

From TEXAS REGIONAL OFFICE

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June 7, 1965

Southern Baptist Convention
Speaks on Race, Evangelism

By Roy Jennings
Baptist Press Staff Writer

DALLAS (BP)--Speaking out sharply on moral and spiritual issues, Southern Baptists used a record-breaking 108th annual meeting here to chart an ambitious future centered in evangelism.

New records were set in attendance and budget. The Convention at Dallas Memorial Auditorium attracted 16,086 messengers from throughout the United States. They adopted a \$21.8 million missions budget for 1966.

Surprise of the Convention was an appearance by Presidential Aide Bill Moyers, an ordained Baptist minister who asked Southern Baptists to join with the Government in ministering to the needs of humanity.

Wayne Dehoney, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson, Tenn., was re-elected president for a second term. The messengers selected M. B. Carroll, pastor of East Grand Baptist Church, Dallas, as first vice-president, and Leobardo Estrada, director of language missions in the New York City area, as second vice-president.

Clifton J. Allen of Nashville, Tenn., editorial secretary of the Baptist Sunday School Board, was chosen recording secretary, and W. Fred Kendall of Nashville, executive secretary Tennessee Baptist Convention, re-elected registration secretary.

Joe W. Burton of Nashville stepped down after 18 years of convention service and refused to let the messengers consider him for another term as recording secretary.

Resolutions on human relations, church-state relations, and obscenity and a petition to the Cuban government suspend sentences against two missionaries and 32 Cuban Baptists highlighted action of the messengers.

The request to the Cuban government in behalf of missionaries Herbert Caudill of Clinchport, Va., and David Fite of Fort Worth, was triggered by the news they had been convicted of counter revolutionary activities, espionage and exchanging foreign currency illegally. Caudill got 10 years and Fite, 6 years.

The resolution said "we regret the circumstances which make it necessary for those people in faithfulness to God and Christian brethren to come into conflict with Cuban regulations." It asked for the prayers of all Christians and Southern Baptists for the missionaries and other prisoners.

In the area of human relations, the messengers called on fellow Baptists to provide positive leadership in their communities toward obtaining peaceful compliance with laws assuring equal rights.

The resolution deplored open and premeditated violation of civil law, destruction of property, violence, and shedding of blood as a way of influencing legislation or changing social or cultural patterns.

On church-state the messengers expressed opposition to any official relationship, diplomatic or otherwise, being established between the United States and the Vatican.

A resolution on obscenity called on the motion picture industry to reinstate and honor its own code of decency. The television industry was urged to reject "current programming of violence, immorality and illicit sex in favor of basic moral values."

Business men were asked to refuse to sell obscene literature and Baptists requested to support enactment of laws on obscene literature where they do not already exist.

Messengers reversed a 1964 decision and voted to participate on a North American Committee of the Baptist World Alliance. They balked last year when key speakers said they felt participation was a step toward ecumencity.

Two of the Convention's 21 agencies--Christian Life Commission and Baptist Sunday School Board--were repeated targets of messengers' wrath but they got votes of confidence before the Convention ended.

The annual report of the Christian Life Commission expressing the hope more Southern Baptists will become actively involved in seeking cures for personal prejudice, unfair housing practices, discriminatory employment, unequal justice and denial of voting rights got the approval of the messengers.

A suggestion by W. M. Nevins of Lexington, Ky., a 92-year-old segregationist preacher, to abolish the Christian Life Commission and use its budget for missions got negligible support.

The Sunday School Board drew criticism for selling the controversial book, The Message of Genesis, and listing in a Training Union quarterly for suggested reading a book by Negro James Baldwin.

A resolution approved by the messengers said the Sunday School Board has acknowledged mistakes and had taken steps to prevent their recurrence. It expressed appreciation to the board and requested the agency to continue to exercise diligence.

Messengers referred criticism about the sale of The Message of Genesis to the Sunday School Board for action.

President Wayne Dehoney set the stage for evangelism in the future in his presidential address. He pleaded for Southern Baptists to return to their main job of sharing their Christian faith with other people on world national and local fronts.

On the world level, he asked Southern Baptists to pledge their support to an effort by Billy Graham to mobilize the total forces of Christianity through a World Conference on Evangelism in West Berlin in October, 1966.

Secondly, he urged that all North and South American Baptists unite in 1969 in hemispheric evangelistic crusade with simultaneous revival.

Third phase of Dehoney's world evangelism plan called for Southern Baptists to undergird with prayer, money and surrendered lives an accelerated program to put 5,000 missions in other countries.

Dehoney recommended a program called "Operation Penetration" for this nation. It would center the efforts of Southern Baptists in the urban and industrial centers where there are high concentrations of people.

To carry out "Operation Penetration," Dehoney made these suggestions:

-Let the Brotherhood, Baptist men's group, step up its program of laymen's witnessing crusades into these areas.

-Let the six seminaries serve as bridgeheads in sending new pastors to the areas to establish missions and churches.

-Provide adequate loan funds to new churches in the target areas.

-Encourage Baptist laymen to organize a non-profit corporation to raise 50 million dollars to buy church building sites.

-Use the Radio and Television Commission to saturate the target area with the Baptist witness through mass communications.

The messengers responded with appropriate resolutions.

Among the speakers supporting Dehoney's evangelism there were C. E. Autrey of Atlanta, director of the evangelism division of the Home Mission Board; Kenneth L. Chafin of Louisville, Ky., professor of evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and W. A. Criswell of Dallas, pastor of First Baptist Church, largest in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Autrey concentrated on proper motives in evangelism. He said Southern Baptists should get out of the baptism "rat race" if they are equating results with success.

He identified as the two true evangelistic motives the love of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Chafin branded racism and segregation as the enemies of evangelism in many local Baptist churches and called on them to stop running and begin sharing the Gospel.

Southern Baptists need to recover the ear of the lost in evangelism, Chafin said. He suggested that Baptists begin sharing the gospel in the indifferent atmosphere of the fraternity house, the shop during the noon hour, and on the front steps of the apartment house.

However, Chafin said he saw hope for evangelism in the Baptist layman who wants to know answers to theological as well as practical questions and isn't content just to lay linoleum on the floor of the church kitchen.

The address by Presidential Aide Moyers contained a bit of evangelism and a great deal of social concern.

"Southern Baptists are beginning to believe finally that we must become a part of the world in order to change it," he said. "We are beginning to believe that Christianity must become relevant in every area of life and that we must deal with the weightier matters of the world."

Moyers called race relations and poverty main world issues which face Southern Baptists. He said Southern Baptists must deal with both.

Southern Baptists for too often have been preoccupied in their meetings with the techniques of propagating their faith, not the purpose for which God had called them, he said.

"Some Southern Baptists have been trying to emphasize only social Christianity on one hand, and others only the salvation of the individual.

"Both are right and both are wrong. The two extremes are only part of the truth and they cannot be separated."

Moyers' address was part of the annual report of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Glenn L. Archer, executive secretary of Protestant and Other Americans United, followed Moyers with criticism of President Johnson's new education-aid law.

Archer said the education-aid law makes provision for help to private and parochial schools for the first time in the history of this country.

Representatives of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs said the new education law does not authorize any grant or provide services to private or parochial schools. He called the law "faithful to the best in our American tradition and true to the Baptist heritage of freedom."

The 1966 Convention will be held May 24-27 in Detroit, Mich.

June 7, 1965

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Baptist Press

NOTE TO EDITORS ATTENDING SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION IN DALLAS: Please kill the pressroom story slugged "SBC Roundup for Saturday am's" placed in your box during the SBC in Dallas on Friday, June 4. Dr. W. A. Criswell did not follow his prepared manuscript from which this story was written, and did not criticize the seminaries as indicated in the lead. Thanks.

Dallas Baptist Press

Pastor's Plane Crashes
On Convention Return

6-7-65

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (BP)--A Baptist pastor and his five-year-old son returning from the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas crash landed into the Gulf of Mexico in a light plane after their engine conked out.

They nonchalantly slept through the night in the cockpit of the plane, and didn't wake up until the tide splashed Gulf waters in their faces.

H. Bruce French, pastor of the St. Petersburg Beach Baptist Church, and his son, Matt, calmly survived the ordeal without a scratch.

"We just thank the Lord, so many things could have gone wrong," said French.

The 35-year-old pastor had flown his light plane from Dallas to Mobile, Ala., where he visited with his parents, B. W. French Sr. There he picked up his son Matt, and the two flew homeward towards St. Petersburg.

About 80 miles north of St. Petersburg near Cedar Key, the plane's engine conked out. "It sounded like it threw three or four rods," French said.

He added that it was dusk, and he chose to land the plane in the shallow water instead of trying to make it to land.

French radioed emergency "mayday" messages to authorities, and then landed smoothly on the Gulf.

"After we hit the water, the plane sank a foot or two. I put Matt on a suitcase to sleep, and he slept about seven hours. I went to sleep a little later myself," French told the Associated Press.

"We woke up when the tide reached our faces. That was about 7:00 a. m.," he said.

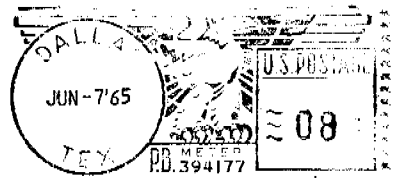
A crab fisherman, E. D. Fletcher of Crystal River, Fla., found them in shallow water about three miles offshore. He offered to carry French and his son in, but a Coast Guard plane spotted them and radioed that a helicopter was on the way.

"We just waited and watched Fletcher work his crab baskets," French quipped. "He caught several dozen while we watched."

French said he planned to tell his congregation that they had a safe trip. "After all when you arrive at your destination, it's a safe trip isn't it? Of course we had a little detour via boat and helicopter, but we arrived safe."

BAPTIST PRESS

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