

November 13, 1965

**Virginia Baptists OK  
Strong Resolutions**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Strongly-worded statements on race relations, capital punishment, extremism, and federal aid to church causes were adopted here by the Baptist General Association of Virginia during their 142nd session.

Adopting unanimously a recommendation from its Christian Life Committee, the Virginia association urged church members to face honestly problems of race relations in Christian love through joint discussion meetings with Negro leaders.

It instructed the convention's General Board to set up a conference on Christian race relations within 18 months, bringing together Baptist ministers and laymen of both races from across the state.

The recommendation encouraged Baptist people to know "their Negro bretheren in the community...through home visits, through exchange of pulpits and choirs, and through joint discussion meetings."

"We acknowledge before God," the report continued, "our partnership of guilt in the long, dark night of injustice and discrimination. Under the cloak of moderation, we have maintained a conspiracy of silence, while extremists at both ends of the issue have set the tone of debate and action."

In a convention-adopted resolution (not part of the Christian Life Committee report), Virginia Baptists took a slap at extremist organizations in Virginia which seek "to create terrorism, racism, and suspicion."

The resolution asked Baptists to refrain from encouraging or participating in any extremist organization that tends to promote racial hatred or violence, and called on Baptists to safeguard the rights of minority groups.

Another resolution flatly opposed the federal government's making any financial assistance available to any church and denominational causes. Copies of the resolution were to be sent to President Lyndon B. Johnson and members of both houses of Congress.

A third resolution urged the state of Virginia to allocate funds to establish a hospital for alcoholics, and expressed opposition to proposed legislation legalizing liquor by the drink and any change in the state's current liquor control act.

All the resolutions and recommendations except one passed without debate or opposition.

An effort to delete the Christian Life Committee's report on capital punishment failed when the entire report was adopted with only minor dissent.

The capital punishment report, which contained no recommendations, called the death penalty "the most extreme form of punishment."

"Such an extreme measure hardly leads to correction, redemption, salvation; and statistics have led to serious doubts whether such extreme measures really lead to crime prevention," the report said.

"Under no circumstance can we conclude from the life of Jesus Christ that punishment is ever to be administered for the sake of anybody's revenge--man's or God's," it said.

One member of the committee which brought the report did not concur with the majority, and one convention messenger interpreted the report as implying that those who believe in capital punishment are unChristian.

Other recommendations commended the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention for "their competent and courageous leadership," and urged district associations of Baptists in Virginia to create Christian Life Committees to deal with social and moral issues.

In other action, the convention elected a new president; approved establishing a new Baptist home for the aging at Newport News, Va.; adopted a \$4.24 million Cooperative Program budget for 1966; adopted a bond guarantee program to underwrite loans to build new churches; and approved two pilot projects to strengthen Christian homes.

H. Cowen Ellis, pastor at Charlottesville, Va., was elected the new president. Other new officers are Robert F. Cochran, Alexandria pastor, first vice-president; Scott C. Hutton Sr., Waynesboro pastor, second vice-president.

The convention-adopted Cooperative Program budget of \$4.24 million allocates 37.5 per cent to Southern Baptist Convention causes, and 62.5 per cent for Virginia Baptist state work.

The new home for the aging in Newport News, to be built from private donations and would be run by the existing Virginia Baptist Home, Inc., which operates a similar institution in Culpeper, Va.

The 1966 session of the Baptist General Association of Virginia will meet in Virginia Beach, Nov. 8-10.

-30-

Alabama Editor Suffers  
Stroke; On Critical List

11-13-65

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Leon Macon, editor of The Alabama Baptist, is in critical condition here following two strokes.

Cerebral hemorrhage occurred first on October 16. Macon has been in the West End Baptist hospital here since that time.

The second stroke came November 10 and left the editor semi-conscious, partially paralyzed and "in critical condition," according to his staff.

-30-

California Baptists  
Urge No Federal Aid

11-13-65

SAN JOSE, Calif. (BP)--The Southern Baptist General Convention of California meeting to observe its 25th anniversary here, ignored a motion instructing its college to accept federal aid.

Instead the convention went on to adopt a strong resolution opposing "the acceptance of federal monies by any Baptist institutions for the support of its programs."

The resolution stated that Southern Baptists have been inconsistent in the application of the principle of church-state separation. "Nevertheless such instances do not justify a continued breakdown in the practices of doctrine."

"Southern Baptists have traditionally taken a forthright stand on separation of church and state and have held the belief that taxation of the citizenry to support a religious cause of any kind is a violation of individual freedom of conscience," the resolution added.

A motion from the convention floor to authorize the trustees of California Baptist College to accept federal aid in whatever form they could get it died for lack of a second.

There was no discussion, only stoney silence when Jolly Griggs, a state college professor from Ventura, Calif., proposed the motion. In recent months Griggs had also proposed that the convention sell California Baptist College and build student centers on college campuses of state-supported schools instead.

The convention did vote to extend an option to sell the property of California Baptist College, but the plans call for moving the school to a new location large enough to double student enrollment.

Last year, California Baptists voted a one year option to sell the present property in Riverside, Calif., but the real estate development firm authorized to sell for \$4.5 million or more has asked for a six months extension of time until May 15, 1966. The convention also increased the price to \$4.6 million.

-more-

In another major action, the convention adopted a record budget of \$2,046,992, and increased its contributions to world missions through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program by one per cent to a 26 per cent allocation.

More than 1,000 churches and missions are a part of the convention, which was organized Sept. 13, 1940 with messengers from 13 churches, it was announced during the 25th anniversary service.

The convention elected new trustees for state Baptist institutions and debated for nearly an hour the suggested slate of trustees nominated by a committee. Several were elected from the floor to replace committee suggestions.

Re-elected as convention president was Clyde B. Skidmore, pastor of First Baptist Church, Costa Mesa, Calif.

The 1966 meeting of the convention will be in San Diego, Nov. 8-10, and in Reno, Nev., in 1967.

-30-

No Wrestling, Just  
A Baptist Floor Fight

11-13-65

SAN JOSE, Calif. (BP)--The Southern Baptist General Convention of California had just ended a long, debate over election of trustees what raged for more than an hour.

At the most appropriate time, an unidentified by-passer stuck her head in the door and asked if there was going to be wrestling in the San Jose Civic Auditorium.

No, came the reply. A Baptist convention is meeting here.

The floor fight was already over.

-30-

Baptist Convention Merger  
Doubtful, ABC Prexy Says

11-13-65

SUNNYVALE, Calif. (BP)--The president of the American Baptist Convention said here that American Baptists are more likely to join with six other denominations in forming a new Protestant church than to unite with Southern Baptists or other Baptist groups.

Robert G. Torbet, president of the American Baptist Convention, described his 1.4 million member convention as "progressive and liberal" and said it differs with the "conservative Southern Baptist Convention on political issues."

"It takes two to talk," he quipped, indicating that the American Baptist Convention is alone in willingness to talk church union at the present time.

During a press conference here at the annual meeting of the American Baptist Churches of Northern California, Torbet said that the American Baptist Convention has already received an invitation to talk about the possibility of merging the ABC with six other Protestant groups.

"The ABC is certainly interested in an ecumenical relationship," he said.

Southern Baptists, however, have generally opposed uniting with other denominations, and unlike the ABC, do not belong to the National Council of Churches.

Torbet said that the ABC has not yet accepted the invitation to talk about the possibility of merging with the six Protestant groups, and it might be as long as two years before the decision is made to accept the invitation.

He pointed out two major obstacles to joining with the Methodists, United Presbyterians, Evangelical United Brethren, Disciples of Christ, the United Church of Christ and the Episcopalians as suggested in the Blake-Pike merger proposal.

-more-

One, he said, is the form of church government: rule of the church by bishops vs. the Baptist concept of congregational government.

The second problem, he said, is baptism: infant baptism vs. the Baptist teaching that Baptism is for persons "who are accountable for themselves." There is talk that both concepts could be accepted in the one church, he added.

In spite of these hurdles, he said that the American Baptist Convention probably stood a better chance of uniting with the six than with the Southern Baptist Convention.

-30-

Alabama Convention Deals  
With Two College Changes

11-13-65

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--The Alabama Baptist State Convention here, after lively debates, voted to change the name of Howard College in Birmingham and defeated a proposal to make Judson College in Marion, Ala., a coeducational school.

Howard College will now become Samford University by action of the convention in recognition of the service and support the Frank P. Samford family has given the Baptist school through the years.

By a vote of 398 to 387, convention messengers turned down a special committee recommendation that Judson College become co-educational by the fall of 1966.

The debate on the co-educational proposal came during a marathon session Wednesday afternoon which technically lasted for seven hours.

Discussions went past the allotted time and election of officers was delayed until the evening session. Constitution requirements, however, stipulate that officers be elected during the afternoon session of the second day, so the presiding officer declared the session to be in "recess" until 7 p.m.

The convention then re-elected J. R. White, pastor of First Baptist Church, Montgomery, to a second term as president, and named laymen as vice-presidents.

Vice-presidents are Dr. Max Vaughn, a physician from Sylacauga, Ala., and Bob Franklin, education director at Woodlawn Baptist Church in Birmingham.

A record budget totaling \$5,605,000 was adopted, exceeding the goal proposed by its Executive Board by nearly \$200,000. The budget was increased when 1965 gifts exceeded this year's goal by more than \$125,000.

The \$5.6 million goal includes a \$4,290,000 Cooperative Program budget and an anticipated \$325,000 in designated gifts.

The convention also adopted a seven year "advance program" beginning in 1966 and ending in 1973 with the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the convention's organization.

Projected goals covered baptisms, Sunday School and Training Union enrollment; Vacation Bible School and Baptist Student Union participation; Brotherhood, Royal Ambassador and Woman's Missionary Union enrollment; endowment funds for Baptist schools, state paper circulation, special and associational missions expansion, and an increase in Cooperative Program giving to missions by \$1.4 million by 1973.

-30-

Tennessee Baptists Vote  
Continuation of Academy

11-13-65

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (BP)--An effort to close down Harrison-Chilhowee Academy (Baptist) failed during the Tennessee Baptist Convention here after a short debate and testimonials from the school's alumni and supporters.

By a vote of 432 to 144, the school in Seymour, Tenn., was continued on the recommendation of the convention's education committee and the executive board.

-more-

A recommendation to provide for the high-school level school's financial needs through regular convention channels drew objections from Gaye L. McGlothlen, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Nashville.

McLothlen, chairman of a survey committee which unsuccessfully recommended in 1959 that the school be closed, argued that the school is competing with the public school system and pointed out that the academy is scheduled to receive nearly \$100,000 from the convention's budget next year. A ten-year building program costing \$750,000 has also been proposed.

McLothlen's motion that the school be closed, however, was defeated by a three to one majority.

Elected as new convention president was G. Allen West Jr., pastor of Woodmont Baptist Church in Nashville.

Other officers are Jonas L. Stewart, Huntingdon, Tenn., pastor, elected first vice-president; Carl B. Allen, Chattanooga pastor, second vice-president; and Wallace Anderson and Gene Kerr, both convention staff workers, elected to recording and statistical secretary posts.

During a pre-convention session, the Tennessee Baptist executive board named Paul Turner, Nashville pastor, as president of the board.

A state-wide Cooperative Program budget of \$4 1/4 million was adopted unanimously, with \$1.4 million of the amount allocated to Southern Baptist Convention causes.

In addition to the budget, a \$125,000 "advance budget goal" was adopted, with that amount being divided between SBC causes, Tennessee schools, children's homes, and Capital needs.

The convention voted to meet Nov. 15-17 in Nashville at the Belmont Heights Baptist Church.

-30-

Ohio Baptists To Enter  
Court Suit on State Law

11-13-65

COLUMBUS, Ohio (BP)--Southern Baptists in Ohio voted unanimously to join other religious groups in filing a court suit to test the constitutionality of a recently passed state law which gives free school bus service to parochial school students.

The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio became the first religious group to vote to enter the litigation against the state law which goes into effect on Jan. 1, 1966.

Representatives from other religious bodies hope to get official permission to join the Baptists in the suit between now and the end of the year.

A planning session was held Nov. 1 with representatives present from Jewish, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Church of Christ, Evangelical United Brethren, Disciples of Christ, and several other religious bodies agreeing tentatively to enter the suit.

It is reportedly the first time that a group of state-wide religious organizations have planned court action to contest the constitutionality of a state law.

The resolution adopted by the 12th annual State Convention of Baptists in Ohio here authorized its executive officers "to cooperate with other interested religious groups to contest the legality of this legislation in the courts."

Earlier this year, the Ohio legislature passed and the governor signed into law a bill which makes public tax funds available to finance school bus transportation for private and parochial school children.

The Baptist-adopted resolution said that the state "owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends, and in providing for such freedom, no ecclesiastical group should be favored by the state more than others."

The convention threw aside normal procedure, which calls for referring all resolutions to an official resolutions committee, and adopted the statement unanimously without opposition or debate.

-more-

An editorial published the week before the convention in the Ohio Baptist Messenger by Editor Lynn Davis urged the convention to enter the court fight.

In other major actions, the convention approved a record budget of \$883,944, an increase of nearly \$130,000 over this year's budget. Thirty-one percent of Cooperative Program contributions from Ohio churches will go to Southern Baptist Convention causes.

Promoted from first vice-president to the presidency of the convention was Carl Hunter, pastor of West Side Baptist Church, Hamilton, Ohio. Other officers elected included Orville Griffin of Dayton, first vice-president, and Cornelius Bright of Warren, Ohio, second vice-president. Both are pastors.

In other action, the convention approved the purchase of additional property near the Baptist Building offices in Columbus, and authorized a \$40,000 remodeling program for the office building.

Crestview Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio, was selected as the meeting site for the 1966 convention, slated Nov. 8-10; and Nov. 14-17 dates were picked for the 1967 convention in Akron, Ohio.

-30-

Florida Baptists Vote  
For Church-State Study

11-13-65

FT. LAUDERDALE, Fla. (BP)--The Florida Baptist Convention here authorized a special committee study next year on the convention's entire policy on separation of church and state.

The action came in a resolution which the convention reaffirmed its belief "that church and state should be separate."

It also asked the convention president to appoint committee of not more than 15 persons to study all implications of church and state cooperation" with special emphasis in the area of government grants to aid Baptist agencies and institutions.

The committee was instructed to report back to the 1966 convention which will meet Nov. 8-10 in Pensacola.

Prior to the convention the president of Stetson University in Deland, Fla., J. Ollie Edmunds had advocated accepting federal grants.

Twice during the convention time was extended for discussion over the financing of a new Baptist junior college planned in West Palm Beach, Fla.

The convention voted to add \$75,000 to the total goal of a special state missions offering next year to provide initial funds for starting the college.

The proposal was suggested after a joint conference of the State Board of Missions, the Education Commission, along with the Baptist college committee of Palm Lake Association and the convention agency and institutional heads.

Messengers also adopted the recommended objectives of the college and a report dealing with the trustees, which were elected to begin official service at the discretion of the State Board of Missions and the Education Commission.

The convention instructed three groups--the education commission, the state board of missions, and the Baptist college committee--to bring back specific recommendations on financing the school at the convention next year in Pensacola.

As guidelines to the three groups, fund raising for the new college should not exceed \$200,000 the second year; \$250,000 the third year; and a state-wide campaign suggested would seek to raise \$1 million. All guidelines must get approval of the three groups before the convention next year.

-more-

In other major actions, the convention authorized a \$200,000 loan for the construction of a 20-bed nursing home facility at the present retirement center in Vero Beach, Fla.; and approved loans totaling \$575,000 for expansion programs at two Baptist assemblies in Florida --Lake Yale Baptist Assembly and the West Florida Assembly near Panama City.

A 1966 Cooperative Program budget of \$3.1 million was approved unanimously, giving 56 per cent to state causes and 44 per cent to world wide causes through the Southern Baptist Convention.

New officers elected included President James L. Monroe, pastor of Riverside Baptist Church, Miami; First Vice-President James F. Graves, of Leesburg, Fla.; Second Vice-President Joseph C. Abernathy of Tampa; and Recording Statistical Secretary M. DeWitt Jackson of Geneva.