



BAPTIST PRESS

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**Georgia Board Delays
On Loan Requests**

ATLANTA (BP)--Georgia Baptists, who have struggled with the question of federal aid to Baptist institutions at almost every annual convention for the past several years, will likely face the issue again in November.

That is the indication in two actions taken by the convention's Executive Committee in September.

The committee postponed a decision on two requests for federal loans from state Baptist colleges. Its administration committee was instructed to produce more facts on whether government interest rates constitute a subsidy or not.

Norman Junior College has asked for permission to borrow \$300,000 for a new library building and Mercer University wanted to borrow \$500,000 for a new science facility. Both requests specified that a 3 per cent interest rate would be paid the government under the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963.

Queries from both schools in 1965 for government loans had resulted in major debate at the 1965 session of the Georgia Baptist Convention. The outcome was that Mercer was authorized to borrow from a commercial lending agency, but not from the government.

Speakers who challenged both requests last week based their arguments on the premise that the 1965 convention vote was an indication of general sentiment on federal loans and should be more carefully considered. They also questioned whether a 3 per cent loan is not in fact a government subsidy.

The Executive Committee meets Nov. 14 in Columbus, Ga., prior to the full convention meeting, Nov. 14-16 at Columbus' Municipal Auditorium.

In other actions, the Georgia Executive Committee adopted a record budget for 1967 of \$4,406,140, an increase of \$391,140. The budget is divided 50-50 between state and Southern Baptist Convention causes after deduction of \$515,600 in agreed-upon promotion expenses.

Approval was also given for establishment of a new church site fund to assist in purchasing church sites in rapidly-expanding centers of population.

The convention's Education Commission was re-organized with members being elected for longer terms and additional convention officers being automatically placed on the commission by virtue of their positions.

The committee also gave approval of Georgia participation in the new Southern Baptist Annuity Board protection plan which will include all states in one broad program.

A major personnel change was made in announcement of the election of Earle F. Stirewalt to succeed Durward V. Cason, who is retiring by Jan. 1 as secretary of the convention's program of Negro work.

Cason has headed Georgia's Negro work ministry since the program was begun in March of 1956. He is 65 years of age.

Stirewalt has been associate in the convention's department of evangelism for five years, serving primarily in the field of prison ministries.

Kentucky Editorial Proposes
Files On Immoral Preachers

MIDDLETOWN, Ky. (BP)--An editorial in the Western Recorder, official publication of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, has proposed creation of a master file on Baptist preachers known to be adulterers and homosexuals.

"The number of adulterers and homosexuals in the Baptist ministry is extremely small," said the editorial, "but even one is too many, especially when there is little or no protection from him by the churches."

Editor C. R. Daley of the Western Recorder said that Baptist preachers known to be homosexuals or adulterers should hardly be allowed to move on to another unsuspecting congregation.

"The effect of the homosexual in religious work is even more tragic than an adulterer, if that is possible," the editorial said. "He moves from church to church leaving a string of youthful victims, some of whom will have psychological scars for the rest of their lives."

Editor Daley went on to ask penetrating questions about "a problem among Southern Baptists so delicate as to be almost unmentionable, but so serious as to have to be faced."

"What is to be done when a pastor or staff member is found to be guilty of adultery or homosexuality?

Should it be covered up with a cloak of secrecy?

"Should such an offender, once discovered, be allowed to move on to another unsuspecting congregation?

"What should be done with the offender?"

Daley not only asked questions, but provided some suggested answers.

"Here's a suggestion for a starter," he wrote. "How about a master file on Baptist preachers and staff members? "...The record of each man should include any known moral breach. Such information could include a man's record on paying his debts and other matters of serious concern.

Daley proposed creation of a "Ministerial Ethics Committee" to be elected by each of the state Baptist conventions using "revered and respected retired pastors for such a committee."

The editor also acknowledged some inherent problems and dangers in maintaining such files on individual pastors and church workers.

"Such information could never be mere heresay," he wrote. "It would have to be authenticated by validated reports from responsible members of former congregations or the minister's own confession.

"Such a file could be entrusted only to the most trustworthy persons," Daley said. "This file would be strictly confidential and made available only to inquiring pulpit committees or other prospective employers.

"Considering Baptist polity and the extreme danger of the misuse of such information, it is next to impossible to come up with any kind of satisfactory plan. An episcopal or even a presbyterian form of church government can handle such a problem, but not so with the independent local church government of Baptists."

Daley observed that ordinarily, most Baptist churches cover up immoral acts of their preachers "with a cloak of secrecy." The result is that such an offender has been known to move from church to church with an immoral affair in each congregation.

The editor cited two responsibilities of the church in such cases. First is a responsibility to extend a redemptive ministry to the offender "if he truly repents and wants a redemptive experience. In the case of homosexuality, there should be professional treatment," the editorial said.

Churches also have a responsibility to protect other churches from such a person "until it is certain the problem no longer exists," Daley wrote.

"An immoral preacher or religious worker should have his ordination revoked, but this rarely happens," the editorial said. "Few Baptist churches ever feel any responsibility for those they ordain longer than a few minutes after the ordination service."

Inviting suggestions from readers, the editorial concluded: "This is an extremely

delicate and difficult problem to approach, but it needs to be considered. Its difficulty should not prevent a serious effort to help solve it."

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Texas Church-State
Panel Bares Report

9/14/66

DALLAS (BP)--The Executive Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas heard here a committee report recommending that Texas Baptist institutions be permitted under certain provisions to accept federal loans.

The board voted to refer a comprehensive report from a special committee assigned to study the convention's policy on separation of church and state to the full convention in Dallas Nov. 1-3.

The committee recommended that Baptist institutions be allowed to borrow from public sources if they voluntarily reimburse the government with added interest to cover any "subsidy involved in the loan."

The move on loans was one of ten recommendations in a report to be presented to the full convention in Dallas from the committee, created in 1965 to review a 1961 convention policy statement which denied both federal loans and grants to Texas Baptist institutions.

The loans involved would be in the long-term, low interest category for the construction of buildings by the Texas Baptist institutions.

Amount of the subsidy in each of the loans, the report said, would be determined "by the Treasury Department estimate of cost based on the average rate produced by the going market yield on issues with remaining terms to maturity of 15 years or more at the time the loan is secured, plus one-fourth of one per cent per annum for administrative costs."

Thus, no set interest rate or repayment scale of "subsidy" was mentioned in the committee's recommendations.

The amount of subsidy each year will be recommended to the Texas Baptist institutions on the described basis by the program coordinating committee, a key panel of the Texas Baptist Executive Board.

W. Morris Ford of Longview, Tex., chairman of the 15-man committee which produced the set of recommendations, said in explanation of the loans provision that the advantage of such financing is that loans are available for such a long period of time that they can be self-amortizing.

"But there is no question," he said, "that the current interest charged involves some government subsidy. However, the fact that the principal of the loan is repaid by the institution makes the subsidy minimal."

Other sections of the report dealt with policy recommendations concerning opposition to direct government aid and grants in the form of surplus property, acquisition of land made available through urban renewal projects, postal rate privileges, research grants, student loans, and tax exemptions.

The report recommended that the state convention continue to approve of the institutions participating in programs of research involving governmental grants, but warned against "tailoring institutional programs to qualify" for such funds to the detriment of the institution's purpose.

Another portion of the guidelines urged rejection of government grants in the form of surplus property, but approved of the policy of purchasing such property at reasonable market value.

On postal privileges, the committee advised that the convention "acknowledge the presence of a subsidy in the postal privileges used by Baptist institutions, publications and churches. However, we recommend that this privilege continue to be exercised," said the report.

Ford said that the subsidy involved--the amount between second class mailing rates and non-profit second class mailing rates--was minimal, an integral part of the postal system and not a significant threat to religious liberty.

Caution was urged by the committee to institutions in dealing with governmental units involving Urban Renewal and other programs in which land becomes available for purchase, that they "be alert to pay a price equal at least to the 'raw land value' of the property."

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In other significant actions, the convention's Executive Board gave initial approval to a record \$12.2 million budget for 1967; filled several vacancies on the convention staff; and approved a proposal which will increase annuity and retirement benefits for thousands of Texas Baptists without a hike in cost to the convention.

The record budget, an increase of \$200,000 over the 1966 budget, must get final approval of the full convention in Dallas.

Elected to fill staff vacancies were Darwin Farmer, presently associate in the convention's direct missions department, as secretary of that department; James Dunn, Baptist student director at West Texas State University, Canyon, Tex.; as associate secretary of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission; and Hylon Vickers of Huntsville as chaplain with the Texas department of corrections, stationed at Richmond, Tex.

The Annuity Board program, which must be approved by all state Baptist conventions, will offer substantial increases in retirement, disability, and death benefits. The plan is titled "The Southern Baptist Protection Program."