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November 17, 1966

Tarheel Baptists Urge Confidential Ministry

WINSTON SALEM, N.C. (BP)--A resolution favoring privileged communication for pastors was adopted here by the North Carolina Baptist State Convention in one of their quietest conventions in years.

The resolution supported efforts to change the current North Carolina laws which require ministers under oath to divulge confidential communications at the request of the judge.

Another resolution adopted unanimously by North Carolina Baptists opposed "open bars" in the form of legalized liquor-by-the-drink sales. The North Carolina legislature is expected to consider proposed legislation on liquor-by-the-drink at its next session.

The only ripple in the convention program came when a pastor from Gibson, N.C., introduced a resolution asking the convention to support Sen. Everett Dirksen Dirksen's efforts to pass a "prayer amendment" to the U.S. Constitution.

The motion, made by Claude Asbury, was tabled by the convention indicating the messengers' apparent disapproval of the prayer amendment efforts in the U.S. Congress, observers said.

Theme of the three-day convention was "Church and Change." Almost every address was pointed to some aspect of change ahead for the church.

Re-elected president of the convention was Carl E. Bates, 52-year-old pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C.

In major business actions, the 3,000 messengers to the convention approved a record \$6.12 million budget, an increase of about \$7000,000 over the 1966 budget. About 34 per cent of the budget will go to support Southern Baptist Convention causes through the SBC Cooperative Program.

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Georgia Baptists Veto
Federal Loan Proposal

11-17-66

COLUMBUS, Ga. (BP)--The Georgia Baptist Convention slapped down an effort to approve "non-subsidy" federal loans for their institutions by a two-to-one vote, and accepted as a gift a \$2 million hotel in downtown Atlanta as the site of a Baptist home for the elderly.

The vote was 761 to 388 against federal loans, after a debate of more than 80 minutes on the following two-point recommendation that came from the convention's administration and executive committee:

"1. That the Georgia Baptist Convention as a policy approve the securing of long-term, low interest loans from public funds for construction of buildings by Georgia Baptist institutions provided the rate of interest paid is equal to the cost of the government in making the loan plus one-fourth of one per cent per annum for administrative costs.

"2. That should the interest paid by any Georgia Baptist institution in any year be less than the Treasury Department estimate of cost, plus one-fourth of one per cent, that the institution pay the government at the close of the year an amount equal to the deficiency."

Sixteen speakers spoke on the motion, each limited to three minutes. The negative vote was cast on a secret ballot.

Waiting in the wings were two request from Georgia Baptist schools for permission to receive federal loans.

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BP Feature

The pastor calls it a year of spiritual progress. "Our faith is much stronger than it was a year ago."

Without discrimination, the members are learning daily to put into practice Christ's admonition to love thy neighbor as thyself.

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LaWayne Hulse is editorial assistant at the Baptist Standard, weekly publication of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

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Photo to be mailed to state Baptist papers

Mercer University, Macon, Ga., had requested approval to seek a \$5000,000 federal loan for a science center and Norman Junior College, Norman Park, Ga., wanted to borrow \$300,000 for a new library.

After the negative vote on approving a "no-subsidy" federal loan policy, the two schools did not submit their requests.

Mercer had submitted the same request last year, but was told to get its money from a commercial agency at "the most favorable rate available."

The Peachtree-on-Peachtree Hotel in the heart of downtown Atlanta was given to the Georgia Baptist Convention by the Beazley Foundation, Inc., of Portsmouth, Va. The hotel was formerly the Winecoff Hotel, where 125 died in 1946 in one of the nation's worst hotel fires.

Searcy S. Garrison, convention executive secretary, said the hotel gift was the largest in value of any single gift ever made to the Georgia Baptist Convention.

The hotel has 200 rooms which will be used to house "elderly people of modest means."

The Beazley Foundation also gave the convention \$50,000 in cash to help renovate commercial sections of the building for more effective use in a ministry to the elderly.

The convention approved a charter for the Peachtree on Peachtree Inn--name for the home suggested by the donor--and elected 15 trustees. All but two are Baptists.

Fred W. Beazley of Portsmouth is principal benefactor of the Beazley Foundation. He is a retired Atlanta businessman who has made several substantial gifts to eleemosynary institutions in Virginia.

Georgia Baptists approved a record 1967 Cooperative Program budget of \$4,406,140. It will be divided 50-50 with Southern Baptist Convention causes after deduction of \$515,600 in agreed-upon promotion and administrative costs.

J. Robert Smith, pastor of First Baptist Church in Statesboro, was elected convention president.

Several expressions were registered in concern for Baptist missionaries and national Baptists in communist prisons in Cuba.

A motion was made to launch a "Project Freedom," to raise funds to pay fines or purchase drugs as ransom for the prisoners, but the resolutions committee instead brought out a report asking that convention leaders work with the Home Mission Board "as they deem wise" to work for the release of the imprisoned Baptist. This substitute motion was adopted.

One resolution urged Baptists to work for stronger legislation designed to protect the sanctity of Sunday observance. It was adopted and referred to the convention's public affairs committee for study and possible action.

The Georgia Convention will hold its 1967 meeting Nov. 13-15 at Jekyll Island, resort island off the Atlantic coast at Brunswick, Ga.

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Maryland Baptists Adopt
Statements on Race, War

11-17-66

KENSINGTON, Md. (BP)-- The Baptist Convention of Maryland recognized the admission of a Negro Baptist church into its fellowship, and adopted a resolution expressing "thanksgiving that people of all races are finding our churches increasingly free of racial barriers."

The convention, meeting for its 131st annual session here, also adopted a resolution on the war in Viet Nam, pledging to support for "every sincere and promising effort in behalf of peace on the part of our national leaders, of the United Nations, and of the spiritual forces of our times."

"We shall not resign ourselves personally to an acceptance of the inevitability of war as a way of international life," said the resolution.

It pledged the support of peace by Christians through prayer, encouraging words, and personal commitment.

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"We shall remember with Christian compassion all who are caught in the viscousness of war--our own youth, those allied with us, and those we designate 'the enemy,'" concluded the resolution.

Another resolution paid tribute to the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission for its emphasis on Christian ethics and social action.

"We are often warned against substituting social reform for personal evangelism," said the resolution. "We would find also the converse warning: let us not ignore the plight of our depressed and disposed fellow man in his earthly situations in an all absorbing pre-occupation with his eternal welfare.

"Personal Christian experience and Christian social obligations are inseparable," said the resolution. "The concern that the Christian has for his brother's rights and welfare arises from the same source as his concern for his brother's soul."

The same resolution expressed thanksgiving that the convention's churches are "increasingly free of racial barriers."

Several Negroes attended the convention, including the pastor of a Negro Baptist church in Philadelphia recently received into the Delaware Valley Baptist Association which is affiliated with Maryland Baptists.

Another resolution opposed a state lottery in Maryland, urging churches in the state to express "unequivocal opposition to a state lottery."

A resolution urging the convention to create a department of Jewish evangelism was diluted by the convention's resolutions committee, which said that such a department "is not presently feasible."

In major action, the convention adopted a budget of \$961,000, an increase of more than \$60,000 over the 1966 budget.

The total budget includes a state-wide Cooperative Program goal of \$775,000 which allocates 40 per cent to support Southern Baptist Convention causes.

The budget also includes an escrow account of \$7,500 to help form a new Baptist convention in the Northeast, anticipated in about 1970.

Plans for construction and development of a new Baptist college in Maryland were outlined by the college's new president, C. Eugene Kratz, who strongly urged the opening of the college in September of 1968.

Re-elected president of the convention was C. Marion Hale, a Baptist layman from Kensington and head of a construction firm.

The 1967 convention will be held in Baltimore, Nov. 13-15.

Utah-Idaho Baptists Report
Church Growth, Adopt Budget

11/17/66

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (BP)--The Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention met in its second annual session here, adopting a 1967 budget of \$204,276 and reporting on growth of their churches.

There was a total gain of 425 members in the convention's 68 churches and missions during the year, bringing total convention membership to 7,217, according to convention executive-secretary Charles Ashcraft.

Elected as president of the convention was John Emery, pastor of First Baptist Church, Brigham City, Utah.

He succeeds Raymond Cearley, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Mountain Home, Idaho, who was elected second vice president for 1967.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--The Alabama Baptist State Convention voted here to increase its budget even beyond the initial recommendation of its Executive Board, and heard an address from its president who urged a ministry to Negro youth of Alabama.

"Because of the tensions created by racial conflict, the door of opportunity has almost closed...for any witness to the Negro youth of this generation," declared Convention President J. R. White of Montgomery, Ala.

White, in his presidential address, said that Alabama Baptists are "losing the Negro youth of this generation in this state and missing the opportunity to challenge them with the gospel of Christ."

He urged the convention to establish a crash program to reach Negro youths, especially on the college level, and to help train Negro Baptist leaders.

White also pointed out that Baptists in Alabama had given \$40 million through their churches last year, but they had "robbed God of \$110 million," based on statistics that showed the tithe potential of Alabama Baptists based on a per capita income would have amounted to \$150 million.

The record \$4.57 million budget adopted by the convention was increased \$180,000 more than the initial budget recommended and approved a month earlier by the convention's Executive Board.

Final figures from the board disclosed that Alabama Baptists in 1966 had given \$181,000 more than the budget, so the convention voted to increase the recommended 1967 budget by \$180,000.

In addition to the \$4.67 budget approved, an additional designated offering goal of \$1,365 million was approved, bringing the grand total goal \$6,035,000.

The convention also approved a special study committee report which recommended an expanded ministry to Baptist college students in Alabama, including lectureships at state college campuses, and scholarships or graduate assistantships.

The recommendations, to be inaugurated when funds are available, also suggested dialogue sessions at colleges with different kinds of ministers, including "theologically-oriented men," serving as specialists in dialogue, personal workers, and pastoral-type ministers.

Elected president of the convention was Herman W. Cobb, pastor of the Twelfth Street Baptist Church, Gaston, Ala., to succeed White.

Honored as recipient of the religious journalism award from the convention was William M. Stewart, Baptist layman and publisher of the Monroe Journal in Monroeville, Ala.

The convention voted to meet next year Nov. 14-16, in Mobile, rejecting a proposal that the convention begin on Monday night instead of Tuesday evening.

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (BP)--The Baptist General Association of Virginia adopted a resolution opposing the Dirksen Amendment, and approved its Christian Life Committee report condemning any form of discriminatory segregation.

The convention approved, after brief debate, a resolution authored by Robert Alley of Richmond, which stated:

"We reaffirm our unwavering support of the established principle of separation of church and state as provided by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, and oppose any impairment of that principle by legislation and any and all constitutional amendments which would any way whatsoever alter, affect or seek to interpret the First Amendment."

Approved by overwhelming voice vote was the report of the convention's Christian Life Committee, which condemned any form of segregation, legal or defacto.

"Any system which separates man from man because of prejudice impedes true brotherhood and inhibits the achievement of full personhood," said the statement.

Debate did not center on whether to adopt the resolution, but rather on the meaning of universal brotherhood of mankind. One faction contended that all men are brothers and the other contended that all men become brothers after their individual acceptance of Christ.

The statement called on "every Christian to fight every practice which separates man from man, and to practice ourselves and urge all others to practice the truth that with freedom there must come responsibility."

The committee's report also dealt with the role of the Christian home, Christian citizenship, Christian responsibility to youth, the challenge of the aging, and Christian brotherhood.

On citizenship, the report said that the Christian is a citizen of two worlds, the kingdom of God and political state, and should be obedient to the law of the land as well as to the high law of God. "If the choice must be made, the Christian must obey God rather than man."

Also approved was a lengthy report of the convention's religious liberty committee, which commended the administrators and boards of Virginia Baptist institutions for their "continued refusal to accept federal or state subsidies."

In other action, the convention approved a report of its pastor-church relations committee which requested \$3,600 for a half-time clerical secretary, beginning in January of 1967 who would maintain biographical files on Virginia Baptist ministers, send out information in response to inquiries, and correspond with churches without a pastor, offering the committee's services.

The report also set up a group of pastor-church counselors, most of them laymen and retired ministers, who may be "called on by churches or pastors in times of special need for advice and guidance."

The convention for nearly three years has discussed the pastor-church relations proposal, but this was the first specific adoption of any plan of action.

A record \$4.5 million budget was adopted, allocating 38 per cent to support Southern Baptist Convention causes. The budget is a \$260,000 increase over the 1966 budget.

Elected president of the convention was Hunter Rigger, a 37-year-old businessman from Poquoson, Va.

Next session of the convention will be at Alexandria, Va., Nov. 14-16, 1967.