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November 17, 1967

Oklahoma Convention
Marked By OBU Stir

1078

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OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Oklahoma Baptists, in the heat of a much-publicized controversy over an independent student publication at Oklahoma Baptist University, were advised in their annual convention to "recapture the concept of personal freedom."

The advice came from Convention President J. M. Gaskin of Durant, Okla., and was prompted by the protest of a group of Baptist ministers over the content of an unofficial publication printed by four students at the Baptist school in Shawnee.

Although no action was taken by the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma concerning the student publication, the controversy permeated the sessions, and numerous speakers referred to it.

The convention gave a standing ovation to Oklahoma Baptist University President Grady Cothen following a speech outlining his own stand and the need for Baptist support of education.

Students, he said, are revolted by the hypocrisy of church members, and added that Christians must not dissipate their energies on small issues. "We have lost all the young people we can afford to lose."

"If we cannot learn to love one another, there is no hope for this generation," Cothen said.

Earlier during the week, the Oklahoma (City) County Baptist Pastors Conference had adopted a resolution expressing support for Cothen and his ability to handle administratively the issue.

The controversy raged over unauthorized publication of a monthly magazine called "The Pluralist" which featured on the cover a picture of a bikini-clad girl, a hippy, and a guitarist standing behind a communion table. Caption was "Where Is The Church."

In what was described by most convention observers as the strongest address of the convention, Gaskin said that "the right of dissent is almost regarded as heresy by some, but it must be preserved as part of the very fiber of democratic process."

The Durant pastor also charged that "Baptists are immeshed in a trap of self-contradictions."

"Our talk is long and loud against government subsidies in education and benevolence but we are not consistent, for every last one of us in this meeting is taking government subsidies in some form or forms," he said.

"The day is long overdue," he added, "for us to be realistic and honest."

He said that the preaching of many Baptists "answers questions nobody is asking," and "our homiletics gymnastics help us dodge both sticky questions about race, bigotry and federal aid."

"Some of us," he added, "are blasting our trumpets and marching around Jericho that fell long ago."

In resolutions adopted by the convention, the convention voted to express approval of Oklahoma Baptist Messenger Editor Jack L. Gritz for his editorial campaign against "dirty movies" on television during "prime family viewing time."

The resolution called for television networks and local stations to delete such movies from their programming.

T. Hollis Epton, pastor of First Baptist Church, Duncan, Okla., was elected president of the convention.

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No budget for 1968 was adopted since it was approved by a special convention meeting last May.

Final session of the convention was delayed so that convention goers might attend the funeral of John T. Daniel, who had been recording secretary for the convention for 42 years until the time of his death.

Daniel had taken his seat at the recording secretary's desk in the convention's opening session when he collapsed and died of a heart attack.

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Baptists Share In Ecumenical Meet 1079

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PALESTINE, Tex. (BP)--Faculty representatives of six Protestant seminaries, including one Southern Baptist school, and two Catholic seminaries have exchanged ideas here in what some theologians feel is an unprecedented occasion.

It was the first such general meeting of the Council of Seminaries and Theological Schools in the Southwest (COSTS).

"The ecumenical aspect was probably the best thing that happened," said E. D. Henson. Henson is dean of the Brite School of Divinity at Texas Christian University, Fort Worth.

David Switzer, associate dean of Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, said he personally felt that the participation in the meeting by Roman Catholic students and priests was "revelatory." They "spoke out very openly, very honestly and very strongly."

A sample polling of several key personalities revealed they felt one of the most important phases of the conference was "putting faculty members in contact with each other, both formally and informally." Following a general session, individuals divided into small discussion groups.

Schools represented included Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth; Phillips University, Enid, Okla.; Texas Christian University, Fort Worth; Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, Dallas; the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest, Austin; St. Mary Seminary, Houston; Austin Presbyterian Seminary; Assumption Seminary, San Antonio, and the Institute of Religion at Houston.

Some 100 persons including faculty members and trustees as well as several students spent three days at Lakeview Methodist Assembly here as guests of the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, which provided full funds for the conference.

Formal sessions were conducted by Shervert Frazier, Baylor University College of Medicine, Houston.

A general discussion highlighted a descriptive account of social and other factors which shape the characteristics of seminary students from the Southwestern region of the nation.

Seminary personnel also explored what seminary trustees expected from their institutions, what students expected from their schools and how faculty members might meet the expectations of both trustee and student.

Trustees agreed that the seminary should be "looked to for the training of the ministry."

William L. Hendricks, professor at Southwestern Seminary and one of seven Southern Baptist theologians attending the conference, reported students expressed a desire for a "larger voice in the structure of seminary programs" and that some of them felt that seminaries were not providing a clear image for the ministry.

Hendricks said that the group also generally felt that the Southwest context of life is changing sociologically. Henson added that a "psychological understanding" of students from this area was developed through dialogue.

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Quiet Tennessee Convention
Acts On Vietnam, '68 Budget

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MEMPHIS (BP)--During what some convention observers called a "quiet but good" convention, Tennessee Baptists adopted a record budget and approved a resolution urging support for fighting men in Vietnam.

The resolution affirmed "our faith and support of them (the Vietnam fighting men) as they perform their duty in the fight against tyranny."

The brief resolution noted that many of the American men who are "fighting and dying in Vietnam" are in many instances Tennesseans or men trained in one of the military installations in Tennessee.

A 1968 budget of \$5 million, an increase of \$400,000 over the 1967 budget, was approved, allocating one-third of the budget to Southern Baptist world mission causes.

Elected president of the convention was Wade Darby, pastor of First Baptist Church Jefferson, City, Tenn.

Next year the convention will meet in Knoxville, Tenn., Nov. 12-14, 1968.

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New Mexico Honors Stagg,
Studies Alien Immersion

1081

11/17/67

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (BP)--The New Mexico Baptist Convention meeting here paid tribute to the man who has served as its executive secretary for 30 years, and adopted a motion calling for a study of the need for a constitutional amendment to bar churches that practice alien immersion.

Special recognition was given to Harry P. Stagg, who is retiring as executive secretary of the convention effective Feb. 1, but with "terminal leave" effective Dec. 1.

He has served longer than any other executive secretary of the Southern Baptist affiliated state convention. R. I. Bradford of Santa Fe., N.M., is his successor.

Stagg was presented a love gift of \$2,500 and a bound volume of letters expressing appreciation for his service. Testimonials concerning Stagg were presented by members of his family, the state convention staff, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Woman's Missionary Union, Sunday School Board and Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Without debate or discussion, the convention approved a motion by Charles Killough, pastor of First Baptist Church in Hobbs, N.M., asking for appointment of a special committee to study and report next year on the alien immersion question.

The motion asked that the committee consider whether a constitutional change is necessary "to safeguard Baptist principles of convention membership against the alien immersion question should it become a factor in the future."

Although Baptist groups in Arkansas and North Carolina had discussed the practices of churches in those states which accept members baptized by other faiths (alien immersion), the issue had not come up previously in New Mexico.

A resolution "pledging our undying gratitude and support" to the U.S. armed forces, especially those in Vietnam was adopted by the convention. Another resolution opposed lowering restrictions in New Mexico which might permit sale of liquor on Sunday.

An amendment to the convention's bylaws was adopted changing the number of members on the convention's State Missions Board from 36 to 40 persons.

The convention also approved a state-wide Cooperative Program goal of \$638,000, an increase of \$18,000 over the 1967 goal. The budget allocates 27 per cent to Southern Baptist causes.

Re-elected president of the convention was Robert J. Morman of Las Cruces, N.M.

Next year the convention will meet at Farmington, N.M., Nov. 12-14, 1968.

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1080-1081

Virginia Baptists Open
Door For Federal Funds

1082

616

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (BP)-The Baptist General Association of Virginia voted here to request the trustees of each of their eight schools to formulate their own policy concerning the use of federal funds.

The motion, made by Religious Herald Editor Reuben Alley, excluded the possibility of using federal grants, but it authorized the boards of trustees to examine all other types of federal funds available and set policies on whether to use them.

Alley's motion also called for the education committee of the General Board to plan and direct a special offering to raise \$250,000 for the eight Virginia Baptist Schools.

Debate and discussion on the motion lasted more than an hour, but the proposal was approved by an estimated two-to-one majority on a standing vote.

In other major actions, the Virginia Baptists elected a new executive secretary, rejected an effort to cut budget support of Southern Baptist world mission causes, authorized a special study of the total convention program, and honored its outgoing executive secretary.

The convention had rejected by an overwhelming vote a proposal from the convention's General Board that the percentage of budget funds to Southern Baptist world mission causes be reduced by 4½ per cent in order to give more support to the schools.

The convention approved the overall \$4,650,000 budget, but voted to keep the present percentage distribution of funds to state-wide and SBC causes at 62 per cent within the state and 38 per cent to SBC causes.

The recommendation of the General Board, which was rejected, would have set the percentages at 66½ per cent to Virginia causes, and 33½ per cent to SBC causes.

In another major action, the Virginia Baptists voted to create a 24-member special study committee which will investigate the total work of the convention and report back to the convention next year.

The committee will study the overall structure and work of the state-wide association, its General Board, institutions, agencies and committees.

A recommendation from the association's education committee asking for representatives of the eight schools to work with the special committee in studying the problems relating to "our educational crisis," and that definite recommendations be made next year.

The report also recommended that the convention not consider establishment of any new schools or sponsorship of any schools not presently connected with the association.

An effort to get the convention to stage a special \$1 million fund drive to benefit both the schools and world missions was defeated. The special campaign would have been divided 62 per cent to the schools and 32 per cent to Southern Baptist causes.

Instead the convention approved the \$250,000 fund campaign for the schools, and asked the trustees to formulate their own policies on federal funds.

In the past, the convention had flatly rejected federal aid to its institutions.

In the discussion of the question, Richmond Pastor Theodore F. Adams made a distinction between "federal funds" and "federal aid," saying that Virginia Baptist schools had long been recipients of federal funds without violating separation of church and state.

Editor Alley, who has in the past strongly opposed any erosion of the church-state separation principle, made a plea for letting the trustees set their own policies on the basis that accreditation might be endangered if the school's trustees are not allowed to make these policy decisions.

Alley also urged more support of Baptists in Virginia for their schools, and added that the \$250,000 campaign is merely a token effort when compared to the needs.

In a major action, the convention elected Richard M. Stephenson, pastor of Columbia Baptist Church in Falls Church, Va., as its new executive secretary. He earlier had been nominated by the association's General Board.

Stephenson, former pastor in Fort Myers, Fla., will assume the position effective Jan. 1, 1968, succeeding Lucius M. Polhill.

One session of the convention here was devoted to paying tribute to Polhill who has been executive secretary for the past 13 years.

Elected president of the convention was Julian H. Pentecost, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Richmond, Va.

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BP PHOTO of Stephenson mailed to Baptist state papers

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Arizona Sets Convention Study, Decreases Budget 1083

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TUSCON, Ariz. (BP)--The Arizona Southern Baptist Convention meeting here authorized a total study of the convention's programs, and voted to decrease its budget in line with anticipated contributions from the churches next year.

The convention adopted a budget of \$657,616 with a state-wide Cooperative Program goal of \$373,392 for 1968, comparing to the 1967 budget of \$692,318, a decrease of \$34,702.

Reason given for the decrease was the effect of copper strikes on Baptist churches in Arizona, and the resulting decrease in contributions to the convention. Of the state-wide goal of \$383,000 this fiscal year, only \$362,000 was received.

The proposed budget decreases the percentage going to Southern Baptist world mission causes from 21 per cent to 18 per cent of the state-wide Cooperative Program goal. If the convention goes beyond its budget, 57 per cent of the overage would go to SBC causes.

A proposal from the convention staff that salaries be cut so that the budget could be met was rejected by the convention after much discussion.

The recommended budget from the convention's Executive Board of a total budget of \$644,000 was amended to a total of \$657,000 so that salaries could be kept at the present level.

During the address of the convention's executive secretary, Charles McKay proposed appointment of a special committee to make a study of the total work of the convention.

The committee, appointed by the convention president, will be composed of 15 pastors and 10 laymen. Frank Gillham, pastor in Tempe, Ariz., will be committee chairman.

The committee will investigate such areas as the convention's constitution, property, relationships between agencies, boards and committees, finances of the convention, and staff personnel. Quarterly reports will be made to the convention's Executive Board.

Three motions from the convention floor were referred to this committee for study and recommendations. The motions prompted lengthy discussion and debate.

One motion asked that the convention sell its hospitals and sever its relationships with all hospital ministries, but a substitute motion was approved referring it to the study committee.

Another motion asked that all capital expenditures be approved by the full convention, and the third motion provided that the convention's Executive Board be composed of at least one-third board members of agencies and institutions of the conventions, and that the board's executive committee include trustee chairmen of all agencies and institutions.

Re-elected president of the convention was M. E. McGlamery, pastor of Twenty-second Street Baptist Church in Tuscon.

Next year the convention will meet Nov. 12-14, 1968, in Phoenix.

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Hardin-Simmons Gets Three Gifts 1084

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ABILENE, Tex. (BP)--Gifts to Hardin-Simmons University totaling \$204,000 were announced here, including three major anonymous gifts.

The three major gifts are \$100,000, \$50,000 and \$10,000.

Lee Hémphill announced that the \$2 million Carr P. Collins campaign is expected to be completed Dec. 31, 1967. "We lack only \$209,000 completing this campaign, Hémphill explained.

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1083-1084

South Carolina Rejects
Federal Aid Study, Grants 1085

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COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--After two years of study and two hours of debate, South Carolina Baptists here rejected by a two-to-one margin federal grants for construction.

The South Carolina Baptist Convention voted 1,423 to 643 in rejecting a report of the convention's two-year Federal Aid Study Committee.

The committee recommended that each college board of trustees be permitted to decide for itself what types of federal aid, including federal grants for building construction, to accept.

In other major actions, the convention acted on another major report, approved a special committee for a proposed study of the total convention program, and authorized charter changes for two of its colleges.

Without approving or rejecting its recommendations, the convention voted to receive as information an extensive report from a committee on licensing, ordaining and disciplining of ministers.

Had it been adopted, the report would have recommended a continuing committee to work in this area, urging similar committees on the associational level. Such committees, however, could not infringe on the procedures of local churches.

Recommendations from the committee included a proposal that a license to preach be for a period of not more than four years, subject to renewal; that ministerial students retain membership in his home church while studying, and that the committee's extensive guidelines for ordination be used.

On recommendation from the convention's General Board, the convention appointed a special 15-member committee to make a two-year study of existing institutions and agencies of the convention "in respect to expansion, consolidation, correlation, fiscal and financial responsibility, and convention support."

Appointed chairman of the committee, which was authorized to employ professional consultants, was Daniel Cloer of Lancaster, S.C. A progress report will be brought next year.

After brief debate, changes in the charters of two South Carolina Baptist schools were approved. The charter changes for Baptist College at Charleston and North Greenville Junior College were to meet accreditation demands, and bring the charters in line with the other South Carolina Baptist schools.

Debate over the Federal Aid Study Committee report lasted for more than two hours. Three members of the committee defended the report's recommendations, all agreeing that at the time they were appointed, they opposed federal aid. In the course of gathering the facts for the study, they said they had become enlightened to the realization that federal aid was not an infringement of religious liberty.

They emphasized that Baptists can still retain religious liberty while cooperating with the federal government.

Opponents to the report, led by Enoch Brown of Columbia, argued that Baptists should support their own schools without relying on the government.

The six speakers who opposed the report said it would leave the door open for outright federal grants for building construction, and that this violates church-state separation.

They also argued that South Carolina Baptists can support their schools, using as an example a special fund campaign to replace a \$611,898 federal grant Furman University had accepted and the convention instructed to be returned. Although the fund drive raised only half of the funds needed, the remainder was taken care of through the convention's annual budget allocations.

The rejection of the Federal Aid Study Committee report, however, did not affect the current policy of South Carolina Baptist schools to accept federal loans and federal grants for research on a contract, service-rendered basis.

In other action, the convention adopted a record 1968 budget of \$4.7 million, an increase of \$450,000, and elected Thomas L. Neely, president of North Greenville Junior College, as president.

1085

Mississippi "Receives"
Education Study Report

1086

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JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--In what convention officials called a "harmonious" and "inspirational" convention, Mississippi Baptists voted to receive, but not adopt, a detailed two-year study of problems facing the convention's educational institutions.

The Long Range Committee on Christian Education presented its report and recommended that it be received, adopted and implemented by the convention's Education Commission in cooperation with the colleges.

A substitute motion was adopted, however, which provided that the report only be "received" and that the schools and Education Commission study and use the report "for whatever good they can get out of it."

The report frankly declared that "Mississippi Baptists cannot hope to continue their four colleges, even on the basis of present quality, unless they increase the present schedule of financial support."

The report dealt with various aspects of the colleges' operations and closed with a series of 16 recommendations.

Among the 16 recommendations was one which suggested that the Education Commission restudy the methods and formula of allocating Cooperative Program funds to the colleges; that each college inaugurate some form of enrollment controls; that each college establish admissions requirements; and that ratios be set for the percentage of funds received from various types of sources. Mississippi College in Clinton was designated as the major center for graduate study.

No mention was made concerning federal aid to the Baptist schools, although it was one of the alternatives the schools face if additional financial support is provided.

The 12-member committee, called by convention officials "a blue-ribbon" panel, was headed by Donald Roark, layman from Yazoo City, Miss.

In other major actions, the convention adopted a record Cooperative Program budget of \$3.8 million; voted to expand its Executive Board to 100 members, and adopted several resolutions.

The budget is an increase of \$300,000 over the 1967 goal. It allocates funds in three sections including \$1,254,000 for Southern Baptist causes, \$2,107,000 for state causes, and \$439,000 for capital needs.

A constitutional amendment was approved increasing the current 77-member Executive Board to 100 members, including 23 additional members at large.

A resolution was rejected which was critical of Home Missions Magazine, monthly publication of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, for carrying "recent articles... especially one on sex, which cast reflection on the inspiration and authority of the scriptures."

Reason given for its rejection was that "Christian social ministries is an adopted ministry of the (Home Mission) board," and because "the resolution overlooks the author's conclusion (in the article on sex) which put sex in its spiritual context."

Two resolutions adopted by the convention opposed the opening of the Mississippi State Fair on Sunday.

The convention closed with an inspirational youth night session when an overflow crowd of 11,000 packed the Mississippi Coliseum here to hear a stirring message by W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas. Several hundred young people went forward at the close of the service committing their lives to Jesus Christ, convention officials said.

Florida Votes College Delay, 1087
Refers Church State Study

434

SARASOTA, Fla. (BP)--The Florida Baptist Convention voted here to delay its plans for building a Baptist college near West Palm Beach, and received a report of its two-year church-state study committee, referring its recommendations for more study.

Recommendations from the church-state committee were referred to the convention's State Board of Missions.

The recommendations proposed, in brief, a goal of 20 per cent of the Baptist school's operating cost be provided by the convention; that allocations to the schools be increased two per cent of the operating costs each year; and that the State Missions Board develop a program of providing capital needs for the institutions.

Plans for a Baptist school at Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., near West Palm Beach were delayed because of the possibility that Evangelist Billy Graham might build a school there, and because a state-supported junior college may also be built in North Palm Beach County.

The college plans will be shelved until Graham decides whether to build a college in Palm Beach Gardens. Earlier this year, the Baptist evangelist said he was considering the Florida site and 16 others for a "West Point of Christian education."

During the convention, Florida Baptists honored their retiring executive secretary and welcomed their incoming executive, and adopted a record \$3.6 million budget.

John Maguire, executive secretary who retires this year, was presented a bound volume of letters of appreciation, a check for \$1,000, a plaque from the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention and a severance gift of \$5,000. He and his wife were also given life occupancy of the home in which they have lived.

The new convention executive secretary, Harold C. Bennett was welcomed, along with Stetson University President Paul Geren, both attending their first Florida conventions in their capacities.

The 1968 budget, an increase of \$300,000 will allocate 45 per cent to Southern Baptist world mission causes, and 55 per cent to state causes. While the percentage to SBC causes remains the same, the convention re-affirmed its intentions of adding one per cent per year for SBC causes until a 50-50 division is reached.

The budget also increases support for Stetson University, from 4.54 per cent to 6.10 per cent of the budget.

Elected president of the convention was Conrad Willard, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Miami.

Resolutions commended the progress of Florida Memorial College, a Negro Baptist school that is moving from St. Augustine, Fla., to Miami, and deplored publicity, government actions, and projects that ignore and offend the Christian conscience in such areas as pornography, narcotics, gambling, and alcohol.

Another resolution pledged prayerful support to the Southern Baptist Executive Committee in considering a possible new name for the Southern Baptist Convention.

Next annual session of the convention will be held at Daytona Beach, Nov. 12-14, 1968.