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November 14, 1968

Conscientious Objection Issue
Referred to New N.C. Council

RALEIGH (BP)--The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina placed its stamp of approval on a new Council on Christian Life and Public Affairs, four-year status for Gardner Webb College in Boiling Springs, N.C., and a record \$6.7 million budget during its 138th annual meeting here.

During what some observers called "one of its most harmonious sessions in years," the only controversy during the convention was sparked by the almost perennial question of federal aid to education and a resolution of support for conscientious objectors to military combat service.

A student from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., Terry Nichols, offered the resolution on conscientious objectors, asking the convention to affirm the right of objection and urging that information and counseling be provided for those who take that route.

A substitute motion offered by the resolutions committee of the convention would have recognized the right of conscientious objection as provided by law. Nichols, one of the organizers of a group called Baptist Students Concerned, asked that his request for information and counseling services be added to the substitute resolution.

After lengthy debate, the entire matter was referred to the new Council on Christian Life and Public Affairs, created at this session of the convention. The Council, which will eventually employ a director and other personnel, will function in much the same way as the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The convention twice refused to reconsider its 1967 decision to allow one of its colleges to participate in a federally-financed faculty enrichment program. The 1967 convention allowed Mars Hill College in Mars Hill, N.C., to take part in the Title III portion of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to enable the college to achieve accreditation.

A pastor from Western North Carolina, J. W. Bargiol of Hayesville, N.C., asked the convention to rescind the 1967 action. His motion was tabled. Later the convention turned down a request to take the motion off the table.

In other actions, the million-member convention:

---Expressed opposition to liquor by the drink legislation expected in the upcoming session of the state General Assembly;

---Asked continuing review of the matter of separation of church and state, with particular reference to prayer in public schools;

---Urged acceptance of the mentally ill in the same manner as those with physical sicknesses, encouraging churches and pastors to remold public opinion to dissolve prejudice against the mentally ill and support of mental health centers and programs to promote better mental health;

---Asked support of a proposal for larger staffs, increased salaries, and further reviews of the state juvenile correction system.

The record \$6.7 million budget, an increase of \$200,000 over the 1968 budget, retained the same formula for distribution--33.34 per cent to Southern Baptist Convention world mission causes; 25.6 per cent to higher education; 11.6 per cent to Christian social services including hospital, homes for aged and childrens homes; and 29.46 per cent to state missions program.

Four-year status for Gardner Webb College was approved almost unanimously. The college plans to add its junior year in September of 1969 and graduate its first seniors in 1971. The college now has 1,300 students.

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NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

The new Council on Christian Life and Public Affairs will be composed of 21 members. It will operate with a budget of \$5,000 in 1969.

One amendment passed by the convention in creating the council stressed that the new organization would speak "to" the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and not "for" it.

The council's objective is to help North Carolina Baptists to become aware of the ethical implications of the Christian gospel with regard to such aspects as daily living, family life, human relations, moral issues, economic life, daily work, citizenship, public affairs and related fields.

Re-elected president of the convention was Claud Bowen, pastor of First Baptist Church in Greensboro, N. C. The convention meets next year at Fayetteville, N. C., Nov. 10-12.

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Texan Defends Publications;
Evangelism and Social Action

(11-14-68)

By Robert O'Brien

FORT WORTH (BP)--Recent criticism of Baptist publications for reporting on Christian social concerns has brought the newly-elected first vice president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas to the defense of the Baptist press.

In an interview here, Jimmy R. Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church in San Antonio, reacted to charges that Baptist publications are emphasizing socialism at the expense of evangelism.

"Baptist publications," Allen said, "reflect what Baptists are saying; they do not create the news. What has happened is that there has been a great awakening among Baptists to the social problems we have long ignored."

The former secretary of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission added that in his opinion, there is no conflict "between a conservative theological insight about the authority of the Bible and the validity of a biblical message and indeed active concern about the social ills that plague human beings.

"It is religious schizophrenia," he continued, "to cut the biblical message in two and be concerned with anything other than the total man. Persons who take the Bible and the ministry of Christ seriously are thrust, without question, into the heart of Christian action."

Allen indicated however that a "valid fear exists among evangelists who see social action advocates of some other denomination who ignore the necessity of new birth through Christ. After all, new birth is the beginning of new life and new life means application of the gospel to every area.

"However," he said, "I believe and pray that Baptists will continue with an evangelistic thrust while making valid contributions toward coping with social problems.

"People who say a strong stand on ethical issues will cripple evangelism are wrong," he declared. "That point of view would make the gospel a sugar-coated one that does not tell people the whole truth about Christ's claim on men's lives. Evangelism and social actions are two sides of the same coin. Together they are the whole gospel.

"On the other hand," he added, "the social actionist who says evangelism is out-dated is wrong because he overlooks the fact that you have to tackle the problem at its basic source, which is the attitude and disposition of the human heart--an attitude or disposition which Christ can change.

"If Baptists can strike the note of bringing the proper perspective on the relationship of ethics and evangelism," Allen concluded, "we can make a contribution to American church life which will bridge an artificial, tragic and divisive gap."

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Georgia Convention Declares:
No Tax Funds For Colleges

MACON, Ga. (BP)--The vexing question of government aid to church institutions plagued the Georgia Baptist Convention again during their annual meeting when the messengers adopted an amendment to an education report forbidding Baptist schools to receive "tax funds."

Georgia Baptists also rejected a proposal from the convention's Executive Committee which would have set up a committee to help pastorless churches and churchless pastors get together, but asked the Executive Committee to set up a counseling service for pastors.

The action on use of tax funds for Baptist institutions came with an amendment to a lengthy report on Christian higher education.

The report called for increased support of established financial channels without changes in the nature or number of Georgia Baptist colleges. The report was based on a study of Georgia Baptist educational needs made by Doak S. Campbell and Associates of Tallahassee, Fla.

Rigid restrictions against the schools getting any tax funds from the government were added to the statement on an amendment which was adopted by a vote of 487 to 419.

Hugh Brooks, pastor of the West End Baptist Church in Atlanta, offered the amendment. The church where Brooks is pastor withdrew from the Atlanta Baptist Association last January because the association approved the use of federal funds by Atlanta Baptist College.

Earlier in the day the convention approved a \$6 million loan for Georgia Baptist Hospital in Atlanta to expand its facilities. The motion authorized the hospital to borrow money "at the lowest interest rate available."

When questioned if this might mean federal funds, hospital officials said none were currently available, but hinted that if loans were available they might be sought. The hospital loan was approved with few dissenting votes.

Norman Junior College, one of six Georgia Baptist schools, was given approval to make an emergency one year appeal to churches of the state for financial assistance, to stave off bankruptcy.

It was revealed that the school in southwest Georgia is about \$250,000 short in current operating cost and has had to borrow money for two months to meet its payroll.

The convention waved its rule against direct appeals to churches for one year to let new Norman president, Thomas G. Renfro and friends try to overcome the financial deficit. Renfro has been president since July 1. He inherited the deficit.

The convention refused to accept a recommendation of its Executive Committee that a committee on pastor-church relations be established, "to help pastorless churches and churchless pastors get together."

Critics voiced fears that it would lead to a bishopry type system of preacher placement and the measure was soundly defeated on a standing vote.

But the next day, messengers approved a motion asking their Executive Committee to consider creating a counseling service, with trained professional counselors to help ministers and their families with emotional problems.

The convention adopted a resolution opposing the legalization of pari-mutual betting in Georgia and the state-wide legalization of liquor sales. Legislation on both subjects is expected when the Georgia General Assembly convenes in January.

In other major actions Georgia Baptists approved a record Cooperative Program budget for 1969 of \$5,344,800 an increase of almost one half million dollars. The budget will allocate 50 per cent to state-wide causes and 50 per cent to Southern Baptist Convention world mission causes, after the deduction of \$572,800 for administration and promotion costs.

Walter L. Moore, pastor of Vineville Baptist Church in Macon was elected Georgia Baptist Convention president. The 1969 convention will meet in Atlanta Nov. 10-12.

New Mexico Baptists Leave
Baptism Issue To Associations

FARMINGTON, N.M. (BP)--The Baptist Convention of New Mexico, on the recommendation of a special study committee authorized last year, voted not to change its bylaws to exclude churches that receive new members from other denominations without baptizing them by immersion.

The current bylaws state that messengers to the convention must represent churches cooperating with one of the local associations in New Mexico.

Thus, in effect, the state convention threw the so-called "alien immersion" question into the hands of the associations within the state. If an association rejects a church for its baptism practices, the convention would have grounds for not seating its messengers.

Although there has not been controversy within the New Mexico convention this year concerning any church in the state practicing "alien immersion," it has been an issue at the Union Baptist Association in Texas (Houston area), and at two associations in North Carolina--the Mecklenburg Baptist Association (Charlotte area) and the West Chowan Baptist Association.

Two years ago, the issue had plagued the Russellville Baptist Association in Arkansas and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, both which refused to seat messengers from the First Baptist Church of Russellville, Ark., which practiced "alien immersion."

Last year, after the Baptist New Mexican carried news reports and an editorial on the alien immersion question in North Carolina, a motion was adopted by the convention asking for a special committee to 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."

The committee this year recommended that no bylaw change is necessary.

In other major actions, the New Mexico convention approved of appointment of a special committee to make a comprehensive study of the convention's existing organizational structure.

The committee was asked to recommend next year "any needed reorganization of convention structure, agencies, policies, programs, job descriptions for all convention personnel, additional programs or agencies needed, and the elimination of any obsolete agency or programs."

A record budget of \$606,235 was adopted by the convention. The budget allocates \$178,263 or 17 per cent for Southern Baptist world mission causes.

Elected president of the convention was John W. Ransdell, pastor of Fruit Avenue Baptist Church, Albuquerque, N.M. Next session of the convention will be held in Roswell, N. M., Nov. 18-20, 1969.

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SBC Presidents Speak
To Louisiana Baptists

(11-14-68)

MONROE, La. (BP)--The Louisiana Baptist Convention, in a harmonious session here, heard a major address by the current president of the Southern Baptist Convention while three former SBC presidents were on the program, and adopted a record \$3.7 million budget.

The convention featured messages by W. A. Criswell, current SBC president and pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas; by H. Franklin Paschall, immediate past president of the SBC and pastor in Nashville; and by Wayne Dehoney, the previous SBC president and pastor in Louisville, Ky.; J. D. Gray, pastor of First Baptist Church, New Orleans, and another former SBC president was also on the program.

The budget, an increase of \$190,000 over last year's \$3½ million budget, allocates 31.4 per cent, a total of \$1,126,850, to Southern Baptist world mission causes.

Elected president of the convention was Terry R. Sanders, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lafayette, La.

Only resolution adopted by the convention expressed appreciation for the hosts and various convention committees.

Next year the Louisiana convention will meet in Baton Rouge, La., Nov. 11-13.

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Storm Hits Maryland, But
Baptist Convention Calm

BEL AIR, Md. (BP)--Outside a storm was raging, but inside the Oak Grove Baptist Church here, the Baptist Convention of Maryland had a calm session with no stormy controversy.

The storm dumped up to 14 inches of snow in parts of Maryland, cutting attendance at the convention slightly, but not dampening the spirit.

In major actions, the convention for the third consecutive year elected a layman as its president, and for the first time elected a woman as a top officer.

New president is Ralph Walls, an automotive executive from Bel Air, and the immediate past president of the convention's State Mission Board.

He succeeds a layman, C. Marion Hale, a contractor from Kensington, Md., who served two terms as president.

First woman elected as an officer was Mrs. Samuel Jackson of First Baptist Church, Baltimore, and immediate past president of the state Woman's Missionary Union. She was elected second vice president.

A record budget of \$1,054,000 for 1969 was adopted. The budget includes a state Cooperative Program goal of \$800,014, with 40 per cent going to Southern Baptist Convnetion world mission causes, and 60 per cent to the state convention.

The budget includes for the first time two preferred items. One will provide \$62,000 to settle accounts on the proposed sale of the property of the new defunct Maryland Baptist College which never got off the ground. Sale of the property was authorized by a special convention in September.

The other preferred item provides \$27,000 in escrow for the formation of new Baptist state conventions in New York and in Pennsylvania whenever they are ready to organize. Southern Baptist churches in these areas are not affiliated with the Maryland convention.

The 1969 convention will meet in Annapolis, Md., Nov. 10-12.

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Hammett Tells South Carolina
Baptists of 1969 Retirement

(11-14-68)

MYRTLE BEACH, S. C. (BP)--The general secretary-treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention for the past seven years, Horace G. Hammett, announced during the state convention meeting here his plans to retire at the end of 1969.

Hammett told the messengers meeting in this coastal resort city that he wanted to give the convention's General Board "plenty of time" to find and recommend a successor. The new general secretary will be elected at the 1969 convention in Charleston, Nov. 18-20.

Hammett has been general secretary-treasurer since Jan. 1, 1962, and earlier had been assistant general secretary for 11 years. He will be 68 next year.

He had been pastor of churches in both North and South Carolina for 20 years, and had coached and taught at Gardner Webb College, Boiling Springs, N.C., before entering the ministry. He was an outstanding athlete at Furman University, Greenville, S. C.

The three-day convention here gave major emphasis to missions and to the Crusade of the Americas evangelistic campaign involving 24 million Baptists in North, Central and South America.

A record budget of \$5,044,000 was adopted for 1969, allocating \$3.3 million for use in South Carolina and \$1.68 million for Southern Baptist Convention world mission causes.

The president of North Greenville Junior College inserted a somber note, saying that the Baptist school is in danger of losing its accreditation because of financial difficulties. The accrediting agency will study the college's affairs within the next month.

New president of the convention is Preston H. Callison, 45-year-old attorney from Columbia, S. C. Callison is a member of the state legislature and a prominent leader in Baptist affairs.

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Utah Idaho Reports
Pioneer Area Growth

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (BP)--Increases in nearly every area of work were reported to the annual Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention here.

Southern Baptist churches in the two-state area baptized 531, gained 990 new members, and ended the year with a total membership of 8,490, said Charles Ashcraft, executive secretary of the convention.

In major actions, the convention adopted unanimously the "Statement of the Crisis in the Nation" approved last June by the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston, and urged churches in the two-state area to implement the statement.

A budget of \$49,032 was approved, including a state Cooperative Program goal of \$57,572. Southern Baptist world mission causes would get 20 per cent of the goal. The budget is an increase of about \$7,000 over the 1967 figure.

Elected president of the convention was Laviod Robertson, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Twin Falls, Idaho.

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Alabama Baptists Urge
Missions and Evangelism

(11-14-68)

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (BP)--A resolution urging a "proper balance to our program" was adopted by the Alabama Baptist Convention here after a pastor introduced a statement warning Southern Baptists against involvement in social and political actions.

The convention was highlighted by adoption of a record \$6 million budget, addresses by the state's governor and a Negro Baptist minister, and the premier of a folk cantata on the theme of the Crusade of the Americas evangelistic campaign.

Without dissent, the convention adopted a resolution which softened criticism of trends in the Southern Baptist Convention towards more emphasis on social aspects of the gospel.

The original statement, presented by Sam Granada of Evergreen, Ala., cited "a marked turn in our (Baptist) publications and our programming from the foundational principles of evangelism and missions to social and political actions. We have seen," said Granada's statement, "our denomination identified with social ills and civil movements containing glaring evils offensive to many of our people."

Granada urged Southern Baptists "not to let their strength and resources be dissipated in social-political involvement but to reserve it for the proclamation of the full gospel to all men.

"We call upon the leaders in agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention to lead us away from social and political involvements which deteriorate our strength and vigorously lead us away to a recommitment of proclaiming the gospel to all men through evangelism and missions," said Granada's statement.

His statement was referred to the resolutions committee, which brought back to the convention a much softer resolution that did not criticize Southern Baptists for dealing with social issues.

"We believe that Southern Baptists are involved in the greatest program of evangelism and missions in the history of our denomination and at the same time in harmony with these programs are seeking to apply the redeeming love of Christ to the issues and problems of our times," said the convention-adopted resolution.

"There should be a proper balance to our program," stated the resolution. "Obviously we cannot grow Christians unless they first have been born into the family of God. However, birth without growth is tragic. We must therefore carry out the full commission of Christ and seek the redemption of the whole man.

The convention recognized "that there are differences of opinion about the issues and problems of our times and the Christian approach to these problems. But we believe that Baptists in Alabama, as in other areas of our convention, are making a sincere effort to make the gospel of Christ relevant. In this context we can and surely will be led by the spirit of God.

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The resolution cited several specific issues that are all a part of the world of concern to Christians, including business, education, crime, ignorance, government and civic responsibility, sin and rebellion, and pagan darkness and unbelief. "Christ speaks to all of these areas and his way is the only way that leads from darkness to light, from chaos, conflict and confusion to order, harmony and peace," said the resolution.

The convention approved resolution concurred with Granada's appeal for a greater emphasis on evangelism and missions. The resolution stated that the greatest possible emphasis must be placed "on the basic function of the church,"

Citing concern for the Crusade of the Americas evangelistic crusade, the convention called upon all Baptists to dedicate themselves to become effective witnesses for Christ to all men."

A report from the convention's Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee pointed out the local autonomy of each church which is "free to accept, omit, or follow any part of the program or proposal made by convention agencies or suggested by a convention gathering.

"We appeal to all our people in this day of stress and revolutionary change constantly to strive for cooperation, to manifest a Christian spirit and concern, and to examine prayerfully the value and/or validity of views expressed by brethren with whom they may disagree."

In a major speech to the convention, Negro Baptist minister J. L. Ware of Birmingham, said that true brotherhood cannot come through fear or intimidation. It is not the product of force but "comes as a new discovered kinship based on principles, on ideals, and on the redemptive power of Jesus Christ."

The governor of Alabama, Albert Brewer, told the convention that the people of the church had better get involved in politics, or else they will leave it up to others. Gov. Brewer, a Baptist and former Sunday school teacher, expressed a desire to set an example that would create trust and inspire Christians to participate in government.

A resolution was adopted commending the governor for his stand against pornographic literature, and another resolution urged the state legislature to oppose liquor by the drink.

The record \$6½ million budget includes a \$5 million Cooperative Program goal that is a \$200,000 increase over last year. The Cooperative Program will allocate \$3.3 million or 60 per cent to state causes and \$1.7 million or 35 per cent, to Southern Baptist Convention causes.

A folk cantata entitled, "Christ In You, The Only Hope," was premiered by an 80-voice youth choir directed by Philip Landgrave, professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. Landgrave wrote the cantata, based on the theme of the Crusade of the Americas, "Christ, the Only Hope."

Elected president of the convention was John Bob Riddle, pastor of Central Park Baptist Church, Birmingham. Next session of the convention is slated Nov. 18-20, 1969.



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