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November 7, 1969

Texas Baptists Veto Loans
For Schools, Institutions

by Bob O'Brien and John Carter

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SAN ANTONIO (BP)--Texas Baptists overwhelmingly voted down federal loans for their institutions after heated debate, casting a 1,203 to 728 verdict against a proposal which would have allowed Texas Baptist institutions to secure long-term, low-interest government loans for building constructions.

A parade of speakers offered impassioned please, pro and con, on the federal aid issue until J. Fred Swank, a Fort Worth pastor, successfully moved for consideration of the previous question, opening the way for a vote on the recommendation.

"All these speeches are fine," Swank told applauding messengers, "but they won't change the opinion of any of us."

Howard E. Butt Jr. of Corpus Christi, Tex., opened the debate with a vigorous speech opposing the recommendation.

"To marry the institutional church to the institutional government--before Jesus Christ comes again--is prostitution," said the lay Baptist preacher and president of the Howard E. Butt Foundation.

"It is to play the harlot," he thundered. "It is to play the Whore. The church is married to Christ. She can have no other master."

In regard to a portion of the recommendation stipulating that the institutions would voluntarily reimburse the government the additional amount of interest to cover subsidy involved, Butt had this comment: "That sounds like guilt money in advance."

James Flamming, a pastor from Abilene, Tex., took exception to Butt's position, remarking that his comments had insulted sincere Christians on the other side of the issue.

"Secularism of society is our real enemy today," Flamming said. "Without strongly supported Christian education, we can't fight secularism," he added.

The convention elected as its president Jimmy R. Allen, pastor of San Antonio's First Baptist Church, a long-time advocate of both separation of church and state, and a balance between social action and evangelism.

Allen, recently elected president of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said afterward he saw his election as an indication of alleliterated social concern among Texas Baptists. Allen is former secretary of the convention's Christian Life Commission.

In financial matters, Texas Baptists approved a \$14½ million budget, an increase of one million dollars over 1969. The breakdown of the allocations indicate \$9,642,500 for Texas causes, and \$4,857,500 world-wide efforts through the Southern Baptist Convention.

Messengers also endorsed a new philosophy of financial planning for Texas Baptist work. A Cooperative Program study committee, advocated a "person-centered" budget, or one that cuts across organizational lines to establish specific "priorities of interest," which would be funded on an individual basis.

The new stewardship pattern, christened "Channels of Compassion," will merge three avenues of giving--Cooperative Program, special offerings and development--under the same general program.

Another study committee authorized last year which had doctrinal overtones prompted no debate and no opposition. The committee recommended no change in the constitutional requirements on membership, saying the present constitution is clear enough.

The committee was requested to come up with an interpretation of the current constitution section which requires messengers to be elected by "regular, missionary Baptist churches that shall voluntarily cooperate with other churches of like faith."

The annual sessions also marked the last year of major emphasis on the Texas Baptist Rio Grande Ministry. Priority will be placed on metropolitan missions in the 70's.

In other action, Texas Baptists adopted a resolution supporting the principle that merchants should close one day a week for the benefit of improved family life and participation in worship.

They also received a report from the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, which urged rejection of extremist tactics, urged respect for Christians on both sides of the war-peace controversy, urged liberalized abortion laws, called for positive action to combat obscenity and pollution and drug abuse, and a number of other issues.

An innovation in the ordinarily-dreary cycle of reports was also launched. Instead of a printed Book of Reports, the messengers were treated to a three-screen multi-media "Panorama of Baptist Witness," which flashed 640 color slides and more than 1,000 feet of movie film through a computerized sequence to visually depict the mission action behind the reports.

A surprise guest for the segment on Christian political and social responsibility was Ben Barnes, Texas Lieutenant Governor, who made a forceful plea for more involvement in government affairs by Baptist laymen.

The program went on to depict many other facets of Texas Baptist work. The production was directed by the convention's public relations director Billy Keith, and produced by Production Services, Inc., of Dallas.

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Michigan Baptists Commend
Nixon of Vietnam Peace Move

11/7/69

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ST. CLAIR SHORES, Mich. (BP)--The Baptist State Convention of Michigan commended President Richard M. Nixon for his efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Vietnam War, adopting a resolution that also deplored the loss of human life in the war.

The convention urged the President to "go to any length to try to reach a peaceful solution to this conflict," and praised the President and other government leaders for their past efforts.

Messengers attending the convention affirmed "that we are peace loving people, and deplore the destruction of the life of any persons, for all are precious in the sight of God."

The resolution also pledged Baptist prayers for the President and other leaders, and expressed appreciation for the military services seeking to preserve American heritage and opportunities.

In other actions, the convention adopted a record budget, elected a new president, and adopted several other resolutions, including opposition to possible legislation in Michigan to provide tax funds for parochial schools as proposed by the governor.

The convention urged individuals to telephone or send telegrams or letters to state legislators expressing their "convictions and feelings to any action now being considered or that will be considered in the future concerning non-public schools receiving tax money."

Arguments given against such tax aid, as summarized from the text of the resolution, include: that no subject taught or service rendered can be done apart from the environment or context of religious atmosphere of the religious institution involved; that such tax funds for non-public schools would be unwise economically; and that it would jeopardize public schools available to all people regardless of racial, religious, social, cultural or economic differences.

Other resolutions affirmed the messengers' desire for "achievement of equal rights for all," expressed concern for an alarming increase of social ills relating to narcotics and alcohol, and voiced appreciation for the assistance given the state convention by Arkansas Baptists since the convention's organization.

Budget for 1970 adopted by the convention totals \$764,168, an increase of \$30,000 over the 1969 budget. Of the total amount, \$66,759 or 20 per cent, goes to Southern Baptist world mission causes.

Elected as new president of the convention was Jimmy Jones, pastor of First Baptist Church, Trenton, Mich.

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Oregon-Washington' Baptists
Elect Negro Woman As Officer

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RICHLAND, Washington (BP)--The Baptist General Convention of Oregon-Washington meeting here elected its first Negro officer when it named a woman, Mrs. Irene James of Takoma, Washington, as second vice president.

The convention also for the first time voted to invite four youth, two college and two high school students, to attend the state convention Executive Board meetings and participate in denominational business.

In other action, the convention adopted a Cooperative Program budget of \$327,290 for 1970, an increase of \$27,290 or nine per cent over the current budget. It allocated \$65,452 or 20 per cent of the budget to Southern Baptist world mission causes.

Elected president was C. E. Bolin, pastor of Green River Baptist Chapel, Auburn, Wash.

The convention meets next year in Portland, Ore., Nov. 3-5.

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October Gifts Boost
Cooperative Program

11/7/69

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Big increases in giving during the month of October boosted Southern Baptist Convention world missions contributions to the \$22.9 million mark for 1969, a 5.65 per cent increase over gifts for the same period in 1968.

In addition to the \$22.9 million in Cooperative Program gifts, Southern Baptists gave \$21.7 million designated to specific SBC world mission causes, for a combined grand total of \$44.7 million in world mission gifts.

Officials with the SBC Executive Committee which prepares the monthly financial report attributed the increase to a big month of giving during October.

Cooperative Program contributions during October totalled \$2.3 million, a 11.78 per cent increase over Cooperative Program gifts for October of 1968.

John H. Williams, financial planning secretary for the SBC Executive Committee, said that the convention normally contributes about five per cent more for any given month in 1969 compared to the same period in 1968.

For the first ten months of 1969, Cooperative Program gifts have increased \$1,228,370, or 5.65 per cent; and designated contributions are up \$831,149, or 3.97 per cent.

The combined Cooperative Program and designated mission gift categories, \$44.7 million, is an increase of \$2 million or 4.82 per cent over grand totals for the same period in 1968.

Of the \$44.7 million, \$28.4 million has gone to support foreign missions, and \$9.5 million to home missions.

The Cooperative Program, a unified budget plan, allocates funds on a formula basis to 19 different Southern Baptist Convention agencies, institutions and organizations.

Amounts reported by the SBC Executive Committee do not include mission gifts to support local or state-wide Baptist mission efforts, but only include amounts channeled to SBC causes through the Nashville office.

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Siler Declines; Milburn Named
Oklahoma Child Care Executive

11/7/69

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OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--In a called meeting, the board of Directors for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma elected Lowell D. Milburn, pastor of First Baptist Church in Shawnee, Okla., as executive director of the convention's department of child care.

T. T. Crabtree, chairman of the committee, told the board that Forest Siler, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lawton, Okla., had declined the position after he had been elected three weeks earlier. His election had been announced publicly earlier.

Crabtree said Siler had called him from Florida where he was in a revival and told him that he had a definite conviction he should not accept the position.

Milburn succeeds H. Truman Maxey who has directed Oklahoma Baptists' child care ministry for the past 35 years. Maxey retires Dec. 31. The homes provide for 230 children in two institutions with a staff of 60 persons.

Milburn is a native of Texas, and a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

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