



BAPTIST PRESS

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October 30, 1970

N.C. Associations Uphold Churches Accepting Non-Immersed Members

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--Three North Carolina Baptist Associations on successive days during the last week of October broke with precedent and refused to act against churches that now accept members who have not been immersed.

Two of the associations--Yates Baptist Association in the Durham, N.C. area, and North Roanoke in the Rocky Mount, N.C., area--turned down amendments to their constitutions which would have required affiliated churches to have only members who have been baptized by immersion.

In each case, a majority favored the amendments, but each failed to get the two-thirds majority required for passage.

In the third association, West Chowan Baptist Association in eastern North Carolina, unanimous approval was given to a membership committee report that asked Aulander Baptist Church, Aulander, N.C., to designate on membership letters whether or not a person has been baptized by immersion.

The Aulander church adopted a new membership policy in 1968 in which they will accept members who were baptized as believers, though not by immersion, in other churches.

North Roanoke Baptist Association voted 123-81, after two hours of debate, for an amendment that would have limited membership in the association to the churches that use the New Testament "as a statement of their faith" and immerse all candidates for membership "on the bases of belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord."

The amendment would have required 136 votes for passage, but only received 123 favorable ballots.

Two churches in the association--Lakeside Baptist Church in Rocky Mount, N.C., and First Baptist Church in Nashville, N.C.--received members from other denominations on statement of Christian experience without requiring immersion.

Lakeside church only recently adopted the policy. The Nashville church is following the policy when it was accepted as a charter member of the association in 1955.

Moderator D. Wayne Martin, pastor of Blanwood Baptist Church praised spokesman and messengers on both sides of the issue for keeping a debate on a high plain.

Yates Baptist Association turned down a similar constitutional amendment which read as follows: "All churches affiliated with the association...shall be churches that use the New Testament as their sole authority for faith and practice and which receive into membership only those persons who have been baptized by immersion in water as their profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord."

The amendment was favored by vote of 135-94, but failed to get the necessary two thirds ballot requiring 152 votes.

The association then approved by a vote of 130-84 a recommendation of its membership practices study committee which stated: "In light of the observations made in this report and in light of variety of membership practices within the churches of the Yates Baptist Association the membership practices study committee recommends:

"That no further action be taken relative to the relationship of Watts Street Baptist Church of any other church to the Yates Baptist Association on the basis of its membership practices..."

The committee further recommended that "with mutual respect for our differences, we continue as in past years to do together God's work in the area of our association."

The Yates Association membership practices committee study grew out of action at the 1969 associational meeting which was asked to reaffirm its commitment to baptism by immersion and oppose membership policies by any of its churches that would accept members without immersion.

The action was aimed at Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham which early in 1969 voted to accept members by transfer of letter from another Christian church giving "evidence of baptism by immersion or by another mode, if that baptism is meaningful to the candidate...."

A committee was named by the association to study membership practices in all the churches in the association. The study revealed that eight churches among the 49 actually had members, associate members of persons under "permanent watchcare" who had not been immersed.

Bruce Little, layman and chairman of the committee, said the group was unanimous in presenting the study findings and in recommending no further action on Watts Street church. None of the members of the committee was a member of one of the eight churches which have accepted members who have not been immersed.

The issue has been a recurring one in North Carolina Baptist associational meetings, as well as in several other states in the Southern Baptist Convention.

In 1967, Mecklenburg Baptist Association consisting of churches in the Charlotte, N.C., area approved a constitutional amendment requiring its churches to have only members who had been baptized by immersion.

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Missouri Convention Adopts
Strong Church-State Resolution

10/30/70

RAYVILLE, MO. (BP)--The Missouri Baptist Convention meeting here adopted unanimously a lengthy and comprehensive resolution on church-state matters, reaffirming its 1969 stand against government grants and gifts to any of its institutions.

The convention also approved a hike of \$400,000 in its budget goal, and re-elected its current president.

Speaking on church-state relations, the convention took note of "the official advocacy of the use of federal tax monies to aid church-related schools" by President Richard M. Nixon, the "widely publicized promotion by the Office of Economic Opportunity of the voucher plan," and strong efforts in the Missouri legislature to aid public schools with tax funds.

The resolution also charged that some organizations in Missouri have concerted programs to defeat legislators who are opposed to state aid for non-public education, and pointed out that the governor of the state has proposed a task force to find ways to help private schools by using tax funds.

The convention took a strong stand in its resolution for support of public schools and the organizations working in their behalf, saying that the public schools "deserve and need the support of all citizens without having to compete with church-controlled institutions for public support from tax funds.

The resolution argued that tax support of church-owned schools would amount to "compulsory taxation to finance church-related education." and that public funds should go only to public schools.

Incumbent convention president H. L. McClanahan, superintendent of missions for Black River Baptist Association in Boot Hill, Mo., was re-elected to a second term.

The new Cooperative Program budget for 1971 is a record \$4½ million. Division of the funds between state and national causes remains the same--35 per cent to the Southern Baptist Convention, 8 per cent for special denominational causes, and 57 per cent for the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Any contributions that exceed the \$4½ million would be distributed 35 per cent to SBC causes, 51 per cent to education expansion in Missouri, and 14 per cent to the Missouri Baptist Foundation as reserves for the convention's Executive Board. This is the same plan approved by the convention last year.

Next year, the convention will meet at First Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo., Oct. 26-28.

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