



**BAPTIST PRESS**  
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

**NATIONAL OFFICE**  
460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
Telephone (615) 244-2855  
W. C. Fields, Director  
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

**BUREAUS**

**ATLANTA** Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
**DALLAS** Billy Keith, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996  
**NASHVILLE** (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lynn M. Davis, Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203, Telephone (615) 254-1631  
**RICHMOND** Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (703) 353-0151  
**WASHINGTON** W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

NOVEMBER 20, 1970

Alabama Baptists Authorize  
Alien Immersion Policy Study

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)--After debating the issue in two business sessions, the Alabama Baptist Convention first tabled discussion on the question of alien immersion, and then approved a motion to study whether to limit convention membership to churches that baptize their members by immersion only.

In other major actions, the convention elected a layman as president, expanded its child care work, adopted a record budget, and heard a black Baptist minister remind them that "whenever any person because of prejudice or vote of the church dehumanizes a person of God's creative love, that is violence."

On the first day of the convention, a constitution change was introduced by James Adams of Athens, Ala., proposing that only churches which "practice baptism by immersion only" be eligible for membership in the state convention.

Observers said his motion came as a surprise to most convention leaders, who noted that the alien immersion question had not been a major issue in that state for years, and they knew of no Southern Baptist Church in Alabama that practice "alien immersion."

Following lengthy discussion, Adams' constitutional amendment was tabled, but the messengers voted the next day to resume discussion of the issue.

The convention approved a motion by Charles Carter of Huntsville, Ala., requesting that a committee study be made of the issue, and that the report be brought to the convention's administrative committee, Executive Board, and state convention. No time was set for the study.

Elected president of the convention was Lambert C. Mims, former mayor of Mobile who now is public works commissioner for the city hosting the convention.

The record budget adopted by the convention is an increase of \$200,000 over the 1970 budget, with a \$7 million goal for 1971, including \$5.3 million in statewide Cooperative gifts and \$1.6 million as the goal for special designated offerings.

Of the \$5.3 million Cooperative Program goal, a total of \$1.8 million would go to Southern Baptist world missions causes, an increase of \$40,000.

Expanding its child care program, the convention voted to take over operation of the Protestant Children's Home in Mobile, which is transferring its assets and buildings to the Alabama Baptist Children's Home system. Acquisition of the Mobile facility now gives Alabama Baptists a center for child care in four cities--Troy, Decatur, Birmingham and Mobile.

The convention approved of two federal loans to Mobile College here, one for \$500,000 for housing units for married students, and one for \$350,000 for completion of a library.

In a major speech, Frederick G. Sampson, pastor of Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church in Louisville, gave his own definitions of "violence" saying that "violence is not always the burning of buildings or tearing off of clothes."

Sampson charged that violence is also done "whenever any person because of prejudice, or vote of the church, dehumanizes a person of God's creative love."

Next year the convention will meet at First Baptist Church, Huntsville, Ala., Nov. 16-17, 1971.

### Colorado Convention Opposes Parochial Tuition Vouchers

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. (BP)--In a peaceful and harmonious session here, the Colorado Baptist General Convention approved a record budget, opposed tuition vouchers to provide tax funds to parochial schools in Colorado, and set a goal for establishing 58 new churches in the convention next year.

The 1971 budget of \$575,671 includes expected income of \$259,609 from Baptist churches in the state, plus a designated mission offering goal of \$76,000.

The budget will allocate \$125,324 or 19 per cent, to world mission causes through the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program. The budget represents an increase of one half of one per cent in cooperative world missions over last year.

New president for the convention is Charles Aiken, pastor of Skyway Baptist Church, Colorado Springs.

In resolutions adopted by the convention, Baptists in Colorado were urged to contact state legislators and register disapproval of proposed legislation for 1971 that would provide tuition vouchers and public tax funds to public and parochial schools in Colorado.

Another resolution pledged continuing support of law enforcement agencies, and expressed alarm at drug abuse in the nation.

Next year, the convention will meet at Seven Hills Baptist Church in Boulder, Colo., Nov. 16-18.

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### Arkansas Continues Doctrine Policy Study, Adopts Statement

11/20/70

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--In sessions described by observers as "remarkably harmonious," the Arkansas Baptist State Convention voted to continue a committee study on alien immersion and open communion policies, and adopted the Southern Baptist Convention's "Statement of Faith and Message" as its own.

The convention, plagued in recent years by a fellowship marred by the exclusion of four churches because of their doctrinal practices, continued the work of a 25-member committee appointed last year to study credential requirements for messengers to the convention.

Indicating that the committee needed another year to complete its work, the committee then recommended that the Arkansas Baptist body adopt the Southern Baptist Convention's 1963 Statement of Faith and Message, which includes a section defining Christian baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Wilson Deese, chairman of the committee, emphasized that adoption of the statement was meant to be a "first step" in dealing with the fellowship problem, and also would provide "doctrinal guidelines" for the convention.

The statement defines Christian baptism as "the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit..." and defines the Lord's Supper as "a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming."

None of the four churches excluded by the convention two years ago sent messengers to this year's meeting. Three of the churches were denied permission to send messengers to the convention because the churches accepted members baptized by churches other than Baptist, and one for inviting Christians other than Baptists to partake in the Lord's Supper.

In other actions, the convention adopted a 1971 budget, approved a three-year fund campaign, re-elected its president, changed the name of the board for its child care program, and adopted resolutions on evangelism, pornography, alcohol, gambling, narcotics, and law enforcement.

The budget of \$2.75 million is a slight increase over the 1970, representing an effort to adjust to a decline in giving. Of the total, \$911,537 will go to Southern Baptist Convention causes, and \$1.8 million will remain in the state.

The convention voted for an all-out effort in 1971 to increase giving from the churches through the Cooperative Program and designated 1972 as a year for a special fund campaign for Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., and 1973 for a special campaign for funds for Southern Baptist College, Walnut Ridge, Ark.

On the recommendation of the board of the Arkansas Baptist Home For Children, the convention voted to change the name of the corporation to "Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services," in order to better prescribe the type of program now being carried out.

Tal Bonham, pastor of South Side Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, was re-elected president by acclamation.

In a resolution on pornography, the convention went on record as "emphatically opposing the report of the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography as irresponsible, misleading and in tragic error." The resolution further urged television stations and theater owners to upgrade their choice of films and programs "to a higher moral level."

Other resolutions urged legislation for more stringent laws against gambling, drug use and abuse, and sale of alcoholic beverage.

In a hard-hitting speech, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Professor William Pinson of Fort Worth called on Arkansas Baptists to be as concerned about "dirty water and dirty air as they are about dirty movies and dirty books;" and to be as concerned about "people kept out of the church because of race as they are about keeping people out because of prohibitions against open baptism."

"We under God must end the demon of racism in our land," Pinson declared. Pinson echoed statements by a Negro evangelist from New York, Tom Skinner, who said the greatest indictment of the Christian church is that during a racial revolution in America, the quietest of all institutions has been the church.

In another major speech, the president of Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Ark., H. E. Williams, proposed that Arkansas establish educational supplements from state tax funds to equalize higher educational opportunities between state-supported and private colleges and universities in the state.

Such tuition grants to students would enable them to attend the institution of their choice, Williams said. He said that because Baptist colleges cannot accept grants from public funds, their annual cost per student is double the cost per student at state colleges \$3,400 at Baptist schools compared to \$1,700 at state schools. As a result, 80 per cent of the Baptist students "are now economically forced to attend colleges other than one of their own free choice."

No action, however, was taken by the convention concerning Williams' proposal.

Next year, the convention will meet at Second Baptist Church, Little Rock, Nov. 16-18, 1971.

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Cowling Says Bible Belt Churches  
Build "Most Segregated Unit"

11/20/70

FORT WORTH (BP)--The pastor of an integrated Southern Baptist church in Arkansas charged here that most churches in the Bible Belt have inadvertently built the most narrowly segregated units of society in America.

"Southern Baptist have rewritten John 3:16 by defining its 'whosoever' to mean 'anyone who is white, middle class, and a potential tither,'" said Dale Cowling, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark.

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Cowling made the statements in a chapel address to the faculty and students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here. He characterized the typical Southern Baptist approach to those of other races this way:

"When we get a strong, well-financed, well-organized church, we may 'reach down' into a deprived area of the city and support a ministry for 'those people' and smugly assume that we are fulfilling Christ's commission."

"What we have done, in effect, is to establish a miniature church for people who are segregated racially, socially, economically, educationally, and culturally," Cowling continued.

He outlined what his own inner-city church was trying to do in reaching all races and economic groups, describing an emphasis on establishing preaching points and social ministries in various parts of the city with weekday and Sunday morning activities. On Sunday evenings, however, the people from all these areas worship together in the downtown church.

"We minister to people where they are," he affirmed, "but we come together for worship in a New Testament fellowship of believers who are rich and poor, black and white, educated and uneducated, lovely and unlovely."

Second Baptist Church, he continued, sponsors tutoring programs for students failing in school, literacy classes for adults, groups in sewing, family nutrition, family planning and birth control information, medical self-help, crafts, music and recreation.

A clinic staffed by doctors, nurses, technicians, and pharmacists provides routine medical care for the poor, and two clinics offer free dental care. The church also operates a Christian counseling center including a psychologist, a psychiatrist and trained counselors on the staff, and a nursery school and kindergarten for children of working mothers.

He said one of the most exciting aspects of what the church is doing is the involvement of laymen, including more than 100 professional people who are using their professional skills and training to help people, "all in the name of Christ."

Breaking out of the mold of the Bible Belt tradition has not been accomplished without suffering, the pastor added.

During the racial crisis in Little Rock in 1957, more than 200 members left because of the church's stand for racial justice, Cowling said.

He added that the word "whosoever" that Jesus used in the familiar John 3:16 passage includes everybody. In what his church is doing in downtown Little Rock, "We want what we need to reflect his inclusiveness," Cowling said.

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Atlanta Group Reluctant  
To Give Land For Center

11/20/70

ATLANTA (BP)--The Atlanta Baptist Association's executive committee postponed calling a special meeting of the association to consider a proposal that would give about 500 acres of Atlanta Baptist College property to the Georgia Baptist Convention, expressing reluctance to give away the valuable land.

In a called meeting, the committee voted down a motion to waive the required 30-day notice for calling an associational meeting, and adjourned without setting a date for consideration of the proposal to establish a huge Baptist center on the property in northwest Atlanta.

Don Aderhold, pastor of Columbia Drive Baptist Church here, made the motion to adjourn saying all the proceedings thus far in regard to the proposal to turn the property over to the state convention had been "irregular."

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He moved that the committee adjourn until the college trustees had an official recommendation to make, and until the association had investigated title of the property and studied possible provisions for its reversion to the association if the college ceas s operation.

Even though his motion to adjourn passed, the committee remained informally to hear information on the proposal from college officials.

Monroe F. Swilley, president of Atlanta Baptist College, said that between now and June the association would have to produce \$500,000 to \$600,000 if the college is to operate during 1971-72. He said he does not forsee this possibility.

Swilley added that funds from recent sale of 54 acres of college property is being used to reduce indebtedness and would not permit the college to operate longer than the nd of this school year.

Jarvis Hill, dean of the college, said that \$84,000 is needed to purchase library books in order to maintain the school's candidacy for accreditation, and observed such support is not likely forthcoming.

"I won't be a part any more of raising false hopes for students who have put their future on the line," he said. "We need to be able to plan for more than one year at a time."

Swilley called for quick action on the proposal to give the land to the convention, pointing out that the school will need to know by February in order to make proper budget and faculty contract plans.

During the meeting of the Georgia Baptist Convention the previous week, the state body authorized its Executive Committee to negotiate with the college trustees and the Atlanta Baptist Association on the transfer of the property, with the understanding that the state convention offices would move from downtown Atlanta to the 500 acre site.

Plans were announced at the state convention for establishment of a huge Baptist center on the property, with offices for the convention, the Atlanta association, a proposed new home for the aged, the Georgia Baptist Children's Home offices, and possibly offices of other local and Southern Baptist agencies, provided the association and college trustees approve the proposal.



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460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

DAVIS C. WOOLLEY HO  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
127 NINTH AVE. N.  
NASHVILLE, TENN. 37203

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