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**Maryland Convention Adopts
Resolution on Race Issue**

CUMBERLAND, Md. (BP)--Adopting a strongly worded resolution, the Maryland Baptist Convention expressed "displeasure" over the withdrawal of a Baptist training quarterly because of its content on race relations, pointing out that "we are in the business of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and not selling literature."

The resolution went on to urge Maryland Baptists to "examine their own attitudes in regard to race so that our preachments will be practices," and urged churches to open both membership and fellowship to all people regardless of race.

Until the resolution on the race issue was introduced, the convention had been described by veteran observers as "mild" and "pleasant."

Thomas W. Downing Jr., pastor of Baltimore's University Baptist Church, introduced the resolution expressing "our displeasure at the principle and procedure accompanying the withdrawal of the church training literature, *Becoming*" by the SBC Sunday School Board.

After automatic referral to the resolutions committee, the convention approved the committee's expanded statement which included not only Downing's wording, but added that the "unnecessary and unfortunate controversy" which has been given much publicity could have been avoided if it had been handled differently.

The convention asked that in the future the Sunday School Board "exercise control, if indeed necessary at all, over such matters before, not after, the actual birth of the publication."

The controversy exploded after news reports indicated that board officials decided to withhold and revise a church training quarterly for 14-15-year-olds, *Becoming*, after it had already been printed. Board officials said the quarterly included a photograph and textual material which was "subject to misinterpretation" and "potentially inflammatory."

The Maryland Convention's resolution, however, pointed out that "the gospel is for all men everywhere, regardless of race or national origin," and that "the gospel is potentially inflammatory and damaging to our prejudices."

It added that the gospel "is not to be decided as the gospel by minority protest nor majority opinion," and that Baptists are "primarily in the business of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and not selling literature."

Applying the resolution to his own convention, Maryland Convention Vice President Robert W. Crowley, pastor of Montrose Baptist Church in Rockville, Md., introduced an amendment to the resolution, warning that Maryland Baptists must not be hypocritical on the race issue.

The convention approved overwhelmingly both the resolution, and Crowley's amendment, which stated: "We also strongly encourage our churches to examine their own attitudes in regard to race so that our preachments will be practices, and the membership and fellowship of our churches will be open to all people regardless of race."

Crowley, who said he deplored the board's withdrawal of the quarterly and was shocked that the material would be withdrawn since he considered it so inoffensive, added he would not vote for the resolution without the amendment for fear of appearing hypocritical.

"How many of us have preached to our people, plainly, forthrightly and courageously, laying it on the line and leading them to accept people of all races into our membership, and not just into our membership, but into our fellowship?" Crowley asked. "How many of us have actively sought to reach every person in our community regardless of their race or color?"

"Now some have said the Sunday School Board is running scared," Crowley observed. "I don't know . . .; but if it is, is it possible that the reason they are running scared is that they are reflecting our attitudes?" Crowley questioned.

"Are we sending double messages--one which says the resolutions we pass at state conventions, and another, which is the way we are seeking to meet the needs and challenges of our own community?"

Crowley pointed out that his own congregation has been integrated for four or five years, but he also questioned how many Baptists have really made an effort to create in reality the kind of scene pictured in the quarterly which was revised. The photograph showed a black youth in conversation with two white girls.

One other resolution relating to the SBC Sunday School Board was adopted by the convention.

"While we deplore the tragic and unnecessary controversy over Volume I of the Broadman Bible Commentary, we are grateful that Dr. W. Clyde Francisco has agreed to try to get us out of this dilemma by writing a commentary to substitute for the controversial one," said the resolution.

Francisco, professor of Old Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, spoke at the Maryland convention. Francisco earlier this year was named to write the commentary on Genesis and Exodus after the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis requested the Sunday School Board to employ another writer to revise the commentary originally written by G. Henton Davies of Regents Park College, Oxford, England.

Another resolution acknowledged the "abilities and dedication of women" in the Maryland convention, urging that more women be appointed to positions of leadership in the denomination.

In other actions, the convention voted to authorize creation of a camping, retreat and conference center for about \$250,000, and adopted a \$1.13 million budget, with 40 per cent of the state goal of \$825,000 Cooperative Program funds going to support Southern Baptist world missions.

Re-elected president was Franklin A. Perry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Laurel, Md. Next year the convention will meet at Broadview Baptist Church, in suburban Washington, D.C.

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Alabama Convention Refuses Immersion Membership Limit

11/18/71

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (BP)--In three different votes here, the Alabama Baptist State Convention refused to alter its membership requirements so that only messengers from churches which practice baptism by immersion would be accepted at the state convention.

In other actions, the convention adopted a record budget with increased support to Southern Baptist mission causes, elected a new president, approved of student observers on the convention's Executive Board, and authorized a loan to Samford University, Birmingham.

What was expected to be a divisive issue may have brought unity to the "business as usual convention," said one observer.

Last year, the messengers voted 317 to 313 to defeat a motion calling for a constitutional change making baptism by immersion a membership requirement. Because the vote was so close, a special committee was appointed to study the matter and report this year.

The committee, however, was divided on the issue and recommended by a 5-1 vote that no change be made in the constitution.

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"We feel that since the committee cannot bring a unanimous report," said Sam Granade, pastor in Evergreen, Ala., and chairman of the committee, "that we would not recommend any action to the convention but ask to be dismissed."

The messengers to the convention approved of the committee's report.

James P. Adams, pastor of West Highland Baptist Church in Athens, Ala., who made the motion last year urging a constitutional change and was the only member of the study committee supporting a change, told the messengers they would regret one day not strengthening the constitutional limitations on membership.

Later, a motion was offered to adopt the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message Statement as the Alabama Baptist Convention's own, since the section on baptism in the statement specified baptism by immersion. With little debate, the motion was defeated.

Still another motion to amend the Constitution by adding the word "Southern" before the words Baptist Churches, thus limiting membership to Southern Baptist churches only, was also defeated when it failed to get a two-thirds majority.

Earlier, the messengers adopted a record \$7.5 million budget which calls for a one-half per cent increase to Southern Baptist Convention causes. Currently, the convention allocates 35 per cent of its receipts to SBC world mission efforts.

During the annual president's address, Lambert C. Mims, commissioner for the city of Mobile, Ala., challenged the convention to increase its support to world wide missions to the 50 per cent level.

Mims also asked the convention to limit the term of president to one year in order for more deserving persons to serve, and asked that his name not be offered for re-election. Mims is expected to run for the U. S. Senate next year.

Elected president was Walter Nunn, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jasper, Ala. Nunn defeated Harper Shannon of Dothan, Ala., former vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In other actions, the convention approved a \$5 million loan for Samford University, Birmingham, for construction of a fine arts center; and approved the appointment of five student observers to meet with the convention's Executive Board.

Resolutions approved by the convention opposed legislation permitting dog racing in two Alabama counties, and called for the study of possible legislation on the matter of privileged information for clergymen.

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Theo Sommerkamp, Veteran SBC
Journalist, Joins Annuity Board

DALLAS (BP)--Theo E. Sommerkamp Jr., a veteran of more than 16 years in Southern Baptist journalism and public relations, has assumed a position as associate director of public relations for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board here.

Sommerkamp, 42, formerly was director of the European Baptist Press Service in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and previously was assistant director of Baptist Press, the news service of the Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville.

In his new responsibility here, Sommerkamp will serve as the press representative for the Annuity Board, working under John D. Bloskas, an Annuity Board vice president and director of public relations.

A native of Tampa, Fla., Sommerkamp has served for the past six years as a missionary associate under the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. He directed the news service of the European Baptist Federation, with offices in Ruschlikon.

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Before going to Switzerland, he was for 10-1/2 years assistant director of Baptist Press, working in the public relations office of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

Previously, he was a reporter for the Tampa Times, the Tampa Tribune, the Tallahassee Democrat, and radio station WTNT in Tallahassee, Fla.

He holds the bachelor of science degree in religious journalism from Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, and a master's degree in journalism from Florida State University, Tallahassee.

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BP PHOTO mailed to Baptist state papers

New Mexico Church Revival
Results in 1,061 Professions

11/18/71

ALAMAGORDO, N.M. (BP)--When the 800-member First Baptist Church of this 22,000 population city sponsored a revival led by Richard Hogue of Houston, there were more professions of faith in the revival than there were members of the church.

A total of 1,061 professions of faith were recorded in the revival, according to the pastor, Jack Stricklan.

"It was just fantastic," exclaimed Stricklan. "We are just thrilled that this could happen in New Mexico."

Stricklan said he had checked with New Mexico Baptist leaders, and that all indications are that the Alamagordo revival had the largest response of any local church revival in New Mexico Baptist history.

The revival also broke attendance records in New Mexico Baptist history, with 1,594 present in Sunday School on the final Sunday. Only a month earlier, a revival at Hobbs, N.M., resulted in a new record of 1,577 persons in Sunday School.

Stricklan estimated that average attendance for the revival services was about 1,500, with a peak attendance of more than 2,000.

Services were moved from the 800-member church to a school gymnasium after an overflow crowd packed the church on the second night of the revival, filling the aisles and even forcing people to sit on the platform.

Stricklan said the revival had made an impact on the entire city, and quoted a letter from one teenage girl in nearby Cloudcroft, N.M., as saying "lives have been changed in my city, and mine is one of them."

Hogue led SPIRENO (Spiritual Revolution Now) rallies and spoke in assemblies at public schools in addition to preaching in the church-sponsored revival.

More than 1,000 teenagers marched from the gymnasium to the heart of the city, carrying banners and chanting, "One way, one way, Jesus is God's way."

The revival closed with a combined service called a "Jesus Celebration" on Sunday, with a record attendance at the church.

Stricklan said that he had baptized 130 new converts since the SPIRENO crusade, bringing the church's total number of baptisms to 155, nearly three times the 56 baptisms recorded during the entire year of 1970-71.

The church is making a special effort at follow-up among those who made decisions, referring to other churches the names of persons giving another denominational preference, and employing Dale Thompson of Tulsa, Okla., as a full-time worker to coordinate the follow-up program.

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Stricklan said he had initiated a SPIRENO Bible class on Sunday mornings for youth who made decisions in the revival, and that SPIRENO Bible clubs were being organized in the schools.

He added that public school teachers had commented on changed attitudes among many of the youth, and that parents had called and written saying they were amazed at the change in the lives of their own children. Several young people on drugs were converted, he said.

"There is only one way I can explain what happened here," said Stricklan, "and that is to simply say that God did it."

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Louisiana Baptists Oppose
Proposed New Race Tracks

11/18/71

PINEVILLE, La. (BP)--The Louisiana Baptist Convention, in sessions described here as "very harmonious," adopted resolutions opposing establishment of any new horse race tracks without a local option vote of Louisiana citizens, and charged that President Richard Nixon is "circumventing" the Constitution by advocating aid to parochial schools.

In major business actions, the convention adopted a record \$4.2 million budget which allocates 35.5 per cent, an increase of .1 per cent, to Southern Baptist Convention causes; elected Charles E. Harvey, pastor of Sunset Acres Baptist Church, Shreveport, as president; and dedicated a new historical and archives library in nearby Alexandria to the memory of the late wife of the convention's executive secretary.

For the first time in history, a black minister, S. M. Lockridge of Calvary Baptist Church in San Diego, Calif., addressed the Louisiana convention.

The resolution on race track gambling urged the Louisiana legislature to adopt local option laws to permit citizens to vote on location of race tracks in the state, and opposed the current system whereby the Louisiana State Racing Commission, responsible only to the governor, may grant licenses to such race tracks.

Another resolution asked President Nixon to "abandon all efforts to circumvent the First Amendment to the Constitution" by encouraging those seeking tax funds in support of non-public schools.

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Oklahoma Baptists Elect
Executive, Approve Budget

11/18/71

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Messengers to the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma elected a new executive secretary-treasurer, and adopted a record \$3.9 million budget despite two attempts to amend the proposed budget from the floor.

The budget, recommended by the convention's Board of Directors, includes a \$3.4 million basic budget, and two "advance sections." Following a plan first approved in 1967, the 1972 budget would divide all money received over the basic budget up to \$3.9 million between Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, and Baptist student work. Seventy-five per cent of the "advance section" funds would go to the school and 25 per cent to student work.

In a new "advance section" recommended by the board, all funds received in excess of \$3.9 million would be divided 75 per cent to Falls Creek Baptist Assembly, and 25 per cent to Camp Hudgens.

A motion to amend the budget, made by a Baptist Student Union director, to eliminate the second "advance section" was defeated. In effect, the motion would have kept all advance funds for Oklahoma Baptist University and for student work.

A second motion from the floor to amend the budget by increasing the allocation to the convention's evangelism department by \$10,000 was also defeated.

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As expected, the convention approved the election of Joe L. Ingram, named last December as executive secretary to succeed T. B. Lackey who retired in September. With a standing vote, Ingram's appointment was unanimously approved. For ten years, Ingram had been assistant executive secretary, working with Lackey.

A motion that the convention go on record as opposing any liberalization of abortion laws in Oklahoma was referred by convention vote to the convention's Christian Life Committee, with a request that the committee study the matter and report back next year.

Messengers also turned down a move to set up a seven-member committee to study the organizational structure of the convention, its aims and its goals.

Elected president of the convention was Forrest L. Siler, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lawton, Okla. Lawton was also approved as a meeting site for the 1973 convention. In the past few years, the convention has met only in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

Next year, the convention will meet at First Baptist Church, Tulsa, Nov. 13-15.

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North American Fellowship
Plans Baptist Cooperation

11/18/71

WASHINGTON (BP)--Sixty leaders from nine Baptist bodies brainstormed areas of closer cooperation in the fields of missions, evangelism, stewardship and general administration during sessions of the North American Baptist Fellowship here.

Each of the nine Baptist bodies represented brought their specialists in the four fields to the discussions sponsored by the fellowship, a committee of the Baptist World Alliance.

"We found we had common interest and common program and that we profit greatly by sharing with one another," said Kenneth L. Chafin, evangelism secretary for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Atlanta.

Chafin added, however, that the group needs to move from a sharing fellowship to a working structure in an effort "to win our continent for Christ."

Chairman of the North American Baptist Fellowship, G. K. Zimmerman, emphasized that the four sharing sessions were not programming meetings but a time of sharing mutual problems.

Zimmerman, executive secretary of the North American Baptist General Conference with offices in Forest Park, Ill., was re-elected chairman of the organization.

The purpose of the fellowship, Zimmerman said, "is to draw together the Baptists of the North American continent on the basis of their common interests and to inspire them to walk together in keeping with the directives of Jesus Christ."

Member bodies of the fellowship are the American Baptist Convention, Baptist Federation of Canada, General Association of General Baptists, National Baptist Convention of America, National Baptist Convention of Mexico, North American Baptist General Conference, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

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