

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**North Carolina Baptists
Reject Immersion Test**

CHARLOTTE (BP)--North Carolina Baptists refused to amend their convention constitution to exclude churches which have members who have not been baptized by immersion.

A constitutional amendment introduced by Gastonia pastor M. O. Owens got a majority vote, 1,245 to 1,078, but failed to get the required two-thirds majority needed for passage.

The amendment would have restricted messengers to the annual convention to those coming from churches which have immersed members only.

All churches affiliated with the North Carolina convention baptize by immersion, but several accept members who have been sprinkled or baptized by other means in other denominations without rebaptism, convention officials said.

Debate on the Owens amendment lasted about 45 minutes. During the debate, Owens said he hoped his proposal would stop what he called "a mushrooming practice" of Baptist churches accepting without rebaptizing members who have been sprinkled but not immersed.

Opponents of the measure all said they believe in baptism by immersion, but that the autonomy of the local church was a far more important matter, arguing that a restriction on membership at the state level would be an infringement on local church autonomy.

The convention also rejected a constitutional amendment which would have restricted consideration of government-funded programs for convention institutions to approval by the convention in annual meeting.

Messengers voted against the amendment, preferring instead to stick with the present arrangement which permits the convention's General Board to rule on programs involving governmental funds.

In approving several resolutions, the convention deplored the recent action of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in withdrawing the church training quarterly *Becoming* from distribution.

The resolution expressed "deep regret and disappointment" to Sunday School Board officials James L. Sullivan and Allen B. Comish for the action, saying the decision had "shocked and disappointed concerned Christians of all races."

It also expressed regret at the resignation of the quarterly editor Frank Grayum, honoring the integrity of his "Christian witness" and expressing continuing interest in his "ministry of reconciliation."

Other resolutions dealt with pornography, prison reform, alcohol, and parochial school aid.

A resolution voicing support of public schools also urged leaders of private, sectarian schools to "comply with the law of the land" by opening such schools to all racial and ethnic groups.

On prison reform, the convention urged Baptists to become involved as Christians in the lives and problems of those in prison, and to work with those who are released from prison.

The convention approved a record budget of \$7,750,000 for 1972, an increase of \$400,000 over the current budget.

Tom M. Freeman, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Dunn, N.C., was elected president.

Scripture Sales Soar, Thai Baptists Report

BANGKOK (BP)--Thailand Bible House has sold over three million portions of Scripture in 1971, a 50 per cent increase over 1970, according to Ronald C. Hill, Southern Baptist missionary press representative.

In this first year under a Thai secretary, the Bible House has gone almost a million copies beyond its goal. Secretary Boonkrong Pitakanon reported that many types of scriptures are completely out of stock.

Many of these portions are being sold in schools, on the invitation of teachers and administrators.

When asked the reason for the big increase, Boonkrong, who is also chairman of the Thai Baptist Churches Association, expressed the opinion that the Holy Spirit is working in the hearts of Thai people, giving them a new openness to Christian truth.

The increased sales also reflect a longing for "a way out," said Boonkrong, as Thai people think about international and internal problems. Some Thais no longer see solutions within tradition, he said.

Boonkrong also cited a new awareness and zeal within Thai Baptist churches. He said that most of the scriptures have been distributed by volunteers from the churches.

Attractive new formats for the Bible portions, including cartoon books of Bible stories, have also boosted sales, said the secretary. Two other recent publications, the Revised Old Testament and the Complete Popular New Testament are expected to receive a warm welcome from Christians, Boonkrong predicted.

Stepped-up financial support from various denominations and increasing use by Roman Catholics of scripture portions distributed by the United Bible Societies of Thailand and Laos were cited as further encouraging signs.

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Chicago Jesus Movement Leader
Plans Berlin Wall Prayer Vigil

11/29/71

CHICAGO (BP)--Southern Baptist evangelist Sammy Tippit, a leader of the Jesus movement in Chicago, has departed for Germany where he hopes to bring the Jesus movement to both sides of the Iron Curtain in East and West Germany.

Tippit and six others plan to march across the country, from Munich to Berlin, climaxing their efforts with a Christmas prayer and fast vigil, and a rally, at Checkpoint Charlie, the main artery into East Berlin from the Western sector of the city.

Tippit, who recently was arrested in Chicago and charged with "disorderly conduct" for witnessing and passing out tracts in Chicago's night club district, said he had obtained permission to erect a cross and hold a one-week prayer vigil near Checkpoint Charlie. The city attorneys in Chicago dropped the charges against Tippit after numerous protests were lodged on a freedom of religion basis.

Murray Bradfield, who works with Tippit in his Chicago street ministry called "God's Love in Action," is already in Germany making arrangements for the march across the country and for the Berlin Wall prayer vigil, Tippit said in an interview just before leaving.

Also going with Tippit to Germany are a Christian rock group, the Living Waters, Tippit's wife and two-month-old son, and Bradfield's wife.

Tippit said the group would march from Munich through Stuttgart, Frankfurt, and Geissen to Kassel, on the border between East and West Germany, and then to Berlin.

The purpose of the march, and the prayer and fast vigil in Berlin, is to "pray for the Jesus revolution to really break loose on both sides of the curtain and throughout all of Europe," Tippit said.

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"Secondly, we are praying that Christians in the West will become aware of many of the conditions that our brothers and sisters in Christ are going through behind the Iron Curtain because of their stand for Christ, and that it might spark a bit more of a revival in the West," Tippit continued.

Climaxing the trip will be a Jesus rally at Checkpoint Charlie on Christmas day, Tippit said. Bradfield will stay in Germany afterwards to set up a branch of "God's Love in Action," but Tippit will return Dec. 27 to speak at the Illinois Baptist state youth evangelism conference.

Tippit said that the trip was being financed by "a miracle of God." He explained that just after his staff had prayed for the \$2,500 needed to finance the trip for the rock group and the two wives, a school teacher brought them a check for \$2,500 saying, "God just laid it on his heart" to do so.

Tippit said that the Jesus revolution is not as widespread in Germany as it is in the United States, but that it was catching hold. He spoke earlier this year at a meeting of the European Baptist Convention pastor's retreat, the English-language organization of Baptists in Europe.

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Belgian Baptists Cite
Increased Growth Rate

11/29/71

NIVELLES, Belgium (BP)--Belgian Baptists in 1971 have recorded a 40 per cent increase in the number of baptisms over last year, according to Southern Baptist Missionary Rudolph M. Wood.

There have been 21 converts baptized this year, compared to 15 in 1970.

Wood noted that the increase in baptisms was entirely within national churches of the Belgian Baptist Union. Neither of the two English-language congregations in the union reported any additions.

"No special reason for this increase can be cited," Wood said. "Special efforts have been made, but direct results cannot be attributed to them."

The Belgian Baptist Union is composed of eight churches and four mission points, including the two English-language churches, with a total membership of 301.

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Two Baptist Churches
Damaged in Bombings

11/29/71

BELFAST, Ireland (BP)--Two Baptist churches here have suffered structural damage as a result of bombings in the immediate area where the churches are located.

A devotional service had just ended at Cliftonpark Avenue Church, and the congregation was singing the final hymn when a bomb exploded. Most of the windows were blown in and glass was scattered widely over the church. Apart from shock, no injuries were reported.

J. F. Bradley is minister at Cliftonpark Church, which is located close to the Crumlin Road, Oldpark area of the city. The parsonage is also located in the troubled area.

At Antrim Road Baptist Church, the pastor, R. C. McMullan, was holding a committee meeting in the manse, next door to the church, when a bomb exploded. Here also the main damage was to the windows in the church building and to the pastor's residence.

None of the churches was directly attacked. They suffered the fringe damage of the explosions. Apparently, it has not been the policy of the bombers to attack church property, except where halls are used by soldiers, according to a report in European Baptist Press Service.

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