



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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November 17, 1972

## California Baptists Leave Baptism Question Unresolved

SANTA MARIA, Calif. (BP)--California Southern Baptists meeting here stumbled on attempts to clarify the meaning of "alien immersion" after defeating three proposed amendments to the convention dealing with the proper method of baptism.

The thorny question of whether to seat as messengers representing churches which accept the baptism by immersion of other denominations was not resolved, however.

The issue, which has troubled the convention for four years, was carried over until next year when proposed constitutional amendments introduced this year seeking to clarify the question will not reach a vote until 1973.

This year, the convention adopted a motion that "the credentials committee formulate a plan . . . for receiving challenges regarding the seating of messengers, and publish that plan in the California Southern Baptist," the state Baptist paper.

The action leaves unchanged the current constitution which states that the convention shall not seat messengers from any church that practices "alien immersion" or "what is commonly called open communion."

Two years ago, the convention appointed a committee to define these terms, but the convention failed to adopt an enabling resolution after the committee reported its definitions.

The committee had defined alien immersion as "baptism administered by any church other than churches of like faith and order." The term open communion was defined as "an invitation to participate in the Lord's Supper to one who is not properly baptised."

One of the constitutional amendments defeated by the convention this year would have made this definition official. It was offered by Harold Coble, pastor of First Baptist Church, Midway City, Calif.

Another defeated amendment, offered by W. B. Timberlake of First Southern Baptist Church, Lompoc, Calif., would have amended the constitution to recognize messengers from Baptist churches which have named as messengers only persons who have been baptized by a Baptist church.

The third amendment, also defeated, would have restricted seating of messengers only to those who have been immersed. It was offered by Harley Murray, pastor of Western Avenue Southern Baptist Church, Anaheim, Calif.

In other business actions, the convention approved a \$2.9 million budget for 1973, including a \$1.5 million state Cooperative Program goal.

In resolutions approved, the convention encouraged the State Board of Education to add the biblical account of creation to subsequent science text books for public schools, urged defeat of efforts to legalize liquor consumption by 18-year-olds, protested the increase of morally offensive movies on television, and supported the California Supreme Court for a ruling upholding the state's "red light abatement law."

The convention re-elected J. Thurmond George, pastor of Foxworthy Baptist Church in San Jose, Calif., to a second term as president, and paid tribute to Floyd Looney, western field representative for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board who will retire Dec. 31 after 30 years of Baptist work in California. He was the first editor of the California Southern Baptist.

Amnesty Proposal Defeated  
During "Tranquil" Convention

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va., (BP)--During what was described as "one of the most tranquil" sessions in its 149 year history, the Baptist General Association of Virginia rejected a proposed statement urging amnesty for conscientious objectors.

Only debate during the three-day session here was sparked by the proposal from the association's religious liberty committee calling on the President and Congress to set up a proper procedure for granting amnesty to "all persons who refused to serve in armed services due to reasons of conscience..."

The proposal added that such a program should not go into effect until all United States ground forces are withdrawn from Vietnam, and all American prisoners of war are released.

Such a program of amnesty, the committee said, "would be an example of Christian charity that must be exercised so that our country can be reunited." It added that "we are called to be ministers of reconciliation to bind together our divided nation."

During the only debate of the convention, a Richmond pastor, Horrace Ford of Broadus Memorial Baptist Church, called the proposal "unrealistic" and "an oversimplification." He argued more Americans would be divided than united by granting amnesty.

Ford added that the committee's handling of "this emotional issue" did not exemplify Christian charity. "As Christians, we may forgive the criminal, but we do not thereby let him go Scott free. Deserters know the burden of their decisions, and they must bear the consequences of their bad deed," Ford argued.

Ellis M. West, professor at the University of Richmond and a member of the committee, countered that the report was not urging amnesty for all deserters or draft dodgers, but only for those who oppose military service for reasons of conscience. "There is an important distinction between ordinary criminals who break the law for selfish reasons and those who violate it for the noblest of reasons," he said.

Although the amnesty proposal was soundly defeated, three other proposals from the religious liberty committee were approved. Two called for full religious liberty to all evangelical Christians in Spain and Colombia, and the third urged Baptists to "help mould world opinion in favor of freedom of our Jewish friends."

Another recommendation approved by the convention called for establishment of 58 new churches in the so-called "urban corridor," and another supported plans for a test project for a mobile home ministry in the Richmond area.

A record budget of \$5.3 million for 1973, an increase of \$550,000, was approved, allocating 38 per cent to Southern Baptist world mission causes.

Resolutions approved urged legislative opposition to unrestricted sales and commerce on Sunday, and opposed legalized parimutuel betting or gambling in any other form in Virginia.

A layman from Richmond, D. James E. Rayhorn, a dentist, was elected president; and for the first time in its 149-year history, a woman was named vice-president--Mrs. G.S. Stratton of Hampton, Va.

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Georgia Baptists Celebrate  
150th Anniversary Session

11/17/72

SAVANNAH, Ga., (BP)--Georgia Baptists celebrated their 150th anniversary here in an annual meeting filled with historic pageantry and almost completely void of controversy.

Leaders said it was "one of the most inspirational and harmonious" annual meetings in recent years.

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Major action of the convention was approval of the merger of Mercer University in Macon, Ga., and Atlanta Baptist College, which opened in Atlanta in 1966.

Mercer, founded in 1833, has about 2,000 students on its campus in Macon, and another 300 in its School of Pharmacy. Atlanta Baptist College, which will become a branch of Mercer, has about 400 students and has struggled with financial difficulties since it opened.

The convention also approved a record 1973 budget of \$6.7 million, an increase of five per cent over last year's budget. After deduction of shared promotion and administrative costs, the budget will be divided equally between Georgia and Southern Baptist Convention causes.

Resolutions supported the principle of tax exemptions for church contributions; opposed use of tax funds for church-owned and operated institutions; and urged government officials at all levels to refrain from taxing properties owned by churches and used for church purposes.

Another resolution acknowledged receipt of a statement from South River Baptist Association opposing the ordination of women as deacons or pastors, but resolved that the convention reaffirm "its conviction that such matters must be left to the local church."

Major attention was given to celebration of the convention's sesquicentennial birthday with several dramas, pageants and other program features.

Elected president was John T. Tippet Jr., pastor of Calvary Temple Baptist Church, Savannah.

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Michigan Baptists Reorganize  
Staff, Oppose Abortion Laws

11/17/72

ST. JOSEPH, Mich. (BP)--The Baptist State Convention of Michigan meeting here adopted a record budget, reorganized its staff structure, and approved resolutions opposing abortion on demand and "racism, lawlessness, and all other forms of Godless immorality."

In a resolution urging Christians to provide leadership in helping resolve the social ills of society, the convention called on Christian citizens "to build a society that is based on justice and freedom for all."

In opposing abortion on demand, the convention affirmed "that God is the creator of life and that he has a purpose for every life." The resolution chided those who do not recognize or respect the sanctity of human life.

In a major reorganization of the convention's staff based in Detroit, the convention authorized a new structure with three divisions of work rather than four. The current "special ministries division" would be absorbed into three new divisions under the headings of administrative cooperative missions, and church development divisions.

In other actions, the convention approved a budget of \$929,646 which would allocate 21 per cent to Southern Baptist world mission causes. The percentage going to SBC causes was increased by one-half of one percent this year.

Re-elected to a second term as president was Roy Adams, pastor of East Gate Baptist Church, Flint, Mich.

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Arkansas Convention Opposes  
Abortion on Demand, Parochial

11/17/72

HOT SPRINGS, Ark. (BP)--In a prevailing spirit of unity, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention adopted a record budget, re-elected its president, expressed opposition to abortion on demand, and tax aid to parochial schools.

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The only debate during an otherwise harmonious session came over a resolution which would have urged the state Game and Fish Commission to refrain from setting the opening day of hunting season on Sunday.

An estimated 20 per cent of the messengers voted against the resolution after one pastor said he felt laymen in his church might misunderstand the resolution because many preachers have Monday as a holiday while other lay people observe Sunday as a holiday.

A resolution opposing abortion on demand passed without dissent. The resolution stated that "it is essential to the welfare of society that the sanctity of human life be affirmed." It opposed broadening of Arkansas abortion laws which might make "abortions available simply on demand."

Another resolution commended President Nixon and his advisors for achievements in the areas of drug control and world peace, urging continued effort "toward bringing the war in Southeast Asia to a just and lasting peace."

In major business, the convention adopted a record budget of \$3.3 million, urged the state Executive Board to seek low-cost hospitalization insurance for Arkansas church employees and re-elected by acclamation Reuben L. South of North Little Rock, Ark., as convention president.

In a major announcement, the convention messengers were told the statewide higher education fund campaign had exceeded the \$4 million goal by \$400,000 in pledges, even though many churches in the convention have not yet given to the program.

Dallas pastor and former Southern Baptist Convention President W.A. Criswell told the convention in a major address that if Baptists divest themselves of their institutions of higher learning, "we are on our way to becoming a small, insignificant sect."

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Northern Plains Opposes  
Tax Exemption Withdrawal

11/17/72

CASPER, Wyo. (BP)--The Northern Plains Baptist Convention, in a harmonious session here, adopted a resolution opposing any effort by Congress to take away tax exemptions for gifts to charitable institutions or church parsonages, or church-owned property used for the propagation of the gospel.

The resolution urged Baptists and concerned citizens to conduct a letter-writing campaign in opposition to such proposals. It did not mention by name, but obviously referred to a tax policy review bill proposed by Sen. Mike Mansfield and Sen. Wilbur Mills.

In major business, the convention adopted a budget of \$341,832, with 13 per cent of the state goal allocated to Southern Baptist world mission causes.

Ralph Ehren, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Rapid City, S.C., was re-elected president.

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South Carolina Baptists  
Reject Baptism Restriction

11/17/72

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (BP)--The South Carolina Baptist Convention strongly defeated a constitutional amendment which would have rejected seating messengers from churches that accept members who have not been baptized by immersion.

Later, however, the convention reaffirmed the "Statement of Baptist Faith and Message" adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925 and 1963, especially citing its position on baptism by immersion only.

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The motion approved added that the convention does not condone the action of any church that accepts members whose baptism was not by immersion.

Observers pointed out that the messengers obviously were strongly supportive of baptism by immersion, but were not willing to adopt a constitutional amendment which might establish creedal requirements for membership. Such doctrinal matters should be left up to the local church.

The constitutional amendment, proposed by Grindy M. Bridwell of Greenville, S.C., was rejected by a vote of 675-519, far short of the necessary two-thirds majority.

Debate centered on whether the convention had the right to exact a doctrinal requirement on a local church.

The baptism question was a carry-over item from last year's convention. It focused on First Baptist Church of Greenwood, S.C., which does not require immersion of members joining from other denominations who were baptized by method other than immersion.

In other actions, the convention elected a young layman as president, adopted a \$6 million Cooperative Program budget for 1973, called for county-by-county votes on the sale of liquor in mini-bottles, and honored a U.S. Congressman for his opposition to the so-called "prayer amendment."

Elected president was Pat Baughmon of Wagener, S.C., a 37-year-old fuel oil distributor and insurance agent. The convention presented the E.J. McDowell Christian Service Award to Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn, Congressman from South Carolina.

In a called meeting before the convention, the General Board elected two new department heads--Henry Chennault, currently director of men's work for Oklahoma Baptists, as the new South Carolina Brotherhood department secretary; and Kirk L. Smith, pastor from Rock Hill, S.C., as director of campus ministries.

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Illinois Opposes Abortion,  
Tax Deduction Withdrawal

11/17/72

DuQUOIN, Ill, (BP)--The Illinois Baptist State Association adopted a record budget, approved several constitution changes, and adopted resolutions expressing opposition to liberalization of abortion laws and removal of tax deductions for church contributions or tax exemptions on church property.

The 1973 budget of \$2.7 million includes a statewide goal of \$1.4 million, and in increase of one percent per year for 1973, 1974 and 1975 in allocations to the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program. The 1973 Cooperative Program receipts will be divided 63.37 per cent to state causes, and 36.63 per cent to SBC causes.

A resolution adopted by the association opposed liberalization of Illinois abortion laws, opposing abortion except for severe medical reasons.

Another resolution urged continuation of tax deductions for church contributions, and tax deductions for church property or any property used exclusively for religious purposes.

The convention also commended President Richard Nixon and others "who are dedicated to peace," and urged every possible effort for the release of prisoners of war.

Several constitutional amendments were approved, including a provision that all convention employees on department director level or above be elected by the Board of Directors.

Another constitutional amendment created a special committee on communication answerable direct to the state association to be over the Illinois Baptist, the weekly state paper, and the convention's office of communications.

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Proponents of the amendment said the association needs a set of checks and balances, and that a separate committee charged only with the state Baptist paper would make this possible. In the past, the state paper editor has reported directly to the executive secretary.

Elected president of the association was Stanley Dill, pastor of First Baptist Church in Wheeling, Ill.

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Colorado Baptists Increase  
SBC Support, Adopt Resolutions

11/17/72

AURORA, Colo, (BP)--The Colorado Baptist General Convention adopted a \$627,954 budget increasing their support of world missions, and approved several resolutions dealing with interpretation of scriptures, race relations, drug and sex education.

The new budget will increase the percentage of funds going to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program by one-half per cent.

A resolution adopted by the convention reaffirmed commitment to the denomination's Baptist Faith and Message Statement of 1925 and 1963, pointing out "the distinctive plank in the Baptist platform"--the capability of every believer to interpret the scripture for himself as led by the Holy Spirit.

On race relations, the convention urged Baptists to "substitute tokenism with significant dialogue and redemptive cooperation" in observance of Race Relations Sunday.

The convention also urged churches to institute drug and sex education programs using materials from Southern Baptist agencies, and that "we seek to involve ourselves more actively with the agonies, issues, and evils of our times," such as prison reform, pollution, drug abuse, and law, order and justice.

The convention re-elected Jack Carroll, of Littleton, Colo., as president and honored Glean Braswell on his 10th anniversary as executive secretary.

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Arizona Holds "Quiet" State  
Convention, Notes Increases

11/17/72

GLENDALE, Ariz. (BP)--In what was described as a "quiet, harmonious" convention, the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention adopted a budget, re-elected its president, and noted "significant increases" in church growth during the year.

The convention's new budget was set at \$926,575, with a record increase in Cooperative Program giving listed at \$50,000 for last year.

Records were also set with a reported 4,900 baptism (conversions), and with a "significant" increase of three per cent in Sunday School enrollment, and 25 per cent in Brotherhood enrollments.

In a unique arrangement, Grand Canyon College, the convention-owned school in Phoenix, conferred the honorary doctor of divinity degree on convention executive secretary Roy. F. Sutton during the annual meeting here.

Re-elected to a second term as president was Truett B. Thompson, professor of electrical engineering at Arizona State University, Tempe, Ariz.

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Northwest Reports Record  
Baptisms, Sets Higher Goals

NORTH BEND, Oreg. (BP)--The Northwest Baptist Convention meeting here reported a record number of conversions, set goals as part of a 25th anniversary celebration next year, and authorized an efficiency study on use of convention resources.

On recommendation of the convention's Executive Board, the convention voted to appoint a special committee to study the convention's use of program personnel and resources, with a move to a more effective use of those resources. The committee is to report next year.

In other action, the convention adopted a budget of \$362,856, an increase of four per cent over the current budget. The new budget also increased the allocation to Southern Baptist world mission causes through the Cooperative Program from 20 to 21 per cent.

Reporting a record number of baptisms, 3,000 for 1972, the convention also set a goal of 3,500 baptisms in 1973 and a Cooperative Program budget of \$365,000 as part of the convention's 25th anniversary celebration.

Elected new president was Cecil Sims, pastor of First Baptist Church, of Lakewood, located near Tacoma, Wash.

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Mississippi Baptists Approve  
Funds to Rebuild Assembly

11/17/72

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--The Mississippi Baptist Convention voted here to authorize a \$1 1/2 million capital funds campaign to rebuild Gulfshore Baptist Assembly at Pass Christian, Miss., which was virtually destroyed by Hurricane Camille in 1969.

The convention also adopted a record budget of \$4.2 million, elected a new president expressed opposition to obscenity and vulgarity in the mass media, and defeated a proposed constitution amendment.

A special committee on constitution and bylaws had recommended that officers in the future be elected so that the first vice president would ascend to the presidency after a one-year term.

Observers said the proposal was rejected primarily because its language was "vague and uncertain." Traditionally in Mississippi, the convention alternates electing a layman and clergyman as president, and each traditionally serve two one-year terms.

Resolutions opposed "the deplorable trend" in the mass media "toward permissiveness," with obscenity, vulgarity, coarseness and lewdness, including the new obscenity--violence.

Another resolution observed that "drug abuse is in an epidemic stage" in Mississippi, and called the beverage alcohol "the most abused drug in our state." Alcohol, the resolution said, must be recognized "as a mind-altering, addictive, represent drug."

Other resolutions opposed gambling in the state, and urged the state legislature to strengthen laws to protect rights of citizens to have a day of rest.

The convention, requested by one pastor to endorse Key '73, an interdenominational evangelistic effort involving 130 religious organizations nationally, adopted a resolution urging Mississippi Baptists to "emphasize Live '73," the state evangelistic program, and commending but not endorsing Key '73.

The new budget of \$4.2 million will allocate almost \$1.6 million to Southern Baptist world mission causes. The \$1.2 million capital fund campaign for Gulfshore Assembly would be added to other funds already in hand to rebuild the assembly at an estimated current cost of \$2.5 million.

Elected president was David Grant, pastor, Broadmoor Baptist Church, Jackson.

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New Mexico Baptists Elect  
Layman, Oppose Marijuana

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--Meeting at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center here, the Baptist Convention of New Mexico adopted a record \$1.5 million budget, elected a layman as president, and adopted resolutions opposing use of tax funds for non-public schools and legalization of gambling and use of marijuana in New Mexico.

The resolution claimed that "there are very imminent threats of legalization of gambling and the sale and use of marijuana, and relaxation of laws concerning sale of alcoholic beverages." It urged vigorous opposition and defeat of such measures.

For the first time since 1931, a layman was elected president of convention. He is Billie Holder, publisher of the Alamogogo Daily News in Alamogogo, N. M.

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Indiana Baptists Continue  
Association Membership Rule

11/17/72

CLARKSVILLE, Ind. (BP)--The State Convention of Baptists in Indiana defeated a proposed constitutional amendment which would have taken from the associations the right to determine which churches can send messengers to the state convention.

The convention also approved a \$1.2 million eight-year tentative plan for the development of an encampment and assembly on 386 acres of land near Monrovia, Ind., but defeated a substitute motion that would have authorized only the first of the seven phases of the encampment development.

Also defeated was a motion that would have instructed the convention to withhold any financial aid to the State Convention of New York because the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association had accepted a church with a woman pastor.

Most debate at the convention dealt with the constitutional requirement that messengers can come only from churches "which are in good standing" with an association. An amendment presented by a special study committee would have removed this restriction, but the amendment was defeated.

A record budget of \$724,414, including a record state Cooperative Program goal of \$488,000, an increase of 22 per cent. Of the state goal, 28.4 per cent will go to Southern Baptist world mission causes.

Elected president was B. T. Scrivner, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sellersburg, Ind.

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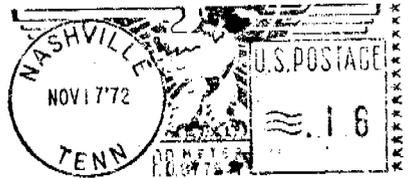
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Find the strength  
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WORSHIP TOGETHER  
THIS WEEK



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NOV 20 1972

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