



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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75-170

Illinois Baptists Support 'Family Viewing' on Television

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)--The Illinois Baptist State Association set a 1976 budget of over \$3.5 million and voted resolutions, including one in support of television's controversial "family viewing" concept.

In other action the statewide body of Southern Baptists postponed any entrance by the convention into the prosecution of James Paynter, a former official of the Illinois Baptist Children's Home, Carmi, who has been indicted for alleged embezzlement of funds from the home.

The convention defeated a motion calling for its officers to become actively involved in the prosecution after hearing that the state was handling the proceedings, according to James H. Smith, the convention's executive secretary.

The family viewing concept--not strong enough for some critics and attacked by others as censorship--drew convention support, which resolved "to unite our voices in favor of continuing and extending what is called 'Family Viewing Time' and that this convention urge all of its messengers to communicate our views about reducing the dramatization of violence and sex in future programs to both broadcasters and state and elected officials."

Family viewing provides that the networks and stations will refrain from broadcasting programs "inappropriate for viewing by general family audiences" during the first two evening prime time hours. Occasional exceptions, with warning advisory announcement, are permitted.

The convention admitted 12 new churches to its membership, representing five ethnic groups and four languages. The congregations are Black, Anglo, Spanish, Arabic and Haitian and conduct services in English, Spanish, French and Arabic.

An objection to admitting Agape Baptist Church, Robinson, Ill., because it had not yet affiliated with its local association of churches, was overridden on the basis that a Baptist church may affiliate with the state and national Southern Baptist conventions without membership at an associational or district level.

Illinois Baptists also voted to allot \$5,200 to Judson College, Elgin, Ill., despite an objection that the Baptist school was not Southern Baptist, and another \$5,200 to Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Mo., a school operated by the Missouri Baptist Convention (Southern Baptist).

Smith said the Illinois Baptist State Association has no schools of its own but believes it must assume some responsibility for Christian education and help schools which render service to its students.

He said Judson College, a conservative school started in 1963 by some American Baptists, has six Southern Baptists on its board of trustees and has performed "fine service for our young people." He said it has an independent board of trustees and is not owned by American Baptists.

"We are in the middle of a north central states thrust, in cooperation with other state Baptist conventions, which would double the number of churches in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa from 1,800 to 3,600 by 1990. We don't have funds to do that and start institutions, too, but we want to accept our responsibility to assist Christian education," Smith said.

Another resolution noted that the public school system in the United States was begun by persons concerned for the moral character, as well as intellectual development of youth.

"For years the trend in public education has led to almost total abandonment of character development with the current experiment at SIU (Southern Illinois University) in Carbondale on the effects of marijuana on human sexual response being but one of the extreme results of this kind of educational system.

". . . This convention encourages its messengers to use their ingenuity in finding ways to express their conviction and exert their influence on local, state and national leaders in education."

In other action, messengers set aside \$2 million of the \$3.5 million budget for its 1976 state Cooperative Program unified budget, with 40 percent of the \$2 million to go to worldwide missions through the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program.

Elected messengers to the convention re-elected Wendell Garrison, pastor of Winstanley Baptist Church, Fairview Heights, Ill., as president and voted to hold the 1976 convention at Second Baptist Church, Marion, Ill., Oct. 26-28.

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Ohioans Speak on Abortion;
Avoid Charismatic Clash

Baptist Press
11/3/75

WILLOUGHBY, Ohio (BP)-- Elected "messengers" to the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio passed a resolution condemning "selfish, non-therapeutic" abortion and faced no controversy over the charismatic movement as some had expected.

In mid-October, two churches--Saylor Park and Oak Hills--were booted out of the Cincinnati Baptist Association for practicing charismatic gifts. A convention spokesman said neither church, which had indicated a desire to continue as Southern Baptist, sent messengers to the state convention and that no move was made on the convention floor to debate the charismatic movement.

In other action, messengers to the 22nd annual meeting of Ohio Southern Baptists voted a record \$2.1 million budget and re-elected Paul Payne, pastor of First Baptist Church, Huber Heights, Ohio, as president.

Messengers heard reports that the convention and its churches were "in good spiritual health," have broken growth records and are on target in their 10-year program of advance. The convention has 513 churches and preaching missions, with 110,000 members. It recorded 8,000 baptisms in 1975 and has shown growth in church program organizations.

The convention's Cooperative Program unified budget portion of the annual budget is expected to top \$1 million for the first time in 1976, reaching over \$1.37 million in contributions from Ohio churches. Thirty six percent of the Cooperative Program figure will go to world missions through the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program.

The resolution on abortion noted that "Holy Scripture clearly affirms the sanctity of all innocent human life " and that "every decision for an abortion, for whatever reason, must necessarily involve a willful decision to terminate the life of an innocent human being.

"Therefore be it resolved that we condemn as a grave moral and spiritual error the practice of abortion for selfish, non-therapeutic reasons and be it further resolved that we reject, as contrary to Southern Baptist doctrine and tradition, any suggestion that Southern Baptists become political activists for permissive abortion."

Another resolution urged "prayer that Ohio Baptists might become part of the solution to the social crisis of today."

The 1976 convention will meet, Nov. 3-5 at First Baptist Church, Fairborn, Ohio.

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N. Y. Baptists Express
Concern for N. Y. City

GREENWICH, Conn. (BP)--The Baptist Convention of New York expressed concern for the financial crisis of New York City, took a stand for morality in television programming and debated the Equal Rights Amendment at the convention's annual session here.

The convention, made up of New York State and parts of Connecticut and New Jersey, did not call for federal aid for New York City but did call for communicating concern for persons in crisis there to federal, state and city officials through an official letter.

The resolution noted that New York City's residents will "invariably suffer, if punitive fiscal action is enforced upon the city." It resolved that the convention express its concern for the people of New York City by "encouraging a humane fiscal policy by those trying to remedy the crisis, . . . by staying sensitive to both their spiritual and physical needs, . . . by preparing to sacrifice if necessary so that essential services will not be lost," and by communicating with the various officials.

A resolution on the Equal Rights Amendment was sent back to the resolutions committee and not reported back to the convention.

Discussion on it, a spokesman said, related to what was involved in the ERA and "whether, if passed, it would involve requiring agencies such as state (Baptist) conventions to hire lesbians, homosexuals and others. Discussion also brought out the fact that if we, in a resolution, state that we will practice equal rights, we might be misunderstood to say that we would in fact employ anyone regardless of circumstances."

The convention set a record budget of \$872,809, with \$228,810 of that to come from contributions from New York convention churches through the state's Cooperative Program unified budget. Twenty-one percent of the Cooperative Program figure will go to worldwide missions through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program, a one percent increase over 1975 and two percent higher than 1974.

In other action the convention elected Nelson Tilton, pastor of Rocherter (N. Y.) Baptist Church as president and a black pastor, Robert Bullock of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, New York City, to one of two vice presidential slots.

Next year's convention will be held Oct. 28-29 at Binghamton, N. Y.

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Five Baptist Churches Plan
National Charismatic Meet

Baptist Press
11/3/75

DALLAS (BP)-- Five Southern Baptist churches, including two recently booted out their local associations for practice of charismatic ministries, will hold what they believe is the first National Southern Baptist Charismatic Conference here next year.

The meeting is set July 21-24, 1976, in the Statler-Hilton Hotel, according to a report by Frank Taggart, religion editor of the Dallas Times-Herald. It has no official relationship to any Southern Baptist association or state convention or to the Southern Baptist Convention.

The churches are Beverly Hills Baptist Church, Dallas, Howard Conatser, pastor; Bay View Heights Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., J. Samuel Phillips, pastor; Trinity Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., Roy C. Lamberth, pastor; West Lauderdale Baptist Church, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., Don LeMaster, pastor; and Claiborne Baptist Church, West Monroe, La., Julian Brandon, pastor.

In mid-October, Beverly Hills Church was one of two charismatic churches "disfellowshipped" by the Dallas Baptist Association and Claiborne Church was disfellowshipped by the Trenton Baptist Association. At least one other association, the Cincinnati (Ohio) Baptist Association, is known to have voted churches out of its fellowship this year. It booted Saylor Park and Oak Hills Baptist Church.

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"After receiving large numbers of letters from Southern Baptist pastors and laymen, we felt there was a need to bring spirit-filled Baptists together for fellowship, inspiration and encouragement," the five pastors said in a joint statement.

"It is not our intention to or purpose to start another denomination or be in conflict with in any way any association, state convention or the Southern Baptist Convention," the pastors said.

"Our coming together will not be to conduct business or promote any person or organization, they said. "Our sole purpose is to look into the Word of God and preach the simple gospel of Jesus Christ."

Representatives of all five churches told Baptist Press the churches will continue to be Southern Baptist and support the denomination through its Cooperative Program unified budget.

The pastors said the idea for the conference, which will be built around a theme of "Liberty in the Spirit," was not originated by any one pastor, but had evolved out of their participation in regional charismatic Southern Baptist conferences.

The first two such regional gatherings were held at Trinity Baptist Church, Louisville, in Nov., 1974, and Feb. 1975, Lamberth said.

The third conference was held in mid-October at Claiborne Baptist Church, West Monroe. Brandon told Baptist Press he thinks sponsorship of that conference, which he said "fell accidentally in conflict" with the Trenton Association's annual meeting date, was what caused the association to vote to disfellowship the church. "It was the straw that broke the camel's back," he said.

Brandon said statements by the association that it had exhausted every avenue of love and understanding with the church were not true. "No one ever talked to me about it," he said.

The three regional conferences, according to Lamberth and Brandon, drew some 500 on the first occasion, 750 on the second occasion and over 850 on the third occasion.

As a result of their participation in these regional conferences, the pastors said, "We decided to get our heads together and plan a national conference."

They said they believe that their charismatic practices are in no way "un-Baptist" as claimed by local Baptist associations which have "disfellowshipped" charismatic congregations.

As evidence, they pointed to "The Baptist Faith and Message," a statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963, designed "to set forth certain teachings which we believe."

Under the heading "God and the Holy Spirit," the statement notes: "The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God . . . He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church . . ."

Citing this passage, the pastors noted that nothing in the statement excludes the spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues and healing.

They said Baptists who oppose the charismatic movement base their opposition on "Baptist tradition," not Holy Scripture.

"We intend to remain loyal, dedicated, practicing Southern Baptists so long as the current 'Baptist Faith and Message' is unchanged," the pastors stated.

Apparently, according to the pastors, only Beverly Hills and Claiborne Churches have run into difficulty with local associations.

Trinity in Louisville started out as a charismatic church about five years ago, Lamberth said, and has been advised not to apply for membership in the local Long Run Baptist Association. He said, however, that the church is affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. -more-

Bay View, a member of the Mobile Baptist Association, has "had things relatively quiet for the past five years," according to a member of Phillips' family. Reportedly a charismatic church for 13 years, the church claims affiliation with both the Alabama Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

LeMaster said the Gulf Stream Baptist Association has not given West Lauderdale Baptist Church any trouble. "I even gave my testimony at the association's pastors' conference," he said, adding that the church is also affiliated with the Florida Baptist Convention and the SBC.

"We're not Pentecostals; we don't promote most things they promote," LeMaster said of the five churches. "Our major emphasis will be fellowship. We want to remain Baptist because Baptists believe in the Bible. We just want fellowship with others who believe as we do."