



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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75-178

Marylanders Urge 'Love and Patience' for Charismatics

FREDERICK, Md. (BP)-- Registered "messengers" to the Baptist Convention of Maryland unanimously resolved to "call upon all Baptists everywhere to practice Christian love and patience towards those with whom we may disagree in the interpretation of Biblical passages relating to the value and validity of charismatic practices."

The resolution came in the wake of recent reports from Texas, Louisiana and Ohio of three associations of Southern Baptist churches expelling a total of five churches from fellowship for charismatic practices related to speaking in tongues and/or healing. The Texas, Louisiana and Ohio state Baptist conventions, however, in recently completed annual meetings, took no action to follow up associational actions.

While calling for "love and patience" toward charismatics, however, the Maryland resolution did not endorse or condemn the movement nor give it encouragement. "In effect, it says that we are not going to let this be an issue in Maryland," a convention spokesman said.

The convention also passed a resolution denouncing creedalism, refused to increase a previously approved outlay of funds for capital development at the convention's Skycroft retreat camping center, set a \$1.25 million Cooperative Program budget and re-elected Charles Casey, pastor of Calverton Baptist Church in suburban Washington, as president.

The creedalism resolution noted "continuing evidence that some Southern Baptists among us still desire to have some type of creedal statement by which to judge the orthodoxy of those comprising our convention."

The statement called upon all Southern Baptists "to reaffirm our faith in the fundamental Baptist principle of the competency of the individual soul before God in all spiritual matters. This basic principle has been faithfully adhered to by Baptists throughout our history. This foundational principle means there can be no manmade creedal statement which any or all Baptists must be coerced to accept. Every Baptist must be free to interpret the scriptures for himself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit after he has committed himself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ."

After hot debate, messengers defeated, 2 to 1, a proposal to allocate \$843,000 for phase one of Skycroft's capital development. Last year, the convention approved outlay of \$612,550 but, based on bids from 12 contractors, they were asked this year to approve the higher amount.

The vote left the previous action in effect and the matter was referred back to the convention's state mission board.

Messengers voted to allot 40 percent of the \$1.25 million state Cooperative Program unified budget to worldwide causes through the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program.

The 1976 convention will be at Viers Mill Baptist Church in suburban Washington, Nov. 15-17.

Businessman Volunteers
To Recruit Volunteers

ATLANTA (BP)--Hal Woods, a Clarksville, Ga., businessman likes to stay busy.

Woods is president of a corporation that operates furniture stores in Clarksville and Cornelia, Ga., and is also president of Hazel Creek Orchards.

So he does have plenty to do. But Woods is a Christian businessman and layman. That's why he has joined the staff of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's Christian Service Corps (CSC) as a volunteer to help recruit volunteers for mission assignments. He will work from his Clarksville homebase and will continue his business activities as well.

CSC is the board's arm which enlists and assigns lay volunteers for mission projects, usually helping home missionaries. Most CSC volunteers go for short terms on their vacation time, but others have actually moved to pioneer Southern Baptist areas to work on a longterm basis. CSC volunteers pay all their own expenses. More than 150 were assigned last summer.

Woods, a former CSC volunteer himself, has coordinated CSC promotion efforts in Georgia for the last 18 months. He will serve on a part-time basis without salary, assisting CSC Coordinator Bill Wilson, himself a volunteer. The new staffer's main concentration will be in encouraging Woman's Missionary Union (WMU, Southern Baptist auxiliary for women and girls) and Brotherhood (for men and boys) groups to sponsor mission volunteers.

Wilson said that Woods "has gone to considerable trouble rearranging his business to be able to give the time." Woods is an ordained deacon and a member of Central Heights Baptist Church in Clarksville, where he is Brotherhood president and has served in numerous other capacities.

His CSC experience was in 1967 when he and his family worked as volunteers in Hazelton, Pa., conducting surveys, directing mission Vacation Bible School and helping organize Valley Baptist Church.

He knows how hard and demanding the work can be. But he believes it is worthwhile for laymen to "give, rather than just receive." He believes in what he is doing. That makes recruiting 100 percent easier, he noted.

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers; others on request.

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Body Confirms Local Option
On Women; Elects Cecil Ray

Baptist Press
11/13/75

ASHEVILLE, N. C. (BP)--"Messengers" to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina passed a resolution here which affirms the right of local churches to make their own decisions on ordination of women to church-related ministries.

They also overwhelmingly elected Cecil A. Ray, nominee of the convention's general board, as the convention's general secretary-treasurer, despite a nomination from the floor. Ray directs the stewardship division of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

North Carolina Southern Baptists, who elected a woman as second vice president, also unanimously approved another resolution urging their committee on nominations and committee on committees to name more women as members of boards and committees.

The ordination resolution recognized "the freedom of conscience of the believer," affirmed "the right of all Christian women to follow God's will in their lives," and affirmed "the right of the local church to ordain all persons who are called to a church-related ministry."

Under Baptist polity, only local churches ordain, and the convention action simply recognized their right to make their own decisions, a spokesman said.

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The resolution consumed more than an hour of heated debate on the final morning of the convention. Most of the debate centered around Galatians 3:28--"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Jesus Christ."

Ray, 52, will succeed W. Perry Crouch, who will retire at the end of 1975. Claud Asbury, a former Wilmington, N. C., pastor and now pastor of a church in Baltimore, Md., was nominated from the floor by James M. Bulman, an Oak Ridge, N. C., pastor and convention parliamentarian for the past 12 years. Asbury drew less than a dozen votes. Later, Bulman was defeated overwhelmingly for the parliamentarian post by Norman A. Wiggins, president of Campbell College, a Baptist school in Buies Creek, N. C.

Ray's nomination was seconded by M. O. Owens, pastor from Gastonia and first president of the ultra-conservative Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, who had been reported earlier as a candidate for general secretary.

Baptists United, the North Carolina version of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, had met in Greensboro, N. C., on Oct. 8, before Ray's nomination by the general board, and named Owens as their floor nominee for the general secretary-treasurer post.

Mrs. A. Leroy Parker, wife of a Greensboro pastor, defeated Owens in a run-off for second vice president of the North Carolina Convention.

In other actions, messengers elected Coy Privette, pastor of North Kannapolis Baptist Church, Kannapolis, N. C., as president; Charles B. Deane Jr., an attorney and former state senator from Rockingham, N. C., as first vice president.

Messengers defeated a resolution calling for handgun control, resolved against pornography, alcohol, violence and vulgarity on television, and referred to the North Carolina convention's general board a proposed bylaw amendment which would have limited the number of trustees and committee members on convention boards and agencies which could come from any one church.

The convention unanimously approved an amendment to its constitution making retirement of the general secretary mandatory at 65, rather than 68, passed an \$11 million Cooperative Program unified budget, and honored Crouch, the retiring general secretary-treasurer.

The 1976 convention is set Nov. 9-11 in Fayetteville, N. C.

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Louisianans Score IRS
Code; Avoid Charismatic Clash

Baptist Press
11/13/75

LAKE CHARLES, La. (BP)--The Louisiana Baptist Convention, in its 128th annual session here, urged the U. S. Congress to exempt churches and church groups from the "substantiality test" of the federal Internal Revenue Code, faced no controversy over the charismatic movement and held a historic joint session with a black Baptist body.

Some had expected the convention to face controversy about the charismatic movement following the expulsion, in mid-October, of Claiborne Baptist Church, West Monroe, La., from the fellowship of the Trenton Baptist Association because of charismatic practices.

A convention spokesman said the issue did not arise and that the Claiborne Church apparently sent no "messengers" to register.

The resolution on the Internal Revenue Code noted that Section 501 (c) (3) of the code provides that contributions by donors to religious and non-religious public charities will be exempt from federal income tax only if "no substantial part" of the charities' activities consist of attempting to influence legislation.

The statement charged that the "substantiality" test is applied unevenly for what "appears to us . . . political reasons" and declared that "many religious organizations hold that a part of their religious mission is to give witness to their religious beliefs as they affect or are affected by public policy."

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It declared that Section 501 (c) (3) "indirectly through the substantiality test" allows government to violate constitutional prohibitions against determining, directing or limiting religious programs of churches, associations of churches and conventions of churches."

Continuing, the resolution said, "The state may not require an individual or organization to forego a constitutional right to qualify for a statutory benefit" and said that "churches have not accepted and cannot accept the substantiality test without violating religious beliefs."

It called on Congress to "specifically exempt churches, associations of churches and conventions of churches from the substantiality test of the bill or any modification of that section."

The joint meeting was an evening gathering, sponsored equally by the Louisiana Baptist Convention and the Louisiana Baptist Missionary Convention, a black body. The first-ever session, a spokesman said, was "highly successful and looked on by both blacks and whites as historic and significant."

In other action, messengers resoundingly defeated a motion that members of its executive board be nominated by associations, voted a record \$7 million state Cooperative Program unified budget and elected Clifton Tennison, pastor of First Baptist Church, West Monroe, as president.

Truman Kerr, minister of education at Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, became the first church staff member, other than a pastor, ever elected as the convention's first vice president.

Messengers accepted a report from the convention's public affairs committee which expressed strong doubt as to the constitutionality of a recently enacted Louisiana law providing state aid to private colleges, including religious ones. The report reiterated its approval of the refusal by Robert A. Lynn, new president of the convention's Louisiana College, to approve use of the funds by his school.

The convention voted to give 32 percent of its \$7 million budget for worldwide causes through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program. That's an increase of one-half of one percent over last year.

The 1976 convention is scheduled Nov. 15-17 in Shreveport.

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Oklahoma Baptists Vote
Budget; Elect Graves

Baptist Press
11/13/75

OKLAHOMA CITY, (BP)--Registered "messengers" to the 70th annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma experienced three days of tranquil sessions, heard from an array of foreign and home missions executives, passed only five resolutions and adopted a record \$5.9 million Cooperative Program budget.

Charles Graves, pastor of Nichols Hills Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, was elected president, succeeding Warren Hultgren, Tulsa pastor.

The messengers approved a policy recommendation stating that the Cooperative Program unified budget is the best way to systematically support missions work at home and abroad but noting that Oklahoma Baptists will continue to respond to special needs in "pioneer" or newer areas of Baptist missions work in the United States.

Another recommendation, aimed at increasing participation by more lay persons in the annual convention sessions, urged churches to launch a program of education and information leading up to the election of more lay people as messengers to the state convention. It urged election of messengers at the same time of year churches elect members to church leadership positions.

A highlight of a session on foreign missions was an appearance by Mrs. James Ragland, a foreign missionary who left Beirut, Lebanon, in recent days when fighting between Christians and Moslems forced the closure of her son's school. An eleventh grader, he is now enrolled in an Oklahoma school. Mr. Ragland remains in Beirut, where he directs a Christian missions school.

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Messengers voted to allot 41.5 percent of the Oklahoma Convention budget to worldwide missions causes through the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program.

The 1976 convention will be Nov. 15-17, at First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City.

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Georgians Debate
Bible and Mercer

Baptist Press
11/13/75

COLUMBUS, Ga. (BP)--The Bible and Mercer University were centers of repeated and extended debate here at the 154th annual session of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

The Bible came out much better than Mercer, whose relationships to the Georgia convention have been a matter of discussion for a number of years.

Registered messengers rallied around the authenticity of the Bible but rejected creeds which hamper freedom of thought and voted down most motions brought by representatives of Concerned Georgia Baptists, an ultra-conservative group which for several months has been agitating about alleged "Bible-doubting liberals" on Georgia Baptist payrolls.

Concerned Georgia Baptists made several frontal moves at the convention in Columbus. Only one succeeded. The group contains a number of persons who have been active in the ultra-conservative Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship.

Without comment, the Georgia Baptist Convention unanimously accepted a report of its executive committee reaffirming the 1963 statement of Baptist Faith and Message as "the theological guideline" for convention employees and ministries.

That statement characterizes the Bible as ". . . a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter . . ."

A few minutes later, a member of Concerned Georgia Baptists, Leroy Cooper, a pastor from East Point, moved that "We reaffirm our faith in the verbal inspiration of the Bible," including "inerrancy" of the Genesis accounts of creation and the fact that "Adam was one man and Eve was one woman." However, Henry Fields, pastor in Tallapoosa, moved that "Georgia Baptists reaffirm their belief in the Baptist Statement of Faith and Message, including what that statement says about the Bible." His motion carried by a wide majority.

Then, Emerson Lyle of Rome moved that convention messengers "reaffirm their faith in the entire Bible as the authentic, infallible, authoritative word of God."

James W. Waters of Macon, who was elected to a second term as convention president, asked messengers to stand, saying "Baptists will always stand for the Bible." While standing he asked them to repeat the pledge to the Bible used in Vacation Bible Schools. No dissenting votes were taken and the matter was resolved in about two minutes.

The next day, another member of Concerned Georgia Baptists, layman Ken Edwards of First Baptist Church in Atlanta, raised the issue of the Bible again. He asked the convention to "go one step further" than the Baptist Statement of Faith and Message and to "declare our belief in the verbal inspiration of the original manuscripts of the Bible." Messengers challenged Edwards right to bring up the Bible issue again. Waters sustained the body and the motion died.

A few minutes later, John Glover, minister of music at First Baptist Church in Atlanta, asked for a point of personal privilege to explain that he had just talked with Charles F. Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church in Atlanta, by telephone and that Stanley wanted it made clear to the convention that "statements made at this convention by members of our church do not reflect views of the pastor or the staff of First Baptist Church in Atlanta."

The Georgia Baptist Convention unanimously adopted a strong resolution on freedom, which asserted that "every individual has the inalienable right and spiritual competence to interpret the Bible for himself, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to freely express his beliefs and convictions."

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It said that the "Bible is the sole authority and all sufficient guide of faith and practice. Creeds, confessions of faith or statement of doctrine, in whatever form, have no authority over the conscience and are not to be used to hamper freedom of thought."

Turning to Mercer University in Macon, the Georgia Baptist Convention verbalized in official action what many Georgia Baptists have been saying privately and publicly for several years.

The convention adopted a lengthy report calling for Mercer to enact long series suggestions which would make the university more responsive to Georgia Baptist churches and to the Georgia Baptist Convention, and would re-establish "communication between the university and its Georgia Baptist constituency."

That report also asked Mercer trustees to change their charter so that Mercer trustees will be elected in the same manner as all other Georgia Baptist agencies.

The chairman of trustees at Mercer was requested to bring a progress report to the 1976 Georgia Baptist Convention, telling what Mercer has done to implement the many suggestions made by convention messengers.

Later in the day, messenger Randy Dunaway of Mount Vernon asked the convention to go on record as saying that "Mercer not assume that we will automatically allocate money to them" unless the convention is satisfied with what Mercer trustees report in 1976.

After extended debate convention messengers approved Dunaway's motion by a vote of 570 to 458.

Jesse Wood of Houston County, shortly after that, made a stronger motion, asking that "all funds allocated to Mercer be withheld and placed in escrow, beginning in 1977, until Mercer trustees submit a satisfactory report that will be acceptable to this convention."

Wood's motion lost, but only after John T. Tippet Jr., a pastor from Savannah, made a substitute motion that the convention committee, which has been studying Mercer relationships for two years, be continued for another year "to assure that a proper report from Mercer comes back to the convention in 1976."

The next day, Wood was back at the microphone asking that the convention budget committee be authorized to withhold all funds allocated to Mercer beginning in 1977 "if the chairman of Mercer trustees does not make a satisfactory report in 1976."

But after brief and spirited debate the convention overwhelmingly refused to consider Mercer again and Wood's motion died.

Many Georgia Baptists have long expressed concern over a Mercer University charter change in 1939 which, in effect, gives the university the right to decide who the convention will consider in voting for trustees. No other Georgia Baptist agency has that exclusive right.

The committee's report also dealt with such things as recruitment of more ministerial students and mission volunteers, having a stronger Baptist student program on campus, and reminding Mercer trustees that they are elected by and responsible to the convention and not to Mercer.

In other matters, the Georgia Baptist Convention approved a record Cooperative Program budget for 1976 of \$9 million. Southern Baptist Convention causes will get 42.73 percent of that amount.

The convention also approved a strong resolution urging that public schools be purged of text books which include "morally objectionable materials."

The convention will hold its 1976 session at Curtis Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga., Nov. 15-17.

Ecuadorian Wounded in Riot
Recovering in Hospital

CANAR, Ecuador (BP)--Fidel Loja, a new Baptist believer, remains hospitalized with a dagger wound received when a mob descended upon a villager's house near here where Loja and others had met for worship.

Stanley D. Stamps, Southern Baptist missionary press representative, reported that Loja has not regained use of his arm which was seriously wounded during the clash. Apparently some nerves in the arm were damaged, Stamps said.

About 40 people were injured when the mob of some 80 Indians interrupted a worship service in the small village outside Canar.

Earlier reports had indicated three of the 40 were hospitalized. Apparently, the other two were not as seriously injured as Loja.

The service was led by Southern Baptist Missionary Archie V. Jones at the invitation of a man he had recently baptized. The incident was reportedly incited by a Catholic priest who was afraid evangelicals would move into his territory. A Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board spokesman said such an incident is rare and that missionaries normally enjoy relationships with Catholics.

Civil authorities are receiving testimony from witnesses in order to establish charges against the ones responsible for the attack.

"An evangelistic meeting among the Quechua residents of Tambo (a near-by village) has been temporarily postponed due to the tense situation," Stamps said.

Meanwhile, Jones continues to make periodic visits to Canar and Tambo to "encourage the believers."

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Child Missing from Thai
Baptist Student Center

Baptist Press
11/13/75

BANGKOK, Thailand (BP)--Three-year-old Wantana Phothararm has apparently been kidnapped from the Baptist student center here where she lived with her grandparents.

Wantana's grandfather, Khun Wan, has been the caretaker of the center for more than 10 years.

She was last seen playing with four other children near the center, according to Maxine (Mrs. Robert R.) Stewart, Southern Baptist missionary to Thailand. As it began to rain, all the other children returned to their homes, but Wantana has not been seen since.

"Wantana is a very friendly, talkative little girl. She has had much attention, not only from her family, but from teachers and students as well. Therefore, no one is a stranger to her," said Mrs. Stewart. "She is used to talking to people she doesn't know."

Khun Wan said he believes Wantana might have been kidnapped "either by a rich person who wishes to take her as his own daughter since she is very pretty or by beggars who could use her for begging." He does not believe she is being held for ransom since he is not a rich person and no ransom has been asked.

Khun Wan, who is a member of the Prakanong Baptist Church, also said that Wantana has been attending Sunday School, knows many songs and loves to sing about Jesus. He suggested she may be a witness to others even in her limited knowledge.

"We request prayers for Wantana and her family and that the person who took the child will feel compelled to return her if it is God's will," Mrs. Stewart said.

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Kentucky Baptists Oppose
Equal Rights Amendment

ELIZABETHTOWN, Ky. (BP)--Meeting in Severns Valley Baptist Church, the first Baptist church constituted on Kentucky soil, "messengers" to the Kentucky Baptist Convention expressed displeasure with the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and took action on the convention's child care ministry.

The item receiving the most emotional response was the resolution opposing the ERA, which the Kentucky state General Assembly has already approved.

Messengers rejected a suggestion of their resolutions committee that, because of strong feelings on both sides, they avoid taking a position as a body but communicate individual concern to elected legislative representatives.

Debaters sounded alarm over possible consequences of ERA and messengers approved a motion in which they opposed the ERA and decided to ask the state legislature to reconsider and reverse its approval of the ERA.

The resolution said the "Equal Rights Amendment will open the doors of legal action to many harmful ideas in our society and could possibly be a serious impairment of the cherished doctrine of separation of church and state."

The messengers approved the report of a committee appointed in 1974 to make an indepth study of the Kentucky child care program. One recommendation approved called for a resumption, on January 1, 1976, of an infant adoption program discontinued several years ago.

Another recommendation called for a report of child care officials to the 1976 convention on many phases of its present program.

The convention asked the indepth study committee, which had reported and had considered its work completed, to continue its study for three years and to report to each annual convention the progress being made on implementation of the convention's suggestions to child care directors. The child care board is an agency of the convention, with its directors elected by and responsible to the convention.

The child care action is the culmination of several years of questions and concern by many Kentucky Baptists on trends and philosophies of the child care program. Differences of opinion have existed as to more modern child care concepts versus more traditional, pastoral approaches.

In other action, messengers elected Henry Huff, a Louisville attorney, as president. He is the first layman to hold the post in more than two decades. Earlier, outgoing President John Wood of Paducah had called for a return to emphasis on and involvement of laity.

The convention adopted a 1976-77 Cooperative Program budget of \$7.9 million, with 33 percent of that amount going to worldwide causes through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program. Last year, Kentucky Baptists gave 32.1 percent of their budget for SBC causes.

The 1976 session will be Nov. 9-11, at Calvary Baptist Church, Lexington, with an additional, duly constituted session, April 19, at Harrodsburg (Ky.) Baptist Church. The April 19 session, a joint meeting with the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky (a black group), will commemorate the 200th anniversary of Baptist preaching in Kentucky. Harrodsburg was the site of the first Baptist preaching in the state.