



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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75-179

Va. Baptists Condemn U. N.
Action; Worship With Blacks

RICHMOND (BP)--In an inter-racial atmosphere created by joint black-white Baptist worship experiences, Virginia Southern Baptists, in annual session here, castigated the Nov. 10 action of the United Nations (U.N.) General Assembly which equated Jewish zionism with racism.

The statewide Baptist General Association of Virginia also approved optional alternatives for funding of its seven educational institutions which may be unique among statewide Southern Baptist-related conventions.

The zionism resolution called upon "all men of good will to repudiate this action (by the U.N.) which has dealt a severe blow to the cause of international peace." It encouraged Virginia Baptist churches to "become informed about this act, which has given anti-semitism the appearance of international legality" and to use "whatever means they deem proper to prophetically proclaim the rights of a people who have survived over 3,000 years of hazardous history on the same ground in Israel, only to find themselves once again systematically oppressed."

Virginia Southern Baptists, in a first-ever experience, held joint worship services with three statewide black Baptist bodies (although each body held separate business sessions), which culminated in a service at Robins Center of the University of Richmond including serving of the Lord's Supper by 150 white and black deacons to some 8,200 people.

The deacons fed the 8,200--about half black and half white--from a gigantic loaf of bread. The congregation kept the individual communion glasses as a souvenir of the evening.

Meanwhile, in business session, the Baptist General Association of Virginia approved an alternative plan for financing Virginia Baptist schools, which grew out of a year-long study and is rooted in years of debate about the relationship of the schools to the state convention.

The action, a spokesman said, "is historical for Virginia Baptists because they have never had a written relationship concerning the schools."

Basically, the plan allows each of the Baptist body's four colleges and three academies to chose whether 1. they will accept funds from the state convention for support of specific ministries on campus or 2. receive funds, carte blanche, on an institutional basis, to use for whatever they wish.

Schools opting for the first alternative must have at least 50 percent Baptist trustees, and those selecting the second option must have at least 75 percent Baptists on the trustee board.

Previously, all schools received the funds on a carte blanche basis, and the convention had experienced constant debate over what the relationships should be.

In another first, Virginia Baptists elected William J. Cumbie, chief executive of the Mount Vernon Baptist Association, Alexandria, as convention president, succeeding Joseph Smiddy, a college chancellor. Cumbie is the first associational missionary elected as convention president, a spokesman said.

In other action, registered "messengers" to the convention adopted a \$6,500,000 state Cooperative Program unified budget, of which 38 percent will be allotted to worldwide missions through the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperation Program.

The 1976 convention will meet, Nov. 9-11, First Baptist Church, Alexandria, Va.

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Mississippi Baptists Urge
Day of Rest; Confidentiality

Baptist Press
11/14/75

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Resolutions concerning taxation of church property, a uniform day of rest, and confidentiality between counselees and ministers were adopted by the Mississippi Baptist Convention during its 140th annual session at First Baptist Church here.

Messengers also adopted a record \$7.3 million budget and authorized the completion of construction on the first phase of a new Central Hills Baptist Retreat facility near the center of the state. Included in the authorization was the permission to borrow up to \$400,000, if needed, for the completion of the buildings and landscaping on the 360-acre site near Koschusko.

James Richardson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Leland, Miss., was re-elected president of the convention.

The \$7.3 million budget calls for \$2,299,660 to go to causes outside the state, with all but \$6,000 of that figure going through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program. The state has scheduled a one-half percent increase per year in funds channeled through the national SBC Cooperative Program over the next 10 year period, to raise the percentage to 35 percent by the end of that period.

In the resolution on taxing church property, the convention advocated that certain property used for church purposes be exempt from taxation, such as that used for worship, education and other non-profit activities, including parking lots, activity buildings, playgrounds, and dwellings furnished by the churches to ministers and other staff members. Suggested as taxable property was that from which profit is derived by lease or rental.

The protection of separation of church and state was given in the preamble of the resolution as a reason for adopting the position on taxation.

The convention noted that many times clergymen are given confidential information by counselees and that Mississippi has no legal protection for the counselee or the minister. The resolution said that in the past two regular sessions, the state senate has instigated such legislation "only to have it die in the committee of the house."

The convention resolved "that we express the sentiment of this convention as being in favor of such legislation that will protect the rights of confidentiality between persons and ministers of any church, sect, or denomination of any religion whatever when the minister is acting in his official capacity as a minister."

Concerning a day of rest, the convention asked that "we continue to encourage Baptist church members to observe Sunday as a day of spiritual refreshment and worship and that we urge Christian citizens in Mississippi to impress upon their elected, state representatives their views concerning a uniform day of rest."

The preamble points out that the U. S. Supreme Court has upheld the "blue law" concept, and chided the state legislature for failing to "adopt a more positive legislation in regard to the uniform day of rest."

The 1976 convention will be held Nov. 16-18 at First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss.

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California Baptists Condemn
Homosexuality; Prostitution

REDDING, Calif. (BP)--Registered "messengers" to the Southern Baptist General Convention of California passed resolutions against prostitution, homosexuality and alcoholism, voted a \$4.4 million annual budget and elected a new president in deliberations here.

They also heard of plans for joint Bicentennial celebrations with black and white Baptists June 4, 1976, in San Francisco and June 8, 1976, in Los Angeles.

The new president is Jack Johnson, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, El Monte, and the \$4.4 million budget includes a \$2.35 million state Cooperative Program goal, of which 26 percent will go to worldwide causes through the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program.

Messengers took strong exception to a recently-enacted California law, not yet in effect, which reportedly legalizes homosexuality in the state. They expressed "concern about the so-called homosexual law and its deleterious effect on the moral climate of our state and its encouragement of abnormal sex."

The convention authorized its chief executive to transmit to the governor and legislative leaders "our desire for them to reconsider their actions on this situation of decadence and sexual perversion."

Among other points in the alcoholism resolution, California Baptists urged the alcoholism program of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) to offer, in their educational efforts, the option of no drinking at all "to their espousal of so-called responsible drinking." The resolution "ascribed to theme, 'If you never drink, you will never be drunk.'"

The joint black-white Bicentennial celebrations are expected to draw from 15,000 to 18,000 in registration and will be developed under the theme "Baptists and Our Nation's History." They will be sponsored by the Baptist Joint Commission of California, made up of four National (black) Baptist state conventions, two American Baptist bodies and the Southern Baptist General Convention of California.

Theo Patnaik, former associate secretary for youth for the Baptist World Alliance, was announced as a new staff member of the California convention's language missions department to work with Asians.

Phil Tilden, pastor of a San Bernardino church, was introduced as the convention's new director of transitional church ministries. Reportedly, one-tenth of Southern Baptist churches in the state are in transitional crisis because of the changing ethnic nature of their communities.

The 1976 convention meets Nov. 16-18 in San Diego.

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Indiana Baptists Set
First \$1 Million Budget

Baptist Press
11/14/75

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. (BP)--The first \$1 million budget in its history was adopted by registered "messengers" to the 17th annual meeting of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana at Speedway Terrace Baptist Church here.

The messengers set a \$1,089,410 budget for 1976, of which \$750,000 is expected from Indiana churches through the state's Cooperative Program unified budget. Thirty percent of the Cooperative Program figure will go to worldwide causes of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In other action, the Indiana convention's executive board was authorized to develop plans for a capital funds campaign to construct Highland Lakes Baptist Center, Monrovia, Ind. If the campaign is formulated, a special session of the state convention will be called at a later date.

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The messengers commended Governor Otis Bowen for his veto of a pari-mutuel horse racing bill which was passed by the Indiana General Assembly.

Resolutions asked churches to share in world hunger projects and urged a state text book commission to continue in seeking public school text books that reflect a theistic understanding of human nature.

Leamon Blalock, pastor of Orchard Drive Baptist Church, Hammond, Ind., was re-elected to a second one-year term as president.

The 1976 convention will meet Nov. 9-11 at Waynedale Baptist Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

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Portuguese Baptists
Aid Angolan Refugees

Baptist Press
11/14/75

By Norma (Mrs. John M.) Herndon

LISBON, Portugal (BP)--Portuguese Baptists are coming to the aid of Angolan refugees, and the Angolan refugees are aiding Portuguese Baptists.

In recent months, nearly 300,000 refugees have returned to Portugal from war-torn Angola. About 50,000 more are expected to come. The majority of them are Portuguese who immigrated to Angola in search of a better life.

Many of these homeless Angolans, as they prefer to be called, left everything they owned, coming only with hand luggage or the clothes they were wearing. The more fortunate ones were able to bring some household belongings, only to be faced with the difficult task of getting them out of customs with no money to pay the duties.

Clothes, food supplies, furnishings and offerings of over \$2,000 have been donated by Portuguese Baptists. Financial assistance has also been received from the Baptist World Alliance and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Churches have not only opened their doors to receive these Baptists as members, but also to house them. Housing is one of the problems at present.

Several churches, small as many are, are temporarily converting their Sunday School rooms and any other available space into living quarters for these people.

Among those receiving help, priority has been given to five Baptist pastors and their families. These men have been active in the leadership of the Angolan Baptist Convention. One of them, Tiago Pereira, has served many years as a missionary to Angola, supported by the Portuguese Baptist Convention. He, his wife and nine children are now hoping to do mission work here in Portugal.

Sergio Felizardo has been called as pastor of the Cacem Baptist Church, located just outside of Lisbon, which has had no resident pastor in several years.

Since no houses are available, and this family of four could not bring any household belongings, the Cacem Church has temporarily housed their new pastor in the educational building, completely transforming Sunday School rooms into living quarters.

The Cedofeita Baptist Church in Porto has also called one of the men as pastor. This church, the largest in the northern part of Portugal, has been without a pastor for several months.

Thus, the pastors and other returning Baptists are receiving much aid from Portuguese Baptists and in turn are filling an important need among Portuguese Baptists. The Angolan Baptists are bringing new life and talents into the Baptist churches of Portugal.

One refugee pastor said, "We thought we would be in Angola for the rest of our lives, but because of circumstances, we feel God can turn tragedy into victory if we but let Him."

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Mrs. Herndon is a Southern Baptist missionary to Portugal.

Northern Plains Baptists
Elect Sherrill; Set Budget

RAPID CITY, S. D. (BP)--Registered "messengers" from churches in four states comprising the Northern Plains Baptist Convention adopted a half-million-dollar budget and elected a new president in annual session here.

Thomas Sherrill, pastor of North Hill Baptist Church, Minot, N. D., is new president of the convention which covers both Dakotas, Montana and Wyoming.

The convention set a 1976 budget of \$525,756, of which \$207,704 is anticipated from Northern Plains churches through the state's Cooperative Program unified budget. Fifteen percent of that amount will go to the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program. The balance of the overall budget will come from sources such as the SBC Home Missions and Sunday School Boards.

In other action, messengers approved a resolution encouraging churches and associations in energy-developing areas to prepare for an influx of new population so "that there not be lack of spiritual energy and ministry to meet growing needs in these communities."

The resolution noted that the Northern Plains are "becoming an increasingly important and valuable energy supply for our nation" (because of such energy sources as shale oil and coal).

In 1976, the convention will meet in Casper, Wyo., Nov. 10-11, to celebrate its 25th anniversary in the town where the first Southern Baptist church in the four-state area was organized, July 15, 1951.

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Colorado Baptists Celebrate
20th Anniversary; Set Budget

Baptist Press
11/14/75

COLORADO SPRINGS (BP)--Registered "messengers" to the Colorado Baptist General Convention celebrated the convention's 20th anniversary, elected a new president and set an annual budget in excess of \$1 million in annual sessions here.

Otis Testerman, pastor of Bookcliff Baptist Church, Grand Junction, Colo., was elected president, succeeding Carey Miller, an Aurora, Colo., pastor.

Messengers set a \$1,800,000 budget, of which \$527,444 is anticipated from convention churches through the state's Cooperative Program unified budget. The balance of the budget comes from contributions from such sources as the Southern Baptist Home and Sunday School Boards. Messengers allotted 23 percent of the Cooperative Program goal to Southern Baptist Convention causes.

The convention adopted a program emphasis which pointed out five needs: better understanding of Christian doctrine and Baptist distinctives, support of the family unit against pressures, new churches where there is "no gospel witness," development and training of church leaders, and revival in the convention's evangelism program.

In a pre-convention executive board session, Jim Rich, pastor of Hillside Baptist Church, Greeley, Colo., was elected as director of stewardship and brotherhood for the convention, and Autry Brown, a professor at Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Mo., and former Colorado pastor, was named to serve as director of the state's Brentwood Christian Training Institute and consultant in Christian social ministries.

The 1975 convention met in the city where the convention was organized in November, 1955. The 1976 convention is set Nov. 9-11, at Hillside Baptist Church, Greeley, Colo.

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Testimony Endorses
National Health Care

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Southern Baptist specialist in the field of Christian Citizenship urged a congressional subcommittee here to pass a "significant program of national health security."

C. Welton Gaddy, director of Christian citizenship development for the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, told the House Subcommittee on Health that moral principles "should inform, guide, and judge" the rationale for such legislations.

The House panel, a subcommittee of the larger Committee on Ways and Means, is currently holding hearings on a wide variety of proposals which would vastly increase the federal government's role in the health care field.

Gaddy did not endorse any specific bill presently before Congress. He appeared as a result of a Christian Life Commission action at its September meeting supporting "the enactment of a morally responsible program of national health security." The commission also instructed its staff to communicate its position to Congress.

In his testimony, Gaddy presented three moral principles which he said "weigh most heavily" upon the debate over national health security.

--Personal worth. Gaddy told the House panel that both Christians and Jews worship "a God who has consistently revealed his desire for people to be whole--mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially."

He also said that "health care is a right" which demands that in an affluent society no person should be without adequate health care. He was critical of the view that health care is "a marketable commodity owned entirely by skilled professionals."

--Social justice. Gaddy called the concept of justice "a basic moral precept" which the U. S. has chosen "as its minimal standard of behavior." He said that in a just society, priority is given to persons.

He observed that "when a society tolerates health services which are poorly distributed, facilities which are inadequate, administration which is not accountable, and costs that are exorbitant, it is time for a change in the nation's health care.

Gaddy also argued for freedom of individual choice and continuing options "as to the type and method of medical care. Those who wish to receive preventive or correctional health care by means of a private medical practice should be at liberty to do so." At the same time, Gaddy noted, those unable to pay and cut off from comprehensive health care "should be free to receive treatment."

--Governmental responsibility. Gaddy told the subcommittee that although government has been willed by God, it has "moral duties to perform." In that light, he said that "Government has a moral responsibility to correct the abuses and inequities of the present health care system and to develop a better system."

Appearing with Gaddy on the same panel were three physicians, all of whom spoke strongly against any involvement of the government in the field, and a representative from the United Methodist Church in West Virginia who supported a specific health care bill.

After each of the five made an oral statement, the subcommittee's chairman, Rep. Daniel Rostenkowski (D.-Ill.), called on the participants to conduct an informal discussion among themselves and with members of the House panel.

During the discussion, Rostenkowski asked the witnesses to explain the wide differences in their views on national health care. Gaddy suggested that the basic reason was the differing perspectives of the witnesses but expressed the hope that even those who disagree on the issue can agree on basic moral principles on which to build an improved health care system.

Arizona Baptists Discuss
Charismatics; Alien Baptism

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--Southern Baptists from Arizona and Nevada, in annual session here, passed a resolution which encouraged Southern Baptist pastors to preach and teach the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to counter the "disunity" sometimes caused by "pseudo-charismatic" movements in local churches.

In other deliberations of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, registered "messengers" set a \$4.3 million annual Cooperative Program budget, elected a new president and adopted several amendments to the convention's constitution.

A convention spokesman said the resolution on charismatics does not mean that all those who practice charismatic gifts are "pseudo"--that there is a New Testament basis for charismatic gifts.

"But," he said, "we believe most of it goes to extremes and is schismatic. The intent of the resolution was that while we want to refrain from a real harsh attitude that could possibly lead to exclusion of churches that allow it, we also want to encourage pastors to deal with the situation by preaching and teaching to prevent disunity."

In other action, messengers also resolved that "any church practicing or accepting baptism not supported by Scripture shall not be considered a regular Baptist church under the provisions of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention."

That resolution, a spokesman said, refers to churches which accept baptisms from other denominations not in accord with the historical view of Baptists that baptism is by immersion and is only symbolic.

In a pre-convention session of the convention's executive board, Roy F. Sutton, the convention's chief executive, was asked to postpone retirement until the end of 1978. A program of advance over the next three years and plans to observe the convention's 50th anniversary in 1978 were primary reasons for the request, a spokesman said.

Constitutional changes were described as primarily for the purpose of updating terminology and effect "other cosmetic changes."

A proposal which would have permitted the state's executive board to elect its own chairman, rather than the annual convention messengers, was defeated, as was a proposal to change the word "layman" to "lay person" where it appears in convention materials.

The convention allowed First Southern Baptist Church, Page, Ariz., a church on the Arizona-Utah border already affiliated with the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention, to seat messengers at the Arizona convention. The church will be dually aligned with the two conventions.

Messengers elected Richard A. Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church, as president, and voted to allot 21 percent of the \$4.3 million budget to the national Cooperative Program unified budget of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The 1976 convention will meet, Nov. 16-18, in Yuma, Ariz.

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Hawaii Votes Record Budget
And Notes Growth for Year

Baptist Press
11/14/75

WAIPAHU, Oahu, Hawaii (BP)--A record \$476,189 budget was adopted by the Hawaii Baptist Convention meeting here, and growth was noted in almost every area of work over the past year.

The annual meeting of the 33-year-old convention, described as "enthusiastic" with "no controversial issues," saw James Baggett, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Waipahu, re-elected president.

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The program included 16 women, with one, Mrs. Elizabeth Kellerman of Honolulu, bringing a major address. In business, messengers approved priority goals and an action design for state mission strategy presented by the convention's executive board, with the board's mission strategy planning group to continue its work through the coming year.

A scroll listing 87 missionaries who served in Hawaii from 1938-75 was presented to the convention, to be displayed at the state office.

The 1976 meeting of the Hawaii convention will be at Kailua Baptist Church on Oahu, Nov. 10-12.

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Florida Baptists Commend
Askew; Vote Record Budget

Baptist Press
11/14/75

SARASOTA, Fla. (BP)--The Florida Baptist State Convention, in annual session here, commended Florida Gov. Reubin Askew for his stand against gambling, voted a record budget and voted to take part in a special emphasis for doctrinal study.

Expected debate over the intention of Baptist Bible Institute, Graceville, to begin a degree program in September, 1976, did not materialize. Previously, the school has offered diplomas for three years of study. In September, it will begin offering a bachelor of ministry degree for four years' study, in addition to the three-year diploma.

The convention voted a record \$6.7 million budget, allotting 47 percent of that amount to the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program. For eight years, Florida Baptists have led all other Baptist state conventions in percentage of giving to SBC causes.

Because they want to prevent the "ugly specter of legalized gambling being extended" in the state, Florida Baptists commended Askew in his publicly outspoken stand against the extension of any form of gambling.

The resolution also called on churches to pray for those in government authority and for the establishment of committees for the purpose of securing and dispersing information regarding "insidious attacks made by those pushing pornography, drugs and gambling on the moral fiber of our society."

The resolution on doctrinal training was made by a special emphasis committee "to encourage and stimulate the churches in participation of doctrinal study during the spring of 1976."

In other action, messengers called for Baptists to work together in helping seek solutions for violence and crime and encouraged churches "to involve their memberships more actively as messengers" to the convention and "that wherever the need is apparent, churches provide expense reimbursement" to lay messengers.

John Pelham, pastor of First Baptist Church, Palatka, Fla., was elected president, succeeding James Graves, a St. Petersburg pastor.

The 114th annual session of the convention heard reports that contributions had topped the 1975 Cooperative Program goal by more than \$775,000 and that Florida Baptist churches had recorded their second highest number of baptisms ever in 1975--more than 29,600. The high of 31,117 came in 1972.

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