



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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November 2, 1976

76-185

N. Y. Baptists Elect Black
Pastor, Vote Record Budget

BINGHAMTON, N. Y. (BP)--"Messengers" to the New York Baptist Convention voted their first \$1 million budget, elected a black pastor as vice president and took stands on homosexuality, abortion, gambling and Transcendental Meditation (TM).

The seven year-old convention, which covers New York state and parts of New Jersey and Connecticut, is among the newer of the 33 state conventions in the 131-year-old Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

The budget of \$1,037,089 includes an \$268,057 Cooperative Program unified budget amount, of which 18 percent will go for worldwide SBC causes through the denomination's national Cooperative Program. The balance of the budget comes from assistance by the SBC Sunday School and Home Mission Boards.

Charles Jolly, pastor of Madison Baptist Church, Madison, N. J., was elected president, and Jasper Simmons, a black pastor from New York City, was elected vice president. He is president of CHANCE, an organization which works with black churches, and is pastor of the Greater File Baptist Church in Harlem.

In a preconvention executive board meeting, Daniel Sanchez, an associate in the language missions department at the SBC Home Mission Board in Atlanta, was elected director of the New York convention's evangelism division. Also, Miss Gloria Grogan, a consultant at the SBC Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) in Birmingham, was elected state WMU secretary and Christian social ministries consultant.

"Debate, during the convention, on homosexuality centered around acceptance of homosexuals as persons vs. condemnation of the practice of homosexuality as sin," a spokesman said. After a debate, pro and con, the convention's resolutions committee brought back a statement which asked that Christians reach out to homosexuals to help them, but recommended that churches not accept them as pastors or church workers and that they not be employed by the state convention. It passed by a margin of 2 to 1.

The messengers also voted to condemn abortion, except in cases of rape, incest or damage to health, and opposed casino gambling in New Jersey and lotteries and off-track betting in New York.

On Transcendental Meditation, the messengers opposed use of public funds to teach it in public schools because TM is a Hindu-based religion and, as a religion, should not be supported by public funds, the spokesman said.

The convention adopted long range plans, which include a 15 percent increase in membership per year, a growth to 260 churches by 1980, and an increase to one baptism for every six members. The convention now has about 164 churches and chapels, with more than 18,000 total members and a baptism ratio of 1 to 9.

In other action, the messengers urged everyone to vote, but took no stand on who to vote for, noting that there is "room for honest differences among Christians and that the important thing is to study the issues and exercise the right to vote," the spokesman said.

The messengers also resolved to oppose "the inroads the occult religions are making, especially with young people."

The 1977 convention will meet Oct. 26-27 in Albany, N. Y.

SBC Cooperative Program
Ahead After 1st Month

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program unified budget entered the 1976-77 fiscal year running 13.43 percent ahead of its progress at the same point in 1975-76.

At the end of October, the first month in the new fiscal year, the Cooperative Program had received \$4,221,121 from Southern Baptist churches via the Cooperative Programs of 33 state conventions covering 50 states. Last October, the total was \$3,721,304.

Adding another \$521,041 received in designated funds (a 16.51 percent increase), total contributions for the month come to \$4,742,162--or 13.76 percent more than the \$4,168,494 received last October.

The 1976-77 national Cooperative Program goal is \$55 million. That includes \$49,000,000 in basic operating funds for SBC agencies' worldwide programs, \$1,080,000 in capital needs and an additional \$4,920,000 in challenge operating funds.

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Hultgren Follows Own
Advice on Disturbances

Baptist Press
11/2/76

By Bob Mathews

TULSA (BP)--Six years after he wrote an article in his church paper on "Disturbances in the Services," Warren Hultgren, pastor of First Baptist Church here, got an opportunity to take his own advice about how to handle such situations.

Just as Hultgren started his televised sermon on Sunday morning, October 31--Halloween--a person costumed in women's clothing walked down a side aisle and approached the pulpit.

As Hultgren tried to talk, the intruder, who turned out to be a six-foot, two-inch, 190-pound man, shouted into the microphone: "I want to tell you the world is coming to an end."

"I'm sure that's true," Hultgren calmly replied.

But then the man, wearing a woman's floppy hat, heavy makeup, and a dress, pulled a pistol from his purse.

Grady Lowery, the church's minister of activities, who keeps in shape in the church's Christian life center, and about five other men jumped him and wrestled him off the platform and out a side door.

Sheriff's deputies booked Donald Page, a 25 year old resident of nearby Sand Springs, in the county jail on a complaint of carrying a concealed weapon and disturbing a religious service. The Tulsa district attorney filed formal charges on Monday. Authorities later discovered the weapon was a blank pistol.

The suspect was reattired in jeans and shirt, found in his purse, before he was put into a cell with other inmates.

In his article, written in 1970, Hultgren said: "I personally try not to be too disturbed by these or other disturbances. The fact of the matter is that there should be more sympathy than horror."

He responded like that on October 31 and repeated some of his earlier printed admonitions about disturbances in the services. Then he proceeded to preach his planned sermon on "The Story of a Haunted House," making the point that unless people strive for good input into their lives, evil will creep in.

The service ended with a couple and their three children joining the church by transfer of membership.

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Ill. Refuses to Deny Seating To Churches Ordaining Women

MARION, Ill. (BP)--"Messengers" to the Illinois Baptist State Association (IBSA) here declined to deny seating to churches that ordain women, adopted a \$2.3 million Cooperative Program unified budget goal for 1977, and approved a special \$1 million fund-raising campaign as "seed money for new churches."

Messengers also refused to restrict IBSA meetings only to facilities which do not sell alcoholic beverages but they reaffirmed their opposition to use of liquor.

The IBSA also passed a resolution calling for concerted prayer by all denominational bodies in Illinois and heard a report that 99 Baptist churches and missions were begun in Illinois in the past 43 months.

A motion to deny seating to churches that ordain women was ruled out of order by outgoing IBSA President Wendell Garrison on grounds that the state convention's constitution does not recognize such practices as a test of fellowship, a spokesman said.

The motion, made by Archie Grigg, a pastor from Decatur, Ill., came after the convention's resolution committee failed to speak on the practice of ordaining women as deacons and ministers. Garrison's decision was sustained by a majority of the messengers.

Keith Stanford of Granite City, Ill., was elected president. Stanford, director of missions for Madison County Baptist Association, had just completed two years as the convention's vice president. As convention president he will serve as chairman of the IBSA board of directors.

The \$2.3 million Cooperative Program goal is a 13 percent increase over the 1976 goal, which, in turn, was a 20 percent increase over 1975. Forty-one percent of the Cooperative Program will go to the Southern Baptist Convention's worldwide mission causes, a one percent increase.

The IBSA's total anticipated receipts for 1977 will be almost \$4 million, including Cooperative Program gifts.

The \$1 million special campaign to raise "seed money" for new congregations will help undergird the Illinois phase of the North Central Mission Thrust, a cooperative effort to double Southern Baptist work in seven Great Lakes area states.

IBSA Executive-Secretary James H. Smith said a goal for Illinois is to enroll 32,000 people in Bible study in 1978 alone:

"I have two visions for Baptists in Illinois; first, a real, Spirit-led revival in every church and, second, the opportunity of every citizen in our state to hear and respond to the gospel."

A second motion by Grigg was defeated that would have prohibited IBSA meetings, including committees, from being held where alcoholic beverages are sold. Then, the messengers reaffirmed their opposition to use of alcoholic beverages, "in case some might think meeting in places where liquor is sold would be a mark of approval," a spokesman said.

One messenger, who opposed Grigg's motion on meeting places, said Baptists "would go further if they would address themselves to a positive witness. If we're going to take this attitude, we can't sleep in a motel where liquor is sold, buy groceries, or eat in a restaurant where alcoholic beverages are served."

The resolution on prayer calls for a "general spiritual awakening" throughout America and spells out a plan to involve all Christians in Illinois in concerted prayer. It says that of the 50 million persons living in the seven North Central United States, at least 32 million "give no vital allegiance to Jesus Christ."

The convention's committee on committees was directed to appoint a special committee to study possible development of a Christian Care Center for the elderly and report back in 1977.

The state convention also authorized a year's study of salary and benefits to pastors and other church-related employees in Illinois. Messengers voted not to increase the \$200 the IBSA contributes annually to the retirement plan of pastors and other church related employees.

The basis for the action, a spokesman said, is that a church is basically responsible for retirement benefits of its employees and that the state body has a contractual agreement with the (Southern Baptist) Annuity Board, similar to other states, of a flat \$200 payment.

Consuming the most time for discussion was a proposal, eventually defeated, to purchase East Bay Camp near Bloomington, Ill., for \$335,654, less a projected year-end operating deficit of \$90,000-\$100,000. The IBSA would also have assumed an indebtedness of \$354,904.

The 1977 IBSA will be in Peoria, Ill., Nov. 3-5.

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CORRECTION:

In line 2, graph 2 of Baptist Press story mailed 11/1/76 and headlined "Racial Confrontation Faces Baptist Deacons in Plains," insert the name: Clennon King after the phrase "a 60-year-old black pastor."

(BP) Photo accompanies story.