



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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76-193

**Penn-Jersey Baptists Urge
State Action on Obscenity**

CARLISLE, Pa. (BP)--The Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey, in annual session here, pledged prayer support for President-elect Jimmy Carter and his administration and urged the Pennsylvania legislature to pass laws authorizing local government to control obscene material.

The convention re-elected Calvin Bailey, pastor of Pittsburgh (Pa.) Baptist Church, as president, and named a black Baptist preacher, Archie Washington of Third Baptist Church, Germantown, Pa., to preach the convention sermon at next year's convention, Nov. 4-5 in Conyngham, Pa.

In other action, elected "messengers" to the convention approved a total budget of \$887,531, including a \$225,000 goal for Cooperative Program unified budget receipts from its churches. Twenty six percent of the Cooperative Program receipts will go to worldwide causes of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

In the resolution on obscenity, the convention urged the legislature to act in keeping with U. S. Supreme Court action on local control of obscene materials.

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**Michigan Baptists Celebrate
25 Years, Oppose Hymn**

**Baptist Press
11/12/76**

SOUTH LYON, Mich. (BP)--The Baptist State Convention of Michigan, meeting here, celebrated 25 years of Southern Baptist work in the state and voted a record \$1,469,785 annual budget.

Elected "messengers" to the convention also passed a resolution expressing strong disapproval to the U. S. Armed Forces chaplains office regarding what they feel is erroneous doctrine in the hymn "Was On A Friday Morning," which appears in the Book of Worship for U. S. Forces.

They also resolved to pray for newly-elected local, state and national leaders and adopted long range goals, which included plans to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in Michigan by 1990. A spokesman said there are some 6.5 million persons in the state who are connected with no church body.

In other action, messengers re-elected Richard Rogers, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Lansing, as convention president and approved a goal of \$564,847 in Cooperative Program receipts from Michigan Baptist churches as part of the total budget. Twenty-three percent of that goal will go to worldwide causes of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) through the national SBC Cooperative Program.

In celebrating 25 years of Southern Baptist work in Michigan, messengers noted significant numerical increases since the first efforts began there in 1951. By 1956, when the first association of Southern Baptist churches was formed, eight churches had 800 members. Now, there are almost 40,000 members in some 200 churches.

The Michigan convention will celebrate the 20th anniversary of its official organization as a state convention at the 1977 annual session at Normandy Road Baptist Church, Royal Oak, Mich., Nov. 8-10.

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It was announced during the convention that Lowell Lawson, a Home Mission Board missionary appointee, will join the Michigan convention to serve as director of the Baptist Center in downtown Detroit. He is former minister of education at Beechmont Baptist Church, Louisville, and has served on the staff of the Long Run Baptist Association in Louisville and has taught at the Boyce Bible School of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary there.

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Colorado Baptists Pray
For Carter, Admit Blacks

Baptist Press
11/12/76

GREELY, Colo. (BP)--The Colorado Baptist General Convention, meeting here, voted to convey prayer and concern for President-elect Jimmy Carter and, heard reports of the affiliation of nine new churches, including two black congregations with the convention.

In other action, the messengers passed a resolution against the "increasing moral decay in our society," and voted a record budget of \$1,149,967, of which \$602,395 is expected as Cooperative Program receipts from Colorado's 150 Southern Baptist churches. Twenty-four percent of the Cooperative Program figure will go to worldwide Southern Baptist causes.

Messengers asked convention president, Otis Testerman, who was re-elected, to convey to Carter "our prayer and concern for God's leadership in his life," and members of Colorado churches were urged to pray for the President-elect.

In the action on the black congregations, the convention's administrative committee routinely approved their eligibility to send messengers to annual meetings, a convention spokesman said.

The resolution on moral decay urged that Christians become more aware "of our Christian responsibility and take a public stand against the encroachment of social evils, such as gambling, pornography, alcohol and drugs.

Messengers also approved establishment of a credentials committee for future conventions because of the feeling that the convention has reached the size where such a committee is needed, a spokesman said.

The 1977 convention will meet, Nov. 9-11, at Bookcliff Baptist Church, Grand Junction, Colo., where convention president Testerman serves as pastor.

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Baptist Work Continues
During Rhodesian Upsets

Baptist Press
11/12/76

SALISBURY, Rhodesia (BP)--Southern Baptist mission work continued virtually unhampered here in spite of missionary reports of rumored guerrilla presence in the rural areas, according to a Baptist missions spokesman.

Davis L. Saunders, area secretary for eastern and southern Africa for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, said that travel was restricted at three of the mission stations due to military activity but at this time none of "our people" have been moved from their work.

The Baptist hospital and high school at Sanyati, Rhodesia, continue to operate and missionary personnel are functioning normally, Saunders said.

"They (the missionaries) are cautiously optimistic that something might come of the talks in Geneva," he said, "but they are fairly apprehensive about the immediate future if the talks break down."

Political activity has not hampered any of the missionaries' planned special activities, he noted. A Baptist Student Union group from Louisiana and a group of stewardship experts from several states in the U. S. completed their planned trips and campaigns this summer without incident, Saunders said.

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N. M. Baptists Vote
First \$1 Million Budget

CARLSBAD, N. M. (BP)--The Baptist Convention of New Mexico voted in annual session here to approve the convention's first annual \$1 million budget and passed a resolution encouraging Baptist agencies to avoid business contacts with organizations which sell alcoholic beverages.

Elected "messengers" also named Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Albuquerque, N. M., as president.

The resolution on alcohol encouraged "Baptist boards, agencies, institutions, and conference centers to refrain from business relationships with firms or business organizations that are engaged in the sale of alcoholic beverages." The resolution stipulated that a copy of the resolution be sent to Grady Cothen, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville.

J. R. Burnette, chairman of the resolutions committee, said the resolution grew out of a protest by some New Mexico pastors that commodities used by the Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center were being purchased from firms that also sell alcoholic beverages.

Larry Haslam, manager of the conference center, said that as far as he knows, such was not the case.

The record budget totals \$1,016,768, of which 27 percent will be allocated to worldwide causes through the national Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget.

The 1977 convention will be held Nov. 8-10, at Central Baptist Church in Clovis, N. M.

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Indiana Baptists Oppose
Parimutuels and TV Violence

Baptist Press
11/12/76

FORT WAYNE, Ind. (BP)--The State Convention of Baptists in Indiana voted here to oppose parimutuel betting in Indiana, to send a wire to President-elect Jimmy Carter assuring him of "prayers and concern," and to oppose violence and immorality on television.

In other action, "messengers" to the convention elected Don Moore, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Evansville, Ind., as president, and recommended that a study on pastoral compensation be sent to church leaders in Indiana. The study, conducted by a committee of laymen, outlined needs for increases in the compensation of pastors and other Baptist church staff members in the state.

The convention also approved a total budget of \$1,210,659, which includes a goal of \$848,000 in receipts from churches through the state's Cooperative Program unified budget. Some 30.5 percent of the Cooperative Program goal will be sent to worldwide causes through the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program.

The vote on parimutuel betting grew out of a move underway in the state to get parimutuel betting approved by the Indiana legislature, a convention spokesman said.

The stand on television programming encouraged Christians to contact sponsors of programs to express the desire for "healthy, discriminating family programs at proper times in the viewing day" and expressed opposition to "violence, immorality and unChristian content" in television programming.

The convention also heard plans for 1977 for Indiana Baptists' participation in the SBC's Bold Mission Thrust (BMT), which would evangelize and congregationalize the nation by 1980; the North Central Missions Thrust, which would double all Baptist work in a seven state area by 1990; and in the Sunday School ACTION explosion plan designed to enlist more people in systematic Bible study and train leaders.

The 1977 convention will meet, Nov. 8-10, at Bloomington Baptist Church, Bloomington, Ind.

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Ky. Lauds Carter, Edwards
On Stances Against Racism

LEXINGTON, Ky. (BP)--President-elect Jimmy Carter and Plains (Ga.) Baptist Church Pastor Bruce Edwards were commended in a telegram from the annual session of the Kentucky Baptist Convention here for the two men's stance opposing racism in a widely publicized incident involving the Plains church.

"Messengers" to the convention also sent a separate telegram to the Plains church, offering their prayers and encouragement.

Their action came during the week before the church was to decide on Sunday, Nov. 14, whether or not to fire Edwards, as urged by the deacons, and uphold its opposition to blacks.

Kentucky Baptists, in their 139th annual session, adopted a record \$8.7 million budget, and elected Ted Sisk, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington, as president. Sisk was president of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists, 1968-69.

Carter and Edwards have openly declared their stance against a resolution barring blacks, passed by the church in 1965 and revived by the deacons in an incident involving a black non-denominational minister, Clennon King, who unsuccessfully tried to attend worship services at the church, with the expressed intention of joining.

On two occasions before the Nov. 14 showdown was to occur, the deacons locked the doors, against the pastor's wishes and advice. Carter is a Sunday School teacher and an inactive deacon at the church, and was not able to vote as a deacon in the events of recent weeks.

He did, however, vote against the original 1965 resolution, which reportedly prohibits membership in the church of "Negroes and civil rights agitators," and he continues to oppose it.

The telegram sent to Carter and Edwards stated:

"Messengers to the 1976 session of the Kentucky Baptist Convention commend you in your stand on welcoming to the Baptist worship services all persons regardless of race, color or ethnic origin. As fellow Baptists, we pledge to you our love and prayers. In addition, we pledge our prayers for your church for God's guidance."

Another telegram from messengers to the Plains Church's members pledged ". . . prayers and deep and genuine concern during these difficult days of decision for you.

"Recognizing the right of each church to decide its own policies even when we disagree, we want to assure you of our sincere prayers for divine guidance.

"May God guide you in making all decisions in the spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ in your total mission and ministry to all men everywhere for his glory," the telegram said.

An original motion to send a telegram to Carter and his pastor, Edwards, commending the two for their stance in the Plains incident, ran into immediate opposition, observers said.

Several messengers saw it as an interference in the autonomy of that local church. Others suggested that a telegram to the church itself would be as appropriate as one to Carter and Edwards.

A three-member committee appointed to consider the matter brought back a recommendation that separate telegrams be sent--to Carter and Edwards, and to the church.

Vocal opposition was expressed again, largely on the question of local church autonomy, a distinctive of Southern Baptist church government, and one messenger said, "Let's not take them on until we sweep around our own doorstep first."

The vote was about two-to-one, observers said, in favor of sending the two separate messages as worded by the three-man committee.

In action concerning its board of child care, which has been under fire for two years, Kentucky Baptists indicated "good feelings" toward the direction in which the board is now moving. It approved a motion calling for the board to delay expenditures for capital needs until a convention-appointed depth study committee completes its work, but at the same time several messengers spoke positively of the work of the board and the administration's responsiveness to earlier proposals.

The depth study committee was appointed in 1974, and at the 1975 convention messengers voted to retain it for three additional years to ensure their wishes would be implemented. The child care board is an agency of the convention.

The convention's record \$8.7 million budget, to take effect Sept. 1, 1977, includes an \$8 million Cooperative Program goal, of which 34 percent is destined for worldwide Southern Baptist causes.

Franklin Owen, executive secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Convention, was unable to attend the sessions, due to a respiratory illness. The convention was held at Calvary Baptist Church, Lexington, where Owen was pastor for 18 years before assuming the duties of convention executive secretary-treasurer.

The 1977 Kentucky Convention will be Nov. 15-17, at Florence (Ky.) Baptist Church.