

**(BP)****-- BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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77-203

La. Baptists Elect Lay  
President, Oppose Gays

PINEVILLE, La. (BP)--The 130th session of the Louisiana Baptist Convention elected its first layman as president in 17 years, picked its first woman officer in recent memory, and passed resolutions dealing with homosexuality, abortion, television programming and child abuse.

In other action, registered "messengers" voted a record \$8.5 million budget and okayed ambitious three-year goals as part of the Southern Baptist Convention's Bold Mission Thrust to proclaim the message of Christ to the entire world in this century.

G. O. McGuffee of Harrisonburg, La., tax assessor for Catahoula Parish, was elected president, and Sarah Frances Anders, head of the sociology department at Louisiana College, Baptist institution which hosted the convention, was named second vice president.

The resolution on homosexuality declared that "there is forgiveness for every sin of the flesh, including homosexuality" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11), but it expressed concern "that there are on every front attempts being made to glamorize and legalize homosexuality as a normal experience."

It said homosexuality is "neither glamorous nor legal in the eyes of God and must therefore be viewed as a cancer eating away at the fiber of the family structure as God's holy institution... (and) as unnatural, offensive and totally contrary to the teachings of God."

The abortion resolution called for the practice of chastity before marriage and fidelity within marriage to "avoid the need for abortion and the taking of an innocent life in violation of the commands of God." But it further called for provision of alternatives to abortion through "counsel, adoption centers for unwed mothers, and a message of redemption and forgiveness through the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Declaring that "much television programming contains irresponsible, distorted and unscriptural portrayals of sexuality, violence and profanity," another resolution requested "television stations and sponsors of such programs to refrain from showing programs that contain such objectionable subject matter." It commended those who are selective in their programming and urged Baptists to "exercise careful discipline of their personal television viewing."

The \$8.5 million missions budget actually embodies a basic Cooperative Program unified budget goal of \$7,750,000, plus advance and challenge goals. The Cooperative Program goal is divided 67 percent for state programs and 33 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes.

Three-year Bold Mission Thrust goals for 150 new congregations (40 in 1978, 50 in 1979, and 60 in 1980), 60,500 baptisms (17,500 in 1978, 20,000 in 1979, and 23,000 in 1980), and 60,000 new Sunday School members (15,000 in 1978, 20,000 in 1979, and 25,000 in 1980) were adopted unanimously by the convention. Additional goals consisted of attaining a \$11,200,000 missions budget by 1980 and enrollments of 119,500 in church training and 90,000 in circulation for the Louisiana Baptist

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state paper were also passed.

The 1978 convention will be Nov. 13-15 at First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La.

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Ga. Baptists Discuss  
A Variety Of Issues

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11/17/77

ATLANTA (BP)--Bold Mission Thrust, a "sister-state" relationship with New York Baptists, ordination of women, abortion and political action were some of the key issues discussed by the Georgia Baptist Convention in one of its most harmonious annual meetings in many years.

Georgia Baptists gave repeated emphasis to Bold Mission Thrust, Southern Baptists' goal of proclaiming the message of Christ to the entire world, and adopted a record \$12 million Cooperative Program goal for 1978, which includes major amounts for Bold Mission Thrust. After deduction of 11.84 percent for shared promotional and administrative expenses, the budget will be divided equally between Georgia Baptist and Southern Baptist Convention causes.

The Georgia convention approved a "sister-state" relationship with the Baptist State Convention of New York, whereby Georgia Baptist churches and agencies will give help wherever possible to churches and agencies in New York.

Jack P. Lowndes, a native Georgian and executive secretary in New York, spoke to the Georgia convention. Searcy S. Garrison, executive secretary in Georgia, had spoken to the New York convention the week before, after which New York Baptists approved the relationship.

Ordination of women came up when messengers from northwest Georgia asked the convention to speak out against ordination of women and to forbid its employees from taking part in such ordinations. A woman was ordained at First Baptist Church in Rockmart, Ga., in August with several state denominational employees participating.

The resolutions committee's report reaffirmed that ordination "to the ministry or the deaconship is a function of the local church." And it resolved that "denominational servants should not be called upon to give up freedoms exercised by other members of Baptist churches."

The convention approved the resolutions committee report without debate or a recorded negative vote. At least seven Baptist women have been ordained into the ministry in Georgia and about 50 have been ordained as deacons.

A resolution on abortion urged the convention to tell Georgia Baptist Hospital in Atlanta not to perform abortions unless the mother's health was impaired or unless her pregnancy had occurred "beyond her control." The resolutions committee conferred with hospital authorities and reported that "the policy suggested by this motion is the intent of the hospital and, insofar as legally possible, carried out in practice."

The committee did urge Georgia Baptist church members to "recognize the spreading misuse of the abortion act and encouraged our people to hold high the value of human life, making careful Christian judgments before becoming participants in this act."

Both abortion resolutions were approved without debate.

The convention also gave one of its two junior colleges, Brewton-Parker Junior College at Mount Vernon, permission to make a feasibility study about moving to four year status.

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A resolution from a south Georgia pastor which would have required all professors in Georgia Baptist colleges to sign a doctrinal statement "similar to those used by Southern Baptist seminaries" was referred to the Georgia education commission and education committee for study and a later report.

William L. Self, pastor of Wieuca Road Baptist Church, Atlanta, host church for the convention, was re-elected president. The 1978 convention was set, Nov. 13-15, at Jeckle Island, Ga.

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Maryland Baptists Barely  
Fail To Endorse Bryant

Baptist Press  
11/17/77

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (BP)--The Baptist Convention of Maryland, meeting in annual session here, defeated a resolution to endorse Anita Bryant's campaign on homosexuality by seven votes but endorsed a vote on the issue of homosexuality without debate.

During a mild convention, in which the only difficult issue involved the Bryant resolution, registered messengers re-elected William Hillis, a Baltimore physician, as president, voted a \$2.1 million budget, and honored Roy D. Gresham, the convention's executive secretary, for 20 years service.

The debate on Bryant came after the resolutions committee refused to report out a resolution by Gardner Koch, a Baltimore pastor, which urged endorsement of her campaign and the writing of letters to Florida citrus growers urging them to retain her in advertising campaigns.

Although there is no specific convention policy to that effect, the committee refused on grounds the resolution dealt with an individual, rather than an issue. Koch took the issue to the convention floor but lost by seven votes.

The resolutions committee, feeling the convention wanted to deal with the issue, followed up with a resolution which declared that "the Bible clearly defines homosexuality as sin, comparable to many other sins listed in the same passages."

It added that "the Christian ethic calls for a denunciation of sin, with unwavering compassion for the sinner," and resolved to "affirm all efforts in a Christian spirit and method to take a stand for authentic righteousness and a redemptive ministry to homosexuals and others whose lifestyle is a deviant moral behavior."

The convention honored Gresham for his 20 years service, during which time the membership has more than doubled, Cooperative Program receipts have tripled and the Baptist conventions of New York and Pennsylvania-South Jersey have been organized from churches affiliated with the Maryland convention.

For the first time in its 143-year history, the Maryland convention will meet outside the state, Nov. 13-15, at Ogletown Baptist Church, Newark, Del. Southern Baptist churches in Delaware are affiliated with the Maryland convention, as are Southern Baptist churches in the six New England states.

The \$2.1 million budget includes \$1.4 million in Cooperative Program receipts from Maryland convention churches, of which 40 percent will go to worldwide Southern Baptist Convention causes.

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Anita Retained But Won't  
Be Only Citrus Personality

LAKELAND, Fla. (BP)-- Anita Bryant's contract as representative of the Florida citrus industry has been renewed here, but that doesn't mean she will continue in the spotlight as the industry's primary spokesperson in national advertising campaigns.

The Southern Baptist entertainer, who has received much adverse publicity since her stand last winter for repeal of a Dade County, Fla., resolution banning discrimination against homosexuals, will not continue as the sole spokesperson for the industry because she doesn't appeal to the entire population, according to an industry spokesman.

Edwin A. Taylor, executive director of the Florida Department of Citrus, told Baptist Press in July that his staff "sees no need to change from our established marketing procedures at this time."

Now, a department spokesman says research conducted over a four year period shows that "current commercials are not as effective as we'd like in reaching certain segments of the population, particularly working women and young people."

A stronger media mix of personalities, some well known, others not, will be "necessary in the foreseeable future," the spokesman told Baptist Press before the Nov. 16 vote by the Florida Citrus Commission to renew Bryant's contract. He said commercials were produced two years ago, "before all this broke," featuring Arthur Fiedler and Peggy Fleming. They were not used then but may appear soon in selected markets.

"Many major companies use a variety of commercials," he continued. "Why can't we?"

He said the controversy has caused no discernible effect on orange juice sales and that mail to the commission has been running three to one in favor of Bryant.

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Okla. Baptists For Human  
Rights, Oppose Homosexuality

Baptist Press  
11/17/77

TULSA, Okla. (BP)--Registered "messengers" to the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma disapproved homosexuality, urged continued U. S. efforts in the area of human rights, and passed a \$7 million budget in annual session here.

In other action, they elected Jerry Don Abernathy, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Tulsa, as president. He had no opposition.

The homosexuality resolution stated opposition to the practice and to the mandatory hiring of known homosexuals by public and private institutions, but it encouraged churches to make every "Godly effort to evangelize and minister to homosexuals."

The messengers voted to encourage President Jimmy Carter and the U. S. government to place high priority on worldwide human rights--but to do so without interfering in the on-going affairs of other nations.

Other resolutions opposed the decriminalization of marijuana and urged church members to protest to sponsors, producers and broadcasters of all media about objectionable programming--but to commend them for wholesome programming.

The \$7 million Cooperative Program budget, which includes advance or challenge sections of another one-half million dollars, will be divided among state and Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) causes, with 42.5 percent going to the SBC.

The 1978 convention will be held Nov. 14-16, at First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City.

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