



## **BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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November 14, 1980

80-182

South Carolina Baptists  
Keep On Missions Track

COLUMBIA, S.C.(BP)--South Carolina Baptists, meeting for their 160th annual meeting, elected Lonnie H. Shull Jr., as president and approved a record Cooperative Program budget.

Shull, pastor of Northside Baptist Church in West Columbia, succeeds John E. Roberts, editor of the Baptist Courier, journal of the South Carolina Baptist Convention. He was second vice president.

Messengers approved a 1981 Cooperative Program budget of \$14.5 million, an increase of \$1.5 million over 1980. It consists of a \$12 million basic budget with a \$2.5 million challenge portion. The basic budget increases the Southern Baptist Convention share to 35.75 percent, up a half percent.

In other actions, the 1,894 messengers:

--Approved the continuation for another year of its rice bowl collections for funds for world hunger relief. Total contributions for 1980 are \$910,443 from South Carolina Baptists alone.

--Heard a report from the general board on the selection of Larry Crisman of Dallas as public relations director beginning Jan. 1. Crisman, 38, has been associate director of public relations for the SBC Annuity Board. He succeeds Tom Brannon, who became director of public relations for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

--Heard a report naming a search committee to secure a successor to Harold Cole, executive secretary-treasurer, who will take early retirement Feb. 28, 1982. Chairman is Kirk Smith, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sumter.

--Passed a resolution urging the United States Congress to adopt an amendment to the U.S. tax laws to restore the \$20,000 tax exemption to employees of charitable and religious organizations working overseas.

--Passed a resolution on unity which reaffirmed convention confidence in the Bible and world missions and urged avoiding division and efforts that might "sidetrack the convention from bold biblical missions."

--Sent telegrams to President Jimmy Carter and President-elect Ronald Reagan declaring the convention's continued prayer support.

--Gave first reading of a proposed constitutional amendment that "the convention shall consist of messengers from the Baptist churches composed of baptized believers..." At present, at least two churches in the state accept new members from other churches without requiring baptism by immersion.

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--Approved, on trial basis, meeting for two days instead of three.

The 1981 convention will meet in Charleston, Nov. 15-16.

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(BP) photo of Larry Crisman mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Baptist Courier.

Indiana Baptists Praise  
Retiring Executive Director

Baptist Press  
11/14/80

GARY, Ind. (BP)--Messengers came to the 22nd annual meeting of Southern Baptists in Indiana to conduct business and praise their retiring executive director, E. Harmon Moore.

They did both, but tears, praise and joy took far more time than business.

Messengers came in a mood of celebration and praise as they recounted what God had done for Indiana Baptists through Moore and his wife, Margaret, since he came to Indiana as the chief executive of the newly formed state convention 22 years ago.

Following an appreciation banquet, the state convention presented a 1981 automobile to Moore and a color television set to Margaret Moore.

In business sessions the messengers adopted a record budget of \$1,885,120, an increase of about a quarter million dollars over the previous year. Of the budget, 31.5 percent will be shared with the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program, the same percentage as last year.

Miscellaneous business opportunities passed almost unnoticed during the sessions with nothing more than seminary alumni luncheons being announced. Only one resolution prompted discussion. The resolution opposed abortion, except when the mother's life is at stake or deemed necessary by medical counsel. It was challenged by an amendment to include rape and incest, but the amendment failed and the resolution passed.

Other resolutions stated continued support for Bold Mission Thrust, opposition to homosexuality and pornography, and expressed grateful appreciation for the leadership of Southern Baptist Convention President Bailey Smith. Messengers voted unanimously to write legislators urging repeal of the overseas tax legislation affecting missionaries.

Frank Worthington, pastor of the host church, Ross Baptist of Gary, was elected president. The 1981 annual meeting was set in Sunnycrest Baptist Church of Muncie, Nov. 3-5.

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Dallas Pastor, Rabbi  
Speak On Human Rights

Baptist Press  
11/14/80

DALLAS (BP)--W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, and a Dallas rabbi called on the Soviet Union to honor the human rights commitments it made when the 1975 Helsinki Accords were ratified.

Criswell and Rabbi J.S. Osfeyer of Congregation Shearith-Israel issued a joint statement as the European Conference on Detente and Human Rights got underway in Madrid to review implementation of the 1975 accords.

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In those accords, the borders established by the Russians after World War II were accepted and the principles of religious freedom and freedom of movement between countries agreed to by all signers, including the Soviets.

Those principles, however, have not in fact been honored by the Soviets, said Criswell and Osfeyer.

They cited Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev's promise to implement the accords and expressed concern for persons in Soviet prisons—Christians and Jews who have been incarcerated solely because they sought to worship God in their own way.

"We urge all people of goodwill to join together to remind the Soviet Union that they must face the judgment of God and of their fellow human beings," they said.

Persecution of Jews in Russia ultimately means persecution of Christians and all other religious faiths, Criswell said.

"If they (Jews) are not free, we're not free," he said. "If they do not have the right to move, to emigrate, to preach, to be free, we do not have that right."

"We represent one common faith, one common prayer and one common appeal and determination that if people who seek the faith of God, that we might be free to worship the Lord and live in the way that God would lead us to serve him."

Both Criswell and Osfeyer denied there was any connection between their joint statements of Christians and Jews with the highly publicized statement of Southern Baptist Convention President Bailey Smith that God does not hear the prayers of Jews.

Their statement, they said, simply grew out of a conversation they had about the Madrid conference.

Large signs emblazoned with "Human Rights for Soviet Jews and Christians" had been erected over the entrance of First Baptist Church and on the wall of Shearith-Israel Synagogue, they said, and would remain in place at least until the close of the Madrid conference.

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Coloradoans Reinforce  
Individual Autonomy

Baptist Press  
11/14/80

AURORA, Colo. (BP)--Messengers to the 25th annual session of the Colorado Baptist General Convention called for the respect of individual dignity and responsibility in matters of politics, theology, personal and social views in a resolution.

Messengers also approved a \$1,965,000 budget, adopted a new constitution and bylaws and celebrated their silver anniversary.

The resolution on individual dignity was one of five adopted by the 335 messengers registered from Colorado's Southern Baptist churches during the session at Central Baptist Church in this suburb of Denver.

The resolution did not mention any specific groups or individuals but noted certain evangelical Christians have attracted widespread media attention.

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Statements accepted by the public as speaking on behalf of all evangelicals, or for large blocs of Christians, or even for individuals, "serve to undermine traditional Baptist principles regarding the responsibility and dignity of the individual believers..."

In many instances, the resolution continues, it "violates the Baptist practice of the autonomy of the local church congregation."

The resolution urged every local congregation and pastor to study, to pray and witness, in order to insure "an order that no other individual or group of individuals may publicly or privately become the authority or spokesman for any other believer without that believer's consent."

In other resolutions, messengers called for prayer support for outgoing President Jimmy Carter and his family, for President-elect Ronald Reagan, and for continued prayer for the American hostages in Iran.

Messengers also urged Congress to adopt an amendment to the tax laws of the United States that would restore a \$20,000 tax exemption to employees of charitable and religious organizations overseas, and called for prayer for the 13.4 million-member Southern Baptist Convention prior to and during its 1981 annual meeting June 9-11 in Los Angeles.

Tom Satterwhite, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church of Fort Collins, was reelected president.

Discussion on the new constitution was brief and spirited. Three motions to amend either died for lack of a second or were killed by a simple majority vote, before the document was adopted.

The 1980-81 budget anticipates \$1.1 million in Cooperative Program receipts from the 200 churches and chapels of the convention. The percentage projected for SBC world mission causes is 27 percent, up one percent from the 1979-80 budget.

Employees of the state convention were voted a 12 percent cost of living salary increase.

A nostalgic silver anniversary presentation was made by current Executive Director-Treasurer Glen E. Braswell and former executive secretary Willis J. Ray, the only two men to occupy the top staff post.

The 1981 meeting will be Nov. 10-12 in Circle Drive Baptist Church in Colorado Springs.

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Tennessee Baptists Shoulder  
Bold Mission Thrust Burden

Baptist Press  
11/14/80

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn. (BP)--Tennessee Baptists lowered their shoulder to the Bold Mission Thrust boulder by entering a sister convention relationship with Michigan Baptists, joining Upper Volta in a three-year, \$500,000 hunger relief commitment and increasing their offerings to world missions through the national Cooperative Program.

Three convention officials left during the meeting for the Michigan Baptist convention in Marquette to relay the action of Tennessee Baptist churches and associations to join their Michigan counterparts in an effort to expand Southern Baptist work in Michigan.

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The Upper Volta hunger project was previously recommended by a special hunger committee and was unanimously approved in Johnson City. In addition to the money, about 150 volunteer doctors, nurses, agriculturalists, agronomists, carpenters, literacy workers and soil conservationists will go for short-term projects in that drought and hunger stricken African nation.

Over 1,500 messengers at the 106th annual session adopted a \$16.3 million budget which includes a \$2 million challenge portion. Both portions will send 35.5 percent for world mission causes through the national Cooperative Program, an increase of one-half percent over last year. John David Laida, pastor of First Baptist Church, Clarksville, for 21 years, won a first ballot election for president of the convention.

Primary debate was on a motion tabled last year to change program statements to allow Tennessee's three Baptist colleges to institute graduate programs. Belmont College in Nashville was the only school interested in offering a graduate degree. An anonymous donor offered \$100,000 per year for five years if the school would offer a masters degree in business administration. Belmont's undergraduate business program, especially music business, is highly regarded.

Belmont President Herbert Gabhart told messengers such a program would provide trained business managers for Southern Baptist churches, missions and denominational activities. He said it would not polarize the three schools or require additional Cooperative Program support.

Messengers defeated the move approximately 9 to 1 on a standing vote. They were told after the vote that the executive board will allow each of the schools to conduct a three-year endowment drive for \$5 million each beginning in 1982.

Resolutions included a request to Congress to restore the \$20,000 tax exemption to charitable and religious workers overseas; a statement opposing all forms of anti-semitism; support for the 1982 world energy fair in Knoxville as a missions opportunity; a request to the Tennessee legislature to restore a 2,000-foot mandatory distance between beer stores and public meeting places; and affirmation of the Cooperative Program as "the channel through which we fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord."

Another resolution expressed appreciation for the seminaries and "their dedicated faculties who continue to faithfully train students." Included in that resolution was an affirmation of the Home and Foreign Mission Boards and the Sunday School Board which "maintains a worthy trust with the churches."

Two resolutions offered but deemed inappropriate by the resolutions committee were in regard to whose prayers God hears and in support of SBC President Bailey Smith.

A motion referred to the constitution and bylaws committee would require Tennessee Convention officers to be active members of churches which give at least 10 percent of their budget through the Cooperative Program, the unified budget that supports Southern Baptist missions and education efforts both state and worldwide.

Observers say the motion came as a reaction to the election at the last two Southern Baptist Conventions of presidents whose churches give considerably less than 10 percent to the Cooperative Program.

The proposal, if supported by the constitution and bylaws committee, must be read and approved at two consecutive conventions. It could not become effective until 1982.

Messengers authorized Laida to appoint a committee to study possible creation of a "ministers' aid fund" which would financially assist pastors, other church staff and associational denominational workers who "lose their jobs." The motion maker said he was concerned over the number of pastors who are forced out of their churches.

The 1981 meeting of the state convention will be Nov. 10-12 at Radnor Baptist Church in Nashville.

In a related action, the Tennessee Baptist executive board elected Miss Osta Underwood as president. The Nashville lawyer becomes the first woman to hold the position.

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Mississippi Baptists Want  
To Merge Two Colleges

Baptist Press  
11/14/80

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--After more than an hour of energetic debate, messengers to the Mississippi Baptist Convention voted to merge Clarke College with Mississippi College.

The merger, proposed by the Clarke College trustees, with the endorsement of the Mississippi Baptist Education Commission and the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, was approved after a substitute motion was defeated which would have left the Baptist junior college at Newton in the hands of the present trustees and required movement toward senior college status.

Clarke has suffered enrollment declines in recent years as well as a depletion of funds. The proposal to merge with Mississippi College, which has nearly 4,000 students, came after a study by the Southern Baptist Education Commission which included merger as one of several possibilities for the ailing school.

In a press conference after the vote to merge the two colleges, Lewis Nobles, president of Mississippi College, said his trustees would likely accept the proposal in January. Both Nobles and A.C. Johnson, president of Clarke, said that classes are scheduled to continue as usual this spring semester and next fall with addition of upper division courses added "based on expressed interest," said Nobles.

In other business, the record 1,442 messengers elected Brooks Wester, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, as president on the first ballot. They adopted a \$12.6 million budget with 33.5 percent slated to go to worldwide causes through the national Cooperative Program. That is an increase of one-half percent over last year.

Messengers passed a school textbook resolution expressing concern over "continued promulgation through the public schools of a closed interpretation of origins" and asked the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission to "confer with representatives of the major publishing companies."

That resolution was far different from that which was presented to the convention by the Yalobusha Baptist Association. The original asked for a committee to study the public school book situation "giving special attention to the theory of evolution, the Bible as the Word of God by divine inspiration, and the concept of God being taught."

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A church-state resolution decried continued attempts at government encroachment in church affairs and an alcohol resolution asked for state laws to reduce the legal presumption of intoxication from .15 percent blood alcohol content to .10 percent.

The 1981 Mississippi Baptist Convention will meet Nov. 9-11 at Jackson's First Baptist Church as it does traditionally.

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Virginia Baptists Reject  
Messenger Test Formula

Baptist Press  
11/14/80

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Virginia Baptists, by a narrow margin, failed to make the Cooperative Program the test for qualification of messengers to the annual meetings.

A large majority of the messengers to the Baptist General Association of Virginia annual meeting favored establishing Cooperative Program giving as the method by which messengers would be qualified, but failed by 15 votes to reach the two-thirds majority necessary to change the constitution.

In other action, messengers approved a stinging denunciation of "creeping creedalism," and efforts to substitute uniformity of statement for the Great Commission.

They also voted to hold contributions to the Virginia Baptist Hospital in Lynchburg in escrow until the hospital implements action requested by the association in its 1978 annual meeting regarding abortions performed at the facility.

Messengers also disavowed themselves from highly publicized statements by Bailey Smith, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, that God does not hear the prayers of a Jew. Virginia Baptists noted Smith does not speak for them, and that God hears the prayer of every person.

In the proposal to qualify messengers by Cooperative Program contributions, the committee to revise the bylaws recommended the more general language of the constitution be changed to more specific language, spelling out that contributions to the association must be through the Cooperative Program.

After an hour of debate, in which 11 persons spoke, 843 persons favored making Cooperative Program giving the test of messenger qualification, and 444 opposed. The persons favoring the change fell 15 votes short of the two-thirds necessary for a constitutional change.

By a 928 to 322 vote, messengers did raise the dollar ratio of giving required to qualify messengers, spelling out that more missions money must be given to reach the maximum number of messengers.

By decisive margins, messengers adopted every resolution brought by the resolutions committee, and turned back nearly every effort to amend.

Messengers adopted a resolution offered by Ray Allen, pastor of Blacksburg Baptist Church in Blacksburg, Va., which pointed out Baptists "have always stood against creedalism to the point some of our forebears went to jail not very far from this place..."

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It said "the rising danger of creeping creedalism" threatens the "most precious Baptist distinctive, soul liberty under the lordship of Jesus Christ," and resolves to "resist any effort to make uniformity of statement a substitute for commitment to the Great Commission task of mission and ministry."

Allen's resolution reaffirmed loyalty to the authority of the Scriptures and the autonomy of local Baptists, and stated "opposition to any who would attempt to determine how our brothers will state their faith."

It also expressed "deepest gratitude" for college and seminary professors "who have shared not only their knowledge but their personal faith..." and "celebrated with deep joy faithfulness of trustees in managing our institutions and agencies."

Further, the resolution calls on the Southern Baptist Convention committee on boards to follow the "open process" of requesting suggestions from state leaders about potential nominees.

Marvin Sultt, pastor of Oakdale Baptist Church in Lynchburg, offered a substitute resolution identical with one passed in the 1980 SBC annual meeting in St. Louis which exhorted trustees to preserve the doctrinal integrity of institutions, and to appoint only persons who believe in the inerrant and infallible Scripture.

The substitute was defeated and messengers overwhelmingly adopted Allen's resolution.

In the resolution concerning SBC President Smith, messengers, by a large margin, adopted a statement which said the association reaffirms "its belief that each Baptist church is autonomous and relinquishes to no one the privilege to speak for it."

It adds messengers reaffirm "our faith in the centrality of Jesus Christ in man's salvation, and that God hears the prayers of every person."

The vote to withhold funds from the hospital apparently is the first time in 157 years such action has been taken as a disciplinary measure. Messengers were asked to allow the general board (executive committee) to determine when the hospital is in compliance with the wishes of the association in regard to abortions, but refused to do so, requiring that the funds be held in escrow until the next annual meeting.

The association's 1978 action requested the hospital trustees review policies to request attending physicians consult with two or more doctors before performing abortions and to bring either the chaplain or local pastor in as a counselor before terminating pregnancy.

It also recommended convenience abortions not be done.

The cutoff of funds was approved after messengers noted "two years is sufficient time to implement" the policies requested.

The BGAV contributes \$109,000 toward the hospital's \$18 million budget and names the board of trustees at the facility.

Messengers adopted an \$11 million state budget, up from \$9,250,000 for the current year. It is split into three phases. In phases one and two, it is divided 62-38 percent between state causes and the worldwide SBC Cooperative Program. The third phase, the challenge budget, is divided 50-50. The percentages are the same as last year.

Messengers elected Norman Gillum, a hardware dealer from Crozet, as president, and set the 1981 annual meeting Nov. 10-11 in Charlottesville.

## Louisiana Enjoys Evangelism Spirit

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--In a meeting most messengers said more resembled an evangelism conference, messengers to the Louisiana Baptist Convention approved a record \$12.6 million 1981 budget and pledged themselves to even greater missionary support.

Messengers also reelected President John Sullivan to a traditional second term, approved 11 resolutions, refused to make Louisiana College its permanent meeting place and seated its first messengers from all-black churches.

The spirit of the convention was set by a Bible study beginning each session and led by five past Southern Baptist Convention presidents, all with Louisiana ties. The presidents were J.D. Grey, Carl Bates, H.H. Hobbs, Ramsey Pollard and Jaroy Weber.

The studies were laced with humor and strong exhortations for a quieting of the so-called inerrancy controversy. Although the term "inerrancy" was never used, messengers had little doubt about the issue being addressed.

The budget allocates \$4 million, or 33.33 percent, for Southern Baptist causes outside Louisiana. The amount has doubled in the past four years, putting Louisiana on schedule to double the amount forwarded to SBC causes between 1977 and 1982, one of the Bold Mission Thrust goals. The SBC portion is one-third percent increase over last year.

Resolutions took traditional stands against non-therapeutic abortions, gambling and alcohol and urged Congress to restore the \$20,000 income tax exemption to missionaries and charitable workers overseas.

A resolution on prayer said the Supreme Court never outlawed voluntary prayer and Bible reading from public schools and spoke against "government authored and sponsored religious exercises in public schools."

A motion to make Louisiana College in Pineville the permanent location for the annual meetings of the Louisiana Baptist Convention failed two to one. Then messengers approved the school as the site for their Nov. 9-11, 1981 meeting.

The seating of messengers from two all-black Baptist churches occurred without fanfare or opposition. The two churches had already been accepted by Gulf Coast Association.

An informal "jelly bean poll" where the 745 messengers could put jelly beans in labeled canisters to vote, indicated messengers actually preferred a permanent central location for the annual meeting, 77 to 52. Those voters who were opposed to the move in the main meeting where the votes counted, must have eaten their beans.

Other topics in the poll showed the Louisiana messengers did not favor a biannual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, did not favor continuation of religious-political groups, but did feel that Bold Mission Thrust has had a significant impact on their church.

CORRECTION: In (BP) story mailed Nov. 13 entitled "Georgia Enjoys Quiet Meeting," please change name in graph 12 to J. Truett Gannon instead of J. Pruett Gannon as written.  
Thanks, Baptist Press