



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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March 5, 1981

81-37

Charleston Association  
Opposes Rules Changes

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (BP)--The executive board of the Pioneer Baptist Association has adopted a resolution opposing proposed changes in the messenger qualification section of the Southern Baptist Convention constitution.

The resolution, adopted without dissent, speaks to an action by the SBC Executive Committee which would modify the current method for qualifying messengers to the annual meeting.

Currently, each church "in friendly cooperation," sympathetic to the work of the convention and a "bona fide contributor," is entitled to one messenger. Additional messengers, up to a total of 10, are allowed at a rate of one per 250 members or \$250 contributed to the work of the convention.

The proposed change, adopted by the SBC Executive Committee in February, allows one messenger from each church on the same basis, but recommends a change in the method by which churches qualify for additional messengers. It specifies one additional messenger, up to a total of 10, is granted for each two percent of undesignated tithes and offerings or for each \$10,000 given through the Cooperative Program.

The proposed change would have to be adopted by two successive conventions to become part of the constitution.

Robert Steckert, pastor of North Charleston Baptist Church, wrote and presented the resolution. It specifies the reasons for the opposition:

"First, members of our local churches have the privilege to vote upon matters within said churches regardless of their amount of giving. To be sure, every Christian ought to tithe, but people who do not are not exempt from casting a ballot. Second, that which has unified Southern Baptists throughout history has been respect for scriptural authority and doctrinal integrity. May it continue to be so.

"Third, that Southern Baptist churches be allowed the liberty to give to the Cooperative Program or whatever agencies of our convention they choose. We reserve the privilege to give the amount we desire, where we desire it spent, not to buy voting power, but because we love the Lord and His kingdom's work.

"Fourth, our recommendation is to leave the privilege of giving as so stated in our constitution. The proposed amendment would demand 18 percent given through the Cooperative Program or \$90,000 per year per church in order to have 10 messengers. It is easier for smaller churches to meet the present requirements: \$2,500 is more reasonable than \$90,000. Eighteen percent should be a goal for giving, but not a mandate.

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"Fifth, Bold Missions is promoted not by legislation in giving, but by motivation in living for Christ and personally confronting the lost world with the claims of our savior."

Steckert said: "We just feel it is an exclusive and excluding measure rather than one which broadens our representation."

The pastor also said the specification contributions must be through the Cooperative Program plays a part—"although I don't know if it is a major factor"—in the opposition.

He added the North Charleston church designates its offerings, giving to all SBC causes "except the seminaries. We have been doing that since December of 1977. We felt it was the only way to cast our vote relative to the seminaries and their taking a firm stand on scriptural authority."

The church which averages 100 in attendance and has an annual budget of \$55,000 to \$60,000 will send its full complement of 10 messengers to the Los Angeles meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention and has set aside \$3,000 in church funds to be used to subsidize its messengers.

The decision to send the full complement of messengers came after Paul Pressler, a Houston appeals court judge who is a leader in the inerrancy effort, spoke at the church.

"It is going to cost us (to go) but it will be worth it," Steckert said. "Our deacons decided we needed to go to the meeting. The one issue—and only issue—is scriptural authority and biblical inerrancy. We do not know what will happen (in Los Angeles) but we want to cast our vote affirmatively on anything relative to biblical inerrancy and scriptural authority."

He added he hopes a "sweet Christian spirit will prevail," but said the issue is more important. "I will take an ultimate stand on that. It is not my preference; it is my conviction."

Steckert called the recommended changes "an effort to whittle down representation," and **charged** his church would be excluded on the Cooperative Program giving basis alone. The church gives 9.5 percent of its budget to causes supported by the Cooperative Program, excluding the six seminaries, two percent to the association and two percent to a local mission.

Another half percent goes to the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship and its publication, the Southern Baptist Journal. "We took the money we had been giving to the seminaries and gave it to them," Steckert said.

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Nazareth Baptists  
Protest Crime Rate

Baptist Press  
3/5/81

NAZARETH, Israel (BP)--Baptist leaders have appealed to Nazareth and Israeli authorities for better police protection after repeated acts of burglary, vandalism and desecration of Baptist property.

The latest in a series of incidents occurred when someone broke into Nazareth Baptist Church; urinated on the pulpit, Bibles and hymnbooks; and stole an electric fan and 15 sets of earphones, reports Elizabeth F. Smith, Southern Baptist press representative in Israel.

At the school next door, bars were torn away from an office window, the glass broken and an adding machine stolen. Police later recovered the fan and 13 sets of the earphones, valued at \$70 each, Mrs. Smith said.

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Pastor Fuad Sakhnini called on the police to "wake out of their indifference and find the one who did such a disgraceful deed of violating holy things. We will not tolerate this terrible act," he said.

Sakhnini and other Nazareth citizens have complained and signed petitions to protest the increase in crime in their city of more than 50,000, but the ministry of police claims crime is decreasing.

This was the first time the church had been burglarized, but was the sixth burglary for the school, Mrs. Smith said. The cars of several teachers at the school have been vandalized and the secretary has been harassed in her office during school hours. "The identity of the perpetrator of this act is known to the police, but they have failed to investigate," Sakhnini said.

Southern Baptist representative Ray Hicks, director of the 550-student school, said that when the burglary was discovered at 6:30 a.m. Saturday, a custodian immediately called police. Only one man, the one on the switchboard, was on duty.

Police did not arrive to investigate until later that morning. They arrested a man loitering in a nearby park after a box containing some of the stolen items was discovered hidden there. The man was questioned and released the following day and no further arrests have been made.

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Seventh Eagle Son  
Sets Baptist Mark

Baptist Press  
3/5/81

McALESTER, Okla. (BP)--When Joel White stepped forward at First Baptist Church, McAlester, to be pinned an Eagle Scout, he set a Baptist record of sorts.

White, the son of Jeanne and J.L. White, is the seventh son of one family to earn scouting's highest honor.

According to Smokey Eggers, director of Baptist relationships for the Association of Baptists for Scouting, a single Catholic family had nine Eagle Scouts, but the Whites' mark is a Baptist standard.

First Baptist Church has sponsored Troup 5 for 50 years and deacon Charles Moore has been scoutmaster for 29 of those years. Moore said White, 15, is "a prince of a man." He has been senior patrol leader twice, the local troop's highest responsibility, and is now junior assistant scout master. The senior White is Moore's assistant.

For his Eagle service project, Joel White rejuvenated an entire school activity yard for a small country school that had no funds. He organized and led his troupe to repair and paint all the equipment and rework the hedges. The only adult help was from his father who did the welding.

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College Head Resigns,  
Will Join Foundation

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP)--George R. Borders, 42, has resigned as president of Palm Beach Atlantic College effective June 30, to become executive director of the Florida Baptist Foundation in Jacksonville.

Borders, former vice president of student affairs and acting president of Stetson University in DeLand, Fla., has been president since January 1978. In that time, enrollment has grown from 425 to 650 and the school started a building program aimed at constructing a 21-acre campus.

At the foundation, Borders replaces Gus Johnson, who retired.

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Mission Market Project  
Includes Kitchen Sink

Baptist Press  
3/5/81

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Some sales may brag about the availability of "everything but the kitchen sink," but at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary even the proverbial kitchen sink was included in students' efforts to raise money for missions.

The sink was a popular item at the students' annual flea market, one of several fund-raising events for summer missions. Other projects have included a pancake feast, a walk-a-thon and a volleyball marathon. Students hope to raise \$10,000 to help support 14 fellow seminarians who will be serving as 1981 summer missionaries in areas stretching from Panama to Alaska.

The funds, however, will have to come from sources other than the kitchen sink. It didn't sell.

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CORRECTION: In Baptist Press story mailed 2/25/81, "Board Upholds Censure; Pledges Press Freedom," please change third paragraph from "five-member executive committee..." to "12-member executive committee..."

Thanks,

Baptist Press

Acceptance Improving  
For Older Ministers

By Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Prejudices affecting the mobility and effectiveness of ministers over 50 may not be as prevalent as feared, according to ministers attending a seminar at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

James Cooper, coordinator of counseling services for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, believes ministers over 50 are reaching a new level of acceptance today, partly because of the larger number of older persons in society.

Often pastor search committees fear an older pastor will move to a church just to retire, or he will "coast" when he arrives, preaching from his reservoir of sermons. They also fear potential health problems and an inability of the pastor to understand needs of church members.

"In most cases, these are likely false assumptions," Cooper said. "Older ministers understand more of what the ministry is about because of the depth of experience gained over the years.

"The minister over 50 has experienced hurts and trauma personally and in the lives of church members, giving him a greater empathy and making him less judgmental and more objective."

"He also is a better counselor by virtue of his insights and life experiences," Cooper said. "The minister over 50 understands what the ministry is about and is able to establish priorities which eliminate the busy-ness that can occupy so much time. He knows he can't be all things to all people."

Cooper recently conducted a survey among several ministers over 50 in Texas. He found the pastors felt the thing they do best after age 50 is preach, which is usually the first requirement from pastor search committees.

"I think the trend in churches is toward more openness, in terms of age restriction," Cooper said. "However, it is a gradual movement, not a wholesale change."

Adults are much more actively involved today in continuing education than several years ago, he said. More ministers participate in continuing education to sharpen their skills, which keeps them from "dying on the vine."

Improved health care and the knowledge that people can be active and vital past age 50 should lessen the health concern.

The average stay for pastors in Southern Baptist churches now is approximately 2.5 years, Cooper said. Older pastors generally do not move as frequently and can give the church a sense of continuity with an established ministry that will many times be longer than the average.

"Ministry is an attitude as well as a role," Cooper said. "If pastors keep their attitude a loving God will use them and bless them."