



BAPTIST PRESS

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81-176

Maryland Baptists Move Toward 50/50 CP Division

SALISBURY, Md. (BP)--The Baptist Convention of Maryland, in its 146th annual session, approved a motion "strongly recommending that the executive committee of the state mission board attempt to implement a 50-50 percent division of all undesignated Cooperative Program gifts" between state convention and Southern Baptist Convention missions endeavors.

Currently, 61 percent of Cooperative Program gifts are retained by the state convention and 39 percent distributed to world-wide missions causes through the SBC unified budget.

The action said, "furthermore, implementation of this 50-50 division should commence with the 1983 budget and, if possible, be completed within five years."

Maryland Baptists approved a 1982 budget of \$2,812,273, of which \$2,010,000 will come from the 295 churches of the convention. The 39 percent to SBC causes--\$783,900--is a half percent increase over the 1981 budget.

A motion to move toward a 50-50 Cooperative Program distribution was by far the single greatest item of debate during a harmonious convention session on Maryland's eastern shore.

Messengers arriving at the convention's opening session found several hundred copies of a "Bold Mission Thrust Priority Motion" and a cover letter by the motion's author, Dana W. Collett, pastor of First Baptist Church, Savage, Md. Collett said he drafted the motion because of his "deep conviction that Bold Mission Thrust is carried out with efficiency and effectiveness."

During the first business session, the following day, Collett formally presented his motion which called for implementation of the 50-50 division beginning in 1983 and achievement of the directive within five years. Debate and parliamentary procedure confusion quickly followed Collett's presentation as William Hillis, Maryland's member on the SBC Executive Committee and a medical doctor from Baltimore, presented an amendment which toned down Collett's instruction to the state executive committee with the words "strongly urge" and "within five years if possible."

The amendment passed 144 to 112 votes.

The convention was picketed during its Wednesday morning session by Carl McIntyre, a fundamentalist radio preacher, who was protesting the appearance of Alexei Bichkov, pastor of Moscow's Baptist Church.

Bichkov, who came to the United States to attend a meeting of the Baptist World Alliance several weeks ago, is accused by McIntyre of being "an agent of the Soviet Union's Communist government."

McIntyre also picketed Bichkov during the Washington, D. C., meeting of the BWA.

Messengers also re-elected president Lewis McDonald, pastor of Oak Grove Baptist Church of Bel Air, and named their first black first vice-president, Norris Sydnor, associate pastor of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Seabrook.

Resolutions included one which deplored the resurgence of Ku Klux Klan activities in Maryland, and another which expressed "Christian concern that the truly needy will suffer" as a result of federal budget cuts undertaken by President Ronald Reagan and the U.S. Congress.

The 1982 meeting of the Baptist Convention of Maryland will be Nov. 15-17 at Middle River Baptist Church in Baltimore.

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Harmonious Georgians
OK Record Budget

Baptist Press
11/12/81

MARIETTA, Ga. (BP)--Georgia Baptist Convention messengers approved without dissent a record Cooperative Program budget, a big new capital improvement endowment program and possible new programs in world hunger and church-minister relations.

Veteran observers called it one of the most harmonious Georgia convention sessions in years.

W. Ches Smith III, pastor of First Baptist Church in Tifton, was re-elected to a second term as president. He is former chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Approved without discussion was the 1982 Cooperative Program budget of \$18,400,000, representing an increase of 5 percent over 1981. After deduction of almost 10 percent in shared expenses with the SBC, it will be divided on a 50-50 basis between Georgia and Southern Baptist causes, the same percentage as last year.

Georgia messengers also gave quick assent to a \$13,850,000 capital improvement and endowment program. It is the sixth such program approved by Georgia Baptists since 1955. The previous five programs have produced more than \$46 million for Georgia Baptist institutions. The new program is expected to take five years to fully fund from receipts above and beyond basic Cooperative Program budgets.

Georgia Baptists also approved a revision of their state constitution. The major change requires churches to give at least some dollar amount to the Cooperative Program to have more than two messengers to state convention sessions. This change provoked some debate, but was overwhelmingly approved.

Georgia Baptists also called on their president to consider creating a special committee to find more ways to lead Georgia Baptists to help alleviate world hunger and the Georgia Executive Committee was called on to study the possibility of creating a special committee of ministers and laypersons to help mediate problems that arise between churches and staff members. The convention has had a secretary of church-minister relations since 1971.

Messengers voted to reaffirm the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement as their doctrinal stance.

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Some messengers wanted to add stronger statements supporting the virgin birth of Jesus Christ and verbal inspiration of "every single word" of the Bible.

One messenger, Phil Bray, pastor of Corinth Baptist Church of Bremen, moved that the convention add "clarifying" statements of Herschel Hobbs, made during the 1981 meeting of SBC in Los Angeles.

However, the resolutions committee only asked messengers to reaffirm the 1963 statement, which was done without discussion.

Also approved was a resolution urging Baptists to help defeat congressional legislation which would change national election days from Tuesday to Sunday.

Minor conflict arose over nomination of former U.S. Sen. Hermon Talmadge of Hampton, as a trustee of Tift College. Talmadge was defeated in his bid for re-election in 1980 after widespread publicity about his divorce and drinking problems.

After several messengers spoke for and against his election, his pastor, Crist Camden, of First Baptist Church, Hampton, urged messengers to elect Talmadge, and he was overwhelmingly approved.

More than 2,700 messengers registered for the Georgia Baptist Convention sessions at Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta. Host pastor Nelson L. Price was elected first vice-president.

The Georgia Baptist Convention will hold its 1982 annual meeting, Nov. 15-17, at Wieuca Road Baptist Church in Atlanta.

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Target Date 1983
For New England

Baptist Press
11/12/81

SUDBURY, Mass. (BP)--New England Baptists have determined to constitute as a Baptist state convention no later than November 1983.

Currently, the 56 Southern Baptist churches and 27 chapels in the New England states of Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut form the Baptist General Association of New England.

New England Baptists, who counted 20 percent membership growth and 960 baptisms in the past year, are just 200 members short of the 11,000 required for convention status.

Nearly 300 messengers at the annual meeting of the association in Sudbury's First Baptist Church re-elected Bill Graham, pastor of Middletown Baptist Church, Middletown, R. I., president.

David Dean, pastor of the host church, First Baptist, Sudbury, was elected first vice-president and Jesse Smith, pastor of Gonic Baptist Church, Gonic, N.H., was elected clerk.

Messengers passed a \$1,175,032 budget of which \$182,504 is anticipated income from New England congregations. The association will forward 20 percent of its local receipts to national SBC causes, the same percent as last year.

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In addition, messengers adopted a \$14,066 challenge goal to fund preparations to constitute as a convention. It was announced Cooperative Program receipts were up 24.5 percent over the same 10 months last year.

Resolutions endorsed Northeast Thrust efforts of five Southern Baptist bodies in a joint effort at evangelizing the 60 million people in the Northeast; endorsed evangelist Billy Graham's crusade scheduled for April and May in Boston; and spoke appreciation for Maryland Baptists' and the SBC Home Mission Board's involvement in New England missions.

The 1982 meeting of New England Baptists will be Nov. 5-6 at Nashua Baptist Church in Nashua, N. H.

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Louisiana Baptists
On Doubling Track

Baptist Press
11/12/81

PINEVILLE, La. (BP)--Messengers to the 134th Louisiana Baptist Convention adopted a \$15 million budget, elected Perry F. Webb Jr., as president, refused to change the nominating process of its state convention executive board, honored Louisiana College on its 75th anniversary, and adopted 11 resolutions.

The budget goal kept Louisiana Baptists on track to accomplish five-years doubling of Cooperative Program contributions to world missions. It commits 34 percent to SBC causes worldwide, a two-thirds percentage point increase over the current year.

Webb is pastor of First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge. Other officers elected were Charles E. Bennett Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Crowley, first vice-president and Ray Frye, Alexandria, second vice-president.

Following the election of Frye, a layman, as second vice-president, John Sullivan, 1981 convention president, reported that Frye was not an elected messenger to the convention, but was an alternate. Messengers instructed the executive board to rule on the matter based on constitutional requirements.

If Frye is ruled ineligible, Reggie Ogea, pastor of Evans Creek Baptist Church, Pearl River, the other nominee, will be declared elected.

A motion by Jerry M. Windsor, pastor of First Baptist Church, Amite, to change the method of electing members to the executive board was defeated decisively. Windsor's motion would have had board members nominated by the Baptist associations in Louisiana with their names then presented to the state convention for election.

Charles Harvey Jr., pastor of Sunset Acres Baptist Church, Shreveport, opposed the motion as a violation of Baptist polity. "We do not function as a representative government," he said. "An association does not send messengers."

Executive board members will continue to be nominated by the convention's committee on nominations, a 15-member committee named by the committee on committees.

Messengers approved resolutions affirming Sunday closing laws; commending Congress for restoring the \$20,000 tax exemption for employees of charitable and religious organizations working overseas; urging Louisiana Baptists to become more deeply involved in the political process; and continuing strong opposition to attempts to further legalized gambling in Louisiana. Messengers also adopted a resolution opposing secular humanism and all other nontheistic doctrines that teach that man is his own god.

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Convention messengers adopted a recommendation by Lynn Clayton, Baptist Message editor, which states that it is "discriminatory to remove church programming and radio schedules only on the grounds that they are religious in nature." WBRC, Baton Rouge, recently cancelled its Sunday telecast of services at First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, after 20 years on the air.

Robert L. Lee, Louisiana Baptist Convention executive director, missed his first convention in 25 years. He is recovering favorably from surgery and was released from the Rapides General Hospital in Alexandria, Nov. 11.

The 1982 meeting will be at First Baptist Church, Lafayette, Nov. 15-17.

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CORRECTION: In BP story mailed Nov. 10 entitled "Evangelism Thread in Northeast Blanket," final line of graph three should say. . . state convention in 1983 or 1984.

Thanks,

Baptist Press