



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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November 13, 1981

81-177 A

Virginians Adopt CF As Messenger Test

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (BP)--Messengers to the Baptist General Association of Virginia amended their constitution to provide that gifts through the Cooperative Program as the sole basis for messenger qualification.

After considerable debate, messengers voted 713 to 283 to approve the constitutional change.

A similar proposal at the 1980 annual meeting of BGAV received a majority vote but fell short of the required two-thirds by only 15 votes.

The amendment does not change the formula by which messengers qualify, but simply inserts the words "Cooperative Program." Previously, messengers were qualified by contributing to the "funds of the BGAV."

Under the formula, a church making a contribution of any amount is entitled to one messenger. It receives two for \$100; three for \$500, four for \$1,500, and an additional messenger--up to the maximum of 15--for each \$1,000. A total of \$12,500 is required for the maximum number of messengers.

Sherrill Stevens, pastor of Montrose Baptist Church of Richmond and chairman of the revision of the bylaws committee, said the change is not a criticism of the special offerings, but the "intention is to focus on how Virginia Baptists do Virginia Baptist programs."

After the vote, Arthur B. Ballard, pastor of Old Forest Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, told the messengers he feels "the autonomy of my church has been infringed upon. . . I intend to go home and lead my church to become a member of another state organization that doesn't infringe on our autonomy."

In another action, messengers accepted the abortion policy of the Virginia Baptist Hospital in Lynchburg.

The vote was not on abortion, but on whether the 250-bed hospital has satisfied a requirement, adopted in 1978, that the hospital establish a policy on abortion.

George Dawson, hospital administrator, told messengers the policy was adopted in January of 1981, and includes the statement that "abortions are not performed at Virginia Baptist Hospital on the basis of patient convenience."

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They are, however, allowed when, in the opinion of the attending physician, they are "medically indicated for physical or emotional reasons."

Donald Bowen, pastor of Downtown Baptist Church of Alexandria, opposed the acceptance, and noted a hospital report that 110 abortions had been performed in the first eight months of 1981. "I cannot convince myself all of them were not convenience abortions."

Messengers, by a vote of 815 to 470, approved the recommendation that "the hospital has satisfied the 1978 requirement."

The action released \$103,020 which had been held in escrow since the 1980 annual meeting.

Messengers also approved a new "programmatic" relationship with the hospital, in which financial support will be given for the specific programs of ministry at the hospital. Under the new budget, the hospital receives \$23,760 rather than the \$103,020 it previously received.

The convention also will continue to nominate trustees for the hospital.

Ballard presented a resolution to the convention which opposed all abortions except to save the life of the mother, and labeled all abortions as murder and all who perform them as murderers.

The resolutions committee recommended the resolution not be considered. There was no challenge to the committee action.

Only one other resolution was presented. It was a strongly worded statement on the nuclear arms race, and noted the "mentality of violence and the insanity of the current military policy. . . ."

The resolution, presented by Donald J. Dunlap, pastor of West End Baptist Church of Suffolk, called on messengers to intensely seek God's help to multiply efforts for making peace and diminish efforts for making war.

It was passed without debate, but with several shouted no votes.

Messengers elected M. Vernon Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church of Alexandria, as president.

They adopted an \$11.2 million budget, which will be divided 61.5 percent for state missions and 38.5 percent for worldwide missions causes through the Southern Baptist Convention unified budget, an increase of a half percent from 1980.

The 1982 annual meeting will be at First Baptist Church of Alexandria, Nov. 9-10.

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Oklahoma Baptists
Observe Anniversary

Baptist Press
11/13/81

TULSA, Okla. (BP)--Oklahoma Baptists celebrated their 75th anniversary, adopted a record \$13.25 million budget and resolved against the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment in their annual meeting.

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The meeting celebrated 75 years since the merger of the Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory Conventions in 1906.

Messengers elected Keith Wiginton, pastor of First Baptist Church of Altus, as president, succeeding Sam Pace, of Lawton, who did not seek re-election to a second term.

Wiginton, 46, defeated William H. Cook of Bartlesville, for the presidency.

The resolution on the role of women reaffirmed "the biblical role which stresses the equal worth but not always the sameness of function of men and women" and called for equality of opportunity for women who work outside the home.

It concluded that "since we believe the Constitution of the USA already provides for the protection of the equal rights of men and women, we see no justification for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Oklahoma has not ratified the ERA.

The record budget includes a basic budget of \$11,794,752 and an advance section of \$1,330,248. All funds are to be divided 55 percent for state causes and 45 percent for world-wide missions causes through the Southern Baptist Convention unified budget.

The 45 percent represents a one percent increase in the amount going to missions beyond Oklahoma. The state convention previously adopted a plan to move to a 50-50 division by 1985.

The 1982 convention will meet Nov. 16-18 at First Southern Baptist Church, Del City.

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Tennessee Elects Allen,
Asks Beer, Church Space

Baptist Press
11/13/81

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--In quiet convention sessions, Tennessee Baptists elected Wayne Allen president, passed a \$17 million budget, and called for the restoration of a law to keep beer sales 2,000 feet from any school or church.

Allen, pastor of East Park Baptist Church, Memphis, was chairman of the 1980 Southern Baptist Convention committee on resolutions. He was named to that post by then SBC President Adrian Rogers, who nominated him as Tennessee president.

Tennessee will forward 35.75 percent of its budget receipts to world missions causes through the national Cooperative Program. That is a .25 percent point increase over the previous year and marks the fifth consecutive increase after a 17-year distribution of 33.33 percent to worldwide causes.

Convention President John David Laida read a letter from U.S. Sen. Jim Sasser in which Sasser commended Tennessee Baptists for their involvement in the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tenn. Sasser is sending a flag which has flown over the U.S. Capitol Building to be flown at the Baptist pavilion at the World's Fair.

Messengers created a seven-member lay committee to update the 1976 study on clergy compensation. The committee, as yet unnamed, will be nominated in time for confirmation by the executive board in December.

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The convention also adopted a resolution noting their sense of loss at the Nov. 2 death of Huber Drumwright, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. The resolution noted Drumwright's exemplary skills with pen, pulpit and podium.

The 1982 Tennessee Baptist Convention will meet Nov. 16-18 at the Leawood Baptist Church, Memphis.

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South Carolinians Name
Ray Rust As Executive

Baptist Press
11/13/81

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)--South Carolina Baptists elected a new executive secretary-treasurer, adopted a \$16 million budget, honored its retiring executive and acted on 14 resolutions in its Nov. 10-11 meeting.

It also rejected moves to change the constitution and bylaws on baptism and board representation.

The convention unanimously elected Ray P. Rust to become executive secretary next March 1 on the retirement of A. Harold Cole.

Rust, a Louisiana native, came to South Carolina in March 1978 as president of Anderson College. Previously, he was executive vice president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a pastor in Louisiana for 28 years.

Cole has been executive secretary-treasurer since Jan. 1, 1970. Earlier he had been assistant executive secretary for seven years, and prior to that was director of student ministries for seven years.

Cole notified the general board and convention a year ago of his plans for early retirement. He will be 62 on March 23.

The 1982 Cooperative Program budget is \$1.5 million larger than the 1981 budget. It has a current operating and capital needs total of \$12.9 million and a challenge portion of \$3.1 million. The current and capital portions include \$4.6 million for the Southern Baptist Convention and \$8.3 for causes in South Carolina. The SBC portion is 38.71 percent of the basic budget, up a half percent from 1981.

The \$3.1 million challenge is to be divided equally between SBC causes and the development of Baptist ministries for the aging in South Carolina.

Horace B. Sims Jr., pastor of Abney Memorial Church, Greenwood, was elected president. He has been first vice-president of the convention during the past year.

The convention rejected a proposed constitutional change which would have restricted its membership. The proposal would have changed Article IV to read, "The Convention shall consist of messengers from Baptist churches in the state, composed of baptized believers," but did not interpret the word "baptized."

James A. Howard of Landrum gave notice of the proposed change in 1980. It was presented for action this year by Everett Tolbert of Greer, and was voted down.

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The proposed change would have excluded messengers from churches which accept transfer members whose baptism was by a method other than immersion. At least two--First Baptist Church, Greenwood, and First Baptist Church, Clemson--accept members by this method, although both baptize only by immersion.

Bylaw changes proposed by Edwin Quattlebaum of Hartsville also were defeated. Quattlebaum asked members of the general board and trustees of the institutions and agencies be ineligible for re-election for two years after rotating off the board. The current requirement is for one year off.

Messengers adopted a resolution reaffirming the Baptist Faith and Message Statement. The resolution was adopted rather than an "inerrancy" resolution proposed by Harry Lane of Eutawville.

A resolution on abortion affirms the sanctity of human life and calls for the Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee to study policies and practices, including those of the Baptist Hospitals in Columbia and Easley and to report to the general board executive committee by next May, and to the convention in 1982.

Other resolutions concerned alleviating world hunger, encouraging greater efforts in Bold Missions, asking Baptists to show greater concern on illegal drug abuse and to support the public school system, to pray for peace and to call upon the Congress to de-escalate the nuclear arms race.

Messengers also saw a historical pageant depicting the development and early history of First Baptist Church, Charleston, oldest in the SBC, which will celebrate its 300th anniversary in 1982.

The 1982 convention will be Nov. 16-17 in Spartanburg.

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Michigan Baptists Honor
Tennesseans, WMU Head

Baptist Press
11/13/81

TRENTON, Mich. (BP)--Michigan Baptists highlighted their partnership with the Tennessee Baptist Convention and lauded one of their own during their annual meeting.

Tennessee personalities were featured on the program, including Tom Madden, TBC executive; James Sullivan of Nashville, retired president of the Baptist Sunday School Board; Kenneth Hubbard, pastor of Mount Olive Baptist Church in Knoxville, and C. L. Huling, minister of music at First Baptist Church of Hendersonville.

In addition to recognizing the partnership, Michigan Baptists honored Dorothy Sample, who was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention Woman's Missionary Union in Los Angeles.

Robert Wilson, Michigan executive, told messengers Sample is probably the first person from a newer area to be elected president of a national agency. She was feted at a reception during the convention.

Messengers re-elected Milton Wood, pastor of Gorham Baptist Church in Jackson, to a second term as president.

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They also adopted a budget of \$1,994,000 for 1982, with \$877,000 to be contributed by the churches of the convention, of which 25.5 percent--or \$224,000--will go to world-wide causes through the Southern Baptist Convention unified budget. It represents a half percent increase.

Messengers also passed a resolution decrying the tendency to "blend conservative Christian theology and conservative political policy," and urged resistance to "the spirit of intolerance and polarization that may surface" when they are linked.

The 1982 annual meeting--the 25th anniversary of the convention--will be Nov. 9-11 at Bethany Baptist Church of Lansing.

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California Defines
Cooperative Church

Baptist Press
11/13/81

MONTEREY, Calif. (BP)--California Baptists added a new section to their constitution that defines a cooperative church as one that has no articles of faith that contradict the Baptist Faith and Message statement and that contributes "financially to the work of this convention." It did not specifically mention Cooperative Program.

Meeting in annual session, elected messengers, approved a study committee report adding the definition to the constitution's membership article. James Morton, California convention president in 1979, named the committee at the request of messengers after conflict arose over the seating of messengers from some churches.

The change was passed with little discussion and the convention continued quietly through the passage of a \$7.7 million budget and the election of W. A. Burkey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fairfield, as president.

The convention will send 27.5 percent of its receipts to world missions causes through the national Cooperative Program, an increase of .5 percent over the previous year.

Messengers defeated an attempted second constitutional change that would have assured equal distribution of representatives from associations on convention boards and agencies. The primary argument against the proposal was that it would eliminate from representation any church not affiliated with an association.

Convention Executive Director Robert Hughes was presented with a gift of \$4,000 in recognition of his 15 years leadership. The offering, authorized by the executive board and taken in churches in the previous month, is to be used by the Hughes for a Christmas trip to be with their missionary children in France and Africa. Hughes underwent heart surgery in September and is now working regularly.

Messengers passed a resolution opposing tuition tax credits or the use of any public funds to benefit private or parochial schools.

They also urged restrictions be placed on cable network contracts to prevent the showing of filmed, actual or simulated sex acts, XXX movies such as Deep Throat or other adult or "kiddie porn."

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The pornography resolution also reminded city councils and county supervisors they have the authority to regulate as a public trust adult book stores and that they can keep adult sex material out of public parks.

Other resolutions expressed concern over groups that promote their superiority over another racial group; called on the convention's 1,200 churches and missions to work harder at strengthening the family as the basic social unit of society; and called for support of the public school system.

The 1982 convention meeting will be Nov. 16-18 at Raincross Square, a convention center in Riverside.

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New York Sets Goal
For 25,000 Members

Baptist Press
11/13/81

ALBANY, N.Y. (BP)--Messengers to the Baptist Convention of New York set a goal to reach 25,000 members by 1984.

Under Southern Baptist Convention guidelines, a state convention is eligible for representation on all committees, boards, agencies and institutions when it passes the 25,000-member mark.

"This is a realistic goal," said Jack Lowndes, executive director of BCNY, who added the last report showed some 20,000 members.

He explained, however, that there are 85 units of non-English speaking churches among the 250 of the convention, many of whom do not fill out the uniform church letter.

"A survey indicated that if all of our churches turned in church letters, we would have at least 23,500 members," he said.

In other business, messengers re-elected Curtis Porter, pastor of Amherst Baptist Church of Tonawanda, a suburb of Buffalo, as president.

They also approved a committee to study the constitution and bylaws and report to the 1982 annual meeting. The basic document has not revised in the 13-year history of the convention. Don Hunt, pastor of Clinton Road Baptist Church of Utica, is chairman.

Also, messengers recognized a new association, the Long Island Baptist Association, which increases the number of associations to nine--three of which have been formed in the past 14 months.

Messengers adopted a budget of \$1,648,045, of which \$344,109 will come from the churches of the convention. Out of the basic budget, 21 percent--\$74,783--will be contributed to worldwide missions causes through the Southern Baptist Convention unified budget.

When the basic budget is reached, 100 percent of the contributions will be sent on to worldwide causes, until it reaches 22 percent of the total, at which time 50 percent will go to the SBC unified budget, 25 percent to state missions and 25 percent to a fund for a new state office building.

The 1982 annual meeting will be Nov. 4-6 at Amherst Baptist Church in Tonawanda.

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