



-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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Arizona Baptists Top
100,000-Member Mark

CHANDLER, Ariz. (BP)--Arizona Southern Baptists were told they have topped the 100,000-member mark as they met for their annual convention Nov. 10-12

In addition, Executive Director-Treasurer Jack Johnson said that about 100 new units--including church-type missions and fellowship Bible classes--were started during the past year.

The meeting featured little discussion, and two of the three top officers of the convention were elected without opposition.

Charles Pollard, pastor of Twenty-second Street Baptist Church in Tucson, was elected without opposition to a full term as president. Pollard succeeded Wendell Freeze, a Yuman layman, at mid-year, when Freeze resigned to join the state convention professional staff.

Clark Johnson, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Flagstaff, was elected first vice president, defeating Owen Overton, pastor of West Glendale Baptist Church. Overton then was named second vice president without opposition.

Messengers adopted a record budget of \$2.9 million, of which \$2,058,000 will be given by the churches of the convention. The convention will contribute 25.5 percent of its budget to worldwide causes through the Southern Baptist Convention unified budget, an increase of a half percent over 1981.

Resolutions included one calling for prayer for President Ronald Reagan and other national leaders and another supporting Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt's recommendation to raise the legal drinking age from 19 to 21.

The 1982 meeting will be held Nov. 9 - 11 in Tucson.

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Florida Baptists
Adopts Priorities

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11/16/81

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Florida Baptists, meeting in their annual convention, Nov. 9 - 11, took a look at priorities and goals for 1982-85.

Among those adopted were 120,000 baptisms, enrollment gains of 85,000 in Bible study, the training of 120,000 persons to share their Christian witness, leading 2,500 church members to volunteer for career missions and church-related vocations and seeing 500 additional persons appointed as short-term missionaries.

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Also the Floridians set a goal of increasing the number of organized churches to 1,700 from the current 1,573, and increasing Cooperative Program gifts to \$21 million by 1985.

Messengers elected William E. Anderson, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church of Stillwater, as convention president.

The 1981-82 Cooperative Program goal of \$14,556,660 was adopted. The Cooperative Program basic budget of \$12,882,000 will be divided 52 percent for Florida state causes and 48 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes, the same percentage as last year.

Money received over the basic budget, known as the advance budget, will be designated at 17 percent for Florida Baptist institutions and agencies, 32 percent for SBC causes, with replacement in the debt reserve fund in the amount equal to funds withdrawn from it in the preceding year for debt payments, and the balance to be placed in the state missions fund. The 32 percent for SBC causes was doubled from 1980-81.

Florida Baptists were challenged last year to increase Cooperative Program gifts at least 13 percent annually. Churches responded by giving 13.61 percent more than the preceding year. The 13 percent annual increase in giving is necessary for a goal of a 50-50 division of all Cooperative Program funds to be reached by 1985.

The state convention accepted the recommendations of the state board of missions to purchase approximately 25 acres in two parcels, bordering the eastern perimeter of Blue Springs Baptist Assembly near Marianna.

The messengers reacted to two convention policies already on the books. One dealt with the state board of missions' action Sept. 11, 1981, which revised a policy related to financial assistance to churches and missions. Slated to go into effect Jan. 1, 1983, the change would have required an escalation from five to 10 percent as the minimum rate a church or mission might give to the Cooperative Program to be eligible for aid. The state board of missions was requested by the convention to rescind this action, restoring the previous guideline of five percent.

Another motion was aimed at changing the convention's retirement policy. Instead of mandatory retirement at age 65, it would be "at age 65 upon mutual agreement of the executive treasurer and the employee." The motion was referred to the state board of missions for study.

Resolutions included those opposing casino gambling and tuition tax credit, and one calling for better cooperation between the Florida Baptist Convention and the black conventions of Florida--namely the General Baptist State Convention and the Progressive Missionary and Educational Baptist State Convention.

The 1982 convention will be held Nov. 15 - 17 in Tampa.

Northwest Asks SBC To Accept Canadians

BELLINGHAM, Wash. (BP)--Messengers to the Northwest Baptist Convention annual meeting unanimously called on the Southern Baptist Convention to seat messengers from Canadian Baptist churches.

Messengers from the 59 "Southern" Baptist churches in Canada's western provinces have been seated at meetings of the Northwest convention since 1952.

The Northwest constitution, however, varies from that of the SBC in that its membership is "messengers elected by New Testament churches of like faith who fellowship through the Northwest Baptist Convention."

The SBC constitution says the convention is "a general organization for Baptists in the United States and its territories," which means the constitution would have to be changed for the SBC to formally seat messengers from Canada.

The Northwest resolution calls for its executive board to look into the possibility of asking for such a change.

Churches in other countries where SBC foreign missionaries work are not called "Southern" Baptist. There are no Foreign Mission Board representatives working in Canada but the Home Mission Board does support some work there.

Messengers also adopted a budget of \$2,434,274 of which \$1,462,500 is anticipated income from Northwest convention churches. Thirty-two percent of those receipts will be forwarded for national SBC causes, a one percent increase over 1981.

Convention President Doyle J. Collins, pastor of Vine Street Baptist Church, Roseburg, Ore., was re-elected without opposition.

Messengers also approved resolutions calling for the Soviet Union to permit the so-called "Siberian Seven," Soviet Christians living in exile in the American Embassy in Moscow for more than four years, to emigrate to the United States. The resolution urged the state department to assist in the process.

Other resolutions supported the Texas Baptist executive board and Christian Life Commission in their call for a U. S. presidential commission on the drunk driver problem in America.

Also approved without opposition was a minor constitutional change which increased the size of the convention's executive board to 36. To illustrate the harmony of the meeting, only two negative votes were cast the entire time.

The 1982 convention will be held Nov. 9 - 11 in Portland, Ore.

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Utah-Idaho Records
'Firsts' At Meeting

Baptist Press
11/16/81

BOISE, Idaho (BP)--Messengers to the 17th annual convention of the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention adopted their first \$1 million-plus budget and elected the first woman officer and the first layman president in their history.

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The messengers adopted a \$1,011,232 budget, of which \$308,460 will be contributed by the 80 churches affiliated with the convention. Of those receipts 20 percent--the same percentage as last year--will be contributed to worldwide mission causes through the Southern Baptist Convention unified budget.

Carroll Reynolds, a layman from Calvary Baptist Church of Boise, was named president, the first time a layman has been named to lead the convention.

Two past presidents, John Embery, pastor of Calvary church, Boise, and Lavold Robertson, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Clearfield, Utah, were elected first and second vice presidents.

Carol (Mrs. Robert C.) Browning, a member of Alta Canyon Baptist Church of Sandy, Utah, was elected recording secretary, the first woman to hold elective post.

Resolutions called for support of the American Bible Society and the cooperation and support of Baptists in the Billy Graham Crusade, scheduled for Boise, Aug. 8 - 15, 1982.

The 1982 convention will meet at Granger Baptist Church, West Valley City, Utah, Nov. 9 - 10.

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Kentucky Baptists To Up
Worldwide Missions Gifts

Baptist Press
11/16/81

ELIZABETHTOWN, Ky. (BP)--In a major decision, messengers to the Kentucky Baptist Convention adopted a motion to increase the present 35 percent contribution of Cooperative Program receipts to Southern Baptist causes by a minimum of five percent by 1990.

The motion, made by convention President Bill Whittaker, pastor of Murray First Baptist Church, passed with only token opposition. The motion leaves making plans to implement the change up to the convention's executive board.

An amendment to add similar increases to in-state Christian education, proposed by Ben Elrod, president of Georgetown College, was overwhelmingly defeated.

In another major action the convention voted to enter a three-year partnership plan linking the state with Ohio Baptists. The objective of the plan is to launch 25 new churches and strengthen 125 existing ones in Ohio by 1985.

Messengers adopted resolutions condemning attempts by state officials to place liquor in the state resort parks system, expressing favor of a study of drunk driving in America and reaffirming support of the American Bible Society.

Messengers designated Sunday, May 30, 1982, as Peace Sunday on the denominational calendar, calling for special sermons and other programs aimed at promoting peace.

Messengers adopted a \$15.9 million budget for 1982-83, which includes 35 percent--the same percentage as last year--for worldwide missions causes through the SBC unified budget.

The well-publicized reaction of Bell Baptist Association to one of its churches accepting members without immersion never surfaced directly during the convention. Though there were rumors, nothing came of it.

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Concern had been expressed in the corridors over the disfellowshipping of messengers of First Baptist Church, Middlesboro, by Bell Baptist Association last month. The association took the action because of the church's open membership policy. There was speculation in advance of the convention that messengers from the Middlesboro church might not be seated at the state convention, but they were, without debate.

It was, in fact, such a quiet week, one metropolitan daily reporter who arrived for the rumored "Baptist fireworks" packed his gear the afternoon of the first day and returned home.

"The convention was without issue," he observed.

Even the election of a president, generally able to spark at least a mild contest of sorts, provoked none. Of 811 votes cast, William D. Jagers, pastor of Cynthiana, Ky., Baptist Church, easily ran away with the election, garnering 74 percent of the votes cast--599 votes. The remainder was split between Glenn Henderson, a Marrowbone layman (121 votes) and Henry Johns, pastor of Versailles, Ky., Baptist Church (91 votes).

Henderson was later elected first vice-president without opposition. Also elected without opposition was Roy Faulkner, pastor of Evarts Baptist Church in Upper Cumberland Association, as second vice president.

The 1982 session will be held at Lexington's Immanuel Baptist Church, Nov. 9 - 11.

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Kansas-Nebraska Names
Mission Offering for Webb

Baptist Press
11/16/81

PRAIRIE VILLAGE, Kans. (BP)--Messengers to the annual meeting of the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists named their annual state missions offering after Viola Webb, who retires next spring after 25 years as convention Woman's Missionary Union director.

They also recognized 10 churches for beginning new work during the year, seated three new churches including a Hmong congregation from Kansas City, and reaffirmed their commitment to begin 200 churches by the year 2000.

Dale Buckhman, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Liberal, Kans., was elected president. He was first vice president this year.

Messengers approved a \$2,308,956 budget, of which \$1.3 million is expected from Kansas-Nebraska churches. Of that, 24 percent will be forwarded to worldwide mission causes through the national Cooperative Program, an increase of one percent over the current year.

A committee was appointed to study the feasibility of producing the Baptist Digest, news journal for the convention, weekly instead of the current bi-weekly.

Resolutions encouraged churches to increase their gifts to the Cooperative Program by one percentage point each year, as the state convention has done; urged church members to become knowledgeable and supportive of mentally and physically handicapped; and noted with appreciation the contribution of America's veterans.

Messengers also voted to establish a fraternal relationship between the Kansas-Nebraska convention and Baptists in Malawi and Zambia. Several Baptist state conventions have such a relationship with other countries in which they send volunteers to assist local Baptists in specific evangelism and relationship building projects.

The 1982 meeting of the Kansas-Nebraska convention will be Nov. 9 - 11 at First Southern Baptist Church, Liberal, Kans.

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