



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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November 9, 1982

82-159

West Virginia Convention
Accepts Out-of-State Churches

By Craig Bird

PARKERSEURG, W. Va. (BP)—The West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists has reached beyond the state borders to accept two Virginia churches and a Kentucky church as members.

Also at the annual meeting of the WCSB, messengers adopted the convention's first \$1 million budget, \$1,009,169. Southern Baptist Convention agencies will provide \$576,879 of that amount, most coming from the Home Mission Board with other support from the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Woman's Missionary Union.

West Virginia will send 22.5 percent of the \$97,264 given by local congregations to worldwide causes of the SEC Cooperative Program, down from 25.5 percent last year.

The Virginia churches, Old Forrest Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, and Barboursville Baptist Church in Barboursville, were accepted as full members while an independent church in Louisville, Ky., Christ Is King Baptist Church, was accepted under watchcare with a final decision on membership to be made at the 1983 convention.

Five churches in West Virginia also were accepted as members—four former chapels that had constituted into churches and Highlawn Baptist Church in Huntington, the largest American Baptist Church in the state, became dually aligned.

The Louisville congregation, which is not a member of either the Kentucky Baptist Convention or the Long Run Baptist Association (Louisville), was first accepted into full membership but a motion to reconsider was introduced at a later business session. Eventually the 250 messengers voted unanimously to put the church on watchcare status in order to acquire more information, according to Jack Walls, editor of the West Virginia Southern Baptist.

The two Virginia churches applied for membership several months ago but Christ Is King church's application was not received until just before the convention opened. The church did not have any messengers present, Walls said.

Two of the pastors of the out-of-state churches said mission opportunities in West Virginia motivated them to seek alignment with the West Virginia convention while the third said the abortion policy of Virginia Baptist Hospital caused his church to join WCSB.

"We have our first mission trip up there planned for next week," said Art Ballard, pastor of Old Forrest Road Baptist Church. "We have been giving through the West Virginia convention for quite a while and I am excited about the leadership in West Virginia and the opportunities for direct mission work for our members here."

Ballard announced last year he would lead his church out of the Baptist General Association of Virginia after that state convention voted to make gifts through to the Cooperative Program the sole basis for messenger qualification.

"We will remain dually aligned with the Virginia convention and keep sending a little money there," Ballard said. He said he had no desire to lead his church out of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Thomas Riner, a Kentucky state legislator, said he decided to sign up his independent church with a state convention after hearing "that many West Virginia counties don't have a single Southern Baptist church." He said Ballard and Floyd Tidsworth, director of missions, stewardship and Brotherhood for the WCSB, called him and, in the three-way conversation, asked him to apply for membership.

Christ Is King Baptist Church meets in Riner's home in Louisville.

Although his church has been independent, Riner is no stranger to the Southern Baptist Convention. At the 1980 SEC meeting in St. Louis he and his wife, Claudia, were disqualified as messengers when it was discovered they were "not in friendly cooperation or sympathetic with the purposes" of the denomination as required in the SEC bylaws.

The Riners signed forms indicating their church (Logos Baptist Church) had contributed \$2,300 to convention causes in 1979 and was eligible for the maximum 10 messengers—but C.R. Daley, editor of the Kentucky Baptist state newspaper, the Western Recorder, told the credentials committee the Kentucky Baptist Convention had no record of the contribution.

Six other messengers registered from Logos Baptist Church and all the cards had been signed by Claudia Riner as church clerk. Two messengers from Christ Is King Baptist Church had registered with cards signed by Mrs. Riner. At the time Riner was pastor of both congregations.

The Riners were requested to appear before the SEC credentials committee but failed to do so. Daley said Christ Is King church has been making contributions to the Kentucky Baptist Convention and was eligible to join the Kentucky Baptist Convention but had declined to do so.

Wayne Huckaby, pastor at Barboursville, said his church "couldn't in good conscience see God's money going to Virginia Baptist Hospital and funding abortions—even though the policy has been changed so that it is not 'abortion on demand'—the policy is still not acceptable."

He said he had mixed feelings, "happy because we have some place we can deposit our money and remain in the Southern Baptist Convention but unhappy about the way the Virginia convention is going." The "extremely liberal positions of the religion department of the University of Richmond" (which receives state convention funds) also figured in the decision, he said.

Barboursville, which is about 65 miles from the West Virginia border, will continue to send \$200 a year to the Virginia convention in addition to designated gifts to the Baptist home for the elderly and the state children's home.

Louisville is about 150 miles west of the West Virginia border and Lynchburg is about 175 miles southeast.

Tidsworth said West Virginia is not courting out-of-state congregations but "we feel good about what is happening here and about Mountain State 200 (an effort to double the number of SEC congregations in five years). We realize there are limitations to what we can do for them but we can use all the help we can get in starting new work here."

Tidsworth also pointed out that several churches in West Virginia are aligned with either the Virginia convention or the Maryland Convention of Baptists.

The only other business item to attract much attention was a proposed constitutional change to enlarge the administrative committee of the executive board and to delineate the responsibilities of each member. "There was general agreement the change should be considered but there was hesitation to make such sweeping changes without more study," Walls said. The matter was referred to the constitution committee for study with a recommendation to be made to the 1983 state convention at Edgemont Baptist Church in Bluefield, W. Va.

Ron Dillon, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Parkersburg (which hosted the 1982 convention) was elected president for 1983. He was president of the WCSB in 1976, 1977 and 1978. Al Griffin, pastor of Westmoreland Baptist Church in Huntington, was elected first vice president and Jim Holt, pastor of Highland Avenue Baptist Church in South Charleston, was elected second vice president.

Sabbath-Observing Adventist
Regains Job As Nurse's Aide

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)—Essie Morris, a Seventh-day Adventist who lost her nurse's aide job at a private Long Island, N.Y., hospital for refusing to work on her Sabbath, will be reinstated with back pay following the U.S. Supreme Court's refusal to review a lower decision in her favor.

Morris, who worked at North Shore University Hospital, Manhasset, between 1967 and 1976, was fired from her position as an infant-care aide in violation of a New York law requiring employers to accommodate the religious requirements of employees, lower courts ruled.

Like Jews, Seventh-day Baptists and others, Seventh-day Adventists observe their day of worship on the traditional Sabbath, which runs from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday.

When she complained to state human rights authorities, two panels agreed with her claim that the hospital failed to make a reasonable effort to accommodate her church's strict Sabbath-observing requirements. Two state courts, including New York's highest tribunal, upheld the human rights panel's rulings.

In appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court, attorneys for the hospital said their client sought to reassign Morris to two other jobs but that she failed to qualify.

They also argued that the New York law guaranteeing Sabbath observers the right to time off on their holy day or days amounted to an unconstitutional establishment of religion.

Attorneys for the New York human rights panels countered that Morris sought to be cooperative by offering to work six, instead of the normal five, nights a week in order to have Friday nights off but was refused.

They argued, and the nation's high court agreed, 8-1, that the Supreme Court had no jurisdiction to review the New York decisions. Only Justice John Paul Stevens voted to set the case for oral argument (82-293, North Shore University Hospital vs. State Human Rights Board).

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New England Baptists
Set Convention Date

Baptist Press
11/9/82

NASHUA, N.H. (BP)—Messengers to the annual meeting of the Baptist General Association of New England have set Nov. 3-5, 1983, as the date they will organize into a state convention.

Although the association, which is affiliated with the Baptist Convention of Maryland, met Southern Baptist Convention guidelines for state convention status this year, it was decided to postpone organizing as a convention until 1983, which is the 200th anniversary year of the birth of Luther Rice, a pioneer mission leader.

"We have been functioning as a convention for three years," said James Currin, executive director. "We really won't be doing anything different, except that we will be sending Cooperative Program contributions directly to the SEC, rather than through the Maryland convention, as we have been doing."

During the annual meeting, messengers were told the association now has 100 congregations—69 constituted churches, and 31 church-type missions—and some 12,000 members. Under SEC guidelines, a fellowship must have 12,000 members in 50 congregations or 10,000 members in 70 congregations to be granted recognition.

Messengers also adopted a \$1,408,918 budget for the coming year, of which \$241,188 will come from the association congregations. Of that, 20 percent will be sent to support worldwide mission causes through the SEC Cooperative Program, the same percentage as last year.

The 137 registered messengers elected David Dean, pastor of First Baptist Church of Sudbury, Mass., as president.

The 1983 meeting will be in Rice Memorial Baptist Church in Northborough, Mass.

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Evangelism Conferences Arouse African Leaders To Reach Cities

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (BP)—Getting out of the classroom and into the streets gave participants in west African urban evangelism conferences a new enthusiasm for reaching Africa's cities with the gospel.

"I have walked through my city many times to buy in the market or to go from one place to another but I have never really seen it. I am seeing it now through new eyes," said Samuel D. Hill, executive secretary of the Liberia Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, Inc.

Even pastors who showed little interest at the beginning of the conference became enthusiastic after participating in preliminary surveys of host cities, said Farrell Runyan, church growth consultant for Africa.

"Some of our more prestigious pastors in Lagos and Ibadan were there wearing out shoe leather—going from house to house meeting people and asking questions," he said.

Runyan and missionary Jimmy Maroney, director of the Center for Urban Evangelism, Nairobi, Kenya, led conferences in Abidjan, Ivory Coast; Monrovia, Liberia; Ibadan, Nigeria, and Kumasi, Ghana. Each conference featured morning seminars followed by afternoons devoted to preliminary surveys of the host cities. Missionaries and Baptist leaders tried to determine what kind of people lived in the cities, what their needs were and whether any of them would be willing to be hosts for Bible studies.

Not only did teams find people willing to have Bible studies in their homes but several found people ready to start immediately. In Ibadan surveyors found one of the most responsive areas to be the Bodija estate area where many executives and administrators live. There one team met a Moslem Alhadji (one who has made a pilgrimage to Mecca) who offered his home for Bible study.

In Ghana where the conference was held at the Baptist seminary, enthusiasm was so great among Baptist leaders and students that Runyan said he felt almost like a revival had broken out. Ghanaian Baptists, he added, are excited about evangelism in spite of difficult living conditions caused by economic problems in the country.

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New York Convention Adopts Peace Resolution

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11/9/82

BUFFALO, N.Y. (BP)—Resolutions on peace, world hunger and a nuclear arms freeze were adopted by messengers to the annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of New York, Nov. 5-6.

The resolution on peace, submitted by Tom Cairns, a member of Rochester Baptist Church, and Christian social missions missionary in Rochester, called on the convention to calendar the Sunday corresponding to Memorial Day as a Peace Sabbath.

The world hunger resolution, proposed by David Buck, pastor of Terril Road Baptist Church of Scotch Plains, N. J., called on the congregations of the BCNY to support efforts of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to alleviate world hunger. It also called on the president of the convention to appoint a committee on foreign and domestic hunger to work with the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission to inform the churches and the laity about the problem and to report back to the annual BCNY meeting in 1983.

While the peace and world hunger resolutions passed easily, spirited debate marked the nuclear freeze resolution, which was adopted on a divided vote. The resolution, which was prepared by the resolutions committee, chaired by Bill Walker, pastor of Rochester Baptist Church, calls for a unilateral freeze on nuclear arms by the United States and efforts to bring about worldwide disarmament.

Another resolution, also proposed by the resolutions committee, was referred to the executive committee. It opposed the proposed constitutional amendment on prayer in the public schools.

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During the annual meeting, at Amhearst Baptist Church in the Buffalo suburb of Tonawanda, messengers adopted a total budget of \$1,794,256, of which \$400,188 will come from the 100 churches and 90 missions of the convention. Of that, 22 percent will be sent to support worldwide missions efforts through the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program, an increase of one percent over last year.

Messengers elected Wesley Ellis, pastor of Vassar Road Baptist Church in Poughkeepsie, as president.

The site and date of the 1983 meeting was not set, but will be established by the convention executive board when it meets later in November.

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Annuity Board Assets
Exceed \$1 Billion

By Ray Furr

Baptist Press
11/9/82

DALLAS (BP)—Assets of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board have exceeded \$1 billion for the first time in board history trustees were told in their Fall meeting.

Darold H. Morgan, board president, told trustees that increased member contributions and management of the contributions moved assets beyond a billion dollars considerably ahead of schedule.

Morgan said the event "basically represents the spiritual vitality of the churches and agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention." He continued, "The fund really needs to be four or five times larger than this when you consider the retirement needs of those who have already retired and those who will retire from these funds which belong to them."

Trustees approved an \$8.8 million budget for 1983, a 13 percent increase over the 1982 budget. Major projects funded for 1982 include continued preparation for a new proposed church annuity plan, expanded marketing and promotion to the churches of the convention, the expansion of the church insurance system and a records update program for the retirement system. A freeze on hiring persons for new positions until July 1982, was announced as a measure to reduce personnel costs.

Other actions included the approval of a 13th Check amounting to 10 percent of the annual benefit of annuitants receiving benefits as of Nov. 30, 1982, and were receiving their retirement checks before Jan. 1, 1980, if investment earnings do not substantially decrease. A two percent good experience credit was granted to Plan A participants accounts.

In compliance with the new Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982, an amendment was adopted to allow members in the Southern Baptist retirement program to contribute up to \$30,000 or 25 percent (whichever is less) of their annual compensation to their pension plans.

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CORRECTION: In BP mailed 11/8/82, please correct seventh graf of "Reports Scarce After Coup Topples Upper Volta Ruler," to show there are 22 missionaries there, rather than 20 as sent.

Thanks,

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