



# - - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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## Alabama Baptists Hit Joint Committee Funding

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--Messengers to the Alabama Baptist Convention annual meeting passed a resolution asking that funding for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs be totally withdrawn.

In addition to spending nearly an hour debating the resolution on the BJCPA and its executive director, James M. Dunn, messengers elected a former Nixon White House staffer as president, increased giving to Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program causes and honored its executive secretary who retires at the end of the year.

The debate on the BJCPA put two members of the SBC Executive Committee on different sides of the issue, and saw a newly elected at-large member of the SBC Public Affairs Committee apparently urge messengers to defund the organization of which he is a board member.

Dotson Nelson, pastor-emeritus of Mountainbrook Baptist Church of Birmingham, urged defeat of the resolution, while Jimmy Jackson, pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church of Huntsville, recommended its passage. Both mem are members of the SBC Executive Committee.

Albert Lee Smith, a member of Southside Baptist Church of Birmingham who also is a member of the board of BJCPA, was critical of Dunn and his membership on the executive board of People for the American Way, a first amendment rights coalition headed by John Buchanan, the man who Smith defeated in the 1980 Republican primary for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Smith, in turn, was defeated after serving one term as a congressman. Smith has been critical of Dunn, and recently wrote a long letter to the Alabama Baptist, newsjournal of the Alabama Baptist Convention, detailing his unhappiness with PAW and with Dunn. The primary complaint was that one of the founders of PAW is Norman Lear, the television producer of such shows as "All In The Family," and "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman."

Some observers saw Smith's participation in the debate as calling for the defunding of BJCPA, on which he serves as a director, by virtue of his election in 1983 as a member of the SBC Public Affairs Committee. The 15-members of the Public Affairs Committee automatically serve as directors of the BJCPA.

Dewayne Lasseter, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Birmingham, introduced a resolution calling on Dunn to either remove himself from all associations with People for the American Way, including membership on the advisory board, or resign as executive director of BJCPA.

When the resolutions committee reported on the resolution, it referred to Dunn by title rather than by name and called on the SBC Executive Committee to "study the matter and take appropriate steps regarding the situation."

It notes that while the SBC funds 80 percent of the BJCPA budget, it is only one of nine groups affiliated to form the organization, and has only one third of the membership on the board of directors.

It adds that Dunn, despite numerous protests, continues to maintain membership in PAW, described in the resolution as an organization "some of whose founders and supporters espouse philosophies which are contrary to biblical principles and decency and morality."

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During the debate, Nelson urged defeat of the resolution, and said: "I'm tired of Baptists being used politically."

M.J. (Ben) Daniels, a layman from Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, offered an amendment to "withdraw totally the SBC's support of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs."

A move was made to refer the whole matter to the Alabama Baptist State Executive Board by Wayne Stephens, pastor of Lineville Baptist Church, but messengers defeated the effort on a 244-213 ballot.

When the motion to refer was being debated, Smith attempted to address messengers, citing his objections to PAW. Harrell Cushing, pastor of First Baptist Church of Gadsden, and president of the convention, instructed Smith to speak to the motion to refer, and would not allow him to continue.

Smith then urged messengers to vote against referring it.

During the debate, Jackson urged passage of the amendment withdrawing all support and referred to Dunn's membership on the PAW, by saying: "This is not the first bad decision by this individual."

Nelson called it "guilt by association," and asked: "I wonder how Jesus would have acted?"

After the long debate, messengers approved the amended resolution by a two-thirds margin.

In a close election, messengers elected Wallace Henley, pastor of McElwain Baptist Church in Birmingham, as convention president. His margin of victory was only 18 votes.

Henley, 42, was 1983 president of the Alabama Pastor's Conference, and was a member of the White House staff during the Nixon administration. He has been a frequent critic of the BJCPA and of Dunn.

In a post-election press conference, Henley praised Dunn as "one of the most intelligent persons in Southern Baptist life," but urged the BJCPA chief to resign from PAW. He admitted he has problems with BJCPA positions on such issues as the constitutional amendment on prayer in the public schools, but said of Dunn: "If he would just sever his relations with People for the American Way, I could support him."

The specter of reduced Cooperative Program funds was raised during debate on the BJCPA resolution, and Henley alluded to the matter in the press conference, noting other pastors are talking to him about their concerns. "I fear the churches will begin to designate Cooperative Program funds unless this situation is corrected."

Despite the fears, messengers moved closer to their goal of a 50-50 division of Cooperative Program funds between Alabama and SBC causes by increasing the percentage to the SBC to 46.61 percent, up from 46 percent last year.

The 1984 Cooperative Budget of \$19,090,000, which includes a \$525,000 challenge goal, yields \$7,426,000 to SBC causes, an increase of \$509,840 over last year.

One evening of the convention was devoted to a program honoring George E. Bagley, executive secretary-treasurer of the Baptist state executive board for 20 years and a 38-year employee of the board. The convention presented Bagley with a new automobile and a check in the amount of \$3,000.

The 1984 state convention will be Nov. 13-14 at Samford University in Birmingham.

South Carolina Baptists Vote  
On Women, Abortion

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--The South Carolina Baptist Convention rejected a resolution opposing the ordination of women to ministry. After brief debate the messengers overwhelmingly defeated the resolution, saying it was a matter for each church to decide and not convention business.

Messengers also voted to "instruct" South Carolina Baptist hospital trustees to amend their current policy on abortion. The approved motion would permit abortion only in documented cases of rape, incest or for preservation of the physical life of the mother. This alters the former policy which would "protect the physical or mental health" of the mother.

Other resolutions which were adopted opposed a U.S. ambassador to the Vatican; favored more emphasis on world peace and opposed pari-mutuel gambling which will be considered by the state legislature early next year. A fourth resolution requests the state legislature to charge a 10 percent surtax on the sale of beer and wine with revenue to be used for alcohol and drug abuse rehabilitation programs.

The convention adopted an \$18 million Cooperative Program budget for 1984. This includes \$6.9 million or 38.3 percent unchanged from last year for the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Nov. 15-16 convention was held in Carolina Coliseum. There were 2,058 messengers.

M.B. Morrow Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Gaffney, S.C., was elected president and two former executive secretaries, A. Harold Cole (1970-82) and Horace G. Hammett (1962-69), were given emeritus status.

The 1984 convention will be Nov. 13-14 in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

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Virginia Annual Meeting  
Is 'Quietest In Years'

By Tom Miller

Baptist Press  
11/18/83

SALEM, Va. (BP)--In their quietest session in several years, messengers to the Baptist General Association of Virginia elected a veteran pastor as president, adopted a \$12,075,000 Cooperative Program budget and sustained every committee report without amendment.

A lone resolution of position opposed the establishment of formal diplomatic relations with the Vatican. The U.S. Congress has authorized expenditure of funds to establish an embassy at the Vatican, and the bill currently is awaiting President Reagan's signature.

Messengers also amended the General Association bylaws to require a three-fourths majority vote for adoption of future resolutions.

The two-day, 160th annual meeting, Nov. 15-16 in Salem, was presided over by Christine (Mrs. A. Harrison) Gregory of Danville, the state convention's first woman president.

William L. Lumpkin, pastor of Freemason Street Baptist Church, Norfolk, was elected president. A noted Baptist historian and former professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., Lumpkin won in a contest with Raymond F. Allen, pastor of Blacksburg Baptist Church. A 27-year tradition in Virginia Baptist elections has produced a laity/clergy president in alternate years, each serving only one term.

The 1983-84 spending plan of the General Association is in three phases with the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receiving an increased share in phases two and three. The division will be 62 percent Virginia and 38 percent SBC in phase one; 60-40 in phase two and 50-50 in phase three.

Turning back a motion to request the Virginia Baptist Hospital in Lynchburg to remove the word Baptist from its name because of its abortion policy, messengers adopted instead a strongly worded commendation of the institution.

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For a number of years the hospital has been under fire from a small number of churches. At first, it was for the hospital's failure to adopt a requested policy on abortions, and later because some did not like the policy that was adopted.

The hospital's policy states that convenience abortions will not be performed, but anti-policy spokespersons claimed the policy permitting an abortion for physical and mental health of the patient is the same as abortion on demand.

By a wide margin messengers rejected a criticism of the hospital and instead commended it "for its ministry, its healing, caring and lovingly sharing in the lives of all those to whom it ministers in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of the Baptists of Virginia."

Tuesday messengers heard sermons by Donald W. Dunlap, pastor of West End Baptist Church in Suffolk, and James T. Draper Jr., president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In the convention's annual sermon Dunlap issued a call for "evangels for the Prince of Peace," and said no idolatry is worse than "putting your hope for survival in nuclear weaponry.

"In Jesus, God puts us right with himself, and thereby with one another, through the cross. If the cross does not mean Russians and Americans are a part of humanity, with walls of hostility between them forever demolished, then the cross is a horrible hoax," he said.

"Are we now ready and willing to wage peace with the same fervor principalities and powers are already waging war?" asked Dunlap.

Later, Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, said Baptist churches ought to be revolutionary communities that meet needs of a revolutionary world.

Draper listed four characteristics of Baptist churches--we are a revolutionary community that is unique in nature, brothers and sisters called by the same Lord, chosen by Christ; we are personally committed to Jesus Christ; there is a distinct fellowship, and we have eternal purpose to preach the gospel. "A church that is not a lighthouse for the lost is an affront to God," Draper declared.

In a departure from custom, Gregory delivered her president's address as the final item on the program speaking to the challenge of biblical education, the church's role in economic and sociological reforms, the problems and possibilities of the aging and crises in the career ministry.

The former first vice president of the SBC called for development of small inexpensive retreat facilities "where the distraught may escape to find new answers and commitments between themselves and God." Earlier the same day messengers ordered creation of a special committee to study needs and solutions for ministers in confrontation with their congregations.

In another action, messengers adopted a new trustee nominating procedure that reduces from 100 percent to 33 1/3 percent the proportion of trustees nominated by the General Association to boards of six educational institutions and the Virginia Baptist Children's Home.

The state convention will continue to nominate all the trustees for the Religious Herald, Virginia Baptist Foundation, Virginia Baptist Extension Board, and Virginia Baptist Homes.

Next year's meeting will be Nov. 13-14 in Virginia Beach.

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Hughes Tells California Baptists  
Of 1984 Retirement Plans

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press  
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OAKLAND, Calif. (BP)--Robert D. Hughes, executive director-treasurer for 17 years, announced he will retire at the end of 1984 during the Southern Baptist General Convention of California annual meeting at the Oakland Convention Center.

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Messengers to the 43rd annual meeting also approved a record California Cooperative Program budget of \$5,200,000 for 1984; reelected Riverside pastor William Crews as president; and voted to "reaffirm the infallibility and authority of the Bible."

A request by the trustees of the convention-owned California Baptist College for an emergency \$150,000 grant was pared to \$75,000 by the convention executive board which also recommended a special CBC offering day Feb. 26 in California churches. Messengers approved this special offering and set a goal of \$375,000.

Hughes, who will turn 65 next year, said his intention to retire was in the best interest of the convention and his family. Health problems during 1982 kept him from the annual meeting that year, but he told the Oakland convention his health had been restored and he was not retiring due to health reasons.

The budget includes 28 percent to the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program, an increase of 1/4 percent over the previous year.

The Bible issue came in a resolution which encountered lengthy debate primarily over "liberalism" in SBC seminaries and colleges. An attempt was made to add the word "inerrant" but in a close vote the amendment failed and the original resolution eventually was approved.

Although the nearby Redwood Empire Association recently withdrew fellowship from three churches which had ordained women, there was no challenge to any messengers and the subject was never brought up on the floor of the convention.

The 1984 convention will be held in San Diego, Nov. 13-15.

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Agnor Reelected  
Maryland President

Baptist Press  
11/18/83

SILVER SPRING, Md. (BP)--The Baptist Convention of Maryland reelected Walter Agnor president and approved the 1984 budget of \$3,275,000 at a busy, but calm, session at Colesville Baptist Church, Nov. 14-16.

Agnor is director of missions for the Eastern Association.

The Cooperative Program operating budget of \$2,217,000 will be distributed 40 percent to the Southern Baptist Convention, and 60 percent the Baptist Convention of Maryland. The SBC share reflects a one-half percent increase.

The majority of messages were mission centered with Ralph Neighbor of Houston making seven presentations. Susan Thompson, widow of Roger Thompson, missionary to Ecuador who was killed in a summer plane crash, spoke briefly.

The 559 messengers also approved the first step for a convention name change. If a favorable vote is taken in 1984, the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware will become the official name for the body. Delaware is one of 12 associations in the convention.

The messengers also heard a report that the state mission board had agreed, at the request of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, for the convention to initiate and develop a partnership with the African nation of Burundi.

There was some discussion on a resolution to oppose national legislation which would authorize the ambassador to the Vatican. The resolution passed, along with an amendment to notify President Reagan and U.S. Senators and Representatives from Maryland and Delaware.

Another resolution resolved to support unemployed persons with prayer and efforts to influence "the political and economic systems in developing jobs."

Next year's meeting will be Nov. 12-14 at Glen Burnie Baptist Church, Glen Burnie, Md.

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