



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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November 6, 1984

84-160

Colorado Baptists' Hopes For Executive Dashed

By Don Turner

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. (BP)—Hopes for a new executive director were dashed unexpectedly during the annual session of the Colorado Baptist General Convention Oct. 30-31.

Meeting in Bookcliff Baptist Church for the 29th annual session, 344 messengers adopted a \$2.6 million budget, passed resolutions concerning casino gambling and abortion funding and approved further investigation into the sale of the three-year-old Baptist building.

In separate actions Colorado Baptists both affirmed and restricted the executive director search committee and passed modifications to an executive board proposal on a committee to relate to the Rocky Mountain Baptist, newsjournal for the CGBC.

Littleton pastor and former state missions director Don Murray was elected convention president. Other officers include: La Junta pastor Lynn Lamb, first vice-president; Broomfield pastor Mike Ruptak, second vice-president, and Mrs. May Marie Irvin and Mrs. Roy Spannagel, both from Pueblo, recording secretaries.

Plans to present a candidate for executive director Wednesday morning were abruptly reversed at the last minute. "As late as 7 a.m. this morning, we were prepared to bring unanimous presentation to the convention," said Eads pastor Eddie Nye, search panel chairman. "Shortly after 7 a.m., the man we were to recommend called and said that through prayer he decided he was not the man for Colorado."

Attempts to open the floor for nominations were ruled out of order.

Messengers also restricted the committee's ability to negotiate on salary and benefits by approving a limit on the salary package.

"I move that the executive director search committee be instructed to abide by the salary package as approved in the 1985 budget," said Doug Trevithick, pastor from Fairplay. "I feel there needs to be clear direction to the committee for their own guidance in the search for an executive director."

The motion sparked lively discussion before being approved. The salary package in the 1985 budget is more than \$55,000. Floor reports indicated the package to be recommended for the prospective candidate would have included increases in travel, retirement and insurance, boosting the package to more than \$70,000.

The search committee did not name the candidate it was preparing to nominate to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of longtime CBGC executive Glen Braswell. Charles Sharp will continue as interim executive.

Investigations will continue into the possible sale of the three-year-old Baptist building within parameters approved by the messengers. If an acceptable offer is made within the guidelines, the executive board is authorized to sell the building which cost Colorado Baptists \$1.1 million, but now is appraised at more than \$2.2 million.

Amended guidelines specify a \$2.3 million sale price, a guaranteed lease-back at a specified maximum rate with option to sub-lease and restrictions on use of the proceeds.

Some messengers urged caution in looking at the sale of the building as a windfall during a time when the rate of growth in giving from the churches is slowed.

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Broomfield pastor Mike Ruptak said freedom from debt could be a witness. "We Southern Baptists put more money into interest payments on our properties than into all of our mission projects combined," he said. "I don't think this honors God. If we moved to free our state budget for ministries, it would encourage churches to free themselves from debt and free their money for missions."

Aurora pastor James Brannon said discussion of the possibility of sale is a sign messengers are ready to deal seriously with the fact giving from the churches had not met budget for the second year.

"We do not have money to hire an executive director...Sunday school director...(or) evangelism director," he said. "If we do not do something with the building, we've got to realize giving from the churches must increase or we must cut one of two areas: staff or Cooperative Program percentage."

Percentage of Cooperative Program giving to be sent to the national program was increased from 28 percent to 28.5 percent. The \$2.6 million budget is a nine percent increase above 1984 budget and a 17 percent increase over projected 1984 income.

Finance committee chairman Steve Spencer from Littleton said the budget projects \$1.5 million in receipts from the churches, and \$1.1 million from other sources, including the Home Mission Board, which would contribute \$834,000 and the Sunday School Board, which would contribute up to \$40,000.

The state offices stayed in the black the past two years, in part because of the unfilled staff vacancies. When questioned about the wisdom of projecting a budget increase following an underbudget year, Spencer said, "We do not spend what we do not get."

The current year was the first year in which giving from the churches in Colorado surpassed \$100,000 a month.

No recommendation for separate incorporation of the Rocky Mountain Baptist was made by the committee appointed to study the matter. Instead, chairman Sam Cotter from Craig recommended changes in the composition of a new executive board committee relating to the paper.

Included in the committee will be three members of the executive board and two members of the state at-large, Cotter said. "The at-large members will be selected by the committee on committees of the executive board in consultation with the Rocky Mountain Baptist editor."

In reports to the annual session, messengers approved a recommendation that the annually appointed credential committee carry over four members each year and received a report to delay a fund raising drive to try to retire the convention debt.

Resolutions concerning Nov. 6 general election ballot issues were passed supporting Amendment 3 to stop public funding of abortions and opposing Initiative 5 which would permit legalized casino gambling near Pueblo.

Next year's convention will be at Ken Caryl Baptist Church in Littleton Nov. 5-7.

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Churches Need Skills
For Reaching People

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
11/6/84

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—The church needs to supplement knocking on doors with multi-media communication plans to be effective in reaching people, Floyd Craig said during a conference on communicating the church's mission to the community.

Craig, deputy director of the governor's office of citizen affairs in Raleigh, N.C., led the session on communicating skills during a Sunday school leadership conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center for workers and churches with more than 1,500 enrolled in Sunday school.

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"If the church is going to reach big cities, the church is going to have to rely on multi-media plans," said Craig, former director of communications for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Craig recently designed an advertising plan for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina using television, radio and newspaper ads in conjunction with church yard signs based on the theme "Sunday school is more than just kid stuff."

Communication should be channeled to particular audiences rather than a shotgun approach to the whole community, Craig explained. He said the North Carolina campaign was based on research indicating which groups should be targeted for appeals.

Churches should consider who they are trying to reach with all their communications and direct the message to that group. This applies to the church newsletter and to other mailings as well, he explained. Advertising may not be the best method for every church to reach into the community, said Craig. "Decide who you want to reach and what responses you want before deciding how to reach them."

Research involves finding out how people in the community get information and then use that medium to communicate the church's message. "The newspaper may be where people are getting information but it also may be the laundromat bulletin board," he said.

Despite the emphasis on using advertising and other ways to reach people, personal communication is still the most important way we can communicate, Craig emphasized.

For this reason, businesses have found direct mail gets better response than other forms of advertising. Churches are using direct mail but need to use it more effectively, he said. Any direct mail approach should have an appeal and an opportunity for the reader to respond.

People look first for their name when reading a letter, Craig said, explaining even mass mailings should have a personal greeting. A handwritten note on a mass mailing also is very effective in telling the reader you care about him personally, he suggested.

"I believe people will respond and churches will reach them," Craig said. But, he cautioned, "make sure you can deliver what you offer in the appeal. If you offer a friendly church, make sure it is," he said.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story "Claas, Dunn Condemn Abduction Of Central American Baptists," mailed 11/2/84, please make the following correction. In paragraph 1, please change the figure 25 to 35. This should make the sentence read, "The chief executive officers of two Baptist groups, with memberships of 35 million and 27 million respectively,...."

Thank you,
Baptist Press

Louisiana Association
Disfellowships Church

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press
11/6/84

SHEVEPORT, La. (BP)—Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association has voted, 439-6 to remove Word of Faith Baptist Church from its fellowship for "going charismatic" by emphasizing speaking in tongues and with "taking over" a smaller pastorless church in the association.

The association's affiliations committee listed six reasons Word of Faith Baptist Church should be dismissed:

--The church "has departed in doctrine and practice from commonly accepted Southern Baptist doctrine and practice, including magnifying the gift of tongues which the Bible teaches to be the least of the gifts;"

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- The Church identified itself as a "Charismatic Southern Baptist Church," disregarding "many hours of council" with associational leadership;
- The association believes the charismatic movement embraces "many errors, most notably the perversion of the doctrine of salvation by grace...;"
- The association had previously passed a resolution "warning of the errors and dangers of the charismatic/neo-pentecostal movement;"
- The church had "taken possession of the property of Northland Baptist Church and absorbed the assets of a struggling sister church" within the association while Director of Missions Bruce Parrish and other associational leaders were attempting to help Northland; and
- An association, like a church, has the right to determine "its own membership, based on doctrine and practice."

Word of Faith was defended by its pastor, John Charles Murphy. He listed several arguments on behalf of the church:

- That the church "accepts the Bible only as its sole authority for faith and practice," in accord with the "Baptist Faith and Message" statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963;
- That the church "has not departed in doctrine or practice from Bible teachings" and that it "does not magnify the gift of tongues above other gifts;"
- That since the church "could not avoid the tag, she regretfully accepted the status quo" and accepted the "charismatic" label only after other churches in the association had "branded" the church;
- That the church "does not accept nor embrace" the errors it sees in the charismatic movement, including the "perversion of the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith" through the doctrine of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace;" and
- That Word of Faith "did not take possession of the property" of Northland Baptist Church but rather merged with the church in a move which Northland approved "unanimously."

"Our action of disfellowship is biblically based under the doctrine of church discipline and is consistent with New Testament love," Moderator Freeman told messengers to the associational meeting.

"We do have a Bible mandate to possess sound doctrine and good ethics," he said. "The theological umbrella under which Baptist abide is broad, but there comes a time when we can no longer condone certain doctrine and practice under the command of I John 4, 'to test the spirit to see if they are of God.'"

Freeman told the Louisiana Baptist Message the association had sufficient grounds to disfellowship Word of Faith about three years ago when the church changed its name from Woodlawn Baptist Church and began its charismatic emphasis.

But Freeman said it was the "unethical practice" of assuming control of the Northland congregation which pushed the association to the point of disfellowship.

Director of Missions Parrish contended the takeover was more than a merger, as Murphy claimed, and questioned the validity of the unanimous vote to merge.

"The Northland church had gone down to about 10 people and the pastor had just resigned when we entered the scene last December," Parrish told the Baptist Message. "The association was in the process of seeking assistance for Northland by providing a sponsoring church."

In the meantime, Parrish said, Word of Faith made inroads into the Northland congregation. Murphy offered to be interim pastor of Northland, and the Word of Faith church, which had no Sunday evening services, met at Northland at that time.

Parrish contended that by the time the merger vote came up, all the Northland members who would have opposed it had left the congregation because they did not like the Word of Faith influence. Therefore, the actual vote to merge was not representative of the historical core of the Northland congregation, he explained.

He noted the association has "looked at the legal aspect" of retrieving the Northland property. However, since the "group who were in Northland who had opposed the takeover had left" the congregation, the association has "no legal recourse," he said.

However, the work of the association will flourish following its recent action, Parrish predicted. "We had two churches which had indicated they would not accept members from Word of Faith Baptist Church before our vote came up," he said. "I feel this action will strengthen the Southern Baptist work in our association."

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Illinois Messengers
Avoid Divisive Issues

Baptist Press
11/6/84

PEORIA, Ill. (BP)—Nearly 700 registered messengers avoided divisive issues—including the question of the ordination of women—during the annual meeting of the Illinois Baptist State Association Oct. 30–Nov. 1.

During the meeting, Charles H. Chandler, pastor of Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church, Urbana, was elected president, succeeding Donald L. Sharp, pastor of Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, Chicago, who served two years as the IBSA's first black pastor.

Meeting under the theme "Laborers Together In Strengthening Missions," messengers declined to tackle potentially divisive issues, including the role of women. A year earlier, messengers debated the seating of messengers from Cornell Avenue Baptist Church in Chicago, where a woman, Susan Lockwood Wright, is pastor.

Lindley Speere, chairman of the resolutions and public affairs committee, acknowledged in his committee's report that a resolution on the role of women had been submitted. But in the light of the theme and spirit of the convention, he said, the committee strongly recommended the convention "not deal again with this sensitive and potentially divisive issue."

Messengers approved a resolution voicing their opposition to the establishment of an ambassadorship to the Vatican and pledging their support for "any and all legal efforts to have it abolished."

In addition, they instructed the state association's executive committee to send a letter to the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention expressing regret and opposition to "the SBC Committee's decision not to participate in a lawsuit opposing the ambassadorship."

Messengers adopted a budget of nearly \$5.6 million, of which \$4,259,000 will be contributed by the churches of the convention. The IBSA will receive \$904,400 from the SBC Home Mission Board. The percentage going to support the worldwide missions and evangelism program of the Southern Baptist Convention was increased a half percent to 43 percent.

Next year's annual meeting will be held in Country Club Hills, Nov. 5–7.

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Church Mission Identical
To Christ's: Theologian

Baptist Press
11/6/84

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—Christians must hold the Great Commission and the Great Commandment in faithful balance, an Argentine theologian told students at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

Pablo Alberto Deiros, professor of church history at International Baptist Seminary in Buenos Aires, said during the Missionary Day address that the church's mission is identical to the mission of Jesus Christ. The church is the continuation of God's liberating and redeeming work in a world rampant with poverty and suffering, he said.

"Jesus is not physically present in the world anymore...But the world was not left without his love and redeeming action. He has empowered his church with his Holy Spirit and the community of saints is now his body on earth," Deiros said.

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Deiros, currently adjunct professor of church history at Southeastern Seminary, told the students the commission to preach the gospel to the world is inseparable from the command to love our neighbors. He said the life of Jesus evidences the fact the proclamation of the Kingdom is inseparable from compassionate ministry to concrete human need.

The theologian, whose parents were Argentine Baptist missionaries to Paraguay, asked if Christians really understand the nature of the world into which Christ and the church have been sent. He then drew a picture of what he called the "Dantesque" world situation which affluent Americans see or think about.

He said the gospel has come into a world where 75 percent of the world's population lives in poverty because they receive only 6.5 percent of the world's income. He said the average income for more than one billion people is just 30 cents per day.

"This is our world! This is the world into which we must go to preach the gospel," he said.

Deiros called for Christians to expand their understanding of the Great Commission.

"'Go into ALL the world and preach the gospel,' was the command of Jesus," Deiros said. "It is very easy for us to understand his words in a geographical way. But, why not interpret them in a sociological way? If we approach his commission from this perspective, it would mean that we must go to every people in all human situations and conditions of life."

Focussing on the theme of incarnation, Deiros said: "As God was incarnate in Christ, so the church has to be incarnate in the world. The incarnate God, Jesus Christ, commissions us to go into the world this way, identifying ourselves with it...."

"He assumed our poverty, our limitations, our necessities, our miseries, our pains and our sufferings."

Deiros said if the church really wants to follow Christ and to fulfill its mission in and to the world, it must be incarnate in the world in a life of service and ministry as well as preaching. "The mission of the church is no more and no less than being Christ in the world," he said.

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Volunteers Aid Continuing
Tanzania Evangelism Surge

Baptist Press
11/6/84

TUKUYU, Tanzania (BP)—Another round of revival has broken out in Tanzania, this time in the country's Rungwe district, where 3,498 Africans made professions of faith in an evangelistic crusade.

The two-week crusade, planned by Southern Baptist missionary Olan Burrow and featuring a team of volunteers from four states, took place in late September in schools, homes and churches throughout the area.

It follows earlier revivals in which volunteers from the States, missionaries and national Baptists collaborated to record 4,119 professions of faith in the Kyela district and about 1,000 decisions in Bukoba.

The crusades are forerunners of an emphasis in the East African nation which will involve about 21 volunteer evangelistic teams in 1984-85. The volunteer enlistment department of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will recruit the teams to work with Tanzania missionaries and national leaders, according to Wayne Bristow, the board's associate volunteer enlistment director. Bristow participated in the Rungwe revival along with eight other volunteers from Georgia, Texas and California.

Evangelistic emphasis will dovetail with emphasis on Sunday school development in Tanzania in 1985 as part of an East Africa-wide emphasis of Southern Baptist missions.

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The week after the Rungwe district revival, Tanzanian Baptists met in Iringa, Tanzania, for their annual meeting and a national evangelism conference designed to point toward the growing emphasis on evangelism. The conference program featured Bristow and missionaries Harry Garvin of Uganda and Boyd Pearce of Kenya.

The Tanzanians pledged at the Iringa sessions to unite their efforts to start new Sunday schools throughout Tanzania, renew their personal witnessing efforts and train teachers to be soul winners "shoulder to shoulder" with the pastors, according to missionary Lynn Burrow.

In the Rungwe district crusade, many schoolteachers, village leaders and even some village chairmen—former chiefs under the old tribal system—accepted Jesus Christ. In one instance a young girl chased one of the vehicles and asked how she could accept Jesus as savior.

"One man, over 95 years of age, joyfully accepted Christ in his home after Wayne Bristow witnessed to him," Mrs. Burrow reported. "It was an answer to many years' prayer of his children and grandchildren."

Another African man came forward in the crusade to volunteer for service as a foreign missionary and two team members from the States may apply for foreign missions service as a result of their trip.

Mrs. Burrow said the team attributed its success to prayers of Christians across the United States, and especially those in the volunteers' own churches, some of whom prayed around the clock.

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Northeast Seminary
Study Group OK'd

Baptist Press
11/6/84

GETTYSBURG, Pa. (BP)—The Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania—South Jersey meeting in its 14th annual session Nov. 1-3, authorized appointment of a special committee to work with other conventions from the northeastern United States and with the Southern Baptist Convention to pursue the establishment of a Southern Baptist seminary in the Northeast.

Messengers adopted a budget of \$1,638,220 for 1985. Of the \$462,000 to be contributed by the churches of the convention, 26.5 percent, the same as last year, will be used to support worldwide evangelism, education and missions programs through the SBC Cooperative Program.

Clyde Risen of Wrightstown, N.J., was reelected to a second term as president.

Messengers adopted resolutions on Christian citizenship and separation of church and state. One warned against political and religious leaders using one another to further their own interests; the other expressed opposition to the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican and affirmed support of the work of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in its efforts to overturn this violation of the separation of church and state.

Next year's meeting is scheduled for Nov. 7-9 at Monroeville Baptist Church in Monroeville, N.J.

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Change Is Challenge,
Not Crisis: Williams

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
11/6/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—If life changes cause stress and anxiety, Jim Williams should be teetering on the brink of a breakdown.

Within the last 15 months, all three of his and his wife, Jo's, children have married, two have graduated from college and he has made a major career move to the Baptist Sunday School Board after 22 years as a faculty member at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

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However, Williams views the changes as challenges rather than crises. He describes his new role as associate to the president, office of planning and research, as a "stimulating new growth opportunity."

Developing corporate strategic planning processes is a major part of his responsibilities. "What do churches need from the Sunday School Board?" is a pervading question that will remain a focus of Williams' work. "This will be asked and answered several times by the year 2000 if the Sunday School Board is able to do more to help churches penetrate society with the gospel," he said.

The remaining years of this century, Williams would like to see the board "give even more attention to reaching people--not just where Baptists have numerical strength but also in places where the name Baptist is a strange name and where the gospel has not penetrated."

Williams' duties also include serving as a liaison with state conventions and other denomination coordinating groups such as the Inter-Agency Council. A third aspect of his work is providing assistance to President Lloyd Elder, a long-time professional colleague and personal friend.

Their first working association came in 1969 when Elder was pastor of Gambrell Street Baptist Church, Fort Worth, where Williams served as interim minister of education for six months. He returned to the interim post in 1971, an interim which lasted six years.

In addition, the Elders and Williamses were across-the-street neighbors during those years. "Our children grew up with theirs. This cemented a deep and lasting relationship," said Williams. The two worked together again from 1978 to 1983 at Southwestern when Elder was executive vice-president and Williams was professor of adult education and associate dean for advanced studies in the school of religious education.

When Williams began work at the board in August, his orientation began with a "back hallway tour where I met the people who are the flesh-and-blood reality of the board."

Hours of conversations with program persons followed. "The longer I've been here, the more impressed I've become with the enormous sense of commitment and diversity of talent that is here," said Williams.

Adjusting to the more regimented lifestyle of an institutional executive, Williams quipped the biggest change has been starting work at 7:30 a.m. However, he added, "I haven't found this to be burdensome. I'm beginning to appreciate the morning time."

For the future, Williams said, "I would like very much to see my energies invested in further sharpening the educational impact of the Sunday School Board within the churches."

For example, the needs of small churches may require new and different strategies, Williams observed. "General Motors is going to the small-car and large-car divisions. We may need to spend more time on the needs of small churches."

He also hopes to contribute to broader marketing strategies for the sharing of Southern Baptist resources. "Some of the best minds and the most caring people are Southern Baptists. Why shouldn't our stories of redemption in Christ be shared with every person in this nation?" he emphasized.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by BSSB bureau of Baptist Press



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