

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

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November 15, 1984

84-166

Supreme Court Rejects
 Trio Of Church Appeals

By Stan Hastey

WASHINGTON (BP)—Three churches, including an independent Baptist congregation, lost their legal bids in disputes with state and local governments when the U.S. Supreme Court rejected their appeals.

In unsigned orders announced Nov. 13, the court, without dissent, refused to review a Nebraska Supreme Court ruling that North Platte Baptist Church, North Platte, Neb., must comply with state regulations to keep its parochial school doors open.

The congregation was one of about 20 Nebraska congregations which defied state laws requiring teacher certification in all schools in the state, public and private. The overwhelming majority of church-related schools were already in compliance with the requirement, but North Platte Baptist Church refused to go along on grounds the state had no authority to require teacher certification.

In a written appeal to the nation's high court, the church also argued that the requirement violated parents' rights to decide which school is best for their children. (83-1974, North Platte Baptist Church v. Nebraska)

Another local congregation, First Assembly of God Church of Alexandria, Va., likewise failed to convince the justices to review a zoning dispute with the city over a church school.

Last June the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals held that zoning restrictions attached to the church's special use permit to operate its school did not violate the First Amendment's establishment of religion clause because they had the strictly secular purpose of promoting public health, safety and welfare.

When the church refused to comply with the zoning restrictions, the court ruled further, it was properly prohibited by a lower court from operating the school.

For its part, the church argued unsuccessfully that the First Amendment's free exercise of religion clause encompassed its right to operate a school on its property to further its ministry without government interference. (84-445, First Assembly of God Church v. City of Alexandria, Va.)

In a third action, the high court also rejected the appeal of a non-profit church corporation which owns and operates a commercial television station in Hartford, Conn. The church, Faith Center, was denied property tax exemption by the city of Hartford.

The church took the city to court but the Connecticut Supreme Court held the city acted within the law and dismissed the church's contention that the denial constituted an excessive entanglement of government with religion and violated its free exercise of religion. (84-260, Faith Center v. City of Hartford)

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Georgia Southwestern Alumni
Express Support Of Dilday

By Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP)—Georgia alumni of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary voiced opposition of attempts to silence Seminary President Russell Dilday, and encouraged him "to speak his God-given convictions in matters related to the seminary and the Convention."

More than 200 Georgia alumni of the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary adopted a resolution calling on the seminary's board of trustees "to support his (Dilday's) personal freedom to speak out as a priest under God." The resolution also pledged support to the seminary faculty and staff, and to Dilday personally.

"We thank Dr. Dilday for his bold voice in these troubled days of our denomination," said the resolution, submitted by J. Phillip Martin, minister of education for First Baptist Church, Chamblee, Ga. The resolution noted Southern Baptist theological institutions have come under attack in recent days "by individuals who have questioned the doctrinal integrity of faculty and staff members."

It also cited public criticism of Dilday "for speaking out on denominational issues" and "attempts to silence his voice through trustee action."

The resolution was referring to a closed-door session of the seminary's board of trustees meeting Oct. 16 in which a motion instructing Dilday to stay out of denominational politics was tabled.

Dilday, president of the seminary since 1978, had written a column in the seminary's alumni publication following the Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City, saying the real issue facing the convention does not involve conservative vs. liberal theology, but is control of the denomination by a well-organized, national, fundamentalist "political machin" seeking to elect fundamentalists to the convention's boards of trustees.

During the Kansas City convention, Dilday received a standing ovation following the annual convention sermon in which he rebuked "shrewd brokers of power (who) manipulate the democratic process of this convention in order to promote themselves...."

Dilday, pastor of Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church in Atlanta for eight years before becoming president of the seminary, had spoken to the Georgia Baptist Convention and to the alumni dinner immediately prior to adoption of the resolution. In his message, Dilday called for Baptists to be true to their heritage and for unapologetic commitment to Southern Baptist cooperative mission efforts.

Of the 212 alumni present at the alumni dinner at Augusta's Hillcrest Baptist Church, there were three votes opposing the resolution, but there was no discussion or debate on the motion.

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Mississippi Reelects
Pickering President

Baptist Press
11/15/84

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)—Messengers to the 149th session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention reelected Laurel attorney Charles Pickering president and increased the portion of its budget which goes to Southern Baptist worldwide mission causes 0.5 percent a year for the next 15 years.

The 1,556 messengers also approved a \$40 million endowment campaign for the convention's three colleges and its children's village and a \$17.5 million basic and \$500,000 "advance" budget for 1985.

The basic budget was scaled back last month from the original \$18 million approved by convention board members in August. Gifts from Mississippi Baptist churches to the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' unified giving program, are lagging more than \$300,000 behind 1984 budget requirements.

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The adjustment in the 1985 budget was made in order to be more "realistic" and represents an increase of \$1 million, or 5.6 percent, over the 1984 budget.

In response to Southern Baptists' Planned Growth in Giving emphasis, messengers approved a recommendation by the convention board to increase the portion of its budget that goes to Southern Baptist worldwide causes each year until it reaches 43 percent in the year 2000. The Mississippi Baptist Convention in 1985 will send 35.7 percent of its budget to the Southern Baptist Convention for its various missions programs.

The convention's five-year endowment campaign for its three colleges—Mississippi College, William Carey College and Blue Mountain College—and Baptist Children's Village is the largest endowment campaign in the history of Mississippi Baptists. It also is believed to be the largest educational endowment campaign ever conducted in Mississippi.

Messengers also adopted a resolution calling for Mississippi Baptists to "support, pray for and offer constructive suggestions in a Christian manner" to Southern Baptist agencies. The resolution called for churches to support the agencies by increasing Cooperative Program gifts and special mission offerings.

Futhermore, the resolution urged "that as Christians we desist from general accusations, name-calling, and unsupported condemnation, yet retaining the freedom of individual expression based on biblical teaching and supportable facts."

Convention President Pickering ruled out of order an amendment to the resolution that said, "Be it further resolved that we instruct our various boards, agencies and institutions not to take part in any...party activities." Pickering said state conventions have no authority to instruct Southern Baptist agencies.

Pickering also ruled out of order a portion of the resolution stating "that we refrain individual or organized efforts to impose any interpretation of Scripture upon the convention, associations, churches, or individuals..."

Messengers also adopted resolutions opposing pari-mutuel gambling and a state lottery, and a resolution supporting raising the legal drinking age to 21. Other resolutions called for the support of public education and appreciation for Southern Baptist Convention officers and heads of boards, commissions and agencies.

A resolution of appreciation also was adopted for the Christian Action Commission for its "assistance given to the churches and associations of the Mississippi Baptist Convention in their attempt to address the issue (of abortion)." The resolution said the "practice of abortion, xcept in the cases of rape, incest and to save the life of the mother, destroys human life, dulls our society's moral sensitivity, and leads to cheapening of all human life."

Bobby Perry of Gulfport, director of missions for Gulf Coast Baptist Association, was elected convention first vice-president and Joan Tyler, a layperson from Collins, was elected second vice-president.

The 1985 convention will be held Nov. 11-13 at First Baptist Church, Jackson.

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Oklahoma First To Split
Mission Funds 50-50

Baptist Press
11/15/84

BETHANY, Okla. (BP)—Oklahoma Baptists became the first state convention to vote to divide the Cooperative Program income evenly between state and national mission causes when it met in annual session Nov. 12-14 in Bethany.

Oklahoma's 50-50 budget split is an increase of two percentage points over 1984 based on a \$19 million budget.

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Executive Director Joe L. Ingram, whose dream it was to reach that milestone, announced the job he was called to accomplish in 1971 is complete and asked the process be started to elect his successor.

Although Ingram asked no move be made to ask him to reconsider, Warren Hultgren, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tulsa, made the first motion he has made in a state convention in 28 years to ask Ingram to stay.

Hultgren moved the mandatory 65-year age requirement be suspended for Ingram and Ingram be asked to stay on and that he bring his decision to the Executive Committee in December. Hultgren's motion passed overwhelmingly while Ingram sat stolidly in the front row of Council Road Baptist Church, Bethany.

Host pastor Wendell Estep was elected president of the state convention in a run-off with Steve Boehning of Emmanuel Church, Shawnee.

Estep, 41, is a former television news director and has been pastor of Council Road, recently cited as one of Southern Baptists fastest growing churches, for nine years.

Resolutions encouraged Oklahoma Baptists to be aware of witness opportunities during the 1989 SBC Convention in Las Vegas, and encouraged Oklahoma churches to increase Cooperative Program giving to help the state convention manage the 50-50 Cooperative Program split.

The 1985 Oklahoma convention will meet Nov. 11-14 at Council Road Baptist Church, Bethany.

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Virginia Baptists
Favor Women's Ordination

Baptist Press
11/15/84

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (BP)—The General Association of Virginia Baptists expressed approval of the ordination of women and voted to join the class action suit against the appointment of a United States ambassador to the Vatican at its annual meeting Nov. 13-14.

Messengers also:

Adopted a record budget of \$13,200,000;

Joined in a sister relationship with the Baptist Convention of Colombia, South America, for 1985-87 to help in urban evangelism and to help meet physical needs in that country;

Adopted a recommendation to assist ministers who have been forcibly terminated with financial support and conflict management programs and to help churches and pastors develop covenants in establishing their pastoral calls and relationships;

Elected Earl Scott, a layman of Mechanicsville Baptist Church, Richmond, as president, Robert Carlton, minister of education at Monument Heights, as first vice-president and Earl Calvert as second vice-president; and

Defeated a resolution concerning abortion on the basis Virginia Baptists had already voiced their opinions relating to abortion, stating their disapproval of it and it wasn't necessary to bring it to the floor again.

The resolution supporting the ordination of women also recognized the role of women in church affairs and the right of individual churches to decide who should be ordained.

The vote to participate in legal action against the naming of an ambassador to the Vatican included instructions to the association officers to communicate the messengers' disapproval of that action to the national senators and representatives from Virginia and to President Reagan.

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National mission and educational programs of the Southern Baptist Convention will receive 38 percent of the undesignated receipts received by the GBAV in the first phase of the budget. In the second phase the split will increase to 40 percent. Both figures are unchanged from last year.

Next year the association will meet in Salem, Va., Nov. 12-13.

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Baylor Funding Plan Largest In Its History

Baptist Press
11/15/84

WACO, Texas (BP)—Baylor University trustees approved a \$24 million bond issue plan Nov. 9 which will allow for the construction and restoration of several buildings.

Of that money, Baylor officials will use \$20 million for construction and restoration, \$400,000 for financing costs and \$3.6 million for a required reserve fund.

An additional \$12 million will be combined with the \$20 million, providing \$32 million for several of the University's most pressing capital improvement needs. The \$12 million will come from designated gifts, seat options on the special events center, an estate gift and other sources.

The funding package is the largest such construction and restoration plan in Baylor's history.

Of the \$32 million, Baylor officials are considering plans to use \$12 million for a special vents center; \$5 million for a new School of Music facility; \$4 million for a new building for the computer and engineering sciences department; \$3.5 million for restoration of Carroll Library; \$3.5 million for a new facility for the John K. Strecker Museum; and \$4 million to add two floors to Moody Memorial Library.

Each project will be coordinated by a separate trustee building committee.

The bond issue portion of the funding plan still must be approved by the administrative committee and by the executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The administrative committee meets Nov. 15, and the executive board meets Dec. 4, both in Dallas.

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