



BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas, 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5100
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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Texas messengers consider
Baylor; adopt 1991 budget

By Ken Camp

N-20
(Texas)

HOUSTON (BP)--A record 7,450 messengers to the Baptist General Convention of Texas re-elected officers, considered motions related to the election of Baylor University trustees and escrowing of funds to the school, and adopted a \$63.5 million basic Cooperative Program unified budget during the 105th annual Texas state convention, Nov. 13-14 in Houston.

Messengers re-elected by acclamation: president, Phil Lineberger, pastor of Richardson Heights Baptist Church, Richardson; first vice president, Ed Rogers, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dumas; and second vice president, Billy Ray Parmer, pastor of First Baptist Church, Valley Mills.

The convention approved a motion, presented by Robert Naylor of Fort Worth, Texas, chairman of the 26-member Committee on BGCT-Baylor Relationship, stating that any trustees elected by BGCT "shall be elected according to the convention's constitution to constitute the governing board of directors of Baylor University."

The committee motion further stated, "These persons shall not assume the office of 'trustee' as defined under the amended Baylor charter unless and until they are directed to do so by formal action of the Baptist General Convention of Texas or by its executive board after the final report of the BGCT-Baylor relationship committee."

On Sept. 21, the Baylor board of trustees revised the university charter to establish a board of regents "with sole responsibility for governance" of Baylor. The committee was created by the BGCT executive board on Oct. 17 to examine the legal, financial and relational issues arising from the Baylor trustees' action.

Naylor, president emeritus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, harshly criticized the action of the Baylor trustees who "unilaterally severed" the "covenant" of trust between the BGCT and Baylor. The action was "surprisingly private if not secretive," he charged, and was a violation of the trust that existed among Texas Baptists.

"We believed that we had a covenant under which we could all walk together," he said, adding that the university and the convention now seem to be "walking to two different drummers."

Herbert Reynolds, president of Baylor University, said the convention's approval of the committee motion went as the university's administration had "expected and wanted." However, he criticized the manner in which Naylor presented his report to the BGCT, saying Naylor used the opportunity "to editorialize in an unbelievable fashion."

Expressing the desire to "set the record straight," Winfred Moore affirmed the trustees of Baylor University as loyal members of the Texas Baptist family. Moore, immediate past chairman of the Baylor trustees, was given time on the program to respond to Naylor's report.

"The trustees of Baylor University are honorable men and women who took action on Sept. 21 to change the charter of Baylor. They had no intention of moving Baylor one millimeter from Texas Baptists and the Baptist General Convention of Texas," said Moore. He added the trustees' action was done to "save Baylor for the family of Texas Baptists."

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In a news conference following his remarks, Moore told the reporters he felt Naylor had "blindsided the trustees by accusing them of violating the trust of Texas Baptists." He said Naylor's comments "positionized" him and were inappropriate for the chairman of a committee on reconciliation.

In an interview later, Naylor said Moore was "entitled to his opinion" and that he (Naylor) felt his own report had "reflected the sentiments of our committee."

The approved 1991 Cooperative Program unified budget of \$63.5 million -- and an additional \$5.3 million challenge portion -- includes support for more than 7,500 missionaries worldwide, for 23 Texas Baptist benevolent and educational institutions and for other missions causes. The basic budget total is identical to the 1990 budget amount. Of that budget, 36.65 percent will go to the Cooperative Program.

Funds earmarked for Baylor are being held in an interest-bearing escrow account until completion of the study by the Committee on BGCT-Baylor Relationship.

Confusion reigned as messengers considered a motion requesting that the appropriate BGCT coordinating boards and the BGCT administrative committee immediately release to Baylor all funds allocated in the 1990 budget. The motion also requested that funds allocated for 1991 not be held in escrow.

On first balloting, messengers approved the motion 2,164 to 1,991. However, a second ballot was called for after Jerry Dawson, director of the Texas Baptist Christian education coordinating board, pointed out that the printed version of the proposed 1991 budget contained an error. Dawson explained ministerial scholarships were incorrectly designated as being part of the escrowed funds. On the second ballot, the motion failed 1,995 to 1,966.

Messengers also approved 2,432 to 1,487 a motion by David Becker of University Heights Baptist Church in Huntsville, encouraging the BGCT administrative committee and executive board to "explore ways to provide financial support" for the Associated Baptist Press alternative new service.

Messengers approved resolutions affirming belief in the priesthood of the believer; freedom of the press and religious liberty; expressing opposition to lotteries and other forms of gambling; and supporting legislation requiring warning labels on alcoholic beverage containers.

BGCT messengers approved a recommendation to change the meeting times and schedule of future conventions, condensing the convention from five to four sessions. The 1991 BGCT will be Nov. 11-12 in Waco.

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No. Carolina Baptists elect officers,
defeat budget by 122 votes

By R.G. Puckett

Baptist Press
11/15/90

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (BP)--Messengers to Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting elected officers without opposition, adopted a resolution expressing concern for the Middle East situation and the military families involved and rejected a proposed budget recommended by the state convention's general board by 122 votes.

About 6,500 messengers registered for the 160th annual session, held Nov. 12-14, making it the largest in the state convention's history.

The resolution adopted on the Middle East situation expressed concern for the military families, many of them stationed in the state, and called upon messengers to pray for them, the nation, for peace and for the persons involved in leadership in the crisis.

Another resolution expressed appreciation for lay persons in the church. It came after a proposed constitutional amendment which would mandated a lay president for the convention two out of every four years was defeated.

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Every officer of the state convention was re-elected without opposition. It was the first time incumbents have not been challenged since 1984.

Gene L. Watterson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Shelby, will serve a second year as president.

W. Randall Lolley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Greensboro and former president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., was re-elected first vice president.

Bruce E. Whitaker, retired president of Chowan College, was re-elected second vice president.

None of the three presidents will be eligible to succeed himself in the respective office in 1991.

Roy J. Smith was re-elected executive director-treasurer as a formality required by the convention's documents. He is the only employee of the state convention; all other denominational employees work for one of the convention's 12 agencies/institutions or the general board at the Baptist Building in Cary.

Messengers to the 1990 convention approved a motion by C. Mark Corts, pastor of Winston-Salem's Calvary church, by a margin of 122 votes out of 6,004 cast which changed the form but not the figures or items included in the proposed budget for 1991.

The general board of the Baptist state convention recommended a budget which would have maintained the same division between the state and the national conventions -- 64.83 percent for North Carolina Baptist causes and 35.17 percent for the Southern Baptist Convention.

It would have made as the norm for the Cooperative Program, a division of the amount going outside the state of 20.3 percent undesignated to the SBC offices in Nashville and 14.87 percent designated to Baptist causes named in the budget.

The proposed budget provided for churches to choose as an option that all of the 35.17 percent going outside the state would be sent undesignated to the Southern Baptist Convention for distribution according to the budget approved by it.

The Corts motion reversed that formula. If churches make no choices on the use of their gifts through the Cooperative Program beyond the state, all of the funds will be sent undesignated to the SBC.

Churches may choose to have their funds divided between undesignated and designated causes at the national and international levels.

In addition to these two basic choices, the remittance form sent to the Baptist Building with gifts from the churches will provide for up to three exclusions and all gifts can still be counted as Cooperative Program funds rather than designated gifts.

Supporters of the proposed budget argued that it offered every church the opportunity to send its gifts as it wishes and remain in the Baptist family as a cooperating congregation.

Opponents of the proposed budget contended that it was a slap at the Southern Baptist Convention, a break with the traditional way of funding Baptist causes in the state and throughout the world.

Some expressed concern that the proposed budget would impose decisions on the local churches that could become divisive within the congregations. That view was answered by the fact that a local church makes a decision each time it approves a budget as to how its mission gifts will be used.

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There was general agreement that the budget, either in its proposed form by the general board, or the revised version approved by the messengers, does provide greater flexibility for each congregation.

The budget sparked debate, before and during the convention.

The budget was approved by the general board in its September meeting by a three-to-one margin. Eleven listening sessions were held across the state in October and November to give Baptists the opportunity to hear presentations and ask questions.

Opposition to the budget proposal was led by Cortts, a past chairman of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. He and three other former presidents of the Baptist State Convention -- Coy C. Privette, Thomas M. Freeman and A.L. Parker -- produced and distributed a brochure entitled "Continuing the Cooperative Spirit" which opposed the proposed budget.

The proposed budget came within the report of the general board on Tuesday. E. Glen Holt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Fayetteville, and president of the general board presented the board's report in which he recognized Bruce Anthony, pastor of Southeast Baptist Church of Greensboro and chairman of the budget committee, for presentation of the budget.

After making an introduction of the budget, stressing the gravity of the decision, Anthony recognized Smith who spoke in favor of the budget.

The budget later was approved for \$28.5 million, which has a preferred item of \$1.6 million for the Ministers Expanded Annuity. The subtotal of \$26,900,000 will be divided 64.83 percent for the Baptist State Convention and 35.17 percent for SBC causes.

The 1991 convention will be held in Asheville at the Civic Center Nov. 11-13.

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Virginia Baptists
hold record meeting

By William H. Jenkins

N-^{CO}(Va.)

Baptist Press
11/15/90

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Virginia Baptists registered in record numbers for the 167th annual meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia held in Richmond Nov. 13-14. The latest official count of 4,738 messengers represents the largest registration in history, almost 2,000 in excess of the previous high.

Messengers elected Michael J. Oblinger, a 39-year old gastroenterologist from Charlottesville, president. He is a member of Broadus Memorial Baptist Church and has been a member of the Virginia Baptist General Board for the past four years. Elected first vice president was Ronald W. Crawford, pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church in Richmond. John E. Houghton, pastor of Kilmarnock Baptist Church in Kilmarnock, was elected second vice president.

Messengers adopted the 1991 Virginia Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget totaling \$16,300,000, the same budget goal as last year. However, the 1991 budget represents a change in percentage allocations to cooperative missions in Virginia and to world mission causes in the SBC Cooperative Program unified budget.

The distribution will be 64.5 percent for Virginia cooperative missions and 34.5 percent for world mission causes. The principal change, in addition to the percentage allocation, will be reflected in the manner in which the 34.5 percent is to be distributed. One-half of the 34.5 percent, \$2,776,100, will be distributed according to the formula adopted by messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in New Orleans last June. The additional \$2,776,100 will be allocated by designation as follows: Foreign Mission Board: \$1,611,950; Home Mission Board: \$620,000; Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs: \$75,000; Annuity Board: \$25,000; Baptist World Alliance: \$100,000; Associated Baptist Press: \$60,000; Partnership Missions: \$134,150; and theological support for Virginia Baptist students attending a Southern Baptist seminary: \$150,000. This latter amount represents an amended change from the floor to the original budget, namely, that a recommended contingency figure of \$50,000 be combined with the theological education figure of \$100,000.

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Walter B. Shurden, professor of Christianity and chairman of the department of Christianity at Mercer University in Atlanta, was the principal speaker.

Out-going president Raymond L. Spence Jr., pastor of Second Baptist Church in Richmond, received a standing ovation in response to his Tuesday evening presidential address "One Moment in Time."

The 1991 meeting will be Nov. 12-13 at the Salem Civic Center in Salem.