



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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November 14, 1991

91-172

### S.C. Baptists vote to pursue 'declaratory judgement action' against Furman By Ben McDade

GREENVILLE, S.C. (BP)--Messengers to the 171st annual session of the South Carolina Baptist Convention voted to take Furman University to court, elected a new executive secretary-treasurer and convention president, and approved a record budget during its two-day meeting Nov. 12-13.

A motion to appoint a committee to "pursue a Declaratory Judgment Action" against Furman was passed, 2,011 to 1,973. Dubbed a "friendly lawsuit" by its author, attorney "Chip" Campsen, a messenger from East Cooper Baptist Church in Mt. Pleasant, the action asks for a court ruling on the legality of the Furman trustees' decision to become a self-perpetuating body in October 1990.

The messengers never voted on the covenant agreement reached between Furman's executive board and the Furman/SCBC Relations Committee. Campsen's motion was presented as a substitute motion to the covenant, which would have allowed the convention to choose trustees from a list provided by Furman.

In October 1990, Furman trustees voted to amend the university's charter and give the board sole power to elect trustees. That move by Furman led the 1990 convention to appoint a committee to enter into dialogue with Furman trustees in the effort to find a mutually acceptable solution. The covenant agreement would have required most trustees to be South Carolina Baptists and a majority to be Southern Baptists.

Robert Shrum, chairman of the negotiating committee and pastor of Oakland Baptist Church in Rock Hill, said after the substitute motion was accepted, "The relationship (between Furman and the Baptists) has been destroyed. There is no turning back of the clock. This effectively destroys forever the relationship South Carolina Baptists had with Furman. There is no trust anymore."

Furman President John E. Johns said the university would have no choice but to follow its amended charter and let the board elect its successors. Any other action by the university regarding the convention's action would have to be made by the board of trustees, he said.

"I cannot speak for the Furman board of trustees, but I hope they will fight with every ounce of strength they have," Johns told Furman supporters at an alumni dinner later that evening.

Johns said he was exhausted emotionally and "devastated" by the convention action. "I never dreamed that the South Carolina Baptist Convention would vote to take Furman University to court after our attempt to compromise," Johns said.

Furman's problems were compounded when the messengers voted to withhold a vote on the Furman trustees until they learned the outcome of the substitute motion vote. The five Furman trustees were selected earlier by the convention's nominating committee from a list of 10 submitted by Furman earlier in the year. Messengers voted to accept the committee's slate the following day, after defeating two motions that would have named substitute trustees.

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A motion also failed which would have deleted \$1.8 million for Furman University from the \$26 million 1992 South Carolina Baptist Convention budget during the Tuesday evening session. The basic section of the budget, \$24 million, is to be divided, with 60 percent going to Southern Baptist Convention causes and 40 percent going to state convention causes.

Floyd Parker, a messenger from First Baptist Church in Ware Shoals, said he made the motion to defund Furman because he wanted to keep missions money out of the hands of lawyers.

The issue still was not dead late Wednesday afternoon. A messenger moved to suspend the rules and reconsider the substitute motion, but the chair ruled the body lacked a quorum.

Finally, members of the general board, the elected body that acts for the convention ad interim, defeated a motion during their organizational meeting Wednesday afternoon that would have called for a special meeting of the convention later this year to reconsider the legal action against Furman. The motion was defeated 32-20.

Not every issue was so divisive during the two-day meeting. B. Carlisle Driggers was unanimously elected executive secretary-treasurer. A Hartsville native, Driggers currently is executive assistant to Ray P. Rust, the man he will succeed March 1, 1992. The executive secretary-treasurer is the general board's chief administrative officer over a 100-member staff located in Columbia. He also provides general leadership for the convention.

Driggers was nominated to the administrative post by a seven-member committee which considered 21 nominees. Before joining the convention staff in 1990, Driggers was minister of outreach and pastoral care at Northminster Baptist Church in Conyers, Ga.

The convention also elected a new president for the coming year. Eddie Greene, pastor of New Prospect Baptist Church in Anderson, was elected by a 140-vote margin over Ernest Carswell Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors. The vote total was 1,455 to 1,315. By the Wednesday morning session, 4,496 messengers had registered for the convention. Only 2,770 messengers cast ballots in the presidential election.

In a press conference following the election, Greene described himself as a conservative and "grass-roots Southern Baptist by choice, not by birth."

He said he did not support the vote to "pursue a Declaratory Judgment Action" against Furman University, because of scripture about Christians not suing one another. He said he wouldn't make any predictions on the outcome of a court decision involving Furman and the convention.

He also said he had three priorities for the upcoming year. The first is church growth. Research indicates about 78 percent of state convention churches are plateauing or declining in church membership. His second priority is evangelism. "One out of every two people in the state are either unchurched or lost. I want to make evangelism a priority," he said.

His third priority, he said, is to put a greater emphasis on missions. "Missions must be at the very heart of our program. Missions must continue to be our primary responsibility."

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Virginia Baptists fund seminaries  
in Richmond and Ruschlikon

By Robert H. Dilday

Baptist Press  
11/14/91

SALEM, Va. (BP)--Allocation of funds for two controversial seminaries and proposed changes in the criteria for church messenger representation topped the agenda at Virginia Baptists's annual meeting Nov. 12-13.

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During their two day-meeting, messengers to the Baptist General Association of Virginia adopted a \$16.3 million budget for 1992 that includes \$25,000 for the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond and the possibility of \$100,000 for the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

However, they rejected a proposal from the state association's general board to alter the basis on which church messenger representation at annual BGAV meetings is determined.

In addition, messengers elected as president a Virginia Beach pastor supported by the state's moderates and authorized contributions from Virginia Baptist churches to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship to be channelled through the BGAV treasurer.

The Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond has been a target of conservatives since its founding in 1989 by moderates who charged quality theological education in the Southern Baptist Convention was endangered. Classes began this fall with 32 students in facilities leased from the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Virginia's capital.

Funding for the school was proposed by the state association's budget committee. Chairman Ernest Boyd of Richmond said the move would provide a theological education option for congregations in the state who believe SBC seminaries are too conservative. He also cited the number of Virginia Baptist students attending the school -- 18 out of 32.

However, opponents of the measure countered that the seminary's confessional document advocates universalism -- a charge seminary president Thomas Graves denied -- and questioned the school's commitment to the authority of Scripture.

A motion to eliminate the line item in the budget failed by a margin of about 60 percent to 40 percent.

Messengers also approved a resolution affirming the "vision of the founders" of the seminary and encouraging Virginia Baptist churches to "support its ministry."

The \$100,000 allocated to Ruschlikon seminary was intended to replace part of a \$365,000 contribution withdrawn by Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees in October. Trustees eliminated the amount, about 40 percent of Ruschlikon's budget, amid charges of liberalism at the school, European Baptists' only international seminary.

The money comes from \$1.6 million in the BGAV budget directly designated to the FMB. If the mission board's trustees rescind their action in December -- a move some observers say is likely -- the \$100,000 will be returned to that amount.

"This will allow continued support of Ruschlikon," said John Herndon, pastor of Jefferson Park Baptist Church in Charlottesville, who amended the budget to include the amount. Herndon, a former missionary to Portugal, said he had personally witnessed the "fine work" done by the school.

Later messengers approved a resolution saying the FMB's action "has done serious damage to the credibility of the Foreign Mission Board and may indeed damage the reputation of all Southern Baptists throughout Europe and the Soviet Union" and asking trustees to rescind their defunding action.

Three FMB trustees from Virginia -- Gary Burden of Newport News, Terry Harper of Colonial Heights and John Simms of Roanoke -- opposed one or both of the actions. Simms, who indicated he had voted against the defunding in October, said he hoped "we correct it in December." But "this will hinder our effort," he warned.

Nevertheless, messengers decisively approved both the funding and the resolution.

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The \$16.3 million 1992 budget includes a \$660,000 "priority item" for the Southern Baptist Church Annuity Plan. Of the remaining \$15.64 million, 64.5 percent will fund Virginia causes and 35.5 percent will be distributed to world missions causes. The total and the percentage divisions are identical to last year's.

Half of the world missions causes portion -- \$2,776,100 -- is sent through the SBC Cooperative Program unified budget. That represents about 17 percent of the total budget.

The other half is designated to selected causes, including the Southern Baptist Home and Foreign Mission boards, the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, the six Southern Baptist seminaries, the Baptist World Alliance, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Associated Baptist Press, Americans United for Separation of Church and State and partnership missions.

Debate focused on a proposal from the BGAV's general board to allot more than two messengers to churches only on the basis of gifts to Virginia causes, not to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Other items in the proposed change in criteria for church messenger representation would have increased from one to two the number of messengers allotted for a minimum contribution to the state's budget; raised the amount of money necessary to receive additional messengers; and reduced the maximum number of messengers from 15 to 10.

Board leaders said the move was necessary following approval last year of a new budget format that allows churches to divide their contributions to state and world-wide causes by any percentage they choose and still be considered cooperative.

As a result, it is now possible for a Virginia church to contribute only to Southern Baptist causes, and nothing to state ministries, yet be permitted to send the maximum number of messengers to the annual meeting.

Opponents of the change said it made some churches "second-class citizens" and violated a pledge made last year that churches opting for diverse percentage divisions would not be penalized.

Each of the four sections of the proposal was voted separately and only one -- increasing to two the number of messengers given for a minimum contribution -- received the two-thirds majority necessary for approval.

W. Jerry Holcomb, pastor of King's Grant Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, was elected BGAV president with 66 percent of the vote. Holcomb, who received support from moderate leaders in the state, defeated Howard Baldwin of Richmond, a vocational evangelist who was publicly endorsed by more conservative Virginia Baptists.

Other moderate-backed candidates also won. William G. "Bill" Wilson Jr., pastor of Farmville Baptist Church in Farmville, was elected first vice president and R. Clint Hopkins, pastor of Churchland Baptist Church in Portsmouth, second vice president.

Authorizing the BGAV treasurer to disburse funds to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an organization founded in 1990 by some Southern Baptists dissatisfied with the more conservative direction taken by the SBC since 1979, will allow churches to channel their gifts through the state Baptist office.

Unless instructed otherwise, the treasurer is prohibited from sending contributions from churches to any cause not in the BGAV budget.

In other action, messengers approved motions affirming Lloyd Elder, who was fired earlier this year as president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, and James T. Draper, elected as his successor.

They also passed a resolution commemorating the bicentennial of the U.S. Bill of Rights and honored two retiring denominational employees: Julian H. Pentecost, who will step down next year after 21 years as editor of the Religious Herald, newsjournal of the BGAV; and William H. Jenkins, retiring in December after 35 years on the general board staff.

Messengers deflected attempts to eliminate the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and Associated Baptist Press from their budget and defeated a motion to add Sanctity of Life Day to the list of officially endorsed observances on the denominational calendar.

Next year's meeting is set for Nov. 10-11 in Virginia Beach.

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Texas Baptists affirm Baylor  
relationship, elect officers

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
11/14/91

WACO, Texas (BP)--A record number of messengers to the Baptist General Convention of Texas approved a new relationship with Baylor University; elected Dick Maples, pastor of First Baptist Church of Bryan as convention president; and approved a \$63.5 million basic Cooperative Program budget.

More than 10,800 elected messengers crowded the Ferrell Special Events Center and spilled into overflow rooms at the Waco Convention Center and First Baptist Church for BGCT business sessions related to the Baylor issue.

By a 59 percent margin, messengers endorsed a relationship proposal that had been drafted by BGCT officers and approved by both the convention's executive board and Baylor's governing board.

Under the relationship agreement -- approved 5,745 to 3,992 by messengers -- 25 percent of Baylor's governing board will be elected directly by the BGCT, and Baylor will name the remaining 75 percent, giving consideration to suggestions from the convention.

The agreement also makes virtually nonamendable charter provisions requiring all regents to be Baptist, stipulating the school be operated according to Baptist and Christian ideals, and assuring the university's assets be transferred to the BGCT if Baylor were dissolved and liquidated.

BGCT President Phil Lineberger, pastor of Richardson Heights Baptist Church in Richardson, relinquished the chair to speak as a messenger in support of the BGCT/Baylor Relationship Proposal. Saying the relationship committee faced three alternatives, "to litigate, to separate or to negotiate," Lineberger assured messengers the committee and the convention's officers favored the latter course.

Affirming the executive board proposal as "the best available at this time," Lineberger said, "Rejecting this proposal won't bring Baylor back to its previous relationship. And to change this agreement is to simply lose the agreement that has been drafted."

By a 5,976 to 4,714 vote, messengers turned aside a substitute motion by Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Houston, which would have required Baylor University's governing board to submit to binding arbitration or face an "appeal to Caesar."

Calling for "rule by the elect and not the elite," Young introduced the substitute motion asking Baylor University to submit to final and binding arbitration by three individuals named by evangelist Billy Graham.

The motion, which Young told reporters was drafted the night before the convention by members of the Baylor Restoration Committee, also said if Baylor rejected the call for binding arbitration, BGCT officials "be authorized and directed to take any and all actions within their power to negate and overturn the actions taken" by the Baylor trustees.

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Messengers elected Maples by a 57 percent margin. He was nominated by Brian Harbour, pastor of First Baptist Church of Richardson, who cited Maples' long record of service on Texas Baptist boards and committees.

Others nominated for the BGCT presidency were Damon Shook, pastor of Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston; and Neil Kibbe, pastor of First Baptist Church of Seguin. The final vote tally was Maples, 5,961; Shook, 3,953; and Kibbe, 506.

At his presidential press conference, Maples promised to be theologically, racially, and ethnically inclusive in his appointments of people to state Baptist institutional boards.

Acknowledging "honest difference of opinions" within the convention, Maples said he wants to see Texas Baptists "put the Baylor controversy to rest" and recommit themselves to the church starting and evangelistic goals of Mission Texas.

Messengers elected as first vice president Harry Lucenay, pastor of First Baptist Church of San Antonio. Lucenay drew 4,875 votes, compared to 3,725 for Miles Seaborn Jr, pastor of Birchman Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

The convention elected Carolyn Cole Bucy of Waco second vice president by a 65.4 percent margin over Hollas Hoffman of Schulenburg and Barbara O'Chester of Austin.

Maples, Lucenay and Bucy all had been endorsed by the Baylor Alumni Association. Shook, Seaborn and O'Chester received the endorsement of the Baylor Restoration Committee.

Turning aside efforts to cut BGCT funding for Baylor, messengers also approved a \$63.5 million basic 1992 Cooperative Program budget for the support of missionary, benevolent and educational causes and a \$5.3 million challenge budget. The bottom line basic figure is unchanged from the 1991 budget. The convention will contribute 36.65 percent to the national Cooperative Program unified budget, the same percentage as last year.

In other business, the convention approved resolutions: urging Texas Baptists to oppose elective abortions and to teach biblical standards of sexual responsibility; opposing state-sponsored lotteries; affirming religious liberty and church-state separation; honoring Southern Baptist chaplains; and expressing appreciation to convention officers and the host city.

The 1992 BGCT is slated for Nov. 9-10 in Corpus Christi.

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Hawaii Baptists receive  
messengers from Guam

Baptist Press  
11/14/91

HONOLULU (BP)--Messengers to the Hawaii Baptist Convention meeting Nov. 7-9 in Honolulu received messengers from three Southern Baptist churches in Guam thus extending the territory served by the convention to the western Pacific. The convention already includes churches from American and Western Samoa.

The action follows the transferring of responsibility for Baptist work in Guam, the Marianas and Micronesia from the Foreign Mission Board to the Home Mission Board.

Also approved was a partnership with the Alabama Baptist Convention from 1991 through 1995.

Three officers were re-elected. They are: Kenneth Newman, pastor of Hawaii Kai Baptist Church, president; Paul Oyer, layman from Olivet Baptist Church, first vice president; Leon Hicks, layman from Waiialae Baptist Church, second vice president.

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Two hundred ninety five messengers and 102 guests were registered for a total of 397. A budget of \$2,268,499, an increase of 8 percent over 1991, was adopted. The percentage going to SBC causes through the Cooperative Program was increased by 0.65 percent for a total of 29.55 percent.

In other action, the messengers approved a re-organization plan for the convention's executive board which provides for a separate board of directors for the Hawaii Baptist Academy and Hawaii Baptist Foundation.

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Penn./So. Jersey Baptists  
debate CP percentage

Baptist Press  
11/14/91

PAOLI, Pa. (BP)--Meeting for its 21st annual session at Paoli Baptist Church with the theme "Advance the Kingdom," the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey elected new officers, and approved the 1992 budget and a long range planning document.

Lamar Duke, pastor of Absecon Baptist Church in Absecon, N.J., was elected president.

The convention registered 200 messengers and 79 visitors.

The 1992 budget of \$637,778 was approved after debate over the Cooperative Program percentage. The new budget is an increase of 0.34 percent over the 1991 budget; however it will require a 5.77 percent increase in receipts from the churches. The Cooperative Program part of the new budget will be the same as the current year, 22.1 percent. A motion was made to increase this to 22.2 percent to set an example for churches and individuals. After debate the motion was defeated 76-56.

In a later statement Wallace Williams, executive director-treasurer, told the convention, "I pledge to you that for 1993 we will come back to you with a recommendation to increase our giving to the Cooperative Program. I will do everything in my power to see that we increase this."

Vision 2001, a long-range planning document was approved. It features four areas -- planting new work, strengthening churches, caring for people, evangelizing the lost -- supported by a base of spiritual awakening.

A resolution on AIDS calling for the promotion of the biblical principle of abstinence from sex outside marriage and for compassion for those with the AIDS virus passed with little debate.

An ad hoc committee appointed last year to study less expensive health insurance for pastors reported insufficient response to continue its work.

Next year's meeting will be at a convention center in Williamsport, Penn., Nov. 5-7.

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New York Baptists ask FMB  
to rescind Ruschlikon action

Baptist Press  
11/14/91

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. (BP)--The 22nd annual session of the Baptist Convention of New York, meeting Nov. 7-8, recognized the first Southern Baptist church in the Northeast United States, elected officers, adopted the 1992 Cooperative Program budget, recognized Emmanuel McCall, and approved a resolution appealing the Foreign Mission Board action relating to the Baptist Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

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More than 250 messengers and guests attended the meeting in Niagara Falls Hotel.

In the election of officers, Larry Brown, a layperson from the Madison Baptist Church, Madison, N.J., was re-elected to a second term. Other officers elected were: first vice-president, Ondra Black, a pastor from Flanders, N.J.; second vice-president, Delfin Orendain, a pastor from Aberdeen, N.J.; recording secretary, Robert Taylor, a layman from North Syracuse, N.Y.; and assistant recording secretary, Gene Maston, a layman from New York City.

The 1992 budget adopted by the convention of \$2,543,195 is a reduction of \$111,375 from the 1991 budget. However, the budget does include a 0.25 percent increase in the percentage going to Southern Baptist causes to 25.75 percent.

The budget anticipates Cooperative Program receipts from the churches of \$588,488; assistance from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board of \$1,790,971; \$88,700 from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board; and other sources of income totaling \$75,036. There are no salary increases for any convention staff and some programs were limited or eliminated.

Emmanuel McCall, former director of the black church extension department of the Home Mission Board and now pastor of Christian Fellowship Baptist Church in Atlanta, was honored for the years of involvement in the ministry of the Baptist Convention of New York and across the Southern Baptist Convention. McCall gave the closing address of the convention and spoke on the necessity of Christians to love each other as an example to the world.

A resolution requesting the Foreign Mission Board trustees to restore funding for the Baptist seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, was brought to the floor and, after extended discussion, adopted by a wide margin. Other resolutions were offered in support of the Cooperative Program, in appreciation for staff for extended years of service, and appreciation for the sister convention relationship with North Carolina Baptists.

The first Southern Baptist church in the Northeast, LaSalle Baptist Church in Niagara Falls, was recognized at a pre-convention prayer meeting on Nov. 6. It was from this church, supported by a Baptist church in Gant, Ala., that Southern Baptists moved into the Northeast in 1955. The first pastor of the new church, Zig Burroughs, was present and shared some of the early history of the church.

Members of the LaSalle church were instrumental in beginning churches in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and other areas in central and western New York. The ministry was initially affiliated with the Ohio convention until the work along the eastern seaboard, begun shortly after the LaSalle church, came together to form the New York Fellowship which became the Baptist Convention of New York in 1969.

The New York convention's 1992 meeting will be Nov. 5-6 in the Albany, N.Y., area.

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Oklahoma convention draws  
more than 1,200 messengers

By Dave Parker

Baptist Press  
11/14/91

BETHANY, Okla. (BP)--"The Year of the Sunday School" was the theme for the 86th annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, held Nov. 11-13 at Council Road Baptist Church in Bethany, a suburb of Oklahoma City, which drew 1,257 messengers.

All officers were elected and seven resolutions were adopted with no opposition. One of the resolutions commended Oklahoma Baptist University for its record of academic excellence and its commitment to cooperation with the BGCO.

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Anthony L. Jordan, pastor of Northwest Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, was re-elected president. First vice president is Bill Merrell, director of missions for Comanche-Cotton Association in Lawton; and second vice president is Joe Knowles, pastor of First Baptist Church of Carnegie.

Messengers approved a \$17 million budget for 1992. Of this total, 44.25 percent will be forwarded to the national Cooperative Program unified budget, the same percentage as last year.

Resolutions approved included a resolution against abortion, a resolution praising OBU, a resolution on supporting the Cooperative Program and resolutions against suicide, advertising alcoholic beverages and sexual relationships outside a man-woman marital relationship.

The resolution on the Cooperative Program said messengers "affirm our commitment to the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention" and "discourage any deviation from our existing cooperative method of mission support."

The revelation basketball superstar Magic Johnson has the HIV virus was frequently mentioned in sermons and reports; pastors repeatedly spoke against his promotion of "safe sex." The resolution on sexuality said Oklahoma Baptists are "committed to the belief that 'safe sex' outside of the bounds of marriage is not the answer to any of America's social ills, but rather the answer lies in a return to biblical morality."

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Ohio Baptists pay tribute  
to the late Tal D. Bonham

Baptist Press  
11/14/91

CINCINNATI (BP)--The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, meeting in Cincinnati, re-elected its president, adopted a 1992 budget of \$5.8 million, and paid tribute to late Executive Director Tal D. Bonham, who died in September.

The convention also voted down an amendment to the proposed 1992 budget that would have allotted \$3,000 to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, which earlier this year was totally defunded by the Southern Baptist Convention.

The executive board, responsible for finding a new executive director, announced the executive committee of the board, based on 1991 membership, would be a search committee.

The search committee includes the president and two vice presidents of the convention in office in 1991, plus chairpersons of five committees of the board related to ministry areas.

Gary L. Frost, Youngstown pastor, was re-elected president. He is the first black pastor to be president. The first vice president also was re-elected. None of the offices was contested.

Convention presidents who held office during the 11 years Bonham was executive director made tributes to his memory. Faye Bonham, his widow, was presented with a plaque in the shape of the state of Ohio with a description of his achievements.

The \$5.8 million budget proposal includes \$3.7 million in anticipated Cooperative Program receipts from churches, with \$1.5 million, or 41.5 percent, going to SBC missions and related activities. This is up 0.25 percent over last year's contribution.

The \$3,000 advocated for BJCPA was "to make a statement for religious liberty," its proponent, an Akron area pastor, said. The amendment lost overwhelmingly with only 13 votes in favor, and several hundred for leaving the budget unamended.

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Total registration for the convention was 882 people, which included 614 messengers.

The 1992 convention will meet in a Dayton suburb Nov. 3-5.

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Key differences mark Baylor,  
Furman decisions, say Texans

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
11/14/91

DALLAS (BP)--Significant differences regarding representation on governing boards and continued funding of universities explain the very different decisions reached by Texas and South Carolina Baptists regarding two of their schools, according to Dick Maples of Bryan, Texas, newly elected president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

On Nov. 11, BGCT messengers meeting in Waco endorsed by a 59 percent vote a relationship agreement with Baylor University that had been drafted by convention officers, proposed by the BGCT/Baylor Relationship Committee and approved by both the convention's executive board and Baylor's governing board.

The following day, messengers to the South Carolina Baptist Convention by a very narrow margin adopted a substitute motion to its proposed agreement with Furman University, instead calling for a legal judgment.

The proposed agreement rejected by South Carolina Baptists was not nearly so favorable to their state convention as the BGCT/Baylor proposal was to Texas Baptists, said Maples, pastor of First Baptist Church of Bryan.

"For instance, the South Carolina Convention had no right to name any person to Furman's board except those Furman approved in advance. Furman, unlike Baylor, refused to agree that all its trustees would be Baptist," Maples said.

"The South Carolina proposal called for the convention to continue to fund Furman in future years at the same level it had funded the university in previous years. The Texas agreement allows the BGCT to make a funding decision about Baylor each year and even -- should the convention choose -- to entirely delete any funding for Baylor.

"While we grieve for our South Carolina brothers and sisters as they begin what will undoubtedly be a divisive and painful struggle, we in Texas can be grateful for the resolution we have reached with Baylor. We can be grateful that Baylor University was willing to go much further than Furman in reaching an agreement which assures its future as a Baptist university."

Maples emphasized Texas Baptist's agreement with Baylor "kept an intrachurch dispute within the church, and we have resisted the temptation to put this issue into the courts."

He stressed, "Now is the time for Texas Baptists, with Baylor remaining within the fold, to move forward about the convention's business, to bring men and women, boys and girls, to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ."

In addition to differences in Baptist convention participation on university governing boards and funding, differences in charters also influenced the decisions of voting messengers when Texas Baptists approved an agreement with Baylor and South Carolina Baptists rejected a proposed agreement with Furman, according to BGCT legal counsel.

"Furman violated the terms of its own charter when it amended that charter without the prior consent of the South Carolina Baptist Convention," said attorney James Guenther of Nashville, noting Furman's charter required that consent before any amendment could take place.

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Baylor's charter, on the other hand, did not contain any requirement that notice of any change be given to the BGCT, nor did Baylor's charter require any convention approval.

"From a legal standpoint, this factor gives the South Carolina Convention a significant advantage in a lawsuit which would not have been available to the BGCT. While this difference does not guarantee the South Carolina Convention will prevail in its suit, it certainly gives them a significant leg up which the BGCT did not have," Guenther said.

Key differences indicate "Baylor University apparently wanted a closer relationship to the BGCT than Furman was willing to negotiate with the South Carolina Convention," Guenther said. "Baylor was willing to give the BGCT some control and participation in the university's governance, without any guarantee of funding.

"These factors undoubtedly influenced the decisions of messengers to the BGCT, who adopted the agreement with Baylor by more than 1,700 votes. When the South Carolina Convention found itself faced with a proposal agreement inferior to the Baylor agreement and a legal position which was comparatively stronger, South Carolina narrowly rejected the agreement."

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Baptists must partner  
with poor, says O'Brien

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
11/14/91

WACO, Texas (BP)--If they wish to reach a changing world with the gospel, Baptists must lay aside the yoke of affluence and become partners with suffering believers worldwide, according to former Southern Baptist missionary Bill O'Brien.

O'Brien, currently director of the Global Strategy Center for Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala., spoke to a missions rally at the conclusion of the 106th annual Baptist General Convention of Texas, Nov. 11-12, in Waco, Texas.

Baptists should "seek out partnerships with those who have been mistreated for one reason or another and ask them to mentor us in the partnership," said the former executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"Who will stand with believers who are prisoners of apartheid as fellow-sufferers for Christ? Who will stand with believers in the West Bank concerned about the five percent of all Palestinian males between the ages of 15 and 55 who are incarcerated without charges?" O'Brien asked.

"Who will stand with priests and clergy jailed in Egypt for their faith? Who will partner together on behalf of the homeless in America or AIDS victims or the crack addicts? Who will stand with Christian brothers and sisters living in the midst of these conditions and others that could be mentioned? Is there such a thing as a ministry or partnership of encouragement?"

"Maybe what some of our fellow-believers need is for us to be willing to live out the questions with them. Simplistic answers are an insult to the dignity of suffering."

Drawing a parallel to the biblical story of Moses' being reared in Pharaoh's house, O'Brien said Texas Baptists -- and all Southern Baptists -- have been shaped since World War II by material wealth and cultural acceptance.

"While bearing the name of Jesus in our mouths and carrying a Bible in one hand, in the other we held on to values that had shaped us and marked us as 'sons of Pharaoh's daughter,'" he said. "We attempted to do what Jesus himself had said was impossible; that is, to serve God and mammon."

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Future partnerships in Jesus' name should be marked by a refusal to be known as children of kingly culture and by a redirection of material resources to the priorities of God's Kingdom, O'Brien said.

"For those of us reared in America's kingly palace, our assets may be our greatest debits," he said. "For while we attempt to walk in partnership with other believers, the harness is the yoke of affluence. And that yoke is too heavy a burden for the wilderness journey."

Pointing to doors in eastern Europe that have opened recently to the gospel, O'Brien rebuked well-intentioned evangelicals who have responded in a paternalistic and materialistic manner.

"Not wanting Christians to suffer disgrace any longer for the sake of Christ, we have offered our treasure -- but not ourselves," he said, pointing to Western preachers who exploit European Christians by leading quick crusades while staying in the finest hotels of Europe and eating lavish meals, and then returning home to brag about their accomplishments.

"Six-figure salaries, luxury automobiles and country-club privileges make it very difficult to regard disgrace for the sake of Christ as greater value than all that," he said.

Faced with the challenge of a changing world, Baptists should resist the temptation to retreat inward. Instead, they should reach out to like-minded believers worldwide in "an ecumenicity of spirit" that transcends denominations.

"God has raised up millions of faithful witnesses whose denominational labels and confessional stances are different to mine. But common Lordship and common commitment to the stewardship of the mystery of God has brought us to a new plateau on which we can stand and work together," he said.

"To partner effectively in a changing world calls for a willingness to leave behind the security of familiar props to persevere in the pilgrimage of the unknown."

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Hungarian ecumenical council  
elects first Baptist president

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BUDAPEST, Hungary (BP)--Hungarian Baptist leader Janos Viczian has become the first Baptist elected president of the Ecumenical Council of Churches of Hungary.

Viczian was elected Nov. 4 to a three-year term in the top post of the 43-year-old council, made up of eight Protestant and Orthodox denominations. He is president of the Baptist Union of Hungary, pastor of a Baptist church in Nezmely and a former member of the Hungarian parliament.

Before the council was established in 1948, "Baptists were considered as a sect" and endured acts of religious intolerance, sometimes initiated by larger church bodies, Viczian told European Baptist Press Service.

"That ended after a few years of our cooperative work on the council," Viczian said. "In 1953 the Reformed bishop asked Baptists to forgive all those past experiences" and relations between the denominations in the council have developed and deepened since then.

In other action the council's assembly in Budapest approved a new set of bylaws, one section of which strengthens the council's commitment to more biblical preaching and evangelism.

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Viczian said the renewed emphasis on evangelism was due in large part to Baptist influence in the council.

Besides the Baptist Union of Hungary, the council's third-largest denomination, other council members are the Reformed Church of Hungary, Lutheran Church, Hungarian Methodist Church and four Orthodox denominations (Hungarian, Hungarian-Romanian, Bulgarian and Serbian.)

Viczian served in the Hungarian parliament from 1988-90 as a representative of evangelical churches in Hungary, a position that no longer exists under the country's new constitution.

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China moves to stop  
'illegal' religious work

By Michael Chute

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HONG KONG (BP)--The chief of China's secret police has ordered security officials nationwide to crack down on "illegal" religious activities in the country, according to an official Chinese news report.

Police should "effectively prevent and wage a struggle against nationalist splittists and criminals who carry out sabotage in the name of religion," Public Security Minister Tao Sijn reportedly told a police conference.

Tao's remarks underscore China's latest effort to stem the "invasion" and development of religious forces from outside the country. Premier Li Peng leveled that charge in a Nov. 8 meeting.

"With regard to reactionary religious forces and secret society forces from outside our borders, we must resolutely fight them once they are discovered," Communist Party politburo member Qiao Shi told top security officials, according to an article in the Legal Daily. "We must absolutely not allow their existence or development."

Chinese and foreign business and religious leaders also have reported recent signs of a crackdown on religion in China. Large-scale arrests of house church leaders reportedly have been carried out since late summer in Jiangsu, Anhui, Guangdong and Zhejiang provinces, including the cities of Guangzhou, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Public Security officials deported Australian businessman Noel Steensen Oct. 27 for holding Bible meetings in his Shanghai home with local Chinese. Steensen, a Jehovah's Witness, claimed interrogators told him other foreigners would be expelled in a crackdown on unofficial church activities.

Steensen said authorities also told him Chinese attending "house churches" must go to government-approved churches, such as those aligned with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, which represents Protestants. However, some Chinese sources report instances where police also have clamped down on some Three-Self churches. Most Jehovah's Witnesses in Shanghai were questioned and police arrested at least five Chinese Jehovah's Witnesses, Steensen charged.

Efforts to reach Chinese Christian officials in the Three-Self movement for comment were unsuccessful Nov. 14.

The crackdown on "illegal" religious activities is further evidence of China's general tightening of controls following the collapse of Soviet communism. It parallels government concern over ethnic unrest in border areas. Besides "illegal" Christian house churches, the police crackdown also targets Buddhist and Islamic religious centers in Tibet and among Muslims in Xinjiang province, which authorities claim are fronts for separatist movements.

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"Following the collapse of the Soviet Communist Party, strict ideological control has become China's long-term policy," said Jonathan Chao, director of the Hong Kong-based Chinese Church Research Center. "Religions, in particular those brought in from the West, have inevitably been reaffirmed as a means of 'peaceful evolution' through which neo-imperialists try to turn China capitalist."

Immediately following the failed Soviet coup, jittery Chinese leaders made the fight against "peaceful evolution toward capitalism" the nation's top priority. In the ensuing three months a massive information campaign has called for "more class struggle" to intensify Marxist education, and commanded leaders of work units to warn their employees not to meet with foreigners without permission.

A Beijing university official reportedly insisted his staff report colleagues' contacts with foreigners. One source said officials even want correspondence with Westerners reported to the Public Security Bureau.

"We do hear rumors of investigations into religious activities by foreigners, but generally those are aimed at persons who organize secret Bible studies or illegally import religious materials into China," said Charlie Wilson, educational resources coordinator for Cooperative Services International, a Southern Baptist aid organization. "Southern Baptist teachers in China don't do those things which are illegal."

"Possible restrictions on foreigners is a concern. Our policy for teachers is to abide by rules and regulations and operate within guidelines set down by our host units. Our Chinese friends and cooperative units know we are Christian and we respect Chinese laws. We also respect and support the Chinese church. Our religious activities are confined to responding to individual questions in personal conversations and regular church attendance in recognized churches. This comes under the normal religious activities protected by the Chinese constitution."

None of the 46 Southern Baptist teachers working in Chinese schools and universities has reported a change in personal relationships with Chinese students or teaching colleagues, according to officials with the aid organization.

"No one has experienced any problems, although some have heard rumors that students are again being required to register when visiting foreign teachers to report contacts with foreigners," Wilson added. "This happens from time to time."

Observers say new CIA chief Robert Gates hurt foreigners working in China when he told U.S. senators during recent confirmation hearings that "more can be done (in China) through expanded human intelligence collection." His comment received little attention in the U.S. media, but was reported throughout China. Some communist hard-liners view Gates' statement as proof the United States wants to topple China's government.

In related developments, Chinese officials have taken new steps to prevent unrest on university campuses. The Communist Party's People's Daily issued a strident rebuke of student-led protests for democracy that led to demonstrations in 1989. The recent article claimed pro-democracy student leaders "are biding their time and looking for opportunities for the kill. We must watch their actions at all times."

Meanwhile, reports out of China suggest unprecedented numbers of Chinese university students have converted to Christianity since the government crushed student protests at Beijing's Tiananmen Square in June 1989. Students disillusioned by socialist shortcomings and searching for political reform and democracy apparently have embraced Christianity in recent months.

Chinese turning to religion have not gone unnoticed by China's government leaders. Vice President Wang Zhen has warned that growing interest in "religion, capitalism and clans" in the countryside placed Chinese communists in jeopardy of losing their traditional rural power base. About 75 percent of China's population lives in rural areas. Peasants make up about half of the Communist Party's 49 million members.

"Fewer and fewer people want to be enrolled in the party or the Communist Youth League, yet more and more want to join religious groups," Wang told party delegates earlier this year. "While the words of (party) cadres in the villages have little appeal, the response to religious figures is overwhelming."

A Chinese government journal called "Atheism, Religion" noted recently that despite China's policy of religious freedom, "in some places great resistance and many problems have been encountered in the implementation of the policy. For example, a large number of properties belonging to religious circles are still occupied by other work units. ... Such infringement of the legal rights of religious bodies is not in accord with the policy of religious freedom and is contrary to the constitution.

"Especially since the June 4th incident, individual localities have acted inappropriately and made inappropriate assessments in dealing with the religious issue, causing much anxiety and discomfort among religious people. The lack of understanding toward the central government's religious policy will certainly affect unity and stability, and the departments concerned should pay more attention to this issue."

While reports and fears of restrictions persist, normal religious activities are continuing in Chinese churches, Wilson said. He pointed to the scheduled Nov. 24 opening of a church in Guangzhou as evidence the Chinese church is pushing forward.

"The application of the policies has always been irregular" in China, Wilson added. "Some places are more strict than others. One factor that makes a difference is the amount of respect foreigners give to the Chinese system and the amount of respect they earn for Christianity by their lifestyle."

Cooperative Services International officials are trying to recruit 100 Southern Baptist volunteers to teach in China next year.

"We see no reason to back down from that number," said Wilson. "People get the impression they can't come to China, but the official China policy that keeps its doors open to educational, cultural and commercial exchanges has not changed."