

November 19, 1958

Oklahoma To Fight Prohibition Repeal

OKLAHOMA CITY--(BP)--The Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma has girded itself for an expected battle with the liquor interests, who are seeking to repeal the state's prohibition laws.

In annual session here, the convention voted to lend one of its state workers ---Samuel W. Scantlan, secretary of rural and city missions---to the state United Drys organization for a six-month period.

Scantlan will serve as acting secretary of the temperance group, which is without an executive leader at present. The Oklahoma convention will pay Scantlan's regular salary as a Baptist worker during this period.

The convention also adopted a resolution reaffirming its support of the temperance work carried on through the United Drys.

State Baptist leaders anticipate a growing effort by the liquor traffic toward repeal. Oklahoma is one of two "dry" states in the nation. An observer said that the repeal issue is "very hot" in Oklahoma and will continue to be for several months.

The governor-elect of the state, who will succeed Gov. Raymond Gray in January has appointed a committee to study repeal. Gary, a Baptist, is on the side of the "dry" forces. The legislature may put a constitutional amendment before state voters on the issue next spring.

As acting leader of the United Drys, it will be Scantlan's duty to lead a citizen's campaign against repeal of prohibition laws. The convention said that it has "never wavered in the slightest in its opposition to the legal sale of alcoholic beverages" in Oklahoma.

The United Dry organization had asked to have Scantlan's services.

"We would expect," the convention continued, "as a people to throw our whole strength into any fight opposing repeal of our constitutional prohibitory laws against alcoholic beverages."

The convention elected Leonard W. Stigler, pastor, Brookside Baptist Church, Tulsa, president. It voted to meet in Tulsa for its annual session next fall.

Stigler was at first opposed by Gov. Gary, who was nominated during the election period. However, a messenger to the convention spoke in opposition to electing a political figure as president. Gary had previously been a vice-president of the convention.

The messenger opposing Gary said he was not personally against Gary, but only because Gary held a political office at the time he was nominated to Baptist denominational office.

Gary's name was withdrawn and Gary later said he did not want to serve as president during his term as a public official.

While the convention was in session, the cornerstone was laid for the 10th state Baptist-operated hospital in Oklahoma. It is the Baptist Memorial Hospital of this city, due to open in February. It has cost about \$4,600,000.

-30-

Oklahoma Foundation Presents Resolution

OKLAHOMA CITY--(BP)--Oklahoma Baptists have asked that the Southern Baptist Foundation, an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, be restrained from

-more-

advertising its services or soliciting information or gifts in Oklahoma.

The request was contained in a resolution adopted by the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma during its annual session here. The resolution was presented by Auguie Henry, Oklahoma City, secretary of the Oklahoma Baptist Foundation.

The resolution was patterned after a model given to state Baptist Foundation secretaries at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, N.C., last summer with the request that each secretary introduce the resolution in his state.

Oklahoma Baptists directed their request to the Southern Baptist Convention. They asked that the SBC instruct the Southern Baptist Foundation to refrain from dealings inside Oklahoma.

The Oklahomans also requested that the SBC "instruct the newly-created Stewardship Commission . . . to promote the program of state Baptist foundations on a Convention basis."

(The Stewardship Commission actually is not yet an entity. It was recommended as a new agency and approved as such at the 1958 session of the SBC in Houston. New agencies, however, require two affirmative votes at annual sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention.)

In this capacity suggested by Oklahomans, the Stewardship Commission would not replace the state foundations but would help them co-ordinate their work and would assist them in their plans.

Oklahomans complained that the services of the state and SBC foundations "are the same."

They said:

"Continued advertising and solicitation . . . by the Southern Baptist Foundation in Oklahoma constitutes an unnecessary duplication" and "tends to disrupt fellowship and good will that should prevail between the Southern Baptist Convention and state convention organizations."

The Oklahoma petition differed from the one drafted by the Texas convention. Texans asked that the SBC consider dissolving the Southern Baptist Foundation and transferring its assets to the Relief and Annuity Board, another SBC agency.

-30-

CORRECTION: In November 9, 1958 Baptist Press release on Texas convention action regarding Southern Baptist Foundation, please make the following substitution for the seventh paragraph starting "Dissolution of Southern Baptist Foundation . . ." etc.:

"Dissolution of the Southern Baptist Foundation should be considered during the next three years, Texans said. Texas messengers requested that the SBC consider transferring assets of the Foundation to the Southern Baptist Convention's Relief and Annuity Board, which has offices in Dallas. The Foundation has offices in Nashville."

The gist of the correction is to insert the word "consider" in the material concerning dissolving the agency and transferring its assets. This correction was made at one point in the story before mailing but inadvertently failed to be made in the paragraph above. -- Baptist Press.

-30-

2 More Conventions
Vote Hays Support

NASHVILLE--(BP)--Two more state Baptist organizations have come to the defense of Brooks Hays, president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Baptist General Association of Virginia, meeting at Virginia Beach,

-more-

commended Hays's "Christian spirit, ministry of reconciliation, and leadership" in a resolution adopted by messengers to that annual session.

In Miami, the Florida Baptist Convention in a resolution adopted during their meeting expressed "appreciation for the able and Christian statesmanship of the Hon. Brooks Hays."

Earlier, the Maryland Baptist Union Association and Baptist State Convention of North Carolina had reaffirmed their confidence in Hays as president of the Southern Convention.

Hays was defeated in early November in a write-in campaign in his home Congressional district in the Little Rock, Ark., vicinity. Since that defeat an unofficial and small group of Baptist laymen have demanded that he resign as Convention president.

Hays told the Virginia association that he did not plan to resign.

-30-

Florida Ignores Bomb Threat To Convention

MIAMI--(BP)--Florida Baptist Convention ignored a bomb threat to continue one of its sessions at Central Baptist Church here.

A woman called on Thursday of the annual convention session and said:

"The Central Baptist Church will be bombed today or tonight. You will not be emptied. This is your last warning." She hung up before the call could be traced.

Convention leaders were unable to understand precisely what was ~~meant~~ by the remark "You will not be emptied," unless the caller believed that the building would be full of people.

After hurried consultation with leaders, C. Roy Angell, pastor of the host church, announced the threat. The messengers voted to continue their meeting.

It was the second threat to bomb the church during the week. On the Sunday prior to the opening of the convention, a threat was made.

Observers discounted the relationship of the second bomb threat to the segregation issue. They felt that the caller was following a pattern of trying to disrupt organized church services and related functions. Several other churches in Miami were threatened by a mysterious caller.

Although the convention continued in session, agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Miami police searched the church several times but found nothing suspicious. At the Thursday night meeting, uniformed police guarded the building against any potential bombing.

-30-

Massive Resistance Backing Rejected

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.--(BP)--Virginia Baptists refused here to endorse the massive resistance program of the Virginia state government under Gov. J. Lindsay Almond Jr. But they did offer him their prayers "in these difficult times."

The massive resistance program is designed to prevent integration of public schools in Virginia.

Action by the Baptist General Association of Virginia came when the association considered the report of its Christian life committee at the annual session here.

While the report made no reference to Gov. Almond, an attempt was made from the association floor to add to the committee report an endorsement of his policy of resistance.

The refusal to endorse the program was by a substantial margin in this coastal city only a few miles from Norfolk, where public schools have been closed to prevent integration.

-more-

The Virginia association also went on record opposing the use of churches for schooling after the public schools have been closed under the massive resistance program.

Virginia also expressed opposition "to any group that tries to divide the church." It also accepted a report recommending to "all Virginia Baptists that as we face these inter-racial problems they be approached in a spirit of Christian humility, prayer, and love."

The report said further "that we seek both to respect and love those who differ from us and that we seek together the reign of God the Father revealed through Jesus Christ our Lord to whom be glory forever and ever."

Following custom, Virginia association elected a layman president for the coming year. The association traditionally rotates the presidency between a minister and a layman. The new president is Jesse M. Johnson, Richmond attorney.

However, the association also elected laymen to both vice presidential positions. James T. Todd, Orange, Va., will serve as first vice-president and H. W. Peters of FrontRoyal, Va., will serve as second vice-president.

It picked Richmond as site for the next session of the general association. Tentative dates are Nov. 10-12, 1959.

-30-

Florida Position About Presidential Candidate

MIAMI--(BP)--Florida Baptists meeting here said they "strongly oppose" the election of a United States President who gives precedence to a religious or political allegiance over the United States Constitution.

The resolution of Florida Baptist Convention did not refer to any religion by name nor any person by name. However, many accepted this as a statement opposing a Roman Catholic candidate for President.

The convention also opposed diverting of public tax funds to church-related institutions, and asked "serious consideration" be given to having a Baptist observer at United Nations and to establishing a world Baptist university.

Another resolution denounced "all use of violence, intimidation, or threat by any group or individual by whatever name as a means of influencing public opinion."

It said that Florida Baptists would "refrain from acts, attitudes, and associations which tend to lawlessness and violence." The resolution encouraged men who "prayerfully and intelligently seek solutions to our problems in this day of unrest" but denounced "all men who deliberately intensify the problem for personal or political self-interest."

The statement on church-state relations, in part, said:

"That we oppose use of public tax funds, on any level, for any church or church-related enterprise . . .

"That we strongly oppose the election of high government officials, and particularly a President of the United States, who may have any private or public oath of allegiance to an alien power, whether political or ecclesiastical which takes precedence over his loyalty to the Constitution of the United States and the freedoms which it embodies."

The convention memorialized the Southern Baptist Convention and Baptist World Alliance, "encouraging them to a more thorough study of world affairs and to a more articulate voicing of Baptist conceptions of liberty and freedom into the ears of the world, particularly in relation to the United Nations."

Next, the convention urged "serious consideration" by these two bodies of

-more-

having a "Baptist observer or committee for the United Nations, paid for by the denomination and fully in accord with Baptist principles." It said that a world Baptist university should make the Gospel known "through the highest type of Christian education for people carefully selected from around the world."

-30-

Seminary Association
Makes Louisville Study

By C. R. Daley

LOUISVILLE--(BP)--The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary controversy which resulted in the dismissal of 13 professors last summer re-entered the news in mid-November with a visit to the seminary of a special committee of the American Association of Theological Schools. The organization is the recognized accrediting agency of theological schools in America. Three days of hearings were conducted by the committee at the seminary and in a downtown hotel.

Appearing before the committee were several groups and individuals involved in the dispute between the seminary president and the 13 professors. All documents, minutes of trustee meetings and other information pertaining to the incident were made available to the committee.

In addition to the president, trustees and members of the present faculty, 10 of the dismissed professors were present for the investigation. Among the trustees present were three who ^{are} openly unsympathetic with the dismissal action and who have worked strenuously for reinstatement of the professors.

The investigating committee was headed by Luther Weigle, dean emeritus, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn. Other committee members were Charles Feilding, Trinity College, Toronto, Canada; Carl C. Rasmussen, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa.; and Marrison Cunniff, dean of Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

Weigle declined to give any information for publication, saying his committee was to report to the full body of the American Association of Theological Schools in December. However, the investigation is understood to have resulted from the unprecedented action of the seminary trustees last summer. Generally the dismissal of one theological professor causes concern in theological circles and the dismissal of 13 at one time aroused the whole theological world.

Southern Seminary President Duke K. McCall and the trustees earlier had announced the visit of the committee. The president welcomed the committee saying there was nothing to hide and that only good could come from a fair investigation. A charge had been made that the American Association of Theological Schools would not investigate the incident because McCall was a high ranking official of the association.

Speculation runs high as to what report might come in December. The most drastic action could be the removal of the seminary from the accredited list of theological schools. At present all Southern Baptist seminaries are fully accredited.

-30-