

November 20, 1958

### Georgians Reaffirm Church-State Rule

ATLANTA--(BP)--Georgia Baptist Convention voted to adhere to the "established principle of separation of church and state" but rejected an amendment calling on Baptists not to vote for a Roman Catholic Presidential candidate.

The church-state resolution was presented without defining specific areas. A messenger to the convention asked that this resolution be amended to say that "no Baptist shall vote for a Roman Catholic candidate for President."

The amendment lost by a great majority. The convention adopted the resolution as submitted by its resolutions committee, unamended.

In annual session here, Georgia Baptists recorded their greatest messenger registration. The number exceeded 1500. About 3000 persons, including visitors, were present to hear Brooks Hays, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, address the convention. This was the largest single turnout.

The convention elected Howard P. Giddens, pastor, First Baptist Church, Athens, president, succeeding James P. Wesberry, Atlanta.

In his presidential address to the Georgia convention, Wesberry made several suggestions which were referred to the state Baptist executive committee. They were:

1. That they explore the possibility of setting up a department of pastoral-church relations. This would help churches without pastors, and pastors without churches, get together. Wesberry said that the head of the department should be an associate secretary.
2. That they consider amending the convention constitution to limit the presidents to one term of a year each in office. By custom, the convention president has been serving two consecutive terms of office.
3. That they consider employing a professional management consultant firm to survey the entire convention operation.
4. That the executive secretary of the convention and department heads of state offices be extended an indefinite call rather than be subject to annual election or re-election as at present.

The convention will meet in Augusta in 1959. Dates are Nov. 10-12.

Atlanta Baptists were authorized to survey the potential success of a \$3 million fund-raising drive to establish a Baptist college in the capital city. The college, if established, would be a co-ordinate college of convention-operated Mercer University in Macon.

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Thomas P. Pruitt Dead;  
Was Outstanding Layman

THOMASVILLE, N. C.--(BP)--Thomas P. Pruitt, 65, prominent lawyer and outstanding Baptist layman, died Sunday, Nov. 16, in Hickory, N. C., his home.

Pruitt suffered a serious stroke a week before he died. His health had been steadily declining in the past two months.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, Nov. 18, at First Baptist Church, Hickory.

He was a former president of the North Carolina Bar Association and had been governor of Carolina District of Kiwanis Club. He was also former member

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of the board of trustees of Wake Forest and Meredith Colleges, in addition to serving more than 25 years as a trustee of the North Carolina Baptist Children's Home.

He is survived by his wife and three daughters and a son.

Pruitt was a native of Ashland, Wis. However, he graduated from high school in Tallahassee, Fla., in 1910. He had lived in Hickory since 1915. He was a graduate of Wake Forest College and the University of Florida.

He was a faithful church worker, having served as superintendent of Sunday school at Hickory's First Baptist Church for 29 years. Pruitt also was a member of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, using his legal knowledge to aid the Convention in carrying out its work.

He was also active in business and civic affairs at Hickory. He was vice-president of Carolina Mills, Inc., and was a director of several textile plants in the Carolinas. Pruitt was executive vice-president of Hickory Hotel Co.

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#### Tennessee Protests Sunday Guard Drills

MEMPHIS--(BP)--Tennessee Baptist Convention has protested Sunday drills being held by the state's National Guard units. It declared that present conditions do not make Sunday drills necessary.

The convention's message to state officials said that these drills caused guardsmen to miss church attendance.

The convention also called on the Tennessee legislature to enact a law granting immunity to ministers from revealing confidences they have received while counselling.

This petition resulted from a case several months ago in west Tennessee in which a Baptist minister was fined and given a suspended jail sentence because he refused to testify in court about such confidences.

Tennessee convention's request for ministerial immunity came about the same time that South Carolina Baptists were asking a similar law from their legislature.

In his president's address, R. Paul Caudill, pastor of Memphis's First Baptist Church, urged the enlistment of more laymen in church affairs, greater support of church-related schools, increased circulation of the state Baptist newspaper, and consideration by the convention of a Baptist home for the aged.

Caudill reported there is less religious liberty in Spain than in Russia, and said he based this observation on visits to both countries. Regarding race relations, he said "We dare not give way to fear and intimidation. We must seek to maintain our Christian integrity and prove the sincerity of our missionary efforts in other lands."

The convention's Christian life committee, in its report, noted that Baptist missionaries abroad "plead for" a Christian solution to America's racial problem lest the Gospel lose its power among people of the earth.

The committee asked that Tennessee Baptists pray for the Christian solution to racial issues and begged that "each of us consider the matter of racial understanding."

It acknowledged there is no easy solution to the problem.

A convention survey committee presented a progress report. The full report on the survey of the convention's organization was not expected until the 1959 convention session at Gatlinburg Nov. 10-12.

The convention, however, heard a proposed constitutional amendment read that would increase the membership of the executive board from the present 54 to 100 members. This will be voted on next year.

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Raymond DeArmand, pastor, Sevier Heights Baptist Church, Knoxville, was elected convention president. The largest messenger registration in convention history---1300---was reported.

The convention adopted a \$3 million 1959 budget. 44 per cent of this amount will go to the Southern Baptist Convention.

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#### Arizona Celebrates Its 30th Birthday

TUCSON, Ariz.--(BP)--Southern Baptists in Arizona celebrated here their 30th birthday as a state convention. Part of their convention business was to endorse the forming of a new convention of Baptist churches in Utah, Idaho, and Nevada in the fall of 1959.

Churches in those three states are now affiliated with the Arizona convention, with the exception of some in western Nevada co-operating with California Baptists.

It will be the second new convention to be formed from Arizona-related churches in recent years. The Colorado Baptist General Convention was organized two years ago from churches in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, and the Dakotas.

Highlight of the birthday celebration was a pageant presented before an audience estimated at 1500 persons, largest attendance in convention history. The pageant entitled "Triumph of 30 Years" was written by J. Kelly Simmons, Phoenix, editor of the Baptist Beacon, state Baptist newspaper.

Arizona messengers adopted a resolution expressing "full confidence" in the leadership of Brooks Hays of Arkansas as president of the Southern Baptist Convention. It was the fifth convention to pay tribute to Hays's leadership since the Congressman was defeated for re-election recently.

They urged churches to take out retirement benefits for their pastors through plans offered by the Southern Baptist Convention's Relief and Annuity Board. In a third resolution, Arizona reaffirmed belief in the "historic stand" of Baptists for separation of church and state.

It also urged that Christian principles be applied to the individual rights of men.

James R. Staples, pastor, North Phoenix Baptist Church, Phoenix, was re-elected president of the convention. A layman member of the same church---Milburn Cooper, an attorney who numbers the convention among his clients---was elected first vice-president.

Cooper is one of the few laymen ever elected to high office in the Arizona convention.

The convention adopted a 1959 budget of \$363,982 of which 17 per cent is forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention to support worldwide missionary, educational, and benevolent activities.

Phoenix had already been chosen for the 1959 convention site. Messengers picked Winslow for the 1960 site.

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retire Aug. 31, 1959.

White came to the college in 1952, the year after Tennessee Baptist Convention began operating Belmont College. Prior to 1951, the school was known as Ward-Belmont and was a girls preparatory school and college. Under Baptist operation, it was made co-educational.

The first official president of the school, White said "My work has been to lay a foundation. I have worked to establish a first-class academic program and a good Christian atmosphere."

White has been a leading proponent of the policy that Baptist-related colleges should have faculty members who are Baptists.

The educator said he and Mrs. White will make their home in Conway, N. C., after retirement. Conway was the childhood home of White.

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#### District Of Columbia To Survey Its Work

WASHINGTON--(BP)--District of Columbia Baptist Convention here voted to establish a committee to survey its work, analyzing the present and future projects of the convention.

There will be 15 members of the survey committee. They will be named at the meeting of the convention's executive board Jan. 12.

The District convention also voted to establish a Christian life committee to study the application of Christian principles to social and ethical problems in the city. The Christian life committee will also work in close contact with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The convention adopted a resolution "reaffirming our confidence and support in the Hon. Brooks Hays as president of the Southern Baptist Convention; that in light of recent developments, we reassure him of our prayers and devotions not only as a denominational leader but also one earnestly endeavoring to inject Christian principles into the fields of political action and race relations."

Hays, Congressman from the Little Rock, Ark., area, was defeated in his re-election bid Nov. 4. During his periods in Washington, Hays attended Calvary Baptist Church, which is affiliated with the District convention. He and Mrs. Hays were active in church work there.

James O. Duncan told the convention he would resign as editor of their newspaper, Capital Baptist, Dec. 31. Duncan, pastor of Hillandale Baptist Church in suburban Hillandale, Md., has been serving as editor on a part-time basis. He told the convention that his pastoral and editorial duties had become too great for him to continue in both positions. He will remain in the pastorate.

The convention adopted a 1959 budget of \$244,933. It will forward \$25,211 each to support work carried on by the Southern and American Baptist Conventions. It is a dually-affiliated local convention.

S. Lewis Morgan Jr., pastor, Petworth-Montgomery Hills Baptist Church, was elected president of the convention.

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