

# **Alabama Baptists vote against same-sex marriage, turn down funds for BWA\_112904**

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## **Alabama Baptists vote against same-sex marriage, turn down funds for BWA**

**By Greg Warner**

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MONTGOMERY, Ala. (ABP)—Alabama Baptists at their annual meeting passed resolutions against same-sex marriage and in favor of education and military chaplains. But they turned down an attempt to divert \$30,000 from the Southern Baptist Convention to the Baptist World Alliance.

Last June, the SBC withdrew its membership and \$300,000 in funding from the Baptist World Alliance, an international umbrella organization representing 211 Baptist bodies. Southern Baptist leaders said BWA harbored theological liberalism, a charge denied by BWA and many of its member groups worldwide.

Meeting in Montgomery, messengers to the Alabama Baptist State Convention defeated an amendment to their \$41.5 million budget to siphon \$30,000 earmarked for the SBC Executive Committee and send it to BWA.

The motion failed on a show-of-hands, according to the Alabama Baptist newsjournal.

The marriage resolution, like those passed in several other state conventions, affirmed "biblical and legal marriage is between one man and one woman," which is "the only marriage ordained of God." The resolution calls for the U.S. Congress and the Alabama legislature to pass constitutional amendments limiting marriage to a man and a woman.

The education resolution affirmed Alabama Baptists' support of education, including public schools, and affirmed actions by local churches, associations and individual Christians to partner with schools.

Several state conventions this fall have been asked to support Christian schools and home schooling as alternatives to public schools, but most conventions have declined to abandon public education.

Other resolutions passed by Alabama Baptists expressed appreciation for those who offered assistance after Hurricane Ivan and asked Baptists "to pray for our military chaplains, military personnel and their families, as well as those families who have lost loved ones in military service."

All resolutions were approved without debate.

In other business, messengers elected Henry Cox, pastor of First Baptist Church, Bay Minette, as president. He became the first person in Alabama Baptist history to serve as second vice president, first vice president and president consecutively.

Messengers also elected Roger Willmore, pastor of First Baptist Church in Boaz, as first vice president, and Gary Hollingsworth, pastor of First Baptist Church in Trussville, as second vice president. All three officers were elected without opposition.

The \$41.5 million basic budget is the largest in the history of Alabama Baptists and a 2.65 percent increase over the 2004 base budget.

Allan Murphy, pastor of North Shelby Baptist Church, made a motion to divert \$30,000 for the Baptist World Alliance from money budgeted for the SBC Executive Committee, which led the move to defund BWA.

"I do not believe that the Baptist World Alliance and its head, Denton Lotz, the brother-in-law of Billy Graham's daughter, Anne Graham Lotz, are theologically liberal," Murphy told the convention. Murphy said that while he and his church are "biblically ultra-conservative," he believes in supporting the BWA.

"I was standing at a microphone at the Southern Baptist Convention to ask us to re-consider (defunding BWA) when debate was cut off. We were not even allowed to discuss the issue," Murphy claimed.

Craig Carlisle, speaking on behalf of the budget committee, warned that "to amend the budget at this time would do tremendous harm to the (State Board of Mission) and our entities who rely on us and to whom it is our responsibly to take care of."

Nobody else spoke for or against the amendment. Messengers voted down the amendment, then approved the budget.

Another motion was presented that would have called for each Alabama Baptist entity to stipulate the Alabama Baptist State Convention as its "sole member," an action already taken by Southern Baptist agencies to prevent trustees from breaking away from the SBC. The motion was ruled out of order, since convention bylaws say charter changes can come only from those trustees.

"The motion asked the convention to overstep its role," said outgoing convention President Joe Godfrey.

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