

California Baptists adopt budget, reject measure related to Baptist Faith & Message

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By Terry Barone

California Southern Baptist

WEST SACRAMENTO, Calif. (ABP)—Messengers to the California Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting adopted an \$11.6 million budget, turned down a constitutional amendment related to the Baptist Faith & Message and re-elected the body's president.

"Connecting to Accomplish the Work" was the theme of the 67th annual meeting at Russian Baptist Church in West Sacramento, Calif., where 518 messengers and 270 guests registered.

Georgia Baptist resolution criticizes Baptist blogs

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By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. (ABP)—Georgia Baptists at their annual meeting approved a record budget and a controversial resolution against using blogs to critique Baptist life.

Gathering in Augusta, more than 1,400 messengers attended the Georgia Baptist Convention meeting, themed “Back to the Basics.” They also approved a 2008 Cooperative Program budget, added 62 new churches and missions, and approved the distribution of money previously given to Mercer University. Mercer is no longer affiliated with the GBC.

Oklahoma Baptists vow to

continue ministering to illegal immigrants

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Oklahoma Baptists vow to continue ministering to illegal immigrants

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

MOORE, Okla. (ABP)—Messengers to the annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma passed a resolution emphasizing non-discriminating ministry to illegal immigrants and adopted a record budget of \$24.6 million.

“Finishing the Task” was the theme of the convention, which brought almost 900 messengers to First Baptist Church of Moore.

South Carolina Baptists OK move toward 50-50 CP split

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South Carolina Baptists OK move toward 50-50 CP split

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

FLORENCE, S.C. (ABP)—South Carolina Baptists have approved budget projections that will gradually result in the state convention forwarding 50 percent of all undesignated receipts to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Messengers at the South Carolina Baptist Convention meeting, held in Florence, S.C., also elected an Aiken, S.C., pastor president and passed resolutions addressing predatory lending, homosexuality and gambling.

Louisiana Baptists pass measure taking full control of institutions

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taking full control of institutions

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

ALEXANDRIA, La. (ABP)—Messengers to the Louisiana Baptist Convention annual meeting passed without discussion a measure that ensures the convention has complete control of its college and other affiliated institutions.

The measure amended the charter of convention-related entities to clarify that the convention owns the institutions, according to the Baptist Message, the Louisiana Baptist newspaper.

N.C. Baptists cut WMU funding, loosen ties with colleges

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N.C. Baptists cut WMU funding, loosen ties with colleges

GREENSBORO, N.C. (ABP)—Messengers changed the face of the [Baptist State Convention of North Carolina](#), loosening ties to its five colleges and retirement home and cutting funding to Woman's Missionary Union.

During their annual meeting in Greensboro, messengers adopted a 2008-09 budget that includes nothing for WMU, accepted the recommendations of a study committee whose chairman said “Baptist Retirement Homes will no longer be a ministry of the convention,” and approved the first of two steps required to relinquish trustee selection of its five colleges.

Only 2,784 messengers, or delegates, attended the annual meeting, even though convention officials expected 4,500 to vote on several significant measures. It was the lowest attendance since 1985.

The final session on Wednesday morning seldom draws a crowd. In fact there were just 120 people in seats when opening music started, but by the time the budget debate began there were closer to 1,200—probably double last year’s final-session attendance. Many observers concluded they were there for the two major issues—the budget and the committee report on the retirement homes.

Words of Hope ministry changes outlook for people with AIDS

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Words of
Hope
counselor
Enock
Kategaya
walks
from
Bible
study.
Along the
way, he
counsels
a man
about
living a
healthy
life with
HIV.
Around 1
million
Ugandans
live with
HIV.
(IMB
photos by
Sue
Sprenkle)

Words of Hope ministry changes

outlook for people with AIDS

By Sue Sprenkle

International Mission Board

MAKOPE STATION, Uganda (BP)—Saidat Makop is sick. To look at her, a casual observer would never know. She looks as healthy as the next person. Her cheeks are rosy. She works in the garden for hours. Her eyes might look a little tired at times, but all mothers suffer the same.

The truth is Makop carries HIV in her body.



Squeezed between her mother and another woman, this young Ugandan girl entertains herself during a Bible study at Saidat Makop's home. This girl's mother is HIV-positive. Her father left when the mother revealed her test results, leaving all the children behind and victims of HIV/AIDS.

Ugandan Baptist pastor counsels people with AIDS

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Nabath
Atusasire
visits with a
Words of
Hope client
outside his
home.

Atusasire
often must
hike up
steep
walking
paths to
isolated
areas to
reach the
homes of his
clients.

Once he's
there, he
talks about
living a
healthy
lifestyle,
offers
mosquito
nets and
shares
about God's
forgiveness.

(IMB photos
by Sue
Sprenkle)

Ugandan Baptist pastor counsels people with AIDS

By Sue Sprenkle

International Mission Board

MBARARA, Uganda (BP)—Dressed in a suit coat and tie, Nabath Atusasire looks a little out of place as he picks his way through an overgrown banana grove.

The humid heat of southern Uganda presses on him. Slick-soled dress shoes provide little traction as the Baptist pastor treks along a well-worn, rocky path to an isolated village. He yells a greeting to a young woman as she walks out of a crumbling, mud home.

Ecumenical group wants to mobilize Christians to abolish genocide

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Ecumenical group wants to mobilize

Christians to abolish genocide

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

NEW YORK (ABP)—Leaders from a number of Christian traditions met in New York recently in an attempt to mobilize Christians to “reflect on their responsibility in the face of genocide.”

Armenian, Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian representatives met on the 69th anniversary of Krystalnacht, the 1938 attack on Jews and their property in Nazi Germany. The Nov. 9 panel was designed to be a “point of departure” on which other Christian groups could model similar meetings, organizers said.

Will neurotheology cause faith to wane? Not likely, experts say

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Will neurotheology cause faith to wane? Not likely, experts say

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

NEW YORK (ABP)—If science asserts that prayer is more neurological than metaphysical, will it cause the believers to abandon their faith? It's highly unlikely, experts in the field of neurotheology agree.

Neurotheology is the study of the correlation between neurological and spiritual activity. Its aim is to find a neurological basis for belief-based experiences like trances, perceived oneness with the universe and altered states of consciousness. Proponents say it can also help explain the daily habits of religious life, namely prayer, meditation and senses of the presence of God.

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Cybercolumn by Brett Younger:

Impossible dreams

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CYBER COLUMN: Impossible dreams

By Brett Younger

My family recently went to see *Man of La Mancha* at Bass Hall in Fort Worth. The critics have not been kind. In "A not-so-dreamy *Man of La Mancha*," The *Dallas Morning News* said, "Maybe I might actually like *Man of La Mancha* if I could ever catch a really good production, but then, maybe not." In "Musical not all we dreamed of," The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* didn't hold back either: "Is it possible that a musical revival can look fantastic and sound even better, yet still be dull? Yes. It's hard to say where the fault lies."

Brett Younger

The critics missed the point. *Man of La Mancha* is not about lights, sound or sets. It's about idealism, hope and dreams.

No clear winners in contested Tennessee Baptist Convention

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No clear winners in contested Tennessee Baptist Convention

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

KINGSPORT, Tenn. (ABP)—Neither an organized fundamentalist group nor a coalition of moderates and unaligned conservatives were the clear-cut winners during the [Tennessee Baptist Convention](#) annual meeting, held in Kingsport, Tenn.

Messengers elected presidential and vice presidential candidates endorsed by [Concerned Tennessee Baptists](#), which has long accused the convention's leadership of over-representing "liberals" and congregations that partner with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Messengers also turned away two attempts to soften a Concerned Tennessee Baptist-supported policy regarding nominees to the convention's boards and committees.