

RESOLUTIONS — REPORT TO THE CONVENTION

MBC ANNUAL MEETING • OCTOBER 28-29, 2019

The Committee on Resolutions of the 185th annual session (2019) of the Missouri Baptist Convention submits this report to the Convention.

Resolutions recommended for adoption:

The Committee on Resolutions recommends that the Convention adopt the following resolutions:

Resolution No. 1: On Christian Citizenship

WHEREAS, Government is ordained and empowered by God to reward good and to punish evil (Romans 13:1-5); and

WHEREAS, God holds all societies accountable to His standards of righteousness (Genesis 6:1-13; 18:20-21; 19:12-13; Jonah 1:1-2); and

WHEREAS, Jesus Himself taught that Christians are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16); and

WHEREAS, The Baptist Faith and Message acknowledges that “all Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society” (XV. The Christian and the Social Order); and

WHEREAS, The Baptist Faith and Message affirms that “every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth and brotherly love” (XV. The Christian and the Social Order); and

WHEREAS, The Baptist Faith and Message proclaims that, “in order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising, their loyalty to Christ and His truth” (XV. The Christian and the Social Order); and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of Christians who are eligible to vote do not vote regularly; and

WHEREAS, The United States Constitution has placed our nation’s leadership in the hands of democratically elected public officials; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we call upon all Christians to faithfully fulfill their God-given responsibilities to engage in the public life of the nation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage all Christians to learn about the platforms of all candidates in any election and vote in accordance with biblical values rather than according to party lines, personalities or candidate rhetoric; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we urge every Christian of voting age to exercise his or her God-given responsibility and constitutionally guaranteed right to engage in the

political life of our nation by voting in every appropriate election; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage Christian men and women to pursue positions of public leadership and service within the government at the local, state and national levels; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we commit to fervently and regularly pray for our elected leaders (I Timothy 2:1-2) to follow the Word and will of Almighty God in all of their decisions that affect our country.

Resolution No. 2: Concerning Sexual Abuse and MBC Churches and Entities

WHEREAS, child sexual abuse is a growing social problem in families, schools, youth and children’s community groups and society in general; and

WHEREAS, some Southern Baptist pastors and leaders have in the past used their positions of authority to sexually abuse children, youth and adults; and

WHEREAS, it is well documented that some Southern Baptist churches and entities have improperly reported and dealt with some accusations of sexual abuse; and

WHEREAS, the fallen nature of mankind means sexual abuse will continue to occur in society and even in churches until the Lord’s return; and be it

RESOLVED, that the Messengers comprising the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Missouri Baptist Convention held October 29 in Branson, Missouri, implore MBC leaders and pastors to report any instances of sexual abuse in MBC churches and entities to the proper government authorities in accordance with the law; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage MBC leaders and pastors to utilize appropriate training materials to educate their organizations concerning the nature of sexual abuse in order to implement the best practices available to prevent sexual abuse from taking place within MBC churches and entities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we also encourage MBC leaders and pastors to seek out any training necessary to allow them to minister compassionately, biblically, and effectively to victims of sexual abuse and other kinds of abuse; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we ask all Missouri Baptists to join together in praying for the healing of the victims of abuse and work to end such behavior within our world, families, the body of Christ and especially within the churches of the Missouri Baptist Convention and its affiliated entities.

Resolution No. 3: On the Threat of Proposed MONA Changes to Religious Liberty in Missouri

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Missouri Nondiscrimination Act (MONA) is to protect various minority groups from discrimination in society; and

WHEREAS, amending MONA to include individuals identifying as LGBTQ has become a priority for a growing number of Missouri State legislators and elected officials; and

WHEREAS, the addition of LGBTQ individuals as a protected class under MONA will impact the free exercise of religious liberty in Missouri by potentially eliminating all Christians that affirm the Bible's teachings on marriage and sexuality from participation in foster care and adoption and by potentially impacting the ability of medical professionals as well as counselors, psychologists and psychiatrists to affirm the Bible's teachings on marriage and sexuality in their private practices; and

WHEREAS, such a change to MONA will impact the ability of churches, Christian schools and Christian ministries from adopting and maintaining employment requirements based on the Bible's teachings concerning marriage and sexuality; and

WHEREAS, making LGBTQ individuals a protected class under MONA could criminalize religious speech and writings that express support for the Bible's teachings of marriage and sexuality; and

WHEREAS, the United States Constitution guarantees the free exercise and expression of religion as a fundamental right in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Missouri and United States judicial system, including the Missouri and United States Supreme Court, have historically affirmed the free exercise and expression of religion as a fundamental right protected by the U.S. Constitution; be it

RESOLVED, that we, the Messengers comprising the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Missouri Baptist Convention, held October 29 in Branson, Missouri, implore all candidates for elected office in the State of Missouri to clearly express their stand on adding LGBTQ individuals as a protected class under MONA; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that Missouri Baptists stand in opposition to legislation expressing support for the adding of LGBTQ individuals as a protected class under MONA because of its negative impact on the free exercise of religion in the State of Missouri.

Resolution No. 4: On Racial Reconciliation

WHEREAS, The Scriptures teach that all people are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and God has made from one man and one woman all the peoples who live on earth (Genesis 3:20, Acts 17:26), and

WHEREAS, the saving purpose of God is to redeem people from every tribe, nation, skin color, and people, and

WHEREAS, the call of the Great Commission is to make disciples from every nation, which is a clear call to cross ethnic lines,

WHEREAS, the call of Christ clearly tells us repeatedly we are to love our neighbors as ourselves (Leviticus 19:9-18, Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-31, Luke 10:25-28, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8); with the Parable of the Good Samaritan serving as an example of the importance of breaking the barrier of racial prejudice to love one's neighbor among the people of God (Luke 10:30-37); and

WHEREAS, Racism is deeply sinful as it disregards the beauty of the image of God in all people, the saving work of Christ for all nations, and the unity of the Body of Christ in brotherhood for all believers, and has no place in God's Kingdom and church, and

WHEREAS, in 2015 the Southern Baptist Convention passed a resolution on racism asking "Southern Baptist entities and Convention committees to make leadership appointments that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the body of Christ and of the Southern Baptist Convention," as well as encouraging congregations to increase their ethnic diversity in church staff roles, leadership positions, and church membership, and

WHEREAS, on three occasions the Missouri Baptist Convention has spoken clearly on the sin of racism and the need for greater racial understanding and reconciliation in resolutions, and

WHEREAS, we grieve over the continued presence of racism and the recent escalation of racial tension in our state and nation; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the messengers to the Missouri Baptist Convention meeting in Branson recommit ourselves to the glorious call and privilege of loving our neighbor and discipling people of all races, ethnic groups, and language groups in our communities, and

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers of the Missouri Baptist Convention denounce racism in all its forms as sin, and call people who demonstrate racist attitudes and actions to repentance, and

RESOLVED, that we urge pastors and churches to demonstrate their heart for racial reconciliation by seeking deeper relationships with those from other ethnic groups while gaining greater understanding and compassion about issues of race as they seek to increase racial reconciliation and diversity within the body of Christ, and

RESOLVED, that we urge the boards and committees of Missouri Baptist Convention entities to continually prioritize and monitor their progress in adequately representing the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of our communities and congregations; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we call on Missouri Baptists to be faithful ambassadors of Gospel reconciliation across all lines in their churches, personal relationships,

communities, and families as they demonstrate the grace and glory of the Gospel of who is reconciling the world to Himself.

Resolution No. 5: On Prison Ministry

WHEREAS, scattered throughout the Show-Me state, there are 21 Missouri State prisons with a population of more than 32,000 men and women;

WHEREAS, those men and women are being ministered to by fewer than 20 chaplains; the majority of those chaplains being Missouri-Southern Baptist chaplains;

WHEREAS, the Missouri Board of Probation and Parole, an agency within the Missouri Department of Corrections, currently supervises more than 40,000 felony probationers and another 15,000+ parolees;

WHEREAS, in addition to the Missouri Department of Corrections, the Show-Me state is home to two facilities that are a part of the federal bureau of prisons with a population of more than 1,100 men and women;

WHEREAS, there are more than 100 county jails in Missouri, at any given time, housing approximately 12,000 inmates; so that the incarcerated and under supervision population in Missouri is greater than 100,000 persons.

WHEREAS, those persons are people for whom Jesus Christ died; and

WHEREAS, the Great Commission includes, and the Gospel applies, to every person including the incarcerated men and women in Missouri; finally

WHEREAS, the admonition of Hebrews 13:3 “Continue to remember the prisoners as you were together with them in prison” applies to every Christian and to every Christian church; be it therefore

RESOLVED, that we, the Messengers of the Missouri Baptist Convention meeting in Branson, Missouri on October 29, 2019 recognize the great need for effective missions and ministry in Missouri’s prisons; be it further

RESOLVED, that the administration and staff of the Missouri Baptist Convention resolve to encourage and educate the Baptist churches of the Show-Me state concerning a genuine Great Commission response to the needs of incarcerated persons and their families through prison ministry; be it finally

RESOLVED, that the churches of the Missouri Baptist Convention endeavor to take every opportunity to minister to the incarcerated men and women and to the chaplains and volunteers who are currently involved in prison ministry.

Resolution No. 6: Courtesy Resolution to Express Appreciation

WHEREAS, the officers, committees, and staff of the Executive Board of the Missouri Baptist Convention have, through their preparation, labor, and spirit, contributed to a successful convention;

WHEREAS, the members of the Local Arrangement Committee along with Director of Missions and staff of the Tri-County Baptist Association, have made every effort to make our stay in this area comfortable;

WHEREAS, the Branson Convention Center and the Branson Hilton have assisted with preparations and have made their excellent facilities and competent staff available in hosting this meeting; be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the 185th Annual Session of the Missouri Baptist Convention meeting in Branson, Missouri, October 29, 2019, express our grateful appreciation to the staff of the Executive Board and to the officers and committees of the Missouri Baptist Convention for an excellent and orderly program and for their leadership in these convention sessions; be it further

RESOLVED, that we express our sincere appreciation to the members of the Local Arrangements Committee; and to the Director of Missions and staff of the Tri-County Baptist Association, whose thorough preparation and hospitality have contributed greatly to the comfort and convenience of the messengers and visitors of the convention; be it finally

RESOLVED, that we thank the Branson Convention Center and the Branson Hilton for their hospitality and help during this session of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Resolution No. 7: Appreciation of Elected Officials Supporting Life

WHEREAS, the Bible clearly teaches that life is sacred; and

WHEREAS, Missouri Baptists have long opposed abortion; and

WHEREAS, the Scriptures also teach us to honor civil authority which has been ordained of God for our good; and

WHEREAS, many Christians in our day are quick to criticize our civil authorities and slow to commend them for good legislative efforts, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers comprising the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Missouri Baptist Convention, held October 29 in Branson, Missouri, commend State Representative Nick Schroer (R-O’Fallon) for sponsoring the “Missouri Stands for the Unborn” Act, in the Missouri House; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we commend all members of the Missouri House who voted to support life and end abortion in this state; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we commend Senator Andrew Koenig (R-Manchester) for taking up the bill in the Missouri Senate, along with those members of the Senate who voted in favor of the bill; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we commend and acknowledge the strong support of Governor Mike Parson in signing the “Missouri Stands for the Unborn” legislation on

May 24th, 2019; be it finally

RESOLVED, that we commend our Secretary of State, John Ashcroft, state Attorney General Eric Schmitt and Solicitor General John Sauer, and their team of lawyers working with them in their efforts to defend this legislation against various legal challenges.

Resolution No. 8: Appreciation and Dissolution of the Agency Restoration Group

WHEREAS, at the Annual Meeting in October 2001, the Missouri Baptist Convention directed the Executive Board and MBC President Dr. Robert Curtis to “take all steps necessary to restore” five breakaway entities “to their former legal relationship of accountability to the MBC family of churches. Thereafter, the Executive Board authorized Dr. Curtis to appoint a Legal Opinion Task Force chaired by former MBC President Dr. Gary Taylor, and tasked them to retain legal counsel to investigate the facts and the law that was applicable to the five entities that unilaterally changed their charters to become self-perpetuating boards – The Baptist Home, the Missouri Baptist Foundation, Windermere Baptist Conference Center, the Word and Way, and Missouri Baptist College, and

WHEREAS, the task force included Gary Taylor, Randy Comer, Jay Stinson, David Tolliver, and Monty Dunn; and

WHEREAS, in a June 6, 2002 special called meeting of the Executive Board of the Missouri Baptist Convention, the Legal Task Force was authorized to act with full corporate powers of the Executive Board to take all legal steps necessary to restore the five agencies, to make a formal offer of binding Christian arbitration, and failing that to commence legal proceedings to recover the entities; and

WHEREAS, on October 25, 2004, the MBC Executive Board expanded the Legal Task Force to include Bob Curtis, Pam Mason, Kenny Qualls, David Tolliver and David Clippard, and to include all churches and individuals named as plaintiffs in the legal action, including Kevin Smith, pastor of Springfield, Spring Hill; Gerald Davidson, Arnold, First; Jay Scribner, Branson, First; Monte Shinkle, Jefferson City, Concord; and individual messengers Lyn Heying, Mitchell Jackson, James Moore, James Plymale, who were to serve until the Task Force disbanded; and

WHEREAS, on December 9, 2008, attorney James Freeman III made a motion to change the name of the Legal Task Force to the Agency Restoration Group, and determined the Word and Way’s data base was not of sufficient value to reclaim through litigation; and

WHEREAS, on March 25, 2014, the MBC’s quest to regain Windermere Baptist Conference Center came to an end when the Missouri Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal from a lower court decision that refused to permit a jury trial at which the public and Missouri Baptists could have heard the complete story of the

actions taken by the breakaway boards and staffs; and

WHEREAS, on September 20, 2016, the Missouri Baptist Foundation was restored to MBC by court decree and non-profit corporation law was clarified, securing the Missouri Baptist Convention’s right to elect trustees and to approve all charter changes, resulting in the transition of the Foundation back into the MBC family of ministries, and as an additional blessing the Court awarded all legal fees and costs that had been incurred by the MBC from the beginning in 2002 which was paid to MBC by the Foundation’s insurer, so that MBC wholly recovered the fees and legal expenses that had been incurred; and

WHEREAS, on September 27, 2017, Circuit Court Judge Karl DeMarce issued a summary judgment in favor of the MBC, ordering the Baptist Home and the Missouri Baptist University to be restored to the MBC family of churches, which decision was affirmed by the Missouri Court of Appeals on February 19, 2019.

WHEREAS, on February 26, 2019, The Baptist Home’s self-perpetuating board unanimously voted to not pursue any further appeals, thus beginning the transition to duly-elected trustees; and

WHEREAS, on February 28, 2019, Missouri Baptist University’s self-perpetuating board also chose to forego any further appeals, thus beginning the process of a smooth transition to MBC elected trustees; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2019 the decision of the Missouri Court of Appeals Western District, became final with respect to The Baptist Home and Missouri Baptist University; and

WHEREAS, acknowledging that the seventeen-year journey of litigation as a last resort has consumed substantial Missouri Baptist energy and resources, and has required great faith, prayer, diligence, and perseverance. Now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the messengers of the 185th session of the Missouri Baptist Convention meeting in Branson, Missouri, October 29, 2019 desire to express our deepest appreciation to the members of the Agency Restoration Group, its chairman, Randy Comer, and its legal team comprised primarily of Michael Whitehead, Jonathan Whitehead, and James F. Freeman, III; and

RESOLVED, that we acknowledge their steadfastness and diligence, which has provided for the Convention of Missouri Baptist churches and their entities a great hope for the future of cooperative, trustworthy, and synergistic ministries for the sake of the gospel, and thanksgiving to God for providing the results of restoration of three beloved institutions to their former relationship with the Convention, just as the ARG was commissioned to do; and

RESOLVED, that we desire current and future MBC-elected trustees to discover, thoroughly analyze, learn from and appropriately respond to historical data the self-perpetuating boards held throughout the litigation period, and that non-profit ministries around

the country which operate under similar laws will profit from these lessons learned so that such costly and disruptive breakaways need never occur again;

RESOLVED, that the Agency Restoration Group, having fully accomplished its mission and submitting its final report, is formally dissolved, with gratitude toward all who served so graciously, selflessly, and humbly; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we encourage all Missouri Baptist churches, associations and entities to recommit themselves to the advancement of the kingdom and the work of the Convention by fully supporting all of the entities of the Convention and by faithfully contributing to the Cooperative Program.

Disposition of Resolutions

The Committee on Resolutions took the following actions respecting disposition of resolutions submitted by messengers to the Convention, the subject matters of which are addressed in the resolutions recommended for adoption:

Resolution submitted by Christian Life Commission on Appreciation of Elected Officials Supporting Life, see Resolution No. 7.

Resolution submitted by Christian Life Commission on Christian Citizenship, see Resolution No. 1.

Resolution submitted by Christian Life Commission on Concerning Sexual Abuse and MBC Churches and Entities, see Resolution No. 2.

Resolution submitted by Christian Life Commission on Threat of Proposed MONA Changes to Religious Liberty in Missouri, see Resolution No. 3.

Resolution submitted by MBC Executive Board on Appreciation and Dissolution of the Agency Restoration Group, see Resolution No. 8.

Resolution submitted by Mike Hubbard, messenger Genesis Church of Eureka, on Racial Reconciliation, see Resolution No. 4.

Resolution submitted by Rick Seaton, messenger Corticelli Baptist Church of Russellville, on Prison Ministry, see Resolution No. 5.

Resolutions Not Reported Out

The Committee on Resolutions does not report out the following resolutions submitted by messengers to the Convention:

Resolution submitted by Travis Horinek, messenger First Baptist Church of Buffalo, on Biblical Inerrancy. The committee strongly affirms Biblical Inerrancy as articulated in Article 1 of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

Resolution submitted by David Van Bebbler, messenger First Baptist Church of Buffalo, on Biblical Affirmation of Women in Ministry. The committee strongly affirms the Biblical role of Women in Ministry as stated in Article 6 of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

Resolution submitted by David Van Bebbler, messenger First Baptist Church of Buffalo, on Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality.

Respectfully submitted, Committee on Resolutions

Dr. Don Colborn, Calvary Baptist Church, Hannibal – Chair

Mr. Roger Alford, Fellowship Baptist Church, Warrenton

Mrs. Holly Fields, Peine Ridge Church, Foristell

Mr. Chad McMath, First Baptist Church, Monroe City

Rev. Colton Strother, First Baptist Church, De Soto