

2015 ANNUAL REPORT
GEORGIA BAPTIST CONVENTION

awaken
2015

SECTION II
PROCEEDINGS OF 2015 ANNUAL MEETING



Proceedings

**2015 Georgia Baptist Convention
194th Annual Meeting
Roswell Street Baptist Church**

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2015

**BELIEVERS WERE ADDED TO THE LORD IN INCREASING NUMBERS
- CROWDS OF BOTH MEN AND WOMEN. ACTS 5:14**

Monday Evening Session November 9, 2015

The 194th session of the Georgia Baptist Convention was called to order by **President Don Hattaway** at Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta on Monday evening, November 9, 2015. He began the session with prayer.

Jon Duncan, state missionary and coordinator of convention music, led messengers in singing the theme song, “*Awake, O Church, Awake*,” written by Dennis and Nan Allen of Truett-McConnell College. He introduced **Becky Lombard**, Professor of Music, Truett-McConnell College, who served as organist, and **David Carnes**, pianist and staff accompanist, Briarlake Baptist, Decatur, who served as pianist. He also introduced Irish singer/songwriters, recording artists, and hymn composers, **Keith and Kristyn Getty** who provided special music for the session.

Vice Presidents serving the 194th session were **David Mills**, Beech Haven Baptist Church, Athens; **Jason Jones**, Isabella Baptist Church, Sylvester; **David Hardwick**, Gentian Baptist Church, Columbus; and **Jeff Daniels**, South Rossville Baptist Church, Rossville.

Recording Secretary, Danny Henson, New Liberty Baptist Church, Ringgold, provided a report of the **Enrollment and Organization**. He moved that the **804 messengers** already registered, plus all others registered would constitute the 194th session of the Georgia Baptist Convention. The motion was seconded and was adopted. **Freddie Rhodes**, Westview Baptist Church, Hawkinsville and **Tom Vann**, Rentz Baptist Church, Rentz, served as **Assistant Recording Secretaries**.

Danny Henson recognized the following **Acteens and Challengers who served as Student Volunteers**: Glendon Cloud, Pine Level Baptist Church, Cairo; Aaron Jones, New Providence Baptist Church, Smarr; Jacob McDonald, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Macon; Audrey Powell and Hope Price, Harp’s Crossing Baptist Church, Fayetteville; and Gunner Robinson, Musella Baptist Church, Musella.

Shep Johnson, First Baptist Church, Douglas and chairman of the **2015 Order of Business Committee**, presented the **Program Provisional** for adoption, noting that the 11:20 am Tuesday, **Scripture and Prayer** was changed to be provided by Bobby Jones, Laurens Association. The **Order of Business was adopted**.

The following persons served as **Tellers** for the 194th session of the Georgia Baptist Convention: Randy Ray, Calvin Holcomb, Daniel Ippolito, Chris Graving, Lee Graham, Chuck Smith, Fred McCoy, Al Daniell, Edwin Avery, Keith Collins, Jeffrey Wyatt, Cliff Ford, Robert Jones, Steve Skates, Ron Stinson, and Doug Bingham.

Perry Sapp, Church Administrator, Roswell Street Baptist Church, extended greetings and welcomed messengers. **David Suddath**, Assistant Associational Missionary, Noonday Baptist Association, also greeted and welcomed messengers.

Claude King, Discipleship and Church Health Specialist, LifeWay, Nashville, Tennessee, led messengers in a time of **Focus on Prayer** in which he encouraged Georgia Baptists to depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit as they respond to the Great Commission and change the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

August Boto, Executive Vice President and General Counsel, **Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention**, shared “The 1% Challenge” video and expressed appreciation to Georgia Baptists for

their Cooperative Program gifts. He encouraged messengers to keep spreading the message that nothing generates support like the Cooperative Program.

Edmund Brannen, missionary in East Asia, shared greetings on behalf of the **International Mission Board** and missionaries on the field. He said that the Cooperative Program is at work in many ways around the world, such as through a tour travel company that takes people to share the Gospel into the mountains where Buddhist live, families who raise rabbits and other agricultural products in order to live in a country where they can share Jesus, and a broadcasting business that targets East Asia with the Gospel. He encouraged messengers to stay focused upon Jesus, to shine a light in the dark places of the world, and to join him in praying for a spiritual revival that will awaken the lost without Christ.

Jeff Iorg, President, **Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary**, thanked messengers for their prayers, for sending students, and for giving through the Cooperative Program. He said that remarkable things have happened through the school because of God's grace and giving through the Cooperative Program. He reported that the seminary is in the top ten in enrollment out of 270 accredited seminaries in North America and is in the process of relocating and building two new campuses that will open in the summer of 2016. He presented a book written by the faculty of the seminary, "*Ministry in the New Marriage Culture*" to President Don Hattaway and Executive Director J. Robert White.

During the **Miscellaneous Business**, Jéan Ward, East Atlanta Church, President African American Fellowship of the Georgia Baptist Convention, presented a motion that "*the African American Fellowship representing all African American churches within the African American Fellowship be allotted one seat on the Georgia Baptist Convention Executive Committee.*" The motion was seconded and was referred to the Order of Business Committee.

First Vice President **David Mills** introduced **Keith and Kristyn Getty** for special music.

Don Hattaway provided the **President's Message** titled "The Next Great Awakening," based on the book of Jonah. He said that Georgia Baptist pastors may feel overwhelmed as they serve in a state and nation that is covered with spiritual darkness, but they should remember that we serve a God who is able to break the chains of the enemy and send the next Great Awakening. He added that an example of the necessity of having a spiritual awakening is seen in the wicked city of Nineveh that was in darkness approaching great peril when God told Jonah to warn the city of God's coming judgement. President Hattaway suggested that we are sitting on the edge of God's judgement coming upon our nation. He said that there is a difficulty of having a spiritual awakening and we cannot sing "*God Bless America*" and expect God to bless us with great sin in our midst. He added that we cannot run from God because His presence is everywhere, but we need to align our lives with the Word of God to experience spiritual awakening. He added that the reality of spiritual awakening is demonstrated as the people of Nineveh heard the shout of Jonah, were overcome with deep grief because of their sin, believed in God, and experienced the salvation of the Lord. He said that we should not tell people about the grace and love of God without also telling them about sin and that God sent His Son to redeem us all because we were lost and undone. He pointed out that Jonah became angry, depressed, and wanted to see Nineveh destroyed because he did not see the people from God's perspective or understand about God's love and forgiveness. He suggested that Georgia Baptists are either running from God, are in a spiritual rut, or have confessed their sins and have a heart that is right with God. He encouraged messengers and all Georgia Baptists to cry out to God, confess their sins, ask God to refresh and renew their heart, and thank God for showing us the way to be cleansed.

Special Music was provided by **Keith and Kristyn Getty**.

Messengers viewed a video report about the ministry of the **Public Affairs Committee** with Mike Griffin, the Convention Public Affairs representative sharing about legislation that came before the General Assembly in the 2015 session and what will be considered in the 2016 session. In the video, he thanked Georgia Baptists for their involvement in 2015 events at the Capitol.

President Hattaway presented a video featuring the past Convention presidents and recognized the following who were present for the 194th session: Nelson Price, Larry Wynn, John O. Yarbrough, Mary Cox representing Frank Cox, Gerald Harris, Wayne Robertson, Joan Hamrick representing Wayne Hamrick, and John Waters.

A **Convention Ministry Spotlight** was presented by Executive Director **J. Robert White** featuring interviews with various ministry leaders. **Peggy Beckett**, President, **Baptist Retirement Communities** said that she is excited about the beginning of a home ministry that will send faithful, God-fearing, care givers into the community who will model Jesus and share their faith. She reminded messengers of the three locations for this ministry: Clairmont Crest in Decatur, Palmetto Park near Newnan, and the newest location in Hiawassee. She asked messengers to pray for the new ministry that will provide opportunities to share the love and compassion of Jesus.

Eric Mathison, Vice President, **Baptist Village Retirement Homes** represented Delos Sharpton, President and CEO, who was unable to be present. He shared that Georgia Baptists are involved in personal care and skilled nursing ministry for senior adults at Baptist Village that helps families in times of great need. He reported that during a recent period of observation by the state audit and licensing agency, the 254-bed nursing home received an excellent rating with “zero deficiencies.” He asked messengers to support the ministry with prayer, particularly as they expand the ministry through the dementia centers for men and women.

Georgia Baptist Children’s Homes and Family Ministries President **James Harper** shared how the ministry continues to reach boys and girls for Jesus Christ. He reported that house parents have Bible study, the children attend local Baptist churches, and last year, 66 children made professions of faith. He shared that one of the newest programs serves mothers who have experienced domestic violence and is now available on all three campuses. He asked messengers to pray for the ministry as they seek staff to work in cottages with the children. Executive Director J. Robert White shared that James Harper will retire in 2016 after 30 years of ministry with the Children’s Homes.

Robby Foster, Northside Baptist, Valdosta, shared passages from the Gospel of John and led in prayer in preparation for the Missionary Sermon.

Keith and Kristyn Getty led in **Congregational Praise** and provided **Special Music** before the **Missionary Sermon**.

Barry Snapp, Victory Baptist, Rockmart, provided the **Missionary Sermon** entitled “Bring Them to Jesus” based on the first chapter of the Gospel of John. He said that there is a lostness epidemic in Georgia, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only thing that will help. He encouraged messengers to remember that their first priority should be to do whatever it takes to bring people to Jesus. He said that John brought Andrew to Jesus, and Andrew brought people to Jesus. He added that while we cannot bring everyone to Jesus, we can bring someone to Jesus. He suggested that Georgia Baptists focus upon three needed actions: invest, invite, and involve to make a Kingdom investment in people and bring them to Christ. He said that the vast majority of the more than 7 billion people on earth are lost and pointed out that the first two letters of the words “Gospel” and “God” are “go,” and we are to go and invest ourselves in caring for people. He reminded messengers that the greatest commandment is to love God and the second is to love others. He shared that it changed his ministry when God taught him to see people as souls rather than just people. Rev. Snapp said that we should also invite people to Jesus as Andrew brought people to Jesus. He shared three lessons that we can learn from Andrew about authentic evangelism: 1) bring family to Jesus; 2) bring a child to Jesus, and; 3) bring someone different to Jesus. He said that Andrew brought his brother Simon Peter to Jesus, he brought a young child to Jesus who shared his lunch with five thousand, and he brought a group of non-Jews to Jesus even though they were different. Rev. Snapp reminded messengers to invite people outside the church to Jesus. He encouraged messengers to follow the example of Andrew and take the time to be personally involved with people, to invite people to come to Jesus, and make a personal investment into the lives of people. He challenged messengers to somehow, someday, bring people to Jesus!

The **Benediction** for the Monday evening session was provided by **Robert E. Wilson**, Light of the Word, Morrow.



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ANNUAL MEETING SESSION
9 AM – 12:00 PM TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10

The Tuesday morning session began with the congregation singing the theme song: “*Awake O Church*” led by **Jon Duncan Rhon Carter**, First Baptist Church, Statesboro, and president of the Sons of Jubal, shared about the recent Sons of Jubal trip to Israel and messengers viewed a video about the trip as he sang, “*I Believe in a Hill Called Mount Calvary.*” Second Vice President **Jason Jones**, Isabella Baptist Church, Sylvester, introduced **Claude King** who led messengers in a time of **focus upon prayer** regarding the urgency of the hour based on Romans 13:11.

Messengers viewed a video report about the ministry of **The Christian Index** featuring **J. Gerald Harris**, Editor, sharing about the various changes taking place as the paper transitions to be mainly available online due to the reduced number of subscriptions reflecting changes in our culture.

The following **Preachers Committee Report** was presented by **Fred Evers**, Northside, Tifton, in the absence of the chairman, Butch Knight, First Baptist Church, Albany, and the **report was approved.**

- 195th Annual Meeting:** November 14 – 15, 2016 at Calvary Baptist Temple, Savannah
- Hosting Association:** Savannah Baptist Association
- Doctrinal Sermon:** Jim Perdue, Second Baptist Church, Warner Robins
- Alternate:** Jason Jones, Isabella Baptist, Sylvester
- Missionary Sermon:** Andy Childs, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Toccoa
- Alternate:** Jerry Dockery, First Baptist Church, Crabapple
- 196th Annual Meeting:** November 13 – 14, 2017 at North Metro First Baptist, Lawrenceville

Executive Director **J. Robert White** presented the **Education Commission Report.** He expressed appreciation for the presidents and introduced them for a report about their respective school.

Emir Caner, President, **Truett-McConnell College**, said that since it was chartered in 1946, Truett-McConnell College has existed to raise up generations who will follow the Lord Jesus Christ and be witnesses of His Word. He announced that the graduating class of May, 2016 will include the first Masters of Arts and Theology graduates and diplomas from “Truett-McConnell University,” as the school will change from being a college to being a university in 2016. He reported that the college is standing against the mandate to hand out abortion inducing drugs to staff and will join other entities before the Supreme Court to stand for life, liberty, and for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Brewton-Parker College President, **Steven Echols**, thanked messengers for supporting Brewton-Parker College and for their support of the Cooperative Program. He said that God has done amazing things at Brewton-Parker College. He shared that in December of 2014, God answered prayers when SACS reversed the financial probation of the college and granted their accreditation through 2021. He added that God has blessed the college with financial donations that have allowed renovation of the dorms, and in August, the faculty, board, athletic department, and student development staff, signed the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. He said that the college is trusting in the Lord and that we need a strong Christian college in South Georgia.

Shorter University President, **Don Dowless**, said that it is a privilege to be one of the Georgia Baptist schools and reminded messengers that Georgia Baptists own Shorter University. He reported that the university has started an online bachelor and associate degree in Christian Studies, and that the Shorter Choral went on tour in Africa. He said that the university has again been noted as a Princeton “Best in the Southeast” university. He reported that three business students were awarded first place in a global business strategy game simulator and students have achieved several national athletic accomplishments.

He said that a Shorter University education is about people and changing one person at a time through the power of Jesus Christ.

Steve Fenlon, First Baptist, Oakwood, led messengers in a time of **Memorials Observance** to remember Georgia Baptist pastors and leaders who have deceased since the 2014 Annual Meeting. The following names were included on the list shared with messengers: Mack Hannah, Clarence Jett (Atlanta Metro); Richard Dendler (Augusta); Lester Anthony, Jim McDuffie (Ben Hill-Irwin); Gordon Hunter, Jr. (Bethel); Randy Niswonger, Tim Walthour (Catoosa); Jesus T. Sanchez (Chattahoochee); Thomas S. Roote, Jr., William VanDyke (Columbus); Steve Bryant, Edward Mimbs, Jimmy Smith (Daniell); David White (Gordon Memorial); Paul Wright (Habersham); Marvin C. Ferguson (Hebron); James Samuel Cranford, James M. Jones, William Aaron Mullinax (Hightower); Ray Burnette (Houston); Fred Bradford (Lookout Valley); Gordon Pittman (Mercer); Don Scarborough (Middle); Sam Shipp (Noonday); Fred White (North Georgia); Richard J. Brookshire (Ogeechee River); Richard Daley (Rabun County); Ben Hatfield, Herman Williams (Roswell); L. Joe Conner (Savannah); Norman Sweeting (Smyrna); Raphael Woods (Stone Mountain); Floyd Hipp (Summerhill); Lawrence Garrett (Tattnall-Evans); James Pelham (Thomas County); J. Wesley Dykes (Troup); and Ronnie Davis, Johnny Williams (West Metro). Employees and retirees of the Executive Committee, Georgia Baptist Convention, included the following: James N. Griffith, Marcus G. Hicks, Jr., Preston Hinesley, E. Frank Major, Archie Mayo, and Danny E. Watters.

The **Executive Committee Report** was presented by the Chairman, **Bryan Alexander**, Sweetwater Baptist, Douglasville. He recognized members serving on the Executive Committee and expressed appreciation to them for their service.

Executive Director, **J. Robert White**, expressed appreciation to Roswell Street Baptist Church staff and congregation for their hospitality as hosts of the 2015 Convention Annual Meeting. He reported that **Cooperative Program** gifts from Georgia Baptists January 1, 2015 through October 31, 2015 totaled \$32,125,383.95 and **total mission gifts** from Georgia Baptists October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015 totaled \$62,096,469.75. He also shared that 53.95% or \$33,498,449.48 of the total gifts from Georgia Baptists from October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015 were forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention. He announced that copies of "One Generation Away," a movie about our diminishing religious freedoms and how we may respond, were available at the Public Affairs display. He encouraged messengers to participate in the Franklin Graham Prayer Rally at noon on February 10, 2016 at Liberty Plaza in Atlanta. He also shared information and encouraged messengers to attend the Keith & Kristyn Getty concert on December 21 at the Fox Theater in Atlanta that also features the Sons of Jubal.

Executive Director, **J. Robert White**, recognized **James Harper**, president, Georgia Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries as he plans to retire in early 2016. He presented Dr. Harper a plaque on behalf of Georgia Baptists expressing love and appreciation for his 30 years of ministry with the Children's Homes.

Scott Smith, state missionary, Church Revitalization and Evangelism, shared that the evangelism ministry exists to elevate, educate and celebrate evangelism. He announced that the 2016 state evangelism conference is scheduled for April 11 and 12 at Piedmont Baptist Church in Atlanta and a 2016 strategy conference will take place September 19 and 20 at a location to be announced.

Kelvin Cochran, staff member at Elizabeth Baptist Church, Atlanta, and previously the Atlanta Fire Chief, shared how God has worked in his life. He expressed appreciation for the support of Georgia Baptists that has helped sustain him and his family during the time of his suspension. He shared five lessons he has learned through his experiences that he called "the blessings of sufferings": God prepares His children for suffering; there are worldly consequences for standing for biblical truth and for Christ; there are Kingdom consequences for standing for biblical truth and for Christ that are greater than the worldly consequences; sufferings are for the glory of God, and; the blessings will go to a higher level if we have courage and faith to stand. He shared that God has called him to preach and asked messengers to pray for him in the days ahead.

Executive Director, **J. Robert White**, presented plaques to Representative Sam Teasley and Senator Josh McKoon expressing appreciation for their leadership and service with the state legislature.

Executive Committee Vice Chairman, **Mike Stone**, referred to the affirmation of the *Reinvention of the Convention* by the Executive Committee in September 2015 as noted in the *2015 Book of Reports*. He said that the objectives are to make our state convention more effective and efficient for generations to come. Executive Director, **J. Robert White**, added that the reinvention of the Convention has been under study over the past two years and is built upon a commitment to global missions support, Georgia church services, Georgia church planting partnerships, and Georgia community evangelism and missions. He said that the focus will remain to serve our churches and to mobilize Georgia Baptists to be on mission. He referred to the eight objectives (Book of Reports, pages 20-21) and said that the reinvention includes the name of the Convention being changed to “**The Georgia Baptist Mission Board**” that better represents the Convention as a mission-sending agency and is similar to the name of the Convention set in 1879 as “The Board of Missions of the State of Georgia.” He said that Georgia Baptists will continue to gather each November for the Georgia Baptist Convention Annual Meeting. He added that in the future, the state missions staff will become more field based and practitioners will serve across the state. He referred to changes in various ministry area names and assignments to better fit the objectives of the reinvention. He said that the new operation of the Missions and Ministry Center will be on Monday through Thursday with calls being referred to staff who will be available remotely on Friday. **Convention President Don Hattaway** invited messengers to affirm the reinvention of the Convention, and messengers responded by standing and applauding. President Hattaway prayed for Dr. White and the direction of the Convention.

Motion was made by the Chairman of the Order of Business Committee, **Shep Johnson**, to extend the time for the Executive Committee Report by 30 minutes and the **motion was approved**.

Darey Kittle, Salem Baptist Church, Dalton, and Chairman of the Cooperative Program Budget Committee, presented the recommended **2016 Cooperative Program Budget** including the instructions, directions, procedures, and recommendations, and they **were approved**.

2016 COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET OF \$40,600,000

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION MINISTRIES		
COOPERATIVE PROGRAM		42.00%
Disbursements*		\$17,052,000
International Mission Board		8,595,913
North American Mission Board		3,886,151
Theological Education Ministries		3,778,723
Facilitating Ministries/SBC Operating		509,855
Christian Ethics and Religious Liberty Ministries		<u>281,358</u>
Total		\$17,052,000

*Disbursements based on SBC Executive Committee Budget

GEORGIA BAPTIST MISSION EXTENSION MINISTRIES		
COOPERATIVE PROGRAM		11.85%
Disbursements		\$4,812,500
Colleges/Universities		
Shorter University		2,000,000
Brewton-Parker College		1,000,000
Truett-McConnell College		1,000,000
Ministerial Education Fund		200,000
Education Commission		<u>12,500</u>
		4,212,500
Baptist Village		250,000
Baptist Retirement Communities of Georgia		250,000
Georgia Baptist Foundation		<u>100,000</u>
Total		\$ 4,812,500

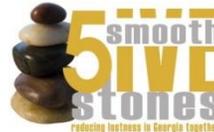
GEORGIA BAPTIST CONVENTION MINISTRIES**FUNDING SOURCES FOR MINISTRY**

Cooperative Program	46.15%	\$18,735,500
Mission Georgia Offering		1,450,000
Cooperative Agreements		522,768
Investment, Registration & Other Income		<u>1,115,601</u>
		\$21,823,869



Disbursements

Administrative Services		\$950,206
Business Services		2,131,407
Communications & Cooperative Program Promotions		1,825,184
<i>The Christian Index</i>		465,582
Woman's Missionary Union/Women's Enrichment Ministries		817,139
Evangelism & Church Revitalization		1,010,191
Church Planting		2,228,777
Collegiate Ministries		3,819,386
Church Ministries		5,845,027
Benevolent Ministries		168,833
Conference Centers		535,000
Executive Committee/Annual Convention		<u>2,027,136</u>
Total		\$21,823,869



Note: The Southern Baptist Convention has historically requested that a portion of their Cooperative Program funds remain in Georgia to be used for the Promotion, Support, Accounting, and Distribution of Cooperative Program funds.

RECOMMENDED 2016 COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET SUMMARY

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION MINISTRIES	42.00%	\$17,052,000
GEORGIA BAPTIST MISSION EXTENSION MINISTRIES	11.85%	\$ 4,812,500
GEORGIA BAPTIST CONVENTION MINISTRIES	46.15%	\$18,735,500
2016 COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET	100.00%	\$40,600,000

BUDGET COMMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS

The following responsibilities are included in the instructions of the committee designated by the Executive Committee to recommend a Cooperative Program budget for the Georgia Baptist Convention: (1) Study Cooperative Program income for the current year as compared with previous years; (2) Estimate income for the new year on the basis of past experience, prevailing economic conditions, and reasonable expectations for the next fiscal year; and (3) Recommend a budget that provides an equitable distribution of available Cooperative Program and non-cooperative funds among all causes supported by Georgia Baptists.

2016 BUDGET DIRECTIONS AND PROCEDURES

1. In order for church staff members to receive GuideStone Protection Benefits provided by the Georgia Baptist Convention, their church must give at least \$420 per plan participant annually through the Cooperative Program.
2. All Georgia Baptist Convention institutions provided for in the budget shall submit an annual declaration of indebtedness to the Administration Committee which shall be reported to the September Executive Committee meeting.
3. All interests provided for in the budget are instructed to keep all funds and designated gifts sacred to the trust and designation.
4. Should receipts available for the 2016 Cooperative Program Budget exceed the amount required to discharge the Convention's commitments, the excess balance shall be disbursed by direction of the Executive Director with approval of the Administration Committee.

5. Georgia Baptist churches may exclude up to two Cooperative Program Budget line items and still have their gifts remain “Cooperative Program” upon written notification to the Executive Director with a copy of the official church action.

6. Only institutions and agencies in cooperation with the Georgia Baptist Convention shall participate in, benefit from or receive funds approved in the 2016 Cooperative Program Budget. An institution or agency is not in cooperation with the Convention if it: (a) is not a participating or cooperating institution or agency of the Georgia Baptist Convention, or ceases to be a Georgia Baptist Convention institution or agency, as may be determined from time to time by the Convention; or (b) violates or fails to follow or comply with any terms, conditions or provisions set out in the 2016 Cooperative Program Budget. In any such case, the Georgia Baptist Convention shall determine where to direct or how to use any funds, payments, or any other benefits relating to such institution or agency, and the Convention may direct that such funds be transferred to or designated for the benefit of any one or more of the Convention’s other cooperating institutions, agencies, programs and/or ministries.

7. All Georgia Baptist Convention institutions, agencies or program entities that receive funding through the 2016 Cooperative Program Budget may not solicit from the churches of the Convention by direct appeal, special offerings, or any other direct funding promotion. Institutions and agencies supported by the 2016 Cooperative Program Budget may raise funds in support of their ongoing work or capital needs from friends, alumni, interested individuals, foundations or corporations who wish to support the values and interests of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

2016 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that in support of Georgia Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention missions and ministries, the 2016 Cooperative Program goal be \$40,600,000.

2. It is recommended that the following special seasons of prayer and offerings be approved as an integral part of the 2016 program:

- North American Missions Week of Prayer and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, March 6-13, 2016
- Children’s Home Day Offering, May 8, 2016
- Senior Adult Ministries Day Offering, July 17, 2016
- Mission Georgia Offering Emphasis, September 2016
- Thankful Hearts Sunday (Health Care Ministry Foundation) Offering, November 20, 2016
- International Missions Week of Prayer and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering Emphasis, December 4-11, 2016

3. It is recommended that individual Georgia Baptists be urged to respond with renewed commitment of life and resources to Christ for service in evangelizing Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

4. It is recommended that churches strengthen the extension of their ministry by increasing their Cooperative Program gifts by at least 1 percent per year.

5. We recommend that every pastor in Georgia become a Cooperative Missions Champion – an advocate in his church for mission education and mission giving through the Cooperative Program. In addition, churches are encouraged to utilize the services and materials available to them through the Georgia Baptist Convention Cooperative Program and Stewardship office.

6. It is recommended that the Mission Georgia Offering goal for 2016 be \$1,750,000.

Fred Lodge, First Baptist Church, Blairsville, presented a resolution regarding the **Pinebloom** property (*Book of Reports, pages 21-22*) and it **was affirmed** by messengers.

David Mills, Beech Haven Baptist Church, presented a recommendation regarding changes in the **Standing Rules of the Georgia Baptist Convention** (*Book of Reports, page 22*) and it **was adopted**.

Jimmy Blanton, Columbus Baptist Association, presented a recommendation regarding **Convention Operations** (*Book of Reports, page 23*) and it **was adopted**.

Don Patterson, Piedmont-Okefenokee Baptist Association, presented a recommendation regarding the **2016 Calendar of Activities** (*Book of Reports, pages 26-32*) and it **was adopted**.

Jimmy Patterson, First Baptist Church, Newnan, presented the report of the **Church Membership Committee**. He said that for the first time in history, over 50% of the churches included on the report are non-Anglo and the report includes a network of churches (Grace Network). He recognized the pastors and members present of the 45 new churches and 16 new missions added to the Convention between November 1, 2014 and October 31, 2015.

Association	Church
At Large.....	Grace Athens, Athens
At Large.....	Grace Capital City, Washington, DC
At Large.....	Grace Marietta, Marietta
At Large.....	Grace Monroe, Monroe
At Large.....	Grace New Hope, Lawrenceville
At Large.....	Grace Snellville, Snellville
At Large.....	Red Hills Community Church, Thomasville
Atlanta Metro.....	Anchor City Church, East Point
Atlanta Metro.....	Endeavor Church, Atlanta
Atlanta Metro.....	The Gathering at Decatur Heights, Decatur
Augusta.....	Harvest Pointe Fellowship, Evans
Chattahoochee.....	Berea Baptist Church, Dahlonega
Chattahoochee.....	Journey Church of Hall County, Gainesville
Chattahoochee.....	Pozo de Esperanza (Well of Hope), Gainesville
Chattahoochee.....	The Branch Church, Dahlonega
Etowah.....	Cornerstone Community Church, Woodstock
Friendship.....	New Life Ministries, Montezuma
Friendship.....	Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Cobb
Friendship.....	Shema Baptist Church, Ellaville
Gwinnett Metro.....	World Life Church, Lawrenceville
Lanier.....	First Baptist Church of Iranians, Suwanee
Lanier.....	Iglesia El Buen Samaritano, Cumming
Lanier.....	Igreja Batista Brasileria North Lanier, Cumming
Lanier.....	Restoration Church of North Georgia, Inc., Cumming
Morganton.....	New Canaan Baptist Church, Blue Ridge
Polk-Haralson.....	Connect Missionary Church, Cedartown
Roswell.....	Nanum Baptist Church, Suwanee
Southeast.....	Victory Baptist Church, St. Mary's
Southside Baptist Network.....	10:31 Church, McDonough
Southside Baptist Network.....	Agape Home Ministry, Stockbridge
Southside Baptist Network.....	Hunmaum Baptist Church of Atlanta, McDonough
Southside Baptist Network.....	Iglesia Bautista Nuevo Amanecer, Stockbridge
Southside Baptist Network.....	New Day Fellowship, Stockbridge
Southside Baptist Network.....	Simple Life Church, McDonough
Southside Baptist Network.....	SouthPoint Fellowship, Locust Grove
Southwest Atlanta.....	Church 180, Locust Grove
Southwest Atlanta.....	Disciples Cross International Church, Grayson
Southwest Atlanta.....	New Macedonia Baptist Church, Riverdale
Stone Mountain.....	Christ First Community Church, Stone Mountain
Stone Mountain.....	Clarkston Fellowship Church, Clarkston
Stone Mountain.....	Mount Zion International Church, Lithonia
Stone Mountain.....	New Creation Church, Clarkston
Stone Mountain.....	River Hills Hispanic, Winder
Troup.....	Praise and Prayer Ministry, LaGrange
Western.....	Real Life Baptist Church, Newnan

Association	Mission
Atlanta Metro.....	Revelation Media Ministry, Inc., Sandy Springs
Columbus.....	Fountain City Church, Columbus
Columbus.....	One Heart Church, Columbus

Gwinnett Metro.....	Atlanta Juhyang Baptist Church, Duluth
Gwinnett Metro.....	Iglesia Vida Christiana, Lawrenceville
Gwinnett Metro.....	Life Pointe Community Church, Lawrenceville
Gwinnett Metro.....	Suwanee Korean Baptist Church, Suwanee
Noonday.....	Hangaram Korean Baptist Church, Marietta
Noonday.....	Iglesia Nuevo Horizonte New Horizon), Woodstock
Noonday.....	Mercy Hill Church, Bonaire
Noonday.....	Mosaic Church, Marietta
Noonday.....	Powerhouse International Church, Marietta
Southeast.....	First Hispanic Baptist Church, Hinesville
Stone Mountain.....	Iglesia Vida Cristiana, Winder
Stone Mountain.....	Lakeview Community Church, Conyers
Stone Mountain.....	Tapestry Church, Atlanta

Executive Committee Chairman, **Bryan Alexander**, moved the adoption of the entire **report of the Executive Committee** as presented and contained in the *2015 Book of Reports* and it **was adopted**.

During **Miscellaneous Business**, Order of Business Chairman, **Shep Johnson**, reported that the following motion during the Monday, November 9, Miscellaneous Business, was referred to the Order of Business Committee: *"President of the African American Fellowship, Pastor Jéan L. Ward, presents a motion that the African American Fellowship representing all African American churches within the African American Fellowship be allotted one seat on the Georgia Baptist Convention Executive Committee."* Order of Business Chairman Shep Johnson presented the following **amended motion**: *"The President of the African American Fellowship, Pastor Jéan L. Ward, moves that Article VI Section 1 of the Constitution of the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia be amended to provide that the African American Fellowship of the Georgia Baptist Convention representing all African American churches within the Georgia Baptist Convention be allotted one seat on the Georgia Baptist Convention Executive Committee. This seat on the Executive Committee shall be held by the President of the African American Fellowship. This person shall be a member of a cooperating Georgia Baptist church in good standing."* The amendment to the **motion and the main motion were approved**. Order of Business Committee Chairman, Shep Johnson, presented the following **motion** and it **was adopted**: *"The Order of Business Committee recommends this motion be referred to the Executive Committee and that they in turn report to the 2016 meeting of the Georgia Baptist Convention in Savannah."*

Special Music was provided by **Sonny Hattaway**, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Cartersville. She sang about Jerusalem as a video of scenes in Jerusalem and Israel were viewed by messengers.

Ronnie Floyd, Cross Church, Springdale, Arkansas, and President of the Southern Baptist Convention, shared a special message about the number one need in order for spiritual awakening to occur in Georgia. He said that there are billions of people who have never heard about Jesus and many Christians, pastors, and churches are moving away from the mission of God and the power of God. He referred to the prayer movement that took place in New York City in 1857 when one million people came to know Christ in two years and said that it is not impossible with our God for that to happen again. He suggested that the thing we need most is the power of God. He suggested that Satan has convinced us that church is more about the songs we sing, the clothes we wear, and the freedom to do church, than the power of God. He reminded messengers of the demonstration of the power of God in Acts 1:8 when people were united in prayer, filled with the Holy Spirit, heard the Gospel in their own language, and 3,000 were saved. He said that there is no great movement of God that is not preceded by prayer by His people and he challenged messengers to pray for spiritual awakening. He referred to Acts 4:31 and the time when the people prayed, their place was shaken, they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they boldly spoke the word of God. He suggested that the second thing Georgia Baptists need in order for spiritual awakening to occur is to live with an urgency. He said that the church today lacks the urgency of the first century church because we do not believe in lostness, that Jesus is coming again, and in repentance. He challenged messengers to not live and do ministry without the power of God because our God can do more in a moment that we can do in a lifetime. He encouraged messengers to lead the way forward with the power of God.

Messengers participated in a time of **Prayer Focus** led by **Claude King**. He asked messengers to get ready for God to send spiritual awakening by being personally transformed and reconciled.

Executive Director, J. Robert White, presented a **Convention Ministry Spotlight** featuring interviews with various ministry leaders. **Georgia Baptist Foundation** President and CEO, **Johnathan Gray**, shared that God is working through the ministry of the Foundation. He reported that there are more than 1,600 ministry accounts providing resources for churches and additional funds that are providing scholarships for seminary students. He asked messengers to pray for the Foundation staff and to pray that many people will be led by God to use the blessings He has provided them to bless Kingdom work and purposes in the future through the Foundation.

Georgia Health Care Ministry Foundation President and CEO, **Will Bacon**, reminded messengers that Georgia Baptists have been involved in a health care ministry since 1901. He said that the transition to a “hospital without walls” created a foundation that gives back. He reported that since 2005, the Foundation has distributed \$36 million through 479 grants that have impacted 3 million lives. He added that more than 16,000 people have come to know Jesus Christ, and about 15,000 mothers have carried their babies to full term as a result of the ministries of grant recipient organizations. He added that one of the most exciting things about the Thankful Heart Sunday Offering is providing retreats and other ministries that give back to ministers. He encouraged messengers to pray that the seeds planted into the lives of the 3 million people impacted through the grant-recipient ministries will result in more people coming to faith in Christ.

Church Financial Services state missionary, **Keith Hamilton**, said that God is blessing through the GuideStone Mission Dignity ministry. A retired minister and Mission Dignity recipient joined him on stage and expressed appreciation for the ministries provided through Mission Dignity. He encouraged messengers to continue their support of the ministry and said that he and his wife are very grateful to God and Georgia Baptists for what is available for retired ministers through ministries supported by grants from the Georgia Baptist Health Care Ministry Foundation and the ministry of Mission Dignity.

Third Vice President, **David Hardwick**, Gentian Baptist Church, Columbus, introduced the **Jubal Tones** led by Steve Brown for **Special Music**.

Bobby Jones, Laurens Baptist Association, Dublin read from Ephesians 2 and led messengers in prayer in preparation for the Doctrinal Sermon.

Sonny Hattaway, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Cartersville, provided **Special Music**.

Brad Waters, First Baptist, Hazlehurst, shared the **Doctrinal Sermon** with the title of “The Amazing Grace of God” based on 2 Samuel 9. He described grace as God reaching down to man that was demonstrated at Calvary and is seen in every line and word of the Bible. He said that the blood of Jesus sacrificed on Calvary is the best picture of the love and grace of God. He added that the grace of God is unexplainable, inexhaustible, and the greatest word ever given to man. He suggested that Mephibosheth, the lame young man described in 2 Samuel 9, provides a picture of the lost and dying world today. He added that the desire of David to show kindness to Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan, as described in this passage depicts the grace of God as He loves and seeks the world through Jesus, who is a friend of sinners and those who cannot help themselves. He suggested that it is amazing that God loves us and that Jesus gave His life for His enemies. He suggested that the grace of God gives Christians a divine responsibility and calling to be a messenger of the truth of Calvary that is a picture of God reaching, lifting and rescuing. He referred to the lame feet of Mephibosheth that provide a beautiful picture of all people as spiritually lame and in need of God. He reminded messengers that every person without Jesus is in need and is invited to join the family of God. He said that today is the day of salvation, and when we come to Jesus through the amazing grace of God, we are given full rights to redemption and rest with Christ.

The **Benediction** for the morning session was provide by **David Cardoza**, the church planter at Yo Soy at Calvary, Lilburn.


**awaken
2015****ACTS 5:14****BELIEVERS WERE ADDED TO THE LORD IN INCREASING
NUMBERS - CROWDS OF BOTH MEN AND WOMEN.****ANNUAL MEETING SESSION
2:00 – 5:55 PM TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10**

Jimmy and Nan Nettles, First Baptist Church, Newnan, led in **congregational praise** to begin the afternoon session.

Claude King presented a time of **Focus on Prayer** based on 1 Peter 1:14-16. He challenged messengers to pray for God to revive His people to holiness, love, and obedience so they may be used to reach others for Jesus Christ.

The **Sons of Jubal** directed by **Jon Duncan** led messengers in singing the theme song and provided a time of **Special Music**.

The **Mission Georgia Report** was presented by **Executive Director J. Robert White**. He began with sharing the 2015 Mission Georgia Offering video and announced that Georgia Baptists have provided 28,306 backpacks in 2015 for children in Appalachia. He reported that last year, there were 701 salvations through the Appalachian backpack ministry.

Dr. White introduced **Chris Humphries**, Calvary Baptist, Austell, and his daughter, Hope, to sing the song, "We Believe" and said that the words of this song are what Mission Georgia ministries are based upon. Dr. White interviewed **Chris Anderson**, Chattahoochee Baptist Church, Cleveland, **Gabe Gill**, Gum Branch Baptist, Hinesville, **Steve Laughman**, Centennial Baptist Association, and **Bob Wilson**, Trinity Baptist, Thomaston, about how Pastor Roundtables, led by the Church Revitalization ministry, have dramatically impacted their ministry. Dr. White shared that the Pastor Roundtables are taking place all around the state and encouraged pastors to participate in one near their church. A video was viewed by messengers with First Baptist Villa Rica pastor, **Kevin Williams**, sharing about being involved in church revitalization and the Pastor Roundtables. He also reported in the video about an evangelistic opportunity that led to the church conducting a mass baptism service at a local high school that resulted in attacks in the media, but also shared the Gospel around the world.

Dr. White interviewed **Keith Pierce** and his wife, Coy, about Endeavor Church, a bilingual church plant in Atlanta, where they minister to both Spanish and English-speaking people. He shared a map of the state on the screen showing locations of churches being planted across Georgia, and pointed out that for the first time, over half of the new Convention churches this year are non-Anglo congregations. He introduced **Andrew Ryshkov**, pastor of the Calvary Russian Baptist Church in Cumming, the largest and strongest Russian Baptist congregation in Georgia. His wife, Inna, shared about their ministry that also includes Bible distribution in Belarus.

Dr. White invited Disaster Relief volunteers to stand and be recognized for their ministry. He shared that Augusta was the staging point for the collection of 500 5-gallon buckets filled with items to assist with the flood disaster recovery in South Carolina. **Dwayne Boudreaux**, Augusta Baptist Association, joined Dr. White to share about Project Augusta, a partnership between the local association and the Georgia Baptist Convention that has resulted in expansion of the mission outreach and ministries of the churches, and the development of a new mission center in the association.

Dr. White shared a video about Operation Liberate, a ministry supported through the Mission Georgia Offering that has rescued young women who have been recruited, enslaved, sold, and exploited by sex trafficking. Dr. White closed the report with prayer for all the Mission Georgia ministries.

Jon Duncan led in **Congregational Praise** and **Special Music** was provided by the **Sons of Jubal**.

The following report of the **2015 Committee on Nominations** was presented by the chairman, **Larry Cheek**, Stone Mountain Baptist Association, and **the report was adopted**.

2015 REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS**CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE** (Terms to Expire 2018)

(Chair) Mike Vernatt, First Baptist Church, Statham, Appalachian Baptist Association
 David Bridwell, Crawfordville Baptist Church, Crawfordville, Georgia Baptist Association
 Tim Dudding, Oakdale Baptist Church, Moultrie, Colquitt County Baptist Association
 Kenyon Fennell, Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Denton, Smyrna Baptist Association
 Jack Peeler, First Baptist Church, Darien, Southeast Baptist Association
 Aaron Quick, First Gum Branch Baptist Church, Hinesville, New Sunbury Baptist Association
 Randy Ray, Pineview Baptist Church, Waycross, Piedmont-Okefenokee Baptist Association
 John Talley, Jefferson Street Baptist Church, Dublin, Laurens Baptist Association

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS (Terms to Expire 2018)

Tanya Ditty*, Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, Noonday Baptist Association
 Tommy Fountain, Grace Baptist Church, Monroe, Appalachian Baptist Association
 Dewey Moyer, Northlake Baptist Church, Gainesville, Chattahoochee Baptist Association
 Tom Rush, Berean Baptist Church, Social Circle, Mulberry Baptist Association
 Rusty Stewart, Poplar Springs North Baptist Church, Dublin, Laurens Baptist Association
 (Term to Expire 2016)
 Suzanne Hudgens*, First Baptist Church, Winterville, Sarepta Baptist Association

EDUCATION COMMISSION (Terms to Expire 2020)

Jeff Brazell, First Baptist Church, Dublin, Laurens Baptist Association
 Jo Jossey, First Baptist Church, Elberton, Hebron Baptist Association

HISTORICAL COMMISSION (Terms to Expire 2020)

Terry Braswell, Jr., Ebenezer Baptist Church, Douglasville, West Metro Baptist Association
 Jason Graffagnino, Concord Baptist Church, Clermont, Chattahoochee Baptist Association
 Jack Staples*, Calvary Baptist Church, Lilburn, Gwinnett Metro Baptist Association

2016 MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

Terrell Ruis, First Baptist Church, Moultrie, Colquitt County Baptist Association
 Alternate: Stanley Luke, First Baptist Church, Nashville, Valdosta Baptist Association

2016 ORDER OF BUSINESS

(Chair) Jerry Peele, First Baptist Church, Eastman, Dodge County Baptist Association
 Mickey Adams, Piney Grove Baptist Church, Fortson, Columbus Baptist Association
 Mike Boatfield, Atco Baptist Church, Cartersville, Bartow Baptist Association
 Mike Brandenburg, First Baptist Church, Butler, Friendship Baptist Association
 Lee Hill, First Baptist Church, Moultrie, Colquitt County Baptist Association
 Clinton Hughes, First Baptist Church, Hogansville, Western Baptist Association
 Chuck Smith, Glade Road Baptist Church, Acworth, Bartow Baptist Association
 Mike Spivey, First Baptist Church, Soperton, Daniell Baptist Association
 Danny Stubbs, Houston Lake Baptist Church, Perry, Rehoboth Baptist Association
 Chris Winford, First Baptist Church, Brunswick, Southeast Baptist Association

2016 PREACHERS COMMITTEE

(Chair) Brad Waters, First Baptist Church, Hazlehurst, Consolation Baptist Association
 James Dollar, Concord Baptist Church, Clermont, Chattahoochee Baptist Association
 Shep Johnson, First Baptist Church, Douglas, Smyrna Baptist Association
 Bob Richardson, First Baptist Church, Blue Ridge, Morganton Baptist Association

2016 RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

(Chair) Steve Foster, First Baptist Church, Snellville, Gwinnett Metro Baptist Association
 Andy Brown, Oxford Baptist Church, Oxford, Stone Mountain Baptist Association
 Dion Brown, Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Moultrie, Colquitt County Baptist Association
 Troy Dykes, Unity Baptist Church, Sylvester, Mallery Baptist Association
 Bill Gammon, First Baptist Church, Rincon, Savannah Baptist Association
 Alfred Lands, Family Life Baptist Church, Morrow, Southwest Atlanta Baptist Association

TRUSTEES OF AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS**GEORGIA BAPTIST FOUNDATION** (Terms to Expire 2020)

Bob Evans, First Baptist Church, Cordele, Houston Baptist Association

Terry Parker, Ingleside Baptist Church, Macon, Mid-State Baptist Association

GEORGIA BAPTIST ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE (Terms to Expire 2018)

Richard Bumpers, Park Place Baptist Church, Snellville, Stone Mountain Baptist Association

Jason Holland, First Baptist Church, Calhoun, Gordon Memorial Baptist Association

TRUETT-MCCONNELL COLLEGE (Terms to Expire 2020)

Adam Baker*, First Baptist Church, Cartersville, Bartow Baptist Association

Robby Foster, Northside Baptist Church, Valdosta, Valdosta Baptist Association

Miles Hannan*, Crossroads Baptist Church, Valdosta, Valdosta Baptist Association

Jim Holmes, First Baptist Church, Helen, White County Baptist Association

Harvard Hopkins*, First Baptist Church, Alpharetta, Roswell Baptist Association

Allen Michael Rea, Dunn Memorial Baptist Church, Baxley, Consolation Baptist Association

BAPTIST RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES OF GEORGIA (Terms to Expire 2020)

Tom Jones, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Toccoa, Tugalo Baptist Association

Jerry Nichols*, McConnell Memorial Baptist Church, Hiawassee, Hiawassee Baptist Association

Bill Terry, First Baptist Church, Helen, White County Baptist Association

GEORGIA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES AND FAMILY MINISTRIES (Terms to Expire 2020)

Clyde Evans, First Baptist Church, Cochran, Pulaski-Bleckley Baptist Association

Melody Kittle*, Salem Baptist Church, Dalton, North Georgia Baptist Association

Larry Montgomery, Beech Haven Baptist Church, Athens, Sarepta Baptist Association

Cail Pressey, Hawhammock Baptist Church, Swainsboro, Emanuel Baptist Association

Beth Slocum*, Pinecrest Baptist Church, Cordele, Houston Baptist Association

Earl Trussell*, Sisters Baptist Church, Sandersville, Washington Baptist Association

SHORTER UNIVERSITY (Terms to Expire 2020)

Randy Bowen*, New Armuchee Baptist Church, Rome, Floyd County Baptist Association

Keith McBroom, North Metro First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Gwinnett Metro Baptist Association

John Pennington, First Baptist Church, Douglasville, West Metro Baptist Association

Kelvin Ratliff*, Sherwood Forest Baptist Church, Rome, Floyd County Baptist Association

Derek Spain, Hebron Baptist Church, Dacula, Mulberry Baptist Association

Joe Tanner, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Villa Rica, Carrollton Baptist Association

(Term to Expire 2017)

Joy Battles*, Pleasant Valley South Baptist Church, Silver Creek, Floyd County Baptist Association

BREWTON-PARKER COLLEGE (Terms to Expire 2020)

Ken Alford, Crossroads Baptist Church, Valdosta, Valdosta Baptist Association

Gary Braddy*, First Baptist Church, Mount Vernon, Daniell Baptist Association

Tim Burnham, First Baptist Church, Lindale, Floyd County Baptist Association

Britt McDade*, First Baptist Church, Vidalia, Daniell Baptist Association

Brent Sammons*, First Baptist Church, Vidalia, Daniell Baptist Association

Philip Williams*, Eastside Baptist Church, Claxton, Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association

(Term to Expire 2018)

Ken Dowling*, First Baptist Church, McRae, Telfair Baptist Association

(Term to Expire 2017)

Lynn Lewis*, First Baptist Church, Lyons, Daniell Baptist Association

(Terms to Expire 2016)

Rick Brown*, Ingleside Baptist Church, Macon, Mid-State Baptist Association

Jim Perdue, Second Baptist Church, Warner Robins, Rehoboth Baptist Association

BAPTIST VILLAGE RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES (Terms to Expire 2019)

Larry Carlisle*, New Victoria Baptist Church, Woodstock, Etowah Baptist Association

Ben Stovall*, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Blackshear, Piedmont-Okefenokee Baptist Association

George Thomas*, Central Baptist Church, Waycross, Piedmont-Okefenokee Baptist Association

Gail Wilkins*, First Baptist Church, Cartersville, Bartow Baptist Association
Wayne Woods, First Baptist Church, Moultrie, Colquitt County Baptist Association
(Term to Expire 2016)
Vann Dempsey, Calvary Baptist Church, Jesup, Altamaha Baptist Association

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Terms to Expire 2020)

Centennial Baptist Association: Mark Harris, Mount Olive Baptist Church, Molena
Central Baptist Association: Dave Nelson, Lake Country Baptist Church, Eatonton
Colquitt County Baptist Association: Andy Cashwell, Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Moultrie
Etowah Baptist Association: Scott Bosier, Shoal Creek Baptist Church, Canton
Gordon Memorial Baptist Association: Steve Skates, Sonoraville Baptist Church, Calhoun
Hiawasse Baptist Association: Bradley Thomas, Macedonia Baptist Church, Hiawassee
Kimbell Baptist Association: Jeff Giddens, High Falls Baptist Church, Jackson
Lookout Valley Baptist Association: Steve Forester*, Head River Baptist Church, Menlo
Mallery Baptist Association: Keith Anthony, First Baptist Church, Leesburg
Morganton Baptist Association: Matthew McDaniel, First Baptist Church, McCaysville
Mulberry Baptist Association: Stephen Fountain, First Baptist Church, Buford
Polk-Haralson Baptist Association: John Lemmings, Corinth Baptist Church, Bremen
Thomas County Baptist Association: Jonathan McLain, Antioch Baptist Church, Pavo
Washington Baptist Association: Lee Lacey, First Baptist Church, Sandersville
West Metro Baptist Association: Randal Whitten, Mt. Harmony Baptist Church, Mableton
Southside Baptist Network Baptist Association: Randy Wood, Liberty Baptist Church, Fayetteville
Southwest Atlanta Baptist Association: Rosemary Lands, Family Life Baptist Church, Jonesboro
At Large: Samuel Ayala, Hebron Baptist Church, Dacula
At Large: Josh Blanco, Camino de Vida Baptist Church, Marietta
At Large: Billy Godwin, Ephesus Baptist Church, Villa Rica
At Large: Otis White, Liberty International LIFE Baptist Church, Morrow
(Terms to Expire 2016)
At Large: John Cadwell, Evergreen Baptist Church, Cochran
At Large: David Mills, Beech Haven Baptist Church, Athens
Mell Baptist Association: Parker Hulsey, Omega Baptist Church, Omega
Valdosta Baptist Association: Wayne Robertson, Morningside Baptist Church, Valdosta
(Terms to Expire 2017)
Ben Hill-Irwin Baptist Association: Danny Gay, Prospect Baptist Church, Fitzgerald
Houston Baptist Association: Bruce Howland, First Baptist Church, Unadilla
Smyrna Baptist Association: Ed Lycett, First Baptist Church, Douglas
(Terms to Expire 2018)
Bowen Baptist Association: Jerry Bishop, Attapulcus Baptist Church, Attapulcus
Fairburn Baptist Association: David Chancey, McDonough Road Baptist Church, Fayetteville
(Terms to Expire 2019)
Consolation Baptist Association: Royce Hulett, Oakland Baptist Church, Hazlehurst
Floyd County Baptist Association: Stephen Williams, New Antioch Baptist Church, Rome
Hephzibah Baptist Association: Al Wright, First Baptist Church, Waynesboro
Merritt Baptist Association: Will Cole, Trinity Baptist Church, Manchester
Mountaintown Baptist Association: Kent Sanford*, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Ellijay
Tugalo Baptist Association: Andy Childs, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Toccoa

Fourth Vice President, **Jeff Daniels**, introduced **Beth Ann Williams**, Executive Director-Treasurer and **Jackie Hardy**, President, for the **Women's Enrichment Ministry Report**.

Jackie Hardy thanked messengers for encouraging missions education in their church. She said that one objective of WMU is to encourage ethnic churches and leaders to fully participate in WMU and reported that WMU is actively engaged with Korean, Vietnamese, Hmong and other congregations. She added that explosive growth has occurred with the number of women of Hispanic congregations being involved in training and participation at an annual retreat and messengers viewed a video highlighting the work of Hispanic Georgia Baptist women. **Karen Pace** interviewed a young girl about her participation in the Girls in Action camp that she said helped her to connect to God and to commit her life to serve as a missionary. **Beth Ann Williams** shared that the WMU ministry exists to help women understand through Scripture that God's heart is for the nations, to help women and girls understand that they can play a personal part in reaching the world and be radically involved in missions.

The **State Speaker's Competition Winner, Haddasah Slappy**, Kinchafoonee Baptist Church, Leesburg, shared her winning speech entitled "Life is What You Make It."

President Hattaway introduced the following **Awaken Panel Discussion** participants: **Robert Jeffress**, senior pastor, First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas; **Claude King**, Discipleship & Church Health Specialist at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention; **Glenn Sheppard**, President and co-founder International Prayer Ministries, Inc.; and **Kelvin Cochran**, staff member, Elizabeth Baptist Church, Atlanta, and former Atlanta Fire Chief.

During the **Awaken Panel Discussion**, President Hattaway asked panel participants to respond to several questions regarding spiritual awakening. Claude King defined revival as what God does with his people, and spiritual awakening as when people come to faith in Christ in such large numbers that it impacts culture. Kelvin Cochran said that evidence is seen in our culture regarding the great need for a spiritual awakening with the diminished structure of marriage and the family over the past 30 years, the legalization of abortion, and the recent legalization of same-sex marriage. Robert Jeffress added that it is critical that we understand our times and be resolved in what we do. Glenn Sheppard said that he believes the greatest obstacle that prohibits our churches from doing what they need to do is unconfessed sin. Claude King suggested that we are in moral freefall, and perhaps that is good, because the faster our fall, the sooner we turn around and get ready for revival. Glenn Sheppard shared that almost anywhere in the world outside western civilization he is seeing God moving, and suggested that perhaps we are too sufficient, sophisticated, and satisfied to ask for sanctification and purification through repentance. Kelvin Cochran said that he did not expect the persecution that he has experienced in a nation founded upon biblical principles and with a constitution that guarantees freedom of expressing our thoughts and beliefs without fear of the consequences. Robert Jeffress said that the reason our nation is in the shape it is today is because of apathetic pastors and laymen in our churches. Claude King suggested that we must return to the Lord and return to our first love for Christ. Glen Sheppard encouraged pastors to find a prayer closet, a prayer partner, and to wait for God to cleanse and purify them. At the end of the panel discussion, Claude King invited messengers to a time of prayer about what God would have them do.

The report from the 2015 Committee on Resolutions was presented by the chairman, David Huff, First Baptist, Lilburn. He recognized other members on the committee including Carlisle Driggers, Stanley Luke, David Meacham, and Paul Robertson. The following **resolutions were adopted**.

RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION

Submitted by the 2015 Committee on Resolutions

WHEREAS, the 194th Annual Session of the Georgia Baptist Convention met at Roswell Street Baptist Church, in Marietta, Georgia on November 9 and 10, 2015, in which the messengers representing Georgia Baptist churches were greeted with Christian grace and warm Southern hospitality; and

WHEREAS, the Roswell Street church staff, membership and many volunteers have tirelessly served the needs of the messengers to the Georgia Baptist Convention, living out the truth of this verse: *"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ" (Col 3:23-24 NKJV)*.

WHEREAS, the musicians, choirs and worship leaders have provided thrilling praise and uplifting celebration in every convention session; and

WHEREAS, the Noonday Association of churches has demonstrated second-mile cooperation, service and hospitality in preparation for and during the meeting;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the messengers of the 194th session of the Georgia Baptist Convention offer sincere appreciation to the leaders and members of Roswell Street Baptist Church together with the churches of the Noonday Association; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the messengers to the 194th session of the Georgia Baptist Convention express our loving appreciation for and extend our heartfelt blessing to Dr. Don Hattaway, president of our beloved Convention; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the messengers of this session of the Georgia Baptist Convention extend honor and thanksgiving to the officers and platform leaders for their guidance and service throughout this meeting. We express gratitude to Mrs. Sonny Hattaway and family for their loving support of our president and this Convention over the past year; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we also express our sincere thanks and gratitude to God for 23 years of loyal service provided by our esteemed Executive Director, Dr. J. Robert White. We express

appreciation to all those who serve on the Georgia Baptist Executive Committee, as well as all the Georgia Baptist Convention staff who loyally serve the causes of Christ here in Georgia and around the world; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we commend the Committee on Order of Business and Rev. Shep Johnson, Chairman, for the preparation of this inspirational program; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this Convention join our beloved President and Executive Director in continuing to emphasize and respond to the theme, “*Awaken 2015*” as expressed in Acts 5:14, “Believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers – crowds of both men and women.” (HCSB) as we commit ourselves to pray fervently for renewal within our churches and strengthen our resolve to obey both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

RESOLUTION ON CASINO GAMBLING AND PARI-MUTUEL WAGERING ON HORSE RACING

Submitted by: Tommy Fountain, Messenger Grace Baptist Church, Monroe

WHEREAS, the Georgia Baptist Convention has frequently stated its opposition to the gambling industry, and the devastating effects of gambling upon the moral and economic life of our nation; and

WHEREAS, the Bible indicates that man is to work creatively and use his possessions for the good of others (Eph. 4:28); gambling fosters a something-for-nothing attitude. The Bible calls for careful stewardship; gambling calls for reckless abandon. The Bible condemns covetousness and materialism (Matt. 6:24-34); gambling has both at its heart. The Christian work ethic is damaged by gambling; and

WHEREAS, Georgia Republican and Democrat legislators are discussing legislation that would allow for casino gambling and for pari-mutuel wagering on horse racing in Georgia; and

WHEREAS, aggressive actions by gambling interests in recent months make abundantly clear their intention of seeking to expand legalized gambling in Georgia, including pari-mutuel gambling or wagering on horse racing and casino gambling; and

WHEREAS, out-of-state corporations and businesses are poised to invest multi-millions of dollars in a bold effort to change state laws to allow casinos and pari-mutuel gambling; and

WHEREAS, the usual arguments for increasing gambling continue to be “this will create jobs” and “it is for the children”, because it will generate revenue for Pre-K and for the HOPE scholarship, and

WHEREAS, these reasons fail to overcome the societal costs of gambling, which are substantial; risks include such consequences as (1) the break-up of families, because gamblers are twice as likely to divorce as non-gamblers, (2) an increase of local crime by at least eight percent within five years or less after the establishment of a casino, as experienced by states that have allowed casino gambling, (3) local job loss because local citizens change their spending habits, (4) an increase of bankruptcies, and (5) an increase of child neglect and domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, once the gambling industry is allowed to operate legally in the state, its lobbying power will grow and increase its influence over legislators and local community officials; and

WHEREAS, once the State of Georgia allows Class III gambling, as described in this resolution, this would open the door for any Indian tribe to venue shop for property to open casinos on land that would be taken out of the governance of the State and off the local tax digest;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge the members of the Georgia Legislature to cease and desist with any efforts to open the State of Georgia to casino gambling and pari-mutuel wagering on horse racing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge state legislators to have the moral courage to oppose the efforts by representatives of the lucrative gambling industry, who unashamedly seek to exert their influence in the political process with the proceeds of their nefarious profits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we pray for and lend our aid and support to Mike Griffin and our Public Affairs Ministry as we confront this menacing issue in the days to come; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Georgia’s Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House and the sitting state senators and representatives who represent the people of Georgia.

RESOLUTION ON THE DANGERS OF MARIJUANA

Submitted by: Gerald Harris, Messenger from Ephesus Baptist Church, Villa Rica

WHEREAS, the drug problem is a complex and intricately interrelated phenomenon in our society, now including a widespread misuse of valuable prescription products, a broad spectrum of unscientific self-medication, deeply entrenched customs of drinking alcohol beverages, and an alarmingly developing culture involving marijuana and a variety of illegal drugs; and

WHEREAS, the pervasive drug orientation of our culture is resulting in widespread social disruption and destruction of life by causing a variety of diseases, accidents and other drug addiction, and is a factor in other serious social problems such as crime, family disruption, workplace issues, and automobile accidents; and

WHEREAS, basic factors now recognized as perpetuating the drug approach to life are social pressure for using, the fascination of drug use created by the entertainment industry, and widespread ignorance of accurate information pertinent to usage of these drugs; and

WHEREAS, contemporary efforts of government, church, civic groups, and other independent agencies are failing to cope effectively with the drug orientation of our culture; and

WHEREAS, since 1996, 23 states and Washington, D.C. currently have laws legalizing marijuana in some form. This trend reflects a growing national tolerance for the use of marijuana for both recreational and medicinal purposes; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, Georgia legalized medical marijuana for eight specified medical conditions; and

WHEREAS, the State Commission on Medical Cannabis is now considering a recommendation that legislation be introduced in 2016 that would authorize the State of Georgia to cultivate, produce and sell marijuana and its extracts; and

WHEREAS, federal seed laws and federal fertilizer laws add complexity and perhaps liability to those involved in cultivation; and

WHEREAS, legislation has been introduced in the Georgia State Senate for the legalization and regulation of recreational marijuana; and

WHEREAS, marijuana is defined as having a high potential for abuse; and no clinical trials have proven efficacy of marijuana as medicine, nor recommended any dosing requirements; and several major medical organizations including the American Medical Association, National Cancer Institute and American Cancer Society have rejected smoked marijuana as medicine; and

WHEREAS, marijuana is a gateway drug leading to addiction and other drug abuse; and marijuana is also a gateway to health problems, introducing multiple toxic chemicals into the user's body, many of which we do not know the effects on the human body; and marijuana use is associated with higher risk for cancer, psychosis, strokes, respiratory damage and heart attacks; and marijuana is also a gateway to crime, because the relationship between illegal drug use (including marijuana) and crime is undeniable;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge the members of the Georgia Legislature to oppose any legislation that would authorize the cultivation of marijuana in the State of Georgia; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the members of the Georgia Legislature to oppose any legislation that would legalize recreational marijuana in the State of Georgia; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call for all Georgia Baptists and others of like-mind and purpose to voice their protest of further legalization of illegal drugs, including marijuana; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we pledge our cooperation with others to neutralize social pressures and minimize glamorization of drug usage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that preventive education in the homes, churches, and the schools be strongly encouraged; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the GBC Public Affairs Committee be encouraged to work diligently with appropriate agencies of the state convention to publicize this position and to encourage cooperation with others seeking these same objectives; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Georgia's Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House and the sitting state senators and representatives who represent the people of Georgia.

RESOLUTION ON AFFIRMING GOD'S DESIGN FOR MALE AND FEMALE PERSONS

Submitted by: Tom Rush, Messenger from Berean Baptist Church, Social Circle

WHEREAS, all persons are created in God's image and are made to glorify Him (Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 43:7); and

WHEREAS, God's design was the creation of two distinct and complementary sexes, male and female (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4) which designate the fundamental distinction that God has embedded in the very biology of the human race; and

WHEREAS, distinctions in masculine and feminine roles as ordained by God are part of the created order and should find expression in every human heart (Genesis 2:18, 21–24; 1 Corinthians 11:7–9; Ephesians 5:22–33; 1 Timothy 2:12–14); and

WHEREAS, transgender activists have sought to normalize the transgender experience, and to define gender according to one's self-perception apart from biological anatomy; and

WHEREAS, the growing transgender movement is aggressively seeking to pass anti-discrimination laws and ordinances, in addition to pushing for sex-integrated bathrooms, locker rooms and showers in public and private schools; and

WHEREAS, some public and private schools are now encouraging parents and teachers to affirm the feelings of children whose self-perception of their own gender is at variance with their biological sex; and

WHEREAS, public and private schools are beginning to capitulate to the powerful transgender lobby by allowing access to restrooms and locker rooms according to children's self-perception of gender, and not according to their biological sex; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Education has ruled that an Illinois school district must give a transgender male full access to a female locker room or lose Title IX funding; and

WHEREAS, Houston Mayor Annise Parker in 2014 subpoenaed sermons that challenged the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance, a legal measure that allows transgender people to use public restrooms of the gender in which they identify themselves; and

WHEREAS, in a landslide 62-38% victory, Houston voters overwhelmingly rejected the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, these cultural currents run counter to the biblical teaching as summarized in The Baptist Faith and Message, Article III that "Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation;"

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we affirm God's good design that gender identity is determined by biological sex and not by one's self-perception—a perception which is often influenced by fallen human nature in ways contrary to God's design (Ephesians 4:17–18); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend love and compassion to those whose sexual self-understanding is shaped by a distressing conflict between their biological sex and their perceived gender identity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we oppose efforts to alter one's bodily identity (e.g., cross-sex hormone therapy, gender reassignment surgery) to refashion it to conform with one's perceived gender identity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we oppose steadfastly all efforts by any governing official or body to validate transgender identity as morally praiseworthy (Isaiah 5:20) through Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Nondiscrimination laws and ordinances, and sex-integrated bathrooms, locker rooms and showers in public and private schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we oppose sex education curriculum or any other curriculum that teaches that all imagined and actual sexual and gender-related identities are equally desirable; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our love for the Gospel and urgency for the Great Commission must include declaring the whole counsel of God, proclaiming what Scripture teaches about God's design for us as male and female persons created in His image and for His glory (Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 20:27; Romans 11:36); and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Georgia's Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House and the sitting state senators and representatives who represent the people of Georgia.

RESOLUTION ON HUMAN FETAL TISSUE TRAFFICKING

Submitted by: Tanya Ditty, Messenger from Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta

WHEREAS, experiments are currently being performed using organs, tissues, and cells obtained from human embryos and fetuses; and

WHEREAS, most of these organs, tissues, and cells are harvested from embryos and fetuses destroyed through abortions; and

WHEREAS, Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the world, has been shown on video this year to be complicit in altering abortion procedures to aid in the procurement of human fetal body parts – even selling whole bodies; and

WHEREAS, the growing industry of buying and selling human fetal organs, tissues, and cells represents a grisly practice that converts human body parts into a commodity to be bought and sold in the marketplace; and

WHEREAS, facilities providing abortions in Georgia are documented to already be in violation of state law and regulations regarding how they operate, yet are not inspected or held accountable; and

WHEREAS, abortion is an act of violence against unborn human persons, and the sale of their tissues is an assault on the biblical truth that all human beings are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:13-16); and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Baptist Convention is on record for its enduring, consistent, and vigorous opposition to abortion;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Georgia Baptist Convention reaffirm our abhorrence of abortion, our repudiation of research using embryos and fetuses from abortions, and our repugnance toward the exploitation of unborn human beings through the sale of their body parts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon our elected officials throughout Georgia to enforce existing laws against the sale of human fetal tissues, and to take appropriate steps to stop the trafficking of baby body parts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Georgia General Assembly to pass legislation to enforce common sense safety regulations at all facilities which provide abortions, and to protect women and children throughout our state, both born and preborn; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Georgia's Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House and the sitting state senators and representatives who represent the people of Georgia.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A STATE-LEVEL FIRST AMENDMENT DEFENSE ACT

Submitted by: Art Williams, Messenger from First Baptist Church, Ellijay

WHEREAS, in 2014, the Georgia Baptist Convention passed a resolution defending traditional marriage; and

WHEREAS, Georgia Baptists embrace the biblical definition of marriage as the exclusive life-long union of one man and one woman, and that equating same-sex marriage with natural marriage creates a host of domestic and religious liberty issues; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court's decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* legalized same-sex marriage for the entire country; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Solicitor General admitted during oral arguments that the tax-exempt status of religious schools is "going to be an issue" if the Supreme Court finds a constitutional right to same-sex marriage in *Obergefell v Hodges*; and

WHEREAS, with the Supreme Court's redefinition of marriage the respect for religious belief concerning the nature of marriage is no longer secure, and attacks against religious liberty and right of conscience have escalated since *Obergefell v Hodges*; and

WHEREAS, Kim Davis, a Kentucky court clerk became the first woman in United States history to be jailed for her religious beliefs regarding marriage after refusing to issue marriage licenses bearing her name as clerk to same-sex couples; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio Supreme Court's Board for Professional Conduct said a judge may not refuse to conduct a ceremony for same-sex couples, and that a judge may not refuse to do all marriages based on personal religious beliefs about marriage that do not allow him or her to celebrate same-sex marriages; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico State Supreme Court ruled that a husband and wife who own and operate a photography studio must act against their religious beliefs and take photographs of a same-sex commitment ceremony, if they want to do business in the state. One of the judges wrote that violating one's religious beliefs was "the price of citizenship;" and

WHEREAS, in a disturbing trend, faith-based charities have been forced out of adoption and foster care services because of their religious beliefs that children belong with both a mother and father; and

WHEREAS, a federal First Amendment Defense Act (FADA) has been introduced in Congress that would prohibit any federal agency from denying tax exemption, grants, contracts, licenses, or certifications to an individual, association, or business based on the belief that marriage is the union between one man and one woman; and

WHEREAS, a federal First Amendment Defense Act would only affect the federal government, so without a state-level FADA state and local governments could discriminate in their dealings with individuals, organizations and businesses that adhere to the religious viewpoint that marriage is the union between one man and one woman; and

WHEREAS, the State of Georgia and local municipalities must not be allowed to discriminate against people who believe what 76 percent of Georgians said about marriage in 2004—that it's the union of one man and one woman;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we must defend religious liberty and the right of conscience by curtailing the misuse and abuse of government power for religious persecution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Georgia Baptists urge the state legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign both the 1993 version of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and a state-level First Amendment Defense Act; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Georgia's Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House and the sitting state senators and representatives who represent the people of Georgia.

There was no **Miscellaneous Business**.

During the **Election of Officers**, President Hattaway received nominations for the office of **President**. Jeremy Morton, messenger from First Baptist Church, Cartersville nominated **Thomas Hammond**, messenger from First Baptist Church, Alpharetta. Jimmy Blanton, messenger from Gentian Baptist Church, Columbus nominated **Jerry Speer**, messenger from Northside Baptist Church, Columbus.

President Hattaway also received nominations for persons to serve as a **Vice President**. Len Turner, messenger from First Woodstock nominated **Brad Waters**, messenger from First Baptist Church, Hazlehurst. Fred Evers, messenger from Northside Baptist Church, Tifton nominated **Robby Foster**, messenger from Northside Baptist Church, Valdosta. Bob Richardson, messenger from First Baptist Church, Blue Ridge, nominated **Joey Taylor**, messenger from Springhead Baptist Church, Adel. Steve Bullard, messenger from Roy Baptist Church, Newnan, nominated **Mark Sterling**, messenger from Curtis Baptist Church, Augusta. Stephen Williams, messenger from New Antioch Baptist Church, Rome, nominated **Terry Braswell, Jr.**, messenger from Ebenezer Baptist Church, Douglasville. Billy Godwin, messenger from Ephesus Baptist Church, Winston, nominated **Kevin Williams**, messenger from First Baptist Church, Villa Rica. Jack Lee, messenger from Altamaha Baptist Church, Jesup, nominated **Morgan Kerr**, messenger from Immanuel Baptist Church, Savannah.

President Hattaway received nominations for **Recording Secretary**. Tommy Fountain, messenger from Grace Baptist Church, Monroe, nominated **Danny Henson**, messenger from Liberty Baptist Church, Ringgold. There were no other nominations and Danny Henson was elected by acclamation. Danny Henson nominated **Freddie Rhodes**, Westview Baptist Church, Hawkinsville and **Tom Vann**, Rentz Baptist Church, Rentz, to serve as **Assistant Recording Secretaries**. There were no other nominations and Freddie Rhodes and Tom Vann were elected by acclamation.

Jon Duncan led the **Sons of Jubal and Jubalheirs** in a time of **Special Music**.

The **Closing Message** was provided by **Robert Jeffress**, First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas. He said that America's collapse is inevitable and there is nothing that we can do to stop it. He said that three decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court have weakened the moral and spiritual infrastructure of our nation and have insured our collapse. He said that the first of these decisions determining the direction of our nation was the 1962 decision to **remove prayer** from public schools. He added that God is no respecter of people or nations and any nation that reverences God will be blessed by Him and any that rejects God will be rejected by God. He said that the second decision that further weakened our nation took place in 1973 with the decision of the Supreme Court to **legalize abortion** and the third decision was the 2015 decision to **legalize same-sex marriage**. He said that this is also the best time to do ministry if we realize that our mission is found in Matthew 5 in which Jesus said that we are to be the salt of the earth. He added that we are called to stand up and push back against the tide of immorality and ungodliness that is sweeping our country. He said that in this passage, Jesus also says that Christians should be the light of the world by sharing the Gospel. He encouraged messengers to remember that this is the best time to live if we have a life purpose to be both the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

A time of **Focus on Prayer** was led by **Claude King** in which he referred to Acts 4:31 that describes how early believers prayed, were filled with the Spirit of God, and began to speak with boldness, resulting in salvation of over 3,000 people.

President Hattaway announced that **Thomas Hammond was elected as the 2016 President** of the Georgia Baptist Convention. Thomas Hammond received 511 votes and Jerry Speer received 380 votes. He also announced that **Robby Foster was elected as 1st Vice President** with 652 votes, **Kevin Williams was elected as 2nd Vice President** with 621 votes, **Brad Waters was elected as 3rd Vice President** with 597 votes, and **Mark Sterling was elected as 4th Vice President** with 441 votes. Terry Braswell received 365 votes, Joey Taylor 348 votes, and Morgan Kerr 322 votes.

He introduced the following **newly-elected officers** along with their wives: Thomas and Carrie Hammond, Kevin and Patrice Williams, Robby and Laura Foster, Brad and Cheryl Waters, and Mark and Jill Sterling.

Executive Director, **J. Robert White** expressed appreciation to Convention President Don Hattaway and presented a plaque to him for the outstanding service and leadership that he has provided for the Convention. He also presented a bouquet of flowers to Sonny Hattaway.

The **benediction** for the closing session was provided by **Bernard Miller**, Southwest Atlanta Association.

Convention President **Don Hattaway** adjourned the 194th Convention Annual Meeting of the Georgia Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia with **1,404 messengers** attending.

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