

Executive Committee, SBC  
Administrative Subcommittee  
February 22-23, 1999

4. SBC Referral: Motion to Conduct Feasibility Study for Name Change of Southern Baptist Convention

Background: During the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, June 9-11, 1998, David G. Pope (NY) presented the following motion:

Motion: That the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention direct the Executive Committee to conduct a feasibility study concerning changing the name of our Convention; the results of this study and recommendation as to further action to be presented at the 1999 Convention.

Items 17 and 43, Proceedings  
of the Southern Baptist Convention,  
June 9-11, 1998  
1998 *SBC Annual*, pp. 36, 61

Similar motions were referred to the Executive Committee in 1965, 1974, 1983, 1989, and 1990.

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting that occurred February 19-21, 1968 contain a discourse regarding the name change issue that is particularly helpful in obtaining a historical setting. An excerpt from those minutes follows:

Recommendation No. 10

The Bylaws Committee has continued its study of the matter of changing the name of the Convention. We feel that the following background statement is essential to an understanding of this matter:

At the meeting of the Executive Committee in February, 1961, Rheubin L. South of Arkansas brought up the matter concerning the various proposals for change in the name of the Southern Baptist Convention. By common consent the matter was referred to the Administrative Committee.

The Administrative Committee studied the matter and brought a report to the pre-Convention meeting in St. Louis that "we recommend to the Southern Baptist Convention the name Southern Baptist Convention best describes our fellowship and should be retained." The matter was discussed by several and finally a motion was passed that the reference to recommend to the Southern Baptist Convention be deleted. The amendment was passed. It was felt there was not enough concern to take the matter to the Convention.

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There continued to be editorials and articles in various Baptist papers, and the 615 people on the 41 study groups in the '70 Onward Project took this matter into consideration as one of the items. In their message to the denomination in early 1965 they asked the "Executive Committee to continue to explore the possibilities of a change in the name of our Convention until a suitable name is found."

In the 1965 session of the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas (Item 106, Page 82, 1966 Convention Annual) Charles Chaney, Illinois, made a motion concerning the name of the Convention that was referred to the Committee on the Order of Business for a scheduled time for consideration. The Committee on Order of Business set the time and at that time, Mr. Chaney moved that "Item 106 be referred to the Executive Committee for further study." This motion was carried.

At the September 21, 1965, meeting of the Executive Committee, the matter was referred to the Administrative Committee and then to its Bylaws Committee. This committee recommended that the staff of the Executive Committee be asked to suggest to the Bylaws Committee procedures for study and the possibility of changing the name of the Convention.

At the February meeting in 1966, the procedures were discussed and it was recommended that "Dr. Routh be asked to work with Martin Bradley of the Department of Research and Statistics of the Baptist Sunday School Board to make a survey of attitudes and possibilities of a name change of the Convention, and report to the committee in its pre-Convention meeting."

At a meeting of the Bylaws Committee on April 7, 1966, it was voted that we recommend "to the Administrative Committee that the Executive Committee continue to study the possibility of a name change and use such surveys and tools available in order to ascertain the sentiment of our people and report back to the Convention meeting in 1967. We recommend that the Executive Committee ask the Southern Baptist Convention in Detroit to express itself by ballot on suggested names."

A study was made under the leadership of Mr. Martin Bradley of a selected sample which showed "respondents were rather evenly divided on this question, with 48% favoring a change, 48.7% opposing, and 3.3% indicating no opinion.

(Note - For information and study, a copy of the BSSB Research Report entitled "A Survey of Opinion Regarding a Change in Name for the Southern Baptist Convention" dated May 1966 follows on pages 47-67.

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At the meeting in Detroit, the Administrative Committee recommended, "that the Southern Baptist Convention in Detroit be asked to express itself on preference for the six top names revealed in the survey undertaken by the Department of Research and Statistics and that opportunity be given to express preference for any other name on the poll to be taken at the Convention. We recommend that the Executive Committee give serious weight to this poll and bring a specific recommendation for a name change to the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Miami Beach." The Executive Committee considered this proposal and then moved to refer it back to the Administrative Committee for further study.

At the September, 1966, meeting of the Executive Committee, the matter was referred back to the Administrative Committee and its Bylaws Committee for further study and report to the February meeting of the Administrative Committee. At the February, 1967, meeting the Bylaws Committee reported continued study of the change of name. This study included an opinion by the editors, state executive secretaries, and heads of SBC agencies. This study indicated that there was no consensus regarding (1) the change of name and (2) the name which should be used if a change were made.

During the time that this study was being made, a validation study was being conducted by the Department of Research and Statistics of the suggestions made in a message to the denomination by the '70 Onward Project. The validation study showed that 76.5% of those who actually have been involved in the '70 Onward study groups felt that the Executive Committee should continue to explore the possibilities of a change in name. However, when this was sent to a larger group of pastors, laymen, and laywomen, only 45.7% either agreed or mildly agreed that the name change should continue to be explored. Only 38.5% of the laymen and only 35.7% of the laywomen felt that the study should be continued.

At the February, 1967, meeting of the Executive Committee, it was voted "that any proposed change of name of the Southern Baptist Convention -- if such should be proposed -- be tested as to its public relations implications; also, that the following list of questions be used as suggested criteria to test these implications. This could be used as criteria in case name change comes about for use by the Executive Committee only:

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1. Is it legally available?
2. Is it distinctive?
3. Would it be confused with other Baptist organizations?
4. Is it easily recognizable?
5. Is it short?
6. Does it lend itself to short form use, such as "United Presbyterians, " "American Baptists, " etc. ?
7. Would the initials be appropriate?
8. Would it be capable of world-wide use?
9. Would there be any unfortunate meanings, visual or auditory, in any foreign language?
10. Does it have a pleasant sound?
11. Does it look good?
12. Is it easy to pronounce?
13. Is it easy to spell?
14. Is its meaning clear?
15. Is it geographically accurate?
16. Can it be easily remembered?
17. Does it have favorable connotations?
18. Does it seem appropriate?
19. Is it capable of easy association with all the related organizations in the denomination?
20. Is the name consistent with Baptist history?
21. Would it be appealing to a majority of the church members in the denomination?

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22. Would it be acceptable to other Baptist bodies?
23. Would it be received favorably by non-Baptist bodies?
24. Would it indicate any change in relationships?
25. Would it indicate any change in polity?

The Executive Committee reported to the Southern Baptist Convention in Miami Beach in 1967 that "the study of the change of name of the Convention be continued by both the Administrative and the Public Relations Committee." No recommendation has been adopted. The matter is still before the Bylaws Committee of the Administrative Committee.

In order to give further guidance to the Bylaws Committee, we suggest that authorization be given to taking an unofficial poll at the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston asking the messengers to indicate their preference for the names - Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist General Convention, or United Baptist Convention.

It is understood that the results of this poll shall not bind the Convention or the Executive Committee in any further recommendation, but shall serve as guidance in any further study.

Motion made and seconded that recommendation no. 10 be adopted. Carried.

Recommendation No. 10, Page 7  
Minutes, SBC Executive Committee,  
February 19-21, 1968  
(Bound Volume X, pp. 160-163)

During the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas, Texas, June 11-13, 1974, the Convention adopted a recommendation of the Executive Committee authorizing the appointment of a special committee of seven persons to study the work of the Executive Committee. In that same Convention, W. A. Criswell moved that the president of the Convention appoint a committee of seven members to study the possibility of changing the name of the Convention. The Convention assigned both subjects to the Committee of Seven (1974 *SBC Annual*, pp. 60-62, 68).

The following persons were named as members of the SBC Committee of Seven:

C.R. Daley (KY), Chairman	Daniel R. Grant (AR)
Harold C. Bennett (FL)	Hershel H. Hobbs (OK)
Olin T. Binkley (NC)	Alma Hunt (AL)
W. A. Criswell (TX)	

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4. SBC Referral: Motion to Conduct Feasibility Study for Name Change of Southern Baptist Convention (continued)

During the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Miami Beach, Florida, June 10-12, 1975, Chauncey R. Daley (KY), chairman of the Committee of Seven, requested an additional year for the study of the work of the Executive Committee and then made the following report on changing the name of the Southern Baptist Convention:

Daley then reported for the committee on the assignment to consider a possible name change for the Convention. He reported that a number of surveys had been made with the Sunday School Board, a survey through Baptist state papers, and other surveys of special groups all of which indicated an overwhelming sentiment of opposition to a change of name. He concluded the report with the following statement: "The Committee of Seven understood its assignment by the Convention was to study the existing sentiment on a name change and report its findings to the Convention without specific instructions to make a recommendation. However, in light of its findings it is the committee's considered judgment that the name of the Southern Baptist Convention should not be changed at this time." Daley then moved adoption of the report. Discussion followed by Donald J. Brown (MD), who moved a substitute motion as follows: "That we do not vote this year on whether or not to change the name of our denomination, but that for one year we consider the name 'Cooperative Baptist Churches' alongside our present name and that at our Convention next year the messengers will vote their choice." Further discussion followed by J.D. Grey (LA) and Brown. The substitute motion lost. The motion to adopt the report passed.

Item 100, Proceedings  
of the Southern Baptist Convention,  
June 10-12, 1975  
*1975 SBC Annual*, p. 65

For information and study, a copy of the "Complete Report on Convention Name Change Study" follows on pages 68-69. Additionally, copies of the opinion survey conducted by the state paper editors dated March 1975, and the BSSB Research Report entitled "A Survey of Opinion Regarding a Change in Name for the Southern Baptist Convention" dated May 1975, follow on pages 70-73 and pages 74-89, respectively.

During the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 14-16, 1983, the following motion presented by William R. Smith (FL) was referred to the Executive Committee:

Motion: That the Executive Committee study the possibility of changing our name from the Southern Baptist Convention to The United Baptist Churches.

Items 81 and 89, Proceedings  
of the Southern Baptist Convention,  
June 14-16, 1983, *1983 SBC Annual*, pp. 40, 49

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During its meeting held September 19-21, 1983, the Executive Committee took the following action in response to the Smith motion and reported it to the 1984 Southern Baptist Convention as follows:

The Executive Committee reaffirms the action of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 10-12, 1975, not to change the name of the Southern Baptist Convention.

1984 *SBC Annual*, p. 78

During the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, June 13-15, 1989, the following motion presented by Jim Guenther (NY) was referred to the Executive Committee:

Motion: That the proper standing committee of the Southern Baptist Convention make a recommendation to the 1990 meeting of our great Convention regarding the changing of the name of our Convention to one which is not descriptive of a region, but rather of our purpose.

Items 77 and 174, Proceedings  
of the Southern Baptist Convention,  
June 13-15, 1989  
1989 *SBC Annual*, pp. 41,49

During its meeting held September 18-20, 1989, the Executive Committee, after consideration and evaluation, took the following action in response to the Guenther motion and reported it to the 1990 Southern Baptist Convention as follows:

That the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention reaffirm its action of September 1983 and the action of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 10-12, 1975, not to change the name of the Southern Baptist Convention, and report this action to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, June 12-14, 1990.

1990 *SBC Annual*, p. 91

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During the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, June 12-14, 1990, the following motion presented by Paul Gunn (TX) was referred to the Executive Committee:

Motion: That the SBC elect or appoint an ongoing committee to discuss, conduct surveys, solicit opinions, and propose a 10-year plan to the 1991 Convention changing our name to the Cooperative Baptist Convention. This committee would represent Southern Baptists from everywhere and would also consist of those persons knowledgeable of the legal transactions involved.

Items 148 and 219, Proceedings  
of the Southern Baptist Convention,  
June 12-14, 1990  
*1990 SBC Annual*, pp. 58, 65

During its meeting held September 17-19, 1990, the Executive Committee, after consideration, took the following action in response to the Gunn motion and reported it to the 1991 Southern Baptist Convention as follows:

The Executive Committee reaffirmed its action of September 1989, September 1983, and the action of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1975 not to change the name of the Southern Baptist Convention.

*1991 SBC Annual*, p. 102

This matter was considered by the Bylaws Workgroup on September 21, 1998, and the Administrative Subcommittee on September 22, 1998. The Administrative Subcommittee made the following recommendation to the plenary body.

Administrative Subcommittee Recommendation: That the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention report to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, June 15-16, 1999, that the Executive Committee, after consideration of the advisability of conducting a formal name-change feasibility study, declines to act on the referred motion, electing rather to affirm a significant prior Convention action and multiple Executive Committee deliberations, all of which affirmed the continued use of the name "Southern Baptist Convention." The Executive Committee specifically reaffirms the 1975 Report on Convention Name Change of the Committee of Seven found in the *1976 SBC Annual* on pages 50-51, and further reaffirms its prior actions against changing the name of the Convention.



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During its meeting held September 21-22, 1998, the Executive Committee postponed taking action on the foregoing recommendation until its February 22-23, 1999, meeting.

Additionally, on September 22, 1998, in other business before the Administrative Subcommittee, John Yeats made a motion, which was seconded and carried, "that the Executive Committee staff be instructed to formulate and propose to the Administrative Subcommittee of the Executive Committee in its February 1999 meeting a strategy for examining the name change issue, which strategy may be approved, amended, or declined by the Executive Committee in that February meeting. Among other considerations, this strategy is to include a recommendation of an appropriate and effective method of determining whether the negative perception of "Southern Baptist" is substantial, and if so, to also determine what percentage of that negative perception is due to the regional bias implied, and what percentage is due to the beliefs held by the Convention."

This recurrent issue seems to have at its heart a desire on the part of some to avoid the apparent limitation to a particular region that the word "Southern" implies, and add a word or phrase that is descriptive of the Convention's work. The name "United States Baptist Convention" was the most popular choice reported in the opinion survey of the state paper editors that was done in May of 1966. The name "Cooperative Baptist Convention" was the most popular choice reported in the opinion survey of the state paper editors that was done in March of 1975. The name "United Baptist Convention" was the most popular choice reported in the opinion survey that was done in May of 1975.

While both of the desires (to overcome an implication of limited territory and to convey a sense of the work of the Convention) are well reasoned, their "usable window" seems to have been limited to the early days of the Convention by intervening history. Developments of that intervening history that now may work against adoption of a new name include recognition of the term "Southern Baptist" as a virtual icon of moral conservatism, belief in the historicity of the entire Bible, and missionary zeal. This is truer now than when the Committee of Seven report was released, especially in light of the conservative resurgence, the Disney resolution, and recent changes to the *Baptist Faith and Message* regarding the family. A recent example showing Southern Baptists are seen in this way is the "You Are Right" ads currently being placed in USA Today (see pages 90-91). Another of these historical developments is use of the word "Cooperative" by groups desiring to distance themselves from the work or beliefs of the Convention.

Admittedly, no comprehensive opinion polls have recently been undertaken to determine the sentiments of Southern Baptists, but the other factors referred to in the 1975 Committee of Seven report all seem to continue to have applicability almost a quarter of a century later, and the passage of time has deepened all the more those perceptions which the world has of the Convention and which Southern Baptists have of themselves.

With regard to the absence of a recent, scientific, Convention-wide poll, the votes approving the more recent Executive Committee actions against name changes may indicate a general approval by messengers of continued operation under the present name. An assessment of the probable outcome of a Convention vote on the matter in the near future might possibly be extrapolated from a review of

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messenger composition at the two conventions preceding each of the prior studies (1965 and 1974, both of which were in Dallas, a 'southern' venue) and the 1998 convention in Salt Lake City, considered by many to be in pioneer territory for Southern Baptists. That review (see pages 92-93) indicates an increase of "non-southern" messenger attendance from 13.5% in 1974 to 20% in 1998. While this growth is significant, the level attained remains insufficient to prevail if a vote were taken and votes were cast along regional lines.

An informal survey was undertaken in the form of an October 5, 1998, letter from Robert E. (Bob) Reccord, president of the North American Mission Board, to all of the state convention and fellowship chief executives. The return letters were copied to Executive Committee staff who compiled and categorized them as shown on a grid found on page 94. Analysis of the results would seem to corroborate the assumptions made in the foregoing paragraph.

Given the fact that current anecdotal evidence indicates that some pioneer states are ambivalent on the name change issue (see Blaine Barber letter about informal state and association surveys in Michigan on pages 95-96), serious consideration needs to be given to whether funding an expensive study should await a point in time when the Convention appears more unified in support of at least considering change. (See also the BP article referred to in the Barber letter on pages 97-99).

In contrast to assessment on the popular level, some consideration should also be directed to the long term practical effects of not only changing the name, but also the effects of merely examining the issue. A statistical analyst who has done work for LifeWay Christian Resources regarding its recent name change has stated that he believes there to be a fundamental difference between recasting the image of subsidiary Southern Baptist entities (recently accomplished) and changing the name of the Convention. The difference is that the members of our churches feel a strong connection between our name and their identity. He advised extreme care in handling the issue, indicating that simply taking a survey might have an unsettling influence on the work of the denomination or might undermine any perception one might have of the denomination as an established, solid, unmovable, or long-standing and authoritative social influence. Changing the Convention's name is tantamount to changing who our church-goers are and what we stand for, and if there is no fundamental shift in either of those two elements, the advisability of changing the name is called into question.

An additional practical ramification is the legal effect of a name change. Attached is a legal opinion from the Convention attorneys on that score, on pages 100-104, which may be summarized by saying that significant structural and polity redesign might have to be undertaken. One adverse effect, for example, would be the empowerment of a Georgia court to remove all of our "directors" upon the petition of only 10 percent of our "members." What those terms would mean in Southern Baptist parlance is as yet unknown.

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Another historical development that might work at cross-purposes with a name change is the advent of the Internet. Website addresses using the Convention acronym "SBC" abound, and, in fact, the official website of the Convention is [www.sbc.net](http://www.sbc.net). These names, known as URLs, are difficult and expensive to harmonize and acquire. The party prevailing in any dispute over the right to acquire or retain a URL name is often the party who has obtained a trademark or has some other prior right to the name. It is possible the acronym or name that might be chosen to replace the current one would not even be obtainable. But the Convention's prior use of the acronym 'SBC' would be difficult to rebut, given the fact that the acronym has been included on church signs for well over 100 years.

Finally, it should be noted that one writer expressing a view on the issue thought that the effect of any name change attempting to include some reference to the USA or North America might actually hamper international missionaries. Although they would still be employed by The International Mission Board, they are most often referred to as Southern Baptist missionaries, a rather innocuous name overseas, but certainly one identified with positive and effective works. If the name of the Convention were changed to include the words "USA," "North America," or "United States," many areas would be repelled by the subliminal connection to a culture they find objectionable, and other areas might wonder whether this was the same group they had learned to know and trust.

With regard to a strategy to examine the name change issue, should further examination be deemed by the Committee to be appropriate, staff has contacted outside market researchers regularly depended upon by LifeWay Christian Resources, and bids have been received from them to emulate and update the 1965 and 1975 name change studies, adding the extra components desired by the Administrative Subcommittee, which bids are attached and found on pages 105-108.

Recommendation: That the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention print in the 1999 *Book of Reports* the attached report on "Changing the Name of the Southern Baptist Convention," and report to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, June 15-16, 1999, that it declines to act further on the motion to conduct a feasibility study concerning changing the name of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Action: Adopted by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention  
February 22-23, 1999



EC/SBC  
February 22-23, 1999

# Report

of the  
Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention  
regarding  
Changing the Name of the Southern Baptist Convention

During the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, June 9-11, 1998, two motions were referred to the Executive Committee dealing with the feasibility of changing the name of the Convention. Similar motions have been referred to the Executive Committee for consideration with some frequency in recent years (e.g. in 1965, 1974, 1983, 1989, and 1990.)

The Executive Committee reviewed the actions it took in years past. It also studied two detailed formal survey reports on the issue conducted by the Sunday School Board, analyses of SBC messengers' profile to evaluate attendance by region, and informal surveys done by the North American Mission Board, state conventions, and area associations. The Executive Committee also reviewed the 1975 "Committee of Seven" report on the name change issue and reexamined the 25 criteria it established in February of 1967 (attached as Exhibit 1) for use in analyzing whether any new name is appropriate.

Additionally, the Executive Committee has obtained a legal opinion covering the practical ramifications of changing the Convention's name. Recent letters from leaders within the Convention concerning the subject have been received, and historical files and clippings on the issue from state papers dating from the present back approximately 40 years have been reviewed. Responses have been received from research consultants regarding costs and methods of updating previous name change surveys. Questions were asked about "brand" identification, established market presence and influence, the impact of recent technology, and any negative effects of regionalism and limited scope of Convention work that use of the word "Southern" implies.

The Executive Committee's review of these materials and consideration of the attendant factors involved produced the following findings:

- 1) The name selection criteria adopted in 1967 by the Executive Committee are all still appropriate (see Exhibit 1).
- 2) No name satisfies as many of the 1967 name selection criteria as does the present name.
- 3) There is no consensus on an acceptable alternate name for the Convention.
- 4) Most popular suggested alternate names involve objectionable side effects similar to those attending the present name. For example, "Continental" implies inclusion of two nations now not a part of our Convention. So does "North American." "Cooperative" now implies alliance with groups who seek to distinguish themselves from the SBC. Any name with the word "States" or "American" in it might create difficulty for missionaries in areas of anti-American sentiment, while the word "Southern" is fairly innocuous when used overseas.
- 5) Those within our Convention who are disaffected by the present name are at least equally opposed by others within the Convention who would be disaffected by discarding it.
- 6) Changing the name of the Convention, or even leaving the issue open for debate over an extended period, would at the very least be unsettling to its ongoing evangelistic work. More probably, the issue would create division where unity now holds sway, and where theology, purpose and function are now known quantities.
- 7) Although in some areas the Convention name is perceived as creating barriers, these difficulties have been ameliorated by not including the word "Southern" in church names.

- 8) During the time period over which name changes have been considered, churches choosing to use the term “Southern Baptist” in their name or materials have prospered, even in non-southern areas.
- 9) The name “Southern Baptist Convention” and term “SBC” have become brand names meaning more than just the sum of their parts. The Southern Baptist Convention no longer denotes a region as much as it does a *position*. It has come to mean missionary zeal, staunch Bible defense, moral rectitude, adherence to faith, and dependence upon the Lord. Indicative of its recognition were the full-page newspaper ads paid for by non-Southern Baptists after the 1998 Salt Lake convention running under the headline *Southern Baptists – You Are Right!* Examples of other names that have transcended their original regional meaning include Western Union, Northwest Airlines, and New York Life.
- 10) While hindsight might indicate that a different name would have had certain advantages, the window of opportunity to make such a change may have closed at the same rate at which the Convention has obtained name recognition and stature.
- 11) Legal counsel has advised that changing the name of the Convention would most probably have the effect of discarding the Convention’s current preferred status as a legislatively created entity, subjecting the Convention to a wide array of statutory mandates that would alter the Convention structure in undesirable ways.
- 12) The magnitude of the total cost of changing the name of the Convention, including such things as corporate document amendment and harmonization, attempting to obtain a new Internet URL, rewording church signs, and reeducating the general public, is unjustifiable in the absence of a compelling reason and overwhelming consensus to change the name.

In summary, the Executive Committee finds no compelling rationale for changing the name of the Convention, nor for underwriting a study concerning same, believing that while a change of name might seem to some to afford a modicum of relief in some areas, it is not justified when all factors are taken into account.

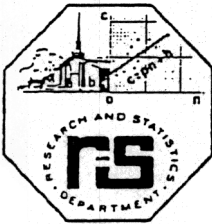
## Exhibit 1

### Criteria to be used by the Executive Committee in Assessing a New Convention Name

1. Is it legally available?
2. Is it distinctive?
3. Would it be confused with other Baptist organizations?
4. Is it easily recognizable?
5. Is it short?
6. Does it lend itself to short form use, such as "United Presbyterians," "American Baptists," etc.?
7. Would the initials be appropriate?
8. Would it be capable of world-wide use?
9. Would there be any unfortunate meanings, visual or auditory, in any foreign language?
10. Does it have a pleasant sound?
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12. Is it easy to pronounce?
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14. Is its meaning clear?
15. Is it geographically accurate?
16. Can it be easily remembered?
17. Does it have favorable connotations?
18. Does it seem appropriate?
19. Is it capable of easy association with all the related organizations in the denomination?
20. Is the name consistent with Baptist history?
21. Would it be appealing to a majority of the church members in the denomination?
22. Would it be acceptable to other Baptist bodies?
23. Would it be received favorably by non-Baptist bodies?
24. Would it indicate any change in relationships?
25. Would it indicate any change in polity?

# 1966 BSSB SURVEY

# BSSB RESEARCH REPORT



A SURVEY OF OPINION  
REGARDING A CHANGE IN NAME  
FOR THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

ISSUED BY THE  
RESEARCH AND  
STATISTICS  
DEPARTMENT

SERVICE DIVISION  
BAPTIST SUNDAY  
SCHOOL BOARD  
NASHVILLE  
TENNESSEE

A SURVEY OF OPINION  
REGARDING A CHANGE IN NAME  
FOR THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Ransom D. Braswell, Jr.  
Project Analyst

RS - 61

May, 1966

Research and Statistics Department  
Martin B. Bradley, Secretary  
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### Highlights of Findings

Overall survey response was 81.2 percent. Pastor response was 96.4 percent, while laymen response was 76.1 percent.

Respondents were almost evenly divided concerning a change in the name of the Southern Baptist Convention with 48.0 percent favoring a change, 48.7 percent not favoring, and 3.3 percent not expressing an opinion. A majority (60.4%) of the pastors responding favored a change; a majority (54.2%) of the laymen responding did not favor a change.

Significant differences of opinion concerning a name change were found among the five regions of the United States. The northern, southeastern, and western regions felt favorable, in varying degrees, toward a name change. An even division of favoring or not favoring a name change was found in the middle region (Missouri and Illinois). The southwestern region did not favor a name change.

"The United States Baptist Convention" was preferred by more respondents (36.1%) than any other suggested name.

Significant differences of opinion concerning a possible new Convention name were found among the five regions of the United States. The northern, southeastern, middle, and north central states preferred "The United States Baptist Convention." Western states preferred suggestions under "Other" names. Southwestern states preferred "The Baptist General Convention of The United States."

No significant differences in response to the questions concerning name change or name preference could be attributed to age, sex, church size, or size of community.

## INTRODUCTION

A motion adopted in June, 1965 by the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Dallas, Texas, requested the Executive Committee to study the possibility of changing the denomination's name. Subsequently, the Executive Committee authorized an opinion survey to determine sentiment toward the possibility of changing the name. The survey was to be completed before the 1966 Convention in Detroit, Michigan.

In the latter part of March, 1966, the Research and Statistics Department received a request from Dr. Porter Routh, Executive Secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention, to conduct the survey now being reported.

### Survey Methods

A total of 1,000 persons were asked to help in this study. Included in the sample were 250 pastors and 750 laymen representing churches throughout the Convention. Usable replies were received from 812 persons for a response rate of 81.2 percent.

The sample selected for this study was drawn from lists of names previously furnished by 400 pastors, who represented churches throughout the Convention. Time limitations necessitated the use of names that had been received for use in a current study concerning the Church Study Course. Of the 3,000 names available, 540 names were drawn for the study course project; the remaining names were available for the name change survey sample. Included in the sample were:

- Pastors
- Sunday School Superintendents
- Training Union Directors
- Brotherhood Presidents
- WMU Presidents
- Persons completing a study course within the past year
- Persons not completing a study course within the past year

The sample was drawn by first placing the lists (furnished by pastors) in alphabetical and numerical order by state and by church size. To determine a beginning point, a random number, between 1 and 10, was drawn. From this point, pastors were drawn by selecting every other name until the sample design for the particular state involved was filled. Laymen were drawn in a similar manner by selecting every third name.

The questionnaire sent to each member of the sample was accompanied by a letter printed on Executive Committee stationary and signed by Dr. Porter Routh. Also enclosed was a stamped (air mail) return envelope, addressed to Dr. Routh. Two weeks after the first mailing of questionnaires, a second questionnaire, cover letter, and return envelope were sent to those who had not yet responded.

The sample selection process involved two known factors which could cause a potential response bias. These are: (1) all churches represented in the study are known to have had Church Study Courses during the last twelve months. This could mean the sample included a disproportionate number of churches favorable to the total program of the Convention. (2) Pastors responding in this survey were those who had previously responded to the request for names selected from their church membership lists. That they had responded to a previous request could be indicative of a probable response to other requests, thus making possible a disproportionate number of "responders" in the pastors sample. However, the potential effect of this factor is lessened when it is noted that a relatively high percentage of laymen (76.1%) also responded. The lay group would not be affected by the "previous response factor" in that their names had been furnished by pastors, not by the individuals involved. Thus, while some potential response bias is known to be present, it does not appear to be enough in evidence to contaminate survey results.

#### Presentation of Data

The analysis of data received is divided into three sections. Section I deals with an analysis of response. Response rates by group composition (pastor-layman), church size, respondent age, church location, and wave number are discussed under this heading. Section II contains statements and tables of a general summary nature reflecting the responses of the respondent group as a whole. Section III contains statements and tables reflecting a detailed analysis of the components of the groups involved, and their responses.

### I. ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE

#### Group Response

An analysis of group response indicates that the response rate of pastors was considerably higher than that for laymen. Of the persons contacted, 96.4 percent of the pastors responded, while 76.1 percent of the laymen responded. Overall response was 81.2 percent.

Of those responding, 31.4 percent were pastors, 65.5 percent were laymen, and 1.1 percent was attributed to "Others," which included some missionaries and retired pastors. The original sample composition was 25.0 percent pastors and 75.0 percent laymen.

### Size and Location of Church

An analysis of response by size of church indicated only slight variations in response rates for each category, with the exception of the smallest (less than 100 members). Approximately 57.5 percent of the sample drawn from this category responded (71.5 percent of the pastors and 52.4 percent of the laymen).

Further analysis of response according to size and location of church indicated that, while each category of size and location was represented by respondents, those from larger churches and those located in cities of 2,500 and more population tended to respond at a slightly higher rate than would normally be expected.

### Age

The reported ages of respondents were distributed throughout the various age levels of life. There was a tendency for laymen to be slightly older than pastors. Of those responding, 45.8 percent of the laymen were 45 years of age or older, while 34.1 percent of the pastors were 45 years of age or older.

### Sex

An analysis of the male-female distribution of respondents showed that 73.4 percent were male (43.2% male laymen and 30.2% pastors) and 26.6 percent were female. There were no significant differences between male and female responses to the items in the questionnaire.

### Wave Analysis

Respondents were grouped according to promptness in responding. Those responding to the first mailing of the questionnaire were classified as "wave one;" those responding to the second mailing were classified as "wave two."

Since pastors generally were more favorable toward a change of name and also tended to reply more promptly, wave one contained a greater percentage of respondents who favored a name change than did wave two. However, a comparison of pastor response by wave, and laymen response by wave, indicated no significant differences.

Respondents' preferences of possible Convention names indicated only slight variations between wave one and wave two. Wave one respondents offered more suggestions for new names than wave two respondents.

The wave response by church location indicated that pastors and laymen in larger communities responded somewhat more quickly than those in smaller communities.

## II. SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Question 1 Respondents were asked to indicate whether they favored, definitely favored, did not favor, or definitely did not favor a change in the name of the Southern Baptist Convention. Respondents were rather evenly divided on this question, with 48.0 percent favoring a change, 48.7 percent opposing, and 3.3 percent indicating no opinion.

	Percent		
Definitely favor	18.0%		48.0%
Favor	30.0		
Not favor	24.9		48.7%
Definitely not favor	23.8		
Not indicated	3.3		
	100.0%		
	(812)		

Question 2 Respondents were asked to show their preference if the name were ever changed. "The United States Baptist Convention" was preferred over other names suggested.

Name Preference	Percent of Respondents
The Baptist General Convention of the United States	15.0%
The United States Baptist Convention	36.1
The Evangelical and Missionary Baptist Convention	20.2
Other...(Suggestions will follow this table)	17.9
Not indicated	10.8
	100.0%
	(812)

Forty-five "Other" names were suggested in reply to this question. These names and frequencies of suggestions follow.

### Question 2 - Detail of "Other" category

"Other" Names	Frequency
The Missionary Baptist Convention	11
The Baptist Convention of the United States	5
Cooperative Baptist Convention	5
International Baptist Convention	4
The Baptist Convention	3
The Baptist General Convention	2
Cooperative Baptist of America (or United States)	

Question 2 (Continued)

<u>"Other" Names</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
The Evangelical Baptist Convention	2
North American Baptist Convention	2
The Southern Baptist Convention of the United States	2
The United States Missionary Baptist Convention	2
Universal Baptist Convention	2
American Baptist Convention	1
Continental Baptist Convention	1
Global (Baptist Convention)	1
Universal Baptist Convention of the United States of America	1
The Baptist Convention of North America	1
The Baptist Convention of the United States	1
The Baptist General Convention of North America	1
Convention Baptist	1
The United States Southern Baptist Convention	1
North American Baptist General Convention	1
North American General Convention of Baptists	1
The Baptist General Convention of America	1
United Baptist Convention	1
Missionary Baptist Convention, U.S.A.	1
The Christian Missionary Baptist Convention	1
Missionary Baptist of the United States	1
The Baptist General Convention of the World	1
A World Baptist Convention	1
The World Wide Baptist Convention of the U.S.A.	1
Baptist Convention, U.S.	1
Baptists	1
The Baptist General Association of U.S.	1
United Baptist Convention of North America	1
Cooperative Baptist General Convention	1
United Baptist Convention of the World or the UBCOW	1
The United Baptist Convention	1
Southern Baptist General Convention of the United States	1

Question 2 (Concluded)

<u>"Other" Names</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
General Baptist Convention	1
Union of the SBC and ABC and call it the USBC	1
The Southern Missionary Baptist Convention	1
North American Baptist Convention	1
The World-Wide Baptist Convention	
General Baptist Convention of the United States	1

Question 3 (a) Respondents were requested to indicate their church position (Pastor, lay person, or other area of service, missionary, minister of music, minister of education, etc.).

<u>Positions</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Pastor	31.4%
Lay person	65.5
Other	1.1
Not indicated	<u>2.0</u>
	100.0%
	(812)

(b) Respondents were requested to indicate the total membership of their church.

<u>Church Size</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>	<u>Percent of SBC Members</u>
Less than 100	16.5%	4.5%
100 - 199	26.7	13.2
200 - 299	11.8	13.1
300 - 499	13.4	17.8
500 - 749	9.4	13.8
750 - 999	5.9	9.2
1000 - 1499	6.7	11.7
1500 - 2499	5.3 }	<u>16.6</u>
2500 and over	2.8 }	100.0%
Not indicated	<u>1.5</u>	
	100.0%	
	(812)	



- (c) Respondents were requested to indicate the location of their church.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Open country	26.2%
Village	14.7
Town	15.6
City 2,500 - 24,999	22.7
City 25,000 - 99,999	8.6
City 100,000 or more	8.9
Not indicated	3.3
	100.0%
	(812)

- (d) Respondents were requested to indicate their age

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Under 25	3.7%
25 - 29	7.8
30 - 34	13.8
35 - 39	16.1
40 - 44	16.3
45 - 49	12.7
50 - 54	9.9
55 - 59	9.4
60 - 64	4.7
65 and over	5.2
Not indicated	0.4
	100.0%
	(812)

(e) Respondents were requested to indicate their residence by state. (States have been grouped into regions.)

<u>Region*</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
1. North. . . . .	3.4%
(Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana)	
2. Southeast. . . . .	60.8
(Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida)	
3. Middle . . . . .	9.6
(Illinois, Missouri)	
4. Southwest. . . . .	19.3
(Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona)	
5. North Central. . . . .	1.2
(North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming)	
6. West . . . . .	4.7
(Washington, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, California)	
Not indicated. . . . .	1.0
	100.0%
	(812)

Each respondent was also asked to indicate states in which he or she had lived for three or more years since their eighteenth birthday. There did not appear to be any evidence of unusual mobility.

\*Alaska and Hawaii were not included in the sample design and no responses were received from these states.

### III. DETAILED ANALYSIS

#### Opinions Concerning Name Change

An analysis of respondents favoring or not favoring a name change disclosed that a greater percentage of pastors (60.4%) favored a change than laymen (42.7%). The table below indicates the relationship between church position and opinions on the name change.

<u>Opinion</u>	<u>Pastor*</u>	<u>Laymen</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Not Indicated</u>
Definitely favor	26.3%	13.9%	44.5%	6.3%
Favor	34.1	28.8	11.1	18.8
Not favor	18.0	28.6	11.1	18.8
Definitely not favor	18.8	25.6	33.3	37.5
Not indicated	2.6	3.1	-	18.6
	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
	(255)	(532)	(9)	(16)

No significant difference as to ages of groups favoring and groups not favoring a name change was found.

An analysis of the relationship between respondents who favored or did not favor a name change and geographical area of residence indicated a significant difference among regions. More respondents in the northern, north central, southeastern, and western states favored a change than did not. Respondents living in the middle states were evenly divided as to favoring or not favoring a change in name. Respondents living in the southwestern states did not favor a change.

<u>Opinion</u>	<u>Area</u>						<u>Not Indicated</u>
	<u>North</u>	<u>South-east</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>South-west</u>	<u>North Central</u>	<u>West</u>	
Definitely favor	42.9%	19.0%	17.9%	10.2%	20.0%	21.0%	- %
Favor	21.4	32.6	30.8	22.9	40.0	31.6	14.3
Not favor	14.3	22.7	26.9	31.8	30.0	23.7	42.9
Definitely not favor	14.3	21.9	21.8	33.8	10.0	23.7	14.3
Not indicated	7.1	3.8	2.6	1.3	-	-	28.5
	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
	(28)	(494)	(78)	(157)	(10)	(38)	(7)

\*While the survey sample included 250 known pastors, 255 of the respondents indicated they served in a pastoral capacity. Therefore, this number (255) has been used to reflect pastor response in the analysis presented in this section.

However, there was considerable variation in favorability among states within given regions. Response by state is shown below, grouped by region.

<u>Region and States</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Not Favor</u>	<u>Not Indicated</u>	<u>Total</u>	
1. North					
Ohio	80.0%	10.0%	10.0%	100.0%	(10)
Indiana	83.3	16.7	-	100.0	( 6)
All others (less than five respondents per state)	66.6	25.0	8.4	100.0	(12)
2. Southeast					
Alabama	44.4%	48.2%	7.4%	100.0%	(54)
Florida	48.5	51.5	-	100.0	(33)
Georgia	50.7	47.8	1.5	100.0	(68)
Kentucky	52.0	46.0	2.0	100.0	(50)
Maryland	33.3	66.7	-	100.0	(12)
Mississippi	32.6	63.0	4.4	100.0	(46)
North Carolina	62.6	30.8	6.6	100.0	(91)
South Carolina	45.5	51.5	3.0	100.0	(33)
Tennessee	55.2	38.8	6.0	100.0	(66)
Virginia	61.0	39.0	-	100.0	(41)
3. Middle					
Illinois	42.1%	52.7%	5.2%	100.0%	(19)
Missouri	52.6	45.8	1.6	100.0	(59)
4. Southwest					
Arizona	- %	100.0%	- %	100.0%	( 3)
Arkansas	43.8	56.2	-	100.0	(16)
Louisiana	20.8	79.2	-	100.0	(24)
New Mexico	33.3	66.7	-	100.0	( 3)
Oklahoma	44.5	55.5	-	100.0	(27)
Texas	29.1	68.6	2.3	100.0	(84)
5. North Central					
Colorado	50.0%	50.0%	- %	100.0%	( 4)
Kansas	60.0	40.0	-	100.0	( 5)
All others (less than four respondents per state)	100.0			100.0	( 1)
6. West					
California	44.1%	65.9%	- %	100.0%	(25)
Oregon	83.3	16.7	-	100.0	( 6)
Washington	50.0	50.0	-	100.0	( 4)
All others (less than four respondents per state)	66.7	33.3		100.0	( 3)

An analysis of the relationship between church size and favoring or not favoring a name change indicated some slight differences among groups, but no clear pattern was established.

Opinion	Church Size									N. I.
	Less than 100	100-199	200-299	300-499	500-749	750-999	1000-1499	1500-2499	2000 or more	
Definitely favor	14.2%	15.2%	21.9%	18.3%	27.6%	14.6%	18.5%	18.6%	21.7%	16.7%
Favor	34.3	29.5	32.3	30.3	28.9	35.4	24.1	30.2	17.4	8.3
Not favor	23.1	26.3	22.9	28.4	18.4	29.2	27.8	20.9	26.1	25.0
Definitely not favor	26.1	26.7	19.8	21.1	21.1	18.8	20.4	27.9	34.8	16.7
Not indicated	2.3	2.3	3.1	1.9	4.0	2.0	9.2	2.4	-	33.3
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(134)	(217)	(96)	(109)	(76)	(48)	(54)	(43)	(23)	(12)

An observation of the relationship between church location and respondents favoring and not favoring a name change indicated slight differences among church location groups; but, again, no definite pattern of differences was established.

Opinion	Church Location						N. I.
	Open country	Village	Town	City 2,500-24,999	City 25,000-99,999	City 100,000 or more	
Definitely favor	11.7%	20.2%	14.2%	20.7%	17.1%	33.3%	18.5%
Favor	31.5	32.8	29.9	32.6	24.3	23.6	22.2
Not favor	24.4	26.9	31.5	21.7	31.4	15.3	18.5
Definitely not favor	30.0	17.6	22.8	20.7	25.7	23.6	22.2
Not indicated	2.4	2.5	1.6	4.3	1.5	4.2	18.6
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
			(127)	(184)	(70)		

Consideration was given to the possible relationship between regional mobility of respondents and favoring or not favoring a name change. In those instances where such a comparison was possible, there did not appear to be significant differences which could be attributed to a regional mobility factor.

Opinions Concerning Name Preference

The relationship between those favoring or not favoring the name change, and possible new Convention names indicated that respondents who definitely did not favor a change tended to offer more suggestions under the "Other" category. However, other differences did not appear to be significant.

No significant differences in choice of name could be attributed to age groupings of respondents.

An analysis of the relationship between expressed preferences concerning a possible new Convention name and geographical area of residence indicated a significant difference among regions. Respondents in the northern, southeastern, middle, and north central states preferred "The United States Baptist Convention. Respondents living in the western states preferred "Other" suggestion, while respondents in the southwestern states preferred "The Baptist General Convention of the United States."

<u>Name Preference</u>	<u>Area</u>						
	<u>North</u>	<u>South-east</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>South-west</u>	<u>North Central</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>N. I.</u>
Baptist General Convention of the United States	10.7%	9.7%	10.3%	33.1%	20.0%	23.7%	- %
The United States Baptist Convention	35.7	39.5	41.0	26.1	50.0		
The Evangelical and Missionary Baptist Convention	17.9	23.7	19.2	12.7	10.0	13.2	14.3
Other	21.4	16.4	20.5	19.1	-	31.6	
Not indicated	14.3	10.7	9.0	9.0	20.0	5.2	85.7
	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
	(28)	(494)	(78)	(157)	(10)	(38)	(7)

An analysis of the relationship between church position and possible new Convention names indicated that pastors and laymen preferred "The United States Baptist Convention." Second choice of laymen was "The Evangelical and Missionary Baptist Convention," while the second highest grouping of pastor preferences was included in the "Other" category.

<u>Name Preference</u>	<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Laymen</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Not Indicated</u>
The Baptist General Convention of the United States	17.3%	13.7%	22.2%	18.8%
The United States Baptist Convention	33.3	38.2	22.2	
The Evangelical and Missionary Baptist Convention	16.9	21.4	11.1	37.4
Other (specify)	25.9	15.6	22.2	-
Not indicated	6.6	12.1	22.3	25.0
	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
	(255)	(532)	(9)	(16)

An analysis of the relationship of church location and possible new Convention names indicated that each church location group favored "The United States Baptist Convention." Some differences in the strengths of the selection occurred.

#### Church Location

<u>Name Preference</u>	<u>Open country</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>City 2,500-24,999</u>	<u>City 25,000-99,999</u>	<u>City 100,000 or more</u>	<u>N. I.</u>
The Baptist Convention of the United States	9.9%	8.4%	20.5%	16.8%	17.1%	26.4%	11.1%
The United States Baptist Convention	33.3	44.5	37.8	32.6	38.6	37.5	25.9
The Evangelical and Missionary Baptist Convention	26.3	22.7	17.3	17.9	20.0	9.7	18.5
Other (specify)	15.0	18.5	12.6	23.4	18.6	20.8	14.8
Not indicated	15.5	5.9	11.8	9.3	5.7	5.6	29.7
	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
	(213)	(119)	(127)	(184)	(70)	(72)	(27)

In studying the relationship between church size groups and possible new Convention names, it was indicated that the best liked name among those suggested was "The United States Baptist Convention." Some differences of strength on this preference occurred among age groups; however, no patterns were established.

#### Church Size

<u>Name Preference</u>	<u>Less than 100</u>	<u>100-199</u>	<u>200-299</u>	<u>300-499</u>	<u>500-749</u>	<u>750-999</u>	<u>1000-1499</u>	<u>1500-2499</u>	<u>2000 or more</u>	<u>N. I.</u>
The Baptist Convention of the United States	14.2%	12.4%	13.5%	16.5%	18.4%	12.5%	24.1%	11.6%	21.7%	16.7%
The United States Baptist Convention	36.6	28.6	41.7	40.4	38.2	43.8	33.3	46.5	39.1	8.3
The Evangelical and Missionary Baptist Convention	17.9	28.6	19.8	17.4	10.5	16.7	27.8	16.3	4.3	8.3
Other (specify)	17.2	17.5	14.6	19.3	23.7	18.8	14.8	16.3	26.1	8.3
Not indicated	14.1	12.9	10.4	6.4	9.2	8.2	-	9.3	8.8	58.4
	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
	(134)	(217)	(96)	(109)	(76)	(48)	(54)	(43)	(23)	(12)

Consideration was given to the possible relationship between regional mobility of respondents and preference of a new Convention name. In those instances where such a comparison was possible, there did not appear to be significant differences which could be attributed to a regional mobility factor.

**APPENDIX**





460 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY  
PORTER ROUTH, *Executive Secretary*

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37219

March 30, 1966

## Opinion Survey Set On SBC Name Change

NASHVILLE (BP)—An attitude and opinion survey among a group of Southern Baptists has been authorized here in an effort to determine sentiment toward the possibility of changing the name of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Executive Committee of the convention authorized the quick opinion poll aimed for completion before the Southern Baptist Convention meets May 24-27 in Detroit, Mich.

A motion adopted at the convention meeting last June in Dallas requested the Executive Committee to study the possibility of changing the denomination's name.

The opinion and attitude study would be one of the first major steps in the range study, which probably will be completed before the May meeting.

Opinions have already been gathered from two different surveys on the name change. The

THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 1966

connection with proposed Southern Baptist plans for the decades of the 1970s of "70 Onward" committee.

In a survey of 715 delegates, about 77 per cent of those surveyed by the Executive Committee favor exploring the possibility of changing the name of our denomination.

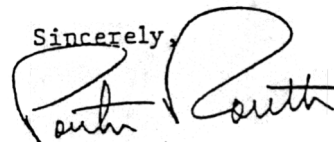
In a letter to the laymen, the Executive Committee has requested that you indicate your opinion on this matter.

March 10, 1966 issue  
Tennessee State Paper,  
Baptist and Reflector

Dear Friend:

We need your help. The Southern Baptist Convention has asked the Executive Committee to study the matter of a change in name for the Southern Baptist Convention. Please take 3 minutes and answer the questions on the attached sheet. Your opinion is very important. Please use the return envelope and mail today.

Sincerely,

  
Porter Routh



460 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY  
PORTER ROUTH, *Executive Secretary*

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37219

April 15, 1966

### Opinion Survey Set On SBC Name Change

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The opinion and attitude study would be one of the first major steps in the range study, which probably will be completed before the May meeting.

Opinions have already been gathered in two different surveys concerning the name change. The

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 1966

connection with proposed Southern Baptist plans for the decades of the 1970s of "70 Onward" committee.

In a survey of 715 delegates, about 77 per cent of those surveyed favored the Executive Committee.

The survey also explored the possibility of changing the name of our denomination.

The name is four letters long.

In a letter to the

laymen

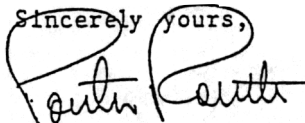
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March 10, 1966 issue  
Tennessee State Paper  
Baptist and Reflector

Dear Friend:

Time for the completion of this survey is just ahead. Although we have not yet received a questionnaire from you, we feel that you may wish to participate in this study. Another questionnaire and self addressed envelope have been enclosed for your convenience. Please mail your reply before April 25.

If you have already mailed in the earlier questionnaire we appreciate your help.

Sincerely yours,  
  
Porter Routh

Opinion Survey  
on  
Southern Baptist Convention Name Change

1. I would 

}	<input type="checkbox"/> definitely favor
	<input type="checkbox"/> favor
	<input type="checkbox"/> not favor
	<input type="checkbox"/> definitely not favor

 a change in the name of the Southern Baptist Convention in the near future.

[Although your answer to the above question may or may not indicate favoring a name change we need your opinion on the following question.]

2. If the name were ever changed, I would prefer:

- The Baptist General Convention of the United States
- The United States Baptist Convention
- The Evangelical and Missionary Baptist Convention
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. a. I am a  pastor  other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 lay person

- b. Total membership of my church is (estimate if necessary):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 100 | <input type="checkbox"/> 750 - 999     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 100 - 199     | <input type="checkbox"/> 1,000 - 1,499 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 200 - 299     | <input type="checkbox"/> 1,500 - 2,499 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 300 - 499     | <input type="checkbox"/> 2,500 or over |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 500 - 749     |  |

- c. My church is located in:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open country        | <input type="checkbox"/> City (2,500 - 24,999)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Village (under 500) | <input type="checkbox"/> City (25,000 - 99,999) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town (500 - 2,499)  | <input type="checkbox"/> City (100,000 or more) |

- d. My age: \_\_\_\_\_ (years)

- e. My residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
(state)

- f. In which state(s) have you lived for three or more years since you were 18 years old? Please list \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ITEM 100, PAGE 65, CONVENTION ANNUAL FOR 1975:

100. Daley then reported for the committee on the assignment to consider a possible name change for the Convention. He reported that a number of surveys had been made with the assistance of the Research Services Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, a survey through Baptist state papers, and other surveys of special groups all of which indicated an overwhelming sentiment of opposition to a change of name. He concluded the report with the following statement: "The Committee of Seven understood its assignment by the Convention was to study the existing sentiment on a name change and report its findings to the Convention without specific instructions to make a recommendation. However, in light of its findings it is the committee's considered judgment that the name of the Southern Baptist Convention should not be changed at this time." Daley then moved adoption of the report. Discussion followed by Donald J. Brown (Md.), who moved a substitute motion as follows: "That we do not vote this year on whether or not to change the name of our denomination, but that for one year we consider the name 'Cooperative Baptist Churches' alongside our present name and that at our Convention next year the messengers will vote their choice." Further discussion followed by J. D. Grey (La.) and Brown. The substitute motion lost. The motion to adopt the report passed.

## COMPLETE REPORT ON CONVENTION NAME CHANGE STUDY

During the June, 1974, meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas, Texas, . . . W. A. Criswell (Texas) moved that the president of the Convention appoint a committee of seven members to study the possibility of changing the name of the Convention with instructions that the committee report to the Convention next year the results of the study. The motion was referred for later consideration." Subsequently, Porter Routh offered a substitute motion that the study suggested be approved and that the study be made by a seven-member committee already approved to study and evaluate the Executive Committee. After some discussion, the substitute motion passed.

The study committee has sought to learn Convention name change opinion from all levels and areas of Southern Baptist life. Some of the committee's efforts included: (1) An invitation through Baptist Press to all Southern Baptists to express their views. (2) Participation with the September, 1974, Public Relation Advisory Conference in a name change study. (3) Study of past name change studies, especially the 1966 opinion survey conducted by the Research Services Department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. (4) A mass opinion poll through ballots placed in all state Baptist papers. (5) A professional opinion survey conducted by the Research Services Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

The response to these efforts was quite heavy and decisive. The committee feels it succeeded in obtaining widespread Baptist opinion on the name change possibility for the Southern Baptist Convention. Responses received by committee members from individuals and from churches in 30 states showed 16 percent in favor of a name change and 84 percent against. The surveys made by state Baptist papers also resulted in an overwhelming rejection of a name change for Southern Baptists. The overall average percentages from 32 state Baptist paper surveys were 35 percent favoring and 65 percent opposing a name change. The state paper surveys revealed that sentiment for a name change was dominant only in some newer areas of Southern Baptist work. In other newer areas for Southern Baptists a majority opposed a name change. State groups with a majority favoring a name change were D. C., Hawaii, Kansas, New England, Michigan, New York-New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania-South Jersey, and West Virginia. All the older state groups in the traditional area of Southern Baptists, along with the Southern Baptist groups in Alaska, Arizona-Nevada, California, Colorado, Indiana, New Mexico, and Ohio rejected the name change idea. Percentages against a name change in the older and larger state groups ran from two to one to nine to one.

The professional survey conducted by the Research Services Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board also revealed that a decisive majority of Southern Baptists opposed any change in the Convention name. The combined percentages of responses to the professional survey were approximately one-fourth for and three-fourths against a name change. Among those included in this survey were pastors, deacon chairmen, Sunday School directors, and church clerks. Of these groups, pastors were the most favorable and church clerks were least favorable to a name change.

The Committee of Seven reached its decision on the name change issue after careful study of all known reasons for and against a name change. Some valid reasons exist for a name change, especially in pioneer areas for Southern Baptists. However, overwhelming reasons for retaining the name were convincing to the committee. Some of these reasons are: (1) All the opinion polls revealed that the vast majority of Southern Baptists are strongly against any name change. (2) The name, Southern Baptists, has become identified and associated with certain doctrinal positions, traditions, and other emphases. A name change would be interpreted by some as abandoning this heritage and these invaluable traits. (3) The danger and tragedy of other groups claiming the name, "Southern Baptists," and capitalizing upon it once we dropped it for another name. Such a development, in the opinion of the committee, would be very confusing to many who identify themselves now as "Southern Baptists." (4) The long and arduous task of communicating a name change and reasons for its adoption to our own constituents, to other religious groups, and to the news media. However, neither this nor other reasons listed would have prevented a recommendation for a change in name if the committee members had strong convictions the name should be changed. (5) The difficulties and problems of inserting a new name into the charters and all the other documents of the Southern Baptist Convention and its agencies and eventually into the documents of state conventions and their agencies, of district associations, and local churches. Also the legal ramifications and implications of a Convention name change in respect to wills, trusts, and deeds in which the Southern Baptist Convention is the beneficiary. (6) The absence of a consensus on a suitable new name. In letters to the committee from Baptists in thirty states, fifty-two different names were suggested with no name appearing as a popular choice.

In the state Baptist paper polls the most popular names were: (1) Cooperative Baptist Convention. This name was in the top five names submitted by twenty states; (2) Continental Baptist Convention—in the top five names submitted by 19 states; (3) United Baptist Convention—in the top five names submitted by 18 states; (4) World Baptist Convention—in the top five names submitted by 17 states; (5) Baptist Convention of America—in the top five names submitted by 15 states.

The Committee of Seven understood its assignment by the Convention was to study the existing sentiment on a name change and report its findings to the Convention without specific instructions to make a recommendation. However, in light of its findings, it is the committee's considered judgment that the name of the Southern Baptist Convention should not be changed at this time.

C. R. Daley, *Chairman*  
Harold C. Bennett  
Olin T. Binkley  
W. A. Criswell

Dan C. Grant  
Alma Hunt  
H. H. Hobbs

# March 1975 State Paper Survey

PRELIMINARY REPORT  
SOUTHERN BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD

## OPINION SURVEY

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION NAME CHANGE

### Totals

Favor.....one-fourth

Do not favor.....three-fourths

### Percentage of Responses

50%

(Tabulation incomplete)

---

TABULATION OF FIRST FIVE NAMES  
SUBMITTED BY THIRTY-ONE STATES

1. Cooperative Baptist Convention.....	Submitted by 20 states		
2. Continental Baptist Convention.....	"	" 19	"
3. United Baptist Convention.....	"	" 18	"
4. World Baptist Convention.....		" 17	"
5. Baptist Convention of America.....	"	" 15	"

STATE BAPTIST PAPER BALLOTS  
PERCENTAGES BY STATES

	<u>FOR</u>	<u>AGAINST</u>
Alabama	32%	68%
Alaska	40%	60%
Arizona-Nevada	18%	82%
Arkansas	14%	86%
California	22%	78%
Colorado	28%	72%
D. C.	55%	45%
Florida	12%	88%
Georgia	23%	77%
Hawaii	76%	24%
Illinois	27%	73%
Indiana	29%	71%
Kansas	58%	42%
Kentucky	25%	75%
Louisiana	22%	78%
Maryland	37%	63%
(New England)	60%	40%
Michigan	67%	33%
Mississippi	5%	95%
Missouri	14%	86%
New York-New Jersey	85%	15%
New Mexico	34%	66%
North Carolina	29%	71%
Ohio	23%	77%
Oklahoma	34%	66%
Oregon	64%	36%
Pennsylvania-South Jersey	67.5%	32.5%
South Carolina	13%	87%
Tennessee	14%	86%
Texas	25%	75%
Utah	27%	73%
Virginia	22%	78%
West Virginia	56%	44%
Average Percentage	35%	65%



SECTION OF LETTERS ON NAME CHANGE  
March 26, 1975

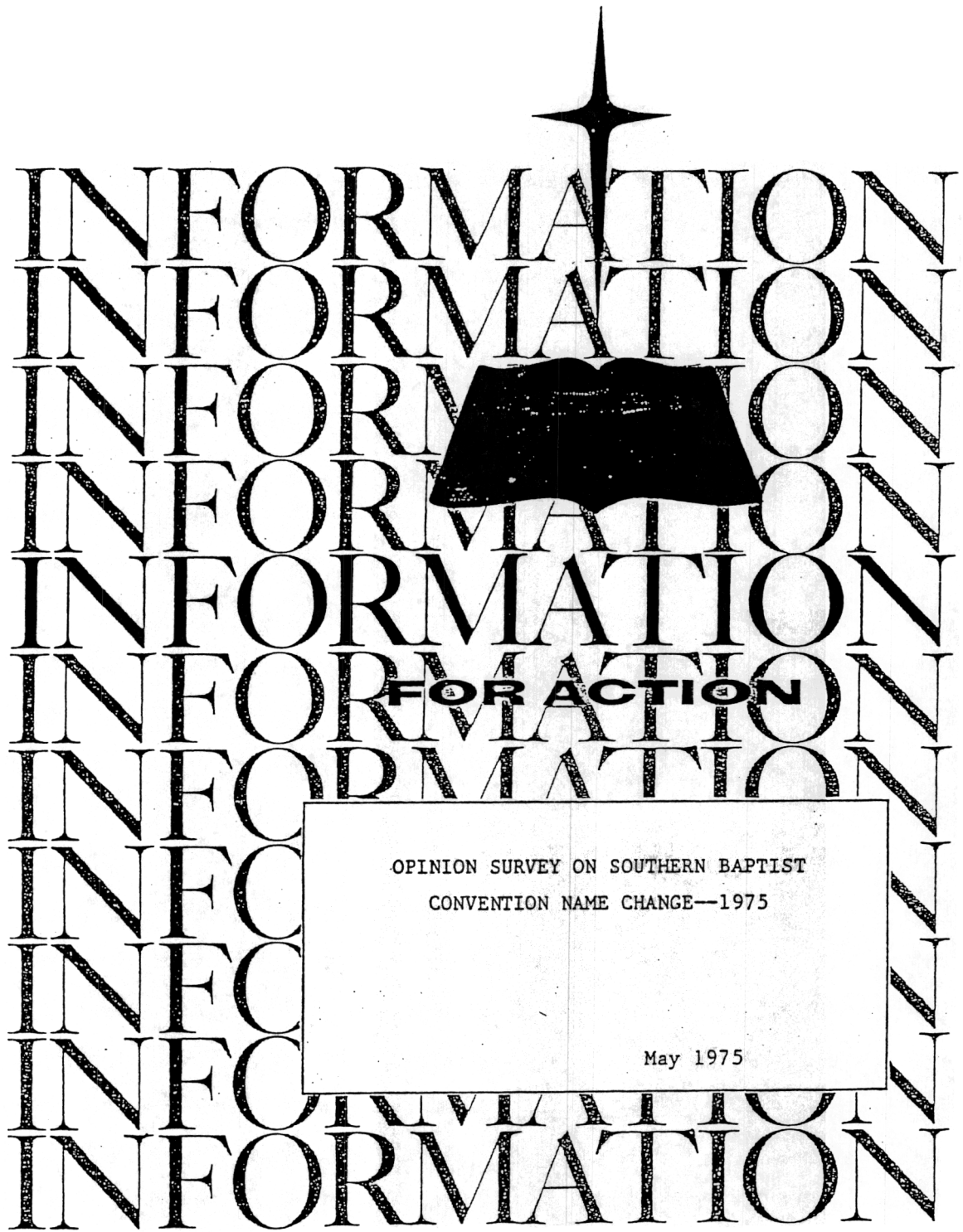
1. Favor a change..... 68 (16%)
2. Oppose a change.....358 (84%)
3. Table..... 3

4. STATES heard from: (30)

Alabama	Kansas	New York
Arizona	Kentucky	Ohio
Arkansas	Louisiana	Oklahoma
California	Maryland	Pennsylvania
Colorado	Michigan	Rhode Island
D.C.	Mississippi	South Carolina
Florida	Missouri	Tennessee
Georgia	North Carolina	Texas
Indiana	North Dakota	Virginia
Iowa	New Mexico	Wisconsin

5. NAMES SUGGESTED:

Baptists  
Baptists, U.S.A.  
Baptist Convention in America  
Baptist Convention of America (8)  
Baptist Convention of North America  
Baptist Convention, USA  
Baptist Convention of the U.S.A.  
Baptist Convention of the United States (4)  
Baptist Convention of the United States of America  
Baptist Cooperative Convention  
Baptist General Assembly, U.S.A.  
Baptist General Convention  
Baptist General Convention, U.S.A.  
Baptist General Convention of America (3)  
Baptist International  
Baptist International Convention  
Baptist Union of America (2)  
Baptist Union of the United States of America  
Christian Baptist Association  
Continental Baptist Convention (Missionary)  
Continental Convention of Baptists  
Cooperative Baptist  
Cooperative Baptist Convention (9)  
Evangelical Baptist Convention in America  
Evangelical Baptist Convention, U.S.A.  
Evangelical United Baptist Convention of America  
Evangelistic Baptist Convention  
Freedom Baptist Convention  
International Baptist  
International Baptist Convention (5)  
Missionary Baptist Convention (4)  
Nationwide Missionary Baptist Convention  
Nationwide Baptist Convention  
New Baptist Convention  
New South Baptist Convention  
North American Baptist Convention  
North, East, West — South Baptist Convention  
Northern Eastern Western Southern Baptist Convention (Abbre: NEWS)  
Spreading Baptist Convention  
The Baptist Convention  
The National Convention of Independent Baptist Churches  
Union of Baptists in America  
United Baptist Churches of Christ  
United Baptist Convention (2)  
United Baptist Convention of America  
United States Baptist Convention (7)  
United States of America Baptist Convention  
Universal Baptists (2)  
World Baptists Convention (2)  
World-wide Baptists (4)  
World-wide Baptist Convention  
World-wide Southern Baptists



OPINION SURVEY ON SOUTHERN BAPTIST  
CONVENTION NAME CHANGE—1975

May 1975

OPINION SURVEY ON SOUTHERN BAPTIST  
CONVENTION NAME CHANGE—1975

Ken Hayes  
Project Analyst

RSD-75-175

May 1975

Research Services Department  
Martin B. Bradley, Manager  
Charles A. Sullivant, Research Supervisor  
Church Services and Materials Division  
The Sunday School Board of the  
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Nashville, Tennessee 37234

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## I. INTRODUCTION

During the June, 1974, meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas, Texas, ". . . W. A. Criswell (Texas) moved that the president of the Convention appoint a committee of seven members to study the possibility of changing the name of the Convention with instructions that the committee report to the Convention next year the results of the study. The motion was referred for later consideration."<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, Porter Routh offered a substitute motion that the study suggested be approved and that the study be made by a seven member committee already approved to study and evaluate the Executive Committee. After some discussion, the substitute motion passed.<sup>2</sup>

In July, Jaroy Weber, newly elected president of the SBC, appointed the following members to the committee: C. R. Daley (Chairman), Herschel H. Hobbs, Harold Bennett, Olin T. Binkley, Daniel R. Grant, Miss Alma Hunt, and W. A. Criswell.

In October, C. R. Daley approached the Research Services Department with the request that a survey of Southern Baptists relative to a name change be conducted. And, the request was made that the survey be similar to one conducted by the Research Services Department in 1966 on the same subject. The request for a survey was approved, and the results of the latest survey make up the report which follows.

## II. METHODOLOGY

A. Sample: A quota sample (representative of the SBC by church size and state convention) of 959 persons was asked to participate in the survey. Included in the sample were pastors, church clerks, Sunday School directors, WMU directors, and chairmen of deacons.

The sample was designed to secure 200 names for each leadership position to be surveyed, but variations in the sampling process and vacancies in the leadership positions in the local churches somewhat altered the original design.

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<sup>1</sup>Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1974, p. 61, item 31.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 68, item 84.

- B. Data Collection: The data was collected by means of a mail survey. The initial mailing featured a cover letter signed by C. R. Daley, chairman of the committee appointed to study a name change. A subsequent follow-up used a cover letter signed by Herschel H. Hobbs, a member of the committee.
- C. Response: Of the 959 persons asked to participate in the survey, 487 (50.8%) returned usable replies. The response, by leadership position is listed below.

<u>Leadership Position</u>	<u>Number Asked To Participate</u>	<u>Number of Usable Replies</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>
Pastor	210	122	58.1%
Church Clerk	213	115	54.0%
Sunday School Director	206	92	44.7%
WMU Director	135	71	52.6%
Chairman of Deacons	<u>195</u>	<u>87</u>	44.6%
Totals	959	487	50.8%

The response to the 1975 survey was not as good as the response to the 1966 survey (81.2%), and it is believed that one of the reasons may center around the number of name change surveys conducted by Baptist state papers and the subsequent publicity given to the results. For example, while we were in the field gathering information, the Baptist Standard, (February 12, 1975 issue) Texas state paper, ran an article entitled "Texans Oppose SBC Name Change, 3-1." Further, in North Carolina, the Biblical Recorder (March 29, 1975 issue) printed an article entitled "Poll Vetoes Name Change," in which this sentence appeared, "To our knowledge, not a single state has yet had a majority of people favoring a name change, with some states running as high as 10 to 1 or 20 to 1 against it." This sort of publicity, we feel, made it difficult for us to convince some potential respondents there was any reason for them to return our inquiry.

- D. Nonrespondent Study: At the close of the mail phase of the survey an attempt was made to conduct a telephone interview with at least fifty of those in the sample who had not responded to the mail

inquiries. This attempt resulted in 46 completed telephone interviews with individuals who did not return questionnaires.

The purpose of this telephone survey was to determine if those who did not respond to mail inquiries held opinions about a name change that differed from those who responded by mail. And, as the table below indicates, the telephone interviews confirmed the direction of the mail survey findings. However, those interviewed by telephone appeared to be significantly less "definite" in their unfavorable attitude toward a name change in the near future than did mail respondents.

<u>Opinions Concerning Name Change</u>	<u>Wave 1 (Those Who Answered First Mail Inquiry)</u>	<u>Wave 2 (Those Who Answered Second Mail Inquiry)</u>	<u>Wave 3 (Telephone Interviews)</u>
Definitely Favor	6.4%	5.0%	- %
Favor	20.2	16.3	17.4
Not Favor	34.6	36.9	67.4
Definitely Not Favor	38.5	40.0	8.7
Not Indicated	<u>0.3</u>	<u>1.8</u>	<u>6.5</u>
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(327)	(160)	(46)

### III. Conclusion and Recommendation

#### A. Conclusion:

The overwhelming majority (74.3%) of Southern Baptists do not favor a change in the name of the Southern Baptist Convention in the near future. This finding is significant when compared with a 'similar survey made in 1966 at which time only 48.7 percent did not favor a change in name.

#### B. Recommendation:

It is recommended that no attempt be made at this time to change the name of the Convention.

IV. HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

1. By a margin of 3 to 1 Southern Baptists do not want the name of the Convention changed.
2. Respondents voluntarily submitted 75 different names that might be used if the name of the Convention were ever changed.
3. The leadership group most favorable (35.3%) to a name change was pastors; the group least favorable (15.2%) to a name change was church clerks.
4. Two thirds (65.5%) of the respondents were males.
5. Over 70 percent (71.9%) of the respondents were 40 years of age or older.
6. Eighteen states were represented in the survey response.
7. The survey response is, within acceptable limits, representative of the SBC in terms of church size categories and church locations.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they definitely favored, favored, did not favor, or definitely did not favor a change in the name of the Southern Baptist Convention in the near future. They indicated the following:

	<u>Percent</u>		
Definitely favor . . . . .	6.0%	}	24.9%
Favor. . . . .	18.9		
Not favor . . . . .	35.3	}	74.3%
Definitely not favor . . . . .	39.0		
Not indicated. . . . .	0.8		
Total . . . . .	100.0%		
	(487)		



2. Respondents were asked to indicate (write-in) their preference, if the name of the Convention were ever changed. The following volunteer responses were offered:

<u>NAME PREFERENCE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>
● United Baptist Convention	15
● Missionary Baptist Convention	13
● American Baptist Convention	6
● Continental Baptist Convention	6
● International Baptist Convention	6
● National Baptist Convention	5
● World Baptist Convention	5
● Baptist Convention	4
● Baptist Convention of U.S.A.	4
● Cooperative Baptist Convention	4
● United States Baptist	4
● The Baptist Convention of America	3
● The Baptist Convention	3
● World Wide Baptist Convention	3
● North American Baptist Convention	3
● General Baptist Convention	2
● Christian Baptist Convention	2
● Baptist General Convention	2
● U.S.A. Baptist	2
● Baptists of the World	2
● Southern Baptist Association	2
● Missionary (World Wide)	
● Southern Success Convention	1
● Baptists for Christ	1
● Renewed World Baptist Convention	1
● Witness Baptist Convention	1
● Christ's Baptist Assembly	1
● National Association of Baptists	1
● New Birth Baptists	1
● Baptists United	1
● Gospel Baptist Convention	1
● Convention Baptists of America	

• John the Baptists	1
• Interstate Baptists	1
• Southern Baptist World Convention	1
• Freedom Baptists	1
• The Bible Baptist Convention	1
• U.S. Baptists United	1
• National Missionary Baptist Convention	
• First Baptist Convention	1
• Cooperative Fellowship of Baptists in America	1
• U.S. Missionary Baptist Convention	1
• Baptist	1
• International Evangelical Baptist Convention	1
• Baptist Convention of North America	1
• Evangelistic Baptist Convention	1
• National-American	1
• Globe Baptist Convention	1
• The Church Convention	1
• Universal Baptist Fellowship	1
• Baptists of the United States	1
• Southern Baptist Soul Winners	1
• Progressive Baptist Convention	1
• Baptist Communication Convention	1
• Convention of Baptists	1
• Southern Baptist Christian Convention	1
• World Wide Southern Baptist	1
• Southern Baptist Churchry	1
• Southern Baptist Ministries Convention	1
• International Christian Convention	1
• Baptist Associaters Conferences	1
• The True Missionary Baptist Convention	1
• Southern Missionary Baptist	1
• World Missionary Baptist Examiner	1
• Agappe (sic)	1
• Baptists of America	1
• Baptist Congress	1
• Baptist Church of God	1
• Southern Baptist Christian Association	1

- American Baptist Association 1
- Independent Cooperative Baptists .1
- Universal Baptist Convention 1
- Baptist Christian Convention 1
- All American Baptist Convention 1
- Bible Believing Baptist Convention

3. Are you:

Pastor . . . . .	25.0%
Church Clerk . . . . .	24.2
Sunday School Director . . .	19.1
WMU Director . . . . .	13.8
Chairman of Deacons. . . . .	<u>17.9</u>
Total. . . . .	100.0%
	(487)

4. Are you:

Male . . . . .	65.5%
Female . . . . .	<u>34.5</u>
Total. . . . .	100.0%
	(487)

5. Your age:

Under 18 . . . . .	0.2%
18-24 . . . . .	2.7
25-29 . . . . .	7.6
30-39 . . . . .	17.0
40-49 . . . . .	28.7
50-59 . . . . .	23.8
60-64 . . . . .	9.7
65 and over. . . . .	9.7
Not indicated . . . . .	<u>0.6</u>
Total. . . . .	100.0%
	(487)

6. The last year of school completed:

<u>Years</u>	
1-6 . . . . .	1.6%
7-9 . . . . .	7.4
10-11 . . . . .	9.9
12 . . . . .	30.0
13 . . . . .	4.9
14-15 . . . . .	8.8
16 . . . . .	12.3
17 . . . . .	4.1
18-19 . . . . .	7.7
20 or more . . . . .	7.6
Not indicated . . . . .	<u>6.2</u>
Total . . . . .	100.0% (487)

Your state of residence:

Alabama . . . . .	8.8%
Arkansas . . . . .	3.5
California . . . . .	3.7
Florida . . . . .	5.1
Georgia . . . . .	9.7
Illinois . . . . .	1.8
Kentucky . . . . .	5.1
Louisiana . . . . .	3.3
Mississippi . . . . .	6.6
Missouri . . . . .	6.2
North Carolina . . . . .	10.7
Ohio . . . . .	0.8
Oklahoma . . . . .	5.8
South Carolina . . . . .	3.9
Tennessee . . . . .	5.7
Texas . . . . .	12.7
Virginia . . . . .	6.4
West Virginia . . . . .	<u>0.2</u>
Total . . . . .	100.0% (487)

Total membership of your church:

1-99 . . . . .	13.8%
100-149 . . . . .	13.6
150-199 . . . . .	10.3
200-299 . . . . .	16.8
300-499 . . . . .	22.0
500-749 . . . . .	9.4
750-999 . . . . .	7.2
1,000-1,499 . . . . .	5.9
1,500-1,999 . . . . .	0.6
2,000-up . . . . .	<u>0.4</u>
Total . . . . .	100.0% (487)

9. Location of your church:

Open Country . . . . .	39.2%
Village . . . . .	15.2
Town . . . . .	11.1
Small City . . . . .	8.8
Medium City	
Downtown. . . . .	2.5
Neighborhood. . . . .	5.9
Suburbs . . . . .	3.3
Large City	
Downtown. . . . .	0.4
Neighborhood. . . . .	7.6
Suburbs . . . . .	<u>6.0</u>
Total. . . . .	100.0% (487)

VI. ANALYSIS OF RELATIONSHIPS

Opinions Concerning Name Change

An analysis of the response indicates that pastors (35.3%) are more favorable toward a name change than are any of the other leadership positions surveyed. The table below, however, reveals that for each leadership position surveyed, the majority oppose a name change in the near future.

<u>Opinions</u>	<u>Church Position</u>				
	<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Church Clerk</u>	<u>Sunday School Director</u>	<u>WMU Director</u>	<u>Chairman of the Deacons</u>
Definitely Favor	6.6%	4.2%	5.4%	9.0%	5.7%
Favor	28.7	11.0	21.5	19.4	12.6
Not Favor	32.0	41.6	38.7	31.3	31.0
Definitely Not Favor	32.7	40.7	34.4	40.3	49.6
Not Indicated	-	2.5			1.1
Totals	100.0% (122)	100.0% (118)	100.0% (93)	100.0% (67)	100.0% (87)

The table below reveals that while some differences do exist in relationships of the respondents' attitudes toward a name change and their geographical areas of residence, the majority in each area oppose a name change. However, if there had been more respondents from the north and the west the results from those areas might have been different. The small number of respondents from these two areas weakens the data at this point. However, it must be remembered that SBC work in these areas is still small, and if more response had been included from these areas, the direction of the overall findings would not have been greatly altered.

<u>Opinions</u>	<u>Area</u>				
	<u>North</u>	<u>Southeast</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>Southwest</u>	<u>West</u>
Definitely Favor	- %	6.0%	5.1%	7.3%	- %
Favor	40.0	16.6	17.9	22.0	33.4
Not Favor	20.0	36.4	46.2	30.1	33.3
Definitely Not Favor	40.0	40.3	30.8	39.0	33.3
Not Indicated	-	0.7	-	1.6	-
Totals	100.0% (5)	100.0% (302)	100.0% (39)	100.0% (123)	100.0% (18)

When the response was analyzed by church size some slight differences among respondents from various church sizes were revealed, but the direction of the findings all point the same way--do not change the name of the Convention in the near future.

<u>Opinions</u>	Church Size									
	<u>1-99</u>	<u>100-149</u>	<u>150-199</u>	<u>200-299</u>	<u>300-499</u>	<u>500-749</u>	<u>750-999</u>	<u>1,000-1,499</u>	<u>1,500-1,999</u>	<u>2,000-up</u>
Definitely Favor	7.5%	1.5%	4.0%	4.9%	3.7%	2.2%	14.3%	20.7%	33.3%	- %
Favor	11.9	19.7	18.0	20.7	19.6	23.9	22.9	17.2	-	-
Not Favor	35.8	39.4	38.0	34.1	33.6	30.4	34.2	34.6	66.7	50.0
Definitely Not Favor	44.8	39.4	40.0	40.3	42.2	41.3	25.7	24.1	-	50.0
Not Indicated	-	-	-	-	0.9	2.2	2.9	3.4	-	-
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(67)	(66)		(82)	(107)	(46)	(35)	(29)	(3)	(2)

The relationship between church location and attitude toward changing the name of the Convention reveals a more favorable attitude toward change. Approximately 40 percent of the respondents from churches located in small cities and medium cities favor, to some degree, a change in the name of the Convention. As a whole, only 25 percent of the respondents in the survey favor a change.

Opinion	Church Location									
	Open Country	Village	Town	Small City 2,500- 9,999	Medium City (10,000-49,999)			Large City (50,000 or more)		
					Downtown	Neighborhood	Suburb	Downtown	Neighborhood	Suburb
Definitely Favor	4.2%	5.4%	3.7%	7.0%	25.0%	10.3%	18.8%	- %	5.4%	3.4%
Favor	14.7	23.0	18.5	30.2	16.7	34.5	18.8	50.0	16.2	6.9
Not Favor	37.2	29.7	38.9	34.9	33.3	20.7	31.1	50.0	32.4	51.8
Definitely Not Favor	43.4	41.9	35.2	27.9	25.0	34.5	25.0	-	46.0	37.9
Not Indicated	0.5	-	3.7	-	-	-	6.3	-	-	-
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(191)	(74)	(54)	(43)	(12)	(29)	(16)	(2)	(37)	(29)



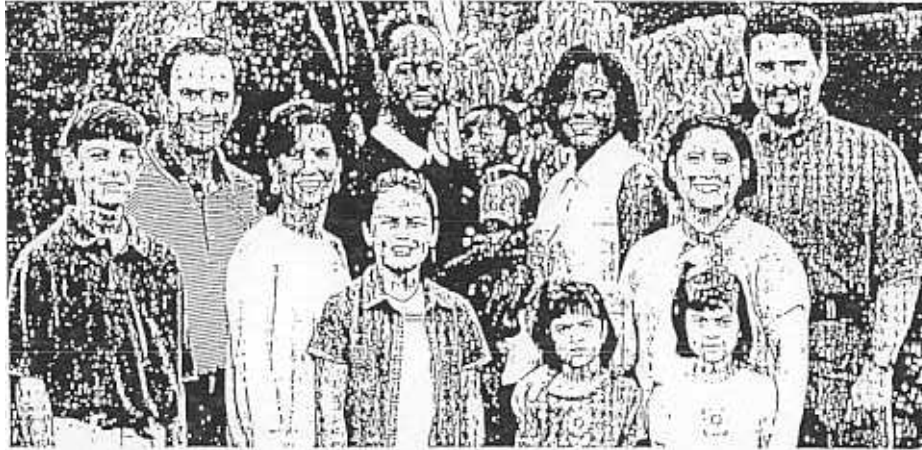
An analysis of the data by states reveals the only incidence in the survey when the majority of a designated group favored a name change. Five of the nine respondents from Illinois favor a name change. And, one half of the respondents from Ohio and Oklahoma favor a change.

Opinion

<u>States</u>	<u>Definitely Favor</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Not Favor</u>	<u>Definitely Not Favor</u>	<u>Not Indicated</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Alabama	2.3%	11.6%	32.6%	53.5%	- %	100.0% (43)
Arkansas	-	29.4	41.2	29.4		100.0% (17)
California	-	33.3	33.3	33.4		100.0% (18)
Florida	4.0	20.0	28.0	48.0		100.0% (25)
Georgia	8.5	23.4	36.2	31.9		100.0% (47)
Illinois	11.1	44.5	22.2	22.2		100.0% (9)
Kentucky		16.0	36.0	48.0		100.0% (25)
Louisiana	-	18.8	25.0	56.2		100.0% (16)
Mississippi	-	12.5	37.5	50.0		100.0% (32)
Missouri	3.3	10.0	53.4	33.3		100.0% (30)
North Carolina	11.5	21.2	40.4	25.0	1.9	100.0% (52)
Ohio		50.0	25.0	25.0	-	100.0% (8)
Oklahoma	21.4	28.6	28.6	21.4		100.0% (28)
South Carolina	5.3	15.8	31.6	47.3		100.0% (19)
Tennessee	10.7	3.6	46.4	39.3		100.0% (28)
Texas	4.8	17.8	29.0	45.2	3.2	100.0% (62)
Virginia	6.5	19.3	35.5	35.5	3.2	100.0% (31)
West Virginia	-		-	100.0		100.0% (1)

When respondent opinion of a name change is related to mobility, there is evidence that respondents who have lived in two or more states for three years or more since their 18th birthday are more open to a name change. (Approximately 40 percent of this group are pastors.) Of those who have lived in at least two states for three or more years since their 18th birthday, 39.0 percent favor, to some degree, a change in the name of the Convention. And, of those who have lived in at least three states for three or more years since their 18th birthday, 50.0 percent favor, to some degree, a change in the name of the Convention.

# Southern Baptists... *you are right!*



*At a time when divorce  
is destroying the fabric  
of our society, you have taken  
a bold stand for the  
biblical principles  
of marriage and family life.  
We thank you  
for your courage!*

*You are right because you recognized that the family  
was God's idea, not man's, and that marriage is a covenant  
between one man and one woman for a lifetime.*

*You are right because you called husbands to sacrificially  
love and lead their wives.*

*You are right because you called wives to graciously submit  
to their husband's sacrificial leadership.*

*You are right because you affirmed that the husband  
and wife are of equal worth before God.*

*You are right because you reminded us that children  
are a blessing and heritage from the Lord.*

*Most importantly, you are right because your statement  
is based on biblical truth!*

## **Baptist Faith & Message Article XVIII. The Family**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church, and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel for sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Dr. Joe Altrich  
President Emeritus, Multnomah  
Bible College

Kerby and Susanne Anderson  
President, Probe Ministries

Dr. Hudson and Miriam Armerding  
Former President, Wheaton College

Dr. Steve Arterburn  
CEO, New Life Clinics

Jack and Kay Arthur  
President and Vice President,  
Precept Ministries

Gary and Carol Bauer  
President, Family Research Council

Scott and Theresa Beck  
Former CEO, Boston Market

Joel and Carol Esther Belz  
Publisher, *World Magazine*

Gary and Donna Bishop  
President, Mission Aviation Fellowship

Ronald Blue  
President, Ronald Blue & Co.

Bill and Wnette Bright  
President, Campus Crusade for Christ  
International

Dr. Frank Brock  
President, Covenant College

Harold and Grace Brown  
Professor, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Larry and Judy Burkett  
President, Christian Financial Concepts

Dr. Bryan and Kathleen Chapell  
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Dennis and Barbara Rainey  
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Jack and Esther Wease  
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President, The Navigators

Dr. Bruce and Darlene Wilkinson  
President, Walk Thru the Bible

Douglas and Nancy Wilson  
Editor, *Credenda/Agenda*

John and Susan Yates  
Rector, The Falls Church (Episcopal)

For an expanded list of names and  
home towns, visit [www.youareright.org](http://www.youareright.org).

# We stand with you!

*We are pastors and lay leaders, civic and business leaders, husbands, wives,  
fathers, and mothers representing a variety of denomination.  
We believe in and strongly affirm this statement on the family.*

Dr. Norman and Barbara Gelsler  
Provost, Southern Evangelical Seminary

Dr. Gene and Elaine Getz  
Founder, Fellowship Bible Churches

Franklin Graham  
President, Samaritan's Purse

Bill and Doris Greig, Jr.  
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Pastor, The Church on the Way

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Professor, University of Texas;  
Editor, *World Magazine*

Dr. Stephen F. Olford  
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*A division of Campus Crusade for Christ*

# Study of Messenger Attendance by Region

Region	State	Dallas 1965		Dallas 1974		Salt Lake 1998	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
SE	Alabama	933	5.8%	1175	6.5%	519	6.0%
NW	Alaska	5	0.0%	15	0.1%	17	0.2%
W	Arizona	129	0.8%	110	0.6%	95	1.1%
SW	Arkansas	534	3.3%	680	3.7%	251	2.9%
W	California	404	2.5%	357	2.0%	226	2.6%
SW	Colorado	195	1.2%	132	0.7%	96	1.1%
N	Connecticut					2	0.0%
SE	Delaware					1	0.0%
SE	D. C.	42	0.3%	45	0.2%	6	0.1%
SE	Florida	451	2.8%	779	4.3%	452	5.3%
SE	Georgia	647	4.0%	1061	5.8%	692	8.1%
W	Hawaii	9	0.1%	17	0.1%	6	0.1%
NW	Idaho					106	1.2%
MW	Illinois	226	1.4%	256	1.4%	166	1.9%
N	Indiana	53	0.3%	167	0.9%	79	0.9%
MW	Iowa					16	0.2%
MW	Kansas - Nebraska	130	0.8%	205	1.1%		0.0%
MW	Kansas					54	0.6%
SE	Kentucky	505	3.1%	682	3.7%	455	5.3%
SW	Louisiana	967	6.0%	935	5.1%	237	2.8%
N	Maine					2	0.0%
SE	Maryland	128	0.8%	157	0.9%	80	0.9%
N	Massachusetts					6	0.1%
N	Michigan	37	0.2%	76	0.4%	35	0.4%
MW	Minnesota					3	0.0%
SE	Mississippi	877	5.5%	981	5.4%	422	4.9%
MW	Missouri	595	3.7%	825	4.5%	324	3.8%
NW	Montana					30	0.3%
MW	Nebraska					9	0.1%
W	Nevada					71	0.8%
N	New Hampshire					1	0.0%
N	New Jersey					17	0.2%
SW	New Mexico	226	1.4%	223	1.2%	71	0.8%
N	New York			23	0.1%	14	0.2%
SE	North Carolina	564	3.5%	1145	6.3%	703	8.2%
MW	North Dakota					0	0.0%
MW	Northern Plains			57	0.3%		

# Study of Messenger Attendance by Region

Region	State	Dallas 1965		Dallas 1974		Salt Lake 1998	
NW	Northwest Conv.			65	0.4%		
N	Ohio	127	0.8%	194	1.1%	109	1.3%
SW	Oklahoma	1137	7.1%	1031	5.7%	739	8.6%
NW	Oregon - Washington	63	0.4%		0.0%		
NW	Oregon					19	0.2%
N	Penn. - S. Jersey			46	0.3%		
N	Pennsylvania					22	0.3%
SE	Puerto Rico					3	0.0%
N	Rhode Island					0	0.0%
SE	South Carolina	515	3.2%	885	4.9%	404	4.7%
MW	South Dakota					2	0.0%
SE	Tennessee	770	4.8%	1099	6.0%	755	8.8%
SW	Texas	5448	33.9%	4080	22.4%	614	7.2%
W	Utah-Idaho	20	0.1%	19	0.1%		
W	Utah					195	2.3%
N	Vermont					0	0.0%
SE	Virginia	299	1.9%	621	3.4%	331	3.9%
NW	Washington					34	0.4%
SE	W. Virginia			28	0.2%	32	0.4%
MW	Wisconsin			12	0.1%	4	0.0%
NW	Wyoming					55	0.6%
	Miscellaneous	17	0.1%	7	0.0%		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>16053</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18190</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8582</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Regional Summary

Northern States		1.4%		2.8%		3.3%
Southeastern States		36.9%		48.3%		57.7%
Midwestern States		5.9%		7.4%		6.7%
Southwestern States		51.8%		38.2%		22.3%
Northwestern States		0.4%		0.4%		3.0%
Western States		3.5%		2.8%		6.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>99.9%</b>		<b>100.0%</b>		<b>100.0%</b>

Southern States		88.7%		86.5%		80.0%
Non-Southern States		11.3%		13.5%		20.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100.0%</b>		<b>100.0%</b>		<b>100.0%</b>

# NAMB Letter Survey of State Leaders regarding The Convention Name Change Issue

Compiled - January 1999

	Pro Change	Slightly Pro Change	Without Preference or No Response	Slightly Against Change	Against Change
Southern State Conventions and Fellowships	4		10	1	4
Non- Southern State Conventions and Fellowships	5	7	8		1
Canada			1		
Combined messenger percentage at 1998 Convention in Salt Lake	15.2%	8.70%	55.70%	7.20%	13.20%
TOTALS	16		19	6	
	23.9%		55.7%	20.4%	

To: Executive Committee, SBC  
Attn.: Augie Boto

Dear Augie,

12-15-98

I have put together the information from two surveys completed in the fall of 1998. The first is from the Northland Baptist Association meeting in October and the second from the Baptist State Convention meeting in November. As you know the poll was not anything officially sanctioned by the Executive Committee, but rather just a way of sampling how Southern Baptists in Northern Michigan feel about the issue. Here are the questions that were asked and the results.

The first question was: "Do you think the name "Southern" in Southern Baptist Convention is a hindrance or barrier in any way to the work of evangelism and church planting in Michigan?"

The second question was: "Would you favor a name change of the Convention replacing "Southern" with a name more reflective of where our Churches are located and who we are?"

The results from the Association were: 25 people voted no on both questions. 14 voted yes on both questions. 5 people voted no on the first question but yes or maybe on the second. 2 people voted yes on the first and no or undecided on the second. (total of 46 votes).

The results from the State Convention were: 85 people voted no on both questions. Of these, 40 were born in northern states (mostly Michigan), 39 were born in Bible-belt states, and six were from the west or out of the country. 82 people voted yes on both questions. Of these, 36 were from northern states, 36 from southern states and 10 from other regions. 4 people voted no on the first question and yes on the second. 10 people voted yes on the first and no on the second.

I am sorry this letter has taken so long to send. The results of these polls surprised me immensely. First, I thought Northland Assoc. would be strongly in favor of a name change because of our location. Secondly, I thought the State Convention would be less in favor, but it appears that the further south we go - the more open people are to the possibility. I doubt that the trend will keep up in Atlanta!

Augie, I am personally having a struggle with this issue of a name change. I know it would cause a very divisive debate. After doing the surveys, a number of people encouraged me to keep going with it, but some were very upset. I believe a name change would benefit the kingdom's work tremendously, and the momentum seemed to be in favor of a change in the 1960s when the surveys were taken. I have not been able to research exactly what happened that nothing was

accomplished at the SBC in Detroit in 1966. If you get a chance, an excellent article for Baptist Press was done on April 1, 1966 about the approval of a name change at that time.

Furthermore, I wonder where the SBC might be today if a change had occurred, because we had gigantic surge in the 1950's which produced so many new Christians and our strategies for planting Churches in the North really accelerated. I think a valid question would be, "if the Lord tarries for another 100 years, will we still be tied to a regional name that has possibly hindered us from reaching more people, starting more churches, and having a significantly greater impact on America?"

What about some other ideas? I would like to see another survey (possibly like the one in Dallas, 1965) at the convention in Atlanta. A poll the denominational leadership could be done at some point.

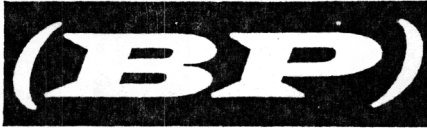
Herb Hollinger was at the State Convention of Michigan representing the Executive Committee. He said he was interested in the results of the poll. Would you mind passing on to him a copy. Thanks!

Have a Merry Christmas.

Sincerely,

Blaine Barber





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April 1, 1966

Editorials Clamor  
For SBC Name Change

By the Baptist Press

Should the Southern Baptist Convention change its name, dropping the "Southern" tag it has carried for 121 years?

Editorials in Baptist state convention weekly newspapers have in the past year said, with only a few exceptions, that a change is in order.

Now, for the first time, a publication of a Southern Baptist Convention agency has editorially endorsed changing the name of the nation's largest evangelical-Protestant body.

An editorial in Home Missions magazine, publication of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, has endorsed an article appearing in the publication proposing the name "United States Baptist Convention" (U.S.B.C.).

The article was written by Charles Chaney of Palatine, Ill., who made a motion at the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas last year proposing a change in the convention's name. The motion was referred to the SBC Executive Committee for study and later report to the convention.

Chaney's motion prompted numerous editorials in Baptist state convention newspapers last summer. Most of the publication's heralded the proposal as long overdue.

Since then, at least nine Baptist state convention publications have editorially endorsed changing the convention's name, a spot poll by the Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention, has revealed.

The biggest state Baptist paper of all, the 370,000-circulation Baptist Standard in Texas, however, strongly opposed any change in name.

The poll revealed that editorials in Baptist state papers published in Colorado, California, Maryland, Alabama, Kentucky, Ohio, North Carolina, Georgia and Maryland have supported some kind of name change.

The arguments, pro and con, are many.

Editorials in favor of a change, in brief, have argued that the present name is not descriptive, it is misleading, it has provincial connotations that are out of date, it is a misnomer, it has offensive connotations in some sections of the country, it is not consistent to national Baptist strategy, and it has racial segregationist overtones.

Those who want to keep the present name argue, in brief, that changing the name will not change the nature of the convention, that the name describes the denomination's theological position rather than geographic location, that the name can be helpful in some sections of the country, and that legal and technical difficulties would be raised by changing the convention's name.

None of the arguments are really that simple. In each case, the editorials amplify and expound their reasons in an effort to build a case for their conclusions.

Editorials in state Baptist publications where Southern Baptists are not as strong numerically are generally much stronger in presenting a case for a name change than editorials in state Baptist papers where Southern Baptists are well entrenched.

"It is no doubt difficult for some churches and denominational leaders in the deep South to understand the problem we present," said an editorial in the Rocky Mountain Baptist in Denver, Col.

"Churches in the Colorado Baptist General Convention which took unto themselves the name "----- Southern Baptist Church" found witnessing to lost people and growing a church most

-more-

difficult, in some cases almost impossible," the Rocky Mountain Baptist said. "Changing a church name to one which did not carry a 'Southern' connotation immediately opened doors of prospects and resulted in easier and more effective work in goselizing a community."

The California Southern Baptist charged that the word "Southern" has a provincial, regional connotation that is out of date. "In the newer states of the convention, our people have to explain why 'Southern' Baptists are in the North, East and West."

"To many people, the word Southern is an offensive thing," said the Ohio Baptist Messenger. "Why should Baptists flaunt a sociologically offensive term before those they are trying to reach?"

The Baptist New Mexican advocated, not only dropping the word 'Southern' which does not describe the denomination's geographical nature, but also urged discontinuance of the word 'Convention,' which, it said, just meets four days a year. "Let's change two-thirds of the name," the editorial said.

Arguments in some "deep South" state Baptist papers have been just as strong, and in some cases stronger, as editorials in some of the newer Baptist state conventions.

Editorials in Baptist state papers published in such deep South states as Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, and North Carolina have in the past year urged the demise of the "Southern" designation.

Said the Kentucky Western Recorder: "The old name is overdue in going. It has served its day well and will always have precious sentimental meaning. It was doomed, however, when we decided to become national instead of sectional, and (it) should have been changed then."

The Baptist Standard in Texas, however, staunchly opposed any change in name.

Arguing that the name is a good one which has served Southern Baptists well, the editorial said that Southern Baptist work could be improved in some respects, but changing the name of their convention is not one of them.

Replying to the argument that the name causes problems to Baptists in the North and West, the Baptist Standard answered: "If the term 'Southern' is so obnoxious that they can't live with it up there, why didn't they forget it and organize some other brand of churches and join some other convention?"

"Multitudes who move north seek out Southern Baptist churches because they are Southern Baptist. To them the name is significant. Where will they turn if our convention changes its name simply because some folks don't like it?" the Standard said.

"If we have to drop the name 'Southern' in order to appeal to some, then how long will it be before others will want us to drop the name 'Christian'? Perhaps we could just drop the word 'church' and call our organizations clubs," the Texas paper said.

Public opinion among Baptists appears (statistically), however, to be in favor of a change.

At the SBC meeting in Dallas last June, an electronic opinionnaire conducted in the exhibit hall revealed that 58.6 per cent of the people who participated expressed opinions that the name should be changed.

A survey conducted in connection with developing the denomination's emphases for the years following 1970 revealed that about 77 per cent of 715 denominational leaders agreed that the SBC Executive Committee should continue to explore the possibilities of "a change in the name of our convention until a suitable name is found."

A second survey among 1,000 pastors, laymen and women, however, resulted in approval of the above statement by only 43 per cent.

The Executive Committee meeting in February authorized another public opinion poll on the proposed name change, aimed for quick completion before the Southern Baptist Convention meets in Detroit, May 24-27.

The opinion survey would be one of the first steps in a long-range study, which probably will not be completed before the May convention. It appears doubtful that there will be any official proposal that the convention change its name from the Executive Committee.

-more-

Meanwhile, editorial comments and articles continue to appear, advocating a name change.

Chaney's article, endorsed by the editor of Home Missions, is perhaps one of the strongest and most comprehensive pleas for a change thus far published.

He argued that the current name is misleading and detrimental, and that it is inadequate and inaccurate.

"It just does not describe us. We have churches in all 50 states of the United States, and the word 'Southern' does not define our nationwide character," Chaney wrote.

"The word (Southern) brings to mind the old comic strip character 'Snuffy Smith,' living on a lonely mountain peak, miles from civilization, in a run-down shack, fighting 'revenurers.' In religious terms, this means guitar playing, snake-handling, anti-intellectualism, and emotionalism," he wrote.

"Other people associate the word 'southern' with racial prejudice," wrote Chaney, who cited as an example a Southern Baptist church in Chicago which had a problem in buying property because the developer thought the church would not welcome 32 Negro families living in the area.

Chaney argued that if Southern Baptists are to seek to evangelize the entire nation, then the name should be national in character.

If the convention eventually does go along with the proposal to change the name of the SBC, what would the new name be?

Again, the proposals are numerous and varied.

Chaney suggests the name, United States Baptist Convention. "With this name, we could properly call ourselves 'U. S. Baptists,'" he said.

Another editor quipped that such a name could also allow references to "Us Baptists," and would allow some die-hards to preserve the letters SBC by tacking on a "U" in front.

Other names proposed have included United Baptists, United Baptist Convention, United Baptists of America, Cooperative Baptists of the United States, Baptist Convention of the United States of America (U.S.A.), Continental Baptist Convention, Baptist Union of America, Union of Cooperating Baptists, and even World Baptist Convention.

The list of possible names, like the arguments for changing or not changing the name, goes on and on.

It appears that the subject will be discussed for a long time

By Jim Newton

-30-

Baptists To Observe  
Jewish Fellowship Week

4-1-66

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptist churches will place a special emphasis on becoming acquainted with their Jewish neighbors April 11-17 during the annual Jewish Fellowship Week.

"We are encouraging churches to invite Jewish neighbors and friends to worship services during the week to illustrate to them what Southern Baptists believe," William B. Mitchell, Jewish work director for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board said.

-30-

# Name Change Legal Opinion

## GUENTHER, JORDAN & PRICE, P.C.

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JAMES P. GUENTHER  
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January 13, 1999

\* ALSO ADMITTED IN KENTUCKY AND TEXAS

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To D. August Boto  
Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention

From James P. Guenther

**Opinion:** *If the Southern Baptist Convention changes its name the Convention would come under the present Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code which would require the Convention to substantially alter its instruments and practices, its governance structure, and perhaps its polity.*

**Summary:** The Southern Baptist Convention is a Georgia corporation by virtue of a legislative act granting the Convention a charter. As long as the Convention does not amend this charter, the Convention is not regulated by the present Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code.

If the Convention desires to change its name, that would be accomplished by an amendment to the Convention's charter. An amendment accomplished pursuant to the Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code would cause the corporation to become regulated by that law.

If the Convention comes under the regulatory provisions of the Georgia act, the law would introduce governmental regulation of the Convention which does not presently exist. The Convention would be required to have a board of directors. The Convention would be required to match its "messengers" to the "delegates" and or "members" in the vocabulary of the Georgia act. The way the Convention does its business would become regulated in a number of other ways.

### Elaboration:

The Convention was granted a charter by the Georgia legislature in 1845. It is by virtue of this charter that the Convention enjoys corporate standing and the legal authority to pursue its purpose "of eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the Baptist denomination of Christians, for the propagation of the gospel, any law, usage, or custom to the contrary not

withstanding."<sup>1</sup>

The Convention, as a legislatively granted chartered institution is not subject to the present Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code. The Nonprofit Code does not now regulate the affairs of the Convention corporation. The act granting the charter to the Convention contained no reservation giving the state the right to modify the franchise.<sup>2</sup>

When the present Georgia act was enacted,<sup>3</sup> it specifically recognized that the act did not apply to those corporations holding legislatively granted charters which contained no state reservation of rights.<sup>4</sup> Georgia's recognition that its current corporation act did not apply to such corporations was undoubtedly helped along by the United States Supreme Court's decisions which said a state may not do otherwise. The court said:

When a private eleemosynary corporation is thus created by a charter of the Crown, it is subject to no other control on the part of the crown than that what is expressly or implicitly reserved by the charter itself. Unless a power be reserved for this purpose, the Crown cannot, in virtue of its prerogative, without consent of the corporation, alter or amend the charter . . . or control the administration of the

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<sup>1</sup> Georgia Laws, 1845, Page 130,

<sup>2</sup> In 1987 we secured the acknowledgement of the Secretary of State of Georgia that "the Southern Baptist Convention was granted a Charter by the Georgia General Assembly (Ga. Laws 1845, p. 130) on the 27th day of December, 1845, and that, absent any provision to the contrary, is perpetual in nature, and the Convention, on the authority of O.C.G.A. 14-3-3(2), is exempt from information filing requirements for nonprofit corporations, and, therefore is automatically a Corporation of Good Standing within the State of Georgia." The Secretary of State relied in part on the opinion of the Georgia Attorney General (69-153).

The previous year we had secured from the Secretary of State a confirmation of our records that at no time since the legislative grant of the charter to the Convention has the Convention undertaken to amend its charter.

<sup>3</sup> The Section citations in this memorandum, unless otherwise noted, are to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. The Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code is the short title of chapter 3 of Title 14 of the O.C.G.A. It is to this nonprofit corporation law I refer when I say "the Georgia act" or simply "the act."

<sup>4</sup> Section 22-2103 (a) provides the Nonprofit Code "shall not apply . . . (2) to any corporation originally created by special Act of General Assembly as to which power has not been reserved to withdraw the franchise . . . ."

charity.<sup>5</sup>

However, the current Georgia act permits a corporation like the SBC to "elect" to be covered by the current Georgia act if it should so choose. That election can occur in several ways. One is by filing an amendment to the corporation's articles of incorporation or by filing amended and restated articles of incorporation pursuant to the provisions of the current act.<sup>6</sup>

In order to change its name, the Convention would be required to file an amendment to its charter or to file amended and restated articles of incorporation. The 1845 special legislative act which created the Convention corporation declared its name to be "the Southern Baptist Convention." The present Georgia act provides a mechanism by which a corporation may change its name by filing an amendment to its articles of incorporation or by filing amended and restated articles of incorporation, with the amendment showing the new name.<sup>7</sup> That new name would be required to include the word "corporation," "incorporated," "company," or "limited," or the abbreviation "Corp." "Inc.," "Co." or "Ltd.," and may not exceed 80 characters in length counting spaces and punctuation.<sup>8</sup>

It is our opinion, therefore, that if the Convention files an amendment or more likely an amended and restated articles of incorporation so as to change its corporate name, the Convention will become subject to the Georgia act.

What would be the significance of the Convention corporation's becoming subject to the Act?

The Convention's articles and bylaws would be required to be in synch with the Georgia act.<sup>9</sup>

1. The legal nature of the messengers would have to be considered in the light of the act's

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<sup>5</sup> Trustees of Dartmouth College vs. Woodward, 4 Wheat 518, 4 Led 629.

<sup>6</sup> Section 14-3-1701.

<sup>7</sup> Sections 14-3-1001, 2 and 3. The law also requires that notice of intent to change the corporate name be previously published in a newspaper in Atlanta. 14-3-1005-1.

<sup>8</sup> Section 14-3-401.

<sup>9</sup> The act contains a "savings" provision recognizing that to the extent the United States or Georgia Constitution would not permit Georgia from interfering in the affairs of the church, the provisions of the Georgia act which are in conflict with the Convention's "religious doctrine" will not override the doctrine. Counsel considers this a thin reed on which to undertake to float much deviation from the Georgia act in the articles and bylaws of the Convention.

recognition of "delegates"<sup>10</sup> and "members."<sup>11</sup> Greater precision would probably be required in describing the authority and rights of the messengers. If it were determined that the messengers are what the act calls "members," the act regulates the meetings of the members and the procedures and notices of those meetings.

2. The Convention would have to have a board of directors. While the act requires the corporation to have a board of directors and defines the board as the "persons vested with the authority to manage the affairs of the corporation,"<sup>12</sup> the act also permits the corporation's articles and bylaws to assign some of the authority customarily exercised by a board of a corporation to someone else, in the Convention's case most likely the messengers and the Executive Committee.<sup>13</sup> Decisions as to those delegations would need to be precisely articulated in the Convention's instruments.

3. A logical question would be raised: Should the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention be the board of directors of the Convention corporation. If so, should the Executive Committee corporation be dissolved and merged into the Convention corporation or should the Executive Committee members serve both as directors of the Executive Committee corporation, as they presently serve, plus serve as directors of the Convention corporation. The rights and powers of the Executive Committee in whatever structure would be chosen would require very careful and thoughtful consideration and clear enunciation in the instruments. Serious consideration would need to be given to the comfort of messengers and other Convention entities on the subject of vesting board of director powers of any kind in the Executive Committee. If the Executive Committee members are not to be the persons composing the board of directors of the convention corporation, than who would be? Perhaps a small group of persons whose rights were reduced as much as possible under the act to function in functionary roles upon the instruction of the messengers. But to establish a new group, regardless how small and how carefully limited in power, would require new ideas and structures and clear fences between the messengers, the Executive Committee, the institutions, and the new Convention board of directors.

4. Who would elect the board of directors, what would be their number, their term of office, and who would have the power to remove them?

5. A Georgia court could remove the Convention's directors upon the petition of 10% of the

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<sup>10</sup> 14-3-630 and Article 8.

<sup>11</sup> 14-3-140 and Article 6.

14-3-140.

<sup>13</sup> 14-3-801 (d).

Members (?) or upon the petition of the state's attorney general.<sup>14</sup>

5. The meetings of the board, the manner in which the board took action, the notice required of board meetings, the appointment and function of committees of the board and the board member's legal standards of conduct would have to be spelled out and in some instances would be dictated by the act.<sup>15</sup>

6. The Convention's officers would be regulated as to the standard by which they conduct their offices.<sup>16</sup>

7. The Convention's board of directors could remove the Convention's president and other officers.<sup>17</sup>

8. The Convention's right and duty to indemnify directors and officers would be circumscribed by the act.<sup>18</sup>

9. Conflicts of interest would be defined and regulated.<sup>19</sup>

10. The manner and substance of amendments to the articles of incorporation would be regulated.<sup>20</sup>

11. The act would regulate the sale, encumbrance, or other disposition of assets in certain instances.<sup>21</sup>

12. The act requires an annual registration to be made with the Secretary of State.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> 14-3-810.

<sup>15</sup> Article 8.

<sup>16</sup> 14-3-842.

<sup>17</sup> 14-3-843.

<sup>18</sup> 14-3-850 et seq.

<sup>19</sup> 14-3860 et seq.

<sup>20</sup> Article 10.

<sup>21</sup> Article 12.

<sup>22</sup> 14-3-1622.



January 20, 1999

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. D. August Boto  
Vice President for Convention Policy  
Executive Committee  
Southern Baptist Convention  
901 Commerce Street  
Nashville, TN 37203

Dear Mr. Boto:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide you with several quotations related to research on a possible name change for the Convention.

Per our discussion and the materials you forwarded to me, we have prepared several options for your consideration. *All assume that our outgoing postage will be \$.33 each.*

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| ■ Replicate the 1975 Name Change Study<br>(2 mailings to 1,000 leaders + 50 phone surveys)                 | \$ 11,970. |
| ■ Survey 42,000 Pastors by Mail<br>(1 mailing to 42,000 pastors)   | \$ 75,540. |
| ■ Survey 10,000 Church Leaders by Mail<br>(1 mailing to 10,000 leaders + post card + 200 phone interviews) | \$ 44,600. |

All three options presented above are based on your desire for a "turnkey" approach to the work. Your involvement will be needed in three specific areas:

- Review and approval of the Survey questionnaire
- Development and delivery of the desired sample
- Providing us with sufficient SBC letterhead and #10 envelopes for the mailings

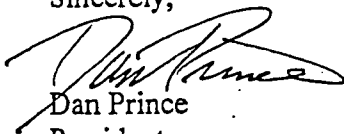
Page 2 of 2

Of course, we would expect to work closely with you throughout the project to be sure that you are kept fully informed of progress on the project. We would also hope to meet with you personally at the point at which we have preliminary results so that you might get an indication as early as possible on the direction of those results. We would also like to review a draft of our Final Report and PowerPoint Executive Briefing presentation with you ahead of delivering these to the Executive Committee.

While the first two options presented are based entirely on the specifications you provided, I might take a moment to outline our thinking on the third option. Our thinking is that, in making such a major strategic decision, Option 1 may not provide a high enough sample size to generate full confidence in the results. Option 2 certainly addresses the important view that all possible "voices" have the opportunity to be heard before such a decision is made. But the cost to do so is high. Option 3 provides an intermediate approach. It calls for a stratified sample, with 2,000 surveys being randomly selected and mailed to each of 5 geographic areas. With an assumption of at least a 50% response rate, this approach would generate sample sizes of about 1,000 per geographic area, and more robust numbers for other kinds of breakouts you will be interested in.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these various approaches, and also give you a chance to learn more about our company. In the meanwhile, if you have questions or concerns, I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Dan Prince  
President

[Dprince@PMResearch.com](mailto:Dprince@PMResearch.com)

*P.S.—We are now talking with some of our larger clients about establishing a "panel" of customers who can be polled quickly and cheaply via short internet surveys as senior management has key issues it wants customer input/feedback on. I'd enjoy exploring this possibility with you since it would enable you to hear from pastors and others cost-effectively on other policy issues throughout the year.*



January 26, 1999

Mr. D. August Boto  
Vice President for Convention Policy  
Executive Committee of the SBC  
901 Commerce Street  
Nashville, TN 37203

Re: Convention Research

Dear Mr. Boto:

Here are my recommendations regarding two research projects that you outlined in your letter of January 20.

SBC Naming Research

The 1975 study was conducted among Pastors and Lay Leaders with 122 pastors responding and 365 Lay Leaders. Lay Leaders included Church Clerks, Sunday School Directors, WMU Directors and Chairmen of Deacons.

I propose replicating this study mailing to the following sample:

- 400 Pastors
- 400 Sunday School Directors
- 400 WMU Directors
- 400 Deacon Chairs

There would be three mailings:

1. Initial mailing to all 1600 respondents
2. Reminder postcard mailed to all 1600 respondents 7-10 days following initial mailing
3. Follow-up mailing to non-respondents

The SBC would provide the following:

- Lists of each of the four respondent groups in an ASCII file. I believe these names and addresses are available from the ACP.
- 3000 Outgoing #10 SBC Executive Committee envelopes that will encourage the respondents to open the envelope
- 1600 Cover letters explaining the purpose of the survey and its confidentiality. I recommend that the letters also stress that this project is being conducted as a follow-up to research conducted in 1966 and 1975.

The questionnaire will be very straightforward replicating the questions from the previous studies. It will be no more than 2 pages in length with one open-ended question. It will be accompanied by a cover letter from an Executive Committee representative encouraging the respondents to complete the survey and return it in the enclosed postage paid envelope.

Research Concepts will partner with MORPACE International. MORPACE is one of the top 25 research firms in the United States. I will lead the project by consulting with you and your committee. I'll write the questionnaire and do the analysis. MORPACE will provide the fieldwork services.

As outlined this research will cost a total of \$3000 plus \$6.50 per returned questionnaire. Assuming a 50% response rate, this project would cost \$8200.


### SBC Pastors Research

You had also requested a quote to conduct a similar survey among the 42,000 SBC pastors. Since this is the entire universe, I would recommend a one-time mailing without any follow-up. Otherwise, the specifications would be identical to the research discussed above. We would expect a 20 – 40% return rate.

The cost for conducting such a broad-based study would be \$4500 plus \$6.50 per returned survey. Therefore, we would expect the total cost to be in the range of \$58,460 to \$113,200.

I hope this is helpful. Please feel free to give me a call if you have further questions. I'll also be glad to meet with you and/or your committee.

Sincerely,



Jim Bryson  
President

Executive Committee, SBC  
Administrative Subcommittee  
February 22-23, 1999

5. SBC Referral: Motion to Change Name of Southern Baptist Convention to Baptist Convention of North America

Background: During the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, June 9-11, 1998, C. Orville Kool (IA) presented the following motion:

Motion: That the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention be commissioned to study the change of our denominational name from the Southern Baptist Convention to the Baptist Convention of North America, and that the Executive Committee be requested to bring back a recommendation regarding this name change to the Convention to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, June 15-17, 1999. I further move that if there is a legal problem with the proposed name change, that the Executive Committee be instructed to propose an alternative, legally appropriate name that will reflect cultural sensitivity and will be a more accurate description of where our churches and missions are located.

Items 19 and 43, Proceedings  
of the Southern Baptist Convention,  
June 9-11, 1998  
1998 *SBC Annual*, pp. 36, 61

This matter was considered by the Bylaws Workgroup on September 21, 1998, and the Administrative Subcommittee on September 22, 1998. The Administrative Subcommittee made the following recommendation to the plenary body.

Administrative Subcommittee Recommendation: That the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention report to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, June 15-16, 1999, that the Executive Committee, after consideration of the advisability of conducting a formal name-change feasibility study, declines to act on the referred motion, electing rather to affirm a significant prior Convention action and multiple Executive Committee deliberations, all of which affirmed the continued use of the name "Southern Baptist Convention." The Executive Committee specifically reaffirms the 1975 Report on Convention Name Change of the Committee of Seven found in the 1976 *SBC Annual* on pages 50-51, and further reaffirms its prior actions against changing the name of the Convention.

During its meeting held September 21-22, 1998, the Executive Committee postponed taking action on the foregoing recommendation until its February 22-23, 1999, meeting.

Additionally, on September 22, 1998, in other business before the Administrative Subcommittee, John Yeats made a motion, which was seconded and carried, "that the Executive Committee staff be instructed to formulate and propose to the Administrative Subcommittee of the Executive Committee in

Executive Committee, SBC  
Administrative Subcommittee  
February 22-23, 1999

5. SBC Referral: Motion to Change Name of Southern Baptist Convention to Baptist Convention of North America (continued)

its February 1999 meeting a strategy for examining the name change issue, which strategy may be approved, amended, or declined by the Executive Committee in that February meeting. Among other considerations, this strategy is to include a recommendation of an appropriate and effective method of determining whether the negative perception of "Southern Baptist" is substantial, and if so, to also determine what percentage of that negative perception is due to the regional bias implied, and what percentage is due to the beliefs held by the Convention."

See page 114 for letter from C. Orville Kool, dated September 1, 1998, and pages 33-108 for background on SBC Referral: Motion on Feasibility Study of Name Change of Southern Baptist Convention.

Recommendation: That the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention print in the 1999 *Book of Reports* the attached report on "Changing the Name of the Southern Baptist Convention," and report to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, June 15-16, 1999, that it declines to act further on the motion to study changing the name of the Southern Baptist Convention to the "Baptist Convention of North America."

Action: Adopted by the Executive Committee of the  
Southern Baptist Convention  
February 22-23, 1999



EC/SBC  
February 22-23, 1999

# Report

of the  
Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention  
regarding  
Changing the Name of the Southern Baptist Convention

During the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, June 9-11, 1998, two motions were referred to the Executive Committee dealing with the feasibility of changing the name of the Convention. Similar motions have been referred to the Executive Committee for consideration with some frequency in recent years (e.g. in 1965, 1974, 1983, 1989, and 1990.)

The Executive Committee reviewed the actions it took in years past. It also studied two detailed formal survey reports on the issue conducted by the Sunday School Board, analyses of SBC messengers' profile to evaluate attendance by region, and informal surveys done by the North American Mission Board, state conventions, and area associations. The Executive Committee also reviewed the 1975 "Committee of Seven" report on the name change issue and reexamined the 25 criteria it established in February of 1967 (attached as Exhibit 1) for use in analyzing whether any new name is appropriate.

Additionally, the Executive Committee has obtained a legal opinion covering the practical ramifications of changing the Convention's name. Recent letters from leaders within the Convention concerning the subject have been received, and historical files and clippings on the issue from state papers dating from the present back approximately 40 years have been reviewed. Responses have been received from research consultants regarding costs and methods of updating previous name change surveys. Questions were asked about "brand" identification, established market presence and influence, the impact of recent technology, and any negative effects of regionalism and limited scope of Convention work that use of the word "Southern" implies.

The Executive Committee's review of these materials and consideration of the attendant factors involved produced the following findings:

- 1) The name selection criteria adopted in 1967 by the Executive Committee are all still appropriate (see Exhibit 1).
- 2) No name satisfies as many of the 1967 name selection criteria as does the present name.
- 3) There is no consensus on an acceptable alternate name for the Convention.
- 4) Most popular suggested alternate names involve objectionable side effects similar to those attending the present name. For example, "Continental" implies inclusion of two nations now not a part of our Convention. So does "North American." "Cooperative" now implies alliance with groups who seek to distinguish themselves from the SBC. Any name with the word "States" or "American" in it might create difficulty for missionaries in areas of anti-American sentiment, while the word "Southern" is fairly innocuous when used overseas.
- 5) Those within our Convention who are disaffected by the present name are at least equally opposed by others within the Convention who would be disaffected by discarding it.
- 6) Changing the name of the Convention, or even leaving the issue open for debate over an extended period, would at the very least be unsettling to its ongoing evangelistic work. More probably, the issue would create division where unity now holds sway, and where theology, purpose and function are now known quantities.
- 7) Although in some areas the Convention name is perceived as creating barriers, these difficulties have been ameliorated by not including the word "Southern" in church names.

- 8) During the time period over which name changes have been considered, churches choosing to use the term “Southern Baptist” in their name or materials have prospered, even in non-southern areas.
- 9) The name “Southern Baptist Convention” and term “SBC” have become brand names meaning more than just the sum of their parts. The Southern Baptist Convention no longer denotes a region as much as it does a *position*. It has come to mean missionary zeal, staunch Bible defense, moral rectitude, adherence to faith, and dependence upon the Lord. Indicative of its recognition were the full-page newspaper ads paid for by non-Southern Baptists after the 1998 Salt Lake convention running under the headline *Southern Baptists – You Are Right!* Examples of other names that have transcended their original regional meaning include Western Union, Northwest Airlines, and New York Life.
- 10) While hindsight might indicate that a different name would have had certain advantages, the window of opportunity to make such a change may have closed at the same rate at which the Convention has obtained name recognition and stature.
- 11) Legal counsel has advised that changing the name of the Convention would most probably have the effect of discarding the Convention’s current preferred status as a legislatively created entity, subjecting the Convention to a wide array of statutory mandates that would alter the Convention structure in undesirable ways.
- 12) The magnitude of the total cost of changing the name of the Convention, including such things as corporate document amendment and harmonization, attempting to obtain a new Internet URL, rewording church signs, and reeducating the general public, is unjustifiable in the absence of a compelling reason and overwhelming consensus to change the name.

In summary, the Executive Committee finds no compelling rationale for changing the name of the Convention, nor for underwriting a study concerning same, believing that while a change of name might seem to some to afford a modicum of relief in some areas, it is not justified when all factors are taken into account.



## Exhibit 1

### Criteria to be used by the Executive Committee in Assessing a New Convention Name

1. Is it legally available?
2. Is it distinctive?
3. Would it be confused with other Baptist organizations?
4. Is it easily recognizable?
5. Is it short?
6. Does it lend itself to short form use, such as "United Presbyterians," "American Baptists," etc.?
7. Would the initials be appropriate?
8. Would it be capable of world-wide use?
9. Would there be any unfortunate meanings, visual or auditory, in any foreign language?
10. Does it have a pleasant sound?
11. Does it look good?
12. Is it easy to pronounce?
13. Is it easy to spell?
14. Is its meaning clear?
15. Is it geographically accurate?
16. Can it be easily remembered?
17. Does it have favorable connotations?
18. Does it seem appropriate?
19. Is it capable of easy association with all the related organizations in the denomination?
20. Is the name consistent with Baptist history?
21. Would it be appealing to a majority of the church members in the denomination?
22. Would it be acceptable to other Baptist bodies?
23. Would it be received favorably by non-Baptist bodies?
24. Would it indicate any change in relationships?
25. Would it indicate any change in polity?



# CORNERSTONE CHURCH/SBC

...*JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.*" Ephesians 2:20

The Middle School

Sioux Center, Iowa

September 1, 1998

An open letter to: All members of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.  
From: C. Orville Kool, 315 Albany Avenue, SE, Orange City, Iowa 51041-1625  
Telephone: 712-737-6414. E-mail: cokool@juno.com  
Subject matter: A proposed name change for our denomination. (See enclosure)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

First, allow me to identify my wife Joyce and myself. Joyce was born in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. I was born in Sioux County, Iowa, where we now serve with the North American Mission Board, planting a new congregation in Sioux Center, Iowa. Most of our ministry has been in Illinois, including previous service with the former Home Mission Board Big Cities Program in Metro Chicago. Neither Joyce nor I have roots in the Southern Baptist Convention. We are Southern Baptists by strong personal conviction. We are denominational loyalists. For two years running, Cornerstone Baptist Mission has been the number one and number two congregation in per capita giving through the Cooperative Program here in the state of Iowa.

Our fervent desire is to see our denomination establish vibrant, growing churches, not only in the south, but also in the north where we are so few in number. As most of us know, this has not been happening on a large scale. What is our problem? We have failed to adapt ourselves to northern culture, "to become all things to all men". Far too often we are perceived as the unwanted invaders who carry with us baggage that goes all the way back to the Civil War.

A major cultural problem is our current denominational name. It no longer identifies the extent of our geography, and carries with it remnants of regional arrogance and pride. When we try to plant a Southern Baptist church here in Iowa, we meet with the same type of resistance and suspicion that would occur if someone would attempt to plant a "northern" Baptist church in Birmingham, Alabama. A denominational name is not a sacred thing, and we should be willing to change when such a name sets up barriers to the communication of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have already done that with the names North American Baptist Mission Board, and the International Mission Board. These changes show a Christian sensitivity that we now need to apply to the name of our beloved denomination. For the sake of souls for whom the Savior died, I urge you to pray with me, and work with me to bring about a change in the name of our denomination.

Sincerely in Christ our common Lord,



C. Orville Kool, D.Min.