

Resolution No. 1:

APPRECIATION

Whereas, this year's annual meeting has been guided prayerfully, fairly, and effectively by Manley Beasley Jr., Convention President, with the support and assistance of Dr. James D. "Sonny" Tucker, Executive Director, and the other dedicated staff and leaders of the Convention; and

Whereas, the staff and laity of First Baptist Church, Cabot, have provided excellent service and arrangements for the annual meeting; and

Whereas, the one hundred and sixty-eighth session has been ably organized by the Program Committee; therefore, be it

Resolved, that we, the messengers to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, meeting at First Baptist Church, Cabot, Arkansas, October 26-27, 2021, express our deep appreciation to our president, executive director, convention officers, the staff and members of First Baptist Church, Cabot, and the Program Committee for their diligent and sacrificial service in the successful preparation and guidance of the one hundred and sixty-eighth session of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Resolution No. 2

ON REMOVAL OF AUTHORIZATION FOR CASINO GAMING IN POPE COUNTY

Whereas, this body resolved in 2018 to “encourage all Arkansas voters to cast votes against Issue No. 4 [hereinafter Amendment 100], denying the gambling industry the opportunity to prey on the weakest, most vulnerable, and most desperate of our fellow Arkansans”; and

Whereas, this body resolved in 2019 to “make every effort to assist in the [statewide ballot] initiative including prayer, voting, funding, and volunteer labor” if local residents pursued an effort to remove Pope County as an authorized location for casino gaming under Amendment 100; and

Whereas, the crime, addiction, social disruption, warped economics, and turbulent family life caused by the predatory gambling conducted by the casinos will be significant burdens on local residents; and

Whereas, the casinos and associated enterprises will cannibalize existing businesses, raise unemployment, drain off essential sales tax, and put stress on law enforcement and social service providers; and

Whereas, gambling is an activity that violates the biblical principles of the sovereignty of God, the work ethic, not coveting another’s possessions, rejecting materialism, protecting the weak and vulnerable, and loving our neighbors as ourselves; and

Whereas, on the November 6, 2018, general election ballot, Arkansans voted for Amendment 100 by a margin of 54% for and 46% against; and

Whereas, Amendment 100 requires the issuance of one license to conduct casino gaming in each of four locations: Oaklawn Racing and Gaming in Hot Springs, Southland Gaming and Racing in West Memphis, Jefferson County, and Pope County; and

Whereas, the voters in those four locations had no more influence than any of the state’s other voters in deciding to grant or deny those casino gambling licenses and an affirmative vote on Amendment 100 by the state’s voters automatically imposes casinos on those four locations; and

Whereas, Pope County voters voted against Amendment 100 by a margin of 60% against and only 40% for; and

Whereas, local Pope County citizens by the name of “Fair Play for Arkansas – 2022” have begun a statewide voter initiative to remove Pope County from Amendment 100; therefore, be it

Resolved, that we, the messengers to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, meeting at First Baptist Church, Cabot, Arkansas, October 26-27, 2021, encourage all Arkansas Baptists to support their brothers and sisters in Pope County as they continue to fight to save their county from the ills of the casino gaming industry; and be it finally

Resolved, that Arkansas Baptists reaffirm their position to make every effort to assist in the initiative including prayer, voting, funding, and volunteer labor.

Resolution No. 3

ON THE EQUALITY ACT

Whereas, all persons are created in God's image (Genesis 1:27), are made to glorify Him (Isaiah 43:7), and based upon these truths, possess inherent dignity; and

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

Whereas, the Bible give us clear instruction and boundaries with regard to what constitutes God-honoring expression of human sexuality (Genesis 2:24; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Romans 1:26-27); and

Whereas, the Equality Act seeks to revise the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by adding a prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity; and

Whereas, the First Amendment of the Constitution prohibits the Congress from making any law prohibiting the free exercise of religion; and

Whereas, if enacted, the Equality Act would explicitly exclude claims by faith-based entities under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act that was passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton in 1993 in relation to the Equality Act and would explicitly permit the government to place substantial burdens upon religious exercise without having to demonstrate any compelling justification in order to do so; and

Whereas, this change in the status of the right to free exercise enjoyed by all Americans, if it were to take place, would bring sweeping historic changes to religious liberty with devastating effect to this foundational freedom; and

Whereas, faith-based charities whose core religious beliefs about human dignity, sexuality, gender, and marriage shape their ministry policies would be forced under the Equality Act to choose between freely exercising those core religious beliefs or abandoning their ministries; and

Whereas, this sort of governmental punishment against faith-based charities for serving the common good according to their cherished beliefs would be unprecedented; and

Whereas, the Equality Act would empower the government to punish individuals whose vocations include creative expression or require professional licensure because of their sincere

and reasonable convictions about gender and sexuality; and

Whereas, the Equality Act would coerce healthcare providers to participate in and provide abortions, hormone therapies, and other procedures which may violate their deeply held religious beliefs; and

Whereas, the Equality Act would undermine the bipartisan, nearly half-century old Hyde Amendment, which protects federal taxpayer dollars from funding abortion; and

Whereas, the Equality Act would undermine decades of hard-fought civil rights protections for women and girls by threatening competition in sports and disregarding the privacy concerns women rightly have about sharing sleeping quarters and intimate facilities with members of the opposite sex; therefore, be it

Resolved, that we, the messengers to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, meeting at First Baptist Church, Cabot, Arkansas, October 26-27, 2021, extend love and compassion to those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender and invite all members of this community to turn from their sins and trust in Christ and experience renewal in the gospel; and, be it further

Resolved, that we proclaim that Christ offers forgiveness of sin for those who turn from their sins and believe on Christ; and, be it further

Resolved, that we believe effective Gospel ministry to individuals who consider themselves part of the LGBTQ community requires that we speak to them and about them with respect and Christlike love, while holding firmly to our biblical convictions on these issues; and, be it further

Resolved, that we, therefore, encourage our fellow Arkansas Baptists to educate themselves with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and to engage in discussion of the Equality Act and related issues with this in mind; and, be it further

Resolved, that we strongly oppose the Equality Act and urge Congress to reject this dangerous legislation and also urge our Arkansas legislators to reject any similar legislation that may flow from the Equality Act, which represents one of the greatest threats to religious liberty in our nation's history; and, be it finally

Resolved, that we affirm the role of churches in providing compassionate care, biblical truth, and restorative hope to men, women, and children, regardless of sexual or gender identity, while joyfully celebrating God's good design of males and females and heterosexuality as clearly expressed in Scripture.

Resolution No. 4

ON ABOLISHING ABORTION

Whereas, from the moment of fertilization, all humans are created in God's image by, through and for Jesus to the glory of God, and all souls belonging to Him (Genesis 1:27, 4:1, 21:2; Isaiah 7:14; Colossians 1:16; Romans 11:36; Ezekial 18:4); and

Whereas, as God's image-bearers, all humans both display His divine worth, power, and attributes, and possess the same objective worth before God, not varying on the basis of incidental characteristics such as ethnicity, age, size, means of conception, mental development, physical development, gender, potential, or contribution to society (Romans 1:19-20; Genesis 1:27, 9:6; Matthew 18:6); and

Whereas, to murder any preborn image-bearer is a sin, violating both the natural law of retributive justice as set forth in the Noahic covenant, as well as the sixth commandment forbidding murder, and as such, is ultimately an assault on God's image, seeking to usurp God's sovereignty as Creator (Genesis 9:5-6; Exodus 20:13; Proverbs 6:17); and

Whereas, God's Word clearly declares that all human life is a sacred gift and that His Law is supreme over man's life and man's law (Psalm 127:3-5, 139:13-16; Romans 2:15-16; Acts 10:42, 17:31; 1 Corinthians 4:5); and

Whereas, God commands His own people to "rescue those who are being taken away to death" and holds them responsible and without excuse when they fail to do so (Proverbs 24:11-12); and

Whereas, in 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States rendered an iniquitous decision on Roe v. Wade, and in doing so deprived the innocent of their rights and usurped God, who sovereignly ordained their authority (Isaiah 5:23, 10:1-2; Psalm 2; Matthew 22:21; John 19:11; Acts 4:19, 5:29; Romans 13:1); and

Whereas, in the Roe v. Wade decision, the Supreme Court of the United States subverted the U. S. Constitution namely, the Preamble, as well as the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments without any legal authority (Article 6, Clause 2 "Supremacy Clause"); and

Whereas, since 1980, the Southern Baptist Convention and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention have passed many resolutions reaffirming the importance of human life at all stages of development, our repentance is still lacking as we consistently have stopped short of calling for the immediate abolition of abortion without exception or compromise; and

Whereas, our confessional statement, The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, according to Article XV, affirms that children “from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord,” and further affirms that Southern Baptists are mandated by Scripture to “speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death,” therefore, be it

Resolved, that we, the messengers to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, meeting at First Baptist Church, Cabot, Arkansas, October 26-27, 2021, do state unequivocally that abortion is murder, and we reject any position that allows for any exceptions to the legal protection of our preborn neighbors, compromises God’s holy standard of justice, or promotes any God-hating partiality (Psalm 82:1-4, 94:6; Isaiah 10:1-2; Proverbs 24:11); and, be it further

Resolved, that we recognize ectopic pregnancies are not murder by abortion, but tragedies during which medical triage is necessary, with doctors never ceasing to treat both mother and baby as human beings created in God’s image, and upholding the Hippocratic Oath by exhausting all possible options to save as many human lives as they can; and, be it further

Resolved, that because abolishing abortion is a gospel issue, we will call upon governing authorities at all levels to continue to faithfully execute their responsibilities as God’s servants of justice, and working with all urgency to enact legislation using the full weight of their office to interpose on behalf of the preborn, abolishing abortion immediately, without compromise; and, be it finally

Resolved, that as Arkansas Baptists we will engage, with God’s help, in establishing equal justice and protection for the preborn according to the authority of God’s Word as well as local and federal law and call upon pastors and entity leaders to use their God-given gifts of preaching, teaching, and leading with one unified, principled, prophetic voice to abolish abortion.

Resolution No. 5

ON RACE AND RACIAL RECONCILIATION

Whereas, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17); and

Whereas, *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* states, “All Scripture is totally true and trustworthy” (Article I); and

Whereas, “God created man in His own image” (Genesis 1:27); and

Whereas, “From one man [God] has made every nationality to live over the whole earth” (Acts 17:26); and

Whereas, in his prophetic vision John saw “a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9-10); and

Whereas, “Through faith [we] are all sons of God in Christ Jesus... There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26-28); and

Whereas, “God...has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18); and

Whereas, *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* states, “Christians should oppose racism” (Article XV); therefore, be it

Resolved, that we, the messengers to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, meeting at First Baptist Church, Cabot, Arkansas, October 26-27, 2021, affirm the sufficiency of Scripture on race and racial reconciliation; and, be it further

Resolved, that we reaffirm our agreement with historic, biblically faithful Arkansas Baptist condemnation of racism in all forms; and, be it further

Resolved, that we reject any theory or worldview, such as critical race theory and intersectionality (CRT/I), that finds the ultimate identity of human beings in ethnicity or in any other group distinctions, rather than in our creator God according to Scripture; and, be it further

Resolved, that we reject any theory or worldview that sees the primary problem of humanity as anything other than sin against God and the ultimate solution as anything other than redemption found only in Christ; and, be it further

Resolved, that we, therefore, reject any theory or worldview that denies that racism, oppression, or discrimination is rooted, ultimately, in anything other than sin; and, be it further

Resolved, that, understanding we live in a fallen world, we incorporate in this resolution our affirmation of the 1995 Resolution On Racial Reconciliation On The 150th Anniversary Of The Southern Baptist Convention, which included, “That we apologize to all African-Americans for condoning and/or perpetuating individual and systemic racism in our lifetime; and we genuinely repent of racism of which we have been guilty, whether consciously (Psalm 19:13) or unconsciously (Leviticus 4:27),” applying this disposition to every instance of racism; and, be it finally

Resolved, that we affirm that our reconciliation in Christ give us the opportunity and responsibility to pursue reconciliation with others so that we can display and share the hope of the gospel with the world.

Resolution No. 6

ON ARKANSAS BAPTIST NEWSMAGAZINE

Whereas, the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine provided Arkansas Baptists with accurate and dependable news coverage on events related to our convention for over 100 years; and

Whereas, through the years many editors and staff members have served faithfully and loyally to provide this ministry to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention; and

Whereas, the ABN ceased to operate as an agency in 2019, the ministry of the Arkansas Baptist News was assumed by the Executive Board of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), where it had its origins; and

Whereas, the transition of Arkansas Baptist News from an agency function to one conducted by the Executive Board of the ABSC was made to better serve news consumers' with digitally-delivered information; and providing that as an in-house ministry by the ABSC was deemed better utilization of time and resources; therefore, be it

Resolved, that we, the messengers to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, meeting at First Baptist Church, Cabot, Arkansas, October 26-27, 2021, express our appreciations for over 100 years of service and ministry promoting missions and the mission of our state convention by the ABN and its editors, writers and staff.