

Appreciation

WHEREAS, We, the messengers to the 184th annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, meeting in Columbia, have been received with love, challenged in faith, and touched by God's grace in diverse ways; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we express our gratitude to the City of Columbia and to Palmetto Baptist Medical Center for their cooperation in assisting South Carolina Baptists with parking, directions, and other incidental events; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we express our appreciation to the members, staff and pastor of First Baptist Church, Columbia, and to Baptist churches and associations in the Columbia area who helped facilitate this meeting; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we express our appreciation to the South Carolina Baptist Convention officers, the Convention staff, and the various committees, platform personalities, groups, musicians, singers, speakers, and worship leaders for their able and inspirational labor among us and leadership before us; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we offer sincere thanks to our Heavenly Father for the experience of life, the opportunity of service, and the joy of fellowship with each other in the gathering of South Carolina Baptists. To Him be the glory now and forever.

Prayer at Public Gatherings

WHEREAS, Genuine faith, by definition, cannot be coerced or legislated; and

WHEREAS, There is a pervasive hostility toward Christianity and religion in the media, the entertainment industry, the political system, the public education system and in the courts; and

WHEREAS, Many Supreme Court decisions have diminished the opportunity for Christians to exercise their right to free speech and religious expression in the public square; and

WHEREAS, Prayer cannot be a genuine response to God unless it is voluntary; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists historically have affirmed the right of voluntary prayer in public places; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we, the messengers to the 184th annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, call upon the courts and public officials not to blur the distinction between government action, which the Constitution may prohibit, and private religious expression, which the Constitution must protect; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we ask our President and congress to help reverse the trends of hostility toward Christianity by passing laws that place no greater restrictions on individual Christians than on non-Believers; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we do commend the Town Council of Great Falls, SC, and the SC State Attorney General, Henry McMaster, for supporting Christian principles by affirming the right of individual members of the Council to pray before going into business sessions; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we encourage Christians to assert their Constitutional right to free speech in the public square by praying to the Father through Jesus Christ, the Son.

Selection of Judges in South Carolina

WHEREAS, The South Carolina General Assembly presently elects judges through a Judicial Merit Selection Commission composed of ten members; and

WHEREAS, This Commission adopts its own rules concerning the selection process; and

WHEREAS, The Commission is composed of five members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives (three active members of the General Assembly and two members of the general public), three members appointed by the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and two members appointed by the President, *Pro Tempore* of the Senate (of these appointments, three must be active members of the Senate and two must be elected from the general public); and

WHEREAS, We believe a broader cross section of our population should participate in the selection of judges; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we, the messengers to the 184th annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, respectfully request that the judicial nominees' names and a brief biography be published on the Legislature's website; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we respectfully request the judicial selection process be expanded to provide for more comment and involvement from the public at large.

Human Trafficking

WHEREAS, Some 50,000 aliens are smuggled into the United States annually; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of State estimates more than one million men, women and children are trafficked around the world each year, generally for the purpose of domestic servitude, sweatshop labor, or sexual exploitation; and

WHEREAS, This practice generates an estimated \$9.5 billion a year by abusing and exploiting the most innocent and vulnerable people; and

WHEREAS, Profiteering human traffickers endanger the lives of countless aliens while compromising the integrity of our immigration laws; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we, the messengers to the 184th annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, commend Senator Lindsey Graham, a member of Corinth Baptist Church, Seneca, for standing in the gap for these kidnapped victims by introducing legislation against human trafficking; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we condemn the practice of trafficking and exploitation of human beings and call upon our governmental entities at the state and federal levels to combat such practices vigorously.

SC Baptist Involvement in Education

WHEREAS, South Carolina Baptists have a long history of involvement in spiritual and academic education at the primary, elementary, secondary, and college levels; and

WHEREAS, This involvement is broad and deep, taking place on a daily basis through public, private, church, and home schools; and

WHEREAS, Christian involvement is manifested not only in professional teaching and administration but also in the crucial area of parenthood; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we, the messengers to the 184th annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, celebrate the diversity of participation manifested by the variety of intentional choices South Carolina Baptist families are making in regard to their children's education; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we call upon all South Carolina Baptists to make the responsible, intelligent, and prayerful choices in education: to be actively involved in the academic and spiritual development of children.

Expanded Gambling in South Carolina

WHEREAS, Christians traditionally have offered four reasons to be concerned about gambling: first, because games focus on acquiring wealth, gambling can encourage the sins of greed and covetousness; second, the emphasis on chance can be an occasion for despair and distrust in God's promises; third, gambling can lead us to misuse stewardship over our time, talents, and resources; and, fourth, gambling can place vulnerable members of our communities at risk of great harm; and

WHEREAS, Gambling is the antithesis of the Biblical understanding of stewardship; and

WHEREAS, Jesus calls His followers to make wise investment of their talents, time and money, gambling is predicated on a very different philosophy of getting something important for nothing or very little, work not as important as luck, and a person's fondest dreams can come true if he gets lucky; and

WHEREAS, Gambling is a compulsion and an addiction which destroys individuals and families; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we, the messengers to the 184th annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, believe that God has entrusted this world to our care—its resources, our own life spans, and our money—and God calls us to work diligently, be frugal, and invest wisely; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage all citizens of South Carolina, specifically Southern Baptists, to become educated and thoroughly informed about all aspects of the gambling question; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage all citizens of South Carolina, specifically Southern Baptists, to contact their elected representatives to voice opposition to the Santee bingo casino, "cruise to nowhere" casino boats, or any other site where electronic games are proposed; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage all pastors of South Carolina, specifically Southern Baptists, to educate and thoroughly inform their congregations about all aspects of the gambling question; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we reaffirm our opposition to commercialized or expanded gambling, including a bingo casino at Santee, "cruise to nowhere" casino boats, or any other site within our state; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage all congregations of South Carolina, specifically Southern Baptists, to use Biblical discipline of members who participate in the promotion of or are otherwise involved in gambling; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we urge all Christians to acquaint themselves with this issue and undertake political action by using their influence to voice their opposition to gambling and, as Christian citizens, to vote for candidates at all levels of government who oppose gambling.

WMU and the Baptist World Alliance

WHEREAS, The Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) has a long and storied history of vital support of South Baptist missions, both home and abroad, and acknowledging that millions of dollars have been raised, thousands of mission projects supported, and countless souls won into the Kingdom of God because of WMU missions support; and

WHEREAS, The WMU is an auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention, and in most of the various state conventions, with total autonomy in its positions and relationships; and

WHEREAS, The national organization of the WMU has been emphatic in its decision to continue its relationship with the Baptist World Alliance even though the Southern Baptist Convention has withdrawn its support and membership; and

WHEREAS, The Baptist World Alliance has growing ties with organizations whose theology departs radically from historic Southern Baptist theology; differences include modes of baptism other than immersion, various views of the authority of Scripture, and praying to a female deity; and

WHEREAS, Many of our godly South Carolina Baptist laywomen who have served faithfully for years in WMU would be highly affronted by the theological ramifications because of the decision made by the national WMU regarding the Baptist World Alliance; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we, the messengers to the 184th annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, respectfully state to both the national and state organizations of the Woman's Missionary Union that they reconsider their relationship with the Baptist World Alliance and its Women's Department; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we affirm the South Carolina Baptist Women's Missionary Union's longstanding decision not to forward or channel any financial or other support to the Women's Department of the Baptist World Alliance.