

RESOLVED, That we renew our call on South Carolina local, state, and federal elected officials to ensure complete religious liberty for all, as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we commit to pray for those who are persecuted or discriminated against due to their religious beliefs.

2018 Resolutions Committee Report

We appreciate the privilege of serving as the 2018 Resolutions Committee. We prayerfully considered resolutions of substance and meaning for the messengers of this Convention. We thoroughly discussed the value and wisdom of the thoughts included in each proposal and we addressed issues that impact our people, our churches, and the Kingdom of Christ.

We present this report to the messengers of the 198th annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention in North Charleston, South Carolina, on November 14, 2018.

Disposition of received proposals:

1. Appreciation, presented as Resolution 1, submitted by the Resolutions Committee
2. Medical Marijuana, amended and presented as Resolution 2, submitted by the Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee
3. Racial Reconciliation, amended and presented as Resolution 3, submitted by Marshall Blalock, Pastor, Charleston First Baptist Church
4. Purity in Ministry Leadership, amended and presented as Resolution 4, submitted as Immorality in Ministry by the Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee
5. Sports Betting, amended and presented as Resolution 5, submitted by the Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee
6. Religious Liberty, amended and presented as Resolution 6, submitted by the Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee
7. People with Developmental Disabilities, respectfully considered, submitted by Timothy McDaniel, Pastor, Broadacres Baptist Church, Cayce
8. South Carolina Baptists and Racial History, respectfully considered, submitted as a recommendation by Donald A. Copeland, Member, Overbrook Baptist Church, Greenville
9. South Carolina Baptists and the Equal Justice Initiative (Montgomery, Alabama, launched April 2018), respectfully considered, submitted as a recommendation by Donald A. Copeland, Member, Overbrook Baptist Church, Greenville

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Finley, Chairman
Darren Rood, Vice Chairman
Chip Coleman
Chip Robinson
Kathy Robinson
Mike Sterlachini
James West

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2018 Report of the Resolutions Committee

APPRECIATION

WHEREAS, The messengers of the 198th annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention have been the recipients of the gracious hospitality of the staff and members of Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, Building Bridges across every barrier by the power of the gospel at the invitation of the Savior is the theme of the 2018 annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Augustus “Robbie” Robinson, Pastor of Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church, has provided excellent support for the South Carolina Baptist Convention annual meeting and other related meetings; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Eric Manning graciously invited South Carolina Baptists to worship at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, otherwise known as Mother Emanuel; and

WHEREAS, Worshipping together at Mount Moriah and at Mother Emanuel is historic, uplifting, and it demonstrates a great desire and commitment of Christian leaders in South Carolina to build bridges across denominational and racial lines to further God’s reconciling work among all people; and

WHEREAS, The president, officers, committees, and platform personnel have conducted the affairs of this annual meeting with dignity and in a Christlike manner; and

WHEREAS, We, the messengers meeting at Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church on November 13–14, 2018, have been received with enthusiastic affection, encouraged in ministry, and disciplined by dear friends to reach all people with the gospel; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we express our profound gratitude to the Lord and all those whose efforts have contributed to the joyful spirit, evangelistic impact, and overall effectiveness of this annual meeting.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

WHEREAS, America’s drug problem includes widespread use of marijuana in various forms and an alarming trend of state-sanctioned, for-profit marijuana businesses; and

WHEREAS, This trend indicates widespread social acceptance of drug abuse and is a factor in other serious social problems such as crime, family disruption, and traffic accidents; and

WHEREAS, A 2016 World Health Organization report and a 2017 National Academy of Sciences study shows that marijuana is addictive and harmful; and

WHEREAS, Other studies have shown that marijuana users are more than twice as likely to move on to abuse prescription opioids; and

WHEREAS, A growing segment of our society and government leaders embraces and perpetuates the use of recreational and/or medical marijuana; and

WHEREAS, Legislation of recreational or medical marijuana cannot be written to address all forms and instances of use, misuse, and abuse; and

WHEREAS, A 2017 study released by the Journal of American Medical Association (Psychiatry) found that rates of marijuana use and addiction increased significantly more in states that passed medical marijuana laws as compared to states that have not; and

WHEREAS, Many cases of illness have been reported due to synthetic products falsely labeled as cannabidiol, or CBD; and

WHEREAS, Legalizing marijuana for medical purposes will encourage and legitimize recreational use; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the South Carolina Baptist Convention meeting in North Charleston, November 13-14, 2018, are opposed to the legalization of medical and recreational marijuana; and be it further

RESOLVED, That non-hallucinogenic CBD component treatments that are FDA approved, prescribed by licensed medical doctors, and dispensed by licensed pharmacies would be acceptable to help certain severely ill patients; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That decisions about access to prescribed and over-the-counter medication be guided by medical science and ethics, not cultural or political ideology.

RACIAL RECONCILIATION

WHEREAS, Building Bridges is the theme of the 2018 annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, God has created all people in His own image (Genesis 1:27) and has made, from one man and one woman, all peoples who live on the earth (Genesis 3:20, Acts 17:26); and

WHEREAS, God loves the world (John 3:16) and, in Christ, is reconciling to Himself people from every tribe, tongue, and nation (Revelation 5:9); and

WHEREAS, Jesus’ atonement on the cross forms people from differing races into one body, breaks down racial barriers, and puts hostility to death (Ephesians 2:14–16); and

WHEREAS, Racial division and racial bias are sin and evil, disregarding the image of God in all people and denying that all believers are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:27–28); and

WHEREAS, Jesus commands Christians to “. . . love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind . . . [and to] love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37–40); and

WHEREAS, The gospel is the only true hope for racial reconciliation and the means by which “God’s multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church . . .” (Ephesians 3:10); and

WHEREAS, Unity goes beyond intellectual agreement as Christians’ hearts grow to have the same concern for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25); and

WHEREAS, Unity among Christians requires an intentional and proactive pursuit of healing (Ephesians 4:1–3); and

WHEREAS, The implications of the gospel require Christians to work toward biblical justice and peace (Luke 4:16–21); and

WHEREAS, The South Carolina Baptist Convention meeting in November 13–14, 2018, is being hosted by the Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church, a traditionally black congregation associated with the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina; and

WHEREAS, The South Carolina Baptist Convention’s evening worship service on November 13 is being hosted by the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, where nine black Christians were murdered in a racially motivated hate crime on June 17, 2015, and where the power of God’s grace was so powerfully displayed in the midst of tragedy; and

WHEREAS, The vision of the South Carolina Baptist Convention is to see every life saturated and transformed by the hope of the gospel in South Carolina and beyond; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the South Carolina Baptist Convention meeting in North Charleston, November 13-14, 2018, make every effort to build unity among all who have faith in Christ Jesus according to his prayer as recorded in John 17:22–23; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we renounce all forms of racism and any attempt to distort the Bible to justify the evil of racism as sin; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we lament the ways in which racism and racial superiority has, at different times and in various ways, plagued our communities, our churches, and our state Convention; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we build relationships across the racial divide by listening, by serving, and by seeking to understand those who are of a different race; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we, as individuals and churches, practice sincere humility “consider[ing] others as more important than [ourselves],” so that all people of differing races might feel welcome in our lives and in our churches (Philippians 2:3); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we intentionally seek racial diversity in all positions of leadership in churches, committees, Associations, and the Convention; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage churches to unite for special occasions as a practical way of fostering greater love across racial lines; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we advocate racial unity to create a more biblically just and peaceful society; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we profess our commitment to Build Bridges with the love of our Savior to make disciples of Jesus Christ across every cultural barrier to the glory of God the Father (Matthew 28:18–20, Acts 1:8).

PURITY IN MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

WHEREAS, Pastors and ministry leaders are held to the highest standard for doctrine, speech, and conduct, the standard being the very character and example of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, Pastors and ministry leaders are to be examples by their faith in Christ and their lives of ongoing repentance of sin (1 Timothy 4:12); and

WHEREAS, Scripture is clear on the imperative of sexual purity among believers and especially among pastors and ministry leaders as a part of a testimony to God’s holiness; and

WHEREAS, Headlines in recent months have reminded us of the heartbreaking moral failures of people in ministry, and we in South Carolina have not been exempt from those; and

WHEREAS, Sexual immorality and other violations of ministerial integrity egregiously pervert and demean the image of God and have tragic consequences for the ministry leader, families, churches, and for others impacted by those transgressions; and

WHEREAS, To minimize, excuse, or deny the presence of sin is disobedient to the call to holiness among God’s people; and

WHEREAS, God’s Word teaches, “. . . sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you, as is proper for saints” (Ephesians 5:3); and

WHEREAS, God’s Spirit is grieved; the Church is defiled; and our witness is eclipsed and damaged by our failure to obey God; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the South Carolina Baptist Convention meeting in North Charleston, November 13–14, 2018, denounce any behavior that compromises the New Testament standard of a ministry leader’s requirement to be above reproach; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call upon pastors, ministry leaders, entity leaders, and denominational representatives to pursue moral and sexual purity in all relationships and to guard their hearts, minds, and doctrine scrupulously, even as all believers should seek the same standards for themselves (1 Timothy 4:16); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we exhort churches to exercise appropriate redemptive church discipline for addressing the disqualifying sin of ministry leaders (Matthew 18:15–20, 1 Timothy 5:19–21); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we covenant one with another to recommit ourselves to confession and repentance and to put sin to death (1 Corinthians 9:27); and be it finally

RESOLVED, That having humbled ourselves in repentance before the Lord, with full consciousness of God’s judgement (2 Corinthians 5:10), we will return to the Great Commission work before us with newfound fervor and purpose, and we will not allow ourselves, our ministries, or our Convention to lose sight of the great and glorious task before us—the fulfillment of the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ through the unflagging evangelization of the lost and discipleship of Christ’s Church.

SPORTS BETTING

WHEREAS, South Carolina Baptists have a long history of opposing gambling in all its various forms; and

WHEREAS, The biblical witness is clear that one of the vital ways we love God is by loving our neighbor and gambling violates this principle causing financial loss and harm to many (1 Timothy 6:10); and

WHEREAS, Sports betting is unmistakably another subtle and vicious form of gambling; and

WHEREAS, Gambling preys on those in our communities who are most economically vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, Gambling violates the principle of lordship, tempting individuals to trust chance rather than God (Proverbs 28:19); and

WHEREAS, Gambling violates the principle of work, looking to gain something for nothing, hoping for easy money rather than pursuing responsible industry, investment, and labor (Proverbs 13:11, Deuteronomy 28:12); and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court ruling in *Murphy v. The National Collegiate Athletic Association* struck down the *Professional and Amateur Sports Act of 1992* granting states the right to sanction widespread sports betting; and

WHEREAS, Out-of-state corporations and businesses are investing millions of dollars in a bold effort to change state laws to accept state-sanctioned sports betting as an everyday event, which will quickly expand, making it harder to regulate; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we urge our fellow South Carolina Baptists and all other followers of Christ not to participate in sports betting of any kind so as to be above reproach, be faithful stewards, and live in the best interest of their families and communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage our Convention leaders and pastors to educate South Carolina Baptists on the deceptive sin and the negative consequences of gambling and sports betting; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge the members of the South Carolina General Assembly to reject state-sanctioned sports betting and any other expansion of gambling; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we express our prayerful support and strong encouragement for those who are providing courageous leadership in vigorously opposing the legalization of sports betting.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

WHEREAS, God alone is Lord of the conscience and has granted religious liberty to mankind (Genesis 2:16–17, Joshua 24:14–15, Romans 10:13); and

WHEREAS, God has granted authority to government as a servant for good (Romans 13:1–7); and

WHEREAS, The First Amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees religious liberty for those under its jurisdiction, declaring that, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government [sic] for a redress of grievances”; and

WHEREAS, The 2000 Baptist Faith & Message affirms, in article XVII—Religious Liberty, “. . . The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others . . .”; and

WHEREAS, Certain local governments in South Carolina have violated the inalienable right to religious liberty granted by God and the United States by restricting churches’ access to public spaces otherwise available for use by civic, political, business, social groups, and others, as well as the freedom of religious expression in public assemblies; and

WHEREAS, Municipalities, neighborhoods, businesses, schools, and families benefit from the ongoing prayers and good works of Christians and churches in their localities; and

WHEREAS, Jesus continues to faithfully fulfill his promise to build his Church (Matthew 16:18) resulting in new congregations and churches being raised up to fulfill the Great Commission; and

WHEREAS, Those new churches need spaces in which to gather for corporate worship; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers of the South Carolina Baptist Convention meeting in North Charleston November 13-14, 2018, declare our full and unqualified support for the free exercise of religious liberty, and voice our concern over any attempt to hinder or suppress religious expression; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge those in the legal profession to engage in defending the rights of those individuals, groups, or churches facing discrimination for their religious beliefs; and be it further