

February 3, 1954

127 Ninth Avenue, North

Nashville, Tennessee

HOLD FOR RELEASE FEBRUARY 11, 1954SOUTHERN BAPTISTS
CONTINUE TO GROW

NASHVILLE, Tenn.--(BP)--Southern Baptists still continue to grow according to statistics released today by J. P. Edmunds, Nashville, Tenn., secretary of the Department of Survey, Statistics and Information, Baptist Sunday School Board.

Total gifts to all causes jumped 12.4 per cent over 1952's total giving, but mission gifts went up only 5.7 per cent. Total gifts to all causes were \$278,851,129, or \$35.36 per capita, during 1953 with \$48,427,760, or \$6.14 per capita, going to missions. The per capita giving increased 8.9 per cent for total gifts and 2.3 per cent for missions.

Six hundred and thirty-one new churches were reported for 1953 to bring the total to 29,496, a 2.2 per cent gain over the 28,865 reported for 1952.

Full-time churches over the Convention now number 19,295 as compared with 17,802 in 1952. Of the remaining churches, 292 are three-quarter-time and 7,573 are half-time. The number of three-quarter-time churches showed a decrease of 50 in 1953 while the number of half-time churches decreased 391.

Almost half of the Southern Baptist churches, 14,688, are classified as open country churches, while another 4,906 are known as village churches. Town churches showed an increase of 4.0 per cent to bring their total to 3,959. Convention-wide city churches totaled 5,943 in 1953, a gain of 620 or 11.6 per cent over last year.

Church property valuation rose to \$1,020,504,214, an increase of \$129,806,875 of 1952's \$890,697,339, or 14.6 per cent.

The statistics revealed that 361,835 people were baptized into membership of the churches over the Southern Baptist Convention, bringing the total membership to 7,886,016. This is a net increase of 251,523, or 3.3 per cent. Additions by letter in 1953 were 472,300.

Sunday school enrolment was 5,759,128, a gain of 268,072, or 4.9 per cent over 1952. Seven hundred thirty-nine new Sunday schools were reported bringing the 1953 total to 28,779.

Evidence of continued growth is shown by the 1,234 new Training Unions reported. This brings the 1953 total to 19,015, a 6.9 per cent gain over the

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17,781 Training Unions reported for 1952. Gain in Training Union enrolment was 172,251 or 10.3 per cent to bring the total to 1,849,544.

The Woman's Missionary Union reported 1,188,080 members in 1953 as compared with 1,143,993 in 1952, an increase of 3.9 per cent.

The Brotherhood, Southern Baptist men's organization, saw a 13.3 gain in the membership of Brotherhoods. The enrolment stood at 214,486 in 1952 whereas 1953 saw an increase to 242,918.

Vacation Bible schools last summer enrolled 2,108,370, a gain of 189,317, or 9.9 per cent over 1952's enrolment of 1,919,053.

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