

February 11, 1964

SBC Moves Toward  
\$100 Million Gift Mark

Important: For release to afternoon papers February 18.

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists continue to press toward the \$100 million mark in annual mission gifts and benevolences, according to the release of 1963 Southern Baptist Convention statistics by the research and statistics department of the SBC Sunday School Board.

Mission gifts through churches totalled \$96,077,109, an increase of \$4,643,264 over the 1962 figure. Total gifts for all causes climbed to \$556,042,694 in 1963, a 2.8 per cent increase. On a per member basis, mission gifts were \$9.24 and total gifts were \$53.49.

Membership of Convention churches again rose, according to Martin Bradley, secretary of the research and statistics department, who serves as the denomination's statistician.

Although the rise was less than that for the preceding year, membership was reported to be 10,395,940, or 202,888 greater than in 1962.

By location, the 1963 membership was distributed as follows: open country, 2,508,228; village, 754,032; town, 1,175,002; and small city (2500 - 9999 population) 1,745,683; large city (10,000 or more population) "downtown," 1,180,045; large city "neighborhood," 2,084,872; and large city "suburban," 948,078.

Latest statistics of The Methodist Church placed that denomination's total membership at 10,234,986. There is a five-month difference in reporting times of Methodists and Southern Baptists.

Methodists reported their latest membership figure in September, 1963. Southern Baptists release their annual statistics in February for the preceding year.

There are Southern Baptist churches in all 50 states, and in the District of Columbia. The number of churches topped the 33,000 mark for the first time, reaching 33,126.

These churches are classified into seven categories: open country, 15,243; village, 4,387; town, 3,651; small city (2,500-9,999 population), 3,418; large city (10,000 or more population) "downtown," 890; large city "neighborhood," 3,260; and large city "suburban," 2,277.

The largest church reported was First Baptist, Dallas, Texas, with a membership of 13,142 and total gifts of \$1,459,921.

Practically all churches reported having a Sunday school, accounting for an enrolment of 7,610,727. With an increase of 40,000, the Convention's Sunday school enrolment maintains its position as the largest in any denomination in the United States. Vacation Bible school enrolment was 3,176,307.

Training Union, Southern Baptists' Sunday evening study group for all ages, had an enrolment of 2,748,553, a very slight gain over the previous year's total. Woman's Mission Union enrolment veered upward to 1,505,413, exceeding 1962 enrolment by 16,061.

Men's Brotherhood enrolment registered an increase of 4,000 to reach 389,995. The number of Royal Ambassadors (boys) climbed to 244,656, a gain of 2,490.

Enrolment in the music ministry zoomed to a record 859,608, or 68,131 more than in 1962. Counted in this enrolment are members of choirs, ensembles, instrumental groups and other activities for all ages.

The estimated value of property of churches (buildings and land) hit the \$2-3/4 billion mark in 1963, a step up of more than \$183 million over the 1962 figure.

Approximately 17,000 churches own the home occupied by their pastor. "The upward spiral of church building and remodeling begun in recent years shows no sign of letting up," Bradley said.

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Note: Release on February 18, 1964, afternoon papers.

1963 SOUTHERN BAPTIST STATISTICS

	<u>1963</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>Numerical change</u>	<u>Percent change</u>
Associations	1,172	1,162	10	.9
Churches	33,126	32,892	234	.7
Baptisms	355,325	381,510	-26,185	-6.9
Additions by letter	549,049	569,540	-20,491	-3.6
Total membership	10,395,940	10,193,052	202,888	2.0
Sunday school enrolment	7,610,727	7,570,455	40,272	.5
Vacation Bible school enrolment	3,176,307	3,176,559	-252	-.01
Training Union enrolment	2,748,553	2,747,581	972	.03
Woman's Mission Union enrolment	1,505,413	1,489,352	16,061	1.1
Men's Brotherhood enrolment	389,995	385,897	4,098	1.1
Royal Ambassador enrolment	244,656	242,166	2,490	1.0
Music ministry enrolment	859,608	791,477	68,131	8.6
Value church property	\$2,751,429,716	2,567,836,860	183,592,856	7.1
Total gifts	\$ 556,042,694	540,811,457	15,231,237	2.8
Total mission gifts	\$ 96,077,109	91,433,845	4,643,264	5.1

Research and Statistics Department

Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention

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