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SOUTHERN BAPTISTS SET
BAPTISM RECORD IN 1948

NASHVILLE, Tenn.--(BP)--Evangelistic fires burned brightly across the 21-state Southern Baptist Convention territory in 1948, and the denomination's 26,823 churches reported 312,246 additions by baptism -- the largest number in Southern Baptist history.

Porter Routh, statistical officer, reported that the number of baptisms in 1948 exceeded the 1947 total by 27,094, and pushed the membership of churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention to 6,491,981. Southern Baptists do not accept infants for baptism or membership.

Sunday school enrolment jumped more than 300,000 during the year -- a record in itself -- to bring the total enrolled in weekly Bible study to 4,308,374, Routh reported.

Training Union enrolment was reported at 1,078,828, Woman's Missionary Society enrolment at 856,057, and Brotherhood enrolment at 109,091, all new high marks. A total of 1,274,763 were enrolled in the summer vacation Bible schools.

Gifts for all causes by Baptist church members affiliated with the Southern Convention reached \$156,605,521, a gain of \$24,442,675 over 1947. Of the total given, \$124,855,222 was used for local church work, and \$31,750,299 was used for missions, education, and benevolences.

A total of \$8,865,790, designated and undesignated, reached the offices of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee for SBC causes. Of this, \$6,000,837 was for the undesignated Cooperative Program, distributed among the various causes on a percentage basis.

Value of church property reached \$450,385,517, a gain of \$83,554,865. Some of this increase represents increased valuation, but most of it represents added building during the year. This figure does not include \$125,000,000 invested by the denomination in educational plants, orphanages and hospitals, but only property owned by local churches, Routh explained.