

March 1, 1949

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS SET BAPTISM RECORD IN 1948

Southern Baptists set a baptism record in 1948, with reports indicating that the denomination's 26,823 churches immersed 312,246 persons during the year.

Porter Routh, statistical officer of the Southern Baptist Convention, said that the baptisms pushed the membership of the churches to 6,491,981. Sunday school enrolment jumped more than 300,000 during the year to bring the total enrolled in weekly Bible study to 4,308,374.

Gifts for all causes channeled through the churches reached \$156,605,521, a gain of almost \$25,000,000 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.

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CHURCH INSTALLS TELEVISION SET AS COMPETITION TO TAVERN LURE

When tavern keepers started installing television sets in their businesses to attract customers, Rev. Darrell C. Richardson of Covington, Ky., feared they may encourage some of his young people to take the drink habit. Immediately he resolved to trade blows, tit for tat, with this competition to the way of life he preaches from one of the city's Baptist pulpits.

Now, thanks to Pastor Richardson and members of the Fort Mitchell Baptist Church, the city's youth can view their television shows in the church's recreation hall. It is believed to be the first television set used in the youth recreation programs of American churches.

Pastor Richardson, himself an athlete, has a well rounded recreation program -- including, currently, eight basketball teams -- "to help our young people have a good wholesome time."

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Many Southern Baptist churches have regular attendants who are stone deaf. The "silent audience" usually is seated in a special group of pews, and a church-employed interpreter uses sign language to help them "hear" the pastor's sermon.

John Stewart died recently at Young Harris, Ga., at the age of 110 years. He was a retired farmer and had served as a deacon in the local Baptist church for the past 70 years.

More than 10,000 people are expected to attend the next session of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting at Oklahoma City, May 18-22, 1949.

The population of Cairo, Egypt, is made up of people following so many different religions that every day is "the Sabbath" for someone.

A Bible on the desk of every businessman is one of the hopes of the Baptist Brotherhood of the South. George W. Schroeder, an officer in the Baptist men's movement, suggests it "as one way in which every businessman can give a silent testimony of his belief in God."

Southern Baptists operate through their 21 state conventions a total of 30 senior colleges, 23 junior colleges, and eight academies. The Southern Baptist Convention operates four theological seminaries for the training of ministers.

The first book printed on the North American continent was a hymnal, produced on a printing press brought across the Atlantic by the Puritans. The book was entitled "Bay Song Book."