



**BAPTIST PRESS**  
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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September 24, 1969

**Survey Shows Major Reasons  
For Denominational Changes**

NASHVILLE (BP)--A survey of 1,905 persons who either joined a Southern Baptist church from another affiliation or left Baptist to join another denomination has disclosed that the vast majority made the change in denomination because of marriage, convenience, or circumstance.

Major purpose of the survey conducted by the research and statistics department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board was to determine why Baptists change denominations either to join it from another church, or to leave the SBC.

The survey, requested by the public relations committee of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, disclosed that during 1967, there were 30,083 persons who joined the SBC from other denominations, and 35,906 persons who left Baptist churches to join other denominations.

Of the 1,905 persons surveyed, there were about 750 usable responses, including 554 "new Baptists" who formerly were affiliated with another denomination; and 210 "former Baptists" who left the SBC to join another church group.

One-third (33.4 per cent) of the new Baptists and 45.2 per cent of the former Baptists responding said they changed denominations in order to be in the same church as the husband or wife.

The reason given by the most individuals who have joined Baptist churches from other denominations, however, was that they felt "that Baptist beliefs were more biblically accurate." Of the respondents, 36.3 per cent cited this reason.

Kenneth E. Hayes, research analyst who directed the survey, said in summarizing the findings that "new Baptists seem to have indicated more spiritual or doctrinal reasons for changing denominations than did former Baptists."

Of the new Baptists, 24.2 per cent said they became a Baptist because "I felt that I was not in God's will" and 15.7 per cent did so because "I felt that I was not saved."

Comparatively, former Baptists who left the denomination ranked these items rather low on a percentage basis, with 12.4 per cent (the second largest percentage) saying they felt they were not in God's will, and 1.4 per cent saying they changed because they felt they were not saved (the lowest percentage ranking.)

Of the former Baptists surveyed, 11.4 per cent added that they felt that Baptist beliefs were less biblically accurate than those of the church they joined.

A larger group, 11.0 per cent of the former Baptists said they were unhappy with their former denomination than the 6.9 per cent of the new Baptists who said they were unhappy with their former church group.

Doctrinal reasons were cited by 8.6 of the former Baptists and 5.6 of the new Baptists.

More convenient location was given as the reason by 11.9 per cent of the former Baptists and 19.0 per cent of the new Baptists; and circumstantial reasons were listed by 10.5 of the former Baptists and 4.9 per cent of the new Baptists.

A profile analysis of the persons responding to the survey showed that the majority of both new and former Baptists are female (about 60 per cent each) and married (about 80 per cent).

Former Baptists were generally younger than new Baptists, had a slightly higher degree of formal education, and had a "slight edge" in professional and technical training.

About 35 per cent of the former Baptists had attended college, professional or trade school, compared to 27 per cent of the new Baptists. Likewise, 28.4 per cent of the former Baptists were professional workers, compared to 20.4 of new Baptists.

Former Baptists tended to be more critical of the SBC than new Baptists in answers to a section on views of the denomination.

Both groups generally agreed that Southern Baptists are doing their best work in the areas of Christian education and worship, and their poorest in the area of reclaiming inactive members.

Consistently, a larger percentage of former Baptists than new Baptists ranked the SBC low on its reputation in race relations, progressiveness, ability to change, willingness to deal with controversial issues, and attention to contemporary problems.

When asked to rank the importance of factors in this order: (1) liked the church's minister, (2) members were pleasant and friendly, (3) liked the church's educational and service programs. Former Baptists picked the same three items, but listed educational and service programs first, and ministerial preference third.

In a section on doctrine, neither new Baptists nor former Baptists wholeheartedly accepted the doctrinal statements of the SBC-approved Statement of Baptist Faith and Message, but generally new Baptists accepted the statements more fully than did former Baptists.

Although the survey did not determine which denomination most former Baptists joined when leaving the SBC, it did disclose that most (37.2 per cent) of the new Baptists were previously Methodist. Others ranked in order were Christian Church, Presbyterian, and Lutheran, all with less than 10 per cent.

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Rutledge Wins Four  
Photographic Awards

9/24/69

ATLANTA (BP)--Don Rutledge, photographer for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, received four photographic awards recently from the Atlanta Press Photographers Association.

The annual contest was open to photographers, amateur and professional, who reside in Atlanta. Over 500 prints were entered in the contest's 12 categories.

Rutledge won a first place and a third place in the scenics category. He also won two second place awards, one in feature photography and another for a Georgia Scenic attraction. He was one of three recipients of four awards each. Last year Rutledge won four prizes in the same contest.

Two of the winning photos were scenes from Appalachia which have appeared in Home Mission magazine. One of the photographs will be used on the cover of the January issue of the magazine, which will commemorate the 125th anniversary of the convention.

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