



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 16, 1970

**SBC Membership Tops 11.4 Million;
Organizations Report Decreases**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Church membership in the Southern Baptist Convention increased to 11,489,613 during 1969, the denomination's research and statistics department reported here in a presentation before the SBC Executive Committee.

Although total church membership increased 157,384 over the 1968 membership totals, decreases were reported in Sunday School, Training Union, Brotherhood, and Woman's Missionary Union organization enrollments, and in the number of baptisms.

The statistics were based on reports from 34,335 churches affiliated with the nation's largest Protestant denomination. The number of churches was up 40 from the number reported last year.

The increase in number of churches was 108 less than the increase in 1968. Small decreases in numbers of churches in open country and village areas were more than offset by additional churches located in towns and cities.

The number of baptisms (conversions) reported by SBC churches was 368,225 down 4,800 from the 1968 figure. The peak year for baptisms was 1959, when 429,063 were reported, Martin Bradley, secretary, research and statistics department, said.

Enrollment decreases were reported in Sunday School, Training Union, Brotherhood, and Woman's Missionary organizations. Music ministry enrollment increased for the fourth consecutive year.

Sunday School enrollment dropped by 127,446 to a new total of 7,418,067. This represents the fifth consecutive annual decrease after 22 years of steady increase. The all-time high in 1964 was 7,671,165.

The Brotherhood (men and boy's missions organizations) had an enrollment of 430,339, a decrease of 18,339.

Enrollment reported for Woman's Missionary Union (women and girls) was down 116,452 to a total of 1,291,221.

Total Training Union ongoing and cumulative enrollment totalled 2,648,388, dropping by 76,709 from the 1968 figure. Reported growth in leader training and member training projects partially offset a sizable loss in the ongoing (mostly Sunday evening only) sector of church training activity.

Music ministry enrollment continued to increase, reaching a new high of 1,062,494. In addition to those in choirs for various age groups, the following are included in the enrollment; 33,063, vocal ensembles; 3,023, band and orchestra; 4,994, instrument ensembles; and 6,550, handbell groups.

Giving by Southern Baptists continued upward. Total receipts from tithes, offerings, and special gifts amounted to \$842,707,390, an increase of \$47,759,639 over the 1968 total.

Contributions to missions increased \$5,200,604 for a total of \$133,224,335.

Tithes, offerings and special gifts averaged \$70.46, including \$11.60 in mission gifts.

Churches reported spending \$132,016,435 on their own construction and another \$3,492,962 on construction of local church-sponsored mission facilities.

Debt reported by churches rose to a new high of \$870,271,234, an increase of \$24.7 million.

Churches ordained 2,080 and licensed 3,636 persons for the gospel ministry. The level of ordinations and licensings has remained stable during the past few years, Bradley reported.

WMU Elects Field
Services Director

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--Miss Mary Hines of Birmingham has been elected director of field services for Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) by the organization's Executive Board.

Miss Hines has been on the WMU staff as Sunbeam Band director since 1964. As field services director she will coordinate the work of age-level organization directors and other personnel in the field services department at WMU headquarters here.

Miss Alma Hunt, WMU executive secretary, said in announcing the staff change that Miss Hines has demonstrated her capability in designing programs and materials that people in the churches like to use, in effective field services, and in leading conferences and speaking.

The field services department helps develop the WMU program for churches and associations and interprets the program to Southern Baptists through conferences, consultation, and publications, Miss Hunt said.

Miss Hines is a native of Virginia. She is a graduate of Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She did additional study at George Peabody College for Teachers.

Miss Hines did home missions work in New Orleans, served the Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans as elementary director and educational director, and was Sunbeam Band director for Alabama Woman's Missionary Union. She taught in the public schools in Virginia just prior to joining the WMU staff.

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Ricker Named Alabama
Baptist Assembly Head

2/16/70

TALLADEGA, Ala. (BP)--George E. Ricker of Montgomery, Ala., has been elected director of Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly and Camps near here by the Executive Board of the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

Ricker, director of associational missions for Alabama Baptists for nearly 10 years, succeeds Waymon C. Reese who had held the post for 12 years. Previously, Ricker was associated with the state Baptist Training Union department.

He is a graduate of Samford University, Birmingham, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth. Samford has awarded him an honorary doctoral degree.

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Home Mission Board Names
Four Couples Missionaries

2/16/70

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has approved the appointment of four missionary couples to serve in three western states.

Mr. and Mrs. Augustine Salazar, missionaries since 1966, were transferred to California to work with migrants.

In addition the board sent Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Ackler to the Oregon-Washington Baptist Convention; Mr. and Mrs. George O. Beckett to the Oklahoma Baptist Center; and Mr. and Mrs. James E. Forrest to Long Beach, Calif.

The Salazars will direct Southern Baptist ministries to Californian's 125,000 migrant workers. This is a new position for the California convention.

The Salazars previously were associate missionaries but with this promotion were given full-time missionary status.

Salazar is a native of Cameron, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. He was pastor of the Primera Mission Bautista del Sur in Newark, Calif., and was pastor of several Mexican-American congregations in Texas.

He is a graduate of Wayland Baptist College, Plainview, Tex.; and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

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Mrs. Irene Salazar attended the Valley Baptist Academy, Harlingen, Tex.

Mr. and Mrs. Ackler will serve the Coulee and Yakima Valley Baptist Association of the Oregon-Washington Convention. Ackler will be superintendent of missions for the area, serving under the board's department of rural-urban missions.

He comes to the post from the New Hope Baptist Church in Citrus Heights, Calif., his most recent pastorate. He has also served churches in Mississippi, Tennessee and California.

Mrs. Elva Ackler will assist her husband. She is a native of Lemar, Mo.

The Becketts move to Oklahoma after serving at the Baptist Good Neighbor Center in Wichita, Kan., since 1968.

Beckett was also pastor of King's Highway Baptist Church. He will direct the ministries of the Oklahoma center.

He is a native of Oklahoma City and a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

He has been a pastor since 1953, serving churches in Texas and Kansas.

Mrs. Maxine Beckett, a native of Arkansas, will assist her husband. She also attended Oklahoma Baptist University and Southwestern Seminary.

Mr. and Mrs. Forrest will move from Colorado to the Long Beach Harbor Association of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California. Forrest will be superintendent of missions.

A native of Texarkana, Ark., Forrest graduated from Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and Southwestern Seminary. He has been pastor of churches in Texas and Colorado. He has resigned as pastor of the First Southern Baptist Church of Pueblo, Colo., to assume his new position.

Mrs. Nannie J. Forrest was also appointed to assist her husband. The mother of three children, she is a native of Texas, and was church secretary at the Pueblo church.

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C O R R E C T I O N

On BP story mailed 2/12/70, headlined, Executive Secretaries Elect Sanders President, please change graph 9, first word, from "Georgia" as sent to "Florida." Graph should read, "Florida, Oklahoma and Kentucky convention executives have indicated...." Georgia has not yet indicated committee approval for this matter. Thank you.

--Baptist Press



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