

Southern Baptist Convention
Office of Press R representative
Mr. Albert McClellan
San Francisco -- 1951

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif.—Some 18,000 Southern Baptists will arrive in San Francisco, Sunday and Monday, June 17-18, for the 94th meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. More than half will be "messengers" who are the official representatives of the local churches. It will be the first time the Convention has met in the West. This is probably the largest annual religious convention numerically in the world. Attendance in Chicago last year reached 22,000.

Their denomination has 27,788 churches and 7,079,889 members. Its growth can be seen in the rapid expansion in California that counted 72 churches with 706 baptisms and 5,693 members in 1944 as compared with 261 churches with 4,381 baptisms and 33,521 members in 1950

"The Whole Gospel for the Whole World" will be the Convention theme which is based on a statement of the late Dr. George W. Truett and widely heralded as an almost perfect motto for the militant missionary group.

Dr. J. D. Grey, of New Orleans, Louisiana, is chairman of the Committee on Order of Business. Dr. Robert G. Lee of Memphis, Tennessee, is president of the group and will preside over all sessions. Dr. Duke K. McCall, Nashville, Tennessee, is executive secretary-treasurer of the Convention's 31 member Executive Committee.

Convention sessions will be held in the Civic Auditorium and headquarters will be maintained in three hotels, Sir Francis Drake, Drake-Wiltshire and Whitcomb. The highlight of the meetings will be a united Baptist evangelistic service in the Civic Auditorium, Sunday night, June 24, closing day of the Convention. Organized caravans of Baptists from all of the 250 California Baptist churches will attend.

The week of Baptist activities will open Monday morning in the Civic Auditorium when 6,000 Baptist women begin their two day Woman's Missionary Union Convention, an auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention. Mrs. George R. Martin of Norfolk, Virginia, president, will preside over these sessions to close Tuesday evening. A second pre-Convention meeting will be held in the First Baptist Church when 3,000 Baptist ministers will hold a one day Pastors' Conference beginning Monday evening. Dr. Herschel H. Hobbs of Oklahoma City will preside. The conference will consider the social and political issues of the day as well as pastoral problems of the minister. These annual Pastors' Conferences are part of an extensive pastoral training program that makes Southern Baptist pastors among the best trained in the world. The denomination now has 8,000 young ministers in training in their 67 colleges and seminaries.

The Convention proper will open Wednesday morning at 9:30 a.m. and will continue through Sunday night. Eighteen thousand are expected to attend during the week. Governor Earl Warren is expected to give the opening welcome address. He will be followed by Dr. S. G. Posey, executive-secretary for California Baptists. The response will be given by Dr. Harold G. Sanders of Tallahassee, Florida.

Two principal speeches are scheduled for Wednesday morning. Dr. Robert G. Lee will deliver the president's address, and Dr. C. Roy Angell of Miami, Florida, will preach the Convention sermon. Other speakers to address the Convention during the week are Dr. F. Townley Lord, colorful president of the Baptist World Alliance, from London, England, Billy Graham, nationally known evangelist, Howard Butt, a corpus Christi Texas groceryman whose oratorical powers are famous among the Baptists, and Dr. W. A. Criswell, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Dallas, a congregation with 9,123 members.

The Southern Baptist Convention is not a lawmaking body, neither does it have the right to interfere with the autonomy of a single Baptist church within its bounds. The Convention is made up of individual members, male and female, who have been selected by their churches. The denomination now reports 27,788 churches with 7,079,889 members. One-third of these churches will be represented at the Convention.

The faith of the Baptist denomination has been summarized by one of its outstanding theologians, the late E. Y. Mullins, as follows: (1) the theological axiom--The holy and loving God has a right to be sovereign, (2) the religious axiom--All men have an equal right to access to God, (3) the ecclesiastical axiom--All believers have a right to equal privileges

in the church, (4) the moral axiom--To be responsible, the s ul must be free, (5) the religio-civic axiom--A free church in a free state, (6) the social axiom--Love your neighbor as yourself.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST ADVANCE CONTINUES

PORTER ROUTH, Secretary, Department of Survey, Statistics and Information

Membership in the 27,788 churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention passed the seven million mark for the first time in 1950 to reach 7,079,889, a gain of 318,624 during the year, according to final tabulations released.

The gain in membership was made possible by a record breaking number of conversions during 1950, 376,085, a gain of 41,193 over the preceding year.

Sunday school enrolment also hit a new record peak with 5,024,553 reported, a gain of 380,903 over 1949, or 8.2 per cent. It was reported that 26,678 of the churches had Sunday schools.

Training Union enrolment climbed 205,457 during the year to reach 1,440,195. The records show that 1,385 new churches started Training Union work during the year to make the total 15,835.

A total of 15,194 churches reported Woman's Missionary Union organization with an enrolment of 1,033,479.

Brotherhood enrolment reached 167,744 in the 5,076 churches which sponsor the men's organization.

The expanded building program of Southern Baptist churches was revealed by a gain of \$97,010,177 in the valuation of church property. The new church property figure was reported at \$645,271,741, a gain of 17.7 per cent during the year. Even with the large increase in building, there was a gain of only \$2,332,882 in the debts owed by Southern Baptist churches. The figure climbed from \$49,249,425 to \$51,582,307 during the year.

Gains in total gifts and gifts to missions were reported. Total gifts for all causes reached \$197,242,014. This amounted to \$27.86 per capita compared with \$26.38 per capita in 1949. Gifts to missions and benevolences totaled \$33,402,124, a gain of \$2,085,306 over 1949. This amounted to \$4.72 per capita, compared with \$4.63 in 1949.

More Southern Baptist churches reported pastors in 1950. Although there were 503 additional churches reported for the year, the number of churches reporting pastors increased 1,105 with 25,093 of the 27,788 churches reporting ministers. Congregations also took note of the rising cost of living. The average salary paid the pastors climbed 8.5 per cent during the year.

Southern Baptists' 21 orphanages reported 4,057 children assisted during the year, with \$3,282,423 expended for operation and \$1,147,770 expended for capital improvements. The total value is listed at \$14,024,320.

The 26 hospitals operated by Southern Baptist groups reported 201,024 patients during the year with receipts of \$28,464,575. The hospitals reported 2,692 nurses in training during the year. A total of 35,931 babies were born in Southern Baptist hospitals during the year. The hospitals are valued at \$57,015,746.

Southern Baptists seminaries reported 3,846 enrolled with 2,813 ministerial students. The 31 senior colleges reported 44,058 students, with 3,724 ministerial students. The junior colleges reported 10,416 enrolled with 1,048 ministerial students. The academies reported 2,226 enrolled with 244 ministerial students. All of the schools report 7,829 ministerial students.

The seminaries report property valued at \$13,566,859, with \$4,539,702 endowment. The senior colleges report property valued at \$53,923,577, and endowment valued at \$33,600,187. The junior colleges have property valued at \$17,410,646 and endowment of \$3,010,374. The Academies have property valued at \$5,186,288 and endowment of \$605,063.

GAINS AND LOSSES
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION — 1950

Item	1949	1950	Gain	
Associations	961	976	15	1.5
Churches	27,285	27,788	503	1.8
Churches with Pastors	23,988	25,093	1,105	4.6
Baptisms	334,892	376,085	41,193	12.3
Church with baptisms	22,565	23,632	1,067	4.7
Church members	6,761,265	7,079,889	318,624	4.7
Sunday school enrolment	4,643,650	5,024,553	380,903	8.2
Churches with Sunday schools	25,496	26,679	1,183	4.6
Training Union enrolment	1,235,438	1,440,895	205,457	16.7
Churches with Training Union	14,450	15,835	1,385	9.6
W.M.U. enrolment	943,135	1,033,479	90,344	9.6
Churches with W.M.U.	14,312	15,194	882	6.9
Brotherhood enrolment	142,412	167,744	25,332	17.8
Churches with Brotherhoods	4,163	5,076	913	21.9
Vacation Bible School enrolment	1,443,072	1,642,772	199,700	13.8
Churches with Vacation Bible School	15,375	16,762	1,387	9.0
Value of church property	\$548,261,564	\$645,271,741	\$97,010,177	17.7
Churches with property	25,889	26,389	500	2.0
Total gifts	\$178,337,307	\$197,242,154	\$18,904,847	10.6
Total gifts to missions	\$ 31,316,818	\$ 33,402,224	\$ 2,085,406	6.7
Churches giving to missions	24,000	25,171	1,171	4.9
Total church debt reported	\$ 49,249,425	\$ 51,582,307	\$ 2,332,882	4.7
Churches reporting debt	-----	6,001	-----	---
Pastor's salary	\$ 36,006,973	\$ 39,052,625	\$ 3,045,652	8.5

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
James D. Grey, Chairman

Committee on Order of Business

The meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in San Francisco, June 20-24, will very likely go down in history as one of the most positive and progressive Conventions ever held. The sentiments to be made vocal will underscore the three-fold commitment of the Convention to doctrinal distinctives, missionary advance at home and abroad, and stewardship enlargement. The theme of the Convention, "The Whole Gospel For the Whole World," will challenge the Convention as they have never been challenged before to an increased and enlarged activity of giving the gospel to all men in all nations in all of the world.

The issues involved and the world call of Christ our King summons Southern Baptists to an all-out support of our total program in the homeland and the foreign fields. We will seriously face the responsibility of retaking certain areas where we have long labored and of entering other areas, particularly the West where we have just begun, and new fields abroad.

The genius of our Southern Baptist co-operative efforts which makes us the marvel of many and the envy of some calls all our people to heroic, sacrificial living and giving. The Convention will call for a rededication of men and means in the carrying of our message of the gospel of Christ to all people of the world.

Southern Baptists must do a big job of reselling our people on our great program of advance. If we are to do more for Christ, we must have more of our people with more of their means dedicated to this work. The emphasis must be placed upon "spreading the base of our stewardship potential" in order that our conquest may be more vital and dynamic.

The great unifying power of our program for Christ as carried on through our Southern Baptist Convention has given and must continue to give us a great denominational solidarity.

With a friendly attitude to all who "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth" and with a quarrel with no other Christian group, Southern Baptists must continue to "mind their own business," declaring their distinctives and preaching the pure gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as it is for men as they are. With renewed zeal we will give our message, however, remembering the admonition of Paul, "Speaking the truth in love."

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