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Projections Show Continued SBC Growth in 1973

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention statistical projections indicate the denomination continued to grow in 1973, with over one billion dollars in total receipts, the third highest number of baptisms ever recorded and an increase of nearly 207,000 church members.

The preliminary statistics, compiled by reports received from 26,135 Southern Baptist churches, project increases in church membership, Sunday School enrolment, church music enrolment, mission expenditures, Brotherhood enrolment and total financial receipts.

Decreases are predicted in baptisms, Training Union enrolment and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) enrolment.

These projections should be "very close" to the final official figures which will be released in February, 1974, according to Martin B. Bradley, manager of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's research services department. Approximately 8,500 churches have not yet reported.

For several years, church membership has been increasing at approximately two per cent each year and 1973 apparently will be no different. The membership is expected to reach the 12,274,000 mark, reflecting a gain of 206,716 or 1.7 per cent.

Although projected baptisms decreased 6.1 per cent to a total of 418,500, that figure is the third highest in Southern Baptist history. The number of baptisms in 1973 ranks behind the 445,725 baptisms in 1972 and the 1959 figure of 429,063.

For the first time, the 1972 total receipts surpassed the one billion dollar figure. The 1973 projections indicate a 12.3 per cent increase amounting to \$1,203,000,000 in total receipts.

Mission expenditures showed a 10.2 per cent increase for a total of \$192,650,000.

The first gain in Sunday School enrolment since 1964 was recorded in 1972. The 1973 estimate indicates a modest increase of 349 members, setting the total Sunday School enrolment at 7,178,000.

"While the gain this year was not pronounced," said A. V. Washburn, secretary of the Sunday School Board's Sunday School department, "it indicates last year's gains were not temporary and that there is developing a consistency in Sunday School growth throughout the convention.

"The growth is somewhat spotty as yet, but an increasing number of churches are showing growth in enrolment and an even greater increase in attendance. The future is full of promise."

Church music continued to increase with a reported seven per cent climb in enrolment. The new enrolment for music organizations is 1,254,000 members, a gain of 80,996. However, this figure includes handbell ringers, vocal and instrumental ensemble enrolment which account for approximately three-fourths of the estimated numerical changes. Handbell ringers and ensembles were not included in the 1972 survey.

The church music department is "delighted by this growth reported by churches," stated William J. Reynolds, secretary. "This is evidence of the strength of music programs in our churches."

Statistics project a 6,228-member gain--or 1.4 per cent increase--to 460,500 enrolled in Brotherhood work with Baptist Men and Royal Ambassador boys.

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Glendon McCullough, the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's executive director, attributed the increase to a growing interest of laymen in missions and the "team effort of state Brotherhood leaders and Brotherhood Commission trustees" to involve men and boys in missions.

"I see the growth of Brotherhood enrolment in the SBC for the last three consecutive years as a prelude to much sharper increases during the next several years as more and more laymen recognize and carry out their individual responsibilities in Christian missions," he added.

Enrolment in Training Union, the denomination's Sunday night program of church training, will experience a loss of 98,445 members, according to projections. That's a 4.8 per cent decrease to an estimated 1,946,000 enrolment in 1973.

According to Philip B. Harris, secretary of the board's church training department, new efforts to increase Training Union attendance have begun.

"The new promotion project 'CHURCH: the Sunday Night Place' for growth, fellowship and training was implemented this fall throughout the convention," stated Harris.

"Church training will be joined by church administration, church music and church recreation in this project in 1974, and the project will continue through 1979.

"Also, 800 growth consultants are just beginning their work on the state level. One or more growth projects in each association will be implemented during the next five years in every state. The summer conferences at the Glorieta (N. M.) and Ridgecrest (N. C.) Baptist Conference Centers will major on enlisting and training members," Harris added.

Projections indicate enrolment in WMU, Southern Baptist woman's auxiliary, will drop 27,641 for a 2.5 per cent loss. Total enrolment for 1973 is expected to be 1,098,000.

WMU Executive Secretary Alma Hunt expressed surprise at the projection. Miss Hunt said she had expected no losses because of encouraging reports from field workers and of outstanding response to leader training opportunities.

The preliminary projections were arrived at by computing the actual figures from 26,135 churches, then projecting through statistical means the expected reports from the 8,500 remaining churches, Bradley said.

"Weighting factors" were added to give "an acceptable degree of accuracy" to these projected figures for planning and decision-making purposes in the denomination, according to Bradley.

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Penn-Jersey Convention
Picks Queen as Editor

12/12/73

HARRISBURG, Pa. (BP)--A. C. Queen has been named director of the newly created division of communication and promotion for the (Southern) Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey, including duties as editor of the Penn-Jersey Baptist, the convention's official journal.

Queen, 58, current superintendent of missions in Southern Oregon for the Northwest Baptist Convention (which covers Oregon, Washington and Western Canada), will also be responsible for the evangelism, stewardship, promotion and Brotherhood work with Baptist Men and the Royal Ambassador boys organization.

G. W. Bullard, the convention's executive secretary, has been editing the Penn-Jersey Baptist. He will continue as top administrator of the convention and will direct its newly created missions division.

A native of St. Louis, Mo., Queen has directed student work for the Missouri Baptist Convention and the Illinois Baptist State Association and also directed stewardship and promotion for the Illinois convention.

He has served as a pastor in Missouri, Texas, California, Illinois and Cuba, where he

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was a Southern Baptist home missionary, 1950-53, and started the first Baptist student work.

Before entering the ministry, Queen was an elementary school teacher and principal and high school principal for 10 years.

After returning from Cuba, he served as a pastor in Champaign, Ill., and taught Bible at the University of Illinois. He served as president and Bible professor at what was then Southern Illinois College of Bible, Carbondale, while directing student work for the Illinois convention. He also taught English at East Texas Baptist College, Marshall, Tex.

Queen has attended Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Mo., and is a graduate of both William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex.

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(BP) PHOTO mailed to state Baptist paper editors

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Missionary Agency Appoints 11;
1973 Total Reaches 227

12/12/73

RICHMOND (BP)--Eleven new missionaries were appointed in a service in Newport News, Va., and initial steps leading toward the opening of additional mission work in Africa were authorized at the December meeting of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board here.

The 11 missionaries, appointed before a crowd of nearly 1,400 people at Parkview Baptist Church in Newport News, brings the total number of missionaries appointed during 1973 to 227, 56 more than last year's total of 171. The 1973 total is the third largest in the 128-year history of the Foreign Mission Board and the largest number of annual appointments since 1969.

Baker J. Cauthen, the board's executive secretary, said, "We undertake this escalation in missionary appointments with the confidence that Southern Baptists remain committed to advance, and that they will provide the required resources through the Cooperative Program (unified budget) and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Cauthen added, "The outlook for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is exceedingly encouraging. We await the ingathering of the offering with much anticipation and hope that it will exceed the goal of \$20,000,000."

The Malagasy Republic, an island off the east coast of Africa, was visited recently by Davis Saunders, area secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa, and John E. Mills, the board's field representative for West Africa, to examine the possibility of beginning a mission program there.

"Although our travel plans had to be altered and we had only a limited number of contacts in the country, subsequent events indicated that God had prepared the way for us to gain the information we needed," Saunders said.

The population of the country is about seven and a half million. Saunders met with leaders from most of the Protestant denominations on the island. These leaders indicated that Southern Baptist missionaries would be welcome, according to Saunders.

In other action, the board appropriated \$10,000 in relief funds to help in the reconstruction of Baptist church buildings damaged by the earthquake in Mexico and urged Southern Baptists to observe Sunday, Dec. 23, as a special Day of Prayer for Peace in the Middle East.

Appointed as missionaries were Mr. and Mrs. Ned L. Duncan of North Carolina and Tennessee, to Uruguay; Mr. and Mrs. Jerry A. Hubbard of Missouri and Texas, to Zambia; Mr. and Mrs. Ron W. Hunt of California and Oklahoma, to Liberia; and Miss Ann Thomason of Louisiana, to Taiwan.

Employed as missionary associates were Mr. and Mrs. Horace F. Burns of Oklahoma and Missouri, to Rhodesia; Miss Dorothy (Dot) Elliott of North Carolina, to Japan; and Mrs. Larry Pendley of Kentucky, to Yemen.

Day of Prayer Urged
For Middle East Peace

RICHMOND (BP)--Southern Baptists are being urged to observe Sunday, Dec. 23, as a special Day of Prayer for Peace in the Middle East.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's committee for Europe and the Middle East recommended the day of prayer during the December board meeting here.

"The Day of Prayer for Peace in the Middle East, Dec. 23, comes five days after the peace conference is scheduled to begin in Geneva," said J. D. Hughey, the board's area secretary for Europe and the Middle East. "We may be closer to peace in the Middle East than anytime in the past 25 years, but divine help is needed. It will be appropriate to pray for peace in the Middle East during the same week that we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace."

The request for the day of prayer originated with Southern Baptist missionaries in the Middle East and was endorsed by the administrative subcommittee of the Baptist World Alliance at its recent meeting in Washington.

During worship services on Dec. 23, churches across the Southern Baptist Convention are asked to set aside a time of prayer for peace in the Middle East.

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Texas College Experiments
With 4-Day Academic Week

12/12/73

BELTON, Tex. (BP)--Mary Hardin Baylor College here is doing its part to conserve energy. The Southern Baptist school will change to a 4-day academic week in the Spring to conserve fuel, according to Bobby Parker, president.

Classes will be held Tuesday through Friday, with Monday set aside for committee meetings, faculty sessions, conferences and lab work.

Night classes will be held in a centralized location to conserve electricity.

If the plan is successful, Parker said, it may be used next fall.

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