

September 29, 1952

127 Ninth Avenue, North

Nashville, Tennessee

1952 CONVENTION ANNUAL
READY FOR DISTRIBUTION

NASHVILLE, Tenn.--(BP)--The 1952 Southern Baptist Convention Annual is off the press and is ready for distribution. The Annual is published each year in accordance with the Business and Financial Plan of the Convention, which states: "The Convention Annual, containing reports and actions of the Convention and other pertinent material, shall be published as soon as possible after the meeting of the Convention and shall be made available without charge to all active pastors and denominational agents."

The Annual will be sold to others desiring a copy for \$2.50.

The release date of this year's edition was delayed due to one of the audits which was incomplete.

Several hundred copies of the 1951 Annual are still on hand. These may be ordered from the Executive Committee, 127 9th., Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn., for 25 cents to cover the handling and postage.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE
TO WESTERN CLERGY HOLDERS

NASHVILLE, Tenn.--(BP)--According to V. T. Corbett, chairman of the Southwestern Passenger Association, the application fee for Western Clergy Certificates will be \$4.00 and new blanks are being printed. This will be effective with the year 1953.

All application blanks, for the years 1952-1953-1954 and prior thereto, should be destroyed.

Applications for blanks should be sent to V. T. Corbett, Syndicate Trust Building, St. Louis 1, Missouri.

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ATOMIC CENTER CHURCH
THRIVES AND PRODUCES

LOS ALAMOS, N.M.--(BP)--The First Baptist Church of Los Alamos, New Mexico, is a "thriving Christian organization far in advance of all others in both numbers and equipment in that area," according to the Baptist New Mexican, state Baptist paper.

This 604 member church, located in the strategic atomic city, reported 83 baptisms in 1952. They had 949 in Sunday school and 232 in Training Union and

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gifts totaled \$36,993.

Charles Ashcraft is pastor of the church, which promotes two missions and has three full-time employees.

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TENNESSEE BAPTIST WOMAN
SERVES IN CANAL ZONE

MEMPHIS, Tenn.--(BP)--Mrs. George B. Jones, a member of Calvary Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee, has gone to Gatun, Panama Canal, for six weeks to aid her brother-in-law Fred L. Jones and his wife, Velma, who are Southern Baptist Home Board missionaries.

Mrs. George Jones, a registered nurse, is conducting a series of classes on home nursing and first aid for the people in the Canal Zone. Since neither Fred Jones nor his wife are medically trained, Mrs. Jones volunteered her services and is personally paying for all her own expenses.

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST LEADERS
OPPOSE CHURCH OF CHRIST BAN IN ITALY

NASHVILLE, Tenn.--(BP)--Three Southern Baptist leaders, who are concerned with the problem of church and state, have issued the following statements on the closing of twenty-two Churches of Christ in Italy.

Joseph M. Dawson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs: "The order of the Italian Government closing twenty-two Churches of Christ in Italy is a shocking example of Roman Catholic intolerance. The Catholic controlled Government justifies this bigoted act on the grounds that the Italian law of June 24, 1929, number 1159, and by pertinent regulation of February 28, 1930, number 286, requires authorization of non-Catholic churches under cult classification.

"Actually that official statement ignores and omits all reference to the postwar Italian democratic Constitution which provides in Article 8 specifically: 'All religious confessions are equally free before the law.' Article 17 of the same document states: 'No previous notice is required for a meeting even in places open to the public.' I can testify to this, because I have the Italian Constitution adopted December 22, 1947, before me as I write. I may say the Baptist Joint Committee, acting with other advocates of full religious freedom for all men everywhere, through an accredited representative in Rome appealed for this provision in 1947 when the Constitution was adopted.

"Reportedly the Roman Catholic Church induced the Government to make the

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shut-out ruling because the Churches of Christ had made 1,000 converts in Italy since the war. Article 19 of the present Italian Constitution reads: 'All persons have the right freely to profess their own religious faith, in any individual or collective form, to proselytize on its behalf, and to perform in private and in public acts of worship, provided the rites are not contrary to public morals.' Strange that a church which boasts with utmost publicity of its proselytes in America should practice persecution in other lands, as in Columbia and Italy, when Roman Catholics join Protestant churches. Does not the Roman Church know that an article in the Universal Bill of Human Rights as put forth by the United Nations declares for the right of every individual to change his religion?

"Again, reports magnify the statement that Baptists and Methodists have not suffered the same fate in Italy as have these little Churches of Christ. Are we thus to be propagandized into holding that only 'duly constituted' religious bodies of size, recognized by government, are to be allowed to function? Minorities have rights as well as majorities. The Roman Catholic Church in the United States of America is a minority, but it has been allowed full freedom here. Big churches had better protect the rights of little churches, or else totalitarian powers, political and ecclesiastical, will do away with religious liberty for anybody."

M. Theron Rankin, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board: "It is stated in the news dispatches from Rome that the real issue with the churches that have been closed is the fact that they have been winning converts from Catholicism. This, of course, is a direct issue of religious liberty. If a Protestant church in Italy hasn't the right to win converts, then it has no right of religious liberty. It is only tolerated for private worship."

"I do not have accurate information concerning the individual and perhaps personal issues that have precipitated the attack upon this particular group of Protestant churches; but what is taking place in this case cannot be separated from the basic issue as to whether the government of Italy is prepared to stand behind its constitutional guarantee of religious liberty."

George W. Sadler, Foreign Mission Board secretary to Europe, Africa and the Near East: "Leaders of the Church of Christ in Ital, may have been less tactful than those of the Baptists and Methodists. That, however, does not excuse Italian officials for ordering their places of worship closed. This action is doubtless a part of the picture of what Dr. Manfredi Ronchi, Baptist leader of Rome, calls 'bloodless persecution.'"

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"As an illustration of what is meant by 'bloodless persecution,' Baptists recently acquired property in a community where they are making a beginning. Up to the time of my visit in July, they had been unable to have the privilege of city water."