



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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June 5, 1975

75-86

## Baptist Membership in Asia Now Over 1.2 Million

WASHINGTON (BP)--Baptist church membership on the continent of Asia increased 45,650 this past year, reaching a new total of 1,205,543, according to data released this week by the Baptist World Alliance (BWA). They are in 10,404 churches.

The most surprising increase was in Communist-run Burma, where the numbers have moved from 291,000 a year ago to about 308,000.

The largest numerical increase was in India, already recognized last year as the second largest Baptist population in the world. Baptists of India have now passed the 760,000 mark.

Bangladesh showed the largest percentage increase in Baptists from a year ago, a fraction over 18 percent, with 16,151 members.

South Vietnam was reported to have 1,817 Baptists, as of Jan. 1, 1975.

Laos, appearing for the first time in Baptist membership data, reported 41 Baptists.

Two nations showed slight decreases in the BWA statistics, China (Taiwan) and Japan.

The data by countries are as follows:

	Churches 1975	Church Members 1975	Church Members 1974
Bangladesh	277	16,151	13,600
Burma	2,733	308,095	290,631
China (Taiwan), Rep. of	84	13,115	13,585
India	6,205	760,853	734,203
Japan	334	33,020	34,911
Korea, Republic of	476	23,615	23,360
Malaysia	41	4,579	4,456
Pakistan	24	2,253	2,135
Singapore	11	1,624	1,665
Sri Lanka	21	2,010	1,750
Thailand	87	7,988	7,115
Vietnam, Republic of	21	1,817	1,817
Hong Kong	53	26,878	26,861
Laos	2	41	0
Macao	3	620	598
Ryukyu Islands	32	2,884	4,206
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>10,404</b>	<b>1,205,543</b>	<b>1,160,893</b>

# # #

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## Philippines Lead Oceania In Baptist Membership

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WASHINGTON (BP)--The Philippines led Oceania (Southwest Pacific) in church growth among Baptist churches this past year, the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) reported here.

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Total Baptist count in the Philippines was 86,515, opposed to 78,142 last year. The Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, one of 11 Baptist bodies and missions in that country, led church growth figures for all of Oceania, reporting a membership increase of 5,000 for a total 43,000, about half that of all Philippine Baptists.

Indonesian Baptists were second in terms of actual growth, reporting 30,011 compared with 25,693 from last year. Australian Baptists, however, remained in second place in terms of membership with its Baptist church members numbering 50,306, a slight decrease from last year.

Another Oceania nation experiencing Baptist growth was New Zealand, which experienced its largest annual gain since 1966. The number of Baptist members there went from 17,550 to 18,049, the BWA said.

Membership in other parts of Oceania was reported to be the same, except for Guam which dropped slightly.

Fiji was added to the places Baptists have work. Although no Baptist churches are reported there yet, a mission has been established under sponsorship of the American-based World Baptist Fellowship Mission Agency (not connected with the BWA), the report said.

Baptist churches in Oceania number 2,022, according to BWA statistics.

The statistical breakdown follows:

	Churches	Church Members	
	1975	1975	1974
Australia	699	50,306	50,724
Fiji	---	-----	-----
Indonesia	122	30,011	25,693
New Zealand	164	18,049	17,550
Philippines	790	86,515	78,142
Guam	23	1,860	2,070
Micronesia (U.S.T.T.)	3	185	185
Papua New Guinea	<u>221</u>	<u>11,930</u>	<u>11,930</u>
TOTALS	2,022	198,856	186,294

# # #

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Liberty Bell Rally Draws  
1,000 Richmond Baptists

Baptist Press  
6/5/75

RICHMOND (BP)--About 1,000 people gathered on the steps of the Virginia State Capitol Building here recently for a bicentennial rally featuring a replica of the Liberty Bell on its way to Miami Beach to be rung in the opening session of the Southern Baptist Convention on June 10.

Richmond was among seven cities scheduled for such rallies as the bell was being transported from Philadelphia, Pa., to Miami Beach. The Richmond rally was sponsored by the Richmond Baptist Association and the Foreign Mission Board. The Foreign and Home boards of Southern Baptists sponsored separate legs of the Liberty Bell's tour.

W. O. Vaught, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark., and immediate past president of the Foreign Mission Board, was guest speaker for the rally and is largely responsible for the bell and its trip to the convention.

In a prepared statement, Vaught emphasized that the seed of religious liberty in the United States was sown primarily by Baptists. He quoted historian Hubert Bancroft and philosopher John Locke to substantiate his emphasis on the role of Baptists.

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The predominantly Baptist crowd applauded when Vaught praised the Richmond city fathers for having the fortitude to withstand pressures on them to remove Jean Antoine Houdon's famous marble statue of George Washington to a larger city. Instead, they demanded that people should come to Richmond to see the statue.

Baker J. Cauthen, executive secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, presided. His opening remarks stressed the importance of religious liberty and the freedom of man through Jesus Christ.

A combined choir of more than 300 voices performed several patriotic numbers accompanied by the Manchester High School band.

A rendition of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" appropriately completed the evening's festivities.

Gene Williams, executive secretary of the Richmond Baptist Association, concluded:

"It was significant that a rally was held in Richmond. The capital city of the Old Dominion produced such men as Patrick Henry who declared religious liberty for all persons."

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(BP) Photo to be mailed to Baptist State papers.

# # #

Southeastern Names Meiburg  
As New Dean of Faculty

Baptist Press  
6/5/75

WAKE FOREST, N. C. (BP)--Albert L. Meiburg, professor of pastoral theology and clinical pastoral education at Colgate Rochester/Bexley Hall/Crozer Seminary, Rochester, N. Y., has been named dean of the faculty at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

Meiburg's appointment, effective August 1, was announced here by Southeastern President W. Randall Lolley. The new dean succeeds Raymond Brown, who has returned to full time teaching.

A native of Seneca, S. C., and an ordained Southern Baptist minister, Meiburg is a graduate of Clemson (S. C.) University and earned the bachelor of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

The former academic dean of Wingate (N. C.) College, a Baptist school, was formerly associate director of the school of pastoral care Baptist hospital, Winston-Salem, N. C.

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#### CORRECTION

In BP story of 5/30/75, headlined, "Baptists Ring Liberty Bell at White House," the last graf--the Triennial Convention was founded in 1814 (instead of 1843)--

Thanks

BAPTIST PRESS

## Openness Is Emphasized At Missions Consultation

By Charlie Warren

MIAMI BEACH (BP)--Openness was the major emphasis here as nearly 300 Southern Baptist leaders, missionaries and Baptist nationals gathered with administrative staff and members of the Foreign Mission Board, for a consultation on foreign missions, an intensive study of world missions.

Information and ideas presented at the consultation, held June 4-8, prior to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting here (June 10-12), will serve as study material and input for the board's report to the convention in 1976 concerning "bold new plans" for foreign missions during the next 25 years, plus other uses.

In stating the purpose of the consultation during the opening session, Baker J. Cauthen, executive secretary of the sponsoring Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, said:

"God has a way of letting us see things from different perspectives. For God has called many to serve him from many varieties of backgrounds and cultures. We gather to benefit from each other as we reach out to find what God is saying."

Jesse C. Fletcher, pastor of First Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tenn., and formerly director of the board's Mission Support Division, reported the results of a similar consultation held in 1965 in Miami Beach.

In his report it was evident that although progress had been made in the 10-year period, many specific suggestions from the previous consultation were never implemented.

Therefore, following Fletcher's report, Norvell G. Jones, a layman from St. Louis, Mo., and Cal Guy, professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, called for the 1975 consultation to be an "action oriented conference."

Guy stated that all such a meeting can possibly be is "pure consultation. But consultation ought to reap implementation," he said. "This consultation is too important for any of us who have an overriding concern to play possum."

"I'm grateful for the kind of openness to discussion which Dr. Cauthen projected and for the honesty for which Jesse (Fletcher) has prepared his paper," Guy said.

During the meeting's first open discussion, four national Baptists from countries where Southern Baptists have mission work, made comments and suggestions.

Chris Marantika of Indonesia said that even though there is an all time high of 2,600 Southern Baptist missionaries, in light of the total of 12.5 million Southern Baptists, that number is actually very small.

Cauthen called on the participants to "saturate the meetings in prayer" and for each person to freely share his own thinking.

6/5/75

Baptist Press

Alabama Baptist Church  
R moves Racial Barrier

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (BP)--Alberta Baptist Church here is "gradually regaining its equilibrium" in the aftermath of a racial incident, April 13, which "severely strained the fellowship of the church," the pastor says.

Since the incident, in which ushers turned away a group of black students attempting to worship at the church, the deacons voted to rescind their policy against seating blacks.

The group voted to "go on record as saying Alberta Baptist Church is a New Testament church and, as such, all people will be seated." The deacons' action was read to the church but the church took no vote on it, Joe Bob Mizzell said, because there had never been a church-wide policy against seating blacks--only a position by the deacons voted about two-years earlier.

Mizzell, who has been pastor of the church since nine months prior to the episode, said, "I cannot personally defend the decision to exclude the students that morning, but, from the beginning, I decided to take a low key approach to bring about healing and minister to all elements in the church."

He said furor over the occurrence, which has drawn mail from around the world, has caused a number of other white churches in the Tuscaloosa area "to quietly remove racial barriers."

The pastor was in the pulpit when the black students from the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa and their instructor, Dorsey Blake, a black Baptist minister, sought to enter the church, and he didn't know of their arrival. Blake said he brought his class in the "Black Religious Experience in America" to the church to experience worship in a white church--not to create a confrontation.

A usher at the door turned the group away.

Mizzell said the 1,600-member church is "gradually regaining its equilibrium," although attendance, giving, and visitors interested in the church have dropped off since the incident. He said the church had 83 additions to its membership in his first nine months but only two in a month-and-a-half after the racial episode.

"But, in the long run," said the 38-year-old pastor who is celebrating his 20th year in the ministry, "we should become stronger as a result of all this--perhaps in a year or so. I'm still in a position to minister to all elements in the church. If I had taken a position of condemnation in the beginning, it would have torn the church apart."

Although Mizzell purposely made himself unavailable for comment on April 13, he was distressed by it because of his own personal openness on the race issue, he said.