



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
480 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5481
RICHMOND Richard M. Styles, Acting Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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76-33

Baptists In Europe Show Slight Numerical Decline

WASHINGTON (BP)--Membership of Baptist churches in eastern Europe ("socialist republics") increased in 1975 in contrast to a decline in western Europe and in the continental total, according to preliminary 1976 statistics compiled by the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).

Carl W. Tiller, BWA statistician, said that figures for most of the European countries are the result of a recent count. But, in a few cases in which updated figures have not yet reached BWA headquarters, estimates or the prior year's figures are used. They are subject to later revision.

In Eastern European nations, churches increased from 6,650 in 1975 to 6,655 in 1976, while church members went up 904 to a total of 745,516. In Western European nations, churches declined by 224 to a total of 4,664 and members went down 3,053 to a total of 419,855.

Totals for Eastern and Western Europe are 11,319 churches and 1,165,371 members in 1976, an overall decline of 219 and 2,149 respectively from the previous year. (Worldwide, Baptists total 33,758,075 in 138,648 churches. Of that figure nearly 29.5 million are in the United States, including 12.7 million Southern Baptists.)

The long term trend for Baptist numbers in Europe has been mixed. Europe is the only continent where there has not been a distinct upward movement, according to the BWA. European membership data for other recent years: 1969, 1,157,432; 1970, 1,178,042; 1971, 1,170,114; 1972, 1,161,606; 1973, 1,141,214; 1974, 1,158,972; 1975, 1,167,520.

Highlights of the reports from European Baptists include:

--The Baptist Union of Yugoslavia reported 166 baptisms in 1975, approximately one baptism for each 19.6 members.

--In the Netherlands, there was an increase in 1975 of 334 church members, bringing the new total to just more than 10,800.

--Spanish Baptists increased in number by 276. Their new total is 9,072.

--The Soviet Union remains in the membership lead with 540,000. The total includes some other Christian groups who are organized with the Baptists. It also includes churches in the Asia part of the Soviet Union, since figures are not supplied separately for the European and non-European parts of the country.

Country by country figures are as follows, not including some areas where no Baptist churches are known of--Albania, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, San Marino, the Vatican City State, and the dependencies of the Faeroe Islands, Gibraltar, Jan Mayen and Svalbard:

BAPTISTS IN EUROPE

1976 *

1975

	<u>Churches</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Churches</u>	<u>Members</u>
Austria	10	800	9	800
Belgium	12	538	11	513
Bulgaria	20	1,000	20	1,000
Czechoslovakia	27	4,045	27	4,045

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	1976* (continued)		1975* (continued)	
	Churches	Members	Churches	Members
Denmark	41	6,554	42	6,611
Finland	38	2,724	33	2,759
France	70	3,745	68	3,639
Germany, Dem. Rep. of	222	22,535	223	22,842
Germany, Fed. Rep. of	371	69,433	392	71,926
Greece	2	211	2	161
Hungary	204	12,000	212	12,070
Iceland	1	50	1	50
Ireland, Rep. of	8	250	8	250
Italy	102	5,449	100	5,336
Luxembourg	1	20	1	20
Netherlands	82	10,813	82	10,479
Norway	65	6,659	64	6,588
Poland	52	2,401	52	2,401
Portugal	56	3,386	62	3,786
Romania	1,037	160,000	1,037	160,000
Spain	89	9,072	87	8,796
Sweden	708	44,687	837	44,826
Switzerland	24	2,822	24	2,822
U.S.S.R.	5,030	540,000	5,025	539,000
United Kingdom	2,977	252,315	3,058	253,219
Yugoslavia	63	3,535	54	3,254
Dependencies:				
Channel Islands	6	300	6	300
Isle of Man	1	27	1	27
TOTAL	11,319	1,165,371	11,538	1,167,520

*Subject to updating.

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HEW Orders Review
Of Marijuana Study

Baptist Press
2/20/76

CARBONDALE, Ill. (BP)--The Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) has reportedly directed the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) to re-examine a Southern Illinois University proposal to test effects of marijuana on male sexual response.

The proposed experiment has received opposition from a number of sources including some Carbondale clergymen. Pastor Ben Glinn of the Lantana Baptist Church here appeared on NBC TV news expressing his arguments against the project.

Also, the First Baptist Church, DeSoto, approved a resolution asking that the project be dropped.

Quoting the Associated Press, the Illinois Baptist said a spokesman for HEW Secretary David Mathews, a Southern Baptist layman, reported NIDA has been asked to see if the research proposal meets government criteria.

The basic project includes showing pornographic films to men subjects to test their sexual responses after using marijuana. Harris Rubin, an SIU school of medicine psychologist, had obtained a \$121,000 grant for the two-year study.

One portion of the grant application has come under criticism. It states: "The nature and rationale of this research project has been described to local public officials and clergymen and has been discussed in the local media including 'call-in' radio and TV programs without receiving any serious objection."

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Autrey Accepts Evangelism
Professorship in Memphis

MEMPHIS (BP)--C. E. Autrey, retired director of evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, will join Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary here as professor of evangelism, effective March 15.

The independent seminary has no organizational relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention or any of its agencies or state conventions.

Autrey, 72, retired from the Home Mission Board post in 1969 after nearly nine years as director. Previously he was professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth; associate secretary of the Home Mission Board's evangelism division; director of evangelism for Louisiana Baptists; and pastor of churches in Louisiana and Tennessee.

Since retirement he has served as visiting professor of evangelism at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1970-71, and as evangelism consultant for the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention.

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When Does A Daydream
Become a Nightmare?

Baptist Press
2/20/76

FORT WORTH (BP)--Criticism of the use of radio in spreading the Christian gospel arises "from what I call the difference between the daydream and the nightmare," Paul M. Stevens told trustees of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission here.

The trustees also conducted commission business, including the election of James W. Waters, pastor of Mabel White Memorial Baptist Church, Macon, Ga., as chairman. He succeeds Charles G. Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va.

"The daydream is from the preacher who says, 'Let's knock out the church walls and let the whole world in. It's easy. All you must do is get on the air and the whole world will flock to you.'

"It's a pleasant daydream," declared the Radio and Television Commission president. "If a man wants to think his weekly 15-minute radio program is a spiritual succulent for the entire community, after which there is no further responsibility on radio, it's a daydream

"But it's not really counting for the cause of Christ like it could, because that kind of dilettante attitude toward a powerful means of communications is so deceptive it's crushing," he continued.

"It becomes a nightmare when he gets into a position of denominational power and renounces the effectiveness of broadcasting and refuses to spend a dime on it."

Likening the commission's work to Christ's parable of the sower and the seed, Stevens said: "We know a lot of the seeds we broadcast die when the sun rises. But we also know that some of the seeds we plant grow and produce.

"And if Jesus knew it and predicted it about his own words, then let us unabashedly accept it as the way our work goes and let us, with vision, seek to take the gospel out of the byways, across the fields, and suffer the consequences of that kind of ministry."

Stevens also commented that the Radio and Television Commission has been called the "only Southern Baptist agency able to successfully secularize the gospel." He said that definition came from a pioneer Southern Baptist educator, Gaines Dobbins, an emeritus professor of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, who is still active in teaching.

Stevens said he asked Dobbins to define "secularized" because "some people don't know whether they want a secularized gospel."

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He said Dobbins defined secular as "the streets versus the temple," adding that the "Radio and Television Commission has taken the gospel out of the temple and put it into the streets where the people are."

The Radio and Television Commission, Stevens said, has not set up its own personal moral code which it wants to impose on the American people in any area.

"Our role, as defined by the denomination, is to preach Christ," he said. "We are not to be turned aside, or to renounce or denounce, we are to preach Christ."

Other commission officers elected include Enoch C. Brown, pastor of Shandon Baptist Church, Columbia, S. C., first vice chairman; E. Ray Scroggins, minister of education and administration at Westbury Baptist Church, Houston, second vice chairman; George Miller, an Oklahoma City attorney, secretary; and Robin H. Mathis, manager of WCTC AM-FM, Houston, Miss., assistant secretary.

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Bicentennial Feature
Baptists Join Colonists
In Fight for Freedom

Baptist Press
2/20/76

PHILADELPHIA, 1775 (BP)--Once accused of disloyalty to their country and of seeking to hinder efforts of the colonies to resist England, most Baptists threw themselves into the fight for freedom.

Many Baptists enlisted with General George Washington. Even Baptist ministers joined the struggle, many of them serving as army chaplains.

One reason for the all-out Baptist effort is that they saw in the cause of civil liberty hope for their own long-cherished dream--religious freedom. By joining in the fight for independence, Baptists hoped to favor a response to their importunities for separation of church and state and soul liberty.

When Massachusetts authorities refused to grant Baptists release from the clergy tax which required them to contribute to support of the state church, Baptist leaders threatened to take their cause to the king. For this stand Baptists were accused of taking advantage of a critical situation to advance selfish interests and lack of patriotism.

Subsequent events proved Baptist leader Isaac Backus correct when he answered the charges: "Baptist churches heartily unite with their countrymen in the cause of freedom and stand ready to exert all their abilities to defend it."

One notable exception to Baptist support of the revolution was Morgan Edwards, a native of Wales who came to this country when he was almost 40 years old. He brought with him a firm loyalty to England and was outspoken in proclaiming it.

Edwards' position earned him the hostility and suspicion of patriots. His fellow ministers attempted with little success to alter his unpopular Tory views.

The war was a severe blow to many Baptist churches. With most of the men taking up arms and the entire population preoccupied with the fight for liberty, churches struggled to survive just when the Baptist cause was gaining strength.

Some Baptists hoped, however, that from the struggle would come not only independence for the colonies but the religious freedom which Baptists had previously been denied.

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