



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2365
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) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2000
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, 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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Almost \$40,000 for Bible Distribution in Philippines

MANILA, Philippines (BP)--An additional \$29,800 for Bibles has been granted to the Philippine Baptist Mission from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The new allocation supplements \$10,000 approved in January from the Ann Oldham Fund, which is set up for publication and distribution of Bibles around the world. The additional money is a reallocation of funds formerly designated for work in Vietnam, according to William R. Wakefield, the board's area secretary for Southeast Asia.

The \$40,000 will make possible the importation of 25,000 Good News Bibles from Korea, according to William T. Roberson, Southern Baptist missionary press representative and director of the Baptist Center here. The center is the publication and distribution arm of the Philippine Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries).

The Good News Bible edition will be budget-priced, making possible purchase of the Bible by the vast student population in the islands, Roberson said.

Although a shortage of inexpensive English-language Bibles already exists, he pointed out that the coming Billy Graham crusades in November would increase the demand.

The first shipment of Bibles was to arrive June 15 and the second shipment is expected to arrive about Aug. 1, Roberson said.

The shipment of Bibles is particularly important in light of a survey by the mission which revealed that more than 51 percent of the Baptist church members attribute their conversion experiences to reading the Bible, according to Wakefield.

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Baptists of World Number
Almost 33.3 Million Persons

Baptist Press
6/27/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--World Baptists continued their long upward trend this past year, registering a gain of 381,797 church members and bringing their new figure to 33,269,319, the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) announced here.

The "Baptist community" figure jumped nearly 2.5 million for the year ending Dec. 31, 1976, reaching the current number of 46,221,039.

Because Baptists accept into membership only persons who have reached an age of discretion and have voluntarily chosen to be identified as Christians, the membership figure is approximately the same in concept as the idea of "full, communicant and confirmed membership" in some of the pedo-baptist denominations, according to Carl W. Tiller, BWA associate secretary for study and research.

Thus, the "Baptist community" figure, which includes children and others under pastoral care, is roughly comparable to the "inclusive membership" figures of other denominations, Tiller said.

BWA statistics include all Baptists that the Alliance can find, according to Tiller, whether they have an affiliation with the BWA or not. He breaks the global total of Baptist church members as follows, on an affiliation basis:

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a. In churches which are members of the BWA	28,763,989
b. In churches which are not BWA members:	
(1) In missions of BWA member bodies	233,809
(2) Other	<u>4,271,521</u>
	33,269,319

The number of Baptist churches grew in the past year by 1,055, and the number of places with regular preaching by 5,149. The number of national Baptist conventions, unions, or unorganized groups of churches moved up from 539 a year ago to 556 in the latest count.

The largest Baptist populations (church membership) are: the United States, 28,773,731; India, 810,327; U.S.S.R., 545,000; Brazil, 432,436; Burma, 321,525; Zaire, 248,593; United Kingdom, 247,968; Canada, 195,085; Romania, 164,000; Nigeria, 147,371.

Ten years ago the Baptists of the world numbered 27,183,622. The growth for the decade -- 6,085,697, comes to more than 22 percent.

Highlights of the new data, by region, were cited by Tiller.

--North America, 29,016,036 church members. The United States outpaces all other countries in its Baptist strength, thus placing the continent far ahead of the others. Baptist churches in North America number 101,245.

--Asia, 1,421,109 church members. This is the third successive year that Asian Baptists have outnumbered those in Europe. Asia is the fastest-growing continent in percentage increase, with its 1976 to 1977 gain over five times the growth rate in North America.

--Europe, 1,172,064 church members. Europe has now reversed its recent annual loss experience and showed a gain this time of more than 2-1/2 percent. However, two-thirds of its Baptists are in Communist countries, and in most of these the official count of Baptists changes rarely or minimally, Tiller said.

--Africa, 829,421 church members. In 22 of the 38 of the African countries which have Baptist churches, the membership count increased in the past year. However, armed hostilities in several parts of Africa have made the Baptist census difficult, Tiller noted.

--South America, 521,616 church members. The decade-long rise in Baptist numbers on this continent came to a halt this year, and there was a slight decline. However, growth continued in the Spanish-speaking and Dutch-speaking countries.

--Central America and the Caribbean Islands, 193,039 church members. This area also suffered a slight decline in membership, particularly in the islands. On the mainland, Nicaragua was a leader in evangelistic results. Every political jurisdiction in Middle America now has Baptists within its boundaries.

--Oceania (Southwest Pacific), 114,163 members. Baptists in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea have increased in numbers this past year, while those in Indonesia have declined somewhat.

--Middle East, 1,871 church members. This, the smallest of the areas for which the BWA collects statistics, is the only region in which the Baptist population has more than doubled in the past decade. The numbers increased by 133 this past year, according to Tiller.

Court Reaffirms Ruling
Against Sabbatarrians

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court struck another blow against Sabbatarrians who believe employees ought to be given Saturdays off if their religious convictions so dictate.

In a short order announced here, the high court voted to overturn itself in the case of a Kentucky man who last fall apparently won his case. The court ruled last November 2 that Paul Cummins, an employee of the Parker Seal Co., of Berea, Ky., was entitled to demand Saturdays off from his employer.

The vote then was 4-4, with Justice John Paul Stevens abstaining because he once worked for a law firm which represented Parker Seal Co. The tie vote, however, meant victory for Cummins.

In a reversal of that decision, the court ruled in June that companies may dismiss or refuse to hire individuals who decline to work on Saturdays because of religious convictions.

The court said then that to force companies to make such an accommodation would create an "undue hardship." A federal law passed in 1972 placed the burden of providing "undue hardship" on employers, not employees.

The new ruling signals a serious setback to Jews, Seventh Day Adventists, and other, smaller Sabbatarrian groups, such as the Seventh Day Baptists.

It also indicates a total reversal on the part of the high court from the days when the court was headed by the late Chief Justice Earl Warren.

During the 1950s and 1960s the Warren court ruled on numerous occasions that the free exercise of religion rights of individuals and religious minority groups supersedes the convenience of employers and larger segments of American society affected by the granting of First Amendment rights.

The new action by the court was announced in a short statement which indicated only that the case will be sent back to a lower federal court to be dealt with in light of the June decision.

The practical effect of the action is to require strict Sabbatarrians whose employers require them to work on Saturdays as a condition of employment to choose between being employed or being loyal to religious conviction.