

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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80-28

**Baptisms Gain Confirmed
In Final Statistical Report**

By Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Final reports from Southern Baptist churches for the 1978-79 year confirmed the strong gain in baptisms predicted in December's statistical projections, and showed only slight changes from projections in giving and in some program enrollments.

The projection for baptisms was on target with the actual gain of 9.7 percent. The gain represents 368,738 baptisms, the highest total since 1976. More than 29,000 Southern Baptist churches reported baptizing at least one person during the year.

The total number of Southern Baptist churches reached 35,605 this year, an increase of 201 and the largest net gain since 1965. Total membership in the convention increased by 1.4 percent, or 182,094, to 13,379,073.

Total receipts in the Southern Baptist Convention topped \$2 billion for the first time, reaching more than \$2.2 billion, or an 11.9 percent increase. Property value reached \$9.6 billion.

Gains and losses in convention programs were mixed, as in the projections, with gains reported only in church music and Brotherhood. Enrollment losses for church training and the Woman's Missionary Union were smaller than predicted while Sunday School enrollment decreased by more than was expected.

The enrollment gain for Brotherhood, the first since 1976, was 0.6 percent, or 2,617, making the total enrollment 469,315.

Church music enrollment actually gained more than had been anticipated from projections, posting an increase of 41,081, or 2.9 percent, to reach a total enrollment of 1.46 million.

Final figures showed the church training enrollment loss to be 1.3 percent, or 23,675, bringing the ongoing church training enrollment to just over 1.75 million.

WMU enrollment declined by 0.7 percent, or 8,181, during the church year, making the new enrollment total 1,086,785.

The enrollment loss for Sunday School had been predicted to be 0.1 percent but the final figures reveal a loss of 0.3 percent, representing a decline of 20,086. Total enrollment for Sunday School is now 7,317,960.

Figures for the annual statistical report are compiled by the research services department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, using information from the uniform church letters mailed from the churches.

Summary of the 1979 Southern Baptist Convention Statistics:
To accompany (BP) release Feb. 18, 1980

	1979	1978	Numerical Gain or Loss	Percent Gain or Loss
Churches	35,605	35,404	201	0.6
Total Membership	13,379,073	13,196,979	182,094	1.4
Baptisms	368,738	336,050	32,688	9.7
Sunday School	7,317,960	7,338,046	-20,086	-0.3
Ongoing Enrollment				
Church Training	1,752,026	1,775,701	-23,675	-1.3
Ongoing Enrollment				
Woman's Missionary Union	1,086,785	1,094,966	- 8,181	-0.7
Ongoing Enrollment				
Brotherhood	469,315	466,698	2,617	0.6
Ongoing Enrollment				
Church Music	1,465,774	1,424,693	41,081	2.9
Ongoing Enrollment				
Total Receipts	\$2,222,082,159	\$1,986,040,615	\$236,041,544	11.9
Total Mission Expenditures	\$ 356,207,790	\$ 316,919,377	\$ 39,288,413	12.4

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Home Mission Board
Associate Resigns

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ATLANTA (BP)--Ed Seabough, associate to the executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, resigned effective Feb. 29, due to physical and emotional exhaustion.

Seabough, 47, in his letter of resignation to Executive Director William G. Tanner, said he felt "desperately the need of several months of complete rest."

Tanner said Seabough, his associate since last August, "has given himself unreservedly to the cause of missions in our land. He has been responsible for hundreds of persons volunteering for Christian service."

Seabough, widely known as the author of six books and as lyricist for 20 musicals, said he needed to restructure his priorities and reassess career goals. "For several months now I've tried to do too many things and solve too many problems for too many people," he said.

After three or four months of rest Seabough hopes "to be open to another creative assignment." He expressed thanks to Tanner and the Home Mission Board for "the great support felt in making this decision."

In 12 years with the Home Mission Board, Seabough was an associate in missionary personnel, director of personnel recruitment and director of public relations and special events.

A native of Gallatin, Mo., Seabough graduated from Southwest Baptist College, Southwest Missouri State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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S.C. Supreme Court
Reverses Church Ruling

CONWAY, S.C. (BP)--The South Carolina State Supreme Court has reversed the order of a lower court that 16 persons voted out of the membership of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Conway, S.C., be restored to full fellowship.

But it was not the clear-cut victory for the principle of separation of church and state which the pastor of the church, B.C. Pigg, and other defendants wanted.

The state's highest court dismissed the case, with the consent of the plaintiffs, who originally had filed suit against the church.

The brief order of dismissal says simply: "It appears to this court that the plaintiffs-respondents have consented to a dismissal of this case with prejudice. Accordingly, upon the motion of the counsel for both sides, it is...decreed that the order of the lower court is reversed... and this action is dismissed with prejudice."

The term "with prejudice" means that the order is final and the matter may not be raised again, according to an attorney.

On June 22, 1979, Judge O.A. Rankin, presiding over the Horry County Civil and Criminal Court, had ruled the church's vote to oust the members "null and void and of no effect."

His order had stated that the dismissed members were "dedicated" and "their actions in no way should be construed as in violation of the Constitution of Hickory Grove Baptist Church." Rankin is a member of First Baptist Church, Conway.

The church, which had dismissed the members over a conflict concerning church polity, maintained, however, that the county court's ruling violated the principle of separation of church and state.

Pigg, who has been pastor at Hickory Grove for approximately six years, said he would have preferred that the case be decided on its merits. "We would have preferred a ruling," he said. "Our whole case was based on the belief that the separation of church and state principle had been violated."

Contacted by telephone, Pigg said he does not know why the plaintiffs consented to dismissing the case. And he said they have not asked to be reinstated as members at Hickory Grove.

Such a request, he pointed out, would first have to be approved by a majority of the deacons before going before the whole church for a vote. "This is according to bylaws the church had before I came here as pastor," he explained.

Action against Pigg and his son, B.C. Pigg Jr., is still pending before an Horry County grand jury. A Conway man, Kenny Hardee, has sworn out warrants against the two following a shooting incident at the parsonage. Hardee, who has relatives who are members of Hickory Grove church, alleges he was shot in the knee during the incident.

Oklahoma Rancher/Baptist
Helped Carry Olympic Flame

By Bracey Campbell

LAKE PLACID, N.Y. (BP)-- Wayne Fagala came a long way when he moved from Tyrone, Okla., to the site of the 13th Winter Olympics last year.

But the two-year missionary for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board added 1,000 more difficult miles to his resume recently when he took part in the relay group that carried the Olympic flame from Yorktown, Va., to an emotional ceremony opening the winter games.

Fagala, 23, was not selected as one of the 52 runners primarily responsible for carrying the flame, but he got to make the 11-day journey when asked to serve as chaplain for the 90-member delegation and as a driver for one of the 11 support vehicles.

"It was a lot of fun and a lot of hard work. But certainly it was one of the most beneficial experiences of my life," said the graduate of Panhandle State University.

Fagala did get to carry the 5-pound torch up Tongue Mountain in New York state. "I was excited when I realized I was going to get to run, but when I saw the size of that mountain I wished I had never heard of the trip."

Fagala said the torches carried by the runners went out several times during the journey, but that the original flame--brought via boat from Greece--was maintained on five miner's lamps in one of the trucks.

Fagala said the crowds along the trip provided the most excitement. "Every town and village we went through had people along the streets, cheering us on.

"It was a great feeling. There were several times, like on the steps of the U.S. Capitol when the National Anthem was played, that it was difficult to keep the tears from flowing."

Fagala said he had several opportunities to witness one-on-one for Jesus with members of the entourage.

"The Lord sure had a surprise in store for me when I got over the initial disappointment of not being selected as one of the primary runners." Fagala and his wife, Kathy, plan to return to ranching in Oklahoma after finishing their stint in Lake Placid. "I have never felt the call to preach, but I do want to be the best worker some church has."

Fagala has served as assistant pastor of the Southern Baptist church in Lake Placid.

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Volunteer's Condition
Continues To Improve

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Milford Doss Jr. of Somerset, Ky., is listed in satisfactory condition by the Veterans Administration Hospital, Lexington, Ky., and his wife says that she sees daily improvement in her husband's condition.

Doss, a Baptist layman, was treated for cerebral malaria at the University of Kentucky Hospital, Lexington, after returning Jan. 18 from volunteer evangelistic efforts in Nigeria. After the malaria had been successfully treated Doss was transferred Feb. 8 to the Veterans Hospital to continue treatment for pneumonia.

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