



-- BAPTIST PRESS

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February 22, 1982

82-28

SBC Shows Healthy Gains;
Training Figure Jumps

CO

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Healthier growth than predicted in December characterized Southern Baptists' final 1981 statistical report. Totals exceeded December projections in all areas except mission expenditures.

Church training, the one program projected to decline in 1981, showed a gain of more than 18,000 in the final figures. A sample analysis of church information letters in December predicted a loss of more than 10,000.

Points of special significance in this year's report are that the number of SBC churches topped 36,000 for the first time; membership is nearly 13.8 million; total gifts passed \$2.75 billion; and Brotherhood enrollment went over the half-million level for the first time since 1964.

This is only the second time since 1963 that all five church programs have increased, with Sunday School leading the way by going over the 7.5-million mark for the first time since 1968. Baptisms was the only area to record a loss from the previous year, but they still exceeded 400,000.

"The final report was better than the December projections this year because an estimated 1,000 letters from churches were involved in special processing and were left out of the projection figures," said Martin Bradley, secretary of the research services department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

"These letters were mostly from stronger churches and this affected the projection totals for all the report areas," Bradley said. "The number of letters used in the projections was 2,000 lower than in past years, which also affected the outcome."

The number of Southern Baptist churches grew by 248, or 0.7 percent, bringing the total to 36,079. This continues a trend of accelerated growth in the convention over the past 11 years.

Total membership in the convention rose 1.3 percent, or 182,772, to a new high of 13,789,580. Membership was projected to increase by 1.2 percent.

Baptisms this year, although dropping 5.6 percent from last year's total, still were 405,608, the 10th highest total in the 137-year history of the convention. The previous year's baptism total, 429,742, was the second highest ever recorded. The 1981 total is 1.4 percent higher than projected in December.

The convention's largest program, Sunday School, recorded a 1.3 percent, or 94,995, growth in enrollment for 1981, which makes the new total 7,528,400. The December projection for Sunday School was 0.8 percent growth.

The church training gain of one percent brings total enrollment to 1,814,179. The figure includes new church member training enrollment, which became a part of the program total this year. Projections made in December indicated a loss for church training of 0.6 percent, or 10,774. Final figures showed the gain of 18,560, the second consecutive increase for the program.

Enrollment in Woman's Missionary Union grew last year by 1.3 percent, or 14,418, making the new total 1,114,461. WMU was projected in December to be up by 0.9 percent.

Brotherhood enrollment for 1981 increased 3.5 percent, or 17,234, bringing enrollment to 512,900. The December projected increase for Brotherhood was about 5,000 lower than the actual figure.

1981 marked the 16th consecutive year of enrollment increase in church music. Total music enrollment is now 1,590,992, up 4.2 percent, or 63,595, from last year. Music was projected to increase by 3.3 percent.

Total receipts for the Southern Baptist Convention were up by 12 percent, or almost \$300 million, to a new high of \$2,782,555,130. Last year's total was \$2.48 billion and the projected increase for this year was 11 percent.

Southern Baptist expenditures for missions in 1981 increased by 9.9 percent, or almost \$40 million, bringing the new total to \$441,400,157. This is approximately \$3 million less than projected.

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Summary of 1981 Southern Baptist Convention Statistics:

To accompany (BP) release February 22, 1982

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>Gain or Loss</u>	<u>Gain or Loss</u>
Churches	36,079	35,831	248	0.7
Total Membership	13,789,580	13,606,808	182,772	1.3
Baptisms	405,608	429,742	- 24,134	- 5.6
Sunday School Ongoing Enrollment	7,528,400	7,433,405	94,995	1.3
Church Training Enrollment	1,814,179	1,795,619	18,560	1.0
Woman's Missionary Union Ongoing Enrollment	1,114,461	1,100,043	14,418	1.3
Brotherhood Ongoing Enrollment	512,900	495,666	17,234	3.5
Church Music Ongoing Enrollment	1,590,992	1,527,397	63,595	4.2
Total Receipts	\$2,782,555,130	\$2,483,645,551	\$298,909,579	12.0
Total Mission Expenditures	\$ 441,400,157	\$ 401,499,506	\$ 39,900,651	9.9

Hughes, Cooper Head
Executives, Editors

CO

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)-- Robert Hughes of California and Edgar Cooper of Florida were elected to head the associations of Southern Baptist Executive Directors and Editors during the groups' annual meetings.

Hughes is executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California. He succeeds Joe Ingram, executive director-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

Cooper, editor of the Florida Baptist Witness, journal of the Florida Baptist Convention, succeeds Don McGregor, editor of the Mississippi Baptist Record, as president of the Southern Baptist Press Association.

The executives named Cecil Ray, general secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, as president-elect, and re-elected Robert Wilson, ex cutive director-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, as secretary-treasurer.

Robert Hastings, editor of the Illinois Baptist, was named president-elect of the SBPA, and Lynn Clayton, editor of the Baptist Message, journal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, was elected secretary-treasurer, succeeding Bobby S. Terry, editor of Word and Way, journal of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Amidst discussion of the survival of the Southern Baptist-affiliated newspapers because of postal increases, editors voted to have their liaison committee work with the director of Baptist Press, Wilmer C. Fields, and leaders of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, to expand the Baptist Press Bureau in Washington, D.C.

The editors, who represent 34 publications with an aggregate circulation of nearly 1.9 million, also accepted a report from the liaison committee recommending Baptist Press remain a part of the SBC Executive Committee, and not be given separate agency status.

During the 1981 annual meeting of the SBC in Los Angeles, messenger Jimmy Stroud from Knoxville, Tenn., recommended giving Baptist Press agency status. The recommendation was referred to the Executive Committee, which administers the news service function, for study.

The liaison committee report, written by C. R. Daley, editor of the Western Recorder, journal of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, notes that retaining BP as part of the Executive Committee structure will be "satisfactory as long as we have BP staff members with the integrity of those now serving. But we need to remember that every establishment is always tempted to control the news and if this happens editors will have to resist."

In a resolution, SBPA members noted the "purpose of the news service is to provide accurate and adequate reporting, whereas SBC history indicates resistance to information that is threatening or embarrassing and the result is often attacks on the news service."

The resolution further said the association believes the "news service is vital to the democratic processes of the convention ... and is opposed to attempts to stifle or hinder" it in its duties. It also "urged cooperation with BP by all parties," and encouraged the Executive Committee to "assume a higher profile as the advocate of the news service for the benefit of the SBC."

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CORRECTION. In (BP) obituary item mailed Feb. 19, page 4, "Former Editor's Wife Dies Following Stroke," change graph 1, line 1 to read: "Margaret McNairy Steele Owen, 84, wife of Richard N. Owen,...and graph 2, line 1 to: Mrs. Owen. In graph 4, line 1: Survivors include her husband, Richard N. Owen, a son...."

Thanks,
Baptist Press

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MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Baptists and Jews were challenged to fight for the human right of 16 million refugees and 600 million hungry and starving people in the world during a national Baptist-Jewish dialogue.

The challenge came from Rabbi Mark Tanenbaum, national director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, and James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington.

"The central moral issue of our time is a growing callousness toward human suffering and an epidemic of dehumanization around the world," said Tanenbaum. He chided the government of 39 countries of the world for spending \$500 million on nuclear proliferation and arms expansion while 600 million human beings are dying of hunger and malnutrition.

Tanenbaum also was critical of Congress and the Reagan administration for proposing an increase of \$500 billion in defense expenditures, but not finding money for food stamps and Aid to Dependent Children.

Dunn, in a Baptist perspective on human rights, was even more harsh, saying the most blatant violation of human rights in America is aimed at women and children. Most of the poor and hungry in America are women and children, Dunn pointed out.

"In our public policies, domestic and foreign, the real motto is 'Women and Children last!'" Dunn said.

Echoing earlier remarks by Tanenbaum, Dunn charged that Americans have taken a stand against the most basic of human rights--the rights of humanity to exist--by entertaining the possibility of a "limited nuclear war and allowing the government to continue stockpiling overkill capacities.

Tanenbaum called for Baptists and Jews to join hands in seeking to bring about "universal, simultaneous disarmament around the world."

"We must bring an end to so much moral anarchy, so much insanity, and end to war and bloodshed," Tanenbaum insisted.

"Relating a personal experience of visiting refugee camps in Southeast Asia," Tanenbaum said he was moved by the despair of one refugee who asked him, "Rabbi, do you know what it is like to see your wife and children die before your eyes?"

But even worse, Tanenbaum observed, is the feeling of 16 million refugees that they are abandoned by the world, their lives are meaningless, that no one cares if they live or die."

"To visit the refugee camps in Cambodia and Laos is almost like experiencing the massive barbarism that occurred in Nazi Germany," Tanenbaum said.

He told of seeing human skulls piled up on the ground as a result of a massive extermination of Cambodians who accepted Western ideals. In the last eight years, the Pol Pot regime exterminated 4 million people, one-half of the total population of Cambodia, Tanenbaum charged.

"It is not insignificant that Pol Pot regarded Adolf Hitler as his model and hero," the Rabbi added. He decried torture and massive human rights violation in 60 countries of the world, calling on Christians and Jews alike in support of the oppressed.

"Christians and Jews may yet become the saving remnant that can save the human family from destruction and turn humanity toward a course of sanity and reason," Tanenbaum concluded.

The dialogue, held on the campus of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, was jointly sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and the Interfaith Witness Department of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Reagan Attends Services;
Fourth Time in 13 Months

By Stan Hasteley

WB

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Reagan attended church services Sunday, Feb. 21, for only the fourth time since assuming the presidency 13 months ago.

Accompanied by Mrs. Reagan, the president attended a special service at historic Christ Church in Alexandria, Va., commemorating the 250th birthday of George Washington.

According to the White House office of media relations, the first family attended services previously at National Presbyterian Church, St. John's Episcopal Church and Belair Presbyterian Church in southern California.

In a year-end interview with U.S. News & World Report, Reagan said he has limited his church attendance because of security precautions imposed by the U.S. Secret Service following the attempt on his life last March 31 and rumors that a Libyan hit squad has targeted him for assassination.

All worshippers at the Feb. 21 service at Christ Church, an Episcopal parish attended by the nation's first president, were required to pass through a metal detecting device similar to those used at airports.

White House officials say that all large crowds are now being screened through such devices before any public appearance of the president.

In spite of infrequent church attendance, Reagan continues to receive vocal support from many conservative religious leaders, most conspicuously from electronic evangelists such as Jerry Falwell, who actively supported Reagan during the 1980 campaign. Falwell and others claimed that Reagan's positions on issues were more moral than those of incumbent Jimmy Carter.

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Students Claim Conversion
Of Kidnapping Suspect

Baptist Press
2/22/82

CO

WALNUT RIDGE, Ark. (BP)--A Walnut Ridge man charged with shooting his way into a dormitory at Southern Baptist College and holding two students there at gunpoint has since made a profession of faith in Christ, members of a jail outreach team say.

Eugene Milgram, 31, is charged with shooting out a plate glass door in the men's dormitory and holding two residents there at gunpoint for about five minutes around 1:30 a.m., Jan. 4.

Student Teddy Reynolds said Milgram held a .410 shotgun on him and roommate Randy Hall while demanding to see a nephew, who had lived at the dorm in the past but is no longer a resident there. The boys did not know Milgram's nephew, and things stood at a stalemate in the next few minutes as they tried to reason with the intruder.

The drama ended with the arrival of police. Lawrence County Sheriff Gene Matthews ordered Milgram to drop the gun and the two students bolted from the dorm lobby down a hallway. Milgram ran down another hallway, but was subdued without incident, eyewitnesses report.

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