



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Craig Bird, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367. Telephone (404) 873-4041

DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201. Telephone (214) 741-1996

NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234. Telephone (615) 251-2300

RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230. Telephone (804) 353-0151

WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. Telephone (202) 544-4226

February 21, 1983

83-26

Southern Baptists Record
Across-the-Board Gains

By Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--An all-time high enrollment for Sunday School and a 7.5 percent increase in church training enrollment led the way in across-the-board gains in Southern Baptist Convention programs for 1982.

Baptisms, which were projected in December to be just under the 400,000 mark, instead recorded a gain of 1.5 percent, or 5,946, to 411,554. The 1981 baptisms totaled 405,608.

Release of final statistical information by the research services department at the Baptist Sunday School Board shows gains for all 10 of the reporting areas traditionally checked to gauge ministry efforts of the denomination. Statistical projections are released the first week of December each year, based on the first letters received by research services.

This year's final total for Sunday School enrollment in Southern Baptist churches, 7,678,604, is the highest in history for the Bible study program, topping the previous high of 7,671,165 recorded in 1964. The church training gain represents an increase of more than 135,000, bringing the total to 1,949,348.

The number of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention went up 0.6 percent to a new total of 36,301, a gain of 223 over 1981.

Membership in the denomination increased during 1982 by 1.5 percent, or 208,672, which pushed the total to 13,998,252. Southern Baptists, the largest protestant denomination in the U.S., likely will surpass the 14 million mark during 1983. The actual gain is slightly higher than the projection.

Total receipts for the convention were more than \$3 billion for the first time, reaching \$3.1 billion, which is a 12 percent, or \$334.8 million, increase over last year. Mission expenditures increased by more than 10 percent to almost \$500 million. Both categories are less than one percentage point higher than projected in December.

Woman's Missionary Union enrollment showed a gain of 3.1 percent, or 34,805, to almost 1.15 million. WMU was projected to gain 3.0 percent.

Enrollment for Brotherhood increased by 3.3 percent, or 16,742, to reach 529,642. The Brotherhood gain is 0.3 percent higher than predicted.

Church music enrollment increased by 2.8 percent, or 43,782, in 1982 to reach a new high of 1.63 million. Church music has not had a decline in enrollment since 1965. This total is approximately 8,000 higher than projected.

The Sunday School gain of more than 150,000 was slightly more than projected. The 2.0 percent increase carried the denominations's largest church program to the record high enrollment after three years of increases.

For church training, the 7.5 percent, or 135,169, increase marks the third consecutive enrollment increase. Church training enrollment was predicted to gain 5.9 percent.

Martin Bradley, secretary of the research services department, reported that 35,215 churches mailed Uniform Church Letters for use in checking the denomination's numerical progress.

Other information included on the letter shows Southern Baptists now have 1,211 associations, up by two from 1981. The number of state conventions remains at 34.

Also, 30,260 churches reported at least one baptism, up 0.9 percent over 1981. The rate of baptisms in the SBC is equal to 5.4 persons baptized in a one-year period for every 100 Sunday School members.

-30-

Evangelist Robison Apologizes
For Earlier 'Un-Christlike' Attacks

By Jim Jones

Baptist Press
2/21/83

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Evangelist James Robison has apologized to more-liberal Southern Baptists and others he has verbally attacked in the past, asking forgiveness for his actions.

"I'm not saying anyone else is wrong" in their criticisms, Robison said in an interview. "I'm saying I was wrong."

Robison sent a letter to Southern Baptist leaders last week and also met with Baylor University professors Feb. 16 in a concerted effort to say he is sorry for his past assaults.

The television evangelist, who became known for his attacks against liberal theology, homosexual rights, abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment and other favorite targets of the religious right, said he has not become "soft on sin."

But he has been increasingly convinced proclamations about sin are not the answer, and said his statements have come across as unnecessarily harsh. A return to morality in America is needed, he said, "but it will never happen unless Christians start loving each other.

"It doesn't matter how many campaigns or media blitzes we have about sin," he said. "The real issue is heart to heart."

Robison wrote in his three-page letter: "Dear Family In Christ: In seeking forgiveness, I stand convicted by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. Although pure in motive throughout 21 years' ministry, I was, on occasion, unChristian in method and approach.

"That which I believed to be God-given conviction often came across as personal attack, prejudice, unkind, poorly thought out, defensive, abrasive, too general; casting many unnecessarily into the same pot and possibly damaging the very body of Jesus, rather than smashing the works of Satan.

"There is a deepening of conviction concerning my own sin of which I gladly repent and ask forgiveness from all. All sin, all doubt, unbelief and vain speculation aimed at God's eternal (and I believe inerrant) word will be dealt with by God."

Robison, a member of the First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, where Southern Baptist Convention President James T. Draper Jr. is pastor, also asked forgiveness for his part in the current Southern Baptist power struggle between fundamentalist conservatives and moderates.

The evangelist delivered a blistering attack against liberalism prior to the 1979 Southern Baptist Convention national meeting in Houston that marked the beginning of the current dispute.

Although Robison said he remains concerned about what he sees as a challenge to the authority of the Bible, he said he too often has tried to shape others in his own image.

His letter said, "However well-intentioned, the results (of his statements) have often caused unnecessary contention, division, strife and controversy, thereby hindering the work of grace so needed in the church. Because I was often 'blinded by the god of this world,' my eyes were distracted to focus more on the cancer in Baptist life than the cure."

-more-

Robison said expressions of righteous indignation are often appropriate, but he called attention to James 1:20, which states "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

"There is no softening toward unbiblical proclamations and practices," he said. "What I'm saying is that we are doing more proclaiming than preaching what the Bible teaches."

Expressing fear that the divisiveness in the Southern Baptist Convention is reaching dangerous proportions, Robison said, "Openness, diversity, discussion and differences are not only important, they are imperative for the body to be healthy."

Robison has provoked controversy when he has spoken out strongly against homosexuality as a sin, but he said the sin of homosexuals "is no greater than Christians' who fail to love one another."

Robison said the biggest change in his ministry is "that I've become more concerned about my own sin than the sins of others. I pray that there will never be another sinner who will feel that he is being judged by me; I hope he is judged by the Word of God."

-30-

(Jim Jones is religion editor of the Fort Worth Star Telegram.)

Telecommunications Equipment Prices
Announced By Sunday School Board

Baptist Press
2/21/83

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Prices for satellite television receive only systems (TVROs) for use with Southern Baptists' American Christian Television System and Baptist TelNet were announced Feb. 16 by Broadman Press of the Sunday School Board.

ACTS is a satellite television network to homes being developed by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. Baptist TelNet is a telecommunications network to churches, associations, state conventions and other Baptist groups which will be operated by the Sunday School Board. Both are due to be operational by the spring of 1984.

Prices were announced for three-, four- and five-meter parabolic dishes and will be available at prices including installation or to be shipped for local installation.

The minimum equipment needed for Baptist TelNet--a three-meter TVRO and installation, one television monitor and one videotape player/recorder--would cost approximately \$4,000 from Broadman. This total is considerably lower than earlier projections of \$12,000 to \$16,000.

"We are pleased prices have been greatly reduced from original estimates," said Grady C. Cothen, Sunday School Board president. "This should enable a larger number of churches and associations to participate in Baptist TelNet."

He said Baptist TelNet training topics will include family ministry, deacon training, missions emphases, stewardship education and others related to all facets of church programs.

A three- or four-meter dish will be needed for Baptist TelNet, depending upon location. A four- or five-meter dish is needed for churches or associations which will be feeding ACTS programs to cable systems or which will function as low-power stations. Five meter dishes also will be able to receive Baptist TelNet programs.

All Broadman TVROs will be produced by Starview, a subsidiary of Craig Electronics, Compton, Calif. Broadman three-meter TVROs will sell for \$2,295 or \$2,795 installed. Shipping charges will be \$100.

Four-meter TVROs will cost \$3,395, or \$3,995 installed, with a shipping charge of \$175. Five-meter dishes will cost \$5,895, or \$7,795 installed. Shipping charges have not yet been determined for five-meter dishes.

-more-

All TVROs include a parabolic dish antenna, polar mount, feedhorn, 100 degree low-noise amplifier, electric polarizer, receiver with modulator and 100 feet of cable.

Options available at extra cost include motorized tracker package, microwave receiver with modulator, computer site survey or on-site surveys. Surveys will be needed primarily in downtown locations to test microwave interference but will not be required in most suburban, town and rural locations.

Broadman already sells television monitors and videotape player/recorders for as low as \$485 and \$695, respectively.

Cothen said package prices which will include TVROs, monitors and player/recorders will be announced around June 1, prior to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Pittsburgh. Subscription prices for programs also will be announced around June 1.

-30-

Illinois Baptist Camp
May Help 'Dream Factory'

By Robert J. Hastings

Baptist Press
2/21/83

PINCKNEYVILLE, Ill. (BP)--A Southern Baptist campground in Illinois may help dreams come true for some critically ill children.

A "Dream Factory Camp" at Lake Sallateeska near Pinckneyville is still in the planning stages but Sallateeska Director Art Nehring is enthusiastic about the possibilities.

Dream Factory, Inc., a movement that began in 1981 in Hopkinsville, Ky., has since spread to at least four states--Illinois, Tennessee, Kentucky and Missouri, Nehring explained. "The Dream Factory is just what the name implies--members help make dreams come true for children who are critically ill or terminally ill."

"We're a loose-knit organization," Debbie Reynolds, a member of the Southern Illinois chapter of Dream Factory, said. "We don't have officers and all of that--we believe in action and doing things. At Christmas, we sent a critically ill little boy to Oregon to visit his grandparents. This spring we're going to add a bedroom to a home for a sick girl who has always wanted a room of her own. We've sent several youngsters to Disney World and one to meet Annie, the star of the Broadway play by that name."

Scott Reynolds, a Catholic layman, told Nehring Sallateeska would make an ideal setting for a group of very, very sick children in June to have fun and good times in the out-of-doors.

If the plans materialize, Sallateeska will host about 90 children and staff during the dream camp," Nehring said. In case of emergencies, there will be an ambulance plus a helicopter from Scott AFB on the grounds, plus three other helicopters on stand-by at Ft. Campbell, Ky.

It's hoped a nurse and physician from Children's Hospital in St. Louis, plus a nurse from St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis, will also be there.

The Dream Factory, Inc., which concentrates on children with such diseases as leukemia, M.S., cerebral palsy and other crippling diseases, has been featured on P.M. Magazine and other television programs.

Special Ministries Director Ed Claybrook, who administers Lake Sallateeska, said it's a tribute to the Illinois Baptist State Association that the Dream Factory is considering Sallateeska. "If we can offer these terminally ill children a few days in the sunshine and on the lake and in the woods, it would give us great pleasure."

-30-

Workers Help Children
Deal With Death, Divorce

Baptist Press
2/21/83

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--People who work with young children in church can be ministers who help children learn to deal with family crises such as death and divorce.

-more-

"The time has come to take a realistic approach and help children learn to deal effectively with traumas," Lu McClellen told participants at a church programs and services coordinating conference in Nashville at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

McClellen, associate dean in the technical/occupation program, Eastfield College, Mesquite, Texas, and a member of First Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas, told workers, "Sometimes telling a four-year-old God loves him is not going to solve the fact his father has died."

Adults tend to explain events with symbolic language such as "asleep in Jesus" because it makes them feel better, McClellen noted. "But young children rarely have a concept of permanence, so this means something different to them."

McClellen told workers not to be overly concerned with giving detailed answers to children. "Make your answers functional, simple and honest. If the child wants to know more he will ask," she said.

Stressing the importance of keeping things as normal as possible, McClellen said, "Remind workers many times it is not a trauma the child is reacting to, but how adults react to him after the trauma."

Because young children are "I"-centered, they react strongly to those things that directly affect them, she explained. "The death of a pet may be more emotionally upsetting than the death of a distant grandparent," McClellen noted. "Don't put undue expectations on children regarding grief. Let them react naturally to a situation."

McClellen believes adults need to reassure children, letting them know they are not to blame for what has happened. "It is not uncommon for a child to think 'If only I had done so-and-so, Daddy wouldn't have left.'"

Children's workers can play an important role in helping the child develop a healthy self-concept. Because of the large percentage of broken homes and the competitive situation in large schools, children need the affirmation and recognition from church workers and other adults, McClellen said.

-30-

Hooper Dilday Dies
In Fort Worth

Baptist Press
2/21/83

Dr. R. Hooper Dilday Sr., 72, Baptist religious educator and denominational leader died Sunday, Feb. 20, in Fort Worth, Texas, after a long illness.

He was director of the church services division of the Baptist General Convention of Texas for 18 years and retired in 1971 after a stroke. As minister of education and music at First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Dilday developed principles of church growth which were used by churches throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

At the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in June, the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association will give its distinguished service award in memory of Dilday.

He is survived by his wife, Opal Spillers Dilday of Fort Worth, three sons: Russell H. Dilday Jr., president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; Donald G. Dilday of Navasota, Texas; James E. Dilday of Houston and daughter, Ann Dilday Young of Benton, La., and nine grandchildren.

Memorials may be given to the Hooper Dilday Memorial Fund at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

-30-