



BAPTIST PRESS

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December 3, 1984

84-173

Projections Paint Mixed SBC Results

By Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Statistical projections for Southern Baptists for 1984 indicate a sluggish, mixed year when compared to the last four years of strong gains.

Small gains are predicted this year in church membership, Sunday school enrollment, church music enrollment and Brotherhood enrollment. Better increases are predicted for mission expenditures and total receipts. All of the predicted gains are smaller than increases last year.

Three areas are projected to decrease this year including baptisms, which is predicted to have a loss of 6.5 percent, or 25,649. The projected total of 368,957 baptisms would be the lowest total since 1979 and the second decrease in two years. Small losses also are predicted in church training enrollment and Woman's Missionary Union enrollment.

Last year all of the programs reported gained between 1.3 percent and 6.7 percent. This year three programs are predicted to register gains ranging from 0.4 percent to 1.0 percent, with losses in two programs of 0.6 percent and 0.7 percent projected.

Membership in Southern Baptist churches is projected to increase by 1.2 percent, or 170,225, which will be the smallest gain since 1977. This will bring the total church membership in the nation's largest Protestant denomination to 14,355,679. Last year's gain in membership was 1.3 percent, or 187,202.

Sunday school, the denomination's largest program, is expected to grow by 0.4 percent for the year, increasing by 31,262 to a new total of 7,846,705, which will be the highest enrollment ever. Last year Sunday school gained 1.8 percent, or 136,839.

Church training is projected to decline by 0.6 percent, or 11,924 this year, to a new total of 1,975,466. This loss follows four consecutive years of growth for church training, when the program increased by more than 235,000.

For church music, there is a projection for the 19th consecutive year of increased enrollment. This year's gain is predicted to be 1.0 percent or 16,568, bringing the new total to 1,673,332. Last year church music increased by 1.3 percent, or 21,990.

It is predicted that WMU enrollment will decrease by 0.7 percent, or 8,227, this year, bringing the new total to 1,167,127. Last year's WMU enrollment increased by 2.3 percent, or 26,088. This will be the first loss for WMU since 1979.

Brotherhood enrollment is predicted to increase by 0.9 percent this year, which represents a gain of 5,088. This increase, which makes the total enrollment for Brotherhood 570,437, follows a gain of 6.7 percent, or 35,707 last year. It will be the sixth consecutive gain for Brotherhood.

Both areas of giving in Southern Baptist churches registered gains for the year which are higher than inflation rates, but lower than the increases last year.

Mission expenditures are projected to increase by 6.7 percent, or \$35,461,980. This would increase the total for mission expenditures to \$564,745,269. Last year's increase in mission expenditures was 8.7 percent, or \$42,348,203.

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Total receipts are predicted to increase by 7.9 percent, or \$26,265,599, bringing the total of \$3,636,716,214. Last year's gain was 8.1 percent, or \$253,063,465.

These projections are based on statistics from 26,039 church letters received before Nov. 13, 1984, in the research services department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. Martin Bradley, secretary of the research services department, said caution should be exercised in making final conclusions regarding changes because statistical sampling error could cause the estimates to differ either up or down by three- or four-tenths of one percent.

The final statistics from Southern Baptist churches will be released in February 1985 by the research services department and should ultimately contain figures from approximately 36,700 churches. The February report also will contain the new total for number of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention.

PROJECTED STATISTICS FOR 1984

	1983 Total	Estimated 1983-84 % Change	Estimated 1983-84 Numerical Changes	Estimated 1984 Total
Baptisms.....	394,606	-6.5	-25,649	368,957
Church Membership.....	14,185,454	1.2	170,225	14,355,679
Ongoing Sunday School enrollment.....	7,815,443	0.4	31,262	7,846,705
Church Training enrollment.....	1,987,390	-0.6	-11,924	1,975,466
Ongoing Church Music enrollment.....	1,656,764	1.0	16,568	1,673,332
Ongoing WMU enrollment...	1,175,354	-0.7	-8,227	1,167,127
Ongoing Brotherhood enrollment.....	565,349	0.9	5,088	570,437
Mission Expenditures.....	\$529,283,289	6.7	\$35,461,980	\$564,745,269
Total Receipts.....	\$3,370,450,615	7.9	\$266,265,599	\$3,636,716,214

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Korea Evangelism Campaign
Leads 7,200 People To Christ

Baptist Press
12/3/84

SEOUL, South Korea (BP)—Nearly 7,200 people committed their lives to Christ during a recent partnership evangelism crusade in South Korea.

The October crusade teamed 150 Southern Baptist volunteers from more than 20 states with missionaries and Korean Baptists in 34 churches for two weeks of evangelistic church services, home visitation and special outreach events. The American volunteers were recruited through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Almost 3,000 decisions for Christ were recorded in churches and homes. More than 4,000 others came in schools, hospitals, prisons and factories reached by partnership teams. Another 226 Koreans committed themselves to vocational Christian service.

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"Sharing with almost 5,000 students and seeing 2,000 pray to receive Christ was exciting," said Don Wilson of Kensington Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn. "But the most thrilling event was sharing the gospel with a 71-year-old man. After church on Wednesday evening we went to the house of his son with whom he lived. The man was the only one in the family who was not a Christian. We shared the gospel and he prayed to receive Christ."

The Korean man told Wilson he "had never heard about salvation in Christ," although he had Christian relatives. The next day he went to church and publicly declared his new faith. "I knew then why God had brought me to Korea," Wilson said.

Partnership campaigns with Southern Baptist volunteers have become a regular and effective part of Korean Baptists' evangelism program, Foreign Mission Board officials said.

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D.C. Convention To Buy Out
BWA Baptist Building Interest

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
12/3/84

WASHINGTON (BP)—Delegates to a special session of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention have authorized a campaign to raise \$1.25 million to buy out the interest of the Baptist World Alliance in a downtown Washington building housing both organizations.

A single motion already approved by three convention panels and approved by delegates with only one dissenting vote also advises the BWA that an appraisal procedure agreed to by both parties in 1947 will be followed. That process prescribes that each group will select an appraiser, who in turn together will choose a third appraiser. The three will then determine the fair market value of the property, located at 1628 Sixteenth Street, N.W.

According to James A. Langley, executive director of the D.C. convention, the \$1.25 million figure will include renovations to the building and surrounding property. "We're attempting to stay where we are," Langley declared.

Langley noted discussions regarding whether to stay or move out of the residential-style downtown location have been going on since 1977, when the convention formed a facilities committee. That panel has investigated several options in the intervening years but has made no recommendation to move.

Pressure on the convention began to build in July, when the BWA general council voted in Berlin to sell its one-half interest and move to a suburban northern Virginia location.

In early November the BWA entered into a contract with JNC Enterprises Inc. looking to sell the property for \$2.13 million, an agreement which gives the BWA 60 days to convince the D.C. convention to go along with the terms of sale. Beyond that period the developer would have 60 days to make a feasibility study as to prospects for future development of the property, during which time he could back out of the deal with no penalty.

Langley said the D.C. convention and BWA staffs enjoy "excellent relations" but also noted the building was appraised only three years ago at \$1.25 million, \$850,000 less than the JNC Enterprises contract proposes.

The recommendation to begin fund-raising and advise the BWA of the convention's determination to follow the 1947 procedure was approved by the facilities committee and the convention's executive committee and executive board before going to delegates for final approval.

Delegates to this year's regular session voted to come back into session Nov. 27 to deal with the property question. No other business was transacted.

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Local Presbyterian Church
Wins Fight With Denomination

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)—A dispute between a Presbyterian congregation and its mother church body came to a close when the U.S. Supreme Court let stand a lower ruling leaving the church property in question under the control of the local church.

In a one-line order announced Nov. 26, the high court declined to review a May 1984 decision of the court of appeals of New York—that state's highest tribunal—that the First Presbyterian Church of Schenectady, N.Y., is not subject to the jurisdiction of its presbytery or of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in a dispute over the congregation's property.

The battle began in January 1977 when the local membership voted 334-4 to sever relations with the denomination over doctrinal differences. Only days after that action, the presbytery of Albany appointed an administrative commission to replace the local "session" on grounds that the decision to sever relations "violated church law."

Instead of appealing the presbytery's action to a higher church tribunal, the congregation took the presbytery to court. After a federal district court refused to enter the case, First Presbyterian sought and received a trial in a state court.

That panel forbade the presbytery from interfering with the local unit's use of the property. But an appellate division of the state supreme court reversed the trial court and granted the denomination's counterclaim that the local church not be allowed to interfere with the activities of the presbytery in maintaining the congregation as an ongoing unit within the denomination.

After the congregation appealed that ruling, the state's high court reinstated the trial court's order, effectively returning control over the property to First Presbyterian.

In asking the U.S. Supreme Court to review the matter, the Presbyterian Church argued the New York decision kept it from replacing the local church leadership and exercising control over church property as provided in its "Book of Order," the denomination's controlling document. The court's interference, the denomination argued further, violated the free exercise of religion guaranteed in the First Amendment.

For its part, the Schenectady congregation argued the Presbyterian denomination is not hierarchical but "connectional" and "the power flows from the people upward through the church courts in contrast to an episcopal or strictly hierarchical system where the power flows from the top down."

The congregation also noted it was founded around 1760, some 30 years before the denomination's founding, that its own incorporation papers make no mention of any denominational affiliation, and that the denomination's Book of Order contained no language requiring that property in dispute revert to the denomination.

(Only in 1981, after numerous congregations successfully convinced civil courts that property in dispute belonged to them and not to the denomination did the old Presbyterian Church insert into the Book of Order a provision that local church property belongs to the denomination.)

For more than 110 years the Supreme Court has been faced with the peculiar church property problems within the Presbyterian denomination, in large measure because the Presbyterian polity is neither purely hierarchical nor congregational.

The court first ruled in 1872 that secular courts have no jurisdiction in such disputes, leaving their settlement to church courts, or "judicatories," as the Presbyterian church calls them.

But in 1979, in the case of *Jones v. Wolf*, the high court ruled 5-4 that states may apply so-called "neutral principles of law" governing all other property to churches as well. "Indeed, a State may adopt any one of various approaches for settling church property disputes as long as it involves no consideration of doctrinal matters," the court held.

After that decision the denomination moved to amend its Book of Order to insure that in future disputes local church property will revert to the mother body. Such a provision now governs the merged Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the denomination formed last year when Presbyterians north and south reunited after being divided during the Civil War. (84-551, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) v. First Presbyterian Church of Schenectady)

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Vocal Care Hints
Can Lengthen Ministry

By Nancy Barcus

Baptist Press
12/3/84

WACO, Texas (BP)—A retired speech professor at Baylor University is offering ministers 10 extra years in the pulpit—just by showing them how to take care of their voices.

George Stokes has been begging preachers to care for their voices during his 25 years as professor of speech. Now retired, he is devoting himself to helping ministers reclaim what he calls "the most abused part of the human body."

During a recent voice workshop for ministers, Stokes told them, "I can give you 10 extra years in the pulpit if you faithfully observe several guidelines which are so sensible, you'll wonder why you didn't think of them yourself."

Unfortunately, most ministers ignore such common sense advice, not realizing that the human voice actually can wear out with continued misuse, Stokes said. "You're in this sad shape vocally because the Spirit lit a fire in you," he said. "Now, let the Spirit lead you to use the right muscles. It's not too late to reclaim your voice, if you start today. Remember, if you break your body through misuse, the Spirit is going to follow suit."

Dehydration is the chief enemy of the voice, Stokes said. Membranes in the vocal folds rub together and need lubrication. Traveling on airplanes can cause vocal damage, both because of the dryer air and the need to talk above the sound of the plane's engines, he said. Emotional strain also can dry up the vocal folds, as can the common cold or allergies.

He recommends avoiding medication or lozenges, using natural remedies instead to restore moisture to the vocal folds. To increase saliva, he recommends softly biting the tongue between each of the rear molars, 10 seconds on each side.

Ministers should use a scarf to protect the throat against cold wind, and always wear a hat and a light coat to keep body temperature constant, he said. Light clothing is better than heavy clothing, because the skin can set its own temperature, he said. When breathing outdoor air, take in air through both the nose and the mouth, because the nose regulates humidity.

The common cold and allergies can be controlled by taking several precautions, Stokes said. Limiting starch in the diet will cut down on mucus and phlegm in the throat. He also recommends clearing the sinuses by natural methods whenever possible, by standing over a pot of steaming water. Antihistamines and decongestants dry the nose and throat and promote irritation of the vocal folds, he said.

Most of all, Stokes warns ministers to avoid straining the voice. Shouting can break blood vessels, and continued misuse of the voice can lead to contact ulcers, polyps and eventual voice failure, he said.

Since the voice is the tool through which the gospel is proclaimed, ministers must place a higher value on it, Stokes said.

"Your voice should express your inner being and sincerest thoughts. Clear articulation and proper breathing will bring souls into the kingdom in a way that shouting may fail to do. Your audience will heed your thoughts and not be sidetracked by a dislike for a strained and unnatural voice."

It often takes many sessions of practice to move from an artificial and damaged vocal sound to a natural voice, Stokes said. But that extra 10 years in the pulpit may be worth it!

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