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All 50 States Represented
At 1985 SBC In Dallas

By Craig Bird

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--There was width as well as depth in the number of registered messengers at the 1985 Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas.

The official headcount of 45,519 included--for the first time--messengers from each of the 50 United States plus Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico, according to figures just released by Lee Porter, registration secretary.

A single messenger from Maine and two messengers each from Rhode Island and Puerto Rico made the 1985 meeting the most wide-spread geographically ever. The only areas entitled to messengers by the SBC constitution not represented were American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Interestingly Vermont, which apparently had been represented only at the Pittsburgh convention in 1983 had eight messengers in Dallas.

As could be expected, Texas had more representation numerically than any other state, with 12,634 messengers which was 27.76 percent of the total. And the "motherland" of the Southern Baptist Convention--the 14 states of the Deep South--accounted for more than 90 percent of total registration (41,104).

But while the numbers are interesting, Porter feels the percentages and the percentage comparisons to the last two conventions in Dallas (1965 and 1974) are a more valid basis for analysis. "Everybody's numbers were probably at an all time high since we almost doubled the record for number of messengers," Porter pointed out.

Comparing individual state totals against the overall figures for the past three Dallas conventions show states east of the Mississippi, "had a greater influence in 1985 than they did in 1975 or in 1964," he said.

Porter looked for states which increased or decreased their percentage of the total registration at least one point over their average from the two pervious Dallas conventions.

On that basis Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia made the biggest gains while Mississippi, Oklahoma and Louisiana showed significant declines. Interestingly, Texas also posted a decline, dropping from an average of 28.22 percent of the two earlier Dallas conventions to a 27.76 percentage.

Georgia, the state with the second greatest number of messengers this year (3,243), averaged 4.93 percent at the 1965 and 1974 meetings but had 7.12 percent of the total this time--an increase of 2.19 percent.

North Carolina jumped 1.99 percent (from an average of 4.9 to 6.89), Virginia moved from 2.64 percent to 4.13 and Kentucky increased from 3.45 percent to 4.47 percent.

Mississippi dropped 1.77 percent (5.42 to 3.65), Oklahoma declined 1.33 percent (6.37 to 5.04) and Louisiana fell 1.26 percent (5.58 to 4.32).

The East-West breakdown was almost even: 22,682 messengers (49.82 percent) from east of the Mississippi River and 22,837 messengers (50.17 percent) from west of the Mississippi.

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The 1984 figures for church membership in the SBC show that 60.55 percent (8,681,997) of the convention's 14.3-million membership lives east of the Mississippi and the remaining 39.45 percent (5,667,660) live west of the river.

Numerically, in 1985, five states provided 52.54 percent of the messengers and 10 states provided 74.47 percent, 14 states (the Deep South) accounted for 90.29 percent and 19 states sent 95.24 percent of the total.

They are:

Texas—12,634, 27.76; Georgia—3,243, 7.12; North Carolina—3,135, 6.89; Tennessee—2,608, 5.73, and Oklahoma—2,296, 5.04 (23,916—52.54 percent of total);

Alabama—2,093, 4.60; Kentucky—2,036, 4.47; South Carolina—2,004, 4.40; Louisiana—1,967, 4.32, and Florida—1,885, 4.14 (33,901—74.47 percent of total);

Virginia—1,878, 4.13; Arkansas—1,844, 4.05; Missouri—1,818, 3.99, and Mississippi—1,663, 3.65 (41,104—90.29 percent of total);

Illinois—561, 1.23; California—521, 1.14; New Mexico—436, .96; Ohio—436, .96, and Maryland—301, .66 (43,359—95.24 percent of total).

Other states and their percentages were: Alaska—28, .06; Arizona—253, .56; Colorado—191, .42; Connecticut—12, .03; Delaware—9, .02; District of Columbia—57, .13; Hawaii—21, .05; Idaho—17, .04; Indiana—295, .65; Iowa—57, .13; Kansas—279, .61; Maine—1, .01; Massachusetts—27, .06; Michigan—139, .31; Minnesota—36, .08; Montana—42, .09;

Nebraska—40, .09; Nevada—41, .09; New Hampshire—11, .02; New Jersey—52, .11; New York—62, .14; North Dakota—13, .03; Oregon—64, .14; Pennsylvania—98, .22; Puerto Rico—2, .01; Rhode Island—2, .01; South Dakota—18, .04; Utah—30, .07; Vermont—8, .02; Washington—98, .22; West Virginia—62, .14; Wisconsin—48, .11, and Wyoming—45, .10.

Porter is expected to release the breakdown of registration by churches soon.

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Gambling Opponents Score
Wins In State Legislatures

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
7/31/85

WASHINGTON (BP)—Anti-gambling leaders came close to scoring a "shut out" this spring as only one state adopted a new form of legalized gambling despite an avalanche of pro-gambling bills introduced in legislative sessions across the country.

Iowa legalized a lottery, joining 22 other states which have adopted state-operated lotteries. In Montana, the legislature voted to submit the issue to the voters in a 1986 statewide referendum.

In other states, however, legislation in support of lotteries, pari-mutuel betting, casino gambling and other forms of gambling was voted down on the floor or killed in committee.

Even so, anti-gambling activists are taking little time to celebrate. Instead, they are gearing up for a new gambling offensive in many states this fall in a continuation of a struggle that has involved many Southern Baptist leaders at local, state and national levels.

"The reward for winning a battle on the gambling issue is the chance to fight again another day," said Larry Braidfoot of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission. Particular "danger points," he said, are special legislative sessions which may be held in several states this fall.

Braidfoot pointed out the efforts of Baptists were especially crucial in the South, where the gambling industry had targeted several states for expansion.

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Lottery legislation came up a loser in state after state. Examples include Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina and South Carolina.

In some cases the vote was close. In Indiana, a bill fell only one vote short in a House committee after pro-lottery legislation had earlier passed the Senate. In North Carolina, a pro-lottery measure died in the Senate on tie vote, while the House took no action on the issue.

In Florida, identified last year by gambling industry leaders as the best possibility for successful lottery legislation in 1985, a lottery bill died in committee. Proponents, however, are now pushing for 300,000 signatures required to get the issue on the November 1986 ballot.

Louisiana faced probably the largest volume of lottery proposals. A total of 15 bills related to a state-operated lottery were introduced. None of the measures, however, made it out of committee.

Anti-gambling strategists also got a lift from Nebraska where a ban on local-option video lotteries was maintained despite intensive lobbying by pro-lottery forces.

On the pari-mutuel front, gambling opponents scored victories in four of the five states identified last year by racing supporters as prime prospects for pari-mutuel legislation in 1985: Georgia, Kansas, Mississippi and Texas. In the fifth state, Tennessee, pari-mutuel legislation was approved by the Senate and lacked only four to six votes for passage in the House before being referred back to committee to wait until 1986.

Anti-gambling forces won dramatic victories in Mississippi and Texas where pari-mutuel bills bit the dust despite confident predictions by supporters. The Mississippi Senate defeated pari-mutuel legislation by six votes after the measure earlier had passed the House. A few days later the Texas House resoundingly defeated the latest horse-betting bill.

In Missouri, where a lottery bill was approved last year by the General Assembly, racing promoters will have to wait at least one more year. Legislation to implement pari-mutuel betting on horse racing failed to reach the floor of either house.

Louisiana, which has pari-mutuel betting on horse racing, turned back attempts to legalize pari-mutuel betting on jai alia games and greyhound dog racing. Separate Senate bills to allow casino gambling on cruise ships and in the French Quarter of New Orleans were defeated.

"Some Christians who are opposed to legalized gambling believe it is only a matter of time before the efforts of the well-organized and high-financed gambling industry eventually pay off," said Braidfoot. "I think the successes this year prove that informed Christians can match the gambling proponents' pressure with persistence and their funds with facts."

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Mozambique Baptists Join Others
In Asking Prayer for Their Land

By Steve Evans

Baptist Press
7/31/85

HARARE, Zimbabwe (BP)—Baptists in Mozambique have joined other Christians in that country appealing for an international day of prayer for Mozambique.

Aug. 10, 1985, has been set aside for Christians around the world to pray for the spiritual and physical needs of Mozambicans. Needs identified include revival, Bible teaching, hunger, international aid, the sick, economic stability and peace from a growing civil war.

Brazilian Baptist missionary Noemia Gabriel Da Silva and members of the Beira (Mozambique) Baptist Church are one of the major forces in calling for the day of prayer, according to Carluci Dos Santos, a Brazilian Baptist working in Mozambique. They have joined Share the Cup, a Harare-based aid organization established to meet the needs of Mozambique, and World Vision International in appealing to the international Christian community for this prayer effort.

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Share the Cup reports Mozambique contains one of the largest populations unreached for Christ in the southern hemisphere. UNICEF, they said, warned up to 2.5 million Mozambicans could die in the next year if there is no change in the food situation. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization named the country one of the six African nations with the most critical food needs this year.

"Mozambique is a forgotten land in great need," said Dos Santos. "Drought, cyclone and floods have led to widespread hunger and hospitals are desperately short of supplies. The spiritual need is also great. Can we ignore the needs of our neighbors?"

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Potpourri Contest
Winners Announced

Baptist Press
7/31/85

ATLANTA (BP)--Approximately 60 Southern Baptist professional and amateur songwriters, storytellers, playwrights and game designers were selected as winners of "Potpourri," a contest sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board special mission ministries department.

The winning selections will appear in "Potpourri II," a collection of skits, stories, songs and activities Southern Baptists can use to share Christ with students, resort tourists, campers, and others who attend fairs and other special events.

The HMB department published the first Potpourri collection two years ago. According to Tom Eggleston, HMB national consultant for special events and creative arts, the first edition was an assortment of previously printed and copyrighted plays, stories, games and activities.

When Eggleston assumed his creative post in 1984, he decided to sponsor a contest to solicit original work for a second edition of Potpourri.

The 130 Potpourri entrants who took the creative challenge, advertised in state papers and various SBC media, submitted more than 340 original pieces. The 60 winners, Eggleston noted, hail from 25 states.

The contest drew both professional and amateur entries, said Eggleston. To qualify for professional level competition, entrants could not currently be enrolled in an educational institution, he explained.

Eggleston added entrants hailed from a variety of ages, the youngest was 13.

According to Esther Burroughs, special mission ministries assistant director and potpourri contest judge, entries were judged on the basis of originality and creativity. Entries rules also stipulated, Burroughs added, all submissions had not been published.

Nellie Crandall of Mountain Home, Ark., won first place in the professional music competition for her entry entitled "Praise Him in the Sunshine." Kenneth Barger of Murrayville, Ill., captured the first place drama professional award for "I am a Church Pew."

In the activities competition Henry Fergus of Goodyear, Ariz., won first place for his entry, "Heavenly Airlines." "Jungle Journey Game" by Mary Jane Jent of Poplar Bluff, Mo., received first place in professional level of the games category and Doni Hammonds of Montevello, Calif., captured first place in the professional stories competition for "Mr. Mushroom, Miss Moss and Old Oak Tree."

Amateur winners included Evalya McCall of Atlanta, for music entry "Put on the Whole Armour of God." Brad Nimmons of Tallahassee, Fla., received first place for "The 5,000 Feeding," a drama. Amateur Jim Wicker of Farmersville, Texas, placed first in the story competition for his entry entitled "Useful to God."

Sandy Wisdom of Carbondale, Ill., received first place in professional level of the games category for "Snap" and Jennifer Goldworthy of Bothell, Wash., captured the amateur activities first place for "Fruits of the Spirit."

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In addition to having their work printed in the second edition, the first place professional and amateur winners also received a cash prize.

Eggleston said the printed Potpourri II will contain all of the 60 winning entries and supplementary material from the first edition.

Scheduled for release by HMB special mission ministries in October 1985, Potpourri II will also contain a third section of "how-to's" for creative worship.

The potpourri contest, commented Eggleston, allowed a geographical and occupational cross section of people an opportunity to become directly involved in ministry by using their creative abilities.

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Thousands Of Youths To Pray
For Foreign Missions Concerns

Baptist Press
7/31/85

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptists' newest foreign missions prayer supporters are some of the youngest.

They're students entering grades eight through 12 whose missions awareness has been raised by Centrifuge, week-long youth camps sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church recreation department.

The youths' prayer commitments have prompted the Foreign Mission Board to inaugurate a monthly mailing of youth-oriented prayer requests from foreign missionaries.

As of mid-July, the Foreign Mission Board had received about 3,500 commitments to pray daily for foreign missions from youths who attended the first three weeks of Centrifuge camps in several locations across the country.

The initial youth-oriented prayer list will be mailed in September, according to Minette Drumwright, special assistant to the FMB president for intercessory prayer.

Already the board is mailing monthly prayer lists to more than 13,500 individuals, groups and churches across the country.

"When a young person enters a commitment to pray daily for specific overseas prayer requests, and continues to pray over a period of years, a sensitivity to the needs of the world and the lostness of people is bound to develop," Drumwright said.

"Of even greater significance, that young person is opening his or her life to the call of God and to the possibility of being the answer to prayer needs," she said. "I believe many future foreign missionaries are among these pray-ers."

A sample prayer request on the youth list comes from South America: "The freshman class of the Equatorial Baptist Seminary in Belem, Brazil, has more than 60 persons. Many of these students are feeling the pangs of homesickness. Pray that the homesick students will rely on God to help them conquer these feelings."

Another is from Africa: "Pray that students will respond to Christ as a result of the Baptist student ministry at three campuses in South Africa. These are at the Universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Western Cape."

The Centrifuge prayer commitments are made usually during the week's closing service, according to Don Mattingly, coordinator of special services in the church recreation department. About 22,000 youths will attend one of the eight weeks of Centrifuge this summer.

Youth ministers interested in leading their groups into expanded prayer for foreign missions should contact FMB Prayer Requests, Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230.

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