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October 3, 1985

85-120

Churches Report
 Record Enrollment

By Frank Wm. White

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist Sunday school enrollment apparently has topped eight million for an all-time record, based on estimates collected during a nationwide reporting telecast.

The Sept. 29 Celebration Sunday reporting telecast on the Baptist Telecommunication Network (BTN) marked the end of a five-year enrollment campaign. During the telecast, state Baptist convention leaders reported the estimated total enrollment for churches in their state.

The telecast included reports from 38 of the 39 state conventions and fellowships with an estimated increase of 115,016 above the 1984 enrollment of 7,857,337.

Additional reports received after the telecast ended include reports from all 39 state conventions and fellowships with an estimated increase of 145,472 for a total enrollment for Southern Baptist churches estimated at 8,002,809. The Southern Baptist Sunday school enrollment was 7,433,405 in 1980 when 8.5 by '85 began, for an estimated five-year gain of 569,404.

The live phone-in telecast was a first for Southern Baptists designed to give an immediate report of the five-year enrollment emphasis. The report was based on churches calling their associational leaders who in turned called the state Sunday school directors for the live phone-in.

Associational leaders used last year's figures for churches which did not report and state leaders used last year's figures for associations not reporting.

*Texas posted the largest numerical gain with an estimated 32,995 increase. Other top numerical estimated increases were Florida, 19,891; Alabama, 14,115; California, 9,080, and Oklahoma, 8,895.

Thirty-four of the thirty-nine conventions posted estimated enrollment increases. Two states--Arizona and Ohio--reported estimates reflecting essentially no change from the 1984 totals. Two states--Colorado and Missouri--registered estimated slight declines.

Iowa churches were counted separately for the first time. Iowa totals were included in the 1984 Missouri total accounting for some of the decline for Missouri in the 1985 estimates.

Puerto Rico showed an estimated increase of 41 percent (1,359). Other high percentage gains: Alaska, 22 percent (1,664); District of Columbia, 21 (2,103); New England, 18 (1,779), and Nevada, 11 (1,307).

"Although it does not appear we will reach the eight and a half million, we have achieved a significant victory by topping the eight million mark," said Harry Piland, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday school department. The growth marks six years of consecutive increase with four years of record enrollment, Piland said.

"There is a new sense of urgency for Sunday school enrollment we have not had before," he said.

The growth of the last five years with four years of record Sunday school enrollment totals reflects an encouraging direction for Southern Baptists, Lloyd Elder, BSSB president, said during the telecast.

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**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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 Nashville, Tennessee

As the 1985 enrollment emphasis ends, Challenge 10/90, a new emphasis to enroll 10 million persons in Bible study by 1990 is beginning.

The goals are not just numbers but are efforts to enroll individuals in Bible study, Piland emphasized during discussion that was a part of the telecast along with the telephone reports from state Sunday school leaders. "Challenge 10/90 is a people challenge not a numbers challenge."

Members of the Sunday school department, other board employees and visitors made up the audience for the live telecast. Interviews with persons involved with the enrollment emphasis were a part of the telecast which also highlighted projects in promoting Sunday school growth.

The enrollment emphasis has had a major impact on the Sunday school work in some conventions. For example, the New England convention reported an estimated enrollment that has almost doubled the enrollment of five years ago. Al Riddley, Sunday school director for New England reported an estimated enrollment of 11,943. Churches making up what is now the New England convention had an enrollment of approximately 6,000 in 1980.

Reporting an increase was significant for some state conventions such as Virginia. The 4,000 estimated increase reported by Lawson Pankey, Sunday school director for the Baptist General Association of Virginia, was a turnaround from previous declines.

Significant progress in reaching ethnic and language groups has helped increase Sunday school enrollment in Virginia, Pankey said.

Oklahoma and the Northwest Baptist Convention both reported estimates marking the conventions' 13th consecutive year of enrollment increases. In the Northwest, two associations reported increases of more than 25 percent, according to Bob Flegal, Sunday school director for the convention.

For California, an estimated increase of more than 9,000 was well above the 7,100 average increase for the past four years, said Jerry Harris, Sunday school director for the Southern Baptist General Convention of California.

While the telecast provides an indication of the totals for Sunday school enrollment, it represents a different reporting process from the annual report of church statistics based on Uniform Church Letters, Piland said, noting: "We believe our process in obtaining these reports has integrity. However, because this is the first time we have attempted this kind of reporting, it is possible these estimates will differ from the official UCL totals."

Official projections will be available Dec. 11 when the Sunday School Board's research services department completes an enrollment projection based on a percentage of the Uniform Church Letters. Final totals for Sunday school enrollment will be based on a complete tally of Uniform Church Letters which is expected in February 1986.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by BSSB bureau of Baptist Press

Colombia Seminary Hears
Fighting, But Stays Open

Baptist Press
10/3/85

CALI, Colombia (BP)--Fighting between Colombia's military and forces intent on overthrowing the government is within earshot of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Cali, but classes are continuing.

"They've been shooting up here this morning," James Giles, Southern Baptist missionary who is president of the seminary, said in an Oct. 1 telephone interview.

Giles, of Bailey County, Texas, sounded a call for prayer for the safety of missionaries, the seminary's 73 students and leaders of 20 Baptist churches in the Cali area, where 1.5 million people live. There are 19 Southern Baptist missionaries working in Cali.

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Just four blocks separated the seminary from a mid-September skirmish between the military and forces sympathetic to leftist causes, Giles said. The strife was about a half-mile away in early October.

"If it gets bad enough, we would cancel classes," but for now, Giles said, "we're just sitting tight and hoping that it doesn't come this way."

Threats to their safety have kept some missionaries from visiting churches in places where hostile groups are active. When travel is necessary, Giles said, "We drive...with the doors locked and the windows raised, in spite of no air conditioning (in the cars).

"Yet, in the midst of all this tension and turmoil, God's peace has helped us.... Repeatedly someone asks, 'Why don't you all get out of that dangerous place?' The question is hard, because logic would dictate that we do. However, we feel God has called us here. Thus we feel secure."

Fighting confined faculty members Roy and Joyce Wyatt, of Richmond, Va., and Rogersville, Tenn., respectively, to their home one day, while the military searched in their residential area for a leader of one subversive group. After several hours of conflict, the leader and his bodyguard were killed. Found at the scene was a detailed plan for blowing up electrical and water installations in Cali.

Another faculty member, Irvin Northcutt of Chapman, Ala., was in his backyard when he heard projectiles hitting the homes and trees in front of the seminary. A bullet hit the outside of the house where he and his wife, Mildred, of Columbus, Ga., live, and one hit a tree in the yard of missionaries Bill and Katie Warren, of Valparaiso, Fla., and Baton Rouge, La. Just down the street, bullets pierced the buildings and cars at a private business school.

Among the casualties in the fighting was the son of a Baptist church member. Telling his mother he was joining one of the subversive groups, the youth left home two weeks before he was killed.

Earlier this year, a number of U.S. diplomatic personnel in Bogota temporarily left Colombia after tensions were stirred up by dealers in illicit drugs, upset over the extradition of four Colombians to the United States to face drug smuggling charges.

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Son Of Home Mission Board
Employee Killed In Crash

Baptist Press
10/3/85

ATLANTA (BP)--The son of a Home Mission Board word processor was killed in a plane crash 50 miles south of Atlanta.

Steven Wilson, 35-year-old son of Home Board employee Betty Wilson, was the pilot of the plane carrying 16 parachutists. All were killed.

The plane was taking off for one of several jumps in clear, sunny skies, and it apparently climbed to about 1,000 feet before it nosed down and rammed into a farm pasture. All the jumpers were on the plane when it crashed.

Wilson, a pilot for the Westwind Sport Parachute Club, Jenkinsburg, Ga., was a former employee of the Federal Aviation Administration and also had been a pilot in the U.S. Air Force.

Although cause of the crash has not been determined, the chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board said the plane was operating with contaminated fuel and may have been overloaded. He described the fuel as "the color of black coffee."

The pilot's father, retired Southern Baptist minister Herb Wilson, told reporters his son would never have flown the plane if he had known there was a problem with the fuel.

Betty Wilson, the pilot's mother, currently employed in the Home Mission Board planning section, has worked with the board for eight years.

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Shells Hit Beirut
Seminary Campus

By Frances Fuller

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)—Shells exploded on the campus of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary Sept. 28. None of the four Southern Baptist missionary families, 10 students and several employees who live there was injured.

The shells fell during a random bombing of areas in east Beirut. One blast broke 12 windows in the home of missionaries David and Maxine King on the seminary campus and destroyed a tree in their front yard. The Kings, from Livingston, N.J., and Augus, Texas, respectively, were in an inside hallway at the time.

Glass blew into the King's basement, where missionaries Bill and Vivian Trimble were sitting with their daughter and son-in-law, missionaries Jerree and Gary White, and the Whites' two small children.

The Trimbles, from Rodessa, La., and Holloway, La., live in an apartment above the Kings. The Whites had been in Lebanon just one week, having transferred from Jordan after their first furlough. He is from Pineville, La., and she from Alexandria, La.

A second shell hit an international ministries building still under construction on campus, doing only slight damage. Shrapnel from another shell hit a room in the home of missionaries Emmett and La Nell Barnes from Potosi, Mo., and Monette, Ark.

Normal activities resumed at the seminary the next day. Missionaries reported worshipers crowded into the seminary chapel for the Sunday morning service of the Mansourieh Baptist Church. Two young women were baptized, and both mentioned the role of missionaries in bringing them to Christ.

Earlier fighting endangered missionary homes in other parts of the Beirut area. Shrapnel broke windows in the sixth-floor apartment of missionary Nancie Wingo from Fort Worth, Texas. During recent artillery battles a village near Beirut was the target of an intense nighttime attack. Missionaries Wayne and Frances Fuller and Mack and Linda Sacco live in the village. The Fullers are from Remer, Minn., and Wynne, Ark., and the Saccos from Gilroy, Calif., and McAlester, Okla.

Numerous shells fell around the Sacco home. One pierced the roof of the building across the street. Many more shells slammed into the hills above the Fullers' home, destroying water pipes and power lines and showering their roof with shrapnel.

Frances Fuller said the Southern Baptist missionaries in Beirut "want to thank all who pray for them and for Lebanon."

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Senate Nixes Exemption
For Witchcraft Groups

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press
10/3/85

WASHINGTON (BP)—The U.S. Senate has voted to take away tax-exempt status from any cult or organization that promotes witchcraft or satanism.

Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., proposed the action as an amendment to the Treasury, Postal Service and General Appropriations Act of 1986. The amendment stipulates no tax exemption be allowed for any "cult, organization or other group that has as a purpose, or that has any interest in, the promoting of satanism or witchcraft."

Helms' measure, adopted without objection on a voice vote, defines satanism as "the worship of Satan or the powers of evil" and witchcraft as "the use of sorcery or the use of supernatural powers with malicious intent."

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While introducing the amendment, Helms recalled a letter from a constituent questioning the tax-exempt status of a group he said was known to promote witchcraft. Helms said he discovered, following correspondence with the Internal Revenue Service and Treasury Secretary James A. Baker, that the IRS "has and will grant tax-exempt status as a religious organization to groups explicitly promoting witchcraft."

Helms said the amendment would stop that practice.

"We allow tax-exempt status for bona fide religious organizations because we believe they help promote the common good," Helms stated. "Cults and witchcraft groups do not; in fact, they lead to violent and unlawful behavior."

A conference committee will reconcile the Senate measure with the House version of the Treasury, Postal Service and General Appropriations Act. Conferees will decide whether to retain the Helms amendment.

In addition, Rep. Robert S. Walker, R-Penn., has introduced a similar measure in the House. The proposed bill, which would deny tax exemptions and deductibility for contributions to "religious organizations having a substantial interest in the promotion of witchcraft," has been referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

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Senate Action Would Delay
Non-Profit Postage Hike

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press
10/3/85

WASHINGTON (BP)--Recent Senate action would delay probable postal rate increases for non-profit publications until Jan. 1, 1986.

The U.S. postal budget approved by the Senate in late September includes \$785 million in federal subsidies for the U.S. Postal Service to provide reduced mailing rates to non-profit mailers, including state Baptist newspapers and church newsletters.

That figure falls \$196 million short of what the Postal Service says it needs to maintain the present level of subsidy. The shortfall would result in an approximate 30 percent rate increase for typical non-profit mailers, a Postal Service spokesman said.

An amendment sponsored by Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, would delay any increase in postal rates for non-profit mailers until the first of 1986.

The Senate-approved postal budget still must be reconciled with the House version of the bill, which contains \$922 million in subsidy. A conference committee is expected to meet soon.

Both versions of the budget contain subsidies significantly above the Administration-proposed \$39 million. The president's proposed 1985-86 budget would have terminated the subsidy except for benefits to organizations that send materials to the blind.

Beginning in 1970, non-profit and other subsidized mailers began a 16-step plan to gradually assume the actual cost of mailing their publications and eventually remove the subsidy entirely. Mailers are now at step 14, with step 15 scheduled to take effect July 1, 1986.

The \$785 subsidy approved by the Senate, however, would catapult mailers to step 16, said an aide to Sen. Quentin N. Burdick, D-N.C. She said a conference committee agreement on a subsidy in the \$850 million range would hold the plan at step 15.

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Hard Financial Issues
Face Churches, Architects

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
10/3/85

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptist churches and their architects must face the hard financial issues early in the planning process of a building program, Gwenn McCormick said during a Workshop for Architects.

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"Not many churches have completed adequate financial planning by the time they select an architect," said McCormick, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church architecture department. "Indeed, some of the early discussions with the architect may leave the impression that money is no object--the church can build anything it wants to build."

That impression is strengthened, McCormick said, by the building committee that insists upon making expensive additions with no concern for increased costs. If an architect proceeds on false financial assumptions, bids may come in 50 percent above the financial capability of the church.

"This may be one of the most difficult areas for the architect to bring himself to deal with," McCormick observed. "He may tell himself the committee knows what the church can afford and that dealing with financial capability is really not his responsibility."

But McCormick expresses the belief "a sensitive and informed architect can be a valuable resource person in helping the church building committee do its financial homework and by leading them to establish a realistic building budget."

McCormick outlined five financial principles related to indebtedness:

1. Building investments should not take precedence over missions, program and ministry needs.
2. Long-term indebtedness must not siphon off resources needed for personnel.
3. A church should not plan to pay for a new building with anticipated income from projected growth.
4. Churches must have a good capital fund-raising program or must gear up to increase giving to a higher level.
5. Total indebtedness must be kept within the range of 25 to 35 percent of undesignated income, with location, growth rate, community economy, stewardship of members and commitment to the project used as guidelines.

Generally, it is best for a church to limit its long-term debt to 15 years," McCormick said. Acknowledging "there may be some situations where this must be stretched to 20 years," he said churches should never take 25 years to repay a building debt. The difference in monthly payments between 20- and 25-year mortgages is minimal, he said.

"In a 25-year loan, the equivalent of payments for the last seven years goes to the increased interest compared to a 15-year loan. It is difficult to justify extending a loan for 10 more years if seven of those years the payments are for interest alone," said McCormick.

McCormick said he believes a capital fund campaign such as Southern Baptists' "Together We Build" can raise from one and one-half to three times the annual church income over a three-year period.

He urged architects to refer churches to their Baptist state convention stewardship office or to the SBC Stewardship Commission in Nashville. "This program can make it possible for a church to finance what otherwise would be impossible for them," he said.

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Edwin Corr: Diplomat
With A Dual Mission

By Stan Hastey

Baptist Press
10/3/85

WASHINGTON (BP)--Ed Corr is an American diplomat with a dual mission: he is an ambassador from his country and an ambassador for Christ.

And while blending the two--professional duty and personal faith--can be a tricky proposition in the context of volatile international relations, the United States' new ambassador to El Salvador does so naturally.

"I do feel that I have a responsibility as an appointed official of the United States government to be sure and respect separation of church and state and not to use my office in a way that would be inappropriate," he says. "But at the same time I feel that I have every right as an individual to go ahead and participate in our own congregation."

Long-time friend and former Southern Baptist missionary to Colombia Alan Neely describes Corr as a "person who is a committed Christian. It is not this super-piety that makes you uncomfortable to be around; there is a genuineness and authenticity about him that goes beyond that."

Former missionary to Mexico Ervin Hasteley remembers vividly staying in the Mexico City home of Ed and Susanne Corr in 1963 during a week-long revival meeting in the English-language Capital City Baptist Church, where the family belonged while Corr was junior officer and later administrative assistant to the U.S. ambassador.

After attending the nightly services where Hasteley was preaching, the Corrs would sit with him around the dining room table talking late into the night about their church and other Baptist work in the country. They also shared with him "what they were doing as God's representatives in Mexico City."

Elbert Smithen, a missionary in Lima, Peru, knew the family nearly 20 years later following Corr's first ambassadorial appointment. The new envoy maintained a "wholesome blend of Christian commitment and diplomatic activities," Smithen says, underscoring as well Susanne Corr's participation in a Bible study group led by his wife, Jo.

Smithen recalls fondly dinners at the ambassador's residence in Lima, including one at which he and Jo, along with Roy and Joyce Wyatt--SBC representatives to neighboring Colombia--were the guests. Corr had put in a grueling day working toward resolution of a tense border dispute between Peru and Ecuador and greeted them in stocking feet and with shirttail out. "Unpretentious" is a word used often to describe this veteran diplomat.

Between his four years in Mexico City and becoming ambassador to Peru in 1980, Corr was asked to undertake a variety of assignments. He was a regional director of the Peace Corps in Cali, Colombia; a desk officer in the Office of Panamanian Affairs at the State Department back home in Washington; executive assistant to the ambassador to Thailand (his only non-Latin American overseas assignment); political counselor and deputy chief of mission at the embassy in Quito, Ecuador; and deputy assistant secretary of state for international narcotics matters at the State Department.

His previous ambassadorial appointments have been to Peru (1980-81) and Bolivia (1981-85). This summer President Reagan nominated him as ambassador to one of the world's hottest diplomatic posts, El Salvador.

His parents, E.L. (Bert) and Rowena Corr, of Bartlesville, Okla., are not unmindful of potential danger. "His dad and I have said many times we wish he could go elsewhere," confesses Rowena Corr. "But where could he go where there is no terrorism? I'm his mother, and I realize El Salvador is somewhat of a hot place. But there's danger that goes with all his assignments. There's always danger."

In recent years the danger factor has been multiplied because of Corr's specialization in the field of international narcotics traffic. During his recent four-year tenure as ambassador to Bolivia, a \$500,000 contract on his life was put out and an assassin was ordered to kill him. Embassy security reportedly sniffed out the plot after the drug pushers tried to bribe a Marine guard to assist them. Twice--once in Lima, once in La Paz, Bolivia-- the ambassador's residence was fire-bombed.

Not surprisingly, Rowena Corr's antidote to anxiety over her son's well-being is to pray. "I've done that for many years," she declares.

"We have always said that if Ed and Susanne had not been diplomats, they would have made good missionaries," she says, adding quickly: "But they are missionaries--I think they have been outstanding missionaries."

By all accounts Corr's success as a diplomat and commitment as a churchman owes largely to his own upbringing in a tight-knit, Christian family. Both parents were schoolteachers. They reared their family in small towns in Oklahoma, settling in Perry. Their first children were twin boys, Ed and Bert Jr., followed by a daughter, Jean Anne (now Cochrane), and a third son, Bill.

Twin brother Bert Jr. says that like many twins, he and Ed "were very supportive of one another," while seeking at the same time separate identities. One vital step they took together, he recalls, was making their professions of faith at age 10 during revival services at First Baptist Church, Edmond, Okla. The family attended church together, including Sunday school and training union. Both boys were Eagle Scouts. At Oklahoma University, they were active in Baptist Student Union and First Baptist Church, Norman, and wrestled competitively.

Ed Corr's care and nurture as a child carried over to his own family. He and Susanne are parents of three daughters. Michelle, 25, recently began her third year in veterinary school at Oklahoma State University; Jennifer, 24, a music therapist, is working toward a master's degree at Southwestern (Okla.) State University, and Phoebe, 20, is a senior business major at Oklahoma University.

Family members and friends alike are unanimous in portraying Susanne as an ideal diplomat's wife. Like her husband, she is fluent in Spanish and insists on identifying with those with whom they have been sent to work.

As for his new assignment in troubled El Salvador, where this summer 13 persons, including six Americans, were gunned down in an outdoor cafe, and where President Jose Napoleon Duarte's daughter recently was kidnaped, Corr is philosophical.

While saying he is not "fatalistic," he adds: "I figure when the Lord wants me to depart this earth that he'll take me.... That in itself gives me the possibility of going about and doing my job, not letting the threats or the danger impede me from doing the best job that I can."

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Baptists Should Temper
Enthusiasm With Patience

By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press
10/3/85

KALISPELL, Mont. (BP)--Southern Baptists, in their enthusiasm to start churches in new work areas, may need to exercise patience or risk reflecting an image of a struggling, suffering denomination.

For Butch Adcock, pastor of Easthaven Baptist Church in Kalispell, Mont., there is a paradox of loneliness for more contact with other pastors while at the same time not favoring the location of a new church within a few miles of another small, struggling church.

"Our basic philosophy has been to establish churches in towns which have no Southern Baptist witness," Adcock said. "Instead, we should establish area churches and let the church reach out where it can be strong, rather than spreading out the leadership.

"Missions efforts for the most part are ineffectual when there is one church with an average attendance of 14 and another church three miles away with about the same number," he said.

"We have to exercise patience, even if it might mean not having a mission for 10 years," he explained. "In the Northwest, we need the strong Southern Baptist witness of good preaching, good teaching and good training.

"I'm for starting churches with good possibilities," explains Adcock, whose church members have been involved in helping with the construction of 14 churches in the northwestern United States in the last nine years.

"A church needs to be running about 200-250 in Sunday school before you can establish a mission by moving leaders to the new church," Adcock said. "You nurture the mission church and keep a strong mother church. When the mission church gets strong, you establish another mission."

In the northwestern part of the U.S., many people are not oriented to attending church, according to Phil Turner, minister of education at First Baptist Church, Dishman, Wash., one of the churches constructed by workers from Easthaven Church.

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"We have a generation or two where people moved here and church is not a part of their lives," Turner said. "Southern Baptists who move here are shocked by the small Baptist churches and go to bigger churches."

To point out the high mobility of people in the area, Turner said his church had enrolled 900 people in Sunday school in the last nine years while their Sunday school enrollment has grown to 261.

Some persons criticize churches for counting members and dollars, but to survive, a church must reach people to support ministries, according to Adcock. With the scarcity of church-goers in the area, a fact of life is competition for members.

In Deer Park, Wash., pastor Charles Hargrove said his church, with an average attendance of just over 100, is the second largest church in the town of approximately 1,800. There are 12 churches in the immediate area.

Hargrove's wife, who recently attended a conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, said other wives of missions pastors in the conferences expressed loneliness because of the difficult circumstances in the Northwest.

"There is strength in numbers," she said. "Numbers represent souls, but they also pay the bills. There is no strength in some churches here."

Deer Park Baptist Church is one of the churches in the area which is making gains in enrollment and finances, with attendance increasing from 60 to the present average of 103 in the last two years.

According to Adcock, Southern Baptists may be "forcing" their missions efforts with a mentality of a church in every city. Area churches might reach more people and have a greater impact on communities.

"Southern Baptists are known for being a strong, evangelical denomination, noted for Bible teaching and Christian growth," Adcock said. "We're not reflecting Southern Baptist work, however, when some of our churches are projecting an image of defeatism and struggle."

"Christians are victorious," Adcock concluded. "We need to project what we preach--a victorious life, a victorious Savior, a victorious salvation."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by BSSB bureau of Baptist Press

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BAPTIST PRESS

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