



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(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, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201-3355, Telephone (214) 720-0550
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 13, 1986

86-18

Baptisms Abroad Reach Record
But Growth Rate Declines

By Art Toalston

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—A record 158,626 baptisms were reported last year by overseas Baptists related to Southern Baptist missions work. The increase, however, was 1.5 percent, compared to seven percent during 1984.

Overseas Baptists' membership topped two million for the first time, a gain of nearly five percent during 1985.

Cooperative work in 106 countries between local Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries was reviewed by Charles Bryan, Foreign Mission Board senior vice-president for overseas operations, during the agency's Feb. 10-12 trustee meeting.

The number of churches increased to 15,635, nearly six percent over 1984, when there was a nine percent gain. Counting churches, chapels and preaching points, 32,969 locations were reported.

More than a fourth of overseas baptisms, some 43,000, were reported in Brazil. In 1984, with 49,000-plus baptisms, Brazil accounted for nearly a third of the total. Second in baptisms were Nigerian Baptists, with nearly 18,850, up 321 over 1984. In Tanzania, baptisms soared from 8,700 in 1984 to more than 12,500—one baptism for every four members.

In the Philippines, nearly 12,500 people were baptized in 1985 as in 1984; in Mexico, 7,300, compared to 6,700 the year before, and in Korea, some 7,300, down from 8,700 in 1984.

On smaller mission fields, there were 1,200 baptisms in Togo—one for every 2.2 members—compared to 350 in 1984. In Lebanon, baptisms increased 75 percent, 79 in 1985, 45 in 1984. In South Africa, baptisms decreased 65 percent, 2,287 in 1985, 3,765 in 1984.

With decreases in some countries and increases or a leveling off in others, Bryan commented, "If our churches (in the United States) are any indicator, there are dips. We can't explain it here and it's hard to explain there.

"Conversion is a work of the Holy Spirit. We have to be faithful to the proclamation and...leave the results to the Lord." Bryan said the board must strive for "evidence of productivity comparable to...the resources we have, both financial and human resources."

With sizeable gains in baptisms in recent years—averaging nearly seven percent since 1975—Bryan said some declines occur as churches seek to disciple and involve new members. In various countries, baptisms increased as a result of special projects by Southern Baptist volunteers.

The baptismal total is far short of a one-day increase in the world's population (230,000 people), Bryan said. "It's a world that is turbulent, chaotic and suffering."

World population increased by 84 million during 1985, equal to the population of Mexico, he said. During 1986, the number of non-Christians may increase by more than 50 million.

The need for missionary evangelists remains critical, Bryan said. "We're trying, the best we can, to inform pastors and preachers that we cannot win more people or start more churches without more help."

--more--

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES**
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

During 1985, 73 field evangelists were among a record 429 missionary appointees, yet 220 church-planting positions, and numerous others in church support, remain unfilled.

The missionary force grew by nearly five percent to a total of 3,597 at the end of 1985. Two new countries were entered, Zaire and Reunion, while the work of Southern Baptist missionaries in Sudan ended. Overseas Baptist pastors numbered 13,285; self-supporting congregations, 12,858.

Overseas Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries expanded their efforts in crisis ministry during 1985, providing, for example, immediate and long-term aid after an earthquake in Mexico and volcanic eruption and mudslide in Colombia. Hunger relief in Africa was expanded and educational and evangelistic efforts in tense areas of the Middle East continued. Southern Baptists contributed a record \$11.8 million toward relief efforts, up 64 percent over record gifts of \$7.2 million during 1984.

Southern Baptists responded to human need "in a greater way than we've done in any period of our history," Bryan said.

Theological training continued to increase and, over the past three years, overseas seminary enrollment increased by more than 50 percent and theological education by extension (TEE) by 40 percent. Totals for 1985 were 9,313 seminarians, up four percent over 1984, and 9,077 in TEE, up nearly 16 percent.

Such enrollment figures are hopeful signs for evangelism and church growth in the years ahead, Bryan said, as are translations of MasterLife into 33 languages, including four in India and six in the Philippines.

The number of short- and long-term Southern Baptist volunteers totaled 6,759, nearly nine percent over 1984, when a 31 percent increase was reported. Nearly 2,300 participated in partnership evangelism between overseas and U.S. churches, 68 percent over 1984 and its 40 percent increase.

A key value of volunteers, Bryan said, is, "When they come back, they give their churches and fellow Christians a new vision of what is happening out there and what needs to happen."

In media work, 58 missionaries and more than 200 nationals reached an estimated audience of 233 million people—more than twice the audience of the Super Bowl football game, Bryan said. There were 35,932 radio broadcasts over 370 stations and 762 telecasts over 61 TV outlets.

Sixty-three missionary physicians, eight dentists and 76 nurses in 22 hospitals and 123 clinics worked alongside more than 5,800 national doctors and other medical personnel caring for more than 163,000 inpatients and nearly 1.4 million outpatients.

At 36 publications centers, 93 missionaries and 791 nationals produced nearly 6.4 million periodicals, 2.4 million books and 11.7 million tracts.

In benevolent ministries, 80 missionaries and 289 nationals ministered to 138,000 adults and children in 82 community centers and 3,357 residents in 21 children's homes.

—30—

Third Missionary Home Lost
In Uganda's Political Battles

Baptist Press
2/13/86

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Continuing strife in Uganda has caused heartbreak and hardship for at least one Ugandan Baptist church and a Southern Baptist missionary couple.

Some members of the Baptist congregation in Soroti have taken refuge in the church building from forces opposing new Ugandan leader Yoweri Museveni. The associate pastor, his wife and their four children are among those taking refuge there. The pastor and his family are in hiding. The pastor's father, a schoolteacher, was killed in mid-January. And the Soroti home of missionaries Harry and Doris Garvin has been gutted, the third missionary home lost in Uganda in a year.

—more—

The Garvins have been on furlough in Cisco, Texas, since August. Garvin learned of Soroti's plight through telephone contacts Feb. 7 and 8.

Museveni and his National Resistance Army are fighting forces loyal to the military government that was ousted in late January. Museveni opponents still control more than a third of the country, Garvin said, and looting is their basic means of survival.

The Garvins, who have six children, had lived in their Soroti home during most of their 16-year missionary career. It had been purchased by the Foreign Mission Board.

"We had steeled ourselves to be ready to lose our goods," Garvin said, "but for the house to burn down, that was a terrible shock. It was so full of memories. It was where we raised our children, where we started a church and over 100 people had come to the Lord as Savior."

Last July, an Foreign Mission Board-owned house where Paul and Kay Eaton lived near the town of Lira and a house rented for Walter and Billie Allen in Lira were destroyed in violence following the overthrow of civilian Ugandan President Milton Obote. The home of George and Doris Berry in Kamkapa also was looted.

Garvin is not sure how his home was destroyed, whether two opposing groups were battling to loot it or a group attempted to open a locked door with a grenade.

"We're in shock," Garvin said. "But we have peace. We haven't changed our plans to go back on July 1."

The Eatons are on furlough in Florida; the Allens and Berrys are on temporary assignments in Kenya.

No missionaries remain in the area held by Museveni's opponents, where more than 50 Baptist churches are located.

Included in the Garvins' loss were new appliances, his library and college and seminary notes. Three times during the late 1970s, the home was occupied by various forces. Before furlough, the Garvins had just completed renovations.

--30--

Lewis Says 70 Percent Of Churches
Grow Because Of Transfers

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press
2/13/86

ATLANTA (BP)--If it were not for transfers of church membership, 70 percent of the churches in the Southern Baptist Convention would not be growing, a church growth consultant told a conference on "Doing Church in the '80s."

"In 92 percent of your churches, the only real growth you've had in the last five years has been from baptizing the children of your members and from transfers of members from other churches," said Ron Lewis of Nashville, Tenn.

Lewis, a former staff member of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and Illinois Baptist State Association, was the opening speaker for a two-day conference on church growth sponsored by Wieuca Road Baptist Church in Atlanta.

The program also featured presentations by Winfred Moore of Amarillo, Texas, first vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention; Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla.; plus a Presbyterian clergyman from Lynchburg, Va., and an independent pastor from Palo Alto, Calif. George Gallup Jr., founder of the Gallup poll, was scheduled to speak but cancelled at the last minute because of a snowstorm in New York City.

Lewis listed six factors which will determine whether a church will grow in the 1980s. They were: population, parking, property, preschoolers, singles and a commitment to reaching all people.

--more--

"If you want to stop past trends and do church (growth) in the '80s, you've got to have a deep conviction that all people everywhere need the gospel," Lewis said. "And if you do that, you're going to have to change your approach."

Lewis said the churches that are growing fastest are located in key areas where the population is booming. "It's a lot easier to grow a church where the population is growing than it is in a place where the population is stagnant."

Parking space is essential if a church is going to grow, he said, adding this is a factor most people take for granted. Churches need one parking place, which costs an average of \$268, for every two members, he said.

Many churches can't grow because they don't have enough land, he observed. It takes one acre of land for every 150 church members to provide total services (including parking) for the people, Lewis said.

Churches that are growing provide the best, most expensive facilities for preschoolers, not for adults, and put strong emphasis on reaching singles, he said.

He added that growing churches can deal with change quickly and can establish priorities and stick with them.

"Very few churches can survive affluence," Lewis added. "They become too proud to cry."

If a church is going to grow, it has to become "receiver-oriented" by focusing its ministries on the needs of people outside the church, not on the needs of church members, he said.

Bill Self, pastor of the Wieuca Road church which planned and hosted the conference, said his church made a major turnaround last year when it began to put into practice lessons learned from business and industry as described in "Search for Excellence" and "Passion for Excellence."

Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo for 27 years, and Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando for nine years, told what had worked in their churches.

Moore, introduced by Self as "president of the Southern Baptist Convention for 48 percent of us," said he was uncomfortable with so much emphasis on growing "big" churches in the SBC.

"We must never get the idea that the people in a little church don't matter," Moore said. "It is the little churches that are the backbone of the Southern Baptist Convention."

About 250 conference participants also heard from two former Southern Baptists who now are pastors of churches of other denominations. Ray Stedman, senior minister of the 3,000-member Peninsula Bible Church in Palo Alto, Calif., and John Killinger, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Lynchburg, Va., each spoke three times.

Self, whose church has sponsored the conference for the last two years, said he decided to broaden the program and try to involve as many pastors as possible from Georgia and surrounding states.

--30--

Missionary Returns
To Work In Haiti

Baptist Press
2/13/86

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (BP)—Southern Baptist missionary Jack Hancox returned to work Feb. 10 along with most of the residents of Port-au-Prince as the Haitian capital was reported relatively calm.

"I'm still hearing gunfire this morning," said missionary Doris Hancox by telephone Feb. 10. But she said the violence appeared to be scattered encounters between military forces and vestiges of the Tontons Macoutes, the militia which supported former dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier. Duvalier fled the country Feb. 7.

--more--

Businesses were reopening around the city, Mrs. Hancox reported, with the exception of enterprises associated with the Duvalier regime or the Tontons, many of which were sacked and burned during the weekend. Otherwise, looting and destruction appear to have subsided. Schools still have not reopened, and the new ruling council has not announced an opening date, she said. An afternoon and evening curfew remained in effect.

"We've heard from several of the churches in the outlying areas and a lot of their warehouses have been vandalized and the food has been taken. But so far as we know, the people are okay," the missionary said. But she added that information from outside the capital was still sketchy. Traffic between some towns and the capital has resumed, however.

Southern Baptist volunteers Dan and Freddie Peters still planned to fly to the United States Feb. 11 with their two teen-age daughters, if the airport in Port-au-Prince was open. They were anxious for their children to get back in school, Mrs. Hancox said.

--30--

Brotherhood Commission
Names Barber To Staff

Baptist Press
2/13/86

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Stephen M. Barber is the new special materials editor at the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, Tenn.

Barber is a graduate of the University of Mississippi with a degree in journalism and a masters degree in public administration. Prior to joining the staff of the Brotherhood Commission, the Atlanta native was employed at the corporate headquarters of Holiday Inn where he produced copy in various formats and assisted in public relations.

At the Brotherhood Commission, Barber will be responsible for editing all printed material except the Commission's periodicals. He will assist in the development of an annual priority list of special materials and maintain their production schedule.

Barber, 31, is single and a member of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis.

--30--



BAPTIST PRESS

901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

LYNN MAY HO
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
901 COMMERCE
NASHVILLE, TN 37203

NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION