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88-180

Southern Baptists start  
861 new Sunday schools

By Frank Wm. White

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists started 861 new Sunday schools during the 1987-88 church year, for a three-year total of more than 2,600 new starts.

New Sunday schools for the year ending Sept. 31, 1988, represent an increase over the 826 new starts for 1986-87. And 944 new Sunday schools were started in the 1985-86 church year. The convention goal for 1985-90 is 8,000 new Sunday schools.

The emphasis for starting new Sunday schools supports the Southern Baptist Bold Mission Thrust goal of 50,000 churches by the year 2000.

New Sunday schools and churches are needed throughout the nation because the population is increasing at a faster rate than the number of churches, said Jim Fitch, manager of the pastor/staff section in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday school division.

Also, as metropolitan areas grow, new churches are needed to meet the needs of new communities, Fitch said. In traditional convention states, major metropolitan areas such as Atlanta, Dallas, Orlando and Houston have been targeted for new Sunday school work.

With 273 new Sunday schools in 1987-88, Texas led the Southern Baptist Convention in new Sunday school starts. The previous year, Texas started 268 new Sunday schools.

Texas Baptists have started 2,554 new Sunday schools in the past 10 years and more than 3,100 since the state convention began a new-starts emphasis 12 years ago, said Richard Sims, new work consultant for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The emphasis for new Sunday schools began in Texas after Houston and Dallas leaders identified more than 600 areas needing new work. Since then, locations needing new Sunday schools and churches have been identified throughout the state, Sims said.

In the past two years, Outreach Bible Study, an eight-week Bible study plan for non-Christians developed by the Sunday School Board, has been used throughout the state to begin Bible study groups that later become Sunday schools, Sims said.

About 87 percent of the new Sunday schools started in Texas during the 12-year effort have become missions or churches, he reported.

Coming in after Texas in new Sunday school starts for 1987-88 were North Carolina, 80; Florida, 56; Kentucky, 41; California, 39; and Georgia, 29.

Completing the top 10 state conventions were New England, 25; Ohio, 24; South Carolina, 24; and Louisiana, 21.

In New England, language groups have been a major emphasis for new starts, accounting for about half of the 25 new starts in that convention in 1987-88, said Al Riddley, director of the church development division of the Baptist Convention of New England.

The New England convention has developed a strategy for new starts by identifying where new churches are needed, and those are the locations where new Sunday schools are developed, Riddley said.

The New England convention plans to have 40 new Sunday schools per year by 1990, Riddley said.

Indonesians replace  
evangelical leader

JAKARTA, Indonesia (BP)--The Union of Indonesian Baptist Churches has replaced its vice chairman, Chris Marantika, who is president of an evangelical seminary operating independently of the union.

Because Marantika held a high position in the Baptist union, some Southern Baptists in the United States have responded to his appeals for funds, unaware that he uses the money for work separate from the union, said Southern Baptist missionary Von Worten.

The relationship between Marantika and the Baptist union has been unclear for some time. Recently the union circulated a letter urging member churches and Baptist institutions in Indonesia to employ only graduates of the Indonesian Baptist Theological Seminary in Semarang. But many Indonesian Baptists were confused, assuming that Marantika's seminary was Baptist because he was a union leader.

"Dr. Marantika himself is Baptist to the bone," said Indonesian pastor David Sumarto, union chairman. "But organizationally speaking, the work he projects is not Baptist."

To Southern Baptists, "Dr. Marantika sometimes gives the impression that his seminary is the only truly evangelical seminary in Indonesia," Worten said. "That's just not so. As a former trustee of our own Baptist seminary, I know its evangelical character."

Marantika, a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, sometimes uses funds to employ Baptist pastors as part-time evangelists, Worten said. The churches the evangelists lead are then listed in statistics sent to contacts in the United States to raise more funds, he added.

Repeated attempts to contact Marantika for comment through his Canadian office and his headquarters in Indonesia were unsuccessful.

The replacement action came at a meeting of union representatives called after the death of union Chairman R. Haribowo. Sumarto was elected chairman, and R.A. Moniung, a lay pastor, vice chairman.

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Jury finds Missouri pastor  
innocent of abuse charges

By Trennis Henderson

Baptist Press  
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ST. CHARLES, Mo. (BP)--Missouri pastor Keith Barnhart has been found innocent of charges of child abuse and sexual abuse. The jury verdict ended a 19-month ordeal for Barnhart, who was arrested March 20, 1987.

"Obviously it's a great relief," said Barnhart, pastor of Cave Springs Baptist Church in St. Charles. "I'm very, very grateful for finally the vindication and being able to finally have the judicial system work and to have my name cleared, as far as the charges are concerned. To hear the not guilty verdict read was like a thousand pounds just lifted off my shoulders."

Following his arrest, Barnhart was charged with 15 felony counts of sodomy, child abuse, sexual abuse and kidnapping. The charges eventually grew to 19 felony counts until prosecutors dropped 17 of the 19 charges before going to trial.

At the time the bulk of the charges were dropped, Barnhart noted, "The assistant prosecuting attorney handling the case indicated to my attorney that he wanted to dismiss all the counts but the elected prosecuting attorney would not let him because of the election coming up."

Barnhart's attorney, Charles Bridges, told Word & Way, newsjournal of the Missouri Baptist Convention, that prosecutors dropped the majority of the charges "because they sent their materials off to expert witnesses, and they haven't been able to find one who will tell them what they want to hear."

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Although the reduced number of charges was easier to defend, Bridges added prior to the trial that he and Barnhart "had no problem with them going with all 19 charges because we wanted to present the evidence."

The St. Charles County jury deliberated less than two hours before returning the not guilty verdict.

The trial focused on alleged incidents with children attending a day-care center run by Cave Springs Church. Teachers at the day-care center, which closed after Barnhart was arrested, testified that Barnhart never had been alone with any of the children.

According to a report in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, psychiatrist Lee S. Coleman testified that leading questions, suggestive questions, repetitive questions and the response of interviewers contributed to unreliable answers from the children involved.

Barnhart said his biggest struggle over the past 19 months "was just waiting to get to the point to have it over with, to finally come to the point when you hear a not guilty verdict."

Voicing appreciation to individuals who have supported him and prayed for him, Barnhart noted that friends, family members and church members have contributed about \$52,000 to help meet legal expenses for his defense. Immediately following his arrest, eight church families posted their residences as bond for his release.

Noting his church members "have stood with me," Barnhart affirmed: "There has never been any consideration whatsoever of my stepping down as pastor. I've continued to preach and conduct pastoral responsibilities as normally as I could."

Reflecting on his experience, Barnhart said: "It gets frightening when all it takes is somebody to point a finger and see the hysteria that develops and how it spreads. ... Even when I know that I was not alone with a child, naturally if you have a ministry, you go down and say, 'hi,' to the children and so forth. I don't know how I could have avoided it, short of not having any contact whatsoever. Whenever you've got a ministry, you know that's not practical.

"Hopefully, the Lord will give me some guidance and leadership of how this might be of practical use to others and things to beware of and avoid."

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Retired missionary  
dies in house fire

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11/10/88

SAN ANGELO, Texas (BP)--Retired Southern Baptist missionary Ona Jones died early Nov. 9 in a fire inside her San Angelo, Texas, home. She was 57.

The two-bedroom home, one of about 80 houses on the grounds of the Baptist Memorial Center, was extensively damaged. The origin of the fire was undetermined, but officials estimated it began around 2:30 a.m. Mrs. Jones' husband, Sam, was attending a meeting out of town.

The Joneses, missionaries to Zimbabwe for 32 years, retired in August 1987, shortly after he became 65. They had lived in the 75-acre San Angelo retirement and medical care community for about two years.

The former Ona Knight, Mrs. Jones grew up in Palestine, Texas. She married Jones, of San Angelo, in 1951, and the two were appointed missionaries in 1955. They later pioneered Southern Baptist work in the city of Salisbury, Rhodesia, now called Zimbabwe.

Missionary colleagues remembered Mrs. Jones as jovial, good-natured and a hard worker. They said she made no attempts to become a leader but freely offered her help to get work done behind the scenes.

She received degrees from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

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Besides her husband, survivors include the four children she reared on the mission field. One daughter, Karen Ray, and her husband, Mark, were appointed Southern Baptist representatives to Australia last year.

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

Medical professionals urged  
to use hands for Christ

By Susan Todd

Baptist Press  
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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Health-care professionals from around the world gathered in Birmingham, Ala., Nov. 3-6 to reaffirm their Christian commitment to the work of their hands and to the work of their lives.

The theme of the 12th national meeting of the Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship was "The Work of Our Hands." Members of three other fellowships -- the Baptist Nursing Fellowship, the Baptist Pharmacy Fellowship and the Baptist Health Related Fellowship -- participated in the program.

Members were reminded of ways they can impact the world with the message of Jesus Christ through their professions and of the need to keep that message central in their work.

"If we are not evangelizing and discipling along with alleviating pain and suffering, there's really no reason for us to be there," said Sarah Duvall, a medical missionary to Indonesia.

Duvall spoke primarily of Southern Baptist foreign missionaries, but she also challenged lay medical professionals to incorporate the same standard into their own work.

A challenge to use their hands as "preaching hands" came from Mark Cortis, pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., and chairman of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board: "We (Southern Baptists) need you more than we've ever needed you before. We need your preaching hands, your healing hands."

Cortis encouraged the health-care professionals to consider their individual responses to missions. He used his own pilgrimage as an example, noting he needed time to realize that "what God wanted was not my willingness to go and my planning to stay, but my planning to go and my willingness to stay."

God has solutions to the problems facing Southern Baptists' missions endeavors, he said: "We need to quit complaining and grumbling and giving praise to the devil. We really can reach the whole world for Jesus Christ. I believe when God wills an end, he also wills a means."

Landrum Leavell, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, encouraged the group to use their hands as "teaching hands."

Teaching hands are clean hands, he said as he reminded them how often they clean their hands in a day. But Leavell added clean hands and a pure heart "are equal, and both are required."

"A pure heart automatically produces clean hands," he said. "We'll never be able to help or teach others if our hands are not clean."

Leavell also underlined the importance of having calloused hands, saying prayer groups and Bible study groups are wonderful, but a time comes when "we need to adjourn those meetings and get to work." He reminded them being stretched mentally is easier than winning souls.

Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss., emphasized the importance of the medical professional's role in the local church: "Your influence is uncalculatable. You need to hear God say, 'Come here. You are my answer'" in a world of people in need.

Participants also heard a report from the organization's executive director, Henry Love. He said the past year has been a good one for the organization, but its financial outlook is grim: "A number of our members are failing to pay dues. Because of their failure to pay, it has caused a financial crisis."

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Yet during the business session, members adopted a \$120,292 budget for the 1988-89 year. This budget is a \$3,000 increase over the previous budget.

Love announced the creation of an endowment fund that will allow foreign missionaries to attend continuing medical education symposiums for free. The symposiums are held each year in Kenya or Malaysia.

The program needs \$150,000 to sustain itself. Before the endowment campaign was publicized, \$56,000 had been given, he said. Additional contributions are expected from Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship members and from the Baptist hospital community.

Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship officers elected for the 1988-89 year are John Bryan of Waco, Texas, president; Hoyt Dees of Atlanta, vice president; Roy Bourgoyne of Memphis, Tenn., chairman of the scholarship committee; and Hoyt Chance of Shreveport, La., chairman of the student committee.

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Low relief funds threaten  
children's vaccinations

By Irma Duke

Baptist Press  
11/10/88

JIBLA, Yemen (BP)--More than 45,000 children in 300 Yemen villages received vaccinations last year through a Jibla Baptist Hospital mobile vaccination program.

But that program will come to a halt if relief giving through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board does not increase soon, missionaries predict.

The Expanded Programme of Immunization, begun by the Jibla hospital in 1982, emphasizes vaccinations for preschoolers but also refers patients to the hospital for treatment. Martha Myers, the Southern Baptist physician who travels most often with the Yemeni immunization team, often finds cases of malnutrition, tuberculosis and malaria in the villages of the ancient Middle East nation.

The Yemeni government ministry of health and Ibb Province health authorities sponsor the program, in cooperation with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund and the World Health Organization. Southern Baptists provided personnel, vehicles and gasoline expenses last year for 45,000 vaccinations against tuberculosis; diphtheria; pertussis; tetanus, for mothers and children; polio; and measles.

The Baptist hospital's involvement has been financed by several contributions from the Foreign Mission Board general relief fund: \$75,000 in 1984 and \$84,000 in 1987. Southern Baptist representative Bill Koehn the hospital's administrator, estimates current funds will last only through next spring. Southern Baptist work with Yemeni people is limited to the hospital's ministries.

The vaccination program aims to decrease deaths among children, primarily those under one year old. The current infant mortality rate in Yemen, about 162 per 1,000 births, is the fifth-highest in the world, according to World Health Organization figures.

Another priority is to provide continuing vaccinations through primary health-care workers being trained throughout the country. Five members of the Baptist hospital team already have received training as vaccinators. One has been trained as a local birth attendant.

Family planning, home birth training and prenatal care also are part of the effort. The Yemeni Swedish Clinic in Ibb uses the hospital's facilities to train local birth attendants.

Myers, from Montgomery, Ala., admits vaccinations are available at the hospital, but she says most people have difficulty getting them there.

"They really don't understand preventive kinds of things so they don't take off from work and hire a taxi to come in," Myers explains. And many cannot take time from work in any case. In addition, some of the vaccines require three doses, calling for multiple trips to the hospital.

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But once the mobile vaccination LandCruiser rolls into a village, mothers, fathers and grandparents come from every direction with their children. The Baptist hospital team -- usually five Yemenis and Myers -- unfolds a plastic picnic table, unloads medicine from atop the truck and starts work as people gather.

Myers and team supervisor Mohammed Amin Sabour sit on suitcases in the shade and register children while the other team members start the vaccinations. Hours later, the team packs up its medicine and equipment and heads to another village over steep, rocky paths that test even four-wheel drive vehicles.

If funds are supplied to continue the Baptist hospital's involvement in the program, Myers hopes to concentrate full time on the mobile vaccination work.