

February 19, 1958

Southern Baptists List
Statistics For 1957

FOR RELEASE ON FEB. 27, 1958. RELEASE
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SECULAR OUTLETS. LET US DO THAT.--(BP).

NASHVILLE--(BP)--Southern Baptists reported numerical gains in all areas surveyed in 1957 and should reach three major milestones during 1958, according to their yearly statistical report.

The Southern Baptist Convention had a net gain of 463 churches in 1957, and has launched a campaign to start 30,000 new churches and missions by 1964, according to J. P. Edmunds, secretary, research and statistics department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville.

It brought the total number of churches co-operating with the Convention to 31,297, a new high.

Southern Baptists hope to establish the 30,000 new churches and missions by 1964, the 150th anniversary of organized Baptist work on a national scale in North America.

Membership of Southern Baptist churches increased 257,432 during 1957. Edmunds said this 3 per cent gain brought total membership to a record 8,966,255.

Southern Baptist churches reported 389,716 baptisms during 1957. This was 5089 more baptisms than reported during 1956, a gain of 1.3 per cent. Baptisms give an indication of the number of people making decisions for Christ in Baptist churches.

"Southern Baptists nudged three milestones during 1957---nine million membership, seven million Sunday school enrolment, and \$400 million total gifts---and should greatly surpass them in 1958," Edmunds continued.

Total gifts during 1957 were \$397,550,347 compared with \$372,136,675 the year before. This was a 6.8 per cent increase.

Gifts to missions and benevolences topped \$70 million reaching \$70,015,299 for the past year. For 1956 the comparative figure was \$64,954,516.

Per capita total gifts in 1957 was \$44.34 compared with \$42.73 in 1956. The gift per capita to missions and benevolences rose from \$7.46 in 1956 to \$7.81 in 1957.

Gifts to mission and benevolent causes include those funds from local churches going to work of Baptist associations, state organizations, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

The \$70 million given for missions and benevolences was \$7 million more than Southern Baptists gave to all causes in 1943, Edmunds reported.

Southern Baptist churches are classified as follows: open country, 15,064; village, 4,777; town, 3,838; and city, 7,618.

Sunday school enrolment increased 2.2 per cent to a total of 6,972,350. Training Union, a Sunday evening study group for all ages, reported an enrolment of 2,414,584, a substantial gain of 4.2 per cent. Vacation Bible school enrolment was up to 2,777,104 in 1957.

Brotherhood enrolment, including men and boys, rose sharply to 511,521, a gain of 14.8 per cent. Woman's Missionary Union enrolment climbed 4.5 per cent to 1,324,295.

1957 saw Southern Baptist churches continue to expand their physical facilities, adding \$171,127,554 to the value of their property. This brings church property value to a record total of \$1,662,512,890, more than double the value in 1951.

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SUMMARY OF 1957 STATISTICS

| | <u>1957</u> | <u>1956</u> | <u>Increase</u> | <u>Per cent Increase</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Churches | 31,297 | 30,834 | 463 | 1.5 |
| Baptisms | 389,716 | 384,627 | 5,089 | 1.3 |
| Membership | 8,966,255 | 8,708,823 | 257,432 | 3.0 |
| Sunday school enrolment | 6,972,350 | 6,823,713 | 148,637 | 2.2 |
| Vac. Bible school enrolment | 2,777,104 | 2,733,990 | 43,114 | 1.6 |
| Training Union enrolment | 2,414,584 | 2,316,354 | 98,230 | 4.2 |
| W.M.U. enrolment | 1,324,295 | 1,267,850 | 56,445 | 4.5 |
| Total Brotherhood enrolment | 511,521 | 445,630 | 65,891 | 14.8 |
| Total gifts | \$397,550,347 | \$372,136,675 | \$25,413,672 | 6.8 |
| Missions and benevolences | \$70,015,299 | \$64,954,516 | \$5,060,783 | 7.8 |
| Total value of church property | \$1,662,512,890 | \$1,491,385,336 | \$171,127,554 | 11.5 |

Research and Statistics Department

Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention

February 19, 1958

Baptist Press

NOTE TO BAPTIST EDITORS: Several of you have requested feature pictures which could be used as cover pictures also. We believe the enclosed photograph, cutlines for which are given below, will be one of this type. You will immediately recognize this person as one who sang to us during the joint banquet of executive secretaries and editors in Albuquerque recently.--Baptist Press.

MINISTER TO SPANISH AMERICANS---One of the major ministries of Southern Baptists in the Southwest is to Spanish-American people. Jesus Correa, pictured here, and his wife are missionaries to Spanish-American Baptists in Albuquerque, N. M. Correa is a native of Monterey, Mexico.--Baptist Press Photo by Theo Sommerkamp.

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GIFT CHECK OF \$500--Rep. Brooks Hays (D., Ark.), center, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, presents a gift check of \$500 to M. P. Turner, right, president of American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville. Porter Routh, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, Nashville, watches. The \$500 gift was from H. E. Holford of Binghamton, N. Y. Holford wrote Hays that he would like to give \$500 to be used in some significant Negro work in the South. Hays suggested that it be given to American Seminary, which trains Negro Baptist ministers and religious workers.--Baptist Press Photo.