



## WHAT TO DO ABOUT NUMBERS

Recently, the *Birmingham News* reported that the Baptist church is experiencing a decrease in membership. Jacqueline L. Salmon of the *Washington Post* wrote, "The number of people baptized in Southern Baptist churches fell for the third straight year last year to the lowest level in 20 years, and membership in the nation's largest Protestant denomination decreased by close to 40,000 to 16.27 million last year."<sup>1</sup> This is cause for alarm to many members of the denomination, so they are focusing their efforts in order to reverse the negative trend. On June 10-11, in Indianapolis, Indiana, Baptists from all over the United States came together for the Southern Baptist Convention to discuss, among other things, how to increase their numbers.<sup>2</sup>

At the 2008 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, which can be watched online, North American Mission Board president Geoffrey A. Hammond presented his four-step National Evangelism Initiative to a swelling crowd of enthusiastic listeners. The plan, which he referred to as "GPS," or God's Plan for Sharing, consists of praying, engaging, sowing, and harvesting, and is supported by recent contributions of almost 60 million dollars.<sup>3</sup> Meetings were held where motions were made and resolutions were passed. Countless references were made to the *Baptist Faith and Message* and the extra-biblical phrase "accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior" was quoted ad nauseam. However, Bible study and citations of God's inspired Word were conspicuously absent.

There is no doubt that those who adhere to the Baptist false doctrine of "faith only" have done an outstanding job of spreading their message and increasing their numbers in times past. They will continue to be an overwhelming influence in our nation due to their large numbers. Members of the church love to see increasing numbers as well, but we will not let our desire for numerical growth compromise our love for the truth found in God's inspired, inerrant Word. All of us who call ourselves Christians would do well to remember the words of Paul to the Corinthian church: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6). What kind of seed are we planting? Is it the seed of God's Word, or some man-made doctrine designed to draw large crowds? (cf. Luke 8:11)

Since the dawn of time, seeds have been producing plants "after their kind" (Genesis 1:12). If we plant the good seed of truth, God will give an increase, and His Word will not return to Him empty, without accomplishing His desire (Isaiah 55:11). Jesus prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Take note: we will be sanctified, or set apart by the truth.

As Todd Clippard recently mentioned, "the numbers that matter most are not on the attendance board." We need to be concerned about sowing seed as much as possible and let God cause the growth. Michael Shepherd has been quoted as saying, "We read about the church in the book of Acts and not in the book of Numbers." Let us take action with the sword of the Spirit in hand so that we can "be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might" (Ephesians 6:10, 17). Surely God will bless us in this endeavor.

—Ashley Kizer

<sup>1</sup> Salmon, Jacqueline. Baptists consider updating policies." The Birmingham News 09 June 2008: 5A.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sbcannualmeeting.net/sbc08/default.asp>

<sup>3</sup> <http://viewers.316networks.com/viewer/odcroundup.aspx?MsoID=3000005&NetworkID=3001782&action=DISPLAYODC>

## Prayer List

### Sick

**Christy Hych** had elbow surgery on Tuesday, June 24th @ Brookwood Medical Center. **Billy Startley** went home from the hospital on Tuesday, June 24th. **Charles Webb** is at Carraway in room 877.

### Please Continue to Pray For..

**Maude Bell, David Burford, Jean Cicero, Mary Guy, Sara Morgan, Janice Parsons, Jimmy Russell, Billy Startley, Martha Wiley, Ramona Yeilding, Jessica Ingle**

We are very thankful for **Magan Gilbert, Tera Hardin, Cody Higdon, Christy Knight, Jeremy LaFoy and Lori Beth Whitfield** who requested prayer this week and those that were recently restored.

Continue to pray for **Joyce Akins, Cheryl Gafford, Jamie Gilbert, Lauren Gilbert, Pat Graham, Sandra Griffin, Christy Hych, Barry Hych, Jason Parsons, Jimmy Russell, Amber Sanford and Megan Wilkerson** for strength and courage.

*Please continue to pray for our unfaithful brothers and sisters.*

### Remember Our Shut-In

**Gertrude Blackwell, Ruby Glidewell, Iva Dean Goolsby, Thelma Hudson, Vurvel Jones, Nell Looser, Earl Martin, Ruth Parsons, Annette Roddy, Bernice Snow, Ginger Shadix**

### Welcome Back!!

Welcome back to **Kristina Blackwell**. We are so pleased to have her back worshipping with us. Kristina's address is PO Box 423, Adamsville, AL 35005. We look forward to working together in the Lord's work here at Adamsville.

**We will meet each Sunday Night for the Master after our PM service.**

## Mark Your Calendar/2008

July 3 -- Praise in Blackwell Park  
July 6-11 -- Ronnie's week @ ICYC  
July 18-19 -- Youth Rally  
July 31-Aug. 2 - Trip to Creation Museum  
Oct. 12-15 - Gospel Meeting, Speaker: **Larry Acuff**  
Oct. 18 --- Family Fun Day @ Tannehill  
Nov. 20 --- Thanksgiving Dinner  
Dec. 31 ---- New Year's Eve Singing

## 2009

Feb. 15-17 -- Singing School, Director: **Burt Jones**

### Adamsville Church of Christ Summer Series – 08 Theme: The Home

July 2	Dangers to our Homes <b>Patrick Morrison</b>
July 9	What Does the Bible Say About Marriage/Divorce/Remarriage? <b>Frank Chesser</b>
July 16	Whom Should I Date and Marry? <b>Bobby Liddell</b>
July 23	What is the Role of the Husband/Father in the Home? <b>Stanley Ryan</b>
July 30	What is the Role of the Wife/Mother in the Home? <b>Tim Hayes</b>

## Thanks

Thanks for all the prayers, phone calls, and cards during this time. Thanks especially for the help you all have been to us. We truly appreciate and love the congregation at Adamsville.  
Love, **Matt, Jessica, Samantha and D.J. Ingle**.

Your kind expression of love and concern has been a blessing to me and my family. Thank you for all the prayers, phone calls, cards, gifts and visits for the past eighteen months. I have completed by treatments and I love each of you more than words can express. It is great to be part of the family of God. **Jean Cicero**