

SBC lost members, gained congregations in 2015

June 8, 2016

The Southern Baptist Convention lost members as baptisms declined last year, but it experienced an uptick in affiliated churches, according to statistics compiled by LifeWay Christian Resources in cooperation with affiliated state conventions.

The number of SBC-affiliated congregations increased by 294, to 46,793, [reported LifeWay](#), the convention's publisher. That represents a 0.63 percent increase and marks the 17th consecutive year of growth.

But overall membership in those churches dropped by more than 200,000. The convention counts 15,294,764 members, a decline of 1.32 percent.

Meanwhile, average weekly worship attendance fell almost 100,000, or 1.72 percent, to 5.6 million participants.

Baptisms reported by the churches also declined by almost 10,000, or 3.3 percent, to 295,212.

The ratio of baptisms to Southern Baptists decreased to one baptism per 52 members, LifeWay calculated.

Financial giving to the churches increased, while missions expenditures declined.

Church receipts totaled \$11.5 billion—a 3.51 percent gain. Total missions giving dropped by 2.03 percent, to about \$1.2 billion. However, four state conventions—Alabama, California, Georgia and Oklahoma—did not ask churches for total missions contributions.

Total contributions to convention causes, what the SBC labels “Great Commission Giving” and includes the Cooperative Program unified budget and mission offerings, declined 3.81 percent, to \$613 million. But five state conventions—Alabama, Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention—did not report that information.

Here is a LifeWay chart of 2015 SBC statistics, listed by state convention:

SBC Statistics By State Convention - 2015 ⁽¹⁾

SBC and State Conventions	Associations	Churches ⁽²⁾	Baptisms	Other Additions ⁽³⁾	Total Membership	Total Receipts ⁽⁴⁾	Total Mission Expenditures ⁽⁵⁾
Alabama ⁽⁶⁾	75	3,242	16,342	19,008	966,764	\$720,317,996	See Footnote 4
Alaska	4	83	523	477	12,896	\$13,822,848	\$1,885,906
Arizona	13	388	2,944	1,760	88,201	\$76,361,625	\$8,204,325
Arkansas	42	1,431	10,346	9,735	488,322	\$326,404,022	\$46,838,097
California ⁽⁷⁾	29	1,782	12,151	See Footnote 5	394,017	See Footnote 5	See Footnote 5
Colorado	11	283	1,193	1,343	34,499	\$43,224,901	\$5,322,092
Dakota	7	84	272	181	4,270	\$5,947,170	\$722,124
District of Columbia		142	305	193	9,358	\$8,168,841	\$686,630
Florida ⁽⁸⁾	49	2,540	25,250	19,850	847,082	\$712,561,179	\$33,125,026
Georgia ⁽⁶⁾	92	3,345	24,620	24,731	1,360,547	\$1,042,256,641	See Footnote 4
Hawaii-Pacific	6	117	634	948	16,250	\$18,897,013	\$2,448,276
Illinois	34	911	4,796	2,895	197,011	\$128,411,407	\$13,932,492
Indiana	14	394	2,133	2,157	85,093	\$60,857,363	\$6,032,581
Iowa	5	96	813	502	12,785	\$22,302,304	\$2,435,284
Kansas-Nebraska	13	315	2,698	1,740	89,230	\$91,596,454	\$9,648,994
Kentucky	70	2,385	13,645	10,500	711,897	\$382,810,807	\$51,070,898
Louisiana	39	1,423	11,067	8,699	518,418	\$385,606,070	\$43,263,339
Maryland-Delaware	11	584	1,378	1,522	97,232	\$91,223,488	\$10,670,902
Michigan	14	255	838	629	27,109	\$18,172,137	\$2,956,411
Minnesota-Wisconsin	8	129	172	225	14,777	\$13,297,389	\$1,618,111
Mississippi	65	2,093	10,872	12,985	624,393	\$505,613,230	\$72,204,637
Missouri	61	1,815	8,299	8,459	541,632	\$344,926,833	\$43,281,817
Montana	5	132	689	449	10,284	\$12,553,325	\$1,408,324
Nevada	4	168	1,184	1,268	29,375	\$33,006,018	\$2,876,143
New England	7	283	1,803	568	27,907	\$18,574,634	\$2,560,492
New Mexico	13	313	3,123	3,671	78,349	\$61,527,070	\$8,991,441
New York	10	420	2,571	526	39,641	\$15,907,756	\$2,274,248
North Carolina	78	4,110	19,870	16,059	1,179,241	\$906,208,054	\$107,345,049
Northwest	14	436	2,004	1,543	55,407	\$58,584,634	\$7,467,017
Ohio	15	652	4,082	2,698	115,886	\$86,690,139	\$10,911,634
Oklahoma ⁽⁶⁾	42	1,704	12,079	10,231	657,979	\$478,802,896	See Footnote 4
Pennsylvania-South Jersey	8	273	1,597	1,281	26,916	\$19,402,193	\$2,344,693
Puerto Rico-US Virgin Islands	4	50	143	41	3,465	\$1,447,042	\$190,936
South Carolina	42	2,101	17,742	13,837	605,119	\$511,541,033	\$64,135,170
Tennessee	67	3,051	22,495	18,661	1,072,638	\$787,357,053	\$99,021,506
Texas ⁽⁷⁾⁽⁸⁾	106	6,040	41,969	See Footnote 8	2,734,371	\$2,292,721,357	\$249,413,504
BGCT	98	4,181	31,300	31,829	2,096,009	\$1,738,818,520	\$191,613,210
SBCT ⁽⁹⁾	104	2,437	20,771	See Footnote 8	1,144,765	\$1,099,958,416	\$116,751,621
Utah-Idaho	11	136	400	396	15,446	\$14,557,297	\$2,052,803
Virginia ⁽⁹⁾	41	1,871	10,404	9,267	597,686	\$498,777,593	\$52,980,280
BGAV	41	1,286	4,433	4,894	402,410	\$309,497,034	\$31,587,362
SBCV		652	6,906	4,997	229,300	\$222,174,688	\$25,072,002
West Virginia	10	194	725	593	26,701	\$19,970,699	\$3,488,882
Wyoming		84	399	321	7,557	\$7,990,966	\$1,242,131
Sub-Total	1,139	46,500	305,607	242,402	14,966,178	\$11,417,349,185	\$1,037,682,606
Adjustments ⁽¹⁰⁾		293	-10,395	2,243	328,586	\$128,512,446	\$167,612,473
Grand Total For SBC ⁽⁹⁾	1,139	46,793	295,212	244,645	15,294,764	\$11,545,861,631	\$1,205,295,079

1. All information as of June 3, 2016.

2. Some state conventions no longer use the designation of church-type mission to categorize congregations which are not self-determining, self-sustaining, and self-propagating. This practice has impacted the number of churches and church-type missions.

3. Total reported by incomplete data from some state conventions. See body of table and notes for details. Care should be exercised in comparing SBC totals to previous years.

4. Alabama State Board of Missions, Georgia Baptist Mission Board, and the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma did not ask the following items or the information necessary to obtain them: Total Mission Expenditures.

5. California Southern Baptist Convention did not ask the following items or the information necessary to obtain them: Other Additions, Total Receipts, and Total Mission Expenditures.

6. Florida Baptist Convention (FBC) total baptisms and total members no longer include church-type missions located in Haiti. In 2014, the statistics for these missions were included in FBC's total baptisms and total members but not included in the reported SBC totals (Grand Total for SBC) as they are not considered a part of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

7. Two conventions exist within the state of Texas. The Texas summary line does not show the arithmetic sum of the two state convention figures, because some congregations are affiliated with both state conventions, and their numbers are reflected in the totals for both state conventions.

8. Southern Baptists of Texas Convention did not ask the following items or the information necessary to obtain them: Other Additions.

9. Two conventions exist within the state of Virginia. The Virginia summary line does not show the arithmetic sum of the two state convention figures, because some congregations are affiliated with both state conventions, and their numbers

are reflected in the totals for both state conventions.

10. This line includes four types of adjustments to the data:

- The removal of duplicate data caused by 788 congregations that are affiliated with more than one state convention.
- The removal of data from 77 congregations affiliated with a state convention but not affiliated with the SBC.
- The addition of data from 1,532 congregations affiliated with the SBC but not affiliated with a state convention.
- The addition of data "pulled forward" from previous ACP reporting cycles for 8,661 congregations that did not report in 2015.

Notes: