

## Profile of a Typical Association

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There are approximately 1,200 associations in the Southern Baptist Convention. They are quite diverse and range in size from less than five churches with about 100 resident members to more than 200 churches with more than 150,000 resident members.

Several descriptive statistics can be used to profile a typical association. For instance, the "average"

association has about 30 churches with 8,133 resident members. The problem with using the "average" or "mean" as a descriptive statistic is that a few extremely large associations can cause the average to be abnormally high in relation to the majority of churches.

A better descriptive statistic especially for social, economic, and religious data is the "median" statistic. The median is that value above which half the values under consideration lie and below which the other half lie, i.e., the middle value. For example, the associational median number of churches is that number of churches where half of the associations have a smaller number of churches and half have

a larger number. While the median is conceptually very simple, it is often difficult to determine as in the case of associations where there are a large number of values to be rank ordered. Given approximately 1,200 associations, determination of the median can be quite tedious; however, computerization simplifies this task.

Associational medians have been calculated for a number of variables derived from the 1980 Uniform Church Letter Data collected by the Sunday School Board. Combined, these medians provide a useful profile of a typical association. The typical association has:

25	Churches	\$93,639	Gifts to Cooperative Program by Churches Per Year
4,822	Resident Members	\$21,636	Gifts to Association Per Year
6,924	Total Members	\$189,522	Total Missions Expenditures by Churches Per Year
\$7,822	Gifts to Annie Armstrong Per Year	4.37	Baptism Rate per 100 Resident Members Per Year
214	Baptisms Per Year	9.09%	Churches Without Pastors
3,548	Sunday School Enrollment	\$233.05	Per capita Tithes and Offerings
1,920	Average Weekly Sunday School Attendance	\$4.47	Per capita Gifts to Associational Missions
572	WMU Enrollment	\$20.41	Per capita Gifts to Cooperative Program
240	Brotherhood Enrollment	29.03%	Churches with Bivocational Pastors
\$1,097,604	Total Tithes and Offerings of Churches Per Year		
\$962,025	Total Local Expenditures of Churches Per Year		

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