

# **SBC baptisms on the rise: Increase follows four-year decline**

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The Southern Baptist Convention has seen a small increase in baptisms after a four-year decline.

The annual profile, compiled by the denomination's LifeWay Christian Resources, shows an increase in baptism totals from 377,357 in 2003 to 387,947 a year later, the denomination announced last month.

Bobby Welch, a pastor who is president of the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination, has drawn attention to the need for Southern Baptist churches to focus more on evangelism and baptisms. During a cross-country bus tour last summer, he urged his fellow Baptists to seek to baptize 1 million people between June 2005 and June 2006.

New statistics also show the SBC increased its membership by 62,444, giving it a total of 16,267,494. *-Associated Baptist Press*