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New Grading System  
Set By SBC Agencies

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**NASHVILLE (BP)**--Three agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention have joined in presentation of a new grading system for church program organizations in Baptist churches.

The grading system, to take effect Oct. 1, 1970, has been approved by the elected members of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, the SBC Brotherhood Commission, and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

The new plan of grading will affect persons from birth through age 17 (graduation from high school). Generally, the plan follows grading used by public school systems.

During a meeting of the SBC Sunday School Board here, one of the elected board members said that the reception of the new system by most SBC churches will probably be like a present television commercial: "What took you so long."

The new plan calls for four essential divisions for each church, no matter how small or how large: preschool division--birth through 5 (entrance into school); children's division--age 6 (grade 1) through age 11 (grade 6); youth division--age 12 (grade 7) through age 17 (grade 12); and persons beyond 17.

Further work is being done on the grading patterns within the latter division.

An example of the options available to a church is shown in the children's division. Those age 6 through 11 could be grouped together in one group in a small church. A second pattern would have ages 6 through 8 grouped together, and ages 9 through 11 together. A third arrangement would group ages 6 and 7, 8 and 9, and 10 and 11. The fourth pattern would have every age from 6 through 11 in a separate group.

Churches may move from any one of the patterns to any of the others, and may have different patterns for different divisions, depending upon the numbers of people represented in the various age groups.

The 1970 date has been set to give churches an opportunity to make the necessary plans for an orderly transition, and to make possible the preparation of curriculum materials, training helps, and organizational assistance.

Members of church educational organizations will be classified in the following manner:

Preschoolers according to the local school system's classification date, children according to their school grade, youth according to their school grade, and those beyond high school age, using Jan. 1 for classification date.

In churches with sufficient numbers of college students their college classification may be used.

Annual promotion date will be the first Sunday in October.

"The new system will make it possible for all churches to use their buildings to the fullest. Buildings being planned will not require major changes because of the flexibility of the proposal," said W. A. Harrell, head of the board's church architecture department.

Further details will be announced as they are worked out by church program organization leaders and agency heads.

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Called Florida Convention  
Scheduled For March 31

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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--The Florida Baptist Convention will hold a special convention session here March 31 to consider the proposed charter of a new Baptist college in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Date for the convention here was announced by convention president Edgar Cooper of Orlando, Fla., immediately following a meeting of the proposed college's board of trustees which approved a draft of the charter to be presented to the special convention.

The trustees also approved appointment of committees to select a president and an architect, and voted to launch the previously-approved \$1 million state-wide fund campaign.

If the special state convention approves the proposed charter, the document will then be filed with the secretary of state to incorporate the college as a non-profit corporation.

Jess C. Moody, pastor of the First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach and chairman of the college's board of trustees, announced the appointment of the committee chairman.

William H. Pruitt of West Palm Beach was named attorney for the college by the trustees.

Chairman of the administration and personnel committee, which will nominate a president, is Dr. Donald E. Warren, cardiologist of West Palm Beach and president of the Florida Heart Association.

Hankins Parker of Miami Springs, Fla., was named chairman of the development committee which will plan the \$1 million fund campaign. Other committees appointed included a curriculum and accreditation committee, a finance committee, a building and grounds committee, and a spiritual life committee.

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Sunday School Board  
Holds 76th Session

(62)

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NASHVILLE (BP)--The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention meeting here approved two far-reaching changes affecting grading in church organizations and prices for church literature.

The 64-member board also heard the 76th annual report of the board's administration, presented by Executive Secretary-Treasurer James L. Sullivan, and discussed many of the 25 areas of the board's work.

The board joined the SBC Brotherhood Commission and the SBC Woman's Missionary Union in approving a new plan for grading church organizations for persons from birth to ages 17. The new grading system in the church program organizations will take effect Oct. 1, 1970.

Basic to the new plan are four divisions: preschool--birth through 5 (entrance into school); children's--age 6 (grade 1) through age 11 (grade 6); youth--age 12 (grade 7) through age 17 (grade 12); and a division for persons beyond 17. The plan is adaptable to any size church.

The board approved price increases in church literature effective Oct. 1, 1967. Reasons for the price hike are increased paper and manufacturing costs, increased shipping costs and increased labor costs. The last price increase was made in 1961, according to Publishing Division Director Herman L. King.

With the price increase included, the cost to churches of the board's literature will still be lower than comparable material of other major denominations and independent publishers, board members were told.

In further action, the board authorized the administration to set up a two-day orientation period for all newly elected board members within one month after their election by the Southern Baptist Convention.

Other highlights of the meeting included an official name change of the office of denominational relations to the office of public relations and a vote to seek preservation of the 1891 site of the board's founding--the original pastor's study of First Baptist Church, Nashville. The church's sanctuary and study area will soon undergo extensive remodeling.

Fourteen board members who have completed two consecutive three-year terms were presented certificates of appreciation for their services to the board.

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~~62~~ Mary Hardin-Baylor  
Has 122nd Birthday

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BELTON, Tex. (BP)--The 122nd anniversary of the granting of the original charter of Mary Hardin-Baylor College by the Republic of Texas will be celebrated at annual charter day ceremonies on Feb. 4.

Ceremonies will be held in the First Baptist Church of Belton. Guest speaker will be Mrs. Herb Barren, permanent class president of the class of 1947 at the Baptist school.

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~~64~~ New Orleans Prof Wins  
Award for Dissertation

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--James A. Brooks, new assistant professor of New Testament at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary here, has been awarded a \$250 prize by the Christian Research Foundation Awards for his recent doctoral dissertation.

Brooks, who completed his doctoral studies at Princeton Theological Seminary last June, wrote the dissertation on the subject, "The Text of the Pauline Epistles in the Writings of Clement of Alexandria." The annual competition is limited to early church history.

Brooks, 33, is a cum laude graduate of both Baylor University (Baptist), Waco, Tex., and Princeton. He is a native of El Paso, Tex.

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~~65~~ Don't Lose Minds Of Youth,  
Seminary Speaker Warns

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"God never places a premium on ignorance," a Georgia Baptist pastor told winter graduates of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary here.

J. Hoffmann Harris, pastor of the Briarlake Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga., emphasized in the seminary's commencement address that today's generation must have the Bible interpreted to them in the light of their needs.

Harris warned that if the church loses the minds of its young people, it will lose its future. He quickly added that reason and thinking is not complete without faith and commitment.

"It is not enough to say, 'I believe the Bible', for indeed the Bible is the Word of God and is truth; but it is not all the truth," Harris said. "God has revealed himself in many areas other than the Bible."

Saying truth is sacred wherever one finds it, Harris pointed out that truth can be and is found in such places as space, the laboratory, in a peace conference, in the United Nations, and in the Holy Scriptures.

Harris said that the Christ of the Bible must come alive to the younger generation, which is asking for a positive demonstration of the living Christ. "We may not be thinking," he said, "but I assure you our people are."

Speaking to 29 winter graduates of the seminary, Harris said that thinking is always hard because it involves a re-examination of one's basic assumptions.

"The person who has all the answers and never questions in the light of modern experience is ill prepared to grow, ill prepared to help others and ill prepared to meet the challenge of today's world."

Harris has been pastor of the Decatur church for the past eight years. A 1950 graduate of New Orleans seminary, he is former pastor of churches in Mississippi, Missouri, and Louisiana.

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