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**BEST Conference Offers 75  
Solutions To 55 Problems**

By Jim Newton

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Baptist Education Study Task (BEST) concluded its second national conference here, but it sounded more like the beginning of even more involved studies of Baptist higher education problems than the end.

The conference didn't solve all the problems facing Baptist schools, including the question of federal aid to education, but it did provide a nation-wide Baptist dialogue on the thorny problems. And thus, it accomplished the limited purpose for which it was organized.

Rabun Brantley, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Education Commission which sponsored BEST, was elated over the meeting. He felt the long-overdue study had accomplished its task, and now the burden rests on the BEST findings committee.

Throughout the four-day conference, a total of about 75 solutions were offered by 22 study groups to about 55 problems already listed by more than 7,000 persons participating in the first national conference, 24 regional seminars, and other adult study sessions.

The task of digesting all the ideas presented in the study now falls to the 18-member findings committee, which will publish its analysis of the study in late summer.

Over and over again, five basic themes were repeated among the 75 solutions offered by the study groups.

1. A crisis in the need for additional financial support is the root of many problems facing the schools, and more money is the obvious solution to many problems.

2. Both the colleges and the Baptist state conventions which sponsor them need to formulate statements of philosophy and purpose for the role of each in Christian higher education.

3. Improved communication between the educational institutions and the churches is vital if problems facing the schools are to be solved.

4. Conventions must recognize that college boards of trustees are responsible for the administration of college affairs, and must not try to set policies for the schools from the floor of the annual conventions.

5. The Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention should sponsor a series of national colloquiums aimed at developing even more pointed solutions to problems in specific areas.

The Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools, composed of presidents, deans and other representatives of Baptist schools, voted in a dinner meeting held in conjunction with the conference to request the Southern Baptist Executive Committee for funds to enable the Education Commission to sponsor such colloquiums.

Thus the BEST project may have become the beginning of a long series of studies to solve the problems facing Baptist schools, both on the national level and on the state level.

The conference left to the Baptist state conventions and boards of trustees two major tasks cited as imperative to solve the problems the schools face.

One is the decision on what to do about accepting federal aid--if any is to be accepted, and if so, what types of aid.

The other is the task of writing in clear and concise language a statement of purpose and philosophy for each school, and developing an over-all philosophy of Christian higher education.

The section on "Preface to a Philosophy of Southern Baptist Higher Education" laid the groundwork for such statements of purpose, but did not attempt to write objectives for each school. It was frequently pointed out that objectives might be different for each institution.

Several points were often repeated in the reports and discussions. There was general agreement in the section that Christian higher education "should be on the cutting edge of religious thought."

There was also general agreement that a valid and major purpose of a Christian college is to prepare vocational Christian workers for the denomination.

Still another emphasis called for the schools to search for knowledge in a Christian atmosphere and to develop an awareness of world issues, relating the truth of God to the whole of life.

On the question of federal aid, the conference generally felt that the decisions should be left to the boards of trustees for each institution.

Another major point, however, was that it is the responsibility of the state convention to secure adequate financial support of the schools, regardless of federal aid.

There seemed to be no indication in the reports whether the majority of the conference participants favored or opposed federal aid, although one conference speaker estimated that perhaps 75 per cent of those present favored the acceptance of federal aid.

"There still are many different schools of thought among us, ranging from those who regard 'separation of church and state' in its strict construction as a Baptist tenet of faith, to those who see no threat to religious liberty in the acceptance of federal aid," said the report to the two sections on Financing Christian Higher Education.

Several conference participants urged the denomination to conduct a special offering for Christian education similar to annual offerings the denomination sponsors for home and foreign missions.

On college-denominational relationships, it was frequently pointed out that the churches should not expect the colleges to be "Bible schools."

But the main point seemed to be that the state conventions should not exert undue control from the convention floor, but should exert their control through the elected boards of trustees. Such undue control endangers the school's accreditation, it was pointed out.

Accreditation was deemed by a section on that subject as an absolute necessity, with great stress being laid on the need for Christian higher education to be of high quality.

Academic freedom and responsibility was also cited as a major item, with one conference participant saying this might well be one of the major problems of tension between the colleges and the churches. All seemed to agree that for both faculty members and students, with freedom must come responsibility.

A good relationship between students and faculty members, with an emphasis on meeting the personal needs of students, was a major point oft repeated in discussions of the report of the section on the Christian College Teacher.

Sections on both Academic Scope and Religious Scope of Baptist schools agreed that Baptist schools are not "Christian" because they teach Bible classes, but only when a "Christian atmosphere" permeates the entire college.

A major question in both these sections was the problem of admissions policies. Should Baptist schools give preference to admission of Baptist students, or should they seek to admit top quality students regardless of Baptist affiliation? There was no clear-cut answer given.

The answers to these and other questions raised during the conference and the two years of study preceding it were left largely to the BEST findings committee, to the state conventions, and boards of trustees.

Final results of the findings committee report is scheduled for release Sept. 15, although the committee is hoping for a release sooner if possible.

Until then, dozens of Baptist state conventions and college personnel will anxiously await the final outcome of BEST, which promises to be only the beginning of even deeper probing of the problems facing Christian higher education.

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Evangelism Division  
To Aid Canada Crusade

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's division of evangelism has accepted an invitation from Canadian Baptists to sponsor a simultaneous revival crusade in the New Brunswick area Oct. 29-Nov. 10.

Eual F. Lawson, associate in the evangelism division, said 20 U.S. preachers would be recruited to preach in the 20 Canadian Baptist churches participating in the campaign.

"Canadian Baptists in the Northeastern Province of New Brunswick have requested help because of the success of other crusades in Canada sponsored by the division of evangelism," Lawson said.

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Shannon To Preach  
At Mission Week

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ATLANTA (BP)--Harper Shannon, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dothan, Ala., will preach at the evening sessions of Home Missions week at the Ridgecrest, N.C. Baptist Assembly Aug. 17-23.

The announcement was made by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's assembly committee, which issued the invitation to Shannon when C. A. Roberts, previously named as the speaker, was unable to fill the engagement.

Earlier in the year, the committee announced that S. M. Lockridge, pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in San Diego, Calif., will serve in a similar capacity Aug. 3-9 at the special missions week at Glorieta, N.M.

Shannon, a native of Birmingham, Ala., is a graduate of Samford University (Baptist) in Birmingham, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He is a member of the Home Mission Board's 65-member board of directors.

Home Missions Week is held annually at both Glorieta and Ridgecrest Baptist Assemblies, with programs designed for both lay Christians and Baptist leadership.

Mission Conferences open to laymen include juvenile rehabilitation, weekday ministries, literacy missions, language missions, metropolitan missions and personal witnessing.

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Jones Honored As Texas  
Baptist Elder Statesman

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INDEPENDENCE, Tex. (BP)--E. N. Jones of Dallas, secretary of the Christian Education Commission for the Baptist General Convention of Texas since 1960, was honored here as Texas Baptist Elder Statesman of the year at the annual meeting of the Independence Baptist Association.

The Elder Statesman Award is given annually by the association and the Baptist General Convention of Texas to a Texas Baptist in recognition of long and devoted service to the Texas Baptist program of work.

Jones, 68, previously served as president of Texas Technological College, Lubbock, Tex., dean of instruction and graduate studies at Midwestern University, Wichita Falls, Tex., and for 17 years on the faculty at Baylor University, (Baptist), Waco, Tex.

In his present position, he directs the denomination's over-all program in its educational institutes and the Baptist Student Union programs.

Jones is the ninth person to receive the Texas Baptist Elder Statesman Award.

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Eight Writers' Awards  
Presented At Ridgecrest

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Five first place and three second place awards were presented here at the annual Writers' Conference competition at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Assembly.

The Baptist writing competition is sponsored by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, owners and operators of the assembly.

The award for best magazine writing was won by Mrs. Walker D. Willingham of Atlanta, Ga., for "Second-Hand Blessing."

Second place went to Mrs. Joe B. Hawkins, also of Atlanta, for "The Cardiology Technician: She Photographs Your Heartbeat." Miss Gerry Pearman of Tifton, Ga., received an honorable mention with "A Dream Of Creation."

Two first place awards were given in the short story division. Mrs. Grace Matlock and Mrs. Julia E. Evatt, both of Marietta, Ga., shared the top spot. "Hannah" was Mrs. Matlock's winning entry, and "The Truth About the Windfells" won for Mrs. Evatt.

Mrs. Evatt took the award for best poem with "Van Gogh's Starry Night," and Mrs. Matlock took second place with "Not With Wings."

The award for best short story for juveniles was won by Mrs. Thurman W. Allred of Concord, N.C. Her story is titled "The Growing-Up Summer."

The awards were presented in the final meeting of the conference by Editorial Secretary Clifton J. Allen of the Sunday School Board. Allen was director of the conference.

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Proposed Plans, Committee  
Announced for Lay Congress

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RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP)--Tentative plans for a hemispheric-wide Baptist Layman's Evangelistic Congress to be held as part of the Crusade of the Americas were announced here by the president of the crusade, Reubens Lopez of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The laymen's meeting, expected to attract about 750 Baptist laymen from 25 countries in North, Central and South America, will be held here July 15-21, 1968.

Purpose of the congress is "to acquaint laymen from North, Central and South America and from the Islands with the evangelistic program and methods being used in Brazil," and to stimulate interest in the Crusade of the Americas.

The five-day congress here will feature both general sessions and afternoon workshops and seminars for sharing of ideas and planning, with inspirational and evangelistic evening sessions, Lopez said.

The weekend following the congress, those attending the meeting will be assigned to Portuguese-speaking Brazilian churches for a special weekend of evangelistic effort. Teams of two participants will visit the churches.

In addition to the plans for the congress, Lopez announced the appointment of a 15-member Crusade of the Americas Laymen's Committee to direct detailed planning of the congress.

Named chairman of the committee was Owen Cooper of Yazoo City, Miss., a Southern Baptist layman and industrialist.

Four other Southern Baptists were named to the committee. They are Joe Coleman, an architect from Tulsa, Okla.; C. Wade Freeman, evangelism secretary for Texas Baptists, Dallas; Maxey Jarman of Nashville, head of the Genesco Corp.; and George W. Schroeder of Memphis, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

Other laymen appointed to the committee include Manuel A. Calderon, pastor in Barranquilla, Colombia; Chester Dixon, real estate man in Chicago, Ill.; Roderick James, layman from Kingston, Jamaica; Allen Jordan of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., Brooklyn, N.Y.; Alfredo Lerin of the Spanish Publishing House, El Paso, Tex., and head of Baptist laymen's work in Mexico; Jose dos Reis S. Pereira, pastor and editor from Rio de Janeiro; Carl Tiller of Washington, D.C., former president of the American Baptist Convention; Dr. Carlos de la Torre, medical doctor and pastor in Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Dr. William Volkman, M.D., Glen Ellyn, Ill. Cooper said in Yazoo City, Miss., that attendance at the hemispheric-wide laymen's congress will be by invitation, with invitations being extended by the proper group in each country and convention responsible for men's work. The SBC Brotherhood Commission is handling invitations to Southern Baptist laymen.

Cooper said that organized tours will be offered participants to enable them to visit mission fields enroute to and returning from the congress.

He added that one of the goals of the Crusade of the Americas and the hemispheric-wide layman's congress is to obtain greater involvement of laymen in mission endeavors.

He said laymen in the United States can learn much from the Brazilian Baptists' 1963-64 evangelistic campaign which involved laymen in a very successful way, with more than 100,000 decisions reported.

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