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BEST Ends Two Year Study;
Findings Emphasize Purpose

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By Jim Newton

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Baptist Education Study Task (BEST) ended its two-year investigation of the problems facing Baptist higher education when the BEST Findings Committee called, among other things, for clear statements of purpose for Christian education.

Throughout the 113-page book outlining the results of the two year study, a thread of suggestions was woven calling for both Baptist state conventions which own schools, and the colleges themselves, to draft statements of philosophy, purpose and objective.

Three other key solutions to problems facing Baptist higher education were also repeated with a dominant theme throughout the report when it was presented to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee here:

---That there exists a communications gap between the colleges and the majority of the Baptist constituents, and something must be done to close this gap.

---That control of the institutions must be vested in the elected boards of trustees of the schools, and the 16 state conventions which own the schools must not seek to control them from the floor of the annual meeting.

---That Baptist schools face a financial crisis, and extraordinary efforts must be made to provide the necessary funds to meet the demands.

The Findings Committee, however, did not resolve the question of acceptance of federal aid being faced by the 54 Baptist colleges and universities throughout the nation.

It left the decision instead to the elected boards of trustees and to the 16 conventions. Several of the conventions are in the midst of studies on the question, and some had delayed their studies with the hopes that the BEST investigation would come up with concrete suggestions.

It did, however, offer some guidelines, suggesting that there can be cooperation between church and state as well as separation; that the trustees should make the decision on the matter; that each federal aid program should be studied carefully; and that the consequences must be examined if they either accept or reject federal aid.

The Findings Committee stated in its report that some of the controversy generated during the two-year study over the federal aid question had actually "tended at times to divert attention from the basic question of ways and means for adequate support by the Baptist constituency."

The Findings Committee concluded its report with a summary of six significant results of the two-year study which has involved more than 8,000 Baptists. The results, in the opinion of the 18 members of the committee were:

"1. An increasing awareness of the significance of Christian higher education as an integral component of the Baptist witness.

"2. A more enlightened understanding of the present difficulties that confront our Baptist colleges and universities.

"3. A consciousness of need for definition of the purposes of Christian higher institutions in our present day culture, and for more effective relationship between the colleges and the denomination.

"4. A more precise understanding of the nature and extent of financial support necessary to provide Christian higher education of acceptable quality.

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"5. A deeper understanding of the vital relationships between the colleges and the conventions that foster and support them, and a clearer understanding of the areas of control and lines of responsibility.

"6. A rededication on the part of many to the improvement and strengthening of the Baptist colleges and universities."

Perhaps the most dominant theme upon which the lengthy report focused was the need for both the colleges and the conventions to draft statements outlining the purposes, objectives and underlying philosophy of Baptist institutions of higher education.

Significantly, the Findings Committee drafted a model statement of purpose with suggested elements in the purpose of a Christian college that the respective colleges and conventions could use as a guide.

The model statement of purpose had six key points. Summarized briefly, the model suggested that the Christian college should:

- Provide higher education within the overall perspective of the Christian world view.
- Create and nurture an atmosphere conducive to the Christian ethic.
- Be a center of study and a forum for discussion of the issues and challenges facing the sponsoring denomination, thus being on the cutting edge of religious thought.
- Give emphasis to the liberal arts and humanities.
- Help prepare workers for all the denominational enterprises, which is a valid if not a major purpose of a Christian college.
- Develop graduates who are committed to and who practice the Christian religion.

Most of the 113-page printed report was devoted to a summary of the ideas discussed by the first and second National Study Conferences of BEST, and the 24 regional seminars held during the first three months of 1966 and 1967.

The Findings Committee reported the results of these studies in their attempt to discover the problems and issues facing Baptist schools; isolate the causes of these problems, present requirements which the solutions to these problems must meet in order to be valid, suggest guidelines for further thinking about these problems, and finally, offer possible solutions to these problems.

In its report, the Findings Committee listed a total of 52 problems and issues facing the schools; proposed a total of 141 requirements which the solutions must meet to be valid; and listed 84 different solutions to the problems.

It suggested that the Education Commission of the SBC, which sponsored BEST, conduct national colloquia to delve deeper into the problems and issues in the areas of college-denominational relationships, financing Baptist schools, academic scope of the institutions, and religious scope of the schools.

Obviously, a listing of all the problems and solutions in a brief summary of the report is impossible. The full report is available from the SBC Education Commission, 460 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville. Cost is 50 cents for postage and printing.

Throughout the report there was an insistence that Baptist education should be quality education. "Only quality higher education can justify the label 'Christian,'" stated the report.

It also affirmed the need for Baptist schools, stating that "Christian education is not an optional interest of the church, but an important function of its mission. Because no effective substitute has been found for the genuinely Christian college, Baptists must continue to nurture and support adequately their Christian institutions of higher education."

The Findings Committee, however, looked with a dim view at establishing new Baptist schools, saying that it is generally agreed that \$20 million would be required to establish a four-year liberal arts college and bring it into full operation as an institution of acceptable academic excellence.

"In view of these considerations, there was general consensus that the proliferation of colleges without adequate support is unwise and is a betrayal of our youth," the Findings Committee declared.

In another section, the committee stated that the Baptist college is, and should be, distinctively different. "Upon this reality and validity of this difference rests the entire case for Baptist colleges," it said. "Unless the difference is real, significant, and favorable, there is no basic rationale for sponsoring Baptist colleges."

A Baptist college is not Christian, however, because all of its faculty members are Baptists, because it teaches required Bible courses, because it has required chapel services, or because it is Baptist-sponsored, the report said.

The committee stated, however, that there seemed to be widespread agreement among the BEST conference participants that courses in Bible should be required (although they should be "so attractive students would seek them without compulsion") and that attendance at chapel services should be required (although such coercion "has only negative value").

While stating that the ideal is for all the faculty members to be Baptists, it reported that such an ideal is not a practical reality in most cases, but that all faculty members should be Christian.

The committee, while reporting that one section of the conferences said that admission policies should be frankly selective, added that "It is assumed that...Baptist students would be given preference for admission."

On the subject of accreditation, the committee stated that accreditation is an absolute necessity, and published a summary of the requirements that most accrediting agencies have set for all schools.

It specifically cited a requirement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools which states: "The governing body should not be subject to undue pressure from state officials or other political or religious groups; furthermore, the governing body should protect the administration from similar outside pressures."

What the long-range effect of BEST and its final report will be may take years to evaluate. One thing seems certain: they have done an exhaustive study, but have left the final decisions up to the state conventions and the boards of trustees for each institution, where the decisions, by Baptist polity, belong.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Separate story will be mailed tomorrow on the section on financing Christian higher education in the BEST report. Stories for tomorrow's budget also include reports on the SBC Communications Conference, and two statistical survey studies released to the SBC Executive Committee.

--Baptist Press

New Orleans Employs News
Man, Two Faculty Members

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has added two new faculty members and has named a director of the seminary's news bureau.

James Donald (Don) Baker, former director of public relations for Southwest Baptist College in Bolivar, Mo., has been named the seminary's news bureau director. He is a doctoral student in the School of Theology at the seminary.

Randall Veazey, a 1965 graduate of the seminary, has joined the faculty of the School of Church Music as instructor of voice. He is a native of Alabama.

Clyde R. Walker has returned to the seminary faculty after serving for one year as a consultant in vocational guidance in the Training Union department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Walker will be assistant professor in the School of Religious Education, teaching psychology and counseling. He is a native of Longwood, Fla.

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Solons Ask Studies For
Free Higher Education

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WASHINGTON (BP)--A Texas Senator and a New York Congressman have teamed up to start the wheels rolling toward universal educational opportunity beyond high school.

Sen. Ralph W. Yarborough (D., Tex.) and Rep. James H. Scheuer (D., N.Y.) introduced companion bills in the House and Senate.

They would require the secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) to submit to Congress before Aug. 1, 1968 a plan or plans for "free universal educational opportunity at the post-secondary level."

"Education is the responsibility of society to its people," Yarborough declared, as he attacked a recent proposal by a White House advisory panel to let college students study now and pay later.

The panel proposed that a student be permitted to borrow up to the full amount of his college education costs in return for a promise to pay the government one per cent of his annual income for every \$3,000 borrowed for 30 to 40 years after graduation.

Calling the plan an "act of desperation," Yarborough said it "may be financially sound, but it aims at the lifeblood of educational opportunity.

"The fundamental principle of equal educational opportunity without regard to financial need has become axiomatic in the American society," he said.

The Texas Senator reminded the Congress that the nation had previously experimented with generous aid to those wishing to continue their education beyond high school. He cited the land-grant colleges and the GI bills following World War II, the Korean War and now the cold war.

These investments provided "tremendous returns," he continued. "The land-grant colleges have provided the facilities necessary for millions to go to college," he said.

"The World War II and Korean GI bills have more than paid for themselves through additional taxes paid by the Veterans earning higher incomes," Yarborough pointed out.

Congressman Scheuer said as he introduced his bill: "There is a direct and provable correlation in today's sophisticated, automated, technological society between a person's economic status--his income, his tax rates, where he lives--and the amount of education he receives."

At earlier hearings under Secretary of the Treasury Joseph W. Barr and U.S. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe expressed their eagerness for such studies as proposed by Yarborough and Scheuer.

The request is being made in the form of an amendment to the Higher Education Act Amendments of 1967.

If accepted by Congress the studies would include plans for:

1. Free universal educational opportunity beyond high school through grants to students or to institutions;
2. Loans to students or to institutions;
3. Tax credits or deductions and work-study or cooperative education systems; and
4. Existing programs of public and private financial aid such as the GI bills.

In order to accomplish the study task by August of next year the Secretary of HEW would be authorized to establish a commission to help him develop the proposed plans.

The Yarborough-Scheuer plan has been referred to the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare and the House Committee on Education and Labor where they are now pending.

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SBC Agencies Make
Capital Needs Pleas

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention agencies presented capital needs totaling \$37½ million for the five-year period of 1968-73, but their requests will be trimmed drastically by the SBC Executive Committee next February.

Twelve different agencies of the convention made the requests. Two of them requested funds for new office buildings.

The SBC Home Mission Board in Atlanta and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington both presented capital needs for funds to construct new office buildings in those cities.

The requests were presented before the program subcommittee of the SBC Executive Committee, which will make a detailed study of the needs and make recommendations to both the Executive Committee and the convention for consideration.

The current capital needs program of the convention ends in 1968. Compared to the \$37½ million in capital needs proposed for 1969-74, the current program provides only \$8.9 million for capital needs through the SBC budget.

Much of the difference will be made up from gifts and other sources of income of the agencies. The SBC capital needs budget does not include operating funds, although the capital the capital funds for the Home and Foreign Mission Boards currently are included in their operating funds.

Biggest request came from the SBC Foreign Mission Board, which asked for a total of \$11.3 million, including \$5½ million for evangelism and church development, \$2.2 million for schools, \$2.2 million for missionaries' homes, \$923,890 for hospitals and clinics, and \$424,000 for publishing houses.

The Home Mission Board asked for a total of \$2.7 million, including \$1.7 million for a new office building to be built in 1970-71 at a total cost of \$2½ million. By 1970 the staff of the board is expected to number 175, and the current headquarters building accommodates only 165 workers. A committee is studying location of the proposed building.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs also requested funds for a new building. Their request for \$600,000 would be used toward construction of a \$2 million Baptist Center "to house offices of agencies in the area, a Center for Advanced Studies, and a Continuation Education and Conference Center." The building would be built in 1970-71.

When the totals are combined, the capital needs requests of the six seminaries actually exceed that of the Foreign Mission Board, with a total of \$13.2 million requested by all six seminaries combined.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary at Fort Worth turned in requests for \$3.8 million. Major item in this was \$1.3 million for married student housing. Other items included a nursery school and kindergarten, medical center, gymnasium, renovation of Price Hall and the Cowden Building, faculty housing, Memorial Building improvements, maintenance building, president's home and campus parking.

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., requested \$1.3 million. Major item is \$800,000 for a library and student housing, totaling \$420,000.

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., asked \$3.3 million. The largest item was \$1.7 million for 14 apartment buildings. Also included were a chapel, classroom building, health and recreation building, missionary residence and child care center.

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary projected its needs at \$2.1 million. It wants apartments costing \$1 million, a new library at \$940,000 and a children's building costing \$175,000.

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., asked only \$877,590. It listed a library at \$752,600 and 12 duplex apartments at \$125,000.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville asked \$1.8 million. It projected a music school building at \$1 million. Other buildings were a nursery-kindergarten, WMU Hall renovation, Rankin Hall renovation, Morton Hall renovation, missionary and faculty apartments and campus roads.

Jacksonville and New Orleans Baptist hospitals turned in a total of \$8.5 million. Normally, these institutions will be told to look to local support for major funds.

The Radio and Television Commission in Fort Worth asked \$566,000. It plans a television production wing costing \$350,000, a warehouse at \$106,000, additional office space at \$90,000 and a second passenger elevator costing \$20,000.

SBC Executive Committee Executive Secretary Porter W. Routh pointed out that the requests were tentative in nature, and that the Executive Committee would not act on them until February.

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SBC Meeting Sites Exchanged;
Houston, '68; New Orleans, '69

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NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention will meet in Houston in 1968 instead of New Orleans, according to action by the Executive Committee of the convention.

The Executive Committee voted to switch the 1968 and 1969 meeting sites. Previously the 1968 convention had been scheduled in New Orleans and the 1969 convention would have been held in Houston.

The action was taken when it became apparent that construction of the new Rivergate Convention Hall in New Orleans would not be completed in time for the convention to be held in New Orleans next year.

The day before the Executive Committee met, it was reported that a portion of the roof of the Rivergate construction collapsed, delaying completion of the convention hall past the scheduled April 24 completion date. Already construction was 18 months behind schedule.

Revised dates for the conventions will be June 3-7, 1968, in Houston; and June 9-13, 1969, in New Orleans. The SBC constitution gives the Executive Committee authority to change the meeting sites in such emergencies.

In other action the committee voted to recommend revised dates of the 1970 convention scheduled previously in Denver from the week of June 1-5, to the new dates of June 8-12. Reason given for the change was because of vote taken by the SBC recently which indicated that the majority of the messengers to the convention preferred the second week in June to the first week in June for the meeting dates.

Selected as the headquarters hotel for the 1968 convention in Houston was the Rice Hotel. Meeting place will be the Houston Coliseum.

The recommendation that the 1968 and 1969 convention sites be exchanged was made by the administrative committee of the SBC Executive Committee. James Monroe, pastor in Miami, Fla., and chairman of the committee said that the collapse of the roof "eliminates any possibility of our going to New Orleans, and we're just glad we have the alternative of recommending Houston."

Monroe said that there was "some doubt" anyway whether the auditorium in New Orleans would be complete, on the basis of a study made by an architectural and engineering firm. "The element of risk would seem to be too great anyway," Monroe said.

Porter W. Routh, executive secretary of the Executive Committee, expressed deep regret of the accident in New Orleans, but added he was glad it happened yesterday in time for the Executive Committee to change its plans.

Cutlines

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Baptist Press Photo

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EXECUTIVE'S PAINTING UNVEILED: Porter W. Routh (right), executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, inspects a portrait presented by the Executive Committee to hang in the parlor of the SEC Building here along with the portraits of previous Executive Committee secretaries. Unveiling the portrait at the presentation were Mrs. Routh (left) and R. Archie Ellis, pastor of First Baptist Church, Columbia, S.C., who for many years was chairman of the Executive Committee administrative subcommittee. (BP) Photo

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