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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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## All Six SBC Seminaries Have Increased Enrolments

NASHVILLE (BP)--Increasing enrolments at Southern Baptists' six theological seminaries this fall suggest a surge of increasing interest in ministry, the church and theological education among the denomination's younger generation.

At the same time, all the campuses are at or nearing capacity in housing, with shortages creating difficulty in placing students on at least two campuses. But all registered students have been housed.

Whatever the differences in interpreting enrolment statistics and totals among the schools --and there are some--the fact remains that the seminaries are experiencing overall growth.

More than 7,000 students have enrolled at the six seminary campuses of Southern Baptists this fall. Last year, the fall total was about 6,000. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, both reporting record enrolments this fall, are believed to be the world's largest and second largest accredited seminaries, respectively.

Enrolment figures for seminaries in the Association of Theological Schools last year (1974-75) in the United States and Canada showed that Southern Baptists' six theological schools were all in the top 36 in enrolment, with four in the top 11.

Fall enrolment totals from the six Baptist schools were reported by spokesman for the individual seminaries. Totals given are for fall terms only and do not indicate totals for the entire academic year at the six seminaries.

Southwestern Seminary led the six schools with a record fall enrolment of 2,892 students, including 108 in its new graduate level, branch program in Houston, according to L. L. Collins, registrar. That figure included 921 new students for the fall, a 45 percent increase in new students over last year at this time. Enrolment at Southwestern last fall was 2,394, Collins said.

At Southern Seminary, updated registration figures hit a record 1,791, up 22.7 percent over the 1,459 fall total last year, according to Wesley M. Patillo, vice-president for development. Of that total, 1,639 are degree and diploma students. The remaining 152 are in evening school and other certificate programs, Patillo said.

Southern's new entering class was a record-breaking 721, a 45.8 percent increase over the same time last year, he noted.

Moving toward the Atlantic seaboard, enrolment at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C., was the largest in the school's 25-year history, with the entering class representing a 29.8 percent increase over last fall. Total fall enrolment at Southeastern was 976, compared with 857 for the same period last year, according to Rodney Byard, assistant to the president for institutional development.

At New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, enrolment this fall was 727, "up slightly over last year at this time," according to Ray P. Rust, executive vice president. Rust said enrolment at the New Orleans-based school has increased about 10 percent each year over the last three to four years.

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., reported that with a week left to go in its fall registration, a record 353 students had enrolled, compared with a 335 total enrollment for fall, 1974, according to Nobel D. Brown, director of admissions and dean of students.

The 1975 fall figures, thus far, include students enrolled in Golden Gate's Los Angeles and Sacramento centers, which reported 27 and five students respectively, and nine at the seminary's new center on the Grand Canyon College campus in Phoenix, Ariz., Brown said.

Golden Gate early predicted its largest new, incoming class since its beginning days in 1946. "That projection has proven true already, even with our incomplete registration to date," Brown said. New students entering this fall easily total more than 54 percent over last fall, he added.

Enrollment at the end of the first two four-week terms, as of Oct. 1, 1975, totaled a record 327 in regular credit courses at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., plus 91 in evening school classes, according to the seminary's registrar.

The 327 figure at Midwestern is a 6.2 percent increase over last fall for the same two terms. Midwestern has experienced record enrollments for the last three academic years, it was noted. Based on enrollment figures to date, indications are that this trend will continue, the registrar said.

The housing situation was most critical at Golden Gate and Southwestern. Stanton H. Nash, assistant to the president at Golden Gate, termed the housing situation there as "very critical," adding, "We're jammed tight, with students having to go off-campus because of the lack of housing. Some have delayed coming to the seminary.

"High costs of living and rental costs off campus are the biggest deterrents to taking all the new students who want to attend Golden Gate," Nash said.

At Southwestern, housing director James Haynes said the school had residences for only 700 married students on campus, with a waiting list on housing in effect since July, 1975.

"The problem is compounded," Haynes said, "by the shortage of low cost housing anywhere in Fort Worth." An additional 125 single students were unable to get room in campus dormitories but all students presently attending Southwestern have found satisfactory housing, Haynes added.

Midwestern was the only seminary not reporting a housing shortage, per se, although officials there indicated all on-campus married student housing was filled.

Southern, Southeastern and New Orleans Seminaries also reported what officials termed a "housing shortage," but each said they were able to house their students without problems.

At Southern, 30 students are being housed in a new Christian young women's residence in downtown Louisville, a project sponsored by Walnut Street Baptist Church. A bus brings the coeds to campus each day. Also, 27 rooms and apartments in an unused dormitory at the Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, adjacent to the Southern campus, are being occupied by Baptist seminarians.

And 30 rooms on Southern's campus have been converted into living space for new students according to Patillo. Many students at Southern live in apartments and homes off-campus in the nearby Crescent Hill neighborhood, he added.

Four and one-half years ago, New Orleans Seminary had over 50 of its 350 on-campus apartments vacant, Rust said. Last year, the school asked 20 student families to get off-campus housing. This year, the shortage is more definite, he said, but off-campus housing has been more than adequate to meet students' needs.

Southeastern's record enrollment this fall brought a housing shortage that was averted for the time, Byard said, with all qualified students enrolled and housed as a result of special arrangements off-campus. Six new duplex apartments for married students on-campus are helping somewhat to offset any shortage in housing there, he added.

Seminary representatives suggested several factors for increased enrollments, including successful recruiting efforts, more graduates returning to enter doctor of ministries or other postgraduate programs and an increased interest in certificate programs for non-college graduates. (By far the largest number of Southern Baptist seminarians are enrolled in degree-level master of divinity and religious education programs.)

But, in the midst of optimism over growth and anxiety over where funds will come from for enlargement of faculty and facilities, seminary representatives universally echo another reason for growth: God is at work on college campuses and in churches with individuals who are seeking a deeper meaning in life--a reversal of the disillusionment of the 1960s, when the younger generation had lost confidence in the vitality of the church.

**Baptist Agency Defends  
Independence of Churches**

By W. Barry Garr tt

WASHINGTON (BP)--The freedom and independence of religion from government controls and regulations dominated actions taken by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in semi-annual session here.

In five major actions the Baptist Joint Committee:

1) Opposed any effort of government to define the mission of a church; 2) Asserted the right of churches to engage in activity to influence legislation; 3) Defended freedom for people to assemble for religious purposes; 4) Protested Internal Revenue Service abuses relating to religious organizations and members of the clergy; and 5) Prohibited its staff members from registering as lobbyists.

The Baptist Joint Committee is a denominational agency, located in the nation's capital, and instructed to work in the area of religious liberty, church-state relations, and public policy which affects or is affected by public policy. The committee is sponsored by nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada, including the Southern Baptist Convention. James E. Wood Jr. is the executive director.

All five of the actions arose out of government policy either now in effect or being considered.

The current practice of the government to define the mission of the church and to limit its activities is found in the federal Internal Revenue Code, Section 501 (C) (3), and in the regulations of the code. The code states that a public charity, which includes churches, will lose its tax exemption if a substantial part of its activity is for the purpose of influencing legislation.

Prominent among the proposals now being considered by Congress is H. R. 8021, sponsored by Rep. Barber B. Conable Jr., (R-N.Y.). Among other things, this bill seeks to give a legal definition to the concept of a "substantial" part of activity of a charity (including churches) that is spent in influencing legislation.

A sweeping coalition of religious bodies is active in opposing the Conable bill, because it does not eliminate the "substantiality" test for their tax exemption. The Baptist Joint Committee is prominent in this coalition by the participation of John W. Baker, director of research services, who serves as its chairman.

The resolution passed by the Baptist Joint Committee on "Religion and Public Policy" declares: "Churches have not and cannot accept the substantiality test without violating deep religious beliefs." The resolution pointed out that "many religious organizations hold that a part of their religious mission is to give witness to their religious beliefs as they affect or are affected by public policy."

The Baptist Joint Committee therefore resolved to request "that the Congress of the United States specifically exempt churches, associations of churches, or conventions of churches from the substantiality test of Section 501 (C) (3) or any modification of that section."

The committee further directed its staff "to use all appropriate means to oppose any modifications of Section 501 (C) (3) which does not remove churches, associations of churches, and conventions of churches from the substantiality test of that section."

Wood commented on the resolution: "While thoroughly consistent with the very founding and subsequent history of the Baptist Joint Committee, this resolution is clearly one of the major position statements ever to have been adopted by the Baptist Joint Committee and was done so unanimously."

In another resolution, the Baptist Joint Committee attacked local or regional ordinances requiring permits for religious meetings or which have the effect of inhibiting the freedom of assembly in the exercise of religion. The committee felt that many such ordinances are in violation of the First Amendment guarantees for the free exercise of religion and "the right of the people peaceably to assemble."

Members of the Baptist Joint Committee were disturbed by the rising number of reports throughout the nation concerning alleged Internal Revenue Service abuses affecting religious organizations or members of the clergy. The committee instructed its staff to gather information on these alleged abuses and to report the findings to its March, 1976, meeting. There is the possibility that the committee will want to participate in some way in one of these cases and to pursue it as far as the Supreme Court of the United States.

The committee, in another action, strongly expressed its view that religious persons or organizations should not be required by government to register as lobbyists as they seek to fulfill the mission of their church by influencing legislation. Specifically, the committee voted "that no member of our staff register as a lobbyist or provide financial information under any new federal law to be enacted hereafter."

The committee also felt that government should not be allowed to investigate the financial records of churches or of religious organizations because of their activity in carrying out their concept of the mission of the church, even if that mission means activity to influence legislation and the formation of public policy.

-30-

Missionary "Chases Rabbits"  
During Sermon in Surinam

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PARAMARIBO, Surinam (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary Leo E. Waldrop reported that he had a little trouble with the Dutch language during a recent sermon here.

It seems he kept "chasing rabbits."

In Dutch, the Old Testament book, I Kings, is pronounced "Koningen." When Waldrop referred his congregation to the I Kings text, it came out "Koniijn," the Dutch word for rabbit.

Throughout the sermon the Surinam believers were amused and bewildered as Waldrop continued to refer to the book of "First Rabbit."

-30-