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February 23, 1978

78-26

House Unit Joins Battle Over Tuition Tax Credits

By Carol Franklin

WASHINGTON (BP)--The scene of the battle over tax credits for tuition has shifted from the U. S. Senate to the U. S. House of Representatives. In five days of hearings the House Ways and Means Committee heard over 90 witnesses.

Educators, parents, students, religious groups, members of Congress and administration figures all had their say on the controversial matter of how to meet the increasing costs of education.

The committee, chaired by Rep. Al Ullman, D.-Ore., has several bills under consideration which would grant a tax credit for educational expenses. The major proposal in the House, the Burke-Frenzel Bill (H. R. 9332), is identical to the Packwood-Moynihan Bill (S. 2142) in the Senate. That measure would provide a tax credit of one-half of the tuition paid to parochial and other private schools up to a maximum of \$500 per student. It includes elementary, secondary and higher education.

The majority of the witnesses at the hearings favored tax credits as a simple means of relieving the pressure on middle class parents who choose to send their children to private schools. Eleven Catholic groups, including parents as well as teachers, testified in favor of such relief. Eleven other private school groups also testified in favor of tax credits.

The Carter administration opposes tax credits for tuition. Joseph A. Califano, secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, in an effort to head off the Moynihan-Packwood Plan again explained the administration proposal to expand existing grant and loan programs to include more families in the middle income range. This plan was unveiled at a White House press conference following hearings in the Senate on the tuition tax credit plan.

Student groups, universities and educational organizations split on the matter. Representatives of students on some campuses strongly urged passage of a tax credit measure while the National Student Lobby and National Student Association opposed such action.

The National Education Association, which did not testify in the Senate hearings, scored the proposals as "unsound administratively, unsound fiscally, unsound as a matter of public policy, and unsound constitutionally."

Three senators and 14 representatives testified on tax credits with only one, Rep. Charles W. Whalen Jr., R.-Ohio, opposing the concept. The Burke-Frenzel Bill has 66 co-sponsors in the House.

Religious liberty groups, such as the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the National Coalition for Public Education and Religious Liberty again opposed tax credits. They were joined in their opposition by citizens groups, such as Save Our Public Schools, which see tax credits as a threat to the survival of the public education system of the nation.

Members of the Ways and Means Committee also split in their support of tax credits for tuition. Rep. Bill Frenzel, R.-Minn., and Rep. James A. Burk, D.-Mass., are chief sponsors of the legislation in the House. Rep. William M. Ketchum, R.-Cal., and Rep. Edgar L. Jenkins, D.-Ga., both stated their opposition during the hearings.

Some Washington observers expect delaying action in the Ways and Means Committee in order to allow the House Education and Labor Committee time to push the administration plan through for action on the floor.

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**Ballenger Assumes Presidency
During Seminary Problems**

By Irma Duke

Baptist Press
2/23/78

RUSCHLIKON, Switzerland (BP)--Isam E. (Dick) Ballenger faces two major problems as he officially takes over the presidency of Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon in March.

Ballenger, a Southern Baptist missionary, must cope both with a money crisis and with the difficulties imposed by Switzerland's stiff quota system for foreigners, which limits the number of foreign faculty members the seminary can have.

Because of the system, used to protect the Swiss labor market, Ballenger had difficulties getting his own visa renewed and recently another Southern Baptist missionary's visa was denied.

As the seminary's interim president since last summer, Ballenger has already become well acquainted with the 28-year-old school's financial problems, too.

"The American dollar is at an all-time low and the costs of goods and services here are extremely high," he explained in an interview in his Ruschlikon office. For example, he said, the seminary has to pay \$15 an hour to get professional painting done. To cash a check of any amount, it must pay a fee of \$3.

The continuing decline in the value of the American dollar in comparison with five major currencies in Europe aggravates the financial situation. On one day in mid-February, the value of the dollar dropped 3.2 percent against the Swiss franc.

Asked about future plans for the seminary, Ballenger said that his "biggest worry is continuing what we're doing. It's a very difficult time. The money is just not there."

During its February meeting, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board voted to give the seminary an additional \$48,730 to cover a 1977 deficit in its operating budget. The institution is sponsored by Southern Baptists through the Foreign Mission Board in close cooperation with European Baptist unions.

Financial support from European Baptists is limited, however. Ballenger said per capita gifts to church causes from Europeans are higher than in the United States but the number of European Baptists is much smaller. According to BaptistWorld Alliance figures, Europe has only about 1,172,000 Baptists. Of this number, over half live in Eastern Europe and cannot send money out, explained J. D. Hughey, the Foreign Mission Board's secretary for Europe, the Middle East and South Asia.

Ballenger said it has been difficult for the institution, which has 55 full-time students, to collect much in tuition because the students could get instruction free or much cheaper in public institutions.

The other problem, Switzerland's quota system for foreigners, recently led to the denial of a visa for E. Wesley Miller, the Foreign Mission Board's mass media representative for Europe. Miller's office has been at Ruschlikon and he has occasionally taught courses at the institution, which offers bachelor of divinity and master of theology degrees and special studies programs. But upon completion of missionary furlough, his visa application was reviewed and denied.

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Ballenger, who also serves as the Foreign Mission Board's field representative for Europe, said the government asks two questions of foreigners who want to live in Switzerland: Is it necessary to reside in Switzerland for your work? And do you render any service which specifically benefits Switzerland?

Miller and Ballenger felt that the answer to both questions in Miller's case was "no." His mass media work has actually been throughout Europe, not just in Switzerland. Ballenger said that they agreed that if Miller's staying would prevent granting of a visa to a full-time professor, it would be better if he moved elsewhere. Ballenger said the seminary, which has eight faculty members and a visiting professor, needs a church history professor now.

Despite current problems, Ballenger has done some planning for the institution's future. He hopes to begin a summer study institute of theological education. The institute would allow laymen and pastors with limited formal education a learning opportunity and would make use of the facilities when the normal school terms are not in session. He also suggests expanded use of the seminary as a conference center during the summer months, but in both cases a director will be needed.

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Irma Duke, news editor and information coordinator, Foreign Mission Board, wrote this during a trip to Europe and Asia.

(BP) Photos mailed to Baptist state papers by the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Campbell Named Chief of BP
Sunday School Board Bureau

Baptist Press
2/ 23/78

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Bracey (Buzz) Campbell, who joined the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in January as supervisor of news and information, will serve as the chief of the Baptist Press bureau at the Sunday School Board.

Campbell, 30, had been managing editor of the "Nashville Banner," which he joined as a reporter in 1971, after six years on the staff of the "Clarion-Ledger", Jackson, Miss.

Other Baptist Press bureau chiefs are Richard T. McCartney, Baptist General Convention of Texas, Dallas; Walker L. Knight, Home Mission Board, Atlanta; Roy Jennings, Brotherhood Commission, Memphis, Tenn.; Robert L. Stanley, Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va.; and W. Barry Garrett, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington.

W. C. Fields of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, Nashville, Tenn., directs BP's national office; Robert O'Brien is news editor and Norman Jameson is feature editor.

Coal Strike Big Challenge To
Christian Miner's Commitment

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By Rex Hammock

Baptist Press
2/23/78

ECHOLS, Ky. (BP)--Picket lines are a strain on the commitment of Christian coal miners and the lingering strike by the United Mine Workers of America poses a challenge to the churches of Christian miners, says Derrill Smith, Kentucky pastor.

Each weekend, Smith, a student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., travels to the tiny west Kentucky community of Echols to serve as pastor of the Pond Run Baptist Church.

Ninety percent of the men in the Pond Run congregation work at the several underground and strip coal mines nearby. While most of the men are members of the union, others in the church are management or "company" employees.

Smith says the two groups are getting along well, but he, like other pastors in similar situations, is concerned with the effect of the long-lasting strike on the life of the church.

"So far, I've felt the freedom to express how I feel about the strike," says Smith, adding that he has been especially concerned with the strike's association with violence.

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The area surrounding Smith's church has not escaped out-breaks of violence during the nearly three-month-old labor dispute. Confrontations between picketers and state and local police have resulted in numerous injuries. In some parts of the state, strike-related deaths have occurred.

Smith is thankful that none of the men in his church have been involved with such actions. "We have had to consider what responsibility our Christian commitment means to non-violence," he says.

"Because we are Christians, we have more responsibility for what goes on in this strike," Smith believes. He explains that often distinct lines are drawn between the Christian and non-Christian coal miner. "Those who profess their Christianity feel the strains of commitment when they are underground or at the strip mine...or on the picket line."

The length of the labor dispute is beginning to have a financial impact on the church. In January, the church fell \$300 short of its budget and expectations for February are more dismal.

"But, the financial problem is one of my least concerns," says Smith, smiling. "That's probably because I've continued to be paid."

But he is concerned with the probable results of a continued strike and believes, "Those who are not working are eventually going to run out of funds. I feel that it is the church's responsibility to minister to them with food and other basic essentials."

The issues facing the Christian coal miner are complex. "The fraternity of the miners is overwhelming," Smith says, "which stems from the fact that they know the very real possibility of dying together in the mines."

"But the Christian coal miner must weigh his union loyalty against the question of bringing the nation into jeopardy," he says, referring to the possible power cut-backs and black-outs if coal production does not resume soon.

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CORRECTION

In Baptist Press story mailed 2/22/78, entitled "SBC Leaders Urge 'Bold Growing, Going, Giving,'" change Keith Parks' title from overseas division director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to mission support division director for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. (See graph 6, which begins... "Cothen, Fagan and Keith Parks...")

Thanks,
Baptist Press