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Tuition Tax Credits May
Be Stymied in the Senate

By Carol Franklin

WASHINGTON (BP)--Voting on tuition tax credits in the U. S. Senate may be held off by a technical maneuver by opponents, according to U. S. Sen. Ernest F. Hollings, D.-S.C.

The Senate Finance Committee approved a new tuition tax credit bill on Thursday, Aug. 3. Hollings said that action calls for a new report on the measure. Any report must be at the desk of the Senate clerk for three days before a vote can be taken.

Delaying the vote until the following Wednesday as the rule required, pushed tuition tax credits up against Senate action on gas deregulation, scheduled for that day. Hollings thinks it is unlikely that the Senate leadership would postpone the gas debate in favor of action on tuition tax credits.

Both the Senate Appropriations and Budget Committees refused earlier to approve a request for a waiver of certain provisions of the Budget Act of 1974 which would have cleared tuition tax credits for full Senate action.

Because the bill authorized new spending for years for which there is not yet a budget, it was necessary to get special approval of those portions of the bill. Both committees reported unfavorably on the request.

Sens. William V. Roth Jr., R.-Del., Bob Packwood, R.-Ore., Abraham Ribicoff, D.-Conn., and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D.-N.Y., prime sponsors of tuition tax credits in the Senate, responded to the Budget and Appropriations Committee actions by substituting a version of the bill which removes its refundability provision and substantially cuts costs.

Hollings, a member of the Budget Committee, declared that the changes in the bill removed technical objections but not the major budget concerns. "We are trying to balance the budget by 1981," he said. "This bill is pure nonsense."

Sen. Edmund Muskie, D.-Me., chairman of the budget committee, attacked the bill for its "total lack of accountability."

The new bill would reduce the maximum elementary and secondary credit to \$250 from \$500. It would eliminate graduate students and undergraduates enrolled at less than halftime. It also would reduce the credit by the amount of any other federal aid for education. The bill would make the credit available only for private school tuition.

The sponsors also included provisions to insure that a private school must comply with state laws regarding accreditation and satisfy the Internal Revenue Service that it does not discriminate before it would be eligible for tuition tax credits.

Hollings noted that the latter provisions would provide plenty of opportunity for government entanglement with church-related schools.

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Packwood said that the portions of the earlier bill which had been blocked by budget and appropriations votes had been deleted in this latest version but would be restored on the Senate floor if the votes could be mustered. The refundability portion of the old measure was a major stumbling block which the sponsors feel the Senate as a whole will accept.

The cutting of costs is an attempt to get a compromise from the administration, Packwood said. President Carter has promised to veto the bill if it passes Congress.

Hollings scored the "devious approach" of tuition tax credit proponents. "They've been caught with their hands in the cookie jar," he said. "And no one believes they only want one cookie."

The House of Representatives passed a measure similar to the new Senate Finance Committee Bill on June 1.

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'Equipping Centers' Offer
Additional Training

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GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--Selected church training leaders were introduced to the training concept of "Equipping Centers" during the Church Training Leadership week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Equipping Centers were designed by the church training department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board as an additional way to accomplish the training function in the church.

Churches with existing church training programs may utilize Equipping Centers as additional support to their weekly discipleship while churches without church training programs may use them as their primary training approach, said Roy T. Edgemon, director of the board's church training department.

The project began two and one half years ago as a result of a Sunday School Board trustees' meeting. One of the priorities the board set was to prepare materials to aid churches in the "Equipping of the Saints" (Christians).

"Equipping Centers were developed in response to the needs of the church," Edgemon said. "The approach to training is one of the most exciting motivations that has been developed in several decades."

The program materials were completed and then tested by more than 200 churches in the states of Kentucky, Kansas, Virginia, Georgia, Texas and California.

"The overall response to the program was favorable so the decision was made to develop the project for national use," Edgemon said.

Equipping Centers are a series of modules or study units grouped around a subject area and utilizing various learning approaches. There are six subject areas with several modules under each one. The subject areas are "Missions in Evangelism," "Church and Community," "Christian Doctrine," "Family Life," "Leadership" and "Christian Growth."

"We believe that the Equipping Centers are distinctive in that they offer a short-term training period, a variety of resources, reusable resources, flexible organization and scheduling, convenient learning settings, and varied learning approaches," Edgemon said.

"Each course of study suggests several learning approaches such as seminars, small groups, one-to-one, individual or combinations," Edgemon added. "Various learning approaches are given because every person has developed a style of learning which is the most effective in his life."

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"We have also incorporated several resource materials into each module hoping to add variety and initiate learning," Edgemon said. "Films, cassettes, books, charts and games are just a few of the resources used."

The materials will be released in July of 1979 with the fall of 1979 as the major launch date in churches. The literature items will appear on the July-August-September undated church literature order form. Eight modules will be released in July 1979 with eight additional modules released in January of 1980.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Pope Paul VI, the spiritual leader of 700-million Catholics around the world, died Sunday, Aug. 6, following a heart attack. Roman Catholic cardinals will meet in 15 to 18 days to seek a successor to the 80-year old pontiff who for 15 years led Roman Catholics through conflict and change. C. Brownlow Hastings, assistant director of the department of interfaith witness at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Atlanta, reflects on what the death of Pope Paul VI and election of a successor means to Southern Baptists. Hastings, who has a special assignment in Baptist-Catholic-Orthodox relations, covered the Synod of Bishops meetings in 1971, 1974, and 1977 as a special correspondent for Baptist Press.

Baptists Should Pray
As Catholics Seek Pope

By C. Brownlow Hastings

Baptist Press
8/7/78

ATLANTA (BP)--"Would you pray with us for Pope Paul at this critical time," Frank Ruff, a Roman Catholic Glenmary home missionary, asked.

It was 1971 and he was appealing to a small group of Baptist pastors at a prayer retreat. I was shocked to recall that I had never prayed for any religious leader except Baptists, much less a Pope in Rome.

Frank was greatly concerned about the forthcoming Synod of Bishops and their debate over the priestly ministry. We could not deny his insistence in a decision that would affect him and thousands of other priests around the world.

Pope Paul VI, who died Aug. 6, is no longer the spiritual leader and final authority of 700-million Roman Catholics. But the need to pray for the cardinals in their conclave to select the next Pope is more critical than ever. The future of spiritual renewal and the peace of internal reform is at stake. Baptists and other evangelicals who pray for a "great awakening" in the centuries-old Catholic Church will want to make this decision a matter of daily prayer.

Though a Pope is not considered to have the sweeping power Popes of the Middle Ages exercised, he still sets the tone and finally points the direction of the largest community of Christians in the world. Though the First Vatican Council gave him the power of speaking infallibly on a dogma for the whole church, only Pius XII in 1950 has exercised the power, speaking on the dogma of the bodily assumption of Mary into Heaven.

Paul VI will long be remembered for his courageous and progressive beginning in 1963. He determined to continue the Second Vatican Council, begun by Pope John XXIII, through three more sessions. Those produced the remarkable documents on religious liberty and on ecumenism, which opened up the church to recognize the validity of other Christian churches and "ecclesial communities" for the first time officially.

In the first years after the council, Pope Paul travelled widely, seeking to serve as an influence for peace and justice. He gave wide encouragement to several movements for spiritual renewal. Then, in 1968, with the encyclical on birth control, he turned strongly conservative in an effort to put the brakes on what some were calling "the runaway church."

He could have invoked his power of infallibility at that time, but he chose not to. Some moral theologians doubt that any Pope would do so over a moral issue where he would over doctrinal ones. As a result also of the new sense of responsibility for personal decisions by Catholic individuals, there was a wave of protest by theologians.

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Not so well known, but more notable to Baptists, were several things Pope Paul encouraged to promote spiritual renewal. He encouraged his Commission on Christian Unity to involve more than 100 Biblical scholars worldwide in cooperating with the United Bible Societies in producing common language New Testaments. Approval also was given for Catholics to read such Protestant versions as "Today's English Version," "The Revised Standard Version," and "The Living Bible."

In 1974, he called the Synod of Bishops to a month long study of evangelization in the modern world. He saw the need to evangelize both those within the Catholic Church who do not have a deep commitment to the Gospel and to proclaim the gospel to those who had never heard the good news of Jesus Christ.

He linked evangelism with the cause of social justice in his 1975 exhortation, "the Gospel must be proclaimed."

Cautious at first, Pope Paul eventually gave endorsement to the charismatic renewal movement now deeply affecting the life of the church in many countries. Cardinal Suenens of Belgium, a far-out possibility as a candidate to be the next Pope, and a good friend in early days, had a large part in convincing Pope Paul that charismatics were making a profound contribution to the lives of millions of Catholics. It is conservatively estimated that 3.5-million Catholics are involved in the charismatic movement worldwide.

No one at this point can predict the direction and the scope of spiritual renewal in the Catholic Church. No one can predict the choice of the cardinals, which should come by the latter days of August. What is certain is that the next Pope may be responsible for more far reaching decisions than either Pope John or Pope Paul.

An outside chance exists that the next Pope will be the first non-Italian in 500 years. If so, the character and structure of the Curia, the Pope's administrative body, may gradually change toward more openness and flexibility. Cardinal Willebrands of Holland, the head of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, is a possible choice.

There's even a more far out chance one might be named from the Third World. If so, Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, the charismatic Argentine, would be a strong contender. However, Cardinal Sergio Pignedoli, who has headed the Commission on Non-Believers in the Curia, is the most likely choice if the progressive cardinals prove to be in the majority.

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Fire Reunites
Split Churches

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VIRDEN, Ill. (BP)--A church which split over a problem involving personalities has been reunited by fire.

A few years ago, the Grace Baptist Church divided into two congregations in this 3,800 population town of Virden, Ill. The new congregation formed the Virden Southern Baptist Church and erected a building.

Then on December 10, 1977, fire destroyed the Grace Baptist Church. Pastor Raymond McAfee and his members began meeting in a Nazarene Church although they had to begin Sunday School at 7:30 a.m. Rather than rebuild the burned building, the members of Grace and Virden Southern have now merged as Grace Southern Baptist Church and meet in the building occupied by the former Virden Church. It will be enlarged by insurance proceeds from the fire.

"I think this is the greatest thing that's happened to Southern Baptists in Virden," said McAfee, whom the church called as pastor. "There are times when it's just as important to consolidate and strengthen existing churches as it is to start new ones. This merger fitted into God's time slot; this was the time for it to happen."

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