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Southern Baptist Educators
Discuss Student Aid, Future

By Dan Martin

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) -- Despite proposed radical cuts in federal student aid programs, Southern Baptist educators are positive about the future of denominational higher education.

Representatives of 16 Southern Baptist affiliated schools, attending a consultation on student financial aid and federal tax policy, repeated their belief that if students want to attend Baptist schools, a way will be found to help them do so.

The consultation was called to consider the implications of President Reagan's plan to slash federal student aid programs by as much as 50 percent. The National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities estimates the proposed cuts could affect 500,000 of the 1.8 million students enrolled in private institutions in the nation.

The Southern Baptist educators were briefed on the status of Reagan's proposed cuts in federal student aid, discussed options open to them to provide needed assistance to their students, and looked at ways in which they can be more effective politically.

Howard Holcomb, of Washington, a consultant on higher education, said there is "no solid indication of what kind of dollars we will have next year," as he described a "confusing situation" in Congress, the Education Department and the Administration.

Holcomb said a showdown over the budget proposals likely will come in April when Congress votes on increasing the national debt level. "The national debt probably will hit \$1.5 trillion by 1985. It is plain that we have overloaded the system ... overloaded it everywhere."

Of student loans, he commented that governmental regulations "have made them so complex that the whole business is about to fall down of its own weight."

Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director-treasurer of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, said the situation is a "near emergency," but added Southern Baptist schools "are in much better shape than are some of the independent institutions who have taken every kind of aid available and have thus become dependent on the federal government for up to a quarter or a third of their budgets."

Walker noted Baptists' traditional belief in the separation of church and state has prevented acceptance of aid to the institutions, and, with few exceptions, has limited Southern Baptist participation in federal programs to student aid.

It is difficult to estimate the impact of the proposed budget cuts on the 51 SBC-affiliated schools, "because they participate at different levels," he said, adding the amount received from federal sources comprises only a small part of the budgets of the schools.

Walker commented the proposed cuts "will have a long-range effect...because we are dealing with the young people of our society. We must point out to Congress that this is not just a matter of balancing the budget, but a question of long-range impact on our nation."

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Participants were encouraged to have various groups--trustees, students, administration, friends, faculty--discuss the question with members of Congress during the Easter break.

"They can talk with the members of Congress about the economic impact the cutbacks will have on the schools. We would like to encourage the legislators to consider each financial aid program on its own merits, and to consider the long-range implications," Walker said, adding that he hopes the Congress will be urged to make the cutbacks "in a phased way if they are believed to be absolutely necessary."

Several participants, including Basil Thomson Jr., general counsel of Baylor University in Waco, Texas, said Baptist schools traditionally have taken a position that "if a student wants to go to our school, we will find a way for them to come."

Thomson, also Baylor's special assistant to the president for governmental relations, said the Texas school "has a basic policy that dependence on state or federal governmental aid is the road to ruin and self-reliance is the road to success."

He said Baylor officials have brainstormed for ideas to help the school provide ways to help students finance their education. "We are going to have to find ways to help the students because governmental aid will never return to what it was in the 1960s and 1970s. It will still be there, but not on the scale it was then," he said.

He suggested a "re-education of the parents" of students, most of whom, he said, have not planned for their children's education. "The parent is going to have to re-assume responsibility," he said.

Among the ideas Thomson mentioned were increased campus-financed work-study programs, using students in more campus jobs, providing financing arrangements, using college placement offices to find student jobs, emphasizing more co-op education and encouraging community involvement through jobs, scholarships, grants or other means.

Thomson said the "bottom line" is increasing the endowments of the institutions. "We need to be much more creative in this area," he said.

Several of the educators commented on denominational support for higher education.

"As Baptists we must decide if education is the kind of thing we want to support," Thomson said. "The people in the churches must be educated as to the value of what they are providing."

He added the support Texas Baptists give to their schools through the Cooperative Program "is equivalent to a \$40 million endowment," and said the Baptist schools must continue to depend on denominational support.

One president, Eugene Hall of Oklahoma Baptist University, voiced some concern about future denominational support, noting OBU is in favor of an effort to increase Oklahoma support of worldwide Cooperative Program mission causes to a 50-50 split.

"But at the same time we are supporting efforts to increase contributions to our national agencies, at least two seminaries and one agency are coming into Oklahoma and competing for development funds we need," he added.

Hall also encouraged the educators to "educate church people about the value of Christian higher education, noting, "We must not be defensive about what it costs to educate a young person. What we as Baptists are doing is head and shoulders above what students receive in state-supported institutions."

Mississippians Show Marin
Bright Side of Christianity

By Don Hepburn

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MARIN COUNTY, Calif. (BP)—Why would anyone take a week off from work, forego a week's pay, then pay \$200 to fly halfway across the country, to spend five days working 10 and 12 hours without compensation digging mud from the homes of strangers?

Residents of exclusive Marin County, across the bay from San Francisco, thought the same thing when 24 Southern Baptist pastors and laymen from Mississippi rolled up their sleeves for them after disastrous rains and mudslides.

To the Mississippians, as explained by Paul Hurdle of Holly Springs, the answer was simply "to come help people that were in need and to share a witness for Christ, to show these people what Christ means to us."

"Just by our being here, I believe, shows these people what Christ does mean in our individual lives. Because if Christ weren't in my life, I surely wouldn't be here," said Hurdle, a farmer.

Hurdle and his fellow Baptists were part of a continuing Southern Baptist relief effort to assist victims of a savage January storm which struck a 250-mile area north and south of San Francisco and caused an estimated \$280 million damage.

In all, 3,160 people were forced from their homes, 477 people were injured and 31 died. The storm destroyed 231 homes and 25 businesses. Another 6,304 homes and 1,014 businesses were damaged. Two Southern Baptist churches also were damaged.

The Mississippi work team dug mud out of several homes and yards; dug and hauled debris out of homes; repaired several homes; helped build a retaining wall to hold a mountainside from sliding into a home; rebuilt a roof on a dormitory and helped rebuild a cabin at Cazadero Baptist Camp, operated by three Southern Baptist Associations; and shared a Christian witness with several storm victims and their families.

The volunteers worked on a priority system, helping people first who were unable to live in their homes and senior citizens living on fixed incomes who were physically unable to do needed repair work.

"What we're finding is that people in Marin County probably all their lives have never needed anything and have always been in control of their lives because they had enough money to deal with (the problem)," explained Harold Hendricks, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Fairfax, Calif.

"For one time in their lives they discovered they did have some needs. And we as Southern Baptists, for whatever reason, we are able to step in at a crucial time and say, 'Here, we would like to help you because you are our neighbors and because we care.'"

According to published reports, \$172 million for personal and commercial property damage was uninsured because of disclaimer clauses in insurance policies restricting liability for damage due to earthquake, floods, or mudslides.

Consequently, the role of volunteers has been a very significant in the lives of the people of Marin County during the past two months.

The work of all volunteers has been coordinated through the Red Cross, but under the direction of Bill Ryan, director of missions for the Redwood Empire Southern Baptist Association.

Ryan tries to utilize Baptist laity from the San Francisco Bay area and from across the state to assist in relief efforts. In addition to Southern Baptists, the Mennonites and Church of the Brethren have sent in teams of volunteers.

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"I can't get over the willingness of these people to take a week out of their lives and off their jobs and jump on an airplane to come and offer us a hand when we are in this kind of trouble," said Kenfield psychiatrist Hal White. "That's a human spirit that's very heartwarming indeed."

In nearby Fairfax, resident Mary Butler watched three Mississippi laymen work four days removing 400 cubic yards of mud from two homes. "The help you have done has been fantastic," she said. "To actually get out to work like this shows that you really live and believe your Christian faith."

Layman Rudon Laney, on his fourth mission trip, said, "It's my chance to minister to somebody else, and to show them God's love living through me. Physically you get tired. But man, the joy that comes through it all; it just takes away the ache and tiredness."

The action of the Baptist volunteers has made a profound impact upon many residents of Marin County, according to Hendricks.

"For someone to fly 2,000 miles from Mississippi, just because they love Jesus and because they love people, and even love people they don't even know, is changing their lives. They see something about Christianity that they have never seen before."

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Louisiana Foundation
Gets \$2.5 Million Estate

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr. CO

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ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP) -- The Louisiana Baptist Foundation has become owner of the largest bequest in its history, \$2.5 million from the estate of the late Mr. and Mrs. William L. Day of Welsh, La.

The will designated 50 percent of the trust income for use by Louisiana College to establish the W. L. and Maggie Day Memorial Endowed Scholarship Fund, and that the use of the remaining 50 percent of the bequest be determined by the trustees of the Foundation.

Glenn E. Bryant, Foundation executive director, said the estate includes about \$350,000 in cash and 1,100 acres of land in Jefferson Davis Parish.

The Days were active members of the First Baptist Church of Welsh. He was a deacon and she was a Sunday School teacher and active in Woman's Missionary Union. He died Oct. 10, 1976; she died May 27, 1981.

John Couch, pastor of First Baptist Church, noted Mrs. Day, a school teacher, was very active in helping establish WMU groups in the area. Her husband was a trustee of Louisiana College, 1964-70 and 1972-76.*

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Tornado Destroys Church,
Put Relief Vans to Work

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ADA, Okla. (BP)--Two Oklahoma Baptist disaster relief vehicles were on the scene the morning after tornadoes left 400 homeless in Ada, Okla., March 15.

Another in the series of spring tornadoes that swept Oklahoma destroyed Virginia Avenue Baptist Church in Bartlesville while 30 people huddled and prayed in a hallway.

In Ada, the tornado damaged 75 homes, including 50 trailers in a mobile home park, injured 35 people and killed one. Two self-contained units manned by volunteers from the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma set up near the mobile home park and served 500 hot meals the next day.

The Virginia Avenue church sanctuary, valued at \$1 million, was a complete loss. The storm lifted the roof and blew down two walls. The storm also blew away the roof and all the windows of an adjacent three-story educational building. The church was insured for \$800,000.

As the tornado approached, 30 people, including some area residents who had come to the church for shelter, huddled in a hallway near the library. The hallway acted as a vacuum tube when the windows went, and immediately filled with glass. But there were no injuries.

"We're going to take a negative experience and make a positive thing out of it," said Virginia Avenue pastor Ralph Dershem. "We will definitely rebuild and continue to serve this community."*

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