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Presidents, Politicians Highlight
Baptist College Commencements

By Lonnie Wilkey

NASHVILLE (BP)--More than 14,800 students will receive degrees from Southern Baptist seminaries, colleges and schools during and early June.

For these students, graduation means the accomplishment of a goal. Amid the pomp and circumstance, however, one fact remains. Before diploma is in hand, graduates must sit through one more long lecture -- well, completely thought-out speech -- unless they decide simply to receive their sheepskins through the mail.

Which leads to the question: Who do colleges ask to deliver commencement addresses?

At least 22 present or former college presidents -- Baptist and non-Baptist -- will send graduates of Southern Baptist schools off to the "real world" with bits of wisdom accumulated over many years.

William Jewell College President J. Gordon Kingsley is the most popular Southern Baptist college president at commencement exercises this year, delivering addresses at three Baptist schools: Louisiana College in Pineville, Palm Beach Atlantic College in West Palm Beach, Fla., and Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Ark.

E. Bruce Heilman, chancellor of the University of Richmond and the commencement speaker at Meredith College in Raleigh, N.C., and Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., is the only other Baptist college president doing more than one commencement address.

Politicians also are in great demand for graduation exercises. Two U.S. Senators -- Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and Mark Hatfield of Oregon -- are on Baptist college commencement programs. McConnell will address graduates at Cumberland College in Williamsburg, Ky., while Hatfield speaks to graduates at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee.

Other politicians at commencement exercises include members of the the U.S. House of Representatives and present and former state governors.

Religious personalities are also popular. At least four pastors are slated to give commencement addresses, including Charles G. Fuller, First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., and president of the Southern Baptist Peace Committee, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.; Ed Young, Second Baptist Church in Houston, Hannibal-LaGrange College in Hannibal, Mo.; James Kennedy, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, Mo.; and Tim Wilson, First Baptist Church, Texarkana, Texas, East Texas Baptist University, Marshall.

Five state convention executive directors are giving commencement addresses: William G. Tanner of Oklahoma, Mississippi College in Clinton; Don Wideman of Missouri, Missouri Baptist College in St. Louis; Ray P. Rust of South Carolina, Baptist Bible Institute in Graceville, Fla.; and Reginald McDonough of Virginia, Bluefield College in Bluefield, Va.; and Don Moore of Arkansas, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark.

Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Education Commission, is the only SBC agency head delivering a commencement address at Campbellsville College in Campbellsville, Ky.

And lest one assume all commencement speakers are men, six schools enlisted women to deliver graduation messages. Among the most notable women speakers are June Scobee, an educator from Houston, and wife of the late space shuttle Challenger pilot Dick Scobee, Baptist College at Charleston in Charleston, S.C.; Betty Siegel, president of Kennesaw College in Marietta, Ga., Belmont College in Nashville; and Jean Galloway Bissell, judge of U.S. Court of Appeals, Washington, Furman University in Greenville, S.C.

And yes, colleges do invite speakers who are not educators, politicians or religious figures. Eugene Methvin, senior editor of Reader's Digest, will address graduates at Shorter College in Rome, Ga.

So there is diversity among commencement speakers. And while they undoubtedly will deliver strong inspiring messages, one thing is certain. Most of the nearly 15,000 1987 graduates probably will forget who their commencement speaker was.

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Gaddy Offers Suggestions
On Coping With Stress

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KONA, Hawaii (BP)—Welton Gaddy, suggested nine ways to cope with stress "when life comes tumbling in and seems to be out of control" during the annual meeting of Southern Baptist state directors of mission ministries.

Gaddy, senior minister to Mercer University in Macon, Ga., and Floyd A. Craig, president of Craig and Associates in Raleigh, N.C., were major speakers during the meeting, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Both Gaddy and Craig are former staff members of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission in Nashville.

Thousands of people constantly are trying to cope with such problems as stress, depression, withdrawal, paranoia and/or frustration, said Gaddy.

These feelings often are brought on by family problems, forced termination from a job, identity confusion, betrayal by a friend, eruption of doubt and loss of a relationship by death, divorce or other means, he said.

Craig, former ombudsman for the governor of North Carolina, described the personal trauma faced by state employees when a new governor took office and what is happening to many employees in American business with the rise of megamergers and hostile and friendly takeovers.

Almost every family in America is affected in some way by these megamergers in business, Craig said. The major reason for such corporate takeovers seems to be "the pursuit of more money for a select few and the accumulation of power," he added, noting these corporate takeovers are "costly and destructive" in terms of human pain and readjustment.

Gaddy, former pastor of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, offered suggestions on coping with such problems in life:

-- Be honest about the situation. "Neither cock-eyed optimism, blind escapism or 'chicken-little' negativism is an appropriate response to a crisis. We can deal with the situation most effectively when we look at it honestly."

-- Get plenty of rest. "Unfortunately, a preoccupation with action seems to prolong some problems rather than to solve them. Heightened activity can result in increased stress and deepened depression, both of which create incredible fatigue. ... If we can deal with what is inside us, we can deal with what is around us. We need to be at our best when dealing with the worst."

-- Reach out to friends. "The temptation to withdraw into a shell, to repress all concerns inside oneself, may be strong. For goodness sake, reject it. A time of crisis is a time for friends. ... Among friends, we unload. We unwind. We share our burdens. We find forgiveness. We laugh and cry. We are church."

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-- Fight cynicism. "When trust breaks down, cynicism breaks out. Resist cynicism tenaciously, courageously. It leads to no good end."

-- Keep a sense of humor. "Humor, like faith, enables us to cope with incompatibilities. In fact, humor and laughter build faith."

-- Pray. "In the midst of a crisis, one may not feel like praying -- especially if the crisis is religion-related. It does not make sense to refrain from prayer because God does not seem near. God would seem near if only we would pray."

-- Channel anger, but don't repress or deny it. "Anger means you care. You must deal with anger. Declare your anger in such a manner as to affirm hope."

-- Renew dreams. "We all must have our dreams. Disillusionment and disappointment breed disorientation. The only value to be affirmed in such a situation is the opportunity to start over, to dream again."

-- Exercise faith. "Real faith is one's foundation or support. It is not a blind leap in the dark. Rather, faith is a way of facing the future based on lessons learned from revelatory events in history -- exodus, resurrection and the like.

"Now, one thing more," Gaddy concluded. "It is unlikely that the problem situation will be solved suddenly and everything will be alright completely. Personally, you probably will make progress one day and regress another. But you can keep moving and you can keep coping."

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University Of Richmond To Receive
\$20 Million Gift For New Program

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5/13/87

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The University of Richmond will receive a gift of \$20 million to establish a center for leadership studies.

University President Samuel A. Banks announced the gift, the second-largest in the school's history, at a news conference May 10 just prior to commencement ceremonies.

The total gift will be presented in two stages. Mr. and Mrs. Roger S. Jepson Jr. of Elmhurst, Ill., will provide \$5 million this summer to go toward construction of a 65,000-square-foot building to house the proposed leadership studies center.

The Jepsons and an anonymous donor will provide an additional \$15 million when the studies program has been created and implemented.

Jepson, a University of Richmond graduate, is chairman and chief executive officer of the Jepson Corp., which owns several companies, including Emerson Quiet Kool Corp. and Gerry Sportswear Corp.

The leadership studies program is the only one of its kind on a college campus, Banks said. It will provide the "connective tissue" to help students see relationships between all their courses and to develop "citizen leaders."

The center will include three "Distinguished Visiting Chairs" for scholars who can bridge the gap from one field to another, and a "speaker's fund" to bring academic leaders to the campus to lecture.

The \$20 million gift ranks next to the E. Claiborne Robins family's \$50 million gift to the university in 1969, at the time the largest gift by living benefactors in American college history.

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CONFERENCE OF SOUTHERN BAPTIST EVANGELISTS
 KEIL AUDITORIUM, ST. LOUIS
 JUNE 17, 1987

- 1:15 Music Evangelists
 2:00 Congregational Song — Dick Barrett, music director of the COSBE, Bremen, Ga.
 2:05 Testimony — Larry Taylor, president of conference of Texas Baptist evangelists, Bandera, Texas
 2:15 Special Music — Gary Bradford, music evangelist, Baytown, Texas
 2:20 Message — Jerry Johnston, evangelist, Overland Park, Kan.
 2:40 Testimony — Randall Miller, evangelist, Euless, Texas
 2:50 Recognitions — Rudy A. Hernandez, president of COSBE and evangelist, San Antonio, Texas
 3:00 Special Music — Claude Rhea, president of Palm Beach Atlantic College, West Palm Beach, Fla.
 3:05 Message — Lewis A. Drummond, Billy Graham professor of evangelism, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.
 3:30 Congregational Song — Dick Barrett
 3:35 Offertory — Choir — Ted Moody, director and pastor of Central Baptist Church, Warner-Robbins, Ga.
 Solo — Miss J.J. Turner, soloist, Carrollton, Ga.
 3:45 Testimony — Howard Baldwin, media evangelism, Richmond, Va.
 3:55 Recognitions — Adrian Rogers, president of SBC and pastor, Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.; Rudy Hernandez
 4:05 Special Music — John McKay, music evangelist, Fort Worth, Texas
 4:10 Message — Bailey Smith, evangelist, Del City, Okla.
 4:40 Dedication of New Officers
 Benediction in Praise

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Evangelists' Meeting
 To 'Stir Up The Fires'

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 5/13/87

ST. LOUIS (BP)--The Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists aims to "stir up the fires of evangelism in the Southern Baptist Convention" when they meet June 17 in Keil Auditorium.

The conference, composed of about 300 persons involved in full-time vocational evangelism, meets during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. The conference generally meets from 1:15 to 5 p.m. Wednesday. This year, the SBC will meet June 16-18 in Cervantes Convention Center in St. Louis. Wednesday afternoon is an open time in the SBC program.

Rudy Hernandez of San Antonio, Texas, president of the COSBE, said the conference will meet five times during the annual meeting of the SBC. In addition to the conference Wednesday afternoon, the group will have a business session and banquet at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, and "Afterglow" sessions at 9:30 p.m. on both Tuesday and Wednesday.

With the exception of the conference in Keil Auditorium, all of the other sessions will be held in the Ballroom at the Sheraton Hotel adjacent to the Cervantes Convention Center.

"Each year the state conventions have evangelism conferences in January. This conference is an evangelism conference in a national setting, held each year with the SBC," Hernandez said.

"We do not have a theme and do not give our speakers a topic to speak about," he said. "We want them to do whatever the Lord leads them to do," he added.

This year, the Wednesday conference session will feature preaching, testimonies and music from vocational evangelists as well as the presentation of special recognition to four men who have been in vocational evangelism for more than 25 years.

To be honored are Billy Graham and Cliff Barrows, both from Montreat, N.C.; Leonard Sanderson of Pineville, La.; and Melvin Wise of Atlanta.

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Main messages will be delivered by former SBC President Bailey E. Smith, now a vocational evangelist from Del City, Okla.; Lewis A. Drummond, the Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; and Jerry Johnston, of Overland Park, Kan., an evangelist who speaks to high school audiences and has written a book on teen suicides.

Evangelists who will give their testimony include Larry Taylor from Bandera, Texas, president of the Conference of Texas Baptist Evangelists; Randall Miller, a black evangelist from Euless, Texas; and Howard Baldwin, from Richmond, Va., who also produced special Sunday school lessons on television.

Musicians include Gary Bradford from Baytown, Texas, who is physically handicapped; Claude Rhea, president of Palm Beach Atlantic College, West Palm Beach, Fla.; J.J. Turner, a 15-year-old soloist from Carrollton, Ga.; and John McKay, a music evangelist from Fort Worth, Texas, and music leader for the 1987 annual meeting of the SBC. Also to be present is Adrian Rogers, president of the SBC and pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis, Tenn., who will bring greetings.

A special event during the Wednesday conference will be a 60-voice choir made up entirely of full-time evangelists and directed by Ted Moody, COSBE pastor-advisor and pastor of Central Baptist Church in Warner-Robbins, Ga.

Officers of the COSBE include Hernandez; Henry Linginfelter of Alcoa, Tenn., vice president; Jackson Cox of Milledgeville, Ga., secretary-treasurer; Dick Barrett of Bremen, Ga., music director; Jerry Swimmer of Iuka, Miss., assistant music director; Bob Kendig of Memphis, Tenn., parliamentarian; and Tom McEachin, liaison with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Atlanta.

Hernandez said the evangelists also will have a booth in the exhibit area of Cervantes Convention Center. The Wednesday afternoon session is open to all who wish to attend. He added tickets will be required but will be available from all members of the COSBE or at the group's booth. There is space for about 3,500 persons in the Keil Auditorium, he said.