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Baptist College Tuition
Continues Upward Rise

By Lonnie Wilkey

NASHVILLE (BP)--As Baptist colleges make final plans for the 1987 fall semester, parents of college students will have to dig a bit deeper into their wallets for tuition and fees.

According to figures released by the College Board in New York and published by the Chronicle of Higher Education, average tuition at four-year private schools will rise 8 percent, to \$7,110.

The news is better at Baptist colleges and universities. While the average percentage increase is the same, the dollar amount is lower at most Baptist schools. Only three schools exceed the \$7,110 average.

Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Ark., is the lowest-priced senior college, with tuition and fees of \$2,494, a 4.9 percent increase over 1986-87. Other institutions with tuition less than \$3,000 include Brewton-Parker College in Mt. Vernon, Ga., \$2,550; and Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain, Miss., \$2,784.

A year's tuition and fees at the University of Richmond (Va.) will be \$8,335, the most expensive of any Southern Baptist school. Next in line are Furman University, Greenville, S.C., \$7,314; and Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C., \$7,250.

Three Baptist colleges held the line on tuition and fees with no increase: Truett McConnell College, a two-year school in Cleveland, Ga.; William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Miss.; and Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas.

Averett College in Danville, Va., reported the largest percentage increase, 18.3, with tuition and fees of \$5,500.

Figures released by the College Board include only tuition and fees. Room and board are not included.

Tuition increases were increasing much more rapidly earlier this decade, but are now stabilizing at a more modest level, observed Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Education Commission.

Walker noted several reasons colleges have to increase tuition costs: The costs of college insurance and equipment have jumped two to three times the rate of inflation since 1974. Also, some major costs are rising quickly to make up for past inflation, including salaries, which are 10 percent below their 1976 levels.

The higher costs for private institutions are misleading, Walker said. There is little difference between the cost of education at private and public colleges, he noted: "Students at public institutions, regardless of financial need, receive a subsidy from state taxpayers that keeps tuition low. The cost of education is the same at an independent college, or even lower in some states."

Baptist college administrators are doing a good job in keeping costs affordable for their Baptist constituencies, he said.

Tuition costs and percentage increase at Baptist colleges are:

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Alabama -- Judson College, Marion, \$3,620, 11.2; Mobile College, Mobile, \$3,750, 14.2; Samford University, Birmingham, \$4,576, 5.9.

Arizona -- Grand Canyon College, Phoenix, \$3,360, 8.9.

Arkansas -- Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, \$3,700, 7.2; Southern Baptist College, Walnut Ridge, \$2,494, 4.9.

California -- California Baptist College, Riverside, \$4,844, 8.0.

Florida -- Palm Beach Atlantic College, West Palm Beach, \$4,800, 10.3; Stetson University, DeLand, \$7,010, 10.4.

Georgia -- Brewton-Parker College, Mt. Vernon, \$2,550, 5.6; Mercer University, Macon, \$6,282, 5.3; Shorter College, Rome, \$4,340, 7.7; Truett-McConnell College, Cleveland, \$3,060, 0.

Kentucky -- Campbellsville College, Campbellsville, \$3,750, 7.1; Cumberland College, Williamsburg, \$3,480, 6.1; Georgetown College, Georgetown, \$4,546, 6.7.

Louisiana -- Louisiana College, Pineville, \$3,035, 10.6.

Mississippi -- Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain, \$2,784, 5.9; Mississippi College, Clinton, \$3,850, 7.1; William Carey College, Hattiesburg, \$3,070, 0.

Missouri -- Hannibal-LaGrange College, Hannibal, \$3,800, 6.4; Missouri Baptist College, St. Louis, \$4,200, 10.5; Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, \$4,340, 6.7; William Jewell College, Liberty, \$5,530, 11.9.

North Carolina -- Campbell University, Buies Creek, \$5,636, 8.3; Chowan College, Murfreesboro, \$3,650, 7.3; Gardner-Webb College, Boiling Springs, \$4,930, 8.8; Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, \$4,840, 7.8; Meredith College, Raleigh, \$4,350, 3.6; Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, \$7,250, 9.8; Wingate College, Wingate, \$3,870, 5.4.

Oklahoma -- Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, \$3,356, 5.9.

South Carolina -- Anderson College, Anderson, \$4,320, 11.3; Baptist College at Charleston, Charleston, \$5,290, 8.1; Furman University, Greenville, \$7,314, 9.9; North Greenville College, Tigerville, \$4,000, 14.3.

Tennessee -- Belmont College, Nashville, \$3,750, 11.9; Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, \$4,780, 10.6; Union University, Jackson, \$3,240, 6.2.

Texas -- Baylor University, Waco, \$4,490, 13.1; Dallas Baptist University, Dallas, \$4,330, 0.7; East Texas Baptist University, Marshall, \$3,420, 3.6; Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, \$4,086, 6.7; Houston Baptist University, Houston, \$3,804, 4.1; Howard Payne University, Brownwood, \$3,215, 2.4; University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Belton, \$3,450, 1.5; Wayland Baptist University, Plainview, \$3,188, 0.

Virginia -- Averett College, Danville, \$5,500, 18.3; Bluefield College, Bluefield, \$3,880, 12.1; University of Richmond, Richmond, \$8,335, 8.6; Virginia Intermont College, Bristol, \$4,925, 12.6.

Methodist Editor Takes
Southern Baptists To Task

By Diane Winston

DALLAS (BP)--The nation's largest Methodist weekly newspaper, in an unusual criticism of another denomination, labeled as "disturbing" and "regretable" a Southern Baptist policy that requires its employees to profess that the Bible is true in all areas.

"Pragmatically, adopting a policy that attempts to dictate the beliefs of others is more likely to polarize and increase disunity among Southern Baptists than to produce the sought-after conformity," said the editorial in the Aug. 28 edition of The United Methodist Reporter.

"Theologically, Protestant Christians long have emphasized that one's conscience should be regarded as inviolable," it said.

The editorial appeared both in the United Methodist Reporter, a 475,000 circulation weekly publication and in its non-denominational weekly, the United Christian Reporter, which has about 25,000 circulation.

Some Texas Baptists were surprised and upset by the comments, which were directed at the policy of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. The Atlanta-based board oversees missions and evangelism efforts in all 50 states. It has about 365 employees at its Atlanta offices and more than 3,600 domestic missionaries.

"I kind of resent people taking us to task on this when we know what our own internal business is," said Rudy Hernandez, a San Antonio pastor who is a member of the Home Mission Board. "If I believed like my sweet Methodist brothers, I'd be a Methodist."

The employment policy, adopted earlier this summer by the Home Mission Board, requires all future staff members to profess that the Bible is historically, theologically, scientifically and philosophically true. That perspective reflects conservative views within the 14.6-million-member convention.

Spurgeon Dunnam III, editor of the Reporter, said the editorial was meant to elucidate differences between Baptists and Methodists. Dunnam wrote the editorial with associate editor Stephen Swecker.

"This kind of issue has an educational function," Dunnam said. "This points out how our tradition is different. It's narrowness vs. broadness."

The editorial also lambasted biblical infallibility, the idea that the Bible is correct in all areas, saying, "We should challenge them to explain their doctrinaire belief in biblical infallibility when the Bible makes no such claim for itself."

But Elton (Butch) Ikels, another San Antonio pastor who sits on the Home Mission Board, said that people who don't believe in a literal hell and heaven, the Genesis account of creation and Jesus' resurrection shouldn't be called Baptists.

"These are some very elementary basic beliefs," Ikels said. "If we don't have these things in common, maybe we are two separate denominations."

Ikels also said if the Methodists took a strong stand on the Bible, their numbers might not be decreasing. Membership in the United Methodist Church has been declining for several years; Southern Baptists have had slight growth.

"We don't look to people outside our denomination for advice on how to do things," Ikels said. "And we certainly don't look to people whose numbers are dwindling."

Dunnam said his denomination does have its problems. In addition to declining membership, Methodists have been plagued by controversies this summer including a Houston bishop who died of AIDS, two cases of self-avowed homosexual ministers, the SMU pay-for-play football scandal and the mystery surrounding the choking attack on the wife of Walker Railey of Dallas.

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"We've got our problems, that's right," Dunnam said. "But the function of an editorial is to make a point, and this editorial makes one or two points that need to be made."

Some Baptists agree.

"I think they assessed the situation accurately, and I concur," said Lawanna McIver, a member of the Home Mission Board from Dallas. "The direction that Southern Baptists have taken in recent years has been to move more toward the right, but the fundamentalists don't care what Methodists think."

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(Diane Winston is religion editor of the Dallas Times Herald)

Memphis Church Calls
Woman Senior Pastor

Baptist Press
8/27/87

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Prescott Memorial Baptist Church, a 235-member dually-aligned congregation, has called Nancy Hastings Sehested of Decatur, Ga., as senior pastor.

Sehested, 36, is believed to be the only woman to be pastor of a congregation affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, only one of four women to be senior pastor of Southern Baptist Convention-affiliated churches and one of only 11 to be either pastor or co-pastor of an SBC-affiliated congregation. There are an estimated 450 ordained women ministers, however, in the SBC.

She was called -- receiving an 83 percent favorable vote -- during a special business session of the church Aug. 23, and will begin her duties Nov. 1.

Prescott Memorial Baptist Church is dually aligned with the SBC and with the American Baptist Churches in the USA (ABC). It is believed to be the only congregation to be dually aligned with the two conventions in Tennessee.

Sehested, a native of Texas, has been associate pastor of Oakhurst Baptist Church, an SBC congregation in Decatur, Ga. She attended Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and graduated from City College of New York in 1974. She also is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

She is the daughter and granddaughter of Southern Baptist ministers. Her father, C. Brownlow Hastings, was for many years a staff member of the interfaith witness department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, specializing in Baptist-Catholic dialogue.

Her husband, Kenneth, also an ordained Southern Baptist minister, is executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, an inter-Baptist peace and justice network. They have two children, Jessica, 11, and Alayna, 7.

Following her election as pastor, Sehested told the Memphis Commercial Appeal she doubts the church's overwhelming call will be mirrored by Memphis Southern Baptists at large.

"I suppose there will be pockets of support -- but probably not an overwhelming reception. The best support I can have is with this community of faith at Prescott and that's what I'm looking forward to," she said.

She also told the newspaper recent actions of the SBC -- including a resolution opposing women as pastors adopted in 1984 and the SBC Peace Committee report in 1987 -- has discouraged aspiring women clergy and the moderate Baptists who support them.

"Women are finding it more and more difficult to find positions in SBC agencies, in churches, on campuses. These aren't easy times for women," she said.

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(Information for this story was provided, in part, by Penni Crabtree, religion writer for the Memphis Commercial Appeal.)

Southern Baptists Participating
In Vietnamese Bible Translation

By Joe Westbury

MIDLAND, Texas (BP)--A joint translation effort between Southern Baptists and seven denominations will produce the world's first Bible in the national Vietnamese language.

Leon Taylor, layman at First Baptist Church of Midland, Texas, said the translation will be the first Vietnamese Bible to be translated from the original languages of Greek and Hebrew. The ethnic group's only existing Bible is a 1916 translation from Chinese into a regional Vietnamese dialect.

"The current version is comparable to translating our King James Version into the Vietnamese language. You simply lose too much in translation," Taylor said.

The seven-year, \$800,000 project is expected to produce the Gospel of John by early 1988, while the New Testament is to be published by the summer of 1990. The entire Bible is targeted for a late 1994 publication date, he reported.

Southern Baptists serving on the 12-member board are Thang Nguyen, national ethnic missionary with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta; Daniel Dao Tran, pastor of Vietnamese Garland Baptist Church, Garland, Texas; Zelma Parsons, Vietnamese Bible teacher at Sherwood Baptist Church, Odessa, Texas; and Taylor.

"The existing translation uses a language that is unintelligible to most Vietnamese," explained Taylor, who has been named president of the Vietnamese Bible Corporation. "The original translator, a non-Christian, utilized a regional dialect and local idioms, many that are no longer used. Our goal is to produce an inexpensive, contemporary and accurate translation on the sixth-grade reading level that will be understandable to Vietnamese around the world."

The missionary effort of various Christian denominations in Vietnam, led by the Christian and Missionary Alliance, has produced numerous seminary-trained leaders who will aid in the project. "The translation must be attempted now by those leaders who fled Vietnam before they are too far removed from their language and cultural context," Taylor noted.

The translation team is composed of seven Vietnamese pastors and scholars from various Christian denominations, including members of Southern Baptist churches. Wycliffe Bible translators who served in the country are acting as technical advisers and trainers, and the United Bible Societies is providing a consultant.

The translation will benefit the 1.5 million refugees scattered around the free world and 60 million people still living in Vietnam. About 190,000 of the refugees reside in the United States and Canada, said Oscar Romo, director of the Home Mission Board language missions division.