

# BULLETIN

## SEMINARY EXTENSION

### DEPARTMENT

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#### THE TREND IN CHURCHES

Nearly three years ago, I made a trip to California, Washington, and Oregon. On that trip I saw a preacher from Georgia who had decided that there was no place for him in Georgia and so he was on his way to get a job in San Francisco. After conversing with him I discovered that in the county where he was pastor there was such a trend toward seminary and college trained preachers that he was left "holding the bag," so to speak. Within a period of three or four years he had seen all the available churches call better educated men. Not too long after this I was in Chicago, discussing with the leaders there some of the problems relative to our program and discovered that there were quite a number of preachers from the south who had moved into the Chicago area and had secured secular jobs. The reason they gave for leaving the south was the same: They had been displaced by well trained men. I discovered the same situations in Detroit, Columbus, and other places. We have found this condition also in southern cities. This process has been going on for many years.

This is a trend which must not be over-looked. Churches are demanding trained men. The reason for this, it seems to me, is altogether understandable. There is a general trend toward higher education. Columbia University made surveys a few months ago and discovered that the educational level for people fifty years and over was the seventh grade. The average level of education for those twenty-six to thirty is high school, and the present trend is toward the junior college as the terminal point of education. Whereas one in four attended college a few years ago, now four

out of five high school graduates go to college. This survey was made in some particular area, but it was quoted by Dr. Bruner of Columbia quite recently.

If one should analyze these facts, he would understand why my friend left Georgia and went to the west coast and why others went to Chicago, Cincinnati, Birmingham, Atlanta, and other cities seeking profitable employment. The educational level of people is rising, and no more can a man of inferior education pose as the leader in his community. In one church a group of youngsters demanded of the leaders that a man of more education be secured as pastor.

What is to be the answer to this situation? Will we come to a day when in Southern Baptist life one without seminary and college training can find no place of service? Will we come to the day in which the terminal point of ministerial education will be the B.D.? Will we come to the place where churches think no one can speak for God except those who have had adequate training? Some one will say "yes" to each of these questions, but I don't think so. In the first place, it is not true that God can speak only through a trained man, and it is not true that God speaks only to trained men. It is true that a trained man has a better chance of leading the people of God. If one expects to continue to work for God, he must have sufficient training to meet the demands. In the next place, one without an education can get an education. Actually, the value of an education does not consist so much of the accumulated data which one acquires as acquaintance with important information. If one would be a well-trained

preacher, he must begin where he is. God called him at the level of education he now has, but God does not expect him to remain at this level. Beginning with whatever liberal education he has, the preacher should do three things: (1) He should initiate a well-disciplined type of study in academic subjects. (2) He should set up a study of the Bible in all of its contextual relationships that will lead him to become an authority to his congregation. (3) He should initiate a program of evaluation that will help him to determine what he needs to study next and seek to do it.

For just such a project and program as this, the Seminary Extension Department was set up. Realizing that we will never be able to come to the day in which all preachers have college and seminary education and not desirous necessarily that such a condition be attained, Southern Baptists set up this Department to help men who have been called of God late in life.

The extension center program is projected by colleges separately, by the Seminary Extension Department separately, and by colleges and the Seminary Extension Department jointly. Our programs have been designed with the preacher and Christian worker in mind who need the kind of help that this article suggests. Of course, we cannot guarantee an individual that he will get all the training he needs through our departments. But we can guarantee that a preacher who initiates our program of study and diligently follows it will be a growing preacher and will be able to develop to an increasing usefulness.

We have in our files letters from men who were "inactive" four or five years, that is to say that no church had called them. Now they are wanted. They have fresh information and new insights and have something of value to offer churches.

Another factor that should be taken into consideration is that the whole scope of adult life is now undergoing vast changes. Some changes are taking place within our society so quickly that adults have to study. People are no longer satisfied to be in

ignorance. Thus those who are above fifty with their seventh grade education are attending night classes to learn, to understand, and grow. The preacher who would be a leader must not only keep up, but he must step ahead of his congregation in education and learning.

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Our first Certificate in Religious Education has been awarded to Miss Evelyn Allen of Pocatello, Idaho. This was completed in a period of three years. Our congratulations to Miss Allen and we send our best wishes to her as she endeavors to use this in dedicated service.

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The largest Seminary Extension Center operating this term is the St. Louis, Missouri Center. This is under the direction of Dr. Home Delozier, Superintendent of the St. Louis Baptist Mission Board, and Miss Georgia Elwell, Registrar-Treasurer. They have 148 enrolled in 203 courses. This is a new center. Other new centers operating for the first time this term are: in Kentucky, Hardinsburg, Manchester, Paducah, Pleasant View, and Princeton; in Louisiana, Baton Rouge, Jonesboro, and Lafayette; in Maryland, Baltimore and Bel Air; in Missouri St. Louis and Webb City; in New Mexico, Hobbs for Negroes; in Tennessee, Henning and Memphis; in Texas, Amarillo, Cleburne, and Plainview.

New centers are being contemplated at Moss Point, Mississippi Clearwater, Florida; Shreveport, Louisiana; Daisetta, Texas; and Lexington, North Carolina. These are planning to open soon after the first of the year.

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#### STATISTICAL REPORT

Correspondence students	2,016
Extension Center students	4,373
Total	6,389

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The new Rural Church course by Dr. G. H. Hendricks, Southeastern Seminary, will be ready Jan. 1, 1957. Price \$12.00.