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A STUDY OF FOUR BIBLE COLLEGES
WHICH ARE CANDIDATES FOR ACCREDITATION
WITH THE SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Education
Morehead State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Educational Specialist

by
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Accepted by the faculty of the School of Education. Morehead State University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Educational Specialist degree.

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Morehead State University, 1984

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This study was undertaken to outline various problems that may be encountered by Protestant Evangelical Bible colleges as they apply for accreditation in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The survey was made of four institutions that had achieved candidate status with SACS during the period 1978-1983. Interviews were conducted with these schools, focusing on the difficulties this type of institution might have in achieving membership, and the perceived value of such membership.

Many of the colleges were aware of the accreditation process since they had membership in the American Association of Bible Colleges. In most cases, achieving candidacy in the Southern Association meant more in-depth analysis of certain general education areas, library holdings, financial stability, faculty qualifications, and student services.

Most schools pointed to a degree of difficulty explaining to visitation committee members the exact philosophy and purpose of the Bible colleges. Once this was accomplished, relatively few problems were seen as major impediments. Increased respectability

in the Education community was seen as the most anticipated value of accreditation.

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John R. Duncan, Chairman
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of Accreditation

Accreditation is a concept unique to the United States by which institutions of postsecondary education or professional associations form voluntary, nongovernmental organizations to encourage and assist institutions in the evaluation and improvement of their educational quality and to acknowledge publicly those institutions, or units within institutions, that meet or exceed commonly agreed to minimum expectations of educational quality.

In the process of accreditation, an institution of postsecondary education periodically evaluates its educational activities in whole or in part, and seeks an independent judgment that substantially achieves its own educational objectives and is generally equal in quality to comparable institutions or specialized units. Essential elements of the process are (1) a clear statement of educational objectives, (2) a directed self-study focused on these objectives, (3) an on-site evaluation by a selected group of peers, and (4) a decision by an independent commission that the institution or specialized unit is worthy of accreditation.

There are six regional accrediting associations in the United States including the Southern Association of Colleges and

Schools (SACS). The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools had its origin in a resolution developed by the faculty of Vanderbilt University. Later, six southern schools held a meeting in Atlanta on November 6, 1895, and gave birth to the association.

For the accrediting of institutions, the Southern Association has four commissions. The Commission on Secondary Schools began operating in 1912. The Commission on Colleges was formed in 1919. The Commission on Elementary Schools began work in 1965, and in 1971, a Commission on Occupational Education Institutions was formed (Proceedings of, 1978).

The Southern Association was organized exclusively for educational purposes, and its objective is to improve education in the South through the exercise of leadership and through the promotion of cooperation among colleges, schools, and related agencies. The geographical territory of the Association consists of the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Latin America (Proceedings of, 1983).

The Association is governed by a Board of Trustees elected from the member institutions. The Board elects a President and President-elect to serve one year. An annual meeting of the membership is held, with the Board of Trustees meeting once before the annual meeting and once afterward. A paid administrative staff led by the Executive Director serves the Association and each of the Commissions.

The Commission on Colleges consists of sixty-six individuals from member institutions who conduct the investigations and visits, and take final action on the accreditation of collegiate institutions.

In recent years, the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has broadened its membership base to include many specialized single purpose institutions such as the Bible college.

History of the Bible College

The growth of the Bible College or Institute in the United States has come out of a heavy emphasis on religious education that lay at the very core of the growth of higher education in its formative years. The following excerpt from the announcement concerning the opening of Kings College (later Columbia University) in 1754 will illustrate this emphasis upon religious ideals in the education process:

The chief thing that is aimed at in this college is to teach and engage children to know God in Jesus Christ, and to love and serve Him in all Sobriety, Godliness, and Richness of life, with a perfect heart and a willing mind (Cubberly, 1948, p. 703).

Frederick Rudolph in his History of the American College and University points out that several colonial colleges had a very definite committment to the ideals of religion. He said of Yale, "[Its] purpose was the pursuit of denominational survival in an environment of diversity" (p. 19). He pointed out that Princeton

"was of the great religious awakening of the eighteenth century" (p. 19). Harvard and William and Mary even went so far as to include the training of clergy as a part of their basic purpose. Rudolph, in quoting Samuel Eliot Morison on the founding of Harvard College, said:

The two cardinal principles of English Puritanism which most profoundly affected the social development of New England and the United States was not religious tenets, but educational ideas: a learned clergy, and a lettered people" (p. 21).

Certainly the Bible college movement in our country could be said to be founded on religious tenets, but they also share the ideal of the Harvard founders that a "learned clergy" and a "lettered people" are very important to the being of society. This is perhaps even more observable in the statement of purpose for the founding of William and Mary College. Rudolph says that one of the main goals was to provide a supply of clergymen and to insure that the youth were piously educated in good letters and manners.

From 1820-1870, about 500 colleges were formed, but only 300 survived. The great majority of these were Protestant Evangelical institutions (Witmer, 1962).

From 1870-1920, there have been three developments that have served to alter the direction of higher education in the United States. First, there has been the development of tax-supported education which must be separated from church relationships

according to the Constitution and the courts. Second, there has been the great expansion of Catholic higher education. By 1870 there were 38 Catholic higher education institutions. Since 1870 there have been over 200 formed (Witmer, 1962). Third, has been the increasing secularization of higher education.

The Bible college movement of the past century has come about as an answer to what Christian educators feel is a definite need in attempting to recreate an atmosphere of learning in which the ideals of religious thought are emphasized in the education process.

As Witmer has stated:

(Bible Colleges). . .represent a pietistic reaction to secularism, a resurgence of spiritual dynamics in Protestantism, a restoration of Biblical authority and direction in education, and a return to the central concern of Christian education. . .the implementation of Christ's Great Commission: "Go ye into all the world. . ." (Witmer, 1962, p. 30).

The two original Bible colleges were Nyack Missionary College founded in 1882, and Moody Bible Institute founded in 1886. These colleges were influenced to a great extent by similar institutions in Europe, especially the East London Institute founded by H.G. Guinness. The greatest period of growth for Bible colleges in the United States was between 1931 and 1960. During that time, seventy-three percent of the existing Bible colleges and institutes were established (Witmer, 1962).

The Bible colleges were definitely affected by some important trends in education during that thirty-year time frame. There was

a growing emphasis on education in all its aspects during that period. Liberal arts instruction and vocational education were being recognized as important ingredients to a successful and meaningful life. More attention was being devoted to education for women and to continuing education opportunities for adults. The leaders behind the Bible college movement recognized these trends and began to provide institutions that would attempt to meet these growing demands within the framework of a Christian oriented, Bible-based curriculum. Most of the early Bible colleges were established with the desire to train men to be preachers. The curriculum was basically confined to a study of the Bible, its related languages, Doctrine, and speech. But over the years, Christian educators began to see the need for upgrading the academic offerings in the Bible colleges. There have been several factors underlying this trend. The first would be the general rise in the level of education in the country as a whole. More and more people were becoming increasingly well educated in a broad number of fields. The need for Christian ministers and church workers to be given a comparable education became obvious. This would lead naturally into a desire to improve the quality of education being offered to prepare men for the ministry. Another factor was the growth of specialized fields of church related vocations such as Christian teachers, youth leaders, social workers, missionaries, etc. This specialization of labor demanded widening areas of study within the offerings of the Bible college.

Finally, the high school graduates were becoming more and more degree conscious. This forced many Bible colleges and institutes to upgrade their faculty and curriculum and to begin offering baccalaureate degrees.

This emphasis on upgrading the academic standards of the Bible colleges led to the establishment of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) in 1947. The idea was first advanced in 1918 by Moody Bible Institute, but was given up as impractical at that time. By 1946, it became obvious that other accrediting agencies were not ready to help and encourage the Bible colleges in the upgrading of their programs. At their Minneapolis meeting in 1946, the members of the National Association of Evangelicals voted to begin an accrediting association which would emphasize sound standards, yet be oriented toward the needs of Bible college education. In October 1947, the Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Colleges was established at Winona Lake, Indiana, with Samuel Southerland as its first president. The AABC was soon recognized by the United States Office of Education as the official accrediting agency for undergraduate theological education.

Purpose and Objectives

There have been several Bible colleges who in recent years have sought to advance the quality of their programs even beyond the standards of the AABC and to seek accreditation with the

regional associations that accredit secular colleges and universities. The rationale behind this desire is not to depart from their historical background or their single purpose design, but to allow the academic world to see that high standards of education can be achieved while still remaining true to their heritage and their special purpose for existence.

This study will attempt to examine four of these colleges that have achieved candidacy for accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in the past five years.

Eight colleges have actually achieved candidacy in the past five years, with four of those now having received full accreditation. These four are Johnson Bible College, Knoxville, TN; Gulf Coast Bible College, Houston, TX; Bible Baptist Institute, Graceville, FL; and Columbia Bible College, Columbia, SC. This study will be limited to those schools still listed as candidates: Kentucky Christian College, Grayson, KY; Toccoa Falls College, Toccoa Falls, GA; Clearwater Christian College, Clearwater, FL; and Miami Christian College, Miami, FL.

The project will strive to provide an understanding into the nature of the problems associated with application for accreditation, the achievement of candidacy, and the value of seeking such regional accreditation for the Bible college. This instrument may provide future reference for those same types of colleges seeking accreditation with regional associations. It will also aid the

writer in the pursuit of an educational career within the Bible college movement.

Specifically, the objectives will be to find out the major problems encountered by these four Bible colleges in the areas of administration, finances and planning, faculty and curriculum, library, student services, and facilities.

The author will discuss how these problems were met, what changes are taking place within these institutions, and what areas of change were emphasized by the Southern Association.

A further objective will be to determine the actual value of seeking accreditation and what, if any, value could be seen in achieving candidacy.

Review of Literature

In undertaking the project, the author examined the "Handbook on Accreditation" published by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, as well as the latest published Proceedings of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1983 to obtain information regarding accreditation requirements, methods, and member schools.

An examination of the past ten years of doctoral dissertations on the subject of Bible colleges and accreditation revealed very little published research. In 1982, Dr. Herbert Cocking of the University of Michigan wrote regarding Bible college accreditation and the North Central Association for the decade of the 1970's,

focusing on why Ft. Wayne Bible College was rejected admission in 1969, while St. Paul Bible College was accepted ten years later. His conclusions coincide with the current trend in the Southern Association. Regional accrediting associations are focusing more on the college's mission and the outcome, with no pressure to change the mission of the school, as had been the case when Bible colleges were rejected admission a decade ago. Cocking concluded that more and more Bible colleges will seek and receive regional accreditation because of the less stringent general education requirements for vocational type institutions.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

This study examined Protestant undergraduate (Level II) Bible colleges (for the purpose of this study, a Bible college is defined as an evangelical protestant undergraduate institution of higher learning that designates itself a Bible college by its own publications and requires all students to have a major of thirty hours of Bible study. Level II is a designation of the Accrediting Association indicating an institution offering no degree higher than a bachelors degree.) that have achieved candidacy by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in the past five years (1978-1983). The four colleges that currently hold candidate status are 1. Kentucky Christian College, Grayson, KY 41143; 2. Clearwater Christian College, 3400 Gulf to Bay Blvd., Clearwater, FL 33519; 3. Miami Christian College, 2300 NW 135th St., Miami, FL 33167; and 4. Toccoa Falls Bible College, Toccoa Falls, GA 30598.

Interviews were conducted with personnel at these colleges and additional information was gathered from publications of the colleges. The interview guide is included as Appendix A. The interview with Kentucky Christian College and Toccoa Falls College were conducted in person, and the interviews with Miami Christian College and Clearwater Christian College were conducted by phone.

A narrative of each interview will be introduced as a summary of the data. The discussion of those interviews will follow with a brief summation of the problems encountered and the analysis of the value of achieving candidacy.

Chapter 3

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Toccoa Falls College

Toccoa Falls is accredited by the American Association of Bible Colleges, but it was felt by the administration that seeking regional accreditation would enhance the academic standing of the institution. It was felt that even though AABC accreditation was important and very professional, that it did not guarantee academic transfer of credits for their students. Toccoa Falls did not want to face the possibility of having their academic work jeopardized by transfer of credits problems.

During the visits of the committees sent by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, hard questions were asked which produced beneficial results as the college gave serious consideration to finding acceptable answers to them.

At this stage there is no evidence to indicate the candidate status has appreciably affected student enrollment or retention in either a positive or negative fashion.

The main emphasis voiced by the committees concerned future planning. "Looking ahead" was more important than what was on hand at the present time. The committee did help the school by making suggestions that would help set up policies and guidelines

for the physical plant on a more logical basis. The committee was very fair in understanding the existing facilities and the potential for future building.

One point that was especially stressed was the need to increase budget expenditures for instructional equipment such as labs, etc.

The library holdings at the time of the committee visit was approximately 50,000 volumes. Some of these volumes dated back to the time when Toccoa Falls also had a high school associated with the college. As a result of this, it was emphasized that a weeding out process be entered into in an attempt to make the library more reflective of its higher education orientation. There were several specific points toward which action was suggested:

(1) A certain percentage of the budget of the institution should go toward devising a program that would insure continued growth in the library.

(2) It was stressed that equal attention be given to the humanities along with Bible and theology.

(3) It was strongly encouraged that the librarian and all future library personnel be graduated from a school that is associated with the AIA.

(4) Some attention was given to upgrading the reference section of the library.

Toccoa was seriously questioned in the field of endowments.

They were told that they should do more work in this area. Especially emphasized was the need for diversity in raising money for general operation and capital development. Toccoa did not have living endowments (i.e. support of a certain denominational group) but these seemed not to have been a major concern in any of the colleges interviewed. Dr. McCarthy, Dean of Toccoa, did point out that accreditation would mean the ability to gain more grants and funds from government and private sources. Accounting procedures were satisfactory, but the college did make one change of its own in that its comptroller at one time was on the administrative board but no longer holds that position.

There was no pressure in regards to the curriculum, but there were some feelings toward perhaps too much Bible in the teacher's program. The committees were very positive in their attitude toward curriculum. As a result of the study, the college itself moved to increase the core curriculum from 45 to 61 hours. It was suggested that the catalog be kept constantly up-to-date to list any changes in curriculum.

It was felt that the entire process of seeking accreditation helped upgrade the faculty and the credibility of the school's academic program. There was attention given to terminal degrees, but hours in the teaching field and in experience in the field were also looked at carefully. Very little comment was made about teaching loads. It seemed that a fourteen hour average was the

most widely accepted, but there was no really hard line drawn in this area. They were interested in faculty evaluation procedures and seemed satisfied with the system used by the school. This system incorporated evaluations by the students, co-workers, and evaluation of new faculty by department chairmen. Interest was expressed in salary and benefits with encouragement to continue progress in this field. This was one of the few schools where the issue of tenure was explored. It was called "faculty security" and was looked at in some depth. The retirement program was examined, but the committees seemed satisfied although emphasizing the need to constantly upgrade as much as possible.

The committees seemed pleased with the institution's handling of student services. The student senate and student union have input into the administrative board. It was suggested that discipline procedures be somewhat clarified. Areas of perceived value on the part of the school as a result of the process of seeking accreditation are as follows: (1) Reaffirmed the school's purpose and their understanding of their ministry, and (2) Helped greatly in the evaluating and upgrading of the library. No real problems were felt to be present in the process. The committee was helpful and cordial. Stress was put on doing what you say you are doing and doing it well. It did seem to be somewhat frustrating that it took so long to achieve the goal, but the administration could understand this.

Candidacy was applied for in 1980 and was received within a year. The majority of the work in compiling, corresponding, etc., was carried out by the President and Dean of the college, although all personnel were involved in compiling reports.

Kentucky Christian College

Dr. Gary Hall, Academic Dean of Kentucky Christian College, stressed that academic responsibility and the easy transfer of credits to other institutions were the main reasons for seeking accreditation from the SACS. He was very pleased with the committee sent by SACS. None of the educators seemed to have any difficulty in accepting the single purpose concept of the institution and the committee members treated KCC personnel as professional educators. Dr. Hall pointed out that there was no way to tell about how SACS accreditation has affected enrollment, but he did feel that it has made an improvement in retention of students.

The committee was very complimentary in regards to the physical resources of the college. Their main concern lay in the field of future planning. They emphasized the need for a master plan for the next ten years which would be periodically re-examined, updated, and kept on file.

The library received a great amount of attention. The recent purchase of the 50,000 volumes from the Shelby campus of the University of Louisville brought the library holdings to approximately 77,000. The committee was pleased with this but

emphasized the need to begin updating the holdings. Especially emphasized was more material in the educational field. Budgeting was discussed mainly in terms of money being allocated by department or area for increasing holdings in those fields. It was suggested that the librarian teach only one course in addition to his duties as head of the library.

In the area of finances, two suggestions were offered. It was felt that there should be more academic participation in budget preparation. It was also suggested that more money be spent per full-time student. Endowments were not emphasized.

There was no pressure to cut back on the Bible-centered curriculum. The committee initially was concerned that some of the general education courses such as history, literature, etc., might be thinly disguised Bible courses but were very satisfied after having listened to the classes that they were legitimately college level. It was suggested that more courses in college level math be offered.

The main emphasis in faculty related suggestions was that any field in which a major was offered must have a Ph.D. teaching in that area. Anyone who teaches a course in general education must have a Masters degree. The faculty teaching load was examined and accepted. Salaries were examined but no formal suggestions were made other than the need to scrutinize regularly and update when needed. The committee was impressed by the peer and student-faculty

evaluation procedures. A commendation was given for the faculty handbook.

Only one area was addressed specifically under administration and organization. The committee would like to see more input by academics into the administrative process.

Student life received close scrutiny from the committee. It was recommended that student services be reorganized into one office under the Dean of Students. It was suggested that a policy statement be published concerning privacy rights of students. Other areas that were touched on included: (1) Creation of a student government body; (2) Construction of a student union building as soon as financially possible; and (3) Inequities in rules concerning men's and women's dorm hours should be corrected.

There was no issue made of the emphasis of the college on rules that centered around religious and moral convictions.

Dr. Hall felt that the following points were positive accomplishments of the process of seeking accreditation: (1) Upgrading of the library; (2) Evaluation of and upgrading of the faculty; (3) Establishment of a grievance procedure; (4) More academic input into budget planning; and (5) The entire process has provided standards to direct the school towards a more professional educational posture.

In speaking of problems which might be encountered by a Bible college in seeking accreditation, Dr. Hall emphasized the following: (1) An emphasis must be made towards a solid core of general studies;

(2) It is important to make sure that General Education classes are not disguised Bible classes; (3) The library must be adequate; and (4) The faculty must be qualified with at least a Master's degree in their teaching fields.

Dr. Hall emphasized that any freedom that might be lost is more than compensated for in quality.

The committees selected by the SACS were excellent. The members were competent and experienced. They felt their job was to help and make useful recommendations and not to be critical. Application was made to SACS in the Fall of 1981, and candidacy was achieved in 1982. There have been two committee visits. The main work associated with the accreditation process has been handled by the President and the Academic Dean. Much of the initial application materials had been prepared when the reaccreditation procedure was compiled by the committee for the AABC. A copy of the visitation report made by SACS in January 1983 is included in Appendix B.

Miami Christian College

Miami Christian College, located in Miami, Florida, has been a candidate for SACS for six years and must achieve full standing this year or start the process again. They are a member of the American Association of Bible Colleges. Miami is an independent conservative Bible college training men and women for church-related work. Most of the students come from Baptist churches and other

fundamentalist groups. Most support is from individuals with a small amount coming directly from congregations.

President George Pearson felt dual accreditation would be helpful for the students and would present the college with a higher standard of education in the eyes of potential donors and the general public. Some pressure had been placed by foundations to achieve accreditation in order to get support. Student recruitment is also affected because of a lack of knowledge on the part of high school counselors about AABC. SACS is more easily recognized.

When Miami first applied to SACS, it was considering moving to a new area and beginning again with a new campus. Since that time, they have rejected relocation plans and now have plans for development at the present location, but are not making much progress. The library consists of 32,000 volumes and was deficient in areas of general education. They have strengthened the reference, periodical, and education sections.

Financial stability was a high priority of the SACS visitation teams and they definitely wanted Miami to show an established endowment. They have not been really successful at this. Several accounting procedures did not meet SACS standards as well, but these have been changed.

There were not any problems in the Biblical studies areas at MCC, but the administration had to give attention to general

education offerings. Many SACS team members were not comfortable with what they saw as a "tainted" method of presenting general education courses. They were not comfortable with opening classes with prayer and teaching from a Biblical viewpoint in all areas. This depended much on the personality of the evaluator, however.

The faculty was well qualified, but a typical small college problem was evident: there were too many one-person departments. They were offering a major in psychology, for instance, with only one professor. This has been worked on and where it was not possible to add people, course offerings at the local university have been incorporated into the students' program.

The Miami self-study showed them that their faculty evaluation was inadequate, and better methods were found. Faculty input into the administrative process was considered good with an "open-door" policy evident at the small school.

Miami had good student involvement in all areas and the SACS teams seemed most pleased at the active student association and services offered. No complaints about stricter rules were offered. A student sits on every administrative committee at the school. Most faculty committees have students on them.

Future planning was an area most SACS evaluators were interested in, and Miami has developed a five-year plan. Interest in this area has increased because of candidacy. The President and Academic Dean were more involved in the accreditation process and the

development of the future plans than anyone.

Miami officials were concerned about their physical plant and their lack of endowment. They did not expect any problems with the curriculum or their general education classes. There seemed to be inconsistency in the different team visits according to MCC.

Miami hopes to achieve full standing this year, but much is still in doubt. A healthy gift from someone would help.

The application for SACS has caused Miami to make great strides in improving many areas that they would not have done without the self-studies and the SACS process. They saw some problems in getting visitation team members to understand their philosophy. There has been positive reaction from supporters as a result of candidacy. Current enrollment is 320, but many are part-time and extension students. Full-time enrollment is 200. No change in student enrollment has been seen as a result of candidacy. Some supporters and administrators are becoming a little restless because of the long time in candidacy, and full acceptance has not been forthcoming.

Miami officials felt that accreditation was a matter of perception. If your students and supporters were told and perceived that AABC accreditation was enough, then they probably would believe it. If they have the impression that SACS membership is the thing to do, then every Bible college should be encouraged to apply. The process has been a valuable thing to them, although the outcome may be disappointing.

Clearwater Christian College

Clearwater Christian College (CCC), located in Clearwater, Florida, applied for accreditation in 1978 and has been a candidate since that year. The college does not fully meet this research paper's criteria as a Bible college. It does require 20 hours of Biblical studies but does not consider itself a single-purpose institution, but more of a Christian liberal arts college. It is not primarily training ministers and church workers, but offers courses of study in many fields. Enrollment is presently 200.

Clearwater appeared to have some physical plant problems with buildings now at capacity. Emphasis was placed on better laboratory facilities when the SACS committees visited. The library contained 33,000 volumes but now has been increased to 37,000 with a major purchase drive underway. The area of deficiency was in reference and periodicals.

Clearwater is not associated with any particular church denomination but relies on individuals of fundamentalist philosophy. It appears to have more support from Baptist churches. The living endowment of support bothered the SACS evaluators and a firm endowment was emphasized. A deficit in the budget has now been corrected. Several recommendations about accounting procedures were enacted including a purchase order and requisition system through a central purchasing agent.

The team of SACS visitors seemed very tolerant of the Biblical nature of the school. Had they not been, Clearwater officials said

they would have just simply dropped the matter of accreditation, since maintaining the Christian teaching perspective was of upmost importance. The team did not bother the curriculum other than to recommend more science.

The faculty situation is still in the process of being remedied, as SACS suggested that three more Ph.D.'s be added to the staff. Between the first and second SACS committees, CCC revamped their faculty evaluation process to include better student evaluation forms and faculty self-evaluation. CCC has no tenure policy but job security was considered adequate. They looked upon faculty membership as a calling of the Lord.

In the area of administration, clarifications of job descriptions were suggested with clearer areas of responsibility. Faculty input was considered good.

Dean Donald Moore felt the SACS visitors were pleased with their student services and a student serves on the school's planning committee. There is an active Student Government Association. The committee members had no problems with the more conservative rules on campus. Emphasis was made that students be informed in advance of what to expect and then do exactly as stated.

A great deal of emphasis was placed on long-range planning, and CCC began a committee working on this with some outside consultants helping in the matter.

Although still a candidate, Clearwater Christian feels the

whole process was definitely valuable to them and has already felt increased acceptability in the academic community and with the transfer of students. Student enrollment has not significantly changed. Financial giving was up in 1983 and candidacy was seen as an asset.

Clearwater's assessment of their own needs coincided with the SACS teams' to a large extent. They felt a major stumbling block was simply the vast amount of office and paper work required in achieving accreditation. A large office staff and plenty of help was needed. At Clearwater, the Provost took a large role in the process with an Accreditation Committee formed made up of the President and Academic Dean.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION OF DATA AND CONCLUSIONS

The change in attitude over the past few years by regional accreditation associations was evident from the experience of the colleges in this study. All of them reported a cordial atmosphere and willingness to cooperate on the part of the SACS staff and visitation teams. No pressure was applied to change the purpose or mission of the Bible college. Emphasis is being placed on the clearly defined mission and how well that mission is being carried out by the school.

Many schools did, however, report some difficulty in explaining the exact nature of a Bible college and how the philosophy differs from a liberal arts school. Much of this confusion is apparently due to the lack of understanding of the special purpose of the college by visitation team members. Some colleges reported that the makeup of the SACS teams played an important role in general acceptance of their programs and beliefs. If team members were open-minded or had a religious background of some type, they usually found no problems with the Bible college atmosphere and procedures. As more Bible colleges are accepted into the Association, this problem will likely abate.

The problems encountered by the Bible colleges can be

summarized in outline form:

I. Administration

A. Bible colleges have a tendency to overload the administration staff with teaching hours. Those schools in the study found a change was necessary in the work load of many administrative workers doubling as faculty.

B. There was emphasis placed on making sure every person knew his/her job description. Bible colleges must be attentive to organizational functions for all staff members.

C. The problem of administrative exclusivity in the budget and decision-making process was found in some institutions. Bible colleges must be prepared to allow more faculty input into how money is spent and the general decision-making process.

II. Finances and Planning

A. A heavy emphasis was placed on the financial viability of the college and the outlook for future growth. Bible colleges that are associated with a particular church group or denomination seem to have a better chance at meeting endowment and financial stability requirements. The colleges surveyed felt accreditation would help their money raising goals.

B. The college must have a vision and plan for the future. This was an area heavily emphasized by most visitation teams, and Bible colleges must learn to look ahead, project, and outline a plan for growth and financial stability.

C. Accepted accounting procedures must be adopted by the college. Strict control over finances and facilities seemed to be a common stipulation among the colleges surveyed.

III. Faculty and Curriculum

A. It is extremely important that each faculty member be qualified in the areas which he is teaching with at least a Masters degree in that field. Bible colleges must examine their number of Ph.D.'s and may be forced to have faculty seek terminal degrees in some areas.

B. Some problems were encountered in faculty teaching loads and clearly defined faculty evaluation procedures. While tenure is not required, some degree of teacher security should be adopted by colleges.

C. The Bible and ministerial training curriculum of Bible colleges generally posed no problem to accreditation. It is important that the general education courses not be disguised Bible classes, however. An examination of the offerings was necessary in many cases with some additional courses added, updated, or dropped. Some instructional equipment at a few of the schools was inadequate.

IV. Library

A. The library seemed to be the most highly scrutinized of the areas examined by SACS teams. Some Bible colleges run into difficulty here with outdated and underfinanced facilities. A modern library building and sufficient holdings to support the

Bible and education curriculum is essential. The main areas of possible deficiency appeared to be in general education and in references and periodicals. A need to weed out unnecessary material and spend money maintaining library facilities was found.

V. Student Services

A. Most Bible colleges had little problem with meeting the needs of the students. The stricter rules and guidelines do not present a threat to accreditation, as long as they are clearly outlined before admission and fairly carried out. There is a need to allow student participation in the decision-making at the school, and some colleges had to upgrade this aspect of student involvement.

B. Some colleges surveyed found it necessary to administer their services more efficiently with organizational changes in student services.

VI. Facilities

A. There seems to be few problems in this area for most colleges. Extravagance is not necessary, as long as buildings are adequate for the services rendered and well maintained. Accreditation generally will not require major changes. Plans for buildings to meet continuing needs seemed to be a recommendation to many of the colleges.

The Bible colleges studied reported the process of accreditation to be a valuable task. The self-study portion generally helped them to pinpoint their inadequacies themselves.

Few found any real surprises from the SACS visitation teams.

It is a process that requires dedication from every member of the administration, faculty, and staff. Most reported a tremendous amount of time, energy, and paperwork involved, satisfying the requirements. All saw the process itself as being an enlightening and enriching experience, one that greatly enhanced their ability to educate and carry out their mission. The problems outlined here can be overcome by innovative people who have a willingness to work for a higher standard of excellence.

The benefits of Southern Association candidacy are, of course, more of anticipation than reality. The expected benefits from eventual accreditation can be seen in the basic reasoning for seeking accreditation with the Southern Association. All the colleges felt a need for increased acceptability or respectability within the educational community. It was felt that professional accreditation by the AABC was not enough to convince many people that the college did indeed have a quality program. This increased respectability would, and in some cases, had already led to easy transfer of students' hours and degrees to other institutions without question.

While most schools also anticipated higher student enrollment because of accreditation, no clear data emerged to show that it was happening while still a candidate.

The colleges reported little trouble in explaining to alumni

and financial backers the move to regional accreditation. It apparently caused little objection since the school's real purpose was not being altered.

A somewhat more tangible value anticipated was the ability of accredited schools to obtain matching industry grants, when employees make a donation to the college, plus foundation grants.

All schools seemed to agree that the process of seeking accreditation and the resultant changes that were required were very valuable in themselves. Naturally, encountering and solving the problems cited by the Southern Association would make a marked improvement in the school.

The issue of seeking accreditation and the possible value of it is one of perception. In higher education today it is perceived that the school recognized by the larger and more widely known associations is a school offering a quality education.

While the American Association of Bible Colleges can develop criteria for schools and certify them as quality Bible colleges, many of these institutions see the need for increased credibility and go beyond professional type accreditation to a broader association such as with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

With today's broader scope of schools being accepted by SACS, it is certain that in the years ahead, many more Bible colleges

which are professionally accredited will seek dual accreditation with a regional association.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

School:

Standing with Southern Association:

Address:

Chief Executive Officer:

Title of Respondent:

What is your present enrollment:

Are all students required to take a major in Bible?:

Are you accredited with the AABC or other accrediting association?:

Why did you seek Southern Association accreditation?:

Why do you feel that dual accreditation is important to your institution?:

Do you feel that accreditation is a significant factor in maintaining or increasing student enrollment?:

Actual Process

A. Physical

1. Were any new facilities recommended or any major changes suggested in the physical plant?:

2. Was a great deal of emphasis placed upon instructional equipment? What instructional equipment was suggested?:

B. Library

1. What were your current holdings at the time of the evaluation?:
2. What additional holdings were required by the association?:
3. Were certain areas of the library holdings particularly stressed?:
4. Were you required to make any changes in library personnel and/or services?:

C. Financial

1. What areas were stressed in evaluating your financial stability?:
2. How did the association view living endowments from supportive churches or denominational groups?:
3. Has there been any change in contributions that could be associated with seeking and/or obtaining regional accreditation?:
4. Were traditional endowments a big factor in the associations's financial expectations?:
5. What type of changes did the association suggest concerning financial accounting procedures?:

D. Curriculum

1. Were there any pressures to move away from being a single purpose institution?:
2. In what major areas were you required to revamp your curriculum?:
3. What changes, if any, did the association require in your

general education offerings?:

E. Faculty

1. What changes were suggested for an adequate faculty?:
 - a. teaching load:
 - b. Ph.D.:
 - c. student/faculty ratio:
 - d. obtaining higher academic degrees:
2. Did the association require you to either institute faculty evaluations or to revamp the process you were using?:
3. Was tenure and/or retirement stressed?:

F. Administration/Organization

1. What changes in your organizational structure were suggested and/or required by the association?:
2. Were you required to have more faculty input into the administrative process?:
3. How did your institution meet the expectations of the association regarding computers?:

G. Student Life

1. What emphasis did the association place on student participation in administrative decision-making?:
2. Was there any problem with stricter rules required of Bible college students?:

H. Research and Planning

1. How much emphasis was placed on future plans of the

institution?:

2. What suggestions were offered as to directions that should be taken in future planning?:

I. General

1. Do you feel that the process of seeking accreditation proved valuable to your institution?:

2. What areas of the actual achievement of candidate and/or accredited status have been of value to you?:

3. What were your assessments of needs as compared to those presented by the association?:

4. What major stumbling blocks did you encounter during the process of seeking accreditation?:

5. Has your purpose or direction as a Bible college changed as a result of accreditation? How?

6. What has been the reaction of your supporting churches and/or individuals to the idea of secular accreditation?:

7. How long from application date did it take to achieve candidacy?:

8. If accredited, how long from candidacy to full accreditation?:

9. Please outline the delegation of responsibilities assigned to individuals, committees, etc., as your institution moved through the accreditation procedure. (Please send a current catalog.)

APPENDIX B

Kentucky Christian College Visitation Team Report: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, January 25, 1984

1. Standard One: Purpose

Commendation: The purpose is well-stated. It is clear. The purpose is understood by all KCC people. It has been reflected quite well.

Suggestion: It is suggested that the purpose be re-affirmed by the Trustees in May and that the Board By-Laws be reviewed and updated.

2. Standard Two: Organization

Various resources have been brought together quite effectively. Mechanisms are in place for an effective operation. Duties of administrators are clearly defined and are being followed.

Recommendation #1: That the administrative chart be redone to reflect the reality of the organization.

3. Standard Three: Education

Commendation: The faculty evaluation procedure is very good.

Recommendation #2: That the Independent Study Program should have clearly stated guidelines for admission.

Recommendation #3: That the evaluation procedures for curriculum and faculty outlined in the Faculty Handbook be implemented.

Suggestion: Various departments or disciplines should study curriculum with a view of updating.

Suggestion: College level math should be offered (College Algebra, for example.)

4. Standard Four: Financial Resources

Eleven specific areas were examined. The Committee was well pleased.

Recommendation #4: That budget development have more "input" from the academic area.

Suggestion: That the expenditure per F.T.E. student be increased as it is in the lower percentile of colleges of our size.

5. Standard Five: Faculty

The College is fortunate in having its present faculty. The Committee "was impressed with the faculty." They were helpful, positive, and cooperative."

Commendation: The Faculty Handbook receives a commendation. It could well be a model for other colleges.

Recommendation #5: If a music major is to be offered, there must be a person on the faculty who has a terminal degree in music. Further, all who teach in general studies must have Masters degrees.

Recommendation #6: Dean Hall should teach one class per semester.

Suggestion: Faculty members should be required to attend

carefully selected professional meetings, short courses, etc.

Salaries have increased since last report. They must be scrutinized regularly and updated when needed.

6. Standard Six: Library

Commendation: The building is very attractive, functional well-lighted, and planned.

Commendation: Plans to expand the building have been made.

Recommendation #7: The Librarian should teach only one course per semester.

Suggestion: All acquisitions from all departments should be catalogued and integrated into central library (especially the record collection and the education curriculum material).

Suggestion: An allocation system by department or program should be implemented for the purchase of books so that each department or program will know how much it has available.

Recent material is not as available as it should be. Additional funds should be budgeted for expanded programs and to update the collection. Funds and acquisitions should be prioritized to insure an equal distribution for all departments.

7. Standard Seven: Student Development

Commendation: A commendation for the attitude and friendliness of the students.

Recommendation #8: A reorganization of Student Services.

Recommendation #9: Formulate and publish guidelines that

reflect the Federal Privacy Act for students.

Suggestion: Eliminate "perceived" inequities between male and female student rules.

Suggestion: Move with due speed to provide Student Union Building.

Suggestion: Create a student government body concurrent with Recommendation #8.

8. Standard Eight: Physical Resources

Commendation: Buildings are adequate, impressive, and well-maintained.

Suggestion: A written master campus development plan should be formulated, clearly outlined, updated, and kept on file.

9. Standards Nine, Ten, Eleven

Do not apply to KCC.

APPENDIX C

Names of College Personnel Interviewed

Toccoa Falls College: Dean McCarthy

Kentucky Christian College: Dr. Gary Hall, Academic Dean

Miami Christian College: President George Pearson

Clearwater Christian College: Dean Donald Moore