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October 14, 1987

87-153

Called Meeting Set
For SSB Trustees

N-SSB

NASHVILLE (BP)--A special meeting of the trustees of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board has been called for Thursday, Oct. 22, for the single purpose of approving five consulting editors for a new conservative, multi-volume commentary to be written by inerrantists.

At their August 1987 meeting, trustees reserved the right to approve consulting editors for the project and named Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas, as the first of six.

Trustees adopted an amendment from the floor calling for the remainder of the proposed slate of consulting editors to be presented for consideration at their next full board meeting in February 1988 or, if the administration needed to move faster, to call a special session of the full board.

The meeting of the 85-member board will begin with lunch and continue into the afternoon as long as needed to receive and act on recommendations from the administration, according to Lloyd Batson, chairman of the trustees and pastor of First Baptist Church, Pickens, S.C.

Batson said Oct. 22 was the date of a scheduled meeting of the trustee executive committee. That meeting has been cancelled.

SSB President Lloyd Elder said, "We feel it is in the best interest of the trustees, the administration and of Southern Baptists to move this project forward to release the first volume of the commentary in 1991 as originally projected.

"Our commitment to Southern Baptists is to produce a commentary that makes a significant contribution to Bible study and to Southern Baptist life," he added.

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N-FMB

Foreign Board Passes
\$168 Million Budget

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
10/14/87

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board voted a 1988 budget of \$167.8 million to back the work of 3,800 missionaries around the world.

The increase of \$2.6 million over the 1987 budget is one of the smallest in recent years, while the cost of supporting the growing number of missionaries claims a steadily rising share of the total.

"It's obvious that 1988 will be a financial challenge, as we experience an increasing number of missionaries under appointment, decreased strength of the U.S. dollar ... and a very modest increase of 1.55 percent in budgeted income," FMB President R. Keith Parks told the trustees in a letter accompanying the budget.

The main reason for the small increase is the decision to freeze the 1987 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal at \$75 million. That's the same as last year's Lottie Moon goal, which was missed by more than \$5.5 million. The Woman's Missionary Union, which promotes the annual church offering for foreign missions, decided not to raise the goal this year after consultation with the Foreign Mission Board.

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The Lottie Moon goal for 1987, if reached, will fund almost 45 percent of the total budget. Southern Baptists' regular Cooperative Program giving through local churches will provide \$66 million, more than 39 percent of the total.

Southern Baptist giving for overseas hunger and relief ministries in 1988 again is estimated at \$7 million, the same as this year's projection. Actual receipts have tended to rise and fall according to relief needs and projects that gain Southern Baptists' attention through the media. All such funds are used exclusively for hunger and relief ministries. General board funds pay domestic administrative expenses for such programs.

Other projected funding includes \$11.5 million from investment income, \$3.2 million in designated gifts, \$3.5 million in unallocated revenues from past years and \$1.6 million in other income.

More than 87 percent of the projected budget funds will be spent overseas. About \$21 million, or 12.5 percent, is tapped for U.S. salaries, administration and promotion.

Almost \$102 million, more than 60 percent of the total budget, will support missionaries and their families in 111 countries. Another \$34.1 million will pay for overseas operating expenses, evangelism and church development programs, publication efforts, education, medical work and hunger and relief ministries.

About \$9.8 million will fund capital needs, such as missionary housing and construction or property purchases for churches, schools, medical facilities and the like. That's the smallest dollar amount for capital programs since 1982. At 5.9 percent of the budget, it's also the smallest capital share of the total in at least 25 years.

"One of the reasons 1988 is going to be a tough budget year is that we are having to use a good bit of the increased funds in the budget for an expanding mission force," said Carl Johnson, board vice president for finance. "We see a decreasing percentage of the budget each year related to capital expenditures. Whether this trend will continue or not we don't know, but it's definitely been a trend for the last 30 years."

The larger the missionary force becomes in the years ahead, the greater the pressure will be for larger budget increases -- or fewer mission programs. But Johnson remains optimistic.

"I have confidence Southern Baptists will provide more money next year in Lottie Moon funds than they did this year," he said. "They will give more through the Cooperative Program. Our investment income is projected to increase. While these increases aren't spectacular at times, they do increase year by year.

"But I don't want anyone to relax and say everything's fine. I think there's going to continue to be financial pressure. ... If and when we ever get to the point that we have absolutely no money for capital (projects), then the budget tension will be a lot greater than it is now."

One bright spot in the overseas financial picture is an apparent stabilizing of the U.S. dollar's value after a two-year slide that put the squeeze on mission budgets in east Asia and Europe.

"We have to believe that it has bottomed out," Johnson said. But budget planners predicted the same thing last year, only to see the dollar fall to its lowest level against the Japanese yen since World War II. For 1988, they've set aside almost \$12.9 million for missionary cost-of-living supplements, compared to \$11.5 million this year.

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John David Hopper Elected
Ruschlikon's New President

N - FMB

Baptist Press
10/14/87

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--John David Hopper, a Southern Baptist missionary in Europe for more than 20 years, has been elected president of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

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The seminary's executive board unanimously nominated Hopper, and the recommendation was approved by the European Baptist Federation Council Oct. 2. The Federation encompasses representatives of Baptist unions, or conventions, in 22 European countries. Hopper's election was approved by the Europe, Middle East and North Africa Committee of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board Oct. 12 and information shared with all trustees Oct. 14.

Later in the meeting, a Foreign Mission Board trustee from Thousand Oaks, Calif., Ron E. Wilson, called for an executive session of the FMB to discuss the action.

But after a mid-morning break, in which Wilson received information from board President R. Keith Parks, Wilson returned to the microphone to say he understood better what the board was being asked to do in approving the new seminary president and there was no need for the executive session.

Wilson added he would meet with the board's Europe, Middle East and North Africa committee in December to get further information about the seminary.

In Europe, the Federation vote was not unanimous, reflecting "the desire of some members to see a European elected to the post," according to Stanley Crabb, director of the European Baptist Press Service. No one, however, spoke negatively of Hopper, Crabb said.

Hopper, 53, has been a Vienna-based fraternal representative to Eastern European Baptists the past 11 years. After his appointment as a missionary in 1965, the New Orleans native taught practical theology at Ruschlikon for four years and then taught and did research at a Baptist seminary in Yugoslavia for four years.

He voiced optimism about his new position, even though the seminary has had seven presidents in the past 10 years. The latest was J. Altus Newell, who led the seminary during a two-year period of financial difficulty before returning to the pastorate in Alabama.

Hopper, who assumes his new duties Jan. 1, told the European Baptist Federation Council, "I am convinced that, in the purpose of God, Ruschlikon has a bright future, that we stand on the threshold of spiritual renewal in our churches in Europe and that the seminary has an important role to play in the days ahead."

He said he agrees with a statement by Ruschlikon's interim president, Guenter Wagner, a longtime faculty member, that, "the seminary must fuse Christian scholarship with evangelical passion."

"In a spirit of optimism," Hopper said, "I ask for your prayers, good will, suggestions and constructive criticisms for the difficult, but challenging days ahead."

The seminary, which was founded in 1949, now has 65 students from six continents. Its new Institute of World Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth was launched earlier this year, directed by Earl Martin, a former Southern Baptist missionary to Africa and missions professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Ruschlikon leaders see Hopper's work in Eastern Europe as a key strength, Crabb said.

The seminary should seek greater numbers of students from Eastern Europe, where a large majority of the continent's Baptists live, Hopper told the Federation Council. "In the past, the percentage of students from our Eastern Baptist communities has been disproportionately small.

"I am convinced that a larger number of students from the socialist countries can add a positive, evangelistic, spiritual accent which will enrich the life and ministry of the seminary in the future."

Hopper is fluent in eight languages. He holds master of theology and doctor of philosophy degrees in church history from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He earlier graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. Prior to entering missions, he was a pastor in Euless, Texas, and Long Beach, Calif.

His wife, Jo Ann, a native of Tulsa, Okla., also is a Golden Gate graduate. She has been active in starting home Bible study groups and last year she led a retreat for Hungarian pastors' wives. The Hoppers have three grown sons.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

NRB Letter Revealed
During House Hearing

N-BJC

Baptist Press
10/14/87

WASHINGTON (BP)--A fund-raising letter disclosed during the closing minutes of a House Oversight Subcommittee hearing on television ministries could shift the mood of the members of that panel.

Subcommittee Chairman J.J. Pickle, D-Texas, interrupted the hearing's final two witnesses to announce he had been handed a "shocking" letter sent out by the National Religious Broadcasters and signed by the group's executive director, Ben Armstrong, who had testified earlier that day.

The letter, which harshly criticized the hearing, also asked for contributions to a \$1 million "war chest" to defend television ministries. The letter described the hearing as part of an attack by the "liberal element in our society" and said the NRB views "this move by Congressman Pickle and others as another sly way to harass ministries one by one until we are forced out of existence -- one by one."

In an angry outburst, Pickle questioned why Armstrong, who by then had left the proceedings, had told panel members he thought they were "doing a fine job" while at the same he was launching a national campaign against the panel's efforts.

"To say we're harassing religious groups is dumbfounding, shocking and extremely disappointing," Pickle said. He said Armstrong had not expressed such concerns during an earlier private meeting.

Afterwards, Armstrong called the letter "an error in judgment." Although he said it was written before a July 21 meeting between Pickle and religious broadcasters, Armstrong acknowledged the letter was not mailed until after that meeting and was circulated throughout August.

Armstrong said he plans to apologize to Pickle in a letter and by telephone, invite the congressman to speak at the annual NRB convention in February and state in the organization's magazine that Pickle "exhibited balance and objectivity" during the hearing.

A spokesman for Pickle said the congressman has "cooled off a little, but it did upset him." Concerning the apology, the aide said Pickle is "certainly willing to talk about it, but there are still some unresolved questions," including the NRB's solicitation of tax-exempt funds for the "war chest."

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Hispanic Texas Baptist Men
Assist In Quake Aftermath

N-Texas

Baptist Press
10/14/87

DALLAS (BP)--Six Hispanic Texas Baptist Men arrived in Los Angeles on Oct. 10 to counsel Spanish-speaking victims of the earthquake that rocked parts of Southern California and to work as interpreters in Disaster Assistance Centers operated by the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Texas Baptists responded to a request from the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, directed through the Brotherhood Commission and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Ben Silva of Dallas, president of Varones Bautistas, is leader of the six-man counseling team. Others include Ray Vargas of Duncanville, Sonny Aguilar of Dallas, Pablo Hinojos of Dallas, Egnaccio Mojica of Dallas and Jesse Garcia of LaMarque.

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An estimated 3,000 Hispanics are living in tent cities in Whittier, and another 1,500 are housed in nine shelters.

"Many of these people came from capital cities of Latin American countries that have been hit by earthquakes in recent years," said Bob Dixon, executive director of Texas Baptist Men. "They have been traumatized by this experience and need counseling by people who understand."

Two members of the six-man Texas Baptist team, Silva and Garcia, worked in disaster relief in Mexico City following the 1985 earthquake there.

Most of the Texas Baptists expect to remain in the Los Angeles area up to one week. A second team may follow them if needed.

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Southwestern Student Becomes
Local Hero By Saving Policeman

By Scott Collins

N-LO
(SUBS)

Baptist Press
10/14/87

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Michael Connell got an unusual opportunity to put his theology into practice after leaving class at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Connell rescued a Fort Worth policeman who was struggling with an armed robber in an alley outside a liquor store. At least 50 other people witnessed the struggle, but only Connell and one other man came to the officer's aid.

A police spokesman said Connell may be recommended for a citation from the city. Connell was driving home to Streetman, Texas, from Southwestern when he noticed officer R.W. Reed's car parked behind the liquor store. Connell said he saw the door open and Reed on the ground struggling with a man.

Connell heard the officer yell for help and ran to his aid.

Officer Reed said the incident began when he spotted a man wearing gloves and a bandana mask walking toward the liquor store. Since the store had been robbed three times recently, Reed suspected the man was attempting to hold up the business again.

Reed got out of his car, spotted a gun in the man's back pocket and yelled for the man to stop. When the suspect ran away, Reed pursued him.

The officer finally caught the man and they began to fight.

During the struggle, Reed managed to take the suspect's gun and throw it under the police car. But as the two men wrestled on the ground, the would-be robber grabbed Reed's gun from the holster. When the suspect pointed the gun at Reed's face, the officer blocked the trigger with his finger.

That's when Connell ran to the aid of the policeman.

"I just ran in to help," Connell said. "I didn't think about it."

Connell held the man's legs while Reed handcuffed the suspect. According to Reed, the suspect was on drugs -- "wiped out to the top" -- which made him out of control. "He was all I could handle," Reed said.

Reed said none of the other 50 people watching the fight responded to his call for help. "That doesn't give you much faith in your fellowman," he said. "But when you've got a guy like Mike who is willing to do something, it's a lot better."

"Mike knew it was a life-threatening situation and it says a lot for him and the type of person he is that he was willing to get involved," Reed said. "It shows that there are still some people who care."

But the seminary student doesn't consider himself a Good Samaritan. He was just responding to someone in need, he said.

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Arkansas Baptists Attempting
Bold Mission In Brazilian City

By Eric Miller

N-FMB

MANAUS, Brazil (BP)--Arkansas Baptists are praying for "10,000 professions of faith in 10 days" as they try to evangelize a whole city in Brazil.

"We're trying to do Bold Mission Thrust in Manaus," said Glendon Grober, director of the Brotherhood department of the Arkansas Baptist Convention.

Hundreds of workers are handing out 200,000 New Testaments, visiting door to door, distributing the last of 3.5 million tracts, singing in schools, preaching in churches and conducting a three-night crusade in a stadium with Brazil's best known evangelist, Nilson Fanini, who is a Baptist.

When all of this is done, Grober said, "everybody in that city of about 1 million will have had the opportunity to hear the gospel and consider accepting it."

Arkansas Baptists also hope their work will result in the formation of 50 new churches and mission points.

This latest work will mark the completion of a three-year partnership project between Brazil and Arkansas. Most of the work has been in Para, a northern state twice the size of Texas. Arkansas Baptists have worked in every major region of that state, participating in construction projects as well as evangelism.

Arkansas' last group, about 180 Baptists from more than 60 churches, is scheduled to leave Oct. 21 to work in the final crusade in Manaus.

With 5,000 to 10,000 professions of faith expected, "the follow-up on that kind of thing gets absolutely scary," said Grober, who was a missionary to this area of Brazil for 25 years.

"We don't have 10,000 Christians or Baptists in Manaus to just follow up on that many people making decisions," he said. "We know that we'll not get all of them into our Baptist churches. We'll lose some of them."

Nonetheless, there were 20 Baptist churches in Manaus three years ago, and "we hope we'll end up with 50 churches" when the work is done, he added.

The work is bringing results in Arkansas too. Randy Pegues went to Brazil as a partnership project participant and felt that God wanted him on the mission field. Now he and his wife, Sherry, are Southern Baptist missionaries to Brazil.

A young man went with a partnership team and returned to Brazil as a Southern Baptist journeyman. Others are considering careers in foreign missions, Grober said.

Monetary support of the partnership project has been another result. Two laymen gave enough money to build a church. Another layman found out money was needed to buy a printing press for printing tracts and he "calmly wrote me a check for \$5,000," Grober said. Still other layman paid all expenses for a team that went this year.

"We have a lot of people come back and share," Grober said. "That's the reason it has gone as well as it has."

When the partnership first started, coordinators anticipated 250 people would travel to Brazil. However, participation has risen to somewhere between 500 and 600 people, Grober said.

"We've had our people come back thrilled to death with a brand new concept of missions and even evangelism in their own lives and sharing their witness," Grober said. "They've gotten a brand new vision of what missions is all about."

"Our people come back much more supportive of the entire Southern Baptist Cooperative Program," he added.