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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE  
SBC Executive Committee  
901 Commerce #750  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203  
(615) 244-2355  
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director  
Dan Martin, News Editor  
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

## BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 720-0550  
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300  
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151  
WASHINGTON Stan L. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

March 16, 1988

88-44

Trustees Name Drummond  
Southeastern President

N-CO  
By Al Shackelford

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Lewis A. Drummond of Louisville, Ky., was elected March 14 as president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary by the board of trustees. Drummond, 61, will become the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary's fourth president April 1.

He will succeed W. Randall Lolley, who resigned in November 1987 after the conservative majority of trustees voted in October to change the school's faculty-selection process to ensure that only people who avow biblical inerrancy would be named to the faculty. Lolley has been Southeastern president for 14 years.

Drummond is administrative director of the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism and professor of evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

His election as Southeastern president was recommended unanimously by the trustees' 12-member executive committee, which was the search committee. After a one-hour dialogue with the trustees March 14, Drummond was elected by a 20-6 vote with one abstention. The dialogue was held in an open session, after trustees defeated a motion to go into executive session.

Drummond told the trustees he hopes all facets of the seminary "can come together in unanimity and get on with the task of equipping ministers of the gospel." Admitting the path to that goal may be rough and rocky, he added: "I would trust God to use me here to bring about reconciliation.

"I would hope to build confidence with the faculty. We are not in heaven, but we are not in hell either."

Drummond told the trustees he supports academic freedom with academic responsibility: "I am really committed to both. This is where this institution has always been."

Concerning his biblical beliefs, Drummond responded, "I believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures theologically; that the Bible is truth without any mixture of error and is truth in all realms of reality."

The new president said his first task would be to fill faculty and staff vacancies. Morris Ashcraft has resigned as dean but will continue to teach. Three presidential assistants also have resigned: Jerry Niswonger, student development; W. Robert Spinks, financial development; and Rodney V. Byard, communications.

Concerning his recommendation of faculty to the trustees, Drummond said these people will have to have academic qualifications and would have to adhere to biblical beliefs that have been approved by the trustees.

Drummond is a native of Dixon, Ill. He joined Southern Seminary as Billy Graham Professor in 1973 and was appointed director of the Billy Graham Center in 1981. He taught at Spurgeon's Theological College in London from 1968 to 1973, holding the chair of evangelism and practical theology, the first full professorship of evangelism in Europe.

He is a graduate of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and earned a doctor of philosophy degree from King's College of the University of London. He has done post-doctoral study at Oxford University in Oxford, England, and Spurgeon's College.

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After the election, the trustees were given a statement signed by eight of the trustees, stating: "The seminary's outstanding heritage is being jeopardized by the current effort to shift radically the theological foundation of the school toward Fundamentalism and the belief in biblical inerrancy. We will not endorse such an erosion of the school's historic character.

"One day, we believe Southeastern will return to the highest standards of theological education. We pledge ourselves to pray and to work for that day."

In related actions, trustees voted 21-4 that Drummond's salary and benefits would be the same as the current president. Lolley is reported to receive a \$71,040 salary, plus \$17,015 in benefits and residence in a seminary-owned house.

The April 1 beginning date that was recommended by the search committee was approved 18-9 with two abstentions, after the trustees defeated 11-16 an amendment to set the beginning date at June 1. Another amendment to set the date on May 9 to coincide with graduation exercises, with Drummond serving as president-elect from April 1 to May 9, was declared out of order by Chairman Robert D. Crowley, who was sustained by trustees.

A fourth recommendation from the search committee asked Drummond to request Lolley to preside at the May graduation. It was approved unanimously after an amendment included the July graduation.

At a later session, the trustees voted to instruct Drummond to take whatever action is necessary to maintain the seminary's accreditation. A committee from the Association of Theological Schools is scheduled to be on the campus March 18 to investigate recent actions by the trustees.

The trustees voted 23-6 to "receive and accept the Peace Committee report of the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention, pledging our full cooperation in giving our consideration to its recommendations and directing President Drummond to formulate implementation plans and report through the executive committee to the full board at its October 1988 meeting."

This action came after trustees voted to rescind an earlier action that the trustee board "accepts and endorses in full the Peace Committee report." This change followed a discussion of difference between a SBC committee's report and its recommendations and what impact the earlier motion might have on accreditation of the seminary.

The trustees approved a \$6,059,067 budget for the seminary's 1988-89 fiscal year and asked the new president to evaluate a proposal to provide study leaves for administrative officers.

In honor of the outgoing president, the trustees voted to name the women's dormitory the Randall and Lou Lolley Hall.

In his final remarks as president to the trustees, Lolley thanked "all of you who have supported me in pursuing the (seminary's) vision together."

He continued: "I step away in a considerable unknown: our beloved Southern Baptist people are gravely divided. They have turned from peacemaking to peacekeeping.

"As I go, I covenant two things, before God, with all of you on this campus and with our Southern Baptist family: First, I declare eternal hostility against every tyranny over the minds and hearts of God's people anywhere on this earth. Second, I commit from this day forward every moment of my time and every millibar of my energy to restoring this school into the hands of her friends and out of the hands of her foes."

Drummond Pledges  
'Absolute Openness'

By Al Shackelford

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Lewis A. Drummond promised he will seek to solve the problems of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary through "absolute openness and accessibility."

Drummond, 61, met with the news media following his election as the seminary's fourth president by trustees March 14. He is the Billy Graham professor of evangelism and administrative director of the Billy Graham Center at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

"I believe that a spirit of understanding comes when there is openness and accessibility," the new president said, "and I want to be open and accessible to everyone -- faculty, students, administration, and alumni -- so that we can all come together and talk about our situation. The president's door is always open."

He said he is willing to meet and have dialogue with any group or any person, adding he wants to continue the tradition of the current president, W. Randall Lolley, of meeting regularly with the students in open forum.

Discussing his goals for the seminary, Drummond said, "I would work toward carrying out the practical, goal-oriented growth and development program, launched in 1983 under President Lolley."

Southeastern Seminary has received a mandate to fulfill the intent of its original purpose "by becoming for men and women a training institution of academic and ministerial excellence that is biblically centered, baptistically conservative, evangelical and theologically aware," he said.

"And, most importantly," Drummond emphasized, "it would be my prayer and hopefully the prayer of all Southern Baptists that a fresh wind of spiritual renewal would sweep the campus, fostering a spirit of love, harmony and commitment to all God would accomplish in and through the institution."

In response to a question on the seminary's accreditation, Drummond said trustee action in October 1987 means "all faculty will have to agree with the documents that our trustees see fit to advocate. This is a trustee matter, and it is not a matter in my hands directly."

Drummond said he is concerned about a March 18 visit by a committee from the American Association of Theological Schools. "It is a serious matter when accreditation is questioned. This is done from time to time when there is trouble internally.

"It is not a routine thing. It must be dealt with, but I can see no serious problem."

Asked if he would encourage women to become pastors, Drummond said that issue is up to the local churches. "If a local church has sent her here, ordained her and wants her as pastor, I would encourage them to call her," he added.

"There are different offices in the life of the church with no distinction to gender, but in the passage related to elders, all pronouns are masculine. There does not seem to be in the New Testament any indication that this was a feminine role, at least in the first century."

About 30 students attended Drummond's news conference, wearing gags in their mouths and handcuffs or ropes on their wrists to illustrate, they said, they had no input in the presidential election process.

At the conclusion of the conference, a second news conference was held by Richard L. Hester, Southeastern professor and president of the school's chapter of American Association of University Professors.

Reading a prepared statement, Hester said: "We hope and pray the coming of Dr. Drummond will open the way for this school to maintain its noble tradition and to fulfill its mission to be a beacon to the Baptist values of liberty and diversity in the search of God's truth.

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"The new president faces the difficult challenge of demonstrating his independence and educational vision. Peace will come here when the legitimate role of the faculty in the appointment of new faculty has been restored; ... when academic freedom is assured."

AAUP is committed to fairness, and the faculty intends to be fair with Drummond, to give him a chance to be the president needed, adding that he has nothing against Drummond personally, Hester said.

"It is difficult for us on this campus who love and appreciate Randall Lolley and who view him as an excellent president to feel any enthusiasm about Dr. Drummond," he added. "I believe that if Dr. Drummond shows that he is willing to support the tradition, established policies and stated purpose of this school, and if he is willing to do what is necessary to preserve our accreditation, this faculty will help him and give him a chance to demonstrate his ability to lead the school in these trying times."

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Linder Warns Baptists  
About Civil Religion

By Tim Fields

N-10  
(LLC)  
Baptist Press  
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WASHINGTON (BP)--Participants at a Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission seminar were told the church should be involved in politics. They were warned, however, of the pitfalls of embracing a civil religion that mixes piety and patriotism until distinguishing between the two is impossible.

"Even though Americans historically have done an admirable job of keeping the institutions of church and state separate, they have never separated the church and politics," said Robert D. Linder, professor of history at Kansas State University. "The concerns of the church and the concerns of politics, historically speaking, have always overlapped in this country."

He cautioned, however, that "from the point of view of the church and politics, the main danger of civil religion in America today is that it identifies God with the national destiny and, in essence, reduces the universal God of the Bible to the tribal god of a particular nation."

"Civil religionists often appropriate God for national ends and purposes, and increasingly in recent times they have not asked God to judge the nation, but to bless its agenda," he said.

Linder, a member of College Heights Baptist Church in Manhattan, Kan., and former two-term city mayor, addressed 250 participants in the citizenship seminar on the dangers of an increasingly stronger presidential civil religion. He also traced the history of politics and the church.

Linder cited three doctrinal principles followed by New Testament Christians in relating to social and political issues he said were valid for any discussion of the church and politics:

"First, there is the early Christian teaching that every human being had intrinsic worth because of the incarnation. The incarnation itself should speak to the Christian political conscience concerning such issues as pornography, poverty, racism and appalling prison conditions, for all these things represent a process of dehumanization that is contrary to the value that God has placed on all humans.

"Second is the view that human life is sacred. I am absolutely convinced this was one of the two or three commonly held social beliefs of the early Christians. It was applied to almost every area of existence where human life was at risk: warfare, abortion and capital punishment.

"The shedding of blood was singled out as one of the most grievous sins of the early church. The believers of those early centuries stood firmly against abortion and capital punishment as contrary to the order of God's creation. As far as I can determine, the early Christian prohibition of killing was absolute.

"Third is the view that believers should champion the poor, the needy and the oppressed ... or what today would be called 'human rights.'"

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Linder said Christians and individual congregations should take a stand on political questions.

"The church seems to be the only institution in Western society today with any kind of absolute values to serve as the basis for social and political reform in a world which desperately needs such reform," he contended.

"A world gone mad with killing and violence surely needs to hear a word from people who are different, who claim to be 'new creatures in Christ.'"

In challenging churches and Christians to political involvement, Linder also outlined limitations for Christian groups or churches.

"It is not wise for the church to participate in partisan politics," he warned. "Identification with one political party or the creation of a Christian party automatically alienates large segments of humanity which should not be given the impression that any particular party is God's anointed or that the policies of any particular party are God's policies.

"On the other hand, I know of no reason why individual Christians in a democratic society should not belong and participate in a political party. Not only do individual believers have that right as citizens of their respective countries, but like most human institutions, the party most likely can benefit from a Christian presence in its ranks."

The church should shun excessive political involvement because "this can dilute its religious or spiritual mission and turn it into just another political action committee or party," Linder said.

"The first business of the church has always been evangelism -- winning people to Jesus Christ; however, the gospel has certain political and social implications which cannot be ignored.

"Nearly all of the major problems facing the world today have both a political and spiritual dimension -- war and peace, freedom and tyranny, terrorism and violence, racial and sexual prejudice, abortion and the right to life, world hunger and poverty, economic justice, the use and misuse of nuclear power, environmental questions -- they all illustrate the link between spiritual and political issues.

"Unresolved over a long enough period of time, any of these issues can bring a great civilization to destruction."

Linder said the church should never participate in the political process for the sake of power and/or privilege and should avoid being co-opted by civil religion.

"Since Christianity is an international religion which finds its most profound expression in personal faith, it would appear to be incompatible with civil religion," he said. "Therefore, Christians should beware of falling for the civil religion blandishments of high officials and reserve the right and the capacity to critique any government or ruling party.

"The church should avoid being used by the state for the state's own ends by participating in civil religion."

Linder cited a growing connection between religion and the presidency that he said has intensified since the Eisenhower administration. He cited the dangers of presidents who assume priestly roles as leaders of civil religion.

"It was Ronald Reagan who brought a new, highly charged religio-political climate to the White House," he contended. "Backed with fervor and passion by many of the most devout people in the country, he responded by adopting a religiously conservative social agenda for his administration. In so doing he became the darling of the New Religious Right and an intimate relationship developed between the two.

"Part of the intimacy was generated by the coincidence of the political goals of the New Religious Right and those of the New Political Right, but a great portion of it also was based on the perception that Reagan was one of them 'spiritually, politically and socially.'"

"This in turn, was largely because the religious rightists believed that the president spoke their language, and he did. Still, that language, the common meeting ground of the adherents of the religious right and the political right, has essentially been the language of civil religion, not Christianity. In fact, it can be argued that Reagan has been the most astute practitioner of civil religion to occupy the White House in the 20th century."

Linder called on Christians to keep in mind that the civil religion language of any president, sincerely uttered though it may be, is not the same as, or is it meant to be, the language of the church and of Jesus Christ.

"Keep in mind that the highest loyalty of a Christian believer is to Jesus Christ, not to any political personality or political office or political ideology or political entity," he said.

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*N-Texas*

SWBTS Employee  
Trimble Dies

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press  
3/16/88

DALLAS (BP)--Robert L. Trimble, 43, of Grand Prairie, Texas, audiovisuals librarian at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, since 1973, died March 14 in a Grand Prairie hospital.

Trimble, a native of Jefferson City, Mo., graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee. He was radio production engineer with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission and the Baptist General Convention of Texas from 1968 to 1971.

Later he was announcer and production engineer for radio stations KAMC-FM in Arlington, Texas, and KDTX-FM in Dallas.

Trimble is survived by his wife, Linda; a son, Scott; a daughter, Lauren; three stepchildren, Brent Yates of Rome, N.Y., and Brooke and John Yates, both of Grand Prairie; his parents, Jasper and Verda Trimble of Jefferson City, Mo.; and a sister, Mrs. Don Emerson, whose husband is pastor of Maranatha Baptist Church in Logan, Utah.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested contributions to the Bob Trimble Memorial Scholarship at Southwestern Seminary.

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