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March 16, 1989

89-42

Southeastern elects Bush
despite faculty protest

By Marv Knox

N-10

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--L. Russ Bush III survived faculty disapproval and a split vote by trustees to be elected academic vice president/dean of the faculty at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Trustees of the Wake Forest, N.C., school discussed Bush behind closed doors for more than three hours March 13, before electing him on a secret-ballot vote, 22-8.

Bush, 44, is associate professor of philosophy of religion at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he has taught since 1973.

During his acceptance speech, he pledged to be a peacemaker at Southeastern. The campus has been marked by controversy since October 1987, when the seminary's new conservative trustee majority changed the way the school chooses its teachers, vesting more responsibility with the president and trustees.

Bush's predecessor, Morris Ashcraft, subsequently joined then-President W. Randall Lolley and several faculty and administrators in resigning. They cited the policy changes -- which they interpreted as ensuring that only biblical inerrantists could be elected to the faculty and as shutting faculty out of the process of selecting their peers -- as the reason.

In the aftermath of those resignations, the two agencies that accredit the seminary initiated investigations of the school.

New President Lewis A. Drummond nominated Bush for the academic post. But the faculty twice voted non-support for Bush.

They cited "his total lack of administrative experience" in a statement prepared by the seminary's chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

They also faulted him for "bias in his writing, his expectation that this faculty would support inerrancy in some form, his affiliation with the fundamentalist leadership in the convention and his lack of understanding of the history or traditions of Baptists in this area."

The statement charged that his nomination "over the reasoned opposition of the faculty violated ... the criterion of accreditation that calls for the faculty to have a substantial voice in such matters."

After the election, C. Michael Hawn, professor of church music and president of the AAUP chapter, said the faculty's votes against Bush and its stated reasons for opposing him speak for themselves: "We have made such a clear, strong statement that there is nothing else to say. He is our dean. We will work with him."

Trustee Mark Caldwell, a pastor from College Park, Md., and the most outspoken moderate on the board, called Bush "the wrong man at the wrong time." He added: "We could have had an inerrantist the faculty supported. They supported other inerrantists. (Drummond) could have been a champion of the faculty and of the inerrantists, but he did not do that. He lost a chance to reconcile."

But Drummond joined Bush's trustee supporters in defending their new vice president.

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"He demonstrated a wonderful Christian spirit of graciousness," said Roger Ellsworth, a pastor from Benton, Ill., and the trustee who nominated Bush. "Even the trustees who opposed him were impressed by that. There are a lot of tensions in the seminary family, but I am confident Dr. Bush is the man to bring about healing."

Bush's election was the "clear leadership of God," said James Bryant, pastor from Fort Smith, Ark., and chairman of the trustee instruction committee. "It was affirmed by the strong trustee vote and Dr. Bush's strong spirit of service, peace, reconciliation and humility exhibited in his acceptance speech."

The majority of trustees disagree with the faculty's assertion that Bush is not qualified for the job, Bryant added: "The president and Dr. Bush both prepared responses to the faculty's criticisms. They satisfied us that the faculty's criticisms were not objective, though we listened carefully to what they had to say."

"Dr. Bush is suited spiritually, intellectually and in his personality not only to work with Dr. Drummond, but to work with the faculty," said trustee Chairman Robert D. Crowley, pastor from Rockville, Md. "He was careful to consider each question raised. I was amazed at his insight into every ramification that has gone on. I cannot imagine the faculty will not embrace him."

Drummond said of his new vice president: "He has all the academic credentials, exhibited scholarship in writing and classroom work, and knows and understands theological education very well. Dr. Bush has a very positive and irenic Christian spirit and is very open to people. When the faculty do get to know him, they will appreciate him as a Christian scholar and gentleman."

During his acceptance speech, Bush told the trustees, "I realize there was a significant number of you who said you did not want me here."

Bush quoted from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." He said: "God called us to be peacemakers. He led more than two-thirds of you to vote for me. Under God's providence, if he will give me life, I will try to do the job that needs to be done."

Observers agreed that an early job will be building relationships with the faculty.

Those relationships have been strained by Bush's nomination over the faculty's protest, their votes against him and a memo to trustees in which he said, "... it is absolutely essential that a conservative majority on the faculty be achieved as soon as possible."

During a news conference, Bush said his memo was written in response to faculty criticisms of his nomination and added, "Some of the language would be revised if I were doing it now."

The memo's first request was that trustees "deal with every concern the faculty raised," he said. Noting the specific context of his much-circulated quote dealt with procedural matters that would require faculty concurrence, he added, "It seemed to me it would be impossible to proceed" without the support of a majority.

The term "conservative majority" means "people who would not be opposed to the president and administration," he said. "That can be achieved by the people who are here if they would not bow their necks but would take a hand extended to them."

Bush discussed several topics during the news conference. They included:

-- Accreditation. "The first thing on the agenda is to deal with matters raised by the accreditation agencies, ... to try to develop a system of input to help the president in formulating a plan," he noted. The goal for a response to the agencies is for the seminary's various constituencies to "reach compromises without compromising convictions."

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-- Faculty selection. The criteria for new faculty include "whether the person affirms our (doctrinal) statement," he said. "I also would want to know other things: Are they Baptist? Are they active in church? Do they hold to Baptist beliefs, such as baptism by immersion, symbolic Lord's Supper, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, repentance and regeneration? Inerrancy is the issue only in the sense that they say that the Bible sometimes teaches things that are not true. Then they have stepped outside the boundaries of our historic confessional life."

Bush wants to "move as quickly as possible to fill the vacant slots" in the faculty, currently six positions, he said. An advantage is that new professors will be people "who have not lived through this crisis and have this emotion," he added.

-- Charges of liberalism. "I'm not sure that exists here," he said, noting that if specific charges were made, he would meet with the faculty member and seek to clarify the position. "I have no reason to believe such charges are true," he added.

-- Relationships with faculty. "I think it will be difficult, especially at first," he conceded. "I believe we're dealing with Christians who do believe in God -- there's basis for reconciliation."

Bush is a Mississippi native. He is a graduate of Mississippi College in Clinton and has earned two degrees from Southwestern Seminary and studied at North Texas State University in Denton and Cambridge University in England.

He has been interim pastor of two Texas churches and held two other church staff positions. He is a general editor of Old Testament materials for a new Bible commentary to be published by Broadman Press and has written for denominational and scholarly journals. He is a member of six scholarly organizations.

He and his wife, the former Cynthia Ellen McGraw, have two children.

Drummond said Bush probably will begin work at Southeastern April 1.

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Southwestern Seminary trustees
approve budget, re-elect chairman

By Scott Collins

N-10
(SUBTS) Baptist Press
3/16/89

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary approved a reduced 1989-90 budget and re-elected Ken Lilly, a physician from Fort Smith, Ark., as chairman of the board March 13-14.

The \$18.5 million budget passed by the trustees is a 1.2 percent cut, or \$226,410 from 1988-89. The new budget freezes salaries and cuts back some programs.

The budget was passed amid concern by the trustees over a reduction of Cooperative Program funds allocated by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. As a result, the board passed a resolution calling for the Executive Committee to reconsider its procedures for administering the unified budget funds of the denomination.

Wayne Allen, trustee from Carrollton, Texas, who offered the resolution, called for trustees to "express our concern about the way the Cooperative Program dollars are allocated and our concern about the support of the Cooperative Program by all of our churches. The purpose is to say to the grassroots churches. 'This is where it hurts,'" Allen said.

Allen and other trustees said the resolution was designed to support the school and its president, Russell Dilday, when the Executive Committee distributes funds.

During his report to the trustees, Dilday said Southwestern's 2.8 percent cut in Cooperative Program funds is a result of money being used for capital needs in other agencies and a no-increase budget adopted by the Executive Committee.

"This will be the first time in over 30 years, and maybe in the entire history of the seminary, when the amount of denominational support will be less next year than it is this year," Dilday said.

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"We are grateful for the Cooperative Program and we must continue to promote that and motivate our churches to increase the amount of denominational support," Dilday said. "All of these efforts to hold money back or to get our way in the Convention by saying we're not going to give through the Cooperative Program are destructive. I oppose that kind of effort, no matter where it comes from. That's not the way to do the Lord's business."

Dilday emphasized the budget represents the school's commitment to a balanced budget with no debts.

Trustee Jimmy Draper of Euless, Texas, expressed a fear the salary freeze could cause a morale problem among faculty and staff at the seminary. Draper was joined by the board in expressing "our concern and anticipation that it's going to be better in the days ahead. We're not happy with the decrease."

Budget planners pointed out that although there is no increase in salaries, the new budget reflects a "significant increase in the cost of benefits" paid by the seminary for career employees and their families.

In addition to Lilly, trustees elected Damon Shook, pastor of Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston, as vice chairman, and re-elected John McNaughton, a layman from Fort Worth, as secretary.

Two new faculty members were elected unanimously. Marion (Bud) Fray, chairman of the religion department and director of the Center for Christian Ministries at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., was elected professor of missions. Angela Cofer, assistant professor of voice at the University of Arizona in Tucson, was elected assistant professor of voice in the school of church music.

The board recognized two trustees who are ending their terms of service. Lewis McDonald, from Bel Air, Md., completed 10 years of service and Billy Tolbert, from El Toro, Calif., is ending a five-year term. Tolbert is moving to another state.

In other items of business, the board:

-- Approved promotions for nine faculty members and granted tenure to three.

-- Approved continued service of John Newport, vice president for academic affairs, and five other faculty members for another year. Because of changes in federal laws, faculty over 65 are subject to yearly approval by the board.

-- Heard of the pending retirements of Charles Williamson, professor of voice; Ralph Smith, distinguished professor of Old Testament; and Nancy Morgan, executive assistant to the president. The board also learned of the resignation of James Brooks, professor of New Testament, who will join the faculty at Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.

-- Approved a proposed chair of religious education (when funded) and named it the J.M. Price Chair of Religious Education, in honor of the founder of the seminary's school of religious education.

-- Elected seven directors to the Southwestern Baptist Seminary Development Foundation, Inc. Trustees elected were Wayne Allen, Bill Crofts, of Phoenix, Ariz.; Lee Molloy, of Paducah, Ky.; and Shook. Non-trustees are Jenkins Garrett, J.T. Luther and Jerry Yowell, all of Fort Worth.

-- Named the conference room in the World Missions and Evangelism Center for Baker James Cauthen, former executive secretary of the Foreign Missions and Evangelism Board, and his wife, Eloise Glass Cauthen.

-- Approved a \$2 million phase of the Cowden Hall building project, which houses the school of church music. The approval allows administrators to proceed with design development and begin the bidding process.

Northeast school faces
tight budget pinch

By Bob Allen

N- (O)
(Md.-Dr.)

BALTIMORE (BP)--The pinch from a proposed tighter 1989-90 Southern Baptist Convention budget will be felt by the fledgling Northeastern Baptist School of Ministry, the school's coordinator said at a recent meeting in Baltimore.

Doran McCarty told members of the Northeast Task Team on Theological Education proposed cutbacks in the SBC operating budget will force the state conventions involved in the project be more aggressive in fundraising than originally thought.

The task team is comprised of representatives of five Northeastern Baptist state conventions -- including the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware -- working in partnership with the six SBC seminaries and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to launch the project. The school, which for the first time employs contextualized theological education as a home missions strategy, is scheduled to open this fall with centers in Pittsburgh and Boston.

McCarty, also executive director of the Southern Baptist Seminary External Education Division, whose governing board consists of the six SBC seminary presidents, said a request for an increase in allocation for the new school was denied by the seminary presidents, themselves feeling the constraints of tightening finances.

A budget adopted in February by the SBC Executive Committee calls for a 2.05 percent decrease in the convention's next budget. The budget, to be presented to messengers at the June 13-15 SBC annual meeting at Las Vegas, Nev., is based on a conservative performance-driven budgeting plan also to be recommended to messengers to the convention. Under the proposed plan, bottom line budget figures for 1989-90 will equal total receipts of 1987-88, the last year on record. The new plan is recommended to help the denomination catch up with the SBC's growing capital needs deficit.

Five of the six seminaries, along with the Home and Foreign mission boards and most SBC agencies expect reduced operating allocations in 1989-90, McCarty said. Only Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., is proposed to receive an increase, the first installment of a five-year \$1 million special allocation to provide endowment for faculty and staff housing allowances.

As a result of the cutbacks, a top priority for the Northeast school and task team overseeing its implementation will be fundraising, McCarty said.

"(The seminary presidents) did not see how they could raise any additional funds out of their budgets," McCarty said. "That does add pressure on the development committee to seek an aggressive stance to raise the money we will need for establishment of centers in Boston and Pittsburgh."

The task team's resources committee recommended that an "information blitz" be targeted immediately at congregations in the five Northeast conventions to encourage contributions to the school. After a discussion on various strategies of support the separate conventions are pursuing, a substitute motion was adopted calling for the resource committee to develop a fundraising plan in consultation with the executive directors of the state conventions to be presented to the task team's steering committee in a called session.

McCarty said funds are in hand for start-up of the Boston and Pittsburgh centers. Projected income for the rest of 1989, however, is about \$12,000 short of anticipated needs at year's end.

Some of the participating conventions plan to continue support of the school through their CP budgets and others by allocations in state missions offerings. Other funds for the school will come from the Seminary External Education Division, the Home Mission Board, student fees and individual donations.

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McCarty and G. Willis Bennett, provost at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. -- which as "lead seminary" will offer degree and diploma programs through the school -- reported that unique accreditation and licensing issues are being addressed with appropriate agencies. Accrediting agencies, for example, are asking for demonstration that a theological education completed start to finish off a seminary campus will be comparable to a traditional seminary education, Bennett said.

In other business, the task team:

-- Received a \$2,000 gift from Montgomery Hills Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Md., to establish the Wilmer and Miriam Bennett Scholarship Fund at the Pittsburgh center. The Bennetts went to Pittsburgh as Mission Service Corps volunteers to help with setup of the center, but were forced to resign and return to their home after he suffered a stroke in December.

-- Accepted the resignation of David F. D'Amico as chairman of the Northeast task team. D'Amico, executive director of the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association since 1985, recently was elected Billy Graham professor of evangelism at Southern Seminary. Elected to lead the task team was the current vice chairman, David Dean, pastor of First Baptist Church in Sudbury, Mass. Joseph M. Smith, director of ministries in higher education for the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, was elected the vice chairman.

-- Adopted a recommendation of the administrative committee that existing seminary studies programs in New York City and Baltimore be the next centers considered for inclusion in the Northeastern School.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) article "Network sale fails; RTVC to continue ACTS," mailed 3/15/89, please make the following correction in the 22nd paragraph: Atkins has offered the transponder to ACTS at his cost until May 31, 1989...

Also in the 26th paragraph, the figure should be ... \$5.5 million from the Cooperative Program ...

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Richard Land named
to anti-porn board

By Louis Moore

N-10
(CLC)

Baptist Press
3/16/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--Richard D. Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, has been named to the executive committee of the Religious Alliance Against Pornography.

The alliance, made up of religious leaders of most major denominations in the United States, has at its main focus opposition to hard-core and child pornography.

The alliance, founded in 1986 and headed by Jerry Kirk, a Presbyterian minister from Cincinnati, has helped in passage of a federal statute prohibiting dial-a-porn and adoption of the Child Pornography and Obscenity Enforcement Act.

Land, who has headed Southern Baptists' moral and social concerns agency since September 1988, was recommended for the post by Harold C. Bennett, president of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, a former member of the committee.

Other Southern Baptists who have been on the board include Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis, Tenn., and a former president of the SBC, and N. Larry Baker, former executive director of the CLC, now pastor of First Baptist Church of Pineville, La.

Following his appointment, Land said pornography is "a plague that is vicious, violent and victimizing. The commission and I look forward to working with Jerry Kirk and other members of RAAP as we seek to do our best to eliminate hard-core and child pornography from our society."

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