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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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October 14, 1991

91-155

Sunday School Board adds  
senior executive team

By Charles Willis

NASHVILLE (BP)--A senior executive team to assist President James T. Draper Jr. in managing the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board will be considered by the institution's 93-member trustee board in a called meeting Oct. 24-25 in Nashville.

In material mailed to trustees Oct. 11, Draper recommends trustees elect T. Michael Arrington, executive assistant to the chief executive officer for Texas Utility Electric Company, Fort Worth, Texas, as executive vice president for operations; E.V. King, the board's vice president for business and finance, as executive vice president for finance and administration; and O. Eugene Mims, pastor of First Baptist Church, Cleveland, Tenn., vice chairman of the board and chairman of the board's executive committee, as executive vice president for planning, research and denominational relations.

The three new positions will replace the current positions of executive vice president, formerly held by James D. Williams, and vice president for business and finance, held by King. Williams became president of the SBC Brotherhood Commission in September.

An additional position of assistant vice president for business is included among the recommendations. Draper is recommending Charles A. Wilson, chief executive officer of Precision Sheeting Service of Camden, N.J., and a trustee of the board, to fill that position.

The change in upper management structure is designed to improve potential for quality leadership, coordination of ministries, and decision making, Draper told an Oct. 11 meeting of the trustee committee appointed in August to assist him in finding a chief operating officer.

"A senior executive team structure increases the potential for effective responses to a complex and changing external environment," Draper said.

Arrington would direct the board's program and product development functions, as well as marketing and sales functions. Reporting to him would be Gary Cook, vice president for church programs and services; Johnnie Godwin, vice president for general publishing; and Jimmy Edwards, vice president for marketing and distribution.

King would direct the overall business and financial plans and policies and business activities that provide specialized services for the board's program, production, operating and marketing functions. Reporting to him would be Wilson and directors of seven financial and business support components.

Mims would direct the planning, research, corporate communication and public relations programs, as well as assisting Draper in representing the board to the Southern Baptist Convention and its agencies, state Baptist conventions, churches, denominational groups and individuals. Reporting to him would be Lloyd Householder, assistant vice president for communications, and other department and staff personnel who relate to planning, research and denominational relations.

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ington, 46, is a native Texan. He holds a B.S. degree in electrical engineering from Texas A & M University, College Station. Prior to joining the staff of the Texas Utility Electric Company in 1983, he had worked in consulting, management and operations positions with Texas Power and Light Company, Dallas, since 1968. He is a member of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas.

King, 48, has been vice president for business and finance at the board since 1984. A native Tennessean, he earned the B.A. degree in economics from David Lipscomb College, Nashville, and the M.S. degree in management and administration from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Prior to coming to the board, he was executive director of the Tennessee Housing Development Corporation, Nashville. He is a member of Immanuel Baptist Church, Nashville.

Mims, 41, is native of Mississippi. He earned the B.A. degree in political science at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va., and the M.Div. and D.Min. degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. Prior to becoming pastor in Cleveland, Tenn., in 1983, he was pastor of churches in Texas, Alabama and Virginia.

Wilson, 48, is a native of Indiana. He earned the B.S. degree in accounting from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, and the M.B.A. degree from Wharton Graduate School of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Prior to founding Precision Sheeting Service in 1980, he was a supply corps officer in the United States Navy. He is a member of Bridgeview Baptist Church in Delair, N.J.

Search committee members who assisted Draper are Dan Collins, an attorney from Taylors, S.C.; Al Jackson, pastor of Lakeview Baptist Church of Auburn, Ala.; Barry Campbell, pastor of South Reno Southern Baptist Church, Reno, Nev.; Rick Forrester, businessman from Lawrenceville, Ga.; and Frank Palmer, pastor of Forest Avenue Baptist Church, Redmond, Ore.

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Baptists continue to debate  
defunding of Swiss seminary

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
10/14/91

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Glenn Hinson says he feels "very pained" to "have been used as an excuse" by trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to defund the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

The trustees, many of whom have disagreed about the seminary's theological stance, voted 35-28 on Oct. 9 to cut \$365,000 from the seminary's 1992 operating budget.

They felt the seminary showed it was continuing in a "liberal" direction by allowing Hinson, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., to teach there for four months on sabbatic leave, according to trustee Ron Wilson of California.

Wilson said trustees perceive Hinson, a church history professor, as having liberal views of Scripture.

"I don't regard myself as a liberal," Hinson responded in a telephone interview Oct. 12, describing his beliefs as consistent with "traditional affirmations of the church through the centuries." Southern Seminary President Roy Honeycutt and the faculty association there each issued statements strongly supporting Hinson after FMB trustees targeted the professor. Honeycutt said the action maligned "the reputation of a renowned Christian scholar."

Numerous European Baptist leaders have reacted with dismay to the trustees' action, saying it calls into question their trust and future relationships with the Southern Baptist mission agency. The FMB had promised funding for the Ruschlikon seminary through 1992.

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son, however, said the action will help restore Southern Baptist conservatives' confidence in the Foreign Mission Board, and give them reason to increase their giving to the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for overseas Baptist work.

"The issue is much broader" than Hinson, said Wilson, a member of the trustee committee overseeing mission work in Europe and a pastor in Thousand Oaks, Calif. Questions about theological liberalism at the seminary have been "a problem among conservative people of our denomination for years," he said.

Under the trustees' Oct. 9 action, the \$365,000 allocation earmarked for Ruschlikon will be redirected to theological education efforts in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Trustees also asked for a legal review of documents from previous years in which the mission board agreed to fund the seminary through 1992.

The Foreign Mission Board started the seminary in the Zurich area in 1948. The European Baptist Federation was founded at the seminary, which also has been a catalyst of other cooperative endeavors by European Baptists. The board transferred ownership of the seminary to the federation in 1989.

FMB President R. Keith Parks said he hopes trustees will reinstate the 1992 allocation during their December meeting. But Wilson said he would be "surprised to see it voted on again."

The cut equals nearly 40 percent of the seminary's budget and will begin in two months. But it will not close the institution, according to its president, Southern Baptist missionary John David Hopper. "God will provide for us out of the riches of his grace," he said in a statement issued Oct. 12.

The seminary and its various satellite programs are set to play a key role in evangelism, church planting and Christian education in the wake of communism's collapse in the former Soviet bloc, Parks said. But the defunding will hinder Southern Baptists "from capitalizing on the opportunities that will not be there forever," he said.

Hinson suggested two organizations of Southern Baptist moderates, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Baptist Alliance, consider adding the Ruschlikon seminary to their budgets.

More importantly, Hinson said, the defunding should stir moderates "to think about what their role is going to be in Baptist mission work around the world. Obviously at the moment, they aren't going to have the tremendous resources the Southern Baptist Convention has had in the past. (But) resources are gradually accumulating (and) the moderates may be able to think a little bigger as time goes on."

News of him becoming embroiled in controversy came as "somewhat of a shock but not completely so," Hinson said. SBC conservatives "have been doing this with other people and with me before. The word 'liberal' is mainly a flag word used by the fundamentalists ... the kind of thing which excites a great deal of alarm. And it means anyone who is to the left of them, which of course means almost anybody."

To Wilson, however, "Even the liberals in our denomination consider Glenn Hinson liberal. We're not talking about somebody who's over in the middle. His students know it, his colleagues know it."

Numerous European Baptist leaders voiced strong reactions after receiving news of the defunding.

Karl-Heinz Walter of Hamburg, Germany, general secretary of the European Baptist Federation, described the action as "a breach of trust, not only to the Ruschlikon seminary, but to the EBF and the 32 Baptist unions affiliated with the federation." Recapping reactions of fellow European Baptist leaders, Walter said the FMB vote prompts them to "question the trustworthiness" of the agency for future partnership efforts with European Baptist unions.

trustees seemingly "were not aware of the repercussions of such a step for the credibility of future activities of the (Foreign Mission Board) in Europe," added Wiard Popkes, also of Hamburg, chairman of the seminary's 13-member trustee board.

In the business world, Walter recounted, critical funding decisions are not made "on such short notice." Popkes described the decision as "made altogether unexpectedly, without any consultation" with seminary officials. The action "violates the promise" of the FMB to provide funding at least through 1992, Popkes claimed.

Statements opposing the action also were issued almost immediately by leaders of Baptist unions in England, France, Italy, Finland and Norway.

However, these Baptists do not represent all European Baptists, Wilson contended. "Some European leaders will be very unhappy," he acknowledged. "Others will dance in the streets," especially many in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union who regard Ruschlikon as liberal, he said. They will welcome much-needed funds for theological education efforts in their own countries, he said.

Countering European Baptists now doubting the board's trustworthiness, Wilson pointed to the FMB's transfer of the seminary property, which he said is valued as high as \$40 million, to European Baptists. He said he does not understand "how in the world that can be considered bad faith."

Wilson also cited the 1989 seminary transfer agreement between the FMB and EBF and said a number of conservatives believe the Europeans "are not being sensitive to us," especially in their promise to draft a statement of their beliefs. FMB trustees must represent Southern Baptists, Wilson said, and "I'm of the belief that 90 percent of those people are Bible-believing people." But the European document is vague about "fundamentals of the faith," he said, and could allow liberal views of Jesus and the Bible to be taught at the seminary.

The trustee action is "a strong matter of stewardship," Wilson stated, asking, "How can we in good conscience continue to overlook this?" Previous FMB trustee boards "haven't really approached many of the problems people saw as problems," he said, and many Southern Baptist conservatives consequently "lost confidence in the FMB" and refused even to promote the denomination's annual Christmas offering. The offering accounts for 47 percent of the funds spent on Southern Baptist work overseas.

"Ruschlikon was one of those problems," Wilson said. "I'm not saying it is the biggest problem (but) it was a problem that was highly visible ... and symbolic of some things. The difference between before and now is that you have enough trustees on the board who are concerned about it. Because of our actions, I think there will be more people who will have confidence in us now."

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U.S., Korean Baptists  
to open hospital in Iran

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
10/14/91

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists, in cooperation with Korean Baptists and the Iranian government, are working to open a hospital built 10 years ago in Iran but never put into operation.

The hospital, built by the Iranian government in the city of Piranshahr, became a victim of the financial strain of Iran's 1980-88 war with Iraq.

Now top Iranian officials have approved plans by Korean Baptists to provide initial staffing for the hospital. Southern Baptists will assist the Koreans in securing an estimated \$436,000 in needed equipment.

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hospital project marks the second Southern Baptist involvement this year in work related to Iran. A dozen volunteers traveled to Iran in May with four field kitchens donated by Southern Baptists to open a feeding station at a Kurdish refugee camp. They also trained Iranian Christians to use the equipment in future relief ministries. The feeding program was part of a \$2.4-million Southern Baptist outreach to Kurdish refugees and other victims of the Persian Gulf war.

The hospital will serve the heavily Kurdish city of Piranshahr as well as two refugee camps -- each with about 10,000 Kurds -- and the surrounding Azerbaijani region along Iran's northwest border with Iraq. Piranshahr's 14,000 residents currently have only a first-aid station and ambulance service to the nearest hospital, 60 miles to the north.

No opening date has been set for the hospital, which will have 20 beds. Only heating, air conditioning and laundry equipment were installed originally in the building. The facility includes barren operating and delivery rooms, an X-ray area and outpatient clinic. Another building on the grounds will house medical volunteers.

The clearinghouse for equipment donations by U.S. hospitals, medical suppliers and other organizations will be the Persian Gulf Response Unit of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Used equipment will be welcome but it should be of good quality and fully usable, said Tim Brendle, the unit's executive director.

A list of needed equipment is available from the Persian Gulf Response Unit based at the mission board in Richmond, Va. Items on the list range from delivery room scissors to an X-ray machine.

Staffing for the hospital's first year of operation will be coordinated by Wallace Memorial Baptist Hospital in Pusan, South Korea. The hospital is enlisting 10-member teams to serve three-month periods. Each team will include a surgeon, internal medicine specialist, gynecologist or midwife, three nurses (including an anesthetist), a pharmacist, laboratory technologist, X-ray technician and an administrator.

"We do not anticipate being able to use American volunteers initially," Brendle said. "But we hope that the opportunity would come later for some American involvement."

Baptist relief efforts coordinated with Iranian officials earlier this year yielded this "opportunity for extended ministry," Brendle noted. Even before the Southern Baptist feeding team's arrival, three doctors from the Wallace hospital traveled to Iran to survey medical ministry possibilities among displaced Kurds.

The hospital's director, Sung Chin Kim, "emerged from that experience with a vision for further involvement of Koreans in partnership with Southern Baptists," Brendle recounted. "And the Iranian government saw that we could deliver on our promises." Kim and the Pusan hospital's chief of internal medicine, Jun Sang Lee, traveled to Tehran in July and met with numerous Iranian officials to review the hospital project. "The site the government has identified gives us a wonderful opportunity to provide medical ministry among the Kurdish and the Azerbaijani peoples," Brendle said.

Although the Piranshahr area has a large Kurdish population, it is located in the western part of Iran's Azerbaijani province.

An estimated 400,000 Iraqi Kurds trekked through the Piranshahr area after the Kurds' unsuccessful rebellion against Saddam Hussein on the heels of his defeat in the Persian Gulf war. In all, more than 1.5 million Kurds fled into Iran and Turkey. Many thousands died in cold, rainy mountain weather during their flight to avoid retribution by Iraqi forces.

Public relations leader,  
Larry Crisman, dies

By Orville Scott

DALLAS (BP)--Larry Crisman, 49, former vice president of public relations for Buckner Baptist Benevolences in Dallas, died Oct. 12 in Garland, Texas, after a long battle with cancer.

Crisman was vice president of public relations for Buckner Benevolences from September, 1989, until this fall when his illness prevented him from serving.

He was director of public relations for the South Carolina Baptist Convention, from 1981-86; associate director of public relations for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board from 1976-80; assistant to the vice president of public relations and development at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas, from 1968-76.

Crisman was a reporter with the Dallas Times-Herald in 1965, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram in 1964, and the Brownwood (Texas) Bulletin in 1962-63.

He did public relations with the U.S. Army in West Germany from 1966-68.

Crisman received the bachelor of arts and master of arts degrees from Howard Payne University and also attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy Crisman of Garland; three sons, Jay Crisman of Lancaster, Texas, Chris Crisman of Dallas, and Damon Crisman of Brownwood; his mother, Joye Crisman of Lancaster; and a granddaughter.

In lieu of flowers a memorial fund has been established for children at Buckner Benevolences.

A graveside service will be Oct. 15 at Edgewood Cemetery in Lancaster, Texas.