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Defunding ruptures trust, hastens
seminary fund-raising, Hopper says By Robert O'Brien

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The president of the international Baptist seminary in Switzerland says the vote by Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees to defund the seminary's operating budget is rupturing European trust of Southern Baptists and forcing the seminary to accelerate fund-raising efforts.

In a statement released Oct. 29, John David Hopper said the trustees' unexpected action "dismayed" and "deeply saddened" him and outraged European Baptist leaders. FMB trustees voted 35-28 on Oct. 9 to cut the \$365,000 the board had allocated for the 1992 operating budget of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and redirect the money to theological needs in Eastern Europe.

The action could cause many European Baptists to sever relations with Southern Baptists, said Hopper, a Southern Baptist missionary who was elected seminary president in 1988. It also has caused many to feel "the Foreign Mission Board is dismissing them as being insignificant and is failing to recognize their religious freedom," Hopper added. "It is rupturing a relationship it took more than 40 years to build," Hopper said. He cited responses from Baptist leaders in 17 countries who have expressed shock and urged FMB trustees to reconsider their vote.

Hopper specifically quoted Baptist executives from the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, England, Scotland and Wales.

"That (rupture of relationships) is ironic since the seminary was started by Southern Baptists in 1948 as a gesture of reconciliation in postwar Europe," he said. The Foreign Mission Board deeded the school to European Baptists in 1989.

"The hope which remains at this moment is that wise trustees of the Richmond board will reconsider the hasty action taken on Oct. 9 and rescind it," Hopper said. "Many Europeans, Americans and others see no reason to try to kill an institution at the heart of Baptist work on this continent for more than 40 years."

FMB trustees, however, feel their vote does not breach trust and that other European Baptists would agree with it, according to trustee Ron Wilson of California. Trustees had "to vote our conscience," Wilson said.

Many of the trustees have disagreed with the seminary's theological stance for years, Wilson said. They felt the school showed a continuing "liberal" direction by recently allowing Glenn Hinson, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., to teach for four months on sabbatic leave. Trustees perceive Hinson as "liberal," Wilson said.

Hinson responded he was "very pained" to be "used as an excuse" for the action. "I don't regard myself as liberal," he said, calling his beliefs consistent with "traditional affirmations of the church through the centuries."

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The Ruschlikon seminary board made plans a year ago to raise funds, anticipating the FMB would begin decreasing budget contributions after 1992 under longstanding agreements, Hopper said. Now it will accelerate efforts in Europe and the United States for a three-year fund-raising campaign. It also will accept designated gifts through the Foreign Mission Board; the Baptist Cooperative Missions Program, Inc., in Atlanta; and the Friends of Ruschlikon Foundation in San Antonio, Texas.

Hopper called the defunding, which represents about 40 percent of the seminary's operating budget, "a devastating blow" to Southern Baptist work in Europe and to the families of faculty, staff and students from 23 countries and five continents.

But "the psychological impact (throughout Europe) is worse than the monetary impact," he said. "To break these ties of 43 years abruptly, without consultation and in the face of agreements worked out in 1978, again in 1982, and reaffirmed in 1988, has provoked a storm of protest all over the continent. The agreements unmistakably commit the Foreign Mission Board to provide \$365,000 in 1992 followed by a decreasing subsidy for up to 15 years thereafter.

"What has been lost is trust and confidence for the Foreign Mission Board," Hopper said.

"National leaders among these Baptists unions have made it clear that this unwarranted action by the (FMB) trustees, taken despite the counsel of (FMB President) Keith Parks and an experienced FMB staff who know European countries well, could mean the severing of many or most working relationships between the SBC and cooperating Baptists of Europe," he said.

Pavel Vychopen, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Czechoslovakia, took note of the reconciling role Ruschlikon has played and called the FMB trustee decision "an unfriendly action toward us," Hopper said.

"In no means could we accept an argument that money released in this way will be used to support theological training in Eastern Europe," Vychopen said of the trustee decision to use the \$365,000 cut from Ruschlikon for theological education in that part of the world.

"We will not only be unprepared to receive such money, but we will have to re-examine our recently renewed relationships with (the) Southern Baptist Convention," said Vychopen, who urged the FMB to reconsider.

"I am afraid ... our people will fear that in the future the SBC will not respect the Hungarian mission agreements," added Janos Viczian, president of the Baptist Union of Hungary. "Any time they might withdraw their financial support and even their missionaries, Ruschlikon could be the first step and we could be the second.

"I am sure the Foreign Mission Board members did not recognize that in Eastern Europe we have religious freedom, and without any problem the students from these countries can attend the International Baptist Seminary," Viczian continued. "This decision now makes this impossible."

Five top Baptist executives from England, Scotland and Wales jointly stated the action has "the unfortunate effect of making Baptists in Europe, many of whom are in partnership with the Foreign Mission Board, ask searching questions as to whether the word of the trustees is their bond. We believe the trustees need to face the moral questions raised by their decision."

But trustees, Wilson said, feel their vote will cause "more people to have confidence" because they have dealt with an issue of theological integrity.

In 1988 trustees asked European Baptist and seminary leaders to respond to 10 recommendations prior to the board's May 1989 transfer of ownership of the Ruschlikon seminary to the European Baptist Federation. The points included a request that they put a statement of European Baptist beliefs in writing.

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European Baptists responded to the 10 points, but many trustees continue to be displeased with a statement of beliefs that was a part of this document. Hinson's teaching assignment does not indicate good faith, Wilson 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."

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Rogers to direct development
for European Baptist seminary

By Robert O'Brien

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, has named David Rogers of Nashville, Tenn., as its vice president for development.

He will help the school step up efforts to raise funds in the United States and Europe, according to seminary president John David Hopper.

Rogers, 44, will direct the U.S. fund-raising campaign and assist its development in Europe, Hopper said. Rogers, who will continue to live in Nashville, also will establish a long-range public relations and development program for the seminary.

A former special assistant to Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander, Rogers has worked in several public relations, development, public affairs and marketing positions in the public and private sectors. Since 1989 he has directed public relations for Gish, Sherwood and Friends, a Nashville advertising and public relations firm.

Trustees of the Ruschlikon seminary made plans a year ago to raise funds because they anticipated the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board would begin decreasing contributions to the seminary's budget after 1992 under longstanding agreements, Hopper said in a statement released Oct. 29.

Now, following an unexpected decision of FMB trustees to defund the seminary's 1992 operating budget, the seminary will accelerate fund-raising efforts in the United States and Europe, he said. FMB trustees voted 35-28 on Oct. 9 to cut \$365,000 earmarked for the seminary's operating budget and use the funds for theological needs in Eastern Europe.

The plans resulted not only in the employment of Rogers but also the engaging of Cargill Associates of Fort Worth, Texas, to do a feasibility study and conduct the necessary research for a three-year fund-raising campaign, Hopper said. The study began July 1.

Darold Morgan, retired president of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, and others have volunteered to begin "recruiting donors who will be pace-setters in the (fund-raising) campaign," Hopper added.

The financial plan includes accepting designated gifts through the Foreign Mission Board; the Baptist Cooperative Missions Program, Inc., in Atlanta; and the Friends of Ruschlikon Foundation, established about two years ago in San Antonio, Texas. P. Joseph Brake, an attorney and Southern Baptist layman in San Antonio, is president of the foundation, Hopper said.

Rogers said he accepted the opportunity to work with the Ruschlikon seminary because he was inspired by the spiritual results "taking place between peoples of diverse cultures and languages as they learn about Jesus Christ and the power of God's word."

At a time of great changes and new opportunities around the world, particularly in Europe, the Ruschlikon seminary can make a great impact on world evangelization, missions and theological education, he said.

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"Most Southern Baptists in the pews don't know what's taking place in Ruschlikon and its potential," said Rogers, a member of Crieveewood Baptist Church in Nashville, where his wife is minister to youth.

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Brotherhood trustees approve reorganization,
corporate planning process, growth goals

Baptist Press
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By Steve Barber

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--James D. Williams, newly-installed president of the Baptist Brotherhood Commission, revealed his vision of the agency's future to its board of trustees and gained approval for reorganization of the staff, the outline of a long-term corporate planning process, and a list of short-term strategic growth goals for 1991-92.

The agency's trustees, meeting Oct. 25-26, unanimously approved a personnel reorganization plan that creates the office of program services and the office of support services, while moving the functions of the church and denominational relations division to the office of the president and to program services.

The plan is effective Nov. 1.

Michael Day, currently director of church and denominational relations, was elected as associate to the president and will be responsible for denominational relations, communications, planning and research. Douglas Beggs, now serving as director of the adult division, was elected as vice-president for the office of program services, a new position. Jim Ferguson, now serving as director of Baptist Men and Senior Baptist Men under Beggs, was elected as director of the adult division.

Responsibility for World Missions Conferences, formerly in church and denominational relations, and Brotherhood administration will continue with Kenny Rains, who will be reassigned to program services. Jack Childs, a 30-year veteran of Brotherhood work on the Memphis staff, will continue as vice-president in the office of support services, which includes the functions of marketing, information services, accounting, property management and distribution services.

Williams acknowledged "not every block" on the new organizational chart was filled, but added he viewed the plan as "a concept for future directions that will move us forward in fulfilling the mission of this historic agency and in carrying out our assigned program responsibilities."

Major objectives embodied in the plan include strengthening the program services area, fixing accountability for program and product development, providing "integration and interaction" between program services and support services, bolstering the marketing and financial accounting functions, and expanding the functions of communications, planning and research.

"I don't want us ever to lose the spontaneity of responding to what the Father is doing, but at the same time I want our decisions to be informed by objective research," Williams said. "We also need to expand our communications function. I want Southern Baptists to really know about us, because the more they know about us, the more they will be blessed by our materials and programs. Some are the best-kept secrets in the Southern Baptist Convention, and I want to change that."

The trustees also approved a new framework for developing long-range plans led by a "blue ribbon panel" consisting of the agency's current cabinet-level staff and five additional staff members. The group will work to develop a planning process and a corporate priority Plan by April 1, 1992. The development of a strategic program plan and an operational plan will follow, with completion targeted for October 1992.

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"Good planning helps you anticipate or 'pre-live' what could happen," Williams said. "I would like for us to develop the kind of planning that is realistic and helps us create the kind of future that God would want us to have. I don't want this planning process to interfere in any way with our immediate and spontaneous response to new opportunities."

While the planning process is under way, the agency's staff will work to achieve 29 "strategic growth goals" also presented to trustees. Typical of the highly-focused, specific targets include increasing sales of merchandise through Baptist Book Stores by five percent, increasing sales of Brotherhood Commission periodicals by an average of five percent, and doubling the number of participants in World Changers, the agency's coeducational mission action option for youth.

"These more immediate, short-term goals represent some very creative work on the part of our cabinet, and if we achieve them, they could generate more than \$600,000 in additional revenue growth during this year," Williams said.

In other action, the trustees:

-- Adopted a revised budget for 1991-92 reflecting total anticipated income of \$4 million.

-- Approved plans for strengthening the agency's financial base by establishing a program reserve fund, and fixed-asset reserve fund, and a contingency reserve fund.

-- Elected new officers. They are Joe T. Lenamon, senior bank official from Fort Worth, Texas, chairman; Joe Herndon, retired engineer from Duncan, Okla., vice-chairman; and Willard Finch, retired college administrator from Winterville, N.C., secretary.

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Williams installed
as Brotherhood president

By Steve Barber

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MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--An "honored and humbled" James D. Williams accepted the Baptist Brotherhood Commission's mantle of office from his predecessor Oct. 25 at First Baptist Church of Memphis, Tenn., and pledged, as the agency's sixth president in 85 years, to deepen its cooperative relationships and remain faithful to its heritage as a laymen's missionary movement.

"I am both honored and humbled by the opportunity to serve the commission as its sixth president. I will work with the trustees, the Brotherhood Commission staff, our state Brotherhood personnel, and in full partnership with the leadership of Woman's Missionary Union, the Foreign Mission Board, the Home Mission Board, and our 19 other Southern Baptist agencies to strengthen our commitment to world evangelism and missions," said Williams, after accepting a newly-minted medallion from former president James H. Smith.

Williams stressed the importance of lay involvement in the expansion of the Christian church from its New Testament beginnings. He cited the examples of the first missionaries, Paul and Barrancas, and the first person to "lay down his life for the gospel," Stephen.

"Each believer is called of God to be a minister in his world and is given grace gifts for the work of ministry," Williams said. "Missions is what a church and church members do to extend Christ's witness and ministry beyond themselves to bring all persons to Christ and glorify God. That's what Brotherhood is all about."

Several Southern Baptists representing the wide range of the convention's work joined Williams and his wife, Jo, on a platform backed by a display of flags from nations where the denomination has ongoing work.

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They included Dellanna O'Brien, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union, who brought a verbal challenge, while Lloyd Elder, former president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, offered the prayer of dedication. Harold C. Bennett, president of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, offered the benediction.

Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board, discussed his agency's longtime partnership in missions with the Brotherhood Commission. Remarks from Keith Parks, president of the Foreign Mission Board, were viewed on video tape.

"It's gratifying that a large number of our Southern Baptist leaders are with us for this time of celebration," Williams said.

He added "God has been at work in my life" since mid-April, when he was first interviewed by the Brotherhood Commission's presidential search committee. "He has been directing me toward this challenging opportunity to serve the churches through our convention-assigned program and as believers to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with a broken and sinful world.

"To all of you here assembled and to all Southern Baptists, I earnestly beseech your prayerful support for both Jo and me, as together we take up this new work," he said. "My prayer is that God will give us his wisdom, strength, and courage for every single day of this grand journey upon which we have embarked."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Brotherhood Commission

Teenagers' private habits
reflect church attendance

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
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ATLANTA (BP)--Teenagers who attend church are more likely to continue to worship when they are alone and to report having a personal experience with God, a Gallup youth survey shows.

Telephone interviews with 513 youth between the ages of 13 and 17 reveal among teenagers who attended church within the last seven days, 87 percent pray when they are alone and 65 percent read the Bible when they are alone.

These figures compare with an overall statistic of 74 percent who pray when they are alone and 44 percent who read the Bible when they are alone.

The overall figure includes 42 percent who pray frequently plus 32 percent who pray occasionally. The Bible readers include 13 percent who read a Bible by themselves regularly and 31 percent who do so occasionally.

Only 9 percent of the teenagers said they never pray by themselves, and 26 percent said they have never read they Bible by themselves.

Of the youth who attended a church service in the past week, 41 percent reported having a personal experience with God at some time. Overall, only 29 percent of the youth reported a personal encounter with God.

Past surveys have consistently reported about 95 percent of the nation's youth believe in God. The latest report indicates 93 percent of youth believe in God and believe that he loves them.

Only 2 percent said there is no God, or if there is one, they are not loved by him. Three percent of teens said they are not certain if God exists and if he loves them.

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