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February 23, 1996

96-32

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**CALENDAR**

DALLAS--Annuity Board trustee meeting, Feb. 26-27.

Chuck Kelley unanimously elected  
 president of New Orleans Seminary By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press  
 2/23/96

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Charles S. "Chuck" Kelley Jr. was elected unanimously Feb. 23 as the eighth president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Kelley, professor of evangelism at New Orleans Seminary since August 1983, will assume the office of president March 1. He succeeds Landrum P. Leavell II, president from 1975-95. Billy K. Smith, provost and academic dean of the graduate faculty, has been interim president since Dec. 12.

The 12-member presidential search committee, chaired by Morris Anderson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pigeon Forge, Tenn., reached a unanimous decision on recommending Kelley in a Feb. 6 meeting.

In accordance with a selection procedure approved in the March 1995 trustee meeting, board members were given two-weeks' notice for the special called two-day meeting, Feb. 22-23.

The special called session for the full board of trustees included a Thursday night dinner meeting with Kelley and his wife, Rhonda, and a Friday morning open session meeting which concluded with a voice vote. A spontaneous standing ovation occurred as the Kelleys re-entered the board room.

Trustees proceeded with Kelley to the seminary chapel, where faculty, staff and students waited to hear the official announcement. Following an introduction of the new president by Anderson, those in attendance gave a standing ovation. Trustee Chairman Ed Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Ocala, Fla., praised Kelley for his servant's heart, then held a presidential commissioning service, with the Kelleys kneeling at the front of the podium area.

The trustees approved in executive session a total compensation package for Kelley as president of \$125,727.

Kelley, 43, has been the Roland Q. Leavell professor of evangelism at New Orleans Seminary since August 1983. In March 1993 he was named chairman of the seminary's largest division, pastoral ministries. In June 1993 he was named director of Southern Baptists' first Center for Evangelism and Church Growth, located on the front block of the NOBTS campus. He also served from 1983-93 as the seminary's director of field education.

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A much-requested public speaker throughout the Southern Baptist Convention, Kelley is recognized widely both for his evangelistic preaching and for his research in the area of "baby boomers" and "busters." He is the author of numerous denominational articles, training materials and books, including "How Did They Do It? The Story of Southern Baptist Evangelism" and "The Roman Road" tract, teacher's guide, learner's guide and training video produced by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and used throughout the SBC during the 1995 "Here's Hope" nationwide evangelism campaign.

Originally from Beaumont, Texas, he is the son of Charles and Doris Kelley, who still reside in Beaumont. He was ordained to the ministry in February 1972. Kelley graduated from Baylor University, Waco, Texas, in 1974 with a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy. He received two degrees from New Orleans Seminary, a master of divinity degree in 1978, specializing in biblical studies, and a doctor of theology degree in preaching in 1983.

Rhonda Harrington Kelley was born in Tuscaloosa, Ala., but raised in New Orleans. She is the daughter of Bob and Joyce Harrington, also of New Orleans.

After graduating from Baylor University with both bachelor's and master's degrees in speech pathology and audiology, in 1974 and 1975, respectively, she completed a doctor of philosophy degree in special education and speech pathology at the University of New Orleans in 1983. From 1978-94 she worked for Ochsner Clinic and Alton Ochsner Medical Foundation Hospital, where she served as director of the division of communicative disorders. She now is a consultant for Ochsner's craniofacial team. She has been an adjunct professor at NOBTS for communication and various student wives' courses for more than 10 years.

An active member of the First Baptist Church in New Orleans, she has been for many years a favorite speaker for classes, Bible studies and women's retreats across the nation, as well as the writer of numerous articles for religious publications.

Rhonda Kelley was managing editor and contributor to the new "Woman's Study Bible," produced at the end of 1995 by Thomas Nelson Publishers of Nashville, Tenn. Since 1989 she has been the host of "Woman to Woman" a weekly half-hour inspirational broadcast on the local FM Christian radio station and the local ACTS network, featuring interviews with various personalities on topics of interest to women. Since 1980 she has been a member of the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.

She is the author of two other books, "Divine Discipline: How to Develop and Maintain Self-Control," released in 1992, and a study guide for "Don't Miss the Blessing," released in 1990, both published by Pelican Publishing Company of Gretna, La.

New Orleans Seminary, one of six Southern Baptist seminaries, is the nation's third-largest. Established in 1917, NOBTS is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to offer associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees.

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An expanded story will be released Monday, Feb. 26, concerning Kelley's pre-election meetings with trustees and faculty.

Covenant implementation chair  
reports progress, challenges

By Bill Merrell

Baptist Press  
2/23/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Robert Reccord, chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Implementation Task Force, in a Feb. 23 report announced William Pinson will chair and name other members to a committee of three or four state Baptist convention executive directors "to be an information resource" for the ITF's work as it relates to state conventions.

Reccord said he asked Pinson, executive director-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Texas who is president of the state executives' group, to chair and name the committee.

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Also in his report of the ITF's work overseeing the SBC restructuring, Reccord spoke of the feelings created by such change -- a denominational reshaping which he affirmed is "complex and challenging."

In a recent meeting with Baptist state executive-directors, Reccord reported, he asked that they become a "resource pool" as the SBC transitions into the "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring aimed at strengthening the SBC's service to churches toward fulfilling the Great Commission during the coming century.

The restructuring, which includes a reduction in the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12, was approved by messengers to the SBC sesquicentennial in Atlanta. The 10-member ITF was created last September by the SBC Executive Committee.

Reccord said he told the state leaders the ITF needs their insight into how the restructuring impacts issues on a state level.

"They will help us see these issues more clearly from a state convention perspective," said Reccord, pastor of First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va., and a member of the SBC Executive Committee.

Reccord noted, "One of the key concerns in state conventions is how cooperative agreements between the Home Mission Board and the states will be affected. The Covenant announced the firm intention of continuing and enhancing the practice of cooperative agreements."

The Home Mission Board and the Brotherhood Commission, whose ministries under the covenant will become part of the North American Mission Board, work in close concert with state conventions. Said Reccord, "This process (with the state leaders) provides an outstanding opportunity for evaluation and development of even better ways of working together."

Reccord, in his report, noted the ITF has worked more than 1,800 hours on the transition.

Likening the SBC restructuring to a family moving across country, Reccord said it is only natural for people to fear change. "The part of change that is so uncomfortable for many of us is ambiguity; we tend to want all the 'i's' dotted and all the 't's' crossed," he said.

"This ambiguity requires leaders to exercise clear vision and wisdom in planning," he continued. "The book, 'The Leadership Challenge' by Kouzes and Posner, brings this into focus when it says, 'There is no freeway to the future; no paved highway from here to tomorrow. There is only wilderness; only uncertain terrain. There are no road maps. No sign posts. So, pioneering leadership must rely on a compass and a dream.'"

Under terms of the Covenant, the Education, Historical and Stewardship commissions are to be dissolved and their work assigned to other agencies. The ITF has devoted a significant part of its time to dealing with personnel matters growing out of these changes, Reccord said.

"To the best of our ability," he said, "we're trying to assure parity and equity for those affected by these changes."

A part of the ITF assignment Reccord described as "challenging" relates to three agencies slated to be replaced by a new one -- the HMB, Brotherhood Commission and Radio and Television Commission merging into the North American Mission Board, the agency charged with leading in the evangelization of North America.

"It's important to remember that the North American Mission Board does not involve simply 'Velcro-ing' two entities into an already existing one," Reccord said. "This involves the creation of a brand new entity. That issue alone has many complexities and challenges."

**Coppenger inauguration slates****Adrian Rogers, Carl F.H. Henry By Martin F. King**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--One of Southern Baptists' premier preachers and one of the century's leading evangelical theologians will be the featured speakers at the April 20-22 inauguration of Mark T. Coppenger as president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis, Tenn., will preach at a community-wide rally to be held on the seminary campus Sunday evening, April 21. Henry will bring the inaugural address on Monday afternoon, April 22.

Inaugural activities, including a 24-hour prayer and fasting vigil, will be held in a 1,200-seat tent pitched on the front lawn of the seminary campus, "to signal our allegiance to the spirit of the assembly tabernacle," Coppenger said.

"These events will highlight four of Midwestern's strongest themes: prayer, revival, biblical preaching and sound theology. We pray many of our Southern Baptist family will be able to join us in this celebration."

Coppenger became Midwestern's third president Aug. 1 and has pledged to emphasize academic excellence, conservative theology and missions and evangelism.

Southern Baptists from the 14 states served by Midwestern are being invited to join seminary students, trustees, faculty and staff in the 24-hour prayer vigil, which begins at 6 p.m. Saturday, April 20.

"In keeping with our theme of prairie fire, of reaching the Midwest and Great Plains region, we want to bring prayer warriors to campus to intercede for the seminary at this pivotal time in her history," Coppenger said.

Those interested in participating in the prayer vigil may contact the seminary relations office for further information.

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**SWBTS receives \$1 million pledge****for continuing education center By Brian Smith****Baptist Press****2/23/96**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary received a pledge of \$1 million from Triple J. Development, Inc., of Baton Rouge, La., Feb. 22. The initial lead gift to be applied to Southwestern's Center for Continuing Education is scheduled to be paid over the next five to seven years.

"We're obviously excited that Triple J. Development is going to help us make the continuing education facility a reality in the very near future," said Seminary President Ken Hemphill. "This is going to be an exciting building for everybody, not only on our campus, but for our alumni and others."

The Center for Continuing Education is designed to be a multipurpose facility as well as a welcome center for the seminary. The multimillion-dollar center will have lodging for more than 200 people and conference and banquet rooms.

"We will be able to house groups for continuing education conferences and weekend retreats from our state, association and churches in the surrounding area," said Jack D. Terry Jr., vice president for institutional advancement. "It likewise will have facilities that could accommodate large senior citizen groups that could come to the campus for conferences."

Other potential uses include hosting youth groups during the summer months and campus ministry conferences and retreats, Terry said.

"It's the kind of building that has a very large appeal to many, many different groups -- but its primary purpose would be for continuing education for ministers and staff people," Terry said.

"The continuing education building has been a dream for many years and is essential for the future development and expansion of the continuing education program," said David Fite, Southwestern's director of continuing education.

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Seminary officials expect the gift to open doors for further financial assistance from donors throughout Texas and the rest of the country.

"We're very excited, because this gives us an opportunity to investigate other foundations who, knowing we have a lead gift, may be interested in sharing their financial resources with us," Terry noted.

Triple J. Development, Inc., was formed about four years ago, and the pledge to Southwestern is the organization's 10 percent tithe off expected earnings from a business venture to be launched in 1996. That venture is a medical treatment for obesity and originally was developed by Michael Girouard, retired anesthesiologist and expert in obesity treatment from New Orleans. Triple J. Development also is involved with firms that provide treatment for certain strains of diabetes.

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Injured missionary, son  
show slight improvement

Baptist Press  
2/23/96

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionary Wade Watts, who sustained brain injuries in an automobile accident in Peru Feb. 1, is showing some slight improvement at Baptist Memorial Hospital-Central in Memphis, Tenn.

Watts, who remains in a coma and in critical but stable condition, opened his eyes Feb. 22, said Marvin Fitts of Memphis, a former Southern Baptist missionary to Peru. Physicians said some fluid in Watts' lungs had cleared, and he may be able to breathe without the aid of a respirator in a few days, Fitts said.

Watts' 9-year-old son, Marcus, who also sustained brain injuries in the wreck, remains in a coma at Lebonheur Children's Medical Center in Memphis. He also is showing some slight signs of improvement, Fitts said. On Feb. 22 he was able to eat some pudding and indicated he understood what his nurse said to him, Fitts said.

Watts' wife, Nancy, 35, and their other son, Joshua, 7, are recovering at the Memphis home of her mother. They sustained less serious injuries in the Feb. 1 wreck on a mountain road near Huancayo, Peru. Joshua is expected to begin attending school in Memphis the week of Feb. 26, Fitts said.

Mrs. Watts and Joshua stayed briefly with the Fitts family after they were released from hospitals in Memphis. Fitts' wife, Jean, had taught high school with Wade Watts in the late 1970s in West Memphis, Ark., before Watts became a missionary.

The Watts family "believes very much in prayer, and so do we," Fitts said. "We really feel that prayer may be Wade's (only) salvation now."

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Airport chaplain addresses  
needs of travelers, workers

By James Dotson

Baptist Press  
2/23/96

ATLANTA (BP)--The electronic voice on the tram at Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport is symbolic of the often-stark atmosphere of airports in general and Hartsfield in particular.

"Stop! Do Not Enter!" the speakers drone. "The doors are ready to close."

People are generally in a hurry, often away from family and familiar environments, and sometimes facing grave personal crises.

But there is another voice at Hartsfield injecting a dose of warm humanity into the sprawling morass of concrete and steel. It is that of R.D. "Denny" Spear, airport chaplain, and those of the volunteers who work out of the airport's Interfaith Chapel.

"Would it be all right if I came in here not to complain about lost baggage, but just to tell you that I hope you have a great day," Spear says to a woman working at the lost baggage desk.

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As he walks by the drop-off point at the terminal, he asks a skycap -- in an apparent daze with head resting in hands -- what he would rather be doing. He would much rather be in a recording studio, the young man says, producing music. A connection is made, pleasantries are exchanged and Spear moves on.

It has been called "sidewalk counseling," Spear says, initiating brief exchanges of encouragement that also can make individuals more comfortable to later talk about deeper issues if the need arises.

Spear, a former pastor of Atlanta's Dunwoody Baptist Church and long-time chaplaincy director for Days Inns of America, has held the airport chaplaincy post since 1992. He said airport chaplaincy does involve the emergencies that many would expect of such a role -- assisting in informing travelers of deaths of family members, counseling distraught people seeking comfort in the chapel. But more routinely he sees it as a ministry of encouragement to lay ministry -- helping employees as they seek to be the church among the many people they have contact with each day.

"We are trying to say what goes on in the world is important," he said. "This is the church out here, these people ... and we try to facilitate them in their ministry." God too often is relegated to a Sunday existence in the lives of many Christians, he said, and he sees himself as an emissary of the institutional church to people of faith in the workplace, to "encourage them at work to feel the presence of God."

The airport chapel ministry in its present form began about 1980, Spear said, when a Presbyterian layman began working to make it reality. Eventually it became a project of the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta, which helped organize a separate board for the chapel. Charles Shirley, a former Southern Baptist missionary, was the chaplain until he retired in 1992.

As a condition of the city-owned airport, which provides the space, the chapel must serve all religions. That means, for instance, the small chapel approximately 10 feet by 20 feet is sparsely decorated because no particular religion can be favored. There are rows of chairs separated by a center aisle, with a small table at the front.

The chapel's logo is a simple kneeling figure, a symbol since adopted by other airport chapels and some hospitals around the world.

The new chapel is closer to the center of activity in the airport, located in a broad corridor leading to the new three-story atrium mall -- another effort at bringing more light and beauty into the airport -- located between the north and south terminals.

There are often at least one or two volunteers working with Spear. Some stay at the chapel while he walks around the airport. Others go out themselves and make rounds of the concourses, greeting employees and making themselves available to help.

There are the emergencies, of course, but even then Spear said it is the employees who often meet the human needs. Once he saw a group of flight attendants huddled around a couple from the Netherlands who had just learned their 18-month-old child had died. Their vacation was cut short. Spear said he "kind of eased up and let them see me," to let them know he was available if they needed him. They didn't.

On other occasions the duties of a professional chaplain are required. Once a woman had to be notified that her husband, who was supposed to pick her up at the airport, had died before he left home, for instance. Spear was called on to assist police in giving the news.

At other times, a simple advocate is needed to lend a hand, such as a woman in a wheelchair with poor eyesight having a hard time finding her ground transportation. A chapel volunteer walked around the terminal looking for her ride, while an airport security guard -- who is also a deacon in his church and a prime example cited by Spear of the ministry of the laity -- kept an eye out for the woman nearby.

Spear acknowledged the dilemmas faced by serving as an interfaith chaplain while coming from a faith that is exclusive in its claims, but he said there is a place for the type of low-key spiritual presence he provides. "Christians have to cooperate for some common good," he said.

Spear said the question for groups such as the Interfaith Airport Chaplaincy - which includes two Muslims and two Jews on its 50-member board -- is, "Can they really work together? Can they cooperate when it comes to providing for people's needs?"

"We are happy that we are here in the airport," he said.

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FIRST-PERSON  
If churches were  
Wal-Mart stores

Baptist Press  
2/23/96

By Ken Marler

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--My grandfather is 94 years old, and acts 60. He has unbelievably good health and an active lifestyle. My grandmother is almost as active at 88.

They live in It, Miss. Yes, It.

That's the name of the community just off Interstate 55 south between Gallman and Wesson, Miss. There is a sign proclaiming, "This is It." I have always wanted a second sign not far down the road reading "That was It."

Every Thursday, my grandfather drives about 20 miles to Wal-Mart in Hazelhurst. That is senior adult day, and he can get free coffee. He doesn't miss that day at Wal-Mart. When I envision my grandfather at Wal-Mart, I see him making sure everyone knows he's in the building. After all, when you're 94, you want everyone to know you're still alive.

When I asked my grandfather why he drives the 40-mile round trip for a free cup of coffee, he says, "Well, I like the free coffee, and I also like the way the clerks hug on me."

Once when my grandfather went to Wal-Mart, it just happened to be his birthday. When he entered the door, he found the clerks had thrown him a birthday party -- cake, candles, balloons, ice cream and a newspaper photographer were all there. (Of course, there was free coffee, also.)

Wal-Mart knows my grandfather, and they know his name and when his birthday is.

Now it is very interesting that my grandfather does not go to church. He is a Christian, and my grandmother doesn't miss church. But my grandfather just doesn't go.

And I think I know why.

At Wal-Mart he gets what he doesn't get at church. The ingredients he misses at church? Hugs, people knowing his name, birthday parties, a sense of belonging and being appreciated.

You see, it doesn't matter if you are 4 or 94, you like this type of attention. Age is not the issue. The issue is feeling like you belong and that you are a part of what's going on.

If my grandfather were in your church, would he get the Wal-Mart reception?

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Marler is field services planning and projects coordinator in the field services section of the Baptist Sunday School Board's ministry and leadership development department.

HOUSE MAIL

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