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Reighard and Pollard named
chairs for Crossover Atlanta

By Mark Wingfield

N-NMB

ATLANTA (BP)--Dwight "Ike" Reighard and Frank Pollard have been named co-chairmen of Crossover Atlanta, an evangelistic effort in Atlanta prior to the 1991 Southern Baptist Convention.

The two pastors were appointed by SBC President Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas. Their role will be to enlist churches from across the nation to become partners with Atlanta-area churches in the pre-convention evangelistic blitz.

Reighard is pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga., and served as chairman of the committee on order of business at last year's annual meeting. Pollard is pastor of First Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss., and is former president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

In an address to the SBC Executive Committee in September, Chapman had proposed a program called Crossover America to evangelize the nation's cities.

Chapman said he hopes Crossover Atlanta will be the first of many programs under the banner of Crossover America. The idea of "crossover" is to place Southern Baptists from all parts of the nation in evangelism projects in key cities, he said.

Crossover Atlanta will be a convention-wide project managed by the Home Mission Board's evangelism section. It will be an expanded version of evangelistic blitzes held in conjunction with annual meetings in Las Vegas, Nev., in 1989 and in New Orleans in 1990.

Plans are already underway for Crossover Indianapolis when Southern Baptists meet there in 1992, said Bobby Sunderland, who is the HMB's coordinator for the special evangelism events.

"I was uncertain about our first effort being in Atlanta until Darrell Robinson (HMB evangelism vice president) informed me that 60 percent of people in the Atlanta area are unchurched," Chapman explained. "Then I realized there are still many people to be reached in that area.

"This could be a wonderful opportunity for all Southern Baptists to work together as well as to see countless lives changed," he said. "This is an opportunity for us to work together in evangelism -- an area we all say is important to us."

Crossover Atlanta will team churches from across the nation with Atlanta-area churches for three days of personal evangelism.

Chapman and Sunderland have set a goal of enlisting at least 200 partnership churches in Atlanta. There are 422 Southern Baptist churches in the seven associations of metropolitan Atlanta.

The project will begin Wednesday night, May 29, with crossover rallies in local churches.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday will be spent in door-to-door witnessing. An area-wide rally will be held Friday night, May 31, at Tabernacle Baptist Church, near the Georgia World Congress Center where messengers to the annual convention will convene June 4-6.

Preachers for the Friday night rally will be Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix and Darrell Gilyard, pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Richardson, Texas.

Crossover Atlanta will conclude with Sunday morning celebrations in the participating local churches. "The visiting pastor will preach a message aimed toward reaping the harvest," Chapman explained. "Our goal will be to direct people to local churches where they can make public professions of faith."

An advance effort will be made in the summer of 1991 in Indianapolis, even though the SBC will not meet there until 1992, Sunderland said. Crossover Indianapolis facilitator Cloyd Sullins is seeking teams of adult witnesses to work one-week terms in June, July or August of 1991.

Inquiries about Crossover Atlanta or Crossover Indianapolis should be addressed to Bobby Sunderland, Home Mission Board, 1350 Spring St. NW, Atlanta, Ga. 30367-5601. Telephone calls should be directed to (404) 898-7687.

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Chapman appoints task force
for call to spiritual awakening

By Mark Wingfield

N - HMB

Baptist Press
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ATLANTA (BP)--The Wednesday evening session of the 1991 Southern Baptist Convention will be devoted to a call to prayer for spiritual awakening, SBC President Morris Chapman announced.

Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, has appointed a 10-member task force to plan the event. The task force is led by Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla.

Southern Baptists' 1991 annual meeting is scheduled for June 4-6 in Atlanta.

Most of the Wednesday evening time slot would have been used by the Home Mission Board for its annual report. However, HMB President Larry Lewis agreed to give up his agency's one-hour program for the emphasis on spiritual awakening.

"Larry Lewis believes as I do that America is in great need of spiritual awakening," Chapman said. "It seems very natural for this to occur on the night traditionally given to the Home Mission Board."

The HMB will have a 10-minute report during another session, Chapman said. The Foreign Mission Board will give its customary hour-long report on Tuesday night of the convention.

"Prior to my election, I felt a strong impression from God that if I were elected president, God wanted me to call Southern Baptists to pray for genuine, heaven-sent revival," Chapman said. "I believe America is in trouble."

"It has been more than 85 years since there has been any national spiritual awakening in America, and that was a spillover of the Welsh Revival. More than 130 years have passed since this nation has experienced a revival that swept the nation like a prairie fire ignited from within the country."

"Our generation has not experienced a national revival," Chapman continued. "We are living in a generation that has many answers to a multitude of complex problems and yet the ultimate and only true answer is our Lord Jesus Christ."

Chapman said he believes revival could begin with Southern Baptists in their largest corporate meeting and move into communities across America. "If God will do a special work in the lives of those who attend Wednesday night of the Southern Baptist Convention, then there's the potential for an immediate impact in our churches all across the country."

"Southern Baptists are of such a great number that if we were to experience a mighty move of God's spirit it could bring a sudden and radical change to the spiritual welfare of this nation," he said.

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Henry said he too believes "the time is ripe" for spiritual renewal. "Southern Baptists could be the vanguard of another Great Awakening," he suggested.

The task force will "respond to what we are sensing throughout the country -- a heart-cry for reality and renewal, born on the wings of repentance and a return to our first love, Jesus Christ," Henry said.

Soon after his election last June, Chapman met with prayer leaders from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board, Sunday School Board, Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union. The task force will consult with those prayer leaders in planning the program, he said.

The task force also will work with the committee on order of business in planning the Wednesday night session, Chapman said. "Nothing will be done that will be contradictory to the sense of direction the committee will be planning for the convention. They are in full agreement in allocating Wednesday night for this purpose."

To facilitate this coordination, Danny Watters, chairman of the committee on order of business, will serve on the spiritual awakening task force. Watters is pastor of Beulah Baptist Church in Douglasville, Ga.

Other task force members are: Johnya Davis, pastor's wife from First Baptist Church of Russellville, Ark.; Lewis Drummond, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.; Bill Hogue, executive director of the California Southern Baptist Convention; J.C. Mitchell, president of the Florida Baptist Convention and pastor of First Baptist Church in Winter Park, Fla.; Jeannie Seaborn, pastor's wife from Birchman Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas; Glenn Sheppard, president of International Prayer Ministries and former director of prayer and spiritual awakening with the Home Mission Board; Wallace Williams, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey; and Fred Wolfe, secretary of the SBC Executive Committee and pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala.

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Troops can receive
Christian literature

By Sarah Zimmerman

N- NMB

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ATLANTA (BP)--Christian literature may now be sent to troops in Saudi Arabia, despite earlier restrictions on Christian material entering the Muslim-dominated country.

Lew Burnett, director of military chaplaincy for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, said the change is due to negotiations between Saudi Arabia officials and the U.S. Postal Service. Burnett said one Bible and small amounts of Christian literature may be mailed directly to specific individuals in Saudi Arabia.

Packages weighing up to 70 pounds may be sent through first class mail. Burnett suggested groups wanting to send large quantities of Christian literature contact the HMB chaplaincy division for shipping instructions.

Army, Air Force and Marine personnel on ground units may be addressed at Operation Desert Shield, APO New York 09848-0006. Navy and Marine personnel on ships can be addressed at Operation Desert Shield, FPO New York 09866-0006.

Addresses of specific units are: 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, APO New York 09656; 24th Mechanized Infantry Division, APO New York 09315; 197th Infantry Brigade, APO New York 09315; 82nd Airborne Division, APO New York 09656; Third Armored Cavalry Regiment, APO New York 09209; and 101st Airborne Division, APO New York 09309.

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Ruschlikon trustees grapple with
belief statement, financial needs

By Art Toalston

N- FM/B

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RUSCHLIKON, Switzerland (BP)--A first-ever statement of beliefs shared by European Baptists has been drafted by trustees of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

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Trustees of the 50-student international seminary also are studying the immediate and long-range finances of the institution, as well as the possibility of selling the Ruschlikon property and moving the school. The seminary is facing a possible budget shortfall of \$250,000 during its current fiscal year.

Four task forces were created as part of the seminary's ongoing effort to respond to opportunities in Eastern Europe and the role the seminary will play in European Baptists' desire for the "re-evangelization of Europe."

The proposed statement of European Baptist beliefs, which has not been released yet, is a response to one of 10 recommendations made by Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees prior to their May 1989 transfer of ownership of the seminary to the European Baptist Federation.

Although the 10 points were phrased as recommendations, some Foreign Mission Board trustees have voiced an expectation that European Baptists must fulfill each item -- especially one "to consider the possibility for a written statement of European Baptist principles common to all European Baptists." It would "give expression to the seminary's biblical commitment," the FMB trustees outlined, and would be a statement "to which seminary teachers would subscribe."

A number of European Baptist leaders, meanwhile, have expressed concern that such a statement hints of creedalism, which they traditionally and staunchly have opposed. Some leaders also have feared the drafting of a statement may bring division among European Baptists who differ on various beliefs. Some European Baptists, for example, do not hold to the "eternal security" of those who profess faith in Christ.

A number of confessions of faith have been accepted by Baptists in various European countries over the years, but no general statement of European Baptist beliefs has ever been formulated.

John David Hopper, Ruschlikon seminary president and veteran Southern Baptist representative in Europe, declined to release the proposed statement of European Baptist beliefs, drafted by the seminary's 13 trustees during their Nov. 2-3 meeting. He noted that the trustees undertook the task at the request of the European Baptist Federation's executive committee. That committee, which will meet in April 1991, has received the draft and will decide what steps should be taken next, Hopper said.

The federation's executive committee may decide to forward the draft to the organization's 85-member council, which includes representatives of 26 European Baptist bodies or "unions." The council's next meeting is in September 1991.

Regarding the seminary's financial troubles, most of the projected budget shortfall for the year stems from the declining value of the U.S. dollar in Europe, Hopper said. About 55 percent of the seminary's funds come in U.S. dollars. When the dollar drops, a part of the institution's anticipated budget "goes up in smoke," he explained.

The projected shortfall will deplete the seminary's reserve funds, which had accumulated in bonds over the years. Future deficits will require the institution to borrow against its property, Hopper said.

Cost-of-living hikes in various European countries also are contributing to the shortfall as well as creating financial difficulties for Baptist unions and the European Baptist Federation, Hopper said.

Among the four task forces created during the November meeting is one to study the possibility of selling or leasing the seminary property and another to study possible sites for relocating the Baptist institution elsewhere in Europe.

Unless the seminary can generate an endowment large enough to guarantee its future operation, uncertain finances may force it to sell or lease its property near Zurich, Hopper said. The property has soared in value since the institution's founding in 1949, and proceeds from its sale could be used to buy a less expensive site in Europe as well as help to endow the seminary's future, he added.

"This is simply a study group," Hopper said of the property study. "It is simply the gathering of information on which good decisions can be made" should the seminary's finances worsen.

For now, the seminary will focus on efforts to raise \$20 million in endowment funds from churches, business people and other supporters in Europe, the United States and other countries, Hopper said.

An annual subsidy from the Foreign Mission Board (\$355,000 for 1990) will increase by \$5,000 each year until 1992, when a yet-to-be-determined reduction plan will be instituted by the board.

The third of the four task forces will review the aims of the seminary, while the fourth will review the academic program. Both studies are being done largely "because of openings in Eastern Europe" and the new sense of economic unity dawning throughout Europe, Hopper said. The task forces' findings will be forwarded to the seminary's trustees and members of the European Baptist Federation executive committee. Both groups are scheduled to meet at Ruschlikon next April.

The various studies stem from a desire among European Baptists "for the re-evangelization of Europe ... and for giving us strong input into the direction they want to see the seminary go," Hopper said. Already fueling the discussion is a list of some 100 suggestions from Baptist leaders throughout Europe, he said.

"We've already added a new diploma and certificate in missions and new programs in our curriculum for evangelism and cross-cultural communication for sharing the gospel," Hopper added.

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Rwanda missionaries returning
despite new border fighting

By Donald D. Martin

N-FMB

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KIGALI, Rwanda (BP)--Five Southern Baptist missionaries who left Rwanda in October because of a rebel invasion planned to return Nov. 12, despite new rebel attacks near the east African nation's border with Uganda.

The five decided to rejoin 10 other Southern Baptist missionaries in Rwanda after the government declared victory over the estimated 4,000 rebels Nov. 1. But new fighting broke out Nov. 3 in two districts 60 miles north of the Rwandan capital, Kigali, as more rebels crossed the border from Uganda.

The new invading force is smaller and most observers expect government troops to defeat them also, said missionary Vernon Sivage of Midland, Texas.

The returning missionaries are David and Janet Hooten of Tifton, Ga.; John and Sharon Pond of Chesapeake, Va.; and Katrina Knox of Columbia, Tenn. They have been living in Kenya since mid-October. They hope to resume their work in different areas in northern Rwanda, Sivage said.

The five missionaries left northern Rwanda soon after fighting began Oct. 1 near the border town of Kagitumba. The rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front advanced to within a few miles of Kigali before Rwandan government troops halted the offensive, pushed the rebels back into Uganda and recaptured Kagitumba, about 110 miles northeast of Kigali. Kagitumba is located on one of three major trading routes between Rwanda and Uganda.

Although fighting continues in northern Rwanda, life in Kigali is returning to normal. "It's almost business as usual here," Sivage said in a phone interview. "Food is available in most of the country and gasoline is available. But the government is working off its national reserve."

No one is certain how long the unrest will last, he said. The Belgian government has told its citizens it is safe to return to Rwanda. French and Belgian paratroopers, sent by their governments to protect their citizens in Rwanda, have returned to their countries. However, a dusk-to-dawn curfew remains, public transportation is still shut down and the U.S. Embassy has not lifted its advisory warning Americans not to travel to the country.

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"We're in a very fluid situation here. You never know from 24 hours to 24 hours. But we are all out of danger and doing what we can locally," Sivage reported.

Press reports said the latest invading force is composed of rebels who regrouped after fleeing to Uganda. Many of the rebels were trained in the Ugandan army, reports said.

Rebel leaders say they are fighting to overthrow the Rwandan government and would, once in power, welcome home thousands of Rwandan refugees living in bordering countries. Landlocked Rwanda is slightly smaller than Maryland and has a population of 6.5 million people, making it the most densely populated country in Africa.

Most soldiers of the Rwandan Patriotic Front are members of the Tutsi tribe, which ruled Rwanda until the early 1960s. In 1959 the majority tribe, the Hutu, launched a revolt and later gained control of the country. Thousands of Tutsi died during several years of political unrest, which also forced hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees to flee into Uganda.

In 1986 a United Nations refugee commission reported that more than 100,000 Rwandan refugees were living in Uganda. Recent news reports place the total at 250,000.

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Resort churches focus
on lifestyle groups

By Sarah Zimmerman

F-AMB

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ATLANTA (BP)--As more Americans discover their favorite vacation spot is also a great place to live, Southern Baptists are challenged with starting churches in resort communities.

In 1988, 130 million or 53 percent of Americans lived within 50 miles of America's major coastlines, according to the Census Bureau. That figure is more than double the 61 million Americans who lived near a shoreline in 1940. In the study, major coastlines included the Atlantic or Pacific oceans, the Gulf of Mexico or the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River but not Alaska's or Hawaii's coasts.

Charlie Ellisor, resort minister in Gulf Shores, Ala., describes the array of people living along the shoreline. The typical business owner, he says, is a 28-year-old male who has never been married or is divorced and living with someone who is not a relative.

"He's a college graduate with a degree in business management. He skis, drinks some, comes from a nominally Christian home and is up to his ears in debt."

In addition, resort areas lure college drop-outs who work seasonal jobs, retired people living in recreational vehicles, and people who lived in the area before it became a popular resort, Ellisor says.

The diversity of people migrating to such areas demands that "we think about lifestyle groups, not geography, in church starting," says Bo Simms, home missionary in Conway, S.C. "You could start five or six churches in the same geographic area and not reach everybody."

Simms works in the Myrtle Beach, S.C., area which doubled its population in the last two years. Eight Southern Baptist churches have begun there in the past five years.

John Farris, director of associational and resort missions in Missouri's Lamine Baptist Association, also works in an area with an exploding population. Six malls were built in six years to keep up with population growth and tourism at nearby Lake of the Ozarks with 1,231 miles of shoreline.

In his 18 years with the association, Farris says 10 churches have begun, including eight in resort areas. The newest church meets in a condominium clubhouse and has 100 people in its Sunday morning worship services.

The ministers find resort churches need to be flexible about where they meet and when they meet.

"People within three blocks of a church won't go to that church, but they can be reached on a river bank," Farris explains.

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Several of the new churches in Lamine Association started as summer preaching points. Area churches and summer missionaries lead worship services at campgrounds or lodges each year. Farris leads worship services from a pontoon boat known as the floating church. Prospects for a church start are discovered through such activities.

"Having church at other than normal times is often the key to success," Simms says. Farris says 8:30 a.m. is a good time for worship services for tourists, because 11 a.m. services disrupt their day's activities.

The biggest obstacle to starting churches in resort areas is the attitude of long-time residents. "Myrtle Beach is a small-town tobacco farming community that doesn't want the resort area to exist," Simms says.

While the Myrtle Beach area population mushrooms, Simms says the existing churches' baptism rate and Sunday school enrollment have remained flat.

Farris agrees. "The old timers have a power struggle. They resent the growth. The 'foreigners' are not welcome in the Ozarks, and in many of those churches."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press