

# (BP)

## BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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91-60

Key SBC committee  
appointments made

By Herb Hollinger

WICHITA FALLS, Texas (BP)--Appointments to two key committees to serve during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, June 4-6, have been announced by SBC President Morris Chapman.

Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas, announced the appointment of the Committee on Committees and the Committee on Resolutions April 19. The SBC bylaws require the president to announce the appointments "at least 45 days in advance of the meeting."

Chapman told Baptist Press he reached "deep into the heart of Southern Baptist life for these appointments."

"Many ... have never (before) served on an SBC committee or board," said Chapman.

Chapman said out of the 78 appointments on the two committees, there are two directors of associational missions, a state convention business manager, 1 bivocational pastors and a state paper editor. One-third of the appointees are laypersons, he said.

From information provided to him, Chapman said the churches represented gave an average of 11.5 percent through the Cooperative Program during the 1989-90 year.

"I am deeply grateful for these people from churches that demonstrate loyalty to our beloved Southern Baptist Convention through their generous Cooperative Program gifts. My appointments were made with a prayer that they will be guided by God's Spirit in every decision," he said.

### COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

The committee has 68 members, 2 from each of the 34 state or regional convention qualified for representation on SBC entities.

SBC Bylaw 21 says the Committee on Committees "shall nominate all special committees authorized during the sessions of the convention not otherwise provided for." The usual responsibility of the committee is to nominate members of the Committee on Nominations, which, in turn, nominates trustees to serve on the 24 national entities of the SBC.

Chapman named Bob Sorrell, staff member of Bellevue Baptist Church, suburban Memphis, Tenn., as chairman.

The committee includes a clergy or denominationally-related person and a layperson from each convention. The occupations of the people listed are as given by Chapman.

ALABAMA -- Calvin Kelly, minister of Valleydale church, Birmingham; Milton L. Williamson, layperson, retired and member of First church, North Mobile.

ALASKA -- Jay George, minister of Sunset Hill church, Anchorage; Denver Copeland, bivocational pastor of First church, Fairbanks.

ARIZONA -- John Heizerman, minister of North Tucson church, Tucson; Vera Parr, realtor, member of Rincon church, Tucson.

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ARKANSAS -- Ben Rowell, minister of First church, Rogers; Wyndham Cook, engineer and member of Memorial church, Magnolia.

CALIFORNIA -- Walter A. Price, minister of First Southern, Beaumont; John J. Swartz, minister of Bethel Southern church, Escondido.

COLORADO -- Heather Burns, salesperson and member of Central church, Aurora; David Miller, minister of Pine Drive church, Parker.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA -- Clara B. Moore, retired, layperson and member of Capitol Hill Metropolitan church, McLean, Va.; Byron Ramsey, minister of Temple Hills church, Temple Hills, Md.

FLORIDA -- Bob Barnes, psychologist and member of Sheridan Hills church, Cooper City; Jerry Garrard, minister of Celebration church, Tallahassee.

GEORGIA -- Wayne Robertson, minister of Morningside church, Valdosta; Paul Gage, evangelist, business manager, member of Rehobeth church, Tucker.

HAWAII -- Sterling Kim, contractor and member of Pukalani church, Pukalani (Maui); Ken Newman, minister of Hawaii Kai church, Honolulu.

ILLINOIS -- Pat Pajak, minister of Tabernacle church, Decatur; Jay Adrian, minister of First church, Fairfield.

INDIANA -- Richard Boyd, minister of Ravinia Park church, Richmond; William (Bill) Gibbs, minister of Sunnyside church, Hobart.

KANSAS-NEBRASKA -- Mahlon Morley, banker and member of First church, Belle Plaine, Kan.; Craig Atherton, minister of Trinity church, Wichita, Kan.

KENTUCKY -- Jeanette Roberts, executive secretary and member of Lovelaceville church, Paducah; Michael W. Hail, minister of New Bethel church, Verona.

LOUISIANA -- Vaughn Phelps, layperson and member of First church, West Monroe; Joe Michael Senn, minister of Oakcrest church, Baton Rouge.

MARYLAND-DELAWARE -- David A. Depp, minister of Memorial Heights church, Cumberland, Md.; Richard E. Reilly, minister of First church, Cumberland, Md.

MICHIGAN -- John O. Gilbert, minister of Ridgecrest church, Rochester; Mary Wiggers, homemaker and member of Onaway church, Onaway.

MISSISSIPPI -- Cornell Daughtry, minister of First church, Indianola; Frank Gunn, minister of First church, Biloxi.

MISSOURI -- Mike Green, minister of Calvary church, Republic; Bob Collins, minister of Plaza Heights church, Blue Springs.

NEVADA -- Jerry Johnston, self employed and member of First Southern, Reno; Michael Rochelle, minister of West Oakey church, Las Vegas.

NEW ENGLAND -- Thomas S. Moncrief, minister of Rice Memorial church, Northboro, Mass.; Richard Wright, minister of Faith church, Warwick, R.I.

NEW MEXICO -- Jim McClung, minister of Mesa View church, Farmington; Jean Martin, insurance claims and member of First church, Albuquerque.

NEW YORK -- James Arrant, director of missions and member of Solid Rock Chapel, Scotia; Mike Chism, corporate executive and member of Owego church, Owego.

NORTH CAROLINA -- Max Pendleton, minister of Catawa Heights church, Belmont; Raymond Johns, minister of Emmanuel church, Durham.

NORTHWEST -- Steve Langston, state convention business manager and member of First church, Beaverton; Ron Bryant, attorney, Forest Avenue church, Redmond.

OHIO -- Mark Scroggins, minister of First church, West Carrollton; Linville Howard, businessman and member of Urbancrest church, Lebanon.

OKLAHOMA -- Charley E. Westbrook, minister of Calvary church, Tulsa; Patsy E. Peters, secretary and member of First church of Carnegie, Park Hill.

PENNSYLVANIA -- Nancy Patrick, counselor and member of East Shore church, Harrisburg; Mark Brookhart, minister of First church, Wrightstown.

SOUTH CAROLINA -- Robert E. Jackson, physician and member of Rock Hill church, Spartanburg; R. Kevin Child, minister of Green Sea church, Green Sea.

TENNESSEE -- Sorrell; Ray Flora, corporate executive and member of Bartlett Baptist Church.

TEXAS -- Lou Brooks, homemaker and member of First church, Sherman; Gene Lindsey, minister of First church, Wills Point.

UTAH-IDAHO -- Brian Harrison, minister of Emmanuel church, Blackfoot, Ida.; Jim Herod, minister of First church, Brigham City, Ut.

VIRGINIA -- James N. Birkitt, Sr., minister of Del Ray church, Ashland; Virginia S. Caffey, homemaker and member of First church, Martinsville.

WEST VIRGINIA -- Bernard Lee Toppings, minister of North Charleston church, Charleston; Rebecca Lee Bates, legal secretary and member of Cumberland Heights church, Bluefield.

#### RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

The Resolutions Committee is composed of 10 members, three of whom must be members of the SBC Executive Committee. The committee, according to Bylaw 21, has the "duty...to prepare and submit to the convention resolutions which the committee deems appropriate for adoption and to report on all matters submitted to it by the convention, with or without recommendation or amendments."

The bylaw also asks that proposed resolutions be sent to the committee 30 days before the annual meeting.

Chapman named David Hankins, Executive Committee member and pastor of Trinity church in Lake Charles, La., as the committee chairman.

Executive Committee members are Hankins; Gayden Jones, homemaker and member of First church, Baton Rouge, La.; and Simon Tsoi, pastor of First Chinese church, Phoenix, Ariz.

Other members are Hal Lane, pastor of West Side church, Greenwood, S.C.; Bill Merrell, director of missions and member of Country Estates church in Midwest City, Lawton, Okla.; H. H. "Bud" Jones, insurance/claims and member of First church, Woodway, in Waco, Texas; R. Albert Mohler, Jr., editor of the Georgia Baptist newspaper, The Christian Index, and member of Atkinson Road church, Lawrenceville, Atlanta, Ga.; Mary M. Norman, school teacher and member of First church, Post, Texas; Dean Register, pastor of First church, Gulfport, Miss.; and Larry Thompson, pastor of First church, Merritt Island, Fla.

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Professionalism, practicality  
goals of religious educators

Baptist Press  
4/19/91

ATLANTA (BP)--Professionalism and practicality are the two goals of the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association set for Atlanta's Omni Hotel June 2-3.

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"Shaping Our Ministry For Today's World" will be the theme of the meeting, expected to attract 400 Southern Baptist Christian educators, said Katie Grogan, president and director of church administration/family ministry department for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware.

The SBC-related meeting is one of several which will precede the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 4-6, at the Georgia World Congress Center.

Registration begins Sunday at 1 p.m. at the hotel with the opening session scheduled for 2 p.m., Grogan said.

Presentations will look into what is happening in America, a realistic view, said Grogan, and what are emerging styles in Baptist churches and elsewhere. Ron Lewis, senior consultant, Church Growth Designs, Nashville, will speak on "Trends in America Today." James Fitch, manager, pastor/staff program section of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board will lead a session on "Trends of Emerging Church Styles."

Robert Dale, director of the church and minister support division for the Virginia Baptist General Board, will lead a third session dealing with "so what," said Grogan. His topic is "Practical, Positive Responses to the Trends."

Professional groupings will discuss, in small groups, how to shape Christian education to meet the needs for churches, in college, state, associational and SBC settings, Grogan said.

SBREA has more than 1,000 members, including Christian education students and seminarians who are given a free one-year membership.

Officers, in addition to Grogan, include: president-elect, William Gambrell, minister of education, First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss.; vice president, Robert Lamb, Christian education professor at Gardner-Webb College, Boiling Springs, N.C.

Eastern vice president, Hoyt Wilson, minister of education/administration, Mountain Brook Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala.; central vice president, Bobby Martin, minister of education, First Baptist Church, Carrollton, Texas; western vice president, Larry Burrow, minister of education/administration, Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church, Riverside, Calif.; secretary-treasurer, Joe Haynes, consultant, Sunday school department, Sunday School Board, Nashville; and assistant secretary, Karen Powers, director of religious education, Jonesboro Baptist Association in Georgia.

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Chapman notes Wednesday  
special session revision

Baptist Press  
4/19/91

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--The Wednesday evening session of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting will not be televised live as earlier announced, according to Jim Henry, chairman of the spiritual awakening committee.

Henry, pastor of Orlando's First Baptist Church, had earlier indicated to church members across the convention they could participate in the special session because the ACTS network would be doing a live coverage.

"However, funds are not available for this broadcast and ACTS has planned to videotape our session to make it available to the churches at a later date," said Henry. A letter indicating the change has been sent to SBC churches, he said.

The Wednesday evening session of the convention, June 4-6 in Atlanta, primarily is devoted to a call to spiritual prayer for spiritual awakening in America. President Morris Chapman will lead the session, calling the denomination and America to special prayer for an "encounter with God," officials said.

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Termination policies not new,  
mission administrators say

By Bob Stanley

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A document stating reasons for terminating the service of missionaries does not represent any change of policy by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, administrators said April 18. It simply puts into writing policies followed informally for years, they explained.

The document, distributed to all missionaries last fall as an update to the "Manual for Overseas Personnel," has been misunderstood by some missionaries overseas and by some Southern Baptists in the United States.

Marse Grant, editor emeritus of the Biblical Recorder, newsjournal of the North Carolina Baptist Convention, attacked the policy in a column published in the Charlotte Observer. And a former missionary now on the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., Page H. Kelley, also has written a letter to state Baptist papers criticizing the policy.

Some missionaries became upset because of wording in the document, and leaders of missionaries in one area asked the board to reconsider its wording.

But Foreign Mission Board administrators believe the misunderstandings have arisen because of a lack of adequate information about why the policy was prepared.

Top-ranking staff executives drafted the document at the urging of the board's attorneys, who say it is essential to have such matters in writing because of the increasing frequency of lawsuits in today's society, explained Don Kammerdiener, the Foreign Mission Board's executive vice president.

After being reviewed by board administrators, the document was presented to the board's trustees for approval last July at a meeting in Glorieta, N.M. It became effective Jan. 1 of this year.

The policy is intended to help the board's area directors in determining if a missionary's service must be ended, Kammerdiener said.

Most of the concern has stemmed from the concluding portion of the document's introductory statement, which says the "Foreign Mission Board always retains the right to terminate any field personnel for any reason satisfactory to the board without disclosing to the person the reason for the termination."

Kammerdiener said the statement was included because the 12 reasons for termination that follow are not "all inclusive," and attorneys suggested this statement to protect the board's interests in case challenges arise in other situations where personnel must be terminated.

He emphasized the instances in which a missionary or other field personnel would be fired are rare. But even one person who fails to live up to Christian standards can adversely affect the work in a given area, he noted. The FMB has more than 3,800 missionaries in 121 countries.

As the new document was distributed overseas, some missionaries mistakenly related the policy to current strategic directions of the Foreign Mission Board such as the 10-year "70-30" deployment goal and the move to turn institutions over to national believers.

Some felt if they could not go along with the new initiatives, their service might be terminated, based upon the "catch-all" stipulation in the document's introductory statement.

Kammerdiener emphasized the board has no such intention. "Most missionaries and mission supporters agree with the emphasis on the evangelistic witness of missionaries and the nationalization of the work," he said.

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"But there is considerable room for discussion and dialogue as to the best way for achieving these goals," he added. "The Foreign Mission Board encourages and expects full dialogue, a diversity of opinion and (diversity in) local application of these strategies of work. There is no relationship between these particular strategies and the statements regarding termination."

He said the deployment document clearly states the missionary force will be divided between those who give the majority of their time to evangelism and church planting (the "70" percent) and those who have other vital assignments (the "30" percent).

The missionaries themselves are working with their area directors to determine how best to deploy personnel in their individual areas, Kammerdiener said.

"The deployment goal (more commonly known as '70-30') is worldwide in scope and not a requirement of any specific missionary," he pointed out. "Hence it could not be used as a basis for terminating the service of any individual."

Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks affirmed this statement. "As Southern Baptists, I believe we have the finest group of missionaries ever assembled in one denominational mission force. The instances in which the service of a missionary must be terminated are rare, indeed. We have one of the lowest attrition rates of any missionary-sending organization in the world, and there has been no significant variance in the attrition rate over the past decade."

Parks did note a report some months back expressed concern over the convergence of three factors -- a slight increase in resignations (which includes any terminations that might have occurred), an increasing number coming to retirement and a three-year decline in the number of appointees. The picture began to improve with an increased number of appointments in 1990.

The president said he regretted any unnecessary concern which the written policy on reasons for terminations may have caused. "We hope to continue to clarify this in communication with both our missionaries and those who support them back home," Parks said.

The list of reasons for termination includes the following: "failure to exhibit Christian lifestyle in keeping with the missionary calling and responsibility;" "patterns of failure in relationships resulting in negative impact on the achievement of the missionary purpose;" "ongoing failure to perform adequately in assigned responsibilities;" "persistent insubordination in relation to supervisors and/or stated policies;" "the persistent advocating of doctrinal opinions inconsistent with The Baptist Faith and Message;" "a persistent emphasis of any specific gift of the Spirit as normative for all or to the extent such emphasis becomes disruptive to the Baptist fellowship."

Other reasons listed are: "continuing misuse of narcotics, tobacco, drugs, other addictive substances, and the use of alcohol as a beverage;" "dishonesty in the handling of money or other resources;" "immoral sexual activities;" "homosexual activities;" "a divorce following appointment;" and "a resignation or termination for any reason by one spouse."

Divorced persons may not serve as career missionaries, although in certain instances they may fill shorter-term volunteer assignments. On the matter of doctrine, the Foreign Mission Board for many years has used The Baptist Faith and Message, a statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963 and reaffirmed at subsequent conventions, as a guide for determining whether missionary candidates' theological beliefs are in keeping with those of most Southern Baptists. In the past decade, only two missionaries have been asked to resign because of their theological beliefs.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: This roundup on Persian Gulf relief work replaces BP story titled "Baptists expand aid to Kurds; Bible distribution also planned" dated 4-17.

Baptists to send food, volunteers  
to Kurdish refugees inside Iran

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
4/19/91

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A Southern Baptist feeding program -- inside Iran -- is being organized to feed 100,000 Kurdish refugees a day.

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The joint program of the Foreign Mission Board's Persian Gulf Response unit, Texas Baptist Men and the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission jumped toward becoming reality April 17 when Foreign Mission Board representatives received verbal commitments from Iranian officials to permit Baptist refugee ministry inside Iran.

The Foreign Mission Board forwarded specific plans for the feeding program to Iranian officials April 19 for formal approval, said Tim Brendle, executive director of the Persian Gulf Response unit.

About \$1.25 million would be allocated from Foreign Mission Board relief funds, and April 25 is the projected date for starting the feeding operation, Brendle said.

More than 1 million Kurdish refugees -- unprepared for the mountainous region's cold weather and many of them barefoot -- have entered Iran or amassed at the Iran-Iraq border, fearing retribution for their failed rebellion against Saddam Hussein's forces.

The Iranian government itself has committed \$57 million to the Kurdish relief effort, according to reports from international relief agencies.

"Animals have protection on this earth," Ahmad Zyai, governor of an Iranian town near the border with Iraq, was quoted as saying, "but these people have nothing." Between 500,000 and 700,000 refugees also are in the mountainous Turkey-Iraq border region.

A thousand Kurdish refugees are dying daily of exposure, starvation and disease, according to relief agencies. Even with President Bush's announced plans for an expanded relief effort by the U.S.-led coalition, Brendle noted a broad range of supplemental efforts by Baptists and others still will be needed among the displaced Kurds.

In organizing the Baptist feeding program for Kurdish refugees in Iran, Texas Baptist Men have begun:

- assembling four portable kitchens -- each capable of feeding 25,000 people two meals a day. Each kitchen will cost about \$15,500 and include 10 stoves, pots, utensils, a water purifier to process 10,000 gallons a day and tarps.

- enlisting disaster relief teams of two or three volunteers to operate the portable kitchens for up to four weeks and train Kurdish refugees to take over the feeding operation.

- exploring sources capable of providing the large quantities of rice, canned food and powdered milk that will be needed.

Both the Persian Gulf Response unit and Texas Baptist Men also were exploring logistical arrangements for moving the portable kitchens and food supplies to Kurdish refugee areas inside Iran.

The scope of the potential feeding operation, Brendle said, is such if the meals consisted only of rice, 68,000 pounds of rice and 8,500 gallons of water would be needed daily.

Additionally, Korean Baptists have begun efforts to assemble medical teams to work in tandem with the feeding program, with their first team scheduled to arrive April 26. One key source of team members will be the staff of the Wallace Memorial Hospital in Pusan.

Southern Baptists wanting to donate above their regular church giving to the feeding program can send funds to Persian Gulf Response, Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230, or Texas Baptist Men, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798.

In other developments, the Foreign Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Texas Baptists are enlisting two four-person medical teams to work among Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq to treat diseases and initiate community health programs, Brendle reported. Each team will have a physician recruited by Texas Baptist Men's Medical Fellowship, a nurse from the Texas Woman's Missionary Union Nurses Fellowship, a team leader enlisted by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission and an interpreter provided by the Foreign Mission Board. Baylor Medical Center in Dallas is securing medical supplies.

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No Southern Baptist personnel ever have worked in Iraq. In Iran, Southern Baptist personnel worked in Tehran until a few days after the Ayatollah Khomeini rose to power in 1979.

Jim Ferguson, Brotherhood Commission disaster relief director, recalled the agency's work in organizing volunteer teams after hurricanes in the Caribbean in 1989 and 1990. "We felt at that time that God was preparing us for an even bigger project," he said, noting Kurdish refugee relief "is that project."

Other Southern Baptist Persian Gulf ministry efforts to date include:

-- purchase of nearly 35,000 blankets to help Kurdish refugees endure the nighttime cold in mountains along the border between Iraq and Turkey. The blankets -- 20,000 purchased with \$121,000 in Foreign Mission Board relief funds and 14,400 purchased by Texas Baptist Men at a cost of \$45,000 -- are being airlifted to Kurdish refugee camps as part of the Defense Department's "Operation Provide Comfort." The crates of blankets purchased by the Foreign Mission Board were stamped in English and Arabic with the words, "Gift to the Kurdish People from Evangelical Christians--Baptists." Texas Baptists' crates were marked with the words, "Christian Humanitarian Aid," and the Southern Baptist disaster relief emblem.

-- \$25,000 in Foreign Mission Board relief funds for Kurdish refugee aid in Turkey and along the Turkey-Iraq border.

-- \$92,600 for distribution of Arabic Bibles in the postwar Middle East. The FMB funds will pay for 14,000 Bibles, along with "How to Read the Bible" inserts produced by the Arab Baptist Publication Center in Beirut, Lebanon.

-- \$120,000 in FMB hunger funds for food distribution in Baghdad and Basra, Iraq. The funds will be handled by an emergency relief committee of the Jordan Baptist Convention, in cooperation with evangelicals in Baghdad and the board's Persian Gulf Response field coordinator, veteran missionary Paul Smith.

-- arrangements to send two-month supplies of food to Kuwait for at least 10,000 workers and family members from India, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Sri Lanka who were stranded in Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion. FMB officials are waiting for Jerry Zandstra, who has returned to Kuwait as pastor of the National Evangelical Church, to complete preparations for the relief effort there.

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Ken Camp of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Jim Burton of the Brotherhood Commission contributed to this story.

Southern Baptist President Chapman  
affirms changes in Convention

Baptist Press  
4/19/91

By Scott Collins & Matthew Brady

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Affirming his hope for peace in the strife-ridden denomination he leads, Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman told students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary April 18 unity in the 15-million-member SBC must be "built around the Word of God."

In a broad-ranging dialogue with students at the largest of Southern Baptists' six seminaries, Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas, said he has tried to lead the convention with "a gracious spirit but firm convictions" about the theological controversy which has dominated the Southern Baptist Convention for 13 years.

"While my desire is to enlarge the tent, and I believe, theologically that will include the vast numbers of Southern Baptists -- maybe 90 to 95 percent -- there are some who by their own confession would not fit under the tent," Chapman said.

"In my spirit, the nature and authority of God's Word has been my interest these years," he said. "Not the interpretation of scripture per se, not the interpretation of people's beliefs about ethical issues. The issue is the nature and authority of God's Word."

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Chapman, who holds master's and doctor's degrees from Southwestern, is expected to be re-elected to a second term as Southern Baptist Convention president during the denomination's annual meeting June 4-6 in Atlanta.

Chapman used his visit to Southwestern to promote the Wednesday evening session of the Southern Baptist Convention, which he said will feature an "unprecedented call for spiritual awakening" among Southern Baptists and the United States.

"I believe we are on the precipice of becoming a greater witness for the Lord Jesus Christ around the world, of expanding our missionary enterprise," he said.

Asked about planned changes in denominational agency leadership for the coming year, Chapman said he has "not known of any changes being planned."

"There have been changes," he said. "There will likely be other changes in time. I am on record as saying that my preference is to see change come by attrition. In most instances attrition would mean retirement, age. In some few instances it may mean early retirement.

"It may mean the choice of a person saying 'I choose not to lead this institution any longer or this agency any longer because I differ with the trustees,'" Chapman added.

He told the students a denomination in "a state of flux" such as the Southern Baptist Convention can expect some changes "even if they (the changes) were criteria for selection of a successor for someone who has retired."

Changes in denominational agency leadership the past year has nothing to do with his election as Southern Baptist Convention president, he said.

"It certainly is not my position, nor the position of Southern Baptist leadership as I know it, to target anyone and to plan for anyone to no longer be in a position of denominational leadership," Chapman said. "But that doesn't mean it won't happen. There are always varied circumstances which might bring it to pass which are beyond even the context of moderate/conservative considerations."

When asked by a student about the impact divisions within the convention will have on the Southern Baptist Convention's unified budget, the Cooperative Program, Chapman responded by saying "there is no doubt the convention is in a time of transition, but it would be impossible to predict the ultimate outcome of events."

And while Chapman said first quarter reports for both baptisms and giving to the Cooperative Program reflect increases he predicted a decline in giving by some churches. Those decreases will require "a temporary adjustment in the budgeting process," Chapman said.

The SBC president said he believes, "the vast majority of churches will continue to give to the Cooperative Program, and some churches may increase their giving."

Other issues addressed by Chapman during the dialogue included:

-- Women in ministry. Chapman said he "strongly favors women in ministry," but he added he does not believe the Bible teaches ordination of women. "That does not in any way diminish what I believe to be the worth of women in ministry," he said.

-- Ethnic representation in the SBC. The convention president said he expects representation for ethnic groups to increase as ethnic populations within the SBC grow. "If we do not become very sensitive to the ethnicity of peoples in the United States we are going to fail to win many United States citizens to the Lord," he said.

-- Representation of small churches. Chapman, answering a student's charge Southern Baptist Convention agencies are run by trustees from large churches said his appointments for this year include pastors and members of "relatively small churches. I believe most, if not all of us, who pastor what you would call a larger church have not forgotten that we pastored churches running 50 to 100 to 150 in Sunday school," he said, "so we have been there."

-- Seminary accreditation. He called accreditation a "worthy objective" and added he believes all six of the Southern Baptist seminaries and their trustees, "would hold the same view." Chapman said while he has no direct involvement with Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., he remains optimistic the troubled school will work through its accreditation problems.

-- Church polity. Chapman said he strongly believes in the priesthood of believers and the autonomy of local churches. "I do believe the pastor has a place of authority which is not to be a dictator," he said. "I don't see Southern Baptists ever doing anything other than making decisions as a body."

During his chapel address to faculty and students, Chapman said the future ministers must take time to "be with Jesus."

"Nothing greater could be said about a man or woman than that that person has been with Jesus," he said. "Except a man or woman spend time alone with God, people will not hear and know the power of God through that person's life."

That power of God comes through prayer, Chapman said.

"I cannot depend upon my education for the power of God in my life," he said. "If I am going to have a part in changing my world for the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, I must find that power on my knees."

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Dewey Mercer, missionary  
to Japan, dies at age 61

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MATSUE, Japan (BP)--Dewey E. Mercer, a Southern Baptist missionary who spent the last decade of his life rebuilding a congregation in an out-of-the-way area on the western coast of Japan, died April 17 of a heart attack. He was 61.

Mercer, from Central City, Ky., came with his wife, Ramona, to the town of Matsue about 10 years ago to try to resurrect a church whose members had all left. Using his typical evangelistic zeal, whatever personal money he could free up and volunteers to refurbish a building, the couple established a fellowship of about 30 believers.

While living in an area near Tokyo, Mercer became interested in the art of lapidary -- gathering, polishing and trading rare stones. He considered lapidary a tool to meet and share the gospel with unbelievers who otherwise would be difficult to reach. The area around Matsue is known for unusual rocks. He taught lapidary to church members there as a way to get to know them better.

Mercer attended Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and Campbellsville Kentucky College. He received the bachelor of arts degree from Western Kentucky State College (now Western Kentucky University) in Bowling Green and the master of divinity and doctor of divinity degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Mercer met his wife, the former Ramona Hall of Fayetteville, Tenn., while in his second year at Southern seminary. They were appointed Southern Baptist missionaries in 1955. In Japan, Mercer worked as a general evangelist and pastor. Before appointment, he was a pastor in Kentucky.

Besides his wife, Mercer is survived by two grown children.

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

90 percent of Americans  
claim a religion, study says

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press  
4/19/91

NEW YORK (BP)--Nine of every 10 Americans claim to belong to some religious group, with nearly two of every 10 identifying themselves as Baptists, according to a landmark study on religion in America.

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Among the study's other findings: residents of America's western states are twice as likely as residents of other regions to claim no religious affiliation.

The percentage of Americans claiming no religious affiliation was twice the national average in California (13 percent), Washington (14 percent) and Oregon (17.2 percent).

The population most identified with religion is found in the South.

"The National Survey of Religious Identification" was conducted by Barry Kosmin and Seymour Lachman of the Graduate School of the City University of New York. Data was collected through telephone interviews with 113,000 adults in the continental United States over a 13-month period ending in April 1990.

The study is important because of its scope and topic. Although the U.S. Census Bureau collects data about numerous traits of Americans, it does not collect information on religion.

Aside from this study, most information about American religion is supplied by religious groups. "Not until this study have we had comprehensive information on religious identification," Lachman said. "We now have a most detailed religious profile of 20th century America."

The primary question asked on the survey was, "What is your religion?" The study did not attempt to define whether or not respondents had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Instead, the question on religion was designed to determine which religious groups respondents identify with.

This profile of American religion shows a strong retention of Christian influence nationwide. More than 86 percent of Americans identify themselves with some Christian-based religion.

The major church groups in America are Roman Catholic (26.2 percent), Baptist (19.4 percent), Methodist (8 percent) and Lutheran (5.2 percent). Overall, 60.3 percent of Americans identify with some Protestant religion.

Jews make up 1.8 percent of the population. The next largest groups each account for less than 1 percent of the population and range from Muslims to Rastafarians.

Only 0.7 percent of Americans claim to be agnostic, while 7.5 percent report they have no religion. In the survey, 2.3 percent of those interviewed refused to reveal a religious identification.

While the new study sheds additional light on American religion, it carries inherent flaws just as statistics reported by denominations can be misleading, warned Maurice Smith. Smith, associate director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department, is an expert on American and world religions, sects and cults.

Denominational statistics can be misleading because different groups count adherents in different ways, he said. For example, some count adults only, while others count adults and children; some count only baptized members while others count anyone who attends.

Smith believes the new study is most accurate in its assessment of traditional religious groups, such as Catholics, Protestants and Jews. The study misrepresents areas such as New Age Movements, he said.

For example, the study reports only 20,000 New Age adherents nationwide. In reality, there are probably 20,000 New Age adherents in Atlanta alone, said Smith, who has studied this particular movement extensively.

The probable reason for the discrepancy, he explained, is that many people who adhere to New Age teachings do not claim to be members of a New Age religion. They may claim to be Baptists or Catholics or Episcopalians because those are the traditional religions of their families.

The study revealed other interesting tidbits about American religion:

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-- Unitarians are most likely to be divorced. Among Unitarians, 18 percent report being divorced, the highest percentage of any religious group.

-- Buddhism, Islam and the "no religion" category claim the largest percentages of single adults. Among Muslims, 39 percent are single; among Buddhists, 37.8 percent; among those claiming no religion, 30.8 percent.

-- Mormons (73.1 percent) are the most likely to be married, followed by members of Brethren churches (70.8 percent), Assembly of God churches (70.4 percent) and Church of Christ churches (70 percent).

-- Hindus, Jews and Episcopalians are among the most educated. Among Hindus, 47 percent are college graduates; among Jews, 46.7 percent; and among Episcopalians, 39.8 percent. Pentecostals and Baptists tend to be the least educated, with 35.6 percent of Pentecostals and 32.6 percent of Baptists completing less than high school.

-- Among all Baptist groups, 68.8 percent of members are white, yet 50 percent of all blacks identify themselves as Baptists. Lutherans (97 percent) and Mormons (93.6 percent) have the highest percentage of white members.

-- Among Hispanics, 65.8 percent identify themselves as Roman Catholics. The next largest category for Hispanics is Baptists, claimed by 7.4 percent.

-- Mormons have the largest mean household size, with 3.8 family members. The next largest families are found among Muslims (3.3 percent), Buddhists (3.1 percent), Hindus (3.1 percent) and Roman Catholics (3.1 percent).

-- Baptists and Jews are most strongly Democratic in political affiliation, while Mormons are most strongly Republican.

-- Mississippi claims the largest percentage of Baptists in its population at 55 percent. Other states with the largest Baptist populations are Alabama (51.4 percent), Arkansas (42.2 percent) District of Columbia (46.8 percent), Georgia (50.8 percent), Kentucky (42.5 percent), North Carolina (47.1 percent), South Carolina (46.5 percent) and Tennessee (43 percent).

-- Although Mormons account for only 1.4 percent of all Americans, they comprise 69.2 percent of Utah's population and 31 percent of Idaho's residents.

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Statistical breakdowns by state are available upon request from the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press.

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