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RPRC re-elects Pattillo;  
honors Southern Baptists

DAYTON, Ohio (BP)--The Religious Public Relations Council re-elected a Southern Baptist as president and presented Southern Baptists the top number of awards in its annual DeRose/Hinkhouse Awards competition.

Wesley M. (Pat) Pattillo was elected to a second one-year term as president of the professional interfaith organization for religious communicators. Pattillo is vice president for university relations at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

Southern Baptists won 10 of 54 RPRC awards, including seven presentations to Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board communicators. Catholics and Lutherans finished second with nine each, United Methodists won seven, and Presbyterians and the World Vision relief organization took four each.

Foreign Mission Board communicators won a Best of Class prize and an award of excellence in the broadcast class for a documentary on Cairo (Don Dahler); an award of excellence (Terry McMahon) and certificate of merit (David Powers), both for videotapes; an award of excellence for a series of news stories on crisis in the Middle East (Art Toalston, Mary Speidel, Erich Bridges and Mike Creswell); and certificates of merit for The Commission magazine (Leland Webb) and the news publication, Focus (Marty Croll).

Other Southern Baptist certificates of merit went to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for a videotape (Scott Collins), the Sunday School Board for photography (Jim Veneman) and Belmont College for a display (Joan Yarborough).

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Sponsor churches needed  
for Kurdish refugees

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
4/23/91

ATLANTA (BP)--More than 2,000 Kurdish refugees from Iraq are seeking to resettle in the United States, and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board is ready to enlist 50 or more churches to sponsor homeless Kurds.

Some of the Kurdish refugees may need church sponsors within a month, said David Terry of the Home Mission Board's language church extension division and its immigration and refugee service.

These Kurds were targets of hostility or persecution even before the exodus of fear by 1.5 million or more Iraqi Kurds toward Turkey and Iran in recent weeks, Terry noted. The sudden international crisis of hunger, disease and exposure to rain and mountain cold began after the Kurds' unsuccessful rebellion against Saddam Hussein's rule.

Most of the Kurds now in the process of resettling outside Iraq could come to the United States within three months, Terry said, explaining, "They must have a sponsor before they can move to the United States."

Churches interested in sponsoring Kurdish refugees may call the Home Mission Board's immigration and refugee service at (404) 898-7395. Information will be provided to potential sponsors on how a church prepares to receive refugees and helps them adjust to life in a new country.

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Sponsoring churches are asked to provide at least three months of rent for refugees and help with food, clothing, household items, finding employment and enrolling children of refugee families in school. Additionally, churches are asked to commit a year to helping refugees with ongoing adjustments.

Although world attention now focuses on Iraqi Kurds, the Home Mission Board needs 10 to 20 new sponsoring churches every month for others fortunate enough -- among the world's 15 million refugees -- to enter the United States.

The board and other agencies involved in refugee assistance, such as Catholic Charities, seek sponsors for large numbers of Soviet Christians, Vietnamese, Romanians, Cambodians, Laotians and others, including a few Albanians and Libyans.

Churches can benefit from refugee ministry, Terry noted. "We've seen new congregations of Christians -- Southern Baptists -- result from refugee resettlement efforts," he said. More than 300 ethnic Southern Baptist congregations have been started in the past 10 years as a result of churches becoming involved in the lives of refugees, he said.

"Refugees are so very thankful for all the efforts done for them," Terry added. Such efforts can "really bring a church together."

Aiding Kurdish refugees in encampments along Iraq's border with Turkey and Iran also is possible through feeding programs and medical care being initiated by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Texas Baptist Men. Donations above regular church giving may be sent to FMB Persian Gulf Relief, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230.

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'New synthesis' developing  
among Christians, Foster says

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press  
4/23/91

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--A "new synthesis" is emerging among Christians in the wake of a decline in denominational loyalties, emphasized a writer on the devotional life.

"People are no longer getting their theology along the vertical bars of denominational loyalty but along the horizontal bars of transdenominational relationships," Richard Foster, professor of theology and writer in residence at Friends University in Wichita, Kan., said in an address at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Yet, rather than mourn these shifting loyalties, Christians need to seize the opportunity to learn from those with diverse Christian backgrounds, said Foster during the Gheens Lectures April 16-19 at the Louisville, Ky., seminary.

Foster, author of "Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth," stressed denominations are not unimportant. "Denominational distinctives are valuable contributions and you need to preach your denominational distinctives as loudly and as clearly as you can," he said. Nevertheless, waning denominational loyalty has caused financial problems at denominational offices and publishing houses, he added.

"We are in a considerable state of flux as we enter the latter part of the 20th century," he said, noting, however, he believes "the power of the Spirit of God" is at work in the transitions: I believe God is bringing together a wonderful new combination of gospel truths that bring vigor and wholeness to our lives. "God is calling together a new synthesis, a new way of looking at how we put ourselves together and drawing strength from the many great streams of Christian faith and witness."

Foster cited five traditions from which Southern Baptists and others can draw:

- the contemplative tradition which stresses "intimacy with God."
- the holiness tradition which focuses on "personal moral transformation."
- the charismatic tradition which emphasizes the gifts of the Spirit and worship.

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-- the social justice tradition which advocates justice and peace in human relationships and social structures.

-- the evangelical tradition which majors on the centrality of Christ and the importance of Scripture.

"Every one of them (the traditions) is a blessing when joined with others to forge a fully orbed Christian witness," he said. "Every one of them is a curse when isolated and allowed to develop into the idolatry of exclusion."

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'Faithful spirit' of William Carey  
alive and well at Carey Memorial

By Susan Todd

Baptist Press  
4/2/91

HACKLETON, England (BP)--The baptistry hadn't been used in 28 years, and the membership had dwindled to four adults -- each more than 70 years old. Both contributed to William John Elliott's reason to celebrate.

"It should be a great day next Sunday," Elliott said as he posted a sign in front of the church inviting passers-by to attend the morning worship service. "I'm hoping to get a lot of people here."

Elliott's definition of "a lot" of people would probably be very different from most people's definition. On a usual Sunday morning at Carey Memorial Chapel, anywhere from three to 10 people show up for the morning service. But for the first baptismal service in 28 years, more were expected.

The woman to be baptized at Carey Memorial Chapel is about half the age of any of the other four members, according to Elliott. Even though new members have been slow in coming to the church, Elliott has never doubted God would provide members to carry on the work. Neither has he let the low numbers defeat him.

"The work has not been so difficult as one might think," Elliott said. "I look on it as no problem. We seem to get through. Marvelous we get through."

Keeping the church going has taken a lot of energy and time from its few members. Elliott, a retired baker, has been the church secretary and treasurer since 1960. He is also the groundskeeper, maintenance worker and even preacher when there is no one else to preach.

"We have no resident minister," he said. "We just have to rely on the local ministers to preach for us. They can usually only provide about two services a month. I have to fill the gaps."

Relying on local ministers to fill the pulpit on many Sundays is nothing new for this small church. One of the most famous to fill its pulpit in the late 1700s was William Carey. Carey was one of the first foreign missionaries sent from England and is credited with inspiring the formation of the modern missions movement.

Carey was a shoe cobbler in Hackleton, a small English village even today. As he worked on shoes, he learned as much as he could about the Bible and about foreign languages. Sundays were spent preaching from pulpits in the surrounding area.

Carey left for India at age 32 and never returned to his homeland. The bicentennial anniversary of his leaving England will be in 1993. More importantly, the bicentennial anniversary of the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society will be celebrated in the fall of 1992.

To commemorate the anniversaries, Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union is sponsoring tours of William Carey's England. Tours will be offered October 1991 through December 1992. During their stay, tour participants will have a chance to visit Carey Memorial Chapel and other places where Carey lived and worked. For information about these tours, write Wilcox World Travel, 1705 BB & T Building, Asheville, N.C. 28801.

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New Hope also will release a biography of William Carey in early 1992. Timothy George, dean of the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., is writing the book, "Faithful Witness: The Life and Mission of William Carey."

Carey has been described as a "faithful witness" because he worked in India seven years before he saw an Indian convert to Christianity.

The members of Carey Memorial Chapel today are carrying on with the same steadfastness William Carey displayed. Elliott is convinced Carey would approve of all they are doing.

"I would think he would say, 'You're doing a good job. Carry on.'"

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by WMU

Partner church helps  
make dreams come true

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
4/23/91

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--Every January Hawthorne Baptist Chapel of Indianapolis makes a list of its dreams. And every year, First Baptist Church of Clinton, Miss., helps the dreams come true.

Two years ago the Indiana congregation dreamed of owning a church building. This year members dreamed of having a baptistry. The Mississippi church helped both dreams become reality as part of their five-year pledge to assist the infant congregation.

Without assistance from churches like First Baptist Church of Clinton, the goals of Hawthorne Chapel would remain on paper. The five-year-old congregation has an average worship attendance of 41, says pastor Willie Rash.

The community is a low-income neighborhood of blue collar workers. Though residents work, Rash notes that working 40 hours a week at minimum wage leaves a person at poverty level. One of the church's best outreach tools is a ministry center where it helps about 25 people a month with food, clothing and utility payments.

"Our people are good giving people, they just don't have much to give," Rash says.

That doesn't keep them from dreaming. After renting a community center for four years, owning a church building was at the top of their wish list.

Last year a Free Methodist church in the area disbanded. It was the fourth church to close in the neighborhood during Rash's five years in Indianapolis.

Hawthorne Chapel saw the chance to own a church building, but it had only \$400 in its building fund. The Methodist church property was priced at \$30,000.

On July 11 last year, Rash mailed letters to churches and friends describing the opportunity to buy the Methodist church. Exactly seven months later, the Baptist congregation closed on the deal, with \$33,719 in cash.

"We thought raising \$10,000 would be easy," Rash says because he knew of the support he could expect from family and friends. But he had no idea the money would be raised so quickly and would include support from 95 families and 12 churches representing eight states.

Hawthorne Chapel also learned a lesson in spiritual economics.

"When we decided to increase our Cooperative Program and associational giving by one-half percent each, we got a \$5,000 gift from a church," Rash says. "When we went over our goal for state missions offering, we got another gift.

"We voted to give \$400 to a mission church that is building and needs money," Rash says. "We want to keep the miracle going."

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Members of Hawthorne Chapel began meeting in the former Methodist building last fall under a lease agreement. They quickly realized they needed a baptistry. They put it on their dream list in January, and members of Clinton's First Baptist Church installed the baptistry in April.

The 13 volunteers of First Baptist also put a new roof on the 50-year-old building and made other repairs during their one-week stay in Indiana.

With support from fellow Baptists like members of First Baptist, Rash says members of his church believe they can do anything. And he says, "I feel like a kid at Christmas."

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

Southern Baptists older  
than U.S. population

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press  
4/23/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Compared to the general population of the United States, Southern Baptist adults tend to be older, better educated but have similar average earnings, according to findings in the Southern Baptist Constituency Study released April 16.

The national survey included about 1,400 respondents in a random sample conducted by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's corporate planning and research department in conjunction with HTI Custom Research of Chicago. Surveys were conducted in the summer and fall of 1990.

Forty percent of Southern Baptist adults are 55 years of age or older compared to 29 percent of the U.S. population. On the younger end of the spectrum, only 13 percent of Southern Baptist adults are 18-29 compared to 26 percent in the U.S.

By education, almost one-half of Southern Baptists reported at least one year of college compared to 37 percent of U.S. adults. Only 12 percent of Southern Baptists completed 11 grades of school or less compared to 23 percent of Americans.

No significant differences with the U.S. population were reported in income levels with 57 percent of Southern Baptists reporting a total household income for 1989 of less than \$30,000 and 40 percent reporting less than \$20,000.

While 52 percent of the U.S. population is female and 48 percent male, Southern Baptists, in contrast, are 58 percent female and 42 percent male.

By marital status, almost two-thirds (64 percent) of Southern Baptists indicated they were married. Of that number 16 percent said they were widowed and remarried or divorced and remarried.

Of the one-third of respondents who described themselves as single, approximately one-third were never married, one-third were divorced and one-third, widowed.

Slightly more than one-third (36 percent) of the respondents indicated they had children ages 18 and under living at home. Almost 10 percent of those who had children indicated they had step-children.

The mobility of Southern Baptists was evident in 10 percent who indicated they had moved once in the previous 12 months, while 32 percent had moved at least once in the previous five years.

Southern Baptists also prefer to live fairly close to the church where they hold membership. Fifty-two percent indicated they live four miles or less from their church while 63 percent said they could drive to church in less than 15 minutes.

The constituency study covered a variety of topics including church life, social issues, the Bible and giving to church and charitable causes.

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Charts to accompany this story will be mailed to Baptist state papers by the Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press.

Midwestern class draws students  
who 'always wanted to play piano' By Brenda Sanders

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--An unusual teaching method has drawn an unusually large crowd of students to a Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary evening class titled, "Beginning Hymn Playing."

The class is taught by Midwestern's visiting professor of church music education, Jo Ann Butler, and is based on the book, "I've Always Wanted to Play the Piano," written by Butler and published last year by Broadman Press.

The text simply details a beginning hymn playing technique Butler developed over the past 20 years. The technique employs a combination of skills -- some theory, some playing by ear and some note reading--and teaches an individual to play as many as 60 hymns with only five musical chords.

"There really are a lot of people who have always wanted to learn to play the piano, but thought it would be too difficult," Butler said. "I've come up with a way to teach them five basic chords that will allow them to play a number of hymns, and they don't even have to learn to read music. All they have to do is be able to tell the black keys from the white keys."

Thirty-two individuals currently are enrolled in the evening class which teaches this technique. Midwestern's acting registrar, Royce Ann Collins, said it is an unusually high enrollment for an evening class at the seminary.

In addition to full-time seminarians, the class includes a number of individuals from more than 20 area churches. Among the students are three pastors, an associational director of missions, a furloughing foreign missionary, seminary staff members, and laypeople from as far away as St. Joseph and Polo, Mo. -- both approximately an hour's drive from the seminary.

The class meets once a week for a two-hour period, for 16 weeks. In the classroom, Butler demonstrates her basic hymn playing method and expounds on music theory discussed in the textbook. In addition, students take turns playing hymns before the entire group, showing what they have learned while practicing the week's lesson at home.

The students are supportive of one another, calling out words of encouragement and applauding each person's efforts. Though some progress more rapidly than others, each individual is praised for his accomplishments. The sense of support and approval from Butler and the class members are almost tangible as each student takes a turn at the piano.

John C. Burnham, director of missions for St. Joseph Baptist Association, and his wife, Melba, both are enrolled in the evening class. Burnham, a 1982 doctor of ministry graduate of Midwestern, said learning to play the piano has been "one of the most satisfying experiences I've ever had."

A frequent guest speaker at churches in his association, Burnham said he hopes to become comfortable enough with hymn playing that he will be able to play for congregational singing on occasion in some of the St. Joseph Association churches.

"I think as I develop this ability, it will add an enjoyable element to worship services," he said. "Sometimes I speak at small rural churches that don't have a pianist, and now there is something I can do to help provide music when I'm there."

Student Ron A. Mann Sr., pastor of Independence Avenue Baptist Church in Kansas City, Mo., said he knew "absolutely nothing" about music when he enrolled in the class, but he has found Butler's five-chord method to be easy to learn.

Mann, who received the associate of divinity degree from Midwestern in 1987, said his wife, Beverly, is a "very good pianist" and noted, "She is amazed at how much I have learned in such a short period of time."

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Ken Freemyer, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Kansas City, Kan., and his wife, Judi, are taking the class together. Freemyer said they encourage one another during the week as they practice hymns at home.

"We have been involved in pioneer missions work in the past and plan to return to that kind of ministry when I retire," Freemyer said. "I feel that Judi and I will really be able to use what we've learned in this class when we go back to a pioneer setting, because there is a big need for musicians--especially people who can play the piano--in that field of ministry."

"I can get real emotional about this class when I think of what their new musical ability can do for the work of the Lord. I developed this method believing that there could be a marked difference in the life of a church when even one person in the congregation can support the music ministry by being able to play hymn," said Butler.

She concluded, "It is a joy to teach people something they've always wanted to know!"

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Crook cites aftercare  
as 'crying need' in prisons

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
4/23/91

LEAVENWORTH, Kan. (BP)--At least one Crook leaves the U.S. Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kan., every day.

As he drives away, he wonders about the 1,500 men still confined by the stone walls and barbed wire of the country's oldest federal prison. He goes home to a supportive wife and two children, but wonders if others will have a place to call home when they are released.

The Crook who leaves daily is Southern Baptist chaplain Glenn Crook. As chief of chaplains at the federal prison, his concern for the inmates' fate contradicts the implications of his last name.

Ministry to released prisoners is the "crying need in our prison system," Crook says.

That need is set to mushroom as the number of people confined to federal prisons escalates. This year the nationwide number of inmates in the 66 federal prisons topped 61,000 for the first time. By the end of next year, the number of federal inmates is expected to rise to 74,400, an increase of nearly 20 percent.

The longer a person is in prison, the more aftercare becomes a burden, Crook says. "The longer a guy is in prison, the harder it is to maintain his family ties. When he gets out, his family's gone."

Inmates who become Christians in prison may also find themselves abandoned by their family of faith when they are released.

"Christian inmates here have close contact with the chaplains, visitors and volunteers who encourage them and affirm them," Crook explains. "When they get out, will they find a Christian community that says, 'We believe in what has happened to you because it has happened to us'?"

"Not everybody's cut out to work in prisons, but we have to take responsibility for these guys who are coming out."

The growing prison population calls for Southern Baptists to see prisons as mission fields, says Crook, who adds volunteers are the "bread and butter" of his ministry as a chaplain.

Crook claims inmates are open to the gospel because "when you go to prison, you're basically stripped of your identity -- you wear the same clothes as everybody else and all of you get up at the same time. You claim your humanity, your personhood, by identifying with a group."

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Yet a jail cell confession of faith is no guarantee a person will not become a repeat offender. Crook says some people make Christian commitments because they think God will get them out of prison. Others simply don't count the cost of being a Christian. Others think as Christians they have to be perfect.

"One slip and they don't sense God's forgiveness and grace to press on. It's real easy to flip back over to a criminal way of life."

But Crook prefers to focus on released inmates who never again live behind prison walls, like a man he met at the federal prison in Bastrop, Texas.

The inmate kept a cross in his garden plot, and at the base of the cross was a rock with an evil face painted on it.

Crook asked the man about the combination. The man replied the cross represented God and the rock represented Satan. He had both of them in his garden because he wanted to cover all his bases.

Crook took the opportunity to share Christ. The inmate became a Christian and six months later, Crook baptized him. He since has been released from prison and has not been back.

Most inmates are from families with low incomes, Crook says. They typically were raised in homes where alcohol and drug abuse mixed with physical and emotional abuse to create dysfunctional families. Crime begins as an escape from such an environment and becomes an addiction, he adds.

Working with addictive, compulsive personalities is at best challenging. But Crook continues to work in the federal prison system because "God has given me a compassion for this kind of ministry, though sometimes I wish I could turn it off."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press year, from 100 to 150.

Returned chaplain recalls  
joy, struggles of battle

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
4/23/91

ATLANTA (BP)--Seven weeks of being in the United States does little to erase memories from seven months of military deployment for Chaplain Darrell Williams.

As one of 195 Southern Baptist chaplains to serve in Operation Desert Storm, Williams cannot forget the fear of war, the joy of baptisms and the agony of atrocities orchestrated by the Iraqi government.

The Army captain landed in Saudi Arabia on Aug. 23 with 853 soldiers from the 24th Infantry Division based at Fort Stewart, Ga. They immediately moved to the desert to train for battle.

The troops were spread out over several miles during their intensive war preparation. Williams, the only chaplain among those soldiers, conducted nine to 12 "packed out" worship services a week. He led 53 soldiers to make professions of faith, and he baptized 29 of them after they completed the Survival Kit for New Christians.

Lew Burnett, Home Mission Board director of military chaplaincy, estimates Southern Baptist chaplains up to 1,200 professions of faith during the Persian Gulf crisis.

As a Protestant chaplain, Williams is required to schedule religious services for people of other faiths. He arranged for Catholic soldiers to attend mass and for Jewish soldiers to celebrate Hanukkah.

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However, his most surprising interfaith encounter was with Muslims. He found people in Saudi Arabia respected chaplains as religious leaders. By Christmas they had such a positive relationship that Saudi Muslims loaned Williams traditional Arab clothing and animals for their Christmas play. Williams said it was his first time to use a live camel in the Christmas scene.

The holiday spirit changed as the Jan. 15 deadline for Iraq to leave Kuwait neared. When the 24th Infantry Division crossed the border into Iraq Feb. 24, Williams led a simple prayer over the radio -- "May God be with us all." "Amen" was the one-word reply.

Williams believes that prayer was answered as his division suffered only four deaths and 12 injuries. The four casualties were four too many, but the number was minimal compared to the hundreds of casualties Williams expected.

Yet Williams did not escape facing death.

At one point, Williams and his troops were near the Euphrates River. He intended to baptize new Christians in the biblical waters, but as they neared the river they had to turn back. Williams said they could not go further because mines and bodies of Iraqi soldiers were everywhere.

Just as troubling to Williams were the Iraqi survivors. He gave military meals to children begging for food and saw old women going through garbage for food and clothing. Yet he entered barracks of Iraq's Republican Guard and saw the army had plenty of food to eat while civilians starved.

Williams returned to the United States on March 22. Much of his time is spent leading marriage and family counseling sessions. He notes that the separation was especially hard on families whose relationships were not healthy before the war. He is also busy encouraging people who made professions of faith during their deployment.

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Church starts highest  
among ethnics, blacks

By Ginny Whitehouse

Baptist Press  
4/23/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Compared to the number of predominantly white Southern Baptist church starts, a significant percentage of new churches are ethnic or black, recent studies showed.

An estimated 10 percent of churches started between 1983 and 1988 have a majority of ethnic or black members, according to a study by Kirk Hadaway of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and Penny Long Marler of Hartford Seminary.

But in 1990 approximately 20 percent of the new churches -- not counting older churches affiliating with the SBC -- were ethnic or black, the Uniform Church Letter stated.

Meanwhile, non-Anglo churches made up only 5.5 percent of the churches in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The study, "New Church Development and Denominational Growth: Symptom or Cause?", examined 38 years of growth statistics in five leading Protestant denominations in the United States.

The study revealed new ethnic and black churches also grow faster, and Hadaway said they are therefore "more likely to survive."

More than 40 percent of all Hispanic, Asian, African-American and Native American churches -- new and existing -- grew by more than 10 percent during the past five years. Just under 30 percent of the predominantly white churches grew by the same amount.

Demographics played a part in these numbers as a shrinking percentage of Americans trace their ancestors to Europe. But these trends do not totally account for the church starts. In contrast to the SBC, the United States "is not 95 percent Anglo," Hadaway said.

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Southern Baptists fared poorly in the number of ethnic and black church starts compared to the other denominations in the study. Approximately 65 percent of the new American Baptist churches, 28 percent of the new Assemblies of God and 26 percent of the new Presbyterian Churches (USA) were predominately non-Anglo.

"Some of these (ethnic groups) are under-churched and can be seen as a mission field. There is also some value in having a pluralistic denomination," Hadaway said. "Starting ethnic churches is a way to achieve both the mission goals and change the character of the SBC from a mono-cultural, mono-regional denomination.

"We're reaching beyond the white Southern population. We are starting a number of Anglo churches, but proportionately there are more ethnics," he added.

About half of new Southern Baptist work -- that includes churches, special classes and mission congregations -- is being conducted in a language other than English, said Chuck Padilla, Hispanic church growth consultant in the board's special ministries department.

The number of Hispanic congregations in the United States has increased 87 percent in the last decade, Padilla said.

Ho Kil Kahng, Korean church growth consultant at the board, said two or three new Korean congregations are formed each month.

"Anglos have had the gospel all this time and have become satisfied with the way they are. A person from the West living in the South does not have the same missionary spirit. The gospel is new to language groups. The freedom we feel in receiving the gospel is tremendous," Padilla said.

The church provides a stopgap for many immigrants when they first arrive in the U.S., and thus, makes it "easier to reach an immigrant than the kids that grows up here," he said.

"Many Koreans who don't speak English find satisfaction in the church, even if they are not a Christian," Ho explained. "Once they attend church and hear the Bible truths, they come to accept Christ."

Regardless of language or culture group, Ho and Padilla agreed the major challenge for evangelism comes with the second generation Americans who have become a "breed all to themselves."

These young adults, youth and children do not feel they totally belong in either an Anglo or a language church, so many ethnic congregations are adding bilingual programs.

"All churches are cultural churches regardless of what language the people speak. That's why we drive past five churches to get to the one we are going to," Padilla said. "In order to reach different groups we must capitalize on the culture."

Growth and the success of church starts in African-American churches may be linked to their historical role, speculated Jay Wells, manager of the black church development section.

Black leaders have traditionally come out of church leadership, making the church an integral part of community, he explained. That also makes church "more acceptable" to blacks, while white non-Christians may now be more resistant.

"Previous generations came from Africa with an increased spiritual dimension," Wells said. "That spiritual dimension still helps bring people into church."

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