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May 1, 1991

91-67

Chapman names Credentials
and Tellers Committees

By Maria Sykes

N-CO

WICHITA FALLS, Texas (BP)--SBC President Morris Chapman announced appointments to the final two key committees to serve during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 4-6, in the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

The SBC bylaws require the president to appoint the Credentials Committee, in consultation with the vice presidents and the Tellers Committee in consultation with the SBC registration secretary.

The vice presidents are Douglas Knapp, a retired missionary to Tanzania, from Gainesville, Fla., and Fred Lowery, minister from First Baptist Church, Bossier, Fla. The registration secretary is Lee Porter, consultant with the Sunday school division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.

The announcement of the Credentials Committee appointments must be made at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting. The Resolutions and Committee on Committees were announced earlier.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The Credentials Committee, in cooperation with the registration secretary, "shall review and rule upon any questions which may arise in registration concerning the credentials of messengers."

Furthermore, any committee ruling, "may be appealed to the Convention during business session. Any contention arising on the floor concerning seating of messengers shall be referred to the committee for consideration and the committee shall report back to the Convention," as stated in bylaw 8.

Chapman named Clark Hutchinson, minister from Eastside Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., chairman.

Other appointees are Frank Ashby, minister from Gracemont Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla.; Finis Beauchamp, minister from First Baptist Church, Cameron, Texas; Charles E. Brown, minister from Government St. Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala.; James M. Castelberry, minister from Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Montgomery, Ala.; Pat Cronin, minister from First Baptist Church, Deerfield Beach, Fla.;

Barrett Duke, minister from Highland Ranch Baptist Church, Littleton, Conn.; Roger Freeman, minister from First Baptist Church, New Orleans; Frankie Harvey, layperson from Emmanuel Baptist Church, San Jose, Calif.; Danny R. Hill, minister from First Baptist Church, Fair Oaks, Calif.; Tommy Knotts, minister from First Baptist Church, Belvedere, S.C.; John David Laida, retired minister from First Baptist Church, Clarksville, Tenn.;

Rick Lineberger, minister from First Baptist Church, Grapevine, Texas; Jerry Mathis, layperson from First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas; Paul T. Murphy, minister from Twelfth St. Baptist Church, Gadsden, Ala.; Chris Osborne, minister from Central Baptist Church, Bryan, Texas; A. Dale Patterson, minister from East Brent Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla.; Russ Preston, minister from Sharon Baptist Church, Olathe, Kan.;

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Rick Ray, minister from First Baptist Church, Moore, Okla.; Charles Redman, minister from First Baptist Church, Pasadena, Texas; Sandy Sandlin, minister from First Baptist Church, Beaumont, Texas; Doug Surber, minister from Miami Shores Baptist Church, Dayton, Ohio; Dennis Swanberg, minister from First Baptist Church, W. Monroe, La.; Maxine Tatum, layperson from Colonial Baptist Church, Baltimore, and Rick White, minister from First Baptist Church, Franklin, Tenn.

TELLERS COMMITTEE

The Tellers Committee tabulates any votes taken during the annual meeting, under the supervision of the registration secretary.

Chapman named Michael T. Hailey, minister from First Baptist Church, Lakeland, Fla., chairman.

Other members are James L. Adkins, retired minister from First Baptist Church, Gracewood, Ga.; Richard Caperton, minister from Wieuca Road Baptist Church, Atlanta; Charles E. Cloyd, layperson from Hickory Baptist Church, Mayfield, Ky.; Stanley Cole, minister from Kento-Boo Baptist Church, Florence, Ky.; Alan Cox, minister from Woodland Hills Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C.;

Alan Day, minister from First Baptist Church, Edmond, Okla.; Mike Dean, minister from Calvary Baptist Church, Beaumont, Texas; Pete DeMoss, minister from Germantown Baptist Church, Germantown, Tenn.; Jack Eassa, layperson from First Baptist Church, West Palm Beach, Fla.; Ernest Easley, minister from Central Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Texas; Charles A. Herbst Jr., layperson, First Baptist Church, Durham, N.C.;

Donald Vance Lasley, minister from First Baptist Church, Damascus, Va.; F. Murray Mathis, minister from Third Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tenn.; Waites P. McLeod, minister from Immanuel Baptist Church, North Augusta, S.C.; David K. Newberry, minister from First Baptist Church, Crossett, Ark.; Omar Pachecano, minister from Eastside Baptist Church, El Paso, Texas; Doug Pilot, minister from Wyoming Baptist Church, West Pittston, Pa.;

Bill Prince, layperson from Abilene Baptist Church, Martinez, Ga.; Lindy Reed, minister from Birchman Baptist Church, Independence, Mo.; Jim Reimer, minister from Second Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo.; Phillip Simmons, minister from N. Richland Hills Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas; Bobby G. Swanner, layperson from First Baptist Church, W. Monroe, La.; Mark Tolbert, minister from S. Highland Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark.; Gary Tolliver, minister from Oak Tree Community Church, Hemet, Calif.; Ted Traylor, minister from Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla.; and Mary Jo Troughton, layperson from Westside Baptist Church, Lenexa, Kan.

Chapman also named Harvey Collier, layperson from First Baptist Church, Albuquerque, N.M., to serve on the Committee on Committees, replacing Jean Martin of Albuquerque. Because of illness in her family, Martin will not be able to serve on the committee.

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April CP receipts are larger than last year

N-C-D

Baptist Press
5/1/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Cooperative Program unified budget gifts received by the SBC Executive Committee for the month of April exceeded those of a year ago but by less than a percentage point.

Gifts received for the Cooperative Program for April were \$11,756,419 compared to \$11,667,118 last year, a .77 percent increase. Seven months into the SBC budget year the CP totals are \$83,299,773 compared to the same period a year ago of \$82,539,644, a .92 percent increase.

The 1990-91 basic operating budget need for seven months is \$80,110,639.

"I am gratified with April's total," said Harold C. Bennett, Executive Committee president/treasurer. "We are still ahead of last year for both the month and the year."

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Designated gifts for the month, however, trailed slightly the previous month and year. April's designated total was \$9,254,213 compared to April 1990, of \$9,335,072, a .87 percent decrease. Total for the month, including CP and designated gifts, was \$21,010,632 compared to \$21,002,190 for 1990.

Budget year designated gifts also are trailing last year. For the seven months \$87,475,373 has been received, compared to \$89,272,173 in 1989-90. That is a 2.01 percent decrease. Designated contributions include the Foreign Mission Board's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, the Home Mission Board's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, and world hunger.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting ministry and missions through state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. State and regional conventions retain a percentage of CP contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining percentage to the SBC Executive Committee for national and international ministries.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Affiliates from seven states honored at ACTS awards ceremony" dated 4/26/91, please change the date in the fourth paragraph from the end to read "Missions '90", not "Missions '91" as reported.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Convention's host city isn't
buckle on Bible Belt anymore

By Mark Wingfield

F-NMB

Baptist Press
5/1/91

ATLANTA (BP)--When he heard Atlanta was selected to host the 1996 summer Olympics, Russ Barker wept.

To Barker, director of missions for Atlanta Baptist Association, the Olympics announcement symbolized the change and challenge facing his hometown and the host city for this year's Southern Baptist Convention.

"I don't know when I've ever had anything give me a deeper sense of pride than when they announced that," he recalls. "I just sat there and cried."

In his lifetime, Barker has seen Atlanta change racially, geographically and spiritually. "It's kind of like watching your family grow up and leave," he says. "In other ways, it gives a sense of pride because of what you see your family becoming."

As an Atlanta native raised under the influence of Southern Baptist churches, Barker testifies his hometown isn't the buckle on the Bible Belt anymore.

Barker is the product of Southern Baptist missions, raised in the Georgia Baptist Children's Home in Hapeville, an Atlanta suburb. Also symbolic of the growth of Atlanta, many messengers attending the Southern Baptist Convention will pass over the former site of Barker's childhood home. It is now runway four at Hartsfield International Airport.

"There was a time in my teenage years when it was almost true that one of every two persons in Atlanta was a Southern Baptist," Barker recalls. "The growth of the city has had such a cosmopolitan flavor to it that now, 67 percent of the city doesn't belong to anybody's church."

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"Our mission field consists of people who have moved here from all over the United States and all over the world. To them, Southern Baptists are everything from some kind of cultic group to almost a non-entity. The culture of the pioneer areas in the 1950s is almost the culture we have to deal with now in Atlanta."

Atlanta is the 12th largest metropolitan area in the United States. With a current population of 2.8 million, Atlanta was the second fastest-growing metropolitan area in the nation during the past decade, its 32.5 percent growth outpaced only slightly by Dallas-Fort Worth.

The number of residents primarily speaking some language other than English has increased from less than 1 percent in 1980 to more than 12 percent in 1990.

In 1914, Atlanta Baptists could hardly foresee the changes their city would face. In the association's annual meeting that year, superintendent B.P. Robertson reported the area's population consisted of about 250,000 people. Because the population was mainly Baptist, Robertson predicted the future Atlanta would be a Baptist city.

That prediction held true for the next 50 years as the association experienced rapid growth, reaching a peak of 162 churches in 1962.

The last 40 years, however, have revealed a different story -- a story of racial and social transition, "white flight" and declining inner city churches.

In 1990, Atlanta Baptist Association reported 103 churches and 21 missions.

In 1960 Southern Baptists had one church for every 4,900 people in Atlanta. Today the ratio is one church to every 8,895 people.

The question facing Atlanta Baptists, Barker claims, is "How are we going to do church in a city with the cultural and ethnic diversity that Atlanta now is? How is the church going to penetrate that kind of society?"

"Atlanta is attempting to become a real international city," Barker explains. "I think the business and cultural part of the city is already there. If there is an aspect of the city that is lagging behind in becoming international, it is the religious."

But Barker will not accept defeat for Atlanta Baptists. Under his leadership the association is focusing on strengthening its existing base and expanding through innovative ministries and aggressive church starting.

Traditional churches have moved to the suburbs as traditional people have fled the city, he points out. "Churches remaining in the city have either got to reach out to the community around them or wither where they are."

He points to a new high rise apartment building across the street from his office in midtown Atlanta. "How is the church going to penetrate that kind of society?" he asks.

"That's the challenge I see before us. How are we as an association going to lead our churches into doing non-traditional stuff to really get to where the people are. Not only where they are geographically and socially, but where they are culturally.

"We're going to have to start breaking some traditional patterns if we're going to reach the city."

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(Adapted from the May-June issue of MissionsUSA magazine)

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

Creative ministries developing where
traditions are gone with the wind By Mark Wingfield

F-DMYS

ATLANTA (BP)--Were she to visit Atlanta today, Scarlett O'Hara might declare tradition had gone with the wind.

Remnants of the Old South depicted in Margaret Mitchell's famous novel about the Civil War are increasingly hard to find in Atlanta. Equally hard to find are the thriving traditional Southern Baptist churches that created Atlanta's reputation as the buckle on America's Bible Belt.

The beacon of the South has reshaped itself into a cosmopolitan, international city that will host visitors from around the world for the 1996 summer Olympics.

In the same way the city has reshaped itself, some Atlanta Southern Baptists are working to restore the shine of the city's faith. In various parts of the city live pastors and laypeople, salaried ministers and volunteer missionaries who are investing their lives in reaching people traditional churches can't or won't reach.

These are Atlanta's innovators in evangelism, a core of Christians committed to the inner city.

Joe Brock is one. Through creative evangelism the pastor has led Woodland Hills Baptist Church to reverse a nearly 30-year decline.

Woodland Hills bucked the trend because its people were willing to "come out of their comfort zone," the pastor claims. As a result, average attendance increased 50 percent last year from 100 to 150.

Two church vans that weren't being used became the means to start a transportation ministry to help people get to church. A food ministry was begun to provide groceries to needy families. Church members take food to clusters of homeless people who live under a nearby bridge.

Home Bible studies have sprung up in various places, including a nearby government housing project. At Christmas the church gave fruit baskets and personalized cards to 800 homes.

In short, the church has become what music minister Steve Cheek gives as a modern-day paraphrase of the Bible. "We're the John 1:14 of this neighborhood," he says. "The word became flesh and hung out among them."

A few miles northeast of the Grant Park area where Woodland Hills is located is Little Five Points, a community one government report classified as a "Bohemian mix."

A small business strip features health food stores, a New Age bookstore and shop windows full of offbeat clothing. Utility poles along the sidewalks are riddled with staples left over from fliers announcing past rallies and crusades for every social issue imaginable.

"There are not many Christians here, and not many Christians are going to move in," says Ken Evans, pastor of Intown Fellowship Church. Evans and his wife became burdened about the spiritual welfare of the community several years ago. They moved into the neighborhood in 1985 and started the church two years later.

On summer nights, Little Five Points residents aren't likely to find Evans inside the church building. He and other Christians frequently plant themselves in the neighborhood's business district where they play guitars, sing and strike up conversations with anyone who'll talk.

Surprisingly, many people do want to talk.

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Adhering to Christian values in this neighborhood creates a certain notoriety, Evans says. "We're known as the white, straight couple with kids. We're the alternative lifestyle.

"The method that's going to work here is a slow method," he says. "If we will persevere, we're going to see fruit. Even though it's slow, we've already seen converts."

Other areas of inner city ministry are anything but slow, as volunteer Arthur Turner will testify. Turner, a layman at Dunwoody Baptist Church in Atlanta's northern suburbs, is a volunteer at the Clark Howell-Techwood Baptist Center near downtown.

In the past four years he has seen more than 300 people profess faith in Jesus Christ through door-to-door visitation in the government housing project.

Turner now coordinates 21 weekly outreach Bible studies throughout the Techwood community. "We can criticize all we want to, but if we don't start getting back in here and leading people to the Lord, the inner city is headed for destruction," he says. "There's as much need here as there is anywhere in the world."

One reason there is so much need may be because the world has come to Atlanta. Racial distinctions once clearly classified as black-white now have taken on a multitude of colors and languages.

Joao Diedam moved his family from Brazil to Atlanta two years ago and discovered there was no Portuguese-speaking church in the city. Working with Atlanta Baptist Association, he determined to start one.

The mission began in March 1990 with Diedam's family and one former missionary to Brazil. Since then the congregation has grown to an average attendance of 45 people.

The key to this success, Diedam says, has been the evangelistic Bible study in homes. "We are having many decisions for Christ in the Bible studies," he says. At least 15 people have become Christians in the past year.

Davis Yaun also testifies to the influence of Bible study. Yaun, an engineer by vocation, is volunteer pastor of Arkwright Baptist Mission in one of Atlanta's poorest inner city neighborhoods.

He recalls the response of a boy who received a Bible at the mission and began reading it at home. After reading about the crucifixion in the gospel of Matthew, the boy returned to Yaun to tell him how the story made him cry.

"Is it alright to cry when you read your Bible?" the boy asked.

That boy is one of seven people who became Christians through Yaun's ministry last year.

Yaun's work began when his church, Clairmont Hills Baptist Church, was given a piece of property in the poor community where he now ministers. When the church didn't know what to do with it, Yaun asked for the opportunity to develop a recreational ministry with the boys living in the predominantly black neighborhood.

"I never had to go door-to-door in this community," the pastor says. "They came to me."

Yaun's goal is to establish the boys in a Christian lifestyle so they'll be able to resist the pull of crime and drugs so prevalent in the neighborhood. "Christianity can become a lifestyle in the same way they could adopt a lifestyle of drugs," he says.

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Homeless lifestyle is the very issue that created a barrier for homeless men and women. Druid Hills Baptist Church attempted to reach with the gospel. Rick Todd, a layman at Druid Hills, had been concerned about the homeless wandering the streets near his church, but felt he could do more than feed them hot dogs on the steps once a week.

The men wouldn't come to Sunday school because they didn't feel they were clean enough or had the right clothes. So Todd figured if he couldn't get them to attend existing classes, he would create a class especially for them.

The home Bible study for the homeless meets in a house adjacent to the main church building. Every Sunday morning, Todd feeds the group coffee, donuts and sausage biscuits and then teaches them a Bible lesson. About 30 people attend.

Happi Keenan takes the gospel to another segment of Atlanta's unseen population -- women in crisis.

Keenan is a Mission Service Corps volunteer working as director of Women's Crisis Center, a home for victims of domestic violence. Last year the center assisted 56 women and their children, for a total of 171 people. The average stay at the center is 42 to 60 days.

"We meet them right where they are," she explains. "We let them cry and still love them. We put clothes on their backs, food on the table and milk in their babies' bottles. Then we help them know how to love themselves."

Without pushing their faith, volunteers at the center attempt to model a Christian lifestyle. Last year, that modeling led to 21 Christian commitments among the women, children and husbands.

Keenan, like the other Atlanta innovators, doesn't see herself doing anything special. When asked, she claims she is just a Christian attempting to express her faith among people who need faith.

"You don't have to quote Scripture," she says. "You have to live it. What they see and read in you they will never forget."

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(Adapted from the May-June issue of MissionsUSA magazine)

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