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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 18, 1992

92-29

Morris Chapman elected;  
salary set at \$120,000

By Herb Hollinger

NASHVILLE (BP)--"I want God's will, nothing more, nothing less."

And praying for a "spiritual awakening through Southern Baptists to this nation," Morris H. Chapman accepted election as the fifth president and treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee during the committee's opening meeting Feb. 17 in Nashville.

Chapman will finish his second one-year term as president of the Southern Baptist Convention at the annual meeting in Indianapolis on June 11. Four days later, June 15, he will become president and treasurer-elect of the Executive Committee and succeed Harold C. Bennett on Oct. 1. Bennett retires Sept. 30.

The Texas pastor was elected amid friends and a high-tech video. The 70-member committee voted, without apparent dissent, to accept the search committee's nomination following a video presentation. Chapman, 51, has been pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, the past 13 years.

Julian M. Motley, search committee chairman, said Chapman's salary would be \$120,000, including a housing allowance. Motley said the salary figure is below what Bennett currently is receiving but the committee felt the economic conditions dictated the suggested lower figure, in agreement with Chapman.

Chapman pledged his "very best" and said he sees himself as a "servant for Southern Baptists."

"I see myself as carrying out the will of the majority and carrying out genuine healing among Southern Baptists," Chapman said. In an apparent reference to his new position as chief executive officer for the group which distributes a Cooperative Program budget of \$140 million, Chapman said "sometimes we fret too much over finances. I believe God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Not figures, facts or finances will carry us through these days ... only faith."

Saying he would speak the truth in love in a troubled Southern Baptist Convention, Chapman said his convictions about God's Word are the same as "I heard growing up as a boy in Kosciusko, Miss."

Chapman said he would look forward to working with Bennett "and learning from him." He called Bennett's 13-year leadership as "gracious and wise." He said he "greatly admired" Bennett.

Motley said the eight-month search for a new president and treasurer was a life enriching and rewarding experience for the 10-member committee. Eleven candidates were recommended to the committee, Motley said, with six meetings and three conference calls held. Three of the candidates eventually were interviewed by the committee. The committee spent about \$25,000 during the search process, Motley said.

EDITORS' NOTE: Suggested edit points appear at the end of this story.

Morris Chapman regarded as  
man of vision, compassion

By Art Toalston

NASHVILLE (BP)--The pastor stood by the bedside of a gravely ill friend this past New Year's Eve.

He took the man's hand; the man gently squeezed back. "That was the last thing he did before he died," the man's wife, Wanda, remembered, "and Morris prayed the sweetest prayer."

Morris Chapman watched his friend Gary Brown, a diabetic since age 7, succumb that afternoon to a series of medical traumas including kidney failure and dialysis, triple bypass heart surgery and amputation of both legs.

Mrs. Brown, also diabetic, said Chapman's wife, Jodi, "meant the world to me" during her husband's fight for life. She said Jodi encouraged her "to talk with Gary about death, rather than put up a facade. His death was not so much a grieving as a rejoicing; these were the sweetest three years of my life. And Jodi helped make it that way."

A week earlier, the two families had their traditional Christmas Eve gift exchange and meal of boiled shrimp and pizza. "We (adults) like shrimp, but the kids like pizza," Mrs. Brown tried to explain, attesting, "It's a good combination. You ought to try it next year."

Beyond being at Gary Brown's side this past New Year's Eve, Chapman's thoughts often turned to the Southern Baptist Convention. As SBC president he had called for a 1992 "Watchman National Prayer Alert" for America's spiritual well-being. It would begin that night with watch services in participating churches. To date, 1,200 churches have committed to pray during assigned one-hour slots each week. And they're encouraged to exchange prayer requests as they telephone the next church on the prayer chain.

"The desperate need for spiritual awakening in this nation has been ever present in my thoughts," Chapman told fellow Baptist leaders in issuing the call to prayer. "Each hour we fail (to pray together as Southern Baptists) another family is broken apart, another teen-ager contemplates suicide, another man or woman falls into immorality, another soul is lost to the kingdom of God."

Such is the man selected for one of the most influential posts among Southern Baptists -- president and treasurer of the convention's Executive Committee. The 77-member committee, which unanimously elected Chapman Feb. 17, allocates more than \$140 million in Cooperative Program funds given by Southern Baptists for national and international missions and ministry, and it acts in behalf of the Southern Baptist Convention between its annual meetings. He will succeed Harold C. Bennett, 67, who is retiring after 13 years in the post.

Chapman, 51, has been part of the SBC all his life. His parents were faithful members of Southern Baptist churches in several Mississippi towns. Revival services at First Baptist Church in Laurel stirred him to yearn for salvation at age 7 and, in his pastor's office, he prayed to receive Christ as Savior and Lord. At age 12, he sensed a call to Christian work during the final service of a boys' Royal Ambassadors camp.

As a student at Southern Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College where he graduated in 1963, he participated in the Baptist Student Union, attended student week at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, and took his first church job as a part-time minister of music and youth in nearby Jackson. At age 21, in a summer of youth ministry back in Laurel, he sensed a call to the preaching ministry. At Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, Chapman earned a master of divinity degree in 1968 and a doctor of ministry in 1975.

"I learned what I learned," he reflected, "at the feet of Baptists."

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He was pastor of First Baptist churches in Rogers, Texas, 1967-69; the Waco suburb of Woodway, 1969-74; and Albuquerque, N.M., 1974-79, with two of those years also in the presidency of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico.

The past 13 years Chapman has been pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, a congregation averaging 162 baptisms per year and devoting 15 percent of its \$2.8 million budget to the Cooperative Program. In both categories it has been in the top 1 percent of Southern Baptist churches each year of his pastorate.

Beyond leading the Wichita Falls congregation, Chapman's energies as SBC president have entailed well over 150,000 miles of travel since 1990 to speak before an array state conventions, evangelism conferences and churches across America as well as represent Southern Baptists in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Korea and Kenya.

Friends describe Chapman as a man of vision and compassion, a gracious man yet unwavering in his convictions, a man who ceaselessly seeks the will of God, often in prayerful late-night walks through his neighborhood. They say he's a pastor who counts his wife as a vital part of his ministry.

And they say Chapman is genuine.

"When he preaches you just feel like you get his whole heart," Mrs. Brown volunteered. "He is man enough" to admit his failings even from the pulpit or in a deacon's meeting, said Harold Warren, chairman of First Baptist's personnel committee. Chapman enjoys stopping for ice cream after an evening of visits in prospective church members' homes, admitted Ron Harris, former minister of media at First Baptist, now program director at a Christian radio station in Dallas. "He'd just as soon have black-eyed peas, cornbread and fried okra as steak," said Katherine Brakebill, who was on the pastor search committee that sought Chapman for the church. "He's real. Flesh and blood like the rest of us," said Steve Cookingham, a friend in the church.

After 28 years of marriage, he remains a romantic. "He hasn't missed a year sending roses on our anniversary," Jodi noted. "He likes to bring home little surprises. He calls every night when he's out of town. It's been a good example for our children -- our son is a romantic because of his dad." The son, Chris, is minister of singles and college students at First Baptist Church in Lakeland, Fla. The Chapmans' daughter, Stephanie, works in the Houston headquarters of a national Christian counseling ministry.

Chapman's mix of spirituality and humanity dates as far back as the revival meetings that stirred his 7-year-old soul. While the guest preacher's sermons were biblical and fervent, more inspiring to him was the musician, a blind singer who played the piano. The young Chapman took note of "the love of Christ which radiated through this man, how he had given his talents to serve the Lord and had such joy in spite of his blindness."

"I told my parents I wanted to invite Jesus into my heart. I was beginning to understand there was a step to be taken beyond simply loving Jesus as I had as a child, that I needed forgiveness of my sins and a personal relationship with Jesus." They made an appointment for him with the pastor, and Chapman remembers him as "a very compassionate and understanding man. He took the time to review the plan of salvation, to listen as I prayed to receive Christ and to pray with me."

At a boys' mission camp at age 12, Chapman once again felt a stirring. "On the last night, during the final service, I remember standing through the invitation for several stanzas until I just couldn't stay in my place any longer. I felt an overwhelming desire to be whatever God wanted me to be." He walked the aisle "to give my life in his service ... yet not knowing what exactly God wanted me to do in the ministry."

Just weeks before he was to enter college, his parents divorced. Then Chapman's father, who had owned a tire store in the town of Kosciusko, went bankrupt. Chapman and his brother, Ron, moved with their mother to Jackson, where she and Ron, now a china sales representative, still reside. Chapman had counted on his father's promise to help with college expenses but suddenly, "There was no money."

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Chapman decided to sell a 1948 Chevrolet he had bought with money earned as a youth, but still he was \$300 shy of his first semester costs. Only in the cashier's line at college did he learn of a deferred payment plan that would allow him to proceed with classes. He paid for his education by church work and a job at a Jackson shoe store.

A call to preaching emerged from a summer of youth work at Highland Baptist Church in Laurel, the city where Chapman had embraced Christ years earlier. He had been a music major but was feeling "something incomplete" about the solos he sang in church. The night before preaching in church on youth Sunday, he urgently asked God for "a sure sign he was calling me into the preaching ministry" -- at least two decisions after his sermon. If there was none, he would accept it as God saying no; if just one, no clear sign.

His fleece didn't come to mind once he started preaching then opened the invitation. Two young people came forward seeking salvation. A third committed herself to missions. His fleece flashed back to mind and "then and there in my heart I accepted God's call to preach. From that day until this God has confirmed that call again and again."

Returning to college, Chapman first noticed his wife-to-be in a chapel program featuring the talents of new students. Jodi Francis of Memphis, Tenn., wearing old blue jeans, with her hair in pigtails, teeth blacked out and freckles dabbed on her face, sang a hillbilly song and played the ukulele. "She was so radiant she took 'em by storm," Chapman enthused. They dated, love blossomed and they were married in the summer of 1963.

At Rogers, Texas, Chapman took his first pastorate while a student at Southwestern Seminary. "He was distinctly different from all the other preachers we had," said Wray Durnal, the town's retired postmaster who chaired the pulpit committee that found Chapman in 1967. "He had the greatest grip of the Scriptures of anybody I've ever known at that age," Durnal said. "I told him many times God had some great things for him."

First Baptist of Rogers topped the Baptist association in baptisms during Chapman's first year. By the end of Chapman's two-plus years there, the church also doubled its Cooperative Program giving.

Chapman's evangelistic commitment intensified at Rogers when he watched a cancer-stricken 29-year-old husband and father die. "I had witnessed to him on numerous occasions. On his deathbed I witnessed to him again and pled with him to trust in Christ. His wife begged him to be saved. There was such a sense of hopelessness in his spirit. When he took his last breath I was devastated." The experience deepened Chapman's heart for "how many people are without hope and yet might still be reached for the gospel."

Rogers also is where Chapman resolved to focus on God's will, "to never to run ahead of God, to make every effort not to take things into my own hands with regard to my fields of ministry. I would try to be faithful to him on a daily basis and let him provide for the future.

"God knows my heart, that I've decided to do nothing more and nothing less than his perfect will. I have a strong conviction God has a perfect will for his children, that he will honor and bless us as we seek to be obedient."

"I think he'll give (Southern Baptists) a good clear sound on the trumpet," said Harold Warren of First Baptist in Wichita Falls, citing Chapman's intensity for seeking God's will.

"Morris feels strongly about things," said Bud Jones, a member of First Baptist in the Woodway suburb of Waco who was on the pulpit committee that introduced Chapman to the church in 1969. "I have not met, nor conceived of, the man who could intimidate him as long as he feels he is following the Lord's plan for his life. The better friend I become with him, it becomes evident that his confidence comes ... not from ego or self-aggrandizement but dependence on the Lord."

Chapman is unapologetic for his biblical conservatism, stating, "To love God is to live with deep conviction."

Biblical conservatism and convictions do not limit a person's love for those with whom he or she differs, Chapman said. "We are to love each other in light of the truth of God's Word. Truth gives us the liberty to love and does not give us the license to hate."

Nor do biblical conservatism and convictions lead to a narrow-minded lifestyle devoid of joy, he said. "On the contrary. The Bible teaches that truth sets you free."

But convictions often involve a price. In 1988 a small group of First Baptist members disenchanted with Chapman began forming a new congregation at Lunn's Colonial Funeral Home in Wichita Falls, with 33 charter members when Colonial Baptist was organized that October. Compared to First Baptist, now averaging 1,500 in Sunday school, Colonial Baptist's Sunday school average stands at 300.

A number of "old-line" First Baptist members, as Warren described them, became angry because "Morris would not kowtow to them. He would listen to them. He would pray with them. But he was going to do what he thought was right. Because they could not control him as they wanted to, they just quit supporting the church ... and began picking at anything (Chapman did)."

When the new church was formed, Warren said, "We prayed for them (and) wished them well, sent them out there with God's blessings on them." Added Steve Cookingham, "Nobody loses if they're still in God's work even if it's someplace else." In a Sunday evening service at First Baptist the week before the new group began meeting, Chapman called the two key leaders to the platform and led in a time of prayer for the fledgling effort.

"Everybody, conservative or moderate, Republican or Democrat, Baptist or Methodist, who takes a stand of any kind is going to pay a price," said Jimmy Draper, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board president and former long-time pastor in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. They may face misunderstanding, gossip, slander, abusive letters or confrontations and various activities to belittle them. "That's why so many people in the world won't take a stand," Draper said.

First Baptist, however, hasn't lost momentum, said deacon chairman Jeral Jackson. Last year, for example, church members' tithes and offerings surpassed their \$2.6 million budget by \$63,000, he noted. Beyond the church's solid finances, Warren added, the church is in "the best spiritual shape" in his 15 years as a member.

Chapman's tenure in Wichita Falls, however, started with a crisis. Just before Easter 1979, two months after he came to Wichita Falls, a tornado struck the city, killing 45 people, including one First Baptist member, in a path of destruction eight miles long and one mile wide. Some 175 church families lost their homes. National TV crews sped to town and one network, after highlighting Easter observances in Jerusalem and Rome, focused on Chapman leading a community service in the tornado-ravaged town's Municipal Auditorium. "Let the whole world know," the pastor declared, "that Jesus Christ lives in Wichita Falls, Texas."

In the early 1980s, Chapman voiced a vision for witness in the largely unchurched Northwest, in which First Baptist would nurture a "flagship church" into a sizable congregation able to initiate its own evangelistic and church-planting efforts in the region. First Baptist made plans for its TV ministry to play a key role in launching the flagship church but suddenly lost access to a strategic cable TV system when the Federal Communications Commission relaxed regulations requiring free community programming. Opposition from old-line First Baptist members and the downturn in the Texas economy also helped shelve Chapman's idea.

The pastor's vision "outstripped our church's vision," Warren said. "I still think the flagship church is a good idea but it may have been 10 years too early. It would have been a big risk, but Morris wanted to exercise our faith." Chapman still hopes the idea might be tested someday. "I am convinced God would honor efforts" to develop flagship churches in major American cities lacking a strong Southern Baptist witness, he said.

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In 1984, Chapman led the Wichita Falls church in a prayer outreach for the then-36,000 churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. First Baptist members committed to pray one hour a week for a predetermined number of churches. Notices were mailed to sister churches with the time they would be prayed for and toll-free telephone lines were installed to receive any specific prayer requests.

Chapman, however, is not a one-dimensional leader. He is not afraid "to wrap great people around him in leadership roles," said Ron Hardin, who was a member of the pastor search committee 13 years ago. Former minister of media Ron Harris credited Chapman with the administrative savvy to "position me with the congregation as a professional in my field" and to welcome his ideas -- and the personal warmth to be open to deep friendship. "I had that kind of support throughout my time there," Harris said.

"Morris is not afraid to shed a tear," Hardin said. "He's not afraid to sit down and cry with you when it's crying time."

For Hardin and his wife, Geri, that time came when their son, Jeff, a firefighter, lost his life in 1984 when he became trapped in a fire-engulfed commercial building. Chapman was out of town that night but called to pray with the Hardins over the phone. The next morning he took the first available flight back to Wichita Falls. Chapman came to the Hardins' house, the three of them kneeled "and he said the most beautiful prayer of comfort in our behalf," Hardin said.

The couple wanted their son's funeral to be a testimony to his fire department co-workers, and Chapman, with an air of grace and kindness in his voice, reminded the firemen they must prepare for possible suddenness of their death, Hardin said.

But Chapman "seemed to have a message for Geri and me as well" about "a heavenly home we can all gather in someday," Hardin said. "Heaven has become much closer to us. It is a message that still rings comfort in our hearts when we listen to it on tape."

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Suggested edit points: This story can be shortened as necessary by such edits as: 1) stopping after paragraph 18, 2) fashioning paragraphs 19 through 31 into a biographical sidebar, 3) fashioning paragraphs 32 and following into a theological/philosophical sidebar. For further edit suggestions, contact Baptist Press. (BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the (BP) central office.

She couldn't shake  
her parents' love

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
2/18/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--It was bad enough that she rebelled just a couple years after asking Christ into her heart at age 14.

But she was the daughter of Morris Chapman, pastor of the 7,000-plus-member First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas, and his wife, Jodi.

"When I was in high school I totally rebelled against everything my parents told me," recounted Stephanie Evans, who is now 23, married and employed at the Houston headquarters of Rapha, a national Christian counseling ministry. "When they asked me to do something, I went the other way," opting to mire her life in "the partying scene."

But ultimately, partying fizzled in its faceoff with godly parenting.

"My parents raised me right. I chose the wrong road," Stephanie recounted. "They had always been there for me, at home, at church, everywhere -- and it made an impression on me even when I totally turned against it.

"Dad's life was always a godly example. That godliness was steady. It was something I couldn't dismiss as fake. I knew it was special.

"My mother always accepted me. Even though she didn't agree with what I was doing, she loved me for me.

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"Their love helped guide me back to Christ."

One night during her second year of college, "I had a dream, just to be real honest. The Lord said, 'I am so tired of forgiving you for things you do over and over and over.'

"My life just turned totally around" once she awoke.

"And I firmly believe it was because of the way my parents brought me up," Stephanie said. "Just like it says in the Bible, 'Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.' That's what happened to me. God chasened me and I turned back to him."

She returned home to Wichita Falls, then transferred to Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., where she graduated in 1990. A few months later she married Scott Evans and began her work at Rapha.

"I know God has totally forgiven me," she said, adding, "I know I went through this for a reason" -- in her counseling-related work, "I can really talk to people who have gone through the same struggles."

Would she prefer to have grown up as someone other than Morris and Jodi Chapman's daughter?

"No way."

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Son watched parents respond  
to prostitute's call for help

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
2/18/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Chris Chapman and his mother, Jodi, knew a prostitute was at the door.

Morris Chapman -- Chris's father and pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas -- had given the prostitute directions to the house.

Somehow she had gotten the Chapmans' phone number that Saturday night. She had been beaten by her pimp and might be beaten again at any moment, she told Chapman. She wanted out of the slavery of prostitution, she said.

Chapman offered refuge.

Chris wasn't surprised. His father may have needed a bit more time to think and pray about his sermons the next day. But now it didn't matter. "When Dad felt like somebody was in need right then, he was ready to give of his time regardless of what the next day held."

The family opened the door. His father "began trying to find out where she was spiritually," Chris recounted. His mother, a nurse by training, tended to the prostitute's physical wounds. "There was no complaining" on his mother's part, Chris said. "When there's a crisis, it's like she shifts into crisis gear."

The family soon decided to take the woman to a local hospital's emergency room. And, after a few months of Christian counsel, Chapman led the woman to faith in Jesus as her Lord and Savior.

Chris often watched his father take action when people were hurting. He saw his dad put in long hours in the ministry of the church.

At times, Chris heard gossipers target his father.

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Nevertheless, Chris entered the ministry. After graduating from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, he became minister of singles and college students at First Baptist Church in Lakeland, Fla., in July 1991. He and his wife, Renee, were married seven months ago.

"Dad never pressured me to go in the direction he has," Chris recounted. "He allowed God to move in my life, in God's timing for me."

Chris tried his hand at making money after graduating from Baylor University in 1987 "but I began realizing money was not my motivation. I kept feeling like the Lord was drawing me back toward ministry in the church."

One day while driving to work he was gripped by the words of a song by Christian musician Steve Green: "The truth that burns within you like a bed of fiery coals contains the power to liberate a thousand captive souls."

"I surrendered (to the ministry) right then in the car. Within a week I quit my job and by the next fall I was enrolled in seminary."

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FMB-HMB agree to coordinate  
transnational missions work

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press  
2/18/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--An agreement to enable the Southern Baptist Foreign and Home Mission boards to cooperate across national and geographic boundaries has been approved by the presidents of the two agencies.

Under the agreement, each of the two mission boards will establish a transnational missions desk with a staff member to coordinate joint missions efforts in both the United States and 122 other countries where Southern Baptists work.

Wally Buckner, assistant executive vice president at the Home Mission Board, and Tom Prevost, director of the international service department at the Foreign Mission Board, have been named to direct the transnational mission desks at their respective agencies.

Their appointments to the coordinating roles were announced during a dialogue between key staff members of the Home and Foreign Mission boards held in connection with the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee. A special 11-member staff task force recommended the plan for cooperation after a year's study.

Buckner and Prevost will assume the coordinating responsibility in addition to their other duties on special assignment by the two presidents.

Larry L. Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board in Atlanta, and R. Keith Parks, president of the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., said the agreement is an indication the world has become "a global community" with interdependent activities affecting every sector of society.

"The world continues to change radically and rapidly," Parks said. "What we've done is develop a system whereby we can work together on a shorter response time across national boundaries."

Lewis said the agreement acknowledges the two agencies "are very different, but share a common concern for reaching the whole world for the Lord Jesus Christ. There is much we can do together in partnership and ways we can work together."

During a dialogue between key staff members of the two agencies, Lewis also pledged support of the Home Mission Board to the Foreign Mission Board's "Green Alert" initiatives to respond to urgent mission needs in the Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly the Soviet Union).

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"Unpaid led opportunities are open for us to work together," Lewis said. "The challenge is so great and the need is so great, we must move forcefully to respond."

Paul Adkins, vice president for ministry at the Home Mission Board, suggested one way the Home Mission Board could help is through involving 20,000 Baptists in the United States who have been trained through HMB-sponsored literacy programs to teach English as a second language in overseas situations where volunteers are needed.

The presidents of the two mission boards approved a pilot project to pair major cities in the United States with major cities overseas that have similar characteristics. No specific cities were named as participants in the pilot project, which would be jointly developed and proposed by HMB and FMB staffs.

The two coordinators were assigned by the presidents to define opportunities and challenges, propose solutions to problems impeding mutual action, facilitate cooperative efforts, negotiate and coordinate cross-office and interagency work to respond to mission needs and enhance ongoing efforts related to major cities, international students, seafarers, diplomats and special events.

For example, both mission boards will be involved in cooperative mission efforts during the Olympic games in Barcelona, Spain, in 1994 and in Atlanta in 1996. Home Mission Board staff members Bill Lee, director of special ministries, and Elmer Goble, associate director of short term volunteers, will go to Barcelona later this year to explore ways the HMB can work with the FMB during the Olympics there.

Lee, a member of the transnational task force which recommended the plan, was in charge of HMB ministries during the world's fairs in Knoxville, Tenn., and New Orleans and Goble was in charge of HMB ministries during the Olympic games in Los Angeles.

As part of the cooperative venture, Lee also will lead a group of student workers to Taipei later this year to expose Baptist Student Union leaders to Chinese culture and to help them develop international ministries to Chinese students studying at universities in the United States.

Parks said program statements adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention have prohibited other SBC agencies from taking the initiative in direct involvement in missions work outside the United States. Parks said the new plan for cooperation between the HMB and FMB enables the convention to keep the program statements intact, but work cooperatively in coordinated mission efforts.

"If we discover from actual practice that the program statements need to be changed, we will revise them in the light of need rather than in the light of theory," Parks said.

In a report to the presidents, the task force noted the program statements for SBC agencies were developed to define boundaries between the agencies and were negotiated so agencies stayed out of one another's turf. "The program statements served well during the 1970s but both society and our churches have changed," the report said.

Although Parks and Lewis said the new cooperative plan is not a step toward actual merger of the two mission boards, it will enable the two boards to share plans, materials and personnel in ways not possible in the past.

The two coordinators also will be assigned to involve Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood organizations in supporting transnational missions, and working with the Sunday School Board's national student ministries in training college students in transnational missions.

Buckner and Prevost, the coordinators, will work under the supervision of the executive vice presidents of the two mission boards, Bob Banks of the HMB and Don Kammerdiener of the FMB. Banks and Kammerdiener were co-chairmen of the transnational missions task force, which will continue to function during the next year.

The plan for cooperation was approved in principle by the administrative committee of the Home Mission Board and the global strategy committee of the Foreign Mission Board.

Missions Day Camp at SBC  
to provide fun for children

By Steve Barber

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--While parents are tending to convention business, singing, praying, listening, voting and standing in lines at the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis, their children may be involved in action-packed activities at the SBC Missions Day Camp.

The SBC Missions Day Camp is sponsored by the children and youth division of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission. It is for boys and girls who will have completed grades 1-6 this year and whose parents are attending the annual SBC meeting.

"Missions is all about meeting needs, and this day camp certainly meets a real need for parents attending the convention," said James D. Williams, Brotherhood Commission president. "It's a privilege for the Brotherhood staff and volunteers to serve once again in this role at the annual meeting."

The day camp provides a missions education program for children of messengers during all daytime sessions of the convention from Tuesday, June 9, through Thursday, June 11. The cost is \$8 per day per child, which includes lunch and refreshments.

To register children for the day camp, visit the Missions Day Camp booth near the messenger registration area of the convention center on Monday, 8 a.m. through 5 p.m., or during daytime convention sessions Tuesday through Thursday.

The day camp will use the facilities of Northside Baptist Church in Indianapolis, 10 miles north of the downtown area.

Transportation will be provided to and from the day camp from the convention center.

Seventh-grade and older children are eligible to serve as assistant counselors for the camp. Contact Karl Bozeman at the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104, or at the Missions Day Camp registration booth on Monday before the convention.

The day campers should dress comfortably. Most activities will be indoors.

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Seminary student's carvings  
draw international attention

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press  
2/18/92

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--For seminary student Kerry Smith a love for carving ducks and a love for starting churches may lead to a happy bivocational marriage.

Smith, a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., has distinguished himself as a world-class duck carver. Last year, the part-time church planter strategist for the Kentucky Baptist Convention finished second in the novice division of the Ward World Championship in Ocean City, Md. About 3,000 carvers from several countries competed. Smith also has placed in competitions in California, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Virginia.

He said he is excited about the possibility of being a bivocational church planter and duck carver. "There's a future in bivocational ministries and church planting," observed Smith, who will graduate this summer. "That may be five or six years down the road for me. Right now, I'll be looking for a full-time position."

Prior to coming to seminary, Smith and his wife, Karen, helped establish new churches in Montana and South Carolina as Southern Baptist Home Mission Board US-2 missionaries.

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His interest in duck carving started when he spotted a beautiful duck in the window of a shop in Gatlinburg, Tenn., nearly 10 years ago. He became serious about taking up the hobby about five years later and began reading books and took a class. Smith's talent quickly became apparent to himself and his friends. "Once I saw I could do it, the flood gates just opened," he said.

The market for his finely-crafted waterfowl has grown from just a few friends and acquaintances to collectors from several states. Each duck, depending on the size, takes from 150-400 hours to carve and sells for \$1,500 to \$2,500.

Smith is headed back to the world championships in April with plans to compete in a higher category of competition. Instead of the ribbons he brought home last year, this time he hopes to bring home prize money. He expects to spend more than 400 hours studying photographs, reading literature and carving his entry in the competition.

Smith's ducks originate from his basement workshop. He uses knives plus some mechanical sanding and carving equipment to carve the life-like creations. He incorporates his passion for detail in carving classes he's been teaching. He includes instruction on feather patterns, installing glass eyes and painting with oils.

Duck carving has progressed from a craft of making working decoys for hunters to more of an art form that is welcomed in the living rooms of collectors, he said. "It's like catching a moment of the outdoors and bringing it into your home." Some duck carvers, he said, have produced ducks that have sold for as much as \$30,000.

Smith was an avid duck hunter when he was growing up in Griffin, Ga. He since has given up the sport completely, having sold his shotgun last year to pay for his backyard aviary -- 14 live ducks that serve as his models. Observing the live birds "has really helped me capture their natural poses," he said. "It helps you capture the essence of each species."

Smith has at times had a year's worth of orders for his ducks. Presently, he has reduced his workload to about seven months of commitments so he can concentrate on competitions.

"When I was a little boy, I used to go into my grandfather's shop and work with wood," he said. "It was a natural thing for me. I've always liked the outdoors and working with wood and I've always enjoyed ducks."

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(BP) photo available upon request from Southern Seminary

Tailor churches to culture,  
urban researcher advises

By Mike Creswell

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BRUSSELS, Belgium (BP)--Europe's major French-speaking cities can be reached for Christ if pastors and missionaries tailor outreach methods to local culture, an American specialist in urban evangelism said.

Programs of drama or classical music may attract French-speaking city dwellers to the gospel better than evangelistic crusades, said Raymond Bakke, speaking in Brussels, Belgium, in February. And the best missions research a pastor can do may be walking through his neighborhood, he said.

Bakke, an American Baptist, has done research and consulting on urban evangelism on six continents through his International Urban Associates ministry in Chicago. He also has been senior associate for large cities with the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.

Bakke and his associates met with a wide range of evangelical pastors and missionaries in Marseille and Paris, France, and in Brussels during January and February. In these "crucial French-speaking cities," help with evangelism is needed because the state of the church there is "bleak," according to Bakke's organization.

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Churches in these cities have declined relative to the increasing population, the group reported. Growing secularism and an increasingly pluralistic religious picture have combined to marginalize Christianity. At the same time, Islam and occultism are becoming more popular.

In Belgium, evangelicals comprise only about 0.5 percent of the population. France and Belgium are considered Roman Catholic countries, and church statistics reflect high percentages of church membership. But those statistics may be empty. A study done by Roman Catholics in Quebec, Canada, a French-speaking, Catholic area, showed fewer than 1 percent of baptized Catholics there participate in parish life, said Glenn Smith, a Montreal minister accompanying Bakke on the Europe tour.

"The Catholic participation may be higher in Belgium but it's not over 5 percent," added Patrick Deneut, a missionary to Belgium with the Canadian Baptist Federation.

Bakke urged pastors and missionaries to walk through their neighborhoods and look for handles on local culture to help share the gospel. "I know a lot of preachers who feel superior, who preach down to people," he said. Noting Jesus spent a lot of time with people, Bakke asked: "Where do you spend your time? ... You must know your neighborhood better than anyone alive. If you don't love your community, I think the people will know it."

Bakke urged conferees to notice the arts in their areas, pointing out Europe is a culture tuned in to the arts. He praised an evangelical group in Lyon, France, that presents the gospel through art and sculpture in a theater.

In Marseille, an evangelical missionary has started three churches in three different neighborhoods, using a different method for each. He went to areas where young people gather and made contacts through drama, mime, picture board drawings and a coffee bar. In three years, he had started a church. His secret? "He adopts his ministry to the context of the city," said Bakke.

Bakke compared Europe to Japan, where evangelicals also make up less than 1 percent of the people. There, too, many Christian churches are so counter-cultural that Japanese must come out of their culture to believe the gospel. The Japanese have a very artistic way of looking at life, yet most churches ignore art. The average communion service common in churches there does not compare well to the beautiful tea ceremony Japanese know, he said.

While Japanese businessmen target the entire world with their products, evangelical pastors tend to be "small-minded," majoring on getting "a few more people, a building a little larger," he said. "I sense a little of that here and I think it's related to marginality and second classness. Pastors feel they're so marginal compared to the overwhelming nature of Paris."

Bakke also urged mission boards to experiment in missions. For instance, in European cities with high unemployment, a board could set up businesses to employ people as some do in Third World nations.

Bakke, who described himself as conservative theologically, said programs developed elsewhere and carried out "by the book" in a given area are not the answer. Southern Baptists and other evangelicals must realize "the McDonald's franchise approach to missions isn't going to work," he said. He praised the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's new nonresidential missionary program, which allows networking of programs and people apart from geographical restrictions.

Bakke said Europe is a "gateway through which evangelicals can reach into North Africa and others areas." To ignore Europe would be "evangelistically foolish," he said.

But Europe is a hard mission field, Bakke acknowledged in an interview. "It's hard ground," compared to Africa and South America where "the church grows even when we sleep ... ." He said Europe is "repaganizing" at profound levels. "Occultism and other things are growing very, very rapidly," he said.

Historically, church growth has come slowly in parts of Europe. It took 600 years to produce Catholic Scandinavia, 300 years for Lutheran Scandinavia and 150 years for Swedish and Norwegian Baptist churches, he said. "It takes a long time to penetrate some of these hard cultures in Europe," he said.

Bakke said he is committed to the renewal of historic churches in Europe as well as the planting of new ones. "I don't agree with those who say just 'Forget the historic churches -- they are unreformable.'... I've studied the Reformation and I know it can happen. The Spirit of God can do it," he said.

Signs of renewal can be found in the United Kingdom, Norway and other places in Scandinavia and in Germany, Bakke said. "So I have hope for Europe -- tremendous hope."