

# Morris Chapman planning to retire

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) — Morris Chapman, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, announced plans Sept. 21 to retire at the end of September 2010.

Chapman, a former pastor who this year celebrates his 50th anniversary in the ministry, called his election to the post both "one of the greatest honors of my life" and "one of the most humbling challenges I have ever faced."

Morris Chapman announces retirement plans to the SBC Executive Committee.

Chapman's announcement comes just a week after a similar one by another SBC agency head, International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin, who announced he is retiring after 17 years at the end of next July. The CEO spot at a third SBC entity, the North American Mission Board, is also vacant, since President Geoff Hammond and three top associates resigned under pressure Aug. 11.

Chapman, who was pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, before coming to the Executive Committee in 1992, said he has been discussing his retirement plans with committee officers for several years and announced his decision to that group Sept. 20.

The Executive Committee authorized chairman Randall James, president of First Orlando Foundation in Orlando, Fla., to appoint a search committee to nominate Chapman's successor.

Saying he does "not want to spend the entire year preparing to vacate my office," Chapman said he would launch an initiative to support a "Great

Commission resurgence," urging agency heads to publicly challenge denominational workers to commit themselves with sharing the gospel with individuals.

*--Bob Allen is senior writer for Associated Baptist Press.*