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April 3, 1973

**Portland Hotels Filled; SBC
Seeks Homes for Messengers**

PORTLAND, Ore. (BP)--With almost every available hotel and motel in Portland filled to capacity during the week of the Southern Baptist Convention slated here June 12-14, the local arrangements committee is organizing to place those without a place to stay in private homes.

Already, hotels and motels have confirmed reservations for 11,560 persons planning to attend the convention, according to Dan C. Stringer, executive secretary of the Northwest Baptist Convention and chairman of local arrangements for the convention.

Stringer estimated that an additional 1,000 hotel-motel reservations had been made direct without going through the convention housing bureau, and that an additional 200 to 300 rooms had been reserved in cities 50 to 60 miles away.

Stringer said that the committee hopes to make arrangements to handle as many as 500 to 1,000 persons in private homes.

Roland Hood, former executive secretary of the convention now serving as interim superintendent of missions for the Interstate Baptist Association in Portland, is chairman of the special committee coordinating housing of messengers in private homes.

As of April 1, Stringer estimated that about 1,000 to 1,500 persons with friends in the Portland area already had made plans to stay in private homes rather than in hotels or motels.

Stringer said that there might be a few hotel or motel rooms available just before the convention begins when and if some who are planning to attend cancel their reservations, but as of April 1, virtually all of the 5,300 hotel-motel rooms available in Portland have been reserved.

He attributed the large number of reservations to the unusual number of families making plans to attend the convention this year, and to the fact that most of the hotels in Portland are small compared to some other major convention cities in the nation.

There also are a large number of charter flights, most of them with block reservations for rooms, scheduled during the Portland convention, he pointed out.

Stringer urged those who plan to attend the convention, but who do not yet have accommodations, to write to either himself or to Hood, and indicate if they would be willing to stay in a private home. If a preference for a hotel or motel is indicated, that request will be honored if any rooms do become available through cancellation, Stringer said.

Stringer and Hood can be contacted at the Baptist Building, 811 N.W. 20th Ave., Portland, Ore., 97209.

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**Heart Attack Claims
Retired Texas Treasurer**

4/3/73

DALLAS (BP)--Memorial Services were held here April 3, for R.A. Springer, treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Texas for 33 years before retiring in 1970.

Springer, 67, died of a massive heart attack April 1, in Natchez, Miss. C. Wade Freeman, director of the Texas Baptist Evangelism Division, conducted the services at Laurel Land Memorial Park and Funeral Home in Dallas.

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His term as treasurer spanned that of five Texas Baptist executive secretaries and 17 convention presidents. In addition to serving as treasurer of the convention, he was also treasurer of the Texas Baptist Church Loan Board and Church Loan Association.

Before joining the convention staff in 1938, Springer was education director for three Texas Baptist churches. He attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, and Metropolitan Business College, Dallas; and had been awarded honorary doctor of laws degree by East Texas Baptist College, Marshall, and the University of Corpus Christi.

The family, including Mrs. Margaret Ward Springer, a sister, two daughters and four grandchildren; requested that memorials go to the Springer scholarship fund at East Texas Baptist College in lieu of flowers.

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Tornado Hits Georgia Church;
Congregation Hopes to Rebuild

4/3/73

ATLANTA (BP) --Within a one week period, tornados destroyed the buildings of two Georgia Baptist churches, one in Conyers, Ga., about 35 miles east of Atlanta, and the other near LaFayette, Ga., in the northwest section of the state.

The Sublingna Baptist Church near LaFayette, Ga., was damaged so extensively that it cannot be rebuilt, according to Willie Bearden, pastor of the church. The congregation plans to construct completely new buildings.

The Highland Park Baptist Church in Conyers, Ga., near Atlanta, lost its sanctuary and half of its two-story educational building. Leon Piper, pastor of the 265-member congregation, said they hoped to rebuild.

In both cases, insurance will cover only part of the damage. About one-third of the damage caused by the LaFayette tornado will be covered by insurance. Most of the insurance coverage at the Conyers church will go to pay off existing notes of indebtedness.

In LaFayette, the congregation began meeting in the basement of the pastorium, which seats about 100 persons. A room upstairs and a church bus were used as classrooms.

The tornado that struck the larger church in Conyers, Ga., left only a portion of the facade of the auditorium and the bottom half of the rear of the building standing.

Side walls and roof of the building were leveled. Some of the solid oak pews were broken up like kindling; others left unscratched. The pulpit remained in place, but the electronic organ standing nearby was swept away and could not be found.

The roof of the education building at the Conyers church was tossed about 150 feet away from the main building. Ten rooms comprising the second story of the education building were sheared off, and the furniture and equipment were gone.

Because the second floor of the educational building is a poured concrete slab and was not uprooted by the tornado, most of the lower floor will be usable. The pastor said the church might hold services there.

First Baptist Church of Conyers has offered their chapel as a meeting place for the Highland Park congregation.

Members of the Highland Park church did all the construction work on the educational building themselves. Some came with tears in their eyes to view the remains of their hard work and financial contributions.

Sunday would have been the first day for the congregation to use newly upholstered pulpit furniture that matched the new baptistry curtain. The chairs were not harmed. They sit in a building without walls or roof. But the matching curtain disappeared.

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The tornados that hit Georgia during the one week period claimed two lives and left thousands homeless. Governor Jimmy Carter estimated damages at about \$114 million.

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BP PHOTO mailed to Baptist state papers.

Pennsylvania Allowed to Pay
Unconstitutional Contracts

4/3/73

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court, in a 5-3 decision, refused to halt payment of \$24 million to Pennsylvania's parochial schools for secular services rendered before the practice was declared unconstitutional.

The court considered the problem arising from enforcement of a state statute during the period before it had been declared unconstitutional.

This new decision by the Supreme Court was an aftermath of its decision in *Lemon v. Kurtzman* handed down on June 28, 1971. At that time the court ruled unconstitutional a Pennsylvania law that provided state funds for parochial schools with purchase-of-service contracts to provide teachers, textbooks and instructional materials for mathematics, modern foreign language, physical science and physical education courses.

In the new *Lemon v. Kurtzman* case, the Supreme Court affirmed a Pennsylvania district court decision which forbade the state from making payments to the parochial schools after the June 28, 1971 date but which permitted the state to reimburse the schools for services performed before that date.

Joining in the majority decision were Chief Justice Warren E. Burger and Justices Harry A. Blackmun, Lewis F. Powell, William H. Rehnquist and Byron R. White.

Dissenting were Associate Justices William O. Douglas, William J. Brennan, and Potter Stewart, Associate Justice Thurgood Marshall took no part in the case.

In making its new decision the Supreme Court made it clear that it was in no way backing down on its original decision concerning the unconstitutionality of the Pennsylvania law that allowed the state to enter into contracts with parochial schools for secular educational services.

However, it did say that, as a matter of equity involving contracts already in operation and to make for an orderly end of an unconstitutional practice, the state could pay for services rendered prior to the date when the practice was ruled unconstitutional.

The court thus refused to enforce unconstitutionality retroactively under certain circumstances. These conditions, according to the court, include a consideration of "particular relations, particular conduct, rights claimed to have become vested, status of prior determinations, and public policy in the light of previous applications."

The dissenting justices would have prohibited Pennsylvania from making payments to the parochial schools on contracts in effect at the time the state law was ruled unconstitutional.

They said in their dissent: "There is as much a violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment whether the payment from public funds to sectarian schools involves last year, the current year, or next year. . . Whether the grant is for teaching last year or at the present time taxpayers are forced to contribute to sectarian schools a part of their tax dollars."

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