

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

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76-19

Committee Urges Support For Persecuted Christians

ATLANTA (BP)--A call for "Intercession for Persecuted Christians" was issued by the 48-member international Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization meeting here.

The committee, an outgrowth of the 1974 World Congress on Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, specifically noted Georgi Vins, a dissident Soviet Baptist pastor who has been sentenced to five years in a labor camp and another five years exile in Siberia.

The committee said it "is painfully aware of the many areas of the world . . . which are closed to or which severely restrict an open proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are deeply moved by the faithfulness of many Christians in those areas" . . . who suffer affliction and persecution.

"We commend these persecuted Christians and their families to the care and ardent intercession of their fellow Christians throughout the world, that God may sustain them in their faith, grant them freedom and open those areas again for an unhindered evangelization," the statement said.

In other action, the committee elected evangelist Leighton Ford of Charlotte, N. C., a Canadian-born Presbyterian and vice president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, to a two-year term as chairman.

Nilson Fanini, pastor of First Baptist Church of Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was named vice chairman, along with Japanese evangelist and broadcaster Akira Hatori of Tokyo.

Kenneth Chafin, pastor of South Main Baptist Church, Houston, is finance chairman for the Lausanne Committee.

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Baptist Pastor to Run For
Governor in North Carolina

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By Robert O'Brien

KANNAPOLIS, N.C. (BP)--Coy Privette says he will resign as pastor of North Kannapolis Baptist Church here to seek the Republican nomination to run for governor of North Carolina.

The 43-year-old pastor, who says he will not turn his back on preaching and ministry in or out of the governor's office, is president of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention and former president of the Christian Action League, a non-partisan, interdenominational group in the state.

"I really dismissed it at first," Privette told Baptist Press in commenting on early suggestions that he run. "But I said I would leave the door open. Lack of Christian citizenship is why we have as many problems as we do."

Privette, pastor of the Kannapolis church for 14 years, was president of the Christian Action League for five years, 1970-75.

"During that time," he said, "it became obvious that special and vested interests dominated the scene in North Carolina politics. When votes were cast in meetings of committees of the General Assembly, they were usually in favor of high paid lobbyists and their vested interests.

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"I began to notice that special interests dominate state commissions," he said.

"Nominees to the utility commission are dominated by utility companies. Nominees to the milk commission are dominated by the milk industry, and so forth."

That situation, Privette said, "must be turned around by making state government people-oriented, rather than special interest-oriented."

Privette got the political bit in his teeth during successful efforts by the Christian Action League to fight for "people-oriented, moral, ethical legislation."

For example, the league led the fight against liquor-by-the drink. It was defeated 70 percent to 30 percent, with 97 out of 100 counties voting against liquor by the drink.

League support helped beat special interest groups which opposed toughening of drunk driving laws, and its efforts were instrumental in passage of legislation to establish a new medical school to increase the short supply of physicians, despite the physicians' lobby.

Privette, who says support has swelled at both the grass roots and party levels for him to run, admits his toughest victory will be winning the Republican primary because during his involvement in non-partisan issues he hadn't established himself as a party regular.

That test will come in August when the primaries decide the candidates.

What Privette wants to do most is "prove that government can be open and above board. People have lost confidence in our political system and professional politicians. They want someone who doesn't owe his soul to the vested interests and someone who will work for people."

He said he responds to criticism that his election will violate separation of church and state like this: "The concept of separation of church and state involves a structural ideal--not separation of morality from government. That kind of separation is why we have so many problems now."

And, declares the Wake Forest University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary graduate, he's not leaving the ministry.

"I will continue to preach, and I hope eventually to return to the pastorate. And, as governor, I would have a much wider opportunity for Christian ministry and witness than ever before."

"State government," Privette continued, "is ministering to needs of people." The state's human resources department deals with people in need and the department of corrections deals with people in trouble, he noted, citing two major departments in North Carolina government.

He feels that resignation from his pulpit is an absolute must. "I would not want to involve the church in a partisan political campaign, and I couldn't do justice to the church while running for office."

He doesn't feel the same way about the presidency of the state Baptist convention, although he said he would resign that, too, if it became apparent that campaigning would interfere with his convention duties.

"My mail," he says, "asks me not to resign as president." He says he has had to refuse invitations to make appearances as convention president because of pastoral responsibilities but that he "could speak even more widely in North Carolina churches after I resign my pastorate."

Besides mail, phone calls and other contacts, Privette says he has gotten encouragement from a mailout to 10,000 persons, most affiliated with the Christian Action League and including, he says, 80 percent registered Democrats.

"To date, 83 percent of the responses say they want to help me get elected and 22 percent say they would change registration from Democrat to Republican to vote for me in the primary."

So, Coy Privette will take a calculated risk, but he's not worried about the future. "God has opened one door after another for me. I don't know what he's got in store for me, but it will be exciting."

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SBC Directors of Missions
Plan Norfolk Conference

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NORFOLK (BP)--The Southern Baptist Conference of Directors of Associational Missions will deal with the identity problems of associations of Baptist churches at its annual meeting here, June 13-14.

The conference, at the Quality Inn-Lake Wright, will meet in conjunction with the annual national meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 15-17 at the Norfolk Scope Convention Center.

"Identity is the number one problem in the world today," says Richard G. Bryant, president of the conference and director of missions for the Miami Baptist Association.

"It's everybody's problem, so we feel like we're dealing with something basic with our directors of missions, and we propose to help them identify the nature and purpose of the association."

Program personnel for the two-day meeting includes William G. Tanner, president of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee; Kenneth Chafin, pastor of South Main Baptist Church, Houston; Guy Bradley, director of missions for the High Desert Association, Lancaster, Calif.; Russell Bennett, director of field education, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

Also, David Haney, director of lay ministries, Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, Memphis; Frederick E. Roach, president of Centennial Homes, Inc., Dallas; Terry and Hattie Fansler, musicians from Grace Temple Baptist Church, Denton, Tex.

Also, Bryant; John A. Brown, conference president-elect and director of missions of the Norfolk Baptist Association; Ray McClung, conference secretary and director of missions for the Pulaski County Association, Little Rock; Robert Helmich, conference treasurer and director of missions for the Muskogee (Okla.) Association and D. E. Strahan, conference news letter editor and director of missions for the Central Association, Madison, Wisc.

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\$35 Million Med Center
Dedicated in Mississippi

Baptist Press
1/29/76

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Mississippi Baptists dedicated their new \$35 million Mississippi Baptist Medical Center here, complete with the latest equipment and some 700 total rooms.

The hospital moved into its new facility 65 years after the establishment of the original hospital, which began in an antebellum home after the Mississippi Baptist Convention purchased it in 1911.

In Nov. 1972, work began on the completely new facility, which is connected to the old facility by an underground tunnel.

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