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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Relief workers request prayers,
more volunteers who can 'rough it' By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
8/26/92

HOMESTEAD, Fla. (BP)--Workers scurried over concrete debris and treaded shingles; they cooked hamburgers, corn and beans while Dave Tracey made announcements to victims of Hurricane Andrew.

"Go back and tell your friends there's free food," said Tracey, of the 11-member relief team of South Carolina Baptists. "It don't cost nothing but a smile, and Jesus loves you."

Asked when the South Carolina team would stop serving supper, Tracey replied, "Whenever we don't have any more (people) in line or we run out of something to feed them."

"Our idea is to give a cold cup of water in Jesus' name," he said as a nearby power generator sounded for the first time. "And now we're fixing to have power to the refrigerator."

The South Carolina team worked in Homestead, Fla., which was hit by the eye of the storm. "Devastation" was the word of the day from victims and witnesses, but relief team members said they hoped to bring encouragement to people surrounded by flattened homes, overturned trucks and dangling power lines.

Yet the heat and humidity combined with long hours to make fatigue a factor among many relief workers.

"We're just running on adrenalin and God. Our bodies are going to start failing us soon," said Steve Mosley, relief worker with North Carolina Baptists who were feeding residents of the Richmond Heights community. "We definitely need everybody's prayers."

Cecil Seagle, Florida Brotherhood director, has issued a request for additional volunteers. He stressed, however, that they must be able to "rough it." He said volunteers should bring their own water and housing such as mobile homes. Hotel rooms are not available.

Volunteers who can bring their own chain saws are needed to help clear debris. Construction volunteers also are needed to put plastic over homes that have no roofs.

Volunteers willing to work in the disaster areas should contact their state Brotherhood director for assignments so the efforts will be coordinated, said Jim Burton, Brotherhood Commission national disaster relief director and on-site coordinator in Miami.

The Home Mission Board has given \$25,000 in hunger funds and \$25,000 in disaster relief funds for the relief projects.

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Jim Burton contributed to this story. (BP) photos of disaster relief efforts in Florida will be available from the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press by the end of this week.

Baptist Andrew victims
'pick up the pieces'

By Barbara Denman

Baptist Press
8/26/92

MIAMI (BP)--Carolyn McAdams began weeping as she walked into the sanctuary of First Baptist Church of Cutler Ridge. Although the walls were standing, the ceiling had caved in, insulation hung in chunks and several inches of water stood on the floor.

"This is the only church I've attended since I was a child," she said. "My home is gone, my car is gone and I've lost my church."

Earlier two deacons surveyed the damage at First Baptist Church of Perrine which looked as if someone had tossed a bomb inside. Pointing to the room that showed daylight through the roof, deacon John Reed said, "There's where I teach Sunday school. I guess I won't be using it for awhile."

The day after Hurricane Andrew slammed through south Florida, these Florida Baptists are picking up the pieces of all they hold dear -- their lives, their homes, their communities and their churches. Little escaped the violent 150 mph winds that devastated their communities. For many Baptists, they have lost everything. No Baptist is known to be among the 11 people who have been reported dead.

The Cutler Ridge and Perrine churches are among eight severely damaged Southern Baptist churches. Churches with confirmed damage include: Spanish Baptist Church in Homestead; First Baptist Church in Homestead; First Baptist Church of Redlands; Glendale and Wayside Baptist churches in Miami.

Several pastors' homes have received extensive damage. Thirty families from University Baptist Church in Coral Gables have completely lost their homes.

Florida Baptist Convention officials fear at least several other churches are lost in Florida City and South Miami Heights, areas among the hardest hit during the storm.

These churches are located on the southern end of U.S. 1, also known as the Dixie Highway. It should be known as the highway of destruction, for each southern mile marker offers increasingly terrifying pictures of the ravages of Hurricane Andrew.

In downtown Miami, residents were faced with no electricity, no running water, no fresh water and no food. Damage to the area was limited to downed trees, broken windows and fallen power lines.

In Coral Gables, hundreds of people sat in line for five blocks waiting for ice. Hurricane Andrew had no respect for life situations -- rich or poor, Anglo, black, Hispanic, elderly and children try to make the most of the long wait.

Further south, hundreds of new cars, new boats and new recreational homes were lifted, split and stacked like a child's game of pick-up sticks. At a once-fashionable shopping center, a gaping hole at Bloomingdale's testified to Andrew's strength. Several miles away, an entire shopping mall lies in rubble.

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In Dade County's southern-most communities, such as Perrine, Homestead and Cutler Ridge, no house, store or building escaped the fury of Andrew.

"The issue of this is not just the damage to the buildings but the economic impact of the destruction," said James Goodson, director of the Florida Baptist Convention missions division.

"These folks will be without their livelihoods for a long, long time. Florida Baptists will be here ministering for a long, long time."

In the aftermath of this hurricane, descriptive phrases become trite.

Some call it a war zone and the presence of National Guardsmen carrying rifles lends credence to that view. Others call it total devastation. The destruction goes on for miles. Officials estimate more than 50,000 people are homeless and up to \$20 billion in property damage has occurred.

"It's incredible how every block you go it gets worse and worse," said Hialeah fireman Henry Clifford who was in the Perrine area offering assistance. "If ever there was a need for benevolence, it is now."

Officials estimated that 90 percent of the town of Homestead had been leveled. Homestead is heavily populated with lower-income families, including migrants and ethnics, who reside in trailers and low-rent apartments. None of these dwellings are livable.

A sense of danger pervades the Homestead area. Smashed windows of the few standing buildings become a looter's dream. Sirens wail in the distance. A lifeless body lies in a parking lot.

A band of weary South Carolinians have set up a feeding site at the Homestead Middle School to serve hot meals in the community. The group from Berkley County, South Carolina, includes 13 persons who specialize in disaster relief feeding and 12 persons who are emergency medical technicians.

They traveled throughout the night to get to Miami.

They came on a personal mission. Three years ago they were victims of Hurricane Hugo, suffering devastation of their homes and communities and weeks without water or electricity.

They have come to Miami "because it's pay-back time," according to Michael Caison from Tall Pines Baptist Church in South Carolina.

Immediately after Hurricane Hugo hit Charleston, a disaster relief van set up a feeding station in the parking lot of the Providence Baptist Church in Moncks Corner. Members of the Providence church group can't forget the kindness of their Southern Baptist family. They have advised Florida Baptists to "hang in there; it will get better," said Dave Tracy of Providence Baptist Church.

Florida Baptists are meeting the needs in a variety of ways, including at least five feeding stations like the one in Homestead. The mobile feeding units were provided by the Baptist state conventions of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Ohio.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew's arrival in Miami, dozens of volunteers from Florida Baptist associations are arriving equipped to get to the work of cleaning up. They will be here for months. Meanwhile, convention officials are assessing requests for clean-up crews as well as identifying potential volunteers to assist.

Emergency funds are provided to both Baptists and non-Baptists who show a need of money while waiting for insurance settlements. Church and community ministers from across the state are assigned at each feeding site to distribute the funds. The funds are allocated from the state convention and the Home Mission Board disaster relief funds.

Florida Baptist Women are providing child care at the Cutler Ridge church, where the state convention disaster relief van is stationed. They have collected hundreds of diapers, juice and toys. Baptists who speak Spanish or French are assigned to each feeding site as Florida Baptists recognize the multi-ethnic diversity that exists in Miami.

The second day after Hurricane Andrew was filled with emotional scenes for many Baptists who responded to the disaster. More than 200 elderly persons from a nursing home spent Monday night at the Citrus Grove Elementary School after they had been evacuated there before the hurricane.

The senior adults spent hours in the hot, dark, urine-stenched school propped up on chairs and desks and cared for by a single nurse. Their only hot meal and comfort was provided by volunteers from the Georgia Baptist Convention.

After learning a feeding site would be set up at the Cutler Ridge church to feed 5,000 meals a day, a Cutler Ridge paramedic began to cry. "That's where my family is, thank you for coming here."

More than 300 elderly adults had sought shelter in the Richmond Heights Middle School yet no provisions had been made for their food.

During a near riot, Red Cross officials summoned a North Carolina team to the school in the middle of the night to provide food relief and to calm heated tempers.

On the second day after Hurricane Andrew arrived in Miami, dozens of volunteers from Florida Baptist associations are arriving in Miami equipped to get to the work of cleaning up.

Persons interested in helping may contact the Florida Baptist Convention Brotherhood Department. Contributions may be sent to the Florida Baptist Convention, 1230 Hendricks Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32207, Attention: Hurricane Andrew Disaster Relief.

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15 Baptist relief units offering
food, care in Florida, Louisiana

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
8/26/92

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Nine Southern Baptist disaster relief units have swung into action to offer food and compassion after Hurricane Andrew's hours-long assault on Louisiana Aug. 26.

Six other Southern Baptist units were stationed in or headed to destruction areas in south Florida after Andrew's rampage there Aug. 24.

New Iberia and Morgan City, La., were two of Andrew's prime victims Aug. 26. New Iberia is a city of some 32,000 people with three Southern Baptist churches and two missions; Morgan City, with some 14,500 people, also has three SBC churches and two missions.

According to the SBC Brotherhood Commission, which coordinates the work of the state Baptist-sponsored relief/feeding units in cooperation with the Red Cross:

-- The Louisiana disaster relief team was to set up a feeding station in Alexandria for evacuees from Andrew's path.

-- Also en route to south Louisiana are four units sponsored by Texas Baptists and single units from Mississippi, Alabama, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

The units range from tractor-trailer rigs to fifth wheels.

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At work in the Miami area were Florida's disaster relief unit, units from South Carolina and North Carolina and two Baptist association-sponsored units from Georgia.

The Memphis-based Brotherhood Commission has established a 24-hour information and message line at 901-272-7839.

The Brotherhood Commission is receiving donations designated for disaster relief. The mailing address is 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104.

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South Carolina Baptists
say, 'It's payback time'

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
8/26/92

HOMESTEAD, Fla. (BP)--For 11 South Carolina Southern Baptists, this is "payback time."

As soon as Hurricane Andrew touched land in Florida, the South Carolina team headed for Homestead, the hardest-hit area. For them, food lines will offer a chance to share the love their state received in 1989 when a Hurricane named Hugo blasted the South Carolina coast.

"We went through it and we know just what they're going through," said Dave Tracey, who fought back tears while remembering the compassion shown three years ago.

After Hugo, a Baptist relief team from Florida rolled into Macedonia and set up a food line at Providence Baptist Church, said Gentry Ward, a South Carolina relief team member and part-time church secretary.

In the following two weeks, workers served three meals a day; more than 58,000 in all, Tracey said. That effort inspired Providence to establish its own relief team, he said.

"When that hurricane hit, we saw God's power," he said. "After we got organized as a relief unit, we saw his love, his grace and his mercy."

Tracey said he looks forward to ministry opportunities after the initial flurry of activity subsides. "You wouldn't believe the number of people we had prayer with in the food lines," he said, referring to the Hugo relief effort.

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150 Texans state plans for
officers slate, CP support

By Toby Druin

Baptist Press
8/26/92

DALLAS (BP)--A letter and statement of "convention support" signed by more than 150 Texas Baptists has been sent to all Texas Baptist pastors urging Cooperative Program support.

The documents also question channeling of funds to organizations such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and urge pastors to bring messengers to the state convention in Corpus Christi Nov. 9-10 to elect new convention leadership.

Though specifying the statement "reflects no organized nor politicized group," Phil Simmons, pastor of North Richland Hills Baptist Church in Fort Worth, one of the framers of the letter and statement, said they would support San Antonio evangelist Rudy Hernandez for convention president and others to be named later for vice presidential slots.

The "Common Statement of Convention Support," signed by 153 people, mostly pastors, describes the Cooperative Program as the "historical, traditional and foundational method in the Southern Baptist Convention for support of missions and evangelism."

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It contends the CP has been eroded by the formation of different groups such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the organization formed in protest to recent developments in the Southern Baptist Convention and which has been receiving an increasing amount of mission dollars for its own programs.

The statement signers affirm their commitment to the Cooperative Program and call on Texas Baptist convention leadership and churches to:

-- promote a harmonious and mutually cooperative spirit ... that will bring us to a spiritual awakening

-- promote and support the Cooperative Program ... as the foundation by which Southern Baptist churches do their work of missions and evangelism.

-- maintain the historical and traditional process of funding in the Baptist General Convention of Texas Cooperative Program budget.

-- promote and support the various institutions of the BGCT and to maintain the historical and traditional relationship with said institutions.

"Increasingly widespread concern has been noted, through general conversations, that BGCT budget items have been or will be directed outside the traditional channels," states the letter, signed by four Dallas-Fort Worth area pastors -- Simmons; Gary Miller of Sagamore Hill Baptist Church in Fort Worth; Danny Souder of Northlake Baptist Church in Dallas; and Ronnie Yarber of Gross Road Baptist Church in Mesquite.

"Any such additions or deletions serve to further move the BGCT away from the process which has made her great. Remaining true to our past relationships with our agencies and institutions is a must"

"It is believed that a 'focused' and 'united' BGCT is the vehicle that God can use to bring awakening. If you agree and will 'openly work' toward electing leadership that will do likewise please begin to make plans now to bring a contingent of like-minded messengers to the BGCT in Corpus Christi in November. In this way officers can be elected who will exert positive leadership toward a historical and traditional BGCT that will serve as a vehicle in reaching Texas with the gospel of Jesus Christ"

Simmons said the statement of support and letter came out of discussions early this year over the growing strength of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, concern that the BGCT needs leaders solidly supportive of the Cooperative Program rather than alternative designation and dissatisfaction with the agenda of the Conservative Baptist Fellowship, an organization of Texas conservatives formed in January.

His overriding concern, Simmons said, is support of the Cooperative Program, and he said he believes many on both sides of the SBC controversy feel the same way.

"We have to find a way to come together," he said. "This is not a moderate or a conservative issue; it is a Cooperative Program issue."

Though he emphasized the Cooperative Program is central in the effort, he cited a letter to pastors sent earlier this year by Jimmy R. Allen, co-chair of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's Global Missions Ministry Group suggesting support of a Fellowship program for churches that might not want to support the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions. Allen could not be reached for comment, although the CBF office acknowledged the letter had been sent.

Such actions are typical of efforts to bypass or undermine support of traditional Southern Baptist causes, Simmons said.

Both Texas Baptist Executive Director William M. Pinson Jr. and Treasurer Roger Hall responded that no state convention funds are budgeted for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship nor is there any plan to budget funds for the organization.

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"The BGCT continues its longstanding focus on evangelism and missions," Pinson said. "For example, starting and strengthening new churches is our united effort to reach Texas with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Cooperative Program provides the primary financial support.

"The BGCT continues to heavily promote the Cooperative Program. Bill Cathey directs this considerable effort which involves all parts of the Texas Baptist family. The best way for a church to demonstrate commitment to the Cooperative Program is to give generously to increase available missions dollars. Many Texas Baptist churches are doing just that. Such action shows support of our institutions and agencies. The level of support for the Cooperative Program by Texas Baptist churches in these difficult economic times is truly inspiring."

Hall said the 1993 budget, which will be presented to the convention's executive board Sept. 15 and, if approved, to the convention in November follows the same form and distribution plan as approved by messengers to the 1991 convention.

The Texas Baptist executive board in September 1991 approved a change in the Cooperating Program reporting procedure. Effective Jan. 1, 1992, churches could delete from their contributions up to five items in the Cooperative Program budget and still have their gifts considered "Cooperative Program." Prior to the change, any gift with restrictions was counted as a designated gift and not credited to Cooperative Program contributions.

Hernandez, meanwhile, said he agreed to permit his nomination in the interest of bringing peace and unity in the Texas Baptist family that he said has been marked by "erosion of support, membership, fellowship and cohesiveness."

The 62-year-old evangelist was second vice president of the BGCT in 1970 and of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1988. He has been president of both the Texas and Southern Baptist Convention conferences of evangelists and of the Mexican Baptist Convention. He is currently a member of the board of directors of the Home Mission Board.

Dick Maples, pastor of First Baptist Church in Bryan, is the current BGCT president. He was elected on the first ballot at the 1991 convention and is eligible for a second term but has not indicated if he will be nominated.

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Christians should vote principles
not denomination, Land, Rogers say

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
8/26/92

DALLAS (BP)--Christians should base their voting on moral principles rather than denominational affiliation, geographical identification and other considerations, Southern Baptists Richard Land and Adrian Rogers told the final session of the National Affairs Briefing Aug. 22.

Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, and Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis, made their comments during the same session in which President George Bush spoke to close the two-day event at the Dallas Convention Center.

Their comments held meaning especially for Southern Baptists, as well as Texans, in attendance. Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton, who turned down an invitation to speak at the NAB, and his running mate, Al Gore, are members of Southern Baptist churches. Bush, whose legal residence is in Texas, is an Episcopalian. Vice President Dan Quayle is a Presbyterian.

"I'm a sixth-generation Texan," said Land, who spoke about an hour before the president. "I've been a Southern Baptist since I was 6 years old and was immersed in a church in Houston, Texas.

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"Don't vote your geographical origin. Don't vote your denominational affiliation. Don't vote your pocketbook. Vote your values. Vote your convictions. Vote your beliefs.

"If a candidate wants your vote, let them earn it the old-fashioned way," Land said. "Let them work for it. Let them make commitments, and then cast your vote based on your beliefs and convictions."

"I mentioned (geographic origin and denominational affiliation) for generic and specific reasons," Land said in an interview later. "Generically, geographic origin and denominational affiliation are too often determining factors in elections.

"In this specific case, President Bush is a Texan, Gov. Clinton is a Southern Baptist, and I happen to be both. I sought to identify elements I shared with both candidates' backgrounds and to use those to illustrate that neither loyalty to one's state and region or loyalty to one's denomination should influence how one votes unless such factors happen to coincide with one's own beliefs, convictions and values."

In introducing Bush, Rogers, three-time president of the Southern Baptist Convention, thanked him for his position on moral issues.

The issues the country faces "transcend mere politics," Rogers said. "As a Baptist, I want to say they also transcend denominational labels because these moral principles are much more strong than any denominational label."

In a message earlier in the day based on Isaiah 59, Rogers referred apparently to a statement Bill Clinton made during his acceptance speech at July's Democratic National Convention.

While describing the sin of dishonesty in America, Rogers said, "We deal in half-truths: 'I am not pro-abortion. I am pro-choice.'

"I wonder, how does this fit? 'I am not pro-discrimination. I am pro-choice. I am not pro-crime. I am pro-choice.' ... all of that is sheer, dishonest rhetoric. That's all it is. Not only do you see it on the political platform," but it exists in the courts and pulpits of America, Rogers said.

In his acceptance speech, Clinton said, "Hear me now; I am not pro-abortion. I am pro-choice."

Land addressed his remarks to the sanctity of human life and the family.

"We don't want to go back to the '50s," Land said in response to critics of the discussion of family values. "We want to go back to the instructions that God laid out. When God talked about a family, he talked about a husband and a wife and children. He talked about Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve."

Defenders of "family values" are not opposed to working women, Land said.

"It's not a question of whether a woman works outside the home," he said. "It's a question of whether her job or her husband and family come first."

Fathers are "not optional accessories to the rearing of children," but they need to assume responsibility, Land said.

Homosexuality should not be considered an acceptable lifestyle, he stated.

"We should no more accept a person's homosexuality or lesbianism than we should accept an alcoholic's alcoholism," Land said. Christians should seek "to deliver them from that destructive lifestyle."

The solution to problems such as abortion, pornography, alcohol and valueless sex education, Rogers said, is with men and women of God "who will lift truth to her feet."

"No politician can save us," Rogers said. "Who can we elect who will get us out of the mess we're in? Nobody. If we'll get right with God, a little child can lead us out."

"I don't know whether we're going to win this election or not," Rogers said, "but I want to tell you four things that burn in my soul. ... it is better to be divided by truth than it is to be united in error. ... it is better to be hated for telling the truth than to be loved for telling a lie. ... I had rather ultimately succeed with truth than temporarily succeed with a lie. ... it is better to stand alone with the truth than to be wrong with the multitude."

Who was he referring to when he used the phrase, "whether we're going to win this election or not"? Rogers was asked later.

"Those who hold common values," he said.

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U.S. moral revival crucial,
Bush tells national briefing

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
8/26/92

DALLAS (BP)--Moral renewal matches any other issue in the United States in significance, President George Bush told a largely evangelical Christian audience of about 5,000 persons at the closing session of the recent National Affairs Briefing.

The nondenominational, two-day event, a repeat of a 1980 meeting largely credited with giving national exposure to what became known as the Religious Right, was organized by Southern Baptist layman Ed McAteer. The program included several pastors, evangelists and lay persons from the SBC as participants.

A recurrent theme in the Aug. 21-22 meeting at the Dallas Convention Center was the need for conservative Christians and others with a biblical world view to take part in a battle to save the family and the country from secularism.

Religion, morality and the family will continue to be themes of his campaign despite attacks from critics, Bush said.

He is "not going to be dissuaded by the critics who call family values a cliché, who say that family values have no place in our national debate. I will ignore those who would rather not talk about a moral revival in America because I believe it is as important as any other challenge that we face."

When he speaks "of family values, of restoring a little moral and religious fiber to our nation's diet, my opponents accuse me of mouthing slogans," he said. "... leave out the election -- it is fundamental that we restore and strengthen the American family.

"And so I believe now that the world has become more like America, it is time for America to become more like herself," said Bush, who earlier had described the victory of freedom over tyranny behind the former Iron Curtain.

That means "strengthening the American family and, yes, it means increasing our faith in God," he said.

While he twice acknowledged the NAB was to be a nonpartisan meeting, Bush said he would make "one political comment."

"I was struck by the fact that the other party took words to put together their platform but left out three simple letters: G-O-D," he said. "My party's platform is different. We are proud to celebrate our country's Judeo-Christian heritage unrivaled in the world."

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A standing ovation, one of several during his speech, greeted Bush's comment.

(The next day, Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton, a Southern Baptist, said Bush was making such statements for "political purposes," according to the Washington Post.

("The implication that he has made that Democrats are somehow godless is deeply offensive to me, to Sen. Gore and to all of us who cherish our religious convictions but also respect America's tradition of religious diversity," Clinton said.

(Al Gore, the Democrats' vice presidential candidate, also is Southern Baptist.)

Bush again called for a constitutional amendment "allowing voluntary prayer" in public schools. He is asking Congress to pass his G.I. Bill for Children, which would provide vouchers for parents to use in choosing either a public, private or religious school for their children, Bush said. He also reaffirmed his pro-life views.

The next day, President and Mrs. Bush attended the early worship service at First Baptist Church in Dallas. They were introduced by senior pastor W.A. Criswell but the president did not speak.

At the NAB, the crowd appeared to remain around 1,500 to 2,000 persons the first four sessions. For the final session, it appeared the arena was about half full.

Though he admitted in the opening session he expected a capacity crowd for Bush's speech, McAteer, president of the Religious Roundtable and organizer of the 1980 NAB as well, said later the enthusiasm of the crowd and the caliber of the speakers and their organizations made it a success.

At the start of each session, McAteer announced the meeting was nonpartisan and the positions voiced by the speakers were "not necessarily those of the National Affairs Briefing." The purpose of the NAB was "to convey knowledge and information to God's people," McAteer said. He also announced Clinton had been invited to speak but had turned down the offer.

Some speakers, such as Don Wildmon of American Family Association and Los Angeles pastor E.V. Hill, directly endorsed Bush. Christians have no choice after comparing the parties' platforms, Hill said.

Others, such as Rogers and Christian Life Commission Executive Director Richard Land, encouraged participants to vote according to issues and convictions rather than such factors as denominational affiliation and geography.

Well-known independent Baptist pastor Jerry Falwell, who said he was speaking only for "loud-mouth, rabble-rouser Jerry Falwell," went a step further by urging the audience to vote according to principles, "and if you've made it through kindergarten I think you know how to pull the lever."

Topics discussed most often were abortion, homosexuality, Israel and the role of religion in public schools and other institutions. The most frequent targets of the speakers' barbs were Congress and the news media.

The news media is "the greatest enemy that we have today in America," Hill said.

Pat Buchanan, who opposed Bush for the Republican nomination, attempted to describe what he meant at the party's convention when he said, "We have to take back our culture."

Americans holding biblical values "have been losing the cultural war for the soul of our country ... and we can see our defeat in the smoking ruins of Los Angeles," Buchanan said.

"Where did that mob come from?" Buchanan asked. "It came out of the public schools in which God, the 10 Commandments and the Bible had long ago been expelled."

It also came out of drug stores that sell pornography, television shows, movies, rock concerts, liberal churches and "families that never existed," he said.

"In Los Angeles, the mob took the secularists at their word and went out and did its own thing," he said.

Author and Family Life Ministries President Tim LaHaye said if Christian leaders "back in 1980 had not gotten involved and had not gotten the church involved, I don't believe we would have had the freedom to meet here today."

After the final session, the Bush/Quayle campaign held a meeting in another room in the convention center. At the rally, the Evangelical Leaders and Laymen Coalition was announced. Prominent Southern Baptists listed as co-chairs are Tim and Beverly LaHaye and Rob Showers, a trustee of the Christian Life Commission. Listed as leaders are Jess Moody, California pastor who ran for Southern Baptist Convention president this year, and Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in North Carolina. "All titles are for identification purposes only," the list said.

Contacted later, Patterson expressed surprise his name appeared on the public list but he said as a private citizen he intends to vote for the Bush/Quayle ticket. Moody could not be reached for comment.

The NAB program included several other Southern Baptists including Gary Bauer, president of Family Research Council; Beverly LaHaye, president of Concerned Women for America; and Robert McGee, president of Rapha, a drug-abuse treatment center.

Criswell welcomed the audience to the final session. Other Southern Baptist pastors and evangelists prayed at the meeting and helped organize it.

Outside the convention center, groups both opposing and supporting homosexual rights demonstrated before and during the final session.

W.N. Otwell, an independent Baptist preacher, led about 20 persons in calling on Criswell and First Baptist pastor Joel Gregory to ask Rex Horne, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church of Little Rock, Ark., to discipline Clinton, an Immanuel member, for his endorsement of homosexual and abortion rights as well as the feminist movement.

During the session, homosexual activists used chalk to draw on the concrete outside the entrance dozens of outlines resembling dead bodies with the names of persons who have died from AIDS. Several anti-Bush slogans also were written.

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Religious Right briefing
stirs debate of its clout

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
8/26/92

DALLAS (BP)--The so-called Religious Right is more powerful than at its peak of national prominence in 1980, according to People for the American Way. Probably so, says conservative Christian leader Lou Sheldon.

The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission is an important member of the Religious Right, says PAW, the self-appointed watchdog over the activities of the movement. Not so, says CLC Executive Director Richard D. Land.

"We are not a part of the 'Religious Right' or any other identifiable subgroup other than the Southern Baptist Convention," Land said.

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The Religious Right supposedly was on display again Aug. 21-22 in Dallas at the National Affairs Briefing. The first NAB, in 1980 in Dallas, is regarded by many as the movement's initial step into the national spotlight. At that meeting, Ronald Reagan told the 12,000-15,000 in Reunion Arena, "I know you cannot endorse me but I endorse you." The support of large numbers of evangelical Christians and conservatives helped catapult Reagan to an easy victory over incumbent Jimmy Carter.

While Southern Baptists individually were involved in the Religious Right in 1980, the "Southern Baptist Convention and Christian Life Commission were not a part," said PAW Vice President Michael Hudson, who was in Dallas to counteract in the media positions expressed at the NAB. The presence of Land, who became executive director in 1988, has made the CLC "an active participant" in the Religious Right, Hudson said.

The inclusion of a denominational agency such as the CLC "has given a sense of legitimacy to the movement it didn't have before," Hudson said.

Such an assertion is off-base, Land responded. The CLC handles issues outside the normal scope of the Religious Right, he said.

"We talk about racism, the environment, drug and alcohol abuse, pornography, religious liberty, war and peace, hunger, the sanctity of human life and a myriad of other issues," Land said.

During his tenure, Land said, the CLC has sponsored or cosponsored conferences on AIDS, racism, addictions and family crises, Christian citizenship, the environment and sanctity of life issues such as abortion, euthanasia and genetic engineering. It will cosponsor a convocation on hunger next spring.

"When and if others such as those identified with the 'Religious Right' agree with our concerns about some of these issues, then we welcome both their discernment and their support," Land said. "But it should always be remembered that the program and the concerns of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission are far too broad to be confined within any group's agenda other than the 15.4 million people who call themselves Southern Baptists."

The Religious Right has never been a monolithic, centrally organized movement. In an interview at the NAB, the movement was described by Sheldon, president of the Traditional Values Coalition, as a "modern committee of correspondence" which has learned "how to network appropriately."

The program at the National Affairs Briefing included speakers from organizations with a variety of focuses: pro-life, pro-family, pro-Israel, pro-defense, pro-public school prayer, pro-gun ownership and anti-pornography. Pastors from Southern Baptist, Missionary Baptist and independent Baptist churches also spoke.

People for the American Way and others group such organizations and personalities under the umbrella of the Religious Right. Pro-family is a term many members of the movement would be more likely to adopt.

Television producer Norman Lear started People for the American Way in 1980 in what he perceived as a need for a counterbalance to the Religious Right. In the last 12 years, PAW, which has its main office in Washington, has included support for abortion rights, homosexual rights and government funding of the arts without restrictions as part of its agenda.

The Religious Right is "very alive, well and very influential," PAW's Hudson said on the NAB's first day. The movement is stronger than in 1980 because it has a "political network in states and communities across country" it didn't have then, Hudson said.

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The Religious Right's "Big Four," Hudson said, are Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, Don Wildmon's American Family Association, James Dobson's Focus on the Family and Sheldon's Traditional Values Coalition. All have organizations at the local or state level.

Early on, Sheldon recognized that TVC, which began in 1980, would have to organize in a "very small manner" if it were to succeed, he said.

He "realized one day very clearly the only way it was going to be done was through the local congregation," Sheldon said. "And if you could educate and raise the level of awareness of the pastor as to what he could do, when he could do it, where he could do it concerning activism, concerning biblical principles being applied to the school board, to the city, to the county, to the state or the federal (government), then it would work."

TVC has about 7,800 member churches in California, Sheldon said, and has affiliates in about 15 states. The TVC was victorious in getting California's curriculum commission and board of education to not designate homosexuality as a positive, alternative lifestyle in health texts in California's public schools, Sheldon said.

"I would say we are viable if we can continue to move in an humble manner and continue to awaken pastors who are very, very hesitant about mixing public policy and biblical principles," Sheldon, a former pastor, said of the movement. "They shouldn't be but they are. I think we are going to be able to save the nation."

Land addressed the NAB about an hour before President George Bush spoke. He accepted the NAB's invitation to speak because one of his assignments is to address Southern Baptists and others "about moral, social, public policy issues and to seek to inform and energize them to active, principled involvement in the political process and interaction with society at large," Land said.

"In my address, I spoke to the sanctity of human life issue, to family values and to the need for opposition to the radical homosexual agenda, which seeks to promote 'positive aspects' of same-sex relationships to children and adolescents at taxpayers' expense," Land said.

"I concluded my remarks by saying, 'I'm a sixth-generation Texan. I've been a Southern Baptist since I was 6 years old and was immersed in a church in Houston, Texas. Don't vote your geographical origin. Don't vote your denominational affiliation. Don't vote your pocketbook. Vote your values. Vote your convictions. Vote your beliefs.'

"In saying that, I am doing precisely what Southern Baptists and the Christian Life Commission have engaged me to do," Land said. "I gave a nonpartisan speech in the best sense of that term. I didn't mention either presidential candidate or either party. I talked about principles, issues and values, and I called upon Christians to vote their convictions."

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Youth worker returns to Miami
to help family and church

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
8/26/92

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Althea McMillan left Glorieta Baptist Conference Center Aug. 26 regretting she couldn't stay but realizing her family and her church in hurricane-ravaged Miami needed her.

McMillan, youth director at Glendale Baptist Church in Miami, had been enlisted by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board to lead youth worker sessions during the Small Sunday School Leadership Conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center Aug. 24-28. It was to be her first such assignment.

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When she left her south Miami home Saturday, Aug. 22, "we knew there was a hurricane out there but didn't know it was going to hit us," she said.

She talked with her family Sunday evening to learn they and more than 1 million other Miami residents were preparing for what was to be the worst hurricane to hit the Florida coast in decades.

That was the last contact she has had with her family. A member of her church has talked with her husband but she is not certain about her mother, three daughters or seven grandchildren who also live in south Miami.

McMillan knows her home was damaged by the 160 mph winds of Hurricane Andrew that slammed ashore early Monday morning Aug. 24. She also has heard several church members have lost their homes including three of her veteran youth workers.

The church "looks like a bomb hit it," according to what pastor Joseph Coats told her in a telephone conversation. She was able to reach Coats on his mobile telephone for the only contact she has had with anyone from home.

The church started 26 years ago with 28 people meeting in a bus and beneath some trees. Now it has more than 4,000 members.

McMillan will be looking specifically for the 200-plus youth who normally attend her Sunday school department to find what their needs are and how to get them involved in recovery efforts.

"I feel dearly for those who have lost their homes and lost everything," she said. "I have to believe that out of this is going to come some good. I think this is going to pull us together."

Because the church is a close family, "we are going to help each other get on our feet. We will look out for each other," McMillan said.

Already the pastor has begun pooling resources to help church members, she said.

"As a church family, we will see what God has to say to us through this," she said. "This is a time when we will have to take God seriously and maybe we haven't been doing that."

As for Sunday morning, one week after Hurricane Andrew blasted the church building, McMillan is confident the church family will meet. We will have Bible study and we will have worship," she said.

"If there is not a part of the church fit to meet in, we will meet on the grounds."

McMillan has lived all her life in Miami and has weathered at least four other hurricanes. Her oldest daughter was born during Hurricane Donna in 1960.