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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 27, 1992

92-73

**Prayer meetings set
May 7 at city halls**

WASHINGTON (BP)--Americans are expected to gather at city halls in about 2,500 cities May 7 to pray for a moral rebirth in the country.

Officials of the event, named "Meet at City Hall," are encouraging Christians to go to their local city hall and pray from 12:20 to 12:40 p.m. on that day. The event is scheduled on the annual National Day of Prayer.

"The Bible tells us in Romans that we are to support the government for conscience sake and we're commanded in I Timothy 2:1 and 2 to pray for kings and all that are in authority," said Richard D. Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "What better day than the National Day of Prayer to visibly and collectively fulfill those commands by gathering and praying at the local seat of government? Christians and those in authority, Christian or not, should be encouraged by such demonstrations of piety and faith." Land is one of 11 honorary co-chairmen of Meet at City Hall.

"I would encourage Southern Baptists to get involved in local efforts and, if there isn't a local effort, to commence one."

In many cities, Meet at City Hall will be highly organized while in others it will have little structure, said Don Wildmon, chairman of the project and president of the American Family Association. "We are leaving it up to the local community to make that decision," Wildmon said in a recent press release.

The mayors of Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston have made public service announcements for television supporting Meet at City Hall, Wildmon said. Many radio stations also are promoting it, he said.

"We are thrilled at the response," Wildmon said. "It is apparent there is a deep hunger for the restoration of traditional morals in our country."

Persons desiring information should call (601) 844-5036.

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**S.C. general board recommends
severed ties with Furman Univ.**

By Ben L. McDade

**Baptist Press
4/27/92**

WHITE OAK, S.C. (BP)--Trying to end what its president Robert Shrum called a "long nightmare of the soul," the 85-member general board of South Carolina Baptist Convention voted April 24 to request a special convention session, setting the stage for a split with Furman University, its oldest institution.

After four hours of debate, convention president Eddie Greene, pastor of New Prospect Baptist Church in Anderson, agreed to call the 1,836-church SCBC together order to deal with a number of recommendations related to Furman. The special session will convene at 1 p.m. May 15 in the Cantey Building on the State Fairgrounds in Columbia. The convention's constitution provides for a special session to be called by the president at the request of the general board. The general board will ask messengers to consider:

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- "Rescinding the November 1991 convention action concerning a declaratory action;
- Dissolving legal and financial ties between the S.C. Baptist Convention and Furman University;
- Allocation of escrowed and budgeted funds; and
- Authorization of appointment of a committee to study the relationship between the S.C. Baptist Convention and its agencies and institutions."

Specifically, the board will recommend legal and financial ties be dissolved as of May 16, 1992, and the "executive committee of the General Board working with officers of the convention be authorized to implement actions necessary for the completion of all and any legal documents which need to be signed and delivered."

Concerning the allocation of funds, the board will recommend "1991 Cooperative Program funds held in escrow be placed in an irrevocable trust account with the Baptist Foundation of South Carolina." The fund balance of March 31, 1992, was \$1.56 million. This recommendation calls for the trust's interest earnings to be available to "any student who is a member of a SCBC church who is attending Furman University, with Christian-related vocational students receiving priority." These funds should be available in the fall of 1993.

The board will recommend 1992 funds held in escrow and budgeted to Furman be disposed of in three ways. First, \$30,000 would be used to hire a full-time campus minister by the general board to continue the development of the Baptist Student Union program at Furman. This recommendation calls for Furman to provide "space on a rent free and utility free basis for the new BSU organization on the campus."

Secondly, \$25,000 would "be allocated to the S.C. Baptist Historical Collection for use in the work of recording and preserving the history of S.C. Baptist churches." The Baptist Historical Collection serves as the official depository for Baptist historical documents and artifacts.

The third part of the recommendation calls for "the balance of funds, approximately \$450,000, be allocated for scholarships for S.C. Baptist students attending Furman University for the school year 1992-93." Unexpended funds in this account as of May 31, 1993, will be added to the principal of the new trust account maintained by the Baptist Foundation for students attending the university.

Concerning funds budgeted for Furman University received after the called session, the board will recommend the balance of approximately \$1.1 million be "equally divided, to extent received," to Anderson College, North Greenville College and Charleston Southern University.

The board also will recommend \$50,000 in funding for the BSU program at Furman in 1993 and the 1993 budget contain \$25,000 for operation of the S.C. Baptist Historical Collection at Furman.

And a recommendation calls for "all future gifts by S.C. Baptist Convention churches for Furman University be sent directly to the university."

The board also recommends the convention president appoint a 12-member committee, assisted by the general board's president and the convention's executive secretary-treasurer, "to study historical, contemporary and future relationships of the SCBC to its agencies and institutions with a preliminary report to be made at the November 1992 annual convention meeting and a final report and any recommendations at the November 1993 convention meeting."

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The only recommendation from the executive committee the full board defeated dealt with future Cooperative Program budgets containing scholarship funds for SCBC students attending Furman University.

The board's executive committee voted unanimously April 10 to call the full board together to hear a report from a convention committee appointed last year to seek a declaratory judgment against Furman. The report says negotiations have ended in an impasse. The committee also heard from a group of 34 Baptist pastors representing differing theological perspectives who recommended a special session of the convention be called to sever legal and financial ties between the two bodies. The convention and Furman have been in dispute since October 1990 concerning election of trustees at the Baptist institution, started in 1825 by state Baptists.

The only other time in recent history a called convention has taken place was May 9, 1985, to deal with a matter concerning another Baptist educational institution, Charleston Southern University, then named Baptist College at Charleston. The college was given permission by the 1,242 messengers to conduct a financial campaign in convention churches through 1987. Restrictions in the convention's business and financial plan concerning financial appeals to the churches by any agency or institution of the convention without prior approval of the convention necessitated the action.

Shrum, pastor of Oakland Baptist Church in Rock Hill, said at the close of the session, "I don't like this but we've been to the well and we know there's not much left to do to save our mission (as South Carolina Baptists)."

Harold Mitchell, chairman of the general board's executive committee and pastor of First Baptist Church in North Myrtle Beach, also urged putting the Furman issue in the past, saying, "The Cooperative Program is bleeding to death." Noting CP gifts are running 16 percent behind budget needs, he said, "If we do not get on with kingdom growth the Cooperative Program will be history."

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Don Kirkland contributed to this report.

Opposes homosexual rights,
Bush signals evangelicals

By Tom Strobe

Baptist Press
4/27/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--President George Bush signaled to evangelical Christian leaders he does not support homosexual rights, two Southern Baptist leaders said after an April 21 White House meeting.

"I think we came away with a clear understanding this president is opposed to the radical gay rights agenda," said Richard D. Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"I have no doubts about the president's intentions," said Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention. "At the same time, I hope those around the president understand his position and will do nothing to detract from or diminish his position with the American people."

The two Southern Baptist leaders were part of a meeting with 15 evangelicals focused on the president's position on homosexual rights.

The White House organized the meeting after Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, and Land challenged President Bush in a Feb. 19 letter to "disavow any support or sympathy for the homosexual civil rights agenda." They wrote the president after learning Robert Mosbacher, chairman of the Bush/Quayle re-election campaign, had met with homosexual activists Feb. 13.

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White House aide Leigh Ann Metzger wrote Chapman and Land in March assuring them Mosbacher's action was not an indication of a new policy agenda. The president, however, had not addressed the issue since the incident.

Because of the conflicting signals, the group wanted a clear signal the Bush administration did not support the homosexual rights agenda, Land told the president, "and he gave us that," Land said.

Land said the president told them he did not support "domestic partners" legislation, giving homosexual couples rights and benefits normally reserved to a husband and wife. President Bush said he had no problem signing a congressional resolution opposing the "domestic partners" act recently approved by the District of Columbia's City Council.

"I went away encouraged he had heard us and we had heard him," Land said. "Of course, you know the proof is in the pudding.

"We were able to make it clear to him our opposition to this was not anti-gay but pro-traditional family. We made it clear we did not want gay-bashing.

"We seek to minister to homosexuals," Land said the group told President Bush, "but that does not mean we will accept homosexuality as a perfectly acceptable lifestyle and we need to have assurances the Bush administration is not going to back or support codification of the homosexual lifestyle as a legal relationship on the same level with marriage. That is, it's not going to be given the same kind of protection ethnic origin or disability or gender have."

Land said the group told the president there is no issue that galvanizes evangelical Christians to the degree the homosexual issue does. "There is greater unanimity than even on the abortion issue."

Chapman and Land illustrated this point by telling the president of the overwhelming disapproval registered by Southern Baptists to recent actions sympathetic to homosexuality by two North Carolina churches. Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh approved a homosexual union between two men and Binkley Memorial Baptist Church voted to license a homosexual male to the gospel ministry.

The group asked again for the president to issue an order governing administration policies that affirms the traditional family and opposes homosexual rights. President Bush made no commitments, Land said. The order was recommended by 18 evangelical leaders, including Chapman and Land, in an October 1990 meeting. Chapman and Land also had requested issuance of the order in their February letter.

Land said he thanked President Bush for his actions on some issues, especially his opposition to abortion.

In addition to Chapman and Land, several other Southern Baptists participated: Gary Bauer, executive director of the Family Research Council; Robert Dugan, director of public affairs for the National Association of Evangelicals; Beverly LaHaye, president of Concerned Women for America; and Ed McAteer, president of the Religious Roundtable.

Among administration officials attending were Les Csorba, special assistant to the president and associate director of presidential personnel, and Metzger deputy assistant to the president for public liaison. Metzger is liaison to evangelicals among other groups. Both are members of Southern Baptist churches.

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Other evangelicals participating at the White House's invitation were Don Argue, president of the National Association of Evangelicals; John Beckett, president of Intercessors for America; Bob Jones III, president of Bob Jones University; Raymond Carlson, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God; David Clark, president of the National Religious Broadcasters; Brandt Gustavson, NRB's executive director; Lou Sheldon, president of the Traditional Values Coalition; Jeff Snyder, director of the Apostolic Coalition; and Jean Thompson, pastor of Harvest Church International in Mount Ranier, Md. Twelve others were invited but did not attend.

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Tennessee, Kentucky churches
aid transplant-needy infant

By Lonnie Wilkey

Baptist Press
4/27/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Churches in Tennessee and Kentucky are rallying to meet the needs of 19-month-old Amanda Jo "Mandy" Moore.

Moore is the daughter of Steve and Kathy Moore, members of Brook Hollow Baptist Church in Nashville. Mandy was born six weeks early and developed a severe intestinal disorder called necrotizing enterocolitis. As a result, she has had most of her intestines removed and developed a serious liver disease.

The child does not have enough intestines left to process food properly so she must be fed intravenously with a high-protein solution which damages the liver. She is in urgent need of a liver and small intestine transplant. Medical experts say it is a highly complex and complicated procedure. The dual organ transplant normally takes 12 to 18 hours, compared to five to 10 hours for a liver transplant.

To get on the donor list for the rare transplant procedure, the Moores need \$600,000. Though the surgery has been performed 11 times successfully at the University of Pittsburgh Hospital, the Moore's insurance company will not pay for the procedure because it is still considered experimental.

Helping the Moores secure financing for the operation is where members of Brook Hollow church have tried to bridge the gap, said pastor Pierce McIntyre.

Church members have basically said "we want to help the family anyway we can," Moore said, admitting the church has abandoned traditional Southern Baptist practices. Though fund raising in churches is normally considered taboo, church members have sponsored various fund-raising projects. "The fund-raising is not for the church; it is for the Moore family," McIntyre emphasized.

McIntyre also has written a letter which will be mailed to every pastor and church in the state.

Noting the secular community has shown overwhelming support, McIntyre said he would like to see "God's people at the forefront of this endeavor."

The Moores presently have about \$170,000 raised. They have also been assisted by their home church in White Plains, Ky., and other congregations in the Baptist association there.

McIntyre stressed time is of the essence. "Mandy's condition has worsened in the last few weeks," he said.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Please kill the story titled "Individualized consultations available to black churches" transmitted on April 16. The consultations will not be available until more people are trained. If you have already used the story, no correction is needed. The situation will be explained when people contact the Home Mission Board black church extension department for information.

CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "African American Fellowship to organize, honor McCall" dated 4/23/93, please change the word "holds" in the first paragraph to "hold" and the word "meet" in the second paragraph to "met."

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Some Afghans listening
to gospel, sources say

Baptist Press
4/27/92

FRANKFURT, Germany (BP)--People in war-weary Afghanistan have become more open to the Christian gospel in recent weeks as the final takeover of the government by rebel forces has neared, sources here report.

Many Afghans are questioning their future and taking a hard look at spiritual matters, according to Christian sources inside the overwhelmingly Muslim country.

Sources say minority ethnic groups -- such as the Hazara people -- are depressed and fear they will be massacred in the chaos and struggle for power caused by the downfall of the formerly Soviet-backed government. The Hazaras are Shiite Muslims who live mostly in Afghanistan's highlands. They number about 5 million and make up 60 percent of the population in Kabul, the besieged capital.

Two members of one Hazara family recently became Christian believers and other members of the family are studying the Bible, sources reported. The family has twice seen a video on the life of Christ.

Christians in Afghanistan have issued a call for believers in the West to pray for the Hazara people in the coming days as Afghanistan experiences tumultuous change.

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Churches of future resemble
cafeterias more than diners

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
4/27/92

COLUMBUS, Ohio (BP)--Successful churches of the future will be more like cafeterias than plate lunch diners, the dean of religion at Liberty University predicted.

With plate lunches, the amount of food and how it is served is controlled, explained Elmer Towns. A cafeteria, on the other hand, offers choices and variety, not control.

Towns, speaking during a Models for Metropolitan Ministries conference in Columbus, Ohio, based his comments on his study of 10 innovative churches in America. His list included two Southern Baptist churches -- First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., and Second Baptist Church of Houston.

One way to make a church more like a cafeteria is to vary times for worship services, Sunday school and prayer meetings. Towns suggested having more than one worship service, not because the auditorium is full but to give members options.

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Saturday night worship services are a viable option for some churches, Towns said.

The alternative time may reach "thousands of young people today who have no distant echo of Christianity," he said. "They have no concept that Sunday is the Lord's Day."

In addition, baby boomers -- generally considered people born between 1945 and 1965 -- want a variety of Bible study topics. Towns said a United Methodist survey showed people expect verse-by-verse Bible study, practical lessons from the Bible, lessons about Christian heritage and biblical lessons about life issues.

In sermons, people want "practical, fix-it" topics. Towns said the three main issues they want pastors to address are marriage relationships, how to raise children and how to manage money.

Another trait of innovative churches, Towns said, is that "pastors don't do ministry." Instead, they equip and empower lay leaders to do everything from hospital visits to wedding ceremonies.

Also, Towns said, "The pastor of the future does not make decisions. He manages decisions and works with a team of people. He makes better decisions based on surveys of what people think."

People expect team leadership based on shared problem solving and goal setting, he said.

People also want to participate in worship services rather than be spectators. Yet Towns said successful churches need strong small groups. He said the worship service attracts people to the church but small groups keep people in church.

Offering more options does not mean changing theology, he said. "Doctrine never changes but methods do."

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Eight principles help churches
present changeless message

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
4/27/92

DAYTON, Ohio (BP)--Eight principles will help churches present their changeless message to a changing society, said Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis.

Lewis, speaking during a Models for Metropolitan Ministry conference, said his pastoral experience taught him these principles work in blue-collar areas as well as white-collar and inner-city churches.

Lewis said churches must:

-- Discover and cultivate prospects. "Find out where they live and what their spiritual condition is," Lewis said. "Make someone in your church responsible for that information."

-- Expand their organization. Lewis recommended the church's witnessing programs be "very intimately married" to Sunday school and Sunday school take the dual responsibility of reaching and teaching people.

-- Train and motivate workers. "Buildings don't reach people," Lewis said. "People reach people."

-- Provide space for ever-growing structure. Lewis said this does not have to mean new buildings. It may mean using Sunday school space more than one hour a week or beginning satellite congregations or mission churches.

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-- Go after people. "We're not really New Testament until we've shared the gospel face to face with people in our community," Lewis said.

-- Provide superior programs. "People want the best we can provide in music and relevant preaching that is biblical, not just a self-help lecture."

-- Develop solid public relations. Lewis urged conference participants to get to know the religion editor of their local newspaper and use tools such as telephone surveys and mass mailings.

-- Pray. "Learn how to make our Father's house a house of prayer."

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Southern Seminary hosts
homecoming for alumni

Baptist Press
4/27/92

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary will host its first homecoming festival for the school's alumni on the weekend preceding the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis.

The June 6-7 event will offer the Louisville, Ky., school's alumni opportunities to renew acquaintances with former classmates and professors, tour the seminary's new \$12 million campus center and participate in an alumni worship service. The weekend also will feature a "town meeting" with seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt who recently has completed 10 years as president.

Several of the seminary's retired faculty will be returning to campus for the event, including Henlee Barnette, Findley Edge, Forrest Heeren, Estill Jones and Robert Proctor. Senior professors Wayne Oates and Wayne Ward will be present as will former seminary President Duke McCall and former SBC Presidents Herschel Hobbs and Wayne Dehoney. A reunion choir, directed by Richard Lin, senior professor of church music, will sing at the Sunday worship service.

Registration, which includes a picnic lunch and a continental breakfast, is \$10 per adult; \$5 for children under 14; and \$25 maximum per family. After May 1, the cost goes to \$15 per adult; \$5 per child under 14; and \$35 maximum per family.

Tickets can be purchased by sending a check and self-addressed, stamped envelope to "Homecoming Festival," c/o Alumni Relations, Southern Seminary, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40280.

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Pastor elected executive
director for Ohio Baptists

By Theo Sommerkamp

Baptist Press
4/27/92

COLUMBUS, Ohio (BP)--Orville H. Griffin, a pastor and denominational staffer in Ohio since 1954, has been elected executive director-treasurer of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

The unanimous recommendation of the convention's search committee, he was elected with only three dissenting votes by the executive board at its April meeting in Columbus. He takes office May 1.

Griffin, 60, has been acting executive director since the death of Tal D. Bonham, the former executive director, last fall. He served under Bonham as associate executive director and handled Cooperative Program, stewardship, annuity, foundation and other assignments. Earlier, he was evangelism director of Ohio.

A native of Georgetown, Ky., who attended Georgetown College there, Griffin's first Ohio connection was as pastor of East Dayton Baptist Church from 1954-67.

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He was president of the Ohio convention in 1966 and was elected to a second term but resigned when elected area director of two associations in the Cincinnati area.

In 1970 he was called as missions director in the Dayton area, filling that post until 1976 when he became evangelism director of the state convention. Bonham chose him as associate executive director after Bonham became executive director in 1980.

As executive director, Griffin will continue to handle stewardship and annuity duties. The associate executive director's post will be left vacant and other duties reassigned to existing convention staff.

He married Lois Watson, also a Kentuckian, in 1951 and they have two sons and a daughter.

The search committee, in recommending Griffin, lauded his financial ability and said the convention needed an executive who could help it maintain financial stability during a time of economic pressures.

Several committee members declared their feeling that Griffin was God's choice for Ohio at this time despite the fact he is just five years from normal retirement age.

Griffin, in accepting the call, said he had told the search committee earlier, when the choice of a nominee was not apparent, that he would do everything possible to help the new executive succeed, whomever it would be.

"I will continue (in the new office) to serve with the same commitment and dedication I have had as pastor, missions director in the associations and as associate executive director in the state," Griffin said.

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Affiliates from seven states
honored with ACTS awards

Baptist Press
4/27/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Local affiliates from seven states received recognition at the seventh annual American Christian Television System (ACTS) Awards ceremony held at Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, April 23.

ACTS of Wichita Falls, Texas, took top honors as affiliate of the year and also received recognition in the Christian message promotional announcement category for its 30-second spot, "Eclipse," featuring scenes from the 1991 solar eclipse.

Other award recipients from Texas were ACTS of Brownwood for its 30-minute weekly contemporary Christian music video series, "Culture Shock," and Travis Avenue Baptist Church of Fort Worth for its 1991 annual Christmas program, "Christmas in Vermont."

ACTS of Jonesboro, Ark., was honored for outstanding achievement in event coverage for its coverage of the AAU/Jr. boys national championship basketball game. Also from Arkansas, Little Rock ACTS TV-27 received spot of the year and short feature honors and ACTS of Texarkana was given human interest (series) and missions program awards.

ACTS of Monticello, Ind., received recognition for its 60-second commercial for a local photography studio.

Walnut Street Baptist Church of Louisville, Ky., was honored for its 30-second Christian message spot, "Time with God."

ACTS of Jackson, Miss., received recognition in the category of human interest (special) for independent producer Ken Anderson's production, "The MVP Spirit." Other award recipients from Mississippi were ACTS of Laurel for "Football 1991," weekly coverage of the 1991 high school football season and ACTS of Mississippi for religious special for its 58-minute program, "If You Love Me... ."

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Special awards were presented to ACTS of Cullman, Ala., for outstanding achievement in the area of public relations and Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church of Montgomery, Ala., received the Viewers' Choice Award for its weekly ACTS Methodist Hour.

ACTS of Virginia was honored with program of the year and educational or informational special/series for its "Many Parts, One Body," a 28-minute program highlighting the work of Shirley Robertson, director of special education ministries for the Virginia Baptist General Board. It presents the steps necessary for churches wanting to begin a ministry to the handicapped.

The nationally televised awards ceremony, called "Night of Honors," was held in association with ACTS' broadcasting counterpart, FamilyNet. Local ACTS affiliates -- including cable television systems and local churches -- were recognized for excellence in television production, public relations and channel management. The gala event was the highlight of three days of ACTS and FamilyNet national affiliates meetings.

ACTS is a satellite-delivered, 24-hour-a-day television programming service operated by the Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention providing inspirational programs primarily to cable television systems throughout the United States. ACTS currently provides programming services to more than 600 affiliates with more than 24 million confirmed potential viewers.

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