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April 20, 1995

95-65

OKLAHOMA CITY--Oklahoma City churches respond to terrorist act.
TENNESSEE--Henry, Williams issue call to prayer in wake of Oklahoma City bomb attack.
OKLAHOMA CITY--Minister prays with nurse after she watched child die.
OKLAHOMA CITY--Nursing instructor, students help Okla. City hospital cope.
OKLAHOMA CITY--Chaplains help rescue workers, families cope with bombing.
KENTUCKY--SBTS faculty hear details of early retirement offer.
KENTUCKY--Student gathering draws protesters, supporters in Southern controversy.
TEXAS--BWA president-elect to keynote Hemphill inauguration May 1.
WASHINGTON--Civil rights leader's daughter to address BWA justice forum.
CALIFORNIA--Dreadful weather, amazing results mark Saddleback Easter service.
NEW MEXICO--Out of arson's ashes, church is back on fire.

Oklahoma City churches
respond to terrorist act

By Dave Parker

Baptist Press
4/20/95

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--9:01 a.m. April 19, 1995.

Like the day John F. Kennedy was killed or the day the Challenger space shuttle exploded, that date will forever be etched in the minds of Americans.

It was the day America lost its sense of security, as terrorists proved they can hit anywhere, anytime.

When a car bomb exploded outside the federal building in Oklahoma City, shock waves were felt for miles. People as far away as Stillwater, 66 miles to the northeast, reported feeling the blast.

The Baptist Building, which houses the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, felt like it was hit by an earthquake, as it shook three or four times from the blast.

Convention employees quickly began checking all the windows for signs of the disaster, and they noticed white smoke pouring from a building downtown. The white smoke turned to black as cars in the federal building parking lot caught fire.

Local television and radio stations almost immediately interrupted regular programming with the chilling announcement that a large explosion had rocked a building downtown.

As word spread about the bombing, people gathered around television sets in disbelief. Impromptu prayer meetings were held for the victims and families of the bombings.

Charles Graves, pastor of Quail Springs Baptist Church in Oklahoma City and president of the BGCO, said he and William G. Tanner, BGCO executive director-treasurer, are asking churches to take up a love offering April 23 and April 30 and send it to help those in need.

"This is so localized and people are not displaced from their homes, so supplies we normally provide are not needed," he said. "The people do, however, need money to help with hospital bills."

The Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building is located at Fifth and Robinson in Oklahoma City. Until October 1990, the Baptist Building was six blocks to the north, and First Baptist Church is at 12th and Robinson.

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Gene Garrison, pastor of First Baptist Church, said because of its location the church immediately became the shift change post for firefighters and other emergency personnel.

Church workers were already gearing up for the Wednesday night meal, so they decided to start making sandwiches for emergency crews.

Rescue efforts were slowed by several additional bomb scares and ambulances were kept two blocks away from the building. They lined up two abreast on Robinson, backing up as far north as 13th Street.

"Around 12:30 or 1, our staff just spontaneously began making sandwiches and handing them out," Garrison said. "They made more than 1,000 sandwiches, and First Christian Church brought over 300. They started walking up the street, handing out sandwiches."

Later that evening, the BGO brotherhood department's disaster relief unit began serving meals out of the church parking lot.

The church had only two members who worked at or near the bombsite; Garrison said one was in California at the time and one had moved to a new location six weeks earlier.

There were several known casualties among friends and relatives of church members, though. One former member had a son working on the eighth floor of the nine-story building. He has not been found. A former staff evangelist at First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, lost two grandchildren in the blast.

Twenty-four hours after the explosion, there had been only 36 confirmed deaths -- 12 of which were children from a day care center on the building's second floor. Another 460 people had been treated in 12 area hospitals, and many remained in serious or critical condition.

Because of the severity of the blast and the amount of rubble, though, it may be days or weeks before the full death count is known, and before churches know how many members are affected.

"Our people are still in shock," Garrison said. "Last night (April 19) in our prayer service, we had a lot of people there. More than half were rescue workers. Instead of me speaking, I let them talk about their feelings and concerns."

In addition, he said the regular services April 23 are being revamped into a prayer service and Scripture sharing time.

"I don't know what is the right thing to do," Garrison said. "We do need to be praying for the doctors, nurses, chaplains, counselors and ministers, so that they will know how to deal with these people."

Ministers from across the metropolitan area helped counsel victims and families at an Oklahoma City church. Even people not directly affected are trying to deal with the loss of security they once felt.

"This just proves that we don't have any security in this world," Garrison said. "Apart from our personal faith in God, there is no security. Here we are in a good Midwestern town, with good neighbors but you can be driving downtown at Fifth and Harvey and have it all end in an instant."

Ted Kersh, pastor of Village Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, agreed.

"This should cause us to be real aggressive for evangelism," he said. "Eternity was bombarded with souls Wednesday morning. We need to get people ready, so they will spend eternity with Jesus Christ."

Kersh said Village Baptist only had one member hurt in the blast, but he said there are many members emotionally involved, including the city's police chief, Sam Gonzalez. He said the church is also very involved in counseling people.

"I immediately sent some staff to high schools in the area, because we got a call" about some high school students whose parents were in the building Wednesday morning.

He also said two members are psychologists and are providing counseling free of charge.

Graves said Quail Springs only had one member who suffered a minor injury, but had a couple of near misses. He said one woman had stopped to put gasoline in her car, and got to work one minute after the explosion.

He said he did not feel so much a sense of insecurity as a sense of anger among Oklahoma City residents.

"This can happen anywhere," he said. "Any terrorist with half a brain -- which is about what I think these people had -- knows that the way you terrify people is to do things in places not expected, in ways not expected.

"I just hope this doesn't turn into racial hatred. We need to find those responsible, but not blame the innocent."

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Henry, Williams issue call to prayer
in wake of Oklahoma City bomb attack

Baptist Press
4/20/95

By Steve Barber

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Jim Henry, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and James D. Williams, president of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, called on all Southern Baptists to pray in the wake of the deadly bomb attack April 19 on the A.P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

"What happened in Oklahoma City yesterday is certainly beyond our ability to fully understand, but not beyond our ability to minister to through prayer," the April 20 statement reads. "Therefore, we are asking Southern Baptists across the United States to pray -- immediately, fervently and constantly -- for those families and friends who have lost loved ones, for the families and friends of those still missing, for the recovery of those who were injured, and for the safety of those special servants -- the police, firemen, rescue workers, counselors and investigators -- who have already given so much."

Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., and Williams were moved to issue their call after hearing reports on the devastation, particularly those from Southern Baptist relief and communications personnel already on the scene.

Bob Carey, editor of Missions Today magazine for the Brotherhood Commission, said from Oklahoma City April 20 the scene is "just as bad as it looks on television; in fact, it's worse. This (the immediate response) will go on for days and days."

Carey was moving about the city with Southern Baptist chaplains ministering to those affected by the tragedy. Mickey Caison of the Brotherhood Commission, acting as national Southern Baptist disaster relief coordinator, was also in Oklahoma City.

The large disaster relief mobile feeding unit owned by the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma was activated April 19 and is operating at First Baptist Church, downtown. There, Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers are preparing and serving meals to family members of victims, rescue workers and other support personnel, according to Laddie Adams, Brotherhood director for the Oklahoma convention.

The Brotherhood Commission coordinates initial, multi-state disaster responses on behalf of all Southern Baptists.

Those who wish to make a donation in support of the disaster relief effort may send contributions to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104. The contribution should be designated for "DR 626, Oklahoma City".

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Minister prays with nurse
after she watched child die

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
4/20/95

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--A Baptist nurse who watched a 3-year-old child die in her arms was among the workers with whom Bill Spain prayed outside the remnants of the federal building in Oklahoma City April 19.

Spain, administrator of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, pastor Tom Elliff and six other members of the church's staff were among numerous ministers who made themselves available at the site after a car bomb devastated the building, sending emotional shock waves throughout the city and nation.

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Authorities called the Del City church seeking ministers to encourage and pray with rescue workers and medical personnel at the site as they ended their shifts inside the destroyed building and with police and National Guardsmen who maintained watch at various posts, Spain recounted.

The nurse was most distraught by not being able to continue helping victims when a bomb scare forced evacuation of the building, Spain said of her intensity to help.

The Del City ministers were given chaplain identification after arriving between 1 and 2 p.m., then they divided up, walked among the workers and ministered individually or in small groups to those needing someone to "put their arm around them and hug them and let them know we were there to help." Spain described the workers as "emotionally distraught ... totally distressed ... in a state of shock ... in disbelief" at the tragedy. Several of the church staff members stayed at the site until 2 or 3 a.m., Spain said.

Among the potential victims who have been missing since the April 19 blast are the stepson of Marjorie McCullough, immediate national past president of Woman's Missionary Union, and the brother of Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board staff member Jimmy Maroney.

Kenny McCullough, a federal alcohol, tobacco and fire arms agent, is the son of the late Glendon McCullough, former president of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, and stepson of Marjorie Jones McCullough of Alexandria, La., a former Southern Baptist missionary to Nigeria, Ghana and Brazil and WMU president from 1986-1991. Kenny's wife's name is Sharon and they have two children, Jessica and Patrick.

Mickey Maroney, 50, a Secret Service agent, was at work on the ninth floor of the federal building at the time of the blast. He and his wife, Robbie, are the parents of two grown children and members of Council Road Baptist Church in Bethany, Okla., an Oklahoma City suburb.

Jimmy Maroney, a 28-year veteran of Southern Baptist foreign missions on the field and FMB staff, directs the mission board's Global Desk. He has served overseas in Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya and on the board staff as associate area director for Eastern and Southern Africa and senior consultant for evangelism and church growth ministries.

Maroney echoed the feelings of many who don't know the fate of family and friends still missing after the blast.

"All we can do is hope and pray," he said of his younger brother. "We'll just keep hoping and praying that he'll be found alive."

Among the severely injured: a Marine who is the son of Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries Mike and Kay Norfleet.

Michael Rand "Randy" Norfleet, 29, was in the U.S. Marine recruiting offices on the sixth floor of the federal building when the car bomb exploded. He had attended a Billy Graham-sponsored prayer breakfast earlier that morning.

Norfleet and his wife, Jamie, live in Stillwater, Okla., where he is a Marine recruiter and they are members of First Baptist Church.

Young Norfleet suffered severe head and eye wounds but managed to walk out of the building. Jamie, seven months pregnant, went into premature labor when she heard the news of his injuries. But doctors managed to stop the labor, and the baby apparently suffered no injury.

On April 20 she was with her husband at St. Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City, where he has undergone plastic surgery and eye surgery to repair deep gashes and lacerations. He faces more surgery.

Doctors are most concerned about his right eye, damaged severely by glass and debris. As of April 20 he could distinguish light, raising hope that he will retain his sight.

Norfleet's parents, from Marlow, Okla., are missionaries in the Ukraine, where they have served since February 1994. Earlier, they were missionaries in Taiwan, 1974-82. Mike Norfleet also was associate director of the Foreign Mission Board's missionary enlistment department from 1984-87. He also has been pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of East Clairmont in San Diego, and New Bridge Baptist Church in Richmond, Va.

Adequate counseling services are available in the Oklahoma City area, according to Doug Dickens, associate professor of pastoral ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. "But several weeks or months from now, pastors and ministers in Oklahoma City's smaller churches may be calling us as they deal with post traumatic stress syndrome," Dickens noted.

For now, the seminary does have specially trained personnel in disaster relief counseling and they are available if the need arises, said Wynona Elder, associate professor of psychology and counseling.

Employees in the Oklahoma City Baptist Book Store, located at 3621 N.W. Expressway, five miles from the explosion, heard the blast. According to Robert Colston, store manager, the noise was as if "a truck crashed into our building."

Meanwhile in Nashville, Tenn., several of the 26 Oklahomans participating in a Baptist Sunday School Board preschool-children leaders conference left Nashville the afternoon of April 19 and the morning of April 20 after hearing of the explosion, according to Larry Dry from the discipleship and family development division. At least one person had relatives in the area and others had concerns for fellow church members.

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Dana Williamson, Robert O'Brien, Teresa Dickens, Jan Johnsonius and Charles Willis contributed to this story.

Nursing instructor, students
help Okla. City hospital cope

Baptist Press
4/20/95

By Marty O'Gwynn & Ray Fink

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--When Juanita Johnson heard of the explosion at Oklahoma City's Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, she knew what she needed to do.

Working in her office at Oklahoma Baptist University's school of nursing on the morning of April 19, Johnson grabbed a lab coat and began the 37-mile trip from the Shawnee campus west to the heart of Oklahoma City.

A former nurse at St. Anthony's Hospital there, Johnson called the hospital from her car and was guided through a maze of emergency vehicles to arrive at St. Anthony's, just a few blocks from the blast site, within an hour of the explosion.

Within another hour, five OBU nursing students also arrived at St. Anthony's and linked up with Johnson to help in the aftermath of the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history.

At around 10:30 a.m., fear of a second bomb sent rescue workers racing from the federal building. Meanwhile, medical teams prepared for a second wave of victims they expected to arrive when rescuers returned to the devastated building.

As the second threat passed and workers re-entered the facility, they did not locate large numbers of trapped people as they had anticipated.

"We worked with two units to prepare for more victims," said Johnson. "But there weren't any patients to take care of."

Instead, Johnson and the students assisted families of victims who sought word on the status of loved ones. Hundreds of family members were directed to a gymnasium inside the hospital.

"There were at least 200 family members in that gymnasium," Johnson said. "You could walk over to anybody and experience an outpouring of anguish, misery and fear."

As they gained information on missing people, the nursing students would leave the gym to search for the individuals.

"For most of the families, we didn't have any information to give them," Johnson said. "It was chaotic."

"We sat and talked with them and just supported them," said Therese Miner, a senior from Seminole, Okla. "We'd get them water, or if they had been there all day, we tried to get them to eat."

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Miner said the students' emotions were pulled the hardest as they stood by parents who learned their children had died. As of 8 a.m. April 20, at least 12 children were listed among the fatalities.

"I think it was all really tragic, but the babies are the ones that really stick out in our minds."

Hospital officials dealt with an overflow of volunteer medical personnel across Oklahoma City, as people sought to aid the victims and their families. Area emergency services personnel often work on disaster preparation in a region where the most common natural disasters are caused by spring storms and tornadoes.

"They were very well organized," said Claudine Dickey, dean of OBU's school of nursing. "Obviously there were more victims than you would ever expect to see from a tornado.

"Oklahoma did what we were prepared to do," she added.

The OBU students, working closely with Johnson, "were more like colleagues to me than students," she said.

The nursing professor stayed at St. Anthony's until late in the afternoon. She left the students working with two counselors as they continued assisting families into the evening.

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Chaplains help rescue workers,
families cope with bombing

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
4/20/95

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Closing his eyes brings images of horror rather than much-needed rest to chaplain Joe Williams.

"I've been at plane crash sites, but I've never seen body parts scattered like this before," said Williams, who is working in the aftermath of the April 19 car bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. "We'll never get over the impact of seeing these things."

Williams is chaplaincy director for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and a volunteer FBI and law enforcement chaplain. He and Jack Poe, Oklahoma City Police Department chaplain, coordinated efforts of more than 100 chaplains during the crisis. Poe, senior chaplain for the Oklahoma Army National Guard, is also a Southern Baptist.

The trauma took its toll on survivors and rescue workers alike, Williams said.

"When you asked (the rescue workers) what bothers them the most, they all said the same thing -- the children," Williams said. The bombed building housed a day care for employees' children.

Chaplains were assigned around the clock, Williams said. Some were stationed where victims' families gathered to wait for news. The day after the explosion, chaplains began making death notification visits to families.

Williams was among those waiting for a report. His son's father-in-law worked at the federal building, and 24 hours after the explosion he had not been found.

A temporary morgue was set up near the site of the explosion, and chaplains worked there in two-hour shifts, Williams said. Chaplains also worked in two-hour shifts at a rest area for rescue workers bringing bodies out of the building.

Rescue workers either talk a lot or don't say anything, Williams said. As chaplains, "We're just there. Sometimes they want to talk to us, sometimes we cry with them."

Williams and Lew Dawson, Home Mission Board associate director of chaplaincy, suggested Southern Baptists pray specifically for five things:

- Spiritual strength for chaplains to maintain self-control. "If they lose it, they won't be able to do what other people need them to do," Dawson said.
- Physical strength for rescue workers and chaplains working long hours.
- Wisdom for chaplains to say the right thing.
- Family members who do not yet know about loved ones who were in the building during the explosion.
- Pastors throughout Oklahoma City who will counsel those affected by the crisis.

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**SBTS faculty hear details
of early retirement offer**

By Herb Hollinger

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--An "early retirement" package was announced to the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary April 19. Officials said there are 29 professors eligible for the package which has a July 31 effective date.

President R. Albert Mohler Jr. and board of trustees' chairman Richard White spoke to the faculty for about two hours following the end of the April 17-19 trustee meeting. Mohler and White discussed actions of the trustees affecting the faculty, especially a new faculty hiring process and an amendment to the faculty-staff manual on discipline.

Most questions asked Mohler and White were about the manual amendment which requires "an obligation on the part of all faculty and staff to support and relate constructively to the institution, its policies and administration." The addition also prohibits "undermining or obstructing the policies" of the seminary during class time and any action by faculty and staff which is "injurious or detrimental to the seminary's relationship with the denomination, donors or other constituencies"

The meeting was termed by one observer as "clarifying" but not necessarily cordial.

The early retirement package was part of a strategy trustees approved during their meeting to reduce expenditures at the seminary which has faced a downward trend in enrollment and gifts.

Of the 70 full-time faculty, 29 are eligible for the retirement plan. Basically, a professor's years of full-time service plus his age must equal at least 65 in order to qualify.

The package consists of one year's salary plus \$500 for each year of service. Thus a professor with 20 years of service could receive a year's salary and \$10,000 as the salary part of the package.

Under benefits, up to age 65, the seminary's portion of the employee's health insurance would be paid for up to 12 months after severance, or until the employee becomes eligible for coverage under another group health insurance plan. Beyond the 12 months, coverage could be continued by the employee picking up the cost to age 65.

The current level of life insurance coverage also would be similarly extended, with one-half of the employee's coverage paid by the seminary for 12 months. An employee who wanted to continue the seminary group plan could pick up the costs following the 12-month period.

Seminary trustees voted during their meeting to cease paying supplemental health coverage for employees who retire after July 31. However, under the early retirement package, that supplemental insurance would still be available for the early retirees -- paid by the seminary -- with some restrictions.

Eligible faculty will, by law, receive a personalized follow-up packet with information about the plan. From the date they receive the packet they have 45 days to accept it plus a seven-day period in which they can revoke their agreement if so desired.

The seminary has about 140 full- and part-time faculty.

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**Student gathering draws protesters,
supporters in Southern controversy**

**Baptist Press
4/20/95**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--A "candlelight witness service" sponsored by a student group at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary April 18 took aim at President R. Albert Mohler Jr., the school's trustees and "survival of the seminary, as well as the denomination."

Among the speakers: outspoken former SBTS professor Molly Marshall who lamented the loss of three women in the seminary's theology department; retired professor William L. Hendricks who decried the current status of the seminary; and Carver Alumni and Friends Association president Steve Williams who said the survival of the seminary and the denomination is at issue.

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The evening gathering on the Louisville, Ky., campus attracted a number of news media and was sponsored by the SBTS Graduate Club. It was advertised in the Louisville area as a "community-wide candlelight witness service in support of the Southern Baptist seminary community and the Carver School of Church Social Work." Supporters had hoped for 1,000 in attendance but some observers said there were more like 200-300.

It was held while the seminary's 64-member board of trustees was meeting in another building on campus in executive session, part of which was to deal with the controversy surrounding the firing of the dean of the Carver school March 20. Diana R. Garland was fired as dean by the president following her public release of information in a dispute about a prospective faculty member at the social work school.

Most of the speakers were critical of the seminary's direction under Mohler.

However, some students were critical of the speakers and the criticism of the seminary.

"When you have a rally in which Dr. Mohler's administration is called a blasphemous, misogynistic administration -- and you have students out there applauding ... that's ungodly behavior," said Gregory Thornbury, a master of divinity student from Winfield, Penn.

Marshall had told the gathering, "We are holding a vigil, I pray it is not a requiem." She lamented the loss of three women in the theology department at the seminary, including her resignation earlier this year which was requested by Mohler. She predicted the department would be without a tenured woman "as long as the misogynistic forces are unabated." Misogyny is the hatred of women, especially by a man.

"In fact, the faculty is looking more and more like it did in 1859 -- and that is blasphemy," Marshall said. "When a person arrogates to themselves to decide whom God calls to ministry and whom God gifts for ministry and whom can best supply the church's need -- it is blasphemy."

Hendricks said five criteria are in jeopardy in the current setting of the seminary: high accreditation standards, academically prepared students, credentialed and prepared faculty, a library with adequate holdings and expanding walls via technology, and "most importantly" a context which is conducive to research, reading and reflection.

He said trustees need to resolve the issues (such as women in ministry) by " ... return(ing) both the practice and discussion of ordination back to the local churches, where it belongs." That would, he said, restore two significant issues related to Baptist heritage: the priesthood of all believers and the autonomy of the local church.

Part of the dispute between Garland and Mohler revolved around the prospective candidate's view on women in the ministry and as church senior pastors.

However, to Brenda Scott, of Lake Placid, Fla., who is in her first year at the Carver school, the legitimacy of women serving in a senior pastor role is not an issue that would surface in a church social work class but it is important for faculty to share the convictions of the consensus of Southern Baptists.

Scott said she came to Southern from a secular social work setting to get "a theological training perspective," to "root my ministry in a foundation to reach people in a way that would definitely solve their problems, rather than just putting a Band-Aid on them." She received her undergraduate degree in social work at a state school but expects the social work training she gets at Southern to have a distinctively Christian influence.

Prospective faculty candidates should "be able to defend views on abortion and homosexuality," Scott said, "founded on biblical perspective."

Scott said she and her husband would continue at Southern. "God knew this was going to happen before we came. And he led us here. In my mind, I can't justify going back."

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Other speakers at the rally included Joe Priest Williams, former pastor of Baptist Tabernacle in Louisville and a professor for the Boyce Bible School, and Dixie Petri, master of divinity student and president of the Student Government Association. The speakers were introduced by Gerald L. Keown, associate dean in the school of theology.

Student leaders, both on and off the campus, also spoke, including representatives from several colleges in the Louisville area as well as Louisville Presbyterian Seminary.

Steve Williams, a graduate of the Carver school and president of a new Carver Alumni and Friends Association, said: "... remember that issues that bring us here tonight are not just the issues of the Carver school, but the issues of the survival of the seminary, as well as our entire denomination." He called on Mohler to speak with the group and urged listeners to "never give up the fight for being true Baptists."

However, Bill Craig, a pastoral care student from Maryland, compared the rally to situations in the Old Testament when adversaries were demonized. "Where's the idea of hope? There's none of that," he said. Instead, "they resorted to a chaotic event."

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Joni Hannigan and Tammi Ledbetter of the Indiana Baptist and Herb Hollinger of Baptist Press contributed to this story.

BWA president-elect to keynote
Hemphill inauguration May 1

By Kellie Crowe

Baptist Press
4/20/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Nilson do Amaral Fanini, president-elect of the Baptist World Alliance, will be keynote speaker at the May 1 inauguration of Ken Hemphill as Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's seventh president.

The inauguration ceremony will begin at 2 p.m. at Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas. It will follow an inaugural prayer gathering for faculty, students, alumni and trustees at 10 a.m. in Truett Auditorium on the seminary's main campus in Fort Worth.

A 1958 graduate of Southwestern, Fanini has preached in 82 countries and was the first evangelist allowed to preach in communist Angola and Mozambique. He preaches weekly to 40 million people on 110 television and 52 radio stations throughout Brazil and six other South American countries.

Fanini is pastor of one of the largest evangelical churches in South America, First Baptist Church of Niteroi with more than 5,000 members.

Other program personalities during the May 1 ceremony will be William Tolar, chairman of the inauguration committee and vice president for academic affairs and provost at Southwestern; James T. Draper Jr., president of the Baptist Sunday School Board; Kay Granger, mayor of Fort Worth; and Mark Corts, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C. Also on the program are Charles Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va.; Ralph Pulley, chairman of Southwestern's board of trustees; Southwestern student Chris Keathly; and alumni representative Bill James of Wilshire Baptist Church, Dallas.

Following the ceremony, Hemphill, his wife Paula, and their three daughters, Kristina, Rachael and Katherine, will be honored at a reception in Travis Avenue Baptist Church's south education building.

Inaugural day activities will conclude with an evening of celebration beginning at 8:30 p.m. in Truett Auditorium. The Southwestern Men's Chorus, Southwestern Wind Ensemble and Southwestern Singers will give special performances. Also featured on the program will be Southern Baptist pastor, humorist and encourager Dennis Swanberg, recently named special assistant to the president for seminary relations.

Alumni may obtain tickets for the evening celebration by calling (817) 923-1921, ext. 3100.

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Hemphill's inauguration is planned as a time of worship and praise for the entire seminary family.

"It's important for a family to have some time together, to have some kind of down time," Hemphill said. "We hope the inaugural activities will be a good experience for the students, a continual healing experience, and a visionary experience to look to the future and say, 'This is what God wants our seminary to be.'"

On May 2, Southwestern's students, faculty, staff and trustees will be treated to a free concert by country musician Ricky Skaggs and his band, the Kentucky Sons of Thunder followed by a western picnic.

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Civil rights leader's daughter
to address BWA justice forum

Baptist Press
4/20/95

WASHINGTON (BP)--Bernice A. King, daughter of the late civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., has been added to the list of speakers at the 17th Baptist World Congress, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Aug. 1-6.

King will make a special appearance at a forum on justice sponsored by the Special Commission of Baptists Against Racism of the Baptist World Alliance, Wednesday afternoon. She also will respond to Baptist concerns for human rights after the human rights award presentation to former President Jimmy Carter during the Thursday evening celebration of the congress.

According to BWA spokesperson Wendy Ryan, "Securing King to speak at the Baptist Congress was the result of the determination and prayers of Baptists in Argentina who especially wanted King to attend the meeting. Baptists in Argentina have stood for human rights and justice in their country during their long military dictatorship and they say the late Martin Luther King Jr. was, and continues to be, an inspiration to them."

The youngest child of King and his wife, Coretta Scott King, Bernice King is remembered by most as the 5-year old in the Pulitzer Prize photograph taken of her as she lay in her mother's lap during her father's funeral. As a child, she dreamed of becoming both a lawyer and a politician, but at age 17, she sensed a call to ministry, eight years later preaching a trial sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta.

Presently King is an associate minister at Greater Rising Star Baptist Church in Atlanta, where she oversees the single adult ministry and is developing a women's ministry. She is a member of the board of directors of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change and is a former member of the Atlanta Community Relations Commission.

King was ordained in 1990 and holds a master of divinity and doctor of law degrees from Emory University in Atlanta.

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Dreadful weather, amazing results
mark Saddleback Easter service

Baptist Press
4/20/95

MISSION VIEJO, Calif. (BP)--(BP) Anyone who thinks "seeker-sensitive" services always pander to the "comforts of the people" probably didn't attend this year's Easter celebration at Saddleback Valley Community Church in Mission Viejo, Calif.

Anticipating a large crowd, the Southern Baptist congregation -- known for its contemporary worship services designed to attract the unchurched -- put up a 5,000-seat tent on one of its parking lots. But churchgoers on Easter Sunday weren't greeted with the usual Southern California sunshine.

Pastor Rick Warren described the scene this way in an E-mail to several friends on SBCNet:

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"An Alaskan storm came through dumping snow on Saddleback Mountain and frigid, icy rain on a very leaky tent. The tent sagged under the load of hundreds of gallons of water caught in folds.

"Freezing howling winds ripped through the tent (no sides to it) periodically picking up hundreds of gallons of water and dousing attenders in different parts of the tent throughout the service. Everyone was freezing by the end of the service."

Warren said the storm shorted out the church's sound system and lights, adding church members dried out amplifiers with hair dryers. Power was restored only 15 minutes before the service began.

Ten minutes before the service, Warren shattered the rear windshield of his car when he backed into a utility pole.

Despite the difficult circumstances, Warren said approximately 15,000 attended services during the day, 169 people made professions of faith and 450 families filled out "first-time" visitor cards.

"I'm amazed at the commitment of the people in this church," Warren said. "I cried with gratitude all afternoon -- after I built a fire and thawed out."

Easter Sunday marked the 15th anniversary of the innovative California church, a milestone none of its members will likely forget.

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Out of arson's ashes,
church is back on fire

Baptist Press
4/20/95

SILVER CITY, N.M. (BP)--It is a church that has experienced more than its share of blazes. Indian Hills Baptist Church, Silver City, N.M., has had six fires, five of them confirmed arson, since Easter 1993. As a result, the building has been leveled. There is nothing left but a concrete slab and an asphalt parking lot. And two signs: One is a notice of reward for information leading to the arsonist; the other is a "For Sale" sign.

But don't think that's the end of the story.

Before the fires, the church was already out of space for parking, education and worship. So they have taken this opportunity to relocate and rebuild. The church has purchased six acres on a very busy intersection of the town. The land is on a hill that can be seen from all directions.

Pastor Dan Grindstaff said, "The intersection is between Wal-Mart and the hospital. Everyone eventually goes that way. By the time we are through building, everyone in the county will know where we are. Also, we are not planning to change the name. Because of the fires, people know about Indian Hills."

Ironically, the new location is across the street from a fire sub-station. "Just a coincidence," Grindstaff said.

But, rising from the ashes, the church finds itself back in the fire again. This time, however, it's the fire of revival.

On April 7-9, Indian Hills had a lay renewal weekend with Troy and Nell Lovett of Texico, N.M., as coordinators. The weeks of prayerful preparation were instrumental in bringing about a spirit of brokenness, confession, repentance, restoration, healing and, ultimately, joy. The Sunday evening praise and testimony service lasted more than three hours. Ten people are awaiting baptism.

Another factor, one in common with other reports of revival, is the "Experiencing God" workbook by Henry Blackaby of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. One group already has gone through the course. Currently, the pastor and deacons are meeting at 7:30 on Sunday mornings, using the materials. Deacon chairman Don White said, "We are concentrating on building a church rather than a building. We are definitely in a state of revival."

Jody Niccum and her husband, John, were the last ones baptized in the old Indian Hills building, the Sunday before the first fire last year. Jody said about the revival, "God has really awakened us to his purpose for our church."

Grindstaff said, "The common themes of testimonies are a sense of unity, love for one another, a deep desire to really know God and a commitment to evangelism."

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