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October 20, 1992

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Rogers joins televangelists
for televised prayer meeting

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (ABP) -- At least one former president of the Southern Baptist Convention -- and perhaps the current president -- will join several key figures of the Religious Right in a "prayer meeting for the nation" that will be telecast nationwide Oct. 25.

The broadcast will originate from Calvary Temple in suburban Dallas on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, one of the nation's largest religious networks.

An article in the Oct. 19 Newsweek labeled the event -- on the eve of the presidential election -- "a partisan TV appeal" by evangelical Christians as part of "a late-campaign effort on behalf of the Bush-Quayle ticket." Organizers of the meeting denied that characterization.

Phillip Crouch, manager of Trinity's flagship station, KDTX-TV in the Dallas suburb of Irving, said the event is "not in any sense a political meeting" but is an opportunity for Christian leaders to "pray for America at the time of the election."

Participants expected to attend, according to Crouch, include Adrian Rogers, three-time SBC president and pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church near Memphis, Tenn.; Don George, pastor of Calvary Temple, Irving; Paul Crouch, president of Trinity Broadcasting Network; Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ; and James Kennedy, a Florida Presbyterian pastor.

Rogers and George joined other evangelical leaders in addressing the National Affairs Briefing in Dallas on the heels of the August Republican convention. Though likewise billed as a non-partisan gathering, the meeting featured major Republican figures -- including President Bush -- and launched a Republican-backed coalition of evangelicals supporting Bush-Quayle.

Sources at Bellevue Baptist Church confirmed that Rogers is scheduled to participate in the Oct. 25 television program.

The Newsweek article indicated Ed Young, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of Second Baptist Church of Houston, was among the expected program participants. Neither Young nor his appointment secretary was in the office when contacted by ABP, and other sources at Second Baptist were unable to confirm Young's plans regarding the event.

The article in Newsweek reported that televangelist Pat Robertson was

expected to attend and that the event would be broadcast on his CBN network. Although Robertson was invited, he will not attend the meeting, and the event will not be televised on CBN, according to Gene Kapp, director of media relations for the network.

Kapp underscored that the event was planned as "a prayer meeting for the nation, not for the benefit of any particular candidate. It is a non-partisan opportunity to pray, with no political connections."

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BJC attorneys warn churches against partisan activities

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Using churches to promote or oppose political candidates compromises religion and runs the risk of costing churches their tax-exempt status, according to two Baptist church-state attorneys.

Oliver Thomas and Brent Walker of the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee cited several examples of questionable campaign tactics, including repeated appeals to churches by the Bush-Quayle campaign, mailings to church leaders by Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, and a brochure produced by Operation Rescue and others that says "to vote for Bill Clinton is to sin against God."

"I remain concerned about the Bush-Quayle campaign's effort to use churches for partisan political purposes," said Thomas, BJC general counsel. "Last spring I questioned their letters asking churches to support the president's re-election campaign -- something the tax code strictly forbids."

In March, Thomas notified the White House after hearing from Oklahoma pastors whose churches received letters from the Bush-Quayle campaign. The campaign's legal counsel assured Thomas that steps were being taken to prevent future mailings to churches.

"Then on Oct. 15, I received a mailing asking religious leaders to use their denominational publications to promote the president," Thomas said.

"This misuse of religion is precisely what leading clergy warned of in August," Thomas said, referring to statements issued by religious leaders decrying the use of religion as a campaign weapon.

Walker, associate general counsel at the religious-liberty agency, criticized the "Family Values Voter Guide '92" distributed to church leaders and promoted by Robertson, Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright, and present and former presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention -- Houston pastor Ed Young, Memphis, Tenn., pastor Adrian Rogers, and Atlanta pastor Charles Stanley.

A letter addressed "Dear Christian Leader" and signed by Robertson, Young, Bright and Rogers states that the Christian Coalition and "other pro-family organizations" are distributing 40 million copies of the guides to 100,000 churches.

The promotional materials assert the guide complies with IRS guidelines for political activities by churches and other tax-exempt organizations. But Walker questioned that claim.

"The guide could create problems for churches if they decide to use and distribute them," he said. "The Christian Coalition's tax status allows for some political activities, but churches can engage in no political activity without jeopardizing their tax-exempt status."

While the guide claims to be non-partisan, Walker said, "it takes very little imagination to see who the Christian Coalition and participating churches want the reader to vote for. At the very least, it's a close call."

The Christian Coalition is a political action organization that bills itself as non-partisan. But, according to the Washington Post, Republican delegate selection manuals were distributed at a 1991 Christian Coalition

conference and Robertson told conference delegates he wants "to see a working majority of the Republican Party in the hands of pro-family Christians by 1996."

Walker had even sterner criticism for the brochure distributed by Operation Rescue's Randall Terry.

"Terry's statement that a vote for Clinton is a sin takes the 'God-is-on-our-side' rhetoric that we heard at the Republican convention to its ridiculous extreme," he said. "Terry's audacity is amazing. Who made him the nation's inquisitor?"

Walker said Americans should be able to disagree on issues "without dubbing political opponents sinners and calling into question the sincerity of their religious convictions."

Terry's group is urging pastors to spread the brochure's message from their pulpits, a step that could lead to problems with IRS for the churches, Walker said.

"Unsuspecting pastors should be aware that such political endorsements will place the churches' tax exemption in jeopardy," Walker said. "Preachers can address issues, but they cannot endorse or oppose candidates from the pulpit without endangering their church's tax status."

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-- By Larry Chesser

Report says uprooted people
pose new hunger crisis

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Worldwide policy makers must make the hunger crisis of uprooted people a high priority, according to Bread for the World Institute.

The institute, the research arm of a 44,000-member Christian citizens' movement to eradicate world hunger, released its third annual world hunger report on World Food Day, Oct. 16.

The report notes that refugees worldwide doubled from 9 million to more than 18 million in the last seven years. An additional 20 million people are displaced within their own countries.

While the number of such uprooted people has increased, the international resources to help them have not grown accordingly.

This crisis confronts the world at a time when hunger overall is on the increase:

-- This century's worst drought has placed tens of millions of Africans at risk of starvation.

-- Communism's collapse, while offering hope for long-term peace, has led to conflicts and hunger in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

-- A U.S. recession and long-term decline in median wages have placed one of every 10 Americans on the food stamp rolls.

-- 785 million people are hungry across the globe and at least another 500 million receive insufficient food to maintain productive lives.

-- More than 40,000 children worldwide die daily from hunger-related causes.

-- Every 35 seconds an infant is born into poverty in the United States, and every 14 minutes an American child dies in the first year of life.

The institute defines uprooted people, particularly refugees, in a traditional and non-traditional way.

Traditionally, refugees are people who cross international boundaries to escape persecution. But the report also recognized other people displaced against their will from their homes as a means of survival. They include people who cross borders but, for political reasons, are not recognized as refugees by a host government, internally displaced people and "environmental

refugees."

Environmental refugees, whose numbers now exceed 10 million, are forced to abandon their homeland as a result of man-made environmental conditions that threaten their lives or work.

For example, unsuitable land-use has reduced the land's carrying capacity or ability to support life throughout the developing world. In another instance, high-risk technologies have resulted in accidents that made regions uninhabitable. The 1986 nuclear explosion at Chernobyl forced more than 10,000 residents to resettle, the report says.

Uprooted people, who account for about 5 percent of the 1 billion people who are vulnerable to hunger, would form a country nearly twice the size of Canada that would be the poorest nation in the world, the report says.

In addition to refugees, the report noted between 600,000 and 3 million Americans are homeless -- the largest homeless population since the Great Depression. Increasing numbers of women, children, minorities and the elderly have become homeless.

More than 25 percent of the homeless population have low-paying jobs that do not provide enough for rent and food.

"Hunger and homelessness walk hand-in-hand, each sustaining the other," the report says. "Homeless people are vulnerable to hunger because of their low incomes, poor access to public benefit programs, health problems, and precarious living conditions."

The report offers two major recommendations or solutions. First, developed nations, particularly the United States, must increase aid to uprooted people at home and abroad. Second, the international community must establish procedures assuring United Nations intervention to meet uprooted peoples' needs.

Policy makers will give uprooted people priority when the public is galvanized to end hunger, the reported adds.

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-- By Pam Parry

N.C. leaders reject Young's account
of Wake Forest, Southeastern history

RALEIGH, N.C. (ABP) -- Two key leaders among North Carolina Baptists voiced disappointment at Ed Young's recent charge that two Baptist-affiliated schools in the state -- Wake Forest University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary -- fostered liberalism.

The reactions from Roy Smith, executive director of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and Robert Mullinax, executive director of the convention's Council on Christian Higher Education, followed Young's address at the recent inauguration of Paige Patterson as Southeastern president.

Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, is current president of the Southern Baptist Convention and a graduate of Southeastern.

"It is regrettable to me," Smith said, "that Dr. Young attacked two institutions that are so near and dear to so many North Carolina Baptists, institutions which have provided thousands of ministers and lay leaders, as well as thousands of other leaders in medicine, education, law, business, government, agriculture and many other vocations."

"It had been my hope that Dr. Young would be a Southern Baptist Convention president who would build bridges, tear down walls and foster healing in our fractured and hurting denomination," Smith added.

Young could not be reached for comment.

In 1832 the state convention started an institute in Wake Forest to provide theological training for young ministers, which became known as Wake Forest Institute and later College. In the 1950s, the college moved to

Winston-Salem, N.C., and grew into a university. The Southern Baptist Convention purchased the original campus in Wake Forest in 1950 and established a seminary there.

Young, in his address, said, "Having lived in North Carolina for 10 years, I know a little bit about the growing conflict and controversy between the North Carolina Baptist convention and Wake Forest College."

Young said controversy broke out among North Carolina Baptists "when the Reynolds Tobacco Company came and said to the convention, 'We will build a new school if you will locate it in Winston-Salem.'"

"Many pastors stood up (at the state convention) and said...the cause of Baptists and the gospel will be greatly diminished if it takes such a step as to leave this place."

"I think the prophets who stood on the floor of the North Carolina Baptist convention that day were 100 percent accurate!" Young exclaimed.

Young went on to assert the university recently "severed all relationship with the North Carolina Baptist convention."

To demonstrate liberalism at the university, Young cited a section of the current catalogue that says "a decision to come to Wake Forest is to choose liberal learning as a way of life." The catalogue also claims a "heterogeneous atmosphere" on campus that "encourages students to search for knowledge and truth wherever that search may lead."

Mullinax of the higher-education council disputed Young's account of history. "SBC President Ed Young claims to 'know a little bit' about the history of North Carolina Baptists and Wake Forest College. If he does, he failed to tell it. He seems, rather, to have made it up as he went along....

"The Baptist State Convention has never had any overture from 'the Reynolds Tobacco Company' about Wake Forest," Mullinax explained. "In 1946 the Council on Christian Higher Education, the General Board and the convention approved the Wake Forest trustee proposal to move the college to Winston-Salem. Ten years and several fund drives later the move was completed."

"The decision to accept an offer of perpetual annual funding from the benevolent and much respected Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation was approved by the convention in called session July 30, 1946," Mullinax continued, noting the vote was approved by an estimated 95 percent of messengers.

Noting that the records are readily available to anyone doing research, Mullinax stated: "I am embarrassed for Mr. Young, and for anyone currently at Southeastern Seminary who might be sensitive to his careless ways.... But, it is especially disappointing when an alumnus of those good years does not reflect the education which was available to him.

"He has not brought honor to himself, to Southeastern or to his office," Mullinax commented.

While acknowledging there was a "remnant" of evangelical teachers at the school, Young said his experience at Southeastern led him and others to doubt the Bible and their salvation and to question their calling.

State executive Smith countered, "Dr. Young's experiences at Southeastern Seminary were totally different from mine." Noting he attended Southeastern under the same presidential administration as Young, Smith said his own experience "deepened and broadened my faith...and magnified the Bible as the divinely inspired Word of God."

In addition, Smith said Young was mistaken in his allegation that Wake Forest University "severed all ties with the Baptist State Convention." Both the convention's constitution and the university's catalogue detail that relationship, he said.

Baptists in Mississippi form Fellowship chapter

JACKSON, Miss. (ABP) -- A group of Mississippi Baptists established a state chapter of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship during an organizational meeting in Jackson Oct. 16-17.

More than 140 people voted unanimously to incorporate the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Mississippi. The group also adopted bylaws and elected representatives to a nine-member coordinating council.

Mississippi is the 10th state or region in which a Fellowship chapter has been organized. Five others are scheduled to take shape in the next few months. The charter of the national Cooperative Baptist Fellowship allows for representation from 18 states and regions.

The national CBF was started in May 1991 by Southern Baptists displeased with the fundamental-conservative leadership of their denomination. The Fellowship provides alternative means for churches and individuals to fund missions and other ministries.

Gene Triggs, newly elected moderator of the Mississippi Fellowship, said the members of the CBF have no intention of severing their ties with the Southern Baptist Convention.

"We are just ready to move on and focus our attention on what is really important -- spreading the gospel," Triggs said. "It is my hope that Southern Baptists from all over Mississippi will avail themselves of this additional opportunity of fellowship, service and missions."

Triggs, a layman from First Baptist Church in Yazoo City, said the Oct. 16-17 organizational meeting reminded him of his days working as a trustee for the Foreign Mission Board.

"There was a spirit of unity and trust, and missions was the central focus of the meeting," he said. "I am pleased to again be part of a Southern Baptist group whose primary purpose is to advance the kingdom of God."

About 175 Mississippians from more than 40 churches attended at least part of the two-day meeting. Joe Tuten of Jackson served as convener of the state meeting.

Among the speakers were Patricia Ayres of Austin, Texas, the national Fellowship's top elected official, and Cecil Sherman of Atlanta, the organization's chief executive.

Ayres, Fellowship moderator, described the structure of the group's national leadership.

"The CBF upholds Christ's pattern of servant leadership and affirms the leadership of the laity," she said. "We want to honor the efforts of early Baptists and affirm the autonomy of the local church and the separation of church and state."

Sherman said the Fellowship seeks to bestow trust and dignity on every person. But granting people freedom carries few guarantees. "We send financial support to the Associated Baptist Press, and they print stuff I wish they wouldn't," Sherman said.

"If you give freedom to anyone, some will abuse the freedom," he said. "That's inevitable. But it's still better than the alternative."

Sherman said about 90 Southern Baptist missionaries have sought appointment by the CBF, which began sending out its own missionaries earlier this year. Southern Baptist missionaries are resigning, he said, because they cannot continue to work for the SBC with a clear conscience.

Also during their meeting, the Mississippians elected officers for their coordinating council. In addition to Triggs, who will serve as moderator, the officers are Charles Myers of Jackson, vice moderator; Doug Haney of Meridian, secretary; Barbara Oliver of Jackson, treasurer; Linda Moore of Starkville, chairperson of the communications committee; Jim Wooten of Clinton, chairperson of the membership committee; and Jane Allison of Hattiesburg, chairperson of the missions committee.

At-large members elected to the council are Jean Boggan of Long Beach and Jon Doler of Leland.

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-- By Linda Moore

Stassen working for peace
in aftermath of Cold War

By Pat Cole

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- The Cold War's thaw has not melted Glen Stassen's vigilance for peacemaking.

Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., believes Christian peacemakers will still have a vital mission to fulfill in the post-Cold War era.

The veteran peace activist applauds the collapse of Soviet communism, yet he still sees danger lurking in the thousands of nuclear weapons that remain as remnants of a half century of East-West friction.

"We must not divert our efforts to reduce nuclear weapons," said Stassen. "We would be a much safer world if we would get them down to 1,000 (warheads) on each side."

An accidental launch of a nuclear weapon has always posed the greatest danger, Stassen said: "The threat of nuclear weapons never came from the Kremlin being hostile. The Kremlin always knew if they released nuclear arms that they would be destroyed in return."

Massive reductions in warheads would mean that the world would "have less of an accident waiting to happen," Stassen said. Downsizing nuclear stockpiles, he added, would gain credibility for the U.S. and Russia to persuade other nations not to develop nuclear capabilities.

The world cannot afford an attitude of complacency about making peace, Stassen said. He compared the situation to an alcoholic who senses a false sense of safety after going for a long period without a drink.

Peacemakers now must concern themselves with the increased potential for regional conflicts around the world, Stassen stressed: "Now that the world is not so controlled by the superpowers, there is more likelihood that countries can make war and get away with it."

A stable world cannot be realized without addressing global economic woes that have been at least partially prompted by the arms race, said Stassen.

"We have spent ourselves into poverty," he explained. "There has been \$1 trillion spent annually on the military -- one third of it by the U.S., a third by the Soviet Union and a third by the rest of the world."

The Bible, Stassen said, teaches that peace flows from justice. Democracy usually does not flourish in nations that are economically dispossessed, he said, noting that people in severe poverty are more likely to follow an autocratic leader.

Christians will continue to play a unique role in the push toward world peace, Stassen said. How? "First, we acknowledge our own complicity in the problem. Second, we bring the love dimension to the process. We are also good at organizing groups."

Peacemaking, he said, is a preferable alternative to the "negative ethics" associated with pacifism and the just-war theory.

In his new book, "Just Peacemaking," Stassen outlines seven steps for peacemaking:

- Affirm common security partnerships with adversaries.
- Take independent initiatives (unilateral confidence-building measures).
- Talk with your enemy.

- Seek human rights and justice.
- Acknowledge humanity's vicious cycles of violence and the need for peacemaking.
- End judgmental propaganda and make amends.
- Participate in groups with adequate information and a policy-making voice.

Stassen's peacemaking steps draw heavily from political scientists and church leaders in Germany whose perspectives were shaped by living with the reality of the Berlin Wall. Stassen, who was in Germany when the Berlin Wall collapsed, devotes the first chapter of his book to "The Turning" in East Germany.

The fall of communist governments in East Germany and the Soviet Union was prompted by grass-roots peacemaking efforts in those nations and the West, said Stassen: "I have a real sense of a gift from God to have been able to have participated in God's peacemaking."

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CORRECTIONS:

In the Oct. 15 story "Moderate Baptists form...", please change Walter H. Whitsett in the 2nd paragraph to William H. Whitsitt. Also change Whitsett to Whitsitt in paragraphs 6, 7 and 8, and change the date 1989 to 1898 in paragraph 7.

In the next to last paragraph of the Oct. 15 story "FMB-CBF dialogue shows...", please change Don Bullock to Pat Bullock and Phyliss to Phyllis.

***** END *****