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NORTH CAROLINA--Fran imparts spiritual lessons, ministry for Southeastern family.

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#### CALENDAR

TENNESSEE--Sunday School Board, trustees meeting, 23-25, Nashville, Tenn.

**Collegians seek to rekindle  
flame for God in Welsh village**

**By Alison E. Fanning**

**Baptist Press  
9/20/96**

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)--Imagine the beauty of a small Welsh village nestled in the valley of a majestic mountainside. The village awakens to the sounds of merchants opening for a day's work and children making their way to school. The picture is calm and serene, but closer observation unveils an alarming reality -- Christianity is on the threshold of extinction.

"Once this generation dies, Christianity is gone in Wales. Only one church in the valley has a membership over five. The people look at religion as something for old people," said Cecil Taylor, dean of the University of Mobile (Ala.) school of religion.

Taylor witnessed this disturbing image while leading a university mission team on a recent trip to the village, Blaengarw, in the Garw Valley (translated, "harsh valley") of Wales. It was where the Great Welsh Revival of 1904-1905 took place, Taylor said. Churches were filled to capacity and thousands were being saved. It is said that during the revival, mules in the coal mines had to be retrained to understand commands because the workers would no longer curse at them.

Now, churches with a seating capacity of over 800 welcome only 15 to 20 worshipers on Sundays.

Taylor said the only people who attend church are elderly ladies. Once that generation passes on, Christianity will be lost in Wales. The younger generation ... feels it isn't relevant to their lives.

"There are hard spots in the world, and there are hot spots. Wales is a hard spot," Taylor said. "After the revival, the faith was not passed to the next generation. If we make any impact there, it will be through the children and teenagers."

In an attempt to reach this lost generation, the 14-member team, consisting of University of Mobile students, faculty and area church members, spent the first day knocking on every door in Blaengarw. The team had hopes of sparking an interest in a barbecue they had planned for that evening and encouraging the children to attend Vacation Bible School the following Monday. After more than 1,500 invitations and innumerable slammed doors, the team greeted only 75 people at the barbecue.

Across the lake from where the barbecue was being held gathered a curious, yet very distant group of teenagers. Taylor attempted to invite the teens to the barbecue, but was rejected as they continued their drinking and socializing. As Taylor returned to the other side of the lake, he proceeded to assemble his team.

"When I gathered the team together, I said, 'See those guys? Go get them!'" Taylor recounted. "About 15 minutes later, I looked across the lake and I saw several small groups, and an American student in the middle of each of them." The relationships that began that night were just the beginning of the life-changing experiences that were to occur the following week.

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The first day of Vacation Bible School also was the first day of summer vacation for the children, which proved to be a great benefit for the team. Of the 180 children enrolled in elementary school, more than 150 were enrolled in VBS by the end of the week.

The team worked diligently teaching the children songs and Bible stories. Pens, pencils, crayons and paper plates gave life to the craft times, and recreation always was popular.

The team worked hard not only to teach the children, but also develop friendships with them. Carey Boone of Mobile, a sophomore education major at UM, recalled one child in particular. Natasha, a dark-haired, 10-year-old girl made quite an impact on several team members.

"Natasha went to one of the counselors one day and said, 'Thanks for coming here. I needed someone to love me,'" Boone said.

Later that week, Natasha came running down the street toward a counselor, yelling, "I asked Jesus in my heart! I asked Jesus in my heart!"

With VBS off to a great start, the focus of the team members began to shift to the teenagers they had met at the lake. Though their initial purpose in coming was to minister to the children, God had opened up a whole new dimension of ministry, and the team began to feel an intense responsibility to reach the Welsh teens.

Monday night an event was planned for the village's teens. After an hour of waiting, no one came. "I asked the pastor, 'Where are the teenagers?'" Taylor said. The pastor gave a list of possibilities, to which Taylor responded, "Let's go get them!"

Taylor's persistence and the team's enthusiasm finally led them to a popular teen hangout called "The Triangle." It was there that conversations started, relationships developed and lives began being changed. The team went out on the streets every night after that, and by the end of the week more than 36 people had made professions of faith. Over half of those decisions were made by teens.

James Taylor of Citronelle, Ala., a senior religion major at UM, told of one teen he met at The Triangle that night. Sixteen-year-old Simon was a professing atheist, had the reputation as the town troublemaker and was soon to be a father with his 14-year-old girlfriend. "Simon" was synonymous with "trouble."

"For some reason Simon took an interest in me. God provided opportunities for me to answer his questions," said James Taylor (who is not related to faculty member Taylor). James made a conscious effort to give Simon extra attention during the week, offering counsel and witnessing as often as he could.

"Simon began asking simple questions like, 'Who is Christ?' and 'What is a Christian?' but by the end of the week he was asking much deeper questions like 'Why do people die?' and 'Why do bad things happen to good people?'" James said.

The last time James saw Simon was as the bus pulled away to return the mission team to the United States. Simon, the town troublemaker, was standing on the sidewalk crying because his newfound Christian friend was leaving him behind.

"I was never able to pray with him to lead him to Jesus Christ, but I have no doubt that God was working in his life," James said.

According to Taylor, another interesting turn of events happened after meeting a 19-year-old named Lee. Lee and his girlfriend, Katie, came to VBS faithfully, videotaping everything that happened. During the week, both Lee and Katie accepted Christ as their Savior; soon they approached the UM faculty member with an interesting opportunity.

The teens were part of a communications class and asked Taylor for permission to use film clips of the team's ministry as an entry in an international film competition. "As part of the film, there was a question-and-answer time with our students. Lee and Katie began asking questions such as 'Who is Jesus Christ?' and 'Why is Jesus Christ relevant to us?'" Taylor said.

As a result, the message of Jesus will reach far beyond the small village in Wales and be broadcast at the international event in Belgium later this year.

Since returning to Mobile, the team has learned that Lee has taken an active role in the church and has begun a weekly Bible study.

The last Saturday night of the trip, the team attempted another barbecue. This time, more than 250 people attended. Taylor recalled comments from several of the villagers: "One 90-year-old man came to me with tears in his eyes and said, 'I've never seen this many people in my village in one place at one time.' Another man, a store clerk, said, 'I've never seen the teenagers look so happy. We appreciate what you've done.'"

"God took a whole community that had no hope and softened their hearts," said student James Taylor.

These stories are what university missions is all about, said faculty leader Taylor. "We're trying to help accomplish the vision of missions and give God a chance to teach students," he said. "God has called many missionaries while they were sitting on a padded pew, but somehow it means more to me for someone who has actually been on the mission field to answer the call. Once you've been there, you can't think about missions in an impersonal way anymore."

Wales is in desperate need of help, Taylor said, noting the only hope of saving Christianity from extinction is by winning this generation for Christ. Taylor is in the process of recruiting another team of college students to return to Wales. Older teams have been to Wales previously, he said, but none of them were able to build the relationships with the teenagers that the college students could.

Individuals or church college groups interested in being a part of the next mission trip to Wales may contact Cecil Taylor at the University of Mobile at (334) 675-5990, ext. 255.

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Fanning is a news writer at the University of Mobile.

### **Fran imparts spiritual lessons, ministry for Southeastern family**

**By Lee Weeks**

**Baptist Press  
9/20/96**

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Two weeks after Hurricane Fran slammed the North Carolina coast, leaving a path of destruction throughout much of the state, life for many is just beginning to return to normal.

But for students and faculty at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, few will soon forget the lessons revealed by God through Fran's fury.

The hurricane, packing near-100-mile-per-hour inland winds, toppled giant oaks, stately magnolias, picturesque cedars and dainty dogwoods that for decades have provided a canopy over the Wake Forest, N.C., campus.

In the wake of the violent storm, students and community residents alike were without electricity for a week. Cold showers, hot nights and cookouts became a way of life for thousands of Wake Forest residents coping with the aftermath of the hurricane's destruction.

But most adapted well while their daily routines were put on pause. Many shared with others where they were lacking and lent a helping hand digging out from the storm's devastation.

"It's given me an opportunity to see people on a more personal level when the sort of normal routine of things was interrupted," said Brian Rolfe, a seminary student from Seattle pursuing a master of divinity degree.

Seminary families joined in a campus-wide cookout and song service praising God the day after the Sept. 5 storm thumped the tree-lined campus, flooding nearly a dozen buildings, knocking out windows, peeling shingles off roofs and smashing about 10 vehicles with downed trees.

"It made me realize how much we actually have and take for granted," said Paul Craft, a Canadian enrolled in the master of divinity/counseling program. "Not having a lot of the stuff that we usually have kind of gave me a new idea of what it's like to be a missionary in some of those countries that are not as fortunate as us."

Southeastern administrators are still counting the dollar damage caused by the hurricane which left several hundred thousand North Carolina residents in the dark for days and costing billions of dollars in property damage.

Preliminary damage estimates at Southeastern range from \$300,000 to \$ 1 million with uncertainty surrounding potential re-roofing of the seminary library and repairs to other buildings and roofs.

Other major damage included flooding to the boiler room of the seminary's plant services building where nearly three feet of water collected during the storm. Binkley Chapel, the student Ledford Center, cafeteria, library, two dorms, the president's home and three other classroom buildings sustained flooding as well.

Still, administrators, faculty and students agree, the seminary has much for which to be thankful.

"Just the way the trees on campus missed buildings, the way the trees fell and just barely missed, you could really see God's providential hand in the way that even with the destruction that happened, a lot of serious injuries and damage (were avoided)," Craft said.

While the storm called a screeching halt for several days to society's hustle and bustle, it did not stop business at the seminary.

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Saturday classes resumed the day after the storm, with students meeting in dimly lit classrooms until Tuesday, Sept. 9, when power was restored to campus buildings minutes before Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla., entered the Binkley Chapel to preach.

"Until Dr. Vines stepped on the campus, we had no power," Southeastern President Paige Patterson told the hot Binkley Chapel audience. "When he stepped into my office a minute ago, the lights came on. I tell you folks that's an effective preacher."

Patterson said he refused to cancel classes during the power outage as an example for churches who are too quick to cancel services.

"Our business here is to prepare people for ministry and have school," said Patterson. "I'm very concerned about churches that cancel services for almost any reason and I wanted to set the example that, hey, we do what we're there to do regardless of the circumstances."

"On the night Spurgeon was saved, nobody was having church except one little Primitive Methodist church and there were only 14 people there, but one of them was Charles Hadden Spurgeon and the world was changed that night because of his conversion."

Patterson said he has been blessed to see how students have handled the setbacks from the storm.

"I'm tremendously well pleased with the response of the seminary family in terms of taking care of each other, in terms of ministering to the community around, particularly elderly people who had trees on their houses and loss of electricity," Patterson said.

"I'm also very pleased with the general attitude that has been maintained throughout the time and the willingness to go ahead and come to class and be uncomfortable and have school under maximum negative conditions."

The Patterson's home was one of the last residences in Wake Forest to get power restored. "It's probably good that we were the last ones," said Patterson. "I would rather us have been without than to have my students without."

Travis Yelton of Charlotte, N.C., is working on his master of theology degree at Southeastern. Yelton said he was amazed at how the entire seminary community pulled together during the storm.

There were seminary families on a neighboring street who, after getting their power restored, visited Yelton and his pregnant wife and their neighbors offering corn dogs and pizza.

"God uses people to take care of other people," Yelton said. "I give God the credit for (those) he has used to minister to me."

Alvin Reid, associate professor of evangelism and church growth and holder of the Bailey Smith Chair of Evangelism, said he and his family realized Hurricane Fran was not your typical wind storm as his wife and two children huddled with him in the middle of a hall as water poured into the kitchen sink through a light fixture.

When he went outside the next morning to survey the damage, he found an 80-foot pine tree on top of his 1990 Pontiac, a 35-foot limb from a giant elm tree stuck in his roof and eight other trees down on both sides of his driveway.

"It could have been a lot worse, so I'm not complaining," Reid said. "It just reminded me that it's just stuff and it can be replaced. It reminds me that we serve an awesome God when you can see the power of one storm and how really tiny that storm is compared to the whole of creation."

Through the devastation, Reid saw an opportunity for ministry.

On Tuesday, Sept. 15, Reid led a group of about 50 students throughout Wake Forest helping residents continuing to clean up debris left by the storm.

"This seemed like a perfect opportunity for us to clean up people's yards and, of course, while we're there to share the gospel," he said.

Patterson said the costly storm should make those who experienced it thankful for what often is taken for granted.

"Most of the people in the world today have never had a day with air conditioning and they will never know what it means to have ice. Part of the good that all of this does is to provide a very cogent reminder that God has blessed us in incredible ways, and this will help make us more grateful for the little things that come into our lives."

## House overrides Clinton veto of partial-birth abortion ban

By Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. House of Representatives voted Sept. 19 to override President Clinton's veto of a bill outlawing a late-term abortion procedure widely decried as gruesome. The victory for the measure's supporters was tempered by the fact the override attempt faces a greater obstacle in the U.S. Senate.

House supporters of the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act gained a favorable vote of 285-137, thereby achieving the two-thirds majority required for an override.

The Senate, however, approved the measure originally by only a 54-44 vote. If all 100 members vote, supporters of the legislation will have to achieve a gain of 13 for an override. The override vote is expected next week.

Unlike the Senate, the House achieved a two-thirds majority, 286-129, in March before sending it to the president.

The procedure banned by the bill involves the delivery of an intact baby feet first until only the head is left in the birth canal. The doctor pierces the base of the baby's skull with surgical scissors, then inserts a catheter into the opening and suctions out the brain. The collapse of the skull enables easier removal of the dead child. The bill allows the use of the method only when the life of the mother is endangered.

The method is used in the second half of pregnancy, usually by the 26th week.

"This is an important win in the battle for truth," said Will Dodson, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's director of government relations. "It is a victory for truth over propaganda. The truth is that the partial-birth abortion procedure is closer to infanticide than to abortion. This procedure graphically demonstrates that abortion is not a choice; abortion is the killing of an innocent, human life.

"It is true that we face a difficult challenge in the Senate, but the truth is on our side," Dodson said. "Pro-lifers are going to convey the truth to every member of the United States Senate in hopes that there, too, the truth will prevail."

The bill's chief sponsor, Rep. Charles Canady, R.-Fla., said after the vote, "President Clinton did all he could to make sure partial-birth abortions keep happening. Today, we did all we could to stop them. President Clinton went too far. With his veto, he showed all of us just how extreme he is on the issue of abortion."

Clinton vetoed the bill in April, citing a need for an exception when the mother's health is endangered. For the veto ceremony, he gathered five women who said they had undergone the procedure for health reasons and/or because their children would not have survived. Bill supporters, however, said the president's health exception would gut the ban, because the Supreme Court in 1973 defined health for abortion purposes to include "all factors -- physical, emotional, psychological, familial and the woman's age -- relevant to the well-being of the patient."

The veto spurred opposition not only from pro-life Republicans but from some pro-choice members of the president's party, some physicians and some religious leaders.

Seventy House Democrats voted for the override, including such pro-choice stalwarts as Minority Leader Richard Gephardt, D.-Mo., and Patrick Kennedy, D.-R.I.

More than 300 physicians, primarily obstetricians, united to oppose the procedure and declare it is never medically necessary and could be dangerous for women. In August, former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop told the American Medical News he believed the president "was misled by his medical advisers on what is fact and what is fiction in reference to late-term abortions. Because in no way can I twist my mind to see that the late-term abortion as described ... is a medical necessity for the mother."

Evangelist Billy Graham, who has refrained from criticizing Clinton, told the president he was wrong. Then-Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry and 10 former presidents called for Clinton, a Southern Baptist, to repent of his action. SBC messengers adopted a resolution condemning the veto and calling for an override. The country's Roman Catholic cardinals and the head of the church's bishops said they would work for an override. Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls called Clinton's action a "shameful veto." As a result of a campaign by the bishops, House members received an estimated 8 million postcards supporting the override.

Abortion advocates lambasted the House action, attacking the bill's supporters for partisan politics in an election year and for manipulating the truth.

"I'm deeply saddened that they would" support such a bill as part of a "political agenda," said Katherine Ragsdale, president of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. "I'm also horrified at the precedent it would set by trying to regulate medical practice through Congress.

"I have yet to have anyone introduce me to anyone or cite anyone who has had this procedure for any thing other than health reasons," said Ragsdale, an Episcopal priest. Pro-lifers have chosen to "start dismantling abortion rights one at a time, and this is the first step," she said.

After Clinton's veto, a group of mainline Protestant and Jewish leaders -- including officials of the United Methodist Church, Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ -- expressed their support in a letter to some House members.

Newspaper reports only days before the override vote damaged contentions by the ban's opponents that the procedure is done almost exclusively for health reasons and there are only about 500 a year in this country.

In one, a Sept. 15 article in *The Record*, a New Jersey daily paper, reported a clinic in Englewood, N.J., performs at least 1,500 partial-birth abortions a year. Only a "miniscule amount" are done for medical reasons and most are elective, doctors at the clinic said.

"The pro-abortion propagandists want the public to focus upon a few cases where women have been led to believe that this procedure is medically necessary," the CLC's Dodson said. "This is a lie. The consensus of the medical establishment is that this procedure is never medically necessary. Where are the doctors who would defend this procedure? These poor women whom the pro-abortion propagandists are parading around are being victimized yet again. They were lied to about the necessity of this procedure in their own case, and now they are being used to mislead the American public. Furthermore, it distracts attention from the fact well known to the abortion industry that at least 80 percent of the women who choose this procedure do so for elective purposes only.

"One member of Congress stood up in the debate over this issue and stated that every member of Congress is obligated to support the Constitution and the Constitution is pro-choice, so therefore they should vote to keep this procedure legal," Dodson said. "We need to remind our elected officials that they owe their highest allegiance to almighty God, who is the author of eternal standards of right and wrong. We don't agree that the Constitution is pro-choice. The Supreme Court is pro-choice and has imposed its view upon society."

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## See You at the Pole yields varied results

By Lynne Jones

Baptist Press  
9/20/96

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)--Early reports indicate participation at this year's "See You at the Pole" varied around the country, with most schools reporting an increase in attendance from previous years.

See You at the Pole is a national day of prayer for students to gather at their school flagpoles and pray for their communities, schools and friends.

In Virginia, Bristol High School reported a large turn-out, so large that students circled the front parking lot instead of the flagpole. The school principal led the first prayer, followed by people praying around the circle twice.

Atlanta, Mich., had different results. The only participants were the two children of the pastor of First Baptist Church. Through an on-line reporting process, the students asked for prayer for the school and community and for more youth willing to take a stand.

A total number of participants is not yet available. Updated results from this year's event are to be posted on the Internet at <http://www.ozarksol.com/youthsbc>. Results also can be sent to the CompuServe address of 103441,2742, called or sent by FAX to (417) 862-1111 or mailed to Youth Evangelism Office, 906 S. National, Springfield, MO 65804.

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## Build program before facilities, church recreation leader urges

By Charles Willis

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Building a church recreation facility is not a "Field of Dreams" proposition, a national leader in church recreation told participants in a recreation facilities seminar at the Baptist Sunday School Board, Sept. 16-19.

"It isn't, 'If you build it, they will come,'" John Garner, director of the church recreation program at the Sunday School Board, said. "There are recreation buildings all over the country that are dark and closed because of inadequate program planning."

Urging development of a theology and a philosophy as the beginning steps in organizing a church recreation ministry, Garner said churches wanting an organized program need to see "all the things people do in their leisure time as tools to reach other people."

Garner said a survey of church peoples' recreation activities, desired activities and interests in recreation leadership roles will prevent offering "anything that nobody wants."

"Start small with what you have," he continued. "You don't have to build a big facility. What can you do with your parking lot? Make programming as good as you can make it," he challenged.

In cautioning recreation leaders to be sure of the need for a building, Garner said beyond the per-square-foot cost of construction, many people fail to calculate the costs of furnishings and equipment and the operating costs of utilities, staff, maintenance, insurance and supplies.

"Develop a master plan for the church. You can do recreation ministry without a facility," he maintained. "You can and you should let the ministry grow and then build a facility to house it. Learn from other churches' experiences. Call them. Take your committee and your architect to visit them and to ask what they would do differently."

The building blocks for a recreation facility, he said, include a ministry concept, a vision, financial ability, proper staffing, right timing and prior programming. Organizing a recreation program parallels organizing a new church, he added, because neither is started with a new building but with existing resources. Once the new work is established and the needs are identified, facilities are designed.

"Remember: Form follows function. The programming should dictate the design of the building," Garner said.

He cited "wrong reasons" for building a recreation facility, including:

-- "Everybody's doing it." Pressure to build a facility because another church has one is not a sound reason to build, Garner said. Determine the needs of your church.

-- "This will be the cure for all our ills." If your church is not a reaching church now, it will not be a reaching church when a building is constructed, he said.

-- "We need a youth building." A recreation facility should not be designed for youth only, Garner said. Design for adults; youth will come. Design for youth; adults will not come.

-- "Our community needs recreation. We're providing it for the community." Providing a building to a group outside the church without controls poses the potential to lose the Christian distinctive. Garner recommended thinking through operating policies, controls and ministry strategy before offering the facility to the community.

-- "We're building a gym." A sports-only mind-set will lose a big portion of the church's audience, Garner maintained. Not all people like sports. Consider also other recreation activities that might reach people.

-- "We're going to win souls." A building doesn't win souls, Garner said. "People win other people for Christ.

"In today's leisure-oriented culture, persons who use recreation programming as a tool, with or without a facility, know that it opens doors," he said.

The recreation facilities seminar was sponsored by the church recreation program of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

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