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Doctors Call It "Miracle"  
Journeyman Walks Again  
After Swimming Accident

By Orville Scott

DALLAS (BP)--A Baptist missionary journeyman's miracle of faith was dramatized anew when he left Baylor Hospital here able to walk with the aid of crutches eight months after a swimming accident in Malawi left him paralyzed and nearly dead.

Larry Hughes, 24, has continually amazed doctors who initially said he couldn't live due to the severity of a spinal injury. Now he has returned to the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Paul D. Hughes of Tulsa, Okla., where he will continue to undergo physical therapy for six hours a day.

Eventually Hughes plans to attend Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, to prepare for social work, his goal before his two-year stint as a missionary journeyman ended in disaster last November after five weeks on the field.

Hughes' voyage of faith began in an African river where a much smaller man, a Malawian Christian retrieved the paralyzed journeyman from the water. Hughes head struck a submerged rock when he dived into the shallow river.

There followed a series of strange events that the young journeyman cannot explain except in the will of God. "What happened has nothing to do with me as a person," he said. "I've just stayed at this point in faith."

One of the first on the scene was a student nurse who recognized the severity of his injury and secured the aid of a Presbyterian doctor who packed the journeyman's head in a box of sand for a long trip by Land Rover.

The only doctor in the little country of Malawi who had the skills to save Hughes' life "just happened" to be at the hospital where they took the almost lifeless missionary. The doctor said he could have lived only another half hour. He performed surgery and set the bones in Hughes' neck.

Then began a series of phenomenal events in the air including fog that lifted at a London airport at the last second to permit the plane carrying Hughes to land so he could be transferred to a waiting flight.

The crew of the jet which brought him to Dallas intended to go on to Houston, but received word that a fog was covering the Texas Gulf Coast; so they landed at Dallas instead and Hughes was carried to Baylor Hospital.

Hughes credits his recovery to "answered prayer." The occupational therapist assigned to his case at Baylor, Mrs. Jan Bodholdt, said "the prayer that has gone up for him has made all the difference."

The effects of young Hughes' "miracle" on an entire church was reported by George Mosier, Larry's pastor while in college at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater.

"I've really noticed a difference in the prayer life of the members. The fact that Larry was able to live and recover has helped people at University Baptist to realize that prayers are answered today," Mosier said.

The journeyman said his family had their faith renewed and was brought closer together as a result of his experience.

While his condition was still so critical that doctors said he couldn't live, Hughes' mother prayed that someone might be led to Christ as a result of the tragedy.

Then as Hughes overcame seemingly impossible odds and actually began to regain some feeling in his paralyzed body, a Baptist doctor said in awe, "It's out of our hands."

Hughes said many people were watching his fiancée, Diane Cole, to see how she'd react to the crisis.

"She turned it over to the Lord," he said. "They were often amazed at how she did react."

Staff members at Baylor Hospital, a Baptist institution, report that the miracles which have happened in the Journeyman's life have also influenced and changed the lives of many other people.

The Dutch doctor who set his broken neck in Malawi and who made the long journey to Dallas with his patient had been known as an agnostic. But when Hughes' mother said, "I thank you and God for bringing my boy back, the doctor was moved to give God credit for the miracle he had been part of.

An ambulance driver was impressed by Hughes' attitude while bringing him from the plane to Baylor. "Man, if he has this kind of faith, I'm going to believe in what he believes," the driver said.

Shortly afterward, Jim Howard, a young inhalation therapist felt an unexplainable compulsion to return to the hospital after getting off work. He found he was needed to operate the hospital's volume respirator used to keep Hughes alive.

Howard was deeply moved by the attitudes of the journeyman struggling for life and the missionary nurse, Mrs. Vicki Hickey, who had been brought into the case from Sanyanti Baptist Hospital, Rhodesia.

"All through the things they were doing to save his life, despite the pain, he always seemed to smile," recalled Howard.

Still overwhelmed by his experience--wondering how he came to be there after being off duty--Howard sought out the hospital chaplain and accepted Christ. He has returned to school to prepare for service as a medical missionary.

A woman with terminal cancer found peace as a result of hearing about the Hughes' miracle.

Hughes said that Dr. Truett James, the Baptist physician who witnessed his progress in recovery, asked him if he realized how fortunate he was to be alive.

"You can't explain it medically," admitted Hughes. "I've just left it up to the Lord."

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Self-Help Project Launched  
In Mexican Handcraft Art

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ZAPATA, Tex. (BP)--The River Ministry of the Baptist General Convention of Texas has launched a self-help project for Mexican-Americans which the sponsors hope will eventually support families all along the 900-mile Rio Grande River bordering Texas and Mexico.

"A Mighty River Handcrafts", a non-profit corporation, has already begun training Mexican-Americans in patchwork, sewing and ceramics. The corporation is selling the art objects on a small scale.

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Elmin Howell, River Ministry coordinator for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, said he hopes the project will spread from its pilot program in Zapata to other mission points along the river, and that contacts can be developed with gift shops and other retail outlets across the country to achieve a volume of sales necessary to expand the program.

The project is headquartered in Zapata near a resort area, which Howell hopes will develop into a major outlet.

"That way we can involve the artisans not only in making the handcrafts but also in sales," he explains.

Howell plans to locate handcraft and sales operations in other resort areas, although the project will not be limited to those areas.

The project originated during a discussion he had last year with W. D. Shores, pastor of the Zapata Baptist Mission, and Mrs. Shores.

Mrs. Shores teaches sewing and patchwork. First Baptist Church, Shreveport, La., provided two paragon kilns for ceramics, which two of its members, Mr. and Mrs. John Odom, helped install.

Mexican-Americans who participate in the handcrafts instruction also attend Bible study classes sponsored by the mission. Already, at least seven professions of faith have resulted, Howell said.

A mother of seven in Zapata, Mrs. Lupe Rodriguez, volunteered her home for use in Bible study and sewing classes.

Recently, Mrs. Shores handed Mrs. Rodriguez a check for \$15, earned by her new skills. She kissed the check, kissed Mrs. Shores and exclaimed, "This is the first money I have ever earned."

Howell said that Southern Baptists and others interested in helping Mexican-Americans like Mrs. Rodriguez find a new sense of pride and confidence could do so by aiding his office make contacts with gift shops and other retail outlets which might be interested in marketing the handcrafts. He urged such persons to write him at the Baptist Building in Dallas.

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67 Journeymen Commissioned  
For Service in 33 Countries

8/2/71

RICHMOND (BP)--Sixty-seven new missionary journeymen were charged during a commissioning service here to go to 33 countries of the world and reach out to the people with the message that "Jesus cares for you."

Baker J. Cauthen, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, told the journeymen that Baptists send missionaries overseas "because people are there and because Jesus is concerned for all people.

"In many places there will be that which is unattractive," he said. "You will find some who were born in blind alleys unable to break out of their circumstances.

"You will not love the circumstances, but you will love the people," he predicted. "We must reach out to them to say we care."

Journeymen are college graduates no older than 26 who apply their training to critical needs abroad, a Baptist spokesman said. They work alongside career missionaries in a specific assignment for two years.

This year journeymen will go to 33 countries. Twenty-four were commissioned for Africa, 11 for East Asia, seven for Europe and the Middle east, five for Middle America and the Caribbean, 12 for South America, and eight for Southeast Asia.

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Their job assignments include teaching, youth work, agricultural assistance, nursing, bookkeeping, film and television production, and secretarial work.

About half the journeymen were seniors at a college or university when selected for training last April; seven were graduate students. Nine were elementary or high school teachers, five were nurses, one was in the U. S. Army, and eight worked for businesses.

This year's contingent of journeymen is almost evenly divided between graduates of Baptist-sponsored schools and state-supported institutions.

Twenty-four of the 67 journeymen were summer missionaries under their campus Baptist Student Union program or the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board program while in college. Nine served for more than one summer in the states or overseas.

Journeyman commissioning was preceded by seven weeks of training this summer at Meredith College in Raleigh, N.C.

Including the newly employed journeymen, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's total overseas force now numbers 2,527.