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FEATURES

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Recently, Baptist Press carried a news story from Carbondale, Ill., reporting that Bob Worley, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church there, had described an outdoor "Jesus people" wedding as "the most spiritual" wedding he had ever performed. The groom was Matthew Baub, a 20-year-old Jewish convert. Baub gives this account of his conversion to Christianity in an interview with Bob Hastings, editor of the Illinois Baptist.

Jewish Youth Joins Jesus
People; Tells Editor Why

By Matthew Baub
As Told to Bob Hastings

My grandfather was a German Jew. He emigrated to the United States in 1900 and opened a little butcher shop on Park Avenue in New York City. My father operated the market until his death, and my mother runs it now. It is in an exclusive residential area.

Growing up in New York City, I had my Bar Mitzvah when I was 13, and joined the Conservative Synagogue of Riverdale. In fact, I'm still a member there. But we were irregular in attendance. It was more social than religious with our family.

My only contact with Christians was with kids who went to parochial schools. Our neighborhood was Jewish and Irish Catholic. You can imagine that combination.

The parochial school kids would ask if I were a Jew, then smash me in the nose. Yet they wore crosses! I didn't want any of their "Jesus" if that's what a cross meant. That's all I knew about Christians--that they beat you up for being Jewish. I thought Christ was the God of the Gentiles, and that a Gentile was anyone who believed in Christ.

I went to the largest high school in the world--DeWitt Clinton High School. About 8,000 students, most of them blacks and Puerto Ricans, attended. It was like going to a zoo every day. The classes were "real wild," and I was robbed right in school. It was easy to cut classes--there were too many kids to check on. After I played hookey 70 times in one semester, my parents put me in a private school. After high school, I enrolled in Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, an art and architecture school. Then my father died.

In high school, I had started smoking grass; then more in art school. I tripped a few times on mescaline, although I was never into drugs really deep.

One day I decided I wanted to see life in a small town, so I struck out for Carbondale, Ill., where I knew some friends at Southern Illinois University (S.I.U.). I came during the Christmas holidays of 1970-71, and liked the small-town atmosphere so well I decided to stay.

One night last March, I went to a "Bible rap" at the Free School at S.I.U. I was immediately impressed with the kids, who some refer to as "Jesus freaks." They were real, genuine people in contrast to my former friends. I realize now that after the death of my father, I had been moving toward God. And that night crystallized my experience.

I accepted Christ right then and there as the Son of God. It was real! I dropped drugs immediately. Drugs aren't real anyway. They're a "low" compared to Jesus. My life is so high now that I wouldn't want to bring myself as low as I was before my conversion. I don't mean I go staggering around in a drug-like trance. I just mean that Christ has lifted my thoughts and ideals so high that my old life is too "low" to go back to.

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My mother thought I was nuts. But she's coming around. She came out from New York for our wedding, and I think she will be saved, as well as Lisa, my 17-year-old sister. Already, I've won two Jewish boys to Christ.

Jews need Christ the same as anyone else. But it really freaks them out when I tell another Jew that I am Jewish. Some Jews think they can't believe in Christ and still be Jews, since Christ is "for Christians." But I do, and I am still a Jew.

There is too much of a wall between Jews and Christians. I know Christ is for all Jews as well as all Gentiles.

Not only had I never heard of the Holy Spirit, my family had never mentioned the New Testament. I never owned one. I was a Jew more culturally than religiously. The sad thing is that Jews were God's chosen, and of all others they should accept his son. The Jews of Jesus' day were too proud to accept him as the Messiah. They were expecting a king; but all he offered was the truth--no glory, no wealth. But it's wrong to say all Jews are rich and snobbish.

Before I found Christ, the Bible was a closed book. It made no sense to me. Now I love it, especially the Book of Acts. The heart of the matter is I've found a better way. I am so happy to be saved from all that past garbage in my life.

I have not joined any formal church, although I was baptized in a creek near New Burnside, and I've helped pastor Bob Worley of Walnut Street Baptist Church set up The Way Inn, a coffeehouse ministry. I still go to the coffeehouse on Friday nights and witness to people who drop in.

We have our own church in a sense, in that we are a body of believers. You see, we have a Bible group that meets on Wednesday nights. I guess there are about 60 or 75 of the Jesus people in Carbondale.

In the future, I want to do anything I can to serve the Lord. I would like to support myself through music and art, then bring as many souls to Christ as possible. I may be drafted soon, and I'll go. Before, I would have refused. But now I'll go, because so many fellows in the service need Christ. I won't go because of Viet Nam, but for the cause of Christ.

You may remember what I said earlier about the parochial school kids wearing crosses. Now I wear a silver cross around my neck. You ask why? "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become as new." (II Cor. 5:17).

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Southern Seminary Faculty
Considering New PhD Degree

September 27, 1971

LOUISVILLE (BP)--A faculty committee has proposed that Southern Baptist Theological Seminary seriously consider offering a new doctor of philosophy degree as a graduate teaching degree.

The recommendation, which is not binding on either the school's faculty or trustees, is currently being discussed by the faculty and the seminary's accrediting agencies.

If adopted, the new degree would parallel or replace the current doctor of theology program at Southern Seminary. Officials said its introduction would in no way affect the new doctor of ministry degree scheduled to begin next fall.

The faculty committee making the recommendation based its suggestion on a year-long study of trends in graduate theological education, as well as desires of alumni, faculty, graduate students and colleges and universities where graduates would teach religion.

No target date was specified, and full plans have not yet been completed.

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Rescue Mission Grants Aid To Students for Ministry

LOUISVILLE (BP)--As a result of a 65-year relationship, the Hope Rescue Mission here has funded three scholarships at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in an effort to help seminary students perpetuate a ministry in the area the mission once served.

The scholarships, which total about \$7,000 annually, are for field education work in the downtown Louisville area where the mission was located until Urban Renewal bought the property.

Trustees for the rescue mission voted to fund the scholarships on a five-year trial period. If the results are what the trustees expect, they may give the seminary enough money to endow the scholarships permanently.

G. Willis Bennett, director of seminary field education, proposed the field education work-scholarships, knowing that the mission's trustees wanted to use the money received from the sale of the mission building to continue missions work in the same geographical area.

The scholarship program will enable the students to perpetuate concerns of the rescue mission trustees, even though no facilities for overnight lodging and meals will be available for individuals in need, Bennett said.

The new program also will insure a continued seminary ministry in the west downtown area, which is now undergoing dramatic change of face, Bennett added.

Pointing out that the scholarships are the result of an investment of 18 generations of seminary students in the inner-city mission, Bennett said that "students worked out of the original mission building erected in 1902 and continued to do so for 65 years until the property was sold."

Three students named to receive the first scholarships will work in three areas. Each is considered as a "minister to community."

Hal Ritter of South Carolina is assigned to social work at the Portland Bridge Mission.

Another student, Fred Sanford of Florida, works at the Baptist Tabernacle church, majoring in a ministry to local teenage boys.

A third student, Philip Rahming of the Bahamas, works as a minister to blacks at the Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church, a predominantly Negro fellowship.

The Louisville men who are providing these students with the Hope Rescue Mission Fund are attorney Ralph Logan, realtor Hart Speiden, manufacturer W. F. Goodell, businessman Frank Register, and retired businessman R. F. Snyder. All men are active in Louisville Baptist churches.