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**Returning Prisoners Need
Understanding, Fite Says**

By Robert O'Brien

FORT WORTH (BP)--When David Fite sits across the breakfast table from his eight year-old son, Mark, he often thinks, "I wonder what you were like when you were a little boy?"

That silent question is part of the heartache of a former Southern Baptist missionary snatched from his family to spend four years in a Communist prison in Castro's Cuba.

And it's only part of the trauma and turmoil that Fite realizes will face men returning from dehumanizing years in North Vietnamese prison camps.

All the POWs, he says, will struggle to adjust--caught in a mind-dizzying culture shock, buffeted by internal forces which they may not know how to verbalize and which will mystify and perhaps even annoy family, friends and employers.

Many, if they are as fortunate as Fite, will return to normalcy and ability to cope with life and assume useful roles. Others may not.

A large measure of their success, Fite says, will depend on the love and patience of those closest to them.

During the four years, 1965-68, which he spent in the Cuban prison, Fite says he had it easier than the men now returning from North Vietnamese prisons.

"I had some advantages. I was not a combatant, and I had lived in Cuba for quite a while and understood the culture and language. During most of my imprisonment, my father-in-law, Herbert Caudill, was there with me, along with imprisoned Cuban Christians.

"That fellowship, the abiding faith I had in Christ and brief monthly visits from my wife, Margaret, helped me bear up under the pressures.

But the physical and mental cruelty of his Communist captors, coupled with severe "brain-washing" techniques and daily management of his every move, took their toll on Fite.

"In a prison environment," he explains, "every decision is made for you--hour-by-hour, day-by-day. They tell you when to get up, when to eat, what to eat, whether or not to eat, what to wear, what to do, when to sleep.

"One of my major adjustments involved re-learning the process of decision making.

"For a long time," he explains, "my life was complicated by the fact that I had to spend a lot of time making little decisions that most people make automatically."

Fite says he would stand in a supermarket, caught in the dizzying swirl of fast-paced American life and take 20 minutes to decide what shaving soap to buy.

Not only may returning veterans face a "decision crisis", but family and friends may expect them to reweave the threads of their lives too quickly, Fite says.

"I hope the rehabilitation program planned by the military may solve that," he says.

"In my case I found that a period of moratorium, in which I was not immediately thrust into major responsibility, helped me readjust."

During the moratorium, he spent time with his family and earned a doctorate in theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, before assuming his current full time job as director of continuing education for ministry at the seminary.

Return from a long absence in prison puts a strain on children and husband-wife relationships as they readjust roles, Fite says

A father, removed from his children's formative years, experiences a gap in his understanding of their development.

Mark was one month old when Fite went away and nearly four when he returned.

His other two boys, were six and eight when he left; and 10 and 12 when he returned four years ago.

But probably the most severe readjustment facing the Vietnam returnees, Fite believes, will involve overcoming the emotional scars of brainwashing.

"They try to destroy a person's sense of self-worth," Fite explains. "They underscore all the negative feelings one has...try to destroy your morale so you will become putty in their hands for propaganda purposes. Then they use you and throw you away like a piece of old tissue."

"They abuse you physically, make you fear for your life, treat you nicely one moment and badly the next, reward you for doing things that go against your sense of values, punish you for standing firm."

"Wives and families must understand these internal pressures and show patience and understanding and help reaffirm these men's sense of personal worth," Fite emphasizes.

Fite says a person without a sense of self worth is an emotional cripple. "If you don't love yourself, you can't give love to others," he says.

"I hope each one who returns will have an understanding family and an understanding group of friends like I did--people who accepted me and loved me as I was."

"Families facing these strains," he said, "should not be ashamed to call on all available resources--personal resources and community resources such as counselors and pastors. That would not be a sign of weakness, but one of hope," he said.

"The return will be much worse for these men than it was for the Caudills and Fites," he said. "They probably will not get heroes welcomes as we did. They will be misunderstood. People will expect too much."

"Documented experiences have shown that men with a sense of meaning in their lives hold up better under duress. To the Christian, that meaning is Christ, who gave me my sense of personal worth and the strength I needed."

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Gambrell Joins Baptist Book
Stores: Ridgecrest, Atlanta

2/5/73

NASHVILLE (BP)--Thomas L. Gambrell, long-time university administrator, has been named manager of the Baptist Book Store at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, N.C., and assistant manager of the Atlanta store.

According to W.O. Thomason, Book Store Division director at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board here, Gambrell will be responsible for supervising the conference center store operations and for assistance in the parent store. His work will include buying, selling, maintaining adequate inventory, order processing, and personnel selection and training.

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A native of Muskogee, Okla., Gambrell is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

Since 1963, Gambrell has served Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., as professor of religious education, field representative in development and dean of students. Previously, he was minister of education at South Side Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, Ark., and minister of religious education for churches in Oklahoma, Texas, Florida, Louisiana and Georgia.

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Special Graduation Held For Cancer Victim's Husband

By Robert Meade

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--As a desperately ill young woman sat watching, her husband received his master of divinity degree with honors during the first special commencement program ever held at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

The special graduation program was called by a vote of the faculty to allow David A. Murray, 25, to receive his degree early so his wife, Kathy, could be present.

Kathy has terminal cancer. Doctors are not certain how long she will live, but since she learned last October of the seriousness of her illness, David's graduation has been a major goal for the couple.

David, a native of Mobile, Ala., had completed all his degree requirements and would have graduated in the spring. Some were afraid Kathy would not live that long.

For two years, Kathy has worked to help her husband make it through seminary, and the seminary faculty and administration felt she should see him graduate. It was the first time in the school's 15 year history that a special graduation ceremony had been called, other than the annual commencement in May.

Around 300 students, friends, seminary faculty and staff, and members of the family witnessed the ceremony in the seminary auditorium here.

Millard J. Berquist, in his last official function as acting president of the seminary, delivered the commencement address, praising the couple as "two very special people."

Berquist, who had been elected president-emeritus of the seminary last August and was continuing until newly-elected president Milton Ferguson took the post, spoke of the courage and hope Kathy demonstrated in her desire to see David graduate.

"I remember so clearly what this beautiful young girl said to my wife when she was in her sick room at the hospital," Berquist recalled.

"We just have to hold onto our dreams," Berquist quoted Kathy as saying. "We can't let our dreams go."

"For two and one-half years," he continued, "she has held onto her dreams of seeing David graduate to become a military chaplain."

The couple met while both were students at Arkansas State University and married two days after their graduation there in 1970. David entered Midwestern Seminary the following fall.

Kathy had a tumor removed early last year, and learned she had cancer. In October, she was told the cancer had spread beyond cure.

"We don't know how long it might be," David said. "It could be weeks, or a year. But the faculty voted to hold this graduation so my wife would be sure to see it, after she worked so hard to put me through."

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Kathy was awarded the "Ph.T. degree," which stands for "putting husband through" given all Midwestern seminary wives at the time of their husband's graduation.

For two years, Kathy had worked as a secretary for the Chas. F. Curry Real Estate Co. Curry, a Baptist layman, was active in the development of the seminary during its beginning days, and had served two terms as a member of the board of trustees.

Prior to the start of the ceremony, Kathy was escorted to a large upholstered chair on the front row by David's brother, Ken Murray, a sophomore at the University of Southern Alabama.

Although her illness was a dominant note during the program, Kathy appeared poised and radiant, the picture of a proud wife as she sat beside her husband.

Following the ceremony, individuals from throughout the auditorium filed by to talk with the couple.

Kathy's father, Dee Ward Hefner of Beebe, Ark., sat on her right during the program. Also present were David's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. Murray of Irvington, Ala.

Following the special graduation ceremony, Kathy returned to her parent's dairy farm in Beebe, Ark., where David was to join her in a few days.

Before she left the auditorium, Kathy said, "We will stay there until we see where God leads us next."

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Texas Baptist PR Group
Deplores News Media Attacks

2/5/73

SAN ANGELO, Tex. (BP)--Efforts to "choke off the free flow of information" in the public media and in the denominational press drew stiff opposition here at the annual meeting of the Texas Baptist Public Relations Association.

In a resolution, the association called attention to recent jailings of reporters for "refusing to supply confidential information and records demanded by prosecutors, grand juries, judges, and others."

The Association said further "the need to protect such confidences is as essential to the reporter as it is to the ordained minister in the faithful discharge of their respective duties to the public and to individuals."

The resolution said the association "deplores measures taken on anyone within the Southern Baptist Convention at national, state, or local level to cut off the free flow of information in the denomination's own media, or to discredit them in responsible performance of their duties."

The 84-member group, which includes personnel serving churches and denominational agencies in public relations activities within Texas, said it "supports the media as they engage in responsible investigative and interpretative reporting and the balanced presentation of diverse, controversial, and often unpopular viewpoints and facts."

The association said it "endorses conscientious efforts by the media and by public officials to find the best means to prevent further interference with and harassment of public media by law enforcement, administrative, and judicial agencies, as well as by private organizations."

It urged its own members "and others in Christian public relations service to at all times 'speak the truth in love,' and to advocate and practice freedom of expression in denominational media as devoutly as freedom of expression in the pulpit."

"Public relations specialists called in service to Christ, who said, 'You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,' share an intense common concern" in problems connected with freedom of information, the Texas public relations workers added.

John D. Bloskas, Dallas, vice-president and director of public relations for the SBC Annuity Board, was elected president of the association. Don S. Hepburn, Fort Worth, associate director of public relations at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, was elected a vice-president. -30