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Paralyzed Polio Victim
Becomes Successful Writer

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By Orville Scott

The doctors said there was nothing anyone could do to help Susan Ray, a hopelessly paralyzed polio victim, at age four.

But now, as a successful Christian writer, Miss Ray, 27, has scripted films and film-strips widely viewed by Southern Baptists. She types and paints and recently completed her first book.

The Baptist Way, her work, written for the 50th anniversary observance of the Cooperative Program, has been described by some Baptist leaders as one of the finest works on who Baptists are and how they engage in missions.

Miss Ray insists that her parents must claim part of the credit for her success. "The commitment and planning were Mother's and Daddy's," she says.

Stricken by polio at age four, Susan lay near death for six months, struggling for every breath. Not only did the polio disable her respiratory system, but it left both her arms and legs almost totally paralyzed.

But Susan's parents were endowed with a faith and determination that refused to accept the verdict of the doctors. "We simply set about finding ways to help Susan," recalls her father, Cecil Ray, director of the Stewardship Division for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Ray, then pastor of Arnett-Benson Baptist Church in Lubbock, launched a part-time career as inventor.

He developed a special motor-driven chair so Susan could join in limited play with other children. Through sensitive switches at her fingertips, she propelled her way along the sidewalk and through the house.

Although providing for Susan consumed much of his at-home hours, Ray realized he must not neglect his young son Lanny. When he was nine, Lanny became the first youngster in his neighborhood to have his own gasoline-powered go-cart.

A few months after her attack of polio, Susan had to return to Houston for a check-up. Since portable auto-transported iron lungs had not been invented yet, it was up to Ray to invent one for Susan.

With the help of his church members and friends, Ray built a miniature battery-powered lung that fit into a station wagon. It was completed three days before Susan's scheduled trip.

After they had driven about an hour, the artificial lung suddenly quit. Knowing little Susan could not live for more than ten minutes without the lung, Ray began tearing into the device, frantically searching for the trouble.

Suddenly, he breathed a prayer of thanksgiving. He discovered it had merely come unplugged.

The special equipment Ray has developed or built for Susan has also helped other paralysis victims to enjoy brighter lives.

Besides the lung and chair, he designed and developed a rocking bed that simulates breathing for the polio victim, a power-driven rocking chair for the same purpose, a travel chair, a chest respirator and an automatic page turner to aid paralysis victims in reading books.

Although Susan's range of hand movement is limited to about an inch, her father wanted her to be able to write and paint. So he invented a mechanical desk that moves the paper beneath the pen.

Though Ray gets a lot of credit for all he has done for Susan, her mother, Charlene Ray, has not been standing by idle. After Ray was called to be superintendent of missions for the San Antonio Baptist Association, Mrs. Ray discovered there was no home-bound program by the schools there. So she went to the schools for textbooks and assignments and was Susan's teacher the rest of the way through school.

Susan's younger brother has also played a major role in her incredible journey, especially in the latest invention.

Even before starting school, Susan was showing signs of journalistic talent in poems she dictated to her mother. At Glorieta Baptist Assembly when Susan was 15, she committed her life to God as a Christian writer.

Susan's first major script resulted in, "I Do Lord," a general stewardship film for Texas Baptists. She has written numerous other scripts since.

Ray felt that the typewriter held the key for Susan's effectively carrying out her commitment as a writer. But how could she operate the keys with a range of hand movement limited to about one inch?

Undaunted by the complexity of the problem, he eventually came up with a miniature keyboard connected to an electric typewriter. Using a stylus which fits into small holes for each key, Susan could send electrical impulses to the typewriter, operating the keys remotely.

Hundreds of hours later, Susan was using a typewriter.

Lanny, who became a first engineering student to score a straight A average for four years at the University of Texas, Arlington, put his skill to work perfecting the unique system of typing.

Susan has also been able to become a landscape artist through means of a mechanical desk with micro switch controls.

"Instead of her hand moving, the desk moves," explains Ray. A number of her paintings adorn the living room of the Ray home in Grand Prairie, a suburb of Dallas.

For Susan, there is no fretting or feeling robbed. "She accepts her handicap as a fact, not a limitation," explains her father. "Then she finds ways around it."

He never says much about it, but those who know him quickly point out: Susan has had a lot of help along her incredible journey from her parents.

**Creedalism Trend Must
Be Stopped, Says Deweese**

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptists must face up to a subtle form of creedalism that is seeping into their life, a Southern Baptist Historical Commission staffer said here.

"This creedalism exists in the movement which suggests that all Southern Baptists give allegiance to the precise doctrines and wording of the 1963 statement of Baptist Faith and Message," said Charles W. Deweese, the commission's assistant director of editorial and research services at a conference he led on Coping with Baptist Controversies and Building Church Fellowship.

"A series of dangerous tendencies issue from the renewed attention directed to the Baptist Faith and Message," which "in itself was a worthy effort," first adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925 and revised by the SBC in 1963.

"First, there is a tendency to place all Southern Baptists into a common doctrinal mold on every point of belief," he said. "This is an impossible and inappropriate objective. Southern Baptists differ today on numerous points listed in the 1963 confession," he added.

Deweese said historically Baptists have encouraged each church member to interpret the scriptures for himself or herself. The current trend "virtually denies this privilege by absolutizing a particular doctrinal expression and recommending it for the use of all Southern Baptists," Deweese continued.

He told Baptist Press, "The authority of the Bible as God's Word is superior to the authority of any statement of faith that any group of Christians have ever constructed."

Deweese also noted his belief that "Baptists should continue to point efforts toward evangelizing the world for Jesus Christ, rather than becoming bogged in doctrinal arguments and controversies."

"Second, there is a tendency to let the Baptist Faith and Message take the place of scripture," said Deweese at the Ridgecrest conference. "This is an impingement upon the authority of the Bible.

"Third, there is a tendency to assume that the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message has continuing validity for Southern Baptists in all times and in all places," Deweese asserted.

"Actually a statement of faith represents the opinions and doctrines only of those people who write and approve it. It is not valid for everyone afterwards. There is no binding quality to the 1963 confession," he added.

"Last," said Deweese, "in the effort to confine the beliefs of Southern Baptists into one definitive statement, there is a tendency to deny the validity of new insight to be gained from the Bible, the Holy Spirit and our Baptist heritage."

He concluded that "Although the 1963 confession was a worthy effort, it was not the final expression of the Baptist faith. Modification will prove imperative as time advances."

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**Alaska Baptists Adopt
Budget; Name President**

8/27/74

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (BP)--Messengers to the 29th annual session of the Alaska Baptist Convention, meeting at Calvary Baptist Church here, adopted a record 1975 budget of \$437,177 and elected a new president.

The convention set a 1975 Cooperative Program unified budget goal of \$130,000 from its churches, with \$37,000--or 29 per cent--of that amount going to Southern Baptist Convention-wide causes.

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A sharp increase in the budget reflects the operating expenses for the Alaska Baptist Family Services Center, which will be operating by Jan. 1, 1975, according to Troy Prince, executive secretary-treasurer of the Alaska Baptist Convention.

Budget for the child care and family counseling center, apart from administrative expenses, will be \$65,570, Prince said.

Virgil Chron, pastor of Muldoon Road Baptist Church, Anchorage, was elected president of the convention, succeeding a layman, Herbert L. Cotton, the first black president ever of a state convention of Southern Baptists. Cotton received a plaque from Prince in appreciation of two-and-a-half years of service and a standing ovation.

Other officers include Keith Foster, pastor of University Baptist Church, Anchorage, first vice president; and Gene Medaris, pastor of University Baptist Church, Fairbanks, second vice president.

The 30th annual session will meet August 12-14, 1975, in the First Baptist Church, North Pole, Alaska. First Baptist Church, Sitka, is the site of the 1976 convention.

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Famine Brings Refugee
To School, To New Home

8/27/74

MARADI, Niger. (BP)--Imbayira thought school was a place where children were physically beaten until a famine brought him to the refugee camp here and to the care of Southern Baptist missionaries. Now his attitude has changed and he looks forward to school this fall.

The 11-year-old boy came with six Aram women and their children to the yard of missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Williams one day in December 1973. The missionaries gave the women food and blankets. Then Mrs. Williams and Mrs. H. Jerold Palmer Jr., also a missionary, went to their home.

On this visit they witnessed stark evidence of the impending famine--refugees gathering in cornstalk villages, no food for even the children, the beginnings of widespread disease. That same night three of the Arab babies died.

Throughout their work with the Arabs, Imbayira was the missionaries' constant companion, helper and interpreter. He was the only one of his nomadic tribe that spoke French, the national language, and none spoke Hausa, the local tribal language. Soon he learned to speak Tamacheck, a tribal language, and fluent Hausa.

When the Tsibiri school, a Sudan interior primary level boarding school, opened a special class for refugee children, the missionaries wanted to send Imbayira along with others.

Imbayira stubbornly refused to go, convinced on the basis of earlier experiences that he would be beaten.

The missionaries persuaded four of his cousins to go, Mohammed and Hussein, both 14, Hamadu, 12; and Ali, 11. The four boys finished first, second, third and fourth in their class of nine. Ali was the top of the class and the first one to become a Christian. Seven of the nine in the class became Christians before the class was over.

Next year, the missionaries hope to send at least 16 children to the school. One of them will be Imbayira, who has seen Christian love and concern change the lives of his cousins.

At last he is convinced that at school they don't beat children, at least not at Tsibiri.

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