

**Brush With Death Leads To New
Lease on Life -- And Ministry**

By Barbara H. Stoops

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--"If anyone had told me five years ago that I'd be hooked up to a kidney machine, I'd have told them, 'Man, I'd rather be dead.' But I'd never say that now."

Joe Royal, a Columbia Bible College senior newly-ordained as a Southern Baptist minister, would, in fact, rather be anything but dead. His brush with death helped him find an unusual role in ministry.

His ordination in June at Mt. Olive Baptist Church, a 250-member congregation he now serves as pastor, climaxed years of study and dedication.

That preparation seemingly had come to an abrupt end in November, 1974, when the Charlotte, N.C., native's kidneys failed. "I felt like I'd kind of been let down by the Lord when my kidneys failed. I knew I'd been called to the ministry but felt that now I wouldn't be able to carry my ministry out. It was that that worried me. I wasn't worried about dying," he says.

Yet now Royal is in the full time ministry of an understanding congregation and carries on a personal ministry to the patients and staff at the Columbia Dialysis Clinic across from Richland Memorial Hospital.

"A kidney patient can be a normal person and lead a normal life. He doesn't have to become a vegetable," says the 33-year-old Baptist minister.

He would like to see some of the teenagers continue their education, maybe even study while hooked to the machine.

Since kidney impairment is considered a permanent disability and so is covered by full Social Security payment, he says, "some of the teenagers aren't hitting a lick and they certainly aren't taking good care of themselves."

A kidney patient's life revolves around the dialysis machine, he points out. There's one in Columbia, one in Charleston, and another in Charlotte, N.C.

Basically, the patient can manage as long as he watches his diet faithfully--especially his intake of liquids--and is punctual about his scheduled time on the machine.

The diet is low in sodium, so as not to retain fluids in the body tissue, low in potassium, high in carbohydrates and high in protein, with only 30 ounces of liquid a day.

If a patient goes longer than his scheduled time on the machine, he says, the poison begins to seep into the system and severe headaches can develop so that he may have to go into the hospital. The Baptist minister skipped three days in a row in April, when his brother died, and had a bad reaction, he says.

A "bad run" on the machine can also cause headaches and weakness, he says, and he always feels a little "light-headed" after each session.

But by being careful, a person can have a full and fairly normal life says Royal, a former life insurance company staff manager who went back to school to become a minister.

In fact, his ministry has developed since he went on the kidney machine six months ago, spending 3 1/2 hours linked up to the life-saving machine which washes his blood free of impurities each Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

He admits that "it's rather depressing to know that for the rest of your life you have to go three days a week into that room and sit down and be tied up to that machine," but he's grateful. "For even 12 years ago there wouldn't have been any hope...there nearly wasn't anyway."

He talks freely about his condition because he wants people to know more about kidney problems and what's being done to help, and because he wants to serve as an example for the other patients on the machine.

Royal is concerned about the other 29 clinic patients, especially the several teenagers, because he feels they need to be shown that it is possible to live a good, productive life, even if they are suffering from kidney failure.

"The dialysis machine has improved, in the past 10 years, so that now the time is down to 3 1/2 hours each session instead of the eight or nine hours it used to take," he says.

Yet 99 per cent of the patients get off the machine and go home to bed. They're just wasting their lives away," he says. "They should go out and do something, as the nurses keep pointing out."

The support of Mt. Olive congregation, leaders of the Fairfield Baptist Association and his wife and nine and 12-year old children has helped make his ministry possible, he says. "They know that at certain times I just won't be able to be there."

He's able to play golf, even though he has to ride a golf cart in the summer. "I can't exercise too much, because I must be careful of my blood pressure no football, baseball or anything like that."

He can go on vacation, but only by planning months in advance and calling ahead to find a place on a kidney machine near where he is going to stay.

Kidney patients are more susceptible to colds and infections, he says, but "they take good care of us in that area and give us flu shots.

"They treat us with kid gloves," he reports. "Everything is sterile and has to be thrown away after it is used, right in the trash can, because of the danger of hepatitis."

The dialysis process begins with the weighing of the patient, he explains. Then, the nurse puts one needle into an artery and another in a vein, so that the blood passes from the artery, into the artificial kidney, which cleans the blood, and then back into the vein. Blood pressure is monitored every half hour.

Royal says he has known he had kidney trouble for more than 20 years. Apparently a stoppage in either tube occurred, but he didn't realize it had done permanent damage. He had major surgery in 1958, when a plastic tube was inserted, which seemed to arrest the trouble.

Then last November, his kidneys just stopped functioning, and he was near the point of death. Now the future looks bright and full of possibilities to the young minister who believes that "All you have to do is look around the corner and you'll find someone worse off."

Among the many friends invited to the ordination were the doctors, nurses and technicians at the Columbia Dialysis Center.

After all, says Royal, "I feel I have a ministry to them as well as to my fellow patients. More than that, they have one with me. Whenever I'm down, they pick me up and set me on my way again."

His advice to others is: "Look to God. Look up and you'll find you're able to do things you never dreamed of!"

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New Orleans Seminary To Inaugurate Leavell

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Landrum Pinson Leavell II will be inaugurated as the seventh president of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in formal ceremonies September 6, 1975.

An inaugural dinner will be held Friday night, September 5, in the seminary cafeteria, with formal installation ceremonies set for Saturday morning in the Roland Q. Leavell Chapel on the seminary campus.

Leavell, former pastor of the First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Tex., assumed duties as president of the seminary on January 1, 1975. Leavell's appointment followed the resignation of Grady Cothen, who accepted the presidency of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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SBC Annuity Board Creates Legal Services Department

Baptist Press
8/14/75

DALLAS (BP)--The Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention here has created a legal services department.

"Federal legislation regulating the pension field requires more frequent service of legal counsel," said Darold H. Morgan, Annuity Board president. "It has reached the point that it is more economical and practical to set up our own legal services department with a full-time staff officer."

Gary S. Nash, a Dallas attorney, has been appointed acting director of the new department, effective August 18, Morgan said. Nash, 27, is a member of Cliff Temple Baptist Church in Dallas. He is a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Tex.

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Bicentennial Feature

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First Baptist College
Chartered by Rhode Island

PROVIDENCE, R. I., Mar. 1, 1764 (BP)--Rhode Island College, Baptists' first institution of higher learning, has been granted a charter by the state legislature. The school will be a Christian college open to students "of all denominations or no denomination."

Because Baptists have seldom been received in other colleges, it is gratifying that they should welcome students of other denominations, a spokesman said. It was to be expected that Baptists should turn to Rhode Island in seeking a charter as this state has been a haven of religious liberty since the days of Roger Williams.

While the charter stipulates that the president and a majority of the trustees shall be Baptists, other officials will be selected from representative denominations in the state. A number of professors also will be selected "indifferently of any or of all denominations."

The charter said that religious tests "shall never be admitted" into the institution. "On the contrary, all members shall enjoy free absolute and uninterrupted liberty of conscience," it declares. "The places of professors and all other officers, the president alone excepted, shall be open for all denominations of Protestants. Youths of all religious denominations shall be admitted to equal advantages and honors."

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The idea of a college that would offer Baptists and other youths educational advantages comparable with those to be had at Yale, Harvard and elsewhere originated within the Philadelphia Baptist Association. James Manning, a recent graduate of Princeton, was selected to put the plan into action.

After conferring with leading Baptists of Newport, R. I., last July, Manning took steps to secure the charter. To date the embryonic school has little more than a charter--no buildings, no equipment, no endowment.

The first Baptist college is expected to be located at Warren with Manning likely to be named the first president.

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Prepared for Baptist Press by the Southern Baptist Historical Commission, Nashville.

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Baptist Leaders Rap
Mrs. Ford's Views on Sex

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE (BP)--Several Baptist leaders have joined in the increasing response to comments by First Lady Betty Ford on premarital sex in a nationally-televised program on CBS-TV.

Ben C. Fisher, executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention's Education Commission here, and George E. Bagley of Birmingham, executive secretary of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, both sent communications to President Ford's wife expressing dismay over her comments. Earlier, in an interview with newspapers in Dallas, W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, and former SBC president, also took sharp exception to Mrs. Ford's point of view.

Mrs. Ford told newsman Morley Safer in an interview on "60 Minutes" she would not be surprised if her daughter, Susan, 18, decided to have an affair and also suggested, in general, "premarital relations with the right partner might lower the divorce rate."

She also said she assumed all her children have tried marijuana, out of curiosity, and added she might have tried it herself had the drug been popular when she was young.

"Your position on premarital sex comes as a shock and a disappointment," Fisher said in a letter to Mrs. Ford. "At a time when many families are struggling against the rising tide of permissiveness, your remarks come as a very hard blow."

"While we are still reeling from a backwash of Chappaquiddick and Watergate, I feel that your statement has done lasting damage to home and family," said Fisher, who also expressed his discouragement about "what is apparently your attitude toward use of marijuana."

In a telegram to Mrs. Ford, Bagley said, "Such an endorsement by one who holds such a prestigious position is appalling in the face of so much premarital sex across the nation and the high rate of divorce brought about by infidelity."

Bagley, former president of the association of Southern Baptist executive secretaries, said many parents faced with this problem with their own children will undoubtedly find their opposition to this sort of thing attacked.

He said he wanted to encourage "all people of every denomination and faith to contact Mrs. Ford and protest this endorsement."

Gilbert Guffin, also of Birmingham, chairman of the Christian life and public affairs commission of the Alabama convention, added: "Mrs. Ford's remarks reflect a distressing and deplorable sense of moral principle that conflicts gravely with the teachings of Christians, Jews and many other religious groups."

Fisher noted: "As an individual, of course, you have every right to your views on any subject, but as First Lady of our land, all public remarks carry great weight and influence."

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