



December 8 , 1976

76-207

"Shadow of Death" Experience  
Told by Baptist Missionary

By Teresa Shields

RICHMOND (BP)--"Nothing ventured, nothing gained," were Richard Forrester's words before he and a Venezuelan boy plummeted over a cliff and fell about 150 feet into a shallow river near La Grita, Venezuela, in late May.

That Forrester and 12-year-old Alan Kenny survived the fall is a fact many people consider a miracle in itself. Perhaps even more miraculous, they can both walk.

"I think this incident illustrates far more than lucky coincidence," said Janice D'Alta, a member of Faith Baptist Church, Maracaibo, Venezuela.

Forrester, a Southern Baptist missionary, was the church's pastor when the accident occurred.

"No one who has heard Mr. Forrester tell about it or who was there at the time, has the slightest doubt that the two were saved by divine intervention," Mrs. D'Alta said.

While on a youth retreat in the mountains near La Grita, Forrester and Kenny went to search for three boys who were apparently lost, according to Joan (Mrs. Richard) Forrester. Kenny's twin brother was one of the lost ones. Since Kenny had been hiking with the boys earlier, he thought he knew where they were.

"It was about 5:30 p.m. when I began to worry about the three boys," Forrester recalled. "Some of us shouted for them. They answered us, but we couldn't see them. They were somewhere in the valley and we were on the top of the mountain. They told us they had been in the river and had gotten out but now couldn't find their way back to the hotel."

As Kenny and Forrester began searching for the boys, they had to go down a mountain which sloped off at about a 45 degree angle. They began descending, in a sitting position, holding onto vines and easing themselves down.

"We had descended about 150 feet when we came to a level place and paused to rest," Forrester noted. "As I started off again, still in a sitting position, my head snapped back and my legs shot straight out in front of me.

"I was lying flat on my back and slipping so fast that I couldn't react. I suppose Alan was right behind me...I lost consciousness before I fell off the cliff and into the rushing stream below. I didn't know I had landed until Alan fell on me and jarred me awake."

Jolted into consciousness, he saw Kenny beside him, face down in the water. Forrester lifted Kenny's head and managed to maneuver Kenny and himself to the shore. He was able to get all but Kenny's feet and one leg out of the cold water.

They later learned that Kenny's legs were fractured a few inches below the hips. His right wrist was broken and he had an extensive skull fracture.

Forrester's upper right leg was shattered. The balls joining the knee were fractured in two places and two bones in the lower leg were broken. His right arm was broken, and there was a multiple fracture of his left cheek bone. He had a two-inch cut on the tip of his head, a deep cut on his forehead, another cut over his left eye and one on his elbow.

The two stayed by the creek seven hours praying aloud that "help would soon come, that the big rocks would not hit us and that it would not rain." Forrester noted that even an hour's rain would have raised the water to where they were.

Others were praying, too, according to Forrester. At the top of the mountain, the group of young people maintained a vigil praying unceasingly for the safe return of their pastor and young friend. The three other boys had been found about 7:30 p.m.

It was about 1:30 a.m. before the hotel gardener, Ramon Garcia, and four other Venezuelan "mountaineers" found Forrester and Kenny. They moved Kenny to a dry place and covered him with a poncho they had brought. However, they were unable to move Forrester.

-more-

About 3 a.m. four hotel employees and four policemen came back with blankets, hot coffee and hot tea. They also moved Forrester to a dry place. Finally about 7:30 a.m., the Venezuelan National Guard started rescue procedures.

"Even though Kenny was small and lightweight, the ascent was extremely slow," Forrester commented. "In some places, the men would lift the stretcher over their heads, put it on the ground, climb up to it, then repeat the procedure. They reached the top with him at 11:30 a.m.

"I was even more difficult to bring up since I weighed around 210 pounds at that time. They tied me securely to the stretcher, but, even so, the stretcher kept slipping out from under me and my injured leg would drop and drag along the ground.

"Alternating teams of seven or eight men on the stretcher would advance as some 20 men several yards ahead pulled on the rope. At intervals of four to six feet, the stretcher team had to be relieved."

After Forrester and Kenny had been taken to the clinic in La Grita, they were driven to a waiting plane to be flown to the Maracaibo hospital. They arrived at the hospital 23 hours after the fall. Both were in critical condition.

According to Mrs. Forrester, Kenny was out of the hospital in a month and walking without crutches within weeks after that. However, Forrester's recovery took somewhat longer. A month after the fall, he was flown to Macon, Ga., to be treated for an advanced infection in his leg.

Three months and six operations after the fall, Forrester was released from the hospital and was convalescing in his hometown of Macon.

He believes his calling is still to Venezuela and concluded:

"God has brought me through the 'valley of the shadow of death'. With his help, I'll again walk on his mountaintops."

The missionary hopes to return to Maracaibo sometime in 1977.

-30-

Touchton Succeeds Nicholas  
At Home Mission Board

Baptist Press  
12/7/76

ATLANTA (BP)--Judy Touchton has been named photo feature editor for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board here, succeeding Tim Nicholas, who resigned in September to become associate editor of the Mississippi Baptist Record.

For the past five years, she has been photo librarian for the Home Mission Board. She also has written for a number of Southern Baptist publications, including Home Missions Magazine.

She was reared in McComb, Miss., and attended Mississippi University for women in Columbus. She is now completing requirements for a bachelor of arts degree in journalism from Georgia State University in Atlanta.

Her husband, Ken, is a freelance photographer whose work has appeared in a number of Baptist publications.

-30-

About 3 a.m. four hotel employees and four policemen came back with blankets, hot coffee and hot tea. They also moved Forrester to a dry place. Finally about 7:30 a.m., the Venezuelan National Guard started rescue procedures.

"Even though Kenny was small and lightweight, the ascent was extremely slow," Forrester commented. "In some places, the men would lift the stretcher over their heads, put it on the ground, climb up to it, then repeat the procedure. They reached the top with him at 11:30 a.m.

"I was even more difficult to bring up since I weighed around 210 pounds at that time. They tied me securely to the stretcher, but, even so, the stretcher kept slipping out from under me and my injured leg would drop and drag along the ground.

"Alternating teams of seven or eight men on the stretcher would advance as some 20 men several yards ahead pulled on the rope. At intervals of four to six feet, the stretcher team had to be relieved."

After Forrester and Kenny had been taken to the clinic in La Grita, they were driven to a waiting plane to be flown to the Maracaibo hospital. They arrived at the hospital 23 hours after the fall. Both were in critical condition.

According to Mrs. Forrester, Kenny was out of the hospital in a month and walking without crutches within weeks after that. However, Forrester's recovery took somewhat longer. A month after the fall, he was flown to Macon, Ga., to be treated for an advanced infection in his leg.

Three months and six operations after the fall, Forrester was released from the hospital and was convalescing in his hometown of Macon.

He believes his calling is still to Venezuela and concluded:

"God has brought me through the 'valley of the shadow of death'. With his help, I'll again walk on his mountaintops."

The missionary hopes to return to Maracaibo sometime in 1977.

-30-

Touchton Succeeds Nicholas  
At Home Mission Board

Baptist Press

12/7/76

ATLANTA (BP)--Judy Touchton has been named photo feature editor for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board here, succeeding Tim Nicholas, who resigned in September to become associate editor of the Mississippi Baptist Record.

For the past five years, she has been photo librarian for the Home Mission Board. She also has written for a number of Southern Baptist publications, including Home Missions Magazine.

She was reared in McComb, Miss., and attended Mississippi University for women in Columbus. She is now completing requirements for a bachelor of arts degree in journalism from Georgia State University in Atlanta.

Her husband, Ken, is a freelance photographer whose work has appeared in a number of Baptist publications.

-30-



**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

**NATIONAL OFFICE**

SBC Executive Committee  
460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
(615) 244-2355  
W. C. Fields, Director  
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor  
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

**BUREAUS**

**ATLANTA** Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041

**DALLAS** Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996

**MEMPHIS** Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461

**NASHVILLE** (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5461

**RICHMOND** Richard M. Styles, Acting Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151

**WASHINGTON** W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

December 8, 1976

76-206

Special George W. Truett  
Chair Considered By Seminary

FORT WORTH (BP)--A newly named chair of instruction that underscores creativity, self-assurance and practical experience in the preparation for ministry, has been tentatively established at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

The George W. Truett Chair of Ministry was approved during a recent meeting of the seminary's board of trustees' executive committee. The chair, ultimately to be endowed with a minimum of \$750,000, received its initial challenge grant of \$150,000 from A. Webb Roberts, a layman from Dallas who has been instrumental in the chair's formation. His grant is contingent on the funding of the additional \$600,000.

Additional funding for the chair is expected to come from designated funds received in the seminary's Dallas division of its "Eight by Eighty" campaign, which seeks to raise \$8 million by 1980 for capital improvements and endowment needs for the Fort Worth seminary.

The major objective of the chair will be to involve students in the actual practice of ministry according to Huber Drumwright, dean of the School of Theology.

The chair is named in honor of the first pastor of the First Baptist Church, Dallas. Truett, who served the church from 1897 to 1944, was also a founding member of the Southwestern Seminary board of trustees for 38 years. During 13 of those years Truett served as chairman of the board of trustees.

It is expected that students working under the George W. Truett professor will experience ministry opportunities through special summer outreach projects and other programs developed through Baptist state conventions and associations.

"The chair's program will seek to help students understand people, to communicate with them, and to help them become flexible as they encounter real situations, problems and ministry opportunities," Drumwright noted.

"We believe a by-product of the new program will be students who will exhibit creativity and self-assurance in ministry," said Drumwright. The Truett professor will teach primarily in the pastoral ministry area of the School of Theology but will cross disciplines in evangelism, field education, and missions.

The establishment of the chair is the outgrowth of pilot ministry projects conducted in the summers of 1974 and 1975. The pilot programs, conceived and funded by Webb Roberts, provided for two students to conduct special ministries to the people of rural north Georgia.

-30-

Prosecutor Appeals Decision  
In Baptist Missionary's Trial

Baptist Press  
12/8/76

TAEJON, Korea (BP)--The judge's decision in a recent trial here involving Southern Baptist missionary Rolla M. (Ronnie) Bradley has been appealed by the prosecutor.

Bradley was fined approximately \$200 for his alleged neglect in a car accident that killed a man. The prosecutor had demanded a 10-month jail sentence for Bradley's alleged part in the accident in February, according to Don C. Jones, administrator of the Korea Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries).

-more-

Bradley was accused of being negligent when his car supposedly sideswiped a drunken pedestrian, according to George H. Hays, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's secretary for East Asia.

Other than establishing that Bradley's car was in the general vicinity of the accident, all evidence was circumstantial, according to Hays. No one actually saw the accident. Neither Bradley nor the Korean pastor riding with him was aware an accident had occurred.

Bradley will have to go back to trial in the next two to three months. "He will be called before a panel of three judges who will review the proceedings of the lower court," Jones said. "We are told that in 80 percent of cases, the decision of the lower court is upheld."

Several other Southern Baptist missionaries have been involved in car accidents in Korea since just more than a year ago. The Arnold A. Petersons, the Jack D. Everharts, Barbara (Mrs. Thomas T.) Jackson and Miss Lucy E. Wagner have had accidents. No charges were filed in the Everhart, Jackson and Peterson accidents, but they were in Miss Wagner's case.

"In none of these cases has it been shown that the missionaries were careless," Hays said.

Miss Wagner went to court and was given a 10-month suspended jail sentence and her driver's license was revoked, according to Hays. She was involved in an accident with an off-duty policeman on a motorcycle. The policeman hit her right front fender, was thrown off the motorcycle and broke his leg. His leg remained in a cast too long, gangrene set in and he lost three toes.

An out-of-court settlement was reached between the family and the Korea Baptist Mission's insurance company. The insurance company paid \$10,000 and then the Foreign Mission Board had to appropriate about \$28,000 more to compensate for his 10-month hospital stay and for loss of his job and status as a policeman. Because of the loss of the toes, he can no longer be a policeman in Korea.

The policeman's family first presented a 38 million "won" or \$76,000 claim to the insurance company. The mission's lawyer said the court would sympathize with the family and would probably demand that amount so he suggested an out-of-court settlement. "They knew that it would be financially better, as well as being better for our work and its image in Korea," Hays said.

An elderly man stepped out in front of Mrs. Jackson's car as he was trying to get to a bus stop in front of a Pentecostal church he had just attended. No charges were filed against the Jacksons but they immediately took personal condolence money to the bereaved family.

The Petersons were involved in an accident with a drunken driver in a stolen vehicle so no charges were filed against them. Mrs. Peterson was the only person injured. She sustained cracked ribs, a deflated lung and numerous bruises.

Everhart had safely stopped behind a disabled bus on an icy highway when his accident occurred. A truck struck his vehicle and pushed it into the side of the disabled bus. The impact shook up the family but no one was injured.

In reflection on these accidents, Hays said, "Driving in countries overseas is hazardous. With the hundreds of cars we have around the world and the thousands of miles we drive a year, we have been most fortunate."

Court Says Disability Plans  
May Exclude Pregnant Women

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U. S. Supreme Court ruled here that private employers are not legally obligated to provide pregnancy disability benefits to women who must drop out of the labor force temporarily to give birth.

The 6-3 decision was immediately condemned by women's rights advocates as a major setback for the cause of equality between the sexes.

The ruling came in a case brought by the General Electric Co. (GE) after twice losing in lower federal courts. The new ruling overturns contrary decisions in six of the ten circuit courts of appeals.

Forty-three women employees of GE's Salem, Va., plant brought the original suit charging the company with sex discrimination for failing to comply with a requirement of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) that disability insurance plans must cover pregnancy.

The EEOC is the federal agency charged by Congress with implementing provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 1972, the EEOC issued a ruling that private companies must include pregnancy in its list of disabilities.

Speaking for the six-man majority, Justice William H. Rehnquist said that while "pregnancy is of course confined to women . . . it is in other ways significantly different from the typical covered disease or disability."

Rehnquist went on to say that GE's disability package, when taken as a whole, does not discriminate in that "there is no risk from which men are protected and women are not. Likewise, there is no risk from which women are protected and men are not."

The court observed further that "gender-based discrimination does not result simply because an employer's disability benefits plan is less than all inclusive."

An attorney for GE earlier told the court that women leave the work force on a larger scale than do men, thereby making pregnancy disability payments nothing more than severance pay benefiting women only.

According to the Washington Post, a GE attorney said after the high court's decision that the average cost of disability benefits runs 70 percent higher for women than for men at GE. The company earlier had presented estimates that comprehensive pregnancy disability benefits would cost American industry \$1.6 billion annually. That figure was disputed by women's rights leaders.

Justice William J. Brennan, speaking for himself and Justice Thurgood Marshall, dissented from the majority opinion, stating that pregnancy is no more voluntary than are attempted suicide, venereal disease, sports injuries, disabilities resulting from fighting, or elective cosmetic surgery, all of which are covered by GE's plan.

Brennan charged the court's majority with inconsistency in isolating pregnancy as the only sexually-related disability not covered. GE's plan calls for disability payments to male employees for absenteeism brought on by prostatectomies, vasectomies, and circumcisions.

Also dissenting was Justice John Paul Stevens, who expressed the view that GE's plan clearly discriminates on the basis of sex, "for it is the capacity to become pregnant which primarily differentiates the female from the male."

Ironically, women's rights leaders opposed Stevens' nomination to the high court last year, alleging that he had been insensitive to their cause as a federal appellate judge.

Kathleen W. Peratif, director of the Women's Rights Project for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), told Baptist Press that the court's decision is a "disaster." She called it "the worst thing that has happened to women in 50 years."

Peratif, an attorney, said the effect of the decision will be to force some women onto welfare rolls because they will have been deprived of income protection "just when they need it the most."

She said that ACLU will press for legislation in the near future to nullify the high court's action.