



-- BAPTIST PRES

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**Baptists Comfort Victims
At Cable Car Crash Site**

By Judy Touchton

SQUAW VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--While rescue workers up the mountain struggled to free survivors and victims of the recent cable car crash at Squaw Valley, local Southern Baptists quickly arrived to minister at the base of the snowy Emigrant Peak.

Dan Holzer, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tahoe City, Calif., and Don Silva, a lay pastor from the church who works in hospital ministries, split duties at the rescue site--Holzer working at the intensive care unit and Silva at the minor injury treatment center nearby. Four people died and 31 were injured when a transport cable broke and slashed through one of the cars.

Strong winds and driving snow hampered rescue efforts. "The rescuers tried bringing the injured down in a rigged gondola, but finally snow cats, heavy machines used in skiing areas, brought the injured down five to eight at a time," Holzer said. "The rescue took longer than we expected. The most critical seemed to come last. They were deeper in the wreckage and torches were taken up to cut them free."

From 7:30 p.m. until after 2 a.m. Holzer and Silva counseled friends and family waiting for news, and prayed and talked with the injured.

Holzer, who skis "all the time" said he rode the tram, in use since 1967, on its 8,200-foot trip from the valley floor to the summit above "hundreds of times."

As chairman of Tahoe Resort Ministries--Baptist churches in the resort area cooperating in ministries to residents and tourists--Holzer already was involved in ministry on the ski slopes.

Another Southern Baptist pastor, Bill Burkett of First Baptist Church, Truckee, Calif., counseled patients at the Tahoe Forest Hospital in Truckee, 15 miles from the crash site, where 15 of the injured were taken. The Southern Baptist pastors, a Baptist member of the ski patrol and one Lutheran minister represented the only religious groups ministering at the crash site.

"Most of the injuries that came in were minor," Burkett said, "broken legs, cuts and bruises. The most major thing was one lady whose husband was killed. I talked to her and her friend whose 7-year-old boy had a laceration on his forehead, consoling both about the man's death."

Holzer had talked with the same woman at the base of the mountain. He dealt with three of the four families who had relatives killed in the accident.

"One little girl, an 8-year-old, lost both parents," Holzer reported. He talked with her, but at the time she did not know of their deaths.

He prayed with a doctor whose daughter was in one of the cars. The daughter arrived at the base in the fourth car load of injured. "It was beautiful to see the reuniting of families," Holzer said.

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Holzer said he received a better response from the doctors and nurses at the scene than expected. "They said they were really glad we were there. It freed them to work since we could talk and help. I don't know how many of them came personally and thanked us," he said.

Since many of the people involved in the accident were probably not Christians, Holzer theorized, he said he expected some anguished cries against God, questioning why God had let it happen. "But nobody said anything bad against God. There were a lot of them thanking God they got out," he reported.

A group of four young people from a nearby church spent the night in the home of laypastor Silva. "This was really a ministry to them," Holzer said. "When they called their parents, it calmed the parents down to know the kids were staying with a minister."

Holzer and Burkett both said they went to help the crash victims and their families because they felt it was "something I should do."

Holzer knew some people who might have been on the tram but his major reason for going to the site was, "I am a minister and this was a time when people needed to be ministered to. I just went to do what I could."

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(BP) Photos to be mailed to Baptist state papers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Additional photo of crash site may arrive late.

Shuttle Bus System
Set For Atlanta SBC

Baptist Press
4/19/78

ATLANTA (BP)--Local arrangement planners for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta in June will provide a shuttle bus system to and from major hotels to the Georgia World Congress Center and from major parking lots.

More than 16,000 registered messengers and some 20,000 persons are expected to attend the SBC annual sessions, June 13-15, and a battery of surrounding meetings.

Tom Duvall, chairman of the Atlanta transportation committee, said four primary bus routes have been charted, serving 25 of Atlanta's largest hotels within inner-city Atlanta. Additional routes will be added if needed to serve more distant motels.

Shuttle buses also will operate frequently from the Atlanta Civic Center parking lot, a huge lot about 10 minutes from the convention site. It will cost only \$1 per day to park there. SBC messengers are urged to use that lot and ride the shuttle bus to the convention.

Duvall explained that about 5,000 parking spaces are in the vicinity of the World Congress Center, but that these are usually occupied by Atlanta business people. The congress center is in the heart of downtown Atlanta.

"Many hotels are within easy walking distance of the World Congress Center," Duvall said. "Thousands of messengers will not need transportation; they can walk easily."

But for those who do need transportation, buses will run every three to eight minutes on a continuing basis. Fare will be 35 cents per person. Pickups will be made according to how messengers are booked at major hotels.

Duvall had this suggestion for messengers: "If your hotel doesn't have many SBC messengers, and an SBC bus doesn't stop there, we urge you to park at the Atlanta Civic Center lot and ride a shuttle bus to the convention. You will have excellent service and be much happier with arrangements."

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Allen Gives Resolutions
Procedure for SBC

ATLANTA (BP)--Larry Baker, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ark., has been appointed chairman of the committee on resolutions which will report to the Southern Baptist Convention when it meets in annual session at Atlanta's Georgia World Congress Center, Jun 13-15.

SBC President Jimmy R. Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas, who appointed Baker and a 10-person resolutions committee, urged all SBC messengers submitting resolutions to streamline the procedures with the following steps:

(1) Submit resolutions in advance in writing, wherever possible, to Baker (P. O. Box 906, Fayetteville, Ark. 72701); (2) check resolutions passed by previous conventions (in convention annuals found in many church offices or in a comprehensive description of resolutions secured by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Southern Baptist Convention Resolutions, 460 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, Tenn. 37219); (3) consult, wherever possible, with the chairman or members of the resolutions committee before a resolution is submitted to the convention; (4) be prepared to turn in a written copy of the resolution at the platform if it is made from the floor.

"These simple steps will avoid confusion and overlapping and will streamline the committee's efforts to do a thorough and fair job of processing resolutions," Allen said.

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Court Ends Ban On Clergy
Serving Public Office Terms

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
4/19/78

WASHINGTON (BP)--In its major church-state decision of the current term, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that states may not forbid ministers from running for public office--based on the First Amendment's guarantee of "free exercise" of religion.

The legal suit which resulted in the high court's decision was originally brought in a Tennessee state court against Paul A. McDaniel, pastor of the Second Missionary Baptist Church in Chattanooga. He sought and won a seat in the state constitutional convention last year.

McDaniel's opponent, Selma Cash Paty, initiated the suit, citing a provision in the state constitution dating to 1796 stating that "No minister of the gospel or priest of any denomination whatever shall be eligible to a seat in either house of the legislature." The Tennessee legislature, in calling last year's constitutional convention, invoked the state constitution's eligibility requirements as applicable to candidates for the constitutional convention.

The Hamilton County chancery court then ruled in McDaniel's favor. But on appeal, the Tennessee Supreme Court reversed that decision, thereby setting the stage for an appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court.

McDaniel was allowed to take his seat in the limited constitutional convention when U. S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart stayed the Tennessee high court decision while the nation's highest tribunal considered the case.

In the high court's unanimous judgment, Chief Justice Warren E. Burger declared that the Tennessee prohibition against ministers ran afoul of the First Amendment in that it conditioned McDaniel's right to the free exercise of religion on the surrender of his right to seek public office. Quoting James Madison, Burger said that Tennessee was guilty of "punishing a religious profession with the privation of a civil right."

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The court's decision strikes down the last of 13 state bans on ministers' seeking office. During the 18th and 19th centuries, several states adopted such provisions in their laws in part because of a desire to keep church and state as separate as possible.

But as the Madison view gained acceptance, 11 of the 13 states banning clergy from public office relented. Only Maryland and Tennessee carried such prohibitions into the 20th Century and Maryland's law was struck down as unconstitutional four years ago.

Not until now, however, had the Supreme Court ever ruled on the question.

At least two Baptist groups had called on the court to make the decision it reached. Last October the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs joined nine other national groups asking the court to strike down the Tennessee ban. They were joined in December by the executive board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

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Injured Missionary Moved
From Baylor Intensive Care

Baptist Press
4/19/78

DALLAS (BP)--Ruth (Mrs. Jack G.) Partain, Southern Baptist missionary injured in a car accident March 23 in Kibaha, Tanzania, has been moved out of the intensive care unit at Baylor University Medical Center.

Word from Partain indicates his wife's recovery is still expected to be lengthy but she is responding better and her level of consciousness is improving. She has been semiconscious as a result of a brain contusion she received in the car-truck collision. Because a long recovery is expected, the Partains have been granted early furlough for medical reasons.

Partain was driving during the mishap but received only minor injuries. Another missionary, Marilyn (Mrs. Tom W.) McMillan, was also hospitalized after the accident but is recovering at her home in Arusha, Tanzania.

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