



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

## -- FEATURES

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New York Volunteers  
Snowbound for Glory

By Judy Touchton

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CANTON, N.Y. (BP)--Jimmy Crawford likes snow.

Once he stayed awake all night tracking in a snowstorm that hit his hometown of Memphis, Tenn.

Jimmy likes snow so much, in fact, he quit his job, packed up his belongings--and his wife, Donna--and moved to upstate New York as a Mission Service Corps volunteer.

But, he confesses, "only partly for the snow," although he claims to enjoy shoveling six-to-ten-foot snowdrifts in his driveway.

Mostly he and Donna, married four years, moved to Canton, N.Y., a tiny farm-ringed community of 6,000 just a few miles from the Canadian border and the St. Lawrence Seaway, to help a nearly non-existent mission congregation grow into a full-size Southern Baptist church.

The Crawfords first visited New York state with a youth group holding Vacation Bible Schools near Lake Placid.

"We had boys and girls in Vacation Bible School who didn't even know who Jesus is. They'd never heard of the Bible. They only knew it was a book because it had a cover," Jimmy says.

The Crawfords, who grew up as Southern Baptists in Memphis, were amazed. "I don't think anybody who's grown up in the Bible belt realizes there are places in our country where people don't know the name of Jesus," Donna says.

The summer changed the Crawfords' lives. "I think we both knew when we left after those two weeks we'd be back," Donna says.

They came back to establish a Bible study and seed the ground for ministry.

"There had been several attempts to start something in Canton," Crawford explains, "but they all failed. There was a Bible study, but it died. We came here to cultivate. When we had the first service we didn't know if anyone would show or not."

That first Sunday about 12 people (including children) met in the town's Grange hall--rent free in return for a paint job by a few volunteers, including the Crawfords.

Mike Cloer, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist in Potsdam, the mission's sponsor, led early services in Canton and returned to Potsdam for 11 a.m. services for nearly six months.

Although the drive to Potsdam is only about 15 miles, mission strategists in New York decided even that's too far for such village-oriented folks.

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In January 1979, the congregation called its own pastor, Dave Cavanaugh, who brought with him his wife, Becky, and two potential church members--their toddler sons, Scott and Josh. By spring 1979, the mission had 43 in Sunday School and worship services.

Despite such obvious success, the Crawfords admit they never intended to be full-time volunteers. Jimmy, a criminal justice major who worked at the Shelby County courthouse in Memphis, intended to find a job in law enforcement. Donna, with a bachelors degree and experience in dental hygiene, wanted a job with a local dentist.

"At first, we were kind of judgmental about people we saw just sitting around unemployed--until we got here and found there were no jobs to be had," Donna says.

The county, St. Lawrence, is one of the poorest in New York.

Their only guaranteed income is just over \$450 a month sent by friends and their Memphis church, La Belle Haven.

Yet Donna says, "I feel a lot more secure than I ever did in Memphis when we were both working good jobs and even had some money in savings. There, we had financial security in the world's eyes. I don't ever want to do without the security I feel with God providing what we need."

But it was not just their uncertain income that caused the Crawfords to make adjustments.

"We would wake up in the morning and ask ourselves, 'What do we do?'" Donna remembers about their first few weeks in Canton.

"Most people see missions as just knocking on doors and telling people about Jesus," she continues. "Up here, missions might mean Jimmy's going over to a farmer's to work when he's a man short, or taking a lady to the doctor in Ogdensburg, or visiting with a woman who keeps two little girls during the day."

"We actually made more visits when we first got here," Jimmy adds. "Then, we didn't know better. We didn't know people were not going to respond."

"People just aren't going to flock to church after one visit. Once, Emmanuel's pastor knocked on 70 doors and got no response. People up here have gotten along so long without God, they've gotten cold."

"Up here, I've had to depend a lot more on God than I did in Memphis," he says. "I just can't make it without him. Otherwise, I'd just have to go back home."

Donna nods and adds, "When this church is strong and when there are some members strong enough to disciple others, we could move on. But I just don't know how I could ever go back to 'business as usual.'"

Jimmy agrees, "I know I'm here for two years. And God may plan for me to stay the rest of my life. Snow or no snow!"

**(BP)****BAPTIST PRESS**

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Sports-Intoxicated America  
Gives President Hard Time

By Norman Jameson

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--Bill Williams discovered "a certain segment of our society is totally and completely intoxicated by sports" when he kept his Grand Canyon College baseball team from competing in the NAIA world series.

Williams, president of the Southern Baptist school, kept his top-ranked team home after they celebrated their final win by pouring champagne over themselves, against published rules prohibiting the use or possession of alcohol.

As a result, he endured threats that forced him from his house for four days, court action initiated by players, possible sanction by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, and potential loss of donor support.

"I didn't have people calling to ask 'How does this decision affect their academic stance?'" Williams said. "We didn't kick any of the boys out of school, didn't put any on probation (a normal disciplinary measure which would have prevented them from playing in the tournament), we've not kept them from coming back. I didn't get any questions about the academic effect."

The Grand Canyon Antelopes, 58-10, were top-ranked among America's small colleges in the National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics. They had just swept their district and area tournaments to earn a berth in the NAIA World Series in Nashville, Tenn., where pro scouts are like shoppers on Christmas Eve.

Publicly, no one has said any of the celebration champagne was consumed and the players denied it was, but possession is just as expressly forbidden. Williams indicated that if this incident had been an isolated case of discipline breakdown, the punishment may have been less severe.

When a photograph of the celebration appeared in Phoenix newspapers, Williams knew it required disciplinary action. But what action would be appropriate to show vividly the seriousness of the players' breach of trust and to treat them not just as athletes but as students and representatives of a Christian school?

On one hand, Williams had a documented violation of published college rules. On the other hand stood the likelihood of a national baseball title and its accompanying publicity, prestige, recruitment aid and donor support. And in the middle, rolling in the conflict of secular and religious values, was the question of the role of athletics at a Christian college.

Williams, talking a month after the incident, said, "The question we kept having to answer was 'What decision will best present to all that our number one priority here is to prepare people to be witnesses?' The only answer that would consistently come back to us was that we needed to keep the team home."

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Williams, a former high school athlete and wrestling coach, is not insensitive to the value of athletics, or to the benefits of a highly successful athletic program such as Grand Canyon's in this decade--two national championship basketball teams and four appearances in the national baseball tournament.

"Quite selfishly, I would have liked a national title, which I believe we would have won," Williams said. "But suppose the team would have gone and won. After this incident, could I have ever presented that in a meaningful light as a positive thing for Grand Canyon College? Every time I mentioned it, people would have said, 'Yeah, you can have those kinds of teams if you have guys that celebrate with champagne, don't have any standards, go by their own rules, etc.' There would have been no way that would have been positive for the institution. I believe God put this institution here and I believe we are strategically located, as far as the evangelism of the West goes."

"There's a bigger lesson than winning a national tournament," Williams maintained. "A lesson that would perhaps make their (players) lives stronger in terms of accomplishment, in terms of respecting those guidelines in both the Christian faith and the institutions they may be a part of that will make them most effective. Those things have to ride above anything you can accomplish at any given time."

Immediate reaction from Arizona newspapers was negative. Sports writers especially castigated the "archaic, unforgiving" attitude of the college toward its players. Eventually, however, editorials swung in favor of Grand Canyon and it was applauded for sticking to its rules and standards at a time when others let them slide. Several Baptist state newspapers carried favorable editorials on the incident.

The ironies of the situation will be pondered for years. Williams met with the executive committee of the NAIA, facing possible sanction for keeping his team out of the national tournament. It issued a statement saying, "Because of the unusual circumstances surrounding this case, the committee has determined that institutional probationary action. . . shall not be assessed in this instance."

Williams said after the meeting, the committee, composed primarily of college administrators and athletic directors, supported Grand Canyon's stance and indicated punitive action may have been more required had the school not reprimanded the players.

But the strangest irony and stuff of which Cinderella stories are composed, is that Grand Canyon's replacement in the world series, David Lipscomb College of Nashville, Tenn., won the thing. Lipscomb, 1977 NAIA champions, had been runner-up in the Area 5 tournament but got their players back together one more time and took the championship before a hometown crowd.

Willard Collins, president of Lipscomb, a Church of Christ school, said before the tournament that he sided with Grand Canyon's stance. Lipscomb also has rules against the use or possession of alcoholic beverages and Collins said, "I would consider that an improper victory celebration at Lipscomb and we would take the same action."

The backwash is past and the silt is settling over the baseball incident, leaving at least one lasting effect. That is that the Christian stance of Bill Williams and Grand Canyon College have stood against overwhelmingly national secular opinion and will be remembered long after baseball games are covered with the dust of history.

Special Missions Volunteer  
To Play Trumpet in Europe

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Stacy Blair has played his trumpet on national television, at Disney World and in U.S. and overseas competition. Now he's taking it to France as he goes as a Fulbright scholar and a missions volunteer.

Blair has been blind since birth.

In September, he will begin studies under Maurice Andre at the Paris Conservatory. Although he will be there as a music student and has personal concerns planned through Europe, he calls himself a musical evangelist and will be available to Southern Baptist missionaries.

He will be the first missions volunteer going overseas through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board as a special service volunteer, a category established primarily for students overseas who want to give a significant amount of time to Southern Baptist missions efforts. His services are completely free to the missionaries; the board did not even make travel arrangements.

The Texas native is quick to say he considers his blindness a physical characteristic, not a handicap. "I feel the Lord gives you tools to work with and what you do with them is up to you," he explains. He has had to memorize all of his music and learns most of it by listening to records and tapes.

He won 32 music awards while in high school and has been given numerous honors since then, including solo appearances all over the United States. In 1977, he was featured on "Good Morning, America" while marching with the Hardin-Simmons University band in the Carter inaugural parade.

But what he considers his most prestigious honor came in June. He competed in the first Maurice Andre international trumpet contest in Paris which was sponsored by the mayor of the capital city and he won first prize. With this award came \$8,000 and a recording contract with Erato Records, a European-based recording firm.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.