



BAPTIST PRESS

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June 24, 1980

80-104

Daingerfield Recovers From
Rampage By Gunman

By Jerilynn W. Armstrong

DAINGERFIELD, Texas (BP)--It's not business as usual in the small East Texas town of Daingerfield. Family members are making funeral arrangements for their dead and others are visiting friends and relatives in area hospitals.

On Sunday, June 22, while the congregation was singing the third stanza of "More About Jesus," a former high school geometry teacher stormed into the packed First Baptist Church of Daingerfield and opened fire on the congregation killing five people and wounding 10 others.

Witnesses said the gunman, Alvin Lee King III, 46, kicked open the doors of the church and screamed, "This is War," before opening fire with an M-1 carbine. He was dressed in full battle gear and carried additional semi-automatic rifles with fixed bayonets and two pistols.

Authorities said King, who was to go on trial the next morning on an incest charge, shot himself in the head after fighting with ushers and fleeing from the church. He is in Galveston's John Sealy Hospital and was reported in stable condition, June 23.

Residents speculated that his impending trial may have triggered the shooting spree. He reportedly had asked several members of the church to serve as character witnesses but they had refused.

Killed were Glna Linam, 7, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Linam; James Y. "Red" McDaniel, 49; Mrs. Thelma Richardson, 78; Kenneth Truitt, 50; and Gene Gandy, 50.

Virgil Fielden, the 72-year-old associate pastor at the church who was to preach for the morning service, June 22, said a year or so ago a skit was staged in the church where several youths stormed into the church in a mock communist takeover and several people thought something similar was happening.

"Since the majority of the congregation believed that the man was play-acting they remained calm and seated. There was no panic, and I believe because of this fewer people were killed," said Dan Gilmore, 34-year-old music and education director at First Baptist Church.

"All I can remember is that everything stopped and got quiet," said Gilmore. "It was quiet like I've never heard before. Then, before I knew it, it was over."

In less than three minutes, the gunman shot down 15 church members attending the 11 a.m. services.

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"My first thought was that it can't happen here in small-town USA," Gilmore said. "I just moved from Houston four months ago to this town, and at first was shocked that this type of freak accident could occur, but it shows that crises take place everywhere."

Before Sunday, King and his wife, Gretchen, lived on a small farm in Cass County. Until 1972, King had been a geometry and math teacher at Daingerfield High School. He abruptly quit and became a truck driver. He later earned a doctorate in psychology at East Texas State University and returned to the Daingerfield area.

Gilmore said no one in the congregation moved until three men tried to wrench the rifles away from King.

One of them--James McDaniel--died trying.

"I cannot commend our people enough for their presence of mind and quick action following the incident," Gilmore said. "They rendered aid to those who needed it and have extended the hand of love and comfort to those who lost loved ones."

"As a matter of fact, the entire community has offered food, facilities and aid to our congregation. In a town of 2,600, there's not a person who remains untouched by this incident. It's a community affair. The pastor and I believe that God is going to work a miracle in and through this situation and bless the church and community." The pastor, Norman Crisp, was ill and did not attend the June 22 service.

Funeral services were scheduled for the five victims on June 24 and June 25. The 10 wounded are recuperating in four area hospitals.

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China Invites Christian
Immunization Team

By C.E. Bryant

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WASHINGTON (BP)--The People's Republic of China has invited Brother's Brother Foundation, an interfaith medical group at Pittsburgh, Pa., to come to China to instruct Chinese health workers in the use of modern jet immunization techniques.

Dr. Robert A. Hingson, a Baptist deacon and founder-director of the BBF, made that announcement at the offices of the Baptist World Alliance which sponsored his round-the-world medical survey in 1958 and has helped finance immunization projects on four continents since that time.

Dr. Hingson and his colleague Dr. Thomas Welty toured China April 26-May 13, studying Chinese medicine and sharing details of preventive medicine programs. They demonstrated jet immunization techniques, and presented the Chinese health ministry with six immunization injectors as a gift from the Baptist World Alliance.

Dr. Qian Xien, the Chinese minister of health, and a group of 10 Chinese medical scientists returned Dr. Hingson's visit in June. They stopped at the Brother's Brother offices in Pittsburgh, and convened again with Dr. Hingson in association with Chinese embassy officials at Washington June 19.

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The jet injector--which propels vaccine by air pressure rather than a needle--was developed by Dr. Hingson in the 1950s, and has been widely used by World Health Organization in its successful crusade eradicating smallpox from the earth.

Dr. Hingson nicknamed the pistol-shaped instrument as a "peace gun" after a youngster he met in the Philippines on his 1958 tour exclaimed, "It's not a bad gun. It makes people well. It's a pistola de la paz (pistol of peace)."

Dr. Hingson said that on his April-May trip to China he and Dr. Welty found the Chinese health ministry vitally interested in the welfare of its people, especially children subject to contagious diseases.

"They have their own vaccines and have made good progress in the field of preventive medicine," he said.

"They are eager to add the peace gun to their arsenal, because it is capable of injecting vaccines into the flesh at a rate of 3,000 an hour. This is more than enough speed to inject every person in a fast walking line, and will be a big step forward in reaching China's large population."

Since 1977, Brother's Brother has worked with the Baptist World Alliance, Rotary International, UNICEF and the World Health Organization in pilot projects immunizing children of selected developing nations against the prevalent diseases of measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, polio, tetanus, tuberculosis and typhoid. The project was tied into the United Nations' observance of The Year of the Child in 1979.

The child immunization program is the same style pilot approach Brother's Brother initiated with a crusade against smallpox during an epidemic in Liberia in 1962. Masses of Liberians were vaccinated in town squares, at soccer stadiums, at helicopter pads in the bush and at highway roadblocks. As a result smallpox disappeared from that West African nation.

World Health Organization carried the smallpox project to other nations in Africa and Asia until WHO officials announced in October 1979 that "one of mankind's greatest scourges, smallpox, has been completely eliminated and will not return."

The immunization kits recently demonstrated to the Chinese include three styles of the gun--a medijet, a dermajet and a pedojet. They vary in capacity. Hingson also demonstrated a newly designed ice chest which will keep vaccines sufficiently cold up to five days in tropical conditions.

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Taylor, Freeman Committed
To Being 'Unifiers' in SBC

By Toby Druin

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6/24/80

DALLAS (BP)--The new vice presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention expressed the same sentiments after a few days of reflection on their recent elections in St. Louis--surprise that the convention chose them and a common commitment to being a unifying influence.

Evangelist Jack R. Taylor of Fort Worth was elected first vice president, winning out over six other nominees. And the man he beat in the runoff, C. Wade Freeman of Dallas, former longtime director of evangelism for Texas Baptists, was elected second vice president, topping a field of 12 for that post.

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Taylor said in Dallas, where he was leading a meeting at Calvary Hill Baptist Church, Mesquite, that the response to his election had been "surprise and pleasure" on his part and that he had been congratulated from all quarters.

"I was somewhat surprised," he said. "Not often has an evangelist even been considered for the office."

He wasn't running for the office, he explained, and didn't consent to his nomination by William A. Cook of Oklahoma until Monday afternoon before the Tuesday night election. Before giving Cook the go-ahead, Taylor had spoken to the Pastors' Conference urging "prayer, not politicking" and pointing out Southern Baptists can disagree and still love each other.

"I hope this can be a year of unifying, of bridge building," he said. "We need to major on relationships. If we are saved persons, we may be apart on doctrines and non-essentials to salvation, but we ought to seek for points of fellowship and agreement and start there instead of at our differences."

Taylor said he felt the convention elections—his and Freeman's and that of Bailey Smith of Oklahoma as president—had the "flavor" of bridge building and developing of relationships, and he hopes to foster that feeling.

Taylor was pastor of Castle Hills Baptist Church, San Antonio, for 17 years, 1957-74, building that congregation from 100 members to more than 4,000. In 1974 he formed Dimensions in Christian Living and moved to Fort Worth. He now leads some 40 Christian life and Bible conferences and Christian growth seminars a year.

"I am not a crusade evangelist in the strictest sense," he said. "My ministry is largely to churches, to Christians and to the building up of individual Christians."

"I see this as an absolute necessity for continuing evangelism and missions. The raising of the quality of the kind of Christianity we have is a natural shot in the arm to evangelism and missions."

Taylor is a native of Wheeler County and is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was pastor of New Hope Baptist Church Number 3 near Ranger, Texas, before moving to San Antonio.

He has become widely known through his books as well as his preaching ministry and said in the future he hopes to spend more time writing.

He is seeing signs of a spiritual awakening in America, he said, in response to "more and more desperation to see God really at work. People want to cease business as usual and get on with business as it ought to be."

Freeman said he was in Washington, D.C., to help with the wedding of his grandson when Clyde Fant of First Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas, called just before the SBC to ask his permission to nominate him for vice president.

"I finally gave my consent reluctantly," he said. "I had never even thought of it; it had never entered my mind."

The second vice presidency is the only elective office Freeman has held other than moderator of a Baptist association, and he was surprised, he said.

He, too, hopes to be a unifying influence, "because I don't want to see a two-party system develop in the convention."

"I have never seen anything like it," Freeman, a member of First Baptist Church, Dallas, said. "I see the possibility of great men who have been leaders of our denomination being at cross purposes with each other.

"Baptists will always have their differences," he said. "We have never been accused of being unanimous on very many things, but we have not had differences that separated us. I weep when I think of the possibility of it."

Freeman is not a fisherman, he said, but his friends who are tell him that when a lake "turns over" the fish don't bite. The turmoil in the convention over inerrancy of the Bible, he said, is comparable to the "lake turning over" and he fears people will not be won to Christ.

"I am afraid the fish aren't going to bite," he said. "The energy of Bold Mission Thrust has been completely sapped over the last two years because of this disrupting force that has crept in."

The answer, he feels, is to refocus Southern Baptist attention on winning people to Christ—getting them "hot after souls," as L.R. Scarborough used to tell his students at Southwestern Seminary, Freeman said.

"I don't think this problem about inerrancy will ever be solved, anyway," he said. "But in fact I don't know a Baptist preacher who doesn't already believe it. Do you know a Baptist preacher who doesn't believe the Scriptures?"

Freeman said his election was a "back to Bethel" experience for him. A native Missourian, he was born 125 miles south of St. Louis and sold newspapers on the streets of the city before being won to Christ at 16 about a mile from the site of the present convention center.

He now frequently returns to Missouri to preach. He has also formed a ministry to senior adults that keeps him busy. When he is in Dallas, he teaches teachers at First Baptist Church, Dallas.

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Christ Changed Him Cullen
Davis Tells Employees

By John Rutledge

Baptist Press
6/24/80

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Cullen Davis, millionaire Fort Worth industrialist, looking out at the 700 Ken-Davis Industries employees he had invited to his mansion to hear evangelist James Robison, told them people had asked if his life had changed since he professed faith in Christ six weeks before.

"You all wouldn't be here if it hadn't," he said.

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Indeed, the Davis mansion was the last place anyone would have expected to find a James Robison crusade. In 1976, Davis' stepdaughter and a man were shot to death in the mansion. Davis stood trial for the murder of the girl in 1977 and was acquitted.

He later stood trial and was acquitted of charges he plotted to kill the judge handling his divorce. Even before these events, Davis was rumored to be a wild party-goer, with no interest in God.

But through mutual friends, including lawyer Richard "Racehorse" Haynes, Robison and Davis met and talked several times about God. Davis liked what he had to say.

He also liked his style, which was "dynamic" rather than the "staid and boring" approach of most preachers he had heard. A few weeks ago Davis made a commitment to Christ at First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, where Robison is a member. He and Mrs. Davis and her 12-year-old son Trey were baptized there Sunday, June 15.

At the mansion June 14 after the singing and Robison's sermon urging his listeners to vote for "Christian" causes and candidates, Davis explained in an interview he came to make his commitment to Christ after having Robison and his wife over for dinner one night.

"I made up my mind then to turn over my life to Christ," he said. But he was no stranger to the concept.

"I'd done it before when I was 16 years old at a Billy Graham crusade in Fort Worth," he explained.

In fact, Davis said he had been a diligent church-goer in his teens, sometimes attending a Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist church service every week.

"I learned quite a bit about the Bible," he said. "I'm not new to the Bible, the church or Christ."

But when he went off to college, he "got away from the Lord," he said.

The frustrations of the court trials over the past several years helped convince him to return to the Lord.

"During the trials I thought about God, not but as some people do. Not a lot of misery or thinking that God had left me," he said.

"I wondered that, what if I went back to God, what would He want me to do?" Davis said the answer to that question is still unanswered, "unless it's just what I'm doing now."

Davis said he was considering going back to church even before he met Robison.

"But I always felt church was a bore," he said. "James was the catalyst that got me to go back."

Now Davis finds many of his acquaintances and friends are open to the gospel.

"It seems like anytime I get into a conversation, they've been pondering it, like 'everything else has failed, let's try Christ,'" Davis said. "There were a lot of latent Christians in the crowd today. They just need somebody to wake them up."

A few reporters asked Davis if his lifestyle had changed, whether he had given up partying and now "stayed home to read the Bible."

"I do read the Bible," he said, but added that the rumors of his wild lifestyle were exaggerated.

"I never had any wild parties here like Priscilla (his ex-wife) did," he said.

Davis is reported to make millions a year, but he doesn't see his wealth as an obstacle in his walk with God.

"I'm glad to have it," he said. No one has confronted him as Jesus did the rich young ruler with a command to sell what he has and give it to the poor.

"I would give it away if the Lord asked me to, but not if James asked me to," he said.

Instead, he's using some of it to support Robison's ministry, which lately has been keying on right wing political issues. These views aren't new to Cullen Davis either.

Robison spent most of his sermon encouraging the crowd to become more concerned and involved with politics, charging that the country has been used by Soviet leaders, has lost control of vital interests in the Middle East and is morally, mentally and spiritually bankrupt.

He came out against the windfall profits tax, federal bureaucracy, the White House Conference on the Family, Supreme Court rulings on abortion and prayer in schools, and for "big business, small business, any kind of business but big government business." He was interrupted several times by applause.

The teaching that religion and politics don't mix leaves Christian voters "as confused as a termite in a yo-yo," Robison said. "The radicals, the communists, the feminists, the gays—they're organized for a cause. We just stumble around in the dark."

Davis, whose businesses deal largely with defense contracts and oil and gas, said Robison expressed his views also.

At the end of the morning's activities, Robison asked everyone to bow their heads and raise their hands if they felt they needed prayer to receive Christ. Then those who felt they hadn't been as concerned about the country and wanted to become more active and informed were asked to raise their hands.

Robison told them where they could obtain a "vote" lapel pin, bumper stickers and copies of his magazine as well as a Bible study guide, and the crowd dispersed, many to shake hands with Davis. There was no altar call, but several persons were counseled with afterwards and professed faith in Christ, one of Robison's associates said.