

(BP)

-- FEATURES
produced by Baptist Press

March 16, 1983

83-40

MK's Discuss Call
Of 'Foreign' Homes

By Norman Jameson

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"I thought I might have to spend the rest of my life living in the United States and it frightened me to death," admits Charlene Martin.

So much for praying for the poor missionary child who grew up in Africa.

Martin, daughter of Earl and Jane Martin, grew up mostly in Tanzania. She is one of 85 "missionary kids" on the campus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and her feelings are not unique. One-third of them are career missions volunteers.

Five MKs interviewed at the seminary longed to return to the land where they were raised. Their only hesitation was the feeling their own emotions, rather than the call of God, were pulling them "home."

"We crave security because we've moved around so much," said Martin. "We crave a place to call home. I want to be sure my decision is not based on that."

Gregg Fort, son of Giles and Wana Ann Fort in Zimbabwe, said he always saw himself returning to the mission field. He grew up speaking Chi Shona better than he spoke English. "A blind man wouldn't know I was white just from hearing me talk," he said.

As a stranger in a strange land, Fort matured more quickly than his peers. That made it difficult growing up because he found little to relate to among those in his age group.

Keith Stamps, son of Stanley and Glenna Stamps in Honduras, said his grandparents still resent the fact he and his family are "not quite like" their other grandchildren.

Fort's biggest adjustment to America has been switching his psychological time clock to high gear. In Africa, tomorrow is as good as today.

Often Africans were in the fields when the Forts passed them on the way to a preaching point. The truck was the Rhodesian's signal to get ready for church. Many had to walk three or four miles after they returned from the fields. When they arrived an hour or two later, services began.

Several MKs say their circumstances contributed to real spiritual growth, strengthened by seeing God act in difficult settings and nurtured by "aunts and uncles" (other missionaries) who loved them as their own.

"That's where I started to see the Christian life was more than going to church," said Janene Weller. "I feel fortunate to have been brought up under really godly men and women."

Weller followed her Navy parents, Jac and Jane, to Singapore from Thailand, so the Far East presented no major adjustment problems when her parents became associate missionaries. "I just thought I was in a wonderful place," she said.

Weller said Singapore is more modern than Fort Worth in many ways. The city is clean because of a \$500 fine for littering, a hair code prevents persons from getting on a train or airplane with hair too long because long hair is associated with the drug culture and no "R" rated movies are shown.

MKs parents are often gone long hours every day, then days at a time to mission meetings and preaching points. Many MKs leave their parents to attend boarding school because local stations cannot provide adequate schooling.

-more-

"I didn't realize how different I was until junior high," said Mary Carpenter, daughter of medical doctor Jim and Joyce Carpenter. "I didn't have an identity problem until we got back to the United States. In Indonesia, I thought we had everything. We ran around barefoot and with few clothes. But here we looked like little beggars." Yet all four Carpenter children want to become missionaries.

Beginning college, for most MKs, is traumatic. Sometimes they don't see their family for two years, there is a six week round trip between letters, peers don't understand, there is no place to be with familiar family during holidays.

To ease the adjustment many missionaries schedule furloughs so they can be in the U.S. when their child begins college. Also the Foreign Mission Board invites all first year students to a Thanksgiving retreat near Richmond and pays the expense. The FMB also provides each MK one free roundtrip back to the mission field during the college years.

Furloughs, retreats and trips home help. But they can't solve all the problems.

"I looked like an American and was expected to know how to act, to know the lingo, what's cool and what's gross," Weller said. "But I had questions about simple things those who grew up in America never have to think about. Is it okay to ask to use someone's fingernail clipper or is that like asking to use his toothbrush? Do you pay for water?"

Martin said the big difference in churches and values makes U.S. adjustment difficult. "The materialism really shocks your system," she said. "But many of us needed that jolt. It helps us realize where our strengths and the source of strength are."

Where some might think the MKs looked forward to furlough times to be "home" in the U.S. and with family, furlough is actually a difficult period. Parents are "Lottie Mooning," raising money for the annual foreign missions offering. "Friends" have grown up with different values and relatives are strangers.

Home--be it in Africa, South America or Asia--is still where your friends are and where you pour out your life, even if it does get a little dangerous occasionally.

Carpenter said, during a riot, her father helped a man who was badly cut up. They found out later he was a communist and had been assigned to kill the family.

"We've lived in an adventurous setting," Martin agreed. Her father is now a professor of missions at Southwestern. "We had the opportunities to see animals and to do certain things the 'normal' American doesn't have opportunity to do. Dad was an avid hunter and we often went with him. I grew up loving the outdoors, having that kind of adventure."

God, not adventure, calls these MKs back to the mission field. They realize absence from America is not deprivation. They wish more would realize the same thing and commit themselves to foreign missions.

-30-

Missionary To Venezuela,
Doris Stull Smith, Dies

Baptist Press
3/16/83

LA GRANGE, Ga. (BP)--Doris Stull Smith, 51, Southern Baptist missionary to Venezuela, died March 10 at West Georgia Medical Center in La Grange following a yearlong bout with cancer.

Mrs. Smith and her husband, Donald R. Smith, had been on extended furlough from Venezuela since 1979. He had been an associate manager at the Missionary Orientation Center at Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Ga., since July, 1980.

The Smiths were appointed missionaries in 1956 and went to Venezuela after a year of Spanish language study in San Jose, Costa Rica. Stationed first in Valencia, Mrs. Smith worked with women and children in a local church and was treasurer of the National Woman's Missionary Union for one year.

-more-

The Smiths lived for a short time in Maracaibo where he did general evangelism and worked with students. They spent their last 10 years on the mission field in Ciudad Ojeda where he was pastor of an English-language church. Her work was centered around the home and her local church. She worked with women's groups and directed the primary and junior Sunday School departments.

She was born in Borger, Texas, and spent most of her childhood there. After graduating from high school in Pampa, Texas, she attended Texas Christian University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, both in Fort Worth.

Besides her husband, she is survived by three sons: Steven of Mandeville, La., Douglas of Houston, Texas, and Scott of Pine Mountain; and two daughters, Sherie Feux and Debra Rodgers, both of Houston, Texas. She is also survived by a stepmother, Francis Stull of Phoenix, Ariz., and two sisters, Mrs. Lillian Hansen of Tulsa, Okla., and Mrs. Lois Robinette of Lovington, N.M.

-30-

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

Kentucky Police Find Body
Of Church Lot Murder Victim

By Laurie Taylor

Baptist Press
3/16/83

LEXINGTON, Ky. (BP)--The body of 86-year-old Nannie Hieatt, who was murdered in the parking lot of First Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky., has been found on a Lexington farm more than three months after her disappearance.

Hieatt, who lived with her twin sister, Kate, and an older sister, Martha, 90, left home early in the evening of Nov. 24 to attend prayer meeting at First Baptist Church.

She was attacked in the church parking lot. Bloodstains were found in the lot and her shoes and hat were found nearby according to Bennett Hall, pastor of the church.

Police found her abandoned car in Dalton, Ga., in December. They believe the attacker took an out-of-the-way route to Dalton through Clarksville, Tenn. Lexington police have confirmed suspect leads in Lexington, Dalton and Clarksville. Police have posted a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the murderer.

Based on reports from witnesses who saw a man in the car, police made a composite drawing of a suspect, believed to be a 175-pound, 6' 2" black man, 25-30 years old.

Hall believes the tragic death of Hieatt, who was honored by the church for 60 years of faithful service just two weeks before her death, can have a positive effect.

"We've experienced disturbing patterns of reaction," Hall reflected. "Through it all, our faith has been strengthened because of Nannie's love for the Lord. Christians have been martyred before and we consider her a martyr too.

"Her murder has made us more resolved to go on with the Lord's work. We've been challenged to make our church a place of worship and safety."

As a result of the death, the church has taken stricter safety precautions. Floodlights now light every area of the church grounds and the city has agreed to erect more streetlights in the vicinity. First Baptist men now escort churchgoers from their cars to the sanctuary.

"Every church needs to be more security conscious," Hall warned. "This could have happened at any church."

Since the murder, several elderly members have stopped attending the inner-city church, but the congregation has also experienced new growth. "We've had 16 additions," said Hall. "Our finances and attendance are growing and we've had a lot of visitors.

-more-

"We're not going to run scared just because Nannie is dead and her murderer is still loose," the determined pastor vowed. "No, sir. We're going right on with the Lord's work."

-30-

(Laurie Taylor is a feature writer from Lexington, Ky.)

FMB Named Defendant
In \$5 Million Suit

Baptist Press
3/16/83

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board now has been named the defendant in a \$5 million damage suit filed by a former volunteer who served in West Germany.

An amended complaint was filed March 9, in United States District Court, Fort Worth, Texas, about a month after the original damage suit named the Southern Baptist Convention as defendant.

Nasser Lotfi of Austin, Texas, identified by the Fort Worth Star-Telegram as a former colonel in the Iranian Air Force and a naturalized U.S. citizen, claims he was beaten by Turkish immigrants on March 27, 1982, while serving in Augsburg, West Germany.

The suit says the beating resulted in permanent injuries to Lotfi's back and spine and a "traumatic neurosis...."

Lotfi and his wife went to West Germany in January of 1982 for a two-year volunteer term. They were assigned to minister to Turkish immigrants in the Augsburg area, working alongside Southern Baptist career missionaries and in cooperation with the German Baptist Union.

The suit claims the Foreign Mission Board "did not disclose" the work could be "hazardous to the plaintiff's personal safety."

Mission board officials said Lotfi was selected because of his apparent Christian commitment, his Middle East background, his language skills and his intense desire to go. Officials said consultations were held in July 1982 and a decision was made to end the agreement under which the Lotfis went overseas.

-30-

Diner Customers
Served Spiritual Food

By June Jernigan

Baptist Press
3/16/83

COLUMBIA, Mo. (BP)--Guy's Diner in Columbia is far from a church in appearance, but a lot of witnessing and ministry takes place within those four walls.

Ed Johnson, owner and operator of the 10-stool diner, witnesses to his customers by giving them "God loves you" pins.

During the state fair last summer Johnson saw "God loves you" pins being distributed at the Missouri Baptist Convention booth. Later his pastor, Bart Tichenor of Little Bonne Femme Church, Columbia, obtained some pins and gave them to church members.

From that Johnson got his idea to use the pins as a ministry at his diner.

"I thought it was an ideal way to break the ice and witness," Johnson said. He ordered 500 pins before Christmas and began giving them out to customers. Recently he put in a second order for 500 more pins.

With the state cancer hospital located across the street from his diner, Johnson has an excellent opportunity to brighten the sad faces of cancer victims' relatives and friends.

-more-

One day a young cancer victim and her father came into his diner. "Do you know a friend of mine?" asked Johnson as he gave the little girl a pin. The little girl smiled and said she knew Jesus loved her, but she did not realize God loved her too.

Due to Johnson's ability to lift spirits, many customers from out of town make Guy's Diner a regular stop. This is often the case for those who come to Columbia with cancer patients requiring regular treatments.

Many customers from the Columbia area are blue collar workers, Johnson said. When he gives them the pins he explains the pins are not only for those wearing them, but also for those who see the pins being worn. They see God loves them too.

Johnson encourages his customers to give the pins away and come back to him for more. He said many of his regular customers frequently come back for additional pins.

Although the response to the pins is usually excellent, said Johnson, there are still a few negative responses. In one case a customer refused a pin. But Johnson said he simply told the man "when the day comes you need him, he will be there."

In many cases Johnson said he may never know the impact of his witness. "You've just got to believe it will lead them to a better way of life," he said.

With Johnson and only one assistant operating the diner, he often doesn't have the time to personally talk to many of his approximately 500 customers who come in each day. But he does try to get to know as many as possible.

Johnson feels many of those he is able to witness to may not be reached any other way.

"I think many times people don't go to church for various reasons, but this (ministry) introduces them to the love of God in a different way," he explained. "If they can't be witnessed to in the pulpit, praise the Lord they can be witnessed to in a diner."