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Piland, McCormick Elected
At Sunday School Board

By Linda Lawson

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Trustees of the Baptist Sunday School Board Aug. 16 elected Harry Piland to return to the board as director of the Sunday school department and Gwenn E. McCormick to become secretary of the church architecture department.

Piland, associate pastor for administration and education at First Baptist Church, Houston, was head of the Sunday school department for five years prior to his resignation in February of this year. McCormick has been director of church building planning for the North Carolina Baptist Convention, Raleigh, since 1977.

Both will assume their positions by Oct. 1.

Piland, 55, said, "It was at my initiative that I left the Sunday School Board. It was also at my initiative that I began discussions with Ralph McIntyre (director of the Bible teaching division) about returning to the board because I began to see with clarity that I had left a task unfinished, a job incomplete."

As Sunday school department director, Piland initiated plans for 8.5 by '85, the goal to increase the denomination's Sunday school enrollment to 8.5 million by Sept. 30, 1985. After leaving, Piland said, "I began to sense the first time in my life following a major decision that I had, in fact, missed God's perfect will."

"I love First Baptist Church, Houston, her great people and the beloved pastor, John Bisagno," said Piland. "I have simply come to a strong and abiding conviction that it is God's will for me to work with all our churches and not just one."

McCormick, 54, succeeds Rowland Crowder who retired earlier this year. He was pastor of First Baptist Church, Whiteville, N.C., from 1969-1977 and First Baptist Church, Aberdeen, N.C., 1963-69. He holds a bachelor's degree from Mercer University, Macon, Ga., and a masters and a doctorate from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

In recommending McCormick to the trustees, Gary Cook, director of the church and staff support division, cited McCormick's innovative leadership in building planning, which included directing the first seminar on energy conservation in churches.

Grady Cothen, president of the board, said he "wholeheartedly favors Piland's return to the board. I personally think this will keep us from losing two, three or four years of impetus in Sunday school work."

Piland also had been minister of education at University and James Avenue Baptist Churches, Fort Worth, and Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, Texas.

He is a graduate of the University of Texas, Austin, and holds a masters and a doctorate in religious education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press

It's A Long Way From The Mekong
River To Campbellsville College

By Joan C. McKinney

CAMPBELLSVILLE, Ky. (BP)--On a Sunday night in December 1975, two young men who had prayed for an escape from the Communists, walked five miles to the Mekong River. A 45-minute swim in the icy water, freed them from their Communist-occupied home country, Laos.

Each carried a suit of clothes and a Bible in plastic bags. They had \$300 betw n them.

Khamsing Norady, who was 19 years old then, and Bounchan Vongsurith, then 21, have come a long way since arriving in America speaking very little English. Last May, Norady graduated from Campbellsville College and was ordained into the ministry. Vongsurith graduated in 1982 and was ordained the first week of June.

The two second cousins have faced a lot in their struggles as Christians.

"I have felt since becoming a Christian that the Lord has called me to be his servant," Norady said. "Since I received Jesus Christ, I have felt joy and peace in my heart. I want to help people know about Jesus Christ."

Norady began pastoring Grand Avenue Baptist Church, a Laotian church in Fort Smith, Ark., in July. He was ordained at Red Hill Baptist Church in Radcliff, Ky., where he and Vongsurith shared the duties of pastoring and leading songs while both were in college.

Vongsurith has been pastoring Trinity Baptist Church in Oklahoma City with a congregation of about 200. His ordination was on his first anniversary there.

Both say they only came to Campbellsville College to "improve our English," never dreaming of graduation. Norady said, "I felt terrible when I came here. The first time I was in class I didn't know what the professor was talking about."

But Norady followed Vongsurith through school and both received degrees in psychology. Norady's wife, Bousay, has also graduated from Campbellsville College with a degree in business administration and Vongsurith's wife, Souan, has taken classes.

Vongsurith was the "leader" of the two because of respect Norady felt for elders in his home country. But Norady remembers a time when his friend was not as strong.

In 1975, the two had been studying in a Bible Training School in Laos and were captured by Communists. Armed guards were at the school forcing them not to spread the gospel. "Christ belongs to Americans" they told Norady.

They were held captive a week and sent home on a Sunday. "We had been praying hard," Norady remembers. An English ambassador had given them \$300 for their escape and they just walked to the Mekong River. "We just had hope in God," Norady said.

Vongsurith had a fever and was "so skinny," Norady said, "He (Vongsurith) kept saying 'I'm going to drown' as we swam," Norady, who was the stronger physically, said. "You believe in God, don't you?"

A rope held the two men together and they made it. But 27 others trying to escape that night were killed.

It was a hard decision to make to leave their families in Laos.

"But the first thing we thought was between our families and God. God loved us so much that we felt we needed to spread his word to our people," Vongsurith said. "We were lucky that the Lord opened the door for us when the ambassador gave us the money."

They made it to Thailand where the Thai people walked on the left of the road and the Laotians on the right. They were spotted immediately. "A gang of Thailand authority" stopped them and took them to a Buddhist temple.

"I'll never forget how they picked up our Bible and asked if we were Christians. 'You think God will help you?' they asked. Then they laughed," Vongsurith said.

Fortunately the leader of the gang knew them from Laos. They spent the night in the temple but were released. They went to a refugee camp in Thailand occupied by about 200 people. When they left nine months later, there were 10,000 there. There are now 100,000.

Vongsurith and Norady were sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Thurman Witten of Vine Grove, Ky., who sponsor Laotians who now live all over the country. "Papa and mama" Witten are a joy to us," Norady said.

Living in a foreign land caused many hardships. There was little money and at one time Norady was the head of the household for 15 people. His wife's family came to the country and lived with them for awhile, and Norady said he was frequently "worried to death."

In one of his classes, the object was to share with the other members. "I have too many problems to tell you," he said. People began helping with money and groceries and "I felt rich during that time," he said. "People lifted me up all the time."

Norady's pastor's wife, Mrs. Sharon Gowin kept their young child, Ruthie, for free while Norady and his wife went to school for a semester. As head of the 15-member household, Norady insisted on Bible study. All of Mrs. Norady's family, including her 84-year-old grandmother, became Christians. All were Buddhist before.

Vongsurith and Norady believe they've accomplished much in their lives here. But there is always room for improvement.

"Yes, I'd do it all over, but I could do better. People try to be better all the time, don't they? Trying to 'get on top'," Vongsurith said.

Vongsurith admits, "I am proud of myself--finally." He is living a different life in Oklahoma--facing prejudice from others toward his people, and helping them with simple things like passing a driver's test and finding a job. But he wouldn't have it any other way.

Norady is looking forward to his challenge in Arkansas. "I know I will be able to help my people," he said. "God has opened his way for my life."

And both are still carrying those two Bibles--the ones that made the long journey from Laos to America.

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(Joan McKinney is a news writer in the Public Information Office at Campbellsville College.)

All Dallas Baptist College
Freshmen Get Computers

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DALLAS (BP)--Each entering freshman at Dallas Baptist College will have his or her personal, portable microcomputer.

The computers are being made available by the college to implement a vote of the DBC faculty to require computer literacy of all new students.

Freshmen enrolling at DBC beginning this fall will be assessed a computer use fee, which will entitle them to the use of a TRS-80 Model 100 briefcase computer. Students will be able to use the computers in class, for out-of-class assignments or for personal use.

The computer use fee is actually a lease-purchase arrangement, according to Bill Moos, assistant professor of computer science at DBC. Moos said students who pay the fee for four semesters will have purchased the Model 100.

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Computer science majors and others who advance beyond the capabilities of the Model 100 have the option of using Apple IIe or IBM Personal Computers, which have a wider range of computing capabilities for more specialized problems.

The computer use fee ranges from \$150 to \$350 per semester, depending on the type of computer selected by the student. All computer use fees apply toward purchase of a computer.

Every entering freshman will be required to take the college's freshman-level course, Introduction to Computers and Data Processing.

"Our ultimate goal is for almost every class at the college to have various types of computer applications built into the course," Moos said. "Some courses lend themselves more readily to computer applications, but almost all courses can use the computer in some way."

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Christian High Adventure Camper
Dies After Van Accident

By Patti Stephenson

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GAINESVILLE, Ga. (BP)--A Christian High Adventure camper critically injured in a traffic accident near Dawsonville July 19 died July 27 at Northeast Georgia Medical Center.

Tray Tanner, 17, died without regaining consciousness after suffering massive head injuries when the van carrying him and six others was struck and overturned by a truck whose driver ran a stop sign on Highway 53.

The group, including CHA staff members Christopher Baskin, 21, and Ronald Thrumman, 25, had been bound for a week on the Appalachian Trail.

Thrumman was hospitalized for abrasions and bruised lungs and later released. Baskin, a Home Mission Board summer missionary, and the remaining four boys were treated and released.

Chuck Clayton, Christian High Adventure national director, expressed sadness at Tanner's death, the first fatality for the 13-year-old program which provides spiritually-oriented wilderness experiences for youth.

The trip had begun at Baxley, Ga., where Baskin and Thrumman were based. The van was owned by the Georgia Baptist Children's Home in Baxley, which had participated in the ministry.

The campers were not residents of the Baxley children's home but had been referred to the program by the juvenile court of Tuscaloosa, Ala.

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Clyde Fant Resigns Presidency
Of Ruschlikon Baptist Seminary

Baptist Press
8/17/83

RUSCHLIKON, Switzerland (BP)--Clyde Fant Jr. resigned Aug. 16 as president of Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland. He said his decision was based on family and personal reasons.

Fant's resignation came less than a year after his inauguration as the sixth president of the seminary, a ministry of European and Southern Baptists which had students from 22 countries last year.

The Foreign Mission Board is expected to act on the missionary resignations of Fant and his wife, Jean, at its next board meeting, Sept. 13.

Isam Ballenger, director for Europe and the Middle East, said Fant's future plans are uncertain. The couple planned to return to the United States within a week of his resignation and reside at least temporarily in Dallas.

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The seminary executive board, comprised of European and Foreign Mission Board representatives, hopes to name an interim administration within a few days.

Th Fant were named missionary associates Feb. 9, 1982, after he was elected to the Ruschlikon post in December 1981. He was formally inaugurated seminary president Sept. 8.

Prior to that, Fant was pastor of First Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas. From 1966 to 1975, he taught preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

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Hispanic Baptist Faith
Undergirds Investigative Work

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
8/17/83

AUSTIN, Texas (BP)--Jesse Fraga's faith sustains him in an often unpopular job.

Fraga, a special investigator in the Texas Attorney General's office, investigates fraud in medical services provided by hospitals, dental clinics, nursing homes and other institutions receiving Medicaid funding.

"We investigate white collar crime," he explained. "The people we probe are often highly respected, yet by the stroke of a pen they abuse people."

He cited as an example health care institutions guilty of double-billing, charging patients for what Medicaid is already paying. "People try to minimize that kind of offense by saying, 'They're providing a service,' but what they're doing is just plain stealing," he said.

Fraga's strong sense of purpose grows from his beliefs as a Christian. He traces the development of those beliefs back to the instruction he received at First Mexican Church in Dallas and to the inspiration of one particular Baptist worker.

"The main influence in my life was Floyd Shockey, director of the Baptist Goodwill Center at Little Mexico Village," he said. "He was instrumental in leading me to the Lord."

Shockey also recommended Fraga for a Latin American Scholarship funded by the Mary Hill Davis Offering for State Missions. The supplemental scholarship enabled Fraga to attend Howard Payne University (affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas).

"Looking back at my time at Howard Payne, I can see that I couldn't have gotten the environment and fellowship I enjoyed there anywhere else," he said. "I'm thankful for the scholarship I received. I probably would not have been able to go to college without it."

Since its beginning in 1956, the Latin American Scholarship program has contributed to the education of more than 900 Latin American students. The Mary Hill Davis Offering has allocated \$50,000 for the program this year.

After his graduation in 1967, Fraga went to work as an adult probation officer. He did case work and counseling for six years and then served as unit director until joining the Attorney General's staff in 1979.

Fraga appreciates the opportunity his job gives him to share his witness. "It's a really inspiring kind of work," he said. "It gives me the opportunity to share with people of all races in the field in different communities. I hope the Lord will continue to lead in my life as he has so far."

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