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Morris Indicted  
In Senter Murders

N-FMB

SANNIQUELLIE, Liberia (BP)—A Liberian grand jury indicted Benjamin M. Morris Dec. 16 for the murders of Southern Baptist missionary Libby Senter and her 10-year-old daughter, Rachel.

A February trial date was set during the brief indictment proceeding at the Nimba County courthouse in Sanniquellie, Liberia. Missionaries George Senter, the husband and father of the murder victims, and Earl Williams, who first found the bodies at the Senter home in Yekepa, were present at the proceeding. Defense counsel for Morris has been appointed.

Morris, 32, was arrested Nov. 27 near the Liberian border with Ivory Coast, one day after he allegedly stabbed Libby and Rachel Senter. He later gave oral and written confessions to the crimes. Liberian police also have indicated they have physical evidence against Morris, a Liberian Baptist seminary graduate who was befriended by the Senters and other missionaries.

The criminal investigation "has been handled very professionally" by Liberian authorities, said missionary Bradley Brown, administrator for the 67 Southern Baptist mission workers in the country.

Liberians have expressed high admiration of George Senter's face-to-face expression of forgiveness to Morris, according to Brown. But everyone wants "justice to be done," Brown said. "Liberians take it as a matter of shame to Liberians and Liberia that such a thing as this, such an unheard of thing, could happen. (There is) shame and sorrow ... just shock, really, throughout the country."

Senter tried to visit Morris a second time in Yekepa, Brown said, but authorities had transferred the accused killer to custody in Sanniquellie. Senter and his son, Philip, left Liberia Dec. 17 for a month-long stay in the United States with Senter's brother, Fred, pastor of English Road Baptist Church in High Point, N.C.

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'Christian Identity'  
Movement Denounced

N-CO

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12/19/86

NEW YORK (BP)—Representatives of major Protestant and Roman Catholic religious organizations—including Southern Baptists—have joined a Jewish human relations agency in denouncing the "Christian Identity" movement.

Participating in a mid-December meeting and news conference sponsored by the American Jewish Committee was Lynn P. Clayton, of Alexandria, La., chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission and editor of the Baptist Message, newsjournal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

"Christian Identity" was described by an expert in racist and extremist groups as "not a single organization, but the name given to a theological and political movement undergirding the entire white supremacist movement, from the Aryan Nations and the Ku Klux Klan to the Posse Comitatus."

Leonard Zeskind, research director of the Center for Democratic Renewal in Atlanta, said the movement, also known as "Identity," "Kingdom Identity" and "Kingdom Message," contends "that the people of Northern Europe—white Anglo-Saxons—are the Lost Tribes of Israel, that Jews are the children of Satan and that black people and people of color are 'pre-Adamic,' a lower form of species than white people."

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One of the movement's "theological constructions," said Zeskind, is that Armageddon—the final battle between good and evil foretold in the biblical book of Revelation—will be "a military battle in America's heartland between themselves and the forces of Satan."

The movement uses this belief and related notions, he added, to promote and justify paramilitary training and the stockpiling of weapons.

The expert warned the movement poses "a special danger to Christians of good will because it claims to base its racist beliefs on the Bible and makes sham connections between its bigoted, often violent, ideas and the sincere religious concerns of many Christians."

Zeskind, who has just completed the first full-scale study of "Christian Identity"—"The 'Christian Identity' Movement"—said the movement maintains "that the problems besetting the American people are the result of 'race mixing' and interreligious cooperation between Christians and Jews, which they call sins; that the U.S. Constitution defines this country as a 'Christian Republic' opposed to both democracy and communism; and that the covenant between God and his people was between God and certain white peoples only."

"They also attack the Christian Right Fundamentalists for their support of the State of Israel and mainstream Christian clergy for being 'agents of Satan,'" Zeskind said.

"'Identity' is composed," he said, "of hundreds of small groupings dotted across the map, not confined to any single region of the country. It includes self-defined ministries that consist of little more than tape and booklet sales, as well as ministers who have regular programs on AM radio stations all over the U.S., and still other leaders who have small, stable congregations in metropolitan areas like Los Angeles or Spokane.

"It has emerged as the primary religious and spiritual phenomenon of the far right and must not be dismissed as a marginal phenomenon. The U.S. has been undergoing a resurgence of bigotry under the guise of Christianity; this resurgence is a deep, ugly stain on our society which people of good will must obliterate."

After hearing Zeskind's presentation, the religious leaders issued a joint statement calling on all Americans "to join with us in publicly opposing this pernicious hate movement," and adding: "Because (Christian Identity) fears the scrutiny of an informed and alert public, we also urge that churches, synagogues and schools undertake intensive courses of education about this movement and that law enforcement officers, elected officials and the media become more knowledgeable about 'Christian Identity.'"

Participating with Zeskind and Clayton in the joint statement were Patricia McClurg, first vice president of the National Council of Churches; J. Bryan Hehir, secretary of the department of social development and world peace of the U.S. Catholic Conference; James Rudin, director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, and C.T. Vivian, chairman of the Center for Democratic Renewal.

At the news conference, Clayton said: "Placing prejudice in a thin cellophane wrapper of pseudo-Christianity cannot make a Christian. Rather, it intensifies prejudice's repulsiveness. Prejudice grows from the darkest regions of mankind's sinfulness and is never justified by lacing it with words and phrases stolen from the Bible. People grasping guns in one hand, homemade bombs in the other, and spitting words of hatred can never fulfill Christ's ultimate command, 'Love one another as I love you.'"

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Missions, Family Require  
Effort To Thrive, Petty Says

By Craig Bird

F - Fm B  
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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—"If you put nothing into your family, don't be surprised when you lose it," Charles Petty insisted.

"And if you put nothing into missions, don't be surprised when the world goes to hell."

Petty, a Southern Baptist layman who is president of Family Success Unlimited Inc. in Raleigh, N.C., addressed a Virginia Baptist Laity Rally in Richmond on "The Family and Mission."

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Using the parable of the Prodigal Son in the 15th chapter of the Gospel of Luke, Petty explored "family" in both the traditional context as well as in the larger context of Southern Baptist and Christian families of believers.

The father in the parable modeled behavior that Petty urged Southern Baptists to reproduce in their own families. "To have the kind of families we want and need to have we have to pay some prices," he said. "It doesn't happen accidentally that we become the kind of mission-minded families we ought to be." The father said warm words and did warm things, Petty pointed out, and consequently reaped what he sowed.

The father had been looking forward to the day his son would come home. He ran to greet him and told the boy he was glad he was home. "What would you have done?" Petty asked. "Made him stand on the porch to learn his lesson? Demand an apology? Ask him where was the change from all the money you gave him?"

Next the father hugged his son. "God in his wisdom told us to touch each other," Petty said. "Couples celebrating golden anniversaries still hold hands, and there is a lesson there.

"I get so tired of seeing fathers and sons in airports who want to hug each other goodbye but are afraid. And watch Baptist preachers at conventions. They beat each other to death, slapping backs. They want to hug these friends and fellow strugglers but don't because they're afraid what someone might think."

Spouses need to touch ("How many sermons have you heard from 1 Corinthians 7 about the sin of husbands and wives not sleeping together?") and children need to be hugged ("Not in public after they are teen-agers—but plenty in private no matter how old they are"), he stressed.

The father also willingly interrupted what he was doing and gave his son "his most precious gift"—that of time. "There is no mission if someone doesn't give time," Petty emphasized. "And if you do not have time for your children now, they won't have time for you later."

Finally the father put relationships before things. He understood the lure of the bright lights to his younger son, and he understood the resentment of the older son. "Notice that he spent time with and had warm words for the older son, too," Petty said.

"If Southern Baptists don't learn to quit calling each other names and start saying and doing warm things to each other, we're in real trouble," he added. "And it wouldn't hurt for us to notice that the father didn't choose between his two boys—he loved them both."

Only when relationships—with family, fellow Christians and millions of non-Christians around the world—are more important than acquiring "things" can Christians begin to do missions the way God intended, Petty said.

"We have houses with huge 'living rooms' where no one ever lives and on Sunday morning at 11:55 our greatest concern is not how many souls will be saved when the invitation is given but whether or not we'll beat the Methodists to the cafeteria," he charged. "We want too much (of material possessions), waste too much and spend too much."

"Our church and mission budgets would be better off if people gave an amount equal to the interest they pay on their car loans instead of what they put in the offering plate and call a 'tithe.'"

Hunger was not the real reason the prodigal came home, Petty reminded. Rather, he came home because he knew he could count on his father's love.

"That is the kind of God we have," he continued. "So often we stand around waiting for the whipping we think God wants to give us instead of responding to his love."

"No where in the Bible do we read of Jesus saying to an individual 'I love you,'" Petty said. "Maybe he didn't have to say it because it was obvious in his relationships."

"If you have love for your husband, your wife, your children, your parents, missions ... anything or anyone, prove it by the way you live."

Ministry To West Texas Pastor  
Surpasses Theology, Politics

By Ken Camp

F-Texas

DALLAS (BP)—Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., and Calvary Baptist Church in Lubbock, Texas, are about a thousand miles apart geographically and worlds apart in their theological emphases, but the two disparate congregations united in ministry to a West Texas pastor.

In May, physicians in Lubbock recommended Pastor Dale Cain of Calvary Church go to Louisville for surgery and treatment by specialists. There he had five extensive operations that eventually included a total colostomy.

Initially, Cain's hospital stay was expected to be relatively brief. However, when complications arose and Cain and his wife spent eight months in and out of the Louisville hospital, life away from home was made easier by an outpouring of support from their home church and from Crescent Hill, the congregation that adopted them.

When Cain announced he would be going to Louisville, Calvary Baptist Church voted to set up a committee to perform pastoral duties, found an interim preacher and agreed to continue providing their pastor his full salary for the duration of his time away from them.

"The church didn't know it would be as prolonged as it was, but when it did become apparent, they never backed off in their commitment," says Cain. "There are so many churches that would give their pastor severance pay and let him go if they faced the same kind of situation, but not our church."

Cain says one reason for the bond between himself and the congregation was the depth of their experiences together. During his 12 years as pastor at Calvary, he led members through a period of transition when the church relocated. He also faced several serious physical problems, including removal of a benign brain tumor four years ago.

"We've gone through many great trials together—a lot more than most would in 12 years," he says.

During his stay in the Louisville hospital, Cain received a huge volume of encouraging cards and letters from his home church. "At one point, the postal service there said they might have to put on extra staff to handle all the letters and cards I was getting each day," he recalls.

In addition to assurances that friends in Lubbock were praying for his healing, Cain, who is on the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, also received word that prayers were being offered in his behalf on the foreign mission field. "A missionary in Argentina contacted me to let me know I was on the top of the prayer list there," he says. "Literally, prayers around the world made the difference in my recovery. Everyone who knew anything about my condition agreed that it was a miracle."

Since Cain's returning to Lubbock, Calvary has continued to minister to him. He says the "superb" office and ministerial staff carried the load during his illness and they, and the church as a whole, are encouraging him not to work too hard too fast.

"You might expect them to be anxious for things to return to normal, but their concern is that I not come back too fast," he explains. "It's like having several hundred grandmothers worrying about you. That's the kind of strong fellowship we have here."

The Cains found that same brand of fellowship in Louisville at Crescent Hill, although they were strangers in the city.

"The people at Crescent Hill had never met us before, but they ministered to our needs. It was like being in our home church with people we've known for years and years," Cain reports.

Hospital visits from Pastor Steve Shoemaker and from church members were frequent. One woman in the church allowed the Cains to live in her home in-between hospital stays and opened her home to Mrs. Cain during the time her husband was in the hospital. Some members brought food. Above all, they made the Cains feel at home.

"The women of the church involved my wife in Bible studies and other activities. They were always with her whenever I was in surgery. They saw to it that she was never left alone, and that she didn't have time to herself to worry," says Cain.

The West Texas pastor was impressed particularly by the fact that they were made to feel at home in a church quite unlike their home congregation. Although uncomfortable with labels, Cain identifies with fundamental-conservatives within the Southern Baptist Convention, while he says Crescent Hill is closely tied to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the moderate-conservative group.

Although Cain says he is strongly committed to a fundamental belief in Scripture, his experience with Crescent Hill has had an impact on his view of the division among Southern Baptists and about ministry in general: "I believe I'm more conscious of the service part of ministry now. When you have experienced hurting and pain and suffering and have been ministered to, you know how to minister better.

"I believe we've overstated this liberal/conservative movement altogether. Regardless of how we classify ourselves, we have a source of unity in Christ and in our service to others.

"In any church, you still find people who want to serve the Lord Jesus. I think maybe we should emphasize that more, and allow ourselves and others to function as God leads."

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ACTS Network Slated To Air  
'A Worldwide Christmas Celebration'

*N-RTVC*

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12/19/86

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Billy Graham, Terry Waite, and Mother Teresa head the list of an all-star cast in "A Worldwide Christmas Celebration," slated to appear on the American Christian Television System (ACTS) Network on Christmas Eve.

The program is being sponsored by The Church of the Nations in New York and will be seen in countries around the world.

Other guests include: the Vienna Boys Choir, Placido Domingo, Sandi Patti, Ray Charles, the Chinese Choir from Beijing, Phil Driscoll, Johnny Cash, and the Singers of Praise from Bethlehem.

Participating countries include: the United States, Austria, Spain, USSR, Great Britain, and Israel.

The 2-hour special will be telecast on ACTS at 10:00 p.m., EST.

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