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July 6, 1988

88-105

Missionary child dies,
family injured in fire

ESMERALDAS, Ecuador (BP)--John Parrish, 3, the son of Southern Baptist missionaries James and Martha Parrish, died inside a flame-engulfed car July 4 in Ecuador, and his father and brother were hospitalized with burns.

Parrish had stopped to buy fuel at a gasoline station in Esmeraldas, Ecuador, when his car burst into flames following an explosion, said Betty Law, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's associate area director for Spanish-speaking South America.

Two sons, Stephen, 7, and John, were in the car. Parrish was standing outside the car when the explosion and fire occurred. He grabbed Stephen and pulled him out of the car, but was unable to find John, Law explained.

Mrs. Parrish was at home with their other son, Micah, 5.

When Parrish first stopped at the gasoline station, an attendant told him the nearby pump was out of order and motioned him on to the next pump. As Parrish moved to the next pump, another attendant took a bucket of gasoline to the malfunctioning pump to prime it. Parrish smelled strong gasoline fumes immediately prior to the explosion inside the car, Law said.

"They don't understand how the explosion happened," Law added. The exterior of the car was not burned as badly as the interior.

Stephen has "rather extensive, serious burns" and is under treatment at a hospital in Quito. Doctors and the Parrishes are considering transferring him to a medical center for burn victims in the United States, Law said. Parrish sustained burns on his face and hands.

The Ecuador mission chartered an eight-passenger plane and flew the Parrish family and John's body to Quito, where a funeral was to be conducted July 5 by missionary Harry Harper. Burial was to be in Quito also.

The Parrishes are first-term missionaries and had been in Ecuador less than seven months, Law said. As the first Southern Baptist missionaries to work in the Esmeraldas area, they are helping with church development and starting of churches. No other missionaries are assigned there.

Parrish is a native of Grand Saline, Texas, and Mrs. Parrish is a native of Kenton, Ohio.

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Largest offering ever
taken at Ridgecrest

By Susan Todd

Baptist Press
7/6/88

RIDGECREST, N.C.--Participants attending Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union week at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in North Carolina have given what is believed to be the largest offering ever taken during a summer conference.

Carolyn Weatherford, national executive director of WMU, announced Monday, July 4, to a crowd of about 1,600 people that the offering taken during the previous morning's worship service totaled \$5,075.10.

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The amount is \$1,228 more than the 1987 WMU summer conference offering of \$3,837. It was given by almost 350 less people than gave the 1987 offering.

"This offering illustrates that WMU women are really concerned about the true state of the Cooperative Program unified budget," Weatherford said. "They are very much aware of the decline in giving by churches. The fact that they gave so much without any special push indicates their commitment to the causes supported by the Cooperative Program."

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' budget that finances missionary, evangelistic and educational ministries around the world. It is supported by individual Southern Baptists who make contributions to their churches. Funds are channeled through the churches and 37 state Baptist conventions and on to SBC agencies and institutions.

All offerings taken during summer conferences at Ridgecrest and Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist conference centers are given to the Cooperative Program.

Bill Emery, manager of the Ridgecrest Conference Center business section, said, "I would venture to say that this will be the largest offering of the summer based on history of summer conferences."

The \$5,075 offering almost equaled the total of offerings taken during summer conferences which met at Ridgecrest in June.

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Missionary to Maasai
dies in Kenya at 51

Baptist Press
7/6/88

KISUMU, Kenya (BP)--Carl R. Hall, a Southern Baptist missionary for nearly 18 years, died of a heart attack July 2 in Kenya. He was 51.

With his wife, Geraldine, Hall started several churches among the Maasai people of Kenya, a nomadic group of herdsmen whom he taught to farm. He also had been the director of Baptist social ministries in Nairobi, Kenya, and most recently had begun working in Kisumu on Lake Victoria.

Hall became known among missionaries for his creativity and capability to carry a job to completion. One example was his ministry in an area near the Tanzania border. There he demonstrated farming techniques to the Maasai people, who had never eaten food from farms. He worked with local officials to apportion land and get people started on their own small farms.

Hall grew up in Heber Springs, Ark. In his freshman year at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., he met the former Geraldine Wright of McCrory, Ark., whom he married two years later.

Before missionary appointment he worked for the Arkansas Department of Public Welfare as a caseworker and supervisor. He also was a director of Royal Ambassador camps for Southern Baptists boys in Tennessee.

Hall received the bachelor of arts degree from Ouachita, the master of religious education degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and the master of science in social work degree from the University of Tennessee School of Social Work in Nashville.

In addition to his wife, survivors include his two children, Byron, 24, in Arkadelphia, and Duane, 18; and his mother, Lena B. Hall, in Arkadelphia.

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

New law designed to counter
religious violence, vandalism

WASHINGTON (BP)--A new law makes damage of religious property or interference with a person's free exercise of religion a federal crime.

The measure -- recently approved by Congress and signed into law by President Reagan -- amends the U.S. Code so that people who engage in interstate activity to damage any religious property because of its religious character or obstruct, by force or threat of force, any person's free exercise of religion are subject to federal fines and prison sentences.

The law's penalties include a fine and up to life imprisonment if death results from the activity, a fine and a prison term of up to 10 years if serious bodily injury results and a fine and imprisonment of up to one year in other cases.

During debate of the legislation -- which received bipartisan support -- members of Congress pointed to increased incidents of religious violence and vandalism.

One of the measure's co-sponsors, Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., said: "This nation is known around the world for its democratic tradition and values. Included within this tradition is our treasured First Amendment right to worship freely. We must never forget the fact that many of our ancestors came to this country in search of freedom to practice their religion. Indeed, part of what makes the wonderfully complex tapestry that is our country is the many religious groups that have found their home here. Our freedom to worship is an integral part of our lives that is often taken for granted.

"Unfortunately we are seeing an increasing amount of violence directed at persons because they belong to a particular religious group. ... Whether he or she be Jewish, Christian or Moslem, no person should suffer or die for practicing his or her faith. No religious symbol should be desecrated to show hatred toward a group of people that share in a particular religious doctrine. In passing this legislation, Congress is sending a clear signal that the desecrations, the injuries, the deaths are intolerable in a free society such as ours."

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Youngs resign CLC;
accept church post

Baptist Press
7/6/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--John and Shirley Young have resigned administrative positions at the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, the third and fourth staff members to leave the agency since June 10.

Young will become minister of media, evangelism and discipleship at First Baptist Church of Independence, Mo., effective Aug. 1.

At the CLC, Young has been associate director and director of product development. Shirley Young has been administrative assistant to Executive Director N. Larry Baker, who resigned effective June 10 to become pastor of First Baptist Church of Pineville, La.

In addition to the Youngs and Baker, another elected staff member, Tim Fields, also has resigned, leaving five professional staff members at the embattled moral concerns agency. Fields, who was associate director and director of communications, accepted a position at the Southern Baptist Education Commission, effective July 1.

The Youngs were elected to the staff in June 1987, in a divided vote. The telephone poll in which they were elected was disputed by one commissioner, leading the six-member executive committee to elect them separately from the poll.

The matter surfaced in the September 1987 meeting of the commission, which also featured an effort to dismiss Baker, who retained his post on a 15-15 tie vote. Baker had been elected to lead the agency on a 16-13 vote in January 1987.

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Prior to coming to the CLC, Young had been on the staffs of First Baptist Church of Raytown, Mo., and First Baptist Church of North Kansas City, Mo. He also had a practice as a doctor of chiropractic medicine and was a St. Louis police officer. He has degrees from Logan College in St. Louis, and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

Shirley Young, a native of Mississippi, was employed at Midwestern Seminary 1979 to 1987, five of those years as administrative assistant to Baker, who was academic dean at the school prior to accepting the CLC post. Previously, she worked in her husband's chiropractic office and was with Delta Air Lines.

The Youngs have three children: Brian, 15; Allison, 11; and Keri, 10.

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Education Commission names
Grant outstanding educator

Baptist Press
7/6/88

GREENVILLE, S.C. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Education Commission named Daniel R. Grant outstanding educator of the year, elected an assistant director and named two special workgroups during its annual meeting in Greenville, S.C.

Grant, retiring president of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., was named recipient of the 1988 Charles D. Johnson Outstanding Educator Award. The award, which was established by the commission five years ago, is given each year to a person who has made significant contributions to Southern Baptist higher education.

The award was presented to Grant during the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools immediately following the annual meeting of the commission.

"Dr. Grant was chosen to receive this award because he has demonstrated an unique commitment to Christian higher education," said Arthur Walker, executive director of the commission. "Twenty-five years after his summa cum laude graduation, he returned to his alma mater to become its 12th president."

Walker called Grant a colleague, a Christian statesman and a denominational servant. He praised Grant for his career as a political science professor who gained national recognition as an authority on urban and metropolitan government, cited his contributions to his local church and the denomination, his leadership as a college president and his involvement as vice chairman of the Commission on Human Rights of the Baptist World Alliance.

In other action, the commission unanimously elected Timothy J. Fields as assistant director of the commission effective July 1 (Editors, see BP story mailed 7/1/88). Fields has been on the staff of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission since 1980 as director of communications, director of product development and more recently as associate director and editor of LIGHT.

In his new position, Fields is responsible for communications and public relations functions of the commission and is managing editor of The Southern Baptist Educator.

Commission members also named a special workgroup to study ways to enhance the agency's placement registry, which provides names of potential faculty and staff to Southern Baptist schools and colleges. A second workgroup was named to study the commission's case statement, which provides the basis for the agency's relationship with and support of 70 Southern Baptist educational institutions.

Commission members approved a budget of \$564,900 for 1988-89. It includes \$496,000 from the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget. Commissioners also authorized an expenditure of \$15,000 for desktop publishing equipment to be drawn from reserve funds.

All three officers of the commission were re-elected to a second term. They are Bob R. Agee, president of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, chairman; D. Jack Nicholas, president of Southern Baptist College, Walnut Ridge, Ark., vice chairman; and William R. Cotton, a layman from Hastings, Fla., secretary.

Members of the commission paid special tribute to Walker on his 10th anniversary as executive director-treasurer of the agency.

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Anti-gambling stand
costs layman his job

By Bob E. Mathews

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Remington Park pari-mutuel racetrack in Oklahoma City has been heralded as a boon to Oklahoma's economy and a source of new jobs, but for one Baptist deacon it has meant the loss of a 15-year career.

The voice of Keith Swezey, a member of First Baptist Church of Edmond, is no longer heard on Oklahoma's premiere radio station because of the race track.

The 12-year veteran of WKY radio and news director for the past four years was given an ultimatum to add coordination of the station's racetrack coverage to his duties or resign.

WKY has the exclusive contract to be Remington Park's official radio station, broadcasting daily reports, promotion of races and, through commercials, to promote pari-mutuel wagering on horse racing.

In his expanded duties, Swezey would have been licensed by the Oklahoma Horseracing Commission. He would have been classified as a disseminator of betting results from the track and would have supervised on-track reporters and others who also would be licensed by the Oklahoma Horeseracing Commission.

Another part of his duties would have been to produce "how-to" features on betting on races.

The station will have exclusive access to the racetrack facilities and first broadcast rights to the results. All other media will have to wait a minimum of 20 minutes before relaying the results. A satellite system will be used to set up a network of stations both in and out of Oklahoma to carry racing news.

When informed of his new assignment, Swezey told WKY officials he could not carry it out because of personal beliefs regarding gambling. He was given the choice of accepting the job or leaving. Thus ended a 15-year career in radio news which included service at KOMA and KRMC.

"I never had an illusion that I was going to stop the station's plans because of my beliefs," he said. "I gave them my biblical reasons for my stand and tried to use the situation to witness to my coworkers."

The veteran newsman said betting on the horses is probably only the tip of the gambling iceberg. "Eventually, the station will air live coverage of the feature races and the wagering could be expanded to betting on the size of the crowd and the handle (the amount of money being wagered)," he said.

Faced with the loss of an income, Swezey turned the matter over to God. "My wife, Dixie, and I prayed about the situation and believed the Lord would work it out," he noted.

Within about a month, he secured a teaching position at his alma mater, Central State University, and began studies toward a master's degree. This fall he will teach broadcasting courses at Oklahoma State University while doing graduate study.

Thus, the loss of an on-the-air news director's position apparently has netted Swezey a new opportunity to teach fledgling broadcasters the "how-to's" of radio and television reporting instead of the "how-to's" of betting on the horses.

Christ, Bible prompt
women to mission service

By Pat Cole

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union members involved in mission action are motivated to service because of their commitment to Christ and the Bible, a recent study at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary revealed.

The study showed 96.7 percent of WMU members said the example of Jesus helped prompt them to mission action, while 96.4 percent indicated obedience to the Bible was a reason for their service. The study was performed by the the Louisville, Ky., school's Paul R. Adkins Institute for Research and Training in Church Social Work.

"It shows these women have been exposed to some good theology," said C. Anne Davis, dean of the seminary's Carver School of Church Social Work. Noting the majority of mission-action participants have been involved in WMU youth programs, Davis pointed out, "WMU has added significantly to their theological and missionary understanding."

Davis directed the two-and-one-half-year study commissioned by the national Woman's Missionary Union. The study sought to establish profiles of women involved in WMU mission action and WMU members and other Southern Baptist women who do not participate in mission action through WMU. It also attempted to discover any statistically significant differences in the two groups. Jon Rainbow, assistant professor of social work, assisted Davis in the study.

Information for the study was based on responses of 425 women across the United States who completed questionnaires mailed to them. WMU members indicated on the questionnaires that they are doing mission work among the poor, the sick, the homebound and the elderly. They also perform services for students, minority groups, internationals and language groups.

The study also revealed:

-- People converted to faith in Christ prior to the end of World War II are more likely to be involved in mission action than those making professions of faith after the war. Davis surmised women who had experienced "hard times" are more likely to empathize with the plight of people in need.

-- Women who are employed fulltime are less likely to be involved in mission action.

-- Mission-action participants outnumber non-participants among lower income groups. Conversely, non-participants outnumber participants in higher income categories. The middle-income group was about evenly split between participants and non-participants.

-- Women who live closer to the local church are more likely to be involved in mission action than women who live farther away. Davis said she believes women who live nearer to their church more readily identify community needs.

-- Participants in mission action have a higher percentage of family members involved in mission action than non-participants. This especially holds true when other family members are female.