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91-45

Journeyman Darla Lovell  
found dead in Uganda

By Mary E. Speidel

N FMB

KAMPALA, Uganda (BP)--Southern Baptist journeyman Darla Lovell, 23, was found dead in her home in Kampala, Uganda, March 24. Lovell apparently died in her sleep of natural causes, but an autopsy was being performed, said Bertie Paul, a missionary in Kampala.

Lovell, from Effingham, Ill., was a secretarial assistant in the Southern Baptist mission office in Kampala. She lived next-door to Paul and her husband, Wayne, administrator of the Southern Baptist mission organization in Uganda.

On the morning of March 24, Lovell was to have met the Pauls for worship services at Nakawa Baptist Church in Kampala, where Wayne Paul was preaching. The Pauls became concerned when she did not show up. After church Mrs. Paul went to check on Lovell and found her dead in bed.

Lovell had reported waking up March 22 sweating profusely and feeling dizzy. She ate and then felt well enough to go to work. At noon she left the mission office to present an evangelistic program at a local primary school. When she returned to work that afternoon, she felt weak and went home to rest.

The next day, Lovell said she felt much better. She was able to do chores and visit some other missionaries, Mrs. Paul said. She spent the evening with the Pauls and returned home at about 8 p.m., saying she wanted to write some letters. She also said she wanted to make a tape for her parents. "I don't know if she ever finished it," said Mrs. Paul.

Lovell's mother, Kay Lovell of Effingham, said her daughter had been in good health except for a brief illness in 1990 during her last semester at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo. One morning her roommate was unable to awaken her and called an ambulance. Physicians at a local hospital examined her and found nothing wrong.

Lovell was then in the middle of student teaching and final exams, so "we thought it was just tension and stress-related," her mother said. Later she was given a clean bill of health before journeyman training last July.

Lovell arrived in Uganda last August. She helped Mrs. Paul, mission treasurer, with bookkeeping. Her colleagues said in her short time there she won the hearts of Ugandans. "She was able to relate to them as equals, as peers. She made them feel very comfortable," said missionary Linda Rice. Outside the office, Lovell worked in ministries to children, recent university graduates and members of an evangelistic basketball team.

Lovell's interest in missions grew out of her involvement in missions education organizations at her home church, First Baptist Church of Effingham. As a member of Acteens, a mission organization for teen-age girls, she was a camp counselor and a volunteer in Ohio and Oklahoma with Acteens Activators, a home missions program for Acteens sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Lovell had wanted to become a career missionary after she finished her two-year journeyman experience, said Roger Marshall, pastor of First Baptist in Effingham. Before he heard about Lovell's death, Marshall had planned to use her as an illustration during a March 24 sermon on Christian service. In his sermon, he noted that her job in Uganda was posting bills, a job many would not consider glamorous. "But she was willing to do the small things -- things that others may not consider important or that others might be unwilling to do," he said.

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Before Lovell left for Uganda six months ago, members of First Baptist planned a "Darla Lovell Day" as a send-off for her. The church raised about \$2,500 for her to use for expenses and commissioned her for mission service.

During the commissioning service, some 125 people made commitments to pray daily for Lovell while she was in Uganda. Church members were given small pieces of rope to symbolize their roles as "rope holders" or supporters for missionaries, he said. "There are pieces of rope in homes all over Effingham reminding people to pray for Darla," Marshall said.

Before going to Uganda, Lovell was in the same journeyman training class as Mary Anna Gilbert, a Southern Baptist teacher who was killed in the Oct. 2, 1990, crash of a hijacked Chinese jetliner in Guangzhou, China.

Born in Charleston, Ill., Lovell grew up in Effingham. She also lived in Oakdale, Ill., while growing up. She received the bachelor of science degree in business education from Southwest Baptist University.

Lovell is survived by her parents, a brother, a sister and her grandparents.

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

'Driven out' claims are  
unfounded, says president

By R. Albert Mohler Jr.

F- NMB

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ATLANTA (BP)--Claims by leaders of the moderate group known as The Baptist Fellowship that they are being "driven out" of the Southern Baptist Convention are unfounded, said SBC President Morris Chapman.

Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas, said "members of the group (The Fellowship) are choosing to disassociate themselves from the majority of Southern Baptists. They have no one to blame but themselves. They have chosen to do this."

The SBC president said convention moderates have "absolutely not" been disenfranchised, but those in The Fellowship have chosen to "disassociate themselves" from the denomination. Chapman's comments came during an interview with The Christian Index, newsjournal of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Reports that a task force of The Fellowship had proposed the establishment of a World Missions Center which would commission missionaries prompted Chapman to say such moves would be "in direct competition with the Southern Baptist Home and Foreign Missions boards, I think," said Chapman, "that the vast majority of Southern Baptists will lend no support to such a movement."

"The Baptist Fellowship and others of similar persuasion remind me of the little boy who went to the carnival with his best friend. When down to his last dime, he was pressured by his friend to ride the merry-go-round. When they finished the ride, the boy said to his friend: 'I have spent my last dime, we have gone 'round and 'round. I got off where I got on, and I ain't been nowhere.' That is," said Chapman, "when all is said and done, I believe their efforts will come to an uneventful end."

The call for WMU participation also elicited Chapman's response.

"The WMU has always been a vital part of Southern Baptist missions." He said he would be "extremely surprised and greatly saddened" if the WMU ever considered "opening the door to participate with an organization such as The Baptist Fellowship. I certainly prayer that they will continue their historic support of the two Southern Baptist mission boards. I believe the hearts of Southern Baptist women beat strongly for Southern Baptist missions," he said.

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Chapman said he also disagreed with FMB President R. Keith Park's comment that the proposed missions center was the "inevitable result" of the SBC conflict. He said the move was "a calculated giant step away from mainstream Southern Baptists."

He also said the establishment of such a center "does not compare whatsoever with a local church's mission projects."

The Fellowship is "choosing to go their own, separate way," said Chapman, "and their heart's desire is to have their own denomination when it seems to be feasible."

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Indonesian church  
destroyed by mob

By Regina Morgan

F-FMB

Baptist Press  
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JAKARTA, Indonesia (BP)--A mob of about 400 Indonesian villagers attacked and destroyed the meeting place of a small Baptist congregation in a Jakarta housing complex March 10.

Attackers used sledgehammers and lead pipes to break through the tile roof and batter down walls of the building before a scheduled service. They also damaged benches, tables and chairs used for children's Sunday school classes.

"Praise the Lord! No one was there at the time," said Surbakty, the deacon who leads weekly worship services. "The attackers had murder in mind."

Church members who normally come early to set up for services had not arrived when the attack occurred. When Siregar, the property owner and a member of the church, arrived on his motor scooter, he searched frantically for a familiar face in the hostile crowd. Seeing none, he fled for his life. Not knowing the building was empty, he feared everyone inside had been killed.

"They were there to kill," Siregar asserted. "I don't doubt that they would have killed me if they had realized who I was. Maybe they didn't recognize me because I had on my motor scooter helmet."

The mob also damaged property of other Christians in the area, set a motor scooter on fire, battered a military police major's automobile and smashed windows at the nearby home of a contractor.

Muslim neighbors have issued threats and warnings during the year the 35-member Baptist congregation has met in Jakarta's Pondok Ungu complex. Concerned about unrest caused by the Baptist meetings, local officials had suggested they be discontinued. But Baptist families who moved into the new housing area wanted to worship in their own neighborhood.

Attackers reportedly came from surrounding villages, not from the housing development. Local and military police are investigating the incident.

Surbakty said church members hope the incident will strengthen the faith of Christians in the area who face an uncertain future.

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Morgan is press representative for Southern Baptist missionaries in Indonesia.

Americans believe in Bible  
but don't study it

By Mark Wingfield

F-HMB

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ATLANTA (BP)--While 82 percent of Americans believe the Bible is either the "literal" or "inspired" word of God, only 21 percent are engaged in Bible study, the Gallup Poll reports.

Further, half of the American population cannot name any of the four New Testament Gospels.

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Despite these contradictions, the Bible remains the most widely read book in America, the Princeton Religion Research Center says in a newly published study titled, "The Role of the Bible in American Society." The booklet is a compilation of several Gallup polls on the Bible, including data collected as recently as November 1990.

The report offers insight into Americans' beliefs about the Bible, reading of the Bible and knowledge of the Bible.

-- Beliefs.

The percentage of Americans believing the Bible to be the "literal" word of God rose to 42 percent in 1990, up from a low of 37 percent in the 1970s and 1980s. By comparison, 65 percent of Americans believed in a literal Bible in the 1960s.

In 1990, another 40 percent of Americans described the Bible as the "inspired" word of God, but not always to be interpreted as literally true.

Through the years, a fairly constant 11 to 14 percent of the population has classified the Bible as a book of fables, history and moral precepts. In 1990, about 4 percent of the population was uncertain about how to regard the Bible.

A more in-depth study conducted in 1988 found 31 percent of Americans believe the Bible should be taken literally word-for-word, 24 percent believe it does not contain errors but some verses are to be taken symbolically rather than literally, and 22 percent believe it is inspired but may contain historical and scientific errors. Only 17 percent said the Bible is not inspired by God, while 6 percent had no opinion.

-- Reading.

In 1990 polls, 17 percent of Americans said they read the Bible daily, while 23 percent said they read it weekly and 13 percent said they read it monthly. Another 25 percent said they read it less than monthly, and 20 percent said they never read it.

Protestants are three times as likely to read the Bible daily as Catholics. Also, females are more likely to read the Bible than males, adults age 50 and above are more likely to read it than younger adults, and Southerners are more likely to read the Bible than residents of other regions.

Nationally, 26 percent of adults claim to have read all the Old Testament while 35 percent claim to have read all the New Testament. Only 11 percent say they have read little or none of the Old Testament and 13 percent say they have read little or none of the New Testament.

When it comes to Bible study groups, 21 percent of American adults say they are involved. Protestants are twice as likely as Catholics to be involved in Bible study groups.

-- Knowledge.

When asked to name the first four books of the New Testament, the four Gospels, only half the population could name any.

Mark is the least-known Gospel, with only 40 percent naming it. Among the other books, 41 percent named Luke, 44 percent named Matthew and 45 percent named John.

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Study finds five common  
traits in growing churches

By Mark Wingfield

F-NMB

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ATLANTA (BP)--Five common traits characterize churches with high baptism rates and growing Sunday schools, a Southern Baptist evangelism leader says.

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Howard Ramsey, director of personal evangelism with the Home Mission Board, studied 25 growing Southern Baptist churches in a search for common characteristics.

For the study, Ramsey isolated the 30 Southern Baptist churches which baptized more than 100 converts in 1989 and experienced at least a 10 percent increase in average Sunday school attendance over the previous year. He interviewed representatives from 25 of those churches, including 20 on-site visits.

The churches range in size from 102 to 22,832 resident members, with average Sunday school attendance ranging from 60 to 5,558. Their number of baptisms for 1989 ranged from 101 to 547.

Despite diversity of demographics, types of pastors and worship styles, Ramsey identified five traits common to all the churches he studied.

1. Pastoral vision for growth. "Each of the pastors realized his vision must become the vision of the people for growth to be accomplished," Ramsey said. "When I interviewed lay people I found they shared the same vision and dreams of their pastor. They continually shared this excitement in their neighborhoods, at their workplaces and in their daily walks with others."

2. High commitment level of leadership. "Every pastor, staff member and core layperson I interviewed practiced a daily quiet time, gave well above the tithe of their income, witnessed regularly and placed a higher priority on service to the Lord than on free time, position or secular employment," Ramsey noted.

3. Exciting worship. "Regardless of the pastor's preaching style, the type of music used or the length of the service, there is a sense of expectancy, and the services are exciting," Ramsey said. "Visitors are welcomed in different ways, but in every church visitors seemed to know they were welcome and felt free to participate in the service."

4. Flexibility and innovation. "Growing churches do not let location, lack of space, condition of facilities or limited finances blur their vision," he said. "Growing churches provide whatever activities and ministries are needed to make contact with all classes of people. Each church had a deep sense of caring and was people-oriented."

5. Evangelism. Ramsey said he found "a total commitment to evangelism, which expresses itself in one-to-one witnessing and worship services with an invitation carefully planned to call people to commitment. Although growing churches use a variety of equipping methods for evangelism, the pastors always model personal evangelism and challenge laity to share their faith, he said.

"I am convinced that the majority, if not all our churches, can grow if these five characteristics become the norm," Ramsey said. "Some can grow more rapidly and larger than others, but all can grow."

Churches Ramsey visited or talked with include: Pleasant View Baptist Church, Phoenix, Ariz.; Immanuel Baptist Church, San Bernardino, Calif.; Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church, Riverside, Calif.; First Baptist Church, San Fernando, Calif.; St. Stephens Missionary Baptist Church, La Puente, Calif.; True Vine Baptist Church, Oakland, Calif.; Valley Baptist Church, Bakersfield, Calif.;

Riverside Baptist Church, Denver; Cinco Baptist Church, Fort Walton Beach, Fla.; Hillcrest Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.; Dunwoody Baptist Church, Atlanta; Hebron Baptist Church, Dacula, Ga.; Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga.; First Baptist Church, Snellville, Ga.; First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga.; Christian Family Center, Peoria, Ill.; New Faith Baptist Church, Matteson, Ill.;

Mount Zion Baptist Church, West Paducah, Ky.; Adamsville Baptist Church, Goldsboro, N.C.; Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C.; Far Hills Baptist Church, Dayton, Ohio; First Baptist Church, Millington, Tenn.; Ridgeway Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.; Gross Road Baptist Church, Mesquite, Texas; and Thousand Oaks Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas.