

(BP)

-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFF
SBC Executive Comm
901 Commerce #
Nashville, Tennessee 37
(615) 244-
Herb Hollinger, Vice Presi
Fax (615) 742-
CompuServe ID# 7042

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

September 10, 1992

92-148

TEXAS -- Minister leaves church after shunning of his HIV-infected son.
WASHINGTON -- 21 groups fight beer ads on video.
MISSOURI -- Missouri senior adults held hostage during standoff in South Dakota.
MISSOURI -- Southwest Baptist University trustees vote to dismiss chancellor James Sells.
MISSOURI -- Olympics medalist maintains personal Christian witness.
SINGAPORE -- Former Hindu credits Alabama woman for his changed life.
NASHVILLE -- Correction

EDITORS' NOTE: The following story by the religion editor of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram is reprinted by Baptist Press with permission. It appeared in the Sept. 10 edition of the paper.

**Minister leaves church after
shunning of his HIV-infected son**

By Jim Jones

Baptist Press
9/10/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Devastated on learning his wife and two young children were infected by the deadly AIDS virus, a third-generation Baptist minister thought he could find help in the church that had nurtured him since his infancy.

Instead, Scott Allen and his family were shunned, becoming modern-day pariahs, he said. Some of those churches now regret their treatment of the Allens, and one, Broadway Baptist Church, Fort Worth, has changed its policy as a result.

The grandson of a Baptist minister and the son of Jimmy Allen, former Southern Baptist Convention president, 36-year-old Scott Allen has left the church and is telling his story to encourage congregations to help those infected with the human immunodeficiency virus, which leads to AIDS.

"I don't think it's strictly a failure of churches," he said in a telephone interview from New York, where he was taping news and talk show programs. "It's a failure of our culture and our society and too often churches reflect society."

In Dallas and Fort Worth, Allen said his eldest son Matt was turned away from Sunday school at First Baptist Church of Arlington and Broadway Baptist in Fort Worth. He also said he was advised to conceal the boy's HIV infection at University Christian Church, a Disciples of Christ congregation in Fort Worth.

Moreover, the family received sympathy but little help from other congregations, including Travis Avenue Baptist Church under pastor Joel Gregory, he asserted.

Allen's life fell apart in 1985 when he was informed the donor of the blood his wife, Lydia, had received years before in a San Francisco transfusion had died of AIDS. Lydia Allen contracted HIV and passed it through the womb to their two sons, Bryan and Matt. Bryan died soon after at seven months, the first reported congenital pediatric AIDS fatality in the Fort Worth area.

Lydia Allen, who died in February at age 38, was co-founder of Bryan's House in Dallas, a facility that helps children who either have the AIDS virus or have parents who do.

--more--

"Lydia was such a remarkable woman and did some incredible things in the midst of tremendous tragedy," Allen said. "I feel kind of sad she chose to remain silent."

Until now, he has kept the story quiet because his wife believed publicity would hurt their surviving son, Matt. Now 10, Matt is attending school in Dallas and is doing well on AZT treatments.

Not all the rejection came from Baptist churches, Allen said.

In 1985, he was associate minister of the First Christian Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., when he was told of the tainted transfusion. After informing Warren Hile, the pastor, he was asked to leave his position, Allen said.

But Hile strenuously disputed Allen was fired and said his 1,600-member congregation embraced the young minister's family on learning of the tragedy. "I feel very good about how we treated him," said Hile, who retired seven years ago.

"We took him in wholeheartedly and kept him on the staff," Hile said in a telephone call from his home. "I held his wife in my arms. I held both babies in my arms and many people did that. There were dozens who supported him."

Congregants were assured by the county health director the possibility of contracting the virus from casual contact with the Allens was negligible, Hile said.

Allen maintains he was stunned by Hile's rejection and left Colorado in the middle of the night for Fort Worth, where his father was president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

"I joined the First Baptist Church of Arlington because I thought we were going to live in Arlington," Allen said.

Although Charles Wade, pastor of the Arlington church, was very sympathetic, three couples who had been sounded out opposed allowing Matt, then 3, to attend Sunday school. Two of the couples said they consulted a pair of Arlington pediatricians, one of whom advised them against having their children play with Matt.

"We didn't know as much about the AIDS virus in 1985," Wade recalled. "I sensed it was very difficult for them. If something had gone wrong, I would have regretted it. I didn't push them to do it. I let it drop.

"I feel very badly about it," he said. "We could have reached out to them and we failed. We just did. I hope that out of this the consciences of churches will be pricked all across America so that better policies can be developed."

Efforts have been under way, on and off for two years, to investigate a new policy on permitting participation of people with HIV, Wade added.

Allen said he was more shocked when Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, known nationally as a progressive congregation, also blocked his son from attending Sunday school.

"The experience haunted us and has caused us to do a tremendous amount of study," said Jan Hill, minister of childhood education at Broadway.

The Allens' request initially went to Cecil Sherman, then senior minister and a friend of the family, she said.

"It was discussed by the ministerial staff. We sought counsel from six physicians, as well as the Centers for Disease Control," said Hill, who has been at the church for seven years. "We could not get the same story twice from physicians, for one thing, and basically did not respond to the (Allen) family."

--more--

Two weeks ago, Broadway's Children's Ministry Committee approved a policy allowing the church to receive any child and family, Hill said.

"We are beginning to use universal precautions with regard to hygiene, the same as in hospitals." Church workers must wear gloves when changing diapers and will be asked to be careful about washing their hands.

"We will be careful any time bodily fluids are transmitted -- the same precautions that most child-care facilities, hospitals and many churches are now using, to be sure all children are kept free from infection of any type," she said.

The new policies also ask families disclose whether any member is HIV-positive "so that we might work together as a team to determine how that child can best be protected within a highly confidential situation."

Joel Gregory was reaching the height of his popular following in Fort Worth when, as pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, he was approached by Allen, whose parents were then members of Gregory's church.

"I was looking for any church that would take us in," Allen said. "We were looking at the possibility of taking Matt to the church's nursery."

But Gregory, now pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas and a leader in the conservative movement in the 15.2 million member denomination, recalled the meeting differently.

"I went to Scott's home and offered to do anything Travis Avenue would do," said Gregory, who maintained Allen never directly requested church membership. "I was in a very difficult position because we were trying to help them while keeping it confidential about the HIV virus."

Afterward, Allen said, he went to University Christian Church, where Albert M. Pennybacker was senior minister.

"He was very supportive but was concerned about how the community would respond," Allen said. Pennybacker, he recalled, suggested he attend Sunday school with Matt while concealing his son's HIV status.

"I went about three times but wasn't comfortable with the situation because no one knew," Allen said. "We had gone through one brutal rejection in Colorado and we didn't want it to happen again."

After Bryan's death, Allen said, he gave up on his search for a church.

"I thought enough was enough," he said. "We felt like the church had let us down. Why beat our heads against the wall?"

Allen left his job with the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission in 1990, saying he could no longer remain a Baptist. He now consults with the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School on a project dealing with care of AIDS patients.

Many churches, including Baptist congregations, are beginning to adopt a more accepting approach to those with AIDS, he said.

"So many are living in secrecy and silent pain," he said. "It is unfortunate that society is moving so slowly to accept us. Ours is not an isolated case."

--30--

Star-Telegram staff writers Hollace Weiner and Anita Baker contributed to this report.

21 groups fight
beer ads on video

By Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP)--If the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and others have their way, Budweiser and Miller Lite soon will no longer be starring in movies and television shows. Neither will alcohol companies be able to target young persons or link drinking with risky activities such as auto racing and water skiing in their advertising.

The Christian Life Commission recently joined 21 other organizations in petitioning the Federal Trade Commission to use its authority under the unfairness doctrine to halt such practices because they violate laws and regulations intended to prevent alcohol-related problems. Among such policies are the 21-year-old minimum drinking limit and warning labels on alcohol containers.

For far too long these companies have demonstrated a woeful lack of concern for the dangerously misleading advertising of the alcohol industry, CLC Executive Director Richard Land said in a statement released at a Sept. 3 press conference in Washington. In light of the societal problems associated with alcohol consumption, one cannot help but believe they are directly related to the misleading advertisements of the alcohol industry, he said.

One of the practices the groups asked the FTC to outlaw is product placement, the featuring of brands of beer and liquor in movie and television show sequences as a result of payment by alcohol companies to the shows' producers.

Recent movies cited by the groups as containing product placement include: Who Framed Roger Rabbit?, Wayne's World, Back to School, Beverly Hills Cops, Cocoon, Ghost Busters, Gremlins, Mr. Mom and Top Gun. Most of these are rated PG or PG-13, movies which persons under 21 are able to attend without an adult.

The insidious and deceptive aspect of this form of marketing is that the consumer is never aware that she is the recipient of a commercial pitch, said Stephen Gardner, a Southern Methodist University law professor in a statement released at a press conference. This is a particular problem, Gardner said, with respect to children and teens watching shows that their parents have cleared for content but that have the sale of a product as a secret sub text.

Other organizations petitioning the FTC were the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, Center for Science in the Public Interest, National PTA and United Methodist Church Board of Church and Society.

"We intend to use every means within our grasp to fight against misleading and harmful alcohol advertising including but not limited to boycotts, congressional action and regulatory action," said James A. Smith, the CLC director of government relations.

"In this particular action, we are calling on the FTC to use the authority it already has to regulate harmful advertising. We won't rest until the scourge of misleading alcohol advertising directed at our children is eliminated," Smith said.

"We call on Southern Baptists to help us fight this battle in any way they can."

The groups petitioning the FTC also support bills in the Senate, S.664, and House of Representatives, HR1443, requiring health and safety warnings in alcohol advertising on television and radio and in newspapers and magazines.

Missouri seniors held hostage
during South Dakota standoff

By Laurie Lattimore

MARYVILLE, Mo. (BP)--A four-day vacation to Rapid City, S.D., for the senior adults of First Baptist Church of Maryville, Mo., included an unexpected twist: being held hostage for five hours in their hotel.

Eighteen-year-old Jeremiah "J.D." Kayton of Box Elder, S.D., released 19 hostages after a five-hour standoff in the Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn Aug. 26. He then shot himself in the stomach and remains in critical condition at Rapid City Regional Hospital.

Doug Noyse, a captain of the Rapid City Police Department, said the investigation is still underway and charges are pending. He said no motive has been determined, but the police are sure the action was not aimed at any specific person.

Bob Webb, pastor of the Maryville church, said everyone was called out of their rooms around 4:30 a.m. to the sound of a fire alarm. He explained the hotel has eight floors with all doors facing an open lobby area. Webb's room was on the sixth floor; Kayton was on the eighth floor.

"We started downstairs, and we heard a voice shouting, 'Go back to your rooms and lock the door,'" Webb said. "On our way upstairs, I saw a man on the eighth floor with a gun. My first impression was that he was a police officer. When we got back into our rooms and saw there were no fire trucks, we knew it wasn't a fire."

Noyse added Kayton had ordered the hotel desk clerk at gunpoint from the eighth floor to call the police department. The initial response team arrived within minutes and surrounded the entire hotel. Noyse said they communicated with Kayton by phone.

Mildred Mires and Rosella Tremble, roommates on the senior adult trip, were on the eighth floor where the gunman made everyone sit in the hall as he paced and shouted. The women were unsure of how many hours they waited in the hall.

"It seemed like to me it took forever," Mires said. "Time just stands still. Rosella was very unconcerned, but I watched every move he made and listened to everything he said."

Tremble said she was never scared because no one's lives were being directly threatened. She even talked to Kayton.

"I told him I needed to go to the bathroom," she said. "I'm sure a lot of people had to, but they didn't ask. He let us go in the room where he was using the phone, and I even told him thank you when we were leaving."

Kayton never directly pointed the gun at anyone, Mires said, but he did yell at a woman who opened her door on the second floor. The woman was part of the Maryville group.

"He shouted, 'Shut the door or I'll shoot,' but I doubt she even heard him because she didn't have her hearing aid in," Mires said. "I'm sure somebody behind her told her to shut the door."

Both women said Kayton shot once into the fountain on the first floor and once into the glass ceiling when he thought someone was on the roof. After a few hours, Kayton began letting people go back to their rooms. Mires and Tremble were the first to go into their rooms.

"He was so nervous, but he didn't threaten anyone," Mires said. "He just changed guns half a dozen times."

--more--

"I felt sorry for him. He was so young and had a long life ahead of him." Webb said that around 9:30 a.m. Kayton let all of the hostages go and turned over some of his weapons to the police before shooting himself in the stomach.

"We just hoped and prayed that it would end without bloodshed," Webb said. "We waited and paid attention to what he told us to do."

--30--

Laurie Lattimore is a news writer for Word & Way, journal of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Southwest Baptist trustees
vote to dismiss chancellor

By Bob Terry

Baptist Press
9/10/92

BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP)--In 1965, James L. Sells joined Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, as director of academic affairs. Three years later he was named president of the school. Sells was named chancellor of the university in 1979 and continued to serve as the institution's chief executive officer.

On May 31, 1991, Sells retired as CEO of the university but continued his role as chancellor, serving under a contract running through August 1993.

However, that relationship came to a sudden and dramatic conclusion Sept. 3 when the SBU board of trustees announced they could "no longer work together (with Sells) in the best interests of the university."

In a press release handed out to reporters following a five-hour closed-door meeting, the trustees announced, "Dr. James L. Sells has been terminated as chancellor of Southwest Baptist University effective immediately. This action specifically revokes any and all authority or license previously given to Dr. Sells to be associated with the university or to use the university's name in any manner or nature whatsoever."

According to SBU attorney Gary Lynch, the action was approved by the trustees by a vote of 31-1. The school currently has 48 trustees. Word & Way, Missouri Baptists' newsjournal, learned the action to sever relationships with Sells was taken Aug. 20 during a special called meeting of trustees. It was reaffirmed in the Sept. 3 meeting with only two dissenting votes.

Trustee chairman Wayne Gott said trustees desired to "work something out" with Sells and invited him to two different meetings. However, Sells refused to meet with the trustee executive committee.

The announced reason behind the action was the trustees' conclusion that Sells made "a deliberate attempt ... to interfere with the proper working of the board of trustees to find and hire a president of the university."

However, Gott said there had been a series of events which culminated with Sells' action to stymie the election of a new president.

The press release said Sells' relationship to some individual members of the trustees had suffered during the search process.

"This may be attributed to many different causes, but a major contributing factor was Dr. Sells' continued lobbying of individual trustees for and against certain prospective candidates for president which either the search committee was considering or which Dr. Sells felt they should consider."

Trustees released a three-page document titled "Chronology of Events" in which they sought to demonstrate Sells was behind a last-minute campaign to stop the election of Ron Ellis as president and elect defeated gubernatorial candidate Roy Blunt.

--more--

Ellis, vice president of Campbellsville College in Kentucky, was the announced recommendation of the trustee search committee. However, after a campaign against him that included a petition drive by local citizens and a series of anonymous letters, Ellis declined to be elected and withdrew his name as a candidate for the office.

The trustees charge Sells orchestrated that campaign by distributing information he knew to be incorrect and by authoring the anonymous letters attributed to students and faculty.

Specifically, trustees charge Sells wrote a card which said, "Roy Blunt is being considered for the presidency at SBU by the search committee and the trustees. A great number of townspeople and college people are supporting him. Will you please join us in letting the trustees know."

The card reportedly was written after Sells had been told that Ellis would be recommended as the new president and after he had been told that efforts to promote Blunt should cease. Search committee members say Blunt was never discussed by the committee prior to Ellis' selection. The search committee agreed to recommend Ellis on July 24.

An anonymous fax signed by Students Against Ellis read, "Students have been left off the President's Selection Committee for two years. We're tired of being overlooked by the trustees. We have returned to school and we will resist Mr. Ellis or anyone until we have representatives on the committee. We will petition, demonstrate, and go to all the media. We pay for our education and we demand a say in the decision."

The fax alluded to concerned faculty, "The mainstream of faculty does not have representation on the Presidential Search Committee and we will resist any decision until everyone is heard. Again the trustees have passed us by to select a chosen few who are out of touch with this university. The trustees, Dr. Ellis, and anyone else can expect a shutdown and confrontation until we are head (sic) and represented. We have remained silent for a long time but now we will fight."

"There is no doubt about the documentation," said Lynch at a press conference following the trustee meeting. "We have the information 10 ways to Sunday. I would never let a client put something like this out in print if there were any doubt at all about the accusations."

Attempts by Word & Way to contact Sells were unsuccessful. However, Lynch added, "I don't know how he can deny it."

Also charged with assisting Sells in the campaign to block Ellis and elect Blunt were Jerald Andrews, senior executive vice president for external affairs; Patty Edwards, director of major events in university advancement; and JoAnn Shaddy, Andrews' secretary.

The press release said, "The board of trustees is distressed as to the involvement of its employees in this matter" and directed Gott as acting university president to "take strong and appropriate action with regard to these employees." Gott is to report his action to the trustees in their October meeting.

Gott pointed out the three employees in question report to him as acting president. Sells reported directly to the trustees. "The board wanted to keep clear the lines of responsibility," Gott explained, adding "the three employees are an administrative responsibility and not appropriate for board action."

However, Word & Way learned a motion was made in the closed-door session to dismiss Andrews. It failed reportedly on a 14-11 vote. Some trustees said Gott threatened to resign as acting president if the trustees acted on any university-related employee other than Sells. They charged that threat influenced the vote's outcome.

--more--

Gott, however, declared he made no such threat. "I told them that if they were going to deal with personnel matters, they did not need a president. I did not threaten to resign."

Gott said since the motion to dismiss Andrews failed, his understanding is that a majority of the trustees oppose Andrews' dismissal.

Also involved in the issue is a five-year contract issued by Sells to Andrews. The contract still has about three years remaining.

However, Lynch told the press conference it was his judgment Andrews had breached the contract by his involvement in opposing board action. Lynch called the opposition "insubordination."

When contacted by Word & Way, Andrews declined to make any statement about his activities or reactions to the trustees' findings.

Trustees also voted to require any salary or benefit increases granted to employees be approved by the trustees in advance. This action came after trustees learned three employees, Andrews, Rod Oglesby, senior executive vice president for internal affairs, and Tim Siebert, senior director of development and public relations, who also is Sells' son-in-law, had been given housing allowances ranging from \$5,000 to \$9,000 on top of salaries. This was done in Sells' final days as CEO without board approval.

The trustees also rescinded the housing allowances for the three employees.

In a related action, the trustees voted to sever relationships with the Southwest Baptist University Advancement Foundation. The foundation is a privately formed fund-raising organization for the benefit of SBU. Sells is chief executive officer of the foundation. The trustees voted that no funds or property of the university be placed in the foundation and directed university employees not to lend any assistance in any way to the foundation.

Even though Sells will not be associated with SBU, trustees voted to honor his contract through August 1993 and will pay him his current annual salary of \$113,000 until that time.

"It is with much prayer and very heavy hearts that the board of trustees has taken these actions," said Gott. The acting president described himself as a friend of Sells who is on the board of trustees because of Sells' invitation. "Many of us had to step aside from our close friendship with Jim Sells for many years to make these difficult decisions.

"This was a time of tears for us," he added.

When asked what impact Sells' leaving might have on fund-raising activities, Gott replied, "The Lord will take care of us."

Privately, several trustees wondered why Sells refused to meet with the trustee executive committee. "He could have kept us from taking this action. We could have worked something out so he could have left with dignity," said one. "It is a tragedy to have 28 years of effective leadership end on such a note as this."

--30--

Olympic medalist maintains
personal Christian witness

By Debbie Von Behren

Baptist Press
9/10/92

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP)--While the eyes of the world were on Barcelona during the 1992 Summer Olympics, the eyes of many Missourians were on Lori Endicott, the top setter for the U.S. women's volleyball team.

--more--

Endicott helped lead her team to the bronze medal during the biggest Olympic gathering in history, featuring nearly 12,000 athletes from 172 countries. The bronze was only the second Olympic medal ever won by a U.S. women's volleyball team, with the first being a silver won in the boycotted Los Angeles Games of 1984.

Endicott, who was named the outstanding setter of the Olympic Games, is proudly claimed by Springfield and neighboring Willard, where she played high school volleyball.

She was accompanied to Barcelona by her parents, Bob and Judy Endicott of Willard, and by several friends. Taking part in the opening ceremonies of the Olympics was something she will never forget.

"I had watched the Olympics on television before, and I can remember seeing all the athletes and thinking this is the nation's best," she recalled. "It was hard for me to believe I was part of that group."

Barcelona definitely had the Olympic spirit, Endicott noted. "There was no doubt that the Olympics were in the air. Barcelona was crowded; there were lots of people everywhere. You could tell that the whole city was excited about the Games being there."

The communities of Springfield and Willard also were excited about their representative in the Olympics. While the Endicotts were in Barcelona, sometimes as many as 30 or 40 family friends gathered at the Endicott home to watch Lori's games via satellite link.

Many of the friends are members of Tatum Chapel Baptist Church, the Missouri Baptist congregation where the 25-year-old athlete has been a member for 17 years. Pastor Daryl Walker said the church family followed Endicott's Olympic progress "extremely closely."

"Everyone talked about Lori and the Olympics at church," Walker remarked. "It's an honor to know her."

Endicott said the support she received from her church family and other community members was heartwarming.

"I received lots of cards and telegrams from people sending encouragement and support," she said. "But that wasn't a surprise because I knew all along that the community would be watching and rooting for us. Most people in our neighborhood go to Tatum Chapel, and I've always had support from them."

However, the Olympics started off badly for Endicott, and consequently for the rest of the team. A bout of nausea forced her to miss two games of the opening match against Japan. Without Endicott, whose job is to run the offense and set up hitters for spikes, the U.S. team lost in five sets, although they had been expected to win the match. It was the low point of the Games for Endicott.

"I was thinking I've worked too hard to be sick at the most important stage of my life," she said. "I was mentally ready, but my body was just not cooperating."

After that match, Endicott and the American team rebounded, finishing second in the preliminary pool. A loss in the semifinals to Cuba put the team in the third-place game with Brazil. The U.S. team soundly defeated Brazil 15-8, 15-6, 15-13 for the bronze.

Although winning the gold had been the ultimate goal, Endicott basked in the glory of winning the bronze.

"Standing on the pedestal and getting the bronze medal would have to be the high point of the Olympics for me," she said. "All these thousands of people were applauding, and at that time it really sunk in and I knew what we had done. I wish that it had been the gold, but I'm proud and happy to have the bronze."

Endicott's volleyball career began at Willard High School, and included setting her team to the state title in 1981 as a freshman and to a third-place finish in 1983 as a junior. She also played high school basketball and was named to the all-state basketball team in 1984 and 1985.

Following high school, Endicott joined the volleyball team at the University of Nebraska. While there, she was a member of four consecutive Big Eight Conference championship teams, and led the Cornhuskers to second place in the 1986 NCAA Tournament.

College honors include being named conference player of the year and Russell All-American in 1987 and 1988. Endicott holds all-time Nebraska records in single-season set assists, career set assists and career service aces, and her team compiled a 115-19 record during her tenure.

Endicott said the strong volleyball program at Nebraska helped build desire in her to excel, and helped her gain a spot as one of only three women not from California on the 12-member Olympic team.

Her Missouri upbringing included a strong relationship with her church, which offered the opportunity for youth activities in a variety of areas.

"For years, I went to Baptist Hill church camp," Endicott shared. "There I had the chance to be involved in all kinds of recreational things."

In addition to participating in activities herself, Endicott spent some time as a lifeguard at the camp. Her pastor believes she has the same good attitude now that she had then.

"Naturally, everyone looks up to Lori," Walker said. "She's careful to set the right kind of example, and has the same values and morals she's always had. It's good for kids to see that even with her success she has kept the same spirit."

Her national team career began in January of 1989 and has survived surgery on her left hand and criticisms of her 5' 9" size. She set the U.S. team to a bronze medal at the World Championships in China in 1990, and won the tournament's Fair Play Award.

"That was a big meet for me," Endicott said. "There were some people who said I couldn't play internationally. But I played well and we upset Cuba for the bronze. I think that showed that I could play."

Even at the international level, Endicott believes it is possible, and even vital, to keep a Christian attitude in all that she does.

"I think it's always possible to maintain a Christian attitude, even at the Olympic level," she pointed out. "You can get angry and still be a Christian. Christians have emotions, too."

During her athletic career, Endicott has been able to draw strength from God on many occasions, but she especially remembers a time when she was far from home and turned to prayer in an important moment. It was at the 1991 World Cup games.

"One of the biggest times prayer helped me was in Japan when our volleyball team was qualifying for the Olympics," she said. "Not praying let us win, but praying let us play our best, and helped me deal with stress and stay focused."

Endicott plans to do just that for several more years. After some time off and after she finishes her degree at Nebraska, she wants to give the gold another try, this time at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta.

But regardless of what happens in the future, she remains modest about her achievements. "When I think about it, it doesn't seem real," Endicott said. "I don't think I've changed because of my successes. My upbringing, where I come from, gives me a solid foundation for who I am."

Her pastor agrees with that assessment of Lori Endicott, a small-town Missouri girl who just happens to be the best in the world at what she does.

"She's super," he said. "The neat thing is that she's not just a world class athlete, but she's also a world class person. Through all the fame and success, she has maintained her perspective. She's still the same Lori."

--30--

Debbie Von Behren is a correspondent for Word & Way, journal of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Former Hindu credits Alabama
woman for his changed life

By Lounette Templeton

Baptist Press
9/10/92

SINGAPORE (BP)--It's a shame Thelma Carter of Decatur, Ala., didn't hear Ashish Shah give his Christian testimony at the recent Asian Baptist Congress in Singapore.

Without her, he wouldn't have a testimony.

Shah was a Hindu when he left Bombay, India, to work in a Decatur hotel for his uncle. Carter, the hotel receptionist, invited Shah to church.

"I didn't have anything else to do, so I went," he said. "It changed my life."

Shah couldn't believe Jesus represented a God of love and mercy. In his testimony, he told how as a Hindu he would awaken at night frightened of his god's "third" watchful eye. He would hurry to the temple the next morning, but fear never completely left him.

At Decatur's Central Baptist Church, however, Shah said he found security and love. He also found salvation. He was baptized even though it meant certain ostracism when he returned home.

After two years in Decatur, he returned to Bombay. His father threw him out of the house and his mother threatened to set fire to herself. But Shah did not recant his Christian faith.

"I loved my family very much, but I couldn't turn from Christ," he said.

Shah, who now serves as a lay minister in his church in Bombay, praised God because his family has gradually come to respect him for his faith.

"They know my Lord is a living Lord," he said. "Sometimes they go to church with me. My prayer is that they will become Christians too."

--30--

CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Trennis Henderson elected editor of Arkansas paper," dated 9/2/92, please change the third paragraph to read:

Greg Kirksey, chairman of the ABN personnel committee and pastor of First Baptist Church of Benton, Ark., said ...

Thanks,
Baptist Press