



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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EDITORS' NOTE: This story updates a (BP) story dated 11/20/92 distributed to editors via SBCNet.

Parks' meeting with CBF  
protested by FMB chairman

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
11/23/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Retired Southern Baptist foreign missions leader R. Keith Parks met with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's Global Mission Ministry Group Nov. 19-20 as part of his decision-making process on accepting a top CBF leadership position.

Subsequently, John Jackson, Foreign Mission Board trustee chairman, issued a statement criticizing Parks for considering the CBF post and for a letter targeting FMB trustees Parks wrote prior to his recent retirement.

"I came to be exposed to the group," Parks told Baptist Press during a break in the CBF meeting, "to see where they're going and make some comments where I think they should be going, (to list) some priorities I would be interested in if I was involved with them."

Parks was formally offered the job of CBF coordinator of global missions by the moderate group's Coordinating Council last September. Parks was president of the SBC's Foreign Mission Board from 1980 until his Oct. 31 retirement.

Now, Parks said, "We'll take this home and process it and come to a decision in the fairly near future, yea or nay."

FMB trustee chairman Jackson, a California pastor, in his response to Parks, stated:

"As chairman of the Foreign Mission Board, it is with a grieved heart that I respond to a news release about Dr. Keith Parks. I have defended him as a man of integrity, however this creates a question in that regard. ... The trustees have not desired to be in conflict with Dr. Parks but rather sought peace. However, we can no longer hold our peace. A gauntlet has been thrown in the face of the FMB and Southern Baptists.

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"We have great concern and feel that there is no justification for a letter written one week prior to retirement bashing trustees and now these statements by Dr. Parks (about the CBF position) one week prior to the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions," an SBC-wide missions emphasis prior to the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions.

"It appears that these two events would indicate a conscious or unconscious attempt to destroy foreign missions as it is now known," Jackson wrote. "To think about, much less assume this new position, is to leave his great heritage and legacy. Consequently, his influence will diminish in the larger context of Southern Baptist life.

"My prayer is that this will be a stimulus rather than a detriment that would motivate Southern Baptists to reach beyond our \$84 million foreign mission offering goal and thus prove their commitment to foreign missions."

Parks, in his counsel to the CBF missions arm Nov. 19-20, said he believes it would be a mistake for it to try to become "a miniature FMB."

He said the CBF should "chart its own course" and "define a distinctive niche," such as missions efforts in "World A," the population belt of missions-neglected people from the Middle East through Asia; the millions of refugees worldwide; and outreach in key urban areas where few others are ministering.

He said the CBF should challenge young people to "a sacrificial lifestyle" and not necessarily pay its workers at the level of FMB missionaries.

Parks confirmed he has agreed to be a keynote speaker during the CBF May 13-15, 1993, assembly in Birmingham, Ala.

Parks' wife, Helen Jean, attended the CBF Global Mission Ministry Group meeting with him in Nashville's Scarritt-Bennett Center retreat facility near Vanderbilt University.

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WMU, SBC leaders share concerns  
over mission support within SBC

By Susan Doyle

Baptist Press  
11/23/92

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union met Nov. 20 to discuss WMU's role within the convention.

The meeting at the national WMU office was held at the invitation of a 17-member committee of national and state WMU leaders. The committee was named last January by national WMU President Carolyn Miller to explore action plans and strategies to strengthen WMU's involvement in missions.

Representing the SBC were Morris Chapman, SBC Executive Committee president and chief executive officer; James T. Draper Jr., Baptist Sunday School Board president; Larry L. Lewis, Home Mission Board president; Don Kammerdiener, interim Foreign Mission Board president; and James Williams, Brotherhood Commission president. Attending with their husbands were Jodi Chapman, Carol Ann Draper, Betty Jo Lewis and Meredith Kammerdiener.

The meeting was held under background rules which allow only the essence of the dialogue to be reported with no direct attribution.

During the one-hour dialogue, several convention leaders asked WMU to not alter its 104-year-old relationship with the SBC.

If WMU begins supporting any other entity or organization, the SBC Executive Committee might see such action as reason to create a competing women's organization which might be established as an agency of the SBC, they said.

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WMU, as an auxiliary to and not agency of the SBC, is self-supporting and self-governing. SBC agencies, except for the Baptist Sunday School Board, meanwhile, receive their funding from the convention and are directed by boards elected by the convention.

Several convention leaders encouraged the WMU executive board to issue a statement regarding its relationship to the SBC. Particularly, they asked WMU to take a stand about its relationship with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The CBF was formed in 1991 by Southern Baptists unhappy with the current leadership and direction of the SBC.

The CBF has employed several Southern Baptist missionaries who left the FMB during the last year because they disagreed with decisions made by FMB trustees regarding mission work in Europe. The CBF also recently established a missions offering.

Some of the SBC leaders told WMU they would view any support of the CBF's missionaries or offering as being in direct competition with the SBC missions enterprise.

However, WMU leaders differed with convention leaders over the dilemma facing the auxiliary organization.

WMU leaders said they are struggling with how to be inclusive of all Southern Baptists. They told convention leaders they get comments daily from people urging WMU to continue supporting all Southern Baptist missionaries -- including those sent by the CBF and those working through other non-traditional channels.

WMU leaders reminded the SBC leaders of the diversity found among Southern Baptists. In the past, they said, the majority of Southern Baptist churches supported missions in the same way -- through common offerings and missionary-sending agencies. Today, more and more local churches and some state conventions are looking at a variety of mission support options within the Southern Baptist family, the WMU leaders said.

WMU leaders said they are grappling with how to best face the changes happening on the local, state and national levels regarding mission support. During the dialogue, one person asked convention leaders to be more inclusive and embrace the full spectrum of Southern Baptists in future denominational appointments.

The WMU 17-member committee is expected to bring a report and recommendations to the full WMU executive board which will meet at the national WMU office in Birmingham Jan. 9 and at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly in Talladega, Ala., Jan. 10-13.

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Two former trustee chairmen  
disagree with Parks' letter

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press  
11/23/92

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (BP)--Two former Foreign Mission Board trustee chairmen have disagreed strongly with a letter Keith Parks wrote to 3,900 Southern Baptist missionaries before he retired Oct. 31 as FMB president.

Bill Hancock of Louisville, Ky., and Mark Corts of Winston-Salem, N.C., expressed the disagreement in a Nov. 17 letter to Parks and a Nov. 19 cover letter on copies sent to state Baptist newspaper editors. Hancock chaired the trustees from 1990-92; Corts, 1988-90. They completed their full terms of trustee service in June 1992 and June 1990 respectively.

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Parks' letter of Oct. 23, which he said Nov. 21 he still stands by, explained why he retired three years earlier than planned after 38 years' service, the last 13 as president. It listed 10 changes he said have taken place at the Foreign Mission Board with which he disagrees philosophically.

Hancock and Corts expressed appreciation for Parks. But they said they "felt compelled ... to give a balanced perspective for all of our Baptist people at this critical time of the year in giving for foreign missions" -- especially since the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is urging churches to give to a new world missions offering competing with the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions.

In their cover letter to editors, Hancock and Corts said "unjustified conclusions could be drawn from Dr. Parks' statement which could drastically hinder" decisions churches will make on their giving to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program budget and the Lottie Moon offering.

They said Parks' "unsupported assertions" were made "in the context of deep disappointment in failing to gain support to continue in his post and the highly charged atmosphere in which his retirement took place."

"What I said in my letter is true; changes have taken place which are affecting missions," Parks told Baptist Press in response to Hancock and Corts. "But I appreciate that they acknowledged in writing that the trustees weren't supportive of me continuing in my post. That was previously denied."

Parks decided to retire in 1992, rather than the 1995 date he earlier requested, because he said he couldn't get the proper support for effective leadership. Current trustee leaders disagree with that, noting he was asked to stay.

Hancock's and Corts' rebuttal of Parks' letter touched on most of the 10 changes at the board listed in Parks' letter to missionaries:

- 1) Lack of appropriate representation of a large percentage of Southern Baptists;
- 2) trustee decisions "increasingly shaped by ultra-conservative theological interpretations, rather than tested and adopted missions principles;"
- 3) an atmosphere of "suspicion, distrust, criticism and intimidation;"
- 4) freedom to disagree "replaced by expectation of conformity," not allowing open discussion;
- 5) a decline in career missionary appointments and increased emphasis on volunteers that causes "an imbalance overseas;"
- 6) trustees without the time or background "increasingly doing staff work instead of fulfilling the role of trustees;"
- 7) more pressure on the board's news office (the foreign bureau of Baptist Press) "to report only 'positive' news;"
- 8) asking prospective staff members for expressions of loyalty toward trustees and/or the 'conservative resurgence;'"
- 9) increasing emphasis for missionary appointment on the four background statements in the 1987 SBC Peace Committee Report, instead of just the Baptist Faith and Message statement;
- 10) the convention controversy causing many missionary candidates "to believe they cannot be appointed or to decline appointment because they are not comfortable with the present Foreign Mission Board direction."

Hancock and Corts deny, and express bewilderment over, Parks' contention that prospective staff members are being asked to support the "conservative resurgence" or that missionary candidates must adhere to the Peace Committee's background statements, rather than the Baptist Faith and Message statement, Southern Baptists' statement of faith adopted in 1963.

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And they note that "distribution of incomplete information and a perspective that does not fit our experience" may be the reason "if (missionary) candidates are failing to come forth." They said their experience, observation and ongoing contacts with the current board of trustees affirms their belief that "this board continues to appoint individuals, not churches, and ... to serve all Baptists and to appoint all Baptists who meet the stated qualifications."

Hancock and Corts said the charge of trustees overstepping their role "may at times be valid ... but it is a minor matter that requires adjustment any time there is a large influx of new trustees."

They also dismissed the concern about pressure on the board's news office, noting discussions have taken place to encourage it "to seek information from several sides of an issue" and "not to report only negative news" but to include "more positive aspects of a situation." They said they "were never made aware of an attempt to monitor or censor what was written ... ."

Hancock and Corts said during "the past 12 years of our involvement in the transition, the decisions which were more driven by theological interpretations were largely those initiated" by Parks and staff. They asked if Parks' charges on "ultra-conservatism" mean he would now back down on staff-recommended decisions to dismiss missionary Michael Willett and to deny career missionary appointment to divorced persons. They referred to a 1988 decision to dismiss Willett, appointed to be a seminary teacher, for "doctrinal ambiguity" on the biblical miracles, and to a statement of an historical board stance against service of divorced persons.

"Decisions such as the ones on Dr. Willett and divorce are certainly not what I had in mind as illustrations of ultra-conservatism vs. sound missions principles," responded Parks. "Those decisions were based on biblical convictions both I and the board have had for years -- and I stand by them."

"If they want an illustration," Parks said, "it's the move toward enforcing theological conformity overseas with financial appropriations -- such as the abrupt decision of trustees to defund the seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland. That's a classic case of allowing an extreme viewpoint in theology to cause overreaction and influence a decision of the board and disrupt mission work as much as that is doing."

In their letter, Hancock and Corts referred to the Ruschlikon defunding to illustrate their contention that certain FMB staff were "insensitive" and contributed to an atmosphere of distrust by not informing the appropriate trustee leaders that E. Glenn Hinson, whom many trustees perceive as liberal, was teaching at the Swiss seminary on a four-month assignment.

"The temporary appointment of Dr. Hinson raised as many hackles among some Baptists as the appointment of Dr. Paige Patterson (a leader in the Southern Baptist conservative movement) to a temporary teaching assignment might have raised in others," Hancock and Corts noted. They said failure to inform the trustees violated a 1988 agreement with the seminary, trustee officers and staff "to keep the (SBC) controversy ... out of the European seminary."

Noting Parks' contention that "suspicion, distrust, criticism and intimidation" have replaced trust and respect, Hancock and Corts called it "a matter of judgment."

"We do not doubt that trust did break down, but we felt that there were also responsibilities you (Parks) had to reach out to the new conservative leadership," they said.

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"There were times when some of us urged you to build bridges with the conservative leadership, and to seek to break down the suspicion and distrust by listening to each other and getting to know each other in a personal way. Other institutional heads have sought to build such bridges and found that the institutional purposes were well served thereby."

Parks responded he spent hours trying to build bridges. "The problem is that when I refused to compromise my principles, they said I wasn't trying to build bridges. Part of the problem was my insistence that we've got to work with all Southern Baptists. If I'd agreed to work with ultra-conservatives only, it would have weakened missions faster than it's been weakened."

Current trustee leaders disagree and have said repeatedly they want to work with all Southern Baptists and they have no "ultra-conservative" agenda. They say they have no goal other than evangelism that results in churches.

Hancock and Corts defended trustee interest in FMB affairs: "Some trustees came to the task ... with critical and analytical thinking applied to institutional life. They were simply not of a mind-set to accept the unquestioned judgments of staff. Such freedom has ... been applauded in some parts of Baptist life when applied to academic institutions.

"... that same kind of critical and analytical thinking needs to be applied to institutional life, such as the affairs of the ... (FMB)," Hancock and Corts continued. "All of us grew weary ... of restating and restudying the same issues. But surely in Baptist life the same privilege ought to be afforded trustees in seeking to learn as is afforded seminary professors and others ... ."

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Hobbs agrees CBF should  
'get in or get out' of SBC

By R. Albert Mohler Jr.

Baptist Press  
11/23/92

ATLANTA (BP)--Herschel H. Hobbs, oft-quoted former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, was "taking a realistic look" when he called for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship to separate itself from the SBC as a matter of integrity.

"When you take their organization in place," Hobbs said, "they have a denomination in embryo. All they need to do is vote 'We are a denomination.'" Hobbs made his remarks in an interview with The Christian Index, newsjournal of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

A member of the SBC Peace Committee, Hobbs said, "I'm not on either side" of the SBC controversy but remains deeply committed to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Chapman had said Nov. 11 the CBF would exercise "their greatest integrity" by "openly declaring they no longer are cooperating Southern Baptists, rather than claiming to be Southern Baptists and trying to draw funds from good-hearted, grass-roots Southern Baptists."

Hobbs said the CBF "keeps coming in trying to get financial support from churches. I can't see it any other way but that when they get sufficient financial support they will get out." As for attempts to fund CBF programs from SBC churches, Hobbs said, "I question the wisdom of that and I can't justify it.

"I wish they would either get in or get out and let us get on with the work," Hobbs stated. The SBC, he said, should "throw its shoulders to the wheel. As for the CBF, "I don't want it, but we do well to face reality and get together or go our separate ways."

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**Churches offer victims  
aid after tornadoes**

**By Ken Camp & David Reid**

DALLAS (BP)--As tornadoes struck in Texas, Alabama and other states, Uvalde Baptist Church in Houston canceled its Nov. 22 Thanksgiving dinner, deciding instead to offer residents of nearby tornado-ravaged Channelview reason to give thanks.

In Alabama, members of the Ethelsville Baptist Church prayed for tornado victims Sunday morning, Nov. 22, then canceled the rest of the worship service to do work clothes to assist in the cleanup of Macedonia, a predominantly black community adjacent to the church where 12 homes were destroyed and numerous others were damaged.

In Houston, Uvalde Baptist Church members joined members of their former mission congregation, Sterlingwood Baptist Church, in serving more than 400 of their neighbors meals they had prepared for the church social.

The volunteers also provided child care for storm victims and helped them clear debris, board up windows and recover scattered belongings.

"Our church is right on the edge of the area that was hit," said Rob Harris, pastor at Uvalde, "and we have a number of our people who lived there -- emphasis on the past tense. Some of their homes were completely destroyed or damaged beyond repair."

About two dozen families at Uvalde Baptist Church either had damage to their homes or had relatives who sustained serious property damage. At Sterlingwood Baptist Church, about 35 families were affected.

Uvalde Baptist is less than three miles from the severely damaged area, and Harris lives about three blocks from the neighborhood where several homes were destroyed. Neither Uvalde nor Sterlingwood sustained serious damage to their church facilities.

About 200 volunteers from Uvalde and Sterlingwood Baptist churches delivered Thanksgiving meals to storm victims. They also set up a table on a street corner to serve food to their neighbors.

"The response of our people made me, as their pastor, proud," Harris said. "The members of Sterlingwood really pitched in, and together we did what neither of us could have done by ourselves."

A local pizza parlor and other area businesses also "pitched in," providing additional food and other supplies for the relief effort, Harris said.

In Alabama, beyond the ministry provided by Ethelsville Baptist Church in Pickens County, the morning service at another nearby church, Carrollton Baptist, was interrupted with a request for food for tornado victims and volunteers. Women in the church responded by providing sandwiches and drinks to feed 100.

"We went through the black community offering them food," said Renay Carroll, wife of Ernie Carroll, director of missions for the Pickens County Baptist Association. "We told them we were there because the Lord loved them and we loved them too."

Back in Houston, John Lilly of Clear Lake University Baptist Church surveyed the disaster site and met with area Baptists Nov. 23 to provide damage assessment for Texas Baptist Disaster Relief.

"It was obvious that more than one tornado hit the area," Lilly said. "On one street, I counted 30 homes that were totally demolished beyond any state of repair. Some houses were flattened right down to the ground."

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Lilly, who worked with the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief ministries in Homestead, Fla., following Hurricane Andrew, said, "I know the damage in Florida covered a larger area, but I've never seen anything worse than what I've seen here (in Channelview)."

Texas Baptists' regional Disaster Relief Mobile Unit from Beaumont was activated and was scheduled to set up at Sterlingwood Baptist Church and begin serving meals by sundown on Nov. 23, according to Bob Dixon, executive director of Texas Baptist Men.

A number of tornados hit six southeast Texas counties on Nov. 21, injuring at least six people. About 1,200 homes in Harris County were damaged, with the greatest destruction in southeastern Houston and in suburban Channelview.

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D.C. convention adopts  
long-range growth goals

Baptist Press  
11/23/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--"Vision 2000: Empowering for Mission," a long-range growth plan, was adopted during the 116th annual session of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

The convention, attended by 275 messengers Nov. 12-13 in Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church, adopted a \$1,019,652 budget for 1993, a 2.7 percent increase over the current year.

From churches' undesignated offerings for the unified budget, 75 percent will be allocated for ministries of the D.C. convention, 12.5 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes and 12.5 percent for American Baptist Churches' causes, all unchanged from the current budget. However, the convention's budget allows churches to designate gifts to Southern Baptist, American Baptist or Cooperative Baptist Fellowship causes.

The Vision 2000 effort encompasses 18 goals, such as 10 new congregations by the end of the decade.

In unopposed elections, new officers are: president, Ellen Sims Teague of First Baptist Church in Gaithersburg and director of the North American Baptist Women's Union; vice president, Ishmael L. Shaw, senior pastor of Paramount Baptist Church and former associate general secretary of the Progressive National Baptist Convention; and recording secretary, Bonnie B. Taylor of the People's Community Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Md.

Michael E. Willett, associate professor of New Testament language and literature at Howard University's Divinity School in Washington, led two Bible studies on the Book of Revelation.

James A. Scott, president of American Baptist Churches, U.S.A., addressed the concluding service.

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Victor Tupitza contributed to this report.

Missionary Tonita Tackett  
dies of cancer at age 45

Baptist Press  
11/23/92

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary Tonita Tackett, 45, died Nov. 22 in Louisville, Ky., after battling cancer for more than five years.

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Appointed a missionary in 1979, Tackett was a secretary in the Southern Baptist mission office in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 1980 to 1991. She also taught secretarial science at a local women's training center and was an active member of Tijuca Baptist Church in Rio.

Tackett discovered she had cancer in Brazil. She chose to stay in Brazil while undergoing treatment, which rid her body of malignant tumors. However, while she was on furlough in October 1991, doctors in the United States discovered the cancer had returned. From then until her death she struggled with the illness while living with her mother, Ann Tackett, in Louisville.

"She was a precious young woman who was well loved among the Brazilian people," said Ann Fallaw, the Foreign Mission Board's associate area director for Brazil and the Caribbean. "She was a right arm for so many of the missionaries. She took on much of the mission business, which freed other missionaries to do their work. She played an important role."

A native of Bellefontaine, Ohio, she earned a bachelor of arts degree from Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., and a master of religious education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. She attended Kentucky Baptist Hospital School of Nursing in Louisville.

Besides her mother, she is survived by three brothers.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers Nov. 23 by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet Newsroom.

**Bernard LaFayette Jr. elected  
American Baptist College head**

By Tim Fields

**Baptists Press  
11/23/92**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Trustees of American Baptist College of the American Baptist Theological Seminary elected Bernard LaFayette Jr. as the college's president during a called board meeting Nov. 20 in Nashville.

LaFayette, 52, vice president for academic affairs at the college since 1987 and pastor of Progressive Baptist Church in Nashville, will assume the presidency immediately. He succeeds Odell McGlothian Sr., who retired June 30 to become pastor of New Salem Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn.

The four-year Bible college is a joint venture of the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. It was founded in 1924 to provide liberal arts and theological education for black church leaders.

As the college's ninth full-time president, LaFayette will head the only predominantly African-American school in the nation accredited by the American Association of Bible Colleges.

LaFayette, who earned a bachelor's degree from the college in 1969, also has attended Fisk University and Boston University School of Law and has earned master's and doctorate degrees in education from Harvard University.

He has served as principal of the Tuskegee Institute High School in Tuskegee, Ala., and dean of the graduate school at Alabama State University.

LaFayette has served on the faculty of numerous colleges and universities including Harvard, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Lindenwood College, Columbia Theological Seminary and Candler School of Religion at Emory University.

As a student at the college, LaFayette was a pioneer in the civil rights movement. In 1967 he was appointed by Martin Luther King Jr. as national program administrator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

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LaFayette has traveled extensively throughout the world in behalf of race relations and world peace and is presently in India attending an international non-violence education conference.

He is married and has two children.

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Also available upon request:

-- Companion feature by Ferrell Foster to earlier story about missionary's bout with cancer.

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