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May 25, 1992

92-89

**TV star-turned-golfer
now Japan 'tentmaker'**

By Michael Chute

TOKYO (BP)--Japanese still remember red-haired, blue-eyed American Micki McKenzie as the star of a hit television show in the early 1980s.

Television producers on a "star search" chose McKenzie over hundreds of other women across America and England. The only foreigner in the series, she played a rookie detective's wife on Japan's top dramatic TV series. After a much-ballyhooed romance in fan magazines, she married the show's star.

A natural athlete, McKenzie took up golf, which is fast becoming Japan's national pastime for the rich and famous. The more she played, the better she got. McKenzie soon found a coach and headed back to the United States to join the women's pro golf circuit.

The storybook marriage to her movie-star husband was over. When she left Japan seven years ago, McKenzie swore she would never return.

"I searched for happiness through other means," McKenzie said of that time. "I thought fame would bring me happiness. I thought marriage would do the trick. I thought money would do it -- after I divorced, I had a lot of it. Money brought all kinds of anxiety. I lived up and down depending on what the stock market did."

Traveling back to her California home after a third successive \$40,000-plus season on the LPGA mini-tour, McKenzie says God spoke clearly to her about her life. She realized just how far she had strayed. The first thing she did was get back into church. One Sunday the pastor reminded Christians they must keep promises they make to God.

McKenzie suddenly remembered vows she made "to live for Christ" as an 18-year-old about to leave for Japan the first time. She knew she had fallen short of that goal, so she set out to turn her life around. In the process, she felt God calling her back to Japan but didn't know whether as a golfer, English teacher, missionary or actress.

McKenzie called long-time friends Bob and Gail Gierhart, Southern Baptist missionaries in Japan. Gierhart had been youth director in McKenzie's home church in Lafayette, Calif., and later performed her wedding ceremony. She learned they were trying to start a new church in Yokohama and wanted to help.

Two years ago, she returned to Japan -- not as an actress, but as a golf pro. Last year, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board entered a covenant with McKenzie recognizing her as a "tentmaker" -- a lay Christian using secular skills overseas to spread the gospel. Her golf skills earn a living for her at Heritage Resort Hotel. The 32-year-old also works with the Gierharts, teaching Bible studies in their home and working in the new church.

"She always said she'd help us in our work but she never did, so we were skeptical," Mrs. Gierhart recalled of McKenzie's earlier years in Japan. "We soon learned she had changed. She got right with God and turned her life around. It surprised us how much she'd grown spiritually. God really did a marvelous thing."

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Japanese still consider McKenzie a "star." She gets media exposure wherever she goes with the magnetic personality that attracted TV producers and captured the imagination of Japanese more than a decade ago. She continues to attract people today, easily making friends wherever she goes.

And she always speaks about Christ. Last year, in fluent Japanese, she told prestigious Yomiuri magazine she would like to play golf with the emperor "so I could tell him about Jesus." She also travels around Japan speaking in churches.

"Micki is well-known, but not pretentious," Mrs. Gierhart says.

The hotel pays McKenzie to teach golf, promote the hotel and its golf course and golf with club members. Management also uses her name in publicity to attract people to the hotel. Her contract states she must OK public relations efforts involving her.

She placed Gideon Bibles in the hotel's 250 rooms. The Gideons sent 50 more Bibles for a Bible study class she plans to start for hotel employees. She also meets with employees individually.

McKenzie also supports other Christian activities in Japan. For instance, she teamed up with pro golf's former U.S. Open winner Larry Nelson at the Tokyo airport to share their faith with Japanese media. Nelson gave his testimony and she sang a song during the press conference.

Life Ministries also uses McKenzie in its "Friendship Golf" program. The evangelical Christian group sets up tournaments putting a Christian in every foursome. After awards ceremonies, one of the Christians gives a testimony and presents the plan of salvation.

"As a tentmaker, I'm building relationships with hotel employees and (club) members," McKenzie said. "This is a perfect job for giving a Christian witness. Out on the golf course there's a lot of time to talk."

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

NOTE TO EDITORS: The following story package, including an information box and two articles, features the Fulani people of West Africa -- the focus of the 1992 World Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization June 5-6. Writer Donald D. Martin and photographer Don Rutledge visited Nigeria to cover the Fulani.

INFORMATION BOX

Africa's Fulani people:
focus of day of prayer

Baptist Press
5/25/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--During 1992's Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization -- 6 p.m., Friday, June 5, through 6 p.m., Saturday, June 6 -- Southern Baptists are urged to pray for west Africa's Fulani (pronounced foo-lahn--ee) people.

Just before Pentecost Sunday each year, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board calls Southern Baptists to join other Christians worldwide in praying for a people group virtually unreached by Christ's gospel.

This year's people group -- the world's largest nomadic society of between 10 to 14 million people -- has searched for water and grazing land for their cattle for centuries. Their search has dispersed them among 18 African countries.

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The Fulani share common bonds in staunch devotion to Islam, cattle, a stoic code of ethics and a variety of related languages and dialects. But their movement of herds across national borders is sometimes restricted. Prolonged drought and Africa's population explosion also threaten the Fulani's traditional way of life.

For more than 30 years Southern Baptists have worked among the Fulani yet only a few thousand Fulani Christians exist.

Prayer is the key to Fulani ministry.

This year, the Foreign Mission Board's prayer office asks Southern Baptists to pray for Southern Baptist missionaries working among the Fulani and that:

-- the Fulani will respond to the gospel message and those who become Christians will not experience extreme persecution.

-- Fulani Christians will be allowed to stay in their villages and evangelize their own people.

-- Christian workers will have victory during spiritual warfare that distracts and discourages them.

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Recipe for Fulani evangelism:
cattle, care and Christ

By Donald D. Martin

Baptist Press
5/25/92

JOS, Nigeria (BP)--Ron Holcomb was having one of those days.

Holcomb, a Southern Baptist agricultural missionary from Denton, Texas, had planned to inoculate cattle at a Fulani camp in the cool plateau region of central Nigeria. But before Holcomb and the mission's veterinary team had unloaded their gear from their truck, a shouting cattleman confronted them.

In a matter of seconds, what started out as a chance to expand Holcomb's Fulani ministry deteriorated into a missionary's nightmare.

The Fulani cattleman was upset because Holcomb and the team refused to break up a set of inoculations to sell just one of them. He lashed out in a battery of accusations. Waving his cattle staff at Holcomb, he shouted to other gathering cattlemen that this group had come to cheat them.

"It seemed he was mad at us from the start," Holcomb relates. "He would throw his hands in the air and shout, 'Why do we have to buy all this? We only want the one shot. That's what we want! These men are here just to take our money.'"

Yet Holcomb had no choice but to follow government guidelines requiring all private veterinary programs to administer a series of inoculations at a set price.

Fulani are often suspicious of outsiders' motivations. But this was the most aggressive attack Holcomb or his wife, Karen, had encountered in their first year of full-time Fulani evangelism.

After a tense discussion, the cattleman eventually quieted down as others explained to him the Baptist team had been invited. Some of the Fulani had seen the agriculturist work the previous day on their neighbors' cattle. The man remained angry but did not object when others urged the missionary to begin inoculating the cattle.

Before starting to work, Holcomb began his customary explanation of who he and his team were and asked if they could pray. The Fulani are predominantly Muslim but they usually welcome all prayers.

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"I began like always," he recalls. "But when I said we were doing this in the name of Jesus Christ, that just set it off. Everything fell apart."

The angry Fulani's rage exploded into a new tongue-lashing. The indignation spread. Other Fulani joined in and started arguing.

"The man was getting madder and madder," Holcomb recounts. "He went on about how we were trying to cheat them. Several more 'discussing groups' broke out. Then the Fulani man who had invited us began running from group to group, yelling, 'Let's get started. Let's start the work.'

"I didn't know what to do. I stood by the truck and tried to maintain my cool. People were arguing everywhere. My team was upset. The Fulani were upset. Everyone was shouting. And then the cows started to die."

Within 15 minutes, two cows dropped dead in the field. The crowd hushed; the loss of even one cow is a blow. A Fulani cattleman's wealth is measured by the size of his herd. The Fulani believe the well-being of a man and his cattle are inseparable.

The Baptist team had not yet treated any of the cattle, so no one blamed them for having "bad medicine." Femi Adewumi, 28, the mission's veterinarian, examined the fallen cows and found they had died from internal parasites that can be treated with one of the vaccines the angry cattleman did not want.

Holcomb and his team eventually treated all the cattle that day but it left them drained and disheartened.

Before beginning work in 1989 with the Fulani, the Holcombs had become fascinated with the nomadic tribesmen. In his first five years of mission work, Holcomb taught agricultural science at the Baptist High School in Jos, Nigeria. But the couple felt God's call to change their ministry. In 1989 they began full-time Fulani evangelism.

He was sure his concern for animals and his training in agriculture and livestock management equipped him to befriend the Fulani. He felt he had the right tools to reach one of the world's least-evangelized people groups. Yet after months of faltering attempts at building relationships, Holcomb knew something was missing. He had a love for the people, knowledge to help safeguard their livelihood and an assured sense of God's leadership. But his efforts to share Christ met with little success.

He isn't the first missionary perplexed by the elusive Fulani. They have traditionally been a nomadic people, making it difficult for outsiders to develop long-term relationships. Small bands of Fulani have wandered throughout western Africa with their cattle for centuries.

Southern Baptists have worked with the Fulani more than 30 years. The late Hattie Gardner devoted much of her 38 years as a missionary to Fulani work near the Benin border. After Gardner's retirement in 1973, Paul and Faye Burkwall continued the work. In 1983 they began the first church in Nigeria with Fulani-language services.

Other groups' Fulani ministries preceded Southern Baptist work. More than 100 Protestant and Catholic missionaries work full-time among the Fulani. Yet of the 10 to 14 million Fulani in some 18 African countries only a few thousand are Christians.

Most Fulani are Muslim. Some mix superstition and Islamic law to form "folk Islam." Whatever form their Islamic beliefs take, it maintains a firm hold. For most, to be Fulani is to be Muslim. Penetrating the Fulani-Islamic identity takes time and prayer.

Yet in recent years, fissures have appeared in this once-impenetrable identity. Several Christian groups have reported upturns in the number of Fulani believers.

Christians who work with the Fulani say social and economic changes threaten their way of life. Years of drought and Africa's rapid population rise have demanded more land for crops, cutting into range land Fulani depend on for their cattle. Today they must pay grazing fees so their cattle may glean bits of grass and fallen husks from dusty furrows that were once free grassland.

Christian missionaries realize this crisis creates openings to share the message of Christ. But the Holcombs continued to feel their own work was faltering.

Then two years ago a young Fulani man stepped into their lives and transformed their ministry. A Baptist high school grad suggested they seek advice from his cousin, Daniel Dama, 25, a third-generation Christian Fulani considering entering the Baptist Pastors' School in Kaduna.

"God knew exactly who we needed to help us," Holcomb says. "When we started to work with Daniel there was a sense of relief, like a burden was lifted off our shoulders. Here was somebody who knew how to reach the Fulani. He took us under his wing, even though he's 10 years younger than we are."

Dama wasn't shy about citing the Holcombs' lapses in protocol and etiquette after each Fulani camp visit. For a start, Dama explained, anyone with manners would squat 10 to 20 yards from a camp and call out his greetings. To walk into a camp without a casual yet lengthy exchange of greetings was barbaric. Dama instructed the Holcombs in table manners, polite conversation and business practices that dealt with cattle. He also schooled them further in language study and approaches to evangelism.

Many barriers remain. The persecution of a new Fulani Christian usually drives that person from his or her village. The chance to speak from one's heart about Christ to a loved one is severed.

When Hassan Adamu, 30, told his family he had become a Christian, they drove him out and stripped him of his cattle. His father promised to shoot him if he returned as a Christian. Adamu turned to fellow Christians for food and shelter.

Yet Adamu sees his life as similar to Joseph's in the Old Testament. "Like Joseph I was thrown into the well by my brothers," he says. "Someday I may be able to help my family by giving them Christ."

Adamu's family has promised him the return of his cattle if he will forget about Jesus. But Adamu says that's not possible. The joy of the Lord is much better than his parents' blessings, he says.

"We're praying for the day when Fulani Christians can stay in their villages so they can be witnesses to their own people," Mrs. Holcomb says.

Holcomb adds that prayer is the key to their whole ministry. Another missionary who has devoted most of her career to Fulani evangelism cautioned the Holcombs not to start their work without active prayer support.

"She said she's never encountered such intense spiritual warfare as with her work with the Fulani. I agree," Holcomb says. "We know Satan doesn't want us here. Every day we're hit with his distractions."

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

The Fulani of west Africa:
changes hobble a way f life

By Donald D. Martin

Baptist Press
5/25/92

TEDMUZU, Nigeria (BP)--At dawn on open farmland in northern Nigeria, a small herd of dusty white cattle draws around a campfire of dried dung and grass.

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A Fulani cattleman near the campfire calls to his herd. Other small fires glow in the darkened fields, but the cattle easily find their master's voice.

As cattle crowd close to the fire, Fulani boys squeeze between the packed cattle, feeding cow chips and stalks of harvested Guinea corn to the flames then sprinting away for more fuel. Plumes of dense smoke filter through the herd. The docile cattle move so close to the fires that blue-green flames lick at their sides.

Cattleman Saidu Shiroma, owner of the herd, explains the smoke and fire temporarily relieve his cattle of nagging insects. For these few minutes each morning, his cattle enjoy a break from the incessant attacks of flies, mosquitoes and gnats.

As the herd of about 30 animals enjoys the fire's protection, Shiroma's sons move through the pack hobbling some of the cattle. Two boys lean into a pair of cows with their shoulders, forcing them to face each other. One boy reaches down and ties the cows' front left legs together. Several pairs are squared off and hobbled.

Shiroma, with more than a hint of pride, scolds his sons. They are slow and their knots are no good, he barks. When it comes time to milk, he will probably spend the whole morning rounding them up again.

But the herd stays in place. The knots hold and the milking moves along quickly. Soon the boys have collected enough milk for the day's meals and possibly some for market.

Shiroma pauses, watching his sons work the cattle. He acknowledges his good fortune -- his sons are able, he is welcome on the land, his herd is fairly healthy.

But Shiroma, like other Fulani, feels the pressure of change. Prolonged drought and Africa's population explosion now threaten the Fulani way of life. The need to cultivate more and more farmland steadily devours the sub-Sahara's sparse grasslands, explains Ron Holcomb, a Southern Baptist agricultural missionary. Holcomb of Denton, Texas, and his wife, Karen, from Houston, live in Jos, Nigeria, and work in Fulani evangelism.

Holcomb met Shiroma in 1989, when Shiroma came to Jos seeking medical help for his cattle. The Holcombs had recently begun inoculating Fulani cattle as part of a new Fulani outreach program. Since then Holcomb and Shiroma have become friends.

On this morning, Holcomb had come to examine some of Shiroma's cattle. Several listless cows showed signs of internal parasites, an easily treated ailment.

But a greater threat than parasites is the cattleman's right to use the grazing land his family has inhabited for generations. In less than one generation, Shiroma has seen this region in northern Nigeria transformed from open range to jealously guarded farmland. What was free grazing for his father's cattle now costs him about \$10 a day -- a sum unheard of just seven years ago. To pay the fees, Shiroma raises goats and rams to sell. Of late, he has even had to sell cattle.

Shiroma can't say with confidence his grandchildren will know this way of life.

For centuries, the Fulani of western Africa have been a fiercely independent nomadic people, many opting for free movement rather than ownership of land. The constant search for water and grass have dispersed them into some 18 African countries. They are concentrated in western Africa but can be found as far east as Sudan and Ethiopia. They number between 10 and 14 million, making them the world's largest nomadic people.

The Fulani share common bonds in Islam, cattle, a stoic code of ethics called "pulaaku" and a variety of related languages and dialects. "Pulaaku," which has upheld Fulani identity for generations, transcends national boundaries and enforces a Fulani's personal reserve and pride. Similar to "losing face" in an Asian society, a Fulani who shows pain, joy, anger or any strong emotion loses "pulaaku."

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Fulani identity also is rooted in Muslim Fulani dynasties of the 18th and 19th centuries. Muslim traders in the 14th century introduced Islam to Fulani herdsman. In time Fulani who lived in cities became known for staunch devotion to Islam. Their religious zeal and an ethnocentrism viewing all non-Fulani as a lower class led to a series of holy wars, explains Victor Azarya in his book, "Aristocrats Facing Change."

"In most of the places to which they spread, the Fulani were subjected to populations whom they despised," Azarya wrote. "Islam increased the feeling of cultural and religious superiority of its believers It increased the frustration of its believers at being ruled by nonbelievers. Moreover, Islam made it a religious duty for its believers to liberate themselves through flight ('hijra') and holy war ('jihad')."

Through a series of Islamic holy wars, the Fulani became rulers of kingdoms concentrated in present-day Guinea, Nigeria and Cameroon. Elements of these kingdoms lasted well into the 20th century. Colonial governments asserted some of their power through Fulani rulers, but not until decolonization did other ethnic groups establish complete control of these areas.

This history is embedded in a Fulani's psyche. Even today, in a Fulani's conversation, there are occasional references to the jihads.

Yet in those same conversations, a Fulani's appreciation of cattle outshines even his pride in a royal heritage. Other ethnic groups, however, consider the nomadic Fulani uneducated, primitive and uncivilized.

Among the Fulani, those who follow a traditional nomadic lifestyle enjoy a prestige all their own, although most Fulani have settled down to some degree. Today the range of Fulani lifestyles is as diverse as their population is spread out. Some live in one place for several years, then move on. Others have been settled for generations. Some of the poorest Fulani have lost their cattle through disease or poor management and have taken up full-time farming, which most other Fulani consider disgraceful.

Another factor that threatens Fulani society: Local and national governments have begun to restrict the movement of Fulani herds. Since a growing number of countries consider Fulani cattle a national resource, they now restrict the movement of herds across national borders, said Southern Baptist missionary Paul Burkwall.

"More and more governments insist that when the Fulani move into a country with their cattle, they have to stay," Burkwall said. "If they want to migrate, they have to leave their cows behind. Their way of life is dying. It's predicted in the next 20 years it will be gone."

The Fulani in the southwest have settled, taken up farming and speak the local Hausa language. But they remain proud of their heritage. The status of owning cattle is still so great that successful Fulani who live and trade in the cities often will buy a herd and hire someone to tend it.

The dependency on farming greatly increased in 1983 when a devastating epidemic wiped out thousands of Fulani cattle. For many Fulani families the only alternative was to farm and hope they could make enough money to rebuild a herd.

"They want to have cattle if possible," Burkwall said. "But when their cows died they had to depend even more on farming. They hate it, but they have to survive."

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

McGlothian to retire from
American Baptist College

By Tim Fields

NASHVILLE (BP)--Odell McGlothian Sr., president of American Baptist College of the American Baptist Theological Seminary (ABC) in Nashville, has announced his retirement effective June 30.

McGlothian, who has been president since 1980, will become pastor of New Salem Missionary Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., after his retirement.

American Baptist College is a cooperative effort between the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. (NBC) to provide liberal arts and theological education primarily for persons committed to ministry in African-American Baptist churches.

The college is the only predominantly black school in the nation accredited by the American Association of Bible Colleges.

During McGlothian's tenure ABC's enrollment increased 78 percent from 131 to 233 students, two new dormitories were constructed, asbestos was removed from all buildings at a cost of \$200,000, an office computer system was installed, three buildings were air conditioned and an office of development and college relations was established with a grant from Lilly Endowment.

McGlothian also worked out an arrangement with National Baptists valued at thousands of dollars a year for free use of facilities at the new Baptist World Center adjacent to the campus. ABC uses the center for all classes, the college food service, trustee meetings and other activities related to the school.

McGlothian said ABC, founded in 1924, is and will continue to be a fruitful cooperative effort among two missions-minded denominations. "When Southern Baptists and National Baptists first began this bold experiment in race relations and Christian missions, it was an idea before its time," he said. "Because of this ongoing cooperative effort, American Baptist College has trained thousands of men and women for Christian ministry positions throughout the United States and the world."

Trustees of the college representing both denominations named an administrative team to be responsible for the operation of the school until a new president is elected. The team consists of four administrators at the college and Arthur L. Walker Jr., secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Seminary Commission and executive director of the SBC Education Commission, who will chair the committee.

ABC staff serving on the management team are Bernard LaFayette, Jr., vice president for academic affairs; Nelson Wilson, vice president for administrative affairs; Robert Brown, director of continuing education; and Floyd Lacey, dean of chapel and director of student development.

Johnnie H. Flakes, a National Baptist pastor from Columbus, Ga., and chairman of the trustees, was elected to serve as chairman of the presidential search committee. Other National Baptist Convention trustees on the committee are Julius Scruggs, a pastor from Huntsville, Ala., and James A. Campbell, ABC faculty member, Nashville.

Southern Baptist Convention trustees on the committee include Don B. McCoy, an ABC faculty member, Hoffman Harliss, a layman, and Walker, all of Nashville.

Trustees also named ABC student Dennis Hudson of Greenville, Miss., to the committee.

Nominations for president should be sent to the search committee in care of American Baptist College, 1800 Baptist World Center Drive, Nashville, TN 37207-9980.

Former 'Zen-Taoist-Jew'
now ready to share Christ

By Walt B. Collins

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--After "trying it all," Randi Beth Lansky found what she was looking for: spiritual reality in Jesus Christ, a loving family and opportunity to minister.

Raised in a conservative Jewish home, Lansky attended Hebrew school, enmeshed in studies of the Torah and teachings of the Old Testament.

"I was the most 'religious' person in my family," said the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary student. "I was very active in our youth group and took what they were teaching me very seriously."

Despite strong teaching at school, family problems soon weighed heavily on Lansky and at 15 she ran away from home.

Entering college several years later, Lansky began sensing a desire to help people. Believing the best way to assist people was psychology, she obtained her bachelor of arts in psychology and her master of science degrees from the University of Michigan. After receiving her license in psychology, she worked with the state youth authority and ran a shelter for battered women.

"I never really worked for financial gain. I worked with municipal governments and foundations. I guess from the very beginning I was called to work with the poor."

In her work, Lansky began sensing the spiritual dimension of many problems with which she was dealing. Deciding to pursue her doctorate, she came to California to study the integration of Eastern philosophy with Western psychology.

In California, she was exposed to students from all over the world. "I studied every religion but Christianity. I was really obsessed with these other religions, totally overwhelmed by all of the 'spirituality.' I guess I was a Zen-Taoist-Jew."

Lansky recalled how God was reaching out to her even in this state of "spiritual" confusion: "I really was not at all interested in Christ but a couple of Christians at the school kept witnessing to me."

It was not long after one particular witnessing encounter that Lansky met Christ personally. She described it as the most dramatic event of her life. "When Jesus came to me, he answered all my questions. I have never really doubted since that day," she said.

Lansky started leading divorce recovery workshops as well as becoming a volunteer missionary for Jews for Jesus in San Francisco. She described herself during that time as "very zealous and, unfortunately, very obnoxious. Over time, I began to calm down more as I learned about Christ."

Enrolling at Golden Gate Seminary, where she now is an M.Div. student, Lansky found the family she lost when she accepted Christ.

"When I accepted Jesus, all my family disowned me. But here at Golden Gate, God is surrounding me with the most incredible family. The professors really love me here. I feel totally accepted. I have really learned something here at seminary. You can't pick your relatives, but you can pick your family."

One professor who has influenced Lansky is Stan Nelson, professor of theology. Lansky's spiritual director in the seminary's supervised ministry program, he helps her prepare for ministry after graduation.

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"Randi Lansky is an enthusiastic young lady with a target in life. She wants to minister, to heal her culture and society in a wholesome way. Randi is greatly gifted and wants to be a redemptive person in any situation," Nelson said.

Lansky, who was discipled in the Assemblies of God, now serves as an intern at Tiburon Baptist Church working with singles. "The autonomy of the local church," she said, "is something that really attracts me to the Southern Baptist Convention. The lack of a hierarchy really allows the Spirit to move."

Now, she said, "After all that God has brought me through, nothing will stop me. God takes great care of me. All I want is to minister."

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(BP) photo available upon request from Golden Gate Seminary.

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