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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Gospel sweeps Mozambique
as refugees return home

By Mark Kelly

Baptist Press
4/3/95

MAPUTO, Mozambique (BP)--In the past decade, hundreds of thousands of Mozambicans fled a civil war that ravaged their homeland. In refugee camps just across the border, Southern Baptist missionaries gave them food and clothing and shared good news of God's love.

Now, as their country settles back into stability, many Mozambicans have returned home to be reunited with long-lost family and friends. They bring with them news of a God whose love can be seen in the words and deeds of his people.

The hungry, half-naked Mozambicans, who poured into the refugee camps in Zimbabwe, needed good news, said Zimbabwe missionary Ed Moses of Orlando, Fla., who coordinated Southern Baptist ministries in three such camps for four years.

Fleeing from raging civil war, they endured great hardship to reach the camps, where they faced deprivation, despair and deadly epidemic.

Moses and his relief crews were determined to show the refugees they cared for them as people, so they developed a "five-pronged" approach to meet physical and spiritual needs.

The missionaries supplemented meager refugee diets with fruit and vegetables, helping them plant and cultivate 6,000 family vegetable gardens and 7,000 fruit trees.

Over two years, they distributed 87 tons of salt, a welcome addition to the otherwise bland grits and cornmeal staples of their diets. Clothing donated by Baptists in Zimbabwe and the United States replaced the rags that hung from their backs.

And in each camp where they ministered, Moses and his crews organized a church to help refugees understand why others cared enough to meet these needs.

"After all those years of civil war, Mozambicans knew there must be something better," said Moses, who has returned to the United States for his final furlough in Orlando before retirement in October after 26 years service.

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"When they saw we cared about the total person, they said to each other, 'Their love is in action.' We saw a tremendous response to our message of God's love."

Moses employed a Mozambican in each camp to oversee relief distributions and lead in efforts to share the gospel. The evangelists lived in the camps and conducted door-to-door witnessing efforts, held preaching services and showed gospel films.

"The results were fantastic," Moses said. "When I left (on furlough in late) 1994, we had baptized 875 people in the three camps. We taught them the Bible and disciplined them. We ordained deacons. We sent four young men to seminary in Gweru, where they could be trained in their own language to lead churches when they were able to go home."

Going home was the hope that sustained many of the refugees.

"We kept saying to them, 'Don't give up hope. You will go home one day,'" Moses said. "We told them, 'You came here lost without Christ and through the terrible effects of a horrific war, you became children of God. Soon you will go back, and you must tell your people what God has done for you.'"

The refugees took Moses at his word. As they have gone home to the provinces along Mozambique's border with Zimbabwe, members of those three churches have started no fewer than 17 congregations in their hometowns.

The same thing has happened in southern Mozambique, where refugees have returned from camps in Swaziland, said Mozambique missionary Jim Brock of Warrior, Ala.

Brock and pastor Bento Matusse took members of the Baptist church in Maputo across the border to minister in refugee camps operated by Southern Baptist missionaries in Swaziland. There they built relationships with Mozambicans won to Christ in the camps. Six Christian leaders trained in Swaziland have now returned home to start new churches all across Mozambique's southern provinces.

The war also created opportunities for the gospel in the cities of Mozambique, where many people had fled to avoid fighting in the countryside, Brock said. In 1988, the Baptist church in Maputo sent a young pastor to work with a struggling congregation in Quelimane, capital of Zambezia province in central Mozambique. Receptivity to the gospel among refugees was so great that more than 2,000 people accepted Christ and 19 new congregations were started in four years.

That remarkable growth has been eclipsed, however, in the past 18 months, according to Mozambique missionary John Dina of Phoenix, Ariz., who was sent to the area in 1993.

As peace has taken hold in the countryside, refugees have left the cities and drifted back toward their homes, Dina said. Along the way, they are making disciples and organizing churches.

Baptized believers now number 5,000 in the province, where in 1988 only 10 were counted. In the past year, the number of congregations has doubled from 30 to 60, with the largest recording 650 members, he said.

"This is not something missionaries have done," he said. "The Mozambicans are winning their countrymen to Christ."

Prospects for the continued growth of the gospel is good, Dina said. A new generation of Mozambican Baptist leaders is nearing the end of training and preparing to expand the work in Zambezia even further. Six new missionaries also are on their way to areas of the country where refugees are returning home, he said.

"If peace continues and we have the laborers to come forward, Mozambique could become our largest harvest field over the next several years," said John Faulkner, who directs Foreign Mission Board work in southern Africa.

If that happens, it will be due in part to Southern Baptists who cared enough to take risks and minister to people in the midst of war and hardship -- and refugees who saw the love of God in food and clothing and kind words.

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed 4/3/95 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet News Room.

'Christy' -- 2 more tries
to find a slot on network TV By Art Toalston

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--"Whatever Happened to Christy?"

Answer: The highly acclaimed series gets two more tries on network TV.

"Christy," based on the late Catherine Marshall's best seller, will air -- temporarily -- in the "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman" time slot April 15, the night before Easter, and April 22 (8 p.m. Eastern and Pacific, 7 p.m. Central and Mountain).

"The whole decision whether 'Christy' comes back will rest on those two nights," said Ken Wales, executive producer of the program about Christy Huddleston, a young teacher who passed up the comforts of city life to make a difference in the lives of Appalachia's children.

"This is the best test case not only for 'Christy' but for family programs like it," Wales said.

"Christy" made its debut last Easter in impressive fashion: It drew 40 million viewers and topped "60 Minutes" and all other CBS shows in the ratings. Five episodes subsequently were aired, along with one last Thanksgiving, but CBS' commitment to giving the show a chance for success has been called into question.

The "Whatever Happened to Christy?" question was posed to CBS in a full-page ad in USA Today March 29.

"Christy" has "delivered a message of hope and inspiration to tens of millions of viewers across America," according to the ad paid for by the Christy Fan Club. "It produced strong ratings for CBS and its reviews were excellent. ... Along with nominations for Emmy Awards and Golden Globes, the first few episodes won more than a dozen national awards for outstanding dramatic television. Hundreds of thousands of phone calls, cards and letters were received by CBS giving thanks for a series that entire families could enjoy watching together."

Additionally, the video of the "Christy" premier has sold more than 250,000 copies -- numerous times over being a best seller. The video is being distributed by Broadman & Holman, the publishing arm of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

With this final try for network TV, "Christy" fans are sounding a call to action on two fronts:

1) registering last-minute votes for "Christy" in TV Guide's "Save Our Shows" campaign by writing: TV Guide S.O.S. Poll, P.O. Box 4822, New York, NY 10185-4822; faxing: (212) 852-7740; or E-mailing: saveourshows@delphi.com. Mail must be postmarked by April 7; the cut-off for fax and E-mail votes is midnight April 7.

2) writing or calling CBS -- 51 West 52nd St., New York, NY 10019, phone (212)-975-4321, or 7800 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036, phone (213) 852-2345.

Wales voiced hope "Christy" can find a place on network TV -- but only with "the continued support of our millions of 'Christy' fans."

The first of the two upcoming "Christy" episodes, "To Have and To Hold," will revolve around Christy, played by Kellie Martin, weighing a major decision in her own life -- whether to accept a proposal of marriage from the community's minister, David Grantland, played by Randall Batinkoff. Other regulars will return, with Tyne Daly as Christy's mentor, Miss Alice, and Tess Harper as Fairlight Spencer, the mountain woman who befriends Christy. The show also will include a guest appearance by Judy Collins as Aunt Hattie, a blind woman known for having the singing voice of an angel.

**Young actor committed
to values of 'Christy'**

By Connie Davis

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--When David Lambert heard last year the TV series "Christy" would be taped near his home in Friendsville, Tenn., and the producers were seeking actors, he filled out one of the applications which were widely distributed across the area, but wasn't interested enough to go to any of the auditions.

So he was surprised when he was chosen as an actor. In fact, he is the only person he knows of in the local cast who didn't have to audition, he said.

Lambert played Orter Ball O'Teale, a student in a church-sponsored school set during the early part of the century in the Appalachian area of Tennessee. The show is based on the true experiences of a teacher in the school told in the book "Christy."

Lambert's character was a member of a family with several major roles in the series. One of his sisters didn't speak although she attended the school and another sister had an eye infection which was treated because of the intervention of Christy and the doctor in the community.

Lambert, who was cast while he was in high school, worked from October to December last year two or three days a week. The producers provided tutors for the students, he explained. Now a student at Belmont University in Nashville, he spoke at the Tennessee Youth Evangelism Conference in March because he was the Tennessee Youth Speaker's Tournament winner.

If the show is renewed and he is asked to continue his character, Lambert said he will be glad to, and not just for the money. He's not too worried about his college schedule. He was told most of the filming would be done during the summer. If not, he would take a week off from his studies.

Lambert said the reason for his commitment is because of his Christian faith. Even if he had been chosen for a role in another TV show, if it contained any sex or violence, he said he wouldn't have done it. But on "Christy," many of the workers were Christians and Ken Wales, the executive producer, was "such a godly man," noted Lambert.

"We need so many more of these family programs on because there's so much trash on TV," said Lambert.

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**Religious people can
positively affect media**

By Linda Lawson

**Baptist Press
4/3/95**

LOS ANGELES (BP)--"Working together with people of good faith and good conscience, we can once again have a popular culture as decent as the people in this great country," a nationally known film critic told members of the Religious Public Relations Council March 31.

Michael Medved, chief film critic for the "New York Post," co-host of a PBS movie review show, "Sneak Previews," and author of books and articles on media and society urged members of the national interfaith organization to greater efforts at affirming positive developments in mass media.

"I do believe religious faith is one of the most pressing interests of the American people," Medved, a devout Jew, said. "America wants to come home. America wants to come back to decency."

He offered a three-step formula: less complaining/more creating, less confrontation/more communication and less attitude/more gratitude.

Medved charged that too many creative, religious people abandoned writing and producing for television and films instead of using their talents and influence for good.

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"A few individuals can make a great difference," he emphasized. For example, he said the most popular TV series for 1994, "Home Improvement," and the most popular film, "The Lion King," share in common the fact that both were originated by evangelical Christian producers.

Rather than boycotting films that might not otherwise have drawn an audience, Medved said religious people need to counter the fact that many people in the media don't know anyone in the religious community. Communication is the key.

"The important thing is to let people see it's possible to be modern, creative and religious," Medved said. "If you can talk to people, it changes stereotypes."

Finally, he suggested, an attitude of gratitude for miracles taking place in the world is needed to counter the "pessimistic messages of media culture."

"We become obsessed with bad news. Today's crybaby, whining culture is one which we as religious people above all must resist," Medved emphasized.

"Nothing corrodes the soul more than failing to say thanks," he said. "We owe a debt of thanks to our parents, the country and above all to the Almighty. Too many don't know how to say thank you."

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ANALYSIS

Is it unreasonable to ask
for families to enjoy TV?

By William T. Neal III

Baptist Press
4/3/95

ATLANTA (BP)--In the last year there have been 46,202 combined incidents of sex, violence and profanity on the four national television networks during prime-time viewing. A total of 91 percent of all sex presented during that time period on ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox is depicted outside marriage.

Those figures, which come from the American Family Association, do not include daytime television or the growing number of cable stations available to most television viewers. A cursory sampling of daytime programming, largely soap operas and talk shows, would verify that they, too, often give new meaning to the word "raunchy."

Many Americans are addicted to television. It becomes a companion to them in their loneliness, a cheap and easy form of family entertainment, or a security blanket for their discomfort with silence. The impact of television upon our society is so great that the church cannot ignore its presence or neglect attempts to influence its direction.

Now comes a new poll published by Children Now, a national advocacy group that says a large majority of young people wish television would teach them values. According to the poll, children ages 10 to 16 say that what they see on television encourages them to take part in sexual activity too soon, to show disrespect for their parents, to lie and to engage in aggressive behavior. More than two-thirds of the children polled said that they were influenced by television and the great majority (77 percent) said that there is too much sex before marriage depicted.

Children seem to have more insight and moral conviction than do the adults who make the decisions regarding television programming. Television executives seem unable or unwilling to police themselves. The situation is getting worse, and many Christians, especially parents, are frustrated over their inability to affect a "clean up" of television. It sounds simple enough to say that the answer is just to turn off the tube and not watch, but that is not the total answer. We may be able to control what our own children watch, but we also have an obligation to protect those other children who are crying out to us for help, who are watching television but know that it is not teaching them good values.

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The American Family Association feels that an economic boycott of commercial sponsors is the answer. While their efforts are commendable, it can at times be complicated to determine who the commercial culprits are and which products are related. Actually, it doesn't take too many letters from consumers to influence the decisions of corporate sponsors, but it is difficult to get even Christians to write and express their opinions. We should take the time to commend the kind of programming that complements family values. That means writing letters to both the networks and advertisers, thanking them for the good programs they produce and sponsor. Such letter writing campaigns have saved shows in the past that were scheduled for cancellation!

We also must encourage Christian young people to consider careers in television and film in order to serve as a catalyst for change in this strategic and influential communications field. If there is going to be a return to good television, who is going to produce it?

Because television is as public as it is, Christians and other interested Americans have a right to insist that the people who control television programming exercise responsibility and good taste, knowing that they have tremendous influence upon the children of our society. It has often been argued that television networks are simply offering the American people what they want. But the truth is that on those rare occasions when wholesome family entertainment is provided, it does meet with commercial success.

Many say that we will never return to the days of family television as exemplified by shows like "Leave It To Beaver," "Ozzie and Harriet" or "Father Knows Best." But the question is, "Why not?" Those shows were not overtly Christian, but they did teach values. Is it unreasonable to ask that we once again be allowed to sit in the living room as families to watch wholesome television without being embarrassed in front of our children at the open sex, violence and profanity that characterizes today's television?

While the Cleavers, the Nelsons and the Andersons may not reflect the typical families of the 1990s, neither do the stereotypes portrayed in today's comedy and drama series. Most current television shows do not reflect the values of mainstream America.

Obviously no one is obligated to own or watch a television set, but even those who choose never to watch are affected by having to live in a society adversely affected by the negative values taught and espoused on commercial television. It is in everyone's best interest that television take a new direction. Christians must not be silent on this subject!

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Mississippi church chosen
for ABC Easter broadcast

By William H. Perkins Jr.

Baptist Press
4/3/95

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--From Miami to Maine and Alaska, Mississippi Baptists are poised to take their Easter message to places both familiar and unfamiliar. The ABC television network -- that's right, home of "NYPD Blue" and "Roseanne" -- has announced it will broadcast the Sunday worship service of First Baptist Church, Jackson, on Easter, April 16, as part of its expanded coverage of religion in America.

Some of the country's most powerful large-market stations plan to broadcast the service, including KABC-TV in Los Angeles, WLS-TV in Chicago and KUSA-TV in Denver, along with affiliates in more than 110 other locations, according to information supplied by the network to the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission (RTVC). Check local listings.

Jack Johnson, RTVC president, said ABC approached RTVC through the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission, with which the Southern Baptist agency is affiliated.

The network requested the RTVC supply a videotape of a live Easter service, and First Baptist, Jackson, was selected for several reasons, Johnson explained.

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"The church is a credit to Southern Baptists, their commitment to quality broadcasting is reflected in excellent television facilities, and Frank Pollard is pastor," he said.

Pollard is featured on the radio and television versions of "The Baptist Hour," produced and distributed internationally by the RTVC.

"Pollard has preached more 'Baptist Hour' sermons than any other speaker," a recent article in RTVC's Beam magazine reported. "With a worldwide audience, a potential Russian TV audience of 80 million, and ACTS and FamilyNet, Pollard's 'Baptist Hour' ministry is certainly the most extensive in the program's history."

Pollard said he is pleased a secular U.S. television network has awakened to the importance of religion in everyday American life.

"Things do go unreported," he said.

Pollard pointed out the opportunity for First Baptist to appear on national television is not a result of his standing or the church's stature in religious circles.

"ABC is airing the service without cost to us. It is a gift from God. We make a mistake if we think we're in charge of this thing. It's really not any more important than my Easter messages at Flint Creek Mission," he said, referring to his first pastorate in Texas while he was a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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Injuries propel bull rider
to renew relationship with God

By Ed Rowell

Baptist Press
4/3/95

WICKENBURG, Ariz. (BP)--Many people must travel as part of their job. When Cody Custer is on the road, he doesn't attend meetings or make sales calls. He travels over 150,000 miles a year, scheduling eight-second appointments aboard 2,000 pounds of bucking, brawling beef. He is a professional rodeo cowboy, one of the best in the business.

Cody's business associates don't have MBAs and expense accounts. They work for hay and have names like Wild Toad, Wolfman and Gunslinger. They not only try to throw him, but will gore, stomp and mash him if given the chance.

Cody's specialty is bull riding -- possibly the most dangerous sport on earth. In 1992, he won the Gold Buckle Award, presented to the World Champion Bull Rider of the Professional Rodeo Cowboy's Association. That same year he was high money winner on the Bull Riders Only circuit and voted the Fan's Most Popular Cowboy.

But fame can quickly turn to famine in the rodeo game. The years of 1993 and 1994 were full of injuries and setbacks. Unlike other professional athletes, rodeo cowboys don't have million-dollar contracts. They cover their own expenses and get paid only if they win. Injury means unemployment.

Six months after winning the world championship, a bull named Pacific Bell jerked Cody so hard the bicep muscle ripped loose from the elbow of his left arm. That injury put him on the sidelines for the rest of the season.

"When it happened, I knew it was serious. I went back to the locker room and just sat and cried. For a few minutes, I felt like God had almost betrayed me. My riding was finally back on track. I had just adjusted my life back to God instead of trying to live up to the expectations people have of a world champion. But I knew God couldn't turn his back on me, so I began to pray, 'Lord, just show me what's going on.'

"I got my attitude right, then called and told my wife, Stacey, I was coming home to be a husband and a daddy."

Waiting with Stacey in Wickenburg, Ariz., was their son, Aaron, only three months old at the time. As Cody accepted the fact he was facing a long period of rehabilitation, he discovered God had some vital lessons to teach through the setback. Today he can honestly say, "I wouldn't trade that time at home for another world championship buckle."

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Cody recalled, "One of the first things I noticed was how much I enjoyed being in church every week. I saw how empty I had become after all these years of being on the road. I was saved in 1984, but for years no one ever taught me about growing in my relationship with Jesus. Getting closer to our pastor has been a big boost to my spiritual growth.

"I was able to slow down long enough to realize how much success can hurt you spiritually. Those bulls don't have any respect for the gold buckle and neither does Satan. I wasn't chasing women or hanging out in bars, but for a while there I was more interested in playing the part of the champ than living a life the Lord could be proud of."

The Custers have found their home church to be a source of continual support and are grateful for that source.

"The prayer that goes out each week for Cody's health and safety is incredible," Stacey said.

Cody added, "Every time I walk through the doors, someone grabs me and says, 'I've been praying for you. Tell me what's going on in your life.'"

The Custers are members of Wickenburg Assembly, pastored by Duane Middleton.

"Stacey is very involved in our church," said Duane. "She has worked with our youth and children's ministries as well as producing our bulletin and newsletter. Cody's travel schedule is wild, but if he's in town, he's in church. He's a celebrity everywhere he goes, but at church he can be just Cody."

Stacey talked about learning to trust God for every need. "The rodeo lifestyle really teaches you to live by faith. There have been a lot of times when we were down to nothing in the bank. When we left the National Finals Rodeo in 1992, I just couldn't believe Cody had won so much money. But we found out soon enough that financial success creates a false sense of security. Instead of trusting the Lord, it's so easy to trust in a bank balance."

God was gracious to the Custers. Cody's 1992 winnings stretched just far enough to cover their basic expenses during his recovery, enabling them to focus on the lessons God was teaching them.

"But by the end of November, I was kicking him out of the house, saying, 'Go win some money!'" joked Stacey.

Perhaps the greatest blessing gained from the unexpected layoff was being able to spend a lot of time with Aaron.

"It makes me feel so good that Aaron knows who Daddy is," said Cody. "If I'd kept up the same schedule I did in 1992, I would have been a stranger to my own son."

Stacey laughed. "It's funny to watch him when I know Cody's due home. I'll tell him 'Daddy's coming!' and he'll stand at the screen door watching for that truck to pull into the drive. When he sees Cody, he starts bouncing and yelling, 'Daddy! Daddy!' Unfortunately, there are a lot of cowboys whose kids barely know them."

Cody agreed, "A guy can have a great time in rodeo, but someday it will be all over. Being Aaron's dad is a lifetime job. Nothing can take the place of a father in a kid's life. I really am grateful God let this accident happen so I could get my priorities straight and remember just how important my family is to me."

Another injury last fall "allowed" Cody to be at home for the birth of their second child, a girl named Lacey Lee.

Cody and Stacey met through mutual friends in 1990. Both had just ended long-term relationships and recently renewed their commitment to Christ. Six months later they married. Stacey left family and friends in Louisiana to make her new home in Arizona.

Rodeo is hard on the cowboys, and even harder on their families. There's a haunting phrase from Garth Brooks' hit song "Rodeo" (Liberty Records) that says:

"A broken home and some broken bones, are all he'll have to show, for all the years that he spent chasin' this dream they call rodeo."

Loneliness and fear are constant companions for many wives whose husbands travel the rodeo road.

"It was tough at first, with Cody gone so much," Stacey remembered. "Jim and Dixie (Cody's parents) live here, and they really went out of their way to accept me and help me out.

"I know it sounds strange, but God has given me an overwhelming peace about Cody when he's away. Sometimes he's gone for weeks at a time, but we talk by phone every single day, and I know the Lord is watching out for him."

With a renewed spirit and healthy body, Cody hit the rodeo road again at the start of the current season. For now, rodeo is both his livelihood -- he's 12th in the bull riding standings -- and his mission field. Every day brings new opportunities to challenge seekers and encourage believers.

Traveling partners have been his brother, Jim Bob, and a rookie, Beau Lindley. They refer to Cody as "the old man." Because he is the oldest, he is as interested in their spiritual development as he is in their success in the rodeo arena.

"The cowboy church services are great at helping people find Christ, but I think there is a lot more we can do in the area of discipling and maturing people," he noted.

Christian music and tapes of pastor and friend Duane Middleton's sermons keep them going down the long, hard road.

"Watching the sun come up through the windshield of a pickup every morning makes it kind of hard to establish any regular routine of Bible study and prayer. But without it, you just fall into the same old traps."

With the help of his church, Cody is making discipleship resources available to other Christian cowboys.

He currently produces a few rodeo schools with another Christian, Lyle Sankey. "We lay it on the line with those kids on the first day. I tell them, 'You are here to find out what makes me a winner. I'm here to tell you it's because of Jesus Christ, not rodeo. Rodeo is not your friend. One day it'll stomp all over you. It might give you about eight seconds of glory, but in Christ you will find out what real glory is.'"

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Rowell is pastor of First Baptist Church, Snowflake, Ariz., a rodeo competitor and a free-lance writer. This story initially appeared in Home Life, a publication of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

**Bull rider, wife take steps
to keep marriage healthy**

**Baptist Press
4/3/95**

WICKENBURG, Ariz. (BP)--Job-related travel is hard on any marriage. Rodeo bull rider Cody Custer and his wife, Stacey, have found ways they maintain a healthy marriage while Cody is on the road, including:

1) Expect a big phone bill. Cody calls home daily. It's important to discuss small things that occur every day as well as major issues.

2) Plug into a local church. Both Stacey and Cody depend on the support of their church family.

3) Remind your spouse constantly that your love is independent of success or failure on the job.

4) Avoid compromising situations on the road. "Buckle Bunnies" or groupies are waiting in every town. Cody has established boundaries that help him avoid temptation and protect him from any appearance of wrongdoing since both his marriage and testimony are at stake.

5) Allow for re-entry time. Cody often arrives home after driving all night. Stacey gives him time to rest before sharing problems or concerns.

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6) Enlist a support network of family and friends. Stacey maintains a good relationship with her in-laws. They help her with Aaron and meet any needs that arise when Cody is traveling.

7) Bring your mind home with your body. As much as possible, Cody puts rodeo aside when he pulls into the driveway so he can focus on Stacey and Aaron.

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Rodeo circuit witness
includes chaps & buckles

Baptist Press
4/3/95

WICKENBURG, Ariz. (BP)--Cody Custer is not shy about proclaiming his faith. After each ride, he kneels in the arena to give thanks. His world champion buckle does not have his name engraved on it. Instead it reads, "Glory to God." That same tribute is stitched on his blue and silver riding chaps.

Other champion cowboys who actively share Christ include bull rider Ted Nuce, bareback bronc rider Lance Crump, calf roper Mike Arnold and team ropers Clay O'Brien Cooper, Jake Barnes, and Allen Bach.

Lane Frost, the subject of the recent movie, "Eight Seconds," received Christ about 18 months before he was killed by a bull at the Cheyenne Frontier Days rodeo in 1989.

This was not even alluded to in the movie, which focused on the rougher side of the rodeo life. Following his conversion, Lane actively shared Christ, and many cowboys made professions of faith at his funeral.

At most rodeos around the country, a hand-lettered flyer nailed to a fence post will let contestants and spectators know about "cowboy church," usually held in the grandstand before Sunday rodeo performances. There, a simple gospel message is shared in song, testimony and preaching by people who love the Lord and the rodeo lifestyle.

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'Lostology' offers Christians
spiritual shoehorn for evangelism By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
4/3/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Innovative phrases and engaging anecdotes serve John Kramp as comfortably as a pair of broken-in house slippers. In conversation and writing, he just seems to come by them naturally.

He describes his new book about "lostology," a word he invented, in terms of potato chips.

"I want people to read the chapters like they're eating potato chips. I want them to say, 'Oh, I can't stop, I think I'll have just one more chapter,'" said Kramp, associate director of the Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division.

Even the title of Kramp's Broadman & Holman book, "Out of Their Faces and Into Their Shoes," comes packaged with a story.

"I would say when most people think about evangelism, they think of in-your-face evangelism. What I'm trying to do with this book is give people a spiritual shoehorn to make it more comfortable."

Kramp likens the discomfort of witnessing to putting on a new pair of shoes without a shoehorn.

"Two things happen -- the shoes either crumple at the heel or they dig into the back of the foot," he said. "So the shoe and your foot both end up with a bad experience."

"When a person tries evangelism -- and this is one place where Christians and non-Christians agree -- it is so uncomfortable for everyone because of the way Christians approach it. Through this book, I want to give Christians a shoehorn that helps them empathize and get into the shoes of a non-Christians."

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Kramp calls his shoehorn "lostology," which he describes as "the study of being lost and what that experience teaches Christians about evangelism."

When Kramp asks Christians to study being lost -- he means geographically.

"Remember how frightened, disoriented and vulnerable you felt when you got lost."

He figures (and it's biblical) if Christians can connect emotionally to the concept of being geographically lost, they might be able to understand what it feels like to be spiritually lost.

"I came up with this term lostology, but not the spiritual concept. Jesus is the one who developed that. When Jesus taught people about their relationship with God, he uses the analogy to being lost -- like a lost sheep, a lost coin or a lost son. He compares being physically lost with being spiritually lost."

Jesus connected to his parables an experience everybody could understand -- "from primitive tribesman living 500 years ago to a sophisticated metropolitan person today," Kramp said.

"To me that's the power of his teaching. When we tend to look at evangelism and salvation, we tend to be very intellectual and cognitive about it. But Jesus' approach was so different."

Kramp said once Christians understand lostology, they can learn new lessons each time they get geographically lost.

"Every time you get lost, you can learn something about how you feel about being lost and use it to be more effective in talking about Jesus."

Stepping into the shoes of a lost person is one of the most difficult tasks a lifelong Christian can undertake, Kramp said.

"Folks who grew up in the church are spiritual insiders. They not only can't remember what it's like to be a spiritual outsider, they never knew. This book is really designed to give those Christians a way to begin to feel some of those things," Kramp said.

"The first half of the book deals with helping us understand what it feels like to be lost," Kramp said. "The second half is about searching for something that is lost. I think that's where a lot of churches struggle. How do we search effectively for the lost, and how do we understand how they might feel when they show up at our church."

One of the most common mistakes Christians make in dealing with non-Christians, Kramp said, is to believe the lost person knows he is lost. He explains that in terms of the "Lost Zone."

"Lots of Christians assume secular people or irreligious people just know they are lost, and I've found that isn't true at all. Non-Christians have some notion as to why they are OK -- whether that be goodness, morality or optimism."

Kramp suggests those non-Christians are in the Lost Zone -- the time gap between being technically lost and then realizing it.

"Every time we get physically lost, there is a gap of time between the time we get lost and the time we recognize we're lost. You can be lost and not know it. There are a lot of folks in that lost zone, they just don't know it, and it's pretty tough to deal with those people."

Those are the type people with whom Christians must establish a relationship, Kramp said. "Then you just begin to ask them questions about how and where they think their lives are going.

"Nothing is more liberating in this whole area of evangelism than to realize it is really OK to ask questions rather than give a lot of information," he said.

If all else fails, a Christian might just have to wait until the non-Christian is ready to hear more about Jesus, Kramp said.

"I think it would be counterproductive to push hard on them. We have to give Christians permission to back away from the door if the Lord hasn't opened it," Kramp said.

"I learned from my grandmother that waiting is very, very active," Kramp said, explaining how his grandmother used to wait up at night until everyone returned home from their dates or outings.

"Waiting is not a passive act. It's not like you don't care. There are times when we have done all we can do. The father in the story of the prodigal son never stopped expecting, hoping or waiting for him.

"There comes a time when you have to say, 'This is God's deal, I can't argue this person into the kingdom. I'm going to wait.'

"But waiting is not inactive."

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**Criswell exhorts
to expose Christ**

By Mike Hooker

**Baptist Press
4/3/95**

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Triumphantly! Enthusiastically! is how Christians should work for Christ, according to W.A. Criswell, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas.

Emphasizing the word "enthusiasm" means "God in you," Criswell exclaimed during a March 28 chapel service at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary: "There's nothing more infectious, more glorious than people who are happy and rejoicing in the Lord! If God is in you, he shines in your face, in your eyes, in the tone of your voice, and in how you react to the providences of life."

Christ intended for his enthusiastic witness to be outside the church building, Criswell said.

"Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two golden candelabra. Jesus was crucified outside on a hill more like a garbage dump than anything else," Criswell noted. "He was crucified naked. It was the purpose of God for his son to be exposed."

In Christian witness, Christ "cannot be exposed too much," Criswell said. "Our great calling in Christ Jesus is to exhibit the Son of God."

The minister's responsibility to lost people goes above and beyond the normal call of duty, Criswell continued. "Young men and women, our high calling in Jesus Christ is to bring the message of hope, deliverance, forgiveness and salvation to those who are outside the kingdom of Christ."

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Missionary learns to 'let go' through '12-Step' recovery," dated 3/30/95, please change the 13th paragraph to read:

Sledge also has written "Making Peace With Your Past," used in Christian support groups for people from dysfunctional families. It's part of a series of support group materials -- called LIFE Support Group Series -- produced by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn.

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