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Faith sustains rescue workers
amid Oklahoma City devastation By Dana Williamson

Baptist Press
5/16/95

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--While life in Oklahoma City may never be the same after the April 19 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, for at least two Oklahoma City rescuers, one constant remained -- their faith in God.

Hundreds of police officers, firefighters and other volunteers relied on their faith as they dug through the rubble left by the explosion, hoping against hope to find that one breath of life still remaining.

"Under every boulder we moved, beneath every piece of wall or granite that was shoved aside, our hope was to find that void and a hand that would reach up to us," said Oklahoma City firefighter Ralph Crawford Jr.

"When it didn't happen, we brought it to a close. It was good for us to know we had done our best. We'd done everything we could."

Crawford, a member of Council Road Baptist Church, Bethany, Okla., had just gotten off duty and was asleep when the blast jolted him out of bed.

Across town, Oklahoma City detective sergeant Kevin Johnson was beginning a tour of the General Motors plant with fellow police officers in the auto theft unit.

Within moments both Crawford and Johnson were on the scene and would spend the biggest part of the next two and a half weeks shuffling through remains of the building looking for bodies and evidence.

Johnson, who belongs to First Baptist Church, Purcell, Okla., said when he saw the devastation, his mind immediately went to the 23rd Psalm.

As part of the auto theft unit, Johnson was assigned to the parking lot north of the building where cars had been burned beyond recognition. It was his job to identify those cars and assist in search and collection of evidence.

Crawford spent day after day in search and recovery efforts in the bombed-out building.

Even while toiling through 12-hour shifts, Johnson, who worked with the morgue and assisted in logging the first 33 entries, said he still had his quiet time every morning.

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"Spending time with the Lord is a part of my daily routine," h emphasized.

"One of the things that helped me through this is that I knew a lot of people were praying for me," he added. "I never got extremely tired, emotional or fearful. The main reason for the strength I was drawing was the people who were praying for me."

"If people don't believe in God," said Crawford, "there's no other way to explain the feelings you had when you were down there working.

"There's not any question at all that God had his hand over everyone at the scene," he said. "Everybody who was doing what they were supposed to do was taken care of. You could just feel a sense of love, and that can only come from a higher being."

Both Crawford and Johnson were impressed with the outpouring of love and support from fellow Oklahomans.

"From the very moment this happened and word started getting out and people realized how big this was, the feeling of hope and love just seemed to rain down on the place," Crawford said.

"We didn't even have to ask for things we needed to keep us going. When we came out for a break, if I stood there 10 seconds, that was too long. Someone would hand me an apple, an orange, a bottle of cold water, a soft drink.

"I was having to refuse stuff because my hands were so full of stuff they were dumping on me so I could replenish myself and go back in."

"If someone went hungry, it was their fault," Johnson agreed. "Anything you asked for, anything you needed, you got. The support was just tremendous."

Johnson said the main portion of the team he worked with from the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms division, FBI and customs also had worked the World Trade Center bombing in New York.

"They said there was an unbelievable difference," Johnson reported. "Here the food was free; in New York they had to pay for it. They were thoroughly impressed." The devastation is something the men find hard to put into words.

"When I first saw the building, it was as big as outer space to me," Crawford said. "I looked at the rubble and debris. There was computer paper blowing around with blood all over it. It was the most horrible thing you could imagine. The gray skies that day made it even more ominous.

"Hundreds of firefighters were waiting to go in and take their turns in rescuing. In those first critical hours, they didn't let us work but just a little while because it was so awful. Not to be gory, but realistic, there were body parts all over the street. People everywhere, crushed and torn. Automobiles unrecognizable."

Crawford said people have asked him why God allowed this to happen.

"God didn't want this to happen," Crawford said. "Somebody had free choice. That's what he gives us. These guys, who had a free choice, decided what they wanted to do, and they did it. I don't think they even had a clue as to how big it was going to be."

Crawford said he wishes some terrorist group from out of the country had been the perpetrators rather than Americans killing Americans. "That hurt me real deeply," he said.

Both Johnson and Crawford said the bombing has made them more aware of family.

"I think about my kids a whole lot more," Crawford commented. "When my shifts were over, I would try to be with them even for just a few minutes to hold them and make sure they were OK," Crawford said of Chris, 13, and Taylor, 7.

Johnson said when he got home each evening, he would pray with his children, Matthew, 8, and Amber, 5.

"We always prayed for the victims' families," he said.

Johnson said he hopes "this tragedy will turn our city, our state and our nation back to God."

"One of the things I pray for is that God would use this tragedy. It's a terrible thing that happened, but God can always take something terrible and bring good out of it. I'm praying that peopl will turn to God."

One afternoon when Crawford was having a particularly hard time with the tragedy, a friend called and told him he was a hero. When Crawford denied that status, the friend said, "You have to be our hero because we're living this tragedy through you."

"It dawned on me how important my task was, not only for me, but my parents, my kids, the people who know me, the people of Oklahoma, the people of this nation," said Crawford.

"The things I say in the future and the way this changes my life, may change the way people feel about the tragedy. It's the biggest thing I've ever been involved in. I had rather not been involved, but because I had to be, I'm proud that I worked with the people I worked with. I feel we made it through together because of our faith in God and the strength he gave us."

Crawford said the biggest honor was bestowed on Oklahoma City firefighters from the onset.

"We said we will remove the bodies. We don't want FEMA, Phoenix, Sacramento or New York. We want Oklahoma City firefighters removing these bodies. These are our people. Our greatest honor was to be able to do that for these people."

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Both Crawford and Johnson are sons of pastors. Crawford's father is Ralph Crawford, retired pastor of Olivet Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, and Johnson is the son of Earnest Johnson, director of missions in Rogers Baptist Association and former Oklahoma City pastor and missionary to Zimbabwe.

Oklahoma associate pastor
briefly a bombing suspect

By Bob E. Mathews

Baptist Press
5/16/95

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--In the wake of the April 19 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, drivers of rental cars with Oklahoma tags are suspect. Add to that someone who resembles drawings of suspect John Doe 2 and you have the possibility of a gigantic case of mistaken identity. Jason Kearney, associate pastor of Berry Road Baptist Church, Norman, Okla., can give testimony that the nationwide search for John Doe 2 is intense.

Seems he rented a car to drive to North Carolina and make arrangements for a summer mission trip.

Kearney noticed an Asheville policeman following him. After a few miles, the officer used his flashing lights to pull Kearney over.

"I knew I had done nothing against the law," the minister wrote in his church newsletter. "At first I thought the officer was going to give me a medal for being such a careful driver.

"When he told me to keep my hands where he could see them, I figured I was wrong. He approached the vehicle, hand on his weapon, and told me to reach slowly for my driver's license.

"He then told me I was none other than the John Doe suspect wanted in connection with the bombing."

Kearney said the officer told him his facial features tipped him off, as well as the car's license being traced to a rental company in Oklahoma City.

"It took about 10 minutes for him to get word from headquarters that I was not the guy," Kearney recounted. "He was very persistent, however, and very disappointed I was not connected with the crime.

"Anyway, I shook hands with him and with other policemen who had come to see me. We all had a really good time on that street corner.

"Afterwards, I thought about how God was going to make this situation into a good one for me. First, now I have a great story to share and laugh about. Second, it gave me a chance to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with about 100 people who gathered to see what all the fuss was about. I had their complete and total attention for several minutes and took advantage of it."

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Oklahoma City church shares
building with Methodists

By Dave Parker

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--What does a church do when its building is rendered unusable by an explosion?

For the First United Methodist Church of Oklahoma City, the solution was provided by Trinity Baptist Church, which agreed to share its facilities.

The Methodist church is at 131 N.W. Fourth, across Robinson Street from the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building destroyed in the April 19 bombing.

The 100-year-old church building suffered major damage in the blast and will have to undergo extensive repair, leaving its congregation without a home for several months.

Then the local Baptist church, located at 1329 N.W. 23rd, stepped in.

Trinity pastor Keith Arledge said he contacted the Methodist pastor when he learned the church had been damaged. The Sunday after the explosion, the Methodists met at Oklahoma City University, but that was not a long-term possibility.

"I invited him and his staff to come talk with us," Arledge said. "We are blessed with a large facility and I told him I believed our people would like them to use our space indefinitely, but I wanted our people to extend that invitation."

So Arledge invited the Methodist congregation for one week. He then presented the proposal to the Trinity family, and they voted "overwhelmingly" to offer their facility to the displaced church.

He said the Methodist church's need "was tailor-made for a Trinity response."

Each Sunday, the Methodists use the sanctuary while the Baptists are in Sunday school, then the Baptists use it while the Methodists are in Sunday school. The facility also is open to the Methodists other times during the week, and a Methodist staff member sits in on Trinity staff meetings to help coordinate the church calendars.

"What we're trying to do is make our facility as open and accessible as we can," Arledge said. "It is working very well."

He said one key to success is the fact that the two congregations are very similar: They have similar praise-centered worship styles, are committed to reaching their community, have decided to stay in the downtown area and are evangelical. Trinity is 84 years old and the Methodist church is 100.

Arledge said the offer was extended without charging rent, but he said the Methodists have offered to help with utilities, custodial costs and parking lot security, as well as donating \$1,000 per month to the church budget.

First Methodist averages around 800 in worship services, while Trinity has around 350.

"With many of our older members, this brings back memories of when we used to fill the sanctuary on our own," Arledge said.

He said the church was happy it could provide such a service to fellow Christians.

"We don't have a lot of money, and we don't have a lot of people," he said.

"But we do have a large facility. We believe in being good stewards of this facility by using it wisely.

"It is encouraging for the people in our community to see two churches that have mutual respect for each other," he said. "It is very positive for two churches who are both evangelistic to work together."

This is the second time in a year that Trinity has been used in such a way. From September through December the church housed students from Cleveland Elementary School, 2525 N.W. 23. The school, which had been closed, was reopening but repairs were not complete when the school year started.

"This was just a response to a specific need," Arledge said. "It is in keeping with 1 John 3:17: 'If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?'

"Our prayer is that God will build both congregations by this."

FMB Lottie Moon trademark
questioned by Virginia WMU

By Art Toalston

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--An application by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to trademark the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering has been questioned by the Woman's Missionary Union of Virginia.

Virginia WMU's executive board, in a May 13 statement, asked WMU's national executive director, Dellanna O'Brien, to investigate the FMB action prior to the June 17 meeting of WMU's national executive board in Atlanta.

The Virginia statement requests "a full report of this investigation" and "appropriate action," but does not specify possible actions.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office will publish the FMB application May 26, starting a 30-day period for any counterclaims.

The Virginia WMU statement noted the executive board "has recently discovered that the Foreign Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, began efforts in July, 1994 to claim sole ownership of the Lottie Moon trademark."

To date at WMU's national headquarters in Birmingham, Ala., various documents from WMU's archives have been forwarded to WMU attorneys for review, a spokeswoman said.

FMB President Jerry Rankin issued a statement May 16 responding to the Virginia WMU action: "We have simply sought to register the name of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to protect it, not the name Lottie Moon." He noted appeals for the Lottie Moon offering have been made in some churches where receipts were divided with non-FMB causes.

But, he said, "owning" the offering "is not an issue that is appropriate on anyone's part. Woman's Missionary Union promotes the offering, and the Foreign Mission Board channels the receipts. The funds belong to the Lord."

Rankin also said, "We respect the Woman's Missionary Union and affirm its historic and continuing role of working with us in partnership, not only to promote the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering but to win the world to Jesus Christ."

In a Richmond Times-Dispatch news story earlier in the day, Earlene Jessee, executive director of Virginia WMU, was quoted as saying the issue "is not political" and "Money has nothing to do with it." She noted WMU always has promoted the offering for the work of the Foreign Mission Board.

But, she told the newspaper, the FMB trademark application "raises the whole issue of whether we are in partnership at all." Not having been informed by the FMB of its action left her "devastated with a deep feeling of betrayal."

And in comments to Baptist Press, Jessee suggested a review of Baptist history. "History shows that we have, from the very beginning, been a vital part of this offering," she said, stating WMU created its approach to missions education in 1888 by making Baptists aware of the needs Lottie Moon faced in her work as a missionary to China. WMU developed the materials to encourage Baptists to pray and give, along with the envelopes for the offering, Jessee said, and in 1918, retired WMU leader Annie Armstrong suggested the offering be named for Moon.

Rankin, reviewing the FMB's steps toward the trademark application, said an attorney acting as executor of an estate leaving money to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in 1990 needed assurances the FMB should receive the funds. The board obtained a legal opinion from the Southern Baptist Convention's attorney, James Guenther, to that effect, Rankin said.

"At that time we shared that letter with Woman's Missionary Union," Rankin stated.

"We were advised to clarify the name legally at that time," Rankin continued, "but nothing was done until 1993 when we received letters from a number of churches stating that the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering was being collected in their churches but then divided among other missions entities."

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Thus began "the process of having the research done to move toward registering the name of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," Rankin said. When it was learned, for example, that a restaurant in Ohio had registered the Lottie Moon name, "That made it more apparent we needed to protect the name of the offering to prevent misuse," Rankin said.

"We moved officially in that direction last July, and it didn't occur to us at that time to discuss it with anyone else after our earlier contact with WMU in 1990," Rankin noted, reiterating, "There was no intent to withhold information from WMU or anyone else."

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Patterson issues father-like
charge to Southeastern graduates

By Dwayne Hastings

Baptist Press
5/16/95

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary awarded degrees to 112 students in May 13 ceremonies in the school's Binkley Chapel -- the largest graduating class since May 1990. The occasion also marked the first full master of divinity class to study and graduate under Paige Patterson, who assumed the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary's presidency in 1992.

Telling the parents they would now have to share their graduating children with him, Patterson said in delivering the charge to the graduates, "In a sense, I look at myself as daddy and father to them."

Then turning to the pews of black-robed graduates, Patterson said, "So like Jacob of the Old Testament gathering his children around him to say a word to them about the future: My children -- I gather you today. I have a word of warning first of all.

"Our world is full of preachers who have failed to maintain their moral integrity in a day when the whole world watches. My first challenge to you today is for you to determine in your heart that under no circumstances will you bring sorrow to the kingdom of God," Patterson said.

Noting the abundance of self-willed missionaries, pastors, preachers and workers in the world, Patterson said, "It is the character of the task to which you have been called to crucify self to become the servant not only of the Lord but of all the sheep of the flock. And whether you are appreciated or unappreciated by the flock, it is yet your responsibility to labor among them as a servant and slave."

Patterson challenged the graduates to a ministry of fruitfulness: "Would you bring the Word of God out of hours in the study, out of patient wrestling with God -- until your soul is full as your mind is full? And when your mouth opens may there be a confluency of that which you have studied and that which has welled up in your heart as the fire of God has fallen."

Warning the students they will encounter those who will hate them for their stands on certain issues, Patterson exhorted the graduates to stand fast for what is right.

"You will stand for something, so I suppose in a way I am praying that you will be hated. You will be bitterly opposed on occasion. There is no defeat in mere opposition -- by the hands of the mighty God you will be delivered."

Patterson continued, "But if you wait upon God and you linger before him and you never become so busy about worldly things that you don't have time for the one who made you and saved you -- I will promise you that all the conflict in the world will do nothing but make you stronger."

Along with degrees in doctor of ministry, master of theology, master of divinity, master of arts and associate of divinity, Southeastern also awarded its first bachelor of arts degree in biblical studies. The undergraduate diploma was granted by the new Southeastern Baptist Theological College which began accepting students for upper level undergraduate work in January.

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**Powell urges Southwestern grads
to take heart into ministry**

By Mark Christie

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The president of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board warned the 425 spring graduates of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary against "Christian cannibalism."

"We need to be concerned about the unification of the churches. If the body of Christ is to survive today, we must stop biting and devouring one another," Paul Powell said. "Perhaps the greatest threat to Christianity today, especially to our denomination, is not from the outside but from the inside."

The single most important ingredient to a successful ministry is heart, Powell said during Southwestern's spring commencement ceremony May 12. A total of 473 degrees, including 36 doctorates, were awarded from the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary's schools of theology, church music and religious education.

"There's a world of difference between a sermon on your mind and a sermon on your heart ... carrying your church on your back and carrying it in your heart," Powell said.

He quoted J.D. Gray, longtime pastor of First Baptist Church of New Orleans, who once said of his ministry there, "New Orleans first got in my hair, then on my nerves, and at last on my heart. And, brother, when a city gets on your heart, you're stuck."

He cited as an example the apostle Paul, a man of courage, commitment and stamina who had the compassionate and caring heart of a shepherd.

"If you leave this place with the kind of burden, the heartbeat for the churches that Paul had, there is hope for our world. But without it, both you and the churches will surely fail," Powell told the overflow crowd at Travis Avenue Baptist Church.

He urged the graduates to be burdened as the apostle Paul was for the continued growth and development of churches.

"The church is the only existing institution which witnesses to the spiritual and the eternal. But we do our work only as we penetrate our world," said Powell, a Southwestern graduate who was honored with a Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1990.

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**Miss America's mother
saw God's possibilities**

By Amy Jennings Adams

**Baptist Press
5/16/95**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--For Daphne Gray, these words are truth -- "with God, anything is possible." From the time her three daughters were babies, she taught them to believe it, too.

And this past Sept. 17, when her youngest daughter, Heather Whitestone, was named Miss America, even the doubters began to believe.

Only a mother can imagine the emotions that overwhelmed Daphne as she watched her daughter glide down the runway. A vision in white, Heather smiled, waved and signed, "I Love You" -- her crown glittering and tears of joy glistening in her eyes.

Those tears reflected in Daphne's eyes as she listened to the strains of "There She is ... Miss America." She knew that Heather had not heard her name called, that the thunderous applause of an audience of 10,000 merely sounded like static to Heather.

"I just feel like it was God's will," Daphne says about her daughter winning the title. "I certainly do believe that he had his purpose."

When Heather was only 18 months old, her family rushed her to the hospital with a dangerously high fever. Doctors administered a medication that saved her life. Relieved, they left the hospital with encouragement from physicians that Heather would "be back to her normal self in two or three weeks."

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But after several months, Daphne knew something was still not quite right. One day, someone dropped a stack of pans in the kitchen. Startled by the loud clanging, everyone jumped -- except Heather.

At the Spain Clinic at Children's Hospital in Birmingham, Ala., Daphne learned her daughter was "profoundly deaf."

"I was devastated and very angry with God," Daphne says. "I could not understand why this was happening. I asked over and over why it couldn't have been me. He really let me vent my anger -- but he never left. Finally, it dawned on me that God did not do this to Heather. But God was there to help me. Once I realized that, I said, 'OK, we have a deaf child. How do we help her?'"

Because no one in Heather's family was deaf, they had no foundation for dealing with her difficulties. But at the same time, they had no preconceived ideas about what Heather could and could not do. One thing Daphne knew was that she didn't want her daughter to be isolated from the hearing world. So she began investigating each of five approaches to dealing with deafness.

Through her search, she visited the Doreen Pollack Clinic at Porter Memorial Hospital in Denver which teaches "ocoupedics" -- that is, the children learn to "listen" and to speak, rather than studying sign language.

"We got to meet a lot of the kids," Daphne explains. "They were able to communicate and seemed very happy, well-adjusted and successful. That made up my mind. I wanted to give Heather a choice," she continues. "I had been told early on that you can always learn to sign, but you can't always learn to speak."

As a part of ocoupedics, Heather's mother would often sit behind her and speak, forcing Heather to learn to use what little hearing she has. Heather also began to read lips at an early age.

"It's the hardest way," Daphne admits, "but Heather has gotten used to putting in extra work." Today, Heather can hear nothing with her right ear. With the help of a sophisticated hearing aid, she can detect minimal sound with her left.

As an additional part of Heather's therapy, her mother enrolled her in a ballet class when she was 5 years old, hoping the music, rhythm and meter might help her to hear human voices. "We never realized it would become one of the loves of her life," Daphne says.

Yet despite obstacles and people who thought she couldn't do it, Heather pursued her love of dance. And on Saturday, Sept. 17, just one hour before she was crowned Miss America, Heather dazzled the audience and the nation with her perfect pirouettes and effortless arabesques to Sandi Patty's powerful song, "Via Dolorosa." Relying strictly on memorized counts, Heather danced to the music God placed in her heart.

But for Heather, ballet is more than an artistic expression or even a God-given talent -- it is a way to worship God.

"I taught all my girls the importance of reading and studying the Bible," Daphne says. "For Heather, since speech was such a difficult thing for her, this was strategic. We went to Sunday school and church, but Heather missed a lot because she was isolated."

In fact, Daphne never quite realized how much Heather was missing until they got a closed caption machine for their television and Heather began to watch Christian programs. "When she could actually see what they were saying, it made such a tremendous difference for her in her faith," Daphne says.

Believing God allowed her to be Miss America because he has a purpose for her life, Heather expressed her faith moments after she won, saying, "I want to witness for God. Because he gave me this talent, I want to give it back to him."

"I get goose bumps when I watch Heather perform," says Daphne. "I feel like God has given her this wonderful gift, and I feel like Heather, through her dance, has the ability to show people that 'with God all things are indeed possible.'"

As Miss America, Heather travels 20,000 miles a month around the United States sharing this message of hope with everyone she meets, hearing and deaf, especially the children.

"The biggest handicap in the world is negative thinking," Heather says. "People handicap themselves by concentrating only on the negative instead of the positive." This is a lesson Heather learned from her mother as she grew up.

"A-M-E-R-I-C-A-N," Daphne would spell, pointing out, "The last four letters are I-CAN. No one can tell you can't."

Another lesson Heather learned from experience is that success requires hard work. "There are no free rides," Heather tells others.

"I have to work harder than some," she admits. "It took me six years to learn to say my last name correctly."

With her mother's encouragement and her own determination, she never quit working. She attended public school without an interpreter until she was 12, when she was sent to the Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis. She graduated from a public high school in Birmingham, Ala., with a 3.6 grade point average.

Since Heather's mother is a teacher, she spent hours working with Heather on reading, math problems and her speech. Yet Heather and her mother both remember times along the way when Heather became discouraged.

"There were times," Heather says now, "when I fought her. I would say, 'Why are you doing this to me?' But as I get older, I realize that speech has made my dreams come true."

Today, Heather, who didn't learn sign language until she was a junior in high school, speaks eloquently, with intonation and expression. And despite her deafness, she has mastered a skill very few people have -- the skill of listening.

As a child, Heather prayed God would give her back her hearing. He didn't. But Heather's sister, Stacey Vera, wrote her a letter that helped her understand that even people who aren't deaf don't always hear. "You can hear," Stacey encouraged her, "just in a different way." She also explained God had given Heather their mother to help her hear.

"I think parents make a covenant with God to guide their children through the good times and the bad times," Daphne says. "We have to be there for our children and sometimes that means taking a strong stand -- to guide them and give them a basis."

"I think the most difficult thing for me to deal with was not the handicap itself, but the emotional part -- the loneliness Heather felt," Daphne recalls. "And I was unable to help her. I couldn't make other children be friends. I just tried to be there for her when she needed to talk and needed a friend."

"As mothers, we all wish we could spare our children hurt," she says, "but life hurts. It's how you deal with obstacles that makes a difference."

According to Heather, her mother never said the word "impossible." It is this kind of encouragement and understanding that led Heather to call her mother her "best friend" and her "hero."

"Because we spent so much time together, she became my role model," Heather says.

With Heather's demanding schedule, she and her mother see very little of each other since she became Miss America. However, because of Heather's occupations they can talk on the phone, even though it is often difficult.

"Of course, I miss her. But my loss is America's gain," Daphne smiles. "In essence I've already said goodbye to Heather one time (when she went to CID in St. Louis for three years), and God helped me through it."

For both Daphne and Heather, reliance on God is an integral part of their lives. "My deafness forces me to depend on God more so that I can hear through him," says Heather, who cannot go to bed without reading God's Word. "He brought me peace and taught me how to overcome my deafness."

"All of us have problems," Daphne says. "I can't even perceive how people handle problems when they don't have Christ."

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Adams is a college friend of the reigning Miss America. Reprinted with permission from Parent Life, which carried the article in March.

**W.Va. Baptists elect
Phillips as new exec**

BECKLEY, W.Va. (BP)--The West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists executive board has unanimously elected Jere L. Phillips as the convention's executive director-treasurer.

Phillips, 43, director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's missions department since 1990, succeeds Don R. Mathis, who held the position two years, leaving in February 1994 to become pastor of Central Baptist Church, Winchester, Ky.

The board affirmed the recommendation of its search committee in a meeting in Beckley, W.Va., April 29,

Phillips, a native of Dyersburg, Tenn., is a 1973 graduate of Union University, Jackson, Tenn., who received the master of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from New Orleans Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in 1978 and 1982, respectively. He has been a pastor in Tennessee, Louisiana, and Florida and was a professor and department chair in the church ministries division of Trinity College, Dunedin, Fla., from 1984-87. He has been a frequent contributor to Southern Baptist publications.

Phillips and his wife, Glenda, have two daughters, Julianne, 20, and Jennifer, 17.

He will officially begin his duties as the fifth executive director of the 25-year-old West Virginia convention June 1, 1995.

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**Hong Kong Baptist Press
retired editor Wong dies**

By Mark Christie

Baptist Press
5/16/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Molly Wong, retired editor of the Hong Kong Baptist Press and a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, died May 2 after a year-long battle with lung cancer. She was 74.

Wong was well-known for her book, "They Changed My China," an autobiography about her escape from China following the communist takeover.

A 1951 graduate of the University of Shanghai, China, Wong was persecuted for her Christian faith prior to her escape from the country when the government came under communist rule. Directly following her graduation from Hong Kong Baptist Seminary, she became editor of the Hong Kong Baptist Press, a news service and Christian literature distributor, in 1960.

Wong enrolled at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1967 and graduated in 1969. She returned to work for Hong Kong Baptist Press until her retirement in 1990. She was honored with a Southwestern Seminary Distinguished Alumni Award in 1992.

Following her retirement, Wong spent her final years editing for the compilation of the New Chinese Bible as well as translating Sunday school materials into Chinese. Some of Wong's other accomplishments include the development of Masterlife materials in Chinese.

In addition to her journalistic activities, Wong was active in her local church in Hong Kong as pianist until 1990. She was known by her close friends as a selfless, devoted and determined Christian, according to Bunelle "Bunny" Gresham, Wong's Sunday school teacher at Gambrell Street Baptist Church in Fort Worth for several years.

Wong also was known for her avid prayer life, especially for praying for her professors and church leaders while at Southwestern Seminary and until her death, Gresham said.

Funeral services for Wong were May 6 in Kowloon, Hong Kong, with burial following in Hong Kong.

A memorial fund has been established in her honor for Hong Kong Baptist Press. Gifts may be made to Hong Kong Baptist Press, care of Gwen Krotts, 322 Prince Edward Road West, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

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Southwestern Seminary alumni
put fortune where heart is

By Bob Murdaugh

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Attorney Robert Andrews' compensation from 66 lawsuits he recently won made him and his wife, Jane, millionaires.

Their first major expenditure from the enormous sum intentionally made a statement about where the couple's true fortune is.

The Andrewses, of Fort Worth, Texas, both graduates of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, said their gift of a new antiphonal organ for Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth is a tribute to the church's organist, Albert L. Travis, also professor of organ at the seminary, and to the longtime relationship between Southwestern and Broadway.

Andrews represented 66 persons, many of whom were adolescents who had been confined in psychiatric hospitals in Texas. According to a Nov. 17, 1993, article in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram newspaper, National Medical Enterprises, the California-based owner of the defunct Psychiatric Institute of Fort Worth, agreed to pay an estimated \$15 million to settle the 66 lawsuits alleging conspiracy, fraud and poor patient care at seven Texas facilities.

"In giving the Albert L. Travis Antiphonal Organ to Broadway, Jane and I wanted it to be known that Christ is our top priority in life," Andrews said, acknowledging the widespread press coverage of the lawsuits and his law firm's victories in them.

"We realized it was very important to make a statement about who we are before we were tempted to forget it," said Andrews, who has served as chairman of Broadway Baptist's organ committee. "When Jane and I received my fees for the lawsuits, I began to realize more than ever before why a former pastor of mine asked his congregation several years ago for special prayer for a man who had inherited a large sum of money."

With 1,752 pipes, the new antiphonal organ in the rear galley of Broadway Baptist is one-sixth of the total new organ Broadway plans to have finished by October 1996.

The complete Rildia Bee O'Bryan Cliburn Organ, named in memory of the mother of renowned concert pianist Van Cliburn, will include 191 ranks, 10,655 pipes, the antiphonal organ's five-keyboard console and another console. It will be the largest organ in Texas and the largest organ of French aesthetics in the world, Andrews noted.

A unique feature of the new antiphonal organ is that Travis will be able to play the entire organ from it, according to Mrs. Andrews.

Travis said the new antiphonal organ already allows more of a variety of sounds for accompanying congregational singing and for accompanying the church's choirs. The musical instrument also enables him to play a wider spectrum of organ literature.

Part of Mrs. Andrews' studies for the master of music degree from Southwestern were under Travis. She later earned the doctor of musical arts degree at Southwestern.

Both of Mrs. Andrews' degrees are in piano performance. Her secondary concentration in her doctoral studies was organ. She currently is an adjunct professor in Southwestern's school of church music.

"He (Travis) is a wonderful teacher and a very encouraging person. He is the reason I would play organ or piano for a church," Mrs. Andrews said. She serves as a substitute organist and pianist at Broadway Baptist in addition to her active membership on the worship committee. She also provides instrumental accompaniment for the children's music ministry at Broadway.

While pursuing the master of divinity degree at Southwestern, Andrews enrolled in Travis' class organ course for two semesters at the request of Mrs. Andrews.

"I am not a musician, but I actually made an 'A' in Al's class both semesters," Andrews said. "I have never heard of any of his students not singing his praises. I was impressed that in his music classes, he emphasized the importance of prayer in life."

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Andrews earned the master of divinity degree at Southwestern in 1985. During his pursuit of the doctor of philosophy degree at the seminary, he chose to discontinue studies and return to the practice of law.

During a recent program acknowledging the dedication of the new antiphonal organ to Travis and Southwestern, Travis told Broadway members and guests, "I am deeply moved and doubly honored.

"Serving as organist on this new instrument is in itself a wonderful privilege," Travis said. "Receiving this additional honor is certainly an unearned blessing.

"Much of what I have learned about the role of the organ in worship I have learned here at Broadway and have passed on to students at the seminary."

Travis commented his role as seminary professor, particularly in the area of improvisation, has been shaped largely by what he has had the freedom to do in worship at Broadway.

James Leo Garrett Jr., a longtime member of Broadway and distinguished professor of theology at Southwestern, said during the April 30 organ dedication service Broadway and the seminary "have been linked ever since the seminary was seeking to relocate from the Baylor University campus in Waco in the early 1900s.

"After Broadway's great fire in April 1909, the church sacrificially gave \$16,000 of the \$100,000, together with a site, needed for the seminary's removal to Fort Worth in 1910, and this while rebuilding its own destroyed sanctuary," Garrett reported.

Southwestern's founder and first president, B.H. Carroll, was a Broadway member the last two years of his life. The seminary's fourth president, J. Howard Williams, was a Broadway member from 1953-58.

Two Broadway families, those of George E. Cowden and William Fleming, have been generous benefactors of the seminary, Garrett said.

"Lengthy indeed would be the list of Southwestern employees and students who have preached, taught, sang, played, led and ministered in the context of Broadway church, and more lengthy still the list of those who have been members of Broadway between 1910 and 1995," Garrett said.

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(BP) photos available upon request from Southwestern's office of public relations.

Quadriplegic layman
insists God is good

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
5/16/95

LA PUENTE, Calif., (BP)--Roberto Yslava insists God is good despite circumstances that appear to contradict him.

In 1971, Yslava was driving to work the graveyard shift as a police department investigator when he saw an elderly man being assaulted. He intervened and was shot by the assailants. The bullet hit him in the back between his fourth and fifth vertebrae.

Today he is paralyzed from the neck down. He can't drink a cup of coffee without help, can't put a knot in a necktie by himself, can't raise his hand to make a point.

"God is not going to heal everyone. Paul had a thorn in the flesh which God did not heal," Yslava says. "Someday I'll have a glorified body."

Born and raised in Arizona, Yslava spent most of his childhood in foster homes. He was in trouble with the law long before he started working for a law enforcement agency.

Yslava says he became more rebellious after being shot because "I thought the world owed me something." Then a physical therapist shared Christ with Yslava, and a group of Christians visited him at home after he was released from the hospital.

In 1976, Yslava became a Christian. "God is good. He gave me a second chance."

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After being paralyzed, Yslava earned a bachelor's degree in administration and humanities, a bachelors of science in law and juris doctorate. He has not passed the California bar exam because he can't finish it in the time allowed. He types and signs his name by putting a mouthpiece between his teeth.

Currently Yslava is a field representative and legal assessor for a Santa Ana, Calif., law firm. The company handles mostly personal injury and criminal law cases, he explains.

Typically Yslava talks to potential clients on the phone first, and they have no idea that he is paralyzed. They often complain about their situations and indulge in self-pity, Yslava says.

When they meet, clients are surprised to see him in a wheelchair. "I can identify with them because of my condition. They ask how I can have peace, and I tell them that God is good."

Yslava is also personnel commission chairman for the Bassett School District, comprised of 10 schools in east Los Angeles. The commission is charged with ensuring fair treatment for classified employees like bus drivers and secretaries.

Yslava earns \$50 a month plus benefits for being on the commission, but he has another motivation for serving. "I care about the rights of employees, and I have the opportunity to share Christ one way or another. If you're sensitive, people will give you the opportunity to introduce Christ."

District superintendent Linda Gonzales says Yslava helps interpret public policy and procedures to guarantee that people are hired impartially.

To avoid the appearance of mixing church and state, Gonzales offers to take a five-minute break from her work to explain Yslava's real impact on the school system.

"I'm a born-again believer," she begins and identifies Yslava as a prayer partner.

"We have 21 gangs in our community," Gonzales says. "One year we had 40 deaths of young people. This year we've had three deaths, and none of them were our school children. We've had not one violent fight and no weapons on our campuses.

"We're not implementing another program. What we're doing is praying," she says.

"God is good," he replies.

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

CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled, "Committee on Committees announced by Jim Henry," dated 5/5/95, please note Don Brock from South Carolina is pastor, Gateway Baptist Church, Columbia, not a layman as printed.

Thanks,
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