

strength of his commitment and faith" throughout the choir trip, Ozmun observed: "He's with the Lord. He's out of pain."

Among 31 people who participated in the Ouachita trip, 25 were aboard the connecting flight from Dallas to Little Rock, including 19 students and Ozmun. Also on the flight were OBU music professors Charles and Cindy Fuller and their three daughters.

Five group members were among the more than 70 people hospitalized following the crash. Two days later, only two of the five remained hospitalized. The Fullers' 14-year-old daughter, Rachel, remained in critical condition with severe burns. Kristin Maddox, a 22-year-old student from Ponca City, Okla., also suffered burns and was at press time listed in serious condition.

Revelations of a number of heroic rescue efforts unfolded as survivors described the moments immediately following the crash.

Charles Fuller recalled seeing "flames coming from the front of the plane toward us." Jerking open an emergency-exit door and stepping onto the wing, Fuller said, "I got my wife out and began pulling people out until there were no more people in that part of the plane. ... I called out three times and there was no response."

As he moved away from the burning wreckage, Fuller quickly found his wife and two of their daughters and guided them to safety. "I went all the way around the plane and there was my other daughter by herself, wandering around," he said. "I found her by the grace of God."

Fuller said he was not aware of the seriousness of her injuries at the time, but his daughter remains the most critically injured among the Ouachita group. He counted his blessings, however, after the traumatic chain of events. "I'm thankful that my daughter is alive and has a good chance for survival," he said. "I'm thankful that we were able to go to Europe and share the gospel. I'm hopeful that God will bring comfort and healing to those who need it."

During an interview with Diane Sawyer on "Good Morning America," Fuller declared: "There are times in life where your faith has to mean something. It can't be something that you just talk about. It has to be something that empowers you to live life."

Several Ouachita students reportedly pulled fellow passengers to safety and offered comfort and encouragement as victims huddled in the pouring rain awaiting rescue crews.

"Everybody was amazingly calm," said Ouachita senior Misha Perkins of Garland, Texas. "After the initial screams, all I heard was the roar

of the flames."

"A man grabbed my hand and we ran," she recalled. "I was almost waist deep in water at one point. We had to jump. There were flames to be dodged as well."

Realizing that there were still people trapped inside the plane, Perkins said, "We began to pray. I remember falling to my knees and crying in my heart and hearing my friend pray, and we began to recite Psalm 91. We began to find more people and formed a cluster. We began to organize who was the most hurt and needed medical attention."

She said she tried to use her body to shield an injured passenger from the weather. "I felt for a while like I was useless and in the way," Perkins said. She quickly discovered, however, that "I could put a calming hand on a shoulder, I could offer my body for warmth and I could tell them about Jesus, which ended up doing more good than I thought it could."

"I saw a lot of gentle shepherds among the group," she said. "I watched people minister and be ministered to."

"The students handled themselves extremely well," Ozmun affirmed. "They took the opportunity they had as survivors to be a witness to others."

Ozmun also sought to minister to injured victims. Quickly escaping the wreckage, he initially began running away from the crash site, fearing an explosion. Despite that fear, he returned to the plane and began helping those in need. "One of the blessings for me was to sit with and talk to and hold hands with those who couldn't move," he recalled.

"I felt the Lord's presence throughout it," he remarked. People had already been praying for the choir team during the two weeks prior to the crash, he noted. "I think that was instrumental in so many of us walking away from it," he said.

"There were a lot of miracles at work at midnight," Fuller agreed. "The plane could have gone in the river or the fire could have been much worse. ... There's Somebody greater than we are who is in control. People of Christian faith are able to see life through an eternal perspective."

Woman named to No. 2 post at British Baptist organization

DIDCOT, England (ABP) -- A woman noted for ecumenical work has been named deputy general secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Myra Blyth, a former Baptist pastor who now works for the World Council of Churches, is the first woman to be elected to the post, according to European Baptist Press Service. Delegates to the union's general assembly affirmed her appointment in April. She and her family are expected to move to Britain from Geneva by the end of the year.

As deputy general secretary, Blyth will be responsible for day-to-day operation of the union's offices in Didcot, England, and will be national ecumenical officer, representing British Baptists in several organizations.

She succeeds Keith Jones, who resigned last year to become rector of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, Czech Republic.

Blyth "has been described as a Baptist gift to the church beyond the Baptist community" for her ecumenical work, said David Coffey, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

She currently is executive director of the cluster on relations for the World Council of Churches, the main international, interdenominational cooperative body of Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant communions around the globe.

Coffey said Blyth "will play a vital role among the family of Baptist churches, rooting our radical vision for mission by encouraging us to worship, work, and serve together."

Coffey said he has known Blyth 20 years, since they worked together as ministers in the same London borough.

-- By ABP staff

Christian Coalition shuffles leadership; Robertson takes day-to-day operations

By Kenny Byrd

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Upset with the Senate's focus on gun

control instead of "pro-family" measures after the Littleton, Colo., school shootings, Christian Coalition President Pat Robertson is stepping into a more active role in the agency's day-to-day operations.

Randy Tate, the Christian Coalition's executive director, has been moved to the coalition's Washington office as senior vice president. An official at the coalition said Tate is needed in Washington to give more "firepower" to pro-family issues. Tate will move to the D.C. office as early as the week of June 7-11.

The official said Robertson is concerned that attention in the nation's capital has turned to gun control in the wake of the shootings rather than issues of concern to the coalition. But the official also noted that Robertson "sees the magnitude of the upcoming elections" and "would like to be very involved in [them]."

Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition, reassumed its presidency after previous president Don Hodel stepped down in February.

Supreme Court refuses to hear Adventist's discrimination claim

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- A former teacher at a Seventh-day Adventist school in Maryland cannot sue to get his job back under federal discrimination laws, according to two rulings left standing June 1 by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Doing so would conflict with First Amendment rights of the religious group that fired him, said two lower courts that previously dismissed Donald Clapper's lawsuit against the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Clapper learned in March 1993 that his teaching contract at the conference's Mount Aetna Academy in Hagerstown, Md., would not be renewed. School officials said the firing was due to declining enrollment and a lack of funds.

But Clapper, at the time 59 and a 20-year teacher at the school, filed a lawsuit alleging the dismissal violated federal laws against discrimination based on age and gender.

In dismissing the lawsuit, a federal district court concluded Clapper held a "quasi-ministerial" role at the school, exempting it from federal antidiscrimination laws. Religious organizations cannot be forced to

obey antidiscrimination laws, the court said, because of the First Amendment's guarantee of the free exercise of religion.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with the district court, concluding the primary duties of teachers at the school "consist of teaching and spreading the Seventh-day Adventist faith and supervising and participating in religious ritual and worship."

Clapper argued that religious instruction was only one part of his job and that other duties were largely secular, entitling him to the same protection as a teacher in a public school.

Attorneys for the conference, however, contended that Clapper's role was inherently religious. "Clapper implausibly recasts Seventh-day Adventist education as predominantly secular," conference attorneys wrote in urging the high court to reject the case. "His characterization is faithless to the record and contrary to explicit factual findings by both courts below."

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