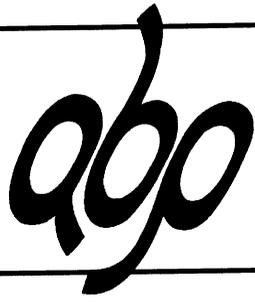


Nashville, Tennessee



Associated
Baptist Press

Editor: Bob Allen
Executive editor: Greg Warner

Phone: 800.340.6626
Fax: 904.262.7745
E-mail: bob@abpnews.com

January 11, 2001

(01-04)

News briefs from Associated Baptist Press

Student charged in vehicle deaths

BOLIVAR, Mo. -- The driver in a December accident that killed three Southwest Baptist University students is facing felony charges of involuntary manslaughter and second-degree assault.

The Springfield News-Leader reported that 20-year-old Tyler L. Wasmer of Independence was drinking Dec. 3 before driving the Jeep Cherokee that ran off a state highway and hit a tree 10 miles north of Springfield. The Missouri Highway Patrol said his blood-alcohol content was .102 percent, just above the state's legal limit.

Killed in the wreck were Gregory Germany, 22, of Rogersville, Mo.; Mary Miller, 20, of Niangua, Mo.; and Byron Phillips, 27, of Anna, Ill. Wasmer and another passenger, 19-year-old Jamie Roszell of Neosho, Mo., were seriously injured.

The university, which is affiliated with the Missouri Baptist Convention, forbids students to use alcohol whether on or off campus.

Steve Morrow, the school's vice president for student development, told the newspaper that officials will meet with Wasmer soon to determine whether he may enroll for the spring semester. He declined to speculate beyond that.

Morrow said he has been in contact with both students who survived the crash several times. "We're concerned about Tyler and his family, and we continue to pray for his recovery," he said. (ABP)

Pastor killed by fleeing inmate

FLAGLER BEACH, Fla. -- A Southern Baptist pastor in Florida died Dec. 27 when a stolen pickup truck fleeing police smashed into his car.

Don Burgess, 60, was pastor of Hammock First Baptist Church in Flagler Beach. He was returning from a Wednesday-night prayer meeting to his home in Palm Coast when the accident occurred about 8 p.m.

The driver of the truck, 24-year-old Christopher Lee Ropp of Cape Canaveral, had escaped earlier in the day from the Flagler County Jail and was being pursued by police when he hit Burgess' car while traveling an estimated 75 to 85 miles per hour. He was charged with first-degree murder in the crash, along with other felony charges stemming from his jailbreak. (ABP)

Baptist state convention president dies

PHILADELPHIA -- Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey president Henry Nash, 62, died in Philadelphia.

An African-American pastor, leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention state affiliate credited Nash for his work among minorities. "A majority of the African-American churches that are now part of our fellowship were influenced in a very positive way by Dr. Nash," said Frank Miller of the Greater Philadelphia Baptist Association.

David Waltz, executive director of the state convention, called Nash's death "a great loss to our state convention and to me personally."

"We have lost a great leader, a true Christian brother and a dear friend," Waltz said.

Nash was first elected the state convention's president in 1999. He was re-elected to a second term last fall. (ABP)

Seminary president among doctoral grads

MILL VALLEY, Calif. -- Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary's December lineup of doctoral candidates included a familiar face -- seminary President William Crews, who received a long-awaited doctor of ministry degree.

Crews was among 16 graduates receiving doctor's degrees from the seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., Dec. 15.

The moment was a long time in coming. Crews, a former pastor who has led the seminary 14 years, first applied for the program 23 years ago. As often happens, however, other responsibilities got in the way. Three years ago, he finally took the plunge.

"This is something I've always wanted to do but never had the clear opportunity to pursue," said Crews, a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Also among December D.Min. recipients was Mark Wyatt, editor of the California Southern Baptist, news journal of the California Southern Baptist Convention. (ABP)

Fellowship dedicates Florida ministry center

HOMESTEAD, Fla. -- Born in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew, Open House Ministries celebrated a milestone this fall with the dedication of a debt-free ministry center in Homestead, Fla.

"This is not only a dedication of the past, but also an inauguration of the future," Daniel Vestal, coordinator of the Atlanta-based Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, said at the dedication ceremony.

The ongoing work began when two churches asked the Fellowship for relief assistance following the devastating 1992 storm. Both the national CBF and Florida's CBF chapter responded immediately with food, clothing and building materials.

After groups left, however, the state CBF organization saw continuing needs for ministry in an area plagued by poverty, drugs and crime. Six missionary couples funded by CBF have served consecutively as directors of Open House Ministries, and 500 volunteers from 14 states helped construct the ministry center over seven years.

Plans for the ministry center include spiritual development, classes in English as a second language, day and after-school care for children, parenting classes and food distribution. (ABP)

Dutch Bible Society workers respond to tragedy

Workers at the International Bible Society worked quickly to minister to injured and bereaved following a New Year's Eve fire that gutted the second floor of a restaurant in Volendam, Holland, killing 10 and badly injuring 70.

Learning of the tragedy, IBS-Holland Director Geert Oosterhuis thought immediately of a Scripture booklet, "When Your Whole World Changes," which is published by the society but wasn't yet translated into Dutch.

Oosterhuis and his staff worked together to complete translating, editing, typesetting, designing a new cover and printing an initial edition in just under four days. "We'll begin distribution today," Oosterhuis said as the booklets arrived in his office Jan. 5, the day the first funerals were being held.

"For the 30,000 inhabitants of Volendam, the scars of this disaster, visible and invisible, will likely last a long time," he said. "It is our prayer that this booklet will provide spiritual solace and comfort to many of those most affected by the tragedy." (ABP)

END
