

NAMB missionary died of apparent suicide

February 1, 2006

Posted: 2/31/06

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By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

HELEN, Ga. (ABP)—The death of a 32-year-old North American Mission Board missionary is under investigation by officials in the north Georgia county where he lived.

The sheriff's office in White County, Ga., is investigating the Jan. 27 death of William Flake, who directed Southern Baptist resort ministries in a tourist area about 50 miles north of Atlanta. Flake, who had a wife, Natalie, and an 8-year-old daughter, Jorjanne, was found at their home in Helen, Ga.

Colleagues said his death was suicide, but White County Coroner Ricky Barrett declined to divulge the cause of death.

"We don't suspect any foul play or anything like that, but the sheriff's department hasn't released anything on it," he explained, directing further inquiries to a detective in the sheriff's office. The investigator did not return a reporter's telephone message requesting more information.

Marty King, a spokesman for the missions agency, said Flake was first appointed a Southern Baptist missionary in 2001 and was a career resort

missionary for NAMB.

“He worked with the tourists in the North Georgia mountains,” he said.

In a NAMB press release, the agency’s head of ministry and servant evangelism praised Flake’s career.

“Michael’s resort ministry mobilized thousands of mission groups,” Jeff Wagner said. “The Helen community came to expect the faithful witness of Michael and his team of resort missionaries, and his ministry was honored with the key to the City of Helen because of the service that the summer missionaries provide. Michael’s special smile and passion for God will be missed.”

Flake, who was a Georgia native, attended Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland, Ga., near Helen. He went on to graduate from Mercer University in Macon, Ga. Flake also attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and extension programs of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Reformed Theological Seminary.