

Baptist Briefs

February 16, 2007

Posted: 2/16/07

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Baptists among mission workers killed in Honduras. Three Americans on a mission trip in Honduras were killed in a truck crash Feb. 6. Ten other people were injured when the truck flipped on a remote mountain road, authorities said. Two of the deceased—45-year-old Perry Goad and 58-year-old Richard Mason Jr., both of Cartersville, Ga.—belonged to Tabernacle Baptist Church in Cartersville. Martha Fuller, 66, from Newnan, Ga., also was killed in the accident, which happened near the village of Mal Pais. Fuller was a member of Newnan First United Methodist Church. The weeklong trip included a group of 28 people traveling with Honduras Outreach, Inc., a Georgia-based, nondenominational charity that has sent North American volunteers to the Agalta Valley in Honduras the past 18 years. The volunteers— up to 1,000 a year—often spent time constructing roads, routing electricity and implementing running water in the remote villages there.

Bush receives SBC religious liberty award. President Bush received a Southern Baptist award for his advocacy of religious freedom in a recent presentation at the White House. Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, presented the John Leland Religious Liberty Award to Bush in the Oval Office. The commission gave the award to the president for "courageously defending the right of all people to exercise freely their religious faith," according to

the framed citation.

Volunteer missions opportunities available in China. Multiple short-term missions opportunities are available in spring and summer through Volunteers for China. Volunteers are needed to teach oral English at an institute in Changzhi, March 1 to April 30; at a Chinese high school, March 1 to June 30; and to senior high school students in Changzhi, July 17 to Aug. 19. Volunteers are needed to teach conversational English to Chinese middle school teachers during a summer English program, July 1-30, and to Chinese college students, July 12 to Aug. 12 and July 17 to Aug. 5. Nursing, medical and science students are needed to help lead workshops at a Chinese medical college, July 17 to Aug. 5. Volunteers also are needed for up to eight weeks in July and August to teach oral English as part of a social ministry program run by the Chinese YMCA and a local Christian church. Longer-term positions also are available that provide a stipend, room and airfare. A valid United States passport is required for all projects. For more information, contact Ann or David Wilson at (865) 983-9852 or e-mail cen29529@centurytel.net.

CBF Midwest regional organization formed. The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has added a new, five-state regional body to its group of constituents. The consortium includes Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. At the formation meeting, participants representing four CBF partner churches also created articles of incorporation, bylaws and a budget. Although officially formed, the Midwest region will not be formally recognized by the national CBF organization until a vote at the 2007 general assembly in June. There, the assembly must adopt a bylaw change recognizing the new region and approve coordinating council representatives from the Midwest region.

Southwestern names conference center director. Evan Lenow, 28, has been named director of the Smith Center for Leadership Development at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He succeeds Thomas White, who became the seminary's vice president for student services last October. Lenow, a native of Memphis, Tenn., earned an undergraduate degree from Mississippi College and a master of divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he served as director of financial aid and international students. He is a doctoral student in Christian ethics at Southwestern Seminary.

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Former treasurer of Arizona Foundation sentenced. Donald Deardoff, 49, former treasurer of the Baptist Foundation of Arizona, was sentenced Feb. 2 to serve four years in prison and pay \$159 million to victims of an

investment scam. He received the sentence after pleading guilty in 2001 to two counts of fraud. Four other former foundation employees also were sentenced to lesser punishments Feb. 2. Former foundation President William Crotts and General Counsel Thomas Grabinski were sentenced in September 2006 to eight and six years in prison, respectively, on fraud and racketeering charges. Both must pay \$159 million in restitution to investors, although it's unlikely they'll be able to repay the full amount, since they each earn 35 cents an hour working as a clerk and an aide in prison. The foundation collapsed in 1999 after state regulators ordered it to stop selling securities. Controlled by the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, it had generated money by soliciting funds from clients ostensibly to build churches and retirement homes. Instead, foundation leaders used the funds for a classic pyramid scheme. The foundation shuffled bad debt and overvalued property between phony companies, paying high profits to backers from the money paid in by subsequent investors. About 11,000 investors lost more than \$550 million in the foundation's collapse.

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News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Baptist churches, in Texas, the BGCT, the nation and around the world.