

SOUTHEASTERN

NEWS

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ENTHUSIASM UNLIMITED
IS BEHIND WELCOME SMILE

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News Writer

The first thing you notice about Cindy Howard is her impish grin, followed by a warm burst of dynamic energy as she lovingly greets you.

Cindy is one of many students at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., with a fascinating, unique story. Her shingle says, "Cindy Howard, M.D." but she has accepted an appointment as a pediatrician in Bangalore, India with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

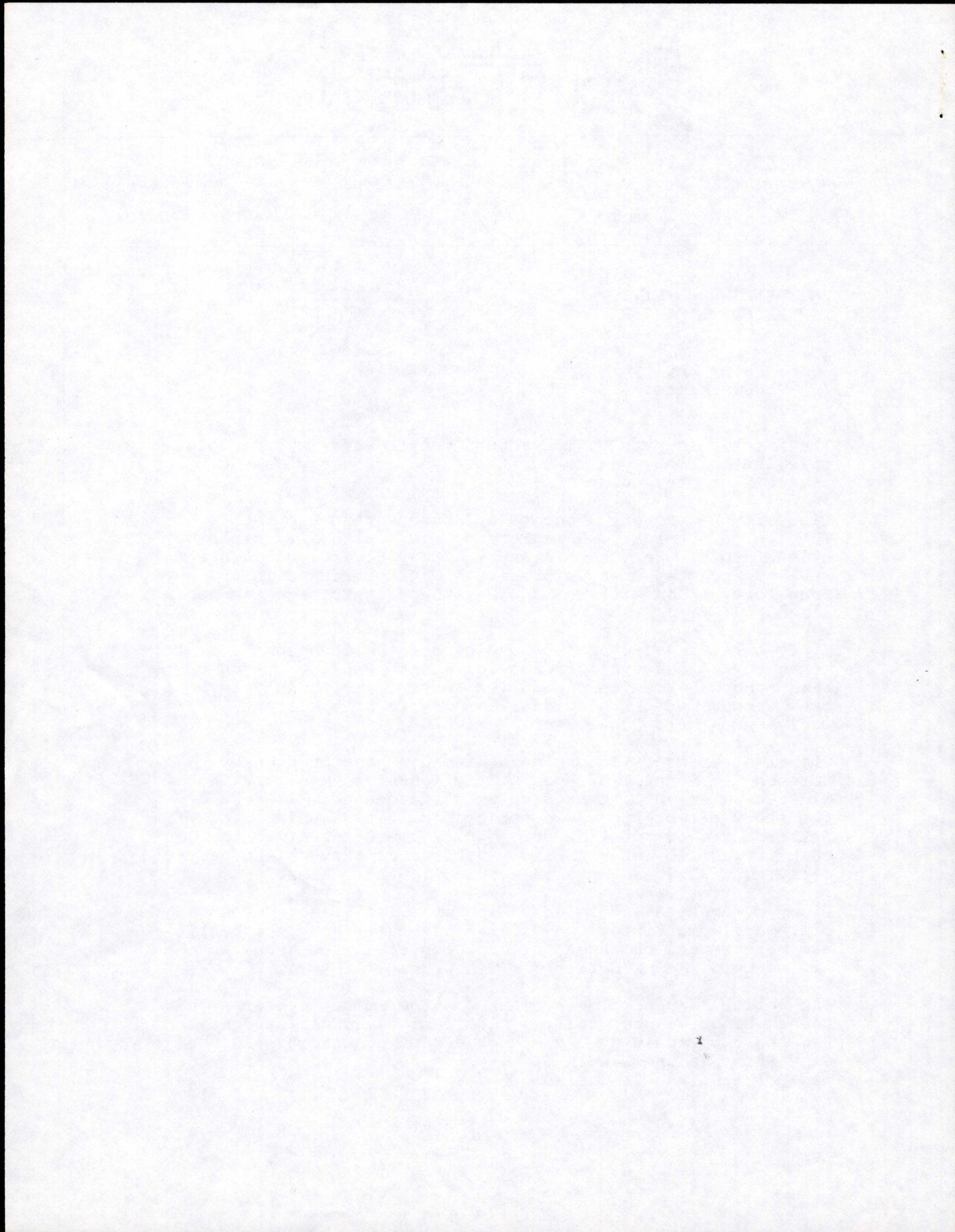
Cindy's heroes as a youth helped direct the Concord, N. C. woman toward her ministry and calling. "During my junior high school years," she recalled recently, "I avidly read books about medical missionaries such as Bill Wallace, Tom Dooly and Albert Schweitzer."

She also remembers attending a missions presentation by Surgeon Tim Pennell of Bowman Gray School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, N.C. that deeply influenced her. "He told the story of working in an African clinic watching many mothers drop out of line before they could see him. For them it was too late; he sadly watched as they walked away carrying their dead infants cradled in their arms."

Cindy remembered and added, "Tim Pennell also noted that a billboard advertising 'Coca Cola, the real thing' probably had more impact on these African people's lives than the living Lord, Jesus Christ."

The petite 34 year-old remembers another visit overseas that had an affect on her call. "As a senior medical student I had the opportunity to work in the Baptist hospital in the Gaza Strip in the Middle East. That reaffirmed my call to medical missions," she said.

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Three months prior to her graduation from medical school in 1978 at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, Cindy's mother became ill with acute leukemia. "I stayed home with her for four months then left to begin an internship at the University of Alabama in pediatrics," said Cindy. Quietly she added, "Six months later, twelve days after Christmas, my mother died."

Cindy Howard feels that she learned many lessons from the experience of her mother's death. "I learned how to grieve and hope with one who is dying. I witnessed what it means to be courageous. I became well aware as a human being as well as a young doctor of my total dependence on God for life," she shared, and added, "and I knew throughout the presence of God in a way I'd never known before."

Cindy expanded her horizons both experientially and educationally during three years of service with the U.S. Army in West Berlin at a pediatric clinic. "I experienced koinonia in the Berlin Baptist Church in a way I'd never experienced it before. There were Christians there from all over the world yet I witnessed the awesome power of our Lord to make us one body," she shared.

There was also an opportunity to encounter firsthand the plight of children in India. "While stationed in Germany," she reflected, "I had participated in the international meeting of the Christian Medical Society sponsored by the Christian physicians of India. I was shocked by the prevalence and destruction of preventable childhood diseases in India," she said, adding, "There were wards of polio victims, infants dying of infectious diarrhea, tuberculosis and measles encephalitis." Cindy continued, "That experience helped pave the way for my decision to apply to become a career missionary for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Upon returning to the United States, I did a fellowship in pediatric infectious diseases and a masters in public health at Tulane University Medical School in New Orleans, Louisiana in preparation for my missions work."

Now her long road to God's will for her life has brought Cindy Howard to Southeastern Seminary where she is completing the courses required of medical missionaries. She concluded the interview by saying "that she has been reaffirmed in the Southeastern Seminary community."

"I have been challenged to be better equipped to fulfill our Lord's commission. As I reflect on my story, I realize that it is our story as members of the body of Christ. Each of us has heard him speak to us and call us out to be his disciples. However our life journeys may differ, we all jointly know the joy and pain of living and being continually redeemed. God has been faithful to me and to Himself. He has called me out to follow Him and to a particular ministry. He is always true. He always comes. Our God is always present."

