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Southwestern Student
Once Faced Firing Squad

By Billy Keith
For The Baptist Press

FORT WORTH (BP)--Graham Lange from Austria may well hold the distinction of being the only student at a Southern Baptist seminary ever to have faced a firing squad and lived to tell about it.

"After World War II on a train carrying French P.O.W.'s (prisoners of war) back to their country," Lange related, "I was taken by investigators of the French Regeme Bureau (Intelligence Service) for a French deserter who had joined the German S.S."

The French, still smarting from the holocaust of world war, prepared a hasty firing squad and led Lange, with several others, out beside the train for execution.

"I was saved by an amazing coincidence," he recalled.

"In the train transporting 1,200 prisoners from all over Germany was one who had been stationed in the village where I lived during the war. He recognized me and spoke for me in a most passionate way, and I was released."

The fear of that experience was the last cruel wound the war inflicted on then 17-year-old Lange, who had endured years of bombings, slave-labor camps, and whippings at the hands of the German conquerors of Europe. For years he had been separated from his parents.

When released by the French authorities he went to Britain where he joined the Merchant Marines.

After several months at sea he learned that his parents had been killed in an airplane crash in Czechoslovakia. He felt completely alone, left the navy and wandered hopelessly.

"In this most desperate situation, when I was absolutely at the end of my tether, God came into my life," he said. "A young man just spoke to me on the street and asked me home for tea."

He continued, "A strange atmosphere pervaded that home. From sincere lips I heard for the first time in my life the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"The seed which was sown lay for quite a time before finding the soil soft and moist enough for it to grow. I fought hard against God's love. But in the end He won and Graham Lange surrendered." That was in 1947.

Before long he wanted to preach. He began a course of study which eventually led him to the International Baptist Theological Seminary, Ruschlikon, Zurich, Switzerland.

He longed to return to Austria where Baptists number only 700. So with his wife, Jayne, the daughter of the man who led him to the Lord, he went to the coal mining area of Ampflwang and established a flourishing Baptist church.

In November 1966 he attended the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin. He met Professor Cal Guy of Southwestern Seminary and shared his dream for Austria. Guy suggested he come to Southwestern for study.

After placing two children, Yolanda, 17, and Martin, 13, in the Immanuel Grammar School in Swansea, South Wales, Mr. and Mrs. Lange and their son, Robin, 7, came to Fort Worth to begin his studies in January.

Lange says a training school is needed in Austria because theological training is not now available anywhere in Austria.

Commenting on current trends in evangelism in Austria, he said, hopefully, "We could be on the brink of a new day in evangelism."

"Since the Reformation, Austria has never had a religious awakening," he added.

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Lange hopes to return to Austria in an effort to play a part in bringing about a religious awakening there. Meanwhile, he continues his studies at the seminary and preaches at every opportunity.

He hopes he will never have to face another firing squad, even though he says now he is willing to die, even to face a firing squad, for the God he loves.

If he ever does face another firing squad, Lange knows he'll be ready next time to meet the God he believes saved him from death so he could preach the Gospel.

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BP PHOTO mailed to state Baptist papers; available to others on request.

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CUTLINES

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BAPTIST PRESS PHOTO

SEMINARIAN TRACES ESCAPE TO FREEDOM: A student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Graham Lange, traces the route of a French train on which he was taken prisoner and almost shot in a firing squad during World War II. Lange tells how he was saved and how he came to America to study for the ministry because of the initial words spoken by a young man who stopped him on the street and asked him home for tea. (BP) Photo

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Baptists Release Guides
 On Religion In Schools

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Religion is proper for discussion and treatment in public schools.

However, public power and public office are inappropriate agencies for religious promotion and practice.

These conclusions are part of "Religion and Public Education--Some Suggested Guidelines" which are being circulated widely throughout the country for discussion by religionists and educators.

The guidelines were prepared by the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here. They will be considered further by the committee in its October meeting. C. Emanuel Carlson is the executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee.

The proposals were produced after months of intensive work by the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee in cooperation with representatives of several Baptist denominational groups. In addition, the suggestions were further refined by an ad hoc committee of pastors and laymen engaged in public education.

"Unhappily, criticism of recent Supreme Court decisions on prayer and Bible reading in the public schools has created confusion and misunderstanding in many communities," the guidelines observe.

"However," they continue, "without implying that the opinion required it, the court stated ways the Bible can be studied and religious values and history can be examined in public schools."

The guidelines take the position "that objective teaching which introduces material of a religious nature intrinsic to the public school curriculum is constitutionally proper."

Hence, the guidelines imply that constitutional prayer amendments are not needed. The Baptist Joint Committee has opposed all such amendments. It relies on the adequacy of the First Amendment and interpretation by the Supreme Court for protection of freedom of religion.

The guidelines state that "religious leaders should encourage the constituents to support the public schools in all their proper educational efforts, including teaching about religion."

Cautioning against undue intrusion on the school curriculum by religionists, the guidelines point out that "it is the responsibility of educators to train personnel and prepare materials for use in the public schools." However, religionists and educators can cooperate in these materials, they say.

A further caution pointed up by the guidelines is against "the establishment of a 'religion of secularism'" in the public schools. Both the guidelines and the Supreme Court decisions state that public schools must not show hostility to religion or preference for a particular religion.

Areas covered by the Baptist Joint Committee study include religious content proper to public education, a concern for ethical values and rights, and acceptable educational methods and activities.

Other areas deal with the school calendar and religious groups, school personnel policies and the practice of religion, and ceremonials including such items as baccalaureates.

A major thrust of the guidelines is that "cooperative planning by school authorities, religious leaders and parents should result in an understanding of the proper role of the school, the church and the home in teaching religion."

In conclusion the guidelines say that "tensions about religion in the schools can usually be resolved by discussion groups and a spirit of cooperation." They urge "avoiding arbitrary demands, legal action, constitutional amendments, or abdication of responsibility by school authorities."

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10 Religious Faiths Join
To Honor Baptist Pastor 410

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Forty-five ministers from 10 religious traditions met with the First Baptist Church here to help celebrate its 165th anniversary and the 30th anniversary of its pastor.

Founded in 1802 when Thomas Jefferson was President of the United States, the First Baptist Church has been served by Edward Hughes Pruden since 1937.

John H. Shouse, chairman of the anniversary committee, pointed out that the newspapers reported that in Pruden's first sermon he urged interdenominational and interracial cooperation. This has been a characteristic of his ministry ever since, he said.

A Jewish Rabbi and a Roman Catholic pastor participated in the worship service by reading from the Old and New Testaments. Choirs from four other Washington churches joined the First Baptist choir to furnish music for the occasion.

Pruden pointed out that this is the first time that the Jewish, Catholic and Protestant faiths were represented in a service in First Baptist Church here.

"In the 30 years since coming to First Baptist," Pruden said, "I have seen this (inter-faith) concern grow in strength until today the whole religious world is moving toward greater understanding of differing points of view."

Samuel H. Miller, dean of the Harvard Divinity School and former pastor of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, Cambridge, Mass., preached the sermon.

Pruden has been active in both the American and Southern Baptist Conventions. He has served on the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention and as president of the American Baptist Convention.

Carl W. Tiller, president of the American Baptist Convention, and Brooks Hays, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, participated in the anniversary service.

First Baptist Church renders a unique ministry in the heart of the nation's capital city. President Harry S. Truman was a frequent worshipper there, as has been Chief Justice Earl Warren and other highly placed government officials. President Lyndon B. Johnson worshipped there last September.

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