

January 14, 1970

Prison Ministry Offers
Opportunity, Hope

by James Evans McReynolds

HUNTSVILLE, Tex. (BP)--Sent to the state prison as a sophomore at the University of Texas, Bill Smith has spent the years of his youth behind bars.

The charge was murder.

His prison experience has given him an opportunity to find himself and his God. His wounded spirit has been healed.

One day Smith hopes to get back into the free world, the world beyond the prison bars. The prison chaplain and the ministry he performs will influence Smith's adjustment to being free again.

"This man was helped because he desperately wanted to be helped," said L. D. Johnson, chaplain of the Huntsville Unit, Texas Department of Corrections.

"It is so much easier for a man who wants something to find it than one who has a mask on.

"In prison a man's mask is stripped off. Every man here recognizes his sinful nature. That's why I am giving my life for this ministry," Johnson said.

Johnson's ministry includes work with the prison Sunday School program, using Southern Baptist Sunday School literature.

"Forty-three per cent of our inmates are Baptists. They like Southern Baptist literature," Johnson said.

"Our Sunday School is just like any other, except that there is no departmental assembly, no offering. It is completely voluntary.

"The men elect their own teachers. The teachers meet on Friday night for about an hour. During this time Dewey Morgan, director of education at the prison, and some area pastors present the lesson with three or four outlines from which the teachers can choose to teach the lesson," Johnson said.

"The teachers use various methods. They lecture, lead discussions, and even have question and answer sessions."

The Texas Department of Corrections is one of several state prison systems which use Southern Baptist literature for Sunday School. Literature is sent to prisons in Georgia, Arkansas, Kansas and Texas.

"No one knows just how many lives this literature touches each week. The men who are in prison read more than the average man in the free world. Many have found themselves and their God through our Sunday School ministry," Johnson said.

Following the Sunday School hour, the inmates here gather for worship at the "Chapel of Hope." The worship is similar to that in many other churches. If you closed your eyes, shutting out the all-white prison uniforms, you would think you were in a church outside the walls of prison.

"One of our goals is for these men to continue to attend Sunday School and church when they go out into the free world," Johnson related.

"No person is intended to live in a 'subhuman' existence. Every one of these men is within Christ's ability to love and forgive. And upon their release, it is my prayer that they express this love and forgiveness to others. Our Sunday School ministry was established with this goal in mind."

Christ said, "I was in prison and ye came unto me." Southern Baptists have an opportunity to give hope to thousands of men and women in prisons throughout our nation," Johnson said.

This hope rests in Jesus Christ as portrayed through the Bible. Southern Baptist literature interprets the Bible and fosters understanding of God's revelation of Himself in human history, he added.

"Bible teaching complements our counseling sessions. Often a man comes to find himself through the Sunday School program. Thus the Sunday School is a therapeutic instrument offering hope to otherwise discouraged and hopeless lives," Johnson related.

Murder is a serious crime. Bill Smith knows forgiveness for his deed through the love of Christ. He is a new man because someone cared enough to provide a Sunday School.

Today he is still active in the prison Sunday School. Tomorrow he hopes to be an active member of somebody's free world Sunday School.

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Camp Managers Meet In
Hawaii, Elect Rankin

1/14/70

WAIANAE, Hawaii (BP)--Meeting at the Puu Kahea Baptist Assembly here on the island of Oahu, the Southern Baptist Assembly and Camp Managers elected John S. Rankin, manager of the Permian Basin Baptist Encampment near Stanton, Tex., as their new president.

A total of 50 representatives from 14 states and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board attended the conference.

As part of the program the camp managers planted a Monkey Pod Tree on the assembly grounds as a living memorial to Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Peterson for their service to the assembly for the past 20 years. The Petersons, hosts for the meeting, will retire after the 1970 summer camping season.

Other officers elected by the camp managers include John Haynes of the Atlanta Baptist Association camp, vice president; and Mrs. C. L. Martin of Texas Baptist Encampment at Palacios, Tex., secretary and treasurer.

The 1971 session will be at Lake Yale Baptist Assembly in Florida.

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Oriental Composer Recalls
Arrest for "Western" Music

by George Sheridan

KOWLOON, Hong Kong (BP)--About 15 years ago, Yip Wai Hong was hailed as one of Red China's leading composers, and was commissioned by the Red Chinese government to compose ballet, concerto, and symphony music for the Peking Opera House.

Twelve years ago, Communist military police came to Yip's home and charged him with writing Western ideas into his musical compositions. He was sentenced to 18 months of hard labor at a prison camp in Northern China.

This month, Yip, now a teacher at Hong Kong Baptist College here, receives the master of church music degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, after finishing course work at Hong Kong Baptist seminary here.

The story of Yip's dramatic escape from behind the Bamboo Curtain, and the detours along the road from Peking to Hong Kong via Louisville, makes a fascinating study of the power of Christian commitment.

Yip is the son of a former president of the Baptist Union of Southern China. His father, a medical doctor who now lives in retirement in Hong Kong, helped found several Baptist hospitals in Southern China, and in 1926 toured the United States to help raise funds for the hospitals.

Yip graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music in Peking and in 1955 was employed as a teacher at the conservatory. It was then he was commissioned by the Communist government to compose music for the Peking Opera House.

When he was arrested in 1958 for allegedly writing Western ideas into his composition, Yip's wife, Choi Ching Yee, protested the charges. A piano teacher at the conservatory, she too was arrested, and placed in a work camp separate from her husband.

Upon their release from prison, the Yips resumed their teaching work, but realizing they were marked as infidels to the Communist cause, began making plans to escape. They made the dangerous flight in 1961.

The Yips then settled in Kowloon, Hong Kong, where Yip's parents and several of his brothers and sisters had established their homes after the 1949 revolution in China.

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It was not until a year after their escape that the Yips were able to get their two daughters out from behind the Bamboo Curtain. The feat was achieved through the courageous efforts of Yip's aging mother who was able to make the trip back into Red China on the excuse that she was visiting several of her other children. The Chinese government was not as suspicious of older people, Yip explained.

Yip is a member of an unusually well-educated family. Besides his father, several of his brothers and sisters are physicians. A brother is in charge of the Kowloon water treatment. A sister and her husband hold degrees in sociology, but operate a clothing manufacturing firm in Hong Kong.

Yip's oldest sister, now in her sixties, holds a doctorate from the University of Michigan, and formerly taught there. Her scientist husband holds degrees from the University of Michigan, Princeton University and the University of Chicago. In 1949, they responded to Chiang Kai-Shek's call for Chinese intellectuals to return to their homeland. They were never allowed out again after the Communist takeover. Yip has several other brothers and sisters still in Red China as well.

Affiliated with the Hong Kong Baptist College since he arrived in Kowloon, Yip took advantage of a fellowship in January, 1968, to work on the master of church music degree at Southern in the field of composition.

Within a year, Yip completed all the church music requirements for the degree, and returned to Kowloon to do electives in theology and religious education at the Hong Kong Baptist Seminary.

Besides some shorter works he composed during his course work at Southern, Yip also wrote an hour-long choral work entitled "Symphony of Earth." Written for orchestra, chorus and soloists, the text of the work is the Genesis account of the creation. Patterned after Igor Stravinsky's composition, "Symphony of Psalms" in format, it combines Oriental and Western techniques in melody and harmony.

Besides his course work at the Hong Kong seminary in the past year, Yip has also been directing the establishment of an accredited department of music at the Hong Kong Baptist College. He is hoping that the department will be registered shortly with the British office of education in Hong Kong.

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Steen Named Adult
Sunday School Editor

1/14/70

NASHVILLE (BP)--John Warren Steen Jr., former pastor of First Baptist Church, Clayton, N.C., has been named editor of adult materials in the Sunday School department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Steen, a native of Mississippi, attended Mississippi College, Clinton, and is a graduate of Baylor University, Waco. He holds a bachelor of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and a doctor of sacred theology degree from Union Theological Seminary, New York.

He served the Clayton church as pastor since 1963. He was pastor of Oaklawn Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, 1960-63; and associate pastor and student director of First Baptist Church, Milledgeville, Ga., 1957-60.

He is the author of "Conquering Inner Space," published by Broadman Press in 1964, and contributed to "Is Christ for John Smith?" and "Everyday, Five Minutes with God," also published by Broadman.

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Baptist Training Worker
Versil Crenshaw Dies

1/14/70

NASHVILLE (BP)--Versil Stuart Crenshaw, an employe of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board for 25 years died here (Jan. 10) following a brief illness.

Memorial services were conducted at Belmont Heights Baptist Church, Nashville, with burial in Charlottesville, Va.

A native of Virginia, Crenshaw, 64, attended the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

From 1944 to 1963, he served as director of intermediate work in the board's church training department. For the past seven years he had worked as a consultant in the general administration section of that department.

Prior to joining the board's staff, he served as associate and field worker for 19 years in the Training Union department of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. He also served three years as director of Training Union work in the Albemarle (Va.) Association. He wrote extensively for the "Training Union Magazine" published by his department and contributed articles to other denominational publications.

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