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New Chinese Baptist Hymnal
Mixes Eastern-Western Tunes

by June P. Carter

RICHMOND (BP)--When Chinese Baptists sing a hymn, they often choose one set to Western music, because they associate these hymns with their introduction to Christianity, says Miss Fern Harrington, a Southern Baptist missionary.

Some Chinese Christians say that indigenous Chinese music, although used in some Christian hymns, reminds them of their old Buddhist roots, so they prefer the Western hymn tunes.

Miss Harrington has been working with Chinese people for 30 years, first in China, then the Philippines, and now Taiwan. She is vitally concerned with hymn preferences of Chinese Christians and is one of a committee of five appointed to the task of helping produce a new Chinese-language hymnal.

The committee includes two Baptist missionaries and three Chinese musicians; its members live in Taiwan, Malaysia and Hong Kong. Modest about her own musical ability, Miss Harrington says she is on the committee to represent the ordinary person in the pew.

The hymnal is a project of Baptist Press in Hong Kong, an agency which produces Chinese literature for Baptist use throughout the Orient.

Although there are about 11 different Chinese hymnals and about 20 church songbooks published by various Christian groups, none adequately meets the needs of Baptist churches, say Miss Harrington.

The hymnal which most congregations use is 35 years old and is full of errors in both music and words, she said. Often a church's supply of the hymnal includes copies of several different revisions, so that the congregation finds itself singing somewhat different words to the same music.

The new hymnal will be used wherever there is Baptist work among Chinese-speaking people. As far away as Los Angles, a Mandarin-Speaking Baptist congregation is anxiously awaiting its completion.

The committee's work began three years ago. They wished to include 600 hymnals, so a major part of their task was a matter of selection. One hundred will be characteristically Chinese in melody. Many of these Chinese hymn melodies were written by Bliss Wiant, an American missionary to China, now retired.

Favorite indigenous hymns from throughout Asia will be included as well. Miss Harrington's brother, who lives in New Delhi, is in a position to help in the selection of some of these. One, a folk song from India, is an American favorite--"I have Decided To Follow Jesus."

A native of Missouri, Miss Harrington left Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary where she teaches, for furlough last April in the United States, but she brought her Chinese hymnal and a Chinese dictionary. Periodically she receives from the music office in Hong Kong a number of hymn translations for the committee's consideration. She studies each hymn and jots down any recommendations she might have.

She checks each hymn's "singability," determining whether the words adequately follow the tune. Sometimes she suggests different wording or closer adherence to the hymn's original meaning.

Since translators simetimes soar above the reading level of the average Chinese, she suggests simplification where she believes it is needed. To make this judgment she relies on two tools--her own reading level, which she equates with that of the average Chinese adult, and the Standard Mandarin Dictionary which rates characters according to their difficulty.

Simplified musical notation will facilitate singing from the new hymnal. Above each note of the melody will appear a number from 1 to 7 representing the note on the diatonic scale. Thus, in a hymn written in the key of C the number "1" would represent the first note of the scale--"Do," or middle C.

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The higher C is designated by a dot above the number, and the lower C by a dot below the number. Time is indicated by a simple system of straight and curved lines.

Is a Chinese hymn read from right to left? No. Although the Bible and other books are read that way, music is read from left to right to fit the music, she says.

Each hymn page presents a much neater appearance in Chinese than in English. Since each character has the sound of a single syllable, the text of each hymn can be marshaled into neat columns.

Although the first target date for publication of the hymnal was Christmas 1968, various difficulties forced the date forward. Now the committee hopes that by April 1971 the new hymnal will be ready for Chinese churches.

Meanwhile, says Miss Harrington, a frequent plea from Chinese Baptists is "Oh, how long, how long must we wait for the new hymnal?"

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BP Photos mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Publishing House Head Urges
Use of "Trinity of Media" 10/6/70

EL PASO, Tex. (BP)--Thomas W. Hill, director of the Baptist Spanish Publishing House here, told the institution's advisory committee that if Christians are successful in penetrating the secular work it will be by means of a "trinity of media:" the printed page, radio and television.

Hill addressed the closing session of a two-week long conference of a 45-member Publishing House Advisory Committee, which spent most of its time grappling with how to improve distribution of Christian literature to get it into the hands of people who need it.

Six subcommittees of the advisory group brought a total of 68 recommendations to the entire group, most of them calling for a hard look at traditional ways of doing things and pointing toward new approaches in literature preparation and utilization.

Hill called on each of the 45 members, who live in 12 countries of Latin America and in Spain, to be personally involved in a special effort in distributing Christian literature, and presented to each a certificate as a "responsible participant in the ministry of the printed word."

Elected president of the advisory committee was L. Laverne Gregory, Southern Baptist missionary to Costa Rica, and named vice president was N. Aldo Broda, director of the board of publications for the Argentine Baptist Convention and administrator of its five bookstores. J. Wilson Ross of the Publishing House staff here was named secretary-treasurer.

The Baptist Spanish Publishing House is one nerve center in a cooperative ministry venture involving the Southern Baptist Convention with many national Baptist bodies in the Spanish-language cultures of the world.

Twenty-four Southern Baptist missionaries serve on the staff of the 65-year-old publishing house operated by the SBC Foreign Mission Board.

The advisory committee, which gives counsel to the publishing house, is composed of Baptist book deposit (warehouse) directors, bookstore administrators and managers, national Baptist convention officers, pastors, theological seminary teachers, leaders of women's work and missionaries.

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SBC Mission Gifts Up
Slightly, September Down 10/6/70

NASHVILLE (BP)--Mission contributions through the Southern Baptist Convvention's unified budget plan, the Cooperative Program, were up 2.21 per cent for the first three quarters of the 1970 despite a slight decrease in giving during the month of September.

Cooperative Program gifts for the first nine months of 1970 reached $21,051,295, an increase of $454,848 or 2.21 per cent over the $20½ million given for the same period in 1969.

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During the month of September, Cooperative Program receipts were down $23,636 or 1.15 per cent compared to September of 1969. Total Cooperative Program contributions for September reached $2,023,402.

John Williams, financial planning secretary for the Southern Baptist Executive Committee which prepares the monthly financial reports, said he was encouraged that Southern Baptist Convention mission gifts had exceeded the previous year's contributions, especially in the light of reports of decreased giving in other denominations.

Williams said that the projections indicated that the SBC would reach all of its $27.1 million operating budget for 1970, all of the capital needs for 1969 held over until the 1970 budget year, and probably about $200,000 of the 1970 capital needs.

In addition to the $21 million in Cooperative Program contributions so far in 1970, Southern Baptists have given an additional $21½ million in designated contributions to specific mission causes.

Designated gifts have stayed at virtually the same level as 1969 designations, with a slight increase of $16,550 or 08. per cent over the 1969 designated gifts category.

So far during 1970, the denomination has received a total of $42½ million in both Cooperative Program and designated mission gifts, an increase of $471,399 over 1969 total gifts, or 1.12 per cent.

The financial report from the SBC Executive Committee reflects only amounts given to support nationwide Southern Baptist mission causes, and does not include contributions to state and local Baptist mission efforts.

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SBC Photographer Wins
26 Awards In Contest 10/6/70

ATLANTA (BP)--Don Rutledge, photographer for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board here, won four top awards and 22 honorable mentions in a statewide photography contest sponsored by the Atlanta Press Photography Association and the Tourist Division of the Georgia Department of Industry and Trade.

For his 27 entries, Rutledge won one first place, two seconds, a third, and 22 honorable mentions. More than 600 photographers were entered in the contest by amateur and professional photographers in the state.

Rutledge has been with the SBC Home Mission Board for four years. He recently collaborated with Home Missions Editor Walker Knight to produce a pictoral essay on love entitled "See How Love Works," to be released by Broadman Press in January.

Before coming to the board, Rutledge was a photographer with Black Star, one of the nation's leading photographic agencies, and traveled extensively in 60 countries on photojournalism assignments. He also did the photography work for the book, Black Like Me, by John Howard Griffin.

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Young Named News, Information
Director at Golden Gate Seminary 10/6/70

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--James Lee Young, a former news reporter for the San Diego (Calif.) Evening Tribune, has been named director of news and information services for Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary here.

Before working for the San Diego daily under the Copley Editorial Careers Program, the 27-year-old news man served in the U.S. Navy and was a reporter for the Seabees stationed in Vietnam. He also was stationed in Gulfport, Miss., and served on destroyer duty in the Gulf of Tonkin off the North Vietnam coastline.

A 1966 graduate of San Diego State College with a degree in journalism, Young was managing editor of the college's daily newspaper, and was Baptist Student Union president.

At the Baptist seminary here, Young will be responsible for news releases and publications production.

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