



BAPTIST PRESS

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Korean Christians Disagree On Government Persecution

By Baptist Press

Korean religious leaders who have spoken out against that country's present regime are taking a "calculated risk," since to do so means almost certain arrest, imprisonment and torture, according to a Korean now living in California.

Don Kim, pastor of Berendo Street Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist church comprised mostly of Koreans in Los Angeles, made his observations in an interview after speaking to the 8th Baptist Youth World Conference in Portland, Ore.

Controversy over the Korean situation is swirling among Christians who do not all accept Kim's assessment.

Kim's address to the Portland conference made reference to Korean Christians being "refined in the furnace of trial" and to "persecutions" which he said have taken place in Korea.

Christians who have "raised their voices" against the government have done so knowing the consequences, Kim said. They may feel this gives encouragement to other Christians in their oppression, suggested Kim, who is now an American citizen and who fears to return to Korea, because "my views are known."

Many believers in the Christian gospel apparently do not think identification with a political party in Korea is now worthwhile, since they consider the "present government to be corrupt and dictatorial," Kim said. Preaching the gospel, however, is not restricted, he said, as long as it deals only with proclamation and worship.

A great deal of controversy surrounds the relations between the government of South Korea and Christians in that nation. Both Protestant and Catholic leaders have been questioned and arrested as a result of the government's recent decrees banning political dissent. The battle has also been waged in the United States.

In early summer, a manifesto was distributed in the States by a group of Japanese Christians decrying Korean government persecutions of Christians in Korea. In July, a full page ad in the New York Times, signed by several Korean Christian leaders, refuted the claims of the manifesto by emphasizing the freedom which they enjoy in proclaiming the gospel.

Among the signers of the ad were the executive secretary and the president of the Korean Baptist Convention.

News reports on August 7 indicated that the South Korean premier rejected demands by senior leaders of the Korean Protestant National Council of Churches that the government withdraw its emergency decrees banning political dissent and release prisoners arrested under the decrees.

According to an August 7 report of the New York Times News Service, a major protest meeting, sparked by the refusal, is anticipated in Seoul by Protestant leaders.

The Korean government justifies the decrees partially by the fact that South Korea is in a "war zone," threatened constantly by invasion from the North, observers point out. Therefore, the government limits anti-government protest for security reasons. Recent reported buildups of North Korean troops on the border have increased fears of invasion.

Baptist work in South Korea began about 85 years ago and has grown steadily since 1950, when Southern Baptist missionaries began work there. Currently, there are about 500 Korean Baptist congregations in a country in which one of every 15 persons professes faith in Christ.

No sign of Christianity, observers report, is visible in North Korea.

Southern Baptist missionaries and South Korean Baptists have found South Korea one of the most responsive nations to the Christian gospel. They minister with great freedom and have no problems with government interference. Visas for new missionary personnel are readily available, according to Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board spokesmen in Richmond, Va.

The Foreign Mission Board is in contact with its Korean Mission, a board spokesman said, to ascertain first-hand how their work is being affected by the present situation.

Historically, Southern Baptist missionaries do not get directly involved in politics in countries where they serve, preferring to concentrate on proclamation of the gospel. (BP)

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Wrapup

Conferees Determined To
Raise Consciousness On Women

8/9/74

By Floyd Craig

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--It looked and sounded like a mission study group. It had all the determination, righteousness indignation, dedication and missionary spirit of such a group. But this was to be a different kind of meeting.

It started out with predominantly women in attendance, but soon husbands and boyfriends came. The conference, "Christian Liberation for Contemporary Women," was sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention and clearly reflected a broad spectrum of Southern Baptist viewpoints and concerns.

With the action of the messengers to the SBC to kill the "freedom for women" recommendation in Dallas still in mind the conference addressed itself to everything from the biblical teachings regarding women and a theology for human liberation to marriage, personal fulfillment, a Christian critique of institutional discriminations against women and the future.

One female seminarian seemed to reflect the majority attitude: "I was very discouraged when I came to this conference, but now I am determined to try to raise the consciousness of my fellow church members to improve the status of women. I am not going to leave the church. I am going to help it do right."

A special task force to study the status of women among Southern Baptists was called for by one of the four conference leaders. Sarah Frances Anders, who chairs the department of sociology at Louisiana College, a Baptist school in Pineville, La., reported nearly every major denomination in the United States has had such a study. "It is now time for Southern Baptists to give serious study to the current and future status of women in the denomination," she said.

Expressing a tone of hurt and pain--which seemed to prevail throughout the 14 sessions--Miss Anders presented what she explained to be a "concise situation report."

"Sexism is widespread in most Christian churches, if not in policy, surely in custom and practice. While a decided majority in most congregations, women are a decided and often solid minority in most levels of leadership and decision making," she said.

"Seminaries are a masculine sub-culture, with predominantly male professors, language, texts, trustees and administration. Until this changes, women who train for the most professional church positions will be marginal people and, to a great extent, unemployable," explained the professor, who holds a Ph. D. in sociology.

"Equal opportunity for employment," charged Miss Anders, "is not present in most ecclesiastical structures. Not only is the percentage of women personnel low compared to the secular labor force, but women seldom rise above clerical, editing and associate administrative positions to the highest executive positions."

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All the speakers--Harry N. Hollis Jr., David R. and Vera Mace and Miss Anders--seemed to agree on the two basics for future action to bring about the "Christian liberation for contemporary women."

First, said the speakers, Jesus Christ has set the pattern for human liberation.

Miss Anders led it off, "Jesus had no separate Christian ethic for blacks, national presidents, wetbacks or Biafrans any more than there is an ethic dealing with the treatment of women... Whatever the distinctions he made between the 12 disciples who happened to be male and his intimate associates, who included a number of women, they were not on the basis for a hierarchy of sexes. He provided the premise and the seeds for liberation of women."

Harry N. Hollis, Jr., director of family and special moral concerns for the Christian Life Commission, told the group, "Jesus treated women as persons and violated those traditions which de-humanized women. In so doing He served as a model for human liberation. It was not only His life that benefited women, but His death and resurrection. Through these events He showed the way toward reconciliation between the sexes."

David R. Mace, professor of family sociology at Bowman Gray School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, N.C., said, "The overall picture in Jesus' relationships with women leaves us in no doubt at all that He accorded them (women) honor and respect in a high degree--and not only as wives and mothers, but also as persons. Anyone who sets out to build a case for subordination of women knows he isn't going to get much support from the Gospels."

Second, all the speakers agreed that "both men and women must work on the problems of discrimination."

"Equality in the church," reported Miss Anders, "will provide equal opportunity for all persons (male and female) to participate in any sphere of organized religion on the basis of gifts and abilities rather than gender."

Hollis explained Christianity is the faith which calls men, and for that matter, women, to be sensitive to the plight of women in our society.

Mrs. Vera Mace, with her husband, David, co-author of many books, asked, "What, after all is holding back the cause of women's liberation? Mainly the stubborn opposition of men who, unwilling to accept equal comradeship with their wives at home, fear its implications in the wider life of the nation. And what, more than anything else, will change their minds? The discovery in their marriage that a wife, no longer discriminated against, becomes not a rampaging renegade, but a loyal partner and trusted friend."

David Mace went on to say, "I don't think the women's movement in this country has recognized that there can be a solution to the problems of the modern woman that does not involve modern man. I have a great deal of sympathy with the predicament of women today... But I don't think they are going to make really significant progress by adopting the policy of attacking men as though they were their natural enemy."

The conference leaders faced such a cross section of Southern Baptists that it was difficult at times to focus upon the special problems of each person, but Hollis expressed the view that it was disappointing and painful for many of the messengers to vote down the Christian Life Commission's "freedom for women" recommendation at the recent SBC in Dallas.

"But the events in Dallas will have the beneficial long-range effect of awakening many Southern Baptists to the gravity of the problems. The messengers may table recommendations but they cannot table rights," said Hollis. "Women are going to be free! God requires it. Justice demands it. Our national Constitution guarantees it. And many men and women in the SBC are going to keep on working under the leadership of the Holy Spirit to help churches reflect God's intention that all humans should be free," Hollis declared.

Baptist Conferees Listen,
React to Nixon's Farewell

By Toby Druin

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--Some 2,200 Southern Baptists, attending Home Missions Week at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center here, listened to President Richard Nixon's resignation speech, then knelt in prayer for the nation, Nixon and new President, Gerald Ford.

"Regardless of a person's politics, for all of us it is a sad hour," Arthur Rutledge, executive director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, told the audience, gathered a half hour early to hear Nixon's address before the final session of Home Missions Week.

Jimmy Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Tex., the preacher for Home Missions Week, told his audience in his closing message, moments after Nixon's speech, that the foundations of the nation were being shaken because of the failures of Christian families to function and because of the breakdown of basic integrity.

Allen said he could hardly bring himself to say that the President has resigned without catching his breath.

The San Antonio pastor said the Watergate scandal that ultimately brought the President's resignation reflected a basic breakdown in his integrity. "That is not just a White House problem, it is a 'my house' problem and a 'your house' problem."

Jesus called us to say "yes" and mean "yes" and "no" and mean "no," Allen said.

"The time has come for the people of God to humble ourselves and realize our responsibility," Allen said. "Nobody wins out of Watergate. Everybody loses. We need to pray and pray and pray," he said, challenging his audience to be the people of God.

Except for the occasional cry of a child and movement of latecomers, the audience listened to Nixon's address, broadcast over the auditorium's sound system, in silence.

Reaction, typically, was mixed.

Paul Thomason, a young man from New Orleans, said he had worked for the President's re-election in 1972 and thought he had done a "great job as president," but added, "I am very disappointed with the way he has lied to the people."

Gerald Beaty, an Odessa, Tex., layman, said, "I feel it is a bad time for our country. I can see the President's point of view, that an impeachment trial would leave the country without leadership. I can understand why he felt it best to resign."

John Gould, a former Navy chaplain and now superintendent of missions at Marietta, Ga., said he was "very upset" and that he felt the resignation would take the pressure off Nixon, but that he feared for the survival of the nation.

"Two years ago he was re-elected by the greatest landslide in history," Gould said, "and now he has been driven out. It reminds me of Jerusalem when the crowd hailed Jesus when he entered the city and then crucified him."

David Waugh of Burlington, N.C., said he wished the President had resigned much sooner. "It is a time of joy and hope for our country, a time to celebrate. Maybe the cleansing of the temple has begun," said the student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Theme for the week was "Equip to Reconcile" and it started and climaxed on notes that underscored the theme.

A major speaker was to have been Clyde Johnston, a Southern Baptist chaplain at Texas's state penitentiary, Huntsville, Tex. Johnson at the time, however, was attempting to minister while 11 hostages were being held by two convicts at the prison. Carl Hart of Home Mission Board's chaplaincy division spoke in Johnston's absence with eloquent testimony of his efforts in reconciliation.

**SBC Leaders Agree With
Resignation; Register Sadness**

By Baptist Press

A note of sadness permeated reactions of top Southern Baptist Convention leaders to Richard Nixon's unprecedented resignation from the U.S. presidency, August 8.

Generally, the SBC leaders, speaking as individuals and not for the 12.3-million-member denomination, agreed with Nixon's decision to resign, expressed no bitterness toward the ex chief executive while recognizing a lapse in integrity which led to his demise, and reflected optimism for the future of America.

"I find no comfort whatsoever in Mr. Nixon's tragic fate," said Foy Valentine, executive secretary of the SBC's Christian Life Commission, reflecting reactions expressed in Baptist Press interviews with SBC President Jaroy Weber; SBC Vice-presidents Stewart B. Simms and Charles King; James E. Wood, head of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; Brooks Hays, former congressman and SBC president; James Langley, executive secretary of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention; and Valentine.

"I join Christians across the land in praying for him and his family and all the persons and families caught in the awful web of public immorality which has come to be a reproach to all America," Valentine said.

Earlier, before Nixon admitted his guilt and resignation fever inundated the nation's capital, C. Welton Gaddy, a Christian Life Commission staffer, not speaking officially for the commission or Southern Baptists, sent an editorial to 33 state Southern Baptist papers across the U.S., urging impeachment of Nixon, not his conviction.

"The time has come," wrote Gaddy, the commission's director of Christian citizenship development, "for general charges of guilt and claims of innocence to be substantiated with authoritative evidence and specific details. Impeachment can best serve the interests of both opponents and supporters of President Nixon. Not to be confused with conviction, impeachment is the constitutional method for considering evidence of the President's guilt so that either he can be constitutionally vindicated and freed to proceed with the direction of the nation's business or he can be constitutionally indicted and subsequently tried in the Senate," Gaddy said.

"As Mr. Nixon reflects upon the Watergate offenses," Hays told Baptist Press, "I hope he will be willing to assume responsibility for his part with a forthrightness and penitence he has not yet manifested. All of his fellow citizens should refrain, meanwhile, from harboring ill will toward him.

"We are a people with a strong faith and that faith throughout our history has been not only judgmental, it has been compassionate," said the former Democratic congressman from Arkansas, former special assistant to Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy and former assistant secretary of state.

"I trust that he and his family will depend on this quality in American life and that he and his friends will not be embittered," Hays said.

"A political officeholder," said Weber, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lubbock, Tex., "should interrogate his own attitude about what is right and wrong. I think we have been living in a kind of climate that developed from a sort of existential theology which states that everything is relative--with no good and no bad--and now we need to return to some absolutes."

"For many years," Valentine said, "the nation heard from Mr. Nixon and his chosen associates a mind-boggling barrage of talk for 'law and order,' against 'coddling of criminals' and in favor of character development for the poor, who were told to work hard, pay their own way and obey the law.

"Now we have the incredibly tragic spectacle of the final departure of the associates and now of Mr. Nixon himself in a disgrace of historic proportions that somehow touches us all." It is a time, he said, for mourning, repentance and beginning again.

"I think we ought to begin our own life with a sense of repentance, cleansing restoration and discipline, and that it ought to move up to the elected officers and into the political structure of our country," Weber said.

"I feel like there is hope for the nation as long as it turns to its spiritual heritage," Weber said. "The believer always has hope. In fact, he is the only one that does have hope in the final analysis."

Charles King, the SBC's second vice president and first black officer in its 129-year-history, was "disappointed in Nixon's talk"--that he didn't "shoulder more of the responsibility" but wanted "to put it on Congress."

In mid June, after his election to the second vice presidency, King told a press conference in Dallas he would prefer George Wallace to Nixon because "at least black people know where Wallace stands. Wallace is a man of his word. I personally would like to see Nixon resign, but I believe in due process of law...."

About two months later, though, King, pastor of Corinthian Baptist Church, Frankfort, Ky., is not seeking vengeance and favors immunity for the 37th president of the United States--a feeling shared by both Weber and Simms.

"A man who has been forced out of the biggest job in the world has been punished enough. I don't think we should bother about pursuing him any further--let him go," King told Baptist Press.

Asked what he, as a Christian, would advise Nixon, if he were in a position to do so, King said:

"Be a good Christian. Join a church. Get love in his heart and quit lying."

"Advice is cheap," responded Simms, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greer, S. C., "and I guess the cheapest kind is that which is unsought."

"But I would have the same feeling Billy Graham has. I've admired him in lots of ways and will continue to be his friend. I would talk in terms of the real joy that comes in Jesus Christ, that issues in a pure heart, that issues in clean hands and clean speech."

"I would probably talk in terms of squaring accounts with individuals who have been hurt... I think I would probably say a word about resisting the temptation to withdraw in bitterness."

"Without credibility or public trust, no one can serve as president of the United States," said Wood. "The real tragedy, of course, is not the resignation of the president of the United States, as unprecedented as that is, but it is the chain of events which precipitated and made inevitable such action."

"While all of us Americans are deeply saddened by the circumstances that brought about the events themselves, we may be heartened by the triumph of the principle that no man is above the law," Wood declared.

Hays noted, "His resignation was most certainly not the result of a vendetta by his political enemies or the media." The pressure of public sentiment and his own party leaders "made the action inevitable," he said.

Langley added, "History...will give Richard Nixon and his administration high marks for certain achievements in foreign affairs. But the events that led to President Nixon's resignation have sickened and depressed the nation."

"In the midst of these deplorable events, it is greatly encouraging that our Constitution is alive and well. Watergate is a signal that there is no substitute for integrity--and it is a warning not only to politicians but to all of us that the welfare of our land and world demands justice, mercy and walking humbly with God," Langley said.

Wood noted that Americans, as never before, must dedicate themselves to integrity in government, "including campaign reform and a just society of law in which human values and human rights are primary concerns of the political process."

Simms, in looking at the next steps the U.S. should take, urged campaign finance reform, "insulation of the FBI and Internal Revenue Service from executive or any other manipulation," strong ethics legislation and doing away with taping of White House conversations to preserve the confidentiality of those who confer with the President. (BP)