



March 5, 1975

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**Korean Revival: 'The
Feeling Is Overwhelming'**

By Jim Newton
For Baptist Press

A spirit of Christian revival is sweeping South Korea in the face of threats of war from the North and oppression and imprisonment of persons daring to criticize the current regime of President Park Chung Kee.

The South Korean religious situation is at once one of paradoxes, ironies and confused issues.

The government actually promotes and encourages the military men to be indoctrinated in some form of religion, though, admittedly, this is because officials have found such men to be strong against communism.

Overtures by the Park regime to the religious world community, such as inviting a Southern Baptist minister from Atlanta to view the situation there, and the recent release of some 150 political and religious prisoners, have apparently done little to enhance the popularity of the Park regime, at least overseas.

Southern Baptist missionaries in South Korea have kept out of the political problems plaguing the country, choosing to concentrate instead on the opportunities for spiritual growth.

"The evangelistic climate has never been better in Korea," said missionary O.K. Bozeman, director of the church development board for The Korean Baptist mission, the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in South Korea.

Bozeman said the turning point in the evangelistic outreach of Korean Baptists came in 1970 when teams of Louisiana Baptist laymen and pastors came to Korea following the Baptist World Congress in Tokyo for a series of evangelistic campaigns.

More than 17,000 decisions were reported as a result of that campaign which was part of a larger Asian Baptist evangelistic crusade sponsored by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The extent of evangelistic response in Korea first came to world attention following the Billy Graham crusade in early summer, 1973.

Total attendance for the five-day crusade was estimated to be 3.2 million, the largest ever at any Graham meetings. More than 81,000 "decisions for Christ" were registered.

A year later, Campus Crusade for Christ sponsored Explo 74 on the same site as the Graham crusade. Officials claimed even larger crowds. A Christianity Today report by Edward Plowman, however, indicated the largest Explo crowd was closer to 300,000, instead of 1.3 million for a single day's gathering.

Baptists were active in both the Graham and Explo 74 efforts, but have been even more involved in their own evangelistic programs, including city-wide crusades, WIN (Witness Involvement Now) schools, and church revivals.

In October, 1973, a city-wide effort among the 6 million people of Seoul involved 173 laymen and pastors from Southern Baptist churches in Texas, Colorado, Tennessee and New Mexico. An estimated 14,000 decisions resulted.

The crusade, which worked through Southern Baptist missionaries in Korea, was sponsored by the World Evangelism Foundation, headed by a former Southern Baptist missionary to Japan, W.R. "Dub" Jackson of Abilene, Tex.

A year later, evangelist E.J. Daniels of Orlando, Fla., sponsored a city-wide crusade in Chunju, Korea, reporting 18,000 decisions.

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The examples of spiritual harvest are numerous. Enrolment at the Korea Baptist Theological Seminary in Taejon, where 170 students registered last fall, was more than double that of the 82 registered for 1972.

Most Baptist missionaries said the major factor for spiritual awareness in South Korea is the "spiritual vacuum in which South Korea now exists."

Almost 90 per cent of the 35 million people in the country indicate no personal religious belief. Buddhism and Confucianism, the two major religious/philosophical traditions of Korea are waning in influence, the missionaries say. But the Koreans have not accepted any other religious faith to replace their traditions.

One reason suggested by a Korean minister for his countrymen and women coming to Christ in vast numbers is that they were impressed with what they saw Christian Americans do in helping to liberate Korea from Japanese oppression after World War II and in preventing South Korea from falling to Communist rule.

The ever-present threat of invasion from North Korea could also be a factor in favor of openness to the gospel, a missionary suggested; "The people are receptive to the message of eternal life, for they have seen the death and destruction of war."

Restrictions and repressions against Protestants and Catholics critical of the Park regime could be another factor. Persecution of Christians almost always makes them more zealous and intense in their faith. This might be true, even though Korean Baptists have not been affected in large degree by oppression from the Park regime.

Emphasis on prayer among Korea's Christians and the strength of leadership were also said by missionaries to favor revival and spiritual awareness among South Koreans.

The Korean pastors are vigorous leaders and are revered, almost too much so, by the members, noted one missionary.

But, it was said, the Korean laity are taking a much more active role, especially in personal witnessing and evangelism.

A factor in spiritual revival for Korean Baptists is the strength of the Baptist mission force.

The number of Southern Baptist missionaries serving in Korea in the last 10 years has increased by about 38 per cent. Southern Baptists have 76 missionaries assigned to the country, including seven couples who were completing language school and beginning their new assignment.

The dropout or resignation rate among missionaries to Korea, one source admitted, is one of the highest in the world. This was attributed to the difficulty of the language, tense past relations with Korean pastors, and problems of adapting to Korean culture.

Estimates of the Christian population of South Korea range from 2.5 to 10 million. Most Baptist missionaries believe the number is closer to 3.5 million Christians.

Statistics on "decisions" may be misleading, too, the missionaries say.

A religious "decision" in Korea does not mean the same thing as it might in the United States, said J.G. Goodwin, administrator of the Korea Baptist Mission. Most often in Korea it means that the person wants to learn more about Christianity.

Reports on church growth appear to verify some of Goodwin's reservations. While baptism figures were not yet available for last year, the number of baptisms stayed fairly constant over the previous three years: 2,800 each for two years and 2,500 in 1972. The peak year for baptisms was 1970 with 3,122 baptisms.

Church membership has not risen proportionately. Membership in Korean Baptist churches is now slightly less than 20,000, up about 12,000 from church membership 10 years ago. The current figure is 8,000 less than the total number of baptisms for the 10 year period.

The tendency of those who visit Korea is to discount the statistics in favor of the "feeling" that overwhelms anyone who attends an evangelistic service in Korea.

How deep the decisions that are made, only God knows, and only time will tell.



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James Belote, Foreign
Mission Board Official, Dies

RICHMOND (BP)--James D. Belote, area secretary for East Asia for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, died unexpectedly here March 4 of a heart attack. He was 61.

A private graveside service was set March 6 at Richmond's Westhampton Memorial Park followed by a memorial service at Foreign Mission Board headquarters here.

Named to officiate at the memorial service were Baker Cauthen, the board's executive secretary; Winston Crawley, director of the board's overseas division; and James Copeland, pastor of Derbyshire Baptist Church, Richmond, where Belote was a member.

As secretary for East Asia, Belote served as a liaison between the board and missionaries in Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Okinawa, Japan and Korea.

Appointed a Southern Baptist missionary in 1940, he was president of Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary in Kowloon and of the Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary in Hong Kong at the time of election as area secretary.

During an earlier leave of absence from his missionary duties, he was professor of missions, comparative religions and evangelism at New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary, 1964 to 1967.

While in Hong Kong, he was pastor of two churches for five years, advisory pastor for four others, chairman of the Hong Kong-Macao Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries) for two years and a member of the executive committee of the Hong Kong Baptist Association.

Originally, Belote was appointed by the Foreign Mission Board for service in China. During World War II he was pastor of Wahiawa Baptist Church, Oahu, Hawaii.

He reached China in 1947, studied language in Canton, and did evangelistic work in Southern China for several years. In 1950 he transferred to Hong Kong, where he did evangelistic work until he joined the seminary faculty as president and professor in 1952.

A native of Washington, D. C., Belote studied at George Washington University there and at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. He was graduated from Wheaton (Ill.) College with the bachelor of arts degree, from Columbia (S.C.) Bible College with the master of theology degree and from New Orleans Seminary with the doctor of theology degree.

Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Martha Bigham Belote; two sons, James D. Belote, Jr. of Houghton, Mich., and Theodore C. Belote of Richmond; and three daughters, Mrs. Virginia Francis Henry of New Orleans, Mrs. Martha Carolyn Roberts of Louisville, and Miss Linda Anne Belote of Richmond.

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Baptist Pastor Explains
Korea's "Delicate Balance"

Baptist Press
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By Jack U. Harwell

ATLANTA (BP)--A Southern Baptist pastor believes that Christians are free to preach and evangelize in South Korea, as long as they refrain from overt acts of political interference that might upset "the delicate balance of power" there.

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William L. Self, pastor of Atlanta's Wieuca Road Baptist Church, made that observation at a press conference in Atlanta following a nine-day trip to South Korea.

Self, who was accompanied by his wife, went to South Korea at the invitation of the country's prime minister to examine facts surrounding alleged religious oppression and report his findings. The invitation, which came at the recommendation of Korean Baptist Evangelist Billy Kim, was the first given to an American clergyman by the regime of controversial President Park Chung Hee.

Self told the press conference: "There are no limitations on the generally accepted social applications of the gospel of Jesus Christ, such as feeding the hungry and healing the sick.

"The gospel," he continued, "may be preached and taught fully in churches, mass public rallies and public schools. Social implications are not discouraged. However, the South Korean government is seriously concerned about what it sees as political activity on the part of the clergy."

The American pastor did not mention Methodist missionary George Ogle by name, although Ogle, who was deported by the South Korean government in December, arrived in Atlanta to serve as visiting professor at Emory University the same week Self returned from his visit to South Korea.

Official reason given for Ogle's deportation was that he had identified himself too closely with dissident groups opposed to the strong handed tactics used by President Park since 1972.

In response to reporters' questions, Self refused to discuss various charges of religious oppression Ogle has made against South Korea's government. He said he had never met Ogle personally and would not debate his points of view in the public press.

"Nine days in Korea do not make me an expert. It is presumptuous to assume that anything more than random impressions can be gathered in only a few days," Self declared.

"I was in Korea as a guest of the government and some special friends. They gave me the assurance that all aspects of national life would be open to me. I was observing, not investigating."

Two major factors, he said, influence South Korean policy and "the delicate balance of power"--threat of Communist invasion from North Korea and "the lack of natural resources in the South."

Self said that during the Pueblo incident "the press noted that North Korea was the most strident and militant nation in the Communist block. I saw nothing to change this observation. Panmunjon is just 25 miles north of Seoul. This cannot help but influence national life of Koreans."

Speaking of South Korea's shortage of natural resources, Self said, "For all practical purposes South Korea is a country with no natural resources . . . there is not enough available land for agriculture. . . South Korea imports its raw materials to manufacture for export."

He said, "This creates a highly sensitive balance in the nation. This balance, if upset, could destroy South Korea."

"I believe government and religious leaders can learn to communicate with one another in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect."

He said this communication will come "as the government grows in its understanding of the wider implications of the gospel, and the religious community grows in its appreciation of pressure on a young country heavily beset by external and internal problems. I found people on all sides who wanted to see this occur."

Referring to rigid controls of the Park regime, which has included jailing of protestors, Self made an analogy:

"I noted many young trees planted along the streets in Seoul. Each had a brace to protect it and insure its growth and safety. This is the nation, Korea--30 years old, trying to take root and grow, greatly beset by problems.

"If the brace is too rigid and tight, the growth will be stunted or thwarted; if it is too loose or removed altogether, the tree could die. When the roots are deep, the trunk sturdy, the branches full, perhaps it will not need the brace."

Speaking of an hour-long conversation he had with President Park, Self said he was especially impressed with Park's "warmth, responsiveness and high degree of concern for the nation.

"President Park volunteered to me his complete support of the separation of church and state and freedom of religious groups to propagate their faith. He was clear and articulate at this point."

Self added: "He also expressed hope that all religious groups would act responsibly in dealing with issues in national life.

"I found President Park to be more animated than his picture would portray and more sensitive than I had assumed. He was relaxed and cordial . . . I dealt with him as a pastor. This is my only credential.

"I saw him as a lonely leader, whose loneliness was intensified by the death of his wife . . . I think I was one of the few people (a pastor) who could talk to him about this aspect of his life. Something significant transpired between us at this level."

While in South Korea, Self conversed with the floor leader of the opposition party to President Park, had contact with five young men whom Park had just released from prison, preached in Seamoonan Presbyterian Church where several anti-government rallies had been held, and spoke in several churches, at a large youth rally in Suwon, to military personnel and had several meetings with Southern Baptist missionaries.

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Taiwan Baptists Win
TV Excellence Award

Baptist Press
3/5/75

TAIPEI, Taiwan (BP)--The Taiwan Baptist Radio and Television Studio has received its second Golden Bell Award from the country's government for a television program series it produces.

The mass communications regulating agency of the government of the Republic of China gave the award for "excellence of programming" in the "Service to Society" classification, which includes educational, public service and religious programs.

Locally written and produced, the studio's "Happiness at the Gate" series consists of life-situation dramas which present the Christian gospel through portraying the Christian approach to problems.

Mrs. Christine Mao, program department head, will represent the Baptist studio at the awards ceremonies in Taipei.

The 110 churches and chapels of the 10,000-member Taiwan Baptist Convention, along with Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board funds, support the studio.

In addition to the television programs, begun four years ago and broadcast each week to an island-wide potential audience of 16 million persons, the Baptist studio also produces 10 radio programs each week for the network stations of the Broadcasting Corporation of China in Taiwan's 10 major cities.

The studio received more than 16,700 letters in response to these broadcasts in 1974. They include 2,909 persons who requested Bible correspondence course materials and 714 who registered decisions for Christ. A total of 616 persons were introduced to local churches for further follow-up during the year.

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S. C. College Fires Dean;
Students Boycott Classes

GREENVILLE, S. C. (BP)--The executive committee of North Greenville College has dismissed the Baptist junior college's dean of instruction and placed the entire faculty on probation for one year.

The action, a new development in the continuing conflict between a majority of the faculty and Harold E. Lindsey, college president, resulted in boycott of classes and a prayer vigil by most of the 750-member student body.

Clarence E. Carder was relieved of all duties as dean of instruction "immediately," according to a report on the committee's action by South Carolina's Baptist Courier. He will receive full salary for the remainder of his employment contract.

The year of probationary status for all faculty members means that all contracts for 1975-76 will be devoid of a tenure clause, the Courier reported. Teachers signing such contracts will be subject to dismissal without the usual recourse of tenured (senior or permanent) personnel.

"This action is drastic," a committee member told the Courier, "but the seriousness of the problem demands it. We intend to be as firm as needed and, at the same time, as conciliatory as possible."

The trustee committee acted also to retire those eligible for retirement at the end of the school year. Those who need a master's degree in their teaching field were told to pursue such study as a contingency of their contracts.

The stipulations will affect Harvey Gibson, English professor who reaches retirement age this year, and Mrs. Billy J. Walsh, Spanish teacher whose master's degree is in education. Others may also be affected. Mrs. Walsh is wife of the school's professor of religion, who had served as the faculty's unofficial spokesman when 16 of the 22 faculty members signed a petition calling for Lindsey's resignation.

The committee action on retirement and certification means strict adherence to academic regulations that have existed for some time. In recent years, some teachers have been retained beyond retirement age on a year-to-year basis. More range has been tolerated also in various fields of study.

The trustee committee said Carder had contributed to continuing unrest among the faculty. They said he violated a stipulation of the board on February 20 that called for all faculty to refrain from "further action that would heighten the confrontation."

At the February 20 meeting, trustees stressed their intent to maintain a middle ground stance in the controversy, voting to retain Lindsey as president and, at the same time, reaffirming the faculty as one of the school's "strongest assets."

At that meeting, the board said no faculty members would be dismissed for participating in the petition but issued a directive against further protest.

The student boycott, which began March 3 following the action to dismiss Carder, was planned to run, the Courier said, until the trustees met again. A special called meeting was set for March 8, by the board chairman in response to a written request by more than eight of the trustees. Under the college's constitution, a meeting must be called when eight or more trustees request it.

Two principal grievances sparking the original faculty protest center around a stepped up teaching load and a charge the president has bought land from the college at less than market value.

The letter of petition accused Lindsey, president since 1970, of being "arrogant, dictatorial, self-serving, unChristian . . ." and asked him to resign.

The trustees, dealing with the charges in the February 20 meeting, did not find sufficient evidence for any of the teachers' charges, the Courier reported, but accepted Lindsey's request that they repurchase 50 acres of land he bought from the school at the price he paid for it.

Lindsey was commended by the board for progress made during his administration but told to "resolve all existing differences between administration and faculty . . ."

He was further instructed to fulfill four promises he had made to the faculty in an address on February 13: to use capital funds for salary, reduce teaching load from 18 to 15 hours, use the academic committee and department chairmen to air greivances and foster morale, inspiration and motivation.

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New Mexico Baptist Church
Buries Young Murder Victim

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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--The Glorieta Baptist Church here has been issued a court order to authorize the church to bury the body of an unidentified young woman, aged 16-22, who was the victim of an apparent rape and strangulation.

"We feel that if it were our daughter and we got separated somehow, we would appreciate someone giving her a decent burial," the church's pastor, Terry Morris, told the Baptist New Mexican.

Some interested citizens had offered to donate funds for cremation and a Santa Fe real estate company offered \$50 for burial costs, but the Glorieta congregation has assumed full responsibility.

"We don't know her, but I think her parents would have a memorial service wherever she lives," said Morris, who will conduct the funeral. "I certainly hope her parents are found. We would like to be able to express our feelings to them."

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