



May 2, 1975

75-7D

Former POW of Sweden
Going Back for Visit

By John M. Wilkes

DALLAS, Tex., (BP)--Charles P. McLaughlin, now (general) secretary for the state missions commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, was first "captured"--and captivated by--Sweden on June 20, 1944.

Rare as it was, he was a prisoner of war in a country noted for its neutrality in times of world conflict.

Now McLaughlin wants to go back, desiring to see old friends he met during his five-month "internment" in World War II.

His chance is coming, as he plans to attend the 13th Baptist World Congress in Stockholm, July 8-13.

He was captured by the Swedish in 1944 after his bomber was hit by flak over a German target. The plane was left with only "one and one-half good engines." The crew of 10 men were unable to get back to their base in Britain.

With sixteen other aircraft from that mission, they crash-landed in a hayfield near Malmo and were "officially" made "prisoners of war" by Swedish authorities.

"I was grateful to the Lord that I was alive, and thrilled to be in Sweden rather than facing prison in enemy territory," McLaughlin now reminisces. He recalls that 88 other planes on the assignment had been shot down earlier.

The American flyers were held in Malmo overnight, then sent to Falun for processing. There, co-pilot McLaughlin walked throughout the city looking for a Baptist church, in the hope of making contact with other Christian believers.

He happened upon a signpost indicating the "Salem Baptist Church," and on the following Lord's Day he and a fellow officer attended services there.

"Pastor Holst welcomed 'our American friends' and announced a passage from I Corinthians 13," McLaughlin remembers.

"This I recognized--it had been the Scripture theme in a Vacation Bible School at my own church the summer before. While the pastor read from the pulpit in Swedish, I was able to quote the words in my head."

The crew's stay in Falun was only for one month, but that was time enough for the navigator, Robert Nichols, to profess faith in Jesus Christ and begin his Christian pilgrimage in the Salem church.

Nichols remains an active Christian today, McLaughlin said, and is a deacon and Sunday School leader of the First Baptist Church in Worcester, Mass.

There also was time for McLaughlin to get in some tennis.

A new Baptist friend, Bo Rylander, one day introduced some of his family to McLaughlin.

"One of his cousins was wearing a jacket with a racquet emblem, so with Bo interpreting, I asked whether she played tennis.

"Although she was to leave on a trip already scheduled, she agreed to a match the next day," McLaughlin recalls, admitting; "I played my best, but not until I went down 6-0, 6-1, did someone tell me that this Elizabeth Rylander had been Swedish national women's singles champion the previous year."

From Falun, McLaughlin was transferred to Granna for several months. Finding no Baptist church there, he made friends with believers in the Lutheran congregation. He even gave English lessons to the organist, Sture Petri, in exchange for piano instruction.

Petri's wife, Dagmar, who had been one of Sweden's representatives to the 1939 New York World's Fair, presented him with a hymnbook which he still has.

And at Granna, he became an unofficial chaplain to other "prisoners" and planned activities and studies to help them pass the time before repatriation.

He even received clearance to take courses at the University of Uppsala, but his "internment" ended and he was able to get back to the United States, via Stockholm and then Scotland, for Christmas with his family.

That was an especially happy reunion, for he had exchanged only a few letters with his wife at home due to his status and military censorship. She, in turn, had received no real knowledge of his whereabouts except for a war department telegram advising that he was "missing in action."

McLaughlin already had made one return trip to Falun and Granna going there in 1955 from London, site of an earlier Baptist World Alliance Congress held in Europe.

Dr. and Mrs. McLaughlin are eagerly planning a side visit to both cities again this July, as the coming Baptist Congress brings them to Stockholm.

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
 460 James Robertson Parkway
 Nashville, Tennessee 37219
 (615) 244-2355
 W. C. Fields, Director
 Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
 James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5461
RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

May 2, 1975

75-71

**SBC Cooperative Program
 Stays Ahead of 1973-74**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Receipts through the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program unified budget for the first seven months of the 1974-75 fiscal year exceed the same period last year by nearly \$1.7 million, or 7.52 percent.

A report released here by John H. Williams of the SBC Executive Committee indicates 33 state conventions covering 50 states have sent in \$23.84 million for use in worldwide SBC causes, compared to \$22.17 million last year.

The \$23.84 million represents about one third of funds received by the state conventions from the SBC's 34,734 churches.

Total national contributions, including \$26.34 million in designated giving, for the first seven months add up to \$50.17 million--a \$3.6 million or 7.71 percent increase over last year.

Figures for April show some \$3.29 million in national Cooperative Program receipts in 1975, a 2.32 percent increase over receipts last April.

Adding some \$3.18 million in designated giving in April, Southern Baptists gave a total of \$6.47 million to national SBC causes this April--a 7.87 percent increase over the April 1974 figure.

-30-

**Baptist Launch Refugee
 Resettlement Assistance**

**Baptist Press
 5/2/75**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Baptists have set plans in action on several fronts to join with other concerned U. S. citizens in aiding thousands of South Vietnamese refugees flooding into the country, according to reports received here from Washington, Atlanta, Richmond and Memphis.

At least three national agencies and a state convention of the 12.5-million-member Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)--the Foreign and Home Mission Boards, the Brotherhood Commission and the D. C. Convention--have already taken initial steps to assist.

At a luncheon in Washington, SBC, American Baptist Churches (ABC) and Baptist World Alliance (BWA) representatives heard an official of the Agency for International Development (AID), on loan to the State Department, say that government officials are depending heavily on voluntary agencies, including church groups, to help in the massive resettlement project.

George Beauchamp of AID called the removal of South Vietnamese from their war-torn homeland the largest such endeavor in American history. He spoke at the luncheon sponsored by U. S. Congressman John Buchanan (R.-Ala.), a Baptist.

Another highly-placed source at AID told Baptist Press that many church groups are purposely avoiding involvement in the refugee relocation project because they are convinced that the way in which refugees were chosen for airlifting out of Vietnam was discriminatory.

The official, a veteran of Southeast Asian affairs, expressed outrage at what he said he senses is an orchestrated plan by American government officials to use the refugee resettlement project in a public relations campaign designed to show American magnanimity.

-more-

A number of church leaders, however, feel that Christians must respond to the refugee problem because an urgent need is there--even if some refugees were evacuated on a discriminatory basis.

In Richmond, the Foreign Mission Board said missionaries to South Vietnam, on furlough when the country surrendered to the Viet Cong (VC), have agreed to assist if needed in centers where refugees are arriving. Contacts are being made with government authorities concerning details of such possibilities.

Meanwhile in Atlanta, the SBC's Home Mission Board announced it has begun moving to assist Church World Service and other religious agencies in resettling of an initial 10,000 refugees. The board previously worked with the resettlement of refugees from Hungary in the 1950s, Cuba in the mid-1960s and Uganda two years ago.

"Church World Service has already made plans to place staff members at each of the three refugee resettlement points in Arkansas, California and Florida and will give us the names of families to be resettled," said Irvin Dawson, the board's associate director of Christian social ministries and director of immigration and refugee services.

The Home Mission Board has contacted all directors of missions in state Baptist conventions and told them "we will probably need sponsors for the refugees," Dawson added.

Persons interested in sponsoring refugees may write for a Home Mission Board brochure at 1350 Spring St., N. W., Atlanta 30309, he said.

The Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, which conducts the SBC's missions education effort among men and boys, has asked its state Brotherhood secretaries to serve as contact persons for Baptist Men's groups which want to sponsor Vietnamese refugees.

Among the refugees are an undetermined number of Baptists evacuated as a result of efforts by Southern Baptist missionaries, H. Earl Bengs Jr. and Gene V. Tunnell.

Bengs and Tunnell, already safely evacuated to Singapore, returned on April 24, just days before the surrender, and gave the American embassy in Saigon a list of Baptist-related evacuees. The list included employees of the Baptist Mission, their families and other Vietnamese.

Foreign Mission Board officials have contacted missionaries in Guam and the Philippines, where it is believed the refugees are located, to determine the number of and location of those included on the list and if all escaped.

W. Eugene Grubbs, the board's disaster response coordinator, said at a meeting in Washington on refugee resettlement, in response to questions, that apparently Southern Baptist missionaries felt that the national Baptist leaders would be in "grave danger" or they would not have gone back in an attempt to get them out.

Kim Cook, a Vietnamese and U. S. citizen who works with the D. C. chapter of the American Red Cross, told meeting participants that relatives in South Vietnam who have escaped report mass massacres in areas taken over by the VC and that the VC has a list of people marked for extermination.

"Many Christians, especially Catholics, were executed in North Vietnam after the 1954 takeover," she said, with strong emotion. "The same thing is likely to happen now in South Vietnam."

At the meeting in Washington, a group of more than 30 Baptists gathered to discuss resettlement strategy, and, in a separate statement, James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, called for concern for all Vietnamese, not just the refugees, which he said included many who were politically and economically privileged. He urged the United Nations, U. S. and other major powers to provide humanitarian aid to the Vietnamese, who remain in their homeland without political or economic privilege, on the basis of need, not military or political considerations.

Wood said the "unspeakable and unending tragedy of Vietnam must not be forgotten with the removal of the American presence."

Top executives of the Home and Foreign Mission Boards and their staffs conferred on April 29 in Lake Yale, Fla., about assisting refugees, during a national seminar on support of missions sponsored by the SBC's Stewardship Commission. Baptist leaders are keeping in touch with U. S. government offices to obtain full information concerning plans for aiding and resettling Vietnamese who arrive in this country. They will release information as available.

The Washington meeting convened largely through the efforts of the Baptist Committee of Metropolitan Washington for Refugee Relief, a group formed in mid-April to aid in resettlement of expected refugees from the Indochina war.

The committee's co-chairmen, Harry Hearne, director of Christian social ministries for the D. C. Baptist Convention, and Allen Oliver, pastor of the Hillandale Baptist Church in Suburban Adelphi, Md., said their appeal for volunteers from area Baptist churches to assist refugees has drawn good response.