



April 11, 1977

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After the Nightmare--
Reflections on Vietnam

By Leland Webb

RICHMOND (BP)--In March 1975, a group of Baptist Men were at a prayer retreat in South Vietnam. Communist forces were fighting 20 miles away, an early part of a sweep that would engulf the country just after Easter.

The only American at the prayer session was Southern Baptist missionary Joe G. Turman, who found himself surrounded by Vietnamese Christians. Aware of the impending disaster, they pleaded "Tell us how we can best live under communism?"

"I remembered the scripture where Jesus said, 'I will not leave you comfortless.' I told them, 'The Lord will be with you in a special way in this time of persecution. My presence is not essential. I'm not going to be with you, but the Lord will be with you.'"

About the same time, missionary H. Earl Bengs Jr. was leading a men's retreat on the seashore near Nhatrang, during which he posed three questions:

"What are you now doing that you could still do if missionaries were not in your churches?" was the first.

"We could worship in our homes," came one reply. "We could read the Bible. We could encourage our brothers."

Bengs inquired, "What are you now doing that you couldn't do if the missionaries were gone?"

"Maybe we could not have such a nice building," one said. "We may have to train ourselves," others said.

Then Bengs asked, "What are you not equipped to do?"

"Perhaps we do not know how to worship as we ought," was one answer. "We don't know much about the Bible," some said.

"Hundreds had been saved--whole valleys of people," recalls Bengs, now serving in Sarawak, Malaysia. "We needed to teach them and train them to worship and study."

The day after their men's meeting, the Bengs left their Dalat home and headed toward Saigon--never to go back to Dalat or Nhatrang.

When Southern Baptist missionaries left Vietnam and Laos, it marked the first time in more than 20 years--since leaving mainland China--that Baptist missionaries had been forced into an apparent permanent absence from a field of service.

South Vietnam's collapse came when response to the gospel seemed to be growing, the missionaries say. Several still remember special events at a Vietnam Baptist Mission meeting in 1974 and at a prayer retreat that December.

"As we look back, we can see that God was preparing us for something we didn't know about," says Bengs. The special times of sharing and prayer "re-established in our minds the sovereignty of God in every situation. On the strength of that," he notes, "we were able to minister in the months to come."

After the 1974 Vietnam Mission meeting came "renewal in our lives," says Turman. Then, "the Holy Spirit working through our lives, began to work through the national leadership." Between March 1974 and January 1975, Turman says, there were more professions of faith in Christ than the missionaries had seen before among the Vietnamese.

"The Lord was preparing a remnant of people to be left behind," believes missionary James L. Kellum Jr., now assigned to the Philippines. Missionary Robert R. Compher, also now in the Philippines, agrees: "The outpouring of the Holy Spirit all over South Vietnam during the last year we were there must have been preparing the Vietnamese for what would come."

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During the last six months Kellum was in South Vietnam, the church he had worked with had at least 26 decisions for Christ every Sunday. He was on furlough when the country fell to the Communists.

"I asked our strongest Christian lay leader why the response. He thought, then replied, 'The people are hungry, and they have no hope,' Kellum recalls.

People seemed to realize that "society and life, as it had been known during the past 25 years was breaking down; there simply was nothing to hold to. This caused an undercurrent of fear and stress that people weren't able to articulate," says William T. (Bill) Roberson, also now in the Philippines:

"In desperation, they saw the message of the gospel that offered new hope and life, and they flocked to it. I think the Holy Spirit used the under-current of foundations breaking up to do what he wanted."

During the last days the missionaries were in Saigon, Vietnamese believers went to refugee camps to give out rice and copies of the Gospel of John. Believers, many of whom ate only two meals a day, shared their food with refugees, Turman recalls.

Plans to help evacuate Mission employees from Saigon fell through. "I feel the Lord left them there for the purpose of carrying on a witness," muses Mrs. Roberson; "They have to depend on the Lord."

Herman P. Hayes, the first Southern Baptist missionary to arrive in South Vietnam in 1959, says, "Many people are still in Vietnam who had genuine experiences of salvation as a result of the Lord's using our Baptist witness.

"My mind runs up and down the land," says Hayes, now assigned to Indonesia. "Faces and names cross the screen, and I remember with gratitude this one and that one, whom I feel confident had an encounter with God.

A Foreign Mission Board spokesman recently told Baptist Press that prospects for the missionaries' return to Vietnam appear nil.

"A good base of churches, though small in number, was left in South Vietnam," Hayes says, "a base rooted in the soil, experience and culture of Vietnam... as were trained leaders."

Bengs declares, "We left a foundation that will last, of people who truly know the Lord and will lead others to him. We left the printed word and years of training we had offered," he continues. "The last thing we said was, 'Get the literature out of the office; don't leave it here to be confiscated. Get it out among the people.'"

"The only thing we could have left of lasting value would be New Testament churches," says Turman: "They are of eternal value..."

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Wood Says Deprogramming
Violates Religious Liberty

By Carol Franklin

WASHINGTON (BP)--Deprogramming of adherents to various religious cults poses a serious violation of religious liberty, not only for cult members but also for those in other groups, a Baptist executive said here.

James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, said in a statement released here: "The current phenomenon of deprogramming of adherents to various religious cults, such as the Unification Church, Hare Krishna and the Church of Scientology, among others, must be viewed as constituting serious violations of religious liberty.

"Deprogramming is, in fact," Wood continued, "incompatible with all of the guarantees of the First Amendment--the no-establishment and free exercise of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, and the right to petition the government for redress of grievances."

Recent news stories have revealed that "deprogrammers" have kidnapped members of Catholic groups, as well as two young Greek Orthodox women, whose parents had them kidnapped because they left home to take jobs.

In light of the spread of deprogramming to groups other than cults, Wood said, this could become a serious threat to everyone. "When the rights of any religious adherents are abridged, the rights of all religious members are threatened. As Baptists, we must be firm in our commitment to the free exercise of religion for all," he declared.

"We Baptists were often hounded and persecuted in the early days of our history. We cannot deny the protection of the Constitution to groups today simply because their beliefs seem to us to be wrong," he stressed.

Deprogramming is the process of forcing a person to change his religious or other beliefs. In its early stages, the process often has meant violent kidnapping and physical torture. The practitioners have become more sophisticated in the wake of protests and court cases challenging the legality of deprogramming.

A number of people who have gone through deprogramming sessions are taking the deprogrammers into court, along with the parents who commissioned them. The battle is focussing on the use in several states of conservatorship laws originally designed to protect elderly or mentally incompetent persons in the management of their property and valuables.

A Tucson attorney, Michael Trauscht, began using these laws to force adult members of religious groups into the custody of their parents on the premise that they were "brainwashed" by the group and were therefore incapable to acting on their own free will.

In a recent California decision, Superior Court Judge S. Lee Vavuris ruled that five adult members of the Unification Church be remanded for 30 days to the custody of their parents, saying: "The child is the child even though a parent may be 90 and the child 60."

Wood deplored such judicial justification of deprogramming. "While one can be sympathetic with parents who have felt alienated from their sons and daughters who have embraced faiths different from and even antithetical to their own, deprogramming ignores the rights of the young people themselves to decide matters of faith and their own religious identity," he said.

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Carol Gallo, spok sperson for the recently formed Alliance for the Preservation of Religious Liberty, said that deprogramming would be better called "domestic terrorism . . . after a person is kidnapped, he is forcibly imprisoned . . . then kept awake for 20-24 hours a day, and is permitted only enough food and water to keep him alive. Teams of mercenaries work in shifts, haranguing and badgering the victim, screaming insults . . . at his . . . religion. This goes on anywhere from three days to six weeks, or even longer, until the victim 'breaks,'" Gallo asserted.

Deprogrammers are reported to charge anywhere from \$5,000 to \$25,000 for their services, whether they are successful or not.

Rev. Robert Walter Taylor, charging he was abducted from an old Catholic monastery in Oklahoma City, told representatives of the National Council of Churches and the United Nations Interchurch Center in New York City that his abductor charged \$500 a day for 30 days of deprogramming.

Another woman detained by a deprogramming organization said she saw her mother give \$1,000 to her deprogrammer. In written testimony to be used in an upcoming court case she said. "I could see where deprogramming is really becoming a racket."

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Judge's Decision Upheld
In Missionary's Trial

Baptist Pr ss
4/11/77

TAEJON, Korea (BP)--A Korean appellate court here has upheld a lower court decision in th November trial of Southern Baptist Missionary Rolla M. (Ronnie) Bradley, following an appeal by the prosecutor.

In the original trial, Nov. 1, 1976, the lower court found Bradley negligent and fined him approximately \$200 in the traffic fatality case. His license, which has since been returned, was suspended automatically. Bradley was accused of negligence when his car supposedly sideswiped a drunken pedestrian and caused his death in February 1976.

The prosecutor, who had demanded a 10-month sentence for Bradley's alleged part in the mishap, appealed the court's decision. However, in appellate court action on April 7, the lower court's decision stood, according to George H. Hays, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board area secretary for East Asia.

Other than establishing that Bradley's car was in the general vicinity of the accident, all evidence was circumstantial, according to Hays. "Neither Bradley nor the Korean pastor riding with him was aware an accident had occurred," Hays said.

The road near the demilitarized zone, north of Seoul, where the accident was supposed to have occurred, is in very poor condition and the night of the alleged accident was also rainy and visibility was poor.

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Suicide Dramatizes Pastor's
Easter Sermon Question

Baptist Press
4/11/77

BILOXI, Miss. (BP)--About three minutes after Frank Gunn, pastor of First Baptist Church here, asked his Easter morning congregation what they would do if they had only three minutes to live, a man lay mortally wounded by the pulpit.

Ford Dawson, 53, a retired Air Force major, burst in a side door, after a scuffle with an usher, and stepped up to the pulpit of the Southern Baptist church, leading his nine-year-old son's dog by a leash.

Although he had a gun and had fired a shot over usher Quentin Hengen's head during the scuffle, Dawson told the congregation and then the choir not to be afraid, recalls Leon Bedsole, minister of music.

Witnesses said he talked about having to pay a price for a crime, shot the dog, and then put the gun to his own temple. He died later at the hospital. The dog, treated by a veterinarian (a member of the church), is expected to recover.

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The day after the shooting, Gunn, enroute to preach a revival service in Marks, Miss., was unavailable for comment.

But witnesses said he had commented in his Easter sermon that each person doesn't know how much time he has left and asked what each person in the congregation would do if he had only three minutes to live.

About that time, Dawson and Hengen tangled at the door and the first shot went off. Many persons in the congregation reportedly thought at first that the scene was a dramatization of the pastor's sermon.

Details of actual wording of Dawson's statements and his motivations are sketchy, although Bedsole commented, "Some report that I got is that he thought he was Jesus and had to pay for his own sin."

Larry Patterson, audio controller handling the church's Sunday morning live broadcast over WLOX-TV, called police while Dawson, whom police say has had a four year history of "emotional problems," confronted the congregation.

Responding almost immediately, police entered a side door about the time Dawson shot himself.

Just before he shot himself, the plug on the live telecast was pulled, but no one knows how it happened, Patterson said.

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Lottie Moon Co-Worker, Floy
White Adams , Dies at 93

BIRMINGHAM(BP)--Mrs. W. W. (Floy White) Adams, who during her early missionary service in China was a co-worker with Southern Baptist missionary heroine Lottie Moon, died here April 9 at the age of 93. A graveside service was held April 11 at Elmwood Cemetery.

Mrs. Adams was the second oldest Southern Baptist emeritus missionary. Mrs. Edgar L. Morgan of Westminster, S. C., also a former missionary to China, is the oldest at 98.

Mrs. Adams and her husband, the late W. W. Adams, served 34 years as missionaries in Tengchow and Dairen, China, before retiring in 1943. She and Adams had fallen in love during their seminary days in Louisville, Ky. After his appointment by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, she remained for a year of additional training before sailing to join him in China in 1909.

While final preparations for the wedding were being made she stayed in the home of Miss Lottie Moon, the senior missionary in Tengchow and the woman for whom Southern Baptists have named their annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

The couple was married on Oct. 28, 1909. In most Chinese weddings, there are two sedan chairs--one for the bride and one for the bridegroom. "In our wedding there was only one chair," Mrs. Adams recalled in an article written for Accent magazine. "Wayne walked beside my chair the short distance from Miss Moon's home to our home."

After retirement, Mr. and Mrs. Adams spoke often in the States, telling of their work in China. Shortly after Mr. Adams' death in 1951, she began working with the Chinese in Birmingham. For many years, she taught Bible and English to the women and led the children to know about Jesus through songs, Scripture verses, and creative activities.

At the time of her death, Mrs. Adams shared an apartment with her sister, Miss Margaret White, in Birmingham. She also is survived by another sister, Mrs. Marion Hestle of Orrville, Ala.

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Baptists Participate
In Execution Protest

By Dan Martin

ATLANTA (BP)--Baptists--and other Christians--played a prominent role in the National Witness Against Executions here Easter weekend.

The witness, sponsored by the Southern Coalition on Jails and Prisons and co-sponsored by many other national groups, drew 3,000 persons to a rally, series of seminars, and Easter morning sunrise service.

Among Southern Baptists participating on the program were Floyd Craig of Nashville, director of public relations for the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, and John Cross, inter-Baptist ministries director for the Atlanta Baptist Association.

Organizers identified other Baptists participants, including a contingent from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville; Will Campbell, a Baptist minister who heads the Committee of Southern Churchmen, Nashville; and others.

Other speakers included former U. S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, New York Times associate editor Tom Wicker, Willard Lee, who spent 12 years on Florida death row before being pardoned because of innocence, Viva Lamb, whose son is on Georgia's death row, and Joe Ingle, director of the Southern Coalition on Jails and Prisons.

Craig, who specified that he spoke only for himself, spoke of a tough test he believes ought to be applied to ethical questions.

The test, he said, is this: "Would Jesus act like that? Would his followers act and talk like that?"

Applying those questions to capital punishment, Craig said he has the "growing feeling of being appalled that any Christian would think of killing any other person with any weapon, whether it's a dull knife, a 'Saturday Night Special,' a shotgun, 1,800 volts of electricity, deadly gas or a noose--whether in a rage or through a ruling of a court."

He referred to the "First Century electric chair--the Cross," and declared: "Today the Cross has little claim on us and meaning for us since we have made it a symbol of jewelry, church steeples and lapel buttons. Perhaps we should weld a casting of the electric chair to every Cross we own in order to shake our consciousness awake.

"Indeed, the Cross is a symbol to remind us of God's grieving when there's a killing, anywhere, anytime, and of his demand on us--his followers--to march to his drum call, a beat of forgiveness, mercy and reconciliation."

Reminding his listeners that Jesus was victimized by "a dehumanizing, brutalizing capital punishment law," Craig said Jesus used the Cross "as a supreme witness against capital punishment," teaching that "forgiveness through love is greater than the practice of vengeance under law . . . He forgave his executioner and those being executed."

A statement from Mrs. Martin Luther King Jr. was read to the rally: "As one whose husband and mother-in-law were killed by murder and assassination, I stand against capital punishment. An evil deed is not redeemed by an evil deed. Morality has never been upheld by legalized murder."

John Cross spoke at a sunrise service, calling the death penalty "a cruel hoax . . . used too often against the poor."

Campbell called on Christians to "serve as advocates of those who are appointed to die" and also to be concerned with "those who have the power of death over the people on death row."

Ingle, of Nashville, charged that most people in the United States "seem more interested in the right of Russians to dissent than with the right of prisoners on death row to live. The most precious right is the right to life," he said.

"Here we are lecturing people on human rights--the Rhodesians, for instance--when we're about to execute several hundred people," he said. (Latest estimates indicate that 342 persons are currently waiting on death rows.)

Ingle, who maintains "murder is wrong" whether it's done in private by the individual or in public by the state, said: "I am here because I am angry . . . but also because my heart is breaking. I am shedding tears of grief along with tears of rage."

Clark, attorney general under Lyndon Johnson, said he came to Atlanta to speak out against violence because it is a "threat to our survival."

He said 366 persons have been executed in Georgia since "we began keeping the grisley statistics in 1930," and added 61 of them were for rape.

"Of those, 58 were black. I defy anyone to explain that in any other way than the starkest racial hatred," he said.

He noted 60 percent of the world's executions currently are being carried out in South Africa and referred to it as "the use of terror to keep apartheid (racial separation) in effect.

Viva Lamb, whose 20-year-old son is now on death row, said families suffer most, and asked those with kin on death rows to identify themselves. Some 20 or 30 persons did so.

Lee, who knows about death row from personal experience, commented, "I am here to say that man is not perfect . . . the same shoes that were on my feet can be on yours today or tomorrow . . ."

Newspaperman Wicker told participants he "came not to preach to the converted" but in hope of reaching others who did not come (to the rally) and who do not know the facts behind executions.

He contended capital punishment does not deter crime and that it is the nation's most discriminatory punishment.

"People in the United States are fooling themselves if they think the death penalty will reduce crime," he said, noting he supports the cause of the rally. "Even if it doesn't have public impact, it's worth doing, in itself, to take a stand and state your convictions . . ."

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(BP) Photos will be mailed to Baptist state papers; others on request.

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Bible Institute Picks
DuBose As President

Baptist Press
4/11/77

GRACEVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Joseph P. DuBose, Jr., pastor of East Hill Baptist Church, Pensacola, was named president of Baptist Bible Institute here.

He will begin his duties May 2, succeeding James E. Southerland, president of the school since December, 1957, who is retiring.

A native of Orangeburg, S. C., DuBose is a graduate of the University of South Carolina, Columbia, with a bachelor of science in business administration, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., with bachelor of divinity, master of theology and doctor of ministry degrees.

Prior to going to Pensacola in 1963, DuBose was pastor of churches in Indiana and North Carolina.