



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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79-13

China Visit Points Up  
Religion Lack in China

By Anita Bowden

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (BP)--Her first return home to mainland China in 30 years convinced Cherry (Mrs. Y. K.) Chang there is an urgent need to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is no active, public churchwork in China, according to Mrs. Chang, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board member and home missionary in California. "Many people practiced Buddhism before the Communists came. Now there is no public Buddhist worship," she said.

Mrs. Chang, who was born and raised in mainland China, had not visited her homeland since late in the 1940s. She and her husband were students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, when the Communists took over. Although she had tried before to visit China, this was the first time she was granted permission for a visa. She was able to spend a week with her 88-year-old mother and to see other friends and relatives.

"Every citizen has freedom to believe on his own, but he's not allowed to tell about his faith," she said. She knows of only two churches in China, one in Peking and one in Nanking, both open only to visitors.

A distant relative, who was a department head at a prominent university and pastor of a local Baptist church before the Communist takeover in the early 1950s, told her religion courses are being taught in the universities, but it is the philosophy of religion--theology without conviction. He is now teaching at a university.

Mrs. Chang carried several Bibles and devotional books with her, and shared her testimony with men who were pastors before the Communists came. These friends carry on their worship quietly, she said. Children are taught the Bible but are cautioned not to speak of their lessons.

She said she was cautioned not to visit several Christian friends who, although released from prison and living at home, were not really free.

Even though personal relationships tie her to mainland China, Mrs. Chang is not pleased by President Jimmy Carter's decision to break official diplomatic ties with Taiwan and establish them with China.

"It's contradictory," she said. "When I became a naturalized American citizen, I had to swear I was not a Communist or a member of the Communist party."

She is also concerned about the United States officially accepting and becoming allies with people who do not believe in God. "In the future we will be dominated by godless influences," she said. She is fearful for Taiwan's safety and even for the safety of the United States.

Mrs. Chang said it is not likely that missionaries will be allowed to enter China. "While I was there a friend told me he had read in a publication that China would welcome all overseas Chinese and others, except missionaries," she said. "But I told my Christian friends that Christians are praying for them and that no matter what happens, we are all one in the body of Christ."

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Mrs. Chang exhorted the members of her own Southern Baptist denomination to "get busy." "We must preach the gospel to as many as possible before doors are closed," she said.

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#### Baptist Film Picked For China Showing

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The doors to China have inched open and a Southern Baptist film was one of the first Western influences to cross the threshold.

"Symphony," a production of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, along with television network films, is to be shown on Chinese national television concurrently with Teng's visit to the United States, according to Jeffrey Gralnick, vice president, special projects, ABC News.

The Baptist film, which premiered August, 1978, on ABC's "Directions" series, is part of a request by the Chinese government to the networks for films that would better orient their people with the U.S.

"Symphony" was chosen because it is a good indication of the American culture which is what the Chinese are looking for," said Gralnick. "It was selected from a three-year's accumulation of network specials."

The film features the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra and the contribution music makes to the enrichment of man's spiritual life.

"I'm very pleased our film was selected to go to China," said Truett Myers, head of the commission's television department. "For 20 years we have been locked out of China and I'm glad the work of Southern Baptists will be one of the first Western efforts to reach that country. The film is ultimately an appreciation for those artists who give us great music. It is spiritually subtle which is probably another reason it was selected."

John Stevens, vice president of television operations, wrote, produced and directed the film. In October 1978, "Symphony" was voted the second most outstanding film in the Long Island Film Festival's documentary-art category.

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Missionaries Home from Iran  
Miss Desert and Their Work

By Ruth Fowler

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ATLANTA, Ga. (BP)--The big excitement in Ahwaz, Iran, centered around the softball field and the temperatures rose to 120 degrees in the summer. For miles around there was nothing but sand.

This desert city was home for Southern Baptist missionaries Kenneth and Beth Glenn, a home they fear they may not see again.

Last fall the quiet of the desert community was shattered when growing anti-shah sentiment burst into demonstrations and conflicts between marchers and the military. With the uprisings came anti-American expressions. According to the Glenns, the tensions and anxieties mounted in their city and no one knew for sure what would happen next.

Now news reports warn that the power struggle may escalate into all-out civil war. All the Americans have left Ahwaz. The English-language church where Glenn was pastor is inactive with its more than 150 members scattered throughout the United States.

But the Glenns and their three children want to return to Iran. Even in the midst of the crisis, they say they never felt personally threatened. They love their city and their work there.

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People who left Ahwaz after the Glenns told of looting of Americans' homes. While there, the Glenns and other Americans received mimeographed death threats on the windshields of their cars. One American oil company executive, Paul Graham, was killed just a block from the Glenn home soon after the Glenns left Iran.

"But we were never mistreated in any way," Glenn emphasizes. "Everyone was very tense. Sometimes people would stare at us, but we were never insulted. We never had anything stolen. Our experiences were very positive."

Even though the Glenns would be willing to return as soon as peace is restored, that may not be possible. They were in Iran to minister to American and European families. Until major companies return employees to Iran, the Glenns' ministry will not be viewed as necessary by the Iranian government.

Other missionaries have not experienced the same all-out evacuation of Americans from their community. The Henry E. Turlingtons and Michael Joe Sowder remain in Tehran where the violence has been less intense and where about 50 of their congregation of 350 remain.

The Glenns found the softball field one of their greatest opportunities to be a part of the community. All five family members played ball with other members of the Western community. As they played they met many people who had questions about why they were in Iran.

Mrs. Glenn said she was surprised at the serious questions someone from the other team would ask her while they ran the bases. She played second and often talked with the runners.

"Some such Americans go overseas to get away from problems," Mrs. Glenn said. "Many of the people just needed a lot of love and a fresh start."

The Americans are gone from Ahwaz, but good memories remain with the Glenn family. "We have no idea about the future," Glenn said. "We want to go back, but we'll go somewhere else if we can't return to Iran."

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Baptist Church Schools  
In Two States File Suits

By Norman Jameson

Baptist Press  
1/29/79

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--In two unrelated cases, Baptist churches in Tennessee and Texas have filed suit in federal court seeking relief for schools they sponsor.

In Tennessee, 42 Baptist churches, including several Southern Baptist, filed suit for exemption from unemployment taxes for their church schools.

In Texas, the First Baptist Church of Dallas challenged an Internal Revenue Service decision that has put its school's tax exempt status in limbo.

Brainerd Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tenn., was one of two churches summoned to bring its payroll records and testify before a representative of the employment security department.

According to a story in the Chattanooga News-Free Press, the suit says the churches were told that if the summonses are not honored, "criminal proceedings will be instituted" by the state against the churches.

The church suit contends the state action violates the constitutional protection of religious liberty and tries to define the mission of a church.

A lawyer member of Brainerd Baptist told Baptist Press "A church is clearly exempt under the law. Whatever ministries a church operates are as much a part of the church as any other ministry."

In fact, says the lawyer, who prefers not to be named, the state is a "Johnny come lat ly" in education because churches first took the responsibility of teaching children to read.

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"The Constitution does not say the state shall educate," he said. "And the scripture says only the parents are responsible for the education of their children. No longer can parents delegate that responsibility to non-Christians in humanistic schools."

J. Ralph McIntyre, director of the church and staff support division of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, whose church administration department produces textbooks and materials for such schools, said: "We feel church schools are a legitimate part of the ministry of a local church and should be treated as part of the church just like Sunday School and church training."

"As such, government involvement in this area is a gross violation of the church-state relationship."

First Baptist Academy's suit filed in Dallas complains the IRS is delaying a ruling on the school's tax status because it's in the process of adopting a new set of regulations designed to deny exemption to private schools that practice racial discrimination.

The rules, aimed at so-called "segregation academies" that grew up in the South in the early 1970s, would require a private school to follow detailed guidelines assuring it doesn't discriminate against minorities in its admission policies, hiring or administrative policies.

Critics of the ruling charge the regulations assume guilt until the schools prove their innocence.

The suit said the delay on the ruling has "practically curtailed" the academy's ability to collect donations because it can't tell potential donors whether or not their contributions will be tax deductible.

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Gardner-Webb Gets  
Scholarship Money

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BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. (BP)--The W. F. Gastons of Belmont, N.C., have established a \$50,000 scholarship for students at Gardner-Webb College who intend to enter full-time Christian service.

Gaston, a graduate of North Carolina State University, was the manufacturing manager for the Cramerton Division of Burlington Mills until his retirement in 1958. Currently, he is owner of Gaston Builders, Inc., of Belmont.

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East Texas Baptist College  
Receives Challenge Grant

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1/29/79

MARSHALL, Texas (BP)--East Texas Baptist College has received a challenge gift of \$400,000 from the Meadows Foundation of Dallas.

Terms for the gift call for the Southern Baptist school to raise matching funds of \$400,000 within the next four years. Funds raised to match the Meadows Foundation gift will be used to retire indebtedness. Curtis W. Meadows, father of the chairman of the Meadows Foundation, retired in 1977 after 37 years on the ETBC board of trustees.

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CORRECTION: In Baptist Press story mailed Jan. 25, entitled "World Hunger Gets Renewed Attention from SBC Groups" please add the word calendar before committee in the first paragraph so it reads "denominational calendar committee." Thanks. Baptist Press