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Miss Hong Kong's Excitement
Peaks When Parents Believe

By Anita Bowden

HONG KONG (BP)--Her year as Miss Hong Kong brought Winnie Chan many exciting moments. But probably the most thrilling came during an evangelistic crusade in Hong Kong when her parents, both Buddhists, became Christians.

A Christian for three years, Winnie had talked to her parents many times about her decision to break with her Buddhist background. But it wasn't until they heard her testimony at the Baptist-sponsored Hong Kong for Christ crusade that they walked down the aisles of the stadium to indicate their own commitment to Christ.

Their decision was a triumph for Winnie, just as winning the title of Miss Hong Kong 1978 had been.

Since childhood, Winnie lacked self-confidence and felt she wasn't good or pretty enough to win anything. After she accepted Christ, a Christian friend who knew about her self-image problem sent her books on how to gain self-confidence through her faith in Jesus Christ.

When she returned to Hong Kong in March 1978 after graduating from college in the United States, family and friends began prodding her to enter the Miss Hong Kong contest "just for fun." After praying and realizing the opportunities she would have to witness to a group of young women who would be mostly non-Christians, Winnie decided to enter.

So did 802 other girls. But Winnie was among 30 semi-finalists and had a real opportunity to witness to them.

Mostly she just smiled a lot and tried to be friendly. That alone made her stand out because competition was so strong that many of the girls weren't interested in being friendly with their rivals.

She says many of the contestants noticed she didn't seem bothered by the competition and asked her secret. "I told them, I'm a Christian. I told them I love Jesus Christ and he loves me a lot and he gave me a lot of happiness," Winnie says.

That happiness began when she was a student at Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield. Her freshman roommate, who was a Christian, introduced Winnie to many of her Christian friends.

During the second semester of her sophomore year, Winnie became sick. She'd been trying to handle a full school schedule plus work in the university library. For a student who had to work extra hard at her studies to compensate for the language barrier, the load was too great. Physically exhausted, she dropped out of school for a while.

Shortly after her decision to leave school, Winnie got several phone calls from Christian friends and acquaintances. Puzzled about their concern and interest in her, since she really didn't know them well, Winnie asked her roommate for an explanation.

"They are Christians. They love you," her roommate tried to explain.

"That really touched me," Winnie says, "because my other friends don't worry about me that much. They don't care about whether I'm in trouble or not."

Soon she began attending church with a Christian family and a few months later accepted Christ as her personal Savior.

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Her year as Miss Hong Kong almost up, Winnie says she's trying to be patient, listening for the Lord to tell her what he wants her to do with her life. She works in the accounting office of Hong Kong Baptist College when she's not involved in Miss Hong Kong responsibilities. But she says she feels drawn to attend seminary and then become involved in "missionary work."

Her parents could tell her she's already involved.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond Bureau of Baptist Press.

Feelings Run High At
Dole's Cults Hearing

By Carol Franklin

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Booing, cheering, and shouts of "liar" and "perjurer" punctuated proceedings at an independent, informational hearing on religious cults called by Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kans., and five other members of Congress.

The audience repeatedly was called to order by a harassed Dole, who denied that the meeting was a "media event" or "debate" but was "a starting point for members (of Congress) in their search for a thorough understanding of this very sensitive and complex issue."

James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, warned the ad hoc group of congressmen that "any legislation which would regulate, limit, or require accountability of the religious activity of any of the so-called 'cults'--a pejorative term which has no place in American law--would infringe on the guarantee of the free exercise of religion of all religious groups."

Wood continued, "The principle of voluntarism (in religion), to which we are deeply committed, leads us to a firm position that anyone who knowingly joins a religious group and thereby seeks to adhere to its religious beliefs should not have his or her religious activity prevented or curtailed so long as no crime has been or is being committed...Any effort on the part of government to monitor or control any religious group without probable cause should be opposed as being beyond the bounds of legitimate government authority."

George W. Swope, American Baptist minister from Westchester, N.Y., contrasted "clergymen who live in ivory towers of speculation" with "hosts of realistic clergymen" who want the government to investigate "destructive and illegal practices and the mind control that makes these practices possible."

Jackie Speler, aide to the late Congressman Leo J. Ryan, D-Cal., who was injured in the shooting at Jonestown, Guyana, which took Ryan's life, called for an investigation of "religious groups that may be fronting for other purposes" but cautioned against "a McCarthy-type witch hunt or any lessening of true religious freedom."

Ted Patrick, a deprogrammer of cult members, convicted of kidnapping in connection with his deprogramming activities, said that cults are destroying young people and "leading this country into totalitarianism." He begged the congressional panel to "do something to eliminate these cults."

Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., urged his colleagues to be careful of any action that would infringe on First Amendment guarantees of freedom of religion. "I am aware that such tolerance embraces considerable breathing space for cranks and charlatans masquerading as religious leaders...Nevertheless, if the government launched into a pattern of preemptive interference with even marginal religious groups," Hatfield said, "it is my judgment that a precedent with regrettable implications might be established for the future of religious freedom in the United States."

Rabbi Maurice Davis, White Plains, N.Y., was repeatedly interrupted by boos and shouts of "lies...that's a lie" as he recounted death threats he has received from cult members for his efforts to separate young people from cults. He compared the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon to the Nazi youth movement and the People's Temple.

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Davis further angered much of the crowd, apparently Unification Church members, when he said, "I am here to protest against child molesters. For as surely as there are those who lure children with lollypops in order to rape their bodies, so, too, do these lure children with candy-coated lies in order to rape their minds."

Barry Lynn, United Church of Christ minister and attorney, told the panel, "If Congress or state governments end up making any mistakes in response to the phenomenon of new religious groups, let those mistakes be on the side of religious tolerance. When our nation's leaders have done otherwise, and erred on the side of intolerance or hysteria, they have always plunged us into the darkest periods of our history."

Jeremiah S. Gutman, attorney and director of the American Civil Liberties Union, charged that "Every attempt I've heard here to define 'cult' as opposed to 'legitimate religion,' offends the First Amendment. There is no official truth in this nation."

Gutman also attacked the proposal of Richard Delgado, professor of law at the University of California at Los Angeles, that the government require a mandatory cooling off period before a person could join a cult and there be forced psychotherapy for cult members. "Talk about religious violation and meddling," Gutman said. "Forced psychotherapy is a vicious, reprehensible practice in the Soviet Union today. It cannot be."

Lynn noted that illegal activities of religious groups are already covered by existing criminal laws and "any further or special regulation seems unnecessary."

The original witness list for the hearing included only people who favor government action or are anti-cult. Protests from the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon and leaders of the Protestant and Jewish religious communities opened the hearing to Wood, Lynn, Gutman, and Neil Salonen, president of the Unification Church of America.

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Nigerian Mission Work
Without Top Leaders

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IBADAN, Nigeria (BP)--Death and illness have taken a heavy toll on leadership at the national headquarters of Nigerian Baptist work.

Emanuel A. Dahunsi, the Nigerian Baptist Convention's general secretary, was killed in an automobile accident Jan. 30. Gordon E. Robinson, executive director of the organization of missionaries, had to return to the United States with his critically ill wife earlier in January. Without these two leaders, the Nigerian Baptist headquarters is suffering, according to John E. Mills, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's secretary for West Africa.

"The headquarters is without strategic leadership and in particular need of the prayers of Southern Baptists," Mills said.

Mrs. Robinson's condition is still critical and doctors have not yet felt she was stable enough to operate on the cerebral aneurysm which hospitalized her most of January.

Missionary Russell L. Locke is acting executive director for the mission in Robinson's absence, but lives in Owerri, more than 200 miles from Ibadan. S. T. Ola Akande, the Nigerian convention president, will be acting general secretary for the convention until its executive council can meet.

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Annuity Board Sends '13th'
Check To 11,000 Annuitants

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DALLAS (BP)--With the mailing of a "13th check," the Southern Baptist Annuity Board classified 1978 as a year of "substantive growth and challenge," but not necessarily one of calm.

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Darold H. Morgan, the agency's president, told trustees the mailing of an extra full month's check went to more than 11,000 annuitants.

In his staff report to the trustees during their 61st annual meeting, Morgan highlighted activities of 1978, calling the year one of "everything but calm."

"Extremes in market variations, pressures of escalating costs, changes in accounting procedures, the influence of governmental regulations and changes in personnel and organization kept us very active," Morgan reported.

The board reported record benefits disbursed to retired or disabled ministers and church and denominational employees. More than \$25.9 million was paid in benefits, some \$6.4 million more than 1977. Of that total, \$345,978 was distributed for relief and another \$13 million was paid in insurance claims.

Morgan said assets held in trust for thousands of ministers, church and denominational employees who participate in the retirement and protection plans the board administers rose to \$569,734,471, an increase of \$70,756,810 over 1977.

He said the enlistment of 630 new churches was a "significant gain...I'm particularly pleased that we have reached this large number of new churches with our ministry. Reaching local churches is a top priority."

The board enrolled 2,545 new ministers and church employees in the retirement program, while 3,721 active members upgraded their participation.

Membership in the retirement program totaled 23,986 in "Plan A," 44,324 in "Plan B" and 4,217 in "Plan C" (variable plan). "Plan B" grew by more than 11,000 accounts.

Morgan said premlums and income totaled \$51,797,996, an increase of \$6,194,054 over 1977. Of that total, \$29,260,611 were earmarked for the "Fixed Fund," \$13,909,103 for "Plan A," and \$3,409,362 for "Plan C." The remainder was received for other plans, the memorial fund and for relief from the Southern Baptist Convention.

Morgan said the board disbursed \$279,772 received from the SBC Cooperative Program for the relief ministry.

The board, he said, operated within its budget, showing a margin of \$4,678.

Morgan introduced Harold D. Richardson of Richmond, Va., the board's new treasurer, who succeeds B. J. Chenault, who was assigned the directorship of the newly created endowment department.

Morgan said the new endowment department faces a major challenge over the next decade, as it seeks to raise \$25 million. The board will use the endowment to improve checks to annuitants, help stabilize the board's reserves during volatile investment periods, and assist smaller churches, particularly in pioneer areas, in enrolling their pastors in the retirement programs.

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Virginia Baptist Homes
Receive Large Bequest

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ROANOKE, Va. (BP)--Virginia Baptist Homes, Inc. is the beneficiary of a bequest that will exceed \$500,000 from the estate of J. Meade Harris of Roanoke.

Charles E. Neal, executive director of the homes, said the money is designated and will be used for construction of living accommodations for the aged at a fourth Virginia Baptist Home to be located somewhere in the Roanoke area.

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