



-- FEATURES

produced by Baptist Press

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July 30, 1979

Mission Dollars In China
Not Wasted Says Pastor

By Jack U. Harwell

79-128

ATLANTA (BP)--Anybody who believes Southern Baptists "wasted" the people and dollars they spent for decades on mission work in China would get an argument from William Self, pastor of Wieuca Road Baptist Church in Atlanta.

Self and his wife, Carolyn, recently spent 10 days in Hong Kong and Taipai during which they saw manifold evidence of the on-going harvest still being reached from Christian seeds sown in China.

"When Chinese people were forced to leave China by communist take-over, they took the gospel of Jesus Christ with them," said Self, immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. "Our labor in the Lord is not in vain."

"We saw strong Baptist churches in Hong Kong and Taipai and surrounding villages and Baptist leaders told us of strong Baptist work in Malaysia and Singapore. Backbones of these Baptist ministries are Christians who came out of China with deep faith and missionary determination," Self stated.

The Selfs led church growth conferences, spoke at Baptist colleges and seminaries, visited with Southern Baptist missionary groups and called on government officials.

They also shared in two special ceremonies in Hong Kong, the 40th anniversary meeting of the Hong Kong Baptist Convention and dedication of a new wing at Hong Kong Baptist Hospital.

"I came home from Hong Kong and Taipai with profound respect for what our Baptist missionaries have done and are doing in the Orient," he said. "Baptist work is well founded. Baptists are well known, they are part of the power structure. They are respected."

"Because of political realities, Christian work is always in a crisis situation. But they take the philosophical long views and keep on producing fruit for the Kingdom. They have superior leadership including missionaries, national pastors and laymen."

The Selfs spent much time counseling with pastors and missionaries in Hong Kong and Taipai.

"Their pastors sound just like our pastors here in America," he said. "I heard the identical questions from Chinese pastors that I heard from pastors in California and Georgia. They asked about church growth, church authority, preaching and the use of time."

"Every one we talked to was bitterly disappointed with President Jimmy Carter and his recognition of Red China," he said. "They are not anti-American, but they are definitely anti-Jimmy Carter."

"They see themselves as the legitimate government, as a developed nation and they feel America dealt with them as a 'non-nation' in giving official recognition to the Communist government of Red China.

"However, I was amazed at the philosophical outlook they have adopted about this setback. They have an ancient culture and they are taking a long view. They are handling the disappointment with genuine class."

"Our missionaries are keenly aware of this attitude," he said. "They are assuring Chinese leaders in Hong Kong and Taipei that missionaries are there to stay. Baptists will not leave the area."

Mrs. Self added, "We saw great freedom of religion in Hong Kong and Taipei and in some ways they are more free than we are in America.

"They can preach and pray in public schools and they can buy time for religious broadcast commercials on radio and television. They are harvesting seeds for the gospel sown across the centuries by missionaries and others of mainland China."

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Campus Police
Nab Suspect

Baptist Press
7/30/79

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A drill for the campus police at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary turned into a "true-to-life" event when off-duty policemen arrested an armed robbery suspect on the campus.

The seven-member squad had gathered for a drill on apprehension techniques used by policemen when they learned that an armed robbery had taken place a block east of the seminary.

Minutes later, a 25-year-old man, armed with a .38 calibre pistol, was seen on the campus. Patrolman Robert Davis apprehended him outside Spurgeon Hall, a dormitory for men. The man was later identified as a suspect in the armed robbery of a woman about a block from the campus.

The arrest was one of several campus police have made in recent months. Campus police have assisted New Orleans' policemen in the apprehension of several suspects in the area; have arrested several persons suspected of such things as breaking and entering and trespassing; and have helped break up a bicycle theft ring.

The campus force has changed greatly in recent months. It's been enlarged to seven armed, uniformed persons. Campus policemen are on duty around the clock and also answer calls at the off-campus apartment complex, about four miles from the campus.

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Revere Rides Again,
Warns Flood Coming

By Orville Scott

ALVIN, Texas (BP)--The spirit of Paul Revere rode the crest of the recent southeast Texas flood.

But instead of "the British are coming," Pat Brown, associate pastor of Chocolate Bayou Baptist Church, shouted, "Wake up, the water's rising," as he went from house to house.

Brown went outside about 1 a.m. to find the water rising fast in his yard near the church. He started phoning sleeping neighbors who weren't aware of the threat to their lives and property.

But the water was rising too fast. So Brown waded the flood waters knocking on doors of about 50 homes and inviting the people to come to the church gymnasium.

About 150 people spent the night and most of the following day in the gymnasium. A man whose vegetable stand was flooded brought what he could salvage to the church to help feed flood victims.

Eventually the church was flooded too, and the people had to be evacuated to the disaster relief center at Alvin Community College.

Pastor Bob Caperton, who was at an encampment with some of the church's youth, has high praise for the young associate pastor's fast action.

He also says the flood victims who were sheltered at Chocolate Bayou and other churches have gained a new appreciation of the church as "a refuge in the storm."

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1st Criswell-Robison
Bible Conference Set

Baptist Press
7/30/79

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (BP)--The Heart of America Bible Conference, the first of a series of Bible conferences across the nation sponsored by W. A. Criswell and James Robison, is scheduled in St. Louis.

The conference, which bills itself as "affirming the authority of the Word of God to strengthen pastors and churches through evangelism," will be held August 13-15 at Tower Grove Baptist Church.

Some have expressed fear that the conferences are simply the latest effort in a political struggle which erupted during the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston in June when messengers battled over biblical inerrancy.

But Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, and Robison, who heads the James Robison Evangelistic Association, say that fear is unfounded.

"To hold a meeting to map out programs of divisiveness would be disastrous," Criswell said in a telephone interview with the Word and Way, Missouri Baptist state newspaper. "Our ship is being swept under the waves of materialism and secularism. We must sound a positive note if we are to survive this storm."

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"We've given God our commitments and our talents," Criswell said. "It is in his hands. After our first meeting in St. Louis, we will know if we have something which God will bless."

"If this meeting has any negative repercussions," Criswell said, "I will not have anything to do with it. There is no spirit of divisiveness within me. I will help with these conferences only if they are wonderful things."

Robison declared that he wished "all the eyes of the Southern Baptist Convention" could look in on the conference in St. Louis. "They would love the spirit they see there. We are going to love one another and love the Lord through it all," he said.

The sponsors plan about 20 conferences, including one in each of the six cities where the SBC has seminaries. Conferences have already been set in the fall in Louisville, Ky., and Fort Worth, Texas, in cooperation with Southern and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminaries respectively. Other sites include Mobile, Ala., and Charlotte, N.C., according to Mike Huckabee, Robison's public relations director.

In late May, the presidents of the six SBC seminaries told Criswell they would support the efforts of Criswell and Robison to hold the conferences.

"Each president indicated he'd be glad to speak at the conferences provided they weren't political and did not involve attacks on Southern Baptist institutions," Milton Ferguson, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., said then.

Asked by the Word and Way about the absence of seminary representatives in the Heart of America program, Criswell said, "That is a problem that has to be worked out. They have to be included (in the future)."

Robison said he wants seminary presidents to speak at the conferences and would urge them to do so in the future. None were specifically invited to the St. Louis meeting, Huckabee said, adding, "There was no specific reason for them not to be invited and they will be in the future."

Robison said a major difference between the Heart of America conference, which will major on evangelistic inspirational preaching, and those in conjunction with SBC seminaries will be class time spent with seminary students.

Besides Robison and Criswell, program personnel at the first conference include Adrian Rogers, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.; James Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, and president of the SBC Pastors' Conference; Bailey Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla.; Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, Dallas; Jack Stanton, director of the Institute of Evangelism at Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Mo.; Larry Lewis, pastor of the host church; and Jerry Vines, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala.

After participating in a Robison-sponsored Bible conference, Criswell approached the evangelist about sponsoring regional Bible conferences in the major cities of the country. Criswell said he offered to participate in such conferences and pledged \$1,000 a month toward secretarial cost to get the conferences going. But because of his busy pastoral schedule, he turned the coordination over to Robison, who already had planned a series of such conferences.

Robison said the conference will not "harangue" an issue. "This will not be a time of my belief versus your belief. We will uphold the Bible and the biblical commissions."

The evangelist added that the conference will not back away from issues but it will not fight anyone's battles. "I don't care if you have been mistreated by someone. You have to have the spirit of Christ and the spirit of Christ is forgiveness. Vengeance belongs to God, not to man," said Robison.

"This conference will present Jesus and the truth. We are going to help people more fully love the Lord."

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story mailed 7-26-79 entitled "Bush Assumes Penn-Jersey Newspaper Production Role" please delete reference to New York in second paragraph. The Baptist Convention of New York has always published its own newspaper. The sentence should read, "Puckett had a similar arrangement with the publication for New England Southern Baptists."

Thanks,
Baptist Press