

(BP)

-- FEATURES  
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After 130 years, SBC Work  
With Chinese Growing Rapidly

By Craig Bird

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--With six, you get eggroll.

For Americans whose knowledge of Chinese culture is limited to reading the menu at Oriental restaurants, it may come as a surprise that, "with six" you can also communicate.

"A person who has working knowledge of five distinct dialects of Chinese, plus English, can 'get by' in working with Chinese-Americans today," Peter Kung, a liaison between the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board and the Baptist Sunday School Board, said.

Kung outlined the 130-year history of Southern Baptist work within the United States with Chinese for a recent joint meeting of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and the SBC Historical Society. He stressed the diversity of ethnic Chinese who make up significant portions of the U.S. population.

The story takes in Black Jack Pershing and Pancho Villa, railroads camps, plantations and laundries, emigration laws and the "boat people" of Southeast Asia--it is how and why Southern whites and Chinese immigrants worship a man who lived in the Middle East 2000 years ago.

"The (five) dialects I'm talking about are distinct," Kung explained. Unlike English, where a British accent and a Georgia drawl are unique but still compatible, different Chinese dialects may not overlap enough to allow communication. Mandarin and Cantonese are the most familiar, but it is not common knowledge that most of the "boat people" that have swarmed refugee camps around the world after being evicted or escaping from Vietnam and Cambodia are ethnic Chinese, according to Kung.

The first Southern Baptist work with Asians of any type was started in 1854 when James Lewis Shuck established the Chinese Chapel of the Baptist Church, Sacramento, Calif. In five years Shuck baptized 16 Chinese, including Ah Mooney and Ah Chak who went back to Canton, China, as preachers "in the service of" the Foreign Mission Board.

The struggling Southern Baptist Convention was unable to finance continued work with the Chinese in California but as Chinese workers followed the railroads into the South, work was continued. In the 1870s, missionaries were appointed to work among the 600 Chinese building the Alabama-Chatanooga Railroad and with the 1,500 contract farm workers that came from China to the fields of Georgia, Mississippi and Arkansas.

Work was resumed in California in 1879 with a mission and a night school in San Francisco and Lo Pipng Ki was baptized into membership of First Baptist Church, San Francisco in 1880. That same year the First Chinese Baptist Church of San Francisco was organized with nine members. In 1898, 1,000 Chinese railroad workers were in El Paso, Texas--known then as the Chinese Mecca of the South--and the First Baptist Church of that city began a Chinese mission.

Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., followed a typical pattern in establishing Chinese work. In 1859 Miss Claudia White, a missionary on furlough from China, challenged the church's Woman's Missionary Society to begin a Sunday school for the Chinese of the nation's capitol. Two women responded, visited all the laundries of the city and invited the men to Sunday school the following week. Eighteen Chinese accepted the invitation. The group became mission minded and supported white and Chinese theological students in Canton.

Unknowingly, Gen. John "Black Jack" Pershing and his Mexican revolutionary nemesis, Pancho Villa, contributed to Southern Baptist work with the Chinese. A large number of Chinese who had migrated to Mexico assisted Pershing as he chased Villa back and forth across the Rio Grande. Villa publicly vowed to kill the "Chinos" as soon as the opportunity arrived, so when Pershing withdrew in 1917 between 500 and 700 Chinese entered the United States with him.

The United States government suspended the Chinese Exclusion Act for them and, "speaking in Spanish and smiling in Chinese," hundreds received U.S. citizenship and settled in San Antonio, Texas. John Milton began a ministry among the newly arrived group and about 12 other Chinese families who had settled in the San Antonio area earlier as farmers. In 1923 the First Chinese Baptist Church of San Antonio was organized with four Chinese and five Anglo members. Today it has more than 200.

Work in Phoenix started with another novel twist. A terminally ill deacon of Central Baptist Church had his pastor relate a message from him at his funeral. Through his pastor W.C. Henderson begged his Chinese friends to forgive him for not witnessing to them. The following Sunday, in 1937, the Chinese Mission was organized.

In New York, Baltimore, St. Louis and numerous other pockets of Chinese population, Christianity became a bridge between Anglos and Chinese. Ironically, one of the first cracks in the wall of prejudice surrounding the Chinese showed up in the Deep South.

In 1930, Southern Baptist pastors in Greenville, Miss., convinced the local school board to organize the first school for Chinese children in the United States, Kung said. And in 1945 Greenville became the first town to allow Chinese children to attend the regular public school.

Today there are 130 "units" of Chinese work connected with the Southern Baptist Convention. The Chinese Baptist church in Los Angeles has 800 members and has 1,400 in Sunday School. The Chinese Baptist churches in Phoenix and Houston each have 900 members. By 1990 the SBC is planning to organize 600 new units.

Help in starting some of those units may come from a surprising source--Hong Kong.

Cowloon City Baptist Church in Hong Kong is the largest Chinese church of any type, according to Oscar Romo, language missions director of the SBC Home Mission Board. The 4,000 member congregation has offered to provide financial support for their longtime pastor, Daniel Cheung, "anywhere" the HMB wants to work with Chinese-Americans in the United States.

"Chinese work in the United States today is similar to early Southern Baptist work in the North," Romo said. "The key is fellowship. Just like the first SBC churches in the north were fueled by a need for fellowship, the key to new Chinese units is the fact they can find fellowship with other Chinese Christians."

Kung, who was the first national SBC worker to Asians, thinks most Southern Baptists would be surprised if they studied the membership roles of Chinese Baptist churches. "Many people think Chinese and common laborer are the same thing," he said. But, while Chinese did build the railroads, work the Southern plantations and run the laundries, "Chinese immigrants were never all coolies," according to Kung.

"The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, applied only to laborers so Chinese professionals were still coming into the United States until it was repealed in 1943," he said. "Then after the 1965 Immigration Act, it was mostly professional Chinese that could come into the country."

Kung is a good example. He and his wife were both born in China and moved to Hong Kong with their families at an early age. He attended a Baptist college in Hong Kong before coming to the United States and earning an advanced degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. His father became a Christian after hearing Kung preach in California.

The problems of Chinese SBC work are still large. Chinese-language literature must be ordered from the Hong Kong publishing house operated by the SBC's Foreign Mission Board, most of the prime areas to begin new work are located in the northern states where Southern Baptist state conventions are financially weakest and fulltime SBC workers with Asians are few.

But with 130 years of history pushing the effort, and ambitious plans for the future pulling, Southern Baptists plan to stay in the middle of sharing Christianity with the Chinese.

Two Golden Gate  
Faculty Promoted

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--F. Daniel Boling and Jerry M. Stubblefield have been advanced to full professorships at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

Stubblefield, professor of religious education and director of the seminary's continuing education program, joined the faculty in 1977. He earned the bachelor of arts degree from Belmont College and the master of arts from George Peabody College for Teachers, both in Nashville, Tenn. He also holds bachelor of divinity, master of religious education and doctor of education degrees from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Boling, professor of religious education, was appointed to the Golden Gate faculty in 1973. He received the bachelor of arts degree from Baylor University, Waco, Texas, and bachelor of divinity, master of religious education, master of divinity and doctor of education degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

The trustees also approved sabbatical leaves for three faculty members for 1984-85: William L. Hendricks, professor of theology and philosophy of religion, will study multi-ethnic theology in Southeast Asia; Samuel Y.C. Tang, associate professor of Old Testament interpretation, will study Semitic languages in New York and Connecticut, and Stubblefield will serve as a special consultant to several Southern Baptist associations in Nevada.

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Baptist Scouting Founder,  
Joe Carrington Dies

Baptist Press  
5/18/83

AUSTIN, Texas (BP)--Joe Carrington, 88, who founded the Association of Baptists For Scouting in 1954, died May 14 after suffering a stroke.

He was a member of Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin and a long time Baptist deacon.

The Association of Baptists For Scouting now includes 7,000 Southern Baptist churches who have Boy Scout troops.

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Two Extension Directors  
Tapped For National Award

Baptist Press  
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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Each fall and spring for at least ten years, V.E. Temple and Alton B. Greene have directed--and often taught--Seminary Extension classes in their areas. Both have been named to receive a 1983 national Extension Center Director Award from the Seminary Extension Department.

"Hundreds of persons have been exposed to theological education through the work of these two men," said Paul E. Robertson, director of extension center education for the SED. "Working 800 miles apart, they each developed and maintained outstanding programs for ministry training in their associations."

Temple is a retired minister in Texarkana, Texas, while Greene is director of missions for Central Baptist Association, Albuquerque, N.M.

Both men can point to several local pastors who received almost all of their formal training through Seminary Extension. In some cases, ministers who began studying in the local extension center later went on to earn college or seminary degrees.

By offering at least four and sometimes as many as ten courses per year, the two center directors have tried to encourage their students to work toward earning a sixteen-course Seminary Extension diploma.

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The success of their centers is more than an individual effort, however, both men insist. "I am a team player, and I owe a debt to all who work with me on the team," said Greene. Temple added, "I feel somewhat like the pastor who was honored for the things his church was doing!"

Formal recognition of the two is scheduled June 13, during the director of missions conference prior to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Pittsburgh.

The Texarkana and Albuquerque centers were among 391 affiliated with the Seminary Extension Department last year. A large majority of these centers were operated through local Baptist associations.

The SED is a part of the Seminary External Education Division, a jointly sponsored arm of the six Southern Baptist seminaries, with offices in Nashville.

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CORRECTION--In (BP) story "Women In Church Vocations Meeting Set For Pittsburgh" mailed 5/12/83, please insert underlined material at end of third paragraph: to discover what we are about and to decide what shape our organization might take in the future.

Thanks,  
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Senate Panel Set To Shelve  
Reagan Prayer Amendment

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press  
5/18/83

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment to return state-written prayers to public school classrooms reportedly has been scuttled by a Senate subcommittee in favor of a milder version.

Reliable sources close to the Senate Subcommittee on the Constitution told Baptist Press when the panel meets May 20 to take up the volatile question of prayer in schools, Reagan's amendment is likely to be set aside. In its place, the same sources say, a new proposed amendment will be considered, this one calling for silent prayer and reflection and for "equal access" to school property by groups of students for voluntary religious meetings.

The decision to set aside the President's proposal apparently was made by subcommittee Chairman Orrin G. Hatch, normally a staunch Reagan ally on Capitol Hill, after two days of hearings April 29 and May 2 on the White House amendment. During those hearings Hatch hinted the Reagan language might not survive the subcommittee's deliberations.

Numerous witnesses, including Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs Executive Director James M. Dunn, warned adoption of the Reagan amendment would return state-written and state-mandated prayer to the classrooms. Dunn pointed to a White House document issued a year ago when Reagan first announced his intention to fight for a school prayer amendment stating "if groups of people are permitted to pray, someone must have the power to determine the content of such prayers." The content, the statement said, would be decided by state legislatures or local school boards.

In spite of such statements and over the objections of Dunn, the Southern Baptist Convention last June overwhelmingly adopted a resolution declaring in part: "This proposed amendment does not constitute a call for government-written or government-mandated prayer."

Hatch apparently has decided to shelve the Reagan amendment in part because the Utah senator and others on the panel realized the President's proposal could not be implemented on the local level without such government sponsorship.

In spite of its change of direction, the subcommittee is expected to act quickly and favorably on the new proposal and send it on to the full Judiciary Committee for action. If the full committee approves it, the amendment would then go to the Senate floor for debate.

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Church History Valuable  
To Present And Future

By Leisa A. Hammett

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A knowledge of church history is important for Southern Baptists according to Charles W. Deweese.

Deweese, director of editorial services for the Southern Baptist Historical Commission, told 600 participants at church history workshops in Brentwood and Knoxville: "If we never evaluate our church and denominational history, we really don't have a good standard for dealing with today and moving into tomorrow."

The church historian commented the "study of religious history has a biblical basis. Large portions of the Bible are historical accounts. Furthur, the teachings of Jesus, reveal his exceptional knowledge of the history of Israel."

The study of church and denominational history will help Southern Baptists sort through challenges and controversies, Deweese added. He identified several factors which he said compel Southern Baptists to know their heritage.

"The acceptance into Southern Baptist churches of large numbers of members who know little or nothing about our denominational and local church heritage is a major source of concern," h said. "The failure of many churches to educate members properly in the richness of basic Baptist history and convictions works against responsible churchmanship and denominational loyalty and makes it difficult for members to bear an intelligent witness for the Baptist faith."

Deweese also said the rise of "quasi-Southern Baptist educational institutions and publications" in the past years "create a significant challenge for Southern Baptists who are not firm in the faith of their fathers. Commitment to such enterprises frequently occurs at the expense of denominational support."

He pointed to the rise of the "electronic church, with its call for an easy, non-demanding discipleship" as a threat to Baptists who are not solidly committed to the bold convictions of their heritage.

As a final factor, he referred to current controversies within the 13.9 million member denomination. "Knowledge of Southern Baptist heritage will aid our assessment of controversies and help keep us from being pulled into extremist positions that violate the fundamental principles of the Baptist reason for being," he said.

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CORRECTION--In (BP) story "RTVC's Allen Say All Systems Go For May '84 Launch of TV Network" mailed 5/11/83, in seventh paragraph, please insert underlined material: gives minority broadcasters and first time broadcasters a two-to-one advantage...

Thanks,  
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