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88-155

Top Olympic champ
may be Park Seh Jik

By Erich Bridges

F-FMB

SEOUL, South Korea (BP)--Park Seh Jik won no gold medals in Seoul, but the Olympics might not have taken place without him.

His moment in the sun was brief -- perhaps five minutes at the Olympic opening ceremonies as he officially welcomed the world to the games and introduced Korean President Roh Tae Woo. He seldom was seen on U.S. television afterward.

But Baptist layman Park Seh Jik may be the biggest winner to emerge from the 24th Olympiad. As president of the Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee, Park has carried the staggering task of bringing off a successful Olympics. And with the cooperation of much of the South Korean population, he apparently has succeeded.

A number of political observers are speculating Park also might eventually succeed Roh as president of South Korea.

"He's the Peter Ueberroth of Korea," says one Park admirer, recalling the American businessman who masterminded the organization and commercial success of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

Park and his fellow Koreans, however, overcame far greater obstacles than Ueberroth ever imagined.

Only the second Asian nation to win the honor of playing host to the Summer Olympics -- Japan was the first -- little South Korea first faced the prospect of billions of dollars in preparation costs. Then came the possibility of a mass boycott by communist nations. Less than a year ago, the nation found itself in the midst of historic but violent political changes that threatened to sink the games entirely or move them to another country.

And hovering over it all was the persistent specter of terrorism or even military action against the games by North Korea.

Despite these problems, plus continuing student protests and a relatively low turnout of foreign visitors, the Olympics went on in grand style. They may even turn a profit, thanks to television, marketing and the well-publicized Korean genius for business.

The stakes were as high as they could be for the nation. The Koreans viewed the Olympics as a once-in-history chance to showcase for the world their determined journey from war-ravaged stepchild status to international prominence. Much of the enormous pressure to deliver fell on Park and his 1,000-member Olympic committee staff. They delivered, mobilizing the entire nation in a total effort to get ready for the games.

"I can see that God used the events of my life to lead me to this point," Park told Decision, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association magazine.

Born near Taegu, Park spent his early years in Pusan. There he became a Christian through the influence of an Australian missionary. He fought in the Korean War as a teen-age volunteer, then became a cadet at the national military academy, where he founded and led a Christian fellowship association.

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He rose steadily through ranks, earning two master's degrees along the way and retiring from the military in 1981 as a major general and commander of Seoul's Capital Security Command. He spent several years in business in high management positions before entering government, where he catapulted from deputy directorship of the national intelligence agency to the top posts in the ministries of administration and sports. In 1986 came the coveted presidency of the Olympic committee as the nation prepared for the final push to the games.

"He's a man of unusual leadership ability," says Southern Baptist missionary O.K. Bozeman, a longtime friend. "He recognizes talent and knows how to use it."

Park, who speaks fluent English and French, also acquired a reputation as a skilled trouble-shooter while carrying out a number of sensitive government missions at home and abroad. That experience helped him cope with the myriad headaches associated with coordinating the Olympics.

Observers say he belongs to the new breed of Korean political leaders in the mold of his friend and ally, President Roh -- military men who have attained both administrative sophistication and a recognition of South Korea's readiness for democracy.

Despite his many responsibilities, he remains an active member and deacon at Seoul's Yoido Baptist Church, where he attends worship services and a 6 a.m. men's Bible study every Sunday. His family holds daily devotions at home.

"My faith is the foundation of everything I do," Park says. "It served as a sublime inspiration in our preparations for the Olympics. My only regret is that because of my schedule I occasionally miss my time for prayer. However, I try not to wander from the teaching of the Bible."

Bozeman adds that Park "speaks out every chance he gets for the Lord. He's very careful to let everyone know there's religious freedom in Korea and that everyone has the same opportunity he has. He's evangelistic in his own way. He doesn't go out and thump a Bible, but he lets you know he is a believer in Jesus Christ."

If their Olympic achievement symbolizes the Koreans' long trek to greatness, perhaps Park symbolizes the emergence of Korean Christians, who now comprise a quarter of the population.

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

Committee advances hymnal
toward 1991 publication

By Charles Willis

N-SSB

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE (BP)--Decisions in the first plenary meeting of the committee to produce a new Southern Baptist hymnal have advanced the denominational project toward its 1991 publication goal.

The 78-member committee unanimously approved recommendations from several subcommittees and evaluated the future use of individual hymns from the 1975 edition of the "Baptist Hymnal" during its Sept. 22-23 meeting at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.

A topical organization of contents to be based on the 1963 "Baptist Faith and Message" statement was unanimously approved for the new hymnal. The three broad categories for hymns are titled "The Glory of God," "The People of God" and "The Witness of the People of God." Nearly 70 subcategories of hymn topics were approved for possible use in classifying hymns.

Other matters proposed by the worship aids subcommittee and approved unanimously include the use of the King James, New International, New American Standard and Revised Standard versions of the Bible for responsive readings and inclusion of poetry, prose, readings, prayers, portions of the "Baptist Faith and Message" statement and traditional Christian art symbols among the worship aids.

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Some 350 hymns, including hymns from the 1975 edition of the "Baptist Hymnal" and new material, received majority votes for inclusion in the new hymnal, which is expected to exceed 600 pages. Committee members referred to concerns expressed by Southern Baptists through correspondence and research surveys on hymn usage and preferences in making their decisions.

Recommendations from the design/organization subcommittee dealing with page format, indices, paper, bindings and cover materials received unanimous approval.

Wesley L. Forbis, editor-in-chief of the hymnal and director of the Sunday School Board's church music department, told members of the committee the hymnbook must be one "of singable musical settings for the congregation and a theological statement of great significance."

The next plenary meeting of the hymnal committee will be April 6-7, 1989, to select additional materials from sources other than the 1975 hymnal for inclusion in the new worship book, Forbis said. Subcommittees will continue work by mail, he said, and will meet as necessary in early 1989 to prepare for the full committee meeting.

Final content decisions will be based on a balance of hymn subject areas, both among materials from the current hymnal and new materials.

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(BP)photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press

Budget crunch endangers
missionary appointments

By Robert O'Brien

N-FMB

Baptist Press
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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists soon will face a reduction in the number of foreign missionary appointments unless they head off a growing money crunch, Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks warned.

Continued squeezing and cutback of budgets will cause the convention's foreign missions agency to reach the point in the near future where it "cannot continue to appoint all the qualified missionary candidates who are ready to go," Parks told a two-day gathering of executive directors of Baptist state conventions.

He urged the state executives to take a more aggressive approach in communicating the needs and problems to Southern Baptists because, he said, "the future of what happens in our denomination" depends on it. Twenty-three state executives attended the meeting. Southern Baptists have 37 conventions and four fellowships covering work in 50 states and Puerto Rico.

Parks mixed optimism with his assessment that the world's largest evangelical missions effort is in jeopardy.

He assured the state leaders that, despite pessimism about finances, the FMB "doesn't intend to make plans as though it's going out of business." The board, he said, still is committed to the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust goals to proclaim the Christian message to the entire world by the year 2000.

"We're planning as though Southern Baptists are still serious about trying to share the gospel with the whole world," he said. "We're planning from now to the year 2000 as if we have no financial or personnel problems.

"But while we're planning, we're trying to work on the problems" created by an eroding pattern of giving to the national Cooperative Program budget and annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions.

FMB Bold Mission Thrust goals call for 5,000 missionaries in 125 countries by 2000. Those and other Bold Mission Thrust goals are on track, Parks said, but will fall by the wayside if Southern Baptists do not match bold goals with bold giving. The board now has 3,842 missionaries in 113 countries.

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Foreign Mission Board responses to the money crunch have included calling on missionaries and home office staff to re-evaluate all expenditures, reassess programs and strategies, and cut 1989 operating budgets 12 percent.

Appointment of all qualified missionary candidates historically has motivated Southern Baptists to support missions, Parks said. A pattern of cutting budgets and appointments could create a disastrous downward spiral of commitment and support which would be difficult to reverse "if and when things turn and money starts coming again," he added.

Such a spiral would result in an excuse for Southern Baptists to do less, rather than being challenged to do more, Parks predicted. "When you cut off the flow of missionary personnel, you undercut a lot of motivation for giving," he said, explaining, "We've deliberately made every effort to appoint all qualified missionaries available through the years."

As the FMB spends more and more on missionary support and less and less on operating budgets, many missionaries, who generate personnel requests, are beginning to think they cannot keep on asking for personnel, Parks said. "I can't describe how tragic that will be for the whole denomination, not just this agency. It'll have an adverse impact on all that we're doing. My prayer is that we can avoid it, that we can keep on appointing everybody qualified to go -- and some way find the money to do it."

Twenty-five years ago, he said, the board spent about one-third of its budget on missionary support and two-thirds on capital and operating needs. The projected 1989 budget includes 62 percent for missionary support.

That cost continues to rise, while Southern Baptists continue to fall short of Lottie Moon goals and barely keep pace with inflation in Cooperative Program giving.

The projected 1989 budget calls for \$95,000 less than the 1988 budget, the first FMB budget decrease since the 1930s, Parks said. The FMB has cut back on operating budgets to absorb new missionaries and continue to provide full support to the current mission force.

Ironically, the giving crunch comes at a time when both the states and the FMB have "windows of opportunity open wider than ever before," FMB Executive Vice President Bill O'Brien told the state executive directors.

During the briefing for the state leaders, Parks, O'Brien and others outlined a wide range of strategies aimed at creating a Christian witness of some type in every nation of the world and at reaching and exceeding Bold Mission Thrust goals in such areas as countries entered, missionaries appointed, people baptized, churches started lay volunteers sent, and others.

But they feel the unprecedented opportunities are offset by an uncertain future, as Southern Baptists wrestle with regional economic problems and continuing political and theological controversy.

Parks pledged to state executives that these factors will not cause the board to maintain a do-nothing, business-as-usual, status quo stance. And, he said, political considerations will not influence FMB decisions.

The sole purpose for decisions made by the board, he said, must revolve around how "we can make the greatest impact for reaching this world for Jesus Christ." Parks pledged that the board will continue to probe, experiment, fine tune its approaches, and take risks to make that impact.

"It's very difficult these days to make any change or decision without somebody wondering what your motive must have been," he conceded. "But we're committed to running those kinds of risks because we think they're essential. If we continue trying to do business as usual, there's no way Southern Baptists are going to touch the whole world for Christ."

Elaborating on FMB response to political controversy, Parks added: "We're not to my knowledge making any consideration or any decisions from a political motivation. It's been most distressing to us to find our people questioning, to find their commitment to missions a little uneasy" because they believe some decisions have been forced on the board.

"I hope we can allow decisions to stand and be evaluated on their own merit," he said.

During the meeting, Parks responded to questions about two such decisions, the firing of missionary Michael Willett on theological grounds and the creation of the FMB's 70-30 plan. Both actions, he said, were recommended by staff, not by trustees of any political persuasion.

Parks reiterated that Willett was examined and asked to resign in the same manner the FMB would have used before any denominational crisis existed. "Not a single board member talked to me about what I should do," he said, added theological beliefs of six missionaries have been reviewed during his presidency and two, including Willett, have been asked to resign.

The 70-30 approach is a plan using rough numbers to indicate that about 70 percent of the missionaries eventually should move toward giving at least half their work time to evangelism that results in churches, he explained.

The FMB's Global Strategy Group of top administrators implemented the approach as part of a 10-year goal to sharpen the focus on such outreach, not lay down inflexible standards.

The board's failure to communicate properly may have contributed to "incorrect interpretations that it was created with a political agenda in mind and would result in removal of missionary specialists," such as medical personnel, agriculturists, teachers, publications workers and others, he said. Many of those specialists already give a lot of time to evangelism, he added.

Parks called on Southern Baptists to pull together to overcome the crisis: "The way we've moved together in the past has been a unification around missions. Denominations which have tried to unify around something else don't have the track record we have in terms of working together, mission outreach, evangelism, church growth or whatever measurement you want to make.

"We don't have any option but to work together to reach the world for Christ -- with all the words we've said, with our insistence on being biblically based and mission in our origin and purpose. We just don't have any option."

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Noted biblical scholar,
William H. Morton, dies

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(MWBTS)

Baptist Press
9/28/88

KANSAS CITY, MO. (BP)--William H. Morton, 73, professor emeritus of biblical archaeology at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, died Sept. 22 following an extended illness.

In 1958, Morton was the second faculty member enlisted by Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. He retired from full-time teaching in December 1983 but continued as senior professor through July 1985.

Morton was a biblical scholar and recognized authority in biblical archaeology. In 1985, Morton presented Midwestern Seminary with an extensive collection of artifacts that he gathered during nearly 40 years of travel in the Middle East.

He graduated from Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, Mo., in 1934 and Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield, Mo., in 1938. He earned master's and doctor's degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. Prior to coming to Midwestern, Morton served on the Southern Seminary faculty from 1948 to 1958.

He was the author of the "Broadman Bible Commentary" chapter on Joshua and was a contributor to the "Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible" and "The Biblical World; A Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology."

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NOTE: Page 4 was omitted from the 9/27/88 mailed issue of Baptist Press. Please insert this page in the page 4 slot of that BP.

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Page 4

Baptist Press

He offered suggestions for evaluating and comparing medical plans to people who are approached by other insurance agents:

- How long are the rates guaranteed?
- What are the maximum benefits?
- What is the time period for receiving benefits? For example: How many days in the hospital are covered?
- What and how many deductibles must be paid? Are they "per-cause" or are they "one-time payments"?
- How much must be paid before the insurance pays 100 percent? What percentage of the coinsurance does the individual pay, and what percentage does the insurance company pay?
- Does the plan pay for hospital room and board? If so, how much? If it pays "X" dollars per day, how does this compare with costs in your city?
- How is surgery covered?
- Are inpatient and outpatient mental/nervous disorders covered?
- Is maternity coverage provided? What are the benefits?
- How is dependent coverage handled?
- What does the policy say about pre-existing conditions?
- Does the plan have a special prescription drug program?

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Baptists increase hunger awareness
but give less than cost of meal

By Gary Gunderson

F - HMB
Baptist Press
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ATLANTA (BP)--In Waco, Texas, a church member sees her neighbor salvaging food from the church dumpster; she helps her church start a food pantry. In Florida, a home missionary sees people scavenging discarded produce; he begins an associational food distribution project.

Events as simple as these have opened the eyes of Southern Baptists to the problems of world hunger. It was only a decade ago, on the first Wednesday night in August, that scattered Southern Baptist congregations observed the first conventionwide hunger emphasis.

Three years later, the emphasis moved to the first Sunday in October. It is now an official part of the denominational calendar, an event noted by churches across the nation.

Just 10 years ago, asking a Southern Baptist church for food was chancy. Only a handful knew what to do. Today, thousands have food ministries.

Union Baptist Association in Houston reports that 152 of its 240 cooperating churches have some type of food program. The Missouri Baptist Convention estimates three-fourths of its churches either stock food pantries or participate in local food distribution networks.

Hunger came into Southern Baptists' living rooms in the mid-1970s, as television networks dramatized a devastating famine in Ethiopia. The issue was personalized by denominational hunger coverage in both MissionsUSA and The Commission, publications of the Southern Baptist Home and Foreign mission boards.

In 1978, 450 Southern Baptist leaders met at Ridgecrest, N.C., to discuss hunger concerns. As a result, hunger awareness found a place on the denominational calendar.

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