



American Baptist News Service

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Chinese Christian Leader Dies at Age 98 Leaving Legacy of ‘Love That Never Ends’

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 11/29/12)—Bishop K. H. Ting, prominent leader of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement and the China Christian Council, longstanding partners of American Baptist International Ministries (IM), passed away on November 22, 2012 at the age of 98 in Nanjing, China.

Bishop Ting, born in 1915, was a highly respected leader of Chinese Christians. In 1985, Ting together with other Christian leaders organized the Amity Foundation, a Christian faith-based organization to meet the needs of people and to glorify God’s name. It was through his vision, leadership and support that Amity Foundation entered into cooperation and ecumenical partnership with churches around the world, according to Ting’s obituary.

Representing American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) and IM at the funeral service in Nanjing was Rev. David Wong. Wong is a special assistant to the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Chan, IM Area Director for China, India and East Asia. Wong brought letters of condolence from ABCUSA and IM leadership to the family of Bishop Ting, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, the China Christian Council and the Amity Foundation.

“‘Love never ends’ and ‘The Bible unites us,’ are two simple, but powerful, statements used by Bishop Ting to guide the development of the church in China and ecumenical relationships,” summarized Chan. “They create tremendous impact over the Chinese churches and society and the global Christian community.”

Since reopening the Protestant churches in China in 1979, the China Christian Council has grown to over 55,000 member churches and meeting points. They are ministered by 3,700 pastors including 1,000 woman pastors, 5,500 elders, 27,000 evangelists, and 150,000 lay pastors and leaders.

“Bishop Ting was an extraordinary leader in the Church,” recalled the Rev. Dr. Roy Medley, general secretary of ABCUSA. “Under his careful guidance, the Church in China flourished and experienced its richest period of growth and service as a truly indigenous expression of the gospel. He will be greatly missed, not only in China but in the church ecumenical,” Medley continued.

In a joint condolence letter, Dr. Medley and the Rev. Dr. Reid Trulson, IM executive director, highlighted Ting’s contributions and commitment to Christianity in China:

“Bishop Ting demonstrated his commitment and gifts for Christian ministry in his early stage of service. His decision to return to serve in China in the 1950s when he served with World Student Christian

Federation in Geneva reflects his passion and enthusiasm for the church and society of his motherland. We are touched by how Bishop Ting reaffirmed his Christian faith trusting that love never ends in time of joy and in struggling situations. His theological reflection of humanity being God's creation in the making rather than a finished product, and the continuing effort of rooting Christian faith in the Chinese social and cultural context has pushed us to re-examine the kind of static and perfection-claimed theology and dogma."

Bishop Ting served in a number of significant positions, namely Chair/ Honorary Chair of the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China, the President/ Honorary President of China Christian Council, the Principal/ Honorary President of the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, as well as Founding President/ President of the Board of the Amity Foundation. Bishop Ting also served in the distinguished positions of Standing Committee member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and a delegate of the National People's Congress.

From advocating the three-self principles to promoting the "three wells" of churches, from preparing seminary faculty to improving the quantity and quality of theological seminaries, from forming the China Christian Council to strengthen pastoral care to establishing the Amity Foundation to engage Chinese Christians to serve their neighbors, from printing 50,000 copies of the Bibles in year 1980 to the marvelous achievement of printing 100 million Bibles by the Amity Printing Company in year 2012, from the effort of contextualization to theological re-construction, from building the Church in China in a post-denominational era to establishing ecumenical relationship to promoting mutual learning and respect, these developments reflect the fulfillment of Ting's vision and his sacrificial commitment and tireless ministry involvement.

In the 1984 Yearbook of American Baptist Churches in the USA, it is recorded that when Bishop Ting was asked about the reason of the growth and revival of the churches in China, he shared in his usual wise manner, "Evangelism happens where Christian people live and work."

"American Baptists are privileged to support the effort of the Church in China in both direct relationship and through ecumenical effort under the leadership of Bishop Ting," concluded Medley and Trulson. "We praise God for the servanthood ministry and prophetic voice of Bishop Ting and many fruits he bore."

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American Baptist International Ministries (IM) was organized in 1814 as the first Baptist international mission agency in America. It began its pioneer mission work in Burma and today works in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas serving more than 1,800 long-term and short-term missionaries. Its central mission is to help people come to faith in Jesus, grow in their relationship with God, and change their worlds through the power of the Spirit. It works with respected partners in over 70 countries in ministries that meet human need.

American Baptist Churches is one of the most diverse Christian denominations today, with over 5,200 local congregations comprised of 1.3 million members, across the United States and Puerto Rico, all engaged in God's mission around the world.