



STATEMENT DL065

Truthfulness of TBN's "China Cry" Movie Called into Question

Critics are charging that the heroine in the \$7 million film *China Cry* produced by the Trinity Broadcasting Network, bears little resemblance to the true-life figure.

That individual — San Jose, California evangelist Nora Lam, whose dramatic escape from Communist China is portrayed in the movie — is now under fire for ethical and financial problems.

Los Angeles Christian talk show host John Stewart has noted that little in the film can be documented, including Lam's alleged escape from a firing squad and a miraculous event in which God supposedly kept her pregnant for nearly a year to enable her to flee to Hong Kong before giving birth. Stewart also investigated other aspects of Lam's life and has publicly dubbed the film as "China Lie."

Despite the hubbub, the film, which is TBN's first attempt at producing a major motion picture, has received generous reviews from both Christian and secular film critics. It opened in 135 theaters nationally in November, and is scheduled to be in many more theaters within the year.

But the controversy is hurting TBN's chances of earning its investment money back as some Christian groups are raising questions about the film and not endorsing it due to controversy surrounding Lam's ministry and character — controversy which has apparently existed in different quarters of the church for some time.

According to the January 14, 1991 *Christianity Today*, the National Association of Evangelicals turned down Lam's ministry application for membership in 1989, and in 1977 the Assemblies of God warned its ministers that "Nora Lam is not endorsed" by its Division of Foreign Missions and is not recommended as a speaker at church services.

The film is advertised as a love story since it shows how young Nora Lam was pitted against her husband, and how she engineered their escape into Hong Kong. The story ends with Lam and her husband being reunited. But according to testimony given in the December 1, 1990 *San Jose Mercury News*, once in Hong Kong, Lam divorced her husband (allegedly due to physical abuse) and moved to America with her second husband, S. K. Sung — who was still married to someone else.

The Rev. Paul Kauffman, Lam's pastor in Hong Kong at the time, was quoted in the *San Jose Mercury News* (December 1, 1990) as saying that he never advised Lam to divorce her husband, and that "she ran away with an elder in my congregation," who left his wife behind.

Once in America, Lam built a ministry that takes in an estimated \$2.5 million per year. And many critics have surfaced alleging that Lam has been involved in a pattern of fund-raising improprieties (e.g., pressuring individuals for money that was not really needed, and was not used for the cause represented. See *Christianity Today*, January 14, 1991).

Lam has been on TBN with founders Paul and Jan Crouch lambasting her critics. And Lam's son, Joseph, has called her critics "dart-throwers" who are "motivated by jealousy and vendettas," according to published reports. But Lam and her staff have not responded to specific allegations made by Stewart and others interviewed by the media.