



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
Telephone (615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Billy Keith, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lynn M. Davis, Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203, Telephone (615) 254-1631
RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (703) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Carrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

August 24, 1971

**Japan Baptists Plan Gradual
Self-Support, Local Control**

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OSAKA, JAPAN (BP)--Messengers to the annual sessions of the Japan Baptist Convention voted to restructure their organization, beginning on a gradual scale in 1973.

According to actions taken at the Amagi Baptist Assembly, the place and importance of the convention as an organization will be de-emphasized and its activities will be centered in local churches and associations.

Plans were set to replace foreign aid with a local cooperative offering within the next seven years. Exceptions from the self-supporting program are convention institutions such as the Japan Baptist Hospital in Kyoto and the theological seminary in Fukuoka.

Studies are underway as to how these can be supported in the future, reported Southern Baptist Missionary A. L. (Pete) Gillespie.

The restructuring will reduce the convention's Tokyo headquarters staff to seven or eight persons, Gillespie said.

President-elect Shuichi Matsumura, who will take office Jan. 1, 1972, said he approves the shift in emphasis from central influence to local churches and associations, but he warned that the churches must develop their laymen to participate in the new emphasis.

Matsumura, pastor of Tokiwadai Baptist Church and a past vice president of the Baptist World Alliance, criticized young, in-experienced pastors who are "out of touch with reality." He said the mere absence of foreign aid will not bring self-support and independence unless the churches become stronger and engage in "perennial evangelism."

Chairman Kawaguchi of the convention's evangelism department said he was pleased that there was so little infighting this year, but said he was discouraged over the number of pastors--he estimated 40 per cent--whose faith appears to be shifting from an evangelistic emphasis to social and political activity.

One pastor said he approves of self-support and cooperation but doubts that the rank and file of his colleagues understand all the implications of these practices. He, as well as with workers in the women's department, expressed hope that the "broad vision of a lost world will not be lost in a narrow effort to become independent," Gillespie said.

A young laymen attending his first convention said he was surprised that the discussions evoked such "unchristian attitudes" among the participants in general sessions. He added however, that there was "much good fellowship and encouragement to become a better Christian" in the meetings in the delegates's rooms.

Executive Secretary Yoshikazu Nakashima summed up the convention meeting this way:

"Everyone is in favor of self-support and cooperation, but we still do not have a program adequate to realize our dream. Even the so-called radical group within our number realizes that our convention cannot live unless we learn to cooperate.

"We are turning a corner historically in our work and we must be careful to make the right turn. The tempo of the meeting was slow. There was much less noise and squabbling than usual. Everyone appeared to want to work hard and well, but we left much undone," Nakashima concluded.

Southern Baptist missionaries in Japan also met recently at the Amagi Assembly and heard an interim report from its strategy study committee. A Japan Baptist Mission strategy for the '70s is in the making and should be implemented in 1972, Gillespie said.

The Japan Baptist Convention is the name of the organization composed of delegates from Japanese Baptist churches' while the Japan Baptist Mission is the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Japan.

As will the convention, the mission will undertake in 1973 a new organizational format designed to streamline its official structure and reduce operating costs.

The mission approved requests of the convention for assistance in operating and capital expenses for 1972.

"It was noted with satisfaction," reported Gillespie, "that the convention is proposing to eliminate the need for help in operating expenses within the next seven years." Capital requests are at an all-time low, he added.

The mission asked the SBC Foreign Mission Board for 26 personnel units (a unit is a couple or single person) for church development and 11 units for institutional and other types of work.

In addition, three missionary journeymen and one summer missionary are needed, the mission said.

The mission elected Stanley P. Howard Jr. of Texas, chairman; Edward L. Oliver of Florida, vice chairman; Mrs. Joy Fenner of Texas, secretary; Melvin Bradshaw of Virginia, press representative; and Robert H. Culpepper of Georgia, chairman of the evangelism committee. Marion F. Morehead of South Carolina is treasurer.

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Texas Church Calls Claypool

8/24/71

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FORT WORTH (BP)--John R. Claypool, pastor of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville for the past 11 years, has been called as pastor of the 5,000-member Broadway Baptist Church, Fort Worth, effective Oct. 1.

Claypool, who preached the annual convention sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis, will succeed J. P. Allen, who joined the staff of the SBC Radio-Television Commission here about two years ago.

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On BP story mailed August 23, 1971, headlined "Exodus of Clergy Alarming, Home Missions Meeting Told," please change spelling throughout story from E. A. Vordery as sent (incorrect) to Verdery. We regret the error. Note name in graphs 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 14, 15, 19, 20 and 21.

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