



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Wong Named President of
BWA; James Sullivan VP

STOCKHOLM (BP)--David Y. K. Wong, an architect and engineer, was elected here as the first lay president in the history of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).

Wong, 65, of Hong Kong, succeeds V. Carney Hargroves of Philadelphia, Pa., a clergyman of the American Baptist Churches, USA, and will serve a five year term.

Among 12 vice presidents, delegates to the 13th Baptist World Congress, which meets every five years, elected a Southern Baptist, James L. Sullivan, retired president of the Sunday School Board, Nashville.

Fred B. Rhoades, a Southern Baptist layman from the Washington, D. C., area, who had been serving as the BWA's treasurer for the Western Hemisphere, was elected treasurer for the entire BWA. Under the BWA's new structure, it will have only one treasurer.

Robert C. Campbell, executive head of the American Baptist Churches; Thelea (Mrs. Delmar) Wessler of the North American Baptist General Conference; and M. L. Wilson of the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, were the other persons from the U. S. elected to BWA vice presidencies.

Wong has been serving as chairman of the BWA's Men's Department, chairman of the Asian Baptist Fellowship and chairman in Hong Kong for the BWA effort, "World Mission of Reconciliation through Jesus Christ."

A native of China, Wong is a member and past deacon chairman of Kowloon Baptist Church, Hong Kong, and former chairman of the board of governors at Hong Kong Baptist College. He is a graduate of two U. S. schools, the University of Redlands and California Institute of Technology.

Other BWA vice presidents are Geoffrey H. Blackburn of Australia, Nilson do Amaral Fanini of Brazil, Adivertus A. Hoff of Liberia, Arthur Kinyanjui of Kenya, David Lagergren of Sweden, Akiko (Mrs. Shuichi) Matsumura of Japan, Azariah McKenzie of Jamaica and Michael Zidkhov of the Soviet Union.

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BWA Speakers Urge
Creation of "New World"

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By R. G. Puckett

STOCKHOLM (BP)--Baptists in today's world need to believe something and do something, the outgoing president of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) told more than 9,000 delegates to the BWA's 13th Baptist World Congress here.

Hargroves' address keynoted the Congress, which included a balanced diet of addresses, music, testimonies, reports and panel discussions.

Stressing the Congress theme, "New People for a New World--Through Christ," Hargroves said Christians can build a new world "by changing individual persons, for we know that when Christ enters into a life, that life is converted to good. And new persons in Christ do help make a new and better world."

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The Christian mind of faith must answer the scientific mind of fact, contended Hargroves, a minister of the American Baptist Churches, USA, from Philadelphia. He argued that even those who say science has proven the non-existence of God are not thoroughly familiar with science because the scientific approach assumes some things that believers also accept.

He appealed to the Congress delegates to believe in some things, more than just an emotional faith, and to translate that faith into involvement in the affairs of the world. He urged the Baptist Christians to witness to the truth, express a concern for physical needs around the world, help create a clean environment and "do something for peace."

"Our obligation is to consciously work for understanding among men and between nations," he stated.

Baptist observers here hailed the addresses of Penrose St. Amant and C. Ronald Goulding as among the most outstanding messages of the congress.

St. Amant, president of the Baptist Seminary in Ruschlikon, Zurich, Switzerland, observed that "...in a century marked by two world wars and many others of smaller magnitude, in a time of almost perpetual crisis for humanity, many of us find talk about the 'new man'--who through his own resources will abolish cruelty, brutality, and ugliness--rather unrealistic and sentimental."

Referring to Paul's statement in 2 Cor. 5:17, St. Amant contended: "For us, the 'new creation' means that the important point is not the race to which one belongs or the culture in which one shares, or the country from which one comes, or the religious rites one observes."

In Christ "something tremendous has happened. Man's deepest despair and highest hopes have been shattered by a power and a love which lift from the deepest human depth and go beyond the highest human height... 'If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation,'" St. Amant said.

Goulding, BWA associate secretary with offices in London, asked the question, "A New World--Fact or Fiction?" He insisted the question is defined more easily when we ask whether we mean a "new world" here and now, in our time, or in the ultimate sense of our "hope of heaven."

In the midst of "the debris of modern civilization", Goulding urged Christians to avoid cynicism and yet not "live securely and therefore blindly in the narrow world of my own content,..."

"God's discontent" with world conditions would then be "made of no effect," he said

Recognizing that the question of whether Christians had created a new world was easier to ask than answer, Goulding asserted that disciples of Christ have "experienced the renewing power of God's life in Christ through the Spirit. For them indeed old things have passed away, all things have become new. The result for them means a new purpose in living, a new ethical standard, a new moral standard, a new power, and above all a new love," he declared.

"We must recognize reality," Goulding said, but he insisted that Christians must share and make known the new values and experiences they have in Christ.

Two Black Baptist ministers from Los Angeles, Calif., issued urgent calls for reconciliation and a "crossing of the barriers" between peoples.

Edward V. Hill and Thomas Kilgore Jr. stressed the importance of Christians "joining hands" to find the lost and be redemptive in a world that has "economic, cultural and denominational barriers."

"When we talk about fellowship beyond frontiers, we are really talking about exploring different lands, meeting other peoples, developing a new race consciousness, understanding other cultures and religions, and discovering other dimensions of an old mystery that has given life and vitality to our faith," Kilgore declared.

Hill observed, "The very strength of our witness is wrapped up in our being reconciled. The world waits to see . . . the unity of the body of Christ expressed not in words or in super-structures but in works, witness and ministry."

Two speakers, one from the Orient and one from Africa, spoke of the problems faced by their respective areas because of social, political and cultural developments.

Mrs. Ayako Hino, principal of the Soshin Girls' School near Tokyo, Japan, said, "Japanese education, material achievement and pseudo democracy is proving to be a failure in the area of human relations and personal fulfillment."

Mrs. Hino told her international audience that the primary task is to "dedicate ourselves, as parents, teachers and members of society, to the truth that Jesus Christ is the foundation for making our lives hopeful, loving and serviceable."

Nlandu Mukoko Mpanzu, 41-year-old general secretary of the 94,000-member Baptist community of Western Zaire, said, "In spite of rumors circulating outside Zaire to the effect that all religious activity and expression have been done away with in our land, I am happy to inform you that . . . the church . . . is . . . on an increasingly solid basis."

He insisted that his country's return to traditional political, economic and social patterns has encouraged Baptists to assume more responsibility for education and other social programs. The government has banned religious instruction in public schools.

In his report to the Congress, Robert S. Denny, BWA general secretary, observed, "Perhaps the most important function of the BWA is its strong voice for religious liberty, freedom and dignity for all men."

The Congress passed a resolution calling for religious liberty, human rights, world peace and public morality.

David Y. K. Wong, a Hong Kong architect, elected to succeed Hargroves as president for the next five years, said in a press conference immediately following his election that his position did not give him power but an opportunity to serve.

In his address to the Congress in its closing session, Wong, first layman to hold the BWA presidency, listed seven priorities he holds for the BWA and urged the delegates to work for change in a world of pressing problems.

"Christ gives us the opportunity, as his followers, to change this world. We have hope and assurance because he has transformed our lives. He guides us to build a new world--a world with peace and righteousness," Wong declared.

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Christian Youth Called
"Signs of Hope" For Future

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STOCKHOLM (BP)--Today's adults cannot solve the major world problems in their lifetime, but they can prepare young people to heal poverty, war, hunger, and racial conflict as leaders of tomorrow, an international Christian youth leader told the Baptist World Congress here.

Karl-Heinz Walter of West Germany, chairman of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Youth Department, said youths and adults are "discovering" that they can work together through the church to seek solutions to conflicts and tragedies. He said young people have gained personal identity and satisfaction in Christianity that they failed to find through either adults or drugs in the 1960s.

Theo Patnaik of India, the BWA's associate secretary for youth, joining Walter in speaking at the Congress's youth night, called the 10 million Baptist youths in the world the "signs of hope."

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Patnaik said that young people make up about one third of the world Baptist population. He described visits to several countries where he said Christian youths are trying to improve their societies. He said Baptist youths in Brazil have organized social action centers and welfare centers. He observed that Baptist youths in India have a major responsibility in evangelism as they engage in house to house and street ministries.

"There is a new breath of air blowing through our churches across the world," Patnaik said. "It brings hope in a time of crisis. Its messengers are youth who have found in Christ a new, vibrant dimension to life and selfless service."

Walter said the church can be the "home of hope" if it enables youths and adults to talk with each other, learn from each other and decide together how to meet problems and needs. He appealed to churches and countries which he said limit young people's expression and leadership.

"I want to remind those who wish to build peace in the world of tomorrow that they must provide opportunity for youth to get to know each other over all boundaries between countries, races, and social systems."

The Baptist World Alliance coordinated the 8th Baptist Youth World Conference at Portland, Oregon, USA, in August 1974, Walter reminded Congress delegates. The youths there contributed more than \$5,000 to relief projects. The theme of the conference was "Christ--Our Challenge to Live." Youths from about 54 nations attended.

"At the end of the conference the young people had changed the whole theme," Walter told the Congress. "They formed a new slogan: 'We count, we are important--Christ cares.'"

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10 Denominations to Try
Electronic Fund Transfer

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NEW YORK (BP)--Local churches of 10 denominational groups will begin experimentation at the beginning of 1976 with a plan in five metropolitan areas in which banks, with proper authorization, may make monthly or quarterly payments directly to religious institutions.

Called "First Fruits--ACTS" (Authorized Contribution Transfer Service), the plan was developed by the Stewardship Commission of the National Council of Churches (NCC) with co-sponsorship by the National Association of Church Business Administrators.

Under the plan, a church member would authorize his or her local church to send a record of his or her financial commitment (no less than \$10 per month or quarter) to Investment Data Corporation of California, a data processing group which can transfer funds in any bank in the nation.

The commitment lasts a year and a giver may designate amounts to churches, colleges, retirement homes or other religious institutions. From each transfer, the company deducts 65 cents for its services, with 6 1/2 cents of that going to the NCC for its First Fruits staff and materials. The donor may receive a monthly statement from his or her church and an annual summary from the data processing company.

"People first brought farm produce to put it on the altar. Then they substituted coins and paper money. Then they substituted checks. Now they can substitute an electronic transfer system," explained Clifford Lott, who heads the section of stewardship of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship, Nashville.

The five metro areas conducting the experiment, which is open also to churches outside those areas, are Philadelphia, Kansas City, Atlanta, Los Angeles and Dallas/Fort Worth.

The 10 denominations involved are the American Baptist Churches, USA, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Church of the Brethren, the Episcopal Church, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Presbyterian Church in the U. S., the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon), the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church and the United Presbyterian Church in the USA.

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