



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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80-33

SBC Urged To Avoid 'Crisis
In Witness' To Ethnic

By Everett Hullum

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--Southern Baptists face a "crisis in witness" to an increasingly pluralistic nation unless they reject traditional paternalistic approaches to language missions, a language missions expert said here.

If the Southern Baptist Convention is to have an impact on the United States' rapidly growing multi-cultural society, ethnic Southern Baptists must be actively involved in all aspects of denominational life, Oscar Romo, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's language missions division, told participants at the 23rd annual Language Missions Conference.

"The crisis of manifest destiny," which asserts cultural superiority "because that's the way it has always been," threatens to turn ethnic Southern Baptists away from the convention, Romo warned.

He added the convention's ethnics, rapidly growing in numbers, may "detach themselves from the SBC," not "because of difference in basic beliefs but because of inflexibility of the structural, social and leadership roles."

Only one of the 34 state missions directors attending the conference, Hawaii Baptist Sam Choy, is an ethnic.

In the decade ahead, Romo said, symbolic caucuses and token appointments to SBC agencies will not satisfy "the aggressive ethnic Southern Baptist" whose presence "enriches the denominational mosaic." Romo challenged the 170 participants, who also included state language missions directors and language workers, to effect profound structural changes in their states to give ethnics opportunities for active participation in all phases of SBC life.

On the denominational level, Romo pointed out, steps are being taken to encourage ethnic participation and to accelerate witness to ethnics. Romo and William Pinson, president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley across San Francisco Bay, announced discussions that will begin an "ethnic theological education emphasis."

The program, as envisioned by Romo and Pinson, will offer specialized theological training to ethnic people, teach Southern Baptist polity, and encourage "cross cultural awareness" of all Golden Gate Seminary students. About 10 percent of those students are of ethnic background.

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"It is obvious God has given Golden Gate Seminary a unique opportunity" by its location near one of the nation's most pluralistic communities, Pinson said. "We haven't done as we should" in exploring evangelism and ministry opportunities in "our Bay Area laboratory," Pinson admitted, but "our language missions training program offers one opportunity to remedy this."

Already the Baptist Sunday School Board has created the church program and services language unit. This office plans to expand production of language missions materials, Romo pointed out. The board's language unit is developing materials in several languages, beginning with Spanish.

Hispanics are the nation's dominant language group. Census projections indicate they will comprise 12 percent or more of the population by the mid-1980s. Asians make up the second largest immigrant group. One survey indicates as many as 5,000 Asians arrive each week in the United States. Two-thirds of all immigration is from Asia and Latin America.

In the past 25 years, Southern Baptists have begun ministry with 77 different language/culture groups. There are more than 3,500 language missions units, about 10 percent of the SBC congregations.

Survey findings released during the conference revealed 840 churches--approximately one of every 40 Southern Baptist congregations--indicated they did some ministry called "language culture." The survey based on reports in the 1977 Uniform Church Letter was conducted by a team from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and sponsored by the Home Mission Board.

The survey discovered "those churches most involved in language/culture ministries have very open attitudes toward language/culture persons.... Involvement in both the number and variety of language/culture ministries goes hand in hand with willingness to have interaction with and grant leadership to language/culture persons."

The positive response of Southern Baptists whose churches conduct language/culture ministries demonstrates, the survey concluded, that "any Southern Baptist congregation with language/culture persons in its setting can become involved in some form of ministry to such persons."

If SBC congregations will begin to respond to the growing numbers of ethnic persons in their midst, Romo said, and if they do so in ways that "encourage ethnic cooperation and participation within the SBC context" rather than in ways which deny ethnic identity and smother the ethnic congregation, Southern Baptists have the ability "to shape the destiny of our land for Christ."

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Next Refugee Wave Will
Require Teamwork Approach

By Everett Hullum

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SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--The next wave of Indochinese refugees requires Southern Baptist churches to become "partners in sponsorship," Gene Tunnell of the Home Mission Board told the 23rd annual Language Missions Conference.

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"Southern Baptists have completely turned around in their willingness to sponsor refugees," said Tunnell, the board's refugee resettlement coordinator. Since fall, SBC churches have averaged resettling 500 refugees a month.

Although the total dropped to 450 in January, Tunnell said the churches volunteering to sponsor a refugee still exceed the number being assigned to the Home Mission Board through national resettlement agencies. "What's happening now," Tunnell said, "is 90 percent of the Indochinese coming to the United States are relatives of earlier Indochinese refugees. This means the new immigrants are wanting to settle in areas already heavily populated with Indochinese people--Los Angeles, Houston, Seattle, Atlanta."

Many SBC churches in these areas have stretched their financial limits of resettlement, Tunnell said. "Yet they are willing to continue active resettlement if other SBC churches can help with money."

Tunnell told of a Houston congregation which has already resettled some 125 refugees. Recently when relatives of one of these families arrived, Tunnell asked another SBC church, a rural congregation in Texas, to help the Houston church financially, rather than attempt to resettle the family.

The Indochinese have gradually migrated to several dozen large specific communities across the U.S., Tunnell reported, despite their original settlement patterns. In these locations, government and churches have established numerous support services--English tutoring, welfare and school programs, job training. In addition, some immigrants have made certain businesses profitable, such as food stores which cater specifically to Indochinese tastes.

Tunnell also encouraged participants to urge their churches not to request specific refugee nationalities. "We have to remember," he said, "the United Nations lists 12 to 14 million refugees in the world, and they are in all parts of the globe."

Recent refugees are also less likely to speak English and have less education and fewer job skills than did those in the first waves of immigration. This accentuates the need to put new Indochinese immigrants into communities with established support systems, Tunnell explained.

"Churches should look and see who is nearby, then build on what's there already. Don't seek Cambodians if you have Vietnamese or Vietnamese if the people around you are Laotian," Tunnell said.

And if no Chinese refugees are within 25 miles, Tunnell urged, "you don't bring them into an isolated situation. Rather become a partner in sponsorship with another SBC church already involved," Tunnell concluded. "Give the refugee his best chance to realize the American dream of life, liberty and happiness."

The United States currently accepts as refugee immigrants only those persons fleeing "political oppression," which Tunnell says, should be interpreted "Communist oppression." But a new bill before Congress, originally labeled the Refugee Act of 1979, will broaden the categories for designation as refugees. Refugees may enter the U.S. at a level higher than normal immigration quotas.

Tunnell urged Southern Baptists to write their senators and congressmen supporting the bill.

By and large, Tunnell said, refugees have been assets to their communities. "They are hard working people willing to take the jobs at the bottom of the ladder," he said. He quoted a Labor Department study which shows "Indochinese employment is lower than the national average." Nationally about one-third of the refugees have been on welfare at any given time, although 40.4 percent now receive such payments, according to a study done for the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Most average only three to four months on welfare although the time is increasing as waiting lists develop in courses in English and job training programs.

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Professor, Pastors Study
Foreign Missions Future

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Educator and missions specialist Ted Ward took 20 Southern Baptist pastors on a detailed verbal tour of foreign missions in the future and its implications on the present during a conference for metropolitan pastors sponsored by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Ward, coordinator of programs in non-formal education at Michigan State University, outlined his perspective of missions in a changing time. The pastors from large urban Southern Baptist churches in the United States dialogued with Ward and shared their views on the future role of the Foreign Mission Board.

"I think the time is upon us for the church of Jesus Christ to be about its business... to light the way for when the bridegroom (Jesus Christ) comes...that people would be prepared," said Ward, a Baptist layman whose profession takes him to developing countries around the world.

Focusing on what he termed "hard realities, things we must contend with today," Ward said the "American way of life is up for grabs and undergoing substantial remodeling," especially in reckoning with continuing shortages in energy, increased lack of mobility and rising inflation pinching the economy.

"This is a marvelous time for Christians to become sensitive to lifestyle," he said.

Ward, who is frequently called upon by denominations and parachurch groups to critique Christian work, also addressed the gap between the rich and poor in developing countries, and the increasing rise in militant Islam, especially in countries where missions has been strong.

Under the category of "strong probabilities," Ward warned the pastors to "be prepared for open countries to close almost overnight" because of immigration restrictions. He said the economic pressures on the church will increase and a de-emphasis on denominational distinctives is needed, especially in developing countries.

Addressing the hunger issue, Ward commented that "North American Christians ought to be responsive to the tremendous needs for a food bank." He believes that all missionaries should be given agricultural development training, which can be applied on the mission field.

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His "high hopes" for the future include more church involvement in national development. "Christian leadership has tremendous possibilities," he told the group. "The Christian community is a trustworthy sector."

He challenged believers to find new modes of missions, not to neglect people at mid-career or older as prime missions candidates and to think seriously about alternatives for employing missionaries who have had to leave countries because of political upheaval. "Any missionary career will not be a place-centered career, but a nomadic career," he said. "Flexibility is a crucial issue."

The professor said he came to the conference to tell the pastors that "no matter what else, missions is still very important. And much of what we've been doing needs to be re-examined given the world we have today."

He added that the "concern for the vitality in missions has to start at the local church level and be facilitated by the mission board."

One conference participant, James E. Coggin, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, said involvement in the conference has been "one of the most refreshing things that has ever come to me as a pastor."

Larry Lewis, pastor of Tower Grove Baptist Church, St. Louis, said, "All of a sudden, I've felt myself becoming more excited about foreign missions. This is the first time I've ever had opportunity to make any personal input into our foreign missions program." He advised the board "to put this show on the road" and engage key pastors throughout the convention in such dialogue.

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

Four Receive Language
Missions Recognition

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SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--Four persons received special awards from the language missions division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board at the 23rd annual Language Missions Conference.

Fern Powers, volunteer worker with seamen and refugees in Olympia, Wash., was given the fourth Mosaic Missions Award; Daniel Moon, consultant in Korean work and language missions with the Brotherhood Commission, Memphis, Tenn., the first Ethnic Church Growth Award; and Jack Combs and Frank Belvin, retiring language missions workers, the Missions in Context Award.

Mrs. Powers, a Washington housewife and schoolbus driver, has resettled through her small church, First Baptist Church of Lacey, Wash., about 500 refugees and also conducts one of the most active seamen's ministries in the SBC. Moon was honored because he has been involved in establishment of about 120 Korean churches and missions in the past eight years.

Combs has directed language missions for California Southern Baptists for 25 years, and Belvin, consultant on Indian Affairs for the Home Mission Board, is retiring after 40 years in language missions.

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Theodore F. Adams
Dies in Richmond

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Theodore Floyd Adams, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., and former president of the Baptist World Alliance, died Feb. 27 at the age of 81. He suffered an apparent heart attack and stroke Sunday morning, Feb. 24, and never regained consciousness.

Born in Palmyra, N.Y., Adams was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Denison College in 1921, and received his theological degree from Colgate Rochester Divinity School, Rochester, N.Y., in 1924.

The Adams family arrived in Richmond Feb. 25, 1936, to assume the pastorate of First Baptist Church where the membership was about 1,400. He came from a church in Toledo, Ohio.

During Adams 32-year-pastorate, from which he retired in 1968, the church grew to some 4,000 members and Adams' role of leadership grew with it.

He was vice president of the Baptist World Alliance, 1947 to 1950. In 1955 at the London meeting of the Baptist World Congress, he was elected to a five-year term as president of the world body.

He soon made a trip to the Soviet Union where he was allowed unusual freedom to preach and serve the Lord's Supper. He served on the BWA's general council from 1934 until his death.

His most recent contribution of service to the Baptist World Alliance was chairing a long range planning committee which framed a plan of action for the BWA through the year 2005. He would have reported the plan at the 1980 Baptist World Congress in Toronto, July 8-13. The plan includes a special five-year evangelistic thrust, 1995-2000, commemorating the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ.

"Dr. Adams' death is a severe loss to the Baptist world fellowship. Despite his chronological years he was young in spirit and in enthusiasm and was always alert to the concern of the international Baptist family," said Robert Denny, BWA general secretary.

"His appointment by President David Y.K. Wong to chair the long range planning committee was inspired. He held the world in his heart and used his past experiences to project a dream for the alliance far beyond his own life expectancy," Denny said.

For 10 years after retirement he was visiting professor of preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C. Giving up the teaching post in 1978, he became a regional director of development for the seminary. He had recently concluded a Virginia-based fund campaign.

Adams served on two different occasions as a member of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and held many positions of leadership in Southern Baptist life.

During his ministry he received 10 honorary degrees. Among them was one from the University of Richmond, where a memorial lectureship will be established. In 1974, the First Baptist Church Endowment Fund, Inc. gave the University of Richmond \$100,000 to establish the Theodore F. Adams Lecture Room in its Boatwright Memorial Library.

Among honors bestowed on Adams was the E.Y. Mullins Denominational Service Award of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, given in 1967.

On the morning he was stricken, Adams had just completed preparation for an address, "What I Have Learned in 60 Years in the Ministry." The lecture was to have been delivered Feb. 25 to a Virginia Baptist ministers discussion group.

Adams is survived by his wife Esther Jillson Adams, Lakewood Manor Retirement Community, Richmond; a daughter, Mrs. Betsy Ann Adams Thompson of Richmond; two sons, Theodore F. Adams Jr., Richmond, and John Jillson Adams of McLean, Va.; and a brother, George Adams of Fairfield, Conn.

Funeral services were to be at First Baptist Church, Richmond, Saturday, March 1, at 11 a.m., with burial at Westhampton Memorial Park.

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

Adrian Rogers Listed
In 'Good Condition'

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MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian Rogers, who underwent gall bladder surgery at Baptist Hospital here, Feb. 27, is listed in "good condition," according to a hospital spokesman.

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, was admitted Feb. 24, after experiencing severe pain. A church spokesman said he is expected to be out of his pulpit for at least three weeks.

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Missionaries Keep Low Profile
After Surinam Military Coup

PARAMARIBO, Surinam (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries and a volunteer in Surinam have been staying inside their homes and keeping a low profile since a Feb. 25 military coup which took control of the capital city of Paramaribo and the country.

All missionary personnel are reported safe and feel no danger, said missionary Harold Lewis in a Feb. 28 telephone call to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va.

No Baptist lives have been lost, he added, and no Baptist property damaged, but Baptist meetings have been cancelled because of a curfew imposed in the former Dutch colony north of Brazil.

"No gatherings are allowed on the streets," said Lewis. "Bible clubs have been affected, so far, because we can't meet together. We're waiting to find out about Sunday services." Schools and businesses have been closed, but merchants are reopening their stores and citizens have been encouraged to begin purchasing goods.

Besides Harold and Martha Lewis of Greensburg, Ind., and Woodruff, S.C., respectively, other missionaries stationed in Paramaribo are Fred and Janice Day of Kenner, La., and Newton, Ala.; Minnie Gaston of Blythe, Calif.; and James and Zelma Foster of Jackson and Pascagoula, Miss. Extended term volunteer teacher Ferebee Gasque, of Florence, S.C., is also in Paramaribo. Missionaries Leo and Margaret Waldrop of Rainier, Ore., and Abilene Texas, are on furlough in Fort Worth, Texas.

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