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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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80-108

Need Missionaries As Partners,
Overseas Baptist Leaders Say

By Adrienne Bonham

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Baptist leaders from Japan, Nigeria and Brazil told enthusiastic audiences at the Foreign Missions Conference what Southern Baptist mission efforts had meant in their lives and affirmed the continued need for missionaries. But they also asked that Baptists of their countries be taken into full partnership in missions efforts.

S.T. Ola Akande, general secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, said, "The question doesn't even come into our minds of whether we need missionaries or not. We need all who will come."

Akiko Endo Matsumura, a vice president of the Baptist World Alliance and pastor's wife from Tokyo, Japan, said, "Missionaries can contribute a different fragrance, their unique personalities to Baptist life in Japan. Each race has some distinct beauty." She said when Christians of various nationalities work together they help people understand the universality of the gospel, the depth of God's work.

Joao Falcao, general secretary of the executive board of the Brazilian Baptist Convention, said Brazil needs missionaries particularly to help start churches in 1,000 counties that have no Baptist witness and in urban areas. They are also needed to work with students and professional persons, to teach music and theological education.

Akande paid tribute to Southern Baptists for their help in providing educational and medical help for Nigerians. He told of his own schooling in Nigerian and Southern Baptist schools. He told of being baptized by John Mills, then a missionary in Nigeria and now Foreign Mission Board area director for West Africa. Akande pointed to the excellent hospitals built with funds from the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Mrs. Matsumura told the Ridgecrest audience that she was the youngest daughter in a Buddhist family. The family made her feel she was worth little. But a Southern Baptist missionary felt differently and helped her find personal worth. Through studying the Bible, she became a Christian. Missionaries helped her attend school in the United States. She returned to Japan to become a leader among Baptists.

"God's grace has shaped my life, and much of that grace has come to me through Southern Baptists," she said.

Mrs. Matsumura described the process that Japanese Baptists have gone through in their relations with missionaries. Childish dependence was followed by adolescent self-assertion. Now there is adult appreciation and cooperation, she said. Missionaries were first the loving, patient and helpful parents. Then they were defensive parents, coping with adolescent rebellion and saying, "We will be separate if you won't let us help." Now they too have reached the stage of mutual respect and cooperation, the speaker said.

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In 1982 Brazil's 515,000 Baptists will celebrate their centennial. Falcao reported on home and foreign mission work sponsored by the Brazilian Baptist Convention. The Brazilian Home Mission Board has 300 missionaries serving in pioneer areas. In the past six years, a series of evangelism projects has resulted in more than 6,000 decisions for Christ, 18 new churches and at least 25 congregations that will later become churches. Falcao said these efforts have also resulted in development of a dynamic plan of evangelism to reach people in their homes, a great missions awakening among young people, and impressive growth in tithes and offerings for missions.

Brazilian Baptists send missionaries to 11 countries, five in South America, plus others where Portuguese is spoken, Falcao reported.

Looking to the future, the three Baptist leaders talked about how Baptists might work together more effectively. Akande wished for "more exchange of ideas" between Southern and Nigerian Baptists, "more active mutual relationships." He suggested that Nigerian and Southern Baptist pastors might exchange pulpits.

"Let the Nigerian pastor bring his own understanding of Christianity and share it with Baptists here," he suggested. The American pastor could do the same thing in Nigeria.

"We should not always be at the receiving end and Southern Baptists at the sending end," he said. "You should not always have all the answers and we have all the questions."

Mrs. Matsumura made this observation: "As Southern Baptists have led the Japan Baptist Convention as a group and myself as an individual, they will surely lead the way in the global search for most effective and cooperative witness to the vast number of lost people and in the practice of Christian brotherhood."

But she cautioned Southern Baptists, "We cannot and should not say that some parts of the world are mission fields of particular mission boards. The whole world is the mission field where all Christians, regardless of nationality and cultural background, must work together as partners in evangelism."

Falcao pointed out that, where Brazilian foreign missionaries are working alongside Southern Baptist missionaries, there is three-way cooperation among them and the nationals of that country. "We are partners in these mission fields," he said. In those places and in Brazil, "there is no jealousy and no fighting. There have always been good relations between Brazilian Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries."

Akande said that, as a parent, he could learn a lot from his four daughters and one son. "They see problems from new angles," he said. In the same way, "younger" Baptists can enrich the insights of "older" Baptists.

The Nigerian Baptist Convention, with 300,000 members, has sent missionaries for a quarter of a century, Akande said. "The inspiration to become involved in missions came from Southern Baptist missionaries." Home missionaries serve in seven or eight locations where there has been no Baptist work.

Two couples serve in Sierra Leone, another west African country. The future of this work depends partly on problems of foreign exchange. But Nigerians intend to do as much missions work as they can, Akande said.

The Japan Baptist Convention has one missionary couple in Brazil and another on Okinawa. When the convention meets in August, it will consider the recommendation to send a couple to Indonesia, said Mrs. Matsumura, whose husband is completing a term as president of the convention. Though Japanese Baptists do not use the term "home missionary," some of their 150 pastors are supported by the convention until their churches can become self-supporting.

All three visitors expressed appreciation for being invited to speak at the Foreign Missions Conference enroute to the Baptist World Congress in Toronto, Canada, July 8-13.

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

Second Man Convicted
In Douglass Murder Case

Baptist Press
7/1/80

EL RENO, Okla. (BP)--Glen Burton Ake, 24, has been convicted of first degree murder in the shooting deaths of Richard and Marilyn Douglass.

Douglass, pastor of Putnam City Baptist Church, and his wife were killed in their home last October.

Ake's co-defendant, Steven Keith Hatch, 26, was found guilty on similar charges and sentenced to death two months ago.

Ake was sentenced to death by drug injection by the seven-woman, five-man jury on the murder counts and was given two 500-year sentences on charges of shooting with intent to kill in the wounding of the Douglass' children, Brooks, 16, and Leslie, 13.

Formal sentencing for Ake was set for July 25. Appeal of the death verdicts is automatic.

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Sacrifices Needed To Reach
Bold Mission Thrust Goals

Baptist Press
7/1/80

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Mrs. R. Keith Parks, wife of the president of the 3,000-missionary Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, cited a major spiritual awakening, more prayer, and an austere lifestyle as prerequisites for Southern Baptists to achieve their objective of making the gospel available to everyone in the world in a single generation.

In a 65-minute address to almost 1,800 persons attending the Bold Mission Leadership Conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, Mrs. Parks (Helen Jean) called the lack of financial support of missions a major hindrance to a successful Bold Mission Thrust.

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To support her claim, Mrs. Parks, a former missionary to Indonesia, said Southern Baptists gave more money percentage-wise to support foreign missions a dozen years ago than they do now.

Currently less than two cents out of every Southern Baptist undesignated offering plate dollar goes toward taking the gospel to 94 percent of the world's population, she said.

And the record for human resources isn't much better, Mrs. Parks added, with only five percent of Southern Baptist seminary graduates going to the foreign mission field as missionaries.

"We're in danger of playing make believe about Bold Mission Thrust," she contended.

Besides the lack of financial support, Mrs. Parks identified seven other prevailing attitudes she felt would thwart Southern Baptists' objective to evangelize the world.

They included procrastination, energy shortage, economic crunch, isolationism, cultural attitude, a rational theology, and doctrinal divisiveness in the 13.4 million-member denomination.

Amplifying on the attitude of divisiveness, Mrs. Parks called the doctrinal dispute among conservatives and moderates a fight over words "which does no good and hurts the people who hear it.

"I believe in the Bible as much as anyone," she added. "I believe all Scripture was inspired by God.

"But I don't believe in creedalism or in a narrow pharisaical spirit. I also believe doctrinal integrity without missions is heresy.

"Don't you think it is almost sinister for this doctrinal discord to occur when we are so concerned with Bold Mission Thrust?" asked Mrs. Parks.

Turning to emphases in foreign missions during the next few years, Mrs. Parks said her husband's agency would major on career missionaries, followed by short-term volunteers and concern for world hunger and refugees.

Mrs. Parks said Southern Baptists could expect to see such trends as complex strategy planning involving broadcasting, staffing in the areas of evangelism and church growth, partnership relations with other countries, and less institutionalism and more mobility.

Sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union, the conference for church and associational Brotherhood and WMU officers offered more than 50 leader training courses interspersed with testimonies by 20 home and foreign missionaries.

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CORRECTION: In Baptist Press story mailed 6-30-80 entitled "High Court Upholds Ban On Publicly-Financed Abortion," please change graph 5 to read:

Under provisions of the latest version, passed last year, the long-term health hazard was removed.

Thanks,

Baptist Press