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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Alvin C. Shackleford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041

DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 720-0550

NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300

RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151

WASHINGTON "00 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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89-10

Taiwan missionaries vote
church planting as goal

By Kathie Chute

N-FMB

TAIPEI, Taiwan (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries in Taiwan took new steps in January toward evangelizing the island, endorsing a goal to concentrate 70 percent of the missionary force in full-time church planting.

The vote followed a similar move by missionaries in Japan last year. Taiwan missionaries hope the new strategy will help them become more effective in evangelistic outreach by focusing the majority of mission resources and personnel on church planting and evangelism. The other 30 percent of the missionaries will be assigned to support and institutional ministries.

About one-third of the 117 Southern Baptist missionaries in Taiwan currently are involved in church planting, with the rest performing a variety of ministries. Under the new strategy, numerous missionaries will change assignments between now and 1997.

The strategic redeployment of missionaries "is based on need" and is "not simply a philosophy of the (Southern Baptist) Foreign Mission Board," said Sam James, the board's director for East Asia.

"We are trying to move toward a more mobile missionary force that will move where urgent need is," James said. He called the Taiwan strategy "a rifle shot instead of a shotgun blast. Whereas before our shot was scattered in many directions, now we're focusing on a target. That is significant."

The new strategy parallels the Foreign Mission Board's 10-year goal of having 70 percent of its missionaries giving more than half of their time to direct evangelism that results in churches. Board officials have emphasized that the "70-30" ratio is a goal for its missionaries but not a mandate placed on them.

Taiwan missionaries adopted more than 100 new policies resulting from a church growth study in cooperation with Taiwan Baptists. The study surveyed the Taiwan Baptist Mission's structure and its use of mission resources and personnel.

The strategies adopted include:

-- All missionaries in Taiwan will be involved in church planting, either as a primary or a secondary assignment.

-- Missionaries will work primarily with new congregations rather than with established churches.

-- A strategic "base staffing plan" pinpoints essential missionary assignments needed to meet the mission organization's goals. The organization will assign missionaries and request new personnel to fill positions identified in the plan. Projections indicate all missionaries will be involved in ministries outlined in the plan by 1997.

-- Beginning in 1990, church planters will be deployed in teams assigned to strategic areas based on the location of Taiwan's unevangelized people -- estimated at more than 60 percent of the population of 20 million.

-- To free themselves to concentrate on church planting, missionaries placed more administrative responsibility in the hands of fewer people. They dissolved most of the mission's standing committees. Two area evangelism supervisors and an administrator will oversee the mission's strategic plans.

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"It's not that the old way we did things did not work," said missionary Hunter Hammett, administrator for the mission. "It had just gotten stale. Change like this takes new commitment. The whole group has to work through a plan like this and accept it together, or it won't work. I think we've done that."

Among concerns voiced by some missionaries was how those not originally appointed as evangelists will get the training necessary to do effective church planting.

"Those of us who have not had either extensive training or firsthand experience have some anxiety, some worry," said missionary Milton Lites, a 19-year veteran of work in Taiwan. "We're assured we'll have training for this. But I don't see how we're going to get training before getting involved in it. We voted to begin next year. Are we going to have to educate ourselves? Are we going to get help from people experienced in our work here, so we can feel confident? This is too important to botch it because we're not trained."

Another central issue is how implementing the 70-30 plan will affect the ministries of missionary wives who were appointed as "church and home" workers.

"Our mission organization took a long time in developing a home program of work (for missionary wives). Now we're trying to build something from ground zero," said missionary John Mark Hansen. He called on the Foreign Mission Board to "help us out. Help us think of innovative ways that we, as married couples, can look at working" with the 70-30 plan.

Missionary Bob Greene noted that the 70-30 concept will "require that many missionary wives deliberately get involved in the 70-percent type of ministry. That is a departure -- at least from when I came through the appointment process -- in terms of the expectations of the wife." Greene and his wife, Mary, were appointed in 1970.

The Taiwan Baptist Mission is the third Southern Baptist mission organization in East Asia to approve new strategic measures. Last year missionaries in Japan and Macao adopted similar plans.

Missionaries in South Korea and Hong Kong, the other two Southern Baptist mission fields in the region, still are evaluating their strategy needs. Both missions are expected to consider proposals by next year.

Although all of the five East Asia mission organizations have plans to implement the Foreign Mission Board's 70-30 ratio, that goal is not the only reason for the changes.

"We cannot continue to do things as we always have," said Area Director James. "The lost people of the world don't come to the missions and say, 'We need a missionary.' We have come to the point that we have to say, 'The lost people of the world must have a missionary.'"

Traditionally, many missionaries in East Asia have worked in Christian institutions or other support ministries. However, Baptist conventions and churches in the countries are growing stronger and better able to support their own institutions.

Also, church starts, Christian conversions and baptisms in East Asia -- excluding South Korea with its powerful Christian movement -- have lagged in recent years.

These factors have contributed to the renewed focus on church planting and evangelism, said James, a former missionary to Vietnam. When he became East Asia director three years ago, he presented the needs to each of the area's five mission organizations and asked them to study possible changes.

The missions that voted to begin self-study were fully aware of the potential for major shifts in their work, James said. But change has not come easily.

"In each case, the change has not come without opposition," he acknowledged. "Some missionaries have been deeply pained. However, they're willing to try. They are willing to do what is necessary to be effective."

John Sullivan elected
executive in Florida

N-6
(Pla.)

LAKE YALE, Fla. (BP)--John Sullivan of Shreveport, La., unanimously has been elected the ninth executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention by its State Board of Missions.

Sullivan, 52, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport since 1975, was the unanimous choice of the executive director search committee.

Recommending him to the board during a regular session Jan. 20, at Lake Yale Baptist Assembly, Daytona Beach pastor Bobby Welch, a member of the search committee, said Sullivan was "the man who could take Florida Baptists to the top of the hill." Noting the consensus of the committee in making the recommendation he added, "We are absolutely certain this is God's man."

Throughout a 40-minute question-and-answer period with the board, Sullivan shared his vision for Florida. Noting that Florida is unlike any other state, he said, "I want to strengthen the churches God has given us and, at the same time, plant new churches where we can reach people for Christ."

Sullivan succeeds Dan C. Stringer, who has been executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention since 1979. Stringer, 62, announced his early retirement last May, citing a desire for a new challenge and the need to spend more time with his family as main reasons for retirement. Stringer plans to relocate to the Scottsdale, Ariz., area this spring.

During the 1980s, Sullivan has become known for his contributions to Southern Baptist convention life. He was a member of the SBC Peace Committee, working to resolve theological and political differences among Southern Baptists.

He served two terms as first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1983-1985, and two terms as a member of the SBC Executive Committee, 1980-1988. He is chairman of the SBC Sesquicentennial Celebration Committee, a post he will hold until 1995.

In his new position, Sullivan will lead Florida Baptists as they develop strategies and ministries to reach 8 million non-Christians in the state. He will direct the work of 190 convention employees involved in various programs of work for Florida Baptists and will oversee the management of the Baptist Building in Jacksonville.

A native of West Virginia, Sullivan earned two degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, including a doctor of ministry in 1973. He previously received the bachelor of arts degree from Grand Canyon College in Phoenix, Ariz.

He has been pastor of five Baptist churches, one in Arizona, three in Texas and Broadmoor in Shreveport.

Although most of his ministry has been in the pastorate, Sullivan has experience working with a state convention staff, having served on the governing board of all three state conventions where he was pastor. For two years he was president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention and has been on the executive board's executive search committee and the state convention's committee on committees. Early in his ministry, he directed the Royal Ambassador program for the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention.

As pastor of the 5,700-member Broadmoor Church for 13 years, Sullivan led the congregation to quadruple the budget, Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget giving and missions giving. The congregation has been a leader in the state in baptisms and Cooperative Program giving. In 1988, the church gave \$1 million to mission efforts, including 19 percent of its total budget earmarked for the Cooperative Program. Since 1980, Broadmoor has baptized 1,160 people, including 132 last year.

In 1986, the Shreveport church sponsored Ellerbe Road Mission, which constituted into a church in 1987. The new work was begun with 200 of Broadmoor's members who were living in the area.

Broadmoor also regularly helps support five missions in South Louisiana, two churches in Reno, Nev., a mission in Summersville, W.V., and a black congregation in Shreveport.

While he was working for the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington, Sullivan was led to Christ by his wife, Nancy, two months after their marriage in 1955. The couple have three grown children, Michael, Cheryl and Jeanie, and two grandchildren.

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New emperor:
man or god?

By Erich Bridges

F-FMB

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TOKYO, Japan (BP)--Will Japan's new Emperor Akihito be declared a man, a god or something in between?

Japanese Christians, along with others concerned about the future of religious freedom in Japan, are waiting for an answer to that question.

"We feel a kind of crisis for our freedom of belief," said Takayasu Furukawa, a Japanese Baptist now studying at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Ultra-nationalists and traditionalists in Japan "are trying to have the emperor be a kind of god again," Furukawa said. "They may force us to worship (him) again, which is against our Christianity."

For 26 centuries, Japanese viewed the emperor as a divinity to be venerated like their ancestors. The late Emperor Hirohito, who died Jan. 7 after 62 years on the Chrysanthemum Throne, shocked a defeated Japan after World War II, when he declared he was not divine. Japan's postwar constitution guarantees religious liberty, a right precious to Christians who remember the persecution and humiliation of the old days.

The 55-year-old Akihito, a quiet man like his father, studied with an American Christian tutor as a youth, married a commoner, rides the Tokyo subway and is said to see himself as a man of the people. He shows little interest in being divine, observers have said.

But the government-sponsored Shinto religious observances that began when the nation realized Hirohito was dying -- and will continue up to and after his funeral in February -- have outraged many Christians, opposition parties and factions opposed to the imperial system.

"Most of them feel these ceremonies scheduled for the new emperor would be a violation of the constitution and also a threat to religious freedom," said veteran Southern Baptist missionary Calvin Parker.

Particularly controversial is the "Great Rice-Tasting Ceremony" scheduled for late next year, during which Akihito will present rice to the gods and "commune" with the Sun Goddess. The ceremony supposedly completes the new emperor's ascension to divinity. Without it, officials insist, Akihito will be only a "half emperor."

Numerous Protestants, including Baptists, have participated in protests and demonstrations against the mixture of government and religion. The United Church of Christ in Japan condemned the "sinister program" to use the death of Hirohito and the mourning period afterward to "revive imperial authority and its Shinto ideological buttress."

Japanese Baptists published a pamphlet expressing concern about the dangers of such a movement. They also criticized the expense anticipated for the approaching funeral in light of the constitution's separation of religion and state.

The current conservative government supports the imperial system but finds itself caught in the middle of the religion-state constitutional question, according to observers.

Parker said the controversy will pass after the royal funeral: "I don't think there's any threat to religious freedom. I don't think the rightists have that strong a following. Surveys show the majority of Japanese want the emperor system, but only a very small group of hard-core rightists want him to be restored to the position of divinity that he had before the war."

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The Japanese enjoy their personal freedom and expanding international contacts, the missionary said, and the modern-minded new emperor likely will lead them forward, not backward. He notes that trend will bring more -- not fewer -- opportunities for spreading Christianity in Japan as its status as a "foreign religion" decreases.

Whatever happens, Furukawa said, "this is a time Christians should stand tall in Christ and confess his name."

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Baptist Young Men build
churches, touch lives in Chile

By Tim Seanor

*F.Y.M. (O)
(B)'hood)*

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PUERTO VARAS, Chile (BP)--"You're being watched by 20,000 people," said Southern Baptist missionary Caroline Jones. "Everybody in this town already knows you are here. They knew you were coming before you got here. And I can assure you that as we pulled into town the word spread that the 'gringos' had arrived."

Aware of their witness responsibility, the seven members of the second Baptist Young Men's overseas work team began their 16-day volunteer experience in Puerto Varas and Santiago, Chile. The team representing High School Baptist Young Men, and Baptist Young Men in the United States and Western Canada traveled more than 5,000 miles by plane, boat, bus, train and automobile to work in church construction and a missionary children's day camp.

"This is the youngest group we've ever had," said Southern Baptist missionary Archie Jones. "Everybody is under 40. This group, being younger, seems to have more energy than most work crews."

Working long, hot days in the South American summer months of December and January, the crew constructed kitchen cabinets and a pantry, and secured ceiling panels on three rooms of a new Baptist church in Puerto Varas, a small city of German ancestry in southern Chile. Overcoming language and cultural differences, the crew enjoyed working with Chilean Baptists, speaking in their churches and learning more about a country filled with volcanoes, crystal-clear lakes, and miles of ocean coastline.

"We could feel the love of the people that we've met," said team member Tim Garrison, 33, of Winston, Ga. "Even though we couldn't speak to each other, you could just feel a mutual bond there -- that was Jesus Christ. It was wonderful."

New Year's Day marked new beginnings for the international Baptist Young Men's work team. After attending the first worship service in the new church, the team boarded a train northbound for Santiago, the capital city of Chile. Transforming from construction crew to day-camp counselors, the group members led Bible studies, music and games for 34 children of Southern Baptist missionaries attending the biannual missions meeting. The feeling of being part of the missions "family" was evident in the hospitality of the Chile mission, they said.

"My most meaningful experience was when all the kids called me 'uncle,' said 15-year-old Scott Laughman of Douglasville, Ga. "When they all called me 'uncle,' I felt responsible for the kids. It was an enjoyable kind of responsibility."

"The kids are a long way from home," explained Brian Nelson, 25, of Delta, British Columbia, Canada. "Family for most of these kids is back in the United States. We are helping the missionaries in Chile by taking care of their kids and relieving them of the stress of not knowing where their kids are and what they're up to."

Many of the missionaries attending the meeting noticed a distinctive difference in the work team. "This is first time in 24 years that I've seen a group of men working with our MK's," said missionary Ken Park of Copiapo, Chile. "They have given us stability and orderliness to the work that I haven't seen before. We're grateful for all that they've done during the week."

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Eddie Pettit, national director of Baptist Young Men, a program sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, Tenn., was leader of the overseas project. "We have two purposes for having this national Baptist Young Men's overseas work project," said Pettit. "We want to teach Baptist Young Men skills they can use in missions and realize that the skills they already have can be utilized overseas or in a home project. We also want to help Baptist men realize that Baptist young men have gifts and talents to offer in such a project."

With changed attitudes and a renewed dedication, the crew members resolved to tell churches at home about the importance of missions. "I understand more about the whole concept of missions rather than just knowing that there's a missionary here and missionary there," said Richard Stone, 27, of Winston, Ga. "Missionaries are working in cooperation to accomplish a goal instead of doing it solo."

"I always looked at missions as just being back in no-man's land," confessed John Tarwater, 18, from Sevierville, Tenn. "I always thought of missionaries as being up on a stool and preaching, but missionaries are normal people who live normal lives. They're just in another land doing God's work."

Asked if the work team would do this kind of project again, Tarwater replied, "In a heartbeat."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Brotherhood Commission

Missionary urges greater
black representation

By Ken Camp

N-1ct89

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--More black Southern Baptists should be foreign missionaries, David Cornelius, a Southern Baptist foreign missionary to Nigeria, told participants at the annual Texas Baptist Black Pastors'/Wives' Banquet in Fort Worth.

"My desire is to see more people of color appointed by the Foreign Mission Board," Cornelius said during a missions emphasis at the banquet, held in conjunction with the Texas Baptist Evangelism Conference in early January..

Cornelius noted that he and his wife, Elwanda, are two of only five blacks currently serving as missionaries appointed by the Foreign Mission Board.

"I don't feel that it is representative of our part in this great convention," he said. "Surely God has called more of us to foreign missions than have responded."

At a recent international missions conference, Cornelius said, he was asked two questions by fellow participants: "Are there not very many black Christians in the United States?" and "Why don't they come to us?"

He urged the black ministers to recognize their dual responsibility to educate church members about missions and personally to be sensitive to God's call to foreign missions.

In the keynote address, Leroy Gaines, associate professor of religious education at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., pointed to the healing of the paralytic in Mark 2:1-12 as a case study in "learning how to pull together." He called on individual churches and people within those churches, as well as the Christian church as a whole, to learn the lesson of cooperation.

Baptists "took a beating in the area of race relations last year," noted Jim Culp, coordinator of the black church relations section of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

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