



THE MESSAGE BOARD
A Newsletter from
A. Roy Medley, General Secretary



Personal Reflections

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BWA Congress 2010

Part 1

Several thousand Baptists from around the world are gathering to “Hear the Spirit” at the 20th Baptist World Congress in Hawaii this week.

At this meeting, Dr. David Coffey, who addressed us at our 2009 Biennial in Pasadena, will be concluding his service as president of the Baptist World Alliance. Dr. Coffey launched several key initiatives during his tenure, including the BWA’s favorable response to an invitation to dialogue with Muslims and the development of the Emerging Leaders Network of rising Baptist leaders, in which American Baptist Jerrod Hugenot participates. David left the Executive Committee with a pastoral word as he reminisced about his five years as president. “It isn’t about counting the privileges of this position, but making the privileges count.” A good guideline for all of us in our Christian service.

He will be succeeded by Dr. John Upton, executive director of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. John brings both international experience as a former missionary and domestic experience as the leader of Virginia Baptists. The Baptist General Association of Virginia is one of the SBC regions that sought individual membership in the BWA when the Southern Baptist Convention pulled out. Dr. Upton is a highly respected voice among North American Baptists. He will continue Dr. Coffey’s legacy of open, evangelical leadership in our midst.

I am often asked what the pullout by the Southern Baptist Convention has meant to BWA life. Apart from sadness over their decision, there has been remarkably little negative fallout in the BWA itself. Their financial contribution has been met by others and their dominant role as the largest Baptist body in the world has been taken over by leaders from other conventions and unions from around the world. As a result, leadership in the BWA now more fully reflects its international constituency.

Dr. John Sundquist, retired executive director of ABC International Ministries, was singled out during the Executive Committee sessions for exemplary leadership of the Personnel Committee during the transition period for the new general secretary of the BWA.

Many American Baptists will be playing key roles in the BWA during the next five years. I will be serving on the Executive Committee, General Council, Baptist-Muslim Relations Committee, Budget and Finance Committee, Membership Committee, and chairing the General Council Resolutions Committee.

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Others include:

- *Baptist World Aid* – Bill Brackney, Lauran Bethell, Clifford Jones, Sr. and Lisa Rothenberger;
- *BWA Congress Program Committee* – Charles Jones and Warren Stewart;
- *Evangelism* – David Laubach, Denton Lotz and Patrick Pang;
- *Worship and Spirituality* – Ken Cadette and Jennifer Davidson;
- *Baptist Heritage and Family* – Rady Roldan, Hector Gonzalez, Sheila Heneise, Horace Russell, and Wallace C. Smith;
- *Theological Education and Leadership Formation* – Alistair Brown and Portia Tyler-Lloyd;
- *Doctrine and Christian Unity* – Kent Berghuis, Bill Brackney, Robert Cochran, Mark Heim and Leo Thorne;
- *Ministry* – James Scott and Marsha Woodard;
- *Christian Ethics* – Bill Brackney, Jerrod Huguenot, Allen Reasons and Yvonne Thorne;
- *Religious Freedom* – Adam Bond;
- *Peace* – Dan Buttry, Paul Hayes and Glen Stassen;
- *Social Justice & Environment* – Jeff Haggray, Lauran Bethell and Luis Rivera-Pagan;
- *Human Rights Advocacy* – Bill Brackney and Virginia Holmstrom;
- *Human Resources* – G. Elaine Smith;
- *Membership* – John Sundquist.

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