

BWA president says Korean Christians praying for United States election_100404

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BWA president says Korean Christians praying for United States election

By Marv Knox

Editor

DALLAS—Christians in Korea are praying for the United States presidential election, Baptist World Alliance President Billy Kim told a banquet audience at Dallas Baptist University.

Kim, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Suwon, South Korea, visited Texas Sept. 28-29 to receive an honorary doctorate from Dallas Baptist University.

Kim told the banquet crowd about the reaction of a second-grade Korean child who traveled with his group to America.

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| Baptist World Alliance President Billy Kim |
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“Just after we got off the plane in the Atlanta airport, this little boy asked his mother, 'Why has God blessed this country so abundantly?' She told him, 'Because they have so many Christians.'

“I believe God has blessed this country abundantly,” Kim added. “And institutions like Dallas Baptist University are the key to God's blessing on this nation.”

Because the United States has been so blessed, it impacts other nations, he said.

“The Korean church is praying for the American election,” he reported. “There are no other super powers left. What happens in your election will affect every person on earth. We pray God will continue to sustain this great nation.”

Kim expressed sorrow for the Southern Baptist Convention's vote last summer to withdraw from the Baptist World Alliance, comprised of 211 Baptist groups from around the globe.

The SBC's departure stemmed from the BWA's decision to admit into membership the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a group that split from the SBC after fundamentalists gained control of the convention.

Kim lamented tactics used by SBC leaders to justify their pullout from the worldwide alliance.

“They said the BWA is anti-American, that we believe in same-sex marriage, that we don't believe Christ is the sole path for salvation,” he said, denying all three charges.

The SBC's vote in June made news in Seoul, and Kim was besieged by reporters who wanted to know what he thought, he reported.

“I explained to the press corps, BWA is not anti-American,” he said, noting

his American-born wife would quit serving his meals if he were anti-American.

“We're also not for same-sex marriage,” he added, noting he knows of one man in his huge Korean church who was gay, “but his family, members of my church, don't believe that way.”

“We as the Korean Baptist Convention don't believe in same-sex marriage, because the Bible condemns it,” he said.

“And if I don't believe Christ is the sole source of salvation, then I have no business being president of the BWA.”

The SBC's vote to leave the BWA has caused “so much hurt” around the world, he said, noting he pleaded with SBC leaders to delay their departure at least until after the summer of 2005, when the BWA will celebrate its 100th anniversary.

“God knows best, and we trust God that things will work out for Southern Baptists as well as BWA,” he said.

Besides, “the world is too big” to linger on hurt and allow it to sidetrack the BWA from helping Baptists around the globe, he added. For example, world Baptists need to support members of the lone Baptist church in Turkey, as well as the 4,000 Baptists in Poland who are out-numbered by their 40 million countrymen, and persecuted Baptists in other parts of the world.

“There is a great task to be done,” Kim insisted. “I believe Baptists united will make the difference in the world.

“I still pray for the SBC. I pray God will use the SBC, the BWA, the CBF, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the American Baptist Churches ... to fulfill the Great Commission.”

DBU President Gary Cook praised Kim, whom he called “Mr. World

Baptist,” for his leadership, not only of his strong church in Korea but of Baptists globally.

Kim has close ties to the Dallas university, Cook said, noting numerous young people from his church are part of DBU's large international student body.

Thirteen Korean businessmen traveled with Kim to the DBU campus to be present for the ceremony where he received the honorary doctorate. At the banquet, they presented Cook with a check for what he described as a “very large scholarship.”

It will be placed in the fund that supports a scholarship named in Kim's honor, he added.

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