

NAMB hands off Vancouver Focus

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VANCOUVER, B.C. (ABP)—American ministry strategies in a Canadian culture have proven to be an imperfect match, at least for the North American Mission Board's Strategic Focus Cities effort.

But ministry leaders at NAMB and within the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists are encouraged by their decision to regroup and restructure the existing mission model in the multi-ethnic city of Vancouver.

On June 1, Vancouver Focus, NAMB's first Strategic Focus City in Canada, officially made the transition from a NAMB-directed ministry to leadership by the Canadian convention and the local Baptist association. Strategic Focus Cities is NAMB's emphasis on increasing evangelism and church-planting efforts in major metropolitan areas in North America.

Alan Au, city coordinator for Vancouver Focus, said NAMB's "rapid investment and rapid outcome" philosophy does not work in Vancouver with the cultural and language barriers that exist. There are nine different languages in the churches supported by the association and Vancouver

Focus.

The 8-year-old Strategic Focus Cities effort typically lands in one city for three years, one year for planning and two-to-three years for implementation. But Vancouver Focus will take closer to six years. Canadian officials are extending the emphasis to 2009, said Au, who left a missionary position with the International Mission Board two and one-half years ago to lead the effort.

The effort gradually will become 100 percent organized and implemented by Capilano Southern Baptist Association, Au said.

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