

# World Baptists honor Lotz for human rights advocacy

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HONOLULU — To be true to their heritage and principles, Baptists must continue the fight for religious liberty for all people, insisted Denton Lotz, who received the Baptist World Alliance’s Human Rights Award July 30 in Honolulu.

Lotz, the Alliance’s retired general secretary, accepted the award on behalf of his predecessors and BWA presidents.

Lotz has been a persistent human rights campaigner, reported Emmanuel McCall of the United States, a BWA vice president.

“Denton has been a visionary leader who led the BWA to commit a decade, beginning in 2000, to combating racism and advocating for human rights,” McCall said.



Denton Lotz (center), who received the BWA's Human Rights Award July 30, joined former recipients of the award at a press conference.

Lotz helped draft proclamations and covenants that bound Christians and others to speak on behalf of persecuted people all over the globe, McCall added, noting Lotz has confronted ambassadors and other government leaders, pleading for freedom for religious minorities.

“God has blessed [the BWA] because we have been faithful to the word and united,” Lotz said of Baptists’ advocacy for human rights. “Where there is

unity, there is strength.”

He cited 20th century Baptist theologian E.Y. Mullins, who maintained: “Where religious liberty is denied, all liberties are denied.”

“Baptists have stood for religious liberty” through the generations and across borders, he said, listing a litany of religious freedom advocates.

The battle continues, Lotz added. He pointed out the U.S. government denied travel visas to hundreds of world Baptists who wished to attend the BWA meeting in Hawaii.

In addition, the 21st century already has shaped up to be one of the bloodiest ever, he said, citing “senseless wars and ... the persecution of people the world over because of their Christian faith,” he said.

“With Moses, we must say, ‘Let my people go,’” he urged. “We call for religious freedom for all people, but we call for freedom in the name of Jesus Christ. ... He is the source of all freedom.”

Baptists desire religious freedom for people of any faith, he said, noting the persecution of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians.

“But we point to Jesus, who says, ‘If the Son has made you free, you are free indeed.’ ”

Marv Knox is editor of the Texas Baptist Standard.