

IMB honors past, looks to the future

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RICHMOND, Va.—The Southern Baptist International Mission Board is ready to move forward into a future of partnership with churches that empowers missionary teams who will make disciples and multiply churches among unreached peoples and places, IMB President David Platt told the agency's trustees.



Angela Banks (right), a new missionary from First Baptist Church in Canyon and her mother, Brenda (center), visit with International Mission Board trustee DeeEdrah White, a member of Granite Hills Baptist Church in Reno, Nevada. Banks said she told God, “I will do whatever you want me to do, go wherever you want me to go, and stay where you want me to stay.” (Photo / Roy M. Burroughs / IMB) In addition to hearing this vision for the future, IMB trustees also approved the appointment of 29 missionaries, recognized the longtime service of two missions workers who retire this month and elected officers during their May meeting.

Southern Baptist churches have rallied around the IMB to indicate their passion to get the gospel to people who never have heard it, Platt said. He noted Lottie Moon Christmas Offering projections indicate an increase in the 2015 annual offering, which runs through the end of May. Offering

totals are reported in early June after the conclusion of the campaign year.

Trustees approved a resolution noting appreciation for a one-time \$4 million gift from the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board to aid IMB missionaries who transition from the international mission field to the United States. Platt told trustees 245 field personnel accepted the board's "hand-raising opportunity" to return voluntarily from the mission field.

"God is good, and God is gracious, and in all we have walked through, God has been faithful to provide everything we need, and by his grace and in his wisdom, to bring us to a place that we set out to get to nine months ago—a place of short-term financial responsibility and long-term organizational stability," Platt said. "The stage is now set for God to work in and through the IMB for years to come, spreading his grace and his glory all over the world."

Platt reflected on the staggering world population growth, noting the world's population did not hit 1 billion people until 1800. By 1960, that number had grown to 3 billion. The global population is projected to triple to 9 billion by 2048.

"You look at this in all of history, and it's humbling, isn't it, to consider the time and place where God has put you and me?" he asked. Platt noted nearly 3 billion out of 7 billion people now are unreached with the gospel—"billions of lost men, women and children have never heard how they can be saved."

"In light of these realities, our goal is not just to send 100 or 200 more missionaries," he said. "We want to send thousands more missionaries, and the potential for doing that is real. But what that means is that with all of our resources in the IMB, we must work with Southern Baptists to streamline pathways for multitudes of men and women to take this gospel to the nations in the future.

“Even with a view toward the future, we are not forgetting the past. For everything we do in the days to come will involve standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.”

The trustee meeting included a luncheon honoring Clyde and Elaine Meador, who are retiring after 41 years service. Trustees also presented a resolution in appreciation for the Meadors’ service. Clyde Meador has worked closely with three IMB presidents as a top adviser and executive vice president, and as the mission organization’s interim president from August 2010 to March 2011. He served most recently as executive adviser to the president.



David Platt, president of the Southern Baptist Convention’s International Mission Board, recognizes Wanda Lee, executive director of Woman’s Missionary Union, for her partnership in missions as she plans to retire. Platt presented Lee with a gift to The Wanda Lee Joy Fund, which benefits the operational expenses of national WMU. (Photo / Roy M. Burroughs / IMB) Trustees also recognized Wanda Lee, who announced her intent to retire by the end of this year after 16 years as executive director of national Woman’s Missionary Union. Lee and her husband, Larry, are former IMB missionaries appointed in 1979 to the Windward Islands. The recognition included a gift of \$15,000 from the IMB to The Wanda Lee Joy Fund, which benefits the operational expenses of national WMU.

Trustees elected Scott Harris, a member of Brentwood Baptist Church in Brentwood, Tenn., as chair of the board; Rick Dunbar, a member of First

Baptist Church in Madison, Miss., as first vice chair; Tim Simpson, pastor of Greenridge Baptist Church in Clarksburg, Md., as second vice chair; and Cindy Snead, a member of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., as recording secretary.