

Union University has entered into a three-year partnership with the Singapore Baptist Convention and the Baptist Theological Seminary of Singapore to help Baptist churches in Singapore in their efforts to reach the nations for Christ.

The partnership agreement was officially announced in mid-November at a signing ceremony with Dockery and representatives from Singapore visiting the Union campus. Though the initial length of the agreement is three years, Dockery said he expected the partnership would be extended and expanded after that first term.

"It's an unbelievable open door for the gospel," Union University President David S. Dockery said. "The Lord has given it to us and we need

Through the partnership, Union will also provide degree programs for pastors in Singapore.

Richard Wells, Union's vice president for church relations, will be the first Union faculty member to travel to Singapore as part of the partnership, when he goes in July to teach a course at the seminary. Faculty members Hal and Mary Anne Poe are scheduled to teach there next fall.

Located on the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula in Southeast Asia, Singapore is an island city-state of 5.6 million people. Singapore is often ranked as one of the top five financial centers in the world, with one of the world's strongest economies.

The city is strategically located, with Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Tokyo, Australia,

Union and Singapore Baptists forge partnership

to be faithful stewards of the moment. It gives us a wide open door to follow through on our commitment as an institution to be a Great Commission university."



Choon Sam Fong, David S. Dockery and Peter Tang sign the three-year partnership agreement between Union University and Baptists in Singapore. (Photo by Beth Spain)

The partnership between Union and Singapore Baptists will include cooperation in such areas as faculty and student exchanges; academic program development; study tour opportunities for church leaders, faculty and students; collaborative research and seminars; promotion of church health, church growth and church planting; and evangelism and discipleship, Dockery said.

Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, India and the Philippines all within just a few hours of travel time. About 3.3 billion people – nearly half of the earth's population – live within seven hours of flying time from Singapore.

"We are grateful for this partnership extended by Union University, particularly to our Baptist Theological Seminary," said Peter Tang, executive director of the Singapore Baptist Convention. "It will really widen our ability to provide training for both those who aspire to be pastors as well as those who are already serving as pastors. We believe that this quality teaching and training from Union will really prepare our pastors to serve God to a higher level."

The Baptist convention in Singapore consists of 36 churches with about 12,000 members. Though the convention is relatively young (the seminary began 21 years ago), the churches have matured and are actively involved in sending out their own missionaries.

"It's very encouraging to know that we have a larger, international network of brothers and sisters in Christ," said Choon Sam Fong, dean of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Singapore, about the partnership. "We can do something together that will benefit not just the seminary or the university, but Christian communities in Singapore, in Asia and maybe in the U.S., too." 卐