

Trail Markers

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Key Early Leaders in BGC Missions

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In the 1940s, there were already a number of Baptist General Conference (BGC) missionaries working internationally under the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS). Some within the conference argued that the BGC should just continue to use the ABFMS as its sending agency. Other strong voices felt that more interest would be generated for missions if the BGC had its own board. The latter voices prevailed, and at the 1944 conference at the fairgrounds in St. Paul, it was voted to establish a BGC mission board with Walfred Danielson as the first mission secretary. In a remarkable mission advance, the conference opened five new fields over the next six years. The new board set a goal of sending out 52 missionaries within eight years, and exceeded that goal by appointing 59 missionaries by 1952.

China: 1944-45

In November of 1944, an organizing meeting for the new board was held in Chicago during which the BGC appointed its first independent world missionaries: Reverend and Mrs. Sten Lindberg. Lindberg had been appointed by the U.S. government to go to China to establish relations with the Chinese government. The conference piggybacked on that arrangement and commissioned the Lindbergs to begin a mission work in Tsingtao. A year later, Dale and Alma Bjork were appointed by the BGC to join the Lindbergs on the China field. All missionaries were forced to leave China in the early 1950s, however, due to political upheaval.