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April 5, 1967

Clergy May Be Required  
 To Join Social Security

287

560

WASHINGTON (BP)--Ministers should be treated no differently from other people under the Social Security law on the basis of conscience or religious liberty, according to a staff report by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here.

The occasion of the Baptist Joint Committee's report is a bill in Congress introduced by Rep. George M. Rhodes (D., Pa.). Hearings have been completed on the bill by the House Ways and Means Committee.

At present ministers are classified as "self-employed" under the Social Security law. As such their participation in Social Security is now voluntary.

If passed, the Rhodes bill would make Social Security coverage for all ministers as self-employed persons automatic unless they individually applied for exemption.

According to the new bill, ministerial exemption from Social Security would be acceptable only if the minister objects on grounds of conscience.

"Since the proposal leaves the minister in the self-employed status, the change suggested by the Rhodes bill does not directly affect churches or church agencies," according to the Baptist Joint Committee staff report.

The report says there is no record of an erosion of religious freedom of persons or churches or church agencies in the administration of the Social Security program to date. Hence, it continues, "the Social Security program as it now operates should not be viewed as a threat to proper church-state separation."

Although the report recognizes that there may be reasons other than religion in objection to the Social Security program, it states that "the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has nothing to add to the purely political and economic controversies raised by the program."

The Baptist Joint Committee staff expressed the view that the Rhodes bill should not be opposed "for any reasons related to religious liberty or church-state relations when it is compared to the present program."

On the other hand, the report says, "We suggest that denominational leaders who have special concern with the retirement needs of ministers and the general conditions of employment of the clergy should assess the economic advantages and disadvantages of the proposed change."

Looking at the record thus far the report points out that about 75 per cent of all ministers have chosen to be under Social Security. Ninety-five per cent of older ministers are covered. Sixty per cent of younger ministers are covered.

"As a result of this difference," the report continued, "the percentage covered will drop over the long run because the deadline for filing the waiver of exemption has passed."

The staff report points out that in the early days of Social Security the denominations were hesitant about including church employees because of a fear of improper church-state involvement. However, with 30 years of experience with Social Security "we think the day of hesitancy is past," it says.

The report adds that the denominations can now "re-evaluate their past stands and move to a more positive posture respecting Social Security." It suggests four approaches to the reconsideration: (1) freedom of conscience, (2) special treatment of the clergy, (3) separation of church and state, and (4) the rights of the person.

In conclusion the report says, "We think that the right of the individual should be primary in discussions of this program. Of course, the institutional relationships it affects should be carefully regarded, but these are of secondary concern."

287

"Churches and their agencies may properly be expected to make some adjustments to honor the rights at issue. This is, in fact, about where both Baptists and the nation have arrived in practice. We think what has been achieved in practice can be defended confidently as a value for the person and the society."

-30-

Senior Citizens Month  
Proclaimed By Johnson

288

4/5/67

369

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Lyndon B. Johnson has proclaimed May as Senior Citizens Month. "Meeting the Challenge of the Later Years" is the theme of the observance honoring the 19 million Americans who are 65 or over.

In his proclamation the President called on the nation for a commitment to enrich and improve the lives of the senior citizens among us. He restated the objectives in his Bill of Rights for Older Americans: "An adequate income, a decent home, and a meaningful retirement."

"There must be a general awareness that it is within the power of us all to bring light to the lives of those who are lonely or in despair, better care to those who are ill or disabled, greater benefits to those who are impoverished," the President said.

The theme is based on the President's proposals now before Congress for an adequate income for the aged, tax reform, extension of nursing and health care and job opportunities.

In the proclamation, Johnson cited legislative achievements during his administration for senior citizens. He said Medicare had eased the "crushing burden of hospital and doctor bills."

"The Older Americans Act of 1965, with its emphasis on community services, gives direction and meaning to lives that might have been spent out in frustration and purposelessness," Johnson said.

He also commended other federal programs which provide assistance to senior citizens in housing and nursing care, public welfare and special training programs.

Johnson said recommendations now before Congress will make the older years of life even more productive and more comfortable by:

- Increasing the benefits under Social Security;
- Raising the level of public assistance for those who must depend on such welfare for the essentials;
- Extending the benefits of Medicare to more people, and expanding its services;
- Increasing the educational, recreational and health services under the Older Americans Act;
- Eliminating income tax discrimination against those over 65 who continue to work;
- Prohibiting discrimination because of age in employment.

Of the 19 million older Americans, only one out of five has a job. About 5.3 million have yearly incomes below the poverty level. More than 15 million Americans over 65 draw Social Security. Two million are on welfare rolls.

In his message on older Americans to the 90th Congress, the President urged that we "look upon the growing number of older citizens, not as a problem or a burden for our democracy, but as an opportunity to enrich their lives and, through them, the lives of all of us."

-30-

288

April 5, 1967

3

Baptist Press

Concert, Five Messages Slated  
For SBC Evangelists Conference

289

252

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (BP)--Five messages and a concert of evangelistic music will highlight the program of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists meeting here at the Miami Beach Auditorium on the afternoon of June 1.

Opening speaker for the Evangelists' Conference will be Dr. R. G. Lee, pastor emeritus (retired) of the Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., speaking on "The Bible--Fiction or Fact."

Following the Thursday afternoon conference, the evangelists will meet for a dinner and business session at the Holiday Inn here to consider a code of ethics for Baptist evangelists.

During the afternoon session at Miami Beach Auditorium, the program will be devoted mostly to inspirational preaching and singing.

About 3,500 are expected to attend the afternoon conference, said Don Womack, president of the Evangelists' Conference.

Three of the five speakers for the meeting are "vocational evangelists." They are: Womack, an evangelist from Memphis; Hyman Appelman, evangelist from Kansas City, Mo.; and Clyde Kendall, evangelist from Atlanta.

John Bisagno, pastor of the First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, a suburb of Oklahoma City, Okla., will also speak on the subject of "Childhood Conversion."

Special music will be presented by Evangelistic Singers Bette Stalnecker of Ripley, Tenn.; Jerry Spencer of Memphis; Al and Ivy Walsh of Atlanta; and Martha Branham of Dallas.

The conference will begin at 1:00 p.m. with an hour-long concert of sacred music directed by Ed Stalnecker of Ripley, Tenn. Music will be featured by Mrs. Branham, Mr. and Mrs. Walsh, Mrs. Stalnecker; Spencer; Sonny Rios of Garland, Tex.; R. L. Sigrest of Yazoo City, Miss.; Bill Michael of Joplin, Mo.; Jimmy Hodges of Lakeland, Fla.; Leon Westerhouse of Birmingham, Ala.; and David and Carol Tyson of Forrest City, Ark.

-30-

290  
Proposed Program  
CONFERENCE OF SOUTHERN BAPTIST EVANGELISTS

Miami Beach Auditorium  
June 1, 1967

- 1:00 Concert--Sacred Music - Directed by Ed Stalnecker  
Martha Branham, Al and Ivy Walsh, Bette Stalnecker, Jerry Spencer, Sonny Rios, R. L. Sigrest, Bill Michael, Jimmy Hodges, Leon Westerhouse, David and Carol Tyson
- 2:00 "The Bible--Fiction or Fact" - Dr. R. G. Lee, Memphis, Tennessee  
2:25 Special Music - Martha Branham, Dallas, Texas  
2:30 "Compassion In Action" - Clyde Kendall, evangelist, Atlanta, Georgia  
2:55 Special Music - Bette Stalnecker, Ripley, Tennessee  
3:00 "Childhood Conversion" - John Bisagno, pastor, First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Oklahoma  
3:25 Special Music - Jerry Spencer, Memphis, Tennessee  
3:30 "Rivers of Blood" - Don Womack, president, Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists, and evangelist, Memphis, Tennessee  
3:55 Offering - Miscellaneous  
4:10 Special Music - Al and Ivy Walsh, Atlanta, Georgia  
4:15 "Cataracts of Revival" - Hyman Appelman, evangelist, Kansas City, Missouri  
4:45 Adjourn
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- 6:00 Evangelists Dinner - Holiday Inn - By Ticket Only  
Business Session - Consideration of Code of Ethics for Southern Baptist Evangelists

289-290

April 5, 1967

4

Baptist Press

Teenage America Finalist  
To Speak To SBC Pastors

291

182

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (BP)--Miss Jackie Fain, a former Miss Teenage Atlanta and finalist in the 1963 Miss Teenage America Pageant, will be a principal speaker for the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference here May 29.

Miss Fain, a senior student at Florida State University in Tallahassee and member of the First Baptist Church of Tallahassee, will speak instead of Charles Wellborn of Tallahassee, chaplain to Florida State University who had earlier been scheduled to address the pastors.

Subject of the address is to be "The Minister Addresses Himself...To the World of the Student." Wellborn will be in Europe at the time of the meeting, and had hoped to return in time to address the pastors, but was unable to work it out.

Miss Fain, the daughter of Col. and Mrs. John M. Fain of Atlanta, is a talented pianist and former soloist with the Atlanta Pops Concert Orchestra.

A popular student with numerous campus organization memberships and leadership positions, Miss Fain has also achieved academic recognition consistently on the college's "Dean's List." She is active in Campus Crusade for Christ, and is pianist for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

-30-

BP PHOTO mailed to state Baptist papers

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NOTE TO BAPTIST STATE PAPER EDITORS: If you have not already carried the program outline for the SBC Pastors' Conference (mailed March 7, 1967), please substitute the name of Miss Jackie Fain, student, Florida State University, Tallahassee; instead of Charles Wellborn, on the program outline, listed Monday afternoon, May 29, 3:35 p.m. Thanks.

--Baptist Press

291