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DECEMBER 4, 1970

**SBC President Urges Denomination
"To Get Into the Arena of Life"**

ATLANTA (BP)--"It is time for the Southern Baptist Convention to stand on its feet and get into the arena of life," the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Carl E. Bates of Charlotte, N.C., declared here.

Southern Baptists must go into a world that has little sense of direction and show love and purity of morals in a time when hate and immorality are rampant, Bates told staff members and the elected board of directors of the SBC Home Mission Board at a luncheon here.

He told the group that he is as concerned as much about what he called "the crisis within the convention" as he is about "the crisis in the world."

Bates, pastor of Charlotte's First Baptist Church, expressed frustration that the denomination should find itself polarized over doctrinal differences at this time, and that opinion polls disclose that the church has less influence on society.

"All of the things that are happening happened when we had every reason to be confident that the church would have a greater influence on people than ever in its history," he explained. "Surprisingly enough, the impact of the church has become weaker and weaker."

Explaining the cause of the growing weakness, Bates cited the transition of people. "I keep hearing that people have moved from the country to the city," he said.

He chided those who fear the city and its problems. The only problem I face in the city is how to get my heart and arms stretched big enough to take in all the city.

"Somebody ought to look at our New Testament and see that this is a book about the city. 'Christianity began in the city,' Bates said.

He called Baptists' ignorance of doctrine and procedures "abysmal."

"Many of our people don't really understand what the Christian faith is all about. There was a time when the average Baptist member knew what Baptists believed."

He added that Baptists must find new ways of communicating the gospel, saying that some of the old approaches are no longer effective.

"We can no longer preach in the death complex we used to," he said. "Evangelism based on the death complex is no more." He added that evangelism which appeals to guilt is also ineffective today.

Speaking to the question of a personal and social gospel, Bates said Baptists must find some way to combine both aspects. He disputed the idea that changed people will automatically change society.

"You can't say anymore that concerned people will change society," he said. "I know a lot of concerned people who're not doing anything to change anything in society."

He challenged the group to develop a deeper commitment before beginning new activities, however, "We ought to get involved but we need to come apart occasionally," he explained. He added that some have meditated too long. "It's just as true that some of us have spent enough time at the altar and ought to get involved."

He said that the Southern Baptist posture must be one of spirit-guided flexibility which neither compromises or capitulates on principles.

As president of the convention, Bates is an ex-officio member of the agency's board of directors. He was an elected member of the board for eight years.

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Senate Acts To Speed Up
Church War Claim Payments

12/4/70

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Senate has acted favorably on a long-delayed bill to give equal treatment to nonprofit charitable and religious organizations in the payment of war damages claimed after World War II.

Two Baptist denominations, the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society and the Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society are among 33 nonprofit groups to receive full payment for their claims.

Under the terms of the bill, nonprofit organizations "operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare, religious, charitable or education purposes" will receive the same priority of payment as small business concerns. Partial payment of about \$15 million has been made to these groups. The present bill amends the war claims act of 1948 to put the nonprofit groups in a priority category to receive full payments as funds are available in the war claims fund.

The bill passed the House in 1969, but will be sent back to that body for minor adjustments before going to the President for his signature.

The total amount of unpaid claims of these nonprofit organizations comes to more than \$9.2 million. The war damage claims of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society totalled \$813,000. According to a spokesman for that group, the society is due to receive, upon final action of the bill, up to \$310,000. The Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society will received around \$20 thousand.

The war claims fund does not come from the public treasure, therefore no appropriation is required. Instead the funds come from the proceeds of German and Japanese assets claimed by the United States during World War II.

At the present about \$5 million is available for further distribution. Also the justice department is holding over \$60 million, pending the result of litigations involving the United States. It is estimated that approximately \$26 million may be available for eventual transfer to the war claims fund to satisfy the unpaid portion of existing awards, which would include groups other than the nonprofit organizations.

The largest claim for war damages covered by the present amendment is that of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America which will receive more than \$5.1 million. The next two highest awards will go to the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia and the World Division of Board of Missions of the Methodist Church. Their claims amount to more than \$3 million each.

In testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, spokesmen for the nonprofit religious groups said the funds received would be used primarily, if not exclusively for the secular purposes of rebuilding their damaged or destroyed schools, hospitals, orphanages, old-age homes and other properties.

In reporting the bill to the Senate, the judiciary committee noted that it did not see the present amendment is necessarily binding as a precedent for future war claims legislation.

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CORRECTION

On BP story mailed 12/2/70, please insert the following graph as the 12th graph on page 1 of the entitled story, Home Mission Reorganization Strengthens Strategy Function: The planning and the coordination section consists of an executive assistant (Leonard Irwin), a planning services department and four regional coordinators.

Thanks

Baptist Press



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