



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 27, 1976

76-92

WB NEWS

Resolution Urged on Govt.
Pension Interference

by W. Barry Garrett

NORFOLK (BP)--A resolution urging protection of denominational retirement programs against excessive government interference will be presented to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee here at its session, June 14, preceding the annual SBC meeting, June 15-17.

Darold H. Morgan, president of the SBC Annuity Board, said the resolution will be submitted to the Executive Committee, which meets at 2:30 p.m. in the East Ballroom of the Holiday Inn-Scope, with the request that the Executive Committee present it to the convention for action.

An Annuity Board spokesman said the reason for the procedure is that "the action affects all the boards and agencies of the convention, and it is appropriate for the Executive Committee to take action."

Pension Boards of other denominations are likewise concerned about government interference in their plans, said the Annuity Board spokesman. They, in their own way, are likewise taking steps to petition the government for corrective measures, he said.

The concern of the church pension boards has been aroused by the Internal Revenue Code as amended by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

According to the Annuity Board, the government through ERISA has defined a "church plan" for pensions in such a way as to prohibit church agencies from participating in "church plans" after 1982. In addition, the government, through its actions, "has arrogated unto itself the authority to define a church in the context of defining the term 'church plan,'" the proposed resolution charges.

The effect of the government's actions, if allowed to stand, will be seriously and adversely to affect the pension systems of the various denominations, according to Morgan.

The text of the proposed resolution is as follows:

"Whereas, the United States Constitution provides that Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; and

"Whereas, the Southern Baptist Convention in the past has consistently opposed excessive government interference with ministries of the local churches and the agencies which help and support them to promote and carry out their mission and ministry; and

"Whereas, the United States Congress through Section 3 (33) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and Section 414 (E) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as amended ("Code") has arrogated unto itself the authority to define a church in the context of defining the term "church plan"; and

"Whereas ERISA and the Code distinguish between a church and an agency of a church or convention of churches, and provide that an agency cannot participate in a church plan after December 31, 1982 and

"Whereas, ministers and lay employees of the Southern Baptist Convention are employed inter-changeably by churches and church-related agencies participating in denominational plans maintained with the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention; and

"Whereas, the Southern Baptist Convention and the 33 individual state Baptist conventions affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention oversee, supervise and contribute to the retirement annuity plans of the churches and the denomination maintained with the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention:

"Therefore, be it resolved, that we the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in annual meeting in June 1976 at Norfolk, Virginia, urge the elected representatives in Congress to support legislation to amend section 3 (33) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and section 414 (E) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (Code) relating to the definition of 'church plan' so that church-related agencies are recognized as part of a church or convention of churches and entitled to participate in a church plan."

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Disaster Funds Dispersed
In Flooded Philippines

RB NEWS

Baptist Press
5/27/76

By Robert L. Stanley

MANILA, Philippines (BP)--Almost half of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's disaster appropriation for the Philippines has already been dispersed.

Of the \$5,000 set aside, \$2,300 has been used to distribute food, clothing and medicine, according to Southern Baptist missionary Robert N. Nash.

Additional funds will be circulated as needed in the devastated areas of Central Luzon. Floods caused by tropical storm Olga affected more than 600,000 persons here and in low-lying ricelands and towns of this area, reports indicate.

Southern Baptist missionaries and church leaders in the Philippines purchased rice and were distributing it to church members and other flood victims on the Luzon island, hard hit by nine days of almost continuous rainfall.

"The rain has been so prolonged that people are without food and unable to get out of their homes because of the floods," explained Nash, chairman of the Philippine mission organization.

Wind damage was slight. However, the typhoon's slow movement across the Philippines set off the record rainfall. Nash said he had received no reports of damage to missionary homes, but it was too early to know the extent church members may have suffered.

Rising waters blocked all highway traffic northward from Manila. Nash said airline space was reserved to fly missionaries to Baguio for their June annual meeting, in case bus and automobile traffic proved impossible.

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Pinson to Head BWA Commission
On Freedom, Justice, Peace

COM NEWS

Baptist Press
5/27/76

WASHINGTON (BP)--William M. Pinson Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Tex., has been named to head the Baptist World Alliance's (BWA) new international Study Commission on Freedom, Justice, and Peace, it was announced here.

Commission co-chairman is Eric L. David, general secretary of the Liberia Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, and Rohan L. Wijesinghe, secretary of the Sri Lanka Baptist Sangamaya in Asia, is commission secretary.

Southern Baptists serving on the commission, besides Pinson, include James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; James Leo Garrett Jr., director of church-state studies at Baylor University, Waco, Tex.; Fred Schwengel, a layman who is director of the U. S. Capitol Historical Society and belongs to a dually-aligned church; and John Wilkes, Southern Baptist missionary and editor of European Baptist Press service.

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