



BAPTIST PRESS

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Annuity Trustees Establish
South Africa Investment Policy

By Ray Furr

DALLAS (BP)—Annuity Board trustees adopted a policy regarding investments in companies doing business in South Africa and reviewed pending tax legislation that would "cripple" pensions for Southern Baptist ministers and denominational employees.

The trustees unanimously moved to establish a three-tiered set of guidelines for Annuity Board investments related to South Africa.

J.W. Shearin Jr., finance committee chairman and trustee from Winston-Salem, N.C., presented the guidelines which emphasize the board's first responsibility is to its constituents and the "...assets under the supervision of the board be invested solely in the interests of plan members and their beneficiaries."

The policy also reaffirms the board should make continuous efforts to keep its investment policy related to the overall purpose of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In a more specific statement regarding South Africa the trustees instructed the board to consider the extent to which companies are engaged in activities in South Africa and "...committed in principle or as signatories to the Sullivan Principles."

The current holdings of companies failing to subscribe in concept to these principles should be sold within a reasonable time if demonstrated progress is not evident.

The guidelines also prohibit the future investments in companies which lack commitment to these principles.

The Sullivan Principles are a set of guidelines drawn up in 1977 by the Rev. Leon Sullivan, a Baptist minister and former board director at General Motors, which commit employers to desegregation and equal employment practices.

Investment Director Stan Morrow affirmed the action saying: "The Sullivan Principles have become the standard adopted by most religious, business and governmental communities that manage large investment holdings."

Morrow noted the board holds no direct investments in South Africa and less than 25 percent --about \$66-70 million--of its equity holdings are related to companies doing business in South Africa. On Dec. 31, 1984, the market value of the equity securities held by the Annuity Board was \$266,714,000, according to financial data printed in the 1985 SBC Annual.

He further reported his research to date showed nearly all of this group of companies are signatories to the Sullivan Principles. Morrow, who said the holdings "change from day to day" through changing investments, estimated the Annuity Board does business with "40 or 50 companies which do business with South Africa."

Gary S. Nash, Annuity Board general counsel, told the trustees tax proposals currently in the Ways and Means Committee of the U.S. House Representatives would have a "...crippling impact on pension plans for ministers and denominational workers."

He said the proposals would repeal a special "catch-up rule" which allows ministers to make up for low contributions made in earlier years of denominational service.

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The proposals also would reduce the amount ministers and their spouses could contribute to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA).

Nash said denominational workers would be penalized for taking early retirement and benefit withdrawals before age 59 1/2 would be severely taxed.

Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan told the trustees more than 2,500 applications had been received for the special insurance "Open Enrollment" emphasis. He noted the toll free telecommunications operation was receiving an estimated 5,000 calls per day.

The two-month "Open Enrollment" emphasis guarantees Southern Baptist ministers and paid church workers medical insurance coverage if they apply during October and November.

Further action included the promotion of John Dudley, director of insurance services, to senior vice-president. A committee was formed to study the expansion of the insurance programs administered by the board.

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Former Synagogue Now
Haitian Baptist Church

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
11/4/85

BOSTON (BP)—The ornate, Gothic-columned building in the Roxbury section of inner-city Boston was built as a Jewish synagogue more than 90 years ago.

Now after two transitions, the building is teeming on Sunday mornings with more than 600 Haitians worshipping and attending Sunday school at the First Haitian Baptist Church of Boston.

The building has been an Old Testament worship center, a Spanish Catholic church and now is a New Testament Baptist church, said Ignatius Meimaris, director of language missions for the Greater Boston Baptist Association.

There are eight Haitian congregations among the 37 churches in the Greater Boston Association. It is not that the Haitian population is larger than other ethnic groups in Boston, but an organized commitment to evangelism among a few Haitian pastors that has created the large percentage of Haitian work in the association, Meimaris explained.

Although Haitian congregations make up about one-fourth of the local congregations in the association, 10 other congregations worship in languages other than English, three are American black congregations and only 18 are predominately white Anglo congregations, according to Larry Martin, director of missions.

Much of the ethnic work in Boston has involved training ethnic laypersons to reach others, Martin said. At the First Haitian Church, more than 40 Sunday school teachers are trained and lead the 21 classes, said Jean Massena, assistant Sunday school director.

Although the church once did not have enough teachers, after continued training, it is no longer difficult to find teachers. Frequently, new classes are started when others get too large. Teachers are always available for the new units, Massena said.

Part of training teachers is teaching them the responsibility for outreach, he explained. "A teacher is responsible for the whole family, not just the one person in his class."

Teachers are required to know the names of every member of the class as well as those of the class members' family. "If the family has a problem, the teacher should know about it," he said.

Teacher involvement has helped the Sunday school grow to the point that the Roxbury church is the largest Southern Baptist church in the Baptist Convention of New England.

Because Southern Baptist literature is not available in French, the Roxbury church uses material from Paris. Weekly workers' meetings are crucial in assisting the teachers in using the materials, Massena said.

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The structure of the Sunday school places an additional responsibility on the teachers of ensuring that the class members know the lesson. Most of the classes meet in various sections of the expansive worship center. At the end of Sunday school, the director quizzes classes on the lesson material.

Spiritual growth has been just as important as numerical growth for the Roxbury church. "That's why we ask questions in Sunday school. All teaching and no asking would not be good," Massena said.

Continued growth is a priority for the Greater Boston Baptist Association. The association began three years ago with only 15 congregations and has grown to the current 37. A goal of six new congregations has been set for this year, Martin said.

Five Bible studies are being conducted in areas where the association hopes to start congregations within the next year. "We target areas, begin to work in them and encourage others to pray for our work," Martin explained.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by BSSB bureau of Baptist Press

Ben Fisher Dies
After Long Illness

Baptist Press
11/4/85

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--Ben C. Fisher, a recognized leader among Southern Baptist educators, died Nov. 3 in a Raleigh hospital after a long bout with cancer.

Fisher, 70, was executive director of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1970-78. Previously he was executive secretary of the Council of Christian Higher Education of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina from 1962-70.

In addition to several pastorates in North Carolina Fisher held faculty and administrative posts at Gardner-Webb College in Boiling Springs, N.C., and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

At the time of his death Fisher was on leave from Campbell University in Buies Creek, N.C., where he was educational consultant to the president and adjunct professor of religion.

Fisher was widely recognized for his contributions to the field of Christian education. He received the Charles D Johnson Award for significant contributions to Southern Baptist higher education from the SBC Education Commission in 1984.

He was honored with an Outstanding Service Award from the Council of Independent Colleges in 1981 and a Distinguished Service Award by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in 1980.

Fisher took an active role in educational-related activities. In 1977 he organized and led a White House conference between President Jimmy Carter and chief executive heads of 22 boards of church-related higher education.

He was also a member of the advisory board of the Center for Constitutional Studies at the University of Notre Dame (1976-82) and was on the Governor's Special Advisory Committee for Non-Public Education in North Carolina (1982-84).

Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the SBC Education Commission, praised Fisher for his leadership role in Southern Baptist life, noting his, "great contribution was his philosophical emphasis on the purpose and mission of our Southern Baptist colleges and schools."

This emphasis was highlighted by Fisher's leadership in planning the National Colloquium on Christian Education held in 1976 at Williamsburg, Va., and the National Congress on Church-Related Colleges and Schools held in 1979 at the University of Notre Dame, Walker added.

The funeral for Fisher will be Nov. 6 at First Baptist Church, Raleigh. The family requests, in lieu of flowers, memorials be sent to the Ben C. Fisher Scholarship Fund at Southeastern seminary.

Fisher is survived by his wife, Sara, of Raleigh, and two sons: David Lincoln Fisher of California and Hugh Robert Fisher of Florida.

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Reagan Signs Bill Marking
National Day Of Fasting

Baptist Press
11/4/85

WASHINGTON (BP)--Following approval by Congress, President Reagan has signed a bill designating Nov. 24 as National Day of Fasting to Raise Funds to Combat Hunger.

The measure is designed to encourage Americans to fast one or more meals on the Sunday before Thanksgiving and contribute the unspent food money for hunger relief. Participants may send contributions to the charity of their choice or to a specially established post office box in Washington.

Donations mailed to the post office box will be distributed through InterAction, an umbrella organization of more than 100 relief groups including the Baptist World Alliance. Those donations should be mailed to: Fast to End Famine, P.O. Box 33219, Farragut Station, Washington, D.C. 20033.

"This is a chance for Americans to continue to voluntarily share their blessings with the not so fortunate," stated Rep. Ron Packard, R-Calif., one of the bill's sponsors. "By giving up a meal or two just a few days prior to our national day of thanks--and donating the money that would have been spent on food for those meals--even the less affluent Americans can afford to contribute.

"It is exciting to know that, given a life-or-death famine situation as we have in Africa and others parts of the world today, we, as a nation of diverse peoples, can come together to help the helpless. We have the resources. We have the will. And, through the National Day of Fasting to Raise Funds to Combat Hunger, we have the way."

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First Southern, Del City
Calls Tom Elliff As Pastor

Baptist Press
11/4/85

DEL CITY, Okla. (BP)--Tom Elliff, chairman of the 1986 Southern Baptist Convention Committee on Boards, has been called as pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla.

In accepting the call, Elliff, who has been pastor of Applewood Baptist Church, Wheat Ridge, Colo., automatically becomes ineligible to serve as a member or chairman of the important committee which nominates trustees to serve on the boards of the national agencies and institutions of the SBC.

Elliff, 41, will succeed his brother-in-law, Bailey E. Smith, who resigned Sept. 15, to enter full-time evangelism. Smith, who was pastor of Oklahoma's largest congregation 12 years, was president of the SBC 1980-82.

During the 1985 annual meeting of the SBC in Dallas, Elliff delivered theme interpretation messages and was elected to the 1986 Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees during a controversial election. The controversy erupted when current SBC President Charles F. Stanley of Atlanta--on advice of his parliamentarian, Wayne Allen of Memphis, Tenn.--ruled out of order efforts to challenge the nominations to the 1986 Committee on Boards.

The controversy has continued, and has included a challenge presented at the September meeting of the SBC Executive Committee, and the threat of a civil court lawsuit.

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Under SBC rules, replacements for persons who resign or otherwise become ineligible to serve on the Committee on Boards are named by the Executive Committee, acting for the convention ad interim. Thus, a new Colorado representative and a new chairman will be named when the committee meets in Nashville, Tenn., Feb. 10-12, 1986.

Replacements cannot be named by the Committee on Committees, since those bodies exist only during the duration of the annual meeting.

Elliff told Baptist Press he believes the role as a member and chairman of the Committee on Boards is "important, but not something which would make me go or stay. While it is important on a year to year basis, it is not my life's calling. I made my decision strictly on what God's will for me is."

Elliff has been pastor of the suburban Denver church since 1983, when he, his wife Jeannie, and their four children returned from Zimbabwe, where they had been foreign missionaries. They returned after serving only two years on the foreign mission field in order to seek medical treatment for their daughter, Beth, now 17, who had been injured in an automobile accident.

Prior to going to Africa, Elliff was pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church in Tulsa, Okla., from 1972-1981. During his pastorate, Eastwood quadrupled in attendance, almost tripled in membership, conducted a television ministry complete with its own production equipment and a mobile unit and operated accredited primary and secondary schools.

During his Applewood pastorate, the church has grown from an average attendance of about 500 to more than 1,000 in Sunday school, and in September dedicated a \$1 million educational building, debt free. The church also baptized 185 new members in 1985 and gave an estimated 10 percent through the convention's unified giving plan, the Cooperative Program.

In Del City--where he was called by a vote of 2,113 to 156--Elliff assumes the pastorate of a church in the midst of a relocation project with a 7,000-seat auditorium under construction. First Southern has a listed membership of 18,400 members, with 7,900 enrolled in Sunday school.

During the first three-quarters of 1985, First Southern contributed \$18,069 through the Cooperative Program, compared with \$80,309 in the first three quarters of 1984.

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Hotels For St. Louis
Convention Listed

Baptist Press
11/4/85

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Hotels which will be reserved for use by the housing bureau at the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention have now been listed, said Tim A. Hedquist, SBC convention manager.

Hedquist said 20 hotels--involving an estimated 5,200 rooms--will be included in the housing bureau block, releasing other rooms for reservations by individuals or groups. He added release of the other hotels is "earlier than in the past, but we are ahead of schedule in convention preparation."

He said the list is being released "because some of the hotels already are being bombarded with requests for reservations" for the mid-June meeting in 1987.

The SBC retains about 4,500 to 5,200 rooms for use by the housing bureau. Those rooms are assigned by drawing from requests mailed Oct. 1 or 2 of the year preceeding the convention, Hedquist said. The system was established to allow individuals an opportunity to obtain rooms for the annual meeting.

The hotels reserved for SBC use, he said, are:

Adam's Mark/St. Louis, Bel Air Hilton, Best Western St. Louisian, Clarion, Embassy Suites, Holiday Inn Market Street, Holiday Inn Riverfront, Marriott's Pavilion, Mayfair, Omni International, Radisson St. Louis, Rodeway Inn Downtown, Sheraton St. Louis,

The Chase, Cheshire Inn & Lodge, Forest Park, Howard Johnson Midtown, Inn At The Park, Quality Inn-St. Louis and University Plaza.

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