

# **BWA president appeals for SBC to stay\_10603**

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)- "Stay with us. Pray with us. Evangelize with us," the president of the Baptist World Alliance urged the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee Sept. 22.

Billy Kim said he "invited myself" to travel from Korea to present a five-minute BWA report regularly provided during the Executive Committee's two-day meetings in Nashville, Tenn.

Kim did not directly reference the circumstances prompting his appeal. Earlier in the session, however, Morris Chapman, president of the Executive Committee, welcomed Kim and the BWA's general secretary, Denton Lotz, to the meeting and briefly noted that a BWA study committee formed several years ago by the Executive Committee has been reactivated.

Chapman said the SBC "is reviewing and evaluating the affiliation of the convention with the Baptist World Alliance. ... As we all know, objectives, priorities and purposes change over time within all of our organizations and periodic evaluations become necessary."

Chapman and other SBC leaders have criticized the BWA for granting membership to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. At the SBC annual meeting in June, the convention's \$425,000 allocation to the BWA was reduced by \$125,000 for the coming year, and speculation has been

widespread that SBC leadership intends to separate completely from the BWA.

Kim thanked Southern Baptists for their part in creating the BWA in 1904 and for their support over the years. "I beg you, stay with us in the Baptist World Alliance," he urged.

Kim, a pastor in Seoul, Korea, appealed to the unity of believers Jesus prayed for in John 17.

"The closer we grow to Christ, the closer we grow to one another," Kim said. "Christian unity is supernatural because it comes from God's nature. It is only experienced in fullness as we draw close to him.

"The unity, though, does not mean uniformity in everything. In the Trinity there exists a unity in diversity—three distinct Persons yet they are one.

"Jesus' prayer for unity does not mean that we all should be the same, though many Christians mistakenly assume that," Kim said. "Too many think other believers should be just like themselves ... read the same books, promote the same style, educate their children in the same way, have the same likes and dislikes."

Kim acknowledged that "there are a lot of differences. I don't like all the unions and conventions that belong to the Baptist World Alliance ... . But we come together as a unity, as a force. ... May God help us. In a kingdom with empowered growth, we need everybody together who believes that Jesus is the only Savior to go out in the highways and hedges and help them come to know Christ and baptize them in order that we will meet them in 'Hallelujah Square' in heaven."

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