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By Trennis Henderson

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WILLIAMSBURG, Ky. (ABP)—Korean pastor Billy Kim, president of the Baptist World Alliance, declined to criticize a Southern Baptist plan to bring “like-minded Baptists” together to form an alternative to BWA.

Kim said there are enough human needs around the world for all Baptists to address. Concerning a planned July meeting in Poland between Southern Baptist Convention leaders and sympathetic Baptist groups, Kim said, “Let’s pray for them. ... We hope they can help other struggling Baptists around the world. We don’t want to alienate any Baptists for any personal reason.”

Last June, the Southern Baptist Convention withdrew its membership and financial support from BWA, an international fellowship of 210 mostly national Baptist unions. Southern Baptist leaders complained the alliance is too influenced by “liberal” Baptists, including the rival Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which recently gained BWA membership.

Southern Baptists set aside some of their financial support withdrawn from

BWA—until recently \$425,000 a year—to establish an alternative organization of “like-minded” Baptists worldwide.

Southern Baptist leaders confirmed the July meeting in Poland, which conflicts with BWA’s 100th anniversary celebration, but downplayed its importance.

“To call the meeting with some of the European Baptist leaders an ‘organizational’ meeting would be a mischaracterization,” said Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee.

BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz called the Poland meeting “a slap in the face to Baptists in the rest of the world.”

Kim, a conservative widely praised by SBC leaders, said Baptists around the globe “ought to be working together to help out struggling Baptists who are in the minority.”

Kim, who retired in December after 45 years as pastor of Central Baptist Church in Suwon, South Korea, will conclude his five-year presidency of BWA this summer at the Baptist World Congress in England.

“The places I’ve been, they’re very, very positive about BWA, and they also are still working with the Southern Baptist Convention,” he said.