

July 1, 1974

Counseling Help

'Too Little Time, Money &
Pulls on Ministers' Lives'

74-7

By Elaine Furlow

KERRVILLE, Tex. (BP)--Sprawled in easy chairs ministers and their wives discuss the frustrations of too little time, too little money and too many pulls on their lives which many ministers experience.

That is partly what has drawn them to a two-day retreat at Laity Lodge near here, sponsored by the Ministers' Counseling Service of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The retreats, at different times and in scattered parts of the state, are for healthy people--not sick ones. The ministers and wives come to relax, but also to listen and talk about a subject too seldom explored: themselves.

Many pastors put in 13 and 14-hour days, and many wouldn't have it any other way. But they're still human beings, with human needs.

Pastors aren't born with the ability to counsel a marriage on the rocks one hour and plan the church budget and next, so some workshops hone counseling and administrative skills. But other demands and pressures can't be cured with just education, and that's where counseling programs come in.

On the state level, only Texas has a well functioning pastoral counseling system, with Virginia Baptists beginning a counseling service this year.

North Carolina pioneered in establishing a pastor-church relations office--and was followed by nine other states. But these are designed primarily to handle pastor placement problems; counseling, where it exists, has been largely peripheral.

But counseling efforts are being made and individuals helped--in Texas, where the pastor-wife retreats like the one at Laity Lodge are part of the ministry of James Cooper, Texas coordinator of counseling.

Partly pep-talk/affirmation, partly a rare chance to discuss problems with peers, the retreats are the ounce of prevention side of Cooper's work; they appeal to "people who have problems, sure, but they are people who are open to search for the answers," says Cooper, a former pastor with a master's degree in counseling.

An experienced Baptist psychologist or counselor sets the tone for the sessions, with contents usually centering on husband-wife relationships and pressures created by the minister's role.

Through the retreats, Cooper encourages pastors and wives not to bottle up frustrations or battle them alone. For those who have passed that point and need more intensive help, he offers an objective, sympathetic ear and an effective referral system.

A large chunk of Cooper's time goes to individual counseling.

"The main problem I find is family tension," Cooper says. "The wife smarting under a role defined by the church, rather than defining her own role."

A second common problem is frustration, caused by the minister being unable independently to determine his priorities. "He may think his most important task today is Bible study but there are a dozen other things to do."

On Cooper's referral list are more than 200 professionals who have a special understanding and appreciation for ministers' work and the stresses on their families. When Cooper refers a pastor for psychological therapy, his office can contribute to the expenses.

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One counselor Cooper has referred persons to is Bill Gould, director-counselor of the Southwest Career Development Center, Arlington, Tex.

"Ministers have a fierce need for feedback, but most of them don't get it," Gould believes. "They have the sweet little lady who says every Sunday, 'Such a wonderful sermon, pastor.' They want to know, 'How am I really doing?'"

Gould thinks it is truer of the minister than anyone else that occupational identity and self-identity are tied together. "If a minister thinks what he's doing is not of value anymore, then he questions his personhood too."

Another center Cooper refers pastors to is Ken Pepper's Pastoral Counseling and Education Center, Dallas. Pepper relies heavily on transactional analysis (T/A). T/A is a way of looking at relationships pioneered by psychologist Eric Berne and popularized by Thomas Harris in his best seller, I'm OK, You're OK.

"T/A is the first personality science that allows room for the conversion experience," Pepper explains. "T/A is the language of the people--faith, love, intimacy--you don't have to deal with pathology."

"Some people think it's a sign of weakness to seek help," thinks Ken Pepper. "If a person says, 'Counseling's not for me,' that's fine. God works in many ways--counseling is one way. A person also can get help through Christian experience or education."

Such programs as these help ministers with leadership, pastoral care, personal witnessing, administration, working with groups and individuals, motivation, communication.

And whether through small groups or a counseling-referral system like James Cooper's in Texas, ministers are beginning to get what they need. (BP)

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Adapted from Home Mission magazine

Baptists Join Interfaith
Bicentennial Project

7/1/74

NEW YORK (BP)--Baptists will have a prominent role in a U.S. Bicentennial project which will emphasize religious liberty as a foundation for all freedoms and as the basis for the advancement of "real democracy."

Project Forward '76 (acronym for "Freedom of Religion will Advance Real Democracy") was authorized in late 1973 and has now begun its activities. The board of trustees of the Interchurch Center here is the sponsoring body.

R.H. Edwin Espy, a prominent Baptist layman, is chairman of Project Forward '76. James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, and Jitsuo Morikawa of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. are members of the policy committee.

According to the first Project Forward '76 newsletter, 140 nationally prominent religious leaders are now on the sponsorship list. These include 100 Protestants, 25 Roman Catholics, seven Jews, four from Orthodox bodies and one each from the Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim faiths.

The latest list of sponsors includes the following Baptists: evangelist Billy Graham; Owen Cooper, immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention; Peter H. Armacost, president of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.; Coretta Scott King, Atlanta, Ga., Benjamin E. Mays, Atlanta, Ga., Duke K. McCall, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.;

Also, Sandy F. Ray, vice president of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.; Mrs. Marcus Rohlf, former president of the American Baptist Convention; Porter W. Routh, executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee; Gardner C. Taylor, founding president of Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., and Mrs. Mary O. Ross, president of women's auxiliary of National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Inc.

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In commenting on Project Forward '76, Wood said, "It is hoped that this national effort will serve as a catalyst for national and local groups which are seeking to provide a spiritual dimension to the Bicentennial observance, 1974-1976."

He further explained that "one motivation for the project is the feeling that religion and society have drifted apart over the past few decades and that effort is needed to study and project a healthy interaction of religion and society in the future."

To achieve its objectives, Project Forward '76 will seek to:

- 1) Stimulate another dimension to the observance of the nation's bicentennial--ethical and moral values, religious values and the meaning of religious liberty;
- 2) Inform groups what others are doing of a religious nature in the observance of the Bicentennial;
- 3) Multiply denominational effectiveness in the observance of the Bicentennial; and
- 4) Supply materials of various kinds to religious groups planning Bicentennial observances.

Besides Espy as chairman of Project Forward '76, other staff members include Leonard Clough, administrative director, and Charles Brackbill, director of public relations. The project will function from room 1676, the Interchurch Center, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10027 .

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Baptist Standard Building
New \$1 Million Facility

7/1/74

DALLAS (BP)--The Baptist Standard, weekly news publication of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, has signed contracts for construction of a \$1 million, one-story building, to be located in a new industrial area, it was announced here.

The Baptist Standard is the largest of 33 Southern Baptist state convention news publications. It's circulation is about 375,000.

The building also will house Southwest Offset, Inc., which prints the news magazine. The Standard's board of directors authorized contractors to begin work immediately. Construction was to begin in mid-July with completion expected within eight months.

The Standard, located at 2222 San Jacinto St. in the Dallas central business district for 27 years, purchased four acres in Lone Star Industrial Park last year where the 36,000 square-foot building will be located on the north side of the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike.

The Standard had earlier given an option on its downtown property. Its directors decided to go ahead with construction before there is a purchase contract because of the time limitations in the option. Reserves invested with the Baptist Foundation of Texas will pay the construction costs in the event the option is not exercised.

The new building will give the Standard its first facilities designed primarily for its use and also for a printing plant. When the present site was purchased old buildings were originally converted into offices. Prefabricated metal buildings were added for some operations and a small addition for offices and storage were later added to the main building.

Presnall H. Wood, chairman of the Standard's board of directors said, "We are confident we will sell the property reasonably soon, and, if not, it becomes more valuable every day."

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**African Evangelical Calls
For International Agency**

LUSANNE, Switzerland (BP)--A prominent African evangelical leader and layman has called for the creation of an international association of evangelical missionary agencies.

Samuel O. Odunaike of Lagos, chairman of the Nigerian Evangelical Fellowship and president of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar, warned that the International Congress on World Evangelization here, July 16-25, could become little more than a "grand picnic" unless it leads to new relationships between missions and churches.

In a study paper for the congress, Odunaike pleaded for "a realignment of thoughts and attitudes towards one another right from the base."

Expressing appreciation for the work of various missionary agencies in his homeland and elsewhere in the "Third World," Odunaike suggested there is more work than can be done by personnel from overseas if they cooperate with overall evangelical strategy.

Too often in the past, he wrote, missionaries have actually hindered the progress of evangelization by their failure to work with each other and with indigenous Christian leaders. The frustration was sometimes not the fault of the individual missionaries but rather the result of directives from their "home boards," he noted.

As a result of visits with Christians on several continents, he wrote, "I am more than convinced" of the need for a forum "to plan together a common strategy to deal with common problems relating to missions."

Odunaike's study paper, together with those contributed by four other Christian leaders, will be studied by participants in a strategy study group on cross-cultural evangelization, during the Lusanne congress.

Resource papers were provided to participants in other of more than 25 strategy groups for the congress. R. Keith Parks, Southeast Asia secretary for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va., is a writer for the cross-cultural evangelization strategy study.

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Harold Freeman Named
To Southwestern Faculty

7/1/74

FORT WORTH (BP)--Harold Freeman, pastor of Highland Baptist Church in Dallas, has been elected associate professor of preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here, effective Aug. 1, 1974.

A native of Elvins, Mo., Freeman, 38, attended high school in Dallas. He was graduated from Baylor University and holds the master of divinity and the doctor of theology degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Prior to becoming pastor of the Dallas church in 1967, Freeman served Texas churches in Waco, Sulphur Springs, Jacksonville, Cresson and Denton.

He is a member of the executive committee of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, a member of the Dallas Baptist Association's Urban Ministries Coordinating Committee, and is a member of the seminary's Long Range Planning Commission.

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