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77-39

Final Months of Pastorate  
Can Be Used Effectively

By David Wilkinson

NASHVILLE (BP)--When the time comes for a minister to leave, many churches and pastors discover that they don't know how to tell each other goodbye. As a result, the final weeks of a pastor's ministry often are unfruitful for both the pastor and the church.

Fred McGehee, career guidance consultant for the church administration department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, believes those final weeks don't have to be ineffective.

"It's very important for ministers to know how to leave and for churches to know how to let them leave," emphasizes McGehee, who works extensively with Southern Baptist pastors. "We have too much movement in the ministry at the present time. Tenures are too short, and that's unfortunate."

"However," he says, "in learning how to deal with closure--that is, how to close out a ministry more effectively--we may do churches and ministers the service of not having to do it as often. The minister, in the act of leaving correctly, may give himself the freedom to stay longer in his next pastorate. And on the other hand, the church will be left with a positive hope that the next pastor will stay longer."

Since it is usually the pastor who takes the initiative in leaving, McGehee says, he should also take the initiative in making the final weeks as effective as possible.

"The pastor," he suggests, "ought to make a brief sweep over his church roles and ask himself, 'How will my leaving at this time influence these people?' When he does this, he's going to come across people who will be influenced in different ways. Some, for example, are going to feel really rejected by what he's going to do."

Others will be shattered. They've depended upon him in certain ways. He's in the process of going through certain important experiences in life with them, and these experiences and these times together are going to be interrupted."

In some instances, McGehee says, the congregation as a whole may feel a sense of rejection.

"If it is a very supporting kind of congregation, the church may feel like its pastor is going on to bigger and better things," he explains. "But in saying that, what does it do to them? It implies that their situation is both smaller and lesser, which in a sense is a personal put-down. So to lose a pastor is to receive a personal judgement."

The pastor can help, McGehee says, by reassuring the church of its uniqueness and explaining that comparisons should not be made between the present situation and his future pastorate.

"This will free the pastor to talk at a deeper than just theoretical level about what the will of God means in his life," he adds.

During the final weeks of his ministry, he says, the pastor should also attempt to heal strained relationships with members who have reacted negatively toward him and with others who have been reluctant to respond to his efforts toward establishing meaningful relationships.

McGehee thinks the former category often includes people who may have been antagonistic toward authority in general, but not necessarily toward the pastor as a person.

"This means that the closure time is a time of supreme importance," he says, "because the pastor is moving out of the authority role, and it may be that only under these circumstances will the antagonistic church member feel free to establish any kind of relationship with the pastor."

Properly saying goodbye to the children in the church is another area that McGehee feels is often overlooked.

"The pastor certainly ought to consider the children," he says. "Many of them aren't going to understand why the pastor's children, who are their friends, are going to leave. And they aren't going to understand why this man who has been their pastor and Vacation Bible School leader and so forth, who has said that he loves them, is now going to leave them."

McGehee suggests that the minister go into the children's Sunday School classes and talk with them about why he is leaving in terms that they can understand.

"The pastor can explain the meaning of the will of God at an interpersonal level," he explains, "and it also helps him move into a friend-pastor role and build a bridge for the next pastor."

Properly closing relationships involved in the pastor's counseling ministry also is essential, according to McGehee.

"The minister usually knows about his move at least a month ahead of time, and he has made an ongoing commitment to his counselees," McGehee says. "He needs to do everything in his power to stimulate growth in those last few sessions. Some counselees, for instance, may say some things they never felt free to say before since they know the pastor is leaving."

The minister should take care of necessary referral processes, McGehee stresses, and make sure that the referral is complete before leaving the community.

Consideration in the final weeks should also be given to the elderly, who may feel threatened by a pastor's move, and, of course, the minister should give attention to his own personal needs and to those of his family.

Once the move has been made, McGehee suggests that the minister write a letter to the church expressing thanks for its encouragement and cooperation and assurance of his prayers in the search for a new pastor.

Obviously, he says, no minister can hope to accomplish all of these things before leaving a pastorate.

"The individual," he states, "can only do what he has the unique strength and ability to do. The important thing is that he feels he has taken the initiative to leave relationships on an upswing rather than a downswing."

"The minister needs to realize that he can plan the way he wants a piece of work to conclude. He can choose for it to conclude on an optimistic, positive and redemptive note, or he can choose for it to conclude with possible pessimistic, destructive and antagonistic feelings."

"He has a choice, but he's going to live with that choice for the rest of his life."

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers # # #

Belmont College, Graham  
Share Woman's Estate

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Belmont College, a Baptist school here, and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association will equally share the estate of a Nashville woman.

Belmont and the Graham organization will each receive \$59,000 from Mrs. Elizabeth S. Wilson, who died in October 1974. She was the widow of William K. Wilson, who retired from the L & N Railroad, and was an active member of Belmont Heights Baptist Church, Nashville.

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77-39

SBC Missionaries Making  
 Decision on Ugandan Return

**NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)**--Six Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to Uganda will remain in Nairobi at least until Monday, March 7. They plan to meet before that date to discuss the matter again before coming to a final decision about their return.

Two of the couples, Mr. and Mrs. G. Webster Carroll of West Virginia and Florida, and Mr. and Mrs. Harry B. Garvin of Texas, went to Nairobi the weekend of Feb. 19-20 to be with their children over a school holiday. Their children attend Rift Valley Academy, a boarding school outside of Nairobi.

The third couple, Mr. and Mrs. James L. Rice of Virginia, went to Nairobi to attend a Feb. 22 meeting with other missionaries from the area.

The missionaries decided to remain in Kenya after Americans were ordered to report to Ugandan President Idi Amin. But Amin postponed the meeting, with no new date set. Americans in Uganda were prohibited from leaving the country, but this order has since been lifted.

Davis L. Saunders, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa, said he was expecting to receive another report from the missionaries if there was any change in the situation.

Saunders emphasized that the decision on whether to return to Uganda is one which the missionaries involved will make themselves. The Foreign Mission Board does not attempt to tell its missionaries when to leave or return to troubled countries, he said.

The board's area representative for East Africa, John R. Cheyne, said there had been no indication that any of the national Baptist people have been directly affected by any actions reportedly taken by President Amin.

The Ugandan government has been the center of worldwide attention in the wake of news reports filtering out of Africa, which claim a purge of Christians is underway and that Amin murdered Anglican Archbishop Janani Luwum. Amin denies the reports.

The Rices are both from Christiansburg, Va. Garvin was born in Anson, Tex., and his wife in Hamby, Tex. Carroll is a native of Bluefield, W. Va., and his wife was born in Lakeland, Fla.

-30-

SBC Mission Work In  
 Uganda 15 Years Old

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**RICHMOND (BP)**--Since Southern Baptist Convention(SBC) missionaries began work in the East African nation of Uganda in 1962, their work, in cooperation with national Christians, has resulted in 75 Baptist churches with 5,850 members and 67 national pastors.

Total Baptist statistics in the country, according to the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), show 106 Baptist churches with 6,366 members.

The more than 10 million people of landlocked Uganda won their independence in 1962, but the country, currently under military rule, remains a member of the British Commonwealth.

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The current government, in power since 1971, has been drawing worldwide headlines with news reports saying that Ugandan President Idi Amin has been purging Christians, including the alleged murder of Anglican Archbishop Janani Luwum. Amin denies the charges.

Three Southern Baptist missionary couples stationed in the country were on a weekend visit to Nairobi, Kenya, Feb. 19-22, when Amin, apparently disturbed by comments by U. S. leaders about his government, put an embargo on Americans leaving the country and ordered some 200 of them in the country to meet with him. Amin has since suspended that order, and the SBC missionaries are in the process of making their decision if and when to return to Uganda.

Southern Baptists first opened work in Uganda with a mobile medical clinic. Missionaries are now assigned to the cities of Jinja and Soroti. Also, in the capital, Kampala, missionaries report encouraging response to work in several evangelistic centers.

In 1970, the Baptist Convention of Uganda was formed and, with its leaders, has continued Baptist work and witness. Although a number of Southern Baptist missionaries were reassigned to other countries because of the uncertainties of future development in Uganda, the three couples remain under appointment to serve there.

At present four Bible schools operate at Jinja, Mbala, Fort Portal and Soroti. Mr. and Mrs. James L. Rice and Mr. and Mrs. G. Webster Carroll are stationed at Jinja. Rice is business manager and treasurer for the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Uganda. Both he and his wife are also in language study. Carroll is an advisor for local churches in evangelism and membership training.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry B. Garvin are stationed in Soroti, where he is field evangelist and principal of a Baptist Bible School. Area pastors attend the Bible School five days each month and are graduated after a two-year course of study. Mrs. Garvin conducts a Bible School for the pastors' wives two or three days each month.

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(BP) Photo of Ugandan map will be mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Court Reverses Kentucky  
Obscenity Conviction

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WASHINGTON (BP)--In its first major obscenity ruling of the current term, the U. S. Supreme Court held unanimously that persons charged with transporting obscene materials across state lines must not be convicted on the basis of court guidelines not in effect at the time the alleged offense occurred.

All nine justices agreed that the owner and manager of the Cinema X Theatre in Newport, Ky., cannot be convicted under guidelines the high court laid down in June 1973, four months after the Kentucky men were charged with showing two obscene films. Convicted with them were two suppliers of obscene materials.

At the time the films were shown in Newport, the high court was dealing with obscenity cases under guidelines set forth in a 1966 opinion (Memoirs v Massachusetts), including the requirement that juries acquit defendants in such cases unless the materials in question were "utterly without redeeming social value."

In 1973 (Miller v. California), the court adopted a new set of tests for obscene materials. These were considerably stricter than the previous ones and resulted in the conviction of the Newport men.

Justice Lewis F. Powell, who wrote the court's opinion, stated that "to apply Miller (standards) retroactively . . . violates the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment." He also noted that "the notion that persons have a right to fair warning of that conduct which will give rise to criminal penalties . . . is fundamental to our concept of constitutional liberty." Speaking for himself and four other justices, Powell ordered the case sent back to Kentucky for a new trial.

The other four justices, while joining the majority view that the convictions were unconstitutional, disagreed with the decision for a new trial. Justice William J. Brennan Jr., the court's senior member expressed the view that the law forbidding interstate transportation of obscene materials is "clearly overbroad and unconstitutional on its face."

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Justice John Paul Stevens, who has not let his views on obscenity be known since joining the high court in December 1975, issued a strongly worded dissent to the decision to set a new trial. He said that current guidelines have resulted in prosecutions that are "intolerably vague" with the result that "evenhanded enforcement of the law is a virtual impossibility."

Stevens added, "Indeed, my brief experience on the court has persuaded me that grossly disparate treatment of similar offenders is a characteristic of the criminal enforcement of obscenity law."

-30-

Dispose of 'Disposability'  
Hatfield Urges Students

Baptist Press  
3/2/77

By Helen Derr

PINEVILLE, La. (BP)-- U. S. Sen. Mark O. Hatfield (R-Ore.) said here that the United States cannot maintain its present style of life indefinitely in a world of diminishing resources.

Speaking at a Lyceum Series sponsored by Louisiana College, Hatfield also discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the Republican Party and both problems and hopes for the political future of the country.

He told the Baptist college students and faculty that his greatest frustration in public life is the way in which the country is letting its "great finite resources--which we have considered infinite--slip away through our horrible style of consumption.

"We are wedded to disposability and convenience," said the conservation-oriented senator, adding that because of that the country is presently importing 51 percent of its oil, consuming non-renewable petroleum resources that make plastic instead of renewable timber, using synthetic fibers instead of renewable cotton and wool."

The country's consumer style is making it more and more dependent on the natural resources of Third World nations "to whom we only peddle arms," he said.

On the plus side, however, Hatfield believes there is a new feeling of "beginning" in the country brought by the new administration, along with a new spiritual consciousness.

"Some of this spiritual consciousness," he continued, "I see in some of the youth subcultures to which we may not subscribe."

Even some of the cults are filling a vacuum for young people who have grown up with poor or no value systems in homes where "parents were too busy making a living" to provide values, the senator believes.

Hatfield, a member of the Conservative Baptist denomination, is an outspoken Christian layman who has written and spoken widely on the problems of the Christian in politics.

He gave President Jimmy Carter good marks for his first month in office, and said he is pleased that a Southerner and a liberal on racial issues has been elected President.

Hatfield said he has no patience with people who are "nervous about a President who teaches Sunday School" (in reference to Carter, a Southern Baptist) and seem to think a Christian could not be smart or capable.

"What about faith in Christ should make a man stupid?" he asked.

Hatfield affirmed hope for the future of the Republican Party but at the same time said, "We have to convey to the public the concept of inclusiveness in the GOP.

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"We have spent too much time driving out the liberals or the conservatives (fighting among ourselves)," he declared. "We hardly have enough people left to have a faction, let alone a party."

He repeatedly made his claims for the validity of the two-party system, with both liberals and conservatives in it, pointing out, "Formation of Liberal and Conservative Parties in this country is not only a myth--it would become a nightmare as the parties split along more and more narrowly-defined lines."

He also warned against political interest groups dedicated to single causes which, he declared, are replacing political parties: "There are more dues-paying members of the Common Cause than contributors to the Democratic Party."

The problem with single interest groups, according to Hatfield, is the lack of accountability: "How are you going to keep Ralph Nader or the president of the Sierra Club accountable?"