



BAPTIST PRESS

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Rural Ministers Face
Paradoxical Situation

By Jim Lowry

SHELBY, N.C. (BP)--Rural pastors often face a paradox when they leave seminary filled with idealistic beliefs and a strong sense of church mission and go to a static church traditionally bound both in size and social ethics.

Frustration and stress arise as pastors must coexist with power structures in the church despite differences over the social issues without compromising their personal beliefs to a point where they lose self-esteem.

Isolation, inadequate financing and unreasonable role expectations contribute to the job-related stress, but changes are coming, according to ministers in a stress management seminar, even though they tend to evolve slowly.

Fred McGehee, consultant in the career guidance section of the church administration department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and director of the seminar, said rural ministers often suffer from inordinate amounts of job-related stress.

"When a pastor moves to a new church field, he is idealized in a role of respect and honor as the preacher, who is supposed to be bigger than life," McGehee said. "He loses some of his humanity, which is stressful."

To make up for loneliness, which one pastor called a hazard of the profession, some pastors are turning to their association office, which serves as an information referral service. Cline Borders, director of missions in the Kings Mountain Baptist Association in Shelby, N.C., said he plans conferences, growth groups, pastoral care schools and seminary extension opportunities to give pastors an avenue for sharing problems and a place to build friendships which are often not available in the fellowship of the church.

"I try to talk and share with pastors in the association," Borders said, "earning the right to be a confidante and friend, sort of a pastor's pastor. I like for the association to be a place where the minister can turn for help."

Pastors often find it difficult to establish meaningful friendships in rural churches because of a sense of "family" that exists. Young ministers particularly are seen as transitory, so church members aren't willing to risk friendship because they expect him to leave soon.

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Some pastors in the seminar, mostly those over 40, expressed a strong sense of nearness to their congregation members. These men generally had been in the church for six to eight years, and had won the trust and acceptance from the congregation to be included as a friend.

The denomination's Bold Mission Thrust goal to present the gospel to everyone by the year 2000 has presented a problem for many of the rural and single staff ministers, because of the increased emphasis on numerical increases in all areas of the church. Many of these churches are located in relatively isolated areas, composed primarily of families from only the immediate geographical area.

Some of the pastors in the seminar said their churches were over 100 years old. Growth has occurred, they said, but not the dramatic increases encouraged in the SBC effort. Again, stress is incurred for pastors who don't have the option of great increases.

Also, church members often are comfortable with the church just as it is, because everyone is acquainted. Change brings stress to established situations and often change is not welcomed whether it relates to new members, a building program or racial policy.

Age is another problem because some pastors feel locked into a situation when they pass a certain age. Borders said he is often contacted by pulpit committees who will consider only a pastor under age 45 and over 35. He said he talks with them, trying to point out qualified candidates who are older, but more often than not he fails to change that requirement.

McGehee said this gives the pastor a feeling of helplessness, wondering how much freedom he has to realize his potential. "How do you preserve a dream in an imperfect world and how much can you compromise your dream and still prevent an esteem imbalance?" he asked.

"The potential of moving from church to church diminishes greatly after 50," according to McGehee, "because people think effectiveness drops off sharply at that age. It's just not so."

Cecil Seagle, pastor of Mulberry Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C., spoke to the pastors about clarifying their professional expectations, and to what extent role expectations of others should be allowed to shape their personal dreams and goals. He said the pastors had to identify, confront and cope with expectations, taking care to determine the origin of the role expectation.

Seagle told the ministers to "filter your role expectations until they become yours because God gives you ultimate control if you'll assume it. Don't become a slave to someone else's roles and expectations for your life."

Compromise is possibly the most difficult area of stress for the rural pastor to manage, because many times his sermons on race relations, use of tobacco, or other social issues are contradictory to what is practiced in his church. Rural people are sometimes more rigid in their beliefs, so change, when it comes, is slow.

**Baptist Church, Car
Damaged by Explosion**

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)--Most of the windows of University Baptist Church in Beirut, Lebanon, were broken and a car belonging to the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries was badly damaged in a bomb explosion.

The dynamite charge, placed in front of a stationery store, discharged during the night. Damage to Baptist property was coincidental, according to a cable sent July 24 by Southern Baptist missionary press representative Frances (Mrs. J. Wayne) Fuller. She said such bombings are politically motivated and have been common in Lebanon since the civil war began five years ago.

Southern Baptist missionary James P. Craigmyle, from Indiana, is pastor of University church, an English-language congregation.

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**Guerrillas Take Cash, Drugs
From Sanyati Baptist Compound**

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GWELO, Zimbabwe Rhodesia (BP)--Guerrillas took about \$1,600 and medical supplies worth another \$350 to \$400 from Sanyati Baptist Compound northwest of Gwelo July 15.

Ralph L. Rummage, chairman of the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Zimbabwe Rhodesia, said four guerrillas arrived at the home of Noble Sithole, principal of the secondary school at Sanyati, about 9 p.m. and asked for money. When he could give them only about \$45, they asked to be taken to the treasurer, who gave them about \$1,500 in school fees.

The guerrillas then took the two men to the hospital, where they released them and took an additional \$45 and medical supplies, mostly antimalarial and injectible drugs. No one at the hospital was molested or threatened, said Rummage.

Both the school and the hospital continue operating under local Baptist leadership but have long-standing contingency plans in case guerrilla activity forces the staff to evacuate. No missionaries have resided on the compound since guerrillas murdered Southern Baptist missionary Archie G. Dunaway Jr. in June 1978.

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**Baptists, Others Respond,
Volunteers Needed in Honduras**

By Jennifer Hall Anderson

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HONDURAS--Southern Baptist missionaries, national Baptist conventions, other relief agencies and the governments of Honduras and Costa Rica are all working to aid Nicaraguan refugees, but volunteer workers also are needed, a Foreign Mission Board relief consultant reports.

John R. Cheyne, the board's associate consultant for relief ministries, who has just returned from visiting refugee centers in Honduras and Costa Rica, said volunteers are needed to help Southern Baptist missionaries in Honduras in self-help programs for refugees.

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Cheyne said clothing is needed for the more than 100,000 refugees from Nicaragua's civil conflict which culminated in government takeover by the Sandinista National Liberation Front. "But attempting to utilize bundles of used clothing from the U.S. is both complicated and costly and many times the clothing is inappropriate," he said. The missionaries hope to arrange a program for making clothes which volunteers would help establish.

"Our major thrust has been in San Marcos de Colon--a town of normally 7,000 which now has 13,000--where missionaries set up a medical mobile clinic staffed by missionary nurse Frances Crawford," Cheyne said. He called the situation in San Marcos "rather grave." Cheyne noted that a self-help project has already begun there--beds are scarce and refugees are making cots for themselves.

About 7,000 other homeless Nicaraguans are in El Triunfo, a town of about 1,000. "There are no facilities; people are living in granaries," said Cheyne. "It's really a mess down there."

In Yusguare, however, the Red Cross has built a "very nice refugee camp with United Nations funds; clean barracks, adequate sanitation, clean water. The people have even opened small shops to sell crafts," said Cheyne. But he emphasized the refugees are desperate for vitamins, food for infants and school supplies.

The Honduras Baptist Mission elected Stanley D. Stamps, missionary to Nicaragua, as temporary coordinator of refugee work in Honduras. Stamps, from Mississippi, has been unable to reenter Nicaragua since he took local leave in June for vacation outside the country. He is still hoping to return to his literature work in Nicaragua.

Cheyne, however, has encouraged the mission to request a full-time volunteer to take over the refugee work, which he says may last for the next two years. He said with the strife coming to a standstill, "maybe 30 percent of the refugees will be returning quickly, but others may still be coming out."

The Honduras situation is somewhat more intense than in Costa Rica, Cheyne said, because the Honduras government will not permit refugees to enter "in the local economy."

"In Costa Rica, there are 60,000 refugees, but less than 1,000 in camps," said Cheyne, adding the Costa Rican government has encouraged refugees to find jobs and take care of themselves.

Baptists organized a refugee camp at the Baptist campgrounds which will accommodate 120 people, said Cheyne. He noted that the Baptist convention of Costa Rica is "fully in control of response efforts. They've been on top of it and have responded well. The convention has made a major contribution in both money and personnel."

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Home Mission Offering Ahead of Last Year's

ATLANTA (BP)--After a slow start, Southern Baptists have contributed \$12,989,746 to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions.

"I think that is tremendous," said William G. Tanner, executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

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Tanner expressed some apprehension that economic uncertainties, energy problems and inflation might hinder the annual offering after receipts had run below expectations during the spring.

However, Tanner reported that in mid-July, the offering had attained 86.6 percent of its \$15 million goal.

"The slow start in receiving the Annie Armstrong Offering was caused by the fact Easter was three weeks later than it was last year (in 1978)," Tanner said. "We have now closed the gap and are more than \$700,000 above the offering of the previous year."

Tanner added the offering is 16.5 percent ahead of last year at mid-July.

The Home Mission Board depends on the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions for nearly half of its \$32 million annual budget.

"We are very dependent on the Annie Armstrong Offering, particularly if we are going to be bold in our efforts to achieve the objectives of the Southern Baptist Convention to evangelize and congregationalize our nation," Tanner said. "I am very grateful to Southern Baptists for their efforts to give to this cause of winning our homeland to Jesus Christ."

Tanner said projections indicate the Home Mission Board will receive approximately \$13.9 million from Annie Armstrong contributions this year, below the projected goal of \$15 million.

"Even though we may not reach the goal of \$15 million in 1979, the contributions Southern Baptists have made will be the largest Annie Armstrong Offering the Home Mission Board has ever received," Tanner added.

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Southern Seminary Receives Gaines Dobbins's Library

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary recently received the personal library of Gaines S. Dobbins pending settlement of the long-time Southern professor's estate.

Approximately 2,000 volumes, occupying 47 shelves and 37 boxes of files from Dobbins' long career as a leader of Christian education, are now housed in the restricted area of the library. It's hoped the collection will be ready for circulation sometime during the coming school year, with each volume containing a nameplate indicating it's part of the Gaines S. Dobbins collection.

"Southern is extremely fortunate to have the carefully chosen collection of this renowned innovator in theological education. The collection emphasizes not only all gamuts of religious education, but also church administration, pastoral care, evangelism and outreach, as well as many others subjects," said Ronald F. Deering, librarian at Southern.

Dobbins, who died at his home in Birmingham, Ala., last September, was professor at Southern from 1920-1956. During that time, he was instrumental in establishing Southern's School of Religious Education, and served as the first dean of that school from 1954 until his retirement in 1956. In 1968, Southern Seminary trustees awarded Dobbins the E. Y. Mullins Denominational Service Award, named him emeritus dean of the School of Religious Education, and later established the Gaines S. Dobbins Chair of Church Administration.

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