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Part four in a series

Baptists Need Leaders
To Stress Conservation

By Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Every Southern Baptist, as a Christian steward, should be involved in energy conservation. Leaders have to evolve, however, as in any emerging social issue where feelings run strongly pro and con.

Pastors, as leaders of autonomous churches, stand as the most likely persons to step into leadership roles for Southern Baptists to speak to church members in terms of a theology of conservation, said Jerry Privette, supervisor of the church building program and promotion section of the Baptist Sunday School Board's church architecture department.

"The pastor interprets the word of God to church members," said Privette, a former pastor and minister of education. "He motivates, inspires and challenges them in many areas of church life.

"Consequently, a personal challenge related to the energy crisis and the need for conservation will probably come from the pulpit. The janitor sets the thermometer where he is told to set it. The finance (budget) committee is responsible only to determine how much money is available to spend."

Privette said that in many communities the pastor is one of the best informed and qualified people to relate the Bible to everyday issues. "But," he emphasized, "the pastor cannot assume the entire responsibility for carrying out a program of energy conservation. Someone else, ideally all church members, must become involved."

"Motivation is where the primary distinction lies between the Christian's and the non-Christian's view of conservation," he said.

"For Christians, it is unique because of our connections with the principles of theology. God created us and the world around us. As long as we believe in him, we will use his resources wisely," Privette said. "It not only stems from the principles of stewardship, but also from the principle of no waste."

Privette said stewardship programs should go beyond money talk and include sermons on the stewardship of energy. He said Christian stewardship must be exercised in at least two ways.

"Man is accountable under God for the proper use and conservation of created natural resources," Privette said. "As Christian stewards, we are equally responsible for the creative use of talents and abilities in the development of tools, instruments and mechanical equipment for maximum benefit to the largest number of people.

"The aim of Christian stewardship goes beyond money savings on utility costs, it also relates to the energy consumed. Money may be replaced eventually, but depleted fossil fuels require hundreds, even thousands of years to replace."

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Privette suggested pastors observe a special energy conservation Sunday, or month, to create awareness in the church and individual Christians. He said members could then go home and apply what is learned in church to conserve at both places.

"When church members learn to conserve, hopefully, there will be a feeling of pride and confidence among them to deal with a crucial situation," he said. "I believe that with the right kind of leadership, people can be led to really become actively involved in an energy conservation effort."

"An energy crisis situation can be very distracting, like panic buying," he said. "People can become insecure and distracted from the major efforts of the church. Most people will eventually adapt, but the initial reaction can be demoralizing and defeating."

"We have two choices. We can have resource conservation by constraint--that is by government decree--or conservation by incentive. The church could minister to many people where the government has taken over and governs by decree."

"On a special energy conservation Sunday, we might exercise every possible option to conserve, so people could see just what they can do without."

"As far as the church is concerned, the pastor is the key because he has the platform for leadership and the foundation for preaching on the subject of stewardship," Privette said. "It is an area of ministry that is ethically and morally right, particularly in regard to how our use, or waste, of energy resources will affect future generations."

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(Article five will deal with some of the potential effects of the energy crisis on Southern Baptist life.)

(BP) photo mailed to Baptist state newspapers

Watson Tells Supporters
He Plans to Accept Job

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DALLAS (BP)--W. Marvin Watson, former postmaster-general of the United States, says he intends to be the active president of Dallas Baptist College by Sept. 1, a post he had not accepted since his election in July.

Watson, 55, had said he would accept the post, vacated by the retirement in May of W. E. Thorn, if friends and trustees agreed to loan the financially beleaguered school \$2.5 million. H reportedly promised to lend it \$250,000 himself.

"I see the trustees as having a responsibility in this matter," Watson said. "When they assume their responsibility, I will be happy to assume mine."

A recent meeting in Dallas, attended by 10 of the school's 35 trustees and about 90 other supporters raised loan pledges and contributions of \$60,000.

The college reportedly has an operating debt in excess of \$1.8 million and is accumulating more each month.

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A native of Oakhurst, Texas, Watson is probably best remembered for his tenure as postmaster-general during President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration. He was executive vice president of Occidental Petroleum Corp., but recently has been an investments consultant, living in Daingerfield, Texas.

He was national chairman of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's "Eight by Eighty" campaign, an effort to raise \$8 million by 1980 that has already surpassed its goal.

He earned bachelor of business administration and masters degrees from Baylor University.

At Watson's request, the recent decision to change the name of the college to Truett Baptist University will be postponed to give him more input into the name change process.

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(BP) photo will be mailed to state Baptist newspapers

Plane Crash Victims
Recovering in Abilene

Baptist Press
8/15/79

ABILENE, Texas (BP)--Pastor Riley Fugitt, who remained in critical condition for days following a plane crash in the Virgin Islands, is improving at Hendrick Medical Center, as are his wife, Vonceil, and Caleb Watson, also injured in the crash.

Fugitt, the most seriously injured among the seven survivors of the July 24 accident that killed five Texas Baptists, suffered a broken right hip and pelvis, broken sternum and collar bone, broken ribs and a collapsed lung. He had remained more than two weeks at the U.S. Navy Hospital in Puerto Rico before transfer to Abilene. He is pastor of First Baptist Church, Clyde, Texas, where four of the five victims were members.

Mrs. Fugitt is in "good" condition recovering from a broken collar bone, broken right arm and ribs, and a cracked pelvis. Watson, 15, has had several operations to correct his injuries which include a collapsed lung.

The Fugitts' son, Mickey, an evangelist, was also on the plane carrying the 12 Baptists and nine others toward St. Kitts where the Baptists were to help Antioch Baptist Church in Bible schools and construction. His main injuries were compression fractures of the spine. He is wearing a brace and plans to resume his revival schedule in late August.

Other survivors released from Hendrick Medical Center, where they were transferred July 29, are Lisa Melton, daughter of the pastor of Elmcrest Baptist Church, Abilene, which had members on the plane; Mrs. Preston (Murlene) Porter, secretary of the Mickey Fugitt Evangelistic Association; and Pam Patton, a college student and member of Elmcrest.

The Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating the causes of the plane crash. Final reports may not be released for several months. Newspapers have reported that Prinair Flight 610, which carried the 21 passengers, was 1,300 pounds overloaded.

William Conner, pastor of the St. Kitts church, has visited the two Texas churches that had members on the downed plane. The churches have had a missions relationship for 10 years.

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Baptist Challenges Soar As Hispanics Increase

ATLANTA (BP)--By 1985, if current trends continue, Hispanics will become America's largest ethnic minority. They already comprise 12.5 percent of the population and with an annual growth rate of 1.8 percent, should account for one-fifth of the U.S. population about halfway through the next decade.

Ministry in 1,200 Hispanic Southern Baptist churches, missions and preaching points today touches 100,000 persons across the nation. But that's only one-half of one percent of the official Hispanic population. Estimates place 3 to 5 million more in the country illegally.

The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board is giving increasing attention to the mass of Hispanic unchurched. The board supports 1,300 language missionaries—the vast majority of which are Hispanic—in 77 language groups.

The Baptist Sunday School Board has just named a consultant to work primarily with SBC Hispanic churches through the board's ethnic liaison unit. Alcides Guajardo, a graduate of the University of Corpus Christi and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, will interpret materials and services available from the board.

Board President Grady Cothen said, "As relatively huge numbers of churches composed of minority groups have chosen to cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention, the need for ministry to and through them has grown."

Baptists who work with Hispanics list some barriers which must be overcome: traditional adherence to cultural Catholicism, language problems, shortage of leaders, misunderstanding by Anglo brothers.

Although the influence of the Roman Catholic Church is hard to measure, few Hispanics are untouched by it, according to Hispanic Southern Baptist leaders.

"People saved in our church have asked if it is all right to have godfathers for their children," reported Bob Sena of Dallas First Mexican Baptist Church. "One young lady who made a profession of faith wanted to go back to Mexico to her saint and pray."

"In my church," said Mark Azard, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Bethania in Baytown, Texas, "with any who come from Catholicism, I teach them the Bible--what salvation and baptism mean. The Anglo has a background of hearing these things. The Spanish-speaking person, especially those from Mexico, has none of this."

But the religion barrier falls when "you understand them, live with them, know the culture, the way they feel, gain their trust," he said.

The key to this, say most Hispanic Baptists, is through the language.

"Always his language has been integral to the Hispanic's understanding of himself," explained Oscar Romo, director of the Home Mission Board's language department. "Today it is common for Spanish-speaking Americans who have been here many generations to retain

the language, despite all the pressures to become Anglicized. How many other ethnic groups can say that? "

Finding leaders who speak Spanish as their native tongue, however, remains a problem. "I am convinced that each ethnic group, because of linguistic, cultural and sociological peculiarities, is the best communicator of the gospel to its people," said Sena.

Adequate response to the limitless challenge of reaching Hispanics requires action on several levels, claimed Jimmy Allen, immediate past president of the SBC and pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas.

A vital step is ending the "peon-patron" relationship that keeps a mission on a mission basis instead of freeing it to achieve church status, Allen said.

"But the style of work I am most interested in is the house church idea now used in South America," he said. "Small groups led by laymen meet during the week, then gather together once a week under the preaching of one dynamic pastor."

Historically, Hispanic work in the U.S. began in this manner, Romo pointed out. Then success converted "house churches" into "regular church structures." By the 1950s, the house-church movement had been replaced by more traditional mission building approaches.

Consequently, albeit unintentionally, Hispanics were locked into missions as Baptists "followed a model of working with the Spanish population that produces smallness," Allen explained.

To free Hispanics from this syndrome and instigate growth "will take Mexican churches, bi-lingual churches, Anglo churches," asserted Leobardo Estrada, head of the Texas Baptist language program.

Additionally, "more of our agencies need to understand Hispanics are not a separate entity in Southern Baptist life, but are Southern Baptists who speak a different language," Whittaker noted.

"Our responsibility will be to find a way to respond to them and their needs--to help develop leaders," Romo concluded. "But our efforts will be pointless if we do not operate within their structures, rather than make them conform to ours."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta and Sunday School Board bureaus of Baptist Press

CORRECTION: In BP story mailed Aug. 10 entitled "Board Prays for Cauthen, Parks, Conducts Business," please change line in fourth graph to read "appropriated more than \$1.5 million for missions and relief projects"--not in relief projects.

Thanks,
Baptist Press