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Last in a series

Baptists Face Tough Decisions
Regarding Energy-Short Future

By Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--As Southern Baptists prepare to meet the energy crunch of the coming decade, the conscious decision must be made to adopt a more disciplined lifestyle to meet our obligations as community leaders.

It is no longer all right to use as much fuel as you can afford to the utter disregard of those who are less fortunate. Responsibilities must be faced in light of the needs of tomorrow's world and the Christian ethic that self is not above everyone and everything else.

Sacrifice is inevitable if natural resources are to be stretched to the point where a changeover can be made from fossil fuels to a replacement capable of meeting our needs--not our selfish, wasteful wants.

Change also seems inevitable, in terms of how our church buildings will look and how we use them.

Reg Narmour, Baptist architect from North Carolina, said in an energy conservation meeting that "the church is unique in its inefficient use of space."

"First," he said, "30 percent of church space is taken up by large assembly areas such as the sanctuary, chapel and fellowship hall. And, 60 percent of the church is educational space while 10 percent is used for secretaries, the pastor's study, etc.

"This means that 90 percent of the space in the church is used only 5 percent of the time and 10 percent of the space is used 30 percent of the time."

Gross inefficiency of energy use cannot continue if the credibility of Southern Baptists is expected to remain high. We must begin immediately to accept the fact that energy consumption has reached crisis proportions, and the simplest, most obvious way to remedy the crisis to a measurable degree is by practicing conservation in our homes and our churches.

In our church buildings, we must look seriously and questioningly at the logic behind oversized, high ceilinged sanctuaries that waste tremendous amounts of energy, particularly heat.

Jerry Privette, supervisor of the church building program and promotion section of the Sunday School Board's church architecture department, said temperature varies approximately one degree for every foot of height. Consequently, when thermostats are lowered to 67 or 68 degrees in the winter, many people experience cold feet because of the temperature difference. If the high ornate ceilings are to stay, churches must find ways to recirculate warm air which rushes to the ceiling.

Although much has been said about solar energy recently, it's doubtful solar will be of much help as an energy source to churches because it must be used on a daily basis for optimum benefit.

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Churches can take advantage of nature by building facilities and placing windows to capture sun rays in winter and using deciduous trees or architectural design for shade in the summer. Also, Privette said no windows should be included on the north side of the building to provide better insulation in the winter.

Privette feels more new Southern Baptist facilities are being constructed as multi-purpose buildings because of the high cost of construction and land.

"We need to keep an attitude of flexibility toward our programs and the use of our buildings," Privette said. "We may need to change our programs to reflect a more energy conscious attitude, by combining meetings, holding some meetings in private homes, and possibly scheduling a worship service and Bible study on a Saturday night."

In Europe, where land is extremely expensive and difficult to acquire, several denominations combine their resources to build a worship facility to be used by more than one congregation. The building is used for worship all day Sunday, and for interdenominational day care and senior adult programs throughout the week.

Change will have to overcome some treasured Southern Baptist traditions, most of which are above reproach in relation to worship practices, but are simply outdated in terms of energy conservation and stewardship of God's resources.

The time has come for serious introspection by Baptists at church and at home to see where we can contribute to conservation through leadership. Procrastination can only mean additional waste of our precious resources and deterioration of our witness in the community.

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(BP) photo mailed to Baptist state newspapers.

Cason's Green Thumb
Aids Black Baptists

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ATLANTA (BP)--Durwood V. Cason's green thumb helps black youths study for Christian vocations.

Cason, 78 and white, operates a nursery in the back yard of his Atlanta home, selling flowers, shrubs and other greenery. Profits go to a memorial in honor of his son, Durwood V. Cason Jr., who drowned in 1957 before he finished preparing to be a medical missionary in Africa.

The scholarship fund was established in 1958 to help black ministerial and missionary students attend college or theological seminary. The memorial's total has reached almost \$70,000, thanks to thousands of contributions and the \$800 Cason has made in his nursery.

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"The idea occurred to me one day when I was in the yard," Cason recalled. "I figured I could make a little something selling all these plants, with every penny then going to my son's memorial fund."

Father and son shared a concern that blacks are a part of the Christian church, he said.

"If you take the gospel seriously, there is no other way. It doesn't make sense to have segregation--everybody is somebody," explained Cason, former secretary of the Georgia Baptist Convention's joint program with National Baptists, a position that emphasized eliminating racial prejudice.

Cason retired in 1967 but has received a citation of recognition from the Georgia Baptist Convention and a V. T. Glass Award from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board for outstanding contributions to racial reconciliation.

"I still want to keep my life full and meaningful, and my little garden lets me work on a good cause--to help black Christians have the same opportunities as the rest of us. We're all brothers and sisters," he said.

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Revival Continues
At Refugee Camp

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SONGKLA, Thailand (BP)--Songkla refugee camp in Thailand has experienced a spiritual revival since the end of March.

More than 100 new Christians have been baptized; others await completion of classes in Christian doctrine. One crusade resulted in 160 decisions for Christ.

The revival began soon after a young Baptist pastor, Dao Ven Chink, arrived at the camp and began meeting with the 10 to 15 Christians. Regular Bible study, prayer and worship services attracted others and the group began growing.

Chink began to sense an interest and openness of many people in the camp. He and the other Christians started praying about and planning for an evangelistic crusade.

They pooled resources and talents to make posters and banners to inform the camp's 3,000 residents of the meetings. Doug Kellum, former missionary journeyman to Vietnam working as a volunteer with refugees in Thailand, and Robert C. Davis Jr., former Vietnam missionary now serving in Hong Kong, led the crusade.

About 400 people crowded around a partially finished camp building each night to attend the open-air services. But everyone at the camp could hear over the public address system.

As Chink, who will resettle in the United States, leaves for his new home, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board leader says, "The Christians in Songkla Camp are praying that the Lord will provide new leadership for the camp and that more will accept Jesus Christ as their savior."

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Blind Student Gains Insight

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP)--If you don't think a person can see without his eyes, just ask Ken Long.

A disease of the nervous system obscures most of Long's vision, making him legally blind. But his perseverance and commitment to achieve his goals have become a source of strength to many at Palm Beach Atlantic College, where he recently climaxed seven years of college study with a long-sought diploma.

It hasn't been easy. Reading, for example, required the assistance of a magnification machine provided by a local agency for the blind. Pages that would take a few minutes for the average reader may take an hour for Long, as he focused on one word at a time. Class notes are taken by tape recording, which he had to replay several times in preparation for tests.

His visual handicap has forced Long, a native of Vero Beach, Fla., to proceed slowly through college, taking two years at Indian River Community College in Fort Pierce and five at Palm Beach Atlantic, a Baptist-affiliated liberal arts college.

This fall Long will continue his studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he will prepare to enter the ministry.

"I may be an assistant pastor or a chaplain," Long says. "I couldn't be a pastor because he has to go around to hospitals and different homes and I'm unable to drive, so that would be a heavy weight on somebody's shoulders."

When Long preached for the final chapel service of his college days, he was surprised by a recognition from his fellow students. A plaque presented to him by the Student Government Association cited his dedication as an "inspiration to the entire college community."

"I just felt like I could hug the whole body of people out there," he recalls.

Ken hopes his efforts might be an example to others that, no matter what their handicap, they should still reach for their goals.

"Years ago I thought it would be impossible for me to graduate from college, but with the help of God I've been able to do it," he says. "Whatever you seek to do in life, strive for it and don't give up because one day you'll make that goal. . .you'll be able to reach it."

"My faith in God has helped me so much," Long says. "It has given me a place to stand. God has enabled me to see that even though this isn't the best condition in the world, I can do just as much as others can do--it just takes a little bit more time."