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Church Growth Parallels
Deacon, Pastor Partnership

By Jim Lowry

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—New growth and fellowship likely will be evident in Southern Baptist churches where deacons are partners in Shared Ministry with the pastor, according to leaders of a National Deacon Conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Bruce Grubbs, supervisor of the pastoral section of the church administration department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, urged deacons at the conference to be "partners with God, the pastor and all believers and minister-servants."

"Ministry is the work of the whole body of Christ, not an elite group," Grubbs told the deacons. "The distinction among us is for role, not rank. Ministry is the work of the whole body and the responsibility and privilege of each believer."

"All believers are ministers, not just the clergy," Grubbs continued. "The greatest church will be one made up of great lay people who support the pastor with prayer and in the work of Christ."

"What we need to be is persons equal to each other," he said. "We're brothers. The preacher is not the boss of the deacons and the deacons are not the preacher's boss. Even though society is set up in 'pecking order,' church language is language of equality."

With tongue in cheek, he said some people don't think Jesus was meant to be a leader, because all he knew how to do was love people. Grubbs said any leadership not modeled on Jesus will go away because it is based on the culture.

"Ministry is most effective and fulfilling when it is conducted on the basis of gifts," he said. "This results in a partnership where you do your part and God can do his part."

Joe Stacker, director of the board's church administration department, said Deacons as Partners in Shared Ministry is appropriate because of the biblical role of deacons as leaders alongside the pastor, as shown in Philippians 1:1 and I Timothy 3.

"The New Testament is clear that deacons join with the pastor as servant leaders to enable the church to become a servant church," Stacker said. "This does not encourage the position of prominence or authority, but one of ministry through a sharing of one's self in Christ."

"Deacons who share this ministry add a dimension of enthusiasm and integrity to a church that can come from no other source," Stacker continued. "I would suggest that any pastor who wants to lead his church to become a 'Great Commission' church should begin by enlisting, equipping and motivating the deacons to be partners in ministry with him and the church."

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Dry Rot Endangers
Single-Staff Churches

By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press
7/24/86

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—Pastors in many small, single-staff churches are drowning in responsibility because of an inevitable "dry rot" that silently but surely eats away at the fellowship of the church.

This dry rot must be treated with the constant upkeep of relationships, said D.G. McCoury, consultant in the church administration department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

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"Even though this erosion can endanger the fellowship of the church, it is important to remember that the presence of dry rot does not call for guilt on the part of the pastor or church members," he said. "Relationships are always developing between the pastor and church members. They are not immune to all the forces affecting the rest of the world.

"The role of the pastor in the single-staff church should be to continuously guide the flow of relationships in the church," continued McCoury, who led sessions during the Bible-Preaching-Administration Conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Types of dry rot defined by McCoury in his sessions included "tired blood," "church is OK" and "predisaster." Either of the first two can be considered the "initial phase in a worsening progression of untreated erosion in the church," he said.

In tired blood dry rot, the general ebb and flow of relationships has produced an environment lacking mutual excitement related to ministry responsibilities. Vitality usually has waned, and many only want to think of the good days and to ignore any negative symptoms because the past is pleasant and non-threatening.

In the church is OK dry rot, the pastor and members are busy and heading in the same direction, but they never touch, McCoury said. This type of dry rot is worse than the first because the pastor and church members don't have a memory of when they were close.

"In a church experiencing predisaster dry rot, the foundation under their relationship has been all but destroyed," he said. "In this type, polarization is evident and conflict is open, escalating and messy. It has become the 'we versus they.'"

Factors listed by McCoury which can contribute to dry rot include the routine of living; unrealistic expectations of the pastor, people or programs; lack of ownership and involvement; and the difficulty of establishing meaningful relationships.

Some of the symptoms which might be evident in churches experiencing dry rot include loss of interest, leadership avoiding each other, restlessness related to church membership, constant doubt, private meetings, constant reorganization, families staying away from services, same few doing everything, debate over who is boss and feelings of isolation.

When a church is experiencing any of the forms of dry rot described by McCoury, he said, it is important for the pastor in the single-staff church to examine his leadership style and assess his strengths and weaknesses.

Volunteers in any church are important but are especially crucial in single-staff churches because of the number of responsibilities faced by the pastor. And due to the large percentage of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention with 300 or fewer members, these churches are critical to the success of the denomination in reaching communities for Christ.

After the pastor assesses his personal strengths and weaknesses, he then needs to evaluate the gifts of church members who share the ministry with him, McCoury said. "The pastor of the single-staff church can multiply his ministry through volunteers who complement his areas of weakness. These church members who are specialists, in budgeting and finance for instance, should be delegated responsibility in their areas of expertise."

Pastors in single-staff churches also must be realistic in terms of goals, programs, plans and resources, he insisted. They must share the ministry opportunities with other Christians whose involvement can help avoid erosion of fellowship which, if untreated, can result in dry rot and eventual breakup of the church.

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Recession Causes Texas
Staff To Cut Spending

Baptist Press
7/24/86

DALLAS (BP)--Facing a June shortfall of more than \$1 million, the staff of the Baptist General Convention of Texas has been instructed to cut expenditures for the remainder of 1986.

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The action was announced in a mid-June staff meeting by William M. Pinson Jr., executive director of the Executive Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, who told the staff to trim expenditures to keep spending within income.

In June, Texas Cooperative Program receipts fell \$1,071,679 short of budget requirements, creating a budget shortfall of \$420,975 for the year. The 1986 basic budget is \$60.5 million, requiring a monthly average giving of \$5,041,667.

Pinson said July receipts show some improvement over June giving, with Cooperative Program receipts at \$4,352,780 for the first three weeks of the month.

"Until June we had been making the budget," Pinson told Baptist Press. "It looks better for July, but August could be another low month."

BGCT Treasurer Roger Hall said that while the convention is living within its means to date, 98.5 percent of its resources are being spent.

Pinson, who explained the action is a trimming of expenditures rather than a cut in the budget, said the action is a "reaffirmation of our commitment to live within our income. We will reduce expenses as we need to. We will closely monitor the situation."

The executive said the BGCT has not faced such a large shortfall "since the Depression." He cited the collapse of oil and gas prices and a general depression in agribusiness as the cause of economic woes in Texas. He noted the governor of Texas has called a special session of the legislature to deal with a projected \$3 billion shortfall in state revenues because of the economic problems in the state.

Pinson declined to say what percentage the staff had been asked to trim, saying the amount will "float, depending on giving. We will monitor the situation and prioritize our expenditures. If giving goes down, we will tighten up; if it goes up, we will ease up a bit, but we are committed to living within our income."

As he announced the cutbacks, Pinson applauded the faithful giving of Texas Baptists, noting Cooperative Program receipts for the year are up, and encouraged everyone to recognize the opportunities for ministry represented by tough economic times. He expressed hope that the Cooperative Program budget will be met for the year in spite of the economy.

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CORRECTION: In story entitled "Christine Bess Handled Money, But People Made Her 'Rich'" dated 7/23/86, please change last sentence of second graf to read: She was secretary-treasurer at the time of her retirement this summer.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Canadian Baptists Welcome
World, Build Future

By Leisa A. Hammett

Baptist Press
7/24/86

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (BP)—From May to October Canada's western province, British Columbia, is inviting the world to visit its collection of pastel-colored islands and its six-month international extravaganza, Expo '86.

Simultaneously, little-known Canadian Southern Baptists are telling who they are, strengthening their churches and creating unprecedented ties with other Christians.

Southern Baptist efforts in conjunction with the world event include student missionary performing teams and volunteer staffing and a host of American construction, evangelism and performance teams. Expo '86 Ministries, sponsored by Capilano Southern Baptist Association, also is hosting several interdenominational rallies and area church services.

Although Baptists do not have an exhibit at Expo '86, their drama, instrumental and vocal missionaries are performing on the outdoor stage of the interdenominational "Pavilion of Promise."

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Sponsored by "100 Huntley Street," a Toronto-based television evangelism ministry, it is the only religious pavilion on the 170-acre site. The pavilion, a high-tech multi-media presentation, was given high marks by the press.

Some Christians initially accused the pavilion of not emphasizing individual acceptance of Christ. Since then producers added a chapel service and also a short video-taped message by Host David Mainse and the presentation narrator, Sir Malcom Muggeridge. Pavilion officials also said the last segment in the multi-media series would be altered to emphasize a more evangelistic approach.

Despite opinions of the pavilion's evangelism content, General Manager Geoffrey Still says by mid-season counselors ministered to 400 people. More than half of them made first time decisions, he notes.

More than 400 international and interdenominational volunteers staffed the 21,000-square-foot pavilion and were available for counseling.

"The Old Salts Shipyard," an exhibit on Expo's west end, is also operated by an interdenominational group, The S.A.L.T. Society. The society's initials stand for "Sail and Life Training."

In addition to the society's exhibit—a 78-foot 1778 replica sail boat—Christian crew members offer 10-day sailing expeditions aboard an historic Canadian vessel. Christian witness—blessings at meals, devotions and discussions—are an integral part of the four expeditions.

Hope '86, another ministry, was established to encourage, train and promote Christian groups to evangelize Vancouver.

Henry Blackaby, Capilano Association's director of missions, says collaborative effort among all denominations is the greatest effect of the six-month Expo.

Two on-site worship services, called Baptist Day at Expo, are uniting the five Baptist denominations which historically have operated autonomously.

Although Southern Baptists established themselves in the United States almost 150 years ago, the world's largest Protestant denomination is a newcomer in the Canadian Baptist scene, staking claim on British Columbian soil only 35 years ago. Since then 80 missions have been launched.

But despite their history and heritage, Southern Baptists and their fellow Baptists are working together for the first time in Canada. And Expo, claims Jack Bergeson, executive minister for the British Columbia Baptist Conference Mission, is the reason.

He also says Canadian leaders of the five Baptist groups developed friendships as a result of their joint witness effort. "Baptist Day at Expo," he adds, "is a significant demonstration of Canadian Baptists' unity in Christ."

Blackaby affirms the importance of the two Expo services—one held in early July, the other in early August.

Calling the services a catalyst for Baptist cooperation, Blackaby emphasizes the need for such interdenominational cooperation. "Southern Baptists can't win Canada by themselves," says Blackaby, a 28-year veteran of the 14-million-member group.

But Blackaby views Expo as the springboard for western Canadian church growth, Baptist cooperation and increased evangelization. And that is already happening, he says, much of it because the aid of nearly 1,000 U.S. Southern Baptists.

U.S. volunteers range from Mission Service Corps participants who are serving one or two years, Baptists who have immigrated to Canada, Christian Service Corps volunteers who are staying from one week to six months and church groups who came for one to two weeks. Their contributions include clerical, student, construction, organizational and church work.

Several Expo Ministries volunteers had served the area previously such as Zack Stateson, who conducted Vacation Bible Schools. Stateson returned this summer, except this time he was honeymooning with new wife, Stacey. The couple returned to the area where he worked, contacted several of the same children, gathered others and led another VBS.

First Baptist Church of Lafayette, La., sent more than 80 youth and singles for 10 days. The singles helped start an area singles ministry.

Texans from Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio ventured to Canadian shores, their second trip in two years. This time the Texas church supplied the labor and building materials for an entire church building.

Volunteer contributions, says Blackaby, "will forever change the way our churches look at doing missions." Because many Southern Baptist church members there are new Christians—among other reasons—there is less lay involvement and greater demands on pastors, he explains.

Expo challenges laypeople to become involved, he says, adding the goal of Expo '86 Ministries is to equip local Christians to continue the work started by the two US-2 missionaries, semester missionaries and U.S. volunteers.

Already 50 area Southern Baptists, Blackaby notes, have committed to full-time Christian work, aided by the inspiration and encouragement of volunteers.

Says Barbara McKenzie, Expo '86 Ministries director, "In a church where each week the core group is eight and then 18 student missionaries visit, it communicates that someone cares and wants to help."

A by-product of the world-wide event and the simultaneous Baptist ministries, McKenzie and Blackaby agree, is that all parties benefit. While Canadians and others are coming to know God, others are committing to full-time Christian service. And volunteers, they report, are returning home changed, with commitments to pray, financially support churches, return and some even legally claiming Canada home.

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Home Mission Board Honors
Pair Of Missions Directors

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Two Southern Baptist directors of missions have been honored for their work the past year by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Melvin Hill, director of missions for Blue River and Kansas City Baptist Associations in Kansas City, Kan., received the award from the metropolitan missions department, and Clarence Hanshaw, director of missions in Savannah River Baptist Association in Ridgeland, S.C., received the award from the rural-urban missions department.

Hill, director of missions in Kansas City since 1982, was cited for his administrative and pastoral skills, used to merge two strong associations into one.

"He enabled a diverse and somewhat fragmented group of churches to come together and form a healthy, united fellowship of churches in mission," said Jere Allen, director of metropolitan missions for the Home Mission Board.

Hanshaw was cited for his 28 years of service in an area including isolated Daufuskie Island and the resort area, Hilton Head.

"He has made sure that residents on Daufuskie Island were not forgotten by Southern Baptists," said Quentin Lockwood, director of rural-urban missions. "Hanshaw fought racism with a gentle but ever-persistent love borne out in quite visible action."

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