

March 26, 1991

MINISTERS IN TRANSITION THINK TANK AT SOUTHEASTERN

by Dr. George A. Worrell

Wake Forest, NC - What would you do if you were just fired from your church? That was the topic for a group of leaders from South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. They were meeting at the invitation of Dr. Lewis A. Drummond, president of Southeastern Seminary to discuss ways of ministering to pastors and staff personnel who have been terminated.

Norris Smith of the Sunday School Board reported that one to two percent of Southern Baptist ministers are terminated from their pastorates. Reggie McDonough suggested that as much as another five percent have vacated their pastorates for other positions under extreme pressure.

Personal testimonies were presented that stressed how important it is that assistance be given to terminated pastors. Suggestions were given as to the types of assistance that could help when these stressful situations occur.

Henry Lankford explained how his church had dissolved its membership, sold the church to another congregation, and gave the proceeds to Southeastern Seminary to set up a fund for the purpose of helping terminated pastors.

The afternoon session involved a discussion of questions such as: What needs do ministers and their families have? What needs are being presently met? How can we meet other needs? What structure is required for continuing this process?

Drummond and others told what services Southeastern Seminary is currently offering to ministers in transition. These services include up to eight months of free housing, a free medical examination by the seminary physician, free classes on an audited basis, use of the library and student recreation facilities, and various support services by the Formation in Ministry office.

-more-

Ray Pollard, Virginia Baptist Convention, Jim Lambert, N. C. Baptist Convention, and Charles Rabon, S. C. Baptist Convention, informed the group about what their conventions are doing in assisting terminated pastors and how they have been asked to assist in the past.

An ad hoc committee made up of Roy J. Smith, Tom Jackson, Jim Lambert, Charles McMillan, and George Worrell will continue to meet to further discover and develop other services that could be provided by the seminary. Potentially, career assessment with assistance in research and development of new programs may be added. Information about current programs offered by the seminary may be obtained by calling the office of external affairs, (919)556-3101, extension 315.

Those attending were: Reggie McDonough, Ray Pollard, Robert Dale, Virginia Baptist Convention; Henry Lankford, Richmond, Virginia; Roy Smith, Jim Lambert, N. C. Baptist State Convention; Charles McMillan, Raleigh Baptist Association; Rev. and Mrs. Bill Wallace, Tar River Baptist Association; Tom Jackson, Wake Forest Baptist Church; Ray Rust, Charles Rabon, South Carolina Baptist Convention; Ned Duncan, York Baptist Association, South Carolina; Norris Smith, Sunday School Board, Tennessee; Lewis Drummond, George Worrell, Charles Dorman, Albert Meiburg, Southeastern Seminary, and Cecil Rhodes, Southeastern Seminary trustee.

-SEBTS-