



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
Telephone (615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041

DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996

NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lynn M. Davis, Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203, Telephone (615) 254-5461

RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (703) 353-0151

WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

June 1, 1972

Atlanta Baptist College, Mercer Merger Talked

ATLANTA (BP)--A committee of the Atlanta Baptist Association executive committee was called into session to discuss a proposal that Atlanta Baptist College be merged with Mercer University.

Frank Stubbs, executive secretary of the association, said that the liaison committee with the college trustees would probably make a recommendation on the proposal at the July 10 associational executive committee meeting.

C. Douglas Jackson, pastor of East Point First Baptist Church, is liaison committee chairman.

The proposed merger was approved by trustees of the two schools in joint session at Atlanta Baptist College May 30. The college is an Atlanta Baptist Association institution, and Mercer is a Georgia Baptist Convention school.

Final approval of the proposal cannot come until it is voted upon by the Georgia Baptist Convention in Savannah, Nov. 13-15.

Stubbs said he is not certain at this point whether the merger will be submitted to the full session of the Atlanta Baptist Association for implementation. If so, the next associational session will be Oct. 16-17.

J. O. North, business manager at the college, said that at this point officials of both schools "anticipate that the merger will be consummated."

He said it is uncertain when the merger would go into effect after final approval is gained, but it is hoped it would be effective immediately.

The merger proposal originally was approved by the executive committees of the two trustee boards on May 16. The two full boards "overwhelmingly" approved the proposal when they met in a closed session May 30.

Atlanta Baptist College, which graduated its first class this spring, would receive automatic accreditation if the merger is consummated.

The Atlanta school has had financial difficulties for the past several years which have resulted in the sale of a parcel of land and a proposal by its trustees to disband the school.

North emphasized, however, that the school has operated "in the black" since September 1971, and that it currently has no indebtedness.

-30-

Merritt Has Heart Attack

6/1/72

ATLANTA (BP)--James White Merritt, for 25 years the executive secretary-treasurer of the Georgia Baptist Convention, suffered a severe heart attack on May 30. He was placed in the intensive care unit at Gainesville General Hospital, Gainesville, Ga.

He was recording secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1955 through 1964.

-30-

Cooper to Direct Texas
Counseling Service

DALLAS (BP)--James L. Cooper has been named by the Executive Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas to launch a statewide counseling service for ministers.

Cooper, pastor of First Baptist Church of Oak Cliff here for the past 16 years, will serve as coordinator of counseling services. It is a new position created by the Texas convention last year.

In other action, the board elevated Edward E. Laux, secretary of the Texas convention's church training department for 12 years, to direct a newly created Special Services Division in the convention's State Missions Commission.

The counseling ministry which Cooper will direct is for pastors, church staff members, denominational workers and their families.

The convention action gives Cooper the "responsibility of establishing a network of counselors over the state to whom he could refer cases."

The counselors would be "psychiatrists, counseling psychologists or clinical pastoral education types."

Cooper would also work with denominational agencies to set up retreats, seminars and symposia to help ministers.

A convention appropriation would pay counseling costs when needed.

Cooper, a former vice president of the Texas convention, holds degrees from Howard Payne College, Brownwood, Tex., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, in addition to a master's degree in counseling from East Texas State University, Commerce.

The division Laux is to head will coordinate activities of the Texas Baptist church training department, church music department, various church youth activities and associational missions programs.



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Nashville, Tennessee 37219*

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LYNN MAY HO
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 9TH AVE. NO.
NASHVILLE TN 37203