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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

--- FEATURES

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76-130

For Once Jerry Clower Had
Trouble Finding the Words

By Bonita Sparrow

FORT WORTH (BP)--Anybody going to try to out talk Mississippi funnyman Jerry Clower had better bring his lunch and plan to spend the day. After all, Clower makes his living with his mouth.

But an Arkansas woman determined to talk about "Country Crossroads" recently told a story that left the Grand Ole Opry comedian nearly speechless and brought tears to his eyes.

"Country Crossroads" is the half-hour radio program produced by Baptists through their Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission and broadcast on 594 stations in this country. Clower, a Baptist, is a co-host on the program.

"I've driven a limousine for Don Bridges Limousine service in Hot Springs, Ark., about four years so I didn't think too much about it when the dispatcher sent me to the airport to pick up a couple of men going to town," said Buelah (Mrs. Leroy) Hurst. "It's about a three-mile trip and that's a pretty good fare."

She had no idea the man in the bright yellow suit was Clower, on his way to address a gathering of the Arkansas Poultry Federation. Nor did she know the man with him was Jim Rupe, who produces "Country Crossroads" for the Fort Worth-based Baptist agency.

Mrs. Hurst opened the conversation. "If I didn't know better, I'd swear you look for the world like Jerry Clower," she told the comedian. "In fact, you look so much like him you could be his twin brother."

Taking Clower's startled reaction for offense she immediately apologized. "I didn't mean to offend you, but you really shouldn't be upset. I'm paying you a real compliment."

She explained. "Jerry Clower is on a radio show that's heard every Sunday afternoon in this area. It's called 'Country Crossroads' and you wouldn't believe what listening to that man on that show has done for our family.

"I don't know whether you can understand this or not, Mister," she went on, "but my husband was really a wicked man. And our four children weren't Christians. Now, thanks to Jerry Clower and 'Country Crossroads,' all that has changed.

"You see, we like country music and we started listening to 'Country Crossroads' every Sunday afternoon at our house. It was about the only thing the entire family (two sons and two daughters) did together.

"Every Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock my oldest daughter would bring her two little children over and we'd all tune in KBHS here and listen to that show. Nobody would say a word during the entire time. And if the telephone rang, we just didn't answer it.

"I can't say for sure when it all happened, but my husband heard what ('Crossroads' co-hosts) Jerry Clower, Bill Mack and Leroy Van Dyke were saying about Christianity enough that he thought there might be something to that Christianity. So we went to church (Social Hill Baptist Church, near Royal, Ark., where the family lives), and he became a Christian.

"What's more, all four of our children went to church and became Christians and were baptized. I'd been a Christian since I was a little girl but I'd drifted away. Now we're all in church. You wouldn't believe how that's changed our family, and I give God and 'Country Crossroads' all the credit."

Mrs. Hurst, contacted later, had a further report. "Well, when that man finally got it through to me that he really was Jerry Clower, and that the fellow with him was Jim Rupe, the producer of the show, I was really excited!

"I got Jerry's autograph and I can't tell you what a blessing it was, just meeting and talking to him. But listen, best of all, since I talked to Jerry my daughter's husband, his mother and daddy, a brother who was bad to drink and a sister-in-law of his have all become Christians and been baptized and are in church--all because of what 'Country Crossroads' did."

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

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August 10, 1976

Budd E. Smith, 66,
 Dies in North Carolina

76-130

BENSON, N. C. (BP)--Funeral services for Budd E. Smith, president emeritus of Wingate College, a Baptist school in Wingate, N. C., were held at Trinity Baptist Church near here, with burial in a family plot in Benson. Smith, 66, died August 5 of a heart attack.

Smith, who retired from the Wingate presidency in 1974 after 21 years in the post, began his teaching career in 1931 at Coker College. He has taught at the University of North Carolina, Wake Forest University and Wingate College and was serving as superintendent of public schools, Oxford, N. C., when he became president of Wingate in 1953.

He earned his bachelor's, master's and doctor of philosophy degrees from the University of North Carolina. He was active in a wide range of religious, civic and professional organizations. He is a former president of the Southern Association of Junior Colleges and former vice chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention's Education Commission.

Smith is survived by his wife, Ethel Knott Smith of Benson, and two sons.

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**Persecution of Evangelicals
 Causes Some to Leave Tambo**

Baptist Press
 8/10/76

TAMBO, Ecuador (BP)--Several Quichua Indian families of new evangelical Christian believers have moved from Tambo following several incidents of harassment, including a major clash where at least four were seriously injured while attending a Baptist worship service in a home.

According to reports, the families are now involved in a colony in Baranco Alto near Guayaquil, Ecuador. They attend worship services at a mission in Triunfo, where four were baptized in January.

The major incident occurred in October 1975, when about 80 Indians disrupted a church service held by Southern Baptist missionary Archie V. Jones in this small village outside Canar. When believers tried to calm the mob, a fight began, resulting in machete wounds and other injuries. Jones escaped and summoned police. The mob leaders were arrested.

All the wounded, except two men, have fully recovered. One almost lost an arm and has only limited use of it now. The other man's eye was cut and badly sutured. As a result, the tear duct does not function and causes him some difficulty.

"We had some trouble recently . . . when a child two years old died in Tambo," Jones reported. "The religious leaders of the town refused to let the child of a 'Protestant' defile their 'Holy Ground,' as the cemetery is called. The sheriff of a neighboring town had us take the child there to bury him."

Evangelicals who have remained in Tambo have faced even further persecution and have been threatened with burnings and killings, according to Jones. Police protection has helped the situation.

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"Recently, in the towns of Canar and Tambo, there was a large demonstration with people carrying signs and shouting anti-Protestant, anti-evangelical and anti-Baptist slogans," Jones said. "Some were carrying fire bombs. The police surrounded the home of some Lutheran missionaries to protect them against the mob."

In spite of the persecution, Jones further indicated that only one of the 18 Indian evangelical believers still in Tambo has abandoned his faith. Two more have accepted Christ as savior and joined the evangelical group.

"Religious persecution is not over," Jones said. "It may have only started in this century. Bishops and archbishops are helpless in the face of fanatical religious leaders in the rural areas far from the large cities."

"The situation is not at all good. We need prayer support in a great way concerning the province of Canar . . . we felt and still feel the Lord wants us here . . . pray for us."

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Midwestern Seminary Begins
Expansion of Facilities

Baptist Press
8/10/76

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here is expanding its classroom facilities to handle increased student enrollment and projected growth, a seminary representative said.

The expansion project, under study by the school's board of trustees and administration for several months, reportedly will increase available classroom space by nearly 30 percent by Dec. 1, 1976.

Major emphasis of the expansion project is the modification of an existing classroom/faculty building. Plans call for developing and enclosing a breezeway area between the faculty building and the classroom/student center complex plus redesigning the existing interior layout.

Besides adding classroom space, the modification will provide area for better faculty office facilities and a bigger and better Baptist Book Store.

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(BP) Photo will be mailed to state Baptist editors

Fuller Seminary Names
John Watts to Faculty

Baptist Press
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PASADENA, Calif. (BP)--John D. W. Watts, who spent 27 years as a Southern Baptist missionary, has been appointed professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary here.

Watts, 55, was professor of Old Testament at Serampore College in West Bengal, India, before he resigned in 1975. From 1964-70, he was president of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland. He helped establish the seminary, which opened in 1949.

The Laurens, S. C., native, who has also served as visiting professor of Old Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., is the son of missionaries. He spent his early boyhood in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Later the family lived in New Orleans, where his father, J. Wash Watts, taught at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary for 36 years.

The younger Watts received the bachelor of arts degree from Mississippi College, Clinton, the master of theology degree from the New Orleans Seminary (then Baptist Bible Institute) and the doctor of theology degree from Southern Seminary.

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O. L. Bayless, Colorado
Editor, Announces Retirement

DENVER (BP)--O. L. Bayless, editor of the Rocky Mountain Baptist, weekly newspaper of the Colorado Baptist General Convention, has announced his retirement effective March 1, 1977.

Bayless said in an editorial in the August 6 issue of his publication that he had submitted his retirement request to convention executive director-treasurer Glen E. Braswell and the administrative committee of the convention's executive board on Aug. 3.

He said the announcement was made to allow the board to "proceed with a search for a new editor and perhaps elect him in the December board meeting."

Bayless, who will be 65 in February, joined the Colorado Convention staff in 1960 as secretary of evangelism after 14 years as pastor of Second Baptist Church, Hot Springs, Ark. He assumed the editorship of the Rocky Mountain Baptist in 1962 and is former president of the Southern Baptist Press Association.

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OBU Interested in
Amy's 'Coming and Going'

Baptist Press
8/10/76

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)--If Amy Carter has a hard time deciding whether she is coming or going in the hectic days of presidential campaigning, a recent gift from Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) may help.

OBU president William G. Tanner sent Amy, the daughter of Democratic nominee Jimmy Carter, an OBU Bison "Coming and Going" T-shirt and a green and gold Bison frisbee.

The T-shirt, which features the front view of a charging Bison with a retreating view from the back, has Amy's name on it.

The frisbee has a Bison on it along with the words "Oklahoma Baptist University." Amy rented her own frisbee to visiting newsmen at the Carter home in Plains, Ga.

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