



-- FEATURES

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'Big Cat' Williams Finds
Christ's Turf Not Artificial

By Dan Martin

GREEN BAY, Wisc. (BP)--At age 13, the world of Clarence Williams--now of Greenbay Packers Football fame--fell apart.

Williams is black. He lived in South Texas and had to leave his home community to attend school in another town because there was no school for blacks where he lived.

He was, like most adolescent boys--gawky, gangly, awkward. As if he didn't have enough problems, his father died as the horrified teenager watched helplessly.

Williams' father had been a Baptist pastor of a church in Brazoria, Tex., near Houston.

"I grew up in church...I had always gone to church," said Williams. "They took me more than I wanted to, but they said go, I had to go."

Williams was one of nine children. "I always depended on my father for a livelihood...for everything. I knew my father and mother would take care of me."

But the youngster's sense of security was shaken with the death of his father.

"He was preaching at an associational meeting in Freeport, I was in the choir, right behind him. He had a heart attack and fell right in front of me. When he hit the floor, he was dead," Williams said.

"I never thought anything like that could happen...to somebody I was depending on. After he was buried, my mamma said, 'Son, if you ever have trusted God, you have to trust him now... If you ever have believed, you have to believe now.'"

But it was tough. "I didn't know what to think. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know who would take care of us. But mamma said we have to trust in the Lord."

Williams cherished a dream of going to college, of making something of himself.

"My mother didn't have enough money to do it, but what happened was that my high school coach saw I had potential. He was kind of like a father to me. He kept me from going wrong. He made me participate in three sports, football, basketball and track.

"He kept me busy...kept me intact."

In high school, Williams was 6-feet, 5-inches tall, but weighed only 205 pounds. He was tall and gangly. He made all-state in basketball, and also excelled in football.

"Then, by the help of the Lord, I received a college scholarship. All of this was his work, not mine. When my father 'passed' I would never have thought I could go to college on an athletic scholarship."

Williams went to Prairie View A&M, a small all-black school near Houston. He became a starter in football and in his senior year was elected team captain and selected to a small-college All-American list.

"I showed a little potential, I guess, and the pro teams started sending me questionnaires," he said. "I couldn't see myself as a pro...I saw those guys play on TV every Sunday and couldn't imagine me doing that...."

But he was drafted in 1968 by the Dallas Cowboys.

"They had been in the playoffs. They had defensive linemen like Willie Townes, Jethro Pugh and Bob Lilly. They didn't need somebody like me."

Williams made the taxi (reserve) squad in 1969. He was traded in 1970 to the Green Bay Packers, in the National Football League, where he soon became a starter at defensive end.

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"My career really started when my father 'passed.' I think I had to take on new life, had to believe in somebody beyond human beings. You can be as good as you want to be when you ask the Lord for help. I try now to depend on the Lord for everything," Williams said.

For almost seven years, he has been a member of Highland Crest Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist Convention-affiliated congregation in Green Bay. He says he first went to the church because it was close--and "friendly"--for him and his wife, Icy.

Williams works with Royal Ambassador boys (a Baptist Brotherhood organization), often helps with ushering duties and takes part in the lay ministry to prisoners in the nearby maximum security penitentiary.

His pastor, William Jenkins, calls Williams "above average in his Christian life and witness." Williams, himself, says he tries to present his Christian witness by "living a life. It is hard for me to go out and talk to somebody, but I try to set an example."

Recently, Williams played a part in helping Fred Carr, the all-pro linebacker for the Packers. On Williams' advice, Carr visited Jenkins and Emmanuel McCall, director of the Home Mission Board's Cooperative Work with National Baptists, who was in Green Bay for a weekend revival.

Carr, who admitted having personal problems, made a profession of faith. He was baptized into membership in the church.

Williams has grown from the gawky, gangly, awkward boy of 13 into a confident, assured man.

"People ask me what I'm going to do when I get out of pro ball. Well, I don't know. I have some things in mind, but I want to do whatever the Lord has in mind. He's been taking care of me this far. I've got confidence in him. I don't think he's going to let me down. He has something and he'll make a way."

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers; others on request

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High Attendance Day
Counts 60% Present

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11/9/76

NASHVILLE (BP)--Nearly 4.4 million persons, 60 percent of all Southern Baptists enrolled in Sunday School, were present Sunday, Oct. 31, on "High Attendance Day" across the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

While representing a larger than average attendance, the figure fell short of the five million goal for that day.

On an average Sunday, approximately 52 percent of the total enrollment attends Sunday School. The 4,393,036 present on High Attendance Sunday represents almost 600,000 more than usually attend.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas had the best increase this year, with a total of 656,108 present, compared to 610,747 last year on High Attendance Sunday.

The Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention and the Northern Plains Baptist Convention ended in a virtual tie for the highest percentage of attendance compared to enrollment, with 75.8 percent and 75.7 percent respectively.

Several state conventions had over 60 percent of enrollment present, including Colorado, Mississippi, Missouri, Pennsylvania-South Jersey, South Carolina and Tennessee.

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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Association-State Link Under
Consideration in Ohio

FAIRBORN, Ohio (BP)--Churches which lose membership in their local association would also lose state convention participation if an amendment, offered here at the 1976 annual session of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, passes next year.

Paul Payne, outgoing president of the convention, relinquished his gavel to introduce the amendment, which stems from the eviction of two churches by the Greater Cincinnati Baptist Association in 1975.

Both of the churches were evicted because of participation in the charismatic movement, with the question of alien baptism entering into the decision on one of them. The charismatic issue was not debated at the Ohio convention, a spokesman said, although another convention officer, Earl Dingus of Chillicothe, chairman of the credentials committee, referred to a church whose pastor "is allowed by his church to baptize a person without the person coming into the membership of that church."

The church, practicing what Dingus termed "alien immersion," was not named, but was apparently one of the two churches in Cincinnati affected by the charismatic issue, the spokesman said.

In other action, "messengers" adopted a study committee report that will lead to establishing a retirement center ministry. It would be first institutional ministry for the Ohio state convention since its founding in 1954 and the first Southern Baptist work there to be supervised separate from the state convention's executive board.

Messengers also passed resolutions condemning permissive abortion, offering prayer support for President-elect Jimmy Carter and other elected officials, and reaffirming the historic Baptist position on separation of church and state.

Asked by Baptist Press to comment on the proposed amendment to let associations determine churches related to the state convention, Walter Shurden, associate professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, also discussed historic Baptist beliefs.

"Such an action," Shurden declared, "would not be historically Baptist because, in our ecclesiology, each unit--church, association, state convention, Southern Baptist Convention--are independent and autonomous."

"The idea proposed in Ohio would be more of a Presbyterian form of church government than Baptist. That kind of thing represents a frightening trend toward uniformity. When one unit in our ecclesiastical form of government sacrifices the right to determine its constituency, there is danger of it eventually leading to the type of monolithic church government which Baptists have historically opposed."

Shurden commented that in the past churches have been disfellowshipped by state conventions following similar action by associations, but that these actions were independent of each other, not structurally dictated.

The statement by Payne, pastor of First Baptist Church, Huber Heights, a suburb of Dayton, reads: "In the event a church deviates from doctrine or engages in practices contrary to those held by this convention, to the extent that an association withdraws fellowship from said church, upon certification of this action by the association to the executive board of the state convention, all benefits and privileges afforded to the church by the state convention (including the seating of messengers to the convention), shall cease until such time as the infraction be corrected and fellowship be restored."

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Loss of privileges might also mean the state convention will no longer pay a portion of the basic retirement dues to the Southern Baptist Annuity Board for the pastors of such churches, a spokesman said.

The subcommittee of the executive board, which deals with the retirement fund, was asked to look into guidelines for such churches during the coming year.

Only two messengers voted against the study committee recommendation on retirement, which was adopted after an hour of discussion about finances and priorities of the state convention's work.

The gift of property in Mason, 25 miles north of Cincinnati, stipulated that the land be used for a retirement center. This prompted the study committee's probe into the need for the best way to establish such a ministry.

Arthur L. Patterson, pastor at Mason and chairman of the study committee, said the retirement center ministry will be self-supporting after aid from the state convention funds to launch it. The institution at Mason would be a resource base for ministries elsewhere in Ohio later.

The resolution on abortion condemned "as a grave moral and spiritual error, the practice of abortion for selfish, non-therapeutic reasons."

It also rejected, "as contrary to biblical doctrine in Southern Baptist tradition, any suggestion that Southern Baptists should become activists in support of permissive abortion legislation."

The resolution on prayer cited the "need for divine guidance in governmental leadership at all levels," while the one on church and state opposed appropriation of public funds for the support of church owned and operated schools. It also urged upholding of separation of church and state as provided for in the Bill of Rights and deplored persecution of people around the world.

On the latter point, the resolution pointed to "the torture and murder of Jehovah's Witnesses in Malawi.

Messengers also elected Bob Bateman, pastor of Lane Avenue Baptist Church, Columbus, Ohio, as president, and voted a total annual budget of \$2,334,973. Of that amount, \$559,147 is expected from the state convention's Cooperative Program unified budget, with \$275,000 going to SBC causes.

The 1977 convention will meet in Heath, Ohio, Nov. 2-4.

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W. Va. Baptists Pray For
Carter, Plan Relocation

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11/9/76

PARKERSBURG, W. Va. (BP)--Elected "messengers" to the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists urged prayer support for President-elect Jimmy Carter and other governmental leaders and approved plans to relocate the convention's state headquarters.

The convention also approved a \$503,879 total budget for 1977, including a goal of \$249,120 in Cooperative Program unified budget receipts from its churches, and elected Ron Dillon, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Parkersburg, as president. Fifteen percent of the Cooperative Program receipts will go to worldwide causes of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Noting the "awesome responsibility of the office of President of the United States and the far reaching effects of what is decided in that office," the resolution urged prayer support for Carter and his advisors. It also urged Christian citizens to "do all that is within our power, under God, to help our President to uphold the spiritual and moral integrity of our nation and our world."

The convention confirmed an action of its executive board to purchase a 48-acre tract of land for the purpose of eventually moving the state headquarters some 25 miles from 801 Sixth Ave., St. Albans, to the Elkview interchange of Interstate 79, in Charleston. The move will come in three to five years, a convention spokesman said. --more--

In other action, the West Virginia Baptists approved a recommendation to establish a loan guarantee procedure, similar to that used by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, for use by small, new churches, which are capable of paying off a loan on property and church buildings but lack collateral to obtain a loan.

The convention also established a committee and set up procedures to channel gifts and bequests to the Southern Baptist Foundation to be invested and held until the funds show enough growth to merit establishment of a state foundation office.

Messengers also took note of the Southern Baptist Convention's Bold Mission Thrust (BMT) emphasis, which has the goal of reaching every person in the U. S. with the gospel of Christ by 1980, and resolved to participate fully.

The 1977 convention is set for Nov. 5-6 at Berkeley Baptist Church, Berkeley Springs, W. Va.

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Baptist Leaders Dismayed At
Anti Family Viewing Ruling

Baptist Press
11/9/76

NASHVILLE (BP)--Two Southern Baptist executives in the fields of broadcasting and moral concerns have reacted with dismay to the recent ruling of a California federal judge against the "Family Viewing Hour" on the major television networks.

Paul M. Stevens of Fort Worth, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Radio and Television Commission, called the ruling "unacceptable and odorous."

Harry Hollis of Nashville, director of special family and moral concerns, SBC Christian Life Commission, called it a "disappointing setback to the millions of Americans who see family viewing time as a first step toward diminishing the exploitation of sex and violence on television. It appears," he said, "that the judge has forgotten that the television airwaves belong to the American people."

The ruling in Los Angeles by U. S. District Court Judge Warren G. Ferguson declared that the controversial family viewing hour violates the free speech provision of the First Amendment to the Constitution.

Ferguson said that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) may not force the networks to set aside an hour of prime time nightly for programming which minimizes violence and sex.

The 223-page decision also points out that while the courts cannot force the networks to abandon the family hour, each network must be allowed to schedule its own programming without interference from the FCC and NAB.

Two of the three commercial networks, ABC and CBS, announced immediately that they will appeal the ruling. NBC said it will wait until the decision has been reviewed before deciding on further legal action.

The networks may decide to point out in their appeal that they are participating voluntarily in programming the family hour.

Stevens took emphatic exception to the idea that the FCC or NAB forced the networks into the family viewing concept. "The networks met and agreed voluntarily that something had to be done about violence and sex on television," he said. "They gathered voluntarily, in the public interest, and sought some answers."

"They consulted with Richard Wiley, FCC chairman, and the FCC, and Mr. Wiley brought no pressure on them. All the networks testified in hearings that what they had done was strictly voluntary."

"The judge chose to ignore the testimony--and to ignore his (earlier) statement to the plaintiffs and defendants that it was obvious no case of undue pressure could be proven and that, therefore, he was stopping the trial and ordering the parties to meet and settle."

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"The surprise ruling," Stevens continued, "completely denies and ignores that statement. The interested public is left wondering what transpired to cause him to reverse his earlier reasonable point of view."

Wiley said that the federal agency is consulting with the U. S. Justice Department concerning a possible appeal. Wiley said after the decision that the FCC had never "issued threats of government action" against the networks if they failed to program the family hour.

Judge Ferguson's decision said that if the FCC chooses to regulate the content of television programming it must do so formally and not by using "informal pressure accompanied by self-serving and unconvincing denials of responsibility."

While acknowledging that "the family hour may or may not be desirable," the judge went on to say that "censorship by government or privately created review boards cannot be tolerated."

Ferguson, who declined in his ruling to comment on the merits of the family hour concept, did offer the services of his court to assist the networks in devising ways to continue using the family hour, but without outside interference.

Judge Ferguson's decision came after three artistic guilds and Norman Lear's Tandem Productions, Inc., challenged the family hour concept. Both Hollis and Stevens reacted against their position.

"If the Hollywood artists would spend as much energy in writing creative programs as they have in fighting family viewing time," said Hollis, "American television viewers would not have to suffer through the excessive violence, sexual exploitation, gutter language, and bathroom humor that characterize so many programs."

"All Americans concerned about television programming," he continued, "should call on the networks not only to continue family viewing time but also to improve it. Let us urge the networks to clean up the other viewing time periods as well."

Stevens, calling the family viewing concept an "admirable example of self discipline," commended Wiley and network executives and noted:

"Family viewing time came about because of two separate audiences in this country-- the pre-teen and teen audience and the young adult, adult and elderly audience. The networks and every responsible broadcaster in this country are aware of this and the general programming format reflects this consistently."

He said former CBS president, Arthur Taylor, suggested that special programming consideration be given to early evening hours, making it primarily for family programming.

Stevens said Taylor did this for two reasons: "(1) He felt that sooner or later the American people were going to rise up against the television industry and demand government control of some sort. He wanted to avoid this at all costs, and hoped that all parties concerned would voluntarily agree with him and work in this direction."

"And, (2)," he recognized that the two audiences were there and sought to program to one in the early evening and to the other in the late evening."

Stevens said the parties to the Hollywood suit objected because "they wanted full access to all network prime time slots, with no recognition of the family viewing segment."

"For the most part they belong to the 'anything goes' segment of the entertainment field," Stevens said.

He said semi-pornography, nudity, semi-nudity and violence and implied violence are their "stock and trade."