



-- FEATURES

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Baptist Church

Names: AI to ZOE!

By W. C. Fields, director,
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)--Baptist churches habitually choose names that indicate their location. This leads to some surprising names for religious congregations.

Apart from the fact that many of these church names were pre-determined by place, some seem to convey to the stranger an attitude. Like the Hustleville, Solitude, Meek and Pride Baptist Churches in Alabama. Alabama also has a Welcome Baptist Church.

Then there are the Cash Baptist Churches in Arkansas, South Carolina and Texas; the Tranquility Baptist Church in California; Ohoopce Church (Ga.), Energy (Ill. and Tex.) and Charity (Ill.) Churches; Little Hope Churches (Ky. and Tenn.); King Bee (Tenn.); Humble (La.); Plain Dealing (La.); Friendly (Md.); and Soso (Miss.) Churches.

Add the Big Level Baptist Church (Miss.); Hooe and Huzzah Churches (Mo.); Ideal and Yeso Churches (N.M.); Love (N.C.); Fancy Fap (N.C.); Ketchum, Okay, High Spring, Sooner, Last Chance and Slick Churches in Oklahoma. Throw in Halfway Church of Texas and the Skinquarter Baptist Church of Virginia and you have reflected, however, fairly, quite an array of attitudes.

Perhaps accidentally, some church names seem to reflect an editorial judgment somewhere back in the darkening past. For instance, the Minor Heights Baptist Church or the Sunny Eve Church, both in Alabama. Or, Dinosaur (Colo.); Head of Tennessee (Ga.); Dry Branch (Ga.); Muddy (Ill.); Mud Meeting House (Ky.); and especially Old Yellow Creek No. 1 and Old Yellow Creek No. 2 in Kentucky.

Kentucky has a Greasy Creek Church and a Typo Church. There is also Eros (La.); Cloudy, Cheek and Omega Churches in Oklahoma; War Creek in Tennessee, plus Inspiration, Cross Cut and Dime Box Baptist Churches in Texas.

Some church names seem to commemorate historic events. Hurricane, East Battle Ground (one of my favorites) and Broken Arrow (Ala.); Pontoon (Ill.); Scaffold Cave, Hanging Fork and Gray Hawk (Ky.); Quarles (Mo.); and Gamble Hill (N. C.).

The shortest name among Southern Baptist churches is that of the AI Church in Alabama. There are others: Bio and Ty Ty Churches (Ga.); Iota (La.); D Lo (Miss.); La Due and Polo (Mo.); Micro (N. C.); Bantam (Ohio); and, in name size, last of the least, Zoe (Okla.).

Some church names are long ones which must make writer's cramp an occupational hazard among their church clerks. Such as Autaugaville (Ala.), West Thonotosassa (Ga.); Three Forks Bacon Creek (Ky.); Bartahatchie (Miss.); Koshkonong and Caruthersville (Mo.); Thacklerville (Okla.); Coosawhatchie (S. C.); and Kaunakakai in Hawaii, where they tend to stutter a lot anyway.

One would like to know the local situation-worth-noting which lies behind such Baptist church names as Burnt Corn and Canoe (Ala.); Weed (Ala. and N. M.); Blackwater (Ariz.); Smoke Rise (Ga.); Gunpowder (Md.); Grape Missionary (Mich.); Splitlog (Mo.); Bear Wallow (N.C.); Red Cross (N. C.); Catfish Creek (S. C.); Chalk Level and Briar Thicket (Tenn.); Cactus, Dripping Springs, Lawn and Telephone Baptist Churches in Texas.

Some names appear to incorporate and institutionalize some quaint goal of the founders: Evening Shade and Natural Steps (Ark.); Double Run (Ga.); and Tidal Wave Baptist Church in Tennessee (which must be a good 300 miles from the nearest tidewater). Then there is a rare pair at Occupy No. 1 and Occupy No. 2, plus the ones at Coax and Aimwell in Louisiana. Consider also, Bunch and Crutchko (Okla.), Era and Profitt (Texas).

Then some churches have enigmatic names like the Enigma Baptist Church (Ga.); Anon Church (Ala.); Mystic Church (Ga., and at Fields, La.); Eternity (Ill.); IXL (Kans.); Koran (La.); Pope and Days (Miss.); Strang (Okla.); Four Holes (S. C.); MCM (Tenn.); and Lower King and Queen (Va.). And who has not identified often with the people at Puzzle Ridge Church in Missouri!

Some names undoubtedly must have been knowingly adopted with a smile. Rabbittown (Al.), forsooth! And Loco (Ga.). Mississippi has a long list of such--Shubuta, Shuqualak, Euclatubba, Tchula, Itta Bena, and Yockanookany, plus some others. A reporter called me from San Francisco prior to the 1971 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention to confirm the name and express his utter delight with the Fee Fee Baptist Church in the St. Louis area.

Attach to this list also the Crossnore and Porter Swamp Churches in North Carolina; Kickapoo and Little Quarsarty in Oklahoma; Broadmouth (S. C.); Gath and Ooltewah (Tenn.); Aina Haina (Hawaii); Earth and the matchless Texas prefix, Waxahachie.

Eyebrow raisers bound to have some special evolution behind them: Silk Hope (Ga.); Little Bonne Femme and Times Beach (Mo.); Toecane, Spray, Bee Tree, Hog Swamp, Hanging Dog and Nags Head (N.C.); Romulus (Okla.); Haile Gold Mine (S. C.); Hanging Limb (Tenn.); Poetry (Texas); and Brandy Baptist Church in Virginia. A tie in this category, however, goes to two churches with singularly striking names: Up Green River Baptist Church (Tenn.), and the Six and Twenty Baptist Church (La.).

Names of some churches might imply a theological stance: Wetmore (Ala.); Old Fashion (Fla.); Open Bible (Fla.); The True Gospel (Ga.); Solid Rock (Ga.); Blue Water (Mich.); Coldwater and Deepwater (Mo.); Little White Water (Mo.); Only Way (Okla.); Free Communion (Tenn.); Content (Tex.); and Lost City (W. Va.).

Some names might have been chosen merely because they are picturesque, like Red Apple (Ala.); Dewy Rose (Ga.); Trees and Sun (La.); Pink (Okla.); and Sunbeam (Va.).

Other church and place names survived perhaps because they sound beautiful. There is Oothcalooga (Ga.), for instance. And Uti Lity (La.). Listen to the music Tutwiler (Miss.), Sue City (Mo.); Pomme de Terre (Mo.), Winnemucca (Nev.); Cooleemee, Canetuck, and Altamahaw (N. C.); Montmorenci and Wassamassaw (S. C.).

Some of the names might have come from a Chamber of Commerce. Consider the Frostproof Baptist Church and the Tee and Green Baptist Church, both of Florida. Then there are the churches at Gasburg, Indiana, and Hot Wells, Louisiana. Include in this list Little Texas (Miss.); Pure Air (Mo.); Rural Dale (Mo.); and New Found (N. C.).

And what shall we more say concerning the personalized names such as Sister Springs Baptist Church (Ala.), Chevrolet and Gamaliel Churches (Ky.); the Bob Baptist Church and the Comrade Baptist Church (La.); Bigwitch (N. C.); Plato and Geronimo (Okla.); Ro Ellen and Mascot (Tenn.); Beth Car Church (Va.); Ben Franklin, Mother Neff, Mother Holmes and Tarzan Baptist Churches in Texas.

Among the 35,073 churches of the Southern Baptist Convention across all 50 states there are hundreds of First Baptist Churches, scores with names like Calvary, Grace, Concord, Faith, Mount Zion, and New Hope. Those listed above stand alone, distinct and unique of name. In the end, notwithstanding, we shall be judged, not by what we put on our signboards, but by what we become as a people of God.



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Midwestern Elects
Delos Miles

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Delos Miles was elected associate professor of evangelism at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, effective Feb. 7, 1978, by the school's trustees during their semi-annual board meeting.

In other developments, the board focused on further faculty additions, academic program revisions, campus restoration projects and long-range planning procedures.

Filling the post established by the trustees at their Spring meeting, Miles, 44, comes from the South Carolina Baptist Convention where he has served the director of evangelism and church services division since 1974. Prior to that position he had served over seven years as director of the evangelism department for the state.

Miles, who has also served as associate secretary of evangelism in Virginia, held pastorates in both Virginia and South Carolina. On two separate occasions, he has taught at Midwestern as an adjunctive professor in the evangelism area. A native of Florence County, S. C., he is a graduate of Furman University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and earned a doctorate at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

The board also approved initiation of phase two of the campus restoration and renovation plan. The phase two project focuses on the renovation of the single student residence hall. Work is scheduled to begin in April of 1978.

Phase one of the overall plan, remodeling of the faculty-classroom complex, was completed last December and increased classroom space by nearly 30 percent.

Finally the trustees participated in an overview of long range planning procedures, reviewing properties and discussing future building and funding goals.

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Mills To Step Down
As Georgetown President

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GEORGETOWN, Ky. (BP)--Robert L. Mills, president of Georgetown College here for nearly 19 years, has announced he will relinquish his duties as president at a time to be determined by the school's board of trustees but no later than the close of the current academic year.

In granting the request, the board asked Mills to continue as chief executive officer until a successor is named and then to assume the office of chancellor.

Mills, 60, is 20th president of the Baptist college and has served in that position longer than any other in the institution's 150 year history.

A native of Erlanger, Ky., Mills came to Georgetown College from the University of Texas. He had served as chairman of the department of educational administration at the Texas school after having been dean of admissions and registrar of the University of Kentucky.

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Johnson, Prominent Baptist
Educator, Dies at 89

MONTICELLO, Ark. (BP)--Burial services were held here for Charles D. Johnson, distinguished Southern Baptist educator, author and editor, who died Oct. 19 at age 89. He and his wife, who survives, had lived here since retirement in 1963.

Johnson, who was president of two colleges, was one of the founders of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1915 and served as its chairman for 21 years. He also founded its official publication, the "Southern Baptist Educator," serving as its editor for 15 years.

Among other contributions, he founded the department of journalism at Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and the Southern Literary Association (in 1937), which promoted creative writing through intercollegiate competitions. He co-founded, with his wife, the Alpha Omega Club, the first social and service organization for women at Baylor, and co-founded the American Studies Association of Texas.

He was also author of a history of Southern Baptist education, "Higher Education of Southern Baptists," a volume published in 1956 which still ranks as an authoritative publication in its field.

College presidencies included service at Ouachita Baptist College (now University), Arkadelphia, Ark., and Arkansas A & M, Monticello. He served two years as dean of Blue Mountain College, a Baptist school in Clinton, Miss., after retiring in 1961 from the faculty and administration of Baylor University, where he spent 30 years. At Baylor, he was chairman and professor in the departments of journalism and sociology.

During his extended professional career, Johnson became a widely acclaimed and popular speaker, known for his ardent espousal of educational and literary causes, his Mark Twain-like humor and his manner of the "Southern Gentlemen."

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Baptist Message Search
Committee Appointed

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ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--A search committee has been named to seek the successor to James F. Cole, who will resign in December after 20 years as editor of Louisiana's Baptist Message.

Charles Harvey, pastor of Sunset Acres Baptist Church, Shreveport, will serve as chairman. Other members are Guy Futral Jr., First Baptist Church, Covington, La., Fred W. Jones Jr. of Ruston, La., and two ex officio members, Lad W. Belehrad of De Ridder, La., chairman of the Baptist newspaper's board of trustees, and Glen Edwards, Broadmoor Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La.

Cole, will become executive director of the Baylor University Alumni Association in Waco, Tex., effective Jan. 1.

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