



-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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80-167

Clarke College-Mississippi
College Merger Recommended

By Don McGregor

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Messengers to the Mississippi Baptist Convention will consider a proposed merger between Clarke College and Mississippi College when they meet in Jackson Nov. 11-13.

The proposal to merge the two Southern Baptist-affiliated schools has been suggested by Clarke trustees and approved by the Mississippi Baptist Education Commission and "informally" supported by Mississippi College trustees.

Clarke College, in Newton, has been plagued by financial woes and declining enrollment. This year, however, enrollment topped 200, up from 160 last year.

The recommendation to merge with stronger Mississippi College was one of the alternatives presented following a study of Clarke by the Southern Baptist Convention Education Commission, which began after a joint meeting between Clarke trustees and the Education Commission in 1979.

Of the recommendation, M.L. Flynt, a Meridian physician and chairman of Clarke trustees, said: "After much diligent work and sincere prayer, the trustees feel that this is the best step that can be taken for the good of Mississippi Baptists and our institutions of higher learning under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Billy Thames, president of Copiah-Lincoln Junior College and chairman of the Mississippi Christian Education Commission, added: "This action was not taken with the idea of getting rid of the institution but to strengthen its ministry."

Lewis Nobles, president of Mississippi College in Clinton, which has about 3,000 students, said the question of merger had been presented informally to MC trustees who "unanimously expressed support for a resolution indicating that they looked with favor on such a move and authorized the administration to move forward and obtain such additional facts and figures as would be necessary to give final consideration to such a merger."

Nobles said it is anticipated, if the merger is approved, that "appropriate upper division courses, contingent on demand," will be offered at the Clarke campus. "In addition, the Clarke campus may well serve as an extension center for graduate level work in various academic areas for those who are interested and live in the geographical area served by Clarke."

To facilitate the merger, Mississippi Baptist Education Commission members voted to employ an accounting firm and an attorney to make an audit and survey legal issues involved in a merger.

Clarke College is one of seven junior colleges affiliated with state Baptist conventions.

Cohabiting Women Risk Losing Their Children

WASHINGTON (BP)--States may revoke custody of children to mothers with live-in boyfriends, according to an action by the U.S. Supreme Court.

In an Illinois case involving a divorced woman whose former husband challenged a custody decree after the woman's male friend moved into the family house, the high court let stand a ruling by the Illinois Supreme Court declaring that the living arrangement violated the state's fornication statute.

The Illinois tribunal held that the best interests of Jacqueline Jarrett's children were served by removing them and placing them under their father's custody. The mother's decision to cohabit with her friend showed "disregard for existing standards of conduct (that) instructs her children, by example, that they, too, may ignore them...and could well encourage the children to engage in similar activity in the future," the court ruled.

Earlier, the state circuit court judge who modified his original custody decree cited the "moral and spiritual well-being and development" of the children as his basis for removing custody from Mrs. Jarrett.

Three U.S. Supreme Court justices objected to the majority's decision not to review the case. Writing for himself and Justice Thurgood Marshall, Senior Justice William J. Brennan Jr. declared that nothing in the record of the case or in logic "supports a conclusion that divorced parents who fornicate, for that reason alone, are unfit or adversely affect the well-being and development of their children in any degree over and above whatever adverse effect separation and divorce may already have had on the children."

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Buchanan Reelection Bid Hurt by Court Setbacks

By Larry Chesser

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WASHINGTON (BP)--A series of legal setbacks has seriously diminished the reelection chances of John Buchanan, R-Ala., the only Southern Baptist minister in Congress.

The most severe blow to Buchanan's bid to win a ninth term as representative of Alabama's sixth district came when the U.S. Supreme Court let stand an order by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, preventing the veteran lawmaker's name from appearing on the ballot as a Whig Party candidate.

Further damaging Buchanan's chances is a ruling by the local board of electors refusing to permit his write-in campaign to distribute stickers with his name printed on them to be used on the ballots.

"As of this moment, we're still in the race," a top campaign official told Baptist Press, but he described Buchanan's write-in chances without use of stickers as "remote."

Buchanan supporters are continuing their write-in efforts, but another ruling by the local board of electors requiring correct spelling of the candidate's name on write-in votes also hurts their chances.

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The irony of the ballot setbacks for Buchanan forces is that a recent poll in the district showed the incumbent ahead of his challengers, Democrat Pete Clifford and Republican Albert Smith. Smith, with the backing of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, defeated Buchanan in the Republican primary in September.

Terry Apple, Buchanan's top aide, said campaign officials are considering an appeal of the board of electors ruling against the use of stickers.

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Religious Programs Returning
But Unenforced Ban Still On

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MEXICO CITY (BP)--Religious broadcasting, banned in Mexico since July by a government decree that has not been strictly enforced, is apparently returning to some degree of normalcy, according to Southern Baptist press representative David Daniell.

However, new restrictions probably will mean that Daniell and other Christian broadcasters will have to communicate their message in less direct ways.

Since 1971 Daniell has produced "Did You Know?", a five-minute commentary broadcast Monday through Saturday. The program features interviews with Baptist pastors and laymen on such topics as marriage, the family, alcoholism and youth. Each show ends with scripture and a "tag" saying Baptists presented the program.

On July 28, when the government ordered radio stations to suspend all religious programs or messages, 30 stations were carrying the program. In addition, 10 other stations were carrying a five-minute children's program Daniell produces titled "Aunt Sofia."

Daniell said the commentary is highly regarded in the industry and is broadcast free of charge by all stations carrying it. "Since some of the stations consider the program educational and cultural, rather than religious, we were afraid to contact anyone to see if they were still carrying the program, thinking that might frighten them into cancelling if they hadn't already," he said.

But several days after the decree to stop religious broadcasting, Daniell received a long distance call from a program director who said although he had received the government order and knew the programs are religious, he couldn't cancel them because their content was of such high quality.

"Furthermore, he decided to broadcast the program on affiliates in three other cities," Daniell said. "All this in the middle of the crisis and at a risk of getting his hands slapped by the government."

Daniell said the government ban apparently was provoked by an invitation for a spokesman of the Roman Catholic Church to testify on the Catholic view of abortion before the Mexican Senate, which was preparing new legislation on the subject. Communist spokesmen objected strongly, claiming the Senate's action had violated the separation of church and state, according to Daniell.

The PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party), apparently viewing the Communists as a growing political threat, singled out religious broadcasting to demonstrate its adherence to post-revolution anti-clericalism, Daniell said.

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Daniell organized a Baptist committee in early August to petition the government for written permission to broadcast the "Did You Know?" commentary, citing its positive moral and ethical emphases. But the committee voted against the petition, saying the program would call attention to Baptists and submit them to unprecedented censorship of expression. However, another evangelical group submitted a representative sample of its programming to the government and is now back on the air.

Pedro Gringoire, a columnist for Latin America's largest and most prestigious newspaper, Excelsior, wrote an article Sept. 30 condemning the government ban. He pointed out that while the Mexican constitution does not permit public worship outside of a church building or private home, broadcasts of religious commentaries or conferences cannot be construed as public worship.

Officially there still has been no government action to rescind the broadcasting ban. But Daniell predicts a gradual return of religious broadcasting which will be characterized by submission to government censorship, "in a general sense."

He believes, however, that there will be less Christian music, fewer direct references to the scriptures, and no church or denominational identification.

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With 610 Years' Service,
They'd Like To Give More

By Anita Bowden

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10/21/80

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--They represented 610 years of combined foreign missionary service, but that wasn't enough to satisfy the 18 retiring Southern Baptist missionaries.

At a recognition service in Richmond, the missionaries thanked Southern Baptists for the teamwork and support that allowed them to serve overseas. They just wish their service could continue.

Several mentioned that no missionaries were available to take their place on the mission field.

One couple, Mr. and Mrs. John N. Thomas, from England and Canada originally, will retire on San Andres Isla, Colombia, where they served the last 10 years of their 29 years as Southern Baptist missionaries.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Frank Mitchell, from South Carolina, missionaries to Chile for 37 years, said since their retirement in February many people had asked if they had it to do over again, would they still be missionaries.

"That's easy to answer," Mitchell said. "Yes. But a harder question is, if we had it to do differently, what would we do?"

He listed a deeper commitment to his work, being more responsive to the Holy Spirit, loving the people he worked with more deeply and faster, letting the love of Christ show through him faster and resting more confidently on Christ's promise to always be with him.

Mrs. Alice May Jowers, from Louisiana, 32-year veteran of work among Chinese in China and the Philippines, remarked that when she was packing to return to the United States for retirement, it suddenly occurred to her that she had been praying incorrectly all those years.

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"I had the tail when I should have had the head," she said. She explained that instead of praying, "Lord, help me to do your will," she realized she should have been praying, "Lord, you do it and let me help you."

Ruby Parker, from Texas, honored with her husband, John, from Mississippi, for 38 years' service in Chile, told of her experiences with a young alcoholic woman named Sylvia. One night Sylvia called her from a bar and asked Mrs. Parker to come get her.

"Well, I'd never been in a bar before," Mrs. Parker said, "but I decided no one would ever know that I hadn't."

She marched into the bar Sylvia had called from and asked for the girl, but she had left. Mrs. Parker went to another bar and another, hunting for the girl until finally one bartender told her that the police had taken Sylvia away.

Mrs. Parker said she remembers saying to herself, "Lord, why can't I leave Sylvia alone?"

She was never able to win Sylvia to Christ, and the girl, an alcoholic from childhood, died some time later. One day Mrs. Parker ran into Sylvia's brother. He told her that because of the love and concern she had shown Sylvia, he and his wife had decided to become Christians and his mother, also, was interested.

"I said to myself then, 'Now I know why I couldn't leave Sylvia alone,'" she said.

Other emeritus missionaries recognized during the service were the Victor L. Franks, from Illinois, who worked with Chinese people in China and Hong Kong for 33 years; Marie Conner, from Georgia, 36 years in China and Taiwan; the Gerald Riddells, from Texas and Mississippi, 36 years in Chile and Colombia; Ann Wollerman, from Arkansas, 26 years in Brazil; the Charles W. Dicksons, from Texas, 33 years in Brazil; Viola Campbell, from Texas, 38 years in Mexico and the Baptist Spanish Publishing House, El Paso, Texas; and the Carl F. Whirleys, from Florida and Alabama, 33 years in Nigeria.

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Only Three L.A. Hotels
Have SBC Rooms Vacant

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LOS ANGELES (BP)--Only three of the original 12 hotels in the Southern Baptist Convention block for the annual meeting in Los Angeles have rooms remaining.

The Ambassador, with 65 rooms, the Biltmore, with 500, and the Bonaventure, with 1,300, have rooms in the \$60-80 range. The Biltmore and the Bonaventure are within 10 blocks of the convention center; the Ambassador is a couple of miles away.

Hotel rooms beyond those that cooperate with the Los Angeles Housing Bureau are available, according to SBC convention manager Tim Hedquist. There are 11,000 hotel rooms in downtown Los Angeles and the SBC has only half of them reserved.

Messengers who want to know alternate housing availability should write for a Housing Accommodations Directory, supplied free from the Housing Bureau. That address is: Housing Bureau, P.O. Box 71608, Los Angeles, Calif., 90071.

There will be ample parking at the convention center so residence at outlying and lower priced hotels will not be terribly inconvenient, according to Hedquist.

Though nearly 5,000 persons have already reserved room space for the convention June 9-11, Hedquist said that indicates nothing about the potential messenger registration. He says simply that people are getting reservations in earlier, because "past history tells them if they don't act early, they don't get the rooms they want."

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