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November 30, 1992

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ATLANTA -- Parks to accept CBF post as missions coordinator.
MISSOURI -- Hannibal-LaGrange ready to move beyond 1989 fire.
ARKANSAS -- Retired California executive dies following heart attack.
GEORGIA -- Georgia college hires Bryan as new president.

Parks to accept CBF post
as missions coordinator

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
11/30/92

ATLANTA (BP)--R. Keith Parks, retired president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, has accepted the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's offer to lead its fledgling missions program, Baptist Press has confirmed.

Parks was scheduled to announce his acceptance of CBF's missions coordinator position in a 4 p.m. news conference Nov. 30 at CBF's headquarters in Atlanta.

The CBF is an organization of Baptist moderates formed in 1991 in protest of the current conservative direction of the Southern Baptist Convention. Parks retired Oct. 31 after 13 years as FMB president, saying he felt it to be God's will in light of differences with FMB trustees over missions philosophy.

He will assume the missions coordinator position Feb. 1, Parks told Baptist Press before leaving his home in Richmond, Va., to appear at the news conference in Atlanta. He will be responsible to the Global Missions Ministry Group of CBF's coordinating council.

Parks was offered a financial package of \$100,000 including salary, benefits and annuity, the same provided CBF coordinator Cecil Sherman, but a CBF spokesperson did not know whether Parks had accepted the specifics.

"Despite all the denominational controversy that has gone on," Parks told Baptist Press, "there's no need for us (the SBC and CBF) to compete with each other. There's so much need in the world that there's room for everyone who wants to reach people for Jesus Christ. It's not my intention to stumble over others but to focus on needy areas."

Parks, addressing a Nov. 19-20 meeting with CBF's Global Missions Ministry Group in Nashville, said he would consider the offer to lead its missions efforts if it remains Southern Baptist, recruits new missionaries instead of just ones now related to the FMB and focuses on such missions needs as unreached peoples in the "World A" population belt from North Africa and the Middle East through China.

"CBF's missions committee has strongly affirmed all of those points, plus others I was interested in," Parks told Baptist Press. "Some may have a different opinion, but that's the kind of Baptist I am. CBF's purpose and strategy statement are very compatible with how I feel about missions ... 'to lead people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to carry out the Great Commission through inclusive global missions in which all Baptists can participate.' That rings true to me and is why, after much spiritual struggle, I have felt led by God to do this."

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Parks' decision, however, stirred a negative reaction from John Jackson, a California pastor who is chairman of FMB trustees. Jackson also issued a negative reaction to Parks' earlier meeting with the CBF, saying, "A gauntlet has been thrown in the face of the FMB and Southern Baptists."

"In addition to my former statements," Jackson told Baptist Press Nov. 30, "(Parks') decision comes at the heart of our time for commitment to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. It appears it has been deliberately planned and orchestrated.

"I personally feel it attacks foreign missions as it is now in operation across the world," Jackson continued. "I believe this will devastate missionaries, pastors, (Southern Baptist) Convention leadership and Southern Baptists as a whole.

"I wish I could say something positive about it, but I cannot see this being a help to missions, but rather extremely harmful," Jackson said.

Don Kammerdiener, FMB interim president, issued a statement Nov. 30: "I can understand why the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship wants Keith Parks to head their world missions program. He's a talented man. However, my stance is the same that I have taken ever since I was 9 years old and especially during my 30-year career in Southern Baptist foreign missions. The best way for Southern Baptists to do foreign missions is through the Foreign Mission Board, which was created for that purpose. I encourage all Southern Baptists to unite around our heritage."

Parks, in the interview with Baptist Press Nov. 30, said many Southern Baptists will continue to give through the SBC's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions and "I would pray blessings on them and never try to discourage them from doing that."

But Parks said his mail, phone calls and contacts have given him "a great concern for churches and individuals who have lost their enthusiasm and involvement in missions. My hope and prayer is that this effort by the Fellowship will mobilize them and be an additional source of income that will expand the witness that Southern Baptists have."

Asked about his support of a "societal" approach to missions after years of emphasizing a denomination-wide effort, Parks said, "The new generation is showing a growing lack of excitement about or commitment to the big denomination. We've seen it in the megachurches where they have tended to express themselves directly. I really believe there are trends toward a societal approach. It will challenge some people to get caught up in missions."

Parks said the 15th and 20th chapters of the New Testament Book of Acts played a role in his decision, in part because it reminded him and his wife, Helen Jan, "that Paul and Barnabas split up when they disagreed and had two missions teams instead of one. The Lord led us to understand that he could use this situation to create another missions team which could do more work than one could by itself."

Parks said he will continue to reside in Richmond, Va., telling Baptist Press the location of his office will be determined later.

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Robert O'Brien, David Winfrey and James Dotson contributed to this report.

Hannibal-LaGrange ready
to move beyond 1989 fire

By Ruthie Critten

Baptist Press
11/30/92

HANNIBAL, Mo. (BP)--Hannibal-LaGrange College dedicated a new administration building Nov. 24 -- the last of three buildings constructed to replace facilities lost in a June 1989 fire.

The fire destroyed a major building complex on the Hannibal, Mo., campus containing the administration building, auditorium, cafeteria and gymnasium.

Without skipping a beat, the work of the college went on after the fire as H-LG officials located temporary classrooms and launched a capital campaign to help fund new construction. Classes were dismissed for only one day.

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Six months after the fire a combination classroom building and cafeteria opened. The Mabee Sports Complex was completed in the fall of 1991. As the 1992-93 school year began, a stately new administration building greeted students. The building features a reconstructed archway of the former administration building in front.

The 44,000-square-foot building contains administrative and business offices, a board room, classrooms, a 75-seat lecture room and faculty offices on the top three floors. The ground floor houses a student center.

Paul Brown, Hannibal-LaGrange president, calls the completion of the building "a turning point."

"It will more or less 'officially' put behind us the chapter related to the fire and its immediate aftermath and launch us into a new phase in the college's history," he said.

According to Brown, that new phase involves "fine-tuning plans for future growth and development." A long-range planning committee is currently mapping out future building projects for the college.

Several special guests were on hand for the Nov. 24 dedication of the building, including H. Alan Nelson, trustee for the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation of Tulsa, Okla. The Mabee Foundation contributed a \$1 million challenge gift to the building campaign. Calling it a "magnificent building," Nelson said the money donated by the foundation was "well-spent."

Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, was the featured speaker at the banquet held that evening. Lewis was Hannibal-LaGrange president from 1981-86.

"I'm delighted that, out of what seemed to be a terrible disaster, has come this beautiful facility; out of the ashes of the fire has come the finest facilities that any college could want," Lewis said. "I think it's a whole new day for Hannibal-LaGrange College."

Lewis remembered fondly his years as a student at the college and later his time as a trustee and then president of the college.

"H-LG stole my heart," he said. "There's something about the spirit, something about the atmosphere. It wasn't buildings that made H-LG; it was something beyond that."

Hannibal-LaGrange College began as LaGrange College in 1858 in the small town of LaGrange, Mo., on the banks of the Mississippi River. In 1928, the campus moved downriver to Hannibal, Mo. Affiliated with the Missouri Baptist Convention, the college became a four-year institution in 1975. The college has continued a steady growth pattern since the fire, currently enrolling about 950 students.

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Critten is Hannibal-LaGrange's newswriter.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is an update of the BP article sent to state newspaper editors the afternoon of Nov. 25.

Retired California executive
dies following heart attack

Baptist Press
11/30/92

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--Robert D. Hughes, executive director emeritus of the California Southern Baptist Convention, died Nov. 25 in a hospital in Little Rock, Ark.

After complaining of chest pains at his home in North Little Rock, Hughes, 73, was taken to the hospital Nov. 22 where he suffered a major heart attack prior to surgery. Doctors had to replace some of the four bypasses done in 1981 in California in a previous surgery. He died about noon Nov. 25 at Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock.

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Funeral services were held Nov. 27 at Cedar Heights Baptist Church in North Little Rock, where Hughes and his wife were members. Burial was at Riverwood Memorial Gardens in neighboring Maumelle, Ark.

Family members from California, Kentucky and France were attending a reunion at the Hughes' home when he was stricken.

Hughes retired at the end of 1984 as California's executive and moved to his native Arkansas. He was the convention's executive director for 18 years, the state's fifth and longest serving chief executive officer.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Ruth; a daughter, Peggy Jean Williams, a SBC missionary in France; and a son, Robert Don, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. Hughes was preceded in death in 1979 by his oldest son, John O.

A native of Glenwood, Ark., Hughes was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist College in Arkadelphia, Ark., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

He was pastor of churches in Arkansas and Texas before moving to California where he was pastor of two churches from 1948-66. He was elected executive director/treasurer of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California in 1966. The convention changed to its current name in 1986.

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Georgia college hires
Bryan as new president

Baptist Press
11/30/92

CLEVELAND, Ga. (BP)--Thomas Clark Bryan has been chosen as the new president of Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland, Ga.

Bryan, vice president for administration and planning at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., will succeed Truett-McConnell's president, H.M. Fulbright, president since 1986 who is retiring at the end of the year.

Bryan, also associate professor of education at Carson-Newman, has been on the college's staff since 1964, and he is a graduate of the college. Bryan holds master of science and doctor of education degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

Truett-McConnell, presently a two-year institution with 1,600 students, is affiliated with the Georgia Baptist Convention. The college, founded in 1946, recently announced plans to become a four-year institution.

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