

(BP)

-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

96-143

August 14, 1996

OKLAHOMA--Cherokee Nation turns back casinos, at least for now.
TEXAS--Texas music minister is SBC presidential hopeful.
OKLAHOMA--Camp helps vandals find God, prepares one teen for heaven.
INDIANAPOLIS--Baptists use sports magazine in witness at Indy Speedway.
ALABAMA--Songwriter aims to reach Fanny Crosby's 1,000 mark.
VIRGINIA--Former FMB leader Frank Means dies.
TEXAS--Missions-minded evangelist Bob Clements dies at 68.

Cherokee Nation turns back
casinos, at least for now

By Dave Parker

Baptist Press
8/14/96

TAHLEQUAH, Okla. (BP)--The Cherokee Nation is considering getting into the casino gambling business, but an Oklahoma director of missions is trying to keep them out.

On July 15, the Cherokee Tribal Council narrowly defeated a proposal to enter a 20-year gambling partnership for a bingo parlor and casino with the Loyal Shawnee in Kansas.

The proposal would have created a bingo hall, smoke shop and service station in the Kansas City, Kan., area.

It also included the possible introduction of casino gambling at the site later. Profits would have been divided among the two tribes, a management company and the family on whose land the project would have been built.

The Loyal Shawnee is not a federally recognized tribe, thus they must get approval from the Cherokee Nation.

Before the Cherokee council meeting, Councilor Bill Baker of Tahlequah, Okla., thought he had enough votes to get the issue passed, until Bridge Chuckluck Jr. spoke up.

Chuckluck, director of missions for Cherokee Baptist Association in Tahlequah, spoke against the proposal at the meeting.

"We are a proud tribe, a very proud tribe, and we want to be recognized as a sovereign nation," Chuckluck said. "Folks, we represent Someone who is more sovereign."

He said Cherokees would have to hide in shame if they made what he called one of the biggest mistakes in the history of the Cherokee Nation.

Chuckluck reminded the council that if they took the action, it would only take 256 signatures on a petition to bring the issue to a vote of the people.

The initial vote was 6-6, with member William Smoke abstaining. When Smoke tried to change his vote to no, Councilor Paula Holder protested. So, Councilor Troy Poteete, who chaired the meeting, voted "no" to break the tie.

Poteete said he regretted having to make the decision, "but I made up my mind a long time ago I'm not going to support Class III gaming within the borders of the Cherokee Nation. I don't think it's the thing to do at this time."

After the vote, Loyal Shawnee business council chairman Don Greenfeather said the Shawnees would "leave the Cherokee Nation."

Chuckluck said he regretted that, but wished the Loyal Shawnees well.

"They want to go on their own, which would be all right," he said. "I told them if there is any other way we can help them, let's do it. Let's help them. But if they want to leave, let them, by all means."

--more--

Since the first vote, though, the Cherokee council decided to reconsider the issue Aug. 12, then postponed that vote indefinitely.

"They are going to redo their proposal, but the bottom line will still be the same," Chuckluck said. "If it went through, we would be in the gambling business.

"We do need some revenue, but not from that source."

Chuckluck said he had learned of the proposal just hours before the July 15 meeting. When he got to the council chambers, the only seat open was in the front, so he took it.

During discussions, several audience members had questions but were not recognized to speak. Chuckluck said he finally stood up and waited until he was recognized.

"I see the writing on the wall," he told the council. "We are about to get into high-class gambling. What we're about to do tonight, the whole world will know about tomorrow."

"I just spoke my heart," Chuckluck said afterward. "After a few moments you could hear a pin drop."

"The council is elected by the people of the Cherokee Nation," he said. "They are supposed to represent the community they are elected from.

"Councilor Don Crittenden said in the meeting he had met with preachers and they approved. I met with him afterwards, and told him that was not true.

"We did not approve."

Crittenden also said 80 percent of the people he talked to approved casinos, but Chuckluck disputed that percentage.

"How many people did you talk to? Just 10 people?" Chuckluck asked.

Another thing Chuckluck objected to was the fact that the council members voting for the agreement know nothing about Butler National Corp., the firm that would manage the complex in Kansas City, Kan.

"I'd be reluctant to get in any business with people I don't know," he said.

Butler National Corp. is a Minnesota firm registered to do business in Kansas. In its application, the firm did not list what type of business it would do, only that it would comply with Kansas laws.

Its board members and officers live in Kansas, Missouri and Arizona. The Kansas attorney general has no record of complaints filed against the firm.

Chuckluck said he believes casino gambling would destroy the Cherokee Nation.

"It would be an embarrassing situation around the world," he said. "If this passes the whole world would know tomorrow how low we have gotten.

"We are a proud people with a long history. We don't need this."

He said he also is concerned about the casino gambling issue that may be voted on in November. The Oklahoma Supreme Court has yet to rule on the validity of the petitions, which request casinos be allowed in Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Sallisaw and Love County.

Attorney General Drew Edmondson has challenged the title of the petition, though. He wants the petition to clearly state that if casino gambling is approved, Indians could open unregulated, untaxed casinos.

State Rep. Jim Hamilton has filed a brief in support of Edmondson's challenge.

If casinos are approved by Oklahoma voters, Chuckluck predicted disaster for Oklahoma and the Cherokee Nation.

"I foresee gambling boats on the Arkansas River," he said. "The Arkansas River bed is owned by the Cherokee Nation. We are classified as a sovereign nation, so if it is approved we could put in all kinds of boats.

"I see gambling casinos all across the state of Oklahoma in the near future, if casinos are approved by the people."

Texas music minister is
SBC presidential hopeful

By Herb Hollinger

HEARNE, Texas (BP)--A Texas bivocational minister of music announced his candidacy for president of the Southern Baptist Convention next year when it meets in Dallas.

Dan Bates, minister of music at First Baptist Church, Hearne, Texas, wrote in a letter to the editor in the July 31 issue of the Texas Baptist Standard that he will "run against Tom Elliff's re-election as president of the SBC in Dallas in June 1997."

Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., was elected SBC president this year in New Orleans. SBC presidents traditionally have been accorded a second one-year term following their first year, often without opposition.

Bates will be nominated by his pastor, Larry Blackmon.

Bates said he wanted to create a "Southern Baptist Bureau of Reclamation" which he said would restore some of the Baptist distinctives lost during the past 16 years of the conservative resurgence at the national level of the denomination. He cited the loss of "freedom, liberty and the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer."

He said he was a "1920s fundamentalist," identified as a person professing complete confidence in the Bible and preoccupied with the message of God's salvation of sinners through the death of Jesus Christ." Most "1996 Southern Baptists would be included in that definition," he added.

"I will be a free voice for Southern Baptists," Bates told Baptist Press.

Blackmon said Bates is "a good guy."

"Every state (convention) should have a favorite son candidate," Blackmon said.

Bates, 51, is a native of Texas who grew up in College Station. He holds degrees from Houston Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He has been on staff of churches in Texas, Oklahoma, Alabama and Florida.

Part-time minister of music at the Hearne church since May 1995, Bates also works for a local funeral home. He and his wife, Linda, have three daughters and one son.

Hearne is located about 20 miles north of Texas A&M University, College Station.

--30--

Camp helps vandals find God,
prepares one teen for heaven

By Dave Parker

Baptist Press
8/14/96

BUFFALO, Okla. (BP)--Aaron Summers did not know what to say. Five boys had approached him about going to Falls Creek (Okla.) Baptist Assembly.

The problem was, the five boys were well-known around Buffalo, Okla., for acts of vandalism.

Only 25, Summers had just been called as pastor of First Baptist Church in the Oklahoma panhandle town March 31, so he wasn't quite sure how to react.

"I knew this group had done some major vandalism in town," he recounted. "I was thinking, 'Who knows how they will act at Falls Creek?'"

So, he met with each boy and his parents, then with each boy individually. He told them he knew what they had been doing in town and that they would not do that at Falls Creek, which is operated by the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

The boys agreed, but Summers talked with them again before the group left for the camp in July.

A total of 21 boys and 11 girls went from the Buffalo church. Rather than being a problem, Summers said the teen vandals were always polite and considerate.

During time in the church's cabin, counselors began talking with the boys about Christ.

--more--

One boy was from a Methodist background, two were from a Christian Church and two were Catholic, but none had been a professing Christian before going to Falls Creek.

"Thursday night, Tom Elliff preached a wonderful sermon, telling them, 'You may not have another moment,'" Summers said of the message by Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla.

"After the service, their peers talked with them about being saved, and all five professed Christ. Friday they went forward during the service," Summers said.

After returning to Buffalo, the pastor said the boys' parents were astonished at the changes in their sons' attitudes, and were very supportive.

"They felt that they just wanted their boys to find God," he said. "And they supported it because it kept their sons out of trouble."

One of the boys' life as a Christian, however, was short-lived; a week after Falls Creek, 15-year-old Sy Herd went on an annual trip to Colorado with his mother, Kris.

Kris Herd ran off the road and both were killed instantly.

Summers said the youth group was traumatized, but God has used the tragedy to help the group grow spiritually.

"I said, 'God never promises you another moment,'" he said. "Now is the time for you to understand that living for Christ is not just an old-person thing; it's what you must do every day.

"The whole town is suffering, but there is also joy, because we know Sy is in heaven," Summers said. "And I just tell the people of our church: 'Just think of the impact these boys will have on our community.'"

--30--

Baptists use sports magazine
in witness at Indy Speedway

By Shawn Hendricks

Baptist Press
8/14/96

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--Box loads of Sports Spectrum magazines were distributed from nearly every street corner encircling the Indianapolis Speedway Aug. 2-3 for NASCAR's third annual Brickyard 400.

Volunteers from 25 area churches gathered at Speedway Baptist Church the day before the race for instructions. A total of 150 people split up into groups and in two days more than 170,000 copies of the evangelical sports magazine were distributed to racing fans passing by on the street.

The magazines featured Christian testimonies, racing stats and photographs of Christian race car drivers. Jeff Gordon and Dale Jarrett, who were on the cover, were just two of the drivers featured in the magazine. Jarrett won the 1996 Brickyard 400.

"It's a tool -- the minute they see Jeff Gordon on the cover, the tool is going to work," said Neal Gore, associate pastor of Fall Creek Baptist Church and a member of Indiana Sports Outreach.

The volunteers who gathered for the event worked under the direction of ISO, a cross-denominational evangelistic organization which began in 1993 as a combined effort of the evangelism department of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana and the evangelism section of the Home Mission Board. The organization uses athletic events as an opportunity for evangelistic outreach.

Gore said the project is a boost to area churches. "It's a starting point for getting church members to share their faith. We want to equip a church, not to work in contrast with a church. It is a simple non-confrontational way to share the gospel with others. It's an easy introduction where they (Christians) can go out and share their faith."

Randy Rainwater, a volunteer from Community Church of Greenwood, said one of the reasons the project has been so successful is because they are handing out a free product. "When you have to pay a couple of dollars for a soda, it's nice to get something free," he said.

--more--

David Wheeler, Indiana Baptists' evangelism director, said he is hoping this year's response will match last year's. More than 1,700 decision cards from 45 states were returned last year.

"Last year, when we went to clean up the area where we worked, we found trash all over the place but we didn't find a half a dozen of those magazines," Wheeler said.

For more information about ISO or Sports Spectrum magazine, contact Wheeler at (317) 241-9317.

--30--

Songwriter aims to reach
Fanny Crosby's 1,000 mark

By Wes Fulton

Baptist Press
8/14/96

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--The tune is familiar, but the words are a little different from what most people are accustomed to:

"I've been working for the Savior,

"All the live long day.

"I've been working for the Savior

"Saying Jesus is the way.

"Jesus gave his life on Calv'ry,

"Paid for all our sin.

"Jesus gave his life on Calv'ry,

"Died and rose again."

The song is "I've Been Working For the Savior," an adaptation of the traditional song "I've Been Working on the Railroad." The lyrics for the adaptation are by Ruth Schram, a Birmingham, Ala., composer, and it comes from Brentwood Music's album series, "Mother Goose Gospel," which takes traditional children's songs and gives them a Christian flavor.

Since its inception, Schram has been one of the primary songwriters for the popular series.

In the 10 years since she published her first song, Schram has seen her songwriting grow from an afternoon hobby into a full-time job, complete with a small recording studio occupying an entire wall of her home. She has published more than 350 songs and had her work appear on 30 albums, four of which were Dove Award finalists. She now spends a minimum of eight hours each day composing songs for recording and publication.

It's not a job she just stumbled into, either. Schram began taking piano lessons at the age of 5 and wrote her first song at the age of 12. She credits the musical talents of her parents and the popular church hymns of John W. Peterson as major inspirations for her career. Her dad was the minister of music at her church, and even managed to put together a small church orchestra, in which Schram played the violin.

Although Schram knew early on that she wanted to be involved in Christian music, she was initially unsure of where to focus her energies.

"I did some performing, but it's not my first love. I found that I would much rather be in the background composing songs than in the spotlight on stage," she said.

It was Peterson who provided the inspiration for composing. He had been a friend of her family when she was young.

"He really broke ground in Christian music. He was writing and publishing Christian music back when it was not a popular thing to do," Schram said. "He wrote very accessible music. A small choir could take one of his musicals and learn it in a few weeks and present a musical that sounded really good."

Schram's career began in 1986, the year she published her first song. At the time, she was working as a secretary at Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham.

--more--

Schram admitted nothing happened with the first song, "but the fact that I got that contract allowed me to get my foot in the door. I called the publisher and asked what else I could be doing for them, and they said they were working on a project where they were going to take Mother Goose songs and rewrite them with Christian lyrics." That was all the inspiration Schram needed. "I immediately went out and got all the Mother Goose songs I could find from the public library, and I started putting Christian lyrics to them."

The final product, "Mother Goose Gospel," featured four songs by Schram, as well as adaptations by other writers. A video that was made from the album was the first Christian's children video to sell more than 50,000 copies, and since then its sales have topped 100,000. Mother Goose Gospel has spawned a successful series featuring more of Schram's work.

Buoyed by her success, Schram kept on going. In 1992 she left her job at Shades Mountain to become a full-time songwriter. "I started losing business because I had to go up to the church from 8 to 5, and I couldn't go to any of the conventions. Once I had about a hundred songs published, and I had a good bit of money coming in from those, my husband and I both felt it was time for me to just step out on faith and go full time."

Schram's typical day starts at 7 a.m. to get ready and take her kids to school. She then comes home and spends most of the rest of the day working on songs.

"There are days when I just feel like I could write 16 songs, I have that many solid ideas. And there are days when I'm just blank, and I'll have to go to God's Word or one of my resource guides, hymn texts, or do some sort of studying that will kind of get the wheels turning."

Even when the ideas don't come, Schram forces herself to stick to her schedule. Working at home makes for a strong temptation to just take it easy and not get any work done. It requires discipline.

To keep herself at work, Schram maintains a list of things that need to be done. "You've got to do something," she said.

"You can go through the files and see if you've got any songs laying around that nobody's published that you can send somewhere else; you can do some studying and jot down ideas, even if you don't have any melodies running through your head."

And there is always help from her editors. "I have a really good working relationship with most of my editors," she said. "If they have a need, they know that I can write very quickly, so they'll call me and tell me exactly what they need from me."

Sometimes this process can be amazingly helpful. Schram told of the time one editor told her she was looking for an Advent anthem.

"I'm from the Baptist church, and we don't really celebrate Advent, so I didn't really know what it was. I asked her, 'What's Advent?' She said that it's when you call the King to come to us."

With that information in mind, Schram delivered the editor the song she was looking for. "I wrote a song called, 'Come To Us, Little King!'" she said with a laugh.

In addition to religious-themed music, Schram recently has branched out into more secular songs.

Her editors at Warner Brothers were so impressed with her work they introduced her to the editors in charge of secular children's music for schools and youth groups.

Among other projects, Schram has arranged a medley of Roy Orbison songs and a Looney Toons medley for use by school choirs.

Despite her hectic schedule, Schram is more comfortable working at home. "Now that I'm doing my music full time, it's amazing how much of a difference it has made," she said.

"I can take my kids to school, I can pick my kids up from school, I can make them dinner, I can sit down and watch a movie with them in the evening" -- to be more available for her family and more a part of their life.

--more--

Even with more than 350 songs and 30 albums stretching her portfolio, Schram is still setting goals for herself.

"Fanny Crosby had 1,000 songs to her credit. Once I pass that mark, I'll feel like I've met my first goal."

The ultimate honor, she said, would be to have one of her songs placed in an official hymnbook.

Still, she tries to keep things in perspective. "I'm not going to live forever," she said, "but I will leave behind something of myself that has meaning to people, that has shown people the way to Christ, given people a means to worship or praise, and I know that something of mine will have an enduring value and last for generations."

--30--

Fulton is an intern at The Alabama Baptist newsjournal.

Former FMB leader
Frank Means dies

Baptist Press
8/14/96

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Frank K. Means, a leader in Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board overseas efforts for 23 years, died Aug. 14 after a long illness. He was 84.

Means was one of the few people elected as a director of Southern Baptist overseas missionary work who had not served as a missionary himself. From 1954 until his retirement in 1977, he was an area secretary, first in Latin America, then the Caribbean and South America as Baptist work in the region expanded.

A reserved and uncomplaining man, Means was known for wielding a keen dry wit. Sensing the strength of his missionary force, he worked with them and national Baptists to grow work that could stand on its own. "He was deeply loved by the missionaries," said Floyd North, editor of the board's magazine, The Commission, from 1957-80. Means and North had first become friends while attending college together.

After eight years as a professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, Means came to work for the Richmond, Va.,-based board in 1947 as secretary for missionary education and promotion.

Means' first wife, the former Elwyn Walling of Big Springs, Texas, died in 1972. He married again, this time to a former secretary at the board, the former Joella Ferguson of Appomattox, Va.

The couple lived in Appomattox, where they were active members of Liberty Baptist Church. Means was a published author who continued writing in recent years.

A Kansas City, Mo., native, Means graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee and received master's and doctor of theology degrees from Southwestern.

Besides his wife, survivors include two brothers and three sisters.

--30--

Missions-minded evangelist
Bob Clements dies at 68

Baptist Press
8/14/96

AUSTIN, Texas (BP)--Bobby Gene "Bob" Clements, a widely traveled Southern Baptist evangelist from Texas, died Aug. 9 after a heart attack. He was 68.

Clements completed an eight-year stint as a trustee of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board last year and was a pastor more than 30 years. He had four sons -- all Baptist ministers -- and a daughter -- a pastor's wife.

While much of his ministry was in Texas, Clements' heart was overseas -- in more than two dozen countries where he led about 40 evangelistic projects since 1963. He and his wife, Faye, took at least two evangelistic trips each year, even in recent years.

Clements was instrumental in ministry to the Maasai people of Kenya.

The spunky Clements, who came to believe in Jesus as a roughneck in his early 20s in the oil fields, outlived doctors' predictions by at least three years. After a heart attack in 1985, they gave him eight years to live -- if he was lucky.

--30--

HOUSE MAIL

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, TN 37234

F
I
R
S
T

C
L
A
S
S

Southern Baptist Library
and Archives