

March 25, 1961

Picture Available

Recreation Buildings
Popular These DaysBy Theo Sommerkamp
Baptist Press Staff Writer

"Unless this building can be used to lead people closer to Christ, it has no place in our church program," a Baptist pastor said at the dedication of a \$150,000 activities building with a full-length basketball floor which doubles as a skating rink.

The pastor clearly believed the church, with 3000 members in a downtown setting, would extend its witness through its recreation facilities. A short time later, the recreation director of the church reported a Junior-age boy who professed faith in Christ had his first contact with the church through a skating party.

This is no isolated case. The increase in church recreation facilities in the 1950's was almost phenomenal in Southern Baptist Convention life.

No less than 35 churches (these are known cases; many others are not known and therefore not counted) built new edifices for recreation purposes. Or, as the 3000-member downtown church did, they renovated existing buildings.

All Baptist churches have recreation. Every time a church has a dinner on the grounds, a fish fry for the men's Brotherhood, a Sunday school class party, it engages in recreation.

But the construction of buildings with major recreation facilities--basketball courts lead the list, followed by skating rinks and bowling alleys--began to swell as the decade of the 1960's opened.

Some have spent large sums. A St. Louis church, recognized as having perhaps the most outstanding plant yet built, put out almost \$3/4 million for a three-storied building accommodating a gymnasium, separate skating rink, ping-pong room, bowling alleys and a snack bar.

The church, Tower Grove Baptist Church, also uses the building for Sunday school space by drawing folding doors across the open area and moving in folding chairs.

Another church, Hendricks Ave. Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., has its gym. Also it possesses a baseball diamond, tennis courts, barbecue pit, croquet court and shuffleboard court.

First Baptist Church, Dallas, largest in the Southern Baptist Convention, has bowling alleys, gym and skating rink. The second largest church in the Convention and largest east of the Mississippi River, Bellevue Baptist at Memphis, recently announced plans for a \$350,000 two-storied recreation center.

Crescent Hill Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., has young people with ingenuity. When the church could not finish out one floor of its building, the young people made their own miniature golf course and installed it there.

Another popular aspect of the recreation program is crafts. Church members volunteer their time to teach others ceramics, leathercraft, woodworking and jewelry-making.

Recreation buildings are designed not just for young people. They have facilities for middle-age Adults and senior Adults. Some of the recreation buildings in downtown churches, for example, offer a noon program for men of the church to work out during their lunch time.

The crafts attract many senior citizens as do shuffleboard and some of the less exerting physical activities.

For the non-sports-minded there also may be classes in music appreciation and art appreciation, with a hi-fi set in a separate room where members may play their own records.

"We find sufficient biblical examples for church recreation," Bob M. Boyd, recreation leadership consultant for the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, said.

"Jesus took part in the wedding at Cana; he also was guest at several banquets," Boyd explained. "Zech. 8:5 says '...the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing...'"

Church recreation facilities as Baptists operate them are unique, according to Boyd. The Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) and Jewish Community Centers are not comparable since both cover a larger field than one church.

"Recreation centers in Baptist churches are operated as a part of the individual church's religious education program," he noted.

Churches have various ways of supporting their programs. First Church, Dallas, does so from revenues earned by its parking building. For most, it comes out of the regular budget. Members buy supplies for their crafts, for example, while the church stocks the necessary tools.

One church bought skates enough to take care of the maximum number its skating floor will accommodate at one time. These are checked out without charge to skaters, but the recreation program is limited to church members and their invited guests.

The current recreation surge in churches isn't new. One hit between 1916 and 1921 but died for lack of direction. Today's emphasis is on adequate direction--a full-time, salaried church activities director and enlistment of lay persons to direct programs in their particular skills.

"Recreation helps provide unity in the church," Boyd said. Other recreation centers separate people by club membership, by sports proficiency or by sexes. Only at the church center do members have their fun and fellowship in company with other believers.

While the program is designed mainly to develop Christians already in the church, many churches find it a very useful aid in evangelism.

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Maryland Studying
Weekly Publication

(3-25-61)

BALTIMORE (BP)--Conditional approval of a weekly state paper for Maryland Baptists has been voted by the Maryland Baptist State Mission Board.

The board voted at its March quarterly meeting here "to look with favor on weekly publication of the Maryland Baptist beginning Jan. 1, 1962." It authorized the board's budget committee to make this a reality if possible and report back for final action by the board in June.

The favorable action was on a proposal by Editor Gainer E. Bryan Jr. for an eight-page, magazine-type journal continuing the present slick paper. It would be published 50 times a year. This proposal was recommended to the board by the advisory committee of the Maryland Baptist.

Now published twice monthly, the paper moved up from monthly publication shortly after Bryan became the first full-time editor in November, 1957. Circulation, then 11,500, is now 14,730.

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Offerings In Cuba
Churches Increase

ATLANTA (BP)--Gifts to Baptist churches in western Cuba increased by 20 per cent over the previous year, Herbert Caudill of Havana reported to mission officials here.

However, Caudill, who is superintendent of work on the island for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, did not indicate how much of the increase is due to an inflation of the tiny nation's economy.

He reported that gifts for the year just closed amounted to \$210,000, with gifts through the Cooperative Program for Cuba reaching \$25,118.

Designated gifts and special offerings brought an additional \$34,000 for the general work.

Three churches, Calvario and La Vibora in Havana and the church at Santa Clara, have gone to full support of their pastors, Caudill reports. There are 83 churches and 10 missions affiliated with Baptist work.

The churches reported 601 baptisms, and recent evangelistic crusades resulted in 5,116 conversions.

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Parker Family One
Of 4 Presidents

(3-25-61)

GREENSBORO, N. C. (BP)--The family of A. Leroy Parker, Greensboro minister, is a family of presidents.

The father, who is pastor of Asheboro St. Baptist Church here, was president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina from 1957 to 1959.

Two Parker children--Sandra, 16, and Billy, 13--were presidents of their classes in high school.

Latest honor comes to Mrs. Parker, elected this year by Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina to be its president.

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Folks and Facts.....

(3-25-61)

.....John V. Vaughen of Stetson University department of chemistry has been selected by The American Friends of the Middle East Inc. to visit several universities in the United Arab Republic in the interest of science education. Stetson, in DeLand, Fla., is a Florida Baptist school. (BP)

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Ouachita, Wayland Make
National Women's Meet

(3-25-61)

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. (BP)--The Flying Queens of Wayland Baptist College, Plainview, Tex., qualified to enter the national women's Amateur Athletic Association (AAU) basketball tourney here.

The Queens, seeking to regain their national trophy, will be joined by the team from another Southern Baptist school--the Tigerettes from Ouachita Baptist College, Arkadelphia, Ark.

The Tigerettes breezed past Wonder State Egg Co. of Little Rock, Ark., 55-35, to win the Arkansas state women's title.

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Meantime Wayland was beating its old nemesis, Nashville (Tenn.) Business College, 39-37, at Nashville. A second game between the two teams had to be cancelled when Wayland, whose girls fly to their out-of-town games, was grounded en route to Tennessee.

Nashville Business College disrupted the Queens' championship plans in the last tournament.

The Tigerettes have lost twice each to the defending national champion Nashville girls and the Flying Queens, who had held the championship for several years until upset by Nashville.

St. Joseph fans, accustomed to seeing the classy Wayland team in the tourney year after year, are wondering if this may be the last. Wayland's administration says it can no longer afford to underwrite the Queens' expenses, but Plainview businessmen are trying to raise enough money to keep the team going next year.

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Rotating Seminary
Lectures Endowed

(3-25-61)

WAKE FOREST, N. C. (BP)--A Greenwood, S. C., businessman, Donald Hawthorne, and his associates have provided funds for annual rotating lecture series in Southern Baptist seminaries.

Funds have been presented in the name of the Carver-Barnes Memorial Foundation. The foundation receives its name from former Southern Baptist seminary professors, the late Drs. W. O. Carver and W. W. Barnes.

Dr. Carver taught missions and comparative religion at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. He organized the first department of missions in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Dr. Barnes was professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. The entire Christian ministries of Dr. Carver and of Dr. Barnes were spent at their respective seminaries. Each taught from 45-50 years.

Purpose of the lectures, according to Hawthorne, a graduate of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary of Wake Forest, N. C., is to "promote the study of distinctive Baptist emphases with a view toward encouraging and strengthening the Baptist contribution to Christian faith."

The initial endowment of the foundation is approximately \$60,000. In addition to Hawthorne, other trustees of the foundation are McLain Hall, a realtor of Greenville, S. C., and James A. Bowers, pastor, First Baptist Church, Greenwood.

The inaugural series of lectures, to be presented April 11-14 at Southeastern, will be given by Theron D. Price, pastor, Wornall Road Baptist Church, Kansas City, Mo. Price will discuss the ways through which the Word of God approaches and reaches man.

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