



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

---FEATURES

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National "Campers on Mission" Rally Attracts 101 Families

By Tim Nicholas and Sandy Simmons

LAND BETWEEN THE LAKES, Ky. (BP)--Amid a setting enhanced by beautiful weather, the cheerful chirping of birds, and occasional glimpses of deer, 101 families gathered here for the first national rally of a newly organized group called "Campers On Mission."

The rally, held at the Rushing Creek Campground in the Land Between the Lakes on the Kentucky-Tennessee border, was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Campers on Mission is a fellowship of campers who want to share their Christian faith. The 101 families present came from a growing membership of more than 5,000 families.

Each family came here with its own style of camping, from pup tents to motor homes, from balogna sandwiches to steak dinners.

One common element is the vinyl C-O-M bumper sticker insignia which is a witness in itself. It is a fish signifying Christianity and a four-point star denoting creation and direction, in a circle symbolizing eternity. The words "Campers on Mission" are inscribed underneath the fish.

Each came with a desire to learn more effective ways to minister as campers. It's a growing fellowship because of the nature of its members and of camping itself.

One member from West Virginia was pitching horseshoes with a man from Alabama whom he had met at a campground near Disney World in Florida. The Alabamian told him about C-O-M and it sounded so good to him that he joined and brought his wife to the rally.

For the Ivey Adams family, one of the few who brought a tent, the rally was an experiment. Adams, child care director at Virginia Baptist Children's Home in Salem, brought his wife Dolly, and children--Martha, 14; Neal, 10; and Phillip, 15 months.

They drove 566 miles to the rally on their first camping trip together. Toward the end of the weekend Adams said the family venture was a success--now his wife will let him invest some money in camping equipment.

One young couple, David and Diana Milner from midwestern Missouri, came to get ideas for resort missions. David, who plans to go to seminary, brought his guitar and led the campers in impromptu sing-alongs.

Don and Pattie Fletcher had found a swimming place on the lake for their two teenaged sons and had planned to do some reading on the gravel beach. Don ended up fishing while Pattie hunted for fossils which coated the area, left by an early ice age. Don found an arrowhead near his tackle box, and neither got around to doing any reading.

Though some sat immersed in the televisions they had brought, most campers took advantage of opportunities to talk with newly made friends or to wander through the area in which the owner, the Tennessee Valley Authority, allows no commercial development. Campers had to leave their cars even for groceries and ice.

Program leaders Joel Land of the Home Mission Board and Larry Haslam of the Sunday School Board, left the campers with as much free time as possible.

Outdoors and away from home, people seemed to be more cheerful and enjoy each other's company more. As one camper said, "You can exist at home by keeping your distance--in a tent by tent trailer, you gotta get together."

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Another, who brought relatives, said he understood for the first time what was meant by "relative humidity."

Campers agreed that C-O-M will continue to grow primarily from the fellowship angle and later from the evangelistic approach. Plans were formulated to hold statewide rallies.

Campers on Mission is now one year old. Already 5,000 families are committed to being missionaries while camping, and 49 states and five foreign countries are represented in the fellowship.

Although Baptist-originated, other denominations including United Methodists have indicated a desire to participate, or initiate a similar program. Many individuals from other denominations have already joined the camping force.

Land, assistant secretary in the Home Mission Board's department of special missions ministries, said, "Perhaps 16,000 people have been added to the missionary force through Campers on Mission."

"Campground dynamics favor witnessing," continued Land, who directs resort missions work. "A family spirit, much like the hornblowing of early Volkswagen owners, prevails. Strangers belong to each other; suffering together the skunks, mosquitos and screaming frogs. But these are seldom negative experiences for campers. They're all part of the outdoor mystique that makes friends of strangers, and starts conversations humming from one end of the camp to the other," he said.

The C-O-M insignia shows up everywhere--on bumpers, camp windows and luggage. The blue and orange symbol has served as a conversation piece for many.

Mrs. Marvin Pelfrey of Anchorage, Alaska, placed the C-O-M sticker on her luggage to speed up identification in crowded airports. She found that it led to conversation.

"In the lobby of Chicago's O'Hare Airport," Mrs. Pelfrey said, "a young distressed mother approached me and said, 'In days gone by the symbol of the fish was left by Christians in the sand. Is this what your symbol means?' I quickly told her it was. Our conversation continued and in those brief moments between flights I had the opportunity to share with her what Jesus Christ had done for me."

This summer, the second for C-O-M, camping caravans from churches and associations throughout the nation are planned. Members of these camping caravans will spend one or two weeks helping home missionaries in projects (similar to those conducted by student summer missionaries and youth choir groups) through short-term appointment as Christian Service Corps volunteers.

New experiences in the camping setting are many--the fresh air, abundance of woodland creatures, birds singing early in the morning. But one of the most rewarding experiences, according to Land, is the "opportunity which develops to share ones experience with Christ and his answers to life's questions when differences in geographic, economic and vocational backgrounds are eliminated."

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Newman Named Chancellor,
College Seeks Successor

5/24/72

BROWNWOOD, Tex. (BP)--Trustees of Howard Payne College here have named President Guy D. Newman as chancellor and appointed a committee to seek a new president for the Texas Baptist school.

Newman requested creation of the chancellor post following a recent \$125,000 grant to the college by the Sangreal Foundation, Inc., of Dallas and its president, Carr P. Collins Jr.

He will work closely with the new Howard Payne president and spend much of his time in public speaking, fund raising and development, a college spokesman said.

Newman has served as Howard Payne president for 17 years, longer than the chief administrator of any of the 10 Texas Baptist schools. He will continue in that capacity until a successor is found.

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Newman is former vice president for development at Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and former pastor of several Texas Baptist churches.

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Organists Plan New
Placement Service

5/24/72

DALLAS (BP)--A placement service for church organists will be operated during the 1972 national convention of the American Guild of Organists at the Fairmount Hotel here.

Counselors will answer questions and arrange interviews between churches and applicants, according to Wesley Coffman, chairman of the music department at Dallas Baptist College.

Coffman, director of placement for the American Guild of Organists, said the group is composed mostly of church musicians, including a large number of Southern Baptists.

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Children's Consultant Named
At Sunday School Board

5/24/72

NASHVILLE (BP)--Al Brewer, minister of education at First Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., for the past four years, has been named consultant in children's work for the Sunday School department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, effective June 1.

A native New Yorker, Brewer holds the bachelor of arts degree in Bible and the master of religious education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

Prior to serving at First Church, Marietta, Brewer was minister of education at First Baptist Church, Lake Worth, Fla. Earlier, he served as minister of youth education at Metropolitan Baptist Church, Wichita, Kan.

He has served as associational Sunday School superintendent for the Palm Lake (Fla.) Association, secretary-treasurer of the state religious education association of Florida and president of the Atlanta Religious Education Association.

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BP PHOTO mailed to state Baptist editors.

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Youth Consultant Named
For Church Training

5/24/72

NASHVILLE (BP)--Hugh E. Willoby, director of youth work for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma for more than nine years, has joined the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board as editor of youth materials in the church training department.

A native of Oklahoma, Willoby earned the bachelor of arts degree in psychology at Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, and the bachelor of divinity degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

Prior to serving the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, he was pastor of Walker Avenue Church, Oklahoma City, for three years. Earlier, he was pastor of Alfalfa Baptist Church, Oklahoma City.

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