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SBC Executive Committee  
460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
(615) 244-2355  
Wilmer C. Fields, Director  
Dan Martin, News Editor  
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

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Pro Football Figures  
Take 'Sportsight' Test

By Greg Warner

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—It is an American cliché—three men lounging on a sofa and talking sports.

In one corner a television set flickers with images of a football game. On the coffee table in front of them, the men diagram a play. All that's missing are the pretzels and beer.

But the makeshift living room is actually a studio set at the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. And Pittsburgh's "Mean" Joe Greene, Denver Bronco's quarterback Craig Morton and former All-Pro lineman Bill Glass are not ordinary armchair quarterbacks. They were in Fort Worth recently to tape a pilot show for "Sportsight," a new Christian television program that will pitch a subtle Christian message to sports-hungry American audiences.

"Sports is really an American metaphor," says Fred South, president of Associates Inc., and a program regular with a view from the stands. "When we learn how to play, we learn how to live. We try to apply the playing principles to the living principles."

Glass, a former football All-American from Baylor University, hosts the show. He spent 11 years in the NFL and played on the Cleveland Browns' 1964 championship team. After retirement in 1969, he formed the Bill Glass Evangelistic Association, also known for its prison ministries. "Sportsight" is one of the association's most recent endeavors. Glass produced several segments of the show aired on 21 American television stations. Now he has contracted the Radio-Television Commission to produce and market the program on a larger scale.

"The commission has really been the impetus to upgrade it and make it a more broadly acceptable show," Glass said. He hopes to secure commercial sponsorship to maintain the show's secular approach.

The program likely will be available to the commercial market in the fall. But "Sportsight" also will be part of the American Christian Television System, the proposed Southern Baptist television network, when the network begins operation.

The 30-minute show is slightly modified from the normal talk show. Guests are prominent athletes who are also Christians. After discussing their careers, the guests analyze film clips of themselves in action. Then they tell more personal experiences from which the Christian message emerges.

"It is always very subtle," Glass explained. "I will ask about a hurt the person has gone through, instead of asking, 'How is your relationship to the Lord?' Whatever Christian slant there is comes out of grappling with a real life situation."

In the recent pilot taping, Greene talked about his award-winning Coca-Cola commercial and Morton recalled one of the rare occasions when he ran for a touchdown.

Finally the discussion turned to the athletes' Christian experiences. Greene described the frustration he felt when he did not play up to his ability during the past two years. That professional frustration led to personal problems.

"I didn't feel as happy in my life as I thought I should," he said. "I began searching for different things to fill that void."

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That search led him to Christ. "Through faith, I found contentment," he said. As for the frustration, "I can live with that now."

Morton also told about depending too much on his athletic success, then being let down.

"When I was traded to Denver, they had a poll to see who the people wanted as their quarterback," he said. "There were four quarterbacks and I got about six percent of the vote. I had played for 12 years and I was worth just six percent. I figured there had to be more to life than that."

Morton found a lot of support for Christians in sports. "I believe everybody would love to be a Christian," he said. "But everybody thinks it is difficult, that you have to be a certain way and give up everything. That's not true. A lot of people just don't realize that it is a one-to-one commitment."

CBS sportscaster Gary Bender will be the program's regular announcer, making the introductions and narrating other segments. Bender, who has worked with Glass before, sees the value of using sports figures to present the Christian message.

"They are held up on a pedestal by the youth of America, right or wrong," he said. "These people are in a fishbowl. They are expected to have opinions. If those opinions involve speaking out for the Lord, more power to them."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Radio and Television Commission.

Sunday Morning Fire  
Damages Texas Church

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--A fire, believed set by arsonists, disrupted Sunday morning worship services at University Baptist Church, March 15, and caused an estimated \$10,000 damages.

The fire, discovered in a classroom by a seven-year-old boy who had left services to get a drink of water, is the fifth case of arson in the Texas Christian University area of Fort Worth in a week.

A week ago, the Baptist Student Center at TCU was set ablaze. The fire caused \$23,000 in damage and firefighters reported books had been stacked in the kitchen and set on fire.

At the church, young Craig Lesok asked his parents about 11:30 a.m. to be excused during the services to get a drink of water. The water fountains on the first floor were too high, so he went upstairs to find a drinking fountain "closer to the ground."

When he got upstairs he saw sparks in the kindergarten room and went to tell his father. The fire was checked by adults and the fire department called immediately.

"I was in the third or fourth sentence of my sermon when one of the deacons signaled to me that the congregation would have to be dismissed," said James Carter, pastor of University Baptist Church.

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"I calmly told the congregation of 800 to rise and face the back of the auditorium. The evacuation was handled in an orderly fashion and we emptied the sanctuary and nursery quickly. I am grateful that no one was harmed and our damage was minimal," Carter said.

Just a block away, the University Christian Church was gutted by a three-alarm fire on Friday, March 13. The three other related fires occurred earlier in the week on the Fort Worth campus. Fire investigators said there is a possibility the fires are related but it is more likely that more than one arsonist is involved.

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First Black Church Joins  
Alabama Baptist Convention

Baptist Press  
3/17/81

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--Westside Baptist Church has become the first predominantly black church to affiliate with the Alabama Baptist Convention.

Westside constituted as a church March 8, and immediately asked to affiliate with the Montgomery Baptist Association. The church, while a mission of Trinity Baptist Church, had been a part of the association.

The Westside story began in 1976 when Westgate Baptist Church, located in a changing community, deeded its building and property to the Montgomery Baptist Association. Trinity church, under the leadership of its pastor, Henry Cox, received permission from the association to sponsor a mission at Westgate to meet the spiritual needs of the community.

Trinity licensed and later ordained one of its black members, Milton Boyd, to become a minister. Boyd became the first pastor of Westside Baptist Mission March 7, 1976.

Boyd, born in Tarboro, N.C., and reared in Brooklyn, N.Y., was a supply systems analyst at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery when he accepted the pastorate.

Westside has a full program, with Sunday School, church training, and missions groups, including Mission Friends, Girls in Action, Acteens, Baptist Young Women and Baptist Women. The two Royal Ambassador chapters, sponsored by the Baptist Men's group, have been featured in Probe, a magazine of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

The Sunday School has an enrollment of 270, with average attendance of 120. Church training enrollment is 207, with 95 persons attending on an average Sunday.

Since Westside has constituted into a church, Boyd is thinking about sponsoring a mission from the new congregation. It would continue the tradition: Westside was a mission of Trinity which in turn was a mission of Heritage Baptist Church.

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Stewardship Commission Names  
Officers, Affirms Integrity

Baptist Press  
3/17/81

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Members of the Southern Baptist Convention Stewardship Commission elected new officers and affirmed the doctrinal integrity of staff members during their annual meeting.

E. Harmon Moore, retired executive secretary of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, was elected chairman, succeeding David C. Bates from Pineville, La.

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Members of the Nashville, Tenn.-based commission also took note of Resolution 16, concerning doctrinal integrity, passed at the 1980 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis.

Commissioners passed a resolution which said it "finds all employees (of the commission) uphold the Bible as stipulated" in the Baptist Faith and Message Statement of 1963, and affirmed "the doctrinal integrity of the employees."

A 1981-82 budget of \$1,774,086 was adopted. Of the total, \$315,800, or 17.8 percent, will come from the SBC Cooperative Program, with other anticipated receipts from the sale of materials and consultant fees.

Statistics reported during the meeting indicate total receipts of Southern Baptist churches in 1980 amounted to \$2,483,645,551, an increase of 11.8 percent or \$261,563,392, and missions expenditures amounted to \$401,499,506, an increase of 12.7 percent, or \$45,291,716.

The annual meeting also featured a dinner hosted by the Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, which has its national offices in Birmingham. Members of the Stewardship Commission were briefed on the work of the WMU and given a tour of the facilities.

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Committee Planning SBC  
World's Fair Participation

By Norman Jameson

Baptist Press  
3/17/81

GATLINBURG, Tenn. (BP)--The scope of Southern Baptist presence at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tenn., may depend on the fund raising success of David Peach.

Cash and pledges currently fall \$141,000 short of the \$364,000 budget established by Baptist Ministries for the 1982 World's Fair, a five-person corporation Peach directs.

Raising the full budget "will make the difference between having a good, live presentation and having a booth," Peach said. Despite receiving financial endorsement from just one Southern Baptist Convention agency, the Home Mission Board, he expects the funds to come.

The Home Mission Board committed \$90,000 to establish a pavilion on a 5,100-square foot site, the largest single contribution. It hopes to mount a special ministries effort similar to that at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, N.Y. Ken Prickett, Home Mission Board special ministries field representative who led the Olympic effort, was planning to head the Knoxville effort before Peach emerged as a local leader.

Tennessee Baptist Convention has promised \$38,000 and a percentage of anticipated overage from the 1981 budget which Peach figured as \$25,000, though the TBC is currently behind its budget goal. Knox County Association of Baptists has pledged \$68,000 and the Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union has pledged \$12,500.

After initial tensions over who would assume project leadership, the corporation has evolved into the primary unit, with all decisions subject to approval by the Knox County Association of Baptists.

"The association took the initiative," says Knox County Director of Missions Ted Huckaby. "We invited them (Home Mission Board, Tennessee Baptists, Woman's Missionary Union) in.

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We sought their expertise, financial support and direction. So it's a Southern Baptist Convention effort, initiated by Knox County Baptists."

Members of the corporation include Peach, who resigned his pastorate at Island Home Baptist Church in Knoxville to direct the corporation; Sarah Roberts, wife of 1982 World's Fair President S.H. Roberts; Bill Lee and Ken Prickett of the Home Mission Board's special missions ministries staff; and Don Pharris, pastor of North Etowah Baptist Church in Etowah, Tenn.

The project was merely a commitment on paper until a recent planning meeting in Gatlinburg involving members of the corporation and about 10 others, including more representatives from the Home Mission Board, and representatives from the SBC Radio and Television Commission and the Executive Committee.

The group established a purpose for the project which reads: 1. to touch the lives of the World's Fair community with the joy, hope and love of the Christian faith; 2. to call them to responsible stewardship of our God-given energy resources, and 3. to inform them about Southern Baptists.

The reference to energy follows the fair's energy theme. Until it was sanctioned by the Bureau of International Expositions in Paris, the fair was billed as the Knoxville International Energy Exposition. The 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville is currently the only such event sanctioned by the Paris bureau.

Baptist Ministries for the 1982 World's Fair plans to commission a musical to be performed at the pavilion daily, May through October 1982. Plans call for a "resident troupe" to perform and Southern Baptist church or youth choirs may be asked to perform an alternate commissioned piece.

Other sections of the pavilion are to be used for multi-media shows and a hosting area where cold water will be available for many of the anticipated 11 million fair goers and Southern Baptists can speak to interested persons one to one.

The fair has faced active antipathy from many Knoxvilleans since the original energy expo idea was introduced. Many Knoxvilleans saw it as a personal project by developers. That assumption, coupled with the interminable inconvenience of road construction, slow sales success in attracting international exhibitors and a critical article in the Wall Street Journal reinforced doubters' feelings the fair wouldn't go.

On top of that, Tennessee Baptists had just been burned by a \$5 million retirement home project that fizzled and were reluctant to commit to another sizeable project so soon. Then an evangelistic group went into a junior high school and Jewish parents were upset thinking their children were being proselytized, and they wrongly assumed Baptists were doing it.

"The local community was the last to admit a fair was going to happen," said Mrs. Roberts, "and was much less convinced that Baptists should be a part of it."

But opinion is changing, though it is still far from unanimous in favor of the fair. Seven countries have signed contracts for pavilions and China and Russia have "made a firm commitment." The Wall Street Journal article discounted Knoxville as an international city and "made folks mad" said Bill Bruster, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Bearden. Consequently, some who had been against the fair started supporting it.

Aubrey Hay, pastor of Oakwood Baptist Church and moderator of the Knox County Association of Baptists, says among Knox County Baptists now, "the whole attitude is very enthusiastic support for it (the fair)."

Huckaby plans to bring directors of missions from eastern Tennessee on a site tour, partly to encourage them to get financially involved. "I'm convinced when they get through with the tour, they will be as enthused about it as we are," he said.