



-- BAPTIST PRESS

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Billy Graham to Keynote
Pre-Convention Meeting

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Evangelist Billy Graham will keynote an evangelistic rally at the Superdome Sunday, June 13, in advance of the 1982 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The rally, expected to draw 75,000 people, is being planned as part of the annual Southern Baptist Pastors Conference, which traditionally meets on the Sunday and Monday in advance of the SBC.

It will culminate a three-day door-to-door witnessing effort, which is expected to draw some 3,000 young people and 5,000 adults to the streets and residential areas of greater New Orleans.

Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Houston and president of the Pastors Conference, said the meeting "began as a dream type of thing," but rapidly took shape as a massive evangelistic rally.

"We have an opportunity to have the largest gathering of Southern Baptists in history," Young said, noting that a rally in Houston's Astrodome during the 1979 SBC meeting drew an estimated 50,000 persons.

"It is my prayer that this rally will set the entire tone for our convention," Young added. "It can say to the world that this is what we are to do; that this is our purpose; that this is our goal. All other things are peripheral. We are an evangelistic body which has the world on our hearts. At this meeting in New Orleans, we are putting into action what we have been preaching about."

To help make the rally a cooperative venture, Young approached Charles E. Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., and chairman of the 1982 SBC Order of Business Committee, which plans and leads the annual meeting.

Fuller said the committee had been seeking a means to have a specific evangelistic effort, in fulfillment of a resolution adopted at the 1981 SBC in Los Angeles.

"The resolution specified that the SBC work with New Orleans and Louisiana Baptists in a definite, concerted evangelistic effort in the city during the time of the convention meeting," Fuller said. "As we looked at the convention program from Tuesday through Thursday, we were hard pressed to discover a time to have an evangelistic rally."

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The Pastors Conference-sponsored rally, Fuller said, is a way in which the Convention can carry out the intent of the 1981 resolution.

Fuller, who said the Order of Business Committee was acting cooperatively in responding to the proposal, wrote or telephoned leaders of the groups which hold pre-convention meetings on the Sunday and Monday preceding the SBC.

"We felt they should have the same opportunity to respond we had," Fuller said, adding that he has heard from most of the groups, and each he heard from indicated willingness to plan programs in such a way as to allow their participants to take part in the Graham rally.

Catherine Allen, assistant to the executive director of the Woman's Missionary Union, said the WMU was informed of the meeting after the format of the 1982 WMU meeting had already been publicized.

"Fortunately," she said, "we had not planned a general assembly for that evening as we have done in years past. We had planned small group activities, including a dinner for women in ministry. They will be adjourned in time for people to make it to the rally."

Young said the rally is scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m., with Graham to speak about 8:30 p.m., in order to allow the other organizations time to have meetings and then to participate in the rally.

Fuller added he appreciates the response, noting he "understands the problems of scheduling for these other groups," many of which meet only once each year.

Nolan Johnston, director of missions for the Greater New Orleans Baptist Association, said the rally will be preceded by two major evangelistic efforts, including door-to-door witnessing by young people, a youth rally to be addressed by evangelist Arthur Blesset, and a city-wide visitation campaign by youth and adults in advance of the rally.

The witnessing effort, Johnston said, has been "set for over a year. We were planning it before Billy Graham was invited."

He said New Orleans Baptists are "going to work hard and are committed to making this a meaningful thing. We believe God is going to bless us."

Young added he "hopes 3,000 or 4,000 people come to know Christ" during the effort. "I feel this is of God and that he is going to bless it."

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Prayer Unifies Baptists
At Guatemala Convention

By Bill Webb

Baptist Press
11/25/81

GUATEMALA CITY, Guatemala (BP)--Mission leaders credit prayer with averting a crisis and unifying opposing forces recently at the annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of Guatemala.

Potential division loomed when dissident pastors, many of whom thought the Southern Baptist mission in Guatemala should provide more financial help, met with mainline pastors and other Baptists for their annual five-day session.

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On the first day, women attending the Woman's Missionary Union meeting overheard lively discussion coming out of the nearby Pastors Conference. Anticipating dissension, they immediately stopped their program, fell to their knees and began praying for the pastors.

From that meeting of pastors came a movement toward reconciliation, according to Southern Baptist missionary Harry Byrd, coordinator of the Guatemala Baptist Mission.

Don Kammerdiener, the Foreign Mission Board's director for Middle America and the Caribbean, said another healthy development in the convention, was an apparent meshing of generations in convention leadership. Messengers elected a young man, Juan Manuel Nunez, as convention president and a member of the older leadership group, Daniel Moscoso, as vice president.

The convention also reaffirmed the presence and work of missionaries. Though the mission was never the target of any distinct movement within the convention structure, it had taken verbal abuse at a few meetings called by the dissidents prior to the convention, Kammerdiener said.

He believes the emergence of the dissident group months ago reflected political and economic pressures throughout troubled Guatemala, as well as a leadership vacuum caused by the emigration of pastors to the United States.

"To properly understand the potential crisis that came to the convention, it has to be seen in the context of a nation that is feeling the overlapping waves of violence and political pressures from surrounding countries," Kammerdiener explained.

"Any country that is under political and military strain is going to suffer economically," he added. As productivity decreases, prices go up, the number of jobs declines, and pastors of small churches suffer.

Such pressures mean people have to live under a continuing strain that may last months or even years. "People's nerves get on edge," he explained.

Missionaries are affected, too.

None of Southern Baptists' 23 missionaries currently in Guatemala have been threatened but, as a matter of simple precaution, some stay closer to their towns of residence than was previously necessary. They minister where they are without taking unnecessary risks or getting involved in political situations.

So far, none has returned to the United States because of pressure on the field, Kammerdiener said. "I'm prejudiced, but I think this is a pretty strong group of people."

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State Conventions Consider
The 'Three Bs' Of Baptists

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
11/25/81

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--For the most part, messengers to the 34 conventions of Southern Baptists stuck with the "Three Bs" of Baptists during recently completed annual meetings.

The "Three Bs" are baptisms, budgets and buildings.

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Generally, the "spirit of Los Angeles" prevailed during the meetings, although brush fires did break out here and there.

Several observers compared the state meetings to the 1981 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Los Angeles, which was supposed to be a schismatic shootout, but ended up in general harmony.

The meetings were so non-controversial that one editor--C.R. Daley of Kentucky's Western Recorder--recounted an incident in which a secular news reporter came to the Kentucky Baptist Convention meeting, looking for "Baptist fireworks."

"He packed his gear on the afternoon of the first day and returned home," Daley wrote, adding the journalist said the "convention was without issue."

Another editor--Herb Hollinger of the Northwest Baptist Witness--reported that only two negative votes were recorded during the entire meeting of the convention.

Editor Jack Harwell of the Georgia Christian Index reported a "harmonious" convention, in contrast to some of recent years in which controversy abounded.

During the meetings, messengers adopted record budgets, and set aside record amounts to support the worldwide mission efforts of Southern Baptists.

Only one convention--the District of Columbia Convention--decreased its national Cooperative Program gifts, dropping 1.45 percent.

Of the others, 21 increased the percentage of their gifts and 12 retained the same percentage as last year.

Cooperative Program gifts were the focus of action in the meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Messengers approved by a hefty margin a proposal to make gifts through the Cooperative Program the sole basis for messenger qualification.

The margin to approve the measure was 712 to 238. Last year, a similar proposal received a majority vote, but failed by only 15 votes to reach the required two-thirds.

The action led one pastor, Arthur B. Ballard, of Old Forest Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, to tell conventioners the vote infringes on the autonomy of his church, and that he intended to "lead" the church out of the BGAV.

Little of the smoke from the pre-Los Angeles controversy remained, if state convention elections are any indication.

Two states--Virginia and North Carolina--elected leaders from the "moderate" faction which emerged before Los Angeles. But the elections of Frank Campbell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Statesville, as president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and Vernon Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church of Alexandria, to lead the BGAV, did not draw theological discussion.

Both Campbell and Davis were allied with the faction which opposed a "political in-rancy" philosophy aimed at taking control of the denomination.

In Alabama, two key figures in the doctrinal dispute--Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, and James Auchmuty, pastor of Shades Crest Baptist Church of Birmingham--were nominated for president.

The two drew national denominational attention when Auchmuty was "bumped" from a second term as a trustee of the Baptist Sunday School Board when his theology was questioned. Wolfe was nominated by the Committee on Boards to replace him. SBC messengers, however, restored Auchmuty to his trusteeship.

In Alabama, neither man was elected. Messengers favored Harrell R. Cushing, pastor of First Baptist Church of Gadsden, for president.

Doctrinal controversy over membership and baptismal practices was rumored in three states, but emerged in only one meeting.

Rumors abounded there would be efforts in both Kentucky and Arkansas to exclude the messengers of churches which accept transfer members who have been baptized by methods other than immersion. In neither state did the issue arise.

In South Carolina, messengers rejected a constitutional change which would have excluded messengers from such churches.

For the most part, resolutions opposed such traditional Baptist targets as alcohol use, pornography and convenience abortions. Two states--Texas and Oklahoma--resolved against the Equal Rights Amendment. Several mentioned arms control, and three--California, Florida and North Carolina--specifically opposed tuition tax credits.

In Virginia, messengers accepted the abortion policy of the Virginia Baptist Hospital in Lynchburg, a topic which caused controversy during the 1980 meeting. The vote was not on abortion, but on whether the hospital had satisfied a 1978 convention request that the hospital establish a policy on abortion.

In North Carolina, messengers approved the sale of the Baptist Building in Raleigh, which had been the subject of considerable controversy in the spring. Messengers honored J. Marse Grant, who had opposed the move, and who has announced he will retire as editor of the Biblical Recorder in September of 1982.

South Carolinians elected Ray Rust, president of Anderson College in Anderson, S.C., as executive director-elect, and honored Harold Cole, who will retire from the post.

In Arkansas, memorial services were held in memory of Huber L. Drumwright Jr., the executive director who suffered a fatal heart attack November 2.

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'Great Mission Tree'
Launches Georgia Offering

Baptist Press
11/25/81

ATLANTA (BP) --About 3,000 Georgians crowded into the Georgia Baptist Center in Atlanta to attend a "Great Mission Tree" ceremony officially launching the Lottie Moon Season of Prayer and Offering for foreign missions in the Georgia Baptist Convention.

In a first-ever event for Georgia, the ceremony was highlighted by lighting of a Great Mission Tree, a 28-foot north Georgia cedar decorated with ornaments from around the world.

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The ornaments were donated by Southern Baptist foreign missionaries and by Woman's Missionary groups across Georgia. The tree was surrounded by four smaller trees, symbolizing the four corners of the earth to which Southern Baptists send missionaries. Flags of foreign nations hung on every level of the five-story building.

James N. Griffith, executive secretary-treasurer of the Georgia Baptist Convention, narrated the hour-long program. He led in reading the biblical account of the birth of Jesus Christ, interspersed with special music by choirs, solists, handbell choirs, harpists and orchestras from Georgia Baptist churches.

The service closed with a brief message from Mrs. Edwin Howard of Doraville, president of Georgia Baptists WMU, and a prayer of commitment led by layman Stephen Cruce of Lilburn, representing Baptist Men.

All present were given Lottie Moon Offering envelopes to fill and give through their local churches.

Griffith said, "What we do here is not to focus attention on ourselves, nor even Georgia Baptists, but to focus on the launching of the foreign mission observance in Georgia Baptist churches."

He termed the ceremony "a huge success," saying, "It was a unified experience for Georgia Baptists. I truly believe this joint launching of the Lottie Moon Offering season will help Georgia Baptists go beyond \$3 million in their gifts to this foreign mission offering."

Griffith added, "We have already placed the Great Mission Tree ceremony on our Georgia Baptist calendar for next year."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Georgia Christian Index.

Bob Jones U. Gains Support
In Court Battle With IRS

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press
11/25/81

WASHINGTON (BP)--Bob Jones University received a boost from a pair of mainline Protestant denominations in its U.S. Supreme Court case against the Internal Revenue Service when the American Baptist Churches and the United Presbyterian Church filed a Nov. 27 Friend-of-the-Court brief.

Written by Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs general counsel John W. Baker at the request of the American Baptist Churches, the brief argues that the fundamentalist Greenville, S.C., school was unjustly stripped of its tax exemption in 1976.

Throughout the lengthy court proceedings that followed that action, IRS attorneys have argued that prevailing "public policy" against racism justified the removal of tax-exempt status from Bob Jones U.

The university, for its part, has argued that its policies restricting black enrollment are based in scripture.

Baker's brief siding with Bob Jones' position insists that American Baptists and United Presbyterians "repudiate any form of racism for any reason." The real issue in the case is not racism, Baker wrote, but whether the IRS has constitutional authority to deny "fundamental rights which take precedence over public policy evolved from non-First Amendment rights."

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Baker was assisted in writing the brief by American Baptist National Ministries counsel Earl W. Trent Jr.

The brief, technically represents the views of the 1.6 million-member American Baptist churches and the 2.4 million-member United Presbyterian Church, and cites Baptist Joint Committee Executive Director James M. Dunn's opposition to the IRS policy.

The Baptist Joint Committee, Dunn said, "strongly objects to any attempt by the government to force--by threat of loss of tax exemption--any religious organization to alter sincerely held religious beliefs to conform to public policy arbitrarily defined by a government agency such as the Internal Revenue Service."

In addition to arguing that Bob Jones' First Amendment rights were sacrificed to "public policy" as enunciated by the IRS, the brief contends that religious organizations' tax exemption "does not constitute state aid to or sponsorship of religion and that the powerful taxing agency exceeded its legal authority in that Congress did not legislate public policy as a determining factor for tax exemption.

The brief also argues that IRS may not require religious groups "to forego constitutional rights in order to secure the statutory privilege of tax exemption" and that by its action against Bob Jones, IRS officials are actually seeking "to establish the criteria for membership in a religious organization."

In agreeing to hear the Bob Jones case, the Supreme Court announced earlier that it will be paired in oral argument with a separate case involving IRS denial of tax exemption to Goldsboro (N.C.) Christian Schools, a pair of elementary and secondary schools operated by Second Baptist Church, Goldsboro, a non-affiliated congregation.

Baker emphasized that the Friend-of-the-Court brief he filed in the Bob Jones case does not apply to Goldsboro Christian Schools.

The latter were established, he noted, only after the Supreme Court and other federal courts ordered desegregation of public schools.

"The issues in the cases are different," Baker said, disagreeing with a statement by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals that the two are "identical twins." That court, which heard both cases earlier, ruled in separate actions against both Bob Jones and Goldsboro Christian Schools.

Bob Jones had won its case against the IRS in the first round of the battle at a federal district court in South Carolina. But after losing in the court of appeals, it asked the nation's high court to settle the long dispute.

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Flap Over Choir Invitation
Prompts ABC-SBC Disharmony

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press
11/25/81

SAGINAW, Mich. (BP)--Misunderstandings over Michigan Avenue Baptist Church's 1,800 pounds of fruitcake and an alleged invitation to perform at the World's Fair in Knoxville, Tenn., has caused a slight case of interdenomination indigestion.

The choir at the church, affiliated with the American Baptist Churches, USA, Inc., is still trying to sell its 1,800 pounds of fruitcake, but has given up on trying to sing at the World's Fair.

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Because of a policy limiting performance to Southern Baptist Convention churches and organizations, Michigan Avenue Baptist Church, an American Baptist congregation, will not perform at the Baptist Pavilion at the Fair.

David Peach of Knoxville, executive director of Baptist Ministries for the 1982 World's Fair, explained the policy was adopted because more than 425 choirs have applied for only 164 time slots available for performance at the Baptist Pavilion, and program committee members felt only groups from Southern Baptist churches should be considered. The pavilion is financed by SBC-affiliated groups, including the Home Mission Board, Tennessee Baptist Convention and Knox County Association of Baptists.

A spokesman for American Baptist Churches' national communications office in Valley Forge, Pa., however, expressed fears the policy has intensified tensions between American Baptists and Southern Baptists, and is a case of Southern Baptist exclusivism.

The pastor at Michigan Avenue Baptist Church said he feels the misunderstandings were caused by "an unfortunate chain of circumstances" and "failure to communicate." The choir director called the whole thing "a comedy of errors."

It all started last February when Anita Say Scherzer, the church's choir director, received a letter from Scott Tillery, on-site entertainment manager for the World's Fair, inviting her to apply for possible performance in the "World's Festival" at the fair.

Tillery said the letter was one of 5,000 mailed to members of the American Choral Directors' Association, to which Mrs. Scherzer belongs, but was not an official invitation to perform.

Excited about the possibility, the choir bought 1,800 pounds of fruitcake to sell to finance the trip, made an audition tape and photograph of the choir, and sent their application to Tillery.

Deluged with hundreds of applications, Tillery referred the matter to Larry Brooks, minister of music at Fountain City Baptist Church and chairman of the program committee for Baptist Ministries at the World's Fair. Tillery also wrote to Mrs. Scherzer saying he had referred the application to Brooks, suggesting the choir be considered for performance at the Baptist Pavilion.

Anxious to make plans, Mrs. Scherzer telephoned Brooks about possible dates the choir could sing. Brooks explained each choir is asked to submit three dates in order of preference. Mrs. Scherzer's first preference was June 24, 1982.

Brooks said at no time did he issue a firm invitation for the choir to perform, and added he was under the impression the church was a Southern Baptist congregation.

On Oct. 21, Baptist Ministries to the World's Fair sent Mrs. Scherzer a packet of materials outlining procedures and policies for groups applying for performance at the Baptist Pavilion. The first item on the list of eight criteria states, "all performing groups must be from a participating Southern Baptist church, college or Baptist Student Union."

Concerned about the restrictions, Mrs. Scherzer called Brooks Oct. 24, and told him the church is affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA, Inc. Brooks consulted with Peach and other members of the program committee but they agreed no exceptions should be made to the policy.

In November, American Baptist News Service released a story to 800 news outlets about the church's dilemma over what to do with the 1,800 pounds of fruitcake.

"The rebuff from the Southern Baptist committee making arrangements for fair entertainment comes at a time when many observers felt the long-standing attitudes toward American Baptists on the part of Southern Baptists were softening, if not abating," wrote Raymond P. Jennings, an employee of the ABC.

Although he said he was reluctant to pass judgment, Jennings said in a telephone interview "it seems to be a case of discrimination" by Southern Baptists against American Baptists.

Jennings pointed out that if it is truly to be a Baptist Pavilion at the World's Fair, it ought to include all Baptists, not just Southern Baptists. A former pastor of a dually-aligned ABC-SBC church in Washington, D. C., Jennings said he personally would like to see better relations developed between American and Southern Baptists.

Peach said the committee planning the SBC World's Fair project decided early in the process against inviting other Baptist groups as sponsors because they wanted the pavilion to offer a ministry and evangelistic thrust to the 11 million people attending the fair. Peach said he had been told American Baptists were opposed to this type approach during the New York World's Fair in 1964-65.

Peach said the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., was invited to participate at the suggestion of a local pastor, but no response to the invitation has been received.

The pavilion, although popularly known as the Baptist Pavilion, officially will be identified by the exhibit's theme, "The Word Is Energy," and will feature the SBC emblem on the front of the building, according to architect's plans.

Both Peach and Brooks expressed regret that misunderstandings had developed, but Peach said he feels the incident had been blown out of proportion by the American Baptist News Service. Brooks added the story inaccurately reported he had "invited" the choir to sing on June 24, 1982.

No choir has yet received an invitation to sing at the Baptist Pavilion, Peach and Brooks said. The committee has not had time to audition the tapes and make decision on which ones will receive invitations, Peach and Brooks said. They added invitations will not be sent to any choir until after Jan. 1, 1982.

Meanwhile, back in Saginaw, Don Ashmall, pastor of the church, expressed regrets over tensions created by the incident. "We would not want Michigan Avenue Baptist Church to become a 'cause celebre' in relationships between American Baptist Churches and the Southern Baptist Convention," he said. "I don't think anyone acted in bad faith or sought to exclude our church intentionally. I would not want it to appear we are angry at Southern Baptists."

Mrs. Scherzer, director of the choir for 25 years as part of an endowed music program, said the choir is still planning to make a music tour next summer, and hopes they might be invited to sing instead at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

What's happened to the 1,800 pounds of fruitcake? "We're selling it as fast as we can," replied Ashmall, adding he is convinced the choir will receive an invitation to sing somewhere next summer.

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Thank You Fort Lauderdale
Feast Draws 3,000 Persons

Baptist Press
11/25/81

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (BP)--First Baptist Church spread a Thanksgiving feast on its parking lot and 3,000 indigents, suburbanites, transients, and socialites partook.

In a giant demonstration of "We Love You, Fort Lauderdale," church members sent 5,000 personal invitations and blanketed the city with billboards, banners and circulars, asking people to come.

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And come they did, from all over Florida. For those who could not come on their own, the church sent buses to bring them in, to the beach, seaport, condominiums and retirement homes.

Four hundred church members on 21 committees prepared the event or served the turkey and dressing, cranberries and cakes to the 3,000 in an hour. Another 1,000 were there to watch and hear television evangelist Rex Humbard, who brought a short, simple message of salvation after the meal.

Rick Braswell, minister of evangelism who proposed the feed, said 250 responded to Humbard's invitation to make a public decision or to seek help, about 170 of them making professions of faith.

Braswell, who has been at the 4,393-member church only four months, said people laid other needs before their individual counselors who spoke with them in the sanctuary following the meeting.

As a result, the church got one family's electric service restored, secured medical attention for a woman still bleeding from an abortion the day before, and gave clothes and shoes to several people.

Transients were given the name of a pastor in the town they were headed for, and a card of referral for that pastor to send back to First Baptist. In a regular church service, First Baptist baptized 40 of those responding.

First Baptist's effort caught the imagination of many people in the area not associated with the church. One produce salesman sent two truckloads of vegetables, another sent 33 cases of green beans. A bakery gave cakes. Anonymous checks arrived. One unnamed lady left an envelope at church with eight one-dollar bills and a note saying that was what was left of her Social Security check.

Response was so enthusiastic from the community and church members, Braswell said the feast will become an annual event. Both Braswell and pastor O. S. Hawkins continually referred to the church members as the driving force. Hawkins said at any church meeting, two-thirds of the congregation will be adults who have become Christians within the past two years.

"The staff drew the picture," said Braswell. "The people colored it in."

He said the "12 baskets" of food left over were taken to nursing homes and mission groups who feed needy free. First Baptist itself feeds 75 to 80 transients and indigents in downtown Fort Lauderdale a free meal every day.

"Often we ask people to give to us," Braswell said, when asked why the feast. "We leave the implication we are a taking ministry and have a tendency to exalt ourselves."

"But to correct that impression is not the biggest reason we gave the feast. People are hungry and thirsty and if we give them even a cup of water in the Lord's name, the Lord will honor that."