

June 4, 1982

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### Baptist Pavilion 'Success' Says Director After Month

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (BP)— Over 65,000 people visited the Baptist Pavilion at the 1982 World's Fair during the first month of operation.

Large crowds indicate the centrally located pavilion is an "overwhelming success" said David Peach, executive director of Baptist Ministries to the fair.

"The pavilion has been filled for almost every performance," he said. "Several decisions have been made and scripture portions in 15 different languages have been distributed."

Daily activities scheduled for the only religious pavilion on the 72-acre fair site include music, drama, media presentations, puppetry and a display of old Bibles.

Over 21 Southern Baptist church and college choirs from 10 states have performed on the pavilion stage.

Five live performances delivered by the pavilion's music and drama team, PowerSource, also are a daily feature. An average of 2,500 daily visitors exhibit a generally positive response to the 30-minute, scripture-based performance and other pavilion features.

"It's very different," said one Kentuckian. "But it reached out and drew your attention."

"It sent chill bumps all over me," exclaimed a Chattanooga woman.

At 3:30 each afternoon, PowerSource joins the official fair band at one of the site's outdoor theaters to deliver a variety of popular tunes and Broadway selections.

The Elm Tree Theater performance attracts many fair goers to the Baptist Pavilion. "We've even escorted people to the pavilion," says PowerSource member D. Ray Davis of Chester, Va.

The pavilion's 248 air conditioned seats attract many scorched fairgoers to frequent showings of the 16-projector slide presentation "The Word is Energy." "It was a little technical," felt a Virginia woman. "I'm not an educated person, but I got a good feeling from it, about energy and that God is all energy."

Approximately 200 people per day enter the lobby at the pavilion's back entrance which contains the old Bibles, including one dating from 1500. "I'd love to spend about three hours looking at that Bible display case," enthused one North Carolinian.

Immediately outside the pavilion, puppets charading from a circus-like Baptist Ministries wagon entertain children, passersby and pavilion visitors. An additional wagon at the west end of the fair is operated by guest church and college puppet teams. PuppetPeople, a group of Tennessee Baptist Convention Baptist Student Union missionaries, supervises the guest teams and performs hourly from the wagon adjacent to the Baptist Pavilion.

Since the fair opened May 1, over 500 volunteers from Tennessee, South Carolina, California, Georgia, Florida and other states have manned the Baptist Pavilion.

Eight groups, including Baptist Student Unions from the University of Houston, University of Southern Arkansas and Memphis State University, have participated in off-site ministries. They cleaned grounds of a nearby retirement home and inner-city mission and a local Baptist academy. Contacts with international fair employees are being made and fellowships with Japanese and Chinese are scheduled later in June.

Twenty-six Baptist Home Mission Board innovators also assist Baptist Ministries with the international ministry and other ministries.

Innovators work secular jobs on the site and volunteer their free time to Baptist Ministries to the 1982 Worlds Fair.

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Probe Reveals Potential  
For Metro New York Baptists

By Michael Tutterow

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NEW YORK (BP)—A marathon search has yielded more than 150 possible new church sites for Metropolitan New York Baptists.

Teams of church extension consultants, local pastors, associational leaders and seminary students "probed" the 26-county association recently to pinpoint areas lacking Southern Baptist ministries. As a cooperative effort between the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, the Baptist State Convention of New York, Metropolitan Baptist Association and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 26 three-member teams scouted the counties, noting current and projected housing and industry, the number and types of churches, and socioeconomic factors impacting the area. Teams also contacted local planning agencies and received census data and maps illustrating present and future land use.

The results, said Nelson Tilton, associate director of HMB church extension division and director of the new work probe, revealed 152 potential sites for starting new churches in an area encompassing more than 18 million people. Presently only 145 churches or chapels offer Southern Baptist witness to the area.

"The probe gives us a sense of direction," said DeLane Ryals, director of church extension for Metropolitan association. The association has set goals to begin 25 new churches within the next two years, and 61 churches within five years, he said.

"We could have put pins on a map," he added, "but this has developed a basis for churches to begin the new work. It puts church extension in a human rather than a statistical dimension."

Tilton added the probe not only gave direction to the association, but also will assist Southern Baptists in reaching a convention goal of 50,000 churches by the year 2000. Southern Baptists have averaged beginning one church per day since 1845, he stated, but to reach the convention's new goal, Southern Baptists must now begin two churches per day.

But Tilton cautioned New York Baptists to use a "holistic" definition of church in establishing new work, challenging local leaders to view the church as more than a building, and not limited by size or location.

Probers outlined "high priorities" ranging from language missions among Spanish-speaking residents in an impoverished New Jersey community to incorporating congregational worship into two existent Manhattan Christian social ministry centers.

Using probe results, the associational missions committee will propose sites for the first 25 new churches. Existing Southern Baptist congregations near proposed sites will sponsor the new works, with personnel and financial support supplied by the association, the state convention and the Home Mission Board.

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"The probe helped us determine a sense of priority for our missions committee," said Quinn Pugh, Metropolitan association's director of missions. But he emphasized neither national agencies nor the association is responsible for beginning new churches. "The local leaders will determine the actual spots for new churches," explained Pugh. "I'm grateful for the denominational interest, but it's going to have to end up a local-church program."

Though coordinated through HMB church extension division, the probe falls under the umbrella of MEGA-city focus, an HMB associational missions division strategy aimed at reaching metropolitan areas with populations in excess of 1 million people.

George Bullard, MEGA-city focus consultant and probe participant, said the probe established a model for future searches in other metropolitan areas. A similar probe is planned for Buffalo, N.Y., next year.

Thomas Bland, professor of Christian ethics and sociology at Southeastern seminary, cautioned probe participants against an antiurban bias he claimed "runs deep in the psyche of the American people." Bland added, "How we view metropolis will have a great deal to do with our approach to ministry in the city."

He said Southern Baptists, as "newcomers to the city," tend to view the metropolis as "centers for evil, where man's pride is expressed in idolatry." But, he stressed, "We are destined to live in an urban world. The biblical story begins in a garden and ends in the city -- the redeemed city."

Bland challenged participants not to withdraw from the city, but to "accept this context as God's gift" and develop a "holistic ministry that seeks to meet need at the point at which it is encountered."

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Final Lottie Moon Total  
Exceeds \$50.7 Million

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Final receipts for the 1981 Lottie Moon Christmas offering for foreign missions totaled \$50,784,173, or 1.6 percent over the \$50 million goal.

Gifts exceeded 1980's total by more than \$6 million and represent a 13.6 percent increase. The 1980 total was \$44,700,339, or 99.3 percent of the \$45 million goal.

The 1982 offering goal is \$58 million.

Books closed May 31 on the 1981 offering. Any money received after that date will be applied to the 1982 offering.

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BFM Statement OK As Is  
Say Former Presidents

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6/4/82

DALLAS (BP)— "The wording of the scripture portion of the statement on Baptist Faith and Message has served Baptists well since the New Hampshire confession of faith and to change it would only do harm to the fellowship," says Herschel H. Hobbs.

Hobbs was chairman of the committee that in 1962-63 reviewed and revised the 1925 statement of Baptist Faith and Message. Their work was approved in the 1963 statement on Baptist Faith and Message which was reaffirmed last year in Los Angeles.

Former SBC President Adrian Rogers said recently in Rome, Ga., he felt much of the controversy in the convention could be eliminated if the wording of the Scripture portion of the statement were changed to read the Bible "is" truth rather than "has" truth without any mixture of error for its matter.

Hobbs said the terminology on the scriptures in the 1963 statement is identical to that in the New Hampshire confession of faith and also in the 1925 statement.

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"It has served Baptists well for these many, many years," he said, "and I think it will continue to do so if we will recognize that the word 'has' may be interpreted in the sense of the word 'is.' To change it, in my judgement, would only do harm to the fellowship."

Hobbs recalled that Rogers said in Los Angeles last year that it was time to stop debating the statement of faith and get on with the work.

"I think we should let the action in Los Angeles lay this matter to rest and get on with the work God has given us to do," Hobbs said.

Several other former SBC presidents contacted by the Baptist Standard, voiced their opinions on the change. All opposed it except Jaroy Weber of Dallas, president in 1975-76.

Weber said he could accept Rogers' suggestion and said he had been told that Rogers or someone else would bring a motion in New Orleans calling for the change. Owen Cooper, the Mississippi layman who was president in 1973-74, took issue with Roger's issue about laymen not knowing the difference.

"I think he underestimates the perception of the layman," Cooper said, and added he was not in favor "of making a golden calf of the statement on Baptist Faith and Message."

Carl E. Bates, president in 1971-72, also commented on the layman angle, saying he didn't feel the whole discussion about the statement made any difference to them at all.

"I talk to a lot of them," Bates said. "They say, 'We are not interested in this battle you preachers have going.'"

Jimmy R. Allen, president in 1978-79, said the wording Rogers prefers is unnecessary. "The convention has decided on a number of occasions that we have an adequate statement," he said. "The fact is the statement is crystal clear...and speaks to the authority and authenticity of the Bible as we have it."

Franklin Paschall, president in 1967-68, said he didn't see the distinction in the two words in question. "It's a distinction without a difference," he said. "Without any mixture of error sounds to me as if the Bible is perfectly reliable the way it is and I am reluctant to change a statement of faith, if it is adequate, everytime somebody raises a point and wants to change a word, if it is, in fact, adequate to a reliable, without any-mixture-of-error book."

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Cooperative Program Continues  
Record Gift Pace Through May

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6/4/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--May mission giving through the national Cooperative Program increased 10.9 percent over May 1981, with a total of \$7,780,027 being distributed by the SBC Executive Committee to the agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention.

May gifts, pushed year to date totals to \$62,619,196, a strong 15.2 percent ahead of the first eight months of last fiscal year.

Designated gifts, primarily for the Annie Armstrong Easter offering for home missions, were \$9,983,147 in May, 12.5 percent ahead of May 1981.

To date, designated gifts of \$68,172,808 are 13.6 percent of that category for 1981.

Total designated and undesignated gifts for the first eight months of the fiscal year are \$130,792,005, up 14.4 percent over the same period in 1981.

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SBC Leaders Discuss Issues  
For NBC Special June 13

By Greg Warner

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Three prominent Southern Baptists discussed a variety of religious and social issues for a television program to be aired by NBC June 13.

Planned as a preview to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans June 15-17, the one-hour special features Harold Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, outgoing convention president Bailey Smith and Edwin Young, president of the SBC Pastors' Conference.

The program, "Toward 2000: A Bold Mission," updates Southern Baptist progress toward preaching the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000. The special is being produced by NBC in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

In an informal dialogue, with NBC correspondent Robert Abernathy, the group found topics of both mutual agreement and some polite disagreement.

Smith favors the proposed constitutional amendment to permit voluntary group prayer in public schools. Both he and Young said misinterpretations of the Supreme Court's 1962 and 1963 rulings make it necessary to restate the right of students to pray, although that right is essentially guaranteed by the First Amendment.

"The ruling has been in one limited area, in prescribed prayers or written prayers," Young explained. "But now many school boards have made a far-reaching thing that was never intended."

"There are many people who would disagree, who think for the government to interfere in this particular area of religion is a violation of separation of church and state and on that principle would be opposed to a prayer amendment," said Bennett.

Smith said he expects the issue of school prayer to come up at the June convention in the form of a resolution, "and I think it would pass."

There was less disagreement on limiting military strength. Bennett said Christians are caught in a dilemma of balancing biblical peace teachings with the practical need of defense.

Said Smith: "We've got to make sure, if we do stop (the military buildup), that we are at least level to the Soviet Union. An unethical man may sign an agreement and then drop a bomb on you. So you've got to change the heart of a person."

The trio agreed messengers in New Orleans likely would address creationism and evolution. But they were all reluctant to ask the government to require schools to teach the biblical account of creation.

Smith said both views should be taught as options or widely held beliefs. If they will not teach creationism, he said, they should at least teach evolution as theory.

"If I send my kids to public schools," Young said, "I would hope that their beliefs in God and the Bible would be honored, but they're not."

Smith said the Bible is opposed to ordaining women to preach, since they have different roles and responsibilities from men. "A woman would never be higher than the place where God put her, to rear children and raise them according to the word of God," he said.

Bennett said the 35 to 50 women now ordained indicate other Baptists may favor women's ordination.

Much of the two-hour discussion described Southern Baptist mission efforts. They disputed Abernathy's suggestion that foreign missions is a form of colonialization, since the SEC's indigenous approach to missions relies on the people of each country to build churches.

Bennett said the biggest hindrances to Bold Mission Thrust are inflation, a poor understanding of stewardship by some Southern Baptists and non-involvement of others. Smith named apathy and complacency as the worst enemies. Young blamed humanism.