



BAPTIST PRESS

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Southern Baptists Conclude
Summer Games Ministries

By Phyllis Thompson

LOS ANGELES (BP)—While the 23rd Olympiad concluded amidst elaborate parades, musical extravaganzas and explosive fireworks, Southern Baptist volunteers were packing boxes, tallying results and saying goodbyes as a five-year project called Summer Games Ministries ended.

Summer Games Ministries began as a dream that Southern Baptists could reach out to help millions of visitors from around the world during the 1984 Summer Olympics.

"For me this is the completion of a dream I've had since 1979," said L.G. Chaddick, director of Christian social ministries for Southern Baptists in the Los Angeles area and chairman of Baptist ministries during the Olympics. "I knew it was possible. Now, I am thankful for the results."

Summer Games Ministries volunteers concentrated on two primary goals: (1) providing a hospitality center offering meals and a place to rest and (2) organizing direct witness teams to minister around the coliseum area where most of the sporting events were held.

During the 15-day period, 3,400 visitors came through the Summer Games Ministries center, (located in what once was a sewing shop) less than five blocks from the Olympic Coliseum.

Southern Baptists provided 111 free meals to transient and stranded visitors at the center, and fed another 2,400 customers in the center's restaurant, which offered soups, salads, sandwiches and desserts at reduced prices.

Although restaurant workers had planned to serve as many as 500 people each day, they said they were pleased with the average of slightly more than 200 daily visitors.

"We never had the massive crowds we expected," explained US-2 missionary Doni Hammonds of Decatur, Ga., who directed center activities, "but I think we provided quality help for those who came."

In the second phase of Baptist ministries, the direct witness effort, a team of 200 volunteers reported 142 professions of faith by visitors to the Olympics.

"We feel very positive about that," said Don Hall, director of missions for Crescent Bay Baptist Association and chairman of the direct witness task force for Summer Games Ministries. "We didn't offer tracts and nothing else. We tried to give a little of ourselves with the literature."

Some feared an outpouring of 30,000 evangelicals and cult group members—many of whom preached on streets and bombarded Olympic visitors with tracts—might lead to visitors' skepticism toward all religious groups.

Dan Hooper, Lutheran Olympic Ministry coordinator who operated a center near the Olympic swim stadium, often found passers-by so disgusted by the deluge of religious literature they even refused coupons for free lemonade and cookies.

"In some ways we were all hurt by those who came in too late with too little preparation," he said. "But I think we helped people. I believe visitors were able to see a difference (between the groups)."

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One man was surprised when Hall offered to take the literature back after sensing the man's lack of interest. "He broke into a smile," Hall said. "He was grateful. I had given him a choice; I had treated him with respect."

One Illinois couple visiting the Olympics noted a difference between Baptist volunteers and some of the other groups. "Out on the street we saw a lot of people," said Betty Hodge, from Mt. Vernon, Ill. "Many were proclaiming the gospel but you could look in their faces and see there was no love. They were giving away nothing of themselves."

Hodge and her husband, Rex, visited the Summer Games Ministries center often during their week-long stay. "You could walk in and just sense the difference," she said. "The people at the center were giving up their summer to help others. They were helpful and friendly. It was like an oasis in the desert."

Los Angeles street vendor Richy Myers came to the center and asked to make a phone call. He said he was amazed when workers refused to accept any money. "I came back to find out more about this group," he said. "During these games, this was the only place I found to rest where workers expected nothing in return."

Though the Olympics ended August 12, Summer Games Ministries leaders and Los Angeles Baptists met the next week to decide whether to continue ministries in the area. Many workers hoped the work begun by Summer Games Ministries would not end with the sporting events.

"In some ways I feel sad," said US-2 missionary Kevin Collins, who coordinated Southern Baptists' volunteer program during the Olympics. "It's always sad to end something, especially something we worked on so long. But we did accomplish much of what we set out to do. From the beginning, our intention was to help people. I think we accomplished our goal."

"I think it would be a great mistake to just let the center die after closing ceremonies," he continued. "This is a low-income area with the second highest crime rate in the city." People here already feel the Summer Games ran roughshod over their privacy while offering little in return, so "I hope we can show them Southern Baptists' commitment was not just to the Olympics but to missions, to meeting needs long after the Games are over."

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Braidfoot Says Lottery
Odds Tell True Story

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
8/15/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--When is the last time you got struck by lightning?

Larry Braidfoot of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission believes people ought to ask themselves that question before betting on a state-operated lottery.

Braidfoot, who has researched legalized gambling for the last two years, says lottery supporters talk more about potential winnings and income for the state than about the tremendous odds of winning. Yet an official of the New York lottery, he points out, admitted the odds of being struck by lightning (about one in two million) were better than the one-in-3.5 million odds of winning that state's recent \$22.1 million jackpot.

In Ohio, where the recent lottery jackpot of \$27 million made national headlines, the odds were even greater--about one in nine million.

The odds of winning the recent Massachusetts lottery jackpot of \$13 million were much "better"--only one in 1.9 million. Yet an MIT math professor, using gambling terminology, said the chances of winning that jackpot were like being dealt four straight royal flushes, all in spades and then leaving the poker table to meet four complete strangers who had the same birthday.

"Supporters of state-sponsored lotteries don't want to talk about the odds," Braidfoot said. Lottery advocates, he added, "also want betters to overlook the fact that the lottery makes the worst payoff, on a percentage basis, of any legal form of gambling."

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At most horse tracks, he pointed out, the "takeout rate" is only about 15 percent, meaning most of the money wagered goes back to the betters. Even slot machines, he noted, have a better pay off than the lottery.

To support his claims, Braidfoot compiled the following data on three state lotteries which have produced jackpots near or surpassing \$20 million:

--The Massachusetts lottery generated a jackpot of \$13 million for the person lucky enough to select the six numbers which were drawn. In order to build a jackpot of that size, betters would have to have wagered about \$22.4 million, since only 58 percent of the amount bet is returned to the winner. The state would get \$6.72 million in taxes (28 percent), and the rest --\$3.14 million (14 percent)--would go for overhead.

--The New York lottery generated a \$22.1 million jackpot (44 percent) on about \$50 million wagered. The state got about \$7.8 million (15 percent) going toward overhead.

--To generate the giant \$27 million jackpot in the Ohio lottery, betters would have to have wagered \$53 million, of which \$19.6 million (37 percent) would go to the state and about \$6.4 million (12 percent) would go for overhead.

"A lottery jackpot may make sensationalist headlines," Braidfoot said, "but it sure doesn't tell the whole story. Even people who don't want to talk about Christian morals ought to be questioning the morality of a state foisting such a sham off on its citizens under the guise of a 'painless' form of tax revenue."

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Cothen: No Representation
False Issue

By Norman Jameson

Baptist Press
8/15/84

SHAWANEE, Okla. (BP)--Claims by inerrantists they have been underrepresented on Southern Baptist Convention boards is a "false issue" according to Grady C. Cothen, recently retired president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Cothen, defeated by inerrancy candidate Charles Stanley for Southern Baptist Convention president in June, has been associated with SEC boards since 1949 when he was elected to the Foreign Mission Board as a 28-year-old pastor. He also was top executive of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, Oklahoma Baptist University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

"There's not been a time in my 35 years association with any board that the majority of members did not believe in infallibility of Scripture," Cothen told a national meeting of SEC in-service guidance directors at Oklahoma Baptist University. "Our boards always have been predominately controlled by inerrantists, but they weren't mean."

"They were people of good will. They steered the Southern Baptist Convention to the middle of the road, to the finest and largest system of education and missions evangelical Christianity ever knew."

Cothen, labled a "liberal" in the political punches thrown between polarized sections of Southern Baptists, said "I've been under control of those rascals since 1961 and never a finer group of people has there been, Bible-believing people. But if I'd have had a liberal bone in my body, one of those rascals would have amputated it."

He told them he has been trying to get a national discussion started on "what is a Southern Baptist," but feels "it may very well be when you start trying to define Southern Baptist, you cease being one."

Others actively are trying to impose definitions on Southern Baptists in the form of creedal statements. Cothen detests such "common ground" statements because the Bible is the only Baptist authority. He even said he wishes the Baptist Faith and Messag statement of 1963 never had been written because people aren't paying attention to the preamble which recognizes soul competency of the believer.

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Cothen, said creedal statements are put forth by people who want a fixed statement by which to measure orthodoxy. "When we begin to measure orthodoxy, we are in a difficult situation as Baptists," he said.

When in 1970, the convention "instructed" agencies to teach and write "according to and not contrary to" the Baptist Faith and Message, "that made the Baptist Faith and Message our creed instead of the New Testament" he said.

"The Holy Spirit is the only adequate rule of faith and practice," Cothen said.

The two elements jousting for convention leadership are not far apart on Scripture, but they differ on managing Baptist business, according to Cothen. He said he cannot ascribe to creedal statements which control because they: put religious authority outside Jesus Christ, or outside Scripture (what people say about revelation, rather than the revelation) or outside his own priesthood; mean authority has been assumed by those who control those who adopt the creed; assume its formulators know what's best for all which make Southern Baptists surrender their priesthood.

"When one group of Baptists assumes to know what's best for the rest of Baptists, they have ceased to be Baptists," Cothen claimed. He said "There is no way to hem us in with enough statements to keep us from committing stupidity.

"When the whole world is leaning toward the right--to authoritarianism, to bossism--this is no time to lose sight of who we are and not acquiesce to people who are more than willing to call the shots."

Instead of narrow creeds Cothen said Southern Baptist commonalties are found in theology, polity and method. But Cothen has found he cannot discuss issues without being put into a camp. "As long as that frame of mind exists polarizaton is inevitable," he said.

To people who think that controversies on the SBC level have nothing to do with associational meetings or churches, Cothen suggests they watch associational meetings this fall. "The resolution on women will be a stick with which they try to beat the associations deciding fellowship with churches that ordain women."

Cothen agreed "a conservative presentation of the Christian faith deserves the same fair and honest presentation as any other position. A truly Christian university deserving of the name will not do it any other way," he said, responding to claims inerrantist theology is ridiculed in the classrooms of Southern Baptist colleges and seminaries.

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Baylor Law School Receives
\$1.4 Million Land Gift

Baptist Press
8/15/84

WACO, Texas (BP)—A. Guy Crouch, a 1949 Baylor Law School graduate who now is a banker and lawyer in Alvin, Texas, has donated 65 acres of land appraised at \$1.4 million to Baylor University.

The land is located in Weybridge, Brazoria County, Texas. Proceeds from the sale of the acreage will endow the A. Guy Crouch Chair of Law to be held by the dean of the Baylor Law School. The donation is among the largest gifts ever received by Baylor Law School.

The first holder of the chair will be a Baylor classmate of Crouch, Texas Supreme Court Justice Charles W. Barrow, who will become dean of the Baylor Law School Oct. 1.

Crouch says the gift is in recognition of his friendship and admiration of Baylor Chancellor Abner V. McCall, "as an individual, as a law professor, law school dean and judge of the Supreme Court." McCall, who served as dean of Baylor Law School between 1948-59, taught Crouch during his student years at Baylor.

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HMB-N

Scrap Labels, Assault
Sin, Says Tanner

By Leisa A. Hammett

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Southern Baptists have got to "quit assailing each other with cheap, counterfeit labels" and start assaulting Satan, Home Mission Board President William G. Tanner said at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

Reemphasizing a theme he used two weeks earlier during a major presentation to Home Mission Board directors, Tanner said he was very concerned about the current bitterness, hate and galvanization evident in so many ways in the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Our enemy is sin and not each other," Tanner told participants attending an annual home missions conference at the North Carolina conference center.

"Some day a whole bunch of us folks, especially those of us who preach and lead are going to have to answer to God as to why we were wrangling over convention controls while the world was dying and going to hell," he added. "We have infinitely more things that hold us together than things to divide us as a Convention."

Tanner said society has developed a dual-personality—quasi-religious schizophrenia, where people say "in God we trust," but engrave on their hearts a "me first" philosophy.

"We're not concerned with doing what's right, but doing what's expedient, and we're dangerously near losing the moral equilibrium of our society," he charged.

An emerging and unspoken hunger and need deep within people is pleading for the unprecedented rescue of evangelism, Tanner said.

"The very disillusionment of this hour could constitute a spiritual awakening but we must act decisively now," Tanner exclaimed. "The urgency of our nation's souls' preparation for eternity ought to be the consuming interest of every believer in our land."

Though our planet is alive physically, it is dying spiritually, Tanner said. In America there are 95 million "lost people," he explained. Whether it is popular or difficult, Southern Baptists need to evangelize, he maintained.

Tanner said if 20th-century evangelism were compared to its early antecedents of first century believers, it would receive rebuke for its apathy, multi-complaints, compromise and indifference and noted a person could not be a Christian and avoid being an evangelist.

Jesus grieves "when compassion and love are forsaken, human need no longer stabs our conscience, and days of national peril leave us with no great sense of urgency," Tanner said.

"When we can be satisfied with holding our own—maintaining the status quo—the fires of evangelism die out in our hearts and flicker out in churches, and we're more interested in our own standing and statistics and bound by competitive, personal prejudice," he added.

Unless evangelism is "rescued," history may note Southern Baptists as a peculiar group of people who were honored and recognized but who did not care, he concluded.