

FIVE MINUTES WITH TOM MOOTY

Column Number 2221

"ANOTHER EFFORT IN COLUMNOLGY"

Long ago in a galaxy far away, the Annual Meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention was held in San Antonio. Since I was working in the Baptist Press Room as Audio/Video Tech, that required me to saddle up and head west to provide audio sound bites and video clips of Convention Business to the religious and secular print reporters, radio stations, and television outlets.

At that time, the Annual Meeting was so large, it could only meet in certain cities; and those same cities usually had an NFL, MLB, and NHL franchise (which didn't bother us because of the time of the year they play). But the NBA was a ball of a different shape and size.

The NBA (National Basketball Association) held their finals at the same time of the year when the Convention was meeting; and more than once, the two schedules had conflicted.

So, the Annual Convention of Baptists was in good ole San Antone - and, surprise, surprise, we were not the biggest news in town!

Never mind that nine hundred sixty nine souls were saved during the convention evangelism efforts that year. Never mind that the economy of San Antonio was fattened by several gigathousands of green dollars. Never mind the three thousand churches that were

started that year; the fifteen thousand students in seminaries, and the ten thousand missionaries serving around the world that year. Don't even consider two hundred million dollar missionary budget this year! Don't even think about that stuff - it doesn't matter!

The big news in San Antone that year was - (wait for it, wait for it) THE SPURS IN THE FINALS!

Baptists, you can come to our town; but remember you are not the only game in town!

So, we checked in our hotel next to the convention center and rode the elevator with our bellman that was bedecked with his "go spurs" ribbon; and a famous television commentator who wanted to talk about "defending the 1-4" and "Labron James". The Hilton just across the park had its balcony lights selectively turned off or on to spell out "Go Spurs" in huge letters blazoned across the entire building.

The local television stations and newspapers carried wall to wall, back to back basketball stories; the big blimp was hovering overhead; and helicopters whumped - whumped their way over the beautiful rapid-growing city underneath.

We were there - but THEY were the big news! The horns were beeping and blowing (one truck even had a locomotive horn) clearing the intersection just like the big boys on the Amtrak. People were cheering and whistling; and acting like they had just finished reading one of my columns and were expressing their appreciation.

But, I guess the most fascinating thing of all was what happened one nanosecond after the final buzzer in the arena. As if on cue from some great big basketball mogul, the San Antonio streets between Market and Commerce and around the Alamo instantly filled with horn honking pick up trucks, mini vans, and stretch limos cruising the grid lock. It reminded me of Cumberland Street after one of the rare Big Orange wins over the Gators - only a bunch more enthusiasm.

However, one thing I noticed looking down from my fifteenth story balcony. A lot of the revelers had not attended the game at all; didn't even have tickets to the party. No, they just piled out of the "Steers and Beers" (and other establishments of similar menu persuasion) down on the street and began waving their "Go Spurs" flags and signs - just like they had been there all along. No, they had been watching on the big screen; and came out to enjoy the jocularity.

Think of it! They hadn't bothered to score a ticket to the game; but they wanted to be a part of the group as if they had. They had the flags, they wore the shirts, they blew the horns, they cheered the Spurs - they looked just like the folks that had gone to the game.

Kinda reminds me of people today who stand on the street corners of life and want to be included in the group they have paid the price of walking with The Lord in Christian Faith.

They wear the shirts, they wave the flags, they sing the songs, they talk the talk; but they have not accepted the blood of Jesus Christ as the price of a ticket to heaven.

And when the award ceremonies are held, they will not be present to see it "up close and personal"; they will still be out there on the street corners waving the flags - outside, looking in!

How about it? Are you outside looking in; or inside the faith of Jesus Christ? The ticket to heaven is already paid for; you just have to show up to receive it!

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