

State fair evangelism results in 373 decisions for Christ

By Chloe Newton
Staff Writer

The 2024 Mississippi State Fair has drawn to a close, and with it Mississippi Baptist fair evangelism. With the help of newcomers and veteran churches, groups, and individuals, the engagement exceeded years past. This year, 195 volunteers had 2,824 Gospel conversations, resulting in 373 decisions for Christ.

For many volunteers, fair evangelism creates a safe environment to share the Gospel for the first time. Among the newcomers was First Baptist, Senotobia, led by Pastor David Haynes, who participated in the evangelism efforts at the Dixie National Rodeo. One of Hayne's favorite moments from his time at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) tent included a member's simple prayer being answered.



“One of First Baptist’s members, who is named

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Hearing the Gospel for the first time evokes a variety of responses. Christians are called to share the Gospel but are not promised they will see the fruits of their labor, yet it is a gift when the Lord allows it.

“We had a young lady come in the tent with her family,” shared Don Lum, MBCB Director of Evangelism. “There were three teenagers and a mom and dad. This young lady was holding back. She was kind of not really engaged. I was talking to the guy that had shared with them, and he came back in the tent the next day and said, ‘Look, you’ll never guess what happened last night. At 1:00 AM this morning, the young lady got up, went into her mom and dad’s bedroom and said, I need Jesus.’”

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“We had a young lady come, and she was scared,” Lum said. “This wasn’t her element, yet I watched her fight within herself to say, ‘I’m going to do this. I can do this. I want to do this.’ She really worked hard to step outside that box, to stand out there and not just watch people come by, but to engage people. Then to come back in the tent and to be able to take time and to learn how to share [the Gospel] with people.”

“It was important for members of our church to become familiar with sharing the Gospel,” said Haynes. “In my opinion, it is sometimes easier to share the Gospel with strangers than it is to share the Gospel with friends or family members. However, once a person gains confidence in their ability to rely upon the Holy Spirit to guide them in Gospel conversations, then he or she will be more confident when talking with friends and family members about Jesus.”



Even when others outright reject the Gospel, God can plant a seed that He may later

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“You’ve sowed the seed,” said Lum. “You told him about Jesus Christ, and then you’ve given him the opportunity to make the decision. And the decision’s always a personal one. We all get to make the choice to follow Him or not. And so I can’t feel bad about that because we did our part. I tell folks when they come to work, I said, you can’t miss. You can’t lose.”

Though the fair has concluded, the work is far from over. Lum and his team have begun the follow up process. New believers will receive a packet of helpful resources. A list of local churches will also be provided to the individuals, hopefully encouraging the new believers to become a member and to be disciplined.