



The Cross & Steeple

www.collinsvillebaptistchurch.com

August 2016

Remembering 1996

Twenty years ago we were all excited about the Summer Olympics. In Atlanta.

Gloria, John and I all volunteered. Gloria with gymnastics. John at the stadium for track and field. And I volunteered for a month in downtown Atlanta at the Main Press Center just across the street from Centennial Park.

That put me in the middle of a lot of action. I worked the night shift so I arrived as journalists were flowing in from events to write stories. And the free music in the park was blaring away. Things didn't die down until about three in the morning, and then things started up again about five.

I was on the main help desk at the main entrance, just inside the door. My job was to help. To do whatever someone in the press needed to have done. And to update all the material we had available for them. Lots of carrying messages. Lots of looking up scores. Lots of helping people find their way around the building. And lots of helping people who lost their credentials. Or people who had a few hours off and wanted to visit a local attraction. Several were shocked to learn that no, there is no actual Tara plantation even though you saw one in *Gone with the Wind*.

I did not do a lot of sitting around, but there was time for some conversations. Some people even talked with me after they learned I was a Baptist preacher.

One of my co-workers was from London. She was not a regular church attender. She had some struggles in life, but she felt like things were working out for her now. She thanked me for talking to her and said "so tas to God". Near as I could understand that meant thank you Lord. I like that. Tas to God.

I talked with a Georgia student who had volunteered almost as a joke. We talked about football (of course), her major, her life. Just a little talk as she tried to figure out her future.

The journalist from up north who was angry about the transportation system. He had lost his pass. We calmed him down. I gave him my pass and he walked away embarrassed.

A man from the suburbs who was riding the bus for the first time ever. He thought it was pretty good. I suspect he never rode it again.

The night supervisor was from Pennsylvania. He laughed at me for saying that I was “fixing to go upstairs”. Seemed like good grammar to me. We were there the night the bomb went off next door in the park. In our building, the pressure that night became great. We had to arrange a quick press conference in the building for leaders to announce on world-wide TV that the Games would go on as scheduled. We had to find translators and pass out equipment for people to hear the translation. The supervisor and I stood together as the conference broke up. He told me how thankful he was to have been able to depend on a few of us. And that he had thought about how close we were to the bomb. And who he should depend on from then forward.

It is amazing how often God will use you to share His Good News if you give Him a chance. On the bus and the subway going back and forth. In the park where people were trading pins. Little words of encouragement to workers who were blamed for computer failures.

But the woman I will remember the most was a day shift worker who came in an hour before I left. I only talked to her once. Learned she was about twenty years older than me. Retired. Lived in a very nice area of town. Had lots of stuff. Was a little bored by the Press Center.

I asked her about her spiritual background. She said that she used to go to church but that she did not see a need for it so she quit. She told me that she was quite satisfied with her life.

I asked her about what she did with problems or times when she needed forgiveness. She said she did not have those times. I was puzzled. Time was running out. So I got blunter.

“But we all sin”, I said. “We all need forgiveness.”

She replied, “Oh, I never sin. I don’t believe in sin anymore.”

I was shocked. How could any human being not believe in sin? We are all sinners. I mentioned Romans to her. She smiled at my ignorance. She told me she had learned that she was not a sinner by listening to people from some group whose name I have forgotten. She truly believed that she did not sin.

When I talk to someone about becoming a Christian, I begin with talking about those Romans passage – all have sinned, because we sin we have earned death, but Jesus has given us the free gift of eternal life if we give our lives to Him. What do you say to someone who is sure they do not need sin and do not need Jesus?

I said a few more words to her then I had to leave. I never saw her again. I often wonder what happened to her. But I will always remember her because she is the first person who ever told me that she did not sin.

Talking to people about Jesus can be scary. You can feel inadequate. It can leave you wondering. But it is the right thing to do. In Atlanta. And in Collinsville. Just try. Talk. Go for the gold.

Luke Laney



Operation Christmas Child

August – School Supplies

August 4 **First Day of School**, Dekalb County Schools

August 10 First Day of School, Fort Payne Schools

Friday, September 16

Collinsville Football Dinner

3:00

Our Fellowship Hall

Friday, September 23 – Saturday, September 24

Collinsville Quilt Walk

Wednesday, September 28

SEE YOU AT THE POLE

2016

WE CRY OUT

A Generation Seeking Him!

Psalm 24:3-6

Global Week of Student Prayer

Sunday, September 25 – Saturday, October 1

Saturday, November 12

Turkey Trot

10 – 3

Food, fun and games. An antique car and tractor show, turkey shoot, cake walk, and historic “turkey toss” and a 5K run

Sunday, November 20

Community Thanksgiving Service

Calvary

Collinsville Baptist Speaker

Thanksgiving

Thursday, November 26
Lighting of Town Tree

First Sunday of Advent

Sunday, November 29

August 4 - 7

30th Annual World's Longest Yard Sale

September 26 – October 1

Dekalb County VFW Agricultural Fair

Tuesday, Nov. 8

Election Day

Please Be Sure You Are Registered to Vote

Sunday, August 14

Birthday Party for Juanita Rogers

Fellowship Hall

Noon

Sunday, July 31

Youth Back to School Rally

Collinsville Community Center

(National Guard)

Our faithful Sanctuary Choir will be on a summer break for a few
Wednesdays and will resume rehearsals later in the summer.