

# Evangelist wins souls by offering chance to win motorcycle\_92004

September 17, 2004

Posted: 9/17/04

## Evangelist wins souls by offering chance to win motorcycle

**By Sherri Brown**

*Baptist Press*

BRISTOL, Tenn. (BP)—In the shadow of the Bristol Motor Speedway, just across from a booth selling Dale Jr. T-shirts and down from a fried Oreos stand, Ronnie Hill was making his pitch. “Get your free chance to win a Harley! All you gotta do is listen to me for 10 minutes.”

Like a carnival caller, Hill beckoned: “Bring your beer, I don't care. ... Come on, boys, get on in here and win you a Harley!”

Hill, a Fort Worth-based evangelist, came to the races not to cheer on his favorite driver but to talk about Jesus to anyone among the 200,000 race fans who would listen.

---

Fort Worth-  
based  
evangelist  
Ronnie Hill (cup  
in hand) talks  
with race fans  
at the Sharpie  
500 race. Hill  
gave away a  
Harley-Davidson  
motorcycle at  
the end of the  
three-day event.  
(Sherri Brown  
Photo)

“I'm an evangelist. I want to preach to lost people,” he said. “I get so frustrated preaching in churches to five or 10 lost people.”

At Bristol, Hill found more than a handful of lost people. During the three-day Sharpie 500 race, standing in front of a Harley-Davidson Sportster 883, he preached a 10-minute salvation message 21 times to about 1,800 people. More than 750 of them indicated they had prayed for salvation for the first time. Most of those were middle-aged adults. Hill will send a letter to everyone who made a profession of faith, encouraging them to find a church home in their communities.

On the day before the race began, drivers lined State Street—the dividing line between Bristol, Va., and Bristol, Tenn.—to sign autographs and greet fans.

Hill and a group of volunteers—situated in a parking lot just down from NASCAR driver Rusty Wallace—passed out tickets “for a free chance at

winning a Harley.” On the hour, Hill preached his message—a brief, pull-no-punches NASCAR version of the gospel.

At the conclusion of his short sermon, Hill asked everyone to fill out the ticket with a name, address and phone number. If they prayed the prayer of salvation for the first time, they were to check the box at the bottom. He assured them that checking the box would not give them a better chance at winning the motorcycle.

The rest of the weekend, Hill partnered with Raceway Ministries, a group that sets up at all of the NASCAR races. Located at one of the main entrances to the speedway, volunteers distributed 40,000 tickets for a chance to win the Harley.

Janis Horn, a 56-year-old Christian from Monee, Ill., won the motorcycle and drove it home from Tennessee.

Hill originally had scheduled a revival for the weekend of the races, but the pastor who invited him canceled.

“There wasn't enough time to schedule another revival. I was telling a friend of mine from Bristol about it, and he said to come on up and he'd get tickets to the races. I told him if I came to the races, I was coming to witness,” Hill said.

And that's what he decided to do. Hill knew the NASCAR audience. He knew the majority of fans would be spiritually lost people. He also knew it would take something dramatic to convince them to stop and listen to his message. A Harley-Davidson motorcycle would do it.

Working with the Sherman-based Plyler Family Evangelism Foundation, Hill bought the \$12,000 Harley and arranged to have it shipped to Bristol.

“NASCAR fans are big on name brands. I knew if we bought a Honda,

they'd never look at it," Hill said.

Along with the Harley, Hill wrote and designed a color gospel tract and a ticket that would attract the crowds.

David Plyler of the Plyler Foundation believed Hill was on the right track.

"Ronnie meets people on their level. He draws people to the message. The message is simple. It's not a feel-good message; it's an honest presentation of the gospel," Plyler said.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention ( SBC ) and around the world.