

2nd Opinion: Obituary for Glorieta, 1952-2013

June 19, 2014

Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, which was created in August 1952, was disposed of Sept. 3, 2013. After a start as an 880-acre Breese Ranch purchase by New Mexico Baptists at a cost of \$50,000, the closing came at the direction of a do-not-resuscitate order authorized by LifeWay Christian Resources, a agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, which sold it for \$1.

Glorieta was born of a vision to offer training and Baptist development for the western United States, with God's direction. The property expanded to 2,500 acres, 18 acres of Prayer Garden, 60-plus homes and lodges, and the main campus buildings with a lake.

✘ Old auditorium at Holcomb Hall at Glorieta Conference Center. Glorieta's vision and mission were to provide discipleship, training, fellowship and reflection. People loved spiritual enrichment, renewal and Christian foundation, which Glorieta provided for 62 years.

In 1953, it began a summer training program of 12 full weeks that at least remained in place until 2008.

Many dedicated, quality leaders through the years managed and directed Glorieta's programs to develop Baptist lives and improve church members' training with new knowledge.

In later years, volunteers helped provide food services. Volunteers also helped maintain and repair campus buildings when LifeWay did not provide enough dollars to keep up.

Beginning in 1952, summer staffers served camp participants each. Summer staffers worked, worshipped, sang, fellowshiped and served during each focus week from 1952 to 2013. These thousands viewed azure skies, the largest cotton-ball clouds possible and even double rainbows as reminders that God was at Glorieta and worked through us as we learned to improve in his service to others.

Achievements

Records show that from 1952 until 2006, Glorieta provided spiritual nurture to:

- 3.5 million campers
- 2,500 people who accepted Jesus as their Savior
- 7,500 people who made a commitment to full-time Christian service

I first experienced Glorieta in August 1971 during Student Week. With that introduction, I continued for 43 years to train, vacation and relax at Glorieta in dorms, hotels, lodges and private homes. The spirit of Glorieta permeated my years of visiting in special godly fellowship and development of long-term friendships. This is a legacy that became very sad when Glorieta was terminated in 2013.

These were the best of times, and these were God's times at Glorieta.

Another cherished group were the homeowners and church-lodge owners, who built on land leased originally by the honorable Sunday School Board. The people and churches added to the sense of community at Glorieta by volunteering during the summer while bringing their church members to experience what made Glorieta special.

A betrayal

The closing of Glorieta was accomplished through the betrayal of LifeWay to the Southern Baptist Convention, the homeowners and the lodge owners.

Memories of Glorieta for millions of attenders, summer staffers, management leaders and former homeowners now are in their minds and hearts. They remember how God taught and blessed them at Glorieta.

Life goes on with the passage of Glorieta, and the memories will keep it alive in the hearts of all who spent time inside her glorious gates.

Thank you, God, for Glorieta, 1952 to 2013. Eternal thanks and blessings upon the founding fathers and the Baptist Convention of New Mexico Baptist Convention for the purchase of first 880 acres. Continued blessings to all summer staffers, former homeowners, camp managers, and the teachers and learners who came to be apart of the learning offered through the weekly training opportunities provided at Glorieta.

Mark Owen is a petroleum chemist and member of First Baptist Church in Tulsa, Okla. At various times across the past 42 years, he worked, trained and vacationed at Glorieta.