

FAITH BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

145 IROQUOIS ROAD
OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE 37830
(865) 482-5119

June 3, 2003

Dear members and friends of FBF,

One of the missions we support here at Faith Bible Fellowship made national news recently. "Atlantic City Casino to Ban Gideon Bibles" ran the headline. The first patrons of the five-star Borgata Hotel (scheduled to open this summer) will have access to amenities such as 135,000 square feet of what is euphemistically called "gaming space," a 35,000 square foot spa, "an incredible pool and recreation area," featuring 11 restaurants and bars, and dozens of other goods and services. "A total package with something to offer guests just about anything they want," boasts the internet brochure.



I suppose it's "just about" everything rather than just plain everything since patrons will be on their own when it comes to contraband like Bibles. The Borgata will be distinctive among Atlantic City hotels and casinos, indeed, distinctive among other hotels owned by parent company Boyd Gaming and MGM Mirage, for not allowing the distribution of Gideon Bibles in its 2000 rooms.

When I read the headline, I thought I could understand the decision from the standpoint of the world's bottom-line. I mean, we can only guess how many good, paying customers have been lost forever to the gambling "industry" after the despair of devastating losses drove them to the Book in the nightstand drawer. All's fair in love and war, as they say, and I thought that maybe the dark side was finally on to us for trading temporary public relations benefits for a harvest of eternal souls. After all, we don't put racing forms and bookies' parlay sheets on the bedside tables at Bible camps.

But then I read further into the story, and if the Borgata people are being candid with us about the reason for not allowing the placement of Bibles, I couldn't disagree more with the decision. "By putting one generic publication in there you're not fulfilling the needs of everybody," said spokesman Michael Facenda. Representing a somewhat larger concern, spokesman Jesus Christ once said, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4, NIV). Satisfaction of life for *every* person is found in communion with God, and that always begins with listening to Him who has spoken to us in the Scripture. Adult playgrounds are no substitute, no matter how expansive, luxurious, or profligate.

Reading further, I was surprised to find myself also in disagreement with the local Gideons representative. "I'm sure they have more important things on their mind than 'shall we put Bibles in the rooms?'" Jim Werner of the Atlantic County Camp was quoted as saying. Mr. Werner deserves credit for thinking ahead, lowering the heat, and making it easier for the hotel to reverse the decision later when press attention is not so intense. But from an eternal perspective, of the over 2 million total square feet at the Borgata devoted to the ignoble task of separating folks from their money, the most important will be the single square foot in each hotel room that should be reserved for the Book that shows the way to God, to heaven, and to life at its best.

*these [things] have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;
and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:31)*

For the cause of His Word in our lives, in our community, and in the world,

Chris