

Bass Pro Uses \$600,000 Prize to Pay Off Church Loan

Though Darrel Robertson captured national media attention last November by winning a million-dollar bass fishing tournament in Florida, the way he qualified has greater spiritual significance.

With only a 2-pound fish and less than 10 minutes to go in the semifinals, Robertson gave up. He assumed he wouldn't survive the cut to compete for the Ranger M1 Millennium title.

But with two minutes left before he had to head inland, he reeled in a bass that weighed more than 4 pounds. The next day he caught more than 10 pounds and netted a \$600,000 prize.

"You have a tendency to shrug off supernatural things," Robertson said. "But that night [of the semi-finals], I called my Sunday school teacher, and she asked what kind of problem I was having. I told her I had lost my faith, and she said, 'The Spirit of God came on me, and I held you up in prayer.'"

A week later, Robertson—an Oklahoma cattle rancher—donated \$103,000 to Southwest City (Mo.) Full Gospel Church to pay off the mortgage on its family life center. Earlier, he had given \$40,000 from his winnings at September's Wal-Mart Tour championship.

Mark Short, who has pastored the church for 15 years, said the gifts helped fulfill a prophecy. In March 1999, evangelist Sharon Saltee had promised that the building would be miraculously paid off in less than a year.

"The things the people here have seen come to pass has let them know there is a supernatural God," Short said.

The kind who can lure fish into a man's boat. AP PHOTO/CHRIS

ABRAHAM