

April 2, 1964

Anchorage Churches  
Report Little Damage

By W. H. Hansen  
For Baptist Press

Damage to Anchorage's Southern Baptist churches in the wake of the earthquake which ravaged much of the city on Good Friday is relatively light, it was determined by state Baptist headquarters at Anchorage.

The church buildings of most denominations were miraculously spared serious damage. Losses were not excessive for most Baptist church buildings, though most suffered some damage.

It is probable that church buildings at hard-hit Seward and Valdez have suffered more extensive damages. Poor communications have held up reports from these two cities. Over the rest of Alaska no other damaged churches were discovered.

Anchorage churches which suffered most damage seem to have been Faith, located in Spenard, East Third Mission (Native), and Calvary.

Faith Baptist Church was gutted by a fire only a year ago. Since that time it had been almost completely restored. Now the building shows new cracks along the side walls of the auditorium, and its brick facing has pulled away to some extent. Other damage is confined to the entryway of the building.

The pastor of Faith Church, Aubrey Short, is president of the Alaska Baptist Convention.

East Third Baptist Mission, whose building was constructed by the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board, suffered a tottered chimney. In its fall the chimney caved in a small section of the church's aluminum roof. The church was holding a week's revival.

Calvary Baptist Church on Government Hill, second largest church in the Alaska Convention, lost about 90 per cent of its lighting fixtures as the quake shook the city of Anchorage for five full minutes. Fluorescent lighting was used extensively throughout the building.

The church met on Easter Sunday in its basement, largely because no heat was available. Many of the church assembled in the 32-degree temperature with no building heat.

Two employees of the Alaska Baptist Convention were working slightly past the quitting time of 5:30 p.m. when the first wave struck at 5:36.

One of them, state Woman's Missionary Union secretary Louise Yarbrough, had come from her office on the second floor of the two-story building to type at the desk of office secretary and bookkeeper Bernice Gillespie.

"I kept begging Louise to finish so we could go by the cleaners at Fourth and 'I' Streets to pick up our clothes," Miss Gillespie recalled urging her roommate. "Had she finished a few minutes sooner, we would have been in one of the worst-struck sections of the city," said the secretary.

The experience of waiting out the tremor in the convention office building, located in the severely damaged downtown section, was far from pleasant, however. Filing cabinets spilled their contents and furniture flew wildly across the room.

After they had unsuccessfully tried to go outside the building, the two women sat on the floor in the middle of the room in an attempt to escape damage from breaking glass. Had she remained on the second floor, Miss Yarbrough would almost certainly have been injured.

The office building is located only a block away from the heavily damaged year-old J. C. Penney store and even closer to the wrecked New York Life Building.

Roy Moore, secretary for religious education in the state convention, was in a 'plane en route from Kotzebue to Anchorage at the time of the quake. The plane was unable to land at Anchorage until the following day. Executive Secretary William H. Hansen was also away from the city.

First Baptist Church is located only a half-block from Penney's and shares its parking lots for Sunday services. In spite of its location, the church suffered only the mild loss of three basement wall partitions made of two-inch concrete blocks.

First Church met for Sunday school in its own building but consolidated its evening services with Grandview Baptist Church, which was not damaged.

Trinity Baptist Church, Mountain View, had water in its basement from a broken pipe. Fairview Church suffered almost no apparent damage. University Church had the inevitable cracks. Eagle River Church reported no apparent damage. Sunset Hills Church and New Hope Church were not heard from.

Daylight illuminates a dark basement room of the Immanuel Baptist Church through a wide crack in the wall. A few fixtures were knocked from their positions, and ceiling tile fell in several places in the building. Only a half-mile away on the Seward Highway, where the church is located, severe faults are evident in the roadway.

No member of an Anchorage Baptist church was ascertained to have lost his life in the quake through Sunday midnight.

Numerous families who were members of local churches lived in the fashionable Turnagain section, which suffered heaviest damage among Anchorage residential districts. The Turnagain home of the music director of First Church, Roger Laube, suffered severe damage.

That of Dr. Royce Morgan, well-known Baptist physician in Anchorage, was also damaged. One Baptist woman experienced a mild heart attack and another a brain concussion.

Early reports from Valdez listed a member of the First Baptist Church there as dead, but the name was not found in later lists.

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#### Alaska Information

(4-2-64)

ATLANTA (BP)--Ten missionaries are jointly employed by the Alaska Baptist Convention and the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in the 49th state.

Southern Baptists number approximately 8,000 members in about 44 churches and chapels, which range in size from a handful to more than a thousand members. They are scattered over Alaska's almost 600,000 square miles from Ketchikan in the southeast to Kotzebue in the northwest.

A. B. Cash, secretary of the pioneer missions department of the mission agency, says in greater Anchorage, Southern Baptists have 14 churches, more than any other denomination.

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#### Messenger Cards Ready

(4-2-64)

NASHVILLE (BP)--Messenger registration cards for the 1964 Southern Baptist Convention are now available, according to John H. Williams of Nashville, manager of Convention arrangements for the SBC Executive Committee. Cards may be secured from state Baptist offices. Williams urged churches to ask for enough cards to certify all whom they elect as messengers.

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Parks Named Alabama  
Sunday School Secretary

MONTGOMERY (BP)--Alva G. Parks, minister of education at First Baptist Church, Montgomery, has been named state Sunday school secretary for the Alabama Baptist executive board.

Parks will begin his duties at the Baptist state office building in Montgomery May 1.

Parks, 33, is a native of Kentucky, and is a graduate of Baptists' Georgetown College in Kentucky. He holds the bachelor of divinity degree in religious education from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

Before joining the staff of First Church, Montgomery, he was minister of education at Southside Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.

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SBC Receipts Rise  
Nearly 10 Per Cent

(4-2-64)

NASHVILLE (BP)--The \$5 million mark was passed in March in Cooperative Program receipts for agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Convention Treasurer Porter Routh here said SBC Cooperative Program receipts are running 9.88 per cent ahead of the amount reported March 31, 1963.

The three-month 1964 statement is \$5,193,687 compared with \$4,726,751 the first quarter of 1963.

Designations to SBC agencies neared the \$10 million mark but are only \$64,610 ahead of the first three months last year. The January-March total this year is \$9,994,671.

During March alone, Cooperative Program income from state Baptist offices amounted to \$1,597,154. This compares with \$1,768,375 in February and with \$1,442,373 in March a year ago.

Designations, which go solely to the single purpose for which they were donated, amounted to \$2,225,836 in March.

Designations in February were \$5,242,127--still reflecting the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions--and in March, 1963 were \$2,276,834.

None of these figures includes funds which the states kept for their own missions, education and benevolent work.

The March, 1964 report and the March, 1963 report are a contrast in percentages of increase. In 1963, Cooperative Program receipts were running only 1.91 per cent over 1962, while designations were running 29.14 per cent ahead.

First quarter, 1964 disbursements to the SBC Foreign Mission Board topped \$12-1/2 million. This included the March amounts of \$2,183,558 in designations (Lottie Moon Christmas Offerings still clearing) and \$802,729 in Cooperative Program funds.

During the same three months, the Home Mission Board received \$1,055,295.

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Man, 90, Ends 75-Year  
Debate With Baptism

DALLAS (BP)--Ninety-year-old Charles V. Smith ended a 75-year debate with himself on Easter Sunday--he was baptized at Grace Temple Baptist Church here.

When he was 15 years old in Pineville, Mo., Smith was sprinkled by the only preacher in town.

For the next three-quarters of a century he debated whether sprinkling or total immersion was the proper mode of baptism.

Total immersion finally won the debate.

He was baptized on Easter Sunday, the final night of a Baptist Jubilee revival at the Southern Baptist Convention-affiliated church.

Pastor Buel Crouch administered the ordinance on the day observed as the anniversary of Christ's resurrection.

Smith was a schoolteacher for many years in Arkansas, Oklahoma, California and Missouri, and later was a store clerk. Ten years ago he retired and moved to Texas.

He said he had been attending Grace Temple Baptist Church and listening to the pastor's sermons on radio for several years.

He spends most of his time at his Dallas residence reading the Bible.

Just before his baptism, he remarked he would feel a lot better about things after the baptismal service.

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(Photo mailed to Baptist papers.)

Mrs. Mathis Becomes  
First Woman Presiding

By Davis C. Woolley  
Executive Secretary, Historical Commission  
of the Southern Baptist Convention

Mrs. R. L. Mathis, one of the vice-presidents who will in all likelihood preside at some session of the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Atlantic City, will be the first woman to preside over the Convention.

Indeed she is the first woman to be elected to an office in its 119 years of history. There was some opposition last year to the Convention's electing a woman as a vice-president by a Baptist pastor from Kentucky, who objected on the grounds it was unscriptural.

Thirty-five years ago Mrs. W. J. Cox, then president of Woman's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention, was the first woman to address the Convention meeting in Memphis in 1929. Dr. George W. Truett, Convention president, recognized Mrs. Cox as speaker.

There was objection to the Convention hearing a woman speaker, from Dr. J. W. Porter, Lexington, Ky., who sought to bar Mrs. Cox from the program on the ground "it's unscriptural." Dr. Porter presented a memorial from the General Association of Kentucky asking women not be permitted to address the Convention.

Dr. M. E. Dodd, Shreveport pastor, briefly replied to Dr. Porter quoting "in Christ there is neither male nor female," and "we are one in Christ." Dr. Dodd's brief address won the day for the women, and Dr. Porter's memorial was overwhelmingly voted down.

Mrs. Cox said in reference to the effort to bar a woman from the program of the Convention, "No woman went to sleep in the garden. No woman denied Him. No woman betrayed Him. But it was a woman, acting in intuition, who tried to save Him."

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The annual report of the Woman's Missionary Union to the Convention was presented by outstanding men of the Convention from 1888 up until the year of the 50th anniversary of the Union in 1938. That year, the report was presented by Mrs. W. J. Cox, and Mrs. F. W. Armstrong addressed the Convention.

In the past 25 years much progress has been made in the recognition of women and their contribution to the denominational programs of work.

Mrs. Mathis, the second vice-president of the Convention, will grace the office of vice-president with dignity and poise, and make her contribution demonstrating that in Christ there is no male or female, and that we are all one in Christ Jesus.

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A Baptist Press feature.