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Downtown Churches Said
Not Ministering To Needs

NASHVILLE (BP)--A two-year study of 114 Southern Baptist churches in downtown areas of cities with 100,000 population or more has disclosed that the vast majority are not ministering to the needs of the people in the downtown area.

Results of the study, conducted jointly by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board metropolitan missions department and the Baptist Sunday School Board church administration department, were released to the annual Southern Baptist Communications Conference here.

"The present church programs are not adequate in reaching and ministering to the people in the present inner-city area," declared the 259-page book reporting data of the study.

"The downtown church is not meeting the challenge of the problems of poverty, mobility of members, loss of neighborhood pride, crime and delinquency, health conditions, and personal maladjustment," said the printed report.

Statistical data supporting this conclusion included such facts as: 82.8 per cent of the churches answering the survey offer no ministry to Negro Baptists, 78.4 per cent do not offer family counseling; 88.2 per cent do not offer a child care clinic; 95.6 per cent offer no medical care; 96.7 per cent offer no pediatric counseling; and 82.4 per cent offer no psychological counseling.

In addition, 63.4 per cent of the churches do not have literacy, remedial reading, or language study classes, and 52 per cent of the pastors describe their visitation programs as "unsuccessful to a marked degree."

In 67.9 per cent of the churches, pastors indicated that the church's facilities are either not open to the community "except on rare or unusual or special occasions" or "only on certain days."

More than half, 53.7 per cent, of the churches serve an area 10 miles or more in radius and 75 per cent serve a radius of seven miles or more."

In addition, 45 per cent of the pastors indicated that less than 20 per cent of their additions had come from a one-mile radius, and over 62 per cent stated that less than 30 per cent of their additions had come from this radius.

"The church is reaching those who do not fall under the description of economic difficulties," the report stated. "This would indicate 'selective evangelism.'"

"It would seem that the local geographic community is being neglected while the church's evangelistic thrust is extended to other areas and people," the report said.

Other sections of the report indicated statistically that the churches surveyed are not reaching people who live in high rise apartments, or senior adults.

The survey also disclosed that the downtown churches are "heavily dependent on secular agencies" to meet social needs of the people in the downtown area, especially on such groups as welfare, education, social clubs and other community activities.

"A few churches are cooperatively and effectively pooling their resources in providing community services, but the avenue of ministry through such comparative efforts is wide open.

"More of the churches are learning of the availability of community resources provided by various agencies and institutions and are engaging in a program of referral," the report added.

Downtown Baptist churches have used long-range planning only sparingly, the report also concluded on the basis of data compiled.

The problems of the downtown church are complicated because, said the report "the heavy work load of the pastor and church staff is a major factor in (its) inability to minister effectively to the needs of its immediate environment."

805

Although the study discloses that 47 per cent of the pastors surveyed felt that the downtown church was "standing still", more than 72 per cent said that they definitely did not see relocation as a likely topic for discussion in the foreseeable future.

"Since the downtown church expects to remain a permanent ministry in the central business district, with only a small minority choosing to relocate, the downtown church will continue to conduct inadequate programs unless adjustments are made," the study stated.

On the basis of the data, it appears that "survival is a major concern of the downtown church," said the study.

The downtown church pastors felt that the major problem of the downtown church was "church members moving away from the community."

The report of the two-year study was presented to the Communications Conference by Brooks Faulkner of the church administration department, Baptist Sunday School Board here; and by J. N. Evans, secretary of the metropolitan missions department for the SBC Home Mission Board, Atlanta.

In his presentation, Evans said that the downtown church needs to define anew the nature and objective of its being and its purpose for existence in the downtown area of the city.

He observed that many downtown churches should study the possibility of developing training programs to teach church members how to minister to the needs of the area, provide facilities for community use, develop a program of referral with existing social agencies, develop curriculum and materials to meet needs, provide field services, cooperate financially with services to the community, and develop an overall strategy for ministering to the needs of persons in the community.

On the basis of information now available, said Evans, it would seem that a helpful procedure would be the study of the neighborhood and the needs of the people, with the church looking toward ways in which it might more effectively meet the needs of the metropolitan area.

Evans pointed out that the study offered no pat answers to the downtown churches, but it clearly indicated the extent of the problems the downtown churches face.

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Valley Baptist Hospital 806
Aids Beulah's Victims

9/25/67

280

HARLINGEN, Tex(BP)--Personnel at the Valley Baptist Hospital were working around the clock in the wake of Hurricane Beulah.

T. H. Morrison Jr., administrator for the 153-bed hospital, reported by telephone that five to seven doctors were treating a capacity number of patients ranging from heart attack to dysentery.

He told James Basden, secretary of the Human Welfare Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in Dallas, his institution was working with various other groups such as Red Cross, Salvation Army and Civil Defense in order to take care of the victims of the devastating hurricane and its aftermath.

He also said that the hospital had taken over blood-bank facilities.

Morrison added his praise for the doctors and hospital personnel, many of whom have worked almost night and day since the hurricane hit four days earlier. Morrison said the hospital emergency room was admitting patients without charge.

The administrator told Basden among the first patients they had, other than the ones who were there before the hurricane struck, were all heart attack patients. A busload of children arrived for care yesterday, Morrison said.

The hospital has kept in touch with the outside world because of a ham radio operator, a hospital staff member, who brought his equipment to the institution prior to the devastating hurricane, the administrator reported.

Basden commended the forethought and planning of the hospital administration and staff.

"This indicates the type of leadership we have in our Baptist hospitals all over the Southern Baptist Convention," he said.

"All of this has brought great stress to the hospital and the end is not within sight. When it is all over, the hospital may have a operating deficit of a sum of \$25,000 to \$35,000 without any promises of additional income," Basden said.

-30-

806

September 25, 1967

3

Baptist Press

Humphrey Favors Federal
Aid During Furman Talk

807

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GREENVILLE, S.C. (BP)--Vice President Hubert Humphrey said at Furman University (Baptist) here that he believed in separation of church and state, but also favored federal aid to church-related colleges.

"I don't think this violates our principles of that separation," the vice president told more than 2,000 students at an afternoon chapel address.

The vice president drew applause when he made the statement regarding federal aid. It came only one week before the South Carolina Baptist Convention was scheduled to release a detailed report on the issue of federal aid to its schools, including Furman.

Humphrey also got loud applause when he answered questions concerning Vietnam and federal aid to riot-torn cities in the United States.

On Vietnam, he scored news media for "irresponsible reporting" in some instances, and said the South Vietnamese troops "are as brave as any over there."

On rioting in the United States, Humphrey said that the answers to problems in American cities cannot be found in riots. He said the riots must be put down and the leaders punished.

Federal funds to riot-stricken cities must be matched with local funds and local wisdom in using the funds, Humphrey said.

In addition to his chapel address, Humphrey answered questions for an hour to a panel of four students and two professors.

Humphrey was in Greenville for dedication ceremonies of a new regional mental health center.

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Hurricane Beulah Spares
Texas Baptist Churches

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9/25/67

406

BROWNSVILLE, Tex. (BP)--Apparently most Texas Baptist churches escaped serious damage in Hurricane Beulah's devastation of South Texas.

Many Baptist families, however, found themselves without homes, food and adequate shelter.

An immediate assessment of damage to churches was not available. Clean-up operations are still being hampered by flooding and lack of public communication. Early reports, however, indicate roof and flood damage.

T. A. Patterson, executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, dispatched an emergency relief team to South Texas to aid churches and missions.

He said the purpose of the team "is to give immediate assistance to Baptist work in the area enabling them to minister to the total community." Patterson also announced disaster funds were already in the hands of the team.

Meanwhile, an emergency appeal for aid to victims who bore the full brunt of the hurricane's 160 m.p.h. punch when it hit Texas was made throughout Texas Baptist churches.

The state executive secretary requested the nearly 4,000 churches affiliated with the state convention to ask their membership for clothing, canned foods and furniture. Many churches reportedly answered with funds as well when the appeal was sounded.

Patterson added that convention personnel would organize work forces for grading and marking clothes for distribution. All efforts are being channeled through area missionaries and local civil authorities.

As Beulah's fury was being unleashed on a scattered 150-mile path between Port Isabel on the coast, then inland to Brownsville, Alice and Laredo, Tex., many pastors remained in their area, working around the clock providing temporary sanctuaries for thousands of people fleeing their homes. Pastors opened their church facilities, joining many institutions and businesses in aiding evacuees.

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One Brownsville pastor, Matias Quintanilla of Southmost Baptist Mission, took advantage of the huge crowds at his mission and conducted several evangelistic services in the many rooms where 198 men, women and children gathered.

First Baptist Church in Port Isabel, Tex., the town allegedly hardest hit by unpredictable Beulah, was virtually undamaged. The old brick structure suffered only water damage in the choir section. In contrast the town itself was 85 per cent damaged or destroyed.

The Valley Baptist Academy at Harlingen, Tex., also suffered slight window breakage and minor flooding as did its older structure which is still being used for living quarters for some academy faculty. Similar damage was experienced by Valley Baptist Hospital.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: This initial report on Beulah will be succeeded, probably on Wednesday, with a wrapup story giving human interest developments and specific information on the extent of damage to Baptist churches. Baptist Press Staff Writer Al Morgan covered the hurricane and will provide photographs as well as the wrapup.

--Baptist Press

Science Building
Dedicated At Baylor

809

9/25/67

126

WACO, Tex. (BP)--A new \$2 million science building has been formally dedicated at Baylor University here.

The Sid W. Richardson Science Building, named for the late Fort Worth oilman and Baylor graduate, was built partly with funds donated by the Sid W. Richardson Foundation.

The three floors of the u-shaped building in use since June, house the departments of biology, geology, mathematics and psychology.

The foundation's director, Perry R. Bass of Fort Worth, was among those who spoke at dedication ceremonies.

Chairman of the Baylor University board of trustees, Hilton E. Howell of Waco, acknowledged the foundation's help in making the new structure possible.

Howell, on behalf of the board of trustees, formally accepted the building as the newest structure on the Waco campus.

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