



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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---FEATURES

produced by Baptist Press

"A Personal View"

Windowless Sockets Stare
At Pillage Left By Celia

08-07-70

By Orville Scott
Baptist Press Staff Writer

CORPUS CHRISTI, Tex. (BP)--Stunned victims were beginning to stir as we entered the wasteland of once beautiful "Corpus Christi by the sea" the morning after Hurricane Celia rampaged through with winds clocked at 161 miles per hour.

I was part of the vanguard of Texas Baptists' disaster relief task force, which included Bob Dixon, Roberto Garcia, Harry Hamblen, Clinton Watson and Jerry Bob Taylor, all of the state convention office in Dallas.

We watched in amazement as the damage grew steadily worse south of Beeville, Tex., across a 75-mile-long stretch of flat Gulf Coast terrain.

Many houses and buildings were unroofed. At Mathis, Tex., for example, some 40 miles inland from where the raging winds first slammed ashore, the roof and a wall caved in at a Baptist mission.

Corpus Christi itself appeared totally wrecked. Along the freeways leading into the city, twisted corrugated roofing and road signs were mounted like miles of metal tumbleweeds against a high fence dividing the traffic lanes.

Electric power poles up to a foot in diameter had been snapped off and deposited on roadways, a twisted mass of wood, wire and cables. Heavy steel railroad cars were knocked off rails. Large steel storage tanks near a refinery were smashed as if struck by a giant's fist.

Residents said the winds ripped the city from three different directions for about three hours. After the first blast of 160 mph winds from the north, the eye of the hurricane enveloped the city.

"For about 25 minutes," said a Civil Defense worker, "the air was so still a feather would have floated straight down." Many residents, who had received scant warning since the storm suddenly changed directions to draw a bead on Corpus Christi, went outside to board up windows.

A Baptist task force worker learned that his relatives in a nearby town---four adults and five children--had survived the storm huddled on the floor of their home after the roof and walls blew away. The wind was too strong for them to walk to shelter, they said.

The downtown and business areas of Corpus Christi were in shambles. Ravaged buildings stared from windowless sockets, and glass and debris were everywhere.

One of the city's largest department stores had collapsed, along with many smaller buildings.

Throughout the residential areas of Corpus Christi and surrounding towns, streets and lawns were choked with twisted, uprooted trees, mingled with sections of roofs.

It first appeared that not a building or a home in the area had survived Celia's fury unscathed.

Later, Vernon Smith, a deacon at Windsor Park Baptist Church here, looked at the devastation in his neighborhood and told us that there was "not a scratch" on his home.

"We had prayer during the storm," he explained. "Don't tell me prayer doesn't pay. I'm convinced the Lord took care of us."

Baptist churches were among the buildings destroyed or severely damaged by the hurricane.

A Latin American woman and child walked among the debris left when half the roof and a wall of First Mexican Baptist Church, Corpus Christi, were ripped away.

One pastor was found sitting in apparent shock on a pile of bricks and debris. The front and back walls of the church stood, but both sides and the roof had been torn out.

Half the Baptist associational missions office was ripped away as if it had exploded. Materials and equipment were lying in the debris.

Corpus Christi Baptist Association Superintendent of Missions Bill Colson said the city looked as if it had been hit by "500 tornados."

(more)

Electrical power and telephones were out from Beeville, Tex., to beyond Corpus Christi. Residents recalled how their ancestors lived before modern conveniences were taken for granted.

Automobiles lined up for blocks to purchase gas from the few stations which could activate auxiliary power supplies to operate gasoline pumps. Many cars, however, were wrecked.

"I'll never again overemphasize material things," said a pastor of a Baptist church.

Despite the inconveniences and the suffering, there were bright spots.

Residents expressed thanks that comparatively little rain or damaging tides accompanied the hurricane. Bright sunshine that followed gave many an opportunity to seal off broken windows and repair roofs, avoiding further water damage.

Watching little groups of neighbors talking and working together to repair their homes, Assistant Missions Superintendent Roland Williams of Corpus Christi Baptist Association said, "It has brought people together like nothing before. In most cases, those who had food shared with their neighbors."

Two days after the storm, the task force and volunteers at Morgan Avenue Baptist Church waited for the arrival of trucks loaded with food and roofing materials.

The Morgan Avenue church, one of the lesser damaged facilities in the area, had been designated as a relief center.

While relief workers searched for a warehouse that was still intact, Baptists throughout the country were said to be collecting food, money and supplies to aid the victims of the most damaging hurricane to hit the Texas Gulf Coast since 1918.

Meanwhile, I was having special problems even in trying to leave to join the task force trip to the stricken area. Because of previous stories she had heard about the aftermath of hurricanes, my wife wouldn't let me leave home until she had rushed to the store for a snakebite kit.

Although there were reports that poisonous snakes had invaded the Corpus Christi area after the hurricane, the pity of it all was that I didn't even see one, let alone get to use my new snakebite kit.

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Money, Food Needed
By Hurricane Victims

CORPUS CHRISTI, Tex. (BP)--Money and nonperishable food are the urgent needs of Hurricane Celia victims, said Charles McLaughlin of Dallas, chairman of the Texas Baptist disaster relief committee.

Food should be sent to Morgan Avenue Baptist Church, 1525 Morgan Avenue, Corpus Christi, Tex. Contents should be clearly marked on the outside of boxes, McLaughlin said.

To facilitate handling and storage when goods arrive in Corpus Christi, everyone planning to send a shipment has been asked first to contact McLaughlin at 404 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex., 75201, phone (214) 741-1991.

Checks should be clearly marked "disaster relief" and sent to R. A. Springer, treasurer, Baptist General Convention of Texas, 201 Baptist Building, Dallas.

"There are far more heavily-damaged churches where money is needed than ever before," McLaughlin said.

Building damages at First Baptist Church, Portland, Tex., for example, total over \$200,000 with more than \$60,000 uninsured damage. The pastor, W. D. Broadway, lost his entire library.

Bedding and furniture can be received at the gymnasium of the Travis Avenue Baptist Church, 4001 Schanen, Corpus Christi, McLaughlin said. Other relief centers are being set up as buildings are secured, he added.

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August 7, 1970

Baptist Conference Agrees On Responsibility of Dissent

WASHINGTON (BP)--More than 100 Baptists from the United States and Canada were unanimous in supporting the "right of dissent" during the fourteenth annual Religious Liberty Conference here sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The unanimity dissappeared, however, at that point as some of the participants urged dissent ranging from mild protest through established channels to the ultimate use of force and violence after other means failed. Even so, before it concluded, the conferees were in agreement on many Christian approaches and responsibilities to dissent.

The theme of the conference was "Dissent in Church and State." Five areas were in the minds of the conferees as they discussed principles and practices for Baptists. These were dissent against war, depersonalization, injustice, the politico-economic system, and institution centered religion.

The speeches, discussions and reports made at the conference do not represent the policy of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs or of the eight denominations that maintain the office in the nation's capital. The conference views become resource material for the Baptist Joint Committee and for the sponsoring denominations, who in turn decide their own policy positions for themselves.

The small group section on "Dissent as Political Strategy" reported to the whole conference: "The group is unanimous in affirming the right and responsibility of dissent as a precious part of Baptist tradition and American civil and political heritage. Suppression of dissent leads to an authoritarian state. Dissent must never be equated with disloyalty."

Another section said: "We agreed that the church could and should be the conscience of the state and the community. With this in mind, we need to help church people to know how to dissent without fear. Our responsibility to Christ should enable us to learn how to differ in love."

A third section declared: "We believe the Christian should offer a listening ear to the dissenter and support his right to dissent even if we disapprove of his cause. Dissent should be channeled into the most positive and creative possibilities. People should be educated to the available channels of redress but a readiness to respond to immediate need without the delay of going through channels should be developed."

Conscience was defined by one of the sections as "the inner sense of moral direction through which a person expresses a system of values."

To this definition the section added that "the biblical basis of conscience is that decisions and actions are motivated by and based upon what one perceives to be for him that course which is described in the Bible and dictated by the Holy Spirit."

To implement the dictates of conscience the section devised nine guidelines for Christian dissent: "(1) be sure we have accurate information on which to work; (2) be willing to take risks; (3) know our own values, moral and otherwise; (4) do not use other people simply as a means to an end;

"(5) Be committed to work for constructive results; (6) avoid retaliatory or vindictive measures; (7) cooperate with others who are working to remedy the same injustices; (8) recognize the right of dissent by others who may have a different set of values; and (9) make our dissent responsible, open and honest."

Commenting on both the right to consent or dissent, the section report said, "All persons, including young adults in college, should be heard with respect in setting policies and rules. At the same time, there should be respect for those in the roles of leadership. It should be recognized that the old as well as the young and all those in between, of varying kinds and sorts and colors have a right to be heard."

The section on "Dissent as Political Strategy" urged the churches to become more active against injustice and oppression in society.

Specifically, this section said that "in our churches we must be ever vigilant to:

- "1. Insure a free pulpit and denominational press;
- "2. Maintain professional denominational agencies for proclaiming and defending principles of social justice; and
- "3. Prepare young people to serve as committed Christians in the political parish."

This section declared that "the church must be the breeding ground for the prophet.

"Recognizing the threat of the imminent collapse of humanity's most sacred values," it continued, "we urge Christians to vigorously exercise their constitutional right and responsibility of dissent. We affirm that it is our duty to nurture, protect and preserve the prophets of change."

The section on "Dissent as Personal Tactics" recommended four "techniques or tactics employed to achieve" Christian objectives. Listed by the group were:

- "1. Propaganda - positive information that is factual and constructive.
- "2. Negotiation - attempt to work through the problems - dissenter and authority talking through their differences and attempting to agree on a course of action or position.
- "3. Use of legal, political, and economic pressure - court cases, boycotts and selective patronage are all examples of such pressure.
- "4. Civil disobedience - the non-violent breaking of laws with assumption of the personal consequences for violation of the law."

The Religious Liberty Conferences are under the direction of James H. Sapp, Director of correlation services of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The 105 participants were from the Southern Baptist Convention, American Baptist Convention, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., National Baptist Convention of America, Baptist General Conference, North American Baptist General Conference, Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc., and the Baptist Federation of Canada.

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Celia Wrecks Havoc in 75 Baptist Churches; Relief Efforts Underway

By Orville Scott

CORPUS CHRISTI, Tex. (BP)--Damage by Hurricane Celia to Baptist churches and other facilities over a wide area of the Texas Gulf Coast may run in the millions, Texas Baptist leaders said.

About 75 Texas Baptist churches and related buildings were damaged, many of them severely, by the killer storm which ravaged the lower Gulf Coast with winds up to 161 M.P.H.

Aid for the hurricane victims was almost immediate. The morning after Celia left Corpus Christi and surrounding towns torn and mangled, a task force was sent into the area by the Texas Baptist disaster relief committee.

The task force, cooperating with Civil Defense and other agencies, began distribution of food to all needy hurricane victims, established communications and activated Baptist disaster relief centers.

Morgan Avenue Baptist Church, one of the lesser damaged buildings in Corpus Christi, was designated as Texas Baptists' first relief center.

Earlier, the church had sheltered 200 people driven from their homes by the savage storm.

The Texas Baptist State Missions Commission approved \$150,000 for relief victims of Celia. The amount included \$5,000 given by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, which received extensive help following the Hurricane Camille disaster last year.

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The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta gave \$25,000.

Texas Baptists' Executive Secretary T. A. Patterson and Charles McLaughlin, head of the State Missions Commission, said other relief funds were to come through a special offering taken in Texas Baptists' 4,000 churches on Aug. 9 and through the convention's disaster relief fund.

The first truckloads of food and supplies came from Baptists in San Antonio, Houston, Tyler and Lubbock, Tex. The relief operation is expected to continue and increase in weeks to come, Baptist officials said.

"Because most warehouses and other storage facilities were destroyed or damaged by the storm," McLaughlin said, "we urge everyone to consult our office in Dallas before sending supplies.

"This way, we can be prepared to receive and distribute them where they are most needed," said McLaughlin, head of the Texas convention disaster relief committee.

Assisting in the relief operations was a 54-member youth choir from Swope Park Baptist Church, Kansas City, Mo. The young people who rode out the hurricane in the basement of the Morgan Avenue Baptist Church, voted unanimously to remain for a week to aid hurricane victims.

A second wave of workers left the state convention offices in Dallas four days after the disaster to join the task force already at work. The group will assist churches technically and financially in rebuilding and continuing their programs.

At the University of Corpus Christi, four apartment buildings and the printing shop were completely destroyed, according to Kenneth A. Maroney, president of the Baptist school.

The art, science, administration, Student Union, gymnasium, and music buildings all suffered serious roof damage and broken windows.

The university's modern new library building lost many books when its windows were broken, allowing rain to pour into the stacks.

Summer school at the Baptist school was cancelled, but about 30 students remained on campus to assist in cleanup and repair operations. President Maroney said school will be held this fall.

About 40 miles away, at Zephyr Baptist Encampment in Sandia, Tex., several dormitories were destroyed.

Damage to Texas Baptist churches in the hurricane-wrecked area may be in excess of \$1 million, said McLaughlin.

Robert Dixon, executive secretary of Texas Baptist Men, who led the initial Baptist task force in the storm ravaged area, said the hurricane wrecked Baptist facilities far beyond any previous disaster in Texas.

Local officials said the storm demolished 90 per cent of Corpus Christi and surrounding towns. Damage to Baptist facilities was about average for the area. About half of the Corpus Christi Baptist Association building seemed to have exploded reminiscent of a tornado.

Some churches were almost completely destroyed, while others had sections of roofs and walls torn out, allowing the rain to soak fixtures and furniture.

Among the churches destroyed were Tuloso Midway Baptist Church of Corpus Christi and Portland Baptist Church which had only the front and rear walls standing amid debris of a new building.

As far inland as Mathis, nearly 40 miles from Corpus Christi,^a large section of the roof and a wall caved in at the Mexican Baptist mission.

Throughout residential and city areas, streets and lawns were littered with twisted and uprooted trees and the remains of businesses and homes.

The 161 mile-per-hour wind snapped large power line poles, leaving the entire area without electricity. It knocked railroad cars from their tracks, and hurled mobile homes about like toys.

Downtown Corpus Christi was a shambles with large buildings staring from windowless sockets and glass and debris scattered everywhere. One of the city's largest department stores collapsed.

Before the hurricane struck, the Texas Baptist disaster relief committee was standing by, ready to offer aid.

Locally, Baptist churches worked with Civil Defense and other agencies. Six Baptist churches had been designated as refugee centers and stocked with supplies.

The Morgan Avenue and Parkdale Baptist Churches, between them, sheltered about 300 people during the storm.

A few days after the storm, the State Missions Commission, at the suggestion of executive secretary Patterson, urged that an emergency mobile unit with communications and relief facilities be purchased by the convention for possible future disasters.

With nearly all phones out in the storm area communications with outside areas was almost impossible, Patterson said.

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Lead in Dissent and Reform,
Youth Urge Baptist Conferees

8/7/70

WASHINGTON (BP)--The church must pioneer in exploring and constructing new means of dissent and should take "its rightful place" in leading the changes which must come about in our world, a group of young persons told fellow conferees in the final plenary session of the 14th annual Baptist Religious Liberty Conference here.

Declaring that "the church ought to be the breeding ground for the prophet," the young spokesmen expressed grave concern over what is going to happen in the church during this time of "revolution."

Is the church "going to take the lead in many changes?" Ted Overman, director of community ministries at the Jochenning Baptist Center here, asked. "Are we going to accept change in a positive way or will it happen in negative and destructive ways if we (the church) do not lead?" he continued.

Urging that churchmen "immerse ourselves" in dissent "in our own localities where it gets risky," Overman said he wondered if church people would welcome the revolution as a "form of renovation" for the church, and "not be afraid of it."

The conference, working on the theme, "Dissent in Church and State," was sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. A total of 105 participants registered from nine Baptist denominations in the United States and Canada.

At least one-fifth of these were under thirty years of age, conference officials said. Special provision to hear the supplementary report of the young persons was made by the conference.

In their formal statement, the young persons, who had participated in the regular group and section discussions, stated that "progressive people throughout the religious community must band together to put into action our belief that it is our moral responsibility to effect social change."

In other reports the conferees agreed on the necessity for and the right of dissent. They also said that denominational and church leaders "need to help church people to know how to dissent without fear."

Acting as the spokesman for the youth group, Overman said he and the other young persons at the meeting, had "looked with consternation" on the world and society in which we live.

Overman, a former student at Golden Gate Theological Seminary, said that Baptists need "not just to reorder our priorities and not just to dissent against the values of society.

"We need a new system of values," Overman declared. "We need to dissent against the whole system which places emphasis on things, not persons...We need a new world order that will involve an emphasis on life, not death, on man and society itself, rather than on a perpetuation of the status quo."

As an example of misplaced values, Jim Garrison, a former student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, told the story of a pastor who led his church in an "intensive training period on Christian discipleship."

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The pastor's efforts, Garrison said, led eventually to a change in membership policy of the church to open the doors "to all who believed... regardless of race, color or economic condition." This action cost the church almost half the membership and the budget was cut in half, Garrison related.

The young seminarian who is now an assistant Baptist Student Union director at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Va., observed: "The pastor may have lost a financially productive organization or a club, but I feel that he has found a church in the true sense."

Among the suggestions made for action during the special presentation by the youth was that church members take a more active role in legislative lobbying. "Not lobbying simply for the church, simply for tax exemption status, or simply for the churches' self interest," Overman expressed.

"But in lobbying actively through our representatives in the political arena of life for man, for humanity, for justice, and against the oppression and the repression which characterizes so much of society today."

Overman proposed that Baptists "redefine" the doctrine of separation of church and state... "so we don't use this as an excuse not to get involved in society and politics and the world of reality."

The possibility of a violent revolution in the country and the threat of the "imminent collapse of humanity's most sacred values" was acknowledged by many participants in the section reports of the three-day meeting.

This fear was underscored by several of the young people as they told their fellow Baptists in the closing session that "that's what its coming to very fast."

Steve Anders, a young man from Arlington, Va., said he didn't believe that very many of "even our liberal church members understand how fast this is coming down."

Anders, who said he is now living in the "Free Community" in Atlanta, told of citizen and police harassment of hippies there. He said that "this is happening all over the country to your kids...and your kids will not stand for it much longer."

"My whole feeling is that there is just not a sense of urgency in getting across to our people that if things don't change now for the better we don't have any other choice but violence...That's where we are going, and nobody wants to go there," Anders declared.

"At this point it is really urgent that we get together," Anders pled. Others, both young and middle-aged, agreed that "the sense of urgency" could not be overstated.

The presentation by the young persons affirmed both optimism and conviction that the Christian faith "has an inherent potential" for the national crisis.

John Collett of Maynardville, Tenn., said that "in this historical situation...in which a segment of our society is in rebellion, this is the best time...in which the Kingdom of God can fit in so well to the philosophies of the young people."

"What they are asking for," Collett continued, "is to be lifted above the historical situation; to have a state of conscience and freedom which is above the day-to-day routine and authorities of church and state."

"The Kingdom of God is that," the young churchman emphasized.

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64 Missionary Journeymen
Commissioned By Foreign Board

8/7/70

RICHMOND (BP)--Sixty-four Missionary Journeymen were commissioned for work in 32 countries around the world during special services conducted by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board here.

Each of the 64 Journeymen has a college or university background and work experience to bolster them overseas, but Baker James Cauthen, executive secretary of the SBC Foreign Mission Board, said their basic qualification is "that each as a person came to feel his own deep need of Jesus Christ."

Cauthen spoke at the commissioning service for the sixth group of Journeymen appointed by the board, urging the young people to "sing with their lives" as they live and work abroad.

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Journeyman are young Baptist men and women no older than 26 who work overseas for two years with career missionaries.

They trained for eight weeks this summer at Meredith College, a Baptist school in Raleigh, N. C., before being commissioned.

They are assigned to jobs such as medical technology, secretarial assistance, teaching, recreation, social work, accounting and bookkeeping, nursing, and public relations.

Cauthen urged the Journeyman to "sing with joyfulness in Jesus Christ" and "sing with their testimonies" through their vocations.

"Much of their radiance grows out of emancipation from the material," Cauthen said. "They deliberately go to give. They take their jobs with an eye upon the service they can render rather than upon their own personal advantage."

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Information about Journeyman from your state will be sent direct to you from the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

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California Baptist Building
Vandalized During Night

8/7/70

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--Vandals broke into the office building of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California here, shattering doors and windows, damaging walls and typewriters, and mutilating photographs and pictures.

An accurate estimate of the extent of damage was not immediately available, but one convention official said it would probably be in the neighborhood of \$3,000.

Police speculated that entrance was gained through the California Southern Baptist Foundation office. Most of the damage was done in the child care office, the Baptist Book Store, and the coffee room, all on the first floor.

The inside door of the Book Store was shattered, two typewriters were damaged, and records and books were strewn on the floor.

The soft drink machine in the coffee room was damaged, evidently with a heavy object, and several glassware items were broken. A window in the coffee room was also shattered, and glass covered the floor.

Although an attempt was made to break into the safe in the California Baptist Foundation office, the vandals were not able to crack the safe.

Pictures in the hallways were mutilated, and numerous holes were punched in the walls of the halls and the doors. The drawers on one of the secretaries' desks were bent out of shape.

All decorative items, including flower pots, pictures, etc., in another office were dumped on the floor.

Apparently only one item was stolen--an adding machine.

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