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March 16, 1973

**Baptist Layman Convinced
Tornado Was Not a Dream**

By Robert O'Brien

HUBBARD, Tex. (BP)--Billy Ray Vardaman thought it was a dream--a horrible nightmare.

But his painfully-battered body has him convinced that the tornado which left its crushing footprints on this small Texas town was, in fact, a reality.

Even the next day, as he lay in Hubbard's small hospital, the Baptist layman couldn't completely sort his dream-like recollections from the reality of the ruins of a home which literally exploded around him, his wife and two children.

"I seemed to hear things breaking up--but maybe it was a dream," he recalled. "I thought I saw a tree zip by...but maybe I dreamed it."

Vardaman, 32, a member of Hubbard's First Baptist Church, dragged himself from the rubble through the cold, driving rain and groped through the early-morning darkness for his family.

His four-year-old and one-year-old sons suffered only slight injuries. Vardaman was battered from head to foot. His wife received multiple lacerations, bruises and a crushed vertebra.

When the mobile disaster unit of the Baptist General Convention of Texas set up in Hubbard later that afternoon to begin feeding tornado victims, workers marveled that so few died in the path of the destruction the tornado had left behind.

The tornado, accompanied by torrential rains, took seven lives in Hubbard, injured about 100 and destroyed several hundred homes and businesses in Hubbard and Burnet, another small town severely hit.

No Southern Baptist churches were damaged except First Baptist Church, Burnet, which lost some windows. A missionary Baptist Church and a Church of God, both in Hubbard, were destroyed.

No Baptists were killed but a number received injuries or suffered severe damage to their homes.

The Texas Baptist disaster relief committee, chaired by State Missions Commission Secretary Charles P. McLaughlin, launched a two-pronged relief effort after receiving news of the disasters.

Robert E. Dixon, executive secretary of the Texas Baptist Men's organization, had trained members of the statewide disaster relief force ready to move in, hours after the funnel struck.

U.S. Army field kitchens covered the situation in Burnet and the National Guard was called to prevent looting in both towns.

Meanwhile, the Texas Baptist mobile unit, a rebuilt and fully self-contained tractor-trailer outfit, rolled into Hubbard.

Directed by Jerry Bob Taylor, a Texas Baptist Royal Ambassador consultant, the unit set up at Lovely Hope Baptist Church, a black congregation whose pastor, Elmo Davis, lost his home and all of his belongings. His wife and two children were hospitalized with serious injuries.

Texas Baptists and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, which volunteered immediate assistance, will share disaster relief costs.

By the time the disaster unit pulled out four days later, it had served hot meals to some 1,800 persons, mostly low income blacks, severely hit by the tornado, and work crews of the Texas Power and Light Co., who worked around the clock to re-establish electric power.

The unit--a major part of the Texas Baptist disaster relief master plan--carries its own food, water, emergency supplies, sleeping and work quarters, generator capable of running a hospital, two-way communication equipment, boat, trail-bike and tools.

Texas Baptists have dispatched second-phase task forces to both towns, which have been declared disaster areas by the federal government.

"They will survey the damage and losses and correlate with the Red Cross and other agencies looking at uninsured damage and losses and needs," McLaughlin said.

He said \$5,000 in disaster relief funds have already been dispatched to Hubbard and that a study is underway to determine needs in Burnet.

Residents of the two areas had one emotion in common--shock. Some moved through the wreckage almost like sleepwalkers.

"But the shock will wear off," commented one worker. "Then the grief and depression will take its toll. That's when our spiritual ministries task force (part of the Texas Baptist disaster plan) will be needed most."

Mrs. Zulethia Sweeney of Hubbard, a 76-year-old black, stood in the ruins of her bed--crushed to rubble by a flying telephone pole.

"I was sleeping right here," she marveled. "Suddenly I woke up and found the house on top of me. It was cold and raining and I couldn't free myself from the lumber, but I wasn't hurt bad.

"I thank the lord for life. I'm not going to let this bother me."

Elmo Davis woke up wedged between a large butane tank and the ruins of his Baptist parsonage.

"It was cold and I hurt," he said, fingering a heavily bandaged forehead and gazing resignedly at the ruins. "I just knew my family was gone.

"Then I heard my wife and daughter moaning under the wreckage. Some neighbor boys helped me pull them out. We looked for 15 minutes for my 11-year-old boy before we found him--about 15 yards away. He had a cracked skull. But the Lord was good--he was alive."

Later that morning--a bright and warm Sunday--Davis appeared as usual in the pulpit of Lovely Hope Baptist Church.

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BP PHOTO mailed to state Baptist papers

J.M. Crowe Elected
President of PCPA

3/16/73

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (BP)--J.M. Crowe, executive president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, was elected president of the Protestant Church-Owned Publishers' Association during the organization's annual meeting here.

Additionally, Crowe was elected to serve on the interdenominational association's eight-member executive committee.

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Six other staff members of the Sunday School Board were named to other committees of the association.

The Protestant Church-Owned Publishers' Association is an independent, voluntary organization concerned with the interests of its membership, which is compiled of non-profit Protestant church-owned publishing institutions.

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BP PHOTO mailed to Baptist state papers.

Pastor's Behavior, Church Size
Related, Louisiana Survey Shows

3/16/73

PINEVILLE, La. (BP)--The size of church membership appears to affect the behavior of the pastor in a measurable way, two professors at Louisiana College concluded here on the basis of data obtained in a survey of 473 Southern Baptist pastors in Louisiana.

The survey was conducted by Sarah Frances Anders, chairman of the department of sociology, and James A. Young, chairman of the department of religion, at the Baptist school here. Of the 1,100 pastors queried, 473 usable replies were returned.

The survey gave a personal profile of the "average" Louisiana Baptist pastor, isolated about a dozen categories of "crucial" problems the pastors face, and outlined behavioral characteristics which seemed to relate directly to the size of the church, the professors wrote in a summary of their findings.

Generally, as the size of the church membership increases, the time the pastor spends on church administration increases, even though larger churches employ larger staffs which theoretically should release the pastor to give more attention to other duties, the survey disclosed.

There is also a direct relationship between the size of the church and the pastor's participation in civic activities. As the size of the church increases, so does the pastor's activity in civic affairs, the professors noted.

A third behavioral characteristic disclosed that as the size of the church membership increases, the time spent on sermon preparation decreases; and a fourth trend indicated that the number of academic degrees held by the pastor increases with the size of church membership.

"These four observations should sound a note of alarm to cause us to reassess the basic responsibility of the minister and point up the need for a priority re-evaluation," wrote Professors Anders and Young in a summary of their findings published in the Louisiana Baptist Messenger.

The survey disclosed that the average pastor in Louisiana spends 25 per cent of his time in sermon preparation, 39 per cent in pastoral care, 21 per cent in administrative duties, and the remaining 15 per cent in other duties.

When asked how they preferred to spend their time, 40 per cent said they felt more time was needed in sermon preparation, and 39 per cent said they felt more time was needed in pastoral care. Only 15 per cent felt the need to spend more time in administration.

"The fact that the typical pastor feels the need for more time for sermon preparation may indicate a need for laymen to provide for the administrative responsibilities," thus releasing the pastor for more attention to other areas of ministry, the professors concluded.

An open-ended question asked the pastor to identify the most critical problem facing his church. Content analysis produced 11 different categories of problems.

Among the most frequently mentioned problems, according to professor Anders, were inadequate financial support for the church, an attitude of indifference and apathy among members of the congregation, and inadequate facilities in the church building plant.

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Other problems isolated by the survey included (not in order of frequency) personality conflicts within the church, inadequately trained leadership, theological differences within the church, failure by the church to minister to people and society; immaturity and lack of Christian growth among members, inadequate programs and resistance to change programs to meet needs; failure of the church in outreach, enlistment and evangelism, and miscellaneous problems that did not fit in any other category.

The professors, in their analysis, noted a difference between those pastors who received all of their education in Louisiana, and those who were educated on a broader geographic plane.

Those educated in Louisiana tend to see the major problem existing within the church fellowship, spending more time on internal matters, while those educated elsewhere tend to see major problems in the church's lack of involvement with social problems and other issues of more importance to the community at large, they observed.

The survey results indicated a higher degree of stability among Louisiana pastors than those of the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole, the professors noted.

The typical Louisiana Baptist pastor exceeds the average for the SBC in both educational preparation and tenure at his church, the professors said. The average Louisiana pastor has spent five years in his current pastorate, compared to a three and one-half year average for the SBC; and has completed 17 1/2 years of schooling, also exceeding the SBC average, the survey noted.

The Louisiana professors noted, however, that the responses to their survey were biased somewhat in favor of the better educated, larger churches, and that no allowance had been made to correct for a possible greater return among these pastors. The SBC figures are corrected statistically for such bias.

A profile of the typical respondent, statistically, described the "average" Louisiana Baptist pastor as: a man in his early forties whose resident congregation is 375 members with a Sunday School enrollment of 265. He has one and one-half years of education beyond the bachelor of arts degree, usually spent in a Baptist seminary. He has served at least three full-time and two part-time pastorates in a ministry lasting an average of 17 1/2 years. He has been in his present pastorate more than five years.

The survey also disclosed that of 319 respondents who have earned a college degree, 250 were earned at Baptist colleges and 69 at state-supported colleges. Of the 250 who earned degrees at Baptist schools, 219 went on to earn a seminary degree; compared to only four of the 69 who earned degrees at state schools.

"These facts surely reveal the predominant role the Baptist college is playing in training for the ministry," the professors concluded. Of the 223 who earned seminary degrees, 93 per cent (208) were graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Of the 319 respondents earning college degrees, 40 per cent (128) were graduated from Louisiana College.