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May 31, 1973

**Tornado Destroys
Church, Kills Man**

CENTERVILLE, Ala. (BP)--A devastating tornado slammed into Brent Baptist Church near here Sunday evening just minutes before the worship service was to begin, killing one man, hospitalizing four, but sparing the lives of more than 100 others due to the quick actions of the church's pastor and youth choir director.

According to Arthur Walker, vice president of Samford University in Birmingham and interim pastor of the church, it was nothing less than a miracle that the entire congregation was not killed.

The nightmarish experience began just as Church Training was dismissing. As members of the congregation began making their way from their departments, the electrical power went off. However, a special service honoring high school seniors had been planned so the choir assembled and the people began filing into the auditorium.

The youth choir left the darkened choir room and gathered outside a side entrance to the auditorium for a last minute rehearsal. Suddenly the choir's director, Jerry Pow, commanded the choir to be quiet. He heard a roar.

Pow told the choir to get in the basement and ran to the front of the church to warn of the approaching tornado. Walker rushed into the auditorium and urged the congregation to assemble in the basement as rapidly as possible. Within seconds the fierce tornado had leveled the auditorium sparing only the front entrance and steeple. Minutes later the entire town of Brent lay in rubble.

Andrew Mitchell, reportedly in mid-sixties and with poor eyesight, was crushed to death when a wall caved in on him. He was just a few feet from the basement stairway. Another man narrowly escaped death and suffered a broken shoulder and collar bone.

Pow and John Meigs, both college students, found two small children waiting for their parents in the vestibule just as the storm hit. They threw the youngsters to the floor and lay on top of them as the building collapsed. The steeple withstood the impact and the four survived.

The church had just called a new pastor, Rev. W.D. McGowin, who had already moved into the parsonage but was attending National Guard summer camp. His wife was visiting her parents in another city. The parsonage, located next door to the church, was also heavily damaged.

The destructive tornado was part of a massive storm that swept through Alabama causing more than \$20 million in damages and killing seven persons.

J.D. Marler, Arizona
Baptist Pastor, Dies

GLOBE, Ariz. (BP)--James D. Marler, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church here and former president of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, died here May 27 after a long illness.

Marler, pastor of the Trinity Baptist Church here since 1963, had been a member of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, and member of the Arizona convention's Executive Board. He was president of the state convention from 1968-70.

A retired Lt. Col. in the Army chaplaincy for 20 years before going to the Globe church, Marler had been pastor of churches in Lowell, Knightdale and New London, N.C. before entering the military chaplaincy.

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Baptist Pastor Robbed
Enroute to New York Church

5/31/73

TRENTON, Ga. (BP)--A Mississippi Baptist pastor enroute to assume a new pastorate in New York was robbed of most of his possessions when someone drove off with the U-Haul truck he was using to move his household goods.

John Barnett of Hattiesburg, Miss., and his family had spent the night at a motel here with the rental truck parked outside the room.

At 6:00 a.m. on Sunday morning, one of Barnett's sons went to get some clothes from the truck and discovered it was gone.

Police found the abandoned truck, empty of all Barnett's possessions, about 11 miles south of Chattanooga, Tenn.

Stolen were most of Barnett's personal belongings, household goods, books and sermons. Barnett said the thing he regrets most is the loss of his sermon notes and notes from his studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Most of the losses will be covered by insurance, Barnett said.

Barnett and his family proceeded by car to Floyd, N.Y., where he has begun his work as pastor of the Floyd Baptist Church.

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First Bilingual Baptist
Book Store Manager Named

5/31/73

NASHVILLE (BP)--The son of former missionaries to Mexico has been named manager of the first bilingual Baptist Book Store, which will be opened in El Paso, Tex., in August.

J.D. Dawson, currently manager of the Lubbock Baptist Book Store in Texas, will transfer to the El Paso store later this summer, according to V.L. McGlocklin, western stores department manager, Book Store Division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

"While Dawson lived in Mexico, he naturally learned to speak Spanish fluently," said McGlocklin. "He is also very familiar with Southern Baptist work and knows the book store business."

While a student at Mississippi College, Dawson began working for the Jackson Baptist Book Store as a part-time shipping clerk in 1952. He soon became that store's receiving clerk and held that position until he received his degree and entered Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth. Later, he returned to the Jackson store as stock room supervisor. In 1963, he became manager of the Denver store and in 1970, went to Lubbock.

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According to McGlocklin, the El Paso store will be the only retail outlet in the continental United States distributing all Spanish materials produced by the Foreign Mission Board's Spanish Baptist Publishing House.

The first bilingual store will handle over-the-counter sales in Spanish and English products and will have a nationwide mail order service for Spanish materials. Mail order service for English materials will be limited to churches in El Paso and the surrounding area of southern New Mexico and southwest Texas.

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Richardson and Rutledge
Join Baptist Standard

5/31/73

DALLAS (BP)--Charles Richardson, director of public information at Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex., and John Rutledge, a recent journalism graduate of Baylor University, are joining the news staff of the Baptist Standard.

Richardson, 37, has served as public information director twice at Hardin-Simmons--1965-67 and April 1, 1968 until he joins the statewide Texas Baptist news publication, Aug. 1.

He served as a press representative for the Baptist General Convention of Texas between tenures at Hardin-Simmons and is former staff writer, religion editor, state editor and Sunday editor for the Abilene Reporter-News.

Rutledge, 22, winner of a 1972 Baptist Standard scholarship named after the publication's editor emeritus, E.S. James, served on the editorial board of the Baylor Lariat, campus paper of the Baptist school in Waco, Tex. He also worked on the Waco Citizen.

Richardson, immediate past president of the Texas Baptist Public Relations Association, is a graduate of Howard Payne College, Brownwood, Tex., and earned a master of arts degree from Hardin-Simmons, and a diploma from the Famous Writers School, Westport, Conn. He did a year of special studies at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

Rutledge's father is police reporter for the Dallas Morning News.

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Bruce Bowles Joins Texas
Baptist Church Loan Agencies

5/31/73

DALLAS (BP)--Bruce W. Bowles, vice president for college affairs at Mary Hardin-Baylor College, Belton, Tex., has been named president and chief executive officer of the Texas Baptist Church Loan Association and Church Loan Corporation. Bowles, 42, succeeds Don J. Singletary, who died last January after a long illness.

The Church Loan Association and Church Loan Corporation are financial agencies of the Executive Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas which make mortgage loans for church building programs.

Before joining the Mary Hardin-Baylor administration in 1969, Bowles served for 10 years as assistant vice president of Lakewood Bank and Trust in Dallas.

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