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August 10, 1973

**Mexican-American Pastor  
Defuses Explosive Scene**

By Robert O'Brien and Orville Scott

**DALLAS (BP)**--A Mexican-American Baptist pastor has been given a large share of the credit for defusing a potentially explosive situation here following the nationally publicized shooting of a 12-year-old Mexican-American boy by a Dallas policeman.

Observers, including police, city officials and veteran newspaper reporters, say an ad hoc committee formed from the Mexican-American community--led by its chairman, Rudy Sanchez--possibly prevented what at best could have been widespread turmoil and at worst, explosive violence.

Sanchez is pastor of First Mexican Baptist Church, Dallas, and president of the statewide Mexican Baptist Departmental Convention, an affiliate to the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

"Baptists seek leadership in many places but here was a situation in which the community voluntarily thrust a Baptist into a place of leadership," commented Oscar Romo, director of language missions for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, who spent several days in Dallas observing the committee in action.

Observers have marveled that widely divergent factions in a fragmented Mexican-American community, from the conservative Mexican Dallas Chamber of Commerce to an activist youth group, the Brown Berets, fell behind Sanchez and the ad hoc committee.

"I've never seen that before," says Police Chief Frank Dyson.

Mexican-American leaders and city officials feel that out of the tragedy will grow a long-lasting community cooperation and increased efforts to insure uniform justice for all racial groups.

The dizzying series of events began about 2:30 a.m., July 24, when Santos Rodriguez died of a bullet through the head while sitting, handcuffed, with his brother, David, 14, in a police car.

Police, believing they had seen Santos and David running from the scene of a burglary (which evidence later failed to support), had pulled the boys out of bed and returned with them to the scene of the crime.

According to reports, a 357 magnum discharged while a questioning officer, D.L. Cain, allegedly held it to Santos' head in an apparent attempt to frighten him into talking.

David later said Cain clicked the hammer once and that it fired the next time he clicked it, causing Cain to cry out in horror. Whether Cain realized the gun was loaded is uncertain, but David said he saw cartridges in the chamber.

Police charged Cain with murder with malice and later suspended another officer, Roy Arnold, for failure to file a completely truthful report to investigators. The grand jury will examine Arnold's part in the tragedy.

Sanchez first became involved when called out of bed that morning by members of the Mexican-American community.

The Rodriguez boys, whose mother is completing a prison term for murder and whose father has been deported, had attended weekday activities at First Mexican Baptist Church. Their grandfather, who had been taking care of them, often attends the Baptist church.

Sanchez conducted Santos' funeral at his church and then, through a series of events, was launched into leadership.

At a meeting of the Mexican-American community, he was asked to chair the committee and serve as spokesman.

In a series of meetings with police and city officials, Sanchez and the committee, along with Councilman Pedro Aguirre, elicited admission that some police apply dual standards of justice with racial groups and received promises they would be weeded out.

"The community chose him, and he was the catalyst which kept the flow of information open between city officials and the Mexican-American community," E.H. Denton, assistant city manager, said of Sanchez.

"Communication is the most valuable link in a crisis. You're in trouble when it stops," Denton said.

Victor Orta, another Mexican-American Baptist pastor who worked with Sanchez and other leaders from the beginning, sees the unification behind Sanchez as the "beginning of something great."

The community is "looking to him and others for continued leadership," said Orta, who also drew praise for his role in keeping peace.

"Residents of the Mexican-American community see that Baptists have a concern for people and for responsible social change," said Orta, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Calvario, a mission of First Baptist Church, Dallas.

Romo said he expects some people will "unjustly criticize" Sanchez and Orta for taking part in a march that did lead to some violence, agitated, police say, by outsiders.

"If they hadn't been there to bring peace," said Romo, echoing a widely held belief, "the thing could have exploded."

Neither Sanchez nor Orta had intended to join the march, organized by the Brown Berets to commemorate Santos' death.

But they said they did so when they realized someone with a cool-headed approach was needed to help keep order.

The only disturbance came after the main march broke up, when some agitators, including a drunk woman who played a major part, burned several police motorcycles, broke store windows, looted, and assaulted police.

The woman, one of 28 arrested, later admitted she lied to the crowd when she told them police had killed her son in the black community.

Sanchez had a difficult task rallying the committee "since the majority of them are Roman Catholic," said Mrs. Adelfa Callejo, a Catholic attorney and president of the Dallas County Criminal Bar Association. "But he earned their respect," she said. "He is walking Christianity."

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Draper Named Dallas  
Baptist Church Associate

8/10/73

DALLAS (BP)--James T. Draper Jr., pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., has resigned to become associate pastor and staff director for the 18,000-member First Baptist Church here.

Draper, 38, has been pastor of the 6,500-member Del City church since March 1970. During his tenure there Sunday School attendance increased from 1,285 to 2,200, Christian training attendance from 500 to 1,000 and budget receipts from \$320,000 to \$650,000.

He begins his new duties with pastor W.A. Criswell on September 9.

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