

September 26, 1974

Distressed Woman Aided by
Pastor, Police, Community

74-51

FORT WORTH (BP)--The Star-Telegram here, on its Sunday editorial page, gave top play to a letter to the editor by a Baptist minister.

The article, headed "Mary Found that Community Cares," was based on a letter written by Roger Freeman, the assistant pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church here.

The Star-Telegram editorial said:

"We are grateful to Rev. Roger Freeman, assistant pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, for sending us a report that in itself constitutes an eloquent and heart warming comment on how our sociological and public institutions can work together to rescue a human being from life's bruising shoals.

"His is the simple, moving story of Mary, a victim of circumstances against which she could not prevail without help--and how she found sympathetic help in a variety of ways after she appealed to the police."

Freeman's letter began:

"I wish to share with you a rare experience of community action which I have had this week concerning joint police, church, and social welfare cooperation.

"A crying, distressed, underfed 32-year-old woman came into our church office Tuesday afternoon. Though unmarried, she had lived with an alcoholic for 2 1/2 years. On that Tuesday, all of life came to a head for her. Her alcoholic companion, with loaded guns, had tried to kill her once too often while in a drunken rage. She ran out into the wet day and called the police for help.

"Two concerned policemen listened to her pour her heart out for 45 minutes, Mary related to me. They tried to outline to her possible courses of action and did their best to comfort her. Since no crime had yet been committed, they could do nothing to the man Mary wished never to see again.

"The police could have taken this person back home. They could have let her continue to walk the streets. But instead, these policemen brought Mary to our church, somehow knowing or thinking we could help.

"This is where the community cooperation comes in. I was thankful the police brought her to our church. After I listened to her story for 30 minutes, this woman said, 'I want a new life.'

"Any minister would have done what I did then. After explaining to her as best I knew how to know Jesus Christ as personal Savior and thus be a 'new creature' in Him, I led this person to faith in Christ. Then I said frankly, 'Now you have your main problem answered, but you still have other problems. You have no food, money, clothes, or place to stay.'

"After several phone calls, another community service entered into Mary's life. A local distress agency recently opened a home in our town for temporary housing and feeding for distressed women (and at no cost).

"After she received clothes and money for bus fare, she was driven to this home, where she stayed for two days.

"But that's not all the story. Another community agency then entered Mary's life. The first day at the employment office, Mary found a permanent live-in position with an elderly lady. She is paid a good salary with free room and board. Mary has her new life.

"Mary called me today. There were no tears this time, only joy and thankfulness at the complete change which had been accomplished in her life.

"I thought people might like to hear a success story of community service. From police, to church, to distress agency, to employment office, Mary was helped to her new life. No, all the stories don't end like this one, but isn't it great that Mary's did?"

-30-

Olin T. Binkley Named
Committee Study Director

9/26/74

NASHVILLE (BP)--Olin T. Binkley, retired president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., has been named study director for the special committee appointed to study and evaluate the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee. The committee was also asked by the 1974 convention in Dallas to study the possibility of a name change for the SBC.

In its first meeting the committee elected officers and adopted guidelines for its study of the two matters. Daniel R. Grant, president of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., was elected vice chairman, and Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary of the Florida Baptist Convention, was chosen secretary. Earlier, convention officers named C.R. Daley, editor of the Western Recorder (newsmagazine for Kentucky Baptists), chairman of the committee.

The committee also chose to call itself the "Committee of Seven." According to Daley, "It was noted with some concern that in the minds of most Baptists the name change study is its [the committee's] primary duty. Almost all mail received by committee members so far has dealt with the name change question.

"While the committee takes seriously the name change study," he continued, "the original purpose of the committee was to study and evaluate the Executive Committee of the convention. This is considered a very serious and important assignment for the committee."

As study director, Binkley will do much of the groundwork for the committee, due to the heavy schedule of other committee members, Daley said. Some or all of the committee will join Binkley for some of the personal interviews and group conferences with SBC agency heads, state secretaries, state editors, present and former SBC Executive Committee members, pastors, laymen and other Baptist leaders. However, Binkley's chief responsibility will be the Executive Committee study and not the name change matter, Daley commented.

The name change study will make extensive use of at least three opinion polls. One of these is a professional and scientific poll to be conducted by the Sunday School Board.

A second is a poll of Baptist state paper readers. A uniform ballot is being prepared to be offered for use in one issue of the papers. Any reader could use the ballot to register opinion on a new name change and send it directly to the study committee, Daley added.

Still another poll is planned, he said, to be used only in pioneer areas (areas of the country where SBC work is new) of Southern Baptists. "The committee feels these areas would be mostly affected by the convention name and they should receive special consideration in the study," Daley said.

In the meantime, he said, all Southern Baptists can express their opinions in writing on both these matters by writing C.R. Daley, Box 43401, Middletown, Ky., 40243, or to any other committee member. Other members are: Miss Alma Hunt, 600 N. 20th Street, Birmingham, Ala., 35203; Herschel H. Hobbs, 1202 N. Robinson, Oklahoma City, Okla., 73103; W.A. Criswell, 1707 San Jacinto, Dallas, Tex., 75201; Harold C. Bennett, 3636 Cathedral Oaks Place, Jacksonville, Fla., 32201; and Daniel R. Grant, 1049 N. Phelps Circle, Arkadelphia, Ark., 71923.

-30-

Baptist Churches Damaged;
Aid Continues in Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (BP)--Reports from San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba, Honduras, less than a week after the country was hit by Hurricane Fifi, indicated that all Southern Baptist missionaries and Baptist church members in the area are safe and accounted for.

Baptist church buildings suffered mud and water damage, although no major structural damage was reported. Many church members, however, have sustained heavy property damage to their homes, some losing everything they owned.

The hurricane, reported to be one of the worst in modern history, struck the northern Honduran coast Sept. 19. There may have been as many as 10,000 deaths resulting from the storm, according to news reports, and an estimated 50,000 families lost their homes.

Many of the hurricane's victims were temporarily being housed in church buildings. Five food distribution centers and a medical clinic have been set up in Baptist churches in the area. Three Southern Baptist medical missionaries, Dr. W. David Harms and registered nurses Mrs. C. Grady Nowell and Miss Frances Crawford, have been helping with medical needs.

In San Pedro Sula, a tree fell on the home of missionary Joe W. Bruce, but the family was not injured. Winds and rain also damaged Second Baptist Church there.

All seven missionary men currently in Honduras are involved in relief efforts. A. Clark Scanlon, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board field representative for Middle America, quoted a government official as saying that Dr. Harms and Miss Crawford were the first medical personnel to reach flood victims on the north coast. They arrived in the disaster area Sept. 21.

Five tons of medical supplies have been arriving daily through the Medical Assistance Program (MAP), a voluntary, international Christian organization that sends help to missionary physicians. These include supplies bought with \$5,000 of emergency relief funds from the Foreign Mission Board. Dr. Harms has been coordinating the MAP effort in the country.

Dry milk, canned food and carpenter's tools are the greatest current needs, according to missionary S. Wayne Wheeler. Dry milk must be purchased in the United States. MAP will fly it in. Supplies have been arriving in Tegucigalpa, the nation's capital, because it has the only open airstrip.

To meet immediate needs, missionaries were working with the military providing plastic bags of food to drop to victims. Many were still on rooftops several days after the storm.

Scanlon said people on rooftops were battling with snakes that also sought refuge from the water. News reports indicated that in Choloma, north of San Pedro Sula, survivors wandered in a daze pointing out where the bodies of family members had been found.

Two Honduran Army helicopters had been airlifting supplies into the region, but airplane fuel has become scarce, curtailing such flights, reports said.

Wheeler said that reconstruction will be the major future effort. Mrs. Harms is seeking permission from an official of the Honduran military to get building materials into the country so reconstruction can begin.

Guatemala was not hit as hard as Honduras, according to Scanlon, but also suffered extensive flood damage. Large portions of Coban, where Mr. and Mrs. Donnell N. Courtney and Mr. and Mrs. Wendall C. Parker are stationed, were flooded.