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Flood in Recife, Brazil,
Damages Missionary Homes

RECIFE, Brazil (BP)--No Southern Baptist missionaries were among the 89 killed in a flood here recently, although nine of the 12 mission homes were extensively damaged.

"It is the worst tragedy of the century for Recife," said the governor of the state of Pernambuco, describing the flood that hit 80 percent of Brazil's fourth major city. Heavy rains in the interior of this northeastern state caused the flood. Ten municipalities hit by the flood waters, including Recife, have been declared disaster areas by the governor.

According to reports, 70 percent of the town of Agua Preta in the southern part of the state was destroyed. Some 55,000 have been reported homeless in Recife.

The Baptist Goodwill Center here sheltered about 400 persons during the first two nights after the flood, until the Army could relocate them. Miss Doris Penkert, Southern Baptist missionary and social worker, reported the situation in the center was not good. She is receiving blankets, clothing and food for the people in the area.

All of the missionaries are safe, but the property damage will be high, according to Raymond L. Kolb, field representative for Brazil. Missionary Wade H. Smith's home sustained the greatest damage with six feet of water inside the house. The Glenn E. Hickeys and Ray T. Fleets were away for the evening and the David L. Millers were on furlough. They had three to five feet of water on the first floor of each of their homes.

The J. Fred Spanns, L. Byron Harbins, David Meins, and Charles W. Dicksons all suffered damage to their homes and property. The L. R. Brocks were expecting the flood, according to Donald Turner, relief coordinator for the North Brazil Mission, and had moved things to higher ground. However, water rose so high the "chandeliers were even in water." Water rose approximately six feet in their home.

A thick layer of mud was left by receding waters. Personal losses of missionaries' property were far greater than in two previous floods in 1966 and 1970. All nine families had some losses and most lost all their major appliances as well as furniture.

In addition, four mission cars were extensively damaged after being trapped and covered by the flood waters.

A number of the Baptist churches in Recife were hard hit, but the extent of their losses is not yet known. The Iputinga Baptist Church, located in one of the hardest hit areas of Recife, had 150 members left homeless.

"What we really need," Turner explained, "is mattresses. And I don't mean only for the missionaries but for the Brazilians too. There's no place to sleep and most all the mattresses are ruined."

Foreign Mission Board officials have requested a full report about relief needs in Recife. They will respond with relief funds according to the suggestions of the North Brazil Mission and the board's disaster relief office.



--- FEATURES

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SBC Churches Report
Growing Violence

By Bonita Sparrow
for Baptist Press

In Fort Worth, Tex., recently, a church treasurer delivering Worth Baptist Church's Sunday collection to a bank's night deposit window was shot in the back and robbed. He died as his teenaged daughters watched in horror.

In Donelson, Tenn., three deacons at First Baptist Church were counting the offering when four armed men wearing ski masks took up the collection at gunpoint.

In Charlotte, N.C., staff members at Woodlawn Baptist Church came to work one morning to discover the offices ransacked and thousands of dollars worth of new music equipment gone.

Across the Southern Baptist Convention, churches report such incidents, indicating that while the meek may well inherit the earth, the violent seem out to snatch it from them.

Many churches are putting feet to prayers for God's protection by hiring extra security guards, installing burglar alarms and surveillance systems and adding additional lights. Unlocked door policies have gone the way of the passenger pigeon and the five cent cup of coffee. Doors are kept locked at all times.

Protection is expensive. First Baptist Church of Dallas, largest church in the nation's largest Protestant-evangelical denomination, reportedly spent "between \$40,000 to \$50,000 on extra guards over the past year." The April 21, 1975 issue of U.S. News and World Report said the church "is installing a new lock system for the building. Already in use is an electronic surveillance system."

Russell Dilday, pastor of Atlanta's Second Ponce De Leon Baptist, said that church has provided additional lighting and installed burglar alarms and equipment at a cost of about \$10,000 over the past three years.

"We aren't in a heavy crime area," he said, "but whenever I attend a meeting of metropolitan pastors that's the main topic of discussion."

Robert LeFavre, associate editor of the Georgia Christian Index, agreed. LeFavre, former associate pastor in charge of ministries at Atlanta Baptist Tabernacle, described the problem as a progressive one.

"When I went to the church in 1964, the front doors were left unlocked. There was an open courtyard and open church offices. Then we had to install heavy wire screens over the windows. Next, doors were locked and easy access to the church offices was denied. Then huge swinging gates closed the courtyard and a decorative wall--10 feet high--was added.

"When I left in 1972, everything was closed up tight. Visitors had to ring the buzzer on the door, identify themselves and then those inside unlocked the door."

Adrian Rogers said Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, has bought property around the church plant and cleared it away for parking. "We have electronic burglar alarms," he said, "and we've moved our scattered church offices into a more compact complex. We have uniformed patrolmen on the parking lots and we've increased parking lot lighting and landscaping to give a campus effect and still allow people to see what's going on."

James Pleitz, pastor of First Church, Pensacola, Fla., reported "a real problem" in his city.

"Deacons patrol the building during services and we have armed policemen on the parking lots around the church," he said. "We leave the Sunday morning offering in front of the sanctuary until the end of the service when it's bagged, taken to the bank by several men, and counted the next day by a committee." (Since the robbery in Donelson, Tenn., First Baptist Church, they follow the same procedure.)

Bill Bell, director of the church extension department for California Baptists, said some churches in his state are installing elaborate and expensive silent alarm systems.

"I know one was installed at Temple, in Redlands," he said, "and a church in Oakland finally had to build a high fence around their parking lot and keep it locked during services."

At First Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky., some unused rooms in the educational building were converted into a rent-free apartment for college boys who serve as live-in caretakers. "It's worked out fine thus far," said Ted Sisk Jr., pastor.

Larger churches with more elaborate equipment report more robberies, but they aren't alone in the misery.

James Sledge of Lakeland, Fla., said that his church, New Home Baptist, was broken into and robbed. Troy B. Land of Mendenhall, a small town in Mississippi, reported a window air conditioner stolen from the educational building, and Gerald T. Smith of Bannertown Church in Mt. Airy, N.C., recalled a recent choir room robbery where purses were rifled and billfolds taken during services.

In Fort Worth, where the murder and robbery occurred, pastors at University and Broadway Baptist Churches described themselves as very fortunate and said "nothing really major has happened to them."

"But at University, we are in the process of protecting, during the day, the organist who is rehearsing; the secretaries at work," said James G. Harris, pastor.

John R. Claypool, Broadway pastor, also reported churchwide precautions. "We try, through Broadway's community ministry, to get at the people redemptively so we do not have to experience their frustrations negatively," he said.

"We have not built walls around the church. We do have to have security, policemen about and that sort of thing, but that is more a precautionary measure than anything else."

W.O. Vaught Jr., of Little Rock, said that precautionary locks, lights and a burglar alarm connected to the fire department didn't deter a break-in at Immanuel Baptist Church. Five plate glass doors were destroyed with a crowbar and the church sustained damages amounting to more than \$3,000 before the culprit was finally discovered.

B.C. Tschudy, pastor of Woodlawn, in Charlotte, summed up the situation.

"One staff member suggested we turn police dogs loose in different parts of the building," he said, "but the problem is who will be the first staff member every morning to collar those dogs. I guess the mice had this problem when they decided to bell the cat."

Churches, in their battle against robberies and vandalism, are trying to bell the cat. But it's expensive and, occasionally, embarrassing.

Orville Scott, public relations director for Baptist General Convention of Texas, reports that when his church, First Baptist, Richardson, finally installed a silent alarm system the first person to trip it was the pastor, Clyde Fant.

Fant had decided to stop by his office one Saturday afternoon. As he reviewed the next morning's sermon in his office, he was forced to stop and produce identification for some of the city's armed policemen, who suddenly appeared at his door and expressed great interest in his business there. (BP)

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Mission Tour Never Leaves
Home; Reaches Hundreds

Baptist Press
7/22/75

By Lynn P. Clayton

WICHITA, Kan. (BP)--"I have lived down the street for 19 years, and I have never heard anything like this," the elderly gentleman marveled after the concert on the church parking lot.

"Do you want to know more about this?", the concert director asked.

"Yes," the man replied, "and I'm going to be returning to find out more." The retired widower who lives 75 yards from the church was in the worship service for the first time the next Sunday.

-more-

This and much more happened on a mission tour that never left town.

"We had gone all the way to West Yellowstone, Mont.--some 1,200 miles-- on a mission trip last summer; but we felt we had not been as effective as we should in reaching the immediate neighborhood around our building. So we decided that this summer we would do at home what we had gone so far away to do."

With that statement Richard Bradford summarized the motivation for the "blitz"-- an intensive campaign of youth mission activities in the neighborhood surrounding Immanuel Baptist Church, Wichita, where he serves as minister of administration-music.

"I never realized what we did could have such gigantic, positive overtones in our community," adds Terry McIlvain, the congregation's youth minister.

Those "overtones", according to McIlvain, include at least five professions of faith; 125 children attending backyard Vacation Bible Schools in the neighborhood; reaching about 300 people in open-air concerts; and finding approximately 240 "unchurched" families living within walking distance of the church.

Immanuel's immediate neighborhood is an inner-city compilation of social and economic diversity.

The "blitz" was much like other youth mission tours. The events of the five-day effort were: early breakfast; quiet time with God; backyard Bible clubs; lunch; two hours of religious census; planned recreation; supper; open-air choir concerts and witnessing; and some brief moments of free-time. Then the youth met in teams to pray for specific needs of the next day. Fleeting hours of sleep came at the close of long days.

The 43 "full-time" youth who participated in the "blitz" moved into Immanuel's education building on Sunday evening. They "stuck it out" until about 10:00 p.m. on the next Friday.

McIlvain said, "We built showers in the boiler room. We furnished a floor for sleeping. If the kids wanted more to sleep on, they had to furnish it."

Approximately 37 more Immanuelites joined the "blitz" for evening choir concerts. The choir conducted concerts in shopping centers, a downtown amphitheater and a parking lot across the street from the church.

The church furnished breakfast and the evening meal; the youth paid for their own noon meal at various "fast food" eating places.

John Click, pastor of the 2,000 member congregation, said, "We have already seen results. People visited our worship the next Sunday. Others sent their children to our regular church Vacation Bible School the next week. After their first visit with us some began asking questions about salvation and church membership."

A significant side result from 24 of the youths' participation in "Super Summer" youth effort the preceding week and the "blitz", according to McIlvain, was "about five of our own young people came to know Christ as their Saviour. They were church members."

Follow-up operations for the "blitz" are already under way.

Immanuel will conduct a day camp for the children reached during the backyard Bible clubs. The day camp was planned on Tuesday and Thursday mornings for the month of July. Activities include Bible study, puppet presentations and four major field trips as well as crafts.

On the evenings of these days youth visited the homes of children involved in the day camp to begin a ministry to the total family.

125 adults have committed themselves to visit in the homes of the 150 "unchurched" people located by the survey. These visitors will give "Jesus Books" to each family and share information about Christ and their church.