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Fort Worth cleanup continues

Church destroyed by tornado holds Sunday service in exhibit hall

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Instead of mourning the loss of their place of worship, parishioners from a tornado-pummeled church gathered Sunday to rejoice in their faith and thank God that more lives were not lost in last week's storms.

More than 1,300 members of Calvary Cathedral International met at a Fort Worth exhibit hall, singing and dancing in joyful celebration.

"Let the rain fall," they sang with arms raised.

"Let the wind blow. There is no place I cannot go. I have a friend. His name is Jesus."

Darrell Switzer was among about 100 people in the near-downtown church when a twister hit Tuesday night during Bible studies, shredding the cathedral's roof and stripping walls from a prayer tower.

The steeple atop the church's centerpiece, a five-story prayer tower referred to by congregation members as the "Power Tower," was removed Friday. Two church volunteers in the tower escaped injury when the storm hit.

Switzer said his faith remained unshakable, even as the building swayed.

"You can knock the house down, but you can't knock the people down," he said. "We are in victory. We are not in defeat."

Four people were killed and another is presumed dead from the tornado that struck downtown Fort Worth just after the evening rush hour.

A second twister struck nearby Arlington and Grand Prairie.

Rev. Bob Nichols, pastor of Calvary Cathedral International, told the congregation that God's grace prevented more lives from being lost.

"There must be a purpose in so many of our lives. Instead

of five funerals, there could have been 500 or 5,000," he said. "We will come back stronger and wiser than ever before. God proves us. He's seeing what's in our hearts."

Church officials vowed to repair the structure or rebuild nearby.

Until then, they may meet again at the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum, or erect a tent on the church property.

Nichols said he is unsure where services will be held on Easter Sunday, which falls on April 23, the church's 36th anniversary.

The church's downtown cathedral formerly housed a Baptist church, and was purchased in 1976 to become the Calvary Cathedral.

Meanwhile Sunday, some downtown workers went back inside the heavily damaged, 35-story Bank One building to try to salvage critical files, computers and other items.

City officials have continued to restrict access to parts of downtown because of the danger of flying glass.

Insurance adjusters estimate damage to Tarrant County at \$450 million.

Government officials said they hoped to file an application for federal disaster assistance by Wednesday.

"Perhaps we can do it sooner, but it remains a challenging task," Tarrant County Judge Tom Vandergriff said Sunday.

Crews also were installing scaffolding over sidewalks to protect workers from falling debris.

A 20-block area would be closed to the public again Monday so construction crews could finish cleanup, a process expected to last until the middle of the week, said city spokesperson Pat Svacina.

"It's going to take at least until midweek to get all that glass out of there. It could take a little longer," he said.

Grassroots groups' campaign to aid in Latino census effort

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — To avoid an undercount of Hispanics and other minorities like the one a decade ago, the U.S. Census Bureau is embarking on a massive advertising blitz for Census 2000.

It's also getting help from grassroots campaigns by Latino advocacy groups, some of which are stepping up their census education efforts like never before.

"The charge is to literally take the census to the streets," said Margaret Leal-Sotelo, census director for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund in Los Angeles.

"We don't count people," she added. "We are just trying to get the message out."

So are assorted other groups working with MALDEF, including the National Council of La Raza, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund and the National Cuban American Council.

Even the Roman Catholic Church has joined the census mission.

"People associate the church with confidence. In Spanish, we call that 'confianza,'" said the Rev. David Garcia, rector at San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio.

In February, Census Bureau Director Kenneth Prewitt visited San Fernando for a special Mass devoted to the census. Archbishop Patrick Flores, speaking mostly in Spanish, told parishioners they had a moral obligation to fill out their census forms.

The service was beamed via satellite on Spanish-language television to millions of viewers nationwide.

The Census Bureau and Hispanic advocacy groups are reminding people that their census forms will be kept confidential. They're also pointing out the census determines congressional and state elected representation and that it is

central to the yearly distribution to states of \$180 billion in federal funds.

It is estimated the 1990 census did not count about 4 million people, or about 2 percent of the population. Nearly half a million Texans were missed.

"Disproportionately, the people who are undercounted tend to be poor, minority and children," said Roberto Ramirez, a survey statistician with the Census Bureau's ethnic and Hispanic statistics branch in Washington.

"For every American, the census is important. For Hispanic Americans, it's crucial. Five short years from now we will be the largest minority in the country."

— Robert Menendez
U.S. Rep. D-NJ

Among Hispanics, approximately 5 percent, or 1.1 million people, were not counted, according to Ramirez.

"For every American, the census is incredibly important. For Hispanic Americans, it's crucial," U.S. Rep. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., said at a Capitol Hill news conference last week. "Five short years from now, we will be the largest minority in the country. Within 50 years, by 2050, 25 percent of Americans will be Hispanic. However, these projections won't count for anything if we are not counted."

The reasons for past undercounts of

State Re... losses fo... lobbying

AUSTIN (AP) — State Rep. Siebert, R-San Antonio, was only legislator to work last year as a lobbyist before local government, but he was the only incumbent legislator to hold office because of it.

"You probably could have done it against me, and the dog would have won," Siebert said of the effects of a year's worth of media coverage of his work before the Antonio City Council.

Four-term incumbent Siebert by a 2-to-1 margin in the Republican primaries March 14 to Eric Ames Jones, a housewife who never held elected office.

At least six state representatives and senators throughout Texas resented private clients last year before local governmental bodies their districts. The Associated Press has learned.

Some legislators estimate the number of their colleagues who lobby before city councils, school boards and county commissioners is three times greater.

"A lot of members do it, 10 or 15," said Rep. Robert Puente, R-Antonio, who opposes the practice. "One person doing it is too many."

Critics say it's a conflict of interest for legislators to lobby local officials because most local governments depend on state funds controlled by the legislature and its lawmakers.

The lawmakers who lobby those fears are overblown. They say that lobbying is legal and say it is legal, provided the legislator never represents his public and professional business.

It is difficult to determine exactly how many legislators moonlight as lobbyists back in their districts. There are no state disclosure requirements and only a few cities require legislators to register.

Austin, Houston and San Antonio are among the exceptions. State lawmakers, all Democrats, registered lobbyists in Houston and San Antonio in the past year, records show.

Sen. Frank Madla, Rep. Reyna, and Siebert lobbied in San Antonio, and Sen. Rodney Ellis, Kevin Bailey and Rep. Garnett man lobbied in Houston. No legislators are registered as Austin lobbyists.

Madla and Ellis did not repeat telephone calls seeking comment.

Like several other legislators, Yvonne Davis, D-Dallas, who owns advertising and consulting businesses, said she refuses clients with business before local governments.

"It would be inappropriate for me to do that for pay," she said.

Puente said he does not believe local public officials can temporarily ignore the fact that a lobbyist visits their office is also a state lawmaker.

"There is no way that any official can go up to someone and say 'Talk to me but don't think of me as a sitting state rep,'" he said. "You have to stay clear of that."

But Bailey said he needs \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year to work as a lobbyist before the Houston City Council to supplement the \$600 a month the state pays him as a representative.

"For me, it's a matter of staying in the Legislature or not staying in the Legislature," he said.

Bailey, who was an aide to Houston council member from 1990 to 1991, represents seven clients matters before the city. Most of them are small businesses with local issues, he said.

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