

# Tornado destroys Primera Iglesia Bautista building in Dallas

October 21, 2019

When severe weather swept through North Texas Oct. 20, a tornado destroyed the Primera Iglesia Bautista de Dallas building in northwest Dallas.

A member of the congregation—Francisco Flores—was at the building Sunday evening preparing for the class he planned to teach on Wednesday when the building began falling apart, Pastor Ricardo Brambila said.

Flores found safety in an area of the sanctuary by leaning against one of the few walls that survived the storm, Brambila reported.

“We are still in shock after our 40-year-old sanctuary was gone in less than a couple of minutes,” Brambila said.

The church, which is more than a century old, had met in that building for the past 40 years, and many families have been members of the church for decades, he said.

While the church has insurance, Brambila was unsure how much of the damage to the building and other loss of property would be covered.

Documents and photos telling some of the church’s history cannot be replaced if lost, Brambila said, but he added he is thankful to God no lives were lost.

# Standing on the promises of God



Leaders of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Dallas began early on Oct. 21 assessing damage to church property after a tornado hit the night before. (Photo courtesy of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Dallas)

Earlier in the day, Brambila preached a sermon from Numbers 14. The Old Testament passage tells about a time when Israel rebelled against Moses and God after wandering in the desert for years. Brambila pointed out how God reminded Israel of his promise and of what awaited them.

After the tornado that hit later that same day, Brambila said, he trusts the congregation also will hold to the promise of God's fidelity.

"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God," said Brambila as he quoted Romans 8. "We love God, and this will serve for our good."

As Brambila and members of his church assess damage and seek to determine the path forward, he noted several other churches and Baptist

leaders already had offered their support and prayers. First, he noted, his congregation will need to make decisions about where to meet for worship.

“We are thankful for churches who have shown their support,” Brambila said. “We do not know what will be next, but we’re glad others want to offer us help.”



Pastor Ricardo Brambila and his wife Janeth serve Primera Iglesia Bautista in Dallas. (Courtesy Photo)

Jesse Rincones, executive director of the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas, expressed the concern of Convención for the Dallas congregation.

“We’ll do whatever we can to help them continue their ministry,” he said.

He commended Brambila for his comforting and calming presence through a traumatic event.

“Ricardo’s leadership has been extraordinary at this time,” Rincones expressed.

Pastor Carlos Valencia of Iglesia Victoria en Cristo in Fort Worth, who also

is coordinator of Faith Community Health, noted the need to consider the emotional needs of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Dallas and its leaders. While concerned Christians are quick to offer immediate relief in times of disaster, he noted the need for support through the long-term process of recovery.

“PIB Dallas will need others walking alongside them later on as they begin the process of healing and growing after the disaster,” Valencia said.