

# **Editorial: In stormy times, sing for those who can't**

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The city is loud. It's even louder during disaster recovery. The elevated noise of recovery is sound in search of a song. Christians carry the tune for the occasion.

## **Stormy times in the Bachman Lake area of Dallas**

A few weeks ago, Pastor Ricardo Brambila and I set a date to get together for lunch in the Bachman Lake area of northwest Dallas. Brambila is the pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista en Dallas. Little did we know what would happen just a couple of weeks later.

Around 9 p.m. on Oct. 21, [an EF-3 tornado](#) plowed right through Primera Iglesia Bautista's building.

A week later, after driving into the parking lot of Primera Iglesia Bautista and turning off the engine, I listened. With the radio and engine off, I heard chainsaws, generators, skid steers, semis and tree grinders; rubble falling into trailers, haul-away dumpsters and truck beds; contractors, insurance adjusters, onlookers and well-wishers.

All of that sound represented the demolition of dreams and decades of hard work.

Over the top of all of that was the regular jet noise of Southwest Airlines 737s landing over Bachman Lake, the strange sound of the world still turning.

I watched for at least 30 minutes as Pastor Brambila took phone call after phone call, received visitor after visitor and coordinated contractor after contractor.

There was a lot going on. There was a lot of noise. It sure looked like chaos in search of a melody.

Those who have lived through disasters and recovery know the sounds and silences. They can feel them.

I walked up to the remains of the building and saw the church's piano in the middle of the room. It looked ready for an open-air concert. If only I knew how to play the piano.

## **Stormy times call for songs of hope**

To get to Primera Iglesia Bautista, I drove past and through about 10 miles of tornado-ravaged neighborhoods. Recovery was underway the full length of the trip. Under all of the noise of recovery work was a hush, a hush like missing birds, a hush like missing songs.

When you're in the middle of stormy times, how do you sing? I don't know that you do.

Well, maybe *you* do, but I've watched people in the thick of things, and it seems like they're doing everything they can to keep things moving forward. For them, there's no time for singing.

I've watched others so overwhelmed by the storms, they have no breath for singing.

In those times, someone else will have to do the singing.

Pastor Brambila told me about the many people, churches and

organizations that have reached out to him and Primera Iglesia Bautista to help them recover after the loss of their building. There's music in that.

With particular gratitude, Brambila spoke of the connection between his church and other local Baptist churches, the local Baptist association, Baptist charitable organizations and the state Baptist convention. Through these relationships with others, Brambila and Primera Iglesia Bautista en Dallas don't feel alone. That sounds like singing to me.

Through these relationships, Primera Iglesia Bautista is lifted with songs of hope. In the relief and recovery work, Baptists and other Christians are embodying the music of Jesus' promise that the heavenly Father looks after the needs of those who seek him.

## **Stormy times are all around**

The Bachman Lake area of northwest Dallas is not the only place impacted by storms—literal and figurative. Stormy times are all around.

Just as tornadoes are surgically precise and random at the same time, so are the storms ripping through communities. Some look small from the outside: financial distress, marital strain, parenting struggles, unemployment and others.

Other storms are fearsome to all who see them: gun violence, drug addiction, racial injustice, family violence, economic disparities, sexual predation, human trafficking and abuses of power, to name just a few.

Storms are raging in homes, neighborhoods and schools, in governments, along borders and throughout nations. In their wake, people are trying to recover, sometimes even as the storms still rage.

There are so many storms. There is so much sound and fury. And it seems to overwhelm to the point of silencing any song of hope.

But hope is one song that can't be overwhelmed or silenced.

Let the people of God sing into the hush underneath the noise of our world.  
Let us sing our songs of hope.



He is Risen yard signs recovered next to Primera Iglesia Bautista en Dallas (Photo by Eric Black)

## Now, we sing

Given our long tradition of hymns and spiritual songs, Christians can do the singing, but in these times, the song must come through our lives more than just our mouths. Our singing on Sunday mornings is rehearsal for the performance.

Let's respond to the storms around us. Let's join together as the people of God and sing into the wake of the storms. Yes, Jesus said we would have trouble in this world, and he also told us to take heart because he has overcome the world. Let the music of our lives embody that hope.

Let's work together to right wrongs and correct injustices.

Let's join hands to carry each other's burdens.

Let's do such good that the music of our lives will be light drawing all people to glorify God in heaven.

Already, this work is underway. There's still room in the choir—or the band, if you prefer.

Stormy times are all around us. Let's sing for those who can't.

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