

DAY OF TERROR

Tragedy brings Mississippians to their knees

Crowds pray for unity, peace, guidance

■ "Getting angry not going to accomplish anything," priest says

By Charlotte Grams
Clarion-Ledger Staff Writer

Emotions were high Tuesday as Mississippi's religious community and others gathered at churches, chapels, synagogues and in schoolyards to pray for action rocked by terrorism.

Prayer vigils were held at Mississippi College, G.V. Sonny Montgomery Veterans Affairs Medical Center and St. Andrew's Cathedral.

They continued through the evening at places including St. Jude Catholic Church in Pearl, where Father Martin Rane offered a Mass of Peace.

"It's important for us to pray for the president and the rulers of our country, and that justice will be done, but war averted," Ruane said. "Getting angry probably not going to accomplish anything. We pray that there will be peace, and that those people who are most responsible for setting out this tragedy will be cool."

Dozens gathered earlier in the VA Medical Center chapel.

"Terrorist attacks like this are what bring America back to its knees and looking up to the heavenly father and asking him for strength," said the Rev. Marti D. Reynolds, chief of chaplain services. "It also serves as a reminder that we are one nation under God."

Fighting back tears, Sissie Stokes, the medical center's quality manager of diagnostic services, said, "You just can't believe a thing like this would happen here. Right now I think it's time to forget about our internal strife ... and come



Mississippians crowd into St. Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral in Jackson Tuesday for a special noon service following terrorist attacks against the United States in New York and at the Pentagon.

together in unity as we look to our heavenly father for guidance."

As much as he prays for unity, Imam Muhammad Harisuddin, spiritual leader of Jackson's Masjid Muhammad, fears most Americans will blame the Muslim community for the acts of terrorism.

"I'm in tears at this point," he said, his voice cracking. "There are going to be many families and innocent people affected by this — not just for this moment, but for years to come. Individuals who would do something like this are mad folks, violent folks."

Later Tuesday, Rabbi Jim Egoft of Jackson's Beth Israel Congregation was still in shock. He believes

the terrorist attack was a "well-orchestrated plan."

The Rev. Dolphus Weary, executive director of Mission Mississippi, says prayer should continue.

"I see this as a wake-up call for ministers, pastors and churches to get back to the business of calling people together, not only to pray for each other but for our country," he said.

United Methodist Bishop Kenneth Carder called for people to pray for healing and for perseverance for those involved in rescuing and treating the injured.

At noon Tuesday, Episcopal Bishop A.C. Marble stood solemnly before about 250 people gathered

for prayer at St. Andrew's Cathedral in downtown Jackson. "I call us to prayer for our nation and the victims and families of these atrocities, for our president, George Bush, and the Congress and leadership of these United States of America," he said.

In the nation's capital for a conference of bishops at the Catholic University of America, Bishop William Houck of the Catholic Diocese of Jackson took part in a noon mass at the adjacent National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The attacks were carried out by people filled with hate, Houck said. "It's indescribable," he said.

Muslims dread backlash, discourage finger pointing

■ "There's a sense of fear, of panic," member of Islamic group says

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Gahzi Khankan, a Muslim leader, said he has been here before, sitting in his home watching TV images of a building turned to dust — the federal building in Oklahoma City.

On Tuesday, after terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, he recalled the assaults on his fellow Muslims after that 1995 bombing by Army veteran Timothy McVeigh.

"Please do not start speculating and pointing the finger at us," said Khankan, a New York leader of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Muslims nationwide shut down their mosques and schools as Americans awaited word about who was responsible for the destruction. After the Oklahoma City bombing, more than 200 Arab- and Muslim-Americans were victimized, the council reported.

"We're suggesting that Muslims who are visually recognized as Muslims, keep a low profile," said Ibrahim Hooper, the council's spokesman. "Don't go out in public areas."

Hooper said a few callers to his office made threats. Several Muslims wearing traditional religious clothing reported being harassed in the Washington area and there

was a report of an assault on a Muslim taxi driver in Manassas, Va., he said.

Security was tightened at mosques and schools across Florida. Two sheriff's deputies stopped cars a block from a private Islamic school in Tampa to protect nearly 300 children there.

"We pray that Muslims are not behind it," said Nahla Al-Arian, a teacher at the school. "The kids got so scared."

The Islamic Association of Raleigh, N.C., and other groups representing Muslim- and Arab-Americans in that city, shut down a mosque and closed an Islamic school after receiving anonymous threats, said Wael Masri, an association member. Several women who wear traditional dress were spat on, said Masri's sister, Rania.

"There's a sense of fear, of panic," Wael Masri said.

Clergy from other denominations joined Muslims in condemning the attack, and organized special prayer services nationwide.

In Washington, Roman Catholic bishops held a Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Bishop Kenneth Angell of Vermont urged Catholic parishes in his state to pray for the dead.

David Harris, executive director of American Jewish Committee, said staff at his New York office left to donate blood, went to hospitals to volunteer and searched for relatives who remained missing.

Hospitals inundated with victims

■ Nursing homes, psychiatric and mobile facilities also used

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Victims of the World Trade Center attacks streamed into hospitals, nursing homes and triage centers Tuesday as thousands of blood donors lined up across the country.

Amid the confusion, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said at least 600 people had been taken to hospitals by mid-afternoon, and some 1,500 "walking wounded" were taken across New York Harbor to New Jersey's Liberty State Park, near the Statue of Liberty.

A mobile hospital set at Liberty State Park expected as many as 5,000 casualties, said New Jersey Hospital Association spokesman Ron Czajkowski. "Every hospital in the state is in disaster readiness mode," he said.

Officials at the Manhattan trauma centers closest to the Trade Center — St. Vincent's Hospital and Medica Center and Bellevue Hospital Center — said they had received only people who were injured outside the twin towers and that the number would likely rise dramatically once rescue workers started digging into the rubble.

One man with burns was taken to New Jersey's Jersey City Medical Center by Steve Newman. He was on Manhattan's West Side Highway, riding a livery cab to work, when he saw the man blown out of the lobby of one of the Trade Center towers.

"I took him and said 'We've got to get him to a hospital,' and the only way to the hospital was across that river," Newman said. He got the man on a water taxi.

Other victims were sent for treatment in New York state psychiatric hospitals. Empty beds in nursing homes also were used.

The state Health Department lined up emergency supplies of tetanus vaccine from Pennsylvania.

North of the city in Connecticut, Stamford Hospital was on high alert and preparing to receive patients by helicopter.

The Navy sent ships to New York and Washington that included surgical teams and limited hospital bed capacity.

The federal Health and Human Services Department activated a national medical emergency system that could dispatch roughly 7,000 volunteer doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other medical staff.

Blood services receive nearly 400 units

■ Mississippians donate at New York Blood Center's request

By Sherri Williams
Clarion-Ledger Staff Writer

Mississippians rolled up their sleeves in droves Tuesday, giving what they could to aid fellow Americans: their blood.

Mississippi Blood Services and United Blood Services of Mississippi together collected nearly 400 units of blood by Tuesday evening, said MBS spokeswoman Dani Edmonson. Typically, about 30 units are collected daily by Mississippi Blood Services.

The main branch of MBS at 1995 Lakeland Drive had to take appointments for donations and reroute donors to UBS and St. Dominic's Health Services Inc. to handle the overflow of those wanting to donate.

"People are putting aside the fear of needles. Employers are allowing people to leave work and donate and stay on the clock to donate today," Edmonson said.

MBS received a fax early Tuesday from the New York Blood Center requesting that donation centers coordinate efforts, Edmonson said.

"An injured patient can go through up to 60 pints of blood and multiply that by the thousands. The need is great," she said. "People have been killed. People have been injured and infected. People will be found days later. The need for blood will be extensive."

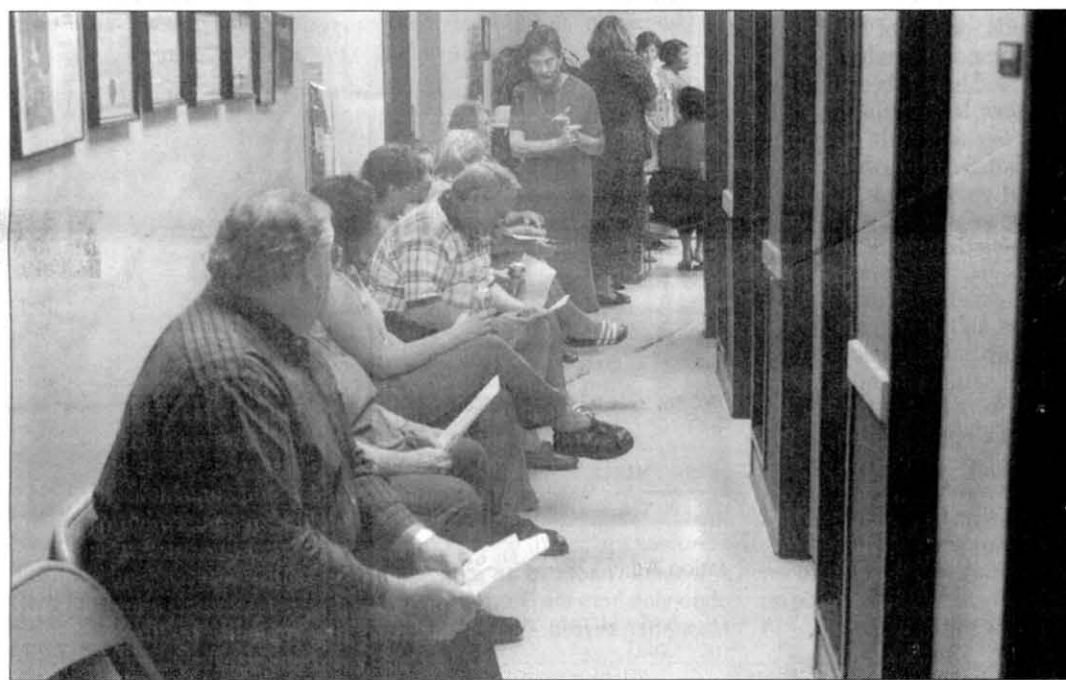
Edmonson said there is an urgent need for all blood types, but the amount of units needed is unknown because there has been limited communication with New York.

"But we are going to test, collect and store and have it ready for them," Edmonson said. "We want people to go to blood centers, and if there are groups, we will go to them. We are trying to get mobilized and go to different parts of the state. But now the most efficient way is for people to go to a blood center."

Glenda Christopher remembers hearing of her family's contributions to the war effort during World War II. On Tuesday, she made one of her own — blood.

"This situation is similar to World War II," said Christopher, 55, of Brandon. "Hopefully we are not entering another world war. But I am concerned for the people in New York. This is a tragedy that has struck a chord."

Max Tullos, a 37-year-old Jackson resident, said he does not



Donors line the walls of Mississippi Blood Services in Flowood Tuesday morning to give blood in response to the terrorist attacks in New York and at the Pentagon.

donate blood often. He was compelled to do so Tuesday.

"This is such a tragic situation and you feel so helpless and in shock, and you want to do something and help people in this tragedy," he said.

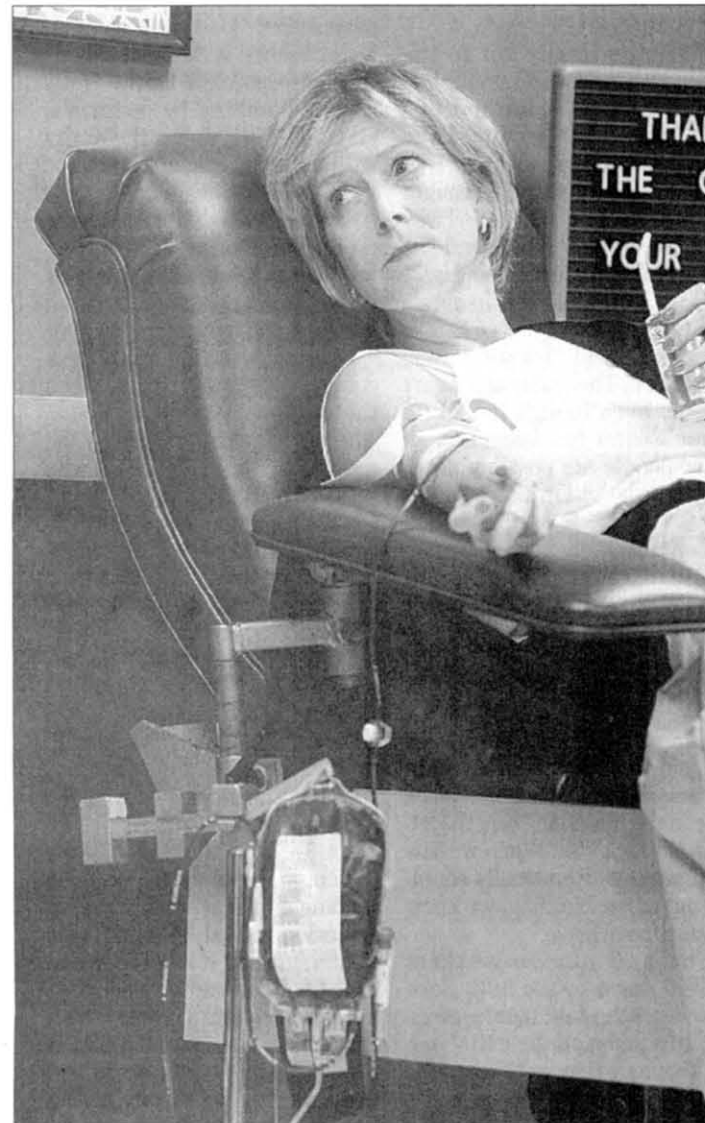
David Goff, associate executive director of United Blood Services of Mississippi in Flowood, said he received calls from people in cities including Florence, Natchez and Grenada expressing the desire to donate blood to those hurt in the bombings.

Goff said for the remainder of the week his center will most likely have extended hours and stay open until 8 p.m. to accommodate those who want to donate blood. Edmonson said MBS will also likely have extended hours through Saturday.

As an employee with the Salvation Army in Little Rock during the Oklahoma City bombing, Goff said blood donation centers "collected record numbers of donors," he said. "It goes to show you how Americans come together in a national tragedy. Unfortunately we have been trying to tell people all along that we need to do this so we won't find ourselves in a crisis."

"I know there is not going to be enough New Yorkers to donate blood," Edmonson said. "They have to deal with the loss of loved ones and jobs ... we can deal with donating blood."

To donate blood call Mississippi Blood Services at (601) 981-3232 or call United Blood Services of Mississippi at (601) 939-3336.



Teresa Ayers of Jackson donates blood during a visit to Mississippi Blood Services in Flowood on Tuesday morning. Donations were running high as people responded to the crisis caused by the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington.

Mississippi families desperate for info

■ Red Cross chapter fielding questions about relatives in target areas

The Clarion-Ledger

The Central Mississippi chapter of the American Red Cross received calls all day Tuesday from people looking for information about their loved ones, said Red Cross spokeswoman Lisa Rossilli.

"Some have children, sons and daughters working at the World Trade Center," she said. "They have been desperate to find out anything they can about their loved ones."

"What we've done and other chapters around the country are doing, is taking basic information about their family members and filling out what we call a Red Cross Family Well Being Inquiry."

The inquiry is for immediate family members only, which includes partners, legal guardians and grandparents, Rossilli said.

"We're doing everything we can to link family members, but people should be advised this will take time to complete (so) the family member should try to make contact on their own," she said.

If a family member makes contact with a relative, they are asked to contact the chapter.

Each chapter across the nation is being asked to evaluate their volunteers so that those with the most experience can be prepared for deployment if they are called.

"Guidelines are in place to get the most experienced volunteers who can cope with this," Rossilli said.

TO HELP

■ Donations may be sent to the American Red Cross, 875 Riverside Drive, Jackson, MS 39202. Also, donations can be made by calling 1-800-HELPNOW.

■ To donate to the Salvation Army, call 1-800-SALARMY.

■ Medical personnel who wish to donate their services should contact their local American Red Cross office.

■ The Federal Emergency Management Agency does not accept donations but coordinates volunteer agencies at disaster sites.