

Relief Efforts In Macon County

by Robert Hatfield

The statistics are staggering: 1,000 homes damaged, destroyed or structurally unstable and, at the time this article is being written, 700 residents remain without electricity. *The Macon County Times* reports:

Fourteen people, from the age of four to elderly citizens in their nineties, were confirmed dead in Macon County; 68-to-70 people were injured seriously, many more were described as “walking wounded,” and hundreds were left homeless and being sheltered in the National Guard Armory.

Macon County Emergency Management director Keith Scruggs told reporters that the tornado diagonally crossed the county, leaving a debris field as wide as one-mile wide in some places. The devastation is unfathomable.

Jesus taught His disciples to be compassionate, and first century Christians were mindful of those in need. The example of the church then teaches the church today how to respond in situations of devastation.

An Example of UNCONDITIONAL LOVE — Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). To love is to let the Christian light shine. It is love that helps men, whether they be Christians or alien sinners, identify us with Christ’s blood-bought church! One can be sure that this love was extended to those in need. New Testament Christians were encouraged to “remember the poor” (Gal. 2:10), a task that Paul said he was “forward (or diligent, zealous - RH) to do.” Concern for those in need was extended unconditionally to “all men” (Gal. 6:10) — whether or not they were members of the church. Jesus showed His love for *all* men when He died “for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1-2). Similarly, Christians extend their Christ-like love to all men.

An Example of UNEXPECTED LIBERALITY — The Macedonian Christians were an unexpected source of abundant generosity. They endured great trials of affliction, yet had an abundance of joy; they were deep in poverty, but abounded in “the riches of their liberality” (2 Cor. 8:2). Paul attributed this great work to the grace of God (8:1), and said that it was made possible because they first “gave their own selves to the Lord” (8:5). God gives the command, and provides the means for obedience if we will first trust in Him (cf. Matt. 6:33; Eph. 3:20).

An Example of UNWAVERING LIGHT — Christian lights shine in obedience to God’s Will (Matt. 5:16). That obedience is offered as service to God, thus He receives the glory. Today’s actions of Christian love will point the world to Jesus, and will glorify God.

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