

Response to the Joplin F5 Tornado and Interaction with New Testament Christians

By James Coalson, Ph.D.
 [Editor's Note: Following is the conclusion of a presentation made by James Coalson to the Bronte Church of Christ congregation earlier this month. Part I of this article ran in the July 29, 2011, issue of the Observer/Enterprise.]

The Church deacon, wife and son were all in their home at the time of the tornado. All were presumed dead, since only the slab of the home was left in place. The man and wife were ultimately located miles apart, but the son was found in a hospital. The son had about ten severe injuries from the tornado. He underwent surgery all night, requiring 16 units of blood and recovered sufficiently to be released from the hospital on our second visit.

As of June 20, the 26th & Connecticut Church of Christ had assisted over 2,000 people. Nobody was turned away and they dispensed over \$100,000 in goods, gas cards, food cards, etc.

Joplin is not known for being part of the "Bible Belt", but all churches appeared to be providing relief of some type. Richard Chambers and Dale both mentioned that the Church of Christ appeared to be helping people that had been turned away by other charities. The reason was not known, but it was very evident that the local Church had been very well received as a result of the generous support to those people in dire need.

We had the opportunity to visit with other groups that were working in the disaster relief, namely the "Red Cross" and the "Core of Engineers". We were able to

visit with the same personnel on both Thursday night and the next Tuesday night. I was amazed that these relief workers were working 16 hours shifts, seven days a week. They were totally exhausted when they returned to the motel after 10 PM each night. While we were visiting with them, we learned that they were only allowed to work in one location for 30 days before another group would rotate in for relief. Then they were allowed two weeks rest before the next assignment.

If we could profile a typical "New Testament Christian", I think those brothers and sisters of the Brotherhood at 26th & Connecticut would be a good example.

After our successful fund raising, I was in contact with another Elder (Doug Douthitt) about future needs, assuming the monetary needs were being met. After some discussion, he indicated the restocking of the library was important, since it had been used extensively by brethren in other surrounding smaller Churches prior to the tornado.

Doug had a survival story of his own. He owned a rental house in the area hit by the tornado. The single mother and two small children had been asleep in a recliner in the living room and were not aware of the tornado warnings. After the tornado hit, the next thing she remembered was waking up in a neighbor's yard in the recliner holding both children. They were not harmed although there was nothing left of their home except a slab of concrete. Imagine this story occurring in the middle of an F5 tornado. Wonders do happen and miracles do occur.

The experts who study tornadoes were surprised at the relatively low death toll for such an F5 tornado. It has been estimated that if the tor-



Say Thank You with Ice Cream! The Robert Lee-Bronte Eastern Star Chapter No. 187 held an "Appreciation Ice Cream and Cookie Supper" Saturday, July 23, 2011, at the Hayrick Masonic Lodge Hall in Robert Lee. The supper honored the Bronte and Robert Lee Volunteer Fire Department and EMS members and spouses. Those present were: Lee and Janet Wommack, Steve Salmon and Gay Adams all Bronte EMS; Jan Magness and Jerome Hanna both Bronte EMS and Volunteer Fire Dept. and Robert Lee EMS; Wayland and Mary Beth Drennan, Rick and Katie Drennan, Ryan and Crystal Stanford, Justin Skipworth, Ross Torres, and Jason Jowers all Robert Lee Volunteer Fire Dept.; Curtis and Annice Walker and Tanner Hanigan all Robert Lee Volunteer Fire and EMS; and Jeanette and John Jacobs Robert Lee EMS.

The Robert Lee - Bronte Eastern Star members who made homemade ice cream, cream puffs and cookies and present to serve this special group were: Mary Beth and Wayland Drennan, Jeffie and Bobby Roberts, George Gray, Dolores Roe, Gayna and Buddy Eldred and Bobby Blaylock.

nado had occurred even 1-2 hours later in the evening, the death toll could have potentially been in the thousands.

Earlier, I mentioned that the hospital was totally destroyed and many of the patients and employees lost their lives. In fact, all of the identifications of the deceased as a result of the tornado were made by either "dental records" or "DNA analysis".

We were most impressed by the "mobile hospital" that had been brought in from Florida and erected across the street from the destroyed hospital. It was a modern version

of the MASH unit seen in TV shows and was equipped to conduct surgery around the clock with rotating doctors and nurses.

The bottom line is that the "scars" will last forever. However, the Missouri residents are a "determined people" and they will make the best of a bad situation. We never heard anyone complaining of the "state of their being", and we did not see or hear of anyone simply waiting for the government to come take care of them. There is no doubt that the small Church of Christ at

26th & Connecticut will continue to grow as a result of this strategy.

Siren System detailed

- One Long Ring - Wind Advisory over 60 miles per hour
- Two Rings - Fire or VFD meeting
- Another Two Rings - Call for additional firefighters
- Three Rings - Tornado Warning
- One Long Continuous Ring - All Clear for tornado
- Four Rings - Alarm Test
- Going off for 7 minutes - Operator Error

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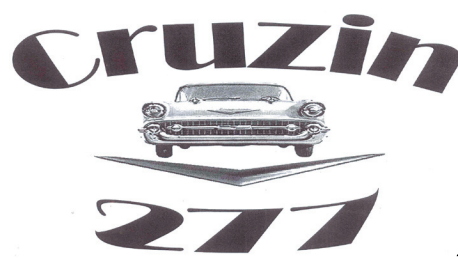
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