

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



2821 Route 22, Patterson, NY 12563-2237 Phone: (845) 306-1100

May 28, 2011

TO ALL CONGREGATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Re: Recent devastating storms

Dear Brothers:

This is to provide a report on the tornadoes that have affected the Southeast and Midwest portions of the United States during the last few weeks.

The devastating storms in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee in late April 2011 affected many of our brothers and sisters in those areas. While there were few injuries and no deaths of publishers, the total number of homes of our brothers and sisters affected by that tornado outbreak is now estimated at 63. The North Florida/Georgia Disaster Relief Committee is continuing to work with the local Regional Building Committees to provide assistance to all those in need.

Recently, a tornado in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was reported, and we are glad to inform you that there were no reports of any publishers being injured or killed; however, early assessments indicate that 18 homes of our brothers and sisters were damaged or destroyed. The local elders and Regional Building Committee are working to care for the immediate needs of our brothers and sisters there.

From Joplin, Missouri, we received confirmed reports that one sister sustained minor injuries and, sadly, one sister was killed during the storm. All publishers from the three congregations in the area have been accounted for. One of the Kingdom Halls in Joplin received minor damage, and approximately 25 homes of the brothers were damaged or totally destroyed. Because of the emotional impact on those affected, the local elders, regional volunteers, and the two circuit overseers in the area are endeavoring to provide spiritual comfort to the publishers. The Regional Building Committee is working with the local elders on damage assessments, and it is expected that an organized local relief effort will be required to assist with the needs of our brothers and sisters in this devastated community.

It is encouraging and faith-strengthening to see the outpouring of local support to those who suffered loss. The love within the brotherhood is evident in the work of local volunteers who have assisted in the cleanup and rebuilding efforts as well as in the generosity shown in material and monetary donations. All of this is a clear demonstration of the love Jesus said would be apparent among his followers.—John 13:35; 1 John 4:10-12, 21.

What can we do to support our brothers affected by these disasters? Never underestimate the good effect that your prayers can have on the brothers in an area that has been struck by a disaster. (2 Cor. 1:8-11) You may also feel motivated to express your concern through a donation. The November 2005 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*, page 3, stated: "It is recommended that donations for humanitarian and relief assistance be made to the worldwide work. This fund is used for relief efforts as well as for advancing the spiritual needs of the Christian brotherhood.

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If, for some reason, a person wishes to make a relief donation separate from contributions to the worldwide work, it will still be accepted and used wherever there is a need for relief assistance. However, it would be appreciated if such donations are made without restrictions as to where and how the funds may be used.”

Generally, after a proper assessment has been made, the branch office will determine if a Disaster Relief Committee should be formed. A Disaster Relief Committee will take the lead in managing the funding and various aspects of the work. All volunteers will be required to work under the Regional Building Committee arrangement. Thus, we do not encourage any to travel to the disaster area unless their local Regional Building Committee has been requested and assigned by the branch office to work on the relief effort. All should cooperate with the responsible brothers taking the lead so that the critical needs of all the brothers are adequately met. It is also requested that whenever there is a disaster, you please do not telephone the branch office, since this can tie up phone lines that are needed to handle incoming calls from the disaster area.

During these last days, we can expect an increase in natural disasters, yet we are certain of Jehovah’s care. We can be assured that “the peace of God” will remain upon these brothers and sisters in the months ahead. (Phil. 4:7) In the face of these unstable and perilous times, we can confidently proclaim the day when mankind will no longer experience any kind of disaster. (Mic. 4:4) As the psalmist said at Psalm 4:8: “In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for you yourself alone, O Jehovah, make me dwell in security.” Again, we encourage you to keep all these brothers and sisters in your prayers.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

cc: Traveling overseers

PS to coordinator of the body of elders:

At the next Service Meeting, please arrange for an announcement to be made to the congregation that a letter on the above-noted subject has been posted on the information board.