

From Where I Sit . . .

Generosity Wins Souls Too

(2 Corinthians 9:12-13)

I've not been able to read a reliable estimate of just how many millions of dollars worth of relief aid has flooded into the hurricane disaster areas following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, but the response from all over America has been staggering. It pleases me to read story after story on the web of churches of Christ that are a part of this massive relief effort. It was particularly heart warming to hear news stories on Fox News and CNN of trucks rolling into the New Orleans area days before the FEMA relief began to arrive. The phrase "faith-based" as used by our President so often concerning people helping each other has taken on a very clear meaning in these past 4 weeks.

Generosity and unselfish sharing are attributes that Christ calls for of those who serve Him. Luke records Paul's words in **Acts 20:35**, "*I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*"

The church of the New Testament times was a giving church and sent often to fill the needs of the saints in famine torn lands such as the famine in Judea for which Paul gathered such a large collection (see **2 Corinthians 8 and 9**). It's noteworthy that people took note of these efforts and gave God the glory for their generosity:

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else" (2 Corinthians 9:12-13).

This morning as I write, I've just heard of 4 who became Christians this week when distribution was made in a Texas town. This is only one instance of the good that's being done. Such stories will be told over and again all along the Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama seacoast communities and for many miles inland. Bible studies are ongoing even while physical needs are met, and churches in those local communities are using your gifts of food, clothing, and finances to fill those needs. The very performing of the deed draws the attention of those who are searching for meaning in their lives.

There are no strings attached to our gifts, and the practice of pure religion necessitates that we give even when those who receive don't accept Christ's teachings. The simple fact is, however, that quite often evangelism begins with some expression of love and kindness. Our Lord healed, fed, comforted, and preached to the masses who followed. No less, we should be willing to show that very same spirit of giving. It is "more blessed to give than to receive," but additionally it presents us with opportunities to tell people how Jesus can make a difference in their lives. **Generosity wins souls too!**

. . . . Terry Broome

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