

# Flooding, Stranded, Emotions Rise in Colorado

The scene in Colorado, where rains continue to relentlessly hammer the northeast part of the state, is marked by confusion, chaos and uncontrollable water.

News reports say at least eight have died because of the flooding, with more than 1,600 homes destroyed, nearly 18,000 homes damaged and more than 11,000 Colorado residents evacuated because of torrential rain the National Weather Services describes as "biblical."

The Billy Graham Rapid Response Team (RRT), deploying alongside Samaritan's Purse, is on the ground, assessing the devastation and ministering to flood victims who are struggling with how to cope with the raging waters, which in some cases have overtaken their homes or businesses.

RRT chaplains will be in Colorado for the foreseeable future, helping give hope to the suddenly homeless and providing emotional and spiritual care to those in need.

"People don't know what they should do," says Toni New, who, along with her husband, Al New, has been in Colorado with RRT since Saturday. "A lot of people can't even get into their homes. They're lost on what their next step is."

Local TV reports say the flooded area is the size of Connecticut, and Toni New, driving through rain hard enough to cause standing water on Sunday afternoon, cannot disagree.

According to reports, the town of Frederick, about 30 miles north of Denver, is seeing 7 inches of rain an hour. In both Frederick and Jamestown, roughly an hour west, residents are not allowed back into town.

“They’re still having to use helicopters to rescue people,” New says. “In some areas helicopters can’t get there, so they’re having to use four-wheelers.”

Dozens of roads are still closed, and mudslides have caused additional damage on top of the massive flooding.

“We drove in a community yesterday that had mud everywhere on the street,” New says. “People are saying they have a lot of mud inside. Landslides are running into their homes.”

New has witnessed high levels of emotion and stress as both she and her husband have shared with homeowners and business owners who have lost everything.

“We prayed with some people this morning who were very emotional,” she says. “A gentleman who had a business that was insured but doesn’t know how much the insurance is going to cover, and it’s a very large warehouse. He was very emotional.”

Two RRT chaplain coordinators have arrived in Colorado with at least a half-dozen crisis-trained RRT chaplains on the ground possibly by week’s end, depending on how quickly the floodwaters subside.

“I think it’s going to take a long time to get everything cleaned out and rebuilt,” New says. “There are still people unaccounted for. They don’t know if they’re alive or just in their homes and don’t have a way of getting in touch with family.”

For those wanting to pray specifically, here are a few areas New has spotlighted:

- Pray for the people of Colorado who have lost everything and don’t know where to turn.
- Pray for the emergency workers who are still rescuing people trapped.

- Pray for churches that are reaching out to the community.

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