

Rapid Response Team Headed to Dallas

Chaplains from the **Billy Graham** Rapid Response Team are being deployed to the Dallas Metroplex area, where as many as a dozen tornadoes ripped through Tuesday afternoon, according to the National Weather Service.

At one Flying J Truck Plaza in Dallas, 80-foot tractor trailers were thrown around like toy trucks and, according to the Red Cross, 650 homes have been destroyed, leaving many in need of comfort and prayer.

Remarkably, no deaths have been reported.

"We have chaplains ready to go and are assessing the situation to find the greatest need," says Keith Stiles, deployment manager for the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team. "Many of us saw the big twister live on television. Please don't forget that it left a trail of despair, and the survivors need your prayers."

Hail as big as baseballs hammered the Metroplex area, with golf ball-size hail at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport grounding 400 flights.

About 14,000 homes and businesses in Arlington were without power on Tuesday as seven people were injured, including one person hit with a fallen tree.

Lancaster, a south suburb of Dallas, absorbed the brunt of the storm, with 10 people injured, including two severely, according to a police officer. At Cedar Valley Christian Academy, where the storm ripped off one of the exterior walls, 60 children took refuge by huddling in a windowless room.

A pastor at one Lancaster church saw debris swirling in the

wind, then herded more than 30 children, some as young as newborns, into a windowless room to ride out the storm.

This marks the 10th Rapid Response Team deployment in the state of Texas, most recently late last summer when wildfires swept through the middle of the state, just east of Austin. Trained chaplains are deployed to help minister to the emotional and **spiritual needs** in the aftermath of a disaster.

A majority of the Texas deployments have been a result of hurricanes that hit the coast in 2005 and 2008. In February 2009, Rapid Response Team chaplains were deployed to Lone Grove, Okla., two hours north of Dallas, after three tornadoes claimed eight lives in that community.

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