



"And now I am no more in the world,
but these are in the world..." (John 17:11).

Use this recent news story to help your students see the relevance
of this week's lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®
or Standard Lesson Quarterly®.

GOVERNMENT AID

Northern California's strongest earthquake in 25 years struck the Napa Valley last Sunday. Its measurement of 6.0 on the Richter scale indicated "moderate" intensity. Numerous businesses were forced to close, approximately 100 people were injured, and a many homes were made uninhabitable. Most homeowners do not carry the costly state-underwritten earthquake insurance, so their losses can be devastating. They are hoping for federal aid. It is too early to tell how Christian aid agencies may respond.

CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE

An earthquake of a different sort had struck the Christians of Jerusalem in Paul's day, where persecution and impoverishment seemed to go hand in hand. Christians in Macedonia were also suffering, but poverty did not stifle their desire to help their fellow believers. So they responded positively to Paul's challenge to come to the aid of those in Jerusalem. Their generosity continues as an example of Christian grace to this day.

1. What is the Christian's responsibility to fellow believers when natural disasters strike?
2. What is the Christian's responsibility to unbelievers when natural disasters strike?
3. How should Christian benevolence differ from secular humanitarian aid, if at all? Why?
4. What needs exist in your community for rendering aid in the name of Christ?
5. How can you and your church prepare in advance to offer help when tragedy strikes?
6. What Christian relief agencies are in need of your support right now?

—Charles R. Boatman

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