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The Rev. Roy Queen (left) and Raymond Rodgers cut the bottoms of doors so they will open and close over carpet.

Staff photos
by Sonny Hedgecock



Their deeds serve man as did Christ's works

By Ronda Cranford
STAFF WRITER

Members of Antioch Baptist Church have found that hammers and nails can give them the drive to follow their religious beliefs.

Volunteers from the 70-member church east of Lexington in Davidson County have worked on approximately 25 houses in the Grifton, Princeville and Tarrboro areas since Hurricane Floyd devastated the area in September 1999.

Pastor Roy Queen said there are no professional construction people among the members of the church, but "over the years, we've become semiprofessional."

Building and construction projects are a specialty for Antioch.

"That's really the heart and soul of the church," Queen said. "To us, it seems important for people who are followers of Christ to do things like this. He was always administering to people. If you don't follow that philosophy, you're not practicing what you preach."

Two years ago, the Antioch congregation constructed its own church building on Beck's Nursery Road.

Church volunteers also make home improvements for local people who are elderly or disabled, Queen said.

When the Floyd disaster happened, the Antioch volunteers were ready to go. They made numerous trips east, leaving Thursday morning and returning Saturday.

"Initially, for the first several trips, we did what they call mud-outs," Queen said. Saturated furniture, carpet and wallboard were torn out of the homes. The frame and exterior were left to dry.

The remaining work was very similar to actually building a house, Queen said. He and his volunteers became experts at replacing molding and installing floors.

"It would be easier, in some cases, to bulldoze and rebuild,"



Raymond Rodgers then carries the door for installation in the house, where restoration is nearly complete. Doors are one of the last things to go up.

Queen said.

Federal Emergency Management Agency settlements, allotments from the N.C. Baptist state convention and Antioch church donations bought the materials.

Most of the homeowners the Antioch volunteers worked with were elderly people, volunteer Raymond Rodgers said. Retired people were given assistance priority.

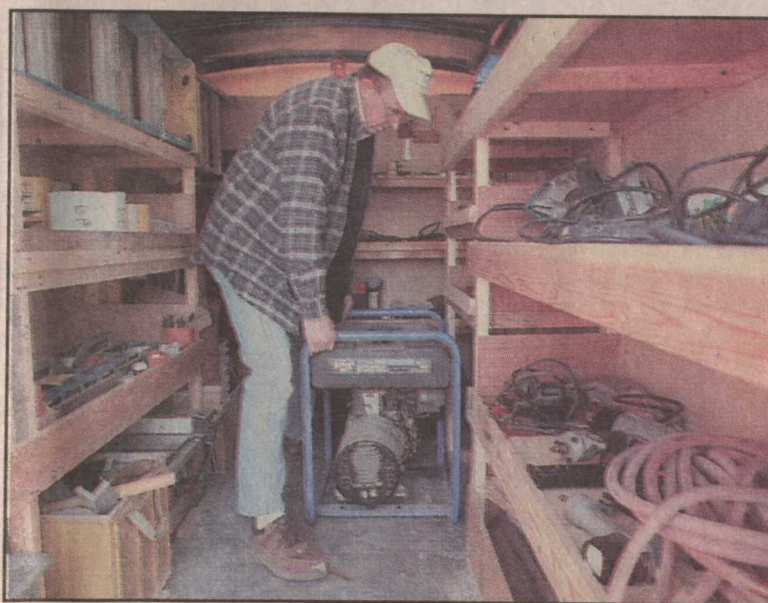
By the time the area dried out enough for restoration work to take place, the public had already begun to forget about the needs of Floyd victims, Queen said.

"There has not really been the widespread support people think. When the newness wears off, so do the volunteers."

Carl Nance, who has been a coordinator for volunteer teams in the area for the past 18 months, agreed.

Even so, volunteer teams from all over the state refurbished approximately 510 houses, said Nance, who tried to match the teams with projects they could do best. Some specialized in painting, for example.

"We're more or less done," Nance said, adding that he's going



Queen unloads a generator to provide power to tools used by volunteer carpenters

home to Charlotte in April.

Just because reconstruction work is for the most part over, that doesn't mean the recovery is complete.

"They've got a long way to go yet. There's places that will be torn down before they'll get rebuilt," Nance said.

Modular and mobile homes have replaced stick-built homes in many cases, said Nance.

Information from the N.C. Redevelopment center said that approximately 468 families are still living in temporary housing - travel trailers and mobile homes -

(See HELPING on 2C)

HELPING: Volunteers rebuild lost homes

(FROM 1C)

provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the N.C. Division of Emergency Management (NCEM).

At one point, 2,335 families were in temporary housing.

These families have just been granted the right to stay in their temporary homes past the March 16 deadline.

They are waiting for replacement homes to become available, to be bought out, or for repairs to be completed on their homes.

FEMA and NCEM will fund the temporary housing program for another year.

Antioch volunteer Raymond Rodgers said he gained a lot from his church's trips east.

"I learned a lot, yes," he said. "Setting cabinets, hanging and finishing drywall."

It also gave him some perspective.

"It made me very thankful that I have never had to experience that kind of trauma," he said.

In May, church members will

travel to South Africa to help another congregation build a permanent church structure. They have been meeting in a tent for 25 years, Antioch volunteer Jerry Owens said.

Owens said the work his church does is designed to benefit other people, but it benefits the volunteers as well.

"I think we get more blessings out of it than they do," he said.

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~~Chancellor~~ ~~Rest~~ Home

Antioch - 1962 - June 17

Albany, Pa., 1, 2 houses built

1950 -

1951 -

1952 -

1953 -

1954 -

1955 -

1956 -

1957 -

1958 -

1959 -

1960 -

1961 -

1962 -

1963 - *Cancelled to build*

1964 -

1965 -

1966 -

1967 -

1968 -

1969 -

1970 -

1971 -

1972 -

1973 -

1974 -

1975 -