

Iowans display attitude of Christ in storm and crisis

by Greg Baker

Iowa's recent "derecho" storm – and, more specifically, the way Iowans have responded to it – reminds me of what makes this coastless state in the Heartland an incredible witness to the nation and an incredible place to live for the over 3 million people who are blessed to call it home.

Even before the pavement could dry from the derecho's downpour, Iowans fully displayed an incredible heart of service and love of neighbor that remind me of the verse in Philippians, where the Apostle Paul challenged Christians to make their attitude that of Christ Jesus, who emptied Himself of everything. Iowans have and must continue to strive to make their attitude that of Christ Jesus.

I had the opportunity to join my church from Des Moines in serving a fellow church in Marshalltown, as they worked to clean up from storm, which leveled a wide swath of Iowa's crops, trees, and buildings with the force of a rare, inland hurricane. The path of destruction stretched over 100 miles long.

Upon entering Marshalltown my heart was just broken, as it seemed not a single tree survived the storm, and so many dwellings sustained serious damage. It took a full day's work from dozens of volunteers to clear just two people's yards.

This might seem a discouraging pace, but I left the day encouraged instead. During our time removing trees, neighbors who had just finished up their own yards joined us. Their addition of chainsaws doubled our production and allowed us to finish in an afternoon what would have otherwise taken several days.



This incredible story of churches from outside communities and neighbors working together was not unique to us, neither was it unique to this storm. It has been the story across Iowa since COVID's persistent time of crisis began in March. From serving food, offering childcare, giving blood, standing with a neighbor, and now clearing debris and offering shelter, Iowans have stepped it up to serve one another.

This incredible example we are seeing in neighborhoods across our state is exactly what Christ had in mind for His Church in neighborhoods all around the world. Christ not only commanded this, He also modeled it. Christ modeled it when He looked after the orphan and the widow. Christ modeled it when He fed the poor and healed the sick. Christ modeled it when He dined with the sinner. Christ modeled it when He died on the Cross for those who would never show their gratitude.



Christ, who was fully God, full of more wealth and power than anyone could ever imagine, gave it all up for us.

The Bible says, “He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a servant” (Philippians 2:7) and, “He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to their point of death, even to death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8).

Jesus served us, taught us about the Kingdom of Heaven, and died for us on the Cross, satisfying the payment of our sins and giving us the hope of eternal life. Jesus did this not for Himself, but for us.

This is the incredible example Christ has set before us. He has called us to not only look out for our interests, but to also consider the interests of others. This is exactly what Iowans are doing across the state and will continue to do. It is in our history. It is who we are. It is who Christ has called us to be.

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