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Burton and the feeding crews worked through the night, and were relieved the next morning by a team of 13 from the South Roanoke Association that was led by Mike Anders, disaster relief leader for the BSC's Region Two.

Feeding crews prepared about 150 meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner on Jan. 30, and expected to provide food services to fire and rescue personnel through the weekend.

David Leary, director of missions for the Neuse Baptist Association, also arrived on the scene quickly, and helped coordinate counseling services for employees and family members, many of whom were in shock. Leary said some relieved family members hugged survivors who were brought to the church in buses from the scene. "It was a real emotional thing," he said. Leary said he was nearby when one family was told of a relative's death.

"We were trying to minister to their needs," he said.

Leary said a fund has been set up to accept donations for those impacted by the accident. Donations can be sent to the association at 176 Piney Grove Road, LaGrange, NC 28551-7700.

The massive damage at the plant reminded some in Kinston of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Leary said. "The statement was made, 'We know how they felt in New York,'" he said.

The quick response by Baptists also reminded Leary of another disaster a few years ago. "We had gone through (Hurricane) Floyd and because of that we were highly organized," he said.

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**Baptists provide care in Kinston following deadly plant explosion**  
**By Tony Cartledge and Steve DeVane**  
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KINSTON, N.C. (ABP) – Baptist disaster relief crews arrived within hours and worked through the night to provide food and comfort in the aftermath of a Jan. 29 explosion that rocked the West Pharmaceutical Services plant in Kinston.

The explosion at about 1:30 p.m. and resulting fires that burned into the night killed at least four workers and injured scores of others.

Harold Burton, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Kinston, said the blast “rocked the church.” Burton ran outside, thinking a jet plane had crashed at the adjacent airport. Seeing the cloud of smoke, he headed for the airport, only to realize that the pharmaceutical plant had blown up.

“People were coming out of the building who had been burned, and some were already on the ground,” he said. Burton knelt and prayed with several of the injured. Helicopters and ambulances began to arrive within minutes, Burton said, and rescue workers determined that a staging area was needed for all the family members and others trying to reach the plant or gain information.

Burton volunteered Immanuel’s facilities, less than a mile away, and soon there were nearly 500 people at the church. Burton contacted North Carolina Baptist Men’s director Richard Brunson at the Baptist State Convention (BSC) offices in Cary, and disaster relief units were quickly dispatched. Beddie Tarlton, who acted as on-site coordinator, brought five crew members and supplies of food from the disaster relief warehouse in Grifton. Ashley Summerlin, pastor of Seven Springs Baptist Church and Neuse Association disaster relief team leader, brought six people and some feeding equipment.

Feeding crews set up shop in Immanuel’s church kitchen and began preparing meals for families gathered at the church, and for fire and rescue workers. More than 300 meals were prepared the first day, most of them trucked to workers at the site. The local “Papa John’s” franchise donated 85 pizzas, which volunteers distributed largely to crews providing news coverage of the event.

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