

Are you prepared for the next disaster?

A Church-Based/Christ-Based Disaster Preparedness & Response Manual

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This manual was initially developed with the input of individuals from a number of organizations who participated in a “Think Tank” hosted in 2006 in Washington D.C. by the Somebody Cares America/International Disaster Response & Preparedness Network as a follow-up to the unprecedented collaborative response required by three national disasters in 2005: the Indonesian tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, and Hurricane Rita. This updated edition includes even more input from our experience in national and global catastrophes that have occurred since that time.


The information compiled comes not only from lessons learned throughout the past four decades, but also from years of experience on the front lines of life, meeting the needs of individuals in daily crisis.

We salute all of our network partners and affiliates for their diligence, faithfulness, and most of all their willingness to contribute to the greater cause of bringing hope and healing in the midst of very difficult circumstances in the lives of those affected by crises.

To see if there are Somebody Cares America chapters, centers, affiliates, or partner organizations in your area, please call 713.621.1498 or email SomebodyCares@SomebodyCares.org.

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**But it will turn out for you
as an occasion for testimony...
Luke 21:13**

FOREWORD:

AN OCCASION FOR OUR TESTIMONY

From Texas to California, from Florida to New England, many people and ministries who are in direct relationship with Somebody Cares America are moving forward at different levels with disaster relief coordination. As I have met with and spoken with many around the country, everyone seems to agree that preparedness is the key. As my spiritual father, the late Dr. Ed Cole, used to say, “Fail to plan, plan to fail.”

Throughout the local, regional, and international disasters of the past two decades we learned a lot, through the grace of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit. There is a sense of urgency now, however, that at any given time anything could happen, and the church must be prepared. In this book we have taken what we’ve each learned and pulled it together into a common language, or “relief speak,” so we can more effectively dialogue when the next disaster strikes.

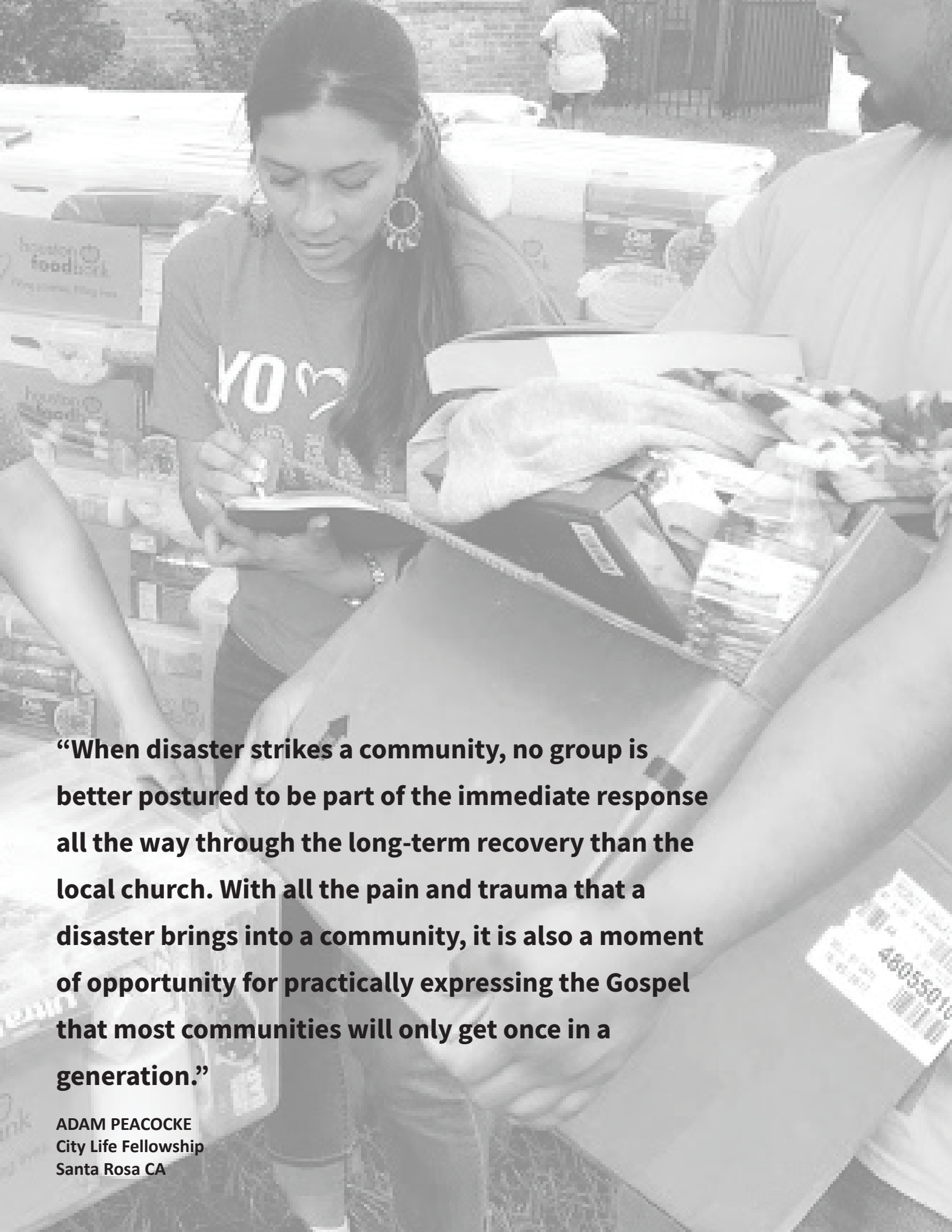
With the seasonal threats of hurricanes and tornadoes—along with the escalating threats of mass casualty events, bio-chemical warfare, and pandemic catastrophes—we can, and should, as the body of Christ be the first responders, ultimately becoming a tangible expression of Christ’s love. This is, of course, not limited only to the situations named above but to any human tragedy, from a national disaster to an individual crisis, such as a family who loses their home in a fire.

We now have a window of opportunity. It was ultimately the church which shone so brightly by responding with sacrificial love during the disasters of the last decade, and it is the church who can shine even brighter in the coming days when we are “first responders,” providing quick and ongoing assistance in times of crisis. That’s because we know our communities at a grassroots level better than anyone else. When we can connect at a broader level and know where the resources are located—not only across our communities, but across the nation—we can better assist one another in times of emergency. We can also effectively articulate our needs to all types of relief agencies, while imparting to them the importance of knowing how to work with Christ-based and church-based organizations.

I often quote Luke 21:13, that these disasters are an occasion for our testimony. In fact, while I was in the San Diego area in the Spring of 2006, the former president of the largest Muslim country in the world requested a private lunch with myself and a colleague. It was the tangible expression of love from the Christian community during tsunami relief that opened the door for this woman to share her heart and concern for her country to two followers of Christ. We have found this locally, as well, from fire departments, judges, police departments, and government officials with whom we have developed relationship during our disaster response initiatives.

The Kingdom of God is built on relationship, and we are thankful for the relationships God has given us. May we continue to labor together in building His Kingdom as we bring hope to those who suffer from tragedy. Thank you for your partnership, and thank you for caring!

DR. J. DOUG STRINGER
FOUNDER & PRESIDENT
SOMEBODY CARES AMERICA-INTERNATIONAL



“When disaster strikes a community, no group is better postured to be part of the immediate response all the way through the long-term recovery than the local church. With all the pain and trauma that a disaster brings into a community, it is also a moment of opportunity for practically expressing the Gospel that most communities will only get once in a generation.”

ADAM PEACOCKE
City Life Fellowship
Santa Rosa CA

INTRODUCTION:

A CHURCH-BASED RESPONSE

Throughout the many disaster responses the Somebody Cares network has been part of—from Tropical Storm Allison flooding in 2001 to recent tsunamis, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, wildfires, and floods in the years since—we’ve seen over and over again how the church can respond quicker and more precisely than any other agency.

A Homeland Security Institute report issued in December 2006 in regard to Hurricane Katrina relief stated: “It was neighborhood congregations...the local fabric of America—that appeared to have carried the day to a great degree.” The same was true in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike in 2008 and Hurricane Harvey in 2017. An article in *USA Today* published in September 2017 quoted Greg Forrester, CEO of VOAD, as saying: “About 80% of all recovery happens because of non-profits, and the majority of them are faith-based.”

That’s because the church is the heart of its community, and our highest common denominator is Jesus. We were made for adversity because we were made to be peacemakers in the midst of storms. We were made to be the ones who bring hope in the midst of despair.

When the church is operating as God intended, it is the best care provider in any community. Being a tangible expression of God’s love to our neighbors means we must excel at unity, organization, and giving. Titus 3:14 in the New International Version states, *“Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.”*

Our Somebody Cares Disaster Response and Preparedness network has adopted the terms “church-based” or “Christ-based” to replace the common term, “faith-based” because Christ is at the center of all we do. If we take Him out of the equation, we take away the very source of our power to be effective. Everything we do is a passion of our heart; if we lose the heart of what we do, we become just another institutional structure. But if we bring heart back to the structure, we will see transformation in our communities. Our desire is to see the church empowered to do what we were created to do while recognizing that we need to work with government agencies and other organizations.

When disasters happen, real people have very desperate needs. Often, resources to meet the needs become tied up in bureaucracy and bottlenecks. We want to work with the other agencies—FEMA, the Red Cross, etc.—to be an asset, but not to be controlled. They have great systems, but the church has people who know their communities. We cannot look to agencies as our source; instead, we must look at ourselves as a resource for them to facilitate what they are doing.

The Heritage Foundation recognized the importance of this grassroots response by issuing a paper regarding Katrina relief and hosting a panel discussion entitled, “A Grassroots Response to Disaster.” Doug Stringer was a part of the panel, representing the faith-based community. “The grassroots response,” he said, “should be the cornerstone of any national effort.”

“The problems arise when a system no longer has the human touch and the relational equity of a community,” he added. “That’s why what we’re doing here is so critical—to help empower other entities who know how to work with those of us who are the practitioners on the ground.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPAREDNESS

“You don’t fully understand the importance of relationship until you are at a place where you really can’t do something by yourself. After Katrina hit, we watched the body of Christ be the body of Christ. We lived it, it’s real, and it works. The time to build relationships is now!”

RICHARD HINOJOSA

Good Shepherd Community Church, Hidalgo TX



THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPAREDNESS

PART 1: BEING PREPARED RELATIONALLY

MENDING THE NET

In 1995, Somebody Cares Houston was unveiled as a citywide effort to reach out at a grassroots level to at-risk youth and those in low income urban communities. There was a need to link those working in struggling urban areas with suburban churches so the church in Houston could reach an entire city for Christ. Doug Stringer calls this “co-pastoring a city.” “When you think in terms of co-pastoring a city with over six million people—such as Houston—you realize this is something you cannot do alone,” he explains. “You realize you need to be part of something bigger than yourself.”

Never was this more true than during Hurricane Katrina. Imagine your city’s population growing in a matter of two days by over 250,000 people—all of them homeless, jobless, with literally no money or belongings except what they carried with them. It was a monumental task, but the body of Christ rose to the occasion like never before to meet the needs. Churches in Houston connected with one another throughout the city and also with churches, ministries, businesses, and individuals across the country! One of our partners estimates that Somebody Cares and all the ministries we networked with during that time facilitated over \$40 million worth of goods and supplies to aid a sea of desperately hurting humanity.

The Homeland Security Institute reports, “Many organizations had local and national support networks to draw upon, at times surpassing the capabilities of government agencies.” And H. James Towey, director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, said, “[The churches] are doing more than what they say they’re doing—on nothing, because that’s the passion of their heart.”

How incredible are the possibilities available to us when we work together! They are so incredible that even the secular world will take notice! This is the principle of “mending the net.” Throughout Scripture, we read that we must first spread the net, wash it, mend it, and then cast it to reap a mighty harvest.

Jesus instructed His disciples to cast the net to bring in the harvest (Luke 5:4-6). The harvest required a net. An individual or a church with only one fishing pole can catch only one fish at a time. But together, we become a net that is mended and interlinked, even with our diversities and our distinctives. To work together, we must agree on the essential tenants of our faith: Christ’s death, burial and resurrection; the Holy Trinity; the inerrancy of Scripture. This is our “highest common denominator.” If we can agree on these essentials, we can join hand-in-hand and become a NET that WORKS!

“Through all the relief work I’ve been part of at locations around the world, I’ve learned that no matter where you go or what kind of disaster there is, the church is always on the frontline... . They are a point of distribution that the government doesn’t have, and distribution is a key to success when dealing with crisis. Who has a better pulse on the community than the church?”

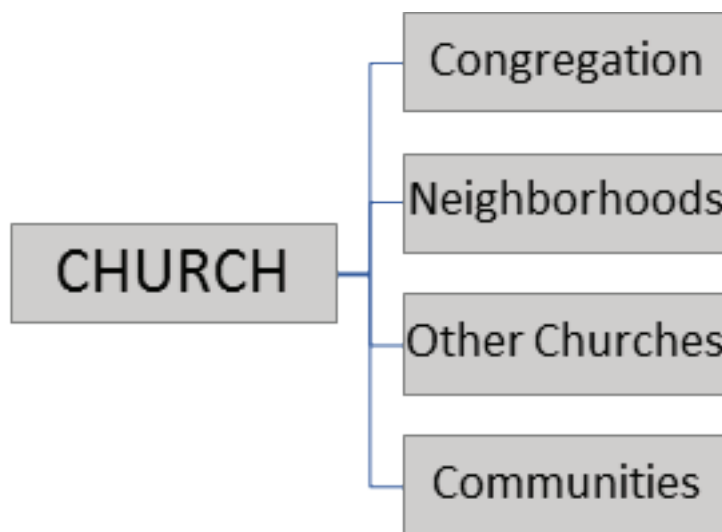
LEO ABDELLA
Christ Fellowship
West Palm Beach, FL

Times of disaster are truly times of harvest. As Pastor Jerry Davis from Christian World Embassy says, “Disaster creates seekers. Crisis time is ‘Good News’ time.”

In 2 Peter 3:6, Jesus gives specific instructions to the fishermen to cast out their nets. “And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So, they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.”

These fishers of men found there were so many fish to be harvested that their net was breaking! They had to signal for their neighbors to help them. It was a task they could not do alone. They could only do it with the help of those who were laboring alongside them. In times of disaster, we can work together by sharing manpower, resources, facilities, and more. But the time to build relationships is now! The time to mend the net is before the disaster strikes. Then we can be an integral part of the net that rescues the hurting, offering healing and hope to those in despair.

The following figure illustrates the four areas in which your church should be building and nurturing relationships:

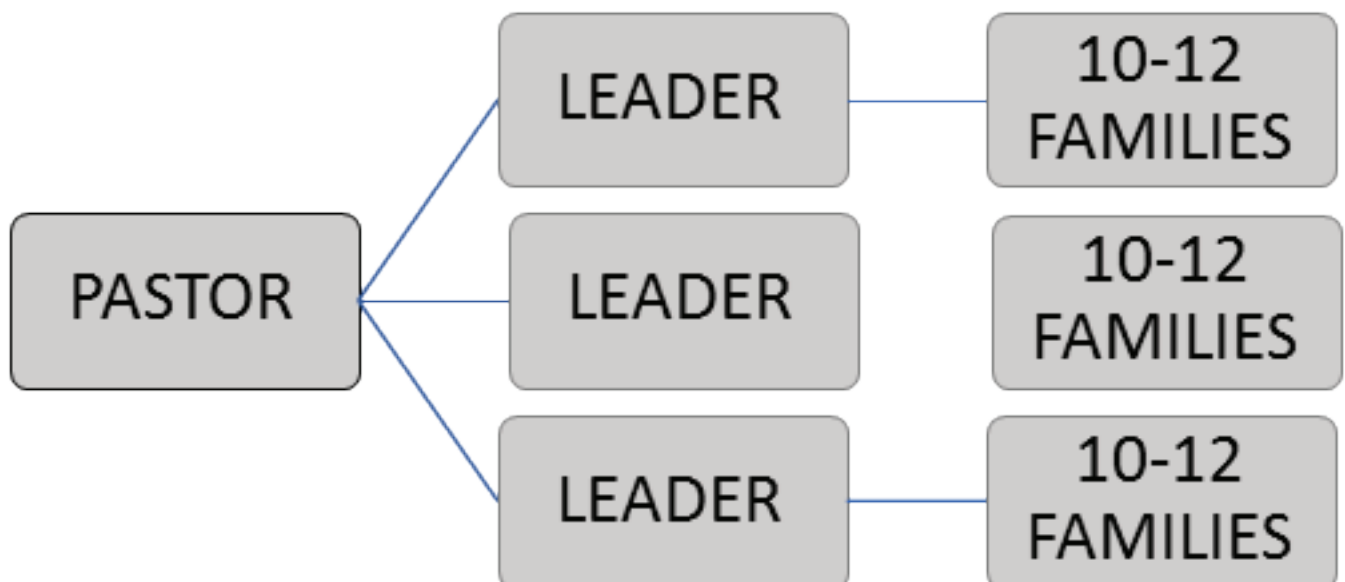


CHURCHES TO CONGREGATIONS



In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, we heard stories of church leaders who could not locate their congregations, and we heard of church members who could not locate their pastors and leaders. Fast forward to recent disasters of 2017 and 2018 where families, friends and congregations were connected quickly through social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.). Pastor Jesse Puente at LifePoint Church in Baytown, Texas said, “The most effective way, following Hurricane Harvey, to check on church members was to gather a team to call individuals and report back their status.”

We recommend having some type of system like this in place that you, your leadership and congregation are aware of before disaster strikes. To avoid such lapses, a basic “phone chain” system can be implemented. Begin with church leadership and assign 10-12 individuals or families for each to call in case a disaster strikes. The second tier of individuals can be assigned a group of families to contact as well, and so on. In disasters such as hurricanes where there is advance notice, home group leaders or leaders of other small ministries within the church can be responsible to find out who is evacuating (or staying) prior to the disaster, where they are going, and how they can be reached. If certain individuals cannot be reached after a disaster—or if there is no telephone or wifi service available—their homes should be visited, if possible. Churches with an IT department can augment phone contact with online registration and information for their congregation. *(See sample phone chain spreadsheets in the Appendix).*



Assigning families to leaders and determining the best communication system for your congregation is valuable for a variety of reasons, but primarily to make sure everyone is safe; to assess needs and provide assistance; to communicate with those who have evacuated when it is possible, wise, or even necessary that they return; and to spread out the calls and communication so the burden does not fall on the pastor. The task is too large for the pastor alone, but when each person accounts for an assigned group, no one will slip through the cracks. We recommend that you begin grouping families to be assigned to leaders as soon as possible so they can touch base with their assigned families.

We also suggest surveying your church members to find out who has special vocational training that could be helpful during a disaster (i.e. doctors, nurses, NIMS certified, retired military, government employees, amateur radio operators, etc.) and any equipment they have available to use during disaster relief (i.e. generators, chain saws, smokers and gas grills, etc.). This information can be obtained by the leaders as they contact assigned families. Compile this in the church database.

CHURCHES TO NEIGHBORHOODS



During the founding of our country, the church was considered the cornerstone of the community. Today our church buildings may not be in the center of our communities, but we can revive that concept as congregations reach out to their neighbors, becoming a tangible expression of the love of Christ.

One couple who volunteers for Somebody Cares Houston was ministering to a New Orleans evacuee after Hurricane Katrina. His mother was an invalid, and she was too heavy for him to carry by himself. He had to leave her behind, helpless, to drown in the flood.

How can the church be prepared to help in situations such as these? By knowing our neighbors. This same couple went door to door prior to the anticipated arrival of Hurricane Rita, just a few weeks later, to ask their neighbors if they needed help preparing for the storm. Although Rita took a turn and hit Southeast Texas instead of Houston, these acts opened doors for long-term ministry to their neighbors that was still going on long after the storm.

Pending times of tragedy can be an open door for evangelism as the church reaches out to neighbors. A simple survey can help church members find out who will need extra assistance with elderly parents, small children, and physically disabled members in their households, while opening the door for long-term relationships. We have included a sample survey in the Appendix. Some people may understandably be reluctant to give out their personal information, so we also suggest that you provide a church business card or some type of flyer that your members can give to neighbors along with their own contact information. An informational mailing to neighbors may also help.

Home-owner associations are another way to get plugged in with your neighbors. Church members can coordinate with area home-owner associations to insert a short article in the newsletter for anyone to contact the church if they need extra assistance in case of an emergency. Your neighbors who are not part of a local church body may not have anyone helping them in times of a disaster. We, therefore, need to bring the church to them!

CHURCHES TO CHURCHES



When disaster strikes, denominational walls come down. But the time to build relationships is before disaster strikes. We have to come together now, with one mind, one sound, and one voice, realizing we may have different styles of worship, but we have a highest common denominator: Jesus.

How do you connect the churches of a community? Begin with cohesion rather than inclusion, collaborating with those who have the same heart to build relationship across racial and denominational lines. You can get a lot more accomplished with cohesion than you can when you try to include a number of opposing agendas. Once you have built a solid foundation with groups who are cohesive, it's easy to invite others to come on board with what you already have established.

If you are not already involved in a ministry network in your city, see if one exists, or just begin meeting with other pastors and leaders. Embrace them and their differences. Build genuine, ongoing relationship. Include monthly corporate meetings for prayer, encouragement, and connection, as well as smaller groups or one-on-one times to have lunch or coffee.

The "NET that WORKS" is already in place, we just have to work together. It is also important during times of disaster that you are connected to the larger body of Christ, as well, through your denomination or through other ministry networks. Tony Krishack, pastor of Victory Christian Center in Houston, shared this testimony of his denominational network meeting a very specific need during the chaos following Hurricane Katrina:

"I got a phone call from a pastor about a mother who had lost her daughter. They had never been out of the inner city. Her mother was frantic. I made a phone call to one of our churches that was filled with evacuees sleeping on the floor, and within 10 minutes, the daughter was talking on the phone to her mother. Another church picked up the daughter, dropped her off at the Louisiana border, and that night she was in the arms of her mother."

Andrew Benson, the Aid Distribution Coordinator in New Orleans and an elder of City Cathedral, a partner of Somebody Cares, lost his home in the bulls-eye of Katrina. "As a New Orleanian, many thanks to all of you," he said to those who gathered at our Think Tank in Washington DC. "You really have taken care of our people. You took care of the people that we couldn't take care of, that we weren't ready to take care of. From my heart, thank you for what you've done. It's a great network."

CHURCHES TO COMMUNITIES

Some of the most effective contacts during hurricane relief involved pastors and leaders who were connected with local authorities in their communities. At First Baptist Church of Kirbyville TX, the pastor's son was also the fire chief. With his help, Somebody Cares was able to help the church set up the main relief staging area for the entire county almost immediately after Rita hit Southeast Texas. Others in our network are involved in their local Chambers of Commerce or serve on the Emergency Operations Centers for their communities. It's also important to know which of your church members are involved in civic positions.



"We have a great emergency management coordinator, chief of police, and fire chief. And most of these individuals are believers," said Lonny Robbins, who served as a pastor and our Somebody Cares director in Pampa TX but was also the city's mayor.

In Humble TX, the late Dr. Buddy Hicks was one of the first ministers to serve on the board of directors for the Chamber of Commerce. "We're just living the life before them," said Buddy, who was recognized by the secular arena as a spiritual leader of the area.

One pastor in our network who served on the local board of the Red Cross said, "Most churches do not even think that they should be involved in activities with civic organizations. But we should be involved in doing those types of things, and we are able to do them much more efficiently and adequately." For example, First Baptist Church in Kirbyville, a town of only 2,000 residents, became the staging area that assisted 8,000 people by helping the local government.

Being involved in organizations like these and establishing connections with local authorities helps in many practical ways during disaster, especially with issues pertaining to transportation and entry access. Citizen Corps offer volunteer opportunities to support local fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, and community public health efforts. With the added support of citizen volunteers, emergency service providers have more time to perform the responsibilities that require their highly skilled personnel.

You can find the Citizen Corps council in your area at:<https://www.ready.gov/citizen-corps>

If you don't have a Citizen Corps Council in your area, contact your state Citizen Corps delegate and work with your local officials to start one.

The following are a few suggestions on other ways to get involved in the community:

- Chamber of Commerce
- School Boards
- Citizen Corps
- Volunteer Citizen Groups (i.e. Citizens Organized for Rita Restoration)
- Community Emergency Response Teams
- Volunteer Civic Position

ACTION ITEMS: BEING PREPARED RELATIONALLY

CHURCHES TO CONGREGATIONS

- ☐ Organize communication system for post-disaster follow up with church members. (Choose what is already working for mass communication in your church. Phone calls or texts, social media?)
- ☐ Survey church members to identify useful skills/resources for disaster response.
- ☐ Compile into a database and print out hard copies as well whenever updated.
- ☐ Use information to set up a disaster response team for your church and delegate responsibilities.
- ☐ Utilize your church/organization Social Media platform to communicate your plans and needs before, during and after crisis.

CHURCHES TO NEIGHBORHOODS

- ☐ Create survey for your church members to use when they offer assistance to their neighbors (preparing homes, helping with the elderly, sick, or disabled).
- ☐ Supply business cards or other church information to be handed out by church members to their neighbors.
- ☐ Encourage church members to be involved in neighborhood associations.
- ☐ Consider running an ad in the local neighborhood association newsletter offering assistance to those who need it. Make sure you have a team in place to respond to calls for help.
- ☐ Join the Facebook groups created by your city and/or state Emergency Management Office, Police Department, Mayor/Governor's Offices, etc. for real-time updates.

CHURCHES TO OTHER CHURCHES

- ☐ Connect with local pastors or compassion network:
- ☐ Connect to a national/international network (or denomination):
- ☐ Need to start a local network because none exists; initial contacts: _____

CHURCHES TO COMMUNITIES

Identify any of your church leaders or members who are part of:

- ☐ Chamber of Commerce:
- ☐ Police Department:

☐ Fire Department:

☐ Local or Federal Government:

☐ Red Cross:

☐ Citizen Corps:

☐ School Board:

☐ Community Emergency Response Team:

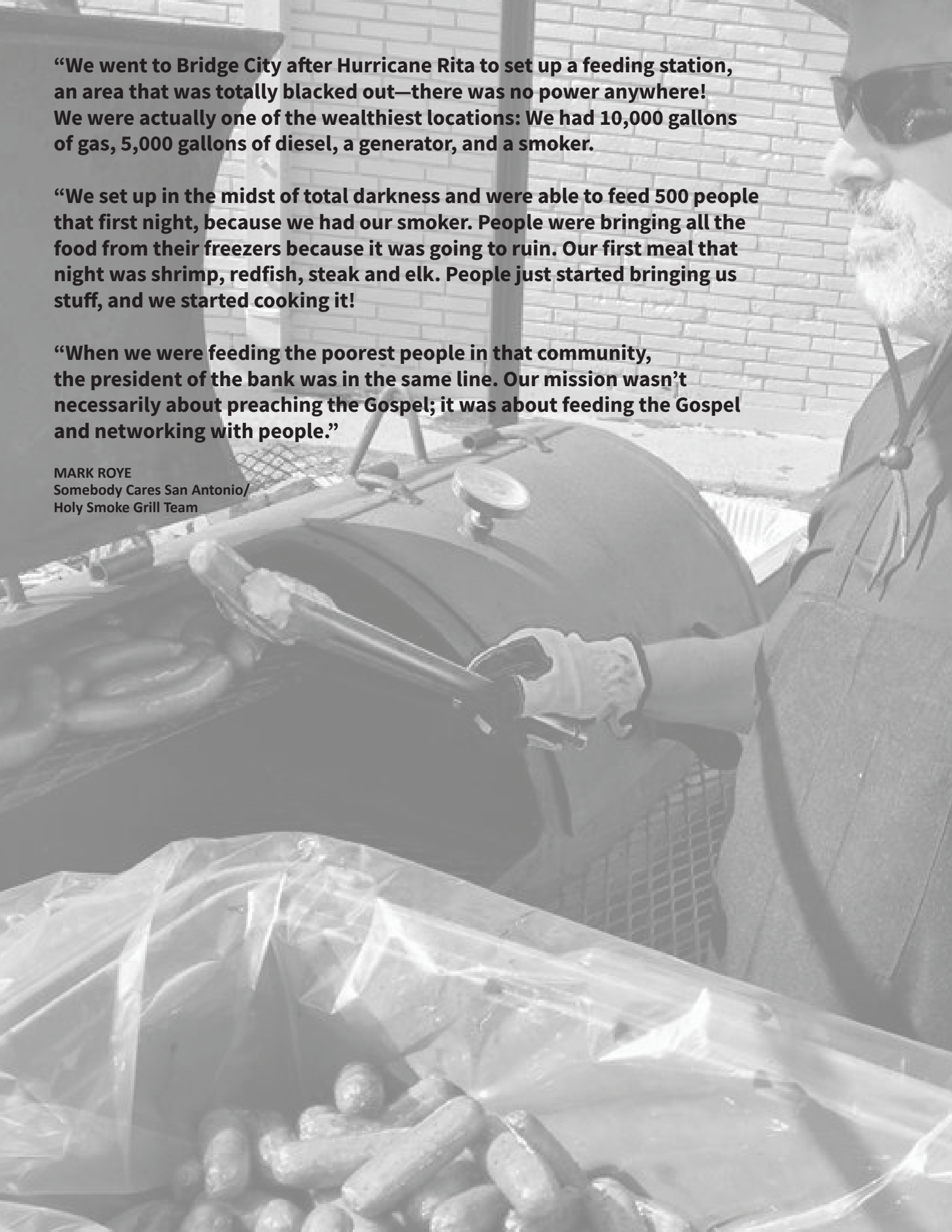
NOTES:

“We went to Bridge City after Hurricane Rita to set up a feeding station, an area that was totally blacked out—there was no power anywhere! We were actually one of the wealthiest locations: We had 10,000 gallons of gas, 5,000 gallons of diesel, a generator, and a smoker.”

“We set up in the midst of total darkness and were able to feed 500 people that first night, because we had our smoker. People were bringing all the food from their freezers because it was going to ruin. Our first meal that night was shrimp, redfish, steak and elk. People just started bringing us stuff, and we started cooking it!”

“When we were feeding the poorest people in that community, the president of the bank was in the same line. Our mission wasn’t necessarily about preaching the Gospel; it was about feeding the Gospel and networking with people.”

MARK ROYE
Somebody Cares San Antonio/
Holy Smoke Grill Team



THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPAREDNESS

PART 2: BEING PREPARED

MATERIALLY

Preparing your ministry materially involves an initial assessment of your current situation along with an assessment of what a pending disaster in your area might look like. For example, your region of the country might not be an area where hurricanes hit, but you may have flooding. Colder climates need to consider back-up sources for heat. Rural areas have different needs than urban areas. FEMA's "Plan Ahead" (<https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>) is an excellent source to assist you in assessing your current situation and helping you prepare for disaster. It contains great disaster planning information relevant to specific disasters.

Once you complete the assessment, you will need to conduct an inventory of what you already have. Many purchases will be one-time expenses or even major capital expenses, such as generators. Other ministries or businesses in the community, or even church members, may have larger items such as forklifts that can be borrowed during the disaster.

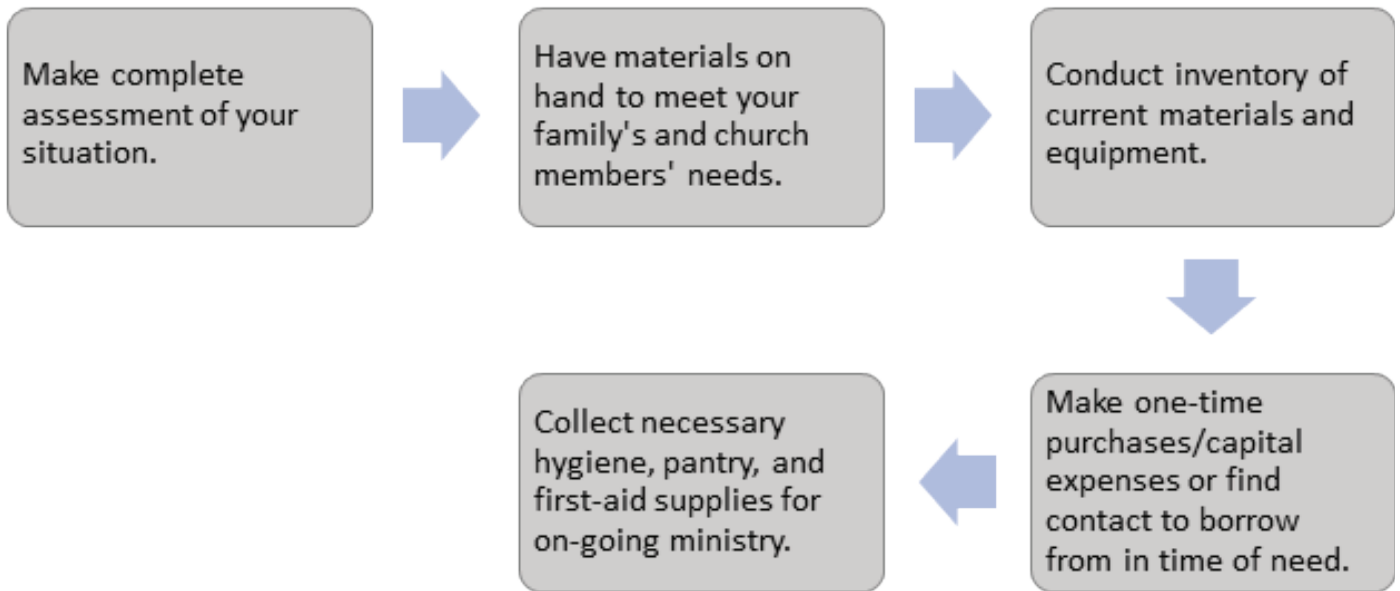
Pantry, hygiene, and first aid items can be kept on hand for ongoing ministry to your church body or your community and replenished as needed. Keep in mind the ages of people in your church and community (do you have elderly people who will need oxygen?) and even ethnicity. When evacuees arrived in Houston from New Orleans, there was a need for African American hair products. During the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, a call came in from Calvary Chapel in West Houston. They had 28 pallets of rice, beans, and non-perishable Spanish food donated. The Somebody Cares Houston team connected them with Ministerio Internacional Gracia y Poder to receive the truck and distribute to their community. As you prepare your pantry keep in mind the diversity of the region you will be serving.

People are generally grateful for whatever is provided during times of crisis. However, there is an added comfort in the familiar. The same is said for the quality of the donations. Creating space where people who have experienced loss can receive with care and dignity the basic items they need to move forward is a tangible way to express God's love for them. The idea is not to hoard materials, as we saw during the Y2K scare, but to have basic materials available for daily on-going ministry so that when a disaster does strike, your church will be ready because you have been doing it all along.

MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL: You and your church members should assess your own families' needs and have those materials on hand first. Knowing your families are taken care of will give you the peace of mind you need to reach out to others in need.

Once your family inventory and church inventory are in place, churches can work together to meet the greater needs of the community.

BEING PREPARED MATERIALLY FLOW CHART



“If the lights were to go out in the room right this second, does anybody here have a flashlight? That’s something I learned during CERT training. Shortly after that, our Christian high school had a gas leak and had to move temporarily to the basement of another church. Two weeks later, we lost power completely, and I was the only person who had a flashlight! I had put one in my desk the very first day I finished my CERT training and got my certificate.”

CINDI WEBSTER
Somebody Cares New England

ACTION ITEMS: BEING PREPARED MATERIALLY

- ☐ Assess types of disasters you might have to deal with:

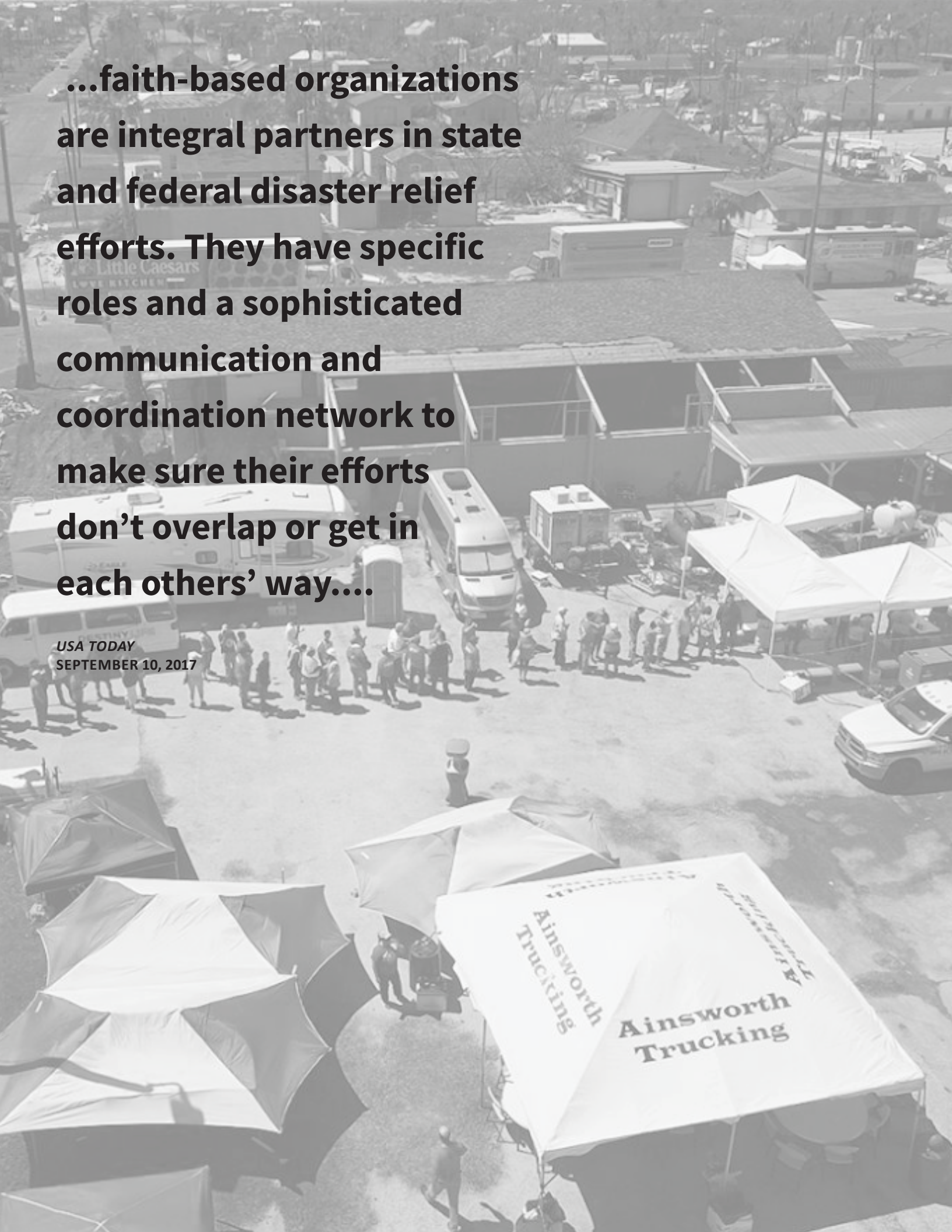
- ☐ Assess special material needs associated with these types of disasters:

- ☐ Take inventory of current supplies on hand. Below are some key items you might want to consider having in your inventory. A more complete list is in the Appendix.
 - LED flashlights (burn brighter, last longer)
 - Battery-operated lanterns
 - Batteries (all sizes)
 - Generators (battery-powered or diesel operated)
 - Back-up communication (HAM radio, satellite systems)
 - Back-up transportation (golf carts, ATVs)
 - Kerosene heaters
 - Smokers (using wood and matches), gas/ charcoal grills
 - Tarps
 - Large tent (for shelter or for warehousing)
 - Tables and shelving for distribution/ warehousing
 - Non-perishable food
 - Water (for drinking, cooking, cleaning, hygiene)
 - Paperware, utensils, and “clam shells” for serving food
 - Can openers
 - Laundry supplies, bleach, other cleaners
 - Bathroom supplies/toilet paper
 - Personal hygiene items (“Care Kits”)
 - Baby supplies
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Cots/air mattresses/pillows/blankets
 - Disposable blankets (like airlines use)
 - Outdoor sound system
 - Bibles and other appropriate spiritual materials
 - Chain saws, other tools
 - Rubber gloves and boots, face masks
 - Bug spray
 - Oxygen
 - Insulin and coolers
 - Other medications/first aid kits
 - Wheelchair

REMEMBER: Make sure your family’s needs are met first, then focus on the church!

**...faith-based organizations
are integral partners in state
and federal disaster relief
efforts. They have specific
roles and a sophisticated
communication and
coordination network to
make sure their efforts
don't overlap or get in
each others' way....**

USA TODAY
SEPTEMBER 10, 2017



THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPAREDNESS

PART 3: BEING PREPARED

LOGISTICALLY

Logistics can include several aspects of any operation, but at the core of it all is COMMUNICATION: when to communicate, how to communicate, what to communicate, and to whom you communicate. Communication is vital, as a disaster can be exacerbated by poor communication. Below are some suggestions to enhance your communication during a time of disaster.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION: THE INCIDENT COMMAND CENTER

With the implementation of a military-style Incident Command Center, a flow of communication is established that will allow operations to be implemented as smoothly as possible under otherwise adverse conditions.

An Incident Command Center may be operated locally through a community response task force, or a trained team from another community can come in immediately after the disaster and set up the operations until it can be operated locally. All needs, assessments, donations, volunteers, and resources are communicated through the central office—located on-site in the disaster area—to the “hub” office (like Somebody Cares America) through a web-based database, satellite communications system, amateur radios, or cell phones. Retired military and CEOs are excellent candidates to help operate the ICC. Having these people available “is like gold,” said Pastor Rodney Bryant, who set up an Incident Command Team in Kingwood TX following Hurricane Katrina.

The command structure is divided into four categories: planning, operations, logistics, and administration. An advance team will include one individual experienced in each area. They coordinate and manage supplies and manpower coming in from the Hub (SCA) and other locations to the areas on-site where they can be best used.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

Web-based coordination is another key aspect of successful logistics. There are several online systems that can be used for identifying and fulfilling the needs. For example, MeetTheNeed.org has been designed for volunteer, case, and resource management. SaharaFoundation.org has an open source disaster management software. And there are others.

Because churches typically are the shipping destination, this type of database allows for the specialization of resource collection (i.e. Church X is the clothing warehouse, Church Z is the medical supply warehouse, etc.). In this way resources can be procured effectively and efficiently. The model is fairly simple, “Nothing more than a conduit of information, because communication is so important when volunteers and supplies need to be directed,” says Leo Abdella, the founder of Homeland Compassion.

Other database communication needs include:

- ☐ Good, current databases for communication with:
 - Church members
 - Other pastors/ministry leaders in your denomination/network
 - Donors and suppliers
- ☐ Databases for tracking:
 - Who receives assistance (for follow-up)
 - Who donated goods
 - Who loaned goods
 - Value of goods supplied
 - Testimonies (to communicate to your donors and/or congregation)
- ☐ Web-based systems for real-time communication of rapidly changing needs and available resources.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES/SECURITY CLEARANCE (IN COORDINATION WITH LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND FEDERAL AUTHORITIES)

It is important to have relationship with local authorities, so you can be approved for entry into disaster areas. CERT training is helpful in gaining access. Find out who in your congregation already has connections. In disasters such as a hurricane where there is advance notice, contact officials in advance so you can have your access documentation, emergency badges, or whatever is required. Find out if your ministry can register with VOAD, as well.

Be sure to know your transportation routes. Churches along these roadways can be prepared as “respite centers” providing water, restrooms, and shelter.

Other helpful items to have access to:

- ☐ Gasoline: Have access to back-up supplies.
- ☐ Non-gasoline or easy-on-gas back-ups (golf carts, ATVs, etc.).
- ☐ Wrecker trucks for pulling trees and debris from blocked roadways.

WAREHOUSES, PROCUREMENT, AND POINTS OF DISTRIBUTION

- ☐ Identify these sources in advance: warehouses, suppliers, and local staging areas.
- ☐ Have back-up staging areas in case the disaster makes your selected location inoperable.
- ☐ Be prepared with paperwork/databases for tracking what is coming in, what is going out. You will need to enter and calculate all information after the “Rapid Response” phase has ended for your own records as well as to supply reports to donors and suppliers.

POWER SOURCES THAT WILL ASSIST IN LOGISTICAL OPERATIONS

- ☐ Generators (fuel and battery operated)
- ☐ Lighting (battery operated or kerosene lanterns, long-life flashlights)
- ☐ Heat/Air Conditioning
- ☐ Refrigerated Trucks

VOLUNTEER COORDINATION AND DEPLOYMENT

Another crucial area of logistics and communication involves volunteer coordination and deployment. During a disaster, the man-power needs are overwhelming; therefore, having someone to recruit, train, and coordinate volunteer activity is crucial. Depending on what role your church or ministry is playing in the relief efforts, (i.e. shelter, central command center, warehouse, food distributor, etc.) your volunteer needs will vary, so plan ahead accordingly.

Assigning volunteers to the appropriate task is critical. Some areas obviously require more physical strength than others. Answering telephones requires relational skills as well as enough knowledge of the situation, your ministry, and your community to assist the callers. As information changed daily during Katrina relief regarding FEMA procedures, housing, and locations where various types of assistance were offered, we found an easy-to-update 3-ring binder was effective. This binder included information on the ministry and situation-specific data like phone numbers and websites for locating specific persons. If your computer system is operating, everything can be updated online so multiple locations have access to the latest data.

Your volunteer coordinator will be responsible for:

- ☐ Assessing where the needs are/taking requests for volunteers
- ☐ Recruiting volunteers/responding to offers to volunteer
- ☐ Assigning volunteers to the appropriate task
- ☐ Processing volunteer applications and/or background checks (See Appendix for a sample volunteer application)
- ☐ Tracking volunteer hours
- ☐ Coordinating volunteer orientation
- ☐ Assembly and daily updating of a volunteer manual with current information needed to answer questions or making on-line updates.

Background checks are very important, particularly at shelters and disaster sites. One of our ministry partners tells the story of a volunteer who had come from Canada to work at their relief camp. A doctor who felt suspicious of the man went online to check him out and found out that he was a pedophile who was wanted for 20 counts. Anyone wanting to volunteer should sign a form giving permission to do a background security check. A sample form can be found in the Appendix.

There are also various web-based applications for which your ministry can sign up. Since the relief efforts of 2017-2018, Somebody Cares has been using Protect My Ministry (<https://protectmyministry.com>) which offers an online application link that every volunteer receives, fills out, and pays a fee to have processed before they were approved to be housed or work with one of our church partners. When you have teams stretched out across the nation, it is much more efficient to use an online resource for completing and storing this vital and sensitive information.

ACTION ITEMS: BEING PREPARED LOGISTICALLY

COMMUNICATIONS

- ☐ Develop a communications plan for your church or network (who to call for what; see diagram on next page)
- ☐ Develop a database to track your church or network members, their skills, and resources (see Being Prepared Relationally/Churches to Congregations)
- ☐ Develop a database for tracking resources coming in and going out during disaster relief :
- ☐
 - Who received assistance (for follow-up)
 - What they received
 - Value of the goods they received
 - Who supplied/donated the goods
 - Testimonies
- ☐ Develop a web-based communication system for your church or network for real-time communication of needs and available resources, which change rapidly during the Rapid Response stage .
- ☐ Back-up communications hardware (write down numbers or contact information for suppliers):
 - Cell phones:
 - Hot Spot- Cellular Data Usage for Internet:
 - Satellite phones:
 - Amateur radio system access (can send emails through amateur radio with Winlink 2000):
 - Internet access through Broadband, DSL, or cable:
 - Portable satellite communication system:

TRANSPORTATION

- ☐ Approved for access into disaster area
- ☐ Back-up gasoline supplies:
- ☐ Back-up vehicles (golf carts, ATVs):
- ☐ Wrecker trucks:
- ☐ Learn evacuation route (if church is located on evacuation route, be prepared as a “respite center” with snacks, water, restrooms)

WAREHOUSES AND DISTRIBUTION

SOURCES IDENTIFIED:

- ☐ Warehouses (preferably with loading docks):

- ☐ Suppliers for specific anticipated needs (see Appendix for some suggested suppliers)

- ☐ Local staging areas for food, other goods:

- ☐ Databases and paperwork for tracking
- ☐

BACK-UP POWER:

- ☐ Back-up power sources located (write quantity, location):

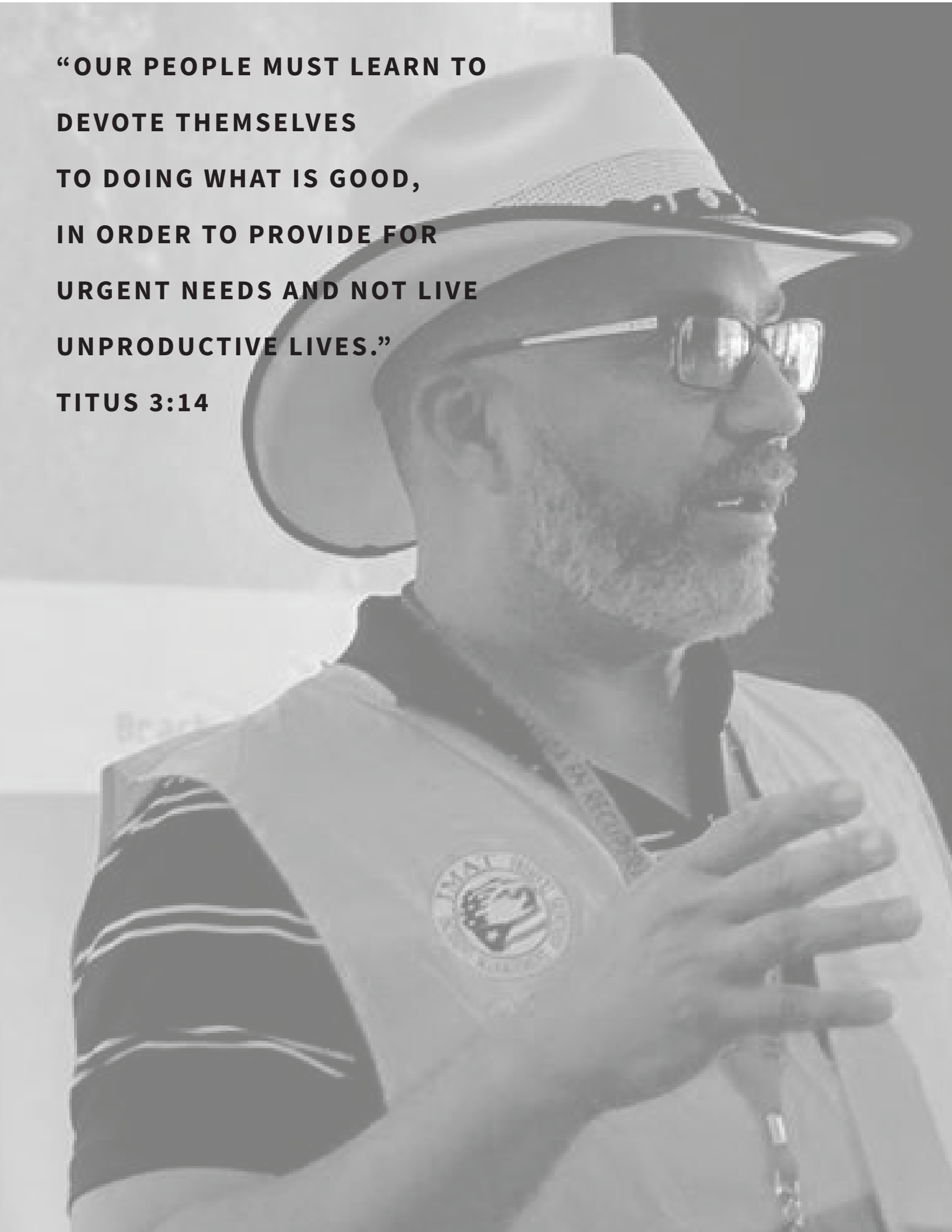
- ☐ Generators (fuel or battery? renewable energy?):

- ☐ Lighting:

- ☐ LED flashlights:

**“OUR PEOPLE MUST LEARN TO
DEVOTE THEMSELVES
TO DOING WHAT IS GOOD,
IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FOR
URGENT NEEDS AND NOT LIVE
UNPRODUCTIVE LIVES.”**

TITUS 3:14



THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPAREDNESS

PART 4: BEING PREPARED VOCATIONALLY (WITH TRAINING)

In this section, we describe several courses and seminars that can equip you to handle various needs that may arise during a disaster.

NIMS TRAINING (NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM)

This course will help in communicating with federal agencies deployed to your area during disaster relief. “I know what these guys are thinking, and I can tell you why they did not work with the church,” explained Rodney Bryant, “It wasn’t because they didn’t love us, but because we didn’t speak the same language. That is all it is.” Rodney is a pastor, police officer, and military veteran from Kingwood, Texas. Lonny Robbins, the former mayor of Pampa, Texas, agreed: “We have to see that understanding the language is important.” During the time he served as mayor he was also senior pastor of Trinity Fellowship and Somebody Cares Pampa. A NIMS self-study course (IS 700) is conveniently offered online at <https://training.fema.gov>

CERT TRAINING (COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM)

“The Community Emergency Response Team concept was developed and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) in 1985. The Whittier Narrows earthquake in 1987 underscored the area-wide threat of a major disaster in California. Further, it confirmed the need for training civilians to meet their immediate needs. As a result, the LAFD created the Disaster Preparedness Division with the purpose of training citizens and private and government employees. The CERT course will benefit any citizen who takes it. This individual will be better prepared to respond to and cope with the aftermath of a disaster.” (Quoted from the CERT website). CERT training will equip you and your church members for hands-on disaster relief. For more information visit <https://www.ready.gov/training>

The basic program is a 24-hour course, typically delivered one evening per week over an 8-week period. Training sessions cover disaster preparedness, fire suppression, basic disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, team organization, and a new module on terrorism.

COUNSELING & CHAPLAINCY FOR WORKING WITH VICTIMS OF TRAUMATIC SITUATIONS

A number of Christian counseling agencies train churches on how to do post-traumatic stress ministry. Somebody Cares offers chaplaincy training and is open to discussion about bringing training to your community. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association also offers chaplaincy training and deployment at three levels:

1. Active and retired chaplains from the FBI or military;
2. Pastors, hospice workers, and Christian counselors;
3. Those who are “just off the pew” but have a heart for people and want to share God’s love.

The American Association of Christian Counselors offers Christian Crisis Response Training Program. Graduates receive a Christian Crisis Response Chaplain Credential (CRC). More than preparing you to adequately minister to people in crisis, credentials and formal training could be the factor that gives you goodwill with authorities to access restricted areas. Crisis counseling is not just for the initial or “rapid response” stages, but for the longer term as well. (See page 43 for other recommended courses.)

“People feel forgotten when the agencies move out.” Jodie Nelson Chiricosta said. “They’re still depressed, and now they feel abandoned unless the church is here to say, ‘We’re here with you.’”

MARRIAGES AND CHILDREN

The needs of children who have been traumatized in disaster are often overlooked. A video training course is offered by the American Association of Christian Counselors, and the Southern Baptist Association can even bring in portable facilities designed especially for children.

Marriage counseling is also a tremendous need during the long-term stages of relief. “The pressure is terrible. Marriages began disintegrating rapidly, especially for people who already had problems before Katrina hit.” says Pastor Allen Hickman from Resurrection Life/Somebody Cares Picayune, Mississippi.

“So, here’s an opportunity for the church to be a conduit,” says Doug Stringer. “Resources without a human touch don’t go very far, but if you can get the church, which knows the community, to offer the human touch by meeting these critical needs, we can see long-term healing in the communities. That’s part of the restoration process.”

CITIZEN/COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING

Are you Ready: An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness is FEMA’s most comprehensive source on individual, family, and community preparedness. The manual can be used as a study guide with credit awarded for successful completion and a 75 percent score on a final exam. A facilitator’s guide is also available for a small group or classroom setting. This is an easy to use manual that has instruction modules for adults, older children, and younger children. A resource CD is packaged with the facilitator guide that contains customizable presentation materials, sample training plans, and other disaster preparedness education resources. Copies of *Are You Ready?* and the facilitator guide are available through the FEMA publications warehouse (1-800-480-2520). A free translation of the book in Spanish is found at: https://www.fema.gov/pdf/library/spa_pfd475.pdf

Other resources and disaster-specific preparedness information can be found at www.ready.gov

Furthermore, many conferences ranging from “The Billy Graham Chaplain Training Conference” to “The Texas Hurricane Conference” are hosted each year throughout the country. Sending members of your churches or

organizations to these events will not only provide your organization with valuable training, but they will also provide great networking opportunities. A listing of a few annual conferences is included in the “Action Steps: Being Prepared Vocationally” section later in the manual.

SCA DISASTER RESPONSE & PREPAREDNESS SEMINARS

Somebody Cares can help you conduct a one-day or two-day training seminar, incorporating practitioners who are experts in one or more of these areas of preparedness and relief. Below is a sample list of topics:

- ☐ Building a compassion coalition/“the NET that WORKS”
- ☐ Networking with local agencies
- ☐ Communications systems & logistics
- ☐ Counseling & chaplaincy training
- ☐ Volunteer training and deployment/pastoral care
- ☐ Warehousing/procurement
- ☐ Mobile kitchens/emergency feeding
- ☐ Setting up long-term camp
- ☐ Mobilizing medical assistance
- ☐ International disaster issues
- ☐ Reaching out in the midst of your need
- ☐ Long-term relief & rebuilding strategies

For information on the topics above, please call 713-621-1498 or email SomebodyCares@SomebodyCares.org.

ACTION ITEMS: BEING PREPARED VOCATIONALLY


Schedule the following trainings for yourself and/or your church members :

- ☐ National Incident Management System (NIMS) (Take online at www.fema.gov)
- ☐ CERT training (You can possibly schedule at your church, with minimum enrollment requirements.)
- ☐ Counseling & chaplaincy training for post-traumatic stress
- ☐ Counseling training for marriages, families, and children
- ☐ Basic preparedness training: FEMA's *Are You Ready?* and the accompanying facilitators guide.
- ☐ *Preparedness Peace* biblically-based home and family preparedness course for individuals or small groups (available to order online at www.SomebodyCares.org)
- ☐ Schedule customized Disaster Preparedness Response Training for your network or community through Somebody Cares America.

Suggested Conferences:

- ☐ Citizen Corp Preparedness Webinars: <https://www.ready.gov/citizen-corps>
- ☐ National Hurricane Conference: <http://hurricanemeeting.com/upcoming-conferences/>
- ☐ Texas Hurricane Conference: <http://hurricane.egr.uh.edu/events/thc-2018-conference>
- ☐ Billy Graham Chaplain Training Conference: <https://billygraham.org/what-we-do/evangelism-outreach/rapid-response-team/training/>
- ☐ Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Association: www.disasters.org/dera/weblink.htm#Events
- ☐ National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster: Look online for a local chapter and get involved as well as the annual national conference at www.nvoad.org
- ☐ Various Training Opportunities through Somebody Cares America/International: www.somebodycares.org
- ☐ Victim Relief Chaplaincy Training: <https://victimrelief.org/category/training/>
- ☐ Faith-Based First Responders Training: <http://www.christinaction.com/content/Training.aspx>

NOTES:



**“OUR ‘MINISTRY OF PRESENCE’ OPENS DOORS FOR
CHRIST TO TOUCH MANY WHOSE WORLD HAS BEEN
TURNED UPSIDE DOWN.”**

DR. EDWARD SMITH

International Director of Chaplaincy for SCA

THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPAREDNESS

PART 5: BEING PREPARED

EMOTIONALLY

Since our inception in the early 1990s, the vision for Somebody Cares has always remained the same. Our goal is to equip, empower, and encourage local churches and ministries around the world to be tangible expressions of God's love in their communities. It is vital to prepare yourself emotionally for what you will see and experience in the event of a crisis so that you will be able to make quick, clear and wise decisions.

HELPING DISASTER SURVIVORS

Trauma is defined as a deeply distressing or disturbing experience. It can also mean a physical injury has taken place. Trauma can be caused by natural disasters or by deliberate or negligent human actions. People experience the effects of trauma following a devastating medical diagnosis, the breakdown of a relationship, after experiencing the loss of their job or the death of a loved one. The church should be ready to help others cope in a healthy way whether it is helping an individual or an entire community. Let's discuss how people will react during or after a traumatic event. In this manual we will focus on assisting communities in coping following a disaster, but the things you will learn will be helpful tools in dealing with individual cases as well.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAUMA

Trauma often results from natural disasters. These types of experiences are particularly insidious because they tend to traumatize large populations of people at once and can result in epidemics of survivor guilt and other PTSD symptoms. Like many causes of trauma, natural disasters can be sudden and overwhelming. The most immediate and typical reaction to a calamity is shock, which at first manifests as numbness or denial. Eventually, shock can give way to an overemotional state that often includes high levels of anxiety, guilt or depression.

According to the American Psychological Association, the following are common symptoms of trauma:*

- Feelings become intense and sometimes unpredictable, irritability, mood swings, anxiety, and depression are coming manifestations of this.
- Flashbacks: repeated and vivid memories of the event that lead to physical reactions such as rapid heartbeat or sweating
- Confusion or difficulty making decisions
- Sleep or eating issues
- Fear that the emotional event will be repeated
- A change in interpersonal relationship skills, such as an increase in conflict or a more withdrawn and avoidant personality
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, nausea, and chest pain

There are some basic signs to help identify trauma. People who have endured traumatic events will often appear shaken and disoriented. They may not respond to conversation as they normally would and will often appear withdrawn or not present when speaking. Another telltale sign of a trauma victim is anxiety. Anxiety due to trauma can manifest in problems such as night terrors, edginess, irritability, poor concentration and mood swings. While these symptoms of trauma are common, they are not exhaustive. Individuals respond to trauma in different ways. Sometimes trauma is virtually unnoticeable even to the victim's closest friends and family. Trauma can manifest days, months or even years after the actual event.

**[Susanne Babbel, "The Trauma That Arises from Natural Disasters", Psychology Today, April 21, 2010.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/somatic-psychology/201004/the-trauma-arises-natural-disasters>]*

EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA

Emotion is one of the most common ways in which trauma manifests. Some common emotional symptoms of trauma include denial, sadness and emotional outbursts. Victims of trauma may redirect the overwhelming emotions they experience toward other sources, such as friends or family members. This is one of the reasons why trauma is difficult for loved ones as well. It is hard to help someone who pushes you away but understanding the emotional symptoms that come after a traumatic event can help ease the process.

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA

Trauma often manifests physically as well as emotionally. Some common physical signs of trauma include paleness, lethargy, fatigue, poor concentration and a racing heartbeat. The victim may have anxiety or panic attacks and be unable to cope in certain circumstances. The physical symptoms of trauma can be as real and alarming as those of physical injury or illness, and care should be taken to manage stress levels after a traumatic event.

SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF TRAUMA

Natural disasters in particular can bring victims a feeling of being betrayed by God, which can result in a loss of faith. Making peace with God might be one step toward healing and gaining faith back, which can be crucial to health. We need to be aware that there are a lot of emotions when dealing with any kind of loss. During the initial mucking-out that took place in thousands of homes across South Texas after Hurricane Harvey, homeowners were met with a great number of outside helpers. These volunteers were eager to get in and serve, but in some cases, stories surfaced that—in the quickness to clear out—care was not taken in handling treasured items that needed to be disposed of because they had been destroyed.

Remember, be the hands and feet of Jesus – treat ALL belongings with respect, not as trash to move out of the way. Be patient when asking what needs to be thrown away and what needs to be stacked to the side somewhere. People may, understandably, be emotional about losing their belongings with all the sentimental attachments and memories that those belongings evoke. Also, homeowners are required to take photos of damaged items such as furniture, appliances, electronics, etc., before they can be reimbursed for the loss of such items. Talk with the homeowners first and create the plan of action. Make sure they are aware of each step you intend to take when clearing out and cleaning their properties.

People in trauma most likely will be emotional, overwhelmed, and – at times – difficult. It's nothing personal. They're dealing with a lot of grief and loss. Please respond in love, no matter what. "You'll be working with people who are trying to go from disaster victims to disaster overcomers. They may seem difficult or have mood swings. It's not personal. Clothe yourself with the compassion of Christ!" says Dr. Edward Smith, SCA International Director of Chaplaincy.

Also, understand that there may be times when disaster survivors should be referred to professional counselors for additional care. When encountering someone with intense emotional needs, the first step may be to have a trained pastor or chaplain visit with the person. They should be able to determine if additional trained help is warranted.

CHILDREN AND TRAUMA

While children can be very resilient, they can also suffer from stress and trauma following a natural disaster. Their feelings are often unconsciously overlooked as parents try to cope with the loss as well as trying to provide for their family. The signs of trauma in children can vary by age and may present itself in a number of ways like:

- Nightmares
- Stomachaches and headaches
- Feeling guilty about something they had no control over
- Having irrational fears
- Feeling helpless or lethargic
- Among other things

It is important for children to be able to express their feelings and thoughts to caring adults; to know they are safe and secure; and to have their routine or some routine reinstated as quickly as possible. Remember, children have lost a lot as well.

Somebody Cares has also found that giving children a Somebody Cares bear or other stuffed animal provides them some comfort as they work through the loss.

Additional resources on how to help children cope after a disaster are listed in the Appendix.

CARING FOR YOURSELF AND TEAM MEMBERS

Responding to disasters is both rewarding and challenging. Sources of stress for disaster recovery volunteers may include witnessing human suffering, risk of personal harm, intense workloads, and separation from family. Stress prevention and management is critical for volunteers to stay well and to continue providing assistance. Volunteers should take steps to practice self-care and provide support for others on the team. Volunteers must be feeling well and thinking clearly before helping others.

You will experience stress when you step up to help others. Managing stress and taking breaks will make you a better volunteer!

Excessive stress can cause:

- Burnout: feelings of extreme exhaustion and being overwhelmed.
- Secondary Traumatic Stress: stress reactions and symptoms resulting from exposure to another individual's traumatic experiences, rather than from exposure directly to a traumatic event.

Coping techniques like taking breaks, eating healthy foods, exercising, and using the buddy system can help prevent and reduce burnout and secondary traumatic stress. Recognize the signs of both of these conditions in yourself and other volunteers to be sure those who need a break or need help can address these needs. Limit your time working alone by trying to work in teams as much as possible.

Signs of Burnout:

- Sadness, depression, or apathy
- Easily frustrated
- Blaming of others, irritability

- Lacking feelings, indifference
- Isolation or disconnection from others
- Poor self-care (hygiene)
- Feeling tired, exhausted, or overwhelmed

Signs of Secondary Traumatic Stress:

- Excessively worry or fear about something bad happening
- Easily startled or “on guard” all of the time
- Nightmares or recurrent thoughts about the traumatic situation
- The feeling that others’ trauma is yours

CARE STRATEGIES & TECHNIQUES

Develop a Buddy System: In a buddy system, two volunteers partner together to support each other and monitor each other’s stress, workload, and safety. Here are some ways to work with your buddy:

- Get to know each other. Talk about background, interests, hobbies, and family.
- Keep an eye on each other. Try to work in the same location if you can.
- Set up times to check in with each other. Listen carefully. Share experiences and feeling.
- Offer to help with basic needs such as sharing supplies and transportation.
- Monitor each other’s workload. Encourage each other to take breaks.
- Communicate you and your buddy’s basic needs and limits to leadership.
- Share opportunities for stress relief (rest, routine sleep, exercise, and deep breathing).
- Acknowledge tough situations and recognize accomplishments, even small ones.

Self-care techniques

- Spend time in prayer and fellowship with God.
- Talk to friends, family, supervisors, and teammates about your feelings and experiences.
- Try to limit working hours to no longer than 12-hour shifts.
- Work in teams and limit amount of time working alone.
- Write in a journal.
- Practice breathing and relaxation techniques.
- Maintain a healthy diet and get adequate sleep and exercise.
- Know that it is okay to draw boundaries and say “no.”
- Limit caffeine and avoid alcohol.
- Drink plenty of water.

Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event: Emergency Responders: Tips for Taking Care of Yourself, CDC <https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/responders.asp>

In caring for relief teams, it is good practice to have daily debrief, or shift debrief if you have multiple workers. During the debrief sessions let team members share:

- Any encounters or experiences that stood out,
- Any experiences that touched or concerned them,
- Where projects stand at the end of the day/shift,
- Any issues that require follow-up.

After team members share, spend time praying together over the concerns and issues, encourage the team members and thank them for their service, and release them to rest. This allows team members to leave their work and concerns behind, so they can decompress and focus on family, rest, and other things that will keep them physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually healthy. It also allows leaders to make sure unresolved issues or important concerns are dealt with in a timely manner.

As followers of Christ, we also understand the importance of spending time in prayer, worship, and fellowship with God. It is a privilege to bring the needs of disaster survivors before the Lord in prayer. While we have the honor of being a tangible expression of God's love to those disaster survivors we meet, understand it is ultimately God who will meet all their needs as His people respond in obedience to what He asks each one to do. Working all the time to meet every need will not allow you to make your best contribution. Remember, we are the body of Christ with many parts, and there are others God is calling to help in the response as well.

In Matthew 11:30, Jesus says, *"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

In obedience to Christ, do only those things He is asking of you, so that you can be effective, avoid burnout, and allow the body of Christ to work as intended as we reach out to those in times of need.

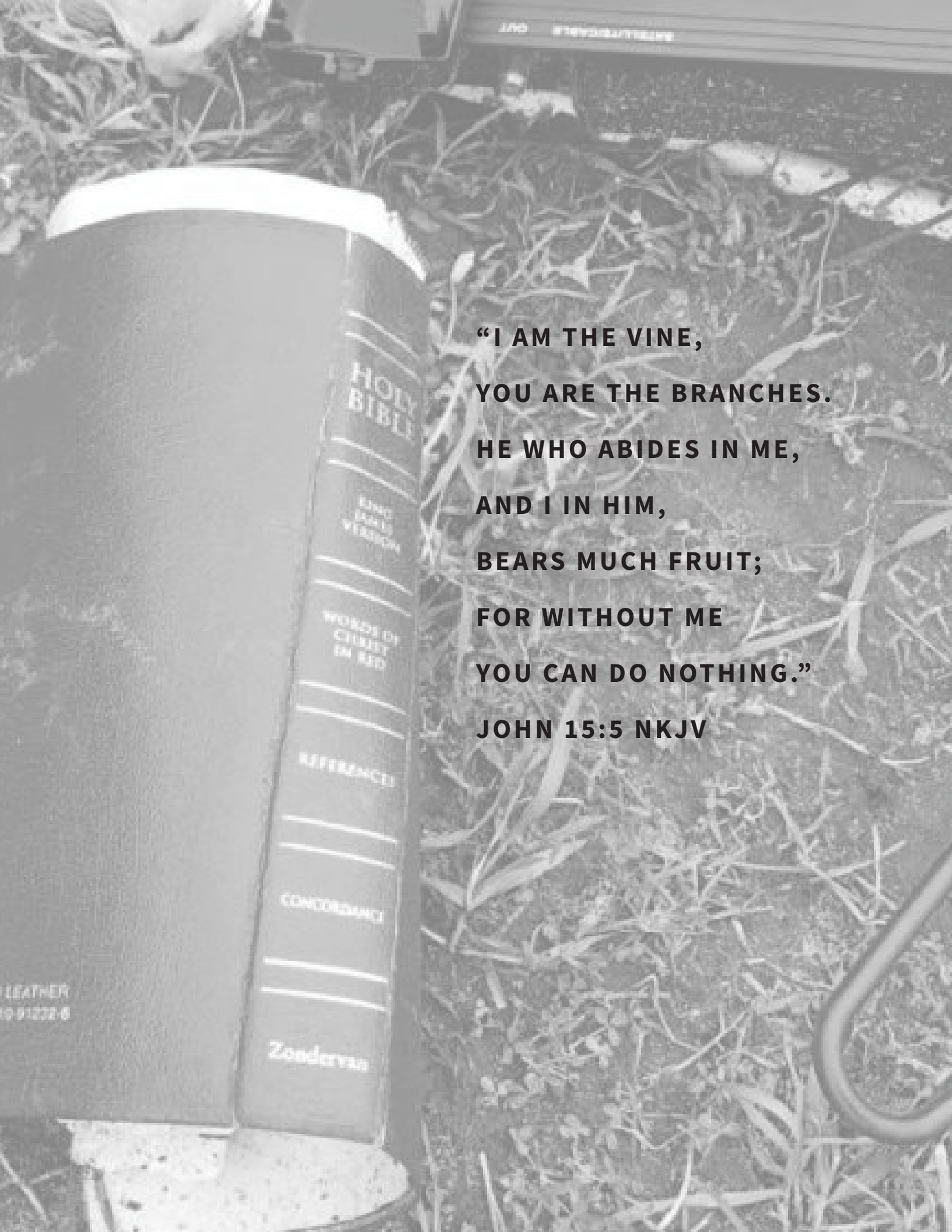
ACTION ITEMS: BEING PREPARED EMOTIONALLY

Prior to disasters:

- ☐ Understand the common characteristics of trauma.
- ☐ Think through the Care Plan for yourself and your team; for the community you're serving; for individual home-owners and their families; for first-responders.
- ☐ Form a plan for the emotional/physical care of survivors and those assisting. How will you help those who show physical signs of trauma such as paleness, lethargy, fatigue, poor concentration and a racing heartbeat, and/or panic attacks?
- ☐ Know the non-emergency medical phone number and what 24-hour clinics are available in your area.
- ☐ Develop self-care techniques

During disaster:

- ☐ Implement the Buddy System
- ☐ Practice Self-care
- ☐ (For Groups) Give time at the end of the day to share and pray as a team.



**“I AM THE VINE,
YOU ARE THE BRANCHES.
HE WHO ABIDES IN ME,
AND I IN HIM,
BEARS MUCH FRUIT;
FOR WITHOUT ME
YOU CAN DO NOTHING.”
JOHN 15:5 NKJV**

THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPAREDNESS

PART 5: BEING PREPARED

SPIRITUALLY

Disaster relief can be a very draining and stressful time for those serving and ministering. Moods are on edge, and the stress levels are very high; therefore, we need to continually be deeply abiding in Jesus, with His Word richly dwelling in us, as apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). We need to deal with our selfishness, wounds, and issues beforehand, so that when disaster strikes, we will be ready to selflessly offer ourselves in service and love. During times of crisis, people are so much more open to spiritual things. We need to be ready to give an answer for the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15), as we see in the following article written by Doug Stringer:

As leaders, we need to know the times and the seasons. We need to be like the sons of Issachar, hearing God's voice and responding accordingly. At the end of 2006, the Lord began speaking to me about three key concepts: foundation, alignment, and consistency.

FIRST, WE MUST BUILD ON THE RIGHT FOUNDATION, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST (I CORINTHIANS 3:11-15)

Just as houses built on the sands of our beaches are not able to withstand hurricanes, neither will we withstand the shaking that is coming if our very lives are built on an unstable foundation. We must dig deep and build on the solid rock foundation of Christ so that we can stand when the winds, the rains, and the floods of life come upon us.

"Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." (Matthew 7:24-27)

"He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great." (Luke 6:48-49)

SECOND, WE MUST BE IN ALIGNMENT IN ALL AREAS OF OUR LIVES: KINGDOM ALIGNMENT, PERSONAL ALIGNMENT, AND BODY ALIGNMENT.

Spiritually, we must be in alignment with God personally and within in the body of Christ, as well. Practically, we must recognize our function and honor the leadership God has placed over us. And physically, we must take care of our bodies, which are the temples of the Holy Spirit.

FINALLY, WE MUST BE CONSISTENT IN OUR SYSTEMATIC AND INTENTIONAL DISCIPLINES OF PERSONAL GROWTH AND DISCIPLESHIP:

Personal prayer life: As I always say, what we do behind closed doors, where no one can see, determines the power of God, or the lack of it, in public.

Daily reading of God's Word: The Word of God washes our minds and pulls down vain imaginations. Many voices are out there. We need to hear the voice of God and be led by the Holy Spirit, not by the voices or external influences of this world.

Giving of our time, our talents, and our tithes and offerings: We need to be systematic and intentional in our giving toward the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

"If we begin practicing these principles now, we will be spiritually prepared when disasters come and able to offer hope during great times of need." Doug Stringer, 2007

COORDINATED PRAYER EFFORTS

In the frantic first days after the New Orleans levees collapsed, Houston was flooded with a quarter million new residents. A leader from one of our city's prayer ministries came to our offices to help. The hallways were filled from one end of the building to the next with evacuees, many of whom had nothing except the shirts on their back. Phones were ringing non-stop. Staff members were working 20-hour days on very little sleep. The needs were overwhelming. As this leader began to serve, he realized that—more than anything else—we needed prayer. Immediately he contacted other prayer leaders and began coordinating 24/7 prayer in our meeting room.

Foursquare Pastor Tony Krishack had the same realization after trying to find ways to help a friend's church that went from a membership of 300 people to a shelter for 3,000 shell-shocked evacuees. He said, "At some stage in our lives, we feel like we have a fair handle on what we're doing and what God can do through us, then we discover there are some disasters that are really God-sized. Sometimes the situation is so big that only God can fix it, but God uses people."

These God-sized problems need His mighty intervention, which is why His people need prayer. The apostle Paul understood the importance of his fellow believers' prayers in his time of great distress, as he tells the church at Corinth:

"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure... But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead... On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many." (2 Corinthians 1:8-11)

What a marvelous outcome! Many will give thanks and praise to God, and the prayers of the saints play a crucial part.

We recommend that you have a prayer coordinator to:

- Recruit and schedule prayer volunteers (on-site, if practical)
- Email/distribute prayer requests to prayer networks/intercessors

You could also partner with an existing prayer ministry or network. Contact the prayer ministries in your area as soon as possible and tap into the infrastructures already in place amongst the people of God.

A guide for prayer coordinators and a sample “Call for Prayer” via email are included in the Appendix.

ACTION ITEMS: BEING PREPARED SPIRITUALLY

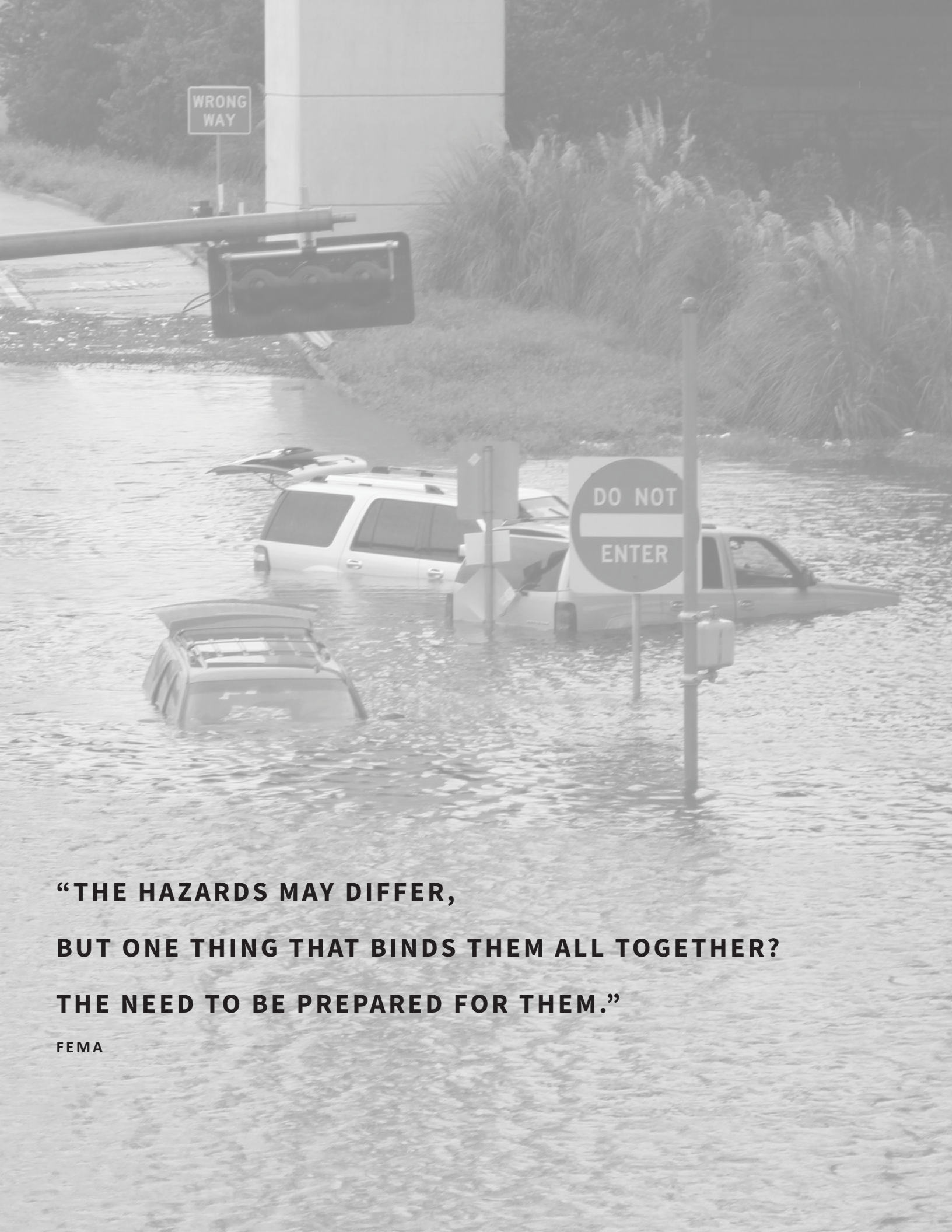
PRIOR TO DISASTERS, EXAMINE DAILY:

- ☐ My personal life, family, and ministry are built on the foundation of Jesus.
- ☐ My personal life, family, and ministry are in proper alignment:
 - With God and His Kingdom purposes.
 - With those He has placed over me, under me, and alongside me.
 - With my body, as I properly care for His temple.
- ☐ My personal life, family, and ministry practice consistent, systematic, and intentional disciplines of:
 - Personal prayer.
 - Daily reading of God’s Word.
 - Giving of time, talents, tithes, and offerings.

COORDINATED PRAYER EFFORTS DURING DISASTER:

- ☐ Prayer coordinator has been designated.
- ☐ Has list of prayer partners and their contact information (email, phone, cell phones) for emergency prayer.
- ☐ On-site location determined for 24/7 prayer during relief efforts, if practical.
- ☐ Connected to existing local prayer ministries and networks.

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES: THE TYPES OF DISASTERS & THE STAGES OF RESPONSE



**“THE HAZARDS MAY DIFFER,
BUT ONE THING THAT BINDS THEM ALL TOGETHER?
THE NEED TO BE PREPARED FOR THEM.”**

FEMA

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

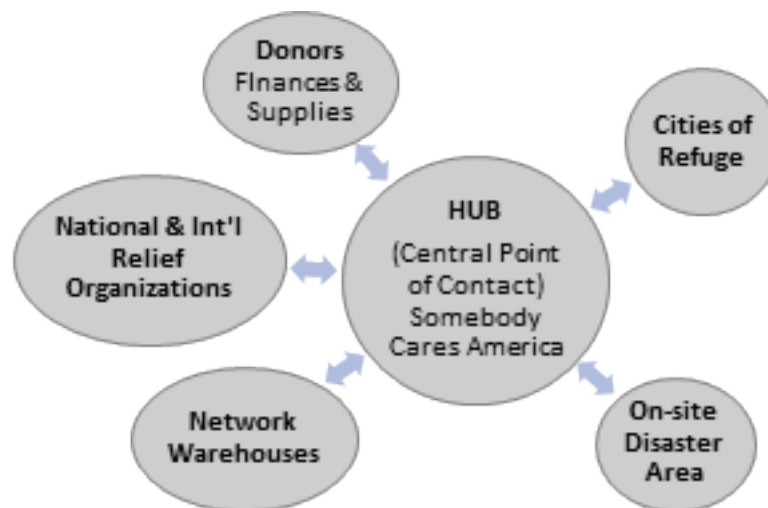
DEFINING THE DISASTER & RECOGNIZING THE ROLES OF PROVIDERS

Every disaster is different, and it is important to be aware of the various types of disasters that could strike your community, from natural disasters to acts of man:

- HURRICANES
- FLOODS
- TORNADOES
- EARTHQUAKES
- VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS
- FIRES
- OIL, GASOLINE, CHEMICAL LEAKS/ EXPLOSIONS
- PANDEMICS*
- TERRORIST ACTS
- MASS CASUALTY EVENTS
- CIVIL UNREST

We have included in the Appendix of this manual a list of the 16 Critical Infrastructure Sectors as identified by the Department of Homeland Security. These sector's assets, frameworks, and systems, regardless of whether physical or virtual, are considered so indispensable to the United States that their crippling or annihilation would debilitatingly affect security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination thereof.

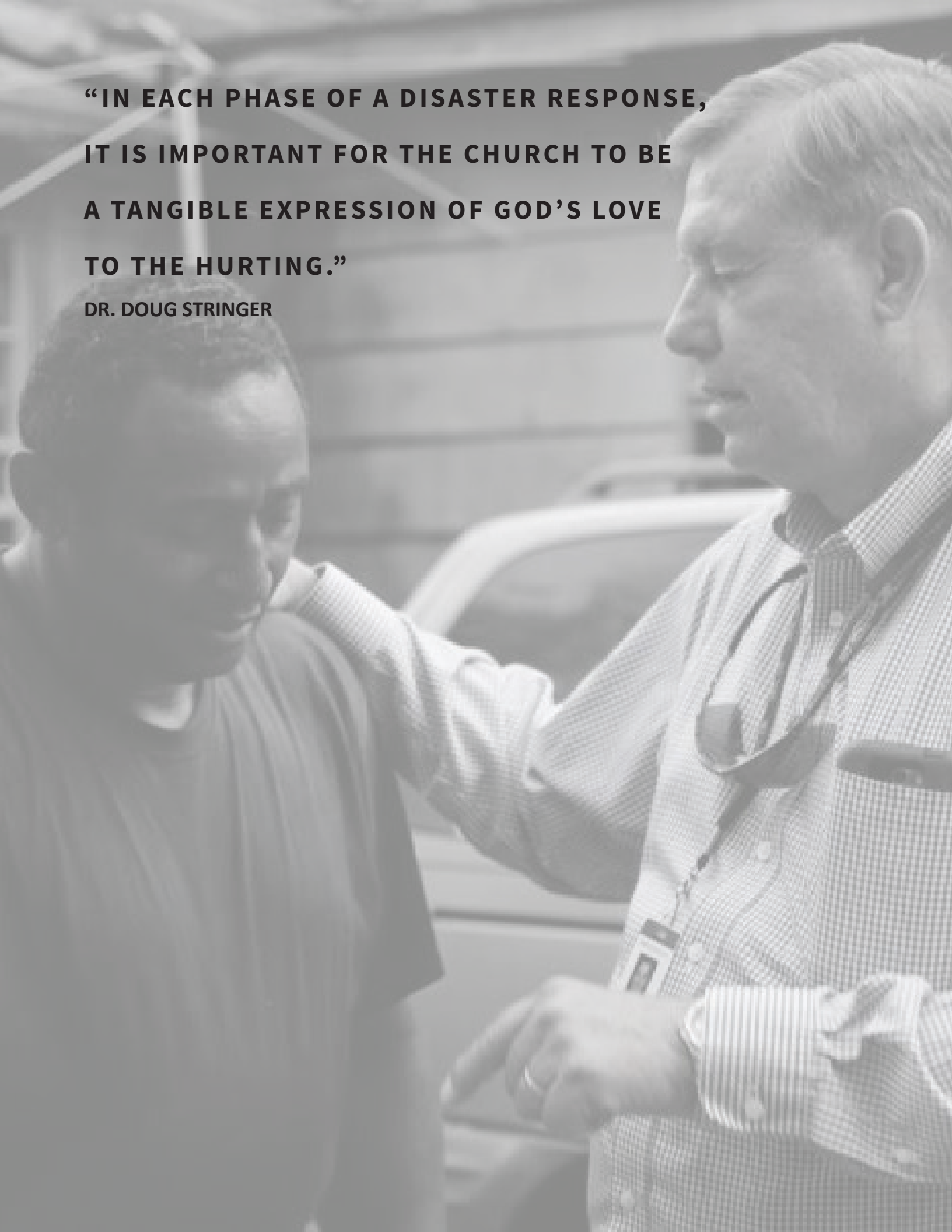
It is also helpful to define the types of relief providers:



**For a more detailed list and specific information on pandemic response, see Appendix.*

**“IN EACH PHASE OF A DISASTER RESPONSE,
IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE CHURCH TO BE
A TANGIBLE EXPRESSION OF GOD’S LOVE
TO THE HURTING.”**

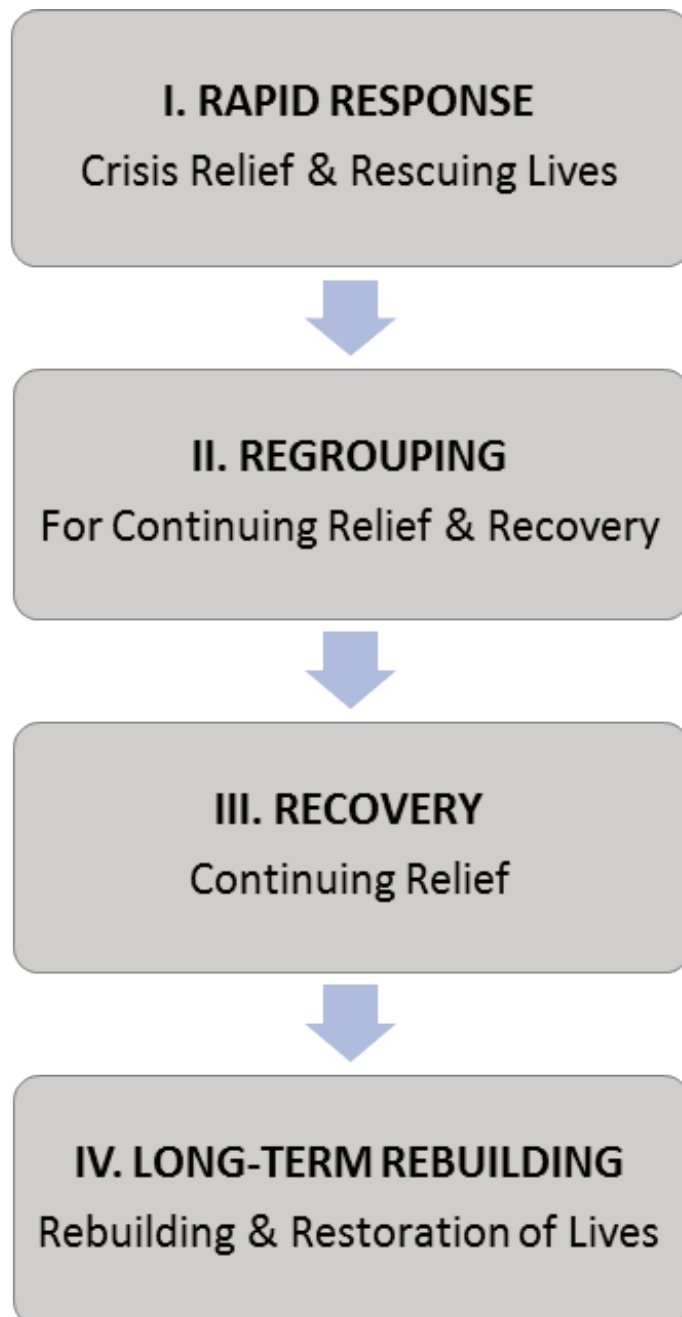
DR. DOUG STRINGER



WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

THE STAGES OF RESPONSE & THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

During relief work in 2005, first with the tsunami then with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Doug Stringer identified the following four stages of response. Each of these stages is explained in-depth in the following section.



When a crisis strikes and people's lives are affected, they have to rely on external assistance to make it through. In some cases, urgent rescue is needed in order for them to survive. But needs generally continue well beyond that initial rescue as they recover from the trauma and try to rebuild their lives. This section will define the four phases of disaster response and how the needs vary. In each one, however, it is important for the church to be a tangible expression of God's love to the hurting.

PHASE I: RAPID RESPONSE & CRISIS RELIEF

During this stage of relief, the disaster has hit, whether there was time to prepare and evacuate—as in the case of a flood or hurricane—or whether it came suddenly, such as an earthquake or a tsunami. All relief suppliers are affected during this stage. This is the time when preparedness will be your foundation. *Are relationships in place between those in the disaster sites and those off-site who can help? Do you have supplies? Back-up communication? Transportation?*

Immediate, real-time assessments of the situation are crucial at this time. This requires communication between those on-ground in the disaster site and those off-site who can meet the needs. Specially selected, experienced teams may also be deployed at this time for on-site visits, especially if communication has been limited or remote areas affected. Assessment results are communicated to donors, suppliers, relief agencies.

During Hurricane Ike relief, and other disasters since, Somebody Cares hosted conference calls with sometimes up to 30 organizations represented—from pastors on-site in disaster areas to procurement specialists across the nation—to match needs with resources. Initially calls were held daily, then gradually decreased. Using conference call meetings proved even more critical during Hurricane Harvey relief, as most of our staff and partners were confined to their own neighborhoods due the extensive flooding.

This will also be the time for your church members to check on one another through your phone chain or other communication system to assess their needs as well.

The following pages include an easy-to-reference diagram as well as a list of issues and items needed in various disaster response locations and by responder type. The information presented is assuming a widespread, complex disaster. Since each disaster is different, this is a general guide to help responders think through what may be required in each situation.

ON-SITE DISASTER AREAS:

- Determine distribution centers & staging areas: Able to receive and distribute truckloads of goods; can use large tents if necessary
- Shelters: Churches set up with food, water, power, bedding, medicine, toiletries
- Food: Procuring, storing, distributing
- Mobile kitchens/refrigerated trucks
- Water: For drinking, cooking, cleaning, sanitation; may need water trucks for potable water
- Cleaning and sanitation supplies
- Emergency medical: Mobile clinics, personnel, first aid, medicine, oxygen, dry ice (for insulin)
- Assessments: From on-ground residents, emergency teams
- Access: Permission letters from authorities, magnetic signs, ID badges
- Communication: Identify all possible back-ups—satellite phones (can be used for internet), cell phones, walkie-talkies, HAM radio
- Identify emergency fuel resource
- Connect back-up power sources/generators
- Emergency clean-up: Chain saws, wrecker trucks to remove debris blocking roadways
- Volunteer coordination: Assess, train, deploy. Initial volunteers need to be self-sufficient with water, food, shelter, etc. (unless they know where they are going and how that ministry is set up in advance) and be skilled

in some way (there will be time for non-skilled teams to volunteer later). These volunteers must be willing to sleep in their vehicles if necessary, and they need to make sure they arrive with enough gas to make the trip back home.

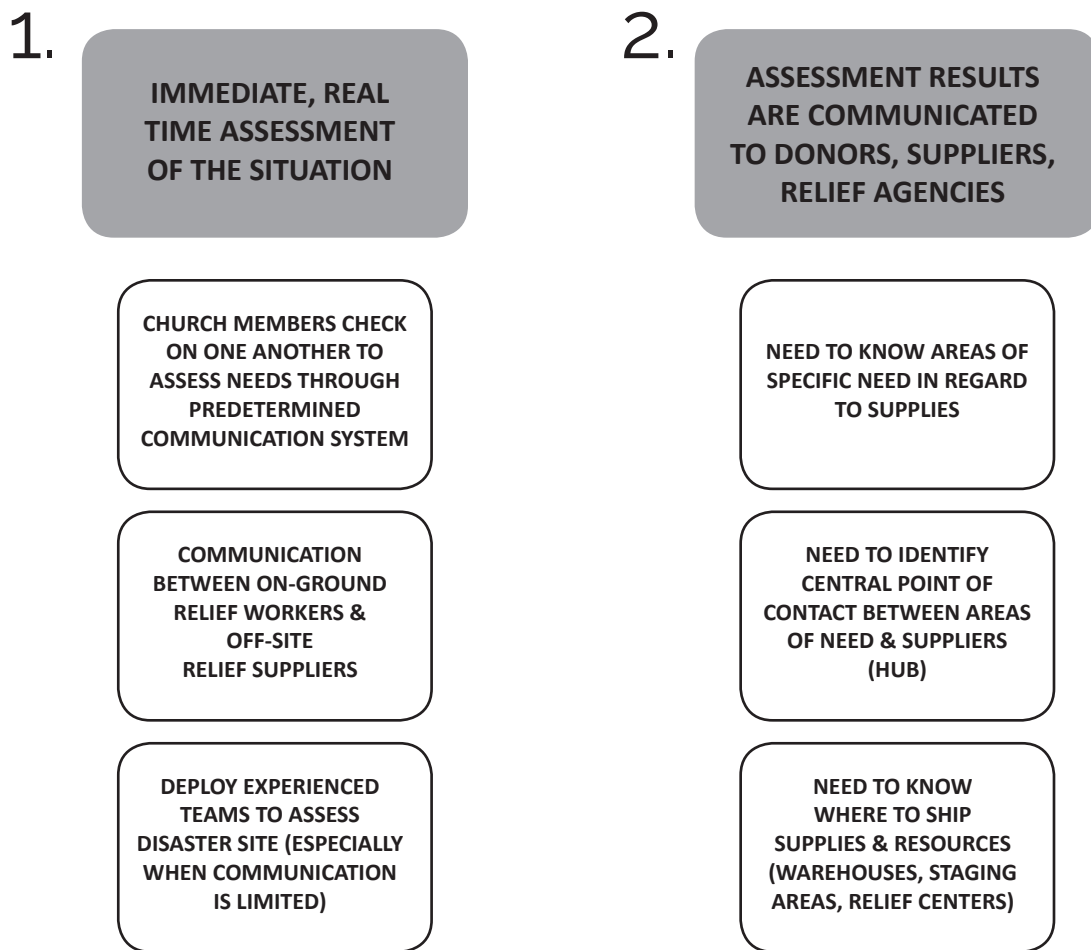


DIAGRAM OF PHASE I: RAPID RESPONSE & CRISIS RELIEF

CITIES OF REFUGE:

- Shelters: Churches, civic venues (arenas), hotels, private homes. For the evacuees' and volunteers' safety, we recommended a background check on everyone who requests refuge in your shelter. Volunteers should also be pre-screened to protect guests.
- Emergency needs: Bedding, food, clothing, toiletries, medicine, transportation/gas, communication (phones and internet), baby needs, elderly needs (wheelchairs), gift cards (gas, phone, clothing, food), medical care
- Distribution centers and drop-off sites for donations: Use radio, TV, web, email to communicate needs, locations, procedures for donating/picking up
- Manpower: Answering phones, receiving and distributing supplies, ministry and prayer, crowd control, trained and/or licensed counselors, updating website, writing and sending e-blasts, data entry
- Toys and games for kids: Have trained children's workers and counselors
- In-service training for volunteers
- Tracking: In-kind donations, intake forms for those receiving help (for tracking and follow-up), distribution of items (such as cots) to be collected later, databases to collect and store information

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AGENCIES:

- Need to know what specific needs are
- Need to know where to ship supplies and distribute resources (including manpower, emergency clinics, and feeding stations)
- Need central point of contact between needs and suppliers (hub)
- Send basic necessities unless specific requests come in for something else

DONORS AND SUPPLIERS:

- Need to know what specific needs are
- Need to know where and how to ship supplies (i.e. ship on pallets, provide bill of lading)
- Send basic necessities unless specific requests come in for something else

WAREHOUSES:

- Locations with loading docks
- Manual labor for unloading trucks
- Forklifts and forklift operator
- Communication: what's coming in, where it needs to go
- Proper paperwork, control for receiving, distributing, tracking
- Plan of action for overflow of items not needed (such as clothing)
- Procedures for distribution (warehouses should distribute to local churches and organizations, who would then distribute to individuals)

HUBS (CENTRAL POINTS OF CONTACT, LIKE SCA):

- Communicating and connecting at all levels
- Directing supplies and assessment teams to disaster sites
- Receiving, distributing, and directing donations where needed most
- Procuring and distributing supplies needed to set up shelters, staging areas, warehouses, medical clinics, mobile clinics
- Connecting with prayer networks
- Working with local and state governments for transportation clearance

PHASE II: REGROUPING FOR CONTINUING RELIEF

This is the time when the immediate crisis is somewhat under control and a working system has been established. Needs and supplies are evaluated for the transition from crisis mode to strategic planning. The central point of contact (Hub) is a key component of communication and evaluation during this period of time. Other relevant issues are listed below.

DISASTER SITES:

- Short-term volunteers begin to leave
- Base camps transition for long-term workers

CITIES OF REFUGE:

- Move distribution from central locations to churches throughout the city
- Contact churches, shelters, etc., to find out needs and fill them
- Connect with FEMA, other agencies to coordinate and update information
- Short-term volunteers begin to leave

- Find missing persons and reconnect them with loved ones

WAREHOUSES:

- Enter and update inventories and supplies that have come and gone
- Assess and communicate what is left and what is needed to Hub

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AGENCIES:

- Need updated information on specific needs
- Will request testimonies, reports to communicate to their donors

DONORS AND SUPPLIERS:

- Need updated information on specific needs
- Need to send thank you letters with stories and testimonies

CENTRAL POINTS OF CONTACT (HUBS):

- Review and evaluate reports from emergency assessment teams regarding on-site disaster areas
- Identify specific needs in disaster areas and refuge cities vs. inventories of supplies in warehouses and distribution centers
- Communicate specific needs to relief agencies and donors (phone, web, email, and media)
- Begin providing reports to relief agencies regarding distribution of their donations
- Assess types of work teams and manpower needed at disaster sites, warehouses, refuge cities; determine where to direct work-teams from churches, businesses, and ministries

PHASE III: CONTINUING RELIEF & RECOVERY

During this stage, the goal is to transition all affected by disaster (victims as well as workers) into a semblance of stability and normalcy. One of the key issues to be addressed here is burn-out and “compassion fatigue,” especially in the disaster sites. We need to pro-actively offer “care for the care-givers.”

Three months after Katrina, Somebody Cares covered the costs for some of the pastors and workers who had partnered with us on the front lines of Katrina and Rita to spend two nights in a hotel in Houston’s Galleria area, along with others we had partnered with here in Houston to minister to evacuees. We spent one afternoon sharing testimonies and ended with a beautiful Christmas banquet. Some of these pastors and their wives were in tears, so grateful for the time away from the daily hardships. “We didn’t know when we got the invitation how badly we needed it,” one of them said.

In Picayune, Pastor Allen Hickman and Resurrection Life Church threw a big block party for the city two months after disaster hit his town. “Every once in a while, people just need something mindless,” he said, so the church rented carnival rides while church members set up booths to entertain the kids. The response was so overwhelming they lost count after 7,000 people showed up! Even the interstate had to be shut down. “That night was the first time my kids and I had laughed since the storm,” said one dad who attended.

DISASTER AREAS:

- KEY GOAL is to get churches operating and functional at this time: Healing will come quickly to those churches who, out of their own desperate need, reach out to meet the needs of others (Isaiah 58)
- Continue ongoing relief for residents and workers
- Continue housing long-term relief teams at base camps
- Begin bringing in general volunteer teams
- Solicit specific skilled labor
- Churches can borrow staff from out of town churches in their denomination or association group, so their own staff can get some time off.

CITIES OF REFUGE:

- Assist evacuees in transition from shelters to temporary housing (hotels, apartments)
- Help them find furniture and housekeeping items
- Enroll children in schools (they will need school supplies, uniforms/clothing)
- Evacuees begin looking for employment
- Need assistance navigating transfers of Medicare, Social Security, etc.
- Need assistance with insurance issues
- Need to update policies and assistance offered by FEMA or other agencies
- Need transportation back to homes for assessments, belongings, closure, etc.
- May need assistance locating family members
- Need assistance finding church homes
- Continuing relief assistance (food, clothing, shelter, medicine, toiletries, gas, transportation)

CHURCHES, STAGING AREAS & DISTRIBUTION CENTERS:

- Many churches at this time go back to “business as usual”
- Needs will continue but distribution may be scaled back; distribution centers phase out or return to normal operation
- Churches should follow up with individuals and families who came in during times of crisis relief
- Time to retrieve loaned items to store for the next disaster (cots, generators, lighting, etc.)
- Continue to keep needs in front of congregation and the public

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AGENCIES:

- Will sometimes set up teams for long-term operations
- Will continue communicating to their donors

CENTRAL POINTS OF CONTACT (HUBS):

- Continue evaluating, communicating, procuring, distributing, and connecting

PHASE IV: LONG -TERM REBUILDING AND RESTORATION OF LIVES

When we look at disasters such as the tsunami and Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Ike, and Harvey, we must remind ourselves that rebuilding is a long-term process. As benevolent as the Church of America is, it’s easy to go back to business as usual before the job is done. We must keep the mission before us. We are not only rebuilding structures, we’re rebuilding lives of real people with names and very real needs.

“God intends us to be there all the way through to be the rebuilders.” said Jodie Nelson Chiricosta from Somebody Cares America.

This may not take as many people as fully engaged as what is required in the earlier stages, but the church as a whole should remain conscious of the needs and continue praying for and supporting those who are still working to rebuild.

DISASTER SITES:

- Ongoing clean-up continues
- Residents deal with insurance issues and delays
- Donations drop off, needs continue
- Media coverage ceases
- Some residents begin returning, but many need temporary housing, food, other relief needs
- Number of short-term volunteers and teams drops off

- Long-term worker burn-out; need respite
- Counseling needed for marriages due to the stress; an opportunity for the church to meet a need
- Continue to communicate needs

CITIES OF REFUGE:

- Need for long-term affordable transitional housing. Be careful of recommending people to church members' homes. Do a thorough background check and set up strict protective parameters to protect your church members and their families.
- FEMA funding stops; need for employment and income.
- Evacuees have established sense of "home" and community, but continue dealing with loss, displacement, lack of closure, cultural adjustments; many still have to decide whether to stay or go back.
- The city's demographics have changed.
- Ideally, evacuees would have been imbibed into local churches where needs can be met by the church family.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AGENCIES:

- Continue long-term operations
- Continue communicating to donors

CENTRAL POINTS OF CONTACT (HUBS):

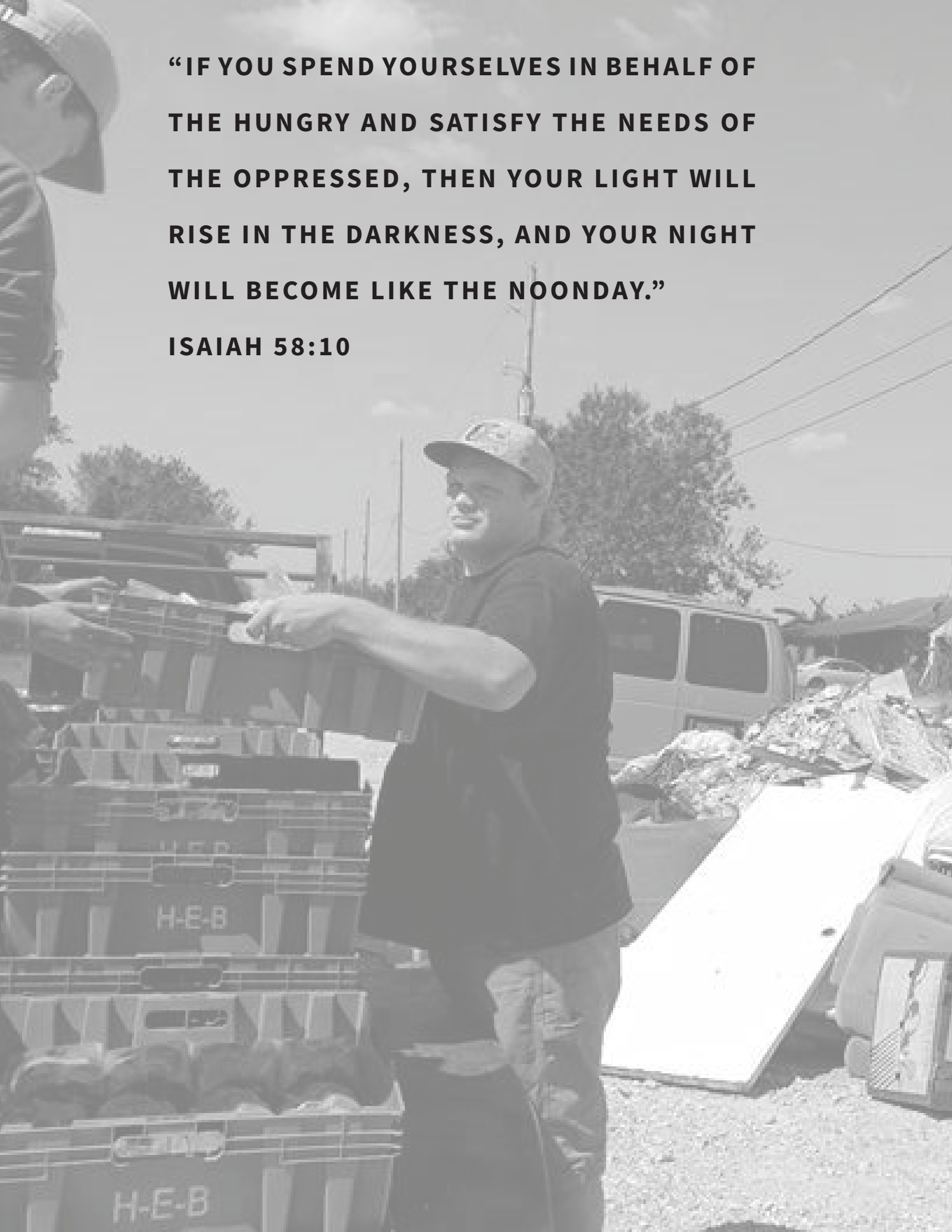
- Still available as needed for long-term support to the disaster site, but urgent needs have subsided.

“After the Southeast Asia Tsunami, I was with a team that visited an evacuee center in Sri Lanka. Many of the children there were traumatized by what they saw, experienced, and lost. We bought a bunch of paper and crayons and asked the children to draw a picture of their experience. They all got busy right away, it was the first time they had an opportunity to express their feelings. As they turned in their pictures, one little girl stood by and kept moving her picture to the top of the stack. She had lost a family member and wanted us to see what she went through. Even though we did not speak her language verbally, the language of love was shared with her by the care and concern we showed.”

JODIE NELSON CHIRICOSTA
Somebody Cares America

**“IF YOU SPEND YOURSELVES IN BEHALF OF
THE HUNGRY AND SATISFY THE NEEDS OF
THE OPPRESSED, THEN YOUR LIGHT WILL
RISE IN THE DARKNESS, AND YOUR NIGHT
WILL BECOME LIKE THE NOONDAY.”**

ISAIAH 58:10



CHURCHES REACHING OUT IN THEIR OWN TIME OF NEED

In Isaiah 58, God is calling the Israelites to a “true fast.” He tells Isaiah to declare to Israel their rebellion, for although they fast and seem eager to know His ways, they have really forsaken his commands and have not dealt with their wicked inner hearts. God wanted the Israelites to go beyond the outward religion to true religion that sought justice, freedom for the oppressed, food for the hungry, shelter for the poor wanderer, and clothing for the naked. If they took care of those in need, God promised them that their own healing would come quickly:

“Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery will speedily spring forth; and your righteousness will go before you; the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.” (Isaiah 58:8)

The following testimonies are from churches and individuals who reached out in the midst of their own time of need, and consequently, watched God bring healing and even revival!

In the midst of not having resources, God provided supernaturally for these churches to be able to serve their communities. As a result, people who had never come to church before are coming to church now because they saw the tangible expression of Christ come from churches that really do care about their communities and were ready to be a lighthouse in the midst of tragedy. We praise God for these heroes.

“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

ANDREW BENSON/CITI-CHURCH NEW ORLEANS/2006: “My 81-year old bishop got up and chastised the whole congregation and told us we were missing it because we thought we were all on vacation. Even though we had all lost everything in the flood like everyone else, he told us we needed to come back home and be a light. I received that rebuke. We came back and opened a distribution center, with the help of Somebody Cares, and the Lord began to bless us in so many ways! One day a businessman, who was not a Christian, stopped by as he was driving past and offered to donate his company’s services to help with the sanctuary repair and mold removal. Another company donated countertops for the dining hall, and they weren’t just Formica—they were top of the line granite. Some of the people who were assisted began coming to volunteer and to help others, and many began attending church services. At one point, only 15-20% of the congregation had returned, yet the tithes and offerings had tripled! God restored our church, but it was almost supernatural!”

ALLEN HICKMAN/RESURRECTION LIFE MINISTRIES SOMEBODY CARES PICAYUNE/2006:

"I've always believed that the church ought to be the answer to whatever the question is. We started assisting people from our parking lot after the storm. It looked like a bomb went off. I started telling people, 'Look, you don't have jobs to go to, so come work up here.' I would have 150 to 200 volunteers every day. The mayor and the city council called us over to their office after about two and a half or three weeks and said, 'Look, would you take over our city's disaster relief? We'll give you whatever we have, and y'all just do it.' I told them I'm going to keep praying for people and handing out Bibles and tracks. They said, 'We don't' care; just do it.' I told them I couldn't keep doing it out of the parking lot, so they paid for a building for us to use through the end of the year. They paid the electric bill; they paid everything."

DOUG STRINGER/SOMEBODY CARES AMERICA/2006:

"A few weeks ago, Allen Hickman called me and was worried about me. He said, 'When are you going to take a couple of days off and hang out and fish; we want to take care of you.' I said, 'Take care of me? You guys are the ones going through it.' That's the kind of heart a true pastor has."

BOB GLAHN/CHERRYDALE BAPTIST CHURCH ARLINGTON, VA/2006; "When Hurricane Katrina hit, we started making calls to find out how we could serve. We got hooked up with Baton Rouge Compassion in Southern Louisiana and sent a team down there that first week after. In fact, I was able to be with Pastor Randy Millette from St. Bernard Parrish. The first time he went back in, he saw his home destroyed, his associates' homes destroyed, and their church destroyed. He saw all that in one day. When I was there, we went to the home of his wife's aunt and uncle and found their bodies in the home. They had died in the flooding. Yet, his response to it all was that he wanted to set up a relief center for the community on his church property. We were able to send a few other teams to help him do that. "

MARLENE YEO/SOMEBODY CARES NEW ENGLAND/2018

"Three weeks ago, we had a fatal gang shooting on our street in front of our building. The young people mourning their friend set up a vigil with candles, stuffed animals, liquor bottles, and letters among the other paraphernalia just four feet from the front steps of the church. There were state and local police, TV cameraman, news reporters, and people on the corner every day, late into the night, every day for weeks. The day after it happened we had a special service with the mayor for the mourners, followed by a 'mercy meal' cook-out in the backyard of the church. Throughout the weeks, several people have attended the services and many people have committed their lives to Christ. God has used one of the young men in our church, who was a former gang member and drug addict, to speak at several peace rallies. He has a powerful testimony and is a beautiful witness for the Lord.

"Since the inception of SCNE in 2002, our heart and mission has always been to reach the youth in our city. But this last crisis has driven the youth to the top of the priority list. The next phase is to make the building, now owned by Community Christian Fellowship (CCF Haverhill), the church I pastor, into the Somebody Cares New England youth center and move the church out into another location. This is a HUGE undertaking of a capital fundraising to purchase the building and relaunch CCF Haverhill in another location, but we are looking forward to the miracles needed in this next season of SCNE as many lives will be rescued! What the enemy meant for evil is used as an occasion for the Lord to be glorified!"

PASTOR MARY KEMP/NEW LIFE CHURCH, HOUSTON/2018

"Through our friendship with Doug Stringer, New Life Church got involved with disaster relief during Katrina. When Hurricane Harvey hit, we were going through a difficult time but wanted to help any way we could. We got 1,000 plates of barbecue from the Houston Police Union and took it to the Memorial City parking lot, where many of the first responders were camping. Word got out that we had barbecue, and the Cajun Navy showed up—hot tired, and hungry. We gave up our own food and fed them gratefully...so much food started being donated that we had no place to take it, so we started sending it to Beaumont and Rockport. Churches in Alabama, Florida, and Kansas sent supplies and food by the trailer full, and it went out as fast as it came in! Such an amazing time! Every single first responder we came in contact with was Jesus-like—grateful, humble, loving. The aftermath of Hurricane Harvey in Houston was one of the saddest, heartbreaking and best times of my life."

NOTES



**“AND MY GOD SHALL SUPPLY
ALL YOUR NEED ACCORDING TO
HIS RICHES IN GLORY BY CHRIST
JESUS.” PHILIPPIANS 4:19**

FEEDING THE 5,000

TESTIMONIES OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

THE LATE MAX TORRES/SOMEBODY CARES AMERICA

"Time after time, we would need a certain item with no knowledge of where to get it, and there would be volunteers praying and worrying. They'd say, 'How are we going to do the project?' and I would say, 'Just trust me on this; just wait.' And as the days went along, every single day, on God's providential schedule and calendar, things would show up as they were needed. It was incredible— it's still incredible and it's still happening! I'm just in awe of what God is doing. I'm never surprised, but I'm constantly amazed that God is doing what He's doing."

DOUG STRINGER/SOMEBODY CARES AMERICA

"I got off the phone with Jerry Davis and some others in New Orleans who were saying there was a desperate need for school supplies. Seventeen of the 135 schools were re-opening. I said I would see what I could do, but I had no clue. Five minutes later I got a call from Himawan Djuhana from City Blessing Churches in California: 'Doug, we have some school supplies. Can you use them?' That's a God-thing! They provided two trailer trucks of school supplies, enough for 20,000 students. Max Torres then got a call that Harris County schools had a bunch of backpacks left over and they didn't know what to do with them—so we got those and sent them as well."

ANDREW BENSON/CITI-CHURCH NEW ORLEANS

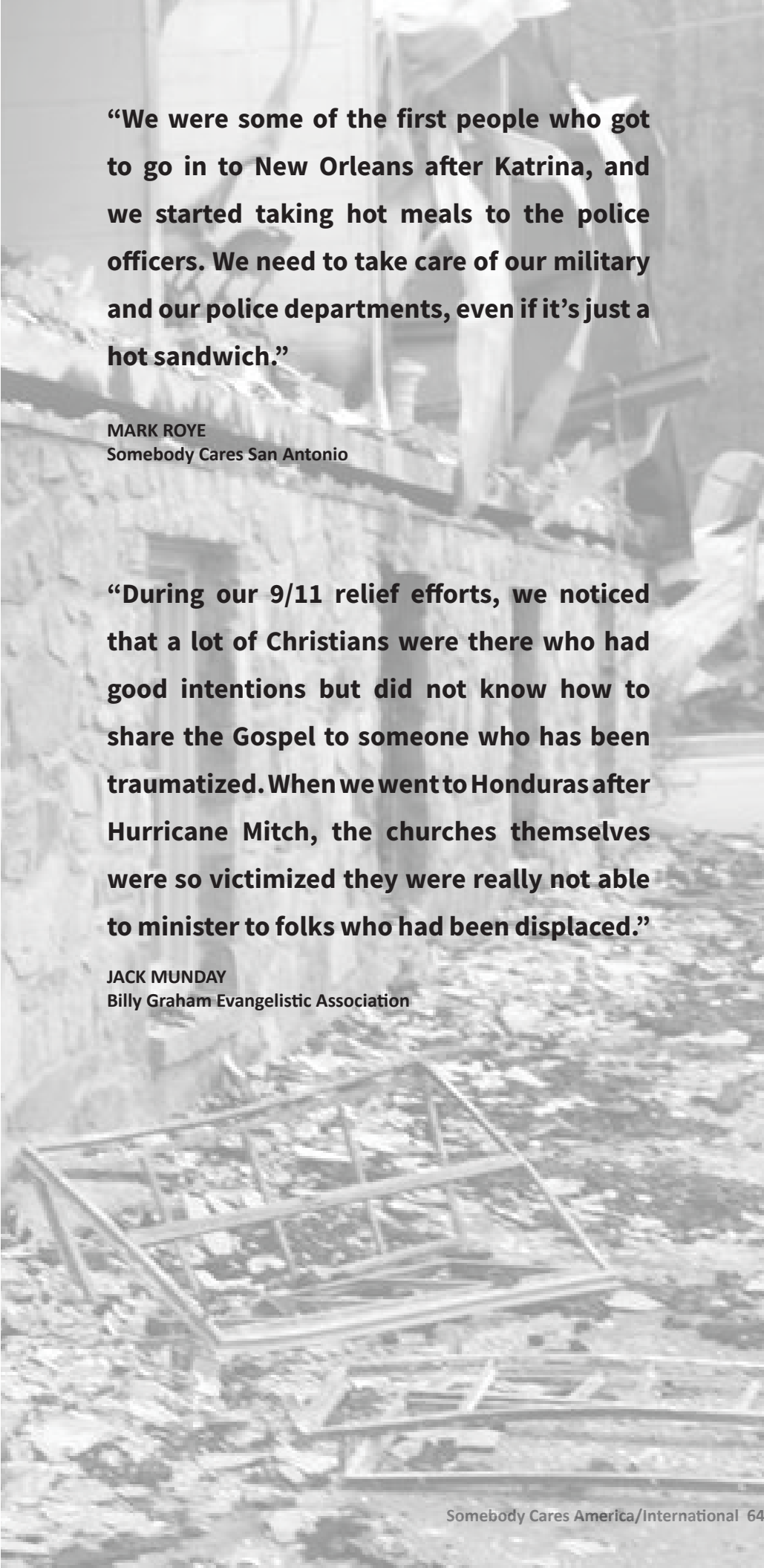
"At Christmas, we were planning to cancel our regular outreach to the community because we knew the people had greater needs than toys. Then we got a call from Youth With A Mission New Orleans. They had 200 wrapped Christmas toys and asked if we could use them. With the help of YWAM, we were able to go door-to-door in the local Vietnamese community and give the children brand new toys."

DAVID GATLIN/GENESIS FOOD BANK, JACKSON MS

"In 2001, Steve from Operation Blessing called me one day and said, 'David, I have a company out in Texas that has about 100 truckloads of charcoal they want to donate. Pat Robertson had a dream or a vision that there would be a major disaster hitting the Gulf Coast of Mississippi soon, and we would like to send charcoal to you.' I started getting truckloads of charcoal. Guess what I had when Katrina hit? I had thousands and thousands of bags of charcoal to give out! God is way ahead of us."

PASTOR CHARLES BURCHETT/FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF KIRBYVILLE, SOMEBODY CARES JASPER/NEWTON COUNTIES

"Hurricane Katrina and Rita relief was just one extended adventure for me,



“We were some of the first people who got to go in to New Orleans after Katrina, and we started taking hot meals to the police officers. We need to take care of our military and our police departments, even if it’s just a hot sandwich.”

MARK ROYE
Somebody Cares San Antonio

“During our 9/11 relief efforts, we noticed that a lot of Christians were there who had good intentions but did not know how to share the Gospel to someone who has been traumatized. When we went to Honduras after Hurricane Mitch, the churches themselves were so victimized they were really not able to minister to folks who had been displaced.”

JACK MUNDAY
Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

just a great spiritual adventure. I’ll give you one testimony. The head cook from the Southern Baptist Convention came over and said, ‘We’re your help; where’s the food?’ And I thought, ‘I don’t have any food.’ Eventually some food showed up, and they came over and said, ‘We don’t have anything to serve it in.’ They were handing out food in pieces of aluminum foil, and I said, ‘All I know to do is pray.’ So, I put my hand on his shoulder and said, ‘Lord, we know that you know where all the clamshell containers in the world are, and you know what we need, and I ask you to give us what we need.’ I took my hand off his shoulder, and the phone rang. It was a volunteer from Pennsylvania who was serving in Doug’s office in Houston. She said, ‘I’m here volunteering, and I just got the call that somebody has some clamshells they’d like to give away. Would you like some?’ And I said, ‘Yes! I’ll take all you can give me!’

“One of my denominational leaders was going to drive that way and pick them up in his car, but I found out there were six pallets! I called him back and said, ‘Well, your car won’t do. I guess God is going to have to provide a 26-foot enclosed trailer with a one-ton Dooley truck if we’re going to get those clamshells. A little bit later my phone rang. My wife was calling from our distribution center and said, ‘Charles, a guy just drove in from West Texas with a 26-foot horse trailer with a one-ton truck. What do you want him to do with it?’ Things like that happened every day, over and over.”

KATHLEEN/SCA VOLUNTEER/2005

“How can I pray for you?” When Kathleen, one of our Katrina volunteers at the Somebody Cares America headquarters in Houston,

asked that question to the woman who came to our office for hurricane relief assistance, she did not know God was using her in one of His “divine connections.”

“I haven’t been able to contact my brother. I don’t know where he is or even if he made it out of New Orleans.”

Kathleen prayed for this woman to get word of her brother’s whereabouts and gave her comfort and reassurance. She helped her complete the brief form we had everyone fill out for us for tracking purposes, then assisted her with her needs. Later, as Kathleen went to file the paperwork, she remembered she had written down the brother’s name on the form before she prayed for him. “I thought, well, I’ll just look through the file and see if we have her brother’s paperwork in here, too—and we did!”

The woman’s brother had been through our facility, possibly even just hours before! Here was the proof he was alive and well! Kathleen followed up and was able to reconnect this family.

VICKIE GASKINS/RISE TO THE TIME/FORMER SCA STAFF

After a long hard year for many families across the country, Somebody Cares gave some a Christmas to remember. It wasn’t the amount or value of the gifts given. It was the personal, caring touch that let struggling families like the Browards know that God cares. The Broward family lost their home and all their possessions when wildfires spread in Texas. The grandfather, who lived with the family, began to experience health problems due to the strain of the loss. He passed away before Christmas. When Somebody Cares representatives, Vickie and Terry Gaskins, stopped by to deliver gifts for Christmas, the Browards rejoiced. They were seeing God’s hand at work, providing their every need. And the Gaskins had a chance to rejoice with them as they learned a friend was bringing them a houseful of furniture that same day!

The Lewis family also lost everything to the wildfires. As they struggle to recover their lives, they are seeing God’s faithfulness, too. Since they had lived in a leased home, they had no land to rebuild. But through prayer and trust in God, they were given three acres where they could build a new home! Area churches stepped in to help with household items, and Somebody Cares provided Christmas gifts.

Around the country Somebody Cares chapters provided holiday meals to the elderly, warm socks and essentials to the homeless, toys to children, and warm hugs and prayer for all who came. It truly was a Christmas to remember.

ADAM PEACOCKE/CITY LIFE FELLOWSHIP/SANTA ROSA, CA

“We were stunned by the timely and generous help that was provided us from the Body of Christ around the nation. We were able to quickly set up a program for providing relief to fire affected families through our local churches and were amazed to find hundreds of thousands of dollars come into this fund from churches outside our community. We also received sizeable contributions from several ministries that funded the purchase of ‘move-in kits’ for those finding new places to stay after losing their homes to the fires. Among the most surprising provisions from God was a new opportunity for ministry into our local public school system. Through a series of personal connections a door was opened that has allowed the local church in our community to provide consistent aid and a message of hope to the children of our community.”

APPENDIX: SAMPLES OF FORMS & OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

WHO TO CONTACT WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

For use in your Incident Command Center; distribute to key staff and volunteers so they will know how to direct inquiries. This will help prevent bottle-neck of all calls going to one person.

**IF SOMEONE IS IN
THE AREA WHERE THE
DISASTER STRIKES,
CONTACT:**

Name:

Organization:

Cell Phone:

Email:

**IF SOMEONE IS OUTSIDE
THE AREA & WANTS
TO SEND MATERIAL
RESOURCES, CONTACT:**

Name:

Organization:

Cell Phone:

Email:

**IF SOMEONE IS OUTSIDE
THE AREA & WANTS TO
SEND FINANCIAL HELP,
CONTACT:**

Name:

Organization:

Cell Phone:

Email:

**IF SOMEONE IS OUTSIDE
THE AREA & WANTS
TO SEND MANPOWER,
CONTACT:**

Name:

Organization:

Cell Phone:

Email:

SAMPLE PHONE CHAIN SPREADSHEET

[illegible][illegible]

SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT CHECK LIST

This list may not be complete, depending on what disasters are prone to occur in your area or the needs in your community. Therefore, make a complete assessment of your area using this list as a guide.

☐ **WATER** (for drinking, cooking, cleaning, hygiene)

☐ **FOOD**

- Ready-to-eat canned meat, fruits, and vegetables (self-heating meals can be obtained through www.heatermeals.com)
- Canned juices, milk, soup
- Staples (sugar, salt, pepper)
- High energy foods (peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix)
- Vitamins
- Food for infants, elderly people, or persons on special diets
- Comfort/stress foods (cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, instant coffee, tea bags)

☐ **FIRST AID KIT**

- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleaning agent/soap
- Latex gloves
- Sunscreen
- Medicine dropper
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the poison control center)

☐ **ONE-TIME PURCHASES/CAPITAL EXPENSES**

- Smokers (use wood and matches), gas/charcoal grills
- Battery-operated radio
- Tarps
- Large tent (for shelter or for warehousing)
- Generators (battery-powered or diesel operated)
- Tables and shelving for distribution/warehousing
- Outdoor sound system

- Battery operated lanterns
- Back-up communication (HAM radio, satellite systems)
- Back-up transportation (golf carts, ATVs)
- Chainsaws, other tools
- Kerosene heaters
- Coolers (for ice, food, or medications such as insulin)
- Wheelchairs
- Tube tent
- Signal flare
- Plastic sheeting
- Fire extinguisher (small canister, ABC Type)
- Portable/hand-cranked washing machines

□ **TOOL KIT**

- Emergency preparedness manual
- LED flashlights (burn brighter and last longer)
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife
- Pliers
- Compass
- Shut-off wrench (to turn off household gas and water)
- Whistle

□ **SUPPLIES**

- Bibles and other appropriate spiritual materials
- Cash or traveler's checks, change
- Plastic storage containers
- Plastic buckets
- Duct tape
- Batteries (all sizes)
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils
- Aluminum foil
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Rubber gloves and boots, face masks
- Bug spray
- Antibacterial soap
- Hand sanitizer
- Washcloths
- Bath towels
- Personal hygiene items ("Care Kits")
 - Soap
 - Shampoo & Conditioner
 - Toilet paper
 - Toothpaste
 - Toothbrushes
 - Mouthwash
 - Razors
 - Moist towelettes
 - Feminine supplies
- Hairbrush, comb
- Disinfectant household chlorine bleach
- Comet/Ajax
- Teflon scrub pads
- Laundry supplies
- Pet food

☐ **CLOTHING AND BEDDING**

- Rain gear, rubber boots
- Cots/air mattresses
- Pillows
- Pillowcases, sheets
- Disposable blankets (like airlines use)

☐ **BABY SUPPLIES**

- Formula
- Diapers
- Rash cream
- Baby spoons
- Baby wipes
- Bibs
- Sippy cups
- Pacifier
- Pedialyte
- Infant Tylenol
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Medications

☐ **SPECIAL SUPPLIES FOR ADULTS**

- Heart and high blood pressure medication
- Insulin
- Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eyeglasses
- Oxygen

☐ **ENTERTAINMENT**

- Games/books/toys for kids
- Christian music on CD with battery operated player or MP3 system

LIST OF SUPPLIERS

EMERGENCY ESSENTIALS/ONE-STOP-SHOP SUPPLIERS

Nitro-pak

- Complete selection of emergency preparedness gear, survival kits, MREs (Meals Ready to Eat), water filters, food storage products, lanterns, radios, etc.

Website: www.nitro-pak.com

Phone: 1-800-866-4876

Emergency Essentials

- Food storage, emergency kits, water filtration, first aid, MREs, survival kits, camping gear, etc.

Website: www.beprepared.com

Phone: 1-800-999-1863

Email: sales@beprepared.com

Email: group@beprepared.com

ProPac (Formerly CERT Kits)

- Cots, trailers, canopies, first aid kits, safety supplies, hard hats, CERT kits and more.

Website: <https://propacusa.com>

Phone: 1-800-345-3036

COMMERCIAL CLEANING AND CONTRACTING SERVICES

Action Restoration

- 24/7 National Emergency Disaster Response
- Certified, licensed, bonded, and insured
- Drying services, cleaning, debris removal, water extraction, temp power, mold remediation, etc.

Phone: 1-800-760-9081

Website: www.action-restoration.com

COMMUNICATION

AlertFM

- Personal alert/messaging system allowing emergency management officials to create and send digital alerts and messages to first responders, school officials, businesses, and citizens based on geographic or organizational groupings, including NOAA weather warnings, evacuation instructions, homeland security notices, Amber Alerts, or school closings.

Phone: 601-709-4240

Website: www.alertfm.com

COTS

National Homestore

- May match competitors' prices, may work with you on shipping

Phone: 1-800-939-3299

Website: <http://nationalhomestore.com>

Out in Style

- May work with you on price and shipping

Website: www.outinstyle.com

Phone: 1-888-667-3453

Email: sales@outinstyle.com

ELECTRIC POWER

CAT (Rental)

- Complete mobile systems for emergency outages
- Equipment: Sound attenuated, packaged generator sets from 20kw to 2000kw; utility-grade power modules transfer switches, distribution equipment; uninterruptible power supply (UPS) systems; mobile banks; turbines

Phone: 1-800-RENT-CAT

Website: www.cat.com

EMERGENCY FUEL

Sun Coast Resources, Inc.

- Emergency fueling for disaster response
- Headquartered in Houston TX, endorsed by the American Red Cross

Phone: 1-800-677-3835

Website: www.suncoastresources.com or www.emergencyfuel.net

FIRST AID KITS

Preparedness Peace

- First aid, medic, and trauma bags

(832) 521-8943

www.preparednesspeace.com

FOOD

Heater Meals-Self Heating Meals

- Self-heating entrees that don't require refrigeration

Phone: 1-800-503-4483

Emergency Contact 24/7 (513) 205-3188

Website: www.heatermeals.com

LED FLASHLIGHTS

Bayco

Phone: 1-800-233-2155

Website: www.baycoproducts.com

Pelican Products, Inc

Phone: 1-800-473-5422

Website: <http://pelican.com>

STORM BAGS

StormTec Emergency Products

- Protects against flooding, landslides; soaks up existing water
- Lightweight alternative to traditional sandbags
- Approved by Department of Homeland Security

888-877 0672 or 530-872-4988

info@stormtec.net

Website: www.stormtec.net

WATER PURIFICATION SYSTEM

First Water Disaster Strike Team

- Provides lifesaving water solutions in disastrous conditions

Phone: 770- 442-8257

Email: info@firstwaterinc.com

Website: www.firstwaterinc.com

SAMPLE COMMUNITY NEEDS SURVEY (FOR USE PRIOR TO DISASTER)

Introduction: We are your neighbors from down the street and members of _____ Church. We are compiling a disaster response database, so we can help those needing assistance in the neighborhood should we be affected by a disaster. We are checking with our neighbors to see who might need help preparing or evacuating should a storm or disaster hit so we can be prepared to help. If you would like to register with our church, we will include your information in our disaster response database, so we can help should a hurricane/tornado/flood, etc., hit our area. Or you can contact submit your form directly to the church at:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Number of people in home: _____

If given warning, will you evacuate? _____ Intended evacuation site: _____

Contact info of evacuation site: _____

Is there anyone living here who will need assistance in the event a storm strikes? _____

Are there any medications that must be administered on a regular basis? _____

Do you have enough supplies for your basic necessities? _____

Do you need help preparing your home should a warning be announced? _____

Share the Good News of Jesus Christ (Preparing your house is important, but the most important preparation is your heart.)

Is there anything we can pray with you about? _____

SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL RELIEF SURVEY (FOR USE AFTER A DISASTER)

How can we help?

We represent a coalition of churches and ministries who would like to help you in any way that we are able. We are attempting to gain an understanding of the real needs of the community so that we can give focus to our volunteers and donors. Your participation in this survey will enable us to assist your neighborhood and all of those affected by disaster.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CELL PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

FOR FOOD, WATER AND HYGIENE ITEMS PLEASE SPECIFY HOW MANY ARE IN YOUR FAMILY: _____

BASICS

- ☐ FOOD
- ☐ WATER
- ☐ COFFEE
- ☐ SLEEPING BAGS/ AIR MATTRESSES
- ☐ GAS FOR GENERATOR
- ☐ TOILET PAPER
- ☐ PAPER PLATES, CUPS, CUTLERY, NAPKINS

PERSON HYGIENE PRODUCTS

- ☐ DEODORANT
- ☐ SHAVING SUPPLIES
- ☐ FEMININE HYGIENE
- ☐ SHAMPOO/CONDITIONER
- ☐ SOAP
- ☐ TOOTHPASTE/BRUSH
- ☐ TOWELS/WASH CLOTHS

BABY ITEMS

- ☐ DIAPERS: _____
- ☐ WIPES: _____
- ☐ DESITIN/BABY POWDER: _____
- ☐ FORMULA/BOTTLES: _____

(List the preferred brands in the blanks.)

EMOTIONAL/SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

- ☐ I NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE NOW.
- ☐ I NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE WHEN THINGS CALM DOWN.
- ☐ I WOULD LOVE FOR SOMEONE TO PRAY FOR ME AND MY FAMILY.
- ☐ I NEED A BIBLE.

MEDICAL NECESSITIES

- ☐ PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE
- ☐ FIRST AID KIT
- ☐ ANTIBIOTICS

CLEANING SUPPLIES

- ☐ PAPER TOWELS
- ☐ BLEACH
- ☐ OTHER DISINFECTANT PRODUCTS
- ☐ MOPS
- ☐ PLASTIC BUCKETS

SUPPLIES AND TOOLS

- ☐ WORK GLOVES
- ☐ WORK BOOTS (Size: _____)
- ☐ CONTRACTOR BAGS
- ☐ SHOVELS
- ☐ BROOMS
- ☐ CROW BARS
- ☐ FLASHLIGHTS & BATTERIES
- ☐ TARPS
- ☐ PACKING BOXES
- ☐ GENERATOR
- ☐ PORTABLE STOVE

VOLUNTEERS

- ☐ HELP SORT AND SIFT THROUGH HOME
- ☐ CLEAN UP DEBRIS

OTHER NEEDS: _____

PRAYER COORDINATOR GUIDE

1. Choose dates for your 24/7 prayer initiative (i.e. Somebody Cares had 21 days of 24/7 prayer during Hurricane Katrina relief).
2. Secure venue/prayer room (i.e. command center, church, etc.) and obtain key.
3. Divide 24 hours into 3-4 hour shifts to be lead by a shift leader, who will facilitate prayer time and host people coming by. For example, begin at 6 a.m. on your selected start date.
4. If website/webmaster is available, coordinate a volunteer sign up site where people can:
 - a) Log in and sign up to pray one hour or more ANYTIME and ANYWHERE
 - b) Log in and sign up to be a shift leader
 - c) Log in and come and join with others in prayer for one hour or more
5. Put out a call (email blast/phone calls, etc.) to intercessors, ministry partners, etc. for shift leaders. These people need to be individuals who you are in relationship with you, for safety and accountability.
6. Put out a call out for prayer volunteers.
7. Schedule shift leaders.
8. Schedule prayer volunteers.
9. Oversee prayer room/volunteers during 24/7 prayer.

SAMPLE PRAYER VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT EMAIL

The following is an email sent by Pastor Hank Marion of New Haven House of Prayer from our Somebody Cares Houston network to gather volunteers for 24/7 Prayer Room during Hurricane Katrina Relief:

Greetings Prayer Warriors,

By divine choice greater Houston has become a city of refuge. There are responsibilities that come with being chosen. The Lord is saying, "Man your post." The prayer networks and relationships God has established are for this season. Watchmen, man your stations!

There is call to pray with some fasting for the 21 days starting Monday, September 12 through Sunday, October 2. The prayer rooms across the city must unite in this focused prayer. There are several expressions of united prayer being planned. They are:

- 1. A list of prayer points that we can all pray through together.*
- 2. The opportunity for individuals to sign up to cover all the one-hour time slots during this period. Sign up for the one-hour slots will be setup soon at <http://katrina.somebodycares.org>.*
- 3. A manned prayer room is being setup at the Somebody Cares offices where people can meet for prayer 24 hours a day during the 21-day period. Volunteers are needed to serve as 3-hour shift leaders. Somebody Cares offices are located at 5005 W. 34th St., Houston, TX 77292, phone 713-621-1498.*

*Praying this will be the church's finest hour,
Hank Marion*

Suggested Prayer Points:

1. Repentance from being lukewarm, harboring racial prejudice, living lives of leisure, and idolatry within the church. (Joel 1:8-14; Psalms 32:3-7)
2. Revival, deliverance, and spiritual awakening to come to Houston. (Isaiah 4:4-6; Joel 2:28-29)
3. The gift of administration and oneness of spirit to come upon those giving leadership in the relief efforts. (1 Cor. 12:28; Romans 12:8)
4. Power, love, and a sound mind to triumph over chaos and confusion. (2 Tim 1:7)
5. Hope and destiny to fill the hearts and minds of individuals where the spirit of fear seeks to minister. (Jeremiah 29:11-13)
6. Healing and health to be released and infirmity defeated. (3 John 2)
7. God to move on the hearts of Houstonians to give of their resources to meet the need of those working on the front lines in compassion ministry. (2 Cor 9:7; Luke 6:38)

SAMPLE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

I. GENERAL INFO

Name: _____ Place of Employment: _____
Address: _____ Occupation: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

II. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Current Church Home: _____

Number of Years Attended Consistently: _____

Please list any churches you have attended regularly during the past five years

Church: _____ Number of Years Attended: _____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____

Church: _____ Number of Years Attended: _____

Contact Person: _____ Telephone: _____

III. DISCIPLINARY AND LEGAL BACKGROUND

The following questions are asked in the interest of protecting our volunteers and clients. They are not meant to be intrusive or prying. Circle Y for yes or N for no. If you prefer, you may leave a question unanswered, in which case you will be contacted, in confidence, by a ministry leader to discuss your response. The information on this application will not be disclosed to unauthorized persons.

1. Have you at any time been arrested? Y N
2. Have you at any time been convicted, pled no contest, or pled guilty to any crime? Y N
3. Have you at any time been named as a defendant to any civil or criminal legal proceeding due to charges against you of sexual misconduct, violence, abuse, or as the result of an accident or mishap? Y N
4. Have you at any time been disciplined in, or dismissed from, a paid or volunteer position due to charges against you of sexual misconduct, violence, abuse, or as the result of an accident or mishap? Y N

5. Are you aware of any investigation, review, or disciplinary action pending against you by an employer, organization in which you volunteered, law enforcement agency, social or protective agency, or licensing authority for sexual misconduct, violence, or as the result of an accident or mishap? Y N
6. Are you aware of having any traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to the people you will be interacting with? Y N

IV. LANGUAGES

	SPEAKING PROFICIENCY				READ/WRITE?
	FLUENT	GOOD	FAIR	BASIC	
LANGUAGE:					
Arabic					
Chinese					
Vietnamese					
Mandarin					
Dutch					
English					
French					
German					
Hindi					
Urdu					
Portuguese					
Russian					
Sinhala					
Somali					
Spanish					
Swahili					
Thai					
Other:					

SAMPLE CRIMINAL HISTORY AUTHORIZATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Dear Volunteer:

An authorization to conduct a criminal history check is required by (Name of Your Organization). Information obtained will be used solely to determine eligibility for service as a volunteer. Your completion of this form in its entirety and submission authorizes (Name of Your Organization) to conduct investigation inquiries into police records, the state prison system, the Department of Public Safety, and/or any other criminal records to determine your acceptability for volunteer service. Filling out this form represents your consent for (Name of Your Organization) to conduct investigations into your background and for your police records, state prison system records, Department of Public Safety records and other records relevant to your legal background to be released to (Name of Your Organization) for evaluation on your suitability for this volunteer service. Thank you.

FIRST NAME: _____ MIDDLE NAME: _____

LAST NAME _____ SUFFIX (Jr, IV, Sr): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ GENDER: M / F

DRIVER LICENSE NUMBER: _____ DRIVER LICENSE STATE: _____

SSN: _____

PRINTED NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

WITNESS PRINTED NAME: _____

WITNESS SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

(Confirm with local law enforcement or attorney for proper wording.)

**SAMPLE APPLICATION
FOR TEMPORARY RESIDENCE IN A SHELTER**

NAME: _____ AGE: _____

SPOUSE: _____ AGE: _____

CHILD: _____ AGE: _____

CHILD: _____ AGE: _____

CHILD: _____ AGE: _____

CHILD: _____ AGE: _____

Where are you from (address/city/state/zip)?

Did you own or rent your housing?

Do you currently have missing family?

What do you consider to be your most immediate need?

If you are needing to work, what type of work do you normally do?

What are your other needs?

At this time are you planning on relocating?

Cell phone numbers:

Are you interested in daytime activities?

SAMPLE CRIMINAL HISTORY AUTHORIZATION FOR SHELTER GUESTS

Dear Guest:

An authorization to conduct a criminal history check is required by (Name of Your Organization). Information obtained will be used solely to determine eligibility for your stay in our shelter. Your completion of this form in its entirety and submission authorizes (Name of Your Organization) to conduct investigation inquiries into police records, the state prison system, the Department of Public Safety, and/or any other criminal records. Filling out this form represents your consent for (Name of Your Organization) to conduct investigations into your background and for your police records, state prison system records, Department of Public Safety records and other records relevant to your legal background to be released to (Name of Your Organization) for evaluation. Thank you.

FIRST NAME: _____ MIDDLE NAME: _____

LAST NAME: _____ SUFFIX (Jr, IV, Sr): _____ GENDER: M / F

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

DRIVER LICENSE NUMBER: _____ DRIVER LICENSE STATE: _____

SSN: _____

PRINTED NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

WITNESS PRINTED NAME: _____

WITNESS SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

(Confirm with local law enforcement or attorney for proper wording.)

A grant application is helpful for assessing needs if your organization has funds to distribute to other churches or organizations.



Somebody Cares America

Relief and Recovery Application

Ike Disaster Relief Fund
2008



Office Use Only

☐ Approved ☐ Waived Amount Approved: _____

Approval
Signature: _____

Approval Date: _____

Contact Information

Organization Name: _____
Contact Name: _____
Contact Position: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____
ZIP: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Office Use Notes: _____

Guidelines for Acceptable Requests:

Requests for disaster relief / recovery funds will be considered for those that meet the following criteria:

1. Grant will benefit local churches and those they serve in Ike affected areas.
2. Funds will be shared by requesting church/organization with other churches/organizations in their region.
3. Funds will only be used to meet needs caused by Hurricane Ike.
4. No funds will go towards needs that will be covered by insurance or any federal program.
5. **Proof of 501(c)3 or church incorporation is provided.**
6. **Recipient agrees to provide timely reporting on use of funds.**

Relief / Recovery Project Information

1. Geographical Area of Project (city or community name): _____

2. Select general areas of assistance requested (check all those that apply):

- ☐ Individual-Level Assistance Requests
☐ Immediate Survival Supplies (water, food, clothing, shelter, power)
☐ On-Site Support for Relief Workers (food, lodging, equipment)
☐ Support for area churches and their staff
☐ Regular church expenses uncovered due to reduced offerings
☐ Other: _____

- ☐ Community Level Project Request(s)
☐ Critical Construction Items (tarps, plywood, roofing, etc.)
☐ Essential Household Items (Bedding, Kitchen, Phone, Job)
☐ Other: _____
☐ Other: _____
☐ Other: _____

3. Provide information on the relief and recovery needs that you propose to meet in your community; explain specific needs:

4. Please list other churches and organizations you will partner with or support through this grant:

Relief Funds Requested

5. Total Funds Requested: _____

Use the following spreadsheet to breakdown your request for assistance. Summarize into major expense areas if room does not allow for full expense description.

Somebody Cares America

A form like this one is helpful for tracking items that need to be returned.

COT DISTRIBUTION SIGN-OUT/RETURN FORM

Cots have been issued by Somebody Cares America to:

Name of Church/Organization: _____

Name of Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

I understand these cots are the property of Somebody Cares America and that all cots will be returned to SCA to be used for future emergency situations.

Number of cots issued: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Received by (signature): _____

Issued by (SCA rep): _____

Number of cots returned: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Returned by (name): _____

Received by (SCA rep): _____

SOMEBODY CARES NEWS ARTICLE ABOUT “HOME FAIR” OUTREACH (PHASE 4: LONG-TERM REBUILDING & RESTORATION OF LIVES)

FEBRUARY 21, 2009: Somebody Cares America/International partnered with Oak Island Baptist Church to host a “Home Fair” for local residents to assist in their rebuilding efforts following the devastation from Hurricane Ike. While the primary purpose of the event was to collect damage and needs assessments from local residents, the day also included various demonstrations for “do-it-yourselfers,” legal advice, games for the kids, and a free hot lunch buffet for everyone. Residents were also able to sign up for free construction materials from Somebody Cares that will be distributed through the church.

Somebody Cares volunteers helped process 121 home assessment surveys. They were also joined by volunteers from long-time Somebody Cares Houston partner Vietnamese Baptist Church, who assisted with translation for the many Vietnamese residents in the community. According to SCA’s Vickie Dalton, over 70 of those homes need to be rebuilt completely.

“One common thing I noticed was that the people of Oak Island were hopeful,” said SCA volunteer Debbie. “With tearful eyes, they shared stories and pictures of trashed homeless lots, but at the end of completing their forms they were smiling, shaking our hands in gratitude for the help, and encouraged to know that there is a possibility of more assistance.”

“Listening to their stories was heart wrenching,” said Bob, another SCA volunteer. “So many have lost their homes and most everything in them. They have some FEMA money but it’s not sufficient to replace what they lost. Still, many of them exhibited a wonderful hope based on their faith in the face of what they have and are experiencing.” While SCA volunteers were touched by the humble tenacity of Oak Island’s residents, staff members from the church were most impressed by the volunteers!

“I was most impacted by the heart of the volunteers for the plight of the people of our area,” said one member of the church’s volunteer staff. “As I worked with volunteers doing intakes for the homeowners, I saw how they responded to the needs of the people as individuals and not just numbers.

“An older gentleman in our church congregation came to me Sunday morning and told me that he felt so good after he did his intake forms because the young lady didn’t just ask him questions, she prayed with him. He received comfort and hope through the prayer, not through the hope of a grant. The people came in a steady stream and the volunteers worked without much time to take a break. When there were lulls, the conversation was of spiritual things and meeting the needs of the people. Because of the spirit of the Somebody Cares volunteers, I was energized.”

Thanks to your faithful support, lives not only in Oak Island but across the globe see the tangible expression of Christ through our Somebody Cares chapters, staff members, and volunteers! Thank you for caring!

HOME ASSESSMENT SURVEY USED IN "HOME FAIR"

Date: _____

Homeowner: _____ Age: _____

Spouse: _____ Age: _____

Address of Affected House: _____

Community: _____

Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

Please check all that apply: Elderly Disabled Medical Other

Insurance: YES NO Amount Received: Amount Left:

Other resources:

Applied for FEMA assistance? YES NO Amount Received: _____ Amount Left: _____

Denied help by FEMA? YES NO

Materials Donated: _____ Purchased: _____

Is home repairable? YES NO

If no, does home need to be demolished? ? YES NO

Have any repairs been made to the home? YES NO

If so, what are they? _____

What needs to be done to the home? _____

Do you need appliances? YES NO List those needed: _____

Year affected house was homesteaded: _____

I give my permission to share this information with:

The State of Texas Grant: YES NO

Volunteer Teams from Churches/Others: YES NO

Other:

Signature of Homeowner: _____

LISTING OF POTENTIAL DISASTERS AND THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, AND NUCLEAR INCIDENTS

Below is a partial list of potential disasters for Preparedness Teams to use in identifying those that are more likely to threaten their community or region. It can also be used to discuss possible scenarios to see if a Disaster Plan takes into account necessary contingencies for each type of disaster for which it was prepared.

*List drawn from the CDC's Public Health Emergency Response Guide.

Natural	Technology/Man-Made
Avalanche	Airplane Crash
Drought	Biological Release
Earthquake	Building/Structural Crash
Extreme Cold/Heat	Chemical/Hazardous Substance Release
Fire/Wild Fire	Civil Unrest/Disobedience
Flood	Mass Casualty Event
Hurricane/Tropical Storm	Critical Infrastructure Failure*
Infectious Disease Outbreak	Explosion
Landslide/Mudflow	Maritime Problem
Snow/Blizzard	Mass Immigration
Thunderstorm/Lightning	Mass Public Gathering
Tornado	Mine Collapse/Explosion
Tsunami	Radiological/Nuclear Leak
Volcano	Train Derailment

In some of these cases (chemical, biological, and nuclear incidents), churches and community organizations should focus on assisting people who are displaced by the incident as well as providing pastoral care, hot meals, or other necessities for the trained first responders who are working within the disaster zone. Another critical role will be to rally prayer for wisdom for governmental leaders and first responders so there is a quick resolution of the crisis with no more loss of life.

The CDC website at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/> has excellent information on what the public should do in cases of a variety of critical incidents.

16 CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE SECTORS AS IDENTIFIED BY HOMELAND SECURITY

Indicated in Presidential Policy Directive 21:

CHEMICAL: The Department of Homeland Security is designated as the Sector-Specific Agency for the Chemical Sector.

COMMERCIAL FACILITIES: The Department of Homeland Security is designated as the Sector-Specific Agency for the Commercial Facilities Sector, which includes a diverse range of sites that draw large crowds of people for shopping, business, entertainment, or lodging.

COMMUNICATIONS: The Communications Sector is an integral component of the U.S. economy, underlying the operations of all businesses, public safety organizations, and government.

CRITICAL MANUFACTURING: The Department of Homeland Security is designated as the Sector-Specific Agency for the Critical Manufacturing Sector.

DAMS: The Department of Homeland Security is designated as the Sector-Specific Agency for the Dams Sector. The Dams Sector comprises dam projects, navigation locks, levees, hurricane barriers, mine tailings impoundments, and other similar water retention and/or control facilities.

DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE: The U.S. Department of Defense is the Sector-Specific Agency for the Defense Industrial Base Sector. The Defense Industrial Base Sector enables research, development, design, production, delivery, and maintenance of military weapons systems, subsystems, and components or parts to meet U.S. military requirements.

EMERGENCY SERVICES: The Department of Homeland Security is designated as the Sector-Specific Agency for the Emergency Services Sector. The sector provides a wide range of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery services during both day-to-day operations and incident response.

ENERGY: The U.S. energy infrastructure fuels the economy of the 21st century. The Department of Energy is the Sector-Specific Agency for the Energy Sector.

FINANCIAL SERVICES: The Department of the Treasury is designated as the Sector-Specific Agency for the Financial Services Sector.

FOOD & AGRICULTURE: The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services are designated as the co-Sector-Specific Agencies for the Food and Agriculture Sector.

GOVERNMENT FACILITIES: The Department of Homeland Security and the General Services Administration are designated as the Co-Sector-Specific Agencies for the Government Facilities Sector.

HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH: The Department of Health and Human Services is designated as the Sector-Specific Agency for the Healthcare and Public Health Sector.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: The Department of Homeland Security is designated as the Sector-Specific Agency for the Information Technology Sector.

NUCLEAR REACTORS, MATERIALS, AND WASTE: The Department of Homeland Security is designated as the Sector-Specific Agency for the Nuclear Reactors, Materials, and Waste Sector.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS: The Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Transportation are designated as the Co-Sector-Specific Agencies for the Transportation Systems Sector.

WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS SECTOR: The Environmental Protection Agency is designated as the Sector-Specific Agency for the Water and Wastewater Systems Sector.

**Note: These infrastructure identifications are updated periodically by the Department of Homeland Security. For updated information visit: <https://www.dhs.gov/critical-infrastructure-sectors>*

PANDEMICS

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. (Psalm 91:1-7)

There is a growing concern about the possibility and effects of a widespread outbreak of a disease like the SARS epidemic in China several years ago or the more recent Swine Flu scare in North America. A staggering number of problems could arise should a true epidemic or pandemic strike. As in other kinds of disasters, panic can set in causing irrational behavior. Should travel restrictions, school and business closings, or other government mandates be implemented, food and other shortages may come into play also as people prepare for long periods of confinement in their homes. Regardless of the type of disaster that comes our way, we—as the church—need to be ready to help those who cannot help themselves. While the complete set of consequences and challenges facing communities is hard to predict since our nation has not faced a deadly pandemic in recent history, there are some basic things that will enable you to start reaching out as you assess the situation in your area.

WHO IS AT RISK?

While the entire community will be at risk during a pandemic, there are several particularly vulnerable groups who may need help getting the basic necessities:

- the elderly
- those with disabilities
- those with HIV/AIDS or other immune deficiencies
- those living below the poverty line
- ministries serving the homeless, battered women, and the poor
- those who have contracted the disease

HOW TO PREPARE

The time to prepare for any disaster is before it hits! The first step is to establish a Task Force within your church, organization, or fellowship that will review a variety of disaster scenarios and determine how you will respond in each. When considering response to a pandemic, it is critical that you have relationships intact prior to an outbreak (see "The Importance of Being Prepared Relationally" section of this manual).

SURVEY

Begin now to survey your congregation, staff, volunteers, clients and neighborhood for those who could need extra help. Ask if they would like you to check in with them in the event of a disaster to see how they are doing. Also give them a phone number you plan to have manned in the event of a pandemic so that those in your service area can call in should they need non-emergency assistance (emergencies should be handled through 911). If a pandemic is announced, be sure to CALL those on your list to see what help they may need, explaining to them what you have available, so their expectations are set correctly.

SUPPLIES

Cleanliness and limited personal contact are two of the best ways to hinder rapid spread of many diseases that may become pandemics. Basic supplies to have on hand should include but not be limited to:

- Bleach or other recommended disinfectants
- Disposable cloths for cleaning
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Disposable gloves in a variety of sizes (non-latex are best because of allergic reactions to latex)
- Hairnets (if you are making, serving, or delivering food)
- N95 Face Masks (N95 Masks meet CDC Guidelines for TB, SARS, smallpox, anthrax, and other airborne

microorganisms. Be sure to check CDC recommendations for other types of health issues so you are properly protected as not all masks provide equal protection. And purchase from a reputable company.) Have enough on hand to give to your response team daily, as well as for distribution to those in higher risk categories, if you are able.

- Bottled water (water fountains are not a good idea during a disease outbreak)
- Non-perishable food to last several weeks for your response team, as well as those you are serving who can't get out themselves.

PARTNERSHIPS

Having key partnerships in place prior to any disaster is so important for seamless, effective service. Here are a few recommendations of partnerships you may want to begin working on now.

- **Media Partnerships:** If you plan to notify the community of what assistance you are providing, have key radio, television, and newspaper partnerships in place so you know who to contact with information and what their deadlines are for broadcast or publication. Limit your service area to your zip code or school district if you need to so you can serve those closest to you and let other churches/organizations serve those in their neighborhoods.
- **Area Churches:** Knowing what other churches in your community will be doing helps in your preparation. They may have specialty services that are appropriate for some of your congregation while you may be able to provide something for some of their congregants. You may also decide to place a bulk order of supplies to share so that you can all take advantage of bulk discounts and split the freight costs.
- **Medical Professionals:** Find medical professionals in your congregation, fellowship, or community who are willing to provide training for your staff and volunteers in palliative care and using infectious disease precautions. They can also give you counsel on proper protection for the specific disease threat.
- **Local Government:** Find out what the local emergency plans are for pandemic response and let them know what you are willing and able to do. Know your government contact person so you can get up to date information if a pandemic occurs and be in the pipeline for any resources they may have to distribute.

BASIC RESPONSE IDEAS

The Presbyterian Church USA disseminated an article titled "Guidance for Congregations" during the swine flu scare in the spring of 2009. That document contains many excellent suggestions for dealing with disease outbreaks in general. It has been included, with permission, for your benefit. Here are a few other things you may want to consider.

- Distribution of masks to fixed income/low income congregants, clients, and neighbors.
- Delivery of groceries and/or meals to shut-ins, the elderly, and those who are sick (make sure your delivery team maintains proper health protocols such as wearing masks, gloves, and hairnets).
- Manning an "Assistance & Prayer Hotline" for neighbors to call should they need assistance.
- Helping clean and disinfect homeless and battered women's shelters as well as food and clothing pantries. This will need to be done daily during a pandemic, so those organizations will welcome the extra help.

Most of all, PRAY – for wisdom, safety, health, and healing, as well as peace for your leaders and community. Make the most of every opportunity, "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

SAMPLE OF CHURCH PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Article used with permission from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

Guidance for Congregations

In response to H1N1 virus (swine flu) outbreak, spring 2009

As the media generates interest in the current outbreak of swine flu originating in Mexico, presbyteries and congregations have an opportunity for a 'teachable moment' about how to prepare for and respond to widespread contagious diseases. As you begin to plan, two items to address are what can/should be done NOW, and what may be necessary LATER.

WHAT TO DO NOW.....

Create a task force to coordinate the church's response within the congregation and in the community. Name one person the primary contact for all messages related to the response.

Precautions

Take common sense precautions to slow or prevent the spread of the flu among members:

- Ask ill members to stay home. Provide alternative spiritual care for those who cannot attend worship or other functions due to these precautions.
- Ask members to sit in alternate rows, to provide the recommended 3' social distance during an outbreak.
- Have facemasks available in the sanctuary for those who want them.
- Train ushers to assist those who may be affected. Tissues, small bottles of sanitizer, and masks can help.
- Have alcohol-based hand sanitizer in the restrooms for use after hand washing.
- Increase diligence when cleaning kitchens, restrooms, and classrooms. Use disinfectant spray on all hard surfaces, including door handles.
- Clean children's toys in Sunday school classes and day care facilities after each class. Mix one part household bleach to ten

parts water (make fresh solution for the day of use), or use Clorox® surface spray with bleach.

- Turn off and mark all water fountains "do not use".
- Increase the supervision of small children in hygiene habits (day care and Sunday school.)
- Consider changing communion practices (i.e. intinction rather than common plate and cups.) Prepare elements wearing gloves and masks. Keep elements covered until used. Communicants can be brought forward by rows.
- During passing of the peace, simply smile and say the words, without hugs or handshakes.
- Ensure that those handling food (for any church functions including Meals on Wheels, food pantry or in-house food service) follow enhanced precautions for safe food handling, including the use of gloves, masks, and hair coverings.

Be aware of needs

Develop a list of individuals from the congregation and the community who may have special needs in the event of a medical emergency, and define how the church can be involved in their support.

Training

- Ask local hospital or health care agencies to provide training to members on palliative care and using infectious disease precautions when in the home of affected members.
- Those who will provide ongoing pastoral and spiritual care in homes during an outbreak should be REQUIRED to have infectious disease precaution training NOW.

Resources

Provide educational resources in simple, easily understood form.

- SIGNS – Make or ask children to make signs reminding people to wash their hands with soap and water frequently.
- BULLETIN INSERT – Create a bulletin insert encouraging best health practices. Inform members about “social distancing” so others will not be offended by a lack of hugs or handshakes, including during passing of the peace.
- HANDOUTS – prepare information (in the languages of the congregation and community) about caring for someone who has the flu. Include information about what services the church has available to help with home care.
- Order *Light Our Way – A Guide to Spiritual Care in Times of Disaster* online at www.pcusa.org/pda/tools/resources.htm. Provide copies for staff, church leadership, and those who may be engaged in spiritual and pastoral care.

PREPARING FOR LATER.....

Community

In a Stage 6 Pandemic, the method for containing the spread of the disease is to require social isolation of infected people; and to reduce opportunities for social contacts among the non-affected. Businesses could close; schools and day care centers would close; travel would be restricted.

Many governmental planners assume that churches will be the principle providers of palliative care and food distribution. There will be differing responses, depending on the state response plan and the perceived severity of the outbreak.

In order to know what your local plan will be, it is important to connect NOW with local

emergency management systems, either through the Emergency Operations Center or the local organization that responds in disaster. Many communities have a coordinating group called a VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) or a disaster committee that is part of the American Red Cross. Someone from the congregation should register with at least one of these groups as a point of contact for the church.

Clergy and other staff should consider taking Red Cross training and registering with the Red Cross. Knowing the community plan ahead of time will make it possible for church leadership to effectively address issues and problems with less frustration.

Current Status

As of April 29, 2009, the World Health Organization lists the current level of influenza pandemic alert (for swine flu) at stage 5. Please monitor the CDC web site for current information, www.cdc.gov/swineflu.

If the outbreak moves to a Stage 6 Pandemic, state and local authorities may initiate mandatory closures of public events and gatherings. Churches would be impacted if worship and meetings are prohibited.

Plan for Ministry Continuation

Before a Stage 6 Pandemic is declared, the church should have a plan for governance and decision-making, considering the inability to meet face to face. Conference calls might be used to conduct Session business; actions would need to be confirmed at a regular meeting following the lifting of restrictions.

Congregations and presbyteries can write specific guidelines in their standing rules concerning electronic meetings. In 2004, the GA considered a question from the ACC about email voting, and their reflections provide a good context for thinking through these issues. Reference – 2004 GA, item 4-14 or get a copy at:

[http://index.pcusa.org/NXT/gateway.dll?fn=default.htm\\$f=templates\\$vid=GA216:10.1048/Enu\\$3.0](http://index.pcusa.org/NXT/gateway.dll?fn=default.htm$f=templates$vid=GA216:10.1048/Enu$3.0) (search for ACC email)

Develop a means for worship when the congregation cannot gather. Some options:

- Contact local radio stations to explore remote feeds or taped worship.
- Contact the local Cable TV network about broadcasting videotape of worship services, church messages, or other events.
- Ask your computer internet service provider about podcasts and live internet feeds of worship, Sunday school classes, or other events. While the initial investment may be costly, this could open up a whole new ministry for those unable to attend - at a very reasonable continuing cost. Web based conferencing video/audio services such as skype.com or gotomeeting.com might be helpful.

Develop a continuation of business plan.

- Plan ways to encourage congregants to make their pledges. Give simple, clear instructions about the options open to members.
- Talk to vendors and utility companies about reduced operations at the church due to closures.
- Plan for continuing office operations and whether increased security will be warranted during closures. Can some employees work from home?

Ensure congregational care and support for ongoing community ministry.

- Food pantry ministry – discuss a plan to continue operations within the guidelines for public gatherings and with precautions not to spread the flu. Is home delivery viable?
- Member care group - explore how to provide palliative care and nutrition support to those unable to care for themselves (because of prior conditions or the flu.)

Meals on wheels or other home feeding programs may be expanded to accommodate additional needs.

Develop plans for responding to new needs as they arise.

- How can the church provide support to families if businesses, schools and manufacturing plants close? How will the church care for the homeless and the displaced due to economic disruptions in the community?
- How can churches work together to provide support to those affected? Can churches share Parish Nurses and Stephen Ministers?



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

www.pcusa.org/pda

NOTES