

# Prepare to Care

Basic Disaster Ministry  
For Your Congregation



a resource from



# Prepare to Care: Basic Disaster Ministry for Your Congregation

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*Prepare to Care* is the companion manual of the *Community Arise* shared comprehensive disaster ministry curriculum -- a project of Church World Service and its members and other related denominations and communions. Designed for clergy and lay leaders in congregations, the manual covers the same content as the eight learning and training modules that are part of *Community Arise*: Basic Disaster Ministry, Disaster Case Management, Disaster Long-Term Recovery, Volunteer Management & Coordination, Emotional & Spiritual Care in Disaster, Children & Youth in Disaster, Technology-Caused Disaster Response, Vulnerability to Disaster.

*Prepare to Care* is the product of many contributors: CWS partners who participated in development of *Community Arise* – American Baptist Churches, Catholic Charities USA, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Church of the Brethren, Lutheran Disaster Response, Mennonite Disaster Service, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Reformed Church of America, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Committee on Relief. CWS Emergency Response Program staff – Bob Arnold, Bonnie Vollmering, Matt Hackworth, Emergency Response Specialists, former CWS disaster volunteers.

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## *Prepare to Care: Basic Disaster Ministry for Your Congregation*

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Visit the CWS Emergency Response web site: [www.cwserp.org](http://www.cwserp.org) (email contacts for CWS Emergency Response Program listed here). This manual and other resources for disaster ministries can be downloaded at this web site.

Call the Church World Service HOTLINE -- (800) 456-1310 -- for disaster information and visit the CWS web site: [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org). Find out about the latest response to disasters by CWS and its constituent denominations via Disaster News Network ([www.disasternews.net](http://www.disasternews.net)), a web site sponsored by Church World Service.

Cover photo: Volunteers fill sandbags for fighting floods (FEMA photo)



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## I. Introduction

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Religious groups have a long history of working together to respond to emergency needs – helping to build, rebuild, and renew communities after disasters. God’s people know the saving grace and power of God and God’s love for all creation.

Scripture is filled with examples of the people of God preparing for disasters, responding to them, and rebuilding after disaster strikes. In Exodus, the detailed instructions of how the Israelites are to prepare the Passover meal and gather their household in anticipation of the catastrophic events mirrors the same preparations we make today. Jesus feeding the 5000 reminds us of the both the compassion and the community resiliency aspects of the relief stages of disaster response. And finally, the story of Nehemiah rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem demonstrates that the need to work collaboratively, develop recovery programs that include the people affected by the disaster.



You and your congregation can make an important contribution in helping people recover from disaster. This manual shows you how. (Brethren Disaster Ministries photo)

Individual congregations -- in cooperation with the wider religious community -- play a unique role among disaster agencies because people of faith recognize the sanctity of all human life. Along with responding to the spiritual and pastoral needs of survivors, they are also called to advocate for the equitable allocation of material resources according to need following disasters. After a disaster strikes, people of God:

- Stand on the side of the oppressed to offer advocacy with and for those most in need
- Seek out unmet needs of people who were vulnerable and marginalized before the disaster
- Provide a larger vision of life that includes emotional and spiritual care as well as physical rebuilding
- Assist in long-term recovery of those in need, regardless of the type of disaster that occurred
- Restore and rebuild community relationships

U.S denominations and communions work together to promote good stewardship of resources and prevent duplication of services in responding to disasters and meeting needs of refugees through Church World Service (CWS), a coordinating organization

which they formed in 1946 following World War II. Major disaster response organizations, including American Red Cross and federal government, look to your denomination and CWS to coordinate faith community efforts in the response. Within this context, you and your congregation, are vital links in a huge network of responders to disasters in the U.S. and around the world.

### **About This Manual**

Our calling to disaster ministry is literally as old as the Scripture that is also our resource for worship, prayer and spiritual care. ***Prepare to Care*** is a resource for those who hear that call and wish to follow the pattern of the Good News for all people. This manual focuses on how to:

- Prepare yourself, your family, and your congregation for disasters inside and outside your community
- Prepare your congregation to work cooperatively with other congregations, faith groups, and community-based organizations where you live to respond to those affected by disasters



(Presbyterian Disaster Assistance photo)

## II. Emergency Management Overview

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In responding to God's call to reduce the vulnerability of people to disasters and meet humanitarian and spiritual needs of disaster survivors, caregivers, and first-responders, the religious community participates in an emergency management system that encompasses government, the private sector -- including business and industry -- and other voluntary organizations.

Local congregations are the fundamental disaster response units of the religious community, providing the venue for ministry and effective utilization of volunteer/financial/material resources. Their effectiveness starts with a basic understanding of how they fit into the domestic emergency management system.



### The Partnership Cornerstone

The cornerstone of the emergency management system in the U.S. is partnership. If there were ever a time when an organization – religious or secular – could spontaneously respond to an emergency or disaster, roll in with equipment and personnel, and set up shop on its own without collaborating with others, that day has long since past.

The religious community is part of a domestic emergency management system encompassing individual families, local/state/federal government, business and industry, and other voluntary organizations. (CWS staff photo)

Emergency management in the U.S. is understood as a shared responsibility of all sectors of society. Today the disaster responder who does not connect with others, coordinate with them, and share information will be out of business in short order. Effective disaster responders know the roles of their partners, understand how they operate, and speak a common language.

### The Scope of Emergency Management

Within this context, emergency management seeks to limit or ameliorate the effects of disasters and hazards:

- **Hazards** include human or natural events or forces that cause disasters. Natural disasters involve geological and climatic hazards -- hurricanes, tornadoes, storms, floods, tidal waves, earthquakes. Technology-caused disasters – fires, explosions, contamination -- stem from application or misapplication of human technology in manufacture, transportation, and use of such substances as radioactive materials, chemicals, oil and petroleum products, agricultural pesticides. Civil strife, war, and disease are also hazards. Some hazards such as earthquakes, tornadoes, flash floods, transportation accidents, or volcanoes strike with little or no warning. Other hazards such as hurricanes, river flooding, and windstorms may strike with advance warning.

- **Disasters** occur when vulnerable people are directly affected by a hazard in such a way as to cause human suffering or create human needs that survivors cannot alleviate without spiritual, monetary, material, or physical assistance. There may be loss of life. People may be injured or missing. The economy may be disrupted. Buildings and their contents may be damaged or destroyed. There may be an impact on electricity, telephone, water, other public utilities, and transportation routes. Cultural, social, and environmental factors which create unsafe conditions make people vulnerable to hazards. Some of the people in a disaster-affected area may be more vulnerable than others because of their economic status, gender, age, education, ethnicity and language, and religion.



Disasters occur when a human-caused or natural hazard directly affects vulnerable people, creating human needs that require spiritual, monetary, material or physical assistance. (CWS staff photo)

- An **emergency** is an occurrence or set of circumstances – often sudden and unexpected – that demands immediate attention. An emergency exists when a hazard physically strikes a community and damage to property or harm to people is threatened or actually occurs. An emergency may or may not be recognized or acknowledged. It may have existed for a long time or be something new.

Comprehensive all-hazards emergency management starts with **mitigation** – day-in and day-out efforts to reduce vulnerability of people and communities by lessening the probability of a disaster, or minimizing the effects of unavoidable disaster. It includes improving infrastructure, constructing safe rooms in homes, retro-fitting during rebuilding that considers hazards, enacting and enforcing building codes and zoning laws, teaching people about hazards and disaster preparedness, working to reduce poverty through community social and economic development programs.

When disaster strikes, effective emergency management depends on the quality of the **preparedness, response, and recovery** of all sectors of society.

## Emergency Management in the U.S.

Towards assuring consistent, effective emergency management throughout the U.S., the Department of Homeland Security sets forth standards and describes best practices in two documents written for other Federal agencies which oversee varied emergency management functions and its public and private sector partners:

- **National Response Framework** (NRF) lays out key emergency management principles applicable to all disaster responders and describes Federal response in detail.

- **National Incident Management System (NIMS)** presents a template for managing response to emergencies and disasters, coordinating multiple agencies, training and exercising, managing resources, developing mutual aid and assistance agreements, certifying personnel, managing information, and crisis planning. Much of NIMS focuses on a management model (the Incident Management System) for facilitating activities in command, operations, planning, logistics, and finance/administration functions following disasters.

Although not legally binding private sector, voluntary, community-based, or faith-based organizations engaged in emergency management, both NRF and NIMS merit attention for the guidance they offer in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

## Preparing for Response & Recovery

Preparedness empowers response and recovery. It encompasses:

- **Planning.** Collecting and analyzing information. Developing policies, practices, procedures, and strategies to perform missions and tasks. Defining required capabilities.
- **Organizing.** Creating the organizational structure, developing the leadership, and assembling the paid and volunteer staff essential for response and recovery work.
- **Equipping.** Identifying and acquiring the necessary equipment, supplies, facilities, and systems required for response and recovery activities.
- **Training.** Assuring that disaster response and recovery personnel have the required skills and knowledge, professional qualifications, certifications and meet performance standards.
- **Exercising.** Simulating disaster incidents to assess and validate proficiency levels, familiarize personnel with their roles and responsibilities in response and recovery and improve coordination and communication among responding agencies.
- **Evaluating & improving.** Comparing results of exercises against capability objectives, identifying deficits, and instituting corrective action plans.



Disaster preparedness starts with collecting and analyzing information and encompasses creation of organizational structures, acquiring necessary equipment, appropriate training, testing plans and adjusting them as required. (FEMA photo)



## The Stages of Response

Response encompasses those stages of the disaster life cycle that focus first on protecting lives and property and then making disaster survivors safe, sanitary, and secure.

- 1. Warning/Anticipation** covers the time from the first indicators that disaster is going to occur through the time it happens or the danger passes and the warning is lifted. News media and government emergency management agencies communicate with the public about the impending disasters. First responders – police and fire departments – gear up to deploy personnel. Disaster relief organizations, including religious groups, are on alert and preparing to respond if necessary.



During disaster impact, local government assumes primary responsibility for response under guidelines of an Emergency Operations Plan. (FEMA photo)

- 2. Impact/Emergency/Rescue** begins when a disaster physically strikes. In an anticipated event such as a hurricane or slow flooding, communities are already braced. In a sudden, unanticipated disaster, local first responders mobilize according to the protocols established in preparedness.

Local government assumes primary responsibility for the response under guidelines of an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Fire, police, rescue squads, and hospital emergency rooms move quickly into action. First responders also include family, friends, and neighbors who provide first aid and shelter and call for needed help. The Red Cross or The Salvation Army opens shelters to house and feed survivors. In many localities in the U.S., Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) with civilian residents specially-trained in first aid, light search and rescue, and crisis intervention assist fire and police in disaster-affected neighborhoods to reduce their work load.

If disaster needs outstrip its resources and capacities, local government may request help from neighboring jurisdictions with which it has mutual aid and assistance agreements and/or from the state that, in turn, responds under guidelines of its own EOP.

- 3. Aftermath/Assessment** begins once the emergency is immediately past. At this time, a spirit of community often prevails among survivors. Strangers become co-workers in continuing rescue efforts. Unsolicited volunteers, eager to help, may begin to arrive at the disaster scene.

Assessments of property damage and loss are initiated. In anticipation of heavy damage, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – the Department of

Homeland Security agency which coordinates Federal response to disasters – may have pre-deployed teams to conduct a preliminary damage assessment (PDA) which the Governor of the state can use as a basis for requesting a Federal disaster declaration by the President.



In the relief/remedy stage following a disaster, the faith community along with other care-givers helps create safe, sanitary and secure conditions for survivors. (Disaster News Network photo)

Unless there are massive power outages, agencies begin to communicate with one another and situation reports are issued. Initial meetings may be called to share information about needs and assistance. If your congregation or judicatory intends to participate in response to the disaster in a meaningful way, this is the time to begin connecting with other human services organizations and emergency management officials through state or local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs) and/or Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs). These groups are consortiums of independently operating organizations that communicate, coordinate, cooperate, and collaborate towards minimizing duplication of services and maximizing assistance to survivors.

**4. Relief/Remedy.** In this stage of the disaster life cycle, the American Red Cross, The Salvation Army, and other care-giving agencies create safe, sanitary, and secure conditions for disaster survivors by providing food, shelter, medical assistance, and bulk distribution of personal care items.

While state and local officials are responsible for rescue, the main actors in the relief stage are local people caring for each other. Money and materials (often unwanted and unneeded) are donated to the most visible relief agencies. People motivated by greed may exploit others -- looting homes and businesses, raising prices on basic goods, offering bogus repair contracts.

Based on the preliminary disaster assessment and other information about the disaster impact, the governor of the state may request through the regional FEMA office that the President of the United States issue a declaration under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. When the President issues a declaration, state and local governments, certain non-profit organizations, and individuals in affected areas are eligible to receive financial and other assistance for response, recovery, and mitigation effort.

With or without a disaster declaration by the President, a variety of Federal agencies may still respond to a disaster depending on the specific needs: The Department of Transportation, the National Communications System, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Forest Service, General Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Defense, Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Energy, Department of Commerce/ National Weather Service, Department of Education, Department of Housing and Urban

Development, Department of Justice, Civil Air Patrol, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Tennessee Valley Authority.

## The Stages of Recovery

In disaster recovery, the focus shifts from protecting property, saving lives, and emergency care to restoring critical infrastructure and assisting individuals and households, and businesses in returning to self-sufficiency.

- 1. Short-term recovery** is immediate and overlaps with response activities. In this stage of the disaster life cycle, people start returning to normal living patterns as essential services are restored, transportation routes are reestablished, temporary repairs are made on homes and businesses, and assistance programs are launched. People who have been evacuated from homes have the opportunity to see them again, assimilate damages and losses, and move from shelters to more comfortable temporary housing. At Disaster Assistance Centers (DACs), survivors can learn about programs of multiple agencies and apply for aid.



During the short-term recovery stage following a disaster, survivors learn about assistance programs of varied agencies and apply for aid at Disaster Assistance Centers. (FEMA photo)

If the President declares the disaster-affected area eligible for federal assistance, FEMA activates a variety of assistance programs by calling up varied federal agency-managed Emergency Response Functions (ESFs) such as the Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Service functions to address disaster needs. In partnership with the state, it establishes a Joint Field Office (JFO) where Federal and state ESFs are administered.

Federal assistance encompasses grants and loans to individuals for housing and other needs resulting from disaster losses, technical assistance for human services, infrastructure support (or public assistance) for some private and non-profit entities for emergency services as well as to government to repair or replace damaged public facilities, and hazard mitigation funding for measures that will reduce future disaster losses to public and private property.

- 2. Long-term recovery.** This stage of the disaster life cycle may include complete redevelopment of damaged areas with long-term reconstruction projects and rebuilding of infrastructure. At the same time, people continue to rebuild their lives, gradually adjusting to losses and changes often with the help of mental health and spiritual care workers.

In the process, needs and goals of families and communities may be reassessed. Because resources become more limited even as unmet needs surface, local and regional organizations begin working together formally and informally. Non-profit agencies, community organizations, churches of different denominations, and ministerial alliances try to organize collaborative response. Church-based disaster response agencies may advocate for social justice and development concerns of vulnerable populations.

**Information & Resources:** The Federal Emergency Management Agency Independent Study Program ([www.training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp](http://www.training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp)) offers a variety of courses on basic emergency management and the U.S. response system such as *Principles of Emergency Management*, *The Role of Voluntary Agencies in Emergency Management*, *Disaster Basics*, *National Incident Command Systems (NIMS): An Introduction*, *National Response Framework: An Introduction*.



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Major reconstruction projects during long-term recovery are part of redevelopment in damaged areas. (Mennonite Disaster Service photo)

**NATIONAL VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS  
ACTIVE IN DISASTER (NVOAD)**

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) and its state and local chapters foster communication, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination among responding agencies that enhances the recovery process. Its member organizations are also committed to preparedness as the first step in response. NVOAD started after Hurricane Camille in 1969 when organizations providing resources and services to survivors and affected communities shared their mutual concern about frequent duplication of services. In 1970, representatives from these voluntary organizations started meeting on a regular basis. There are now 52 state and territorial VOADs and a growing number of community VOADs (or COADS). NVOAD organizations:

Adventist Community Services	National Association of Jewish Chaplains
American Baptist Men/USA	National Emergency Response Teams (NERT)
American Radio Relay League	National Organization for Victim Assistance
American Red Cross	Nazarene Disaster Response
AMURT (Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team)	Noah's Wish
Billy Graham Rapid Response Team	Operation Blessing
Brethren Disaster Ministries	Points of Light Institute and the Hands On Network
Catholic Charities USA	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
Church World Service	REACT International, Inc.
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee	The Salvation Army
Church World Service	Samaritan's Purse
Churches of Scientology Disaster Response	Save the Children
City Team Ministries	Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Convoy of Hope Episcopal Relief and Development	Southern Baptist Convention – North American Mission Board
Feeding America    Feed the Children	Taiwan Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation USA
Habitat for Humanity International	United Church of Christ –Wider Church Ministries
Hope Coalition America	United Jewish Communities
The Humane Society of the United States	United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)
International Critical Incident Stress Foundation	United Way of America
International Relief and Development	World Hope International
International Relief Friendship Foundation	World Vision
Latter-day Saint Charities	
Lutheran Disaster Response	
Mennonite Disaster Service	
Mercy Medical Airlift	

### III. The Faith Community & Disaster Ministry

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The religious community plays a vital and unique role in meeting physical and spiritual needs in disaster-affected communities with particular focus on people with unmet needs who often fall through the cracks of assistance programs offered by government and other social service agencies.



The faith community plays a special role in long-term recovery, focusing energy and resources on helping survivors rebuild their lives spiritually and physically. People of faith offer hope through spiritual care and hammer the nails in rebuilding and repairing homes. (Mennonite Disaster Service photo)

Most people who led normal, healthy lives before the disaster can recover with temporary assistance. Others, however, may not be able to recover as quickly. Although the federal Individual and Households Program (IHP) provides much needed assistance, some people will not receive enough aid through insurance or other programs for home repairs or rebuilding after their disaster losses. When personal resources or insurance are not adequate, recovery is impaired. The religious community is there to help.

The religious community also has a special role to fulfill as people rebuild their lives emotionally and spiritually after a disaster. People of faith can offer spiritual support to survivors and caregivers in the rescue stage following a disaster at staging and evacuation areas. When other responders are providing relief assistance – medical services, food, and temporary shelter, the faith community can offer support to survivors, professional caregivers, and volunteers as it maintains established traditions of spiritual care and religious observances.

As disaster recovery continues, still other needs emerge.

When other assisting organizations complete their disaster response missions, local faith-based organizations assume more responsibility and work with other community-based groups in ongoing recovery.

In long-term recovery, the religious community plays its biggest role. It assists in cleanup, repair, and rebuilding, coordinates volunteers, and advocates for those who need physical help while continuing to offer spiritual and pastoral care to support high levels of hope and effective work among survivors and caregivers who are tired and may be burning out or becoming discouraged.

#### **Biblical Themes**

Jesus as the compassionate servant, comforter, and advocate and his focus on helping “the least of these” provide a framework for understanding the religious community’s work in disaster. It is an incarnational role -- being the bodily presence of

God, as in Jesus Christ -- in the midst of the “hell” a disaster produces -- particularly for those who are most vulnerable to the effects of the disaster. Bringing hope and order to the chaos.



The religious community assists in cleanup, repair, and rebuilding. It coordinates volunteers and advocates for those who cannot speak for themselves. (CWS staff photo)

As a compassionate servant, the religious community helps meet relief needs, stepping in to assist when other public and private responders leave people out of the process.

As a comforter, the religious community renews people and their communities after a disaster by providing opportunities and places for disaster survivors to find fellowship and friendship and share their stories. Counseling/caring -- listening to survivors, walking through grief and guilt with them so they can move toward acceptance of their present condition, and providing hope so they can set goals

for the future and transcend the disaster experience -- is an important part of the religious community’s role as comforter.

As an advocate, the religious community focuses on justice in responding to disasters. It engages in family and household advocacy (helping people access the systems that offer aid to which they are entitled) and public policy advocacy (working for laws and regulations that protect men, women, and children).

In being the presence of God, the religious community reaffirms values and beliefs and offers redemption, renewal, new life and most importantly, hope -- the one thing no other disaster responder can bring to people.

## How Church World Service Helps

Church World Service (CWS) helps the faith community play its unique role in disaster preparedness, mitigation, and response as a coordinating organization for its denominational members in the U.S.

The CWS Emergency Response Program assists disaster-affected persons through spiritual and physical support that empower local/regional/state religious leadership who want to work together toward building or restoring community. Although the CWS disaster response commitment comes from the imperative of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, its program invites and welcomes all religious groups to work together in meeting humanitarian needs.



Following a disaster, faith-based responders offer hope as the presence of God – the one thing no other responder can bring to survivors. (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance photo)

CWS is a registered non-governmental organization (NGO) with the U.S. Government and a member of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) and Interaction -- an international coordinating agency. In addition to worldwide disaster response, CWS works with partner organizations in development projects around the world, assists immigrants and refugees, conducts public education on global poverty and social-economic development issues, and raises funds to assist the poor and vulnerable through its CROP Walks for Hunger. Your denomination/communion and affiliated agencies support CWS and look to it to provide leadership in the ecumenical or interfaith communities on their behalf.



Church World Service  
Emergency Response  
Specialists train and  
mentor long-term  
recovery leaders and  
work with local groups  
on special projects.  
(CWS staff photo)

Six Church World Service member and related denominations also actively deploy staff and volunteers following disasters in the U.S. to do specialized work: **Church of Brethren** (rebuilding/repairing homes, disaster child care), **Christian Reformed World Relief**

**Committee** (rebuilding/repair homes, needs assessments, long-term recovery organization capacity building), **Lutheran Disaster Response** (rebuilding/repairing homes, case management), **Mennonite Disaster Service** (rebuilding/repairing homes), **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** (volunteer housing and hospitality), **United Methodist Committee on Relief** (rebuilding/repairing homes, case management).

## **CWS Emergency Response Committee**

National denominations and church-related agencies work together through the CWS Emergency Response Executive Committee and related Domestic and International roundtables. The Executive Committee includes representatives of CWS member denominations who participate in discussions about policy. The committee's two Roundtables include representatives of CWS member and non-member denominations who look at disaster response field issues and how to cooperate in their work.

## **CWS Emergency Response Office**

The Church World Service Emergency Response staff monitors disasters throughout the U.S. and the world, ships material resources to disaster sites, and works with local partners who respond. Through its response in partnership with new or existing faith-based organizations at disaster sites, CWS seeks to empower the stricken community to not only to recover but to prepare for future disasters and mitigate their impact.

## **CWS Emergency Response Specialists (ERSs)**

Professional Emergency Response Specialists (ERSs) are the critical, central operational component of the CWS domestic disaster response program. They encourage and facilitate cooperative work by people of faith in disaster response, recovery preparedness, and mitigation. ERSs assess humanitarian needs following disasters and how CWS can



assist through material resource shipments, training and mentoring of local long-term recovery leaders, and working with care-giving agencies in developing projects geared to vulnerable populations. They support and strengthen state and community inter-religious organizations, facilitate cooperative activity of faith groups in disaster preparedness/mitigation/response/recovery and build relationships with FEMA, the American Red Cross, other response agencies, and VOADs. They are also sources of public information on the role of the faith community in disaster response and recovery.



CWS Emergency Response Specialists train and mentor local long-term recovery leaders and work with care-giving agencies in developing special projects. (Photo by Mack Hackworth)

## IV. Mitigation: Reducing Your Community's Vulnerability

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People and communities have come to rely on help after a disaster rather than learning about risks and taking feasible prevention and mitigation steps. Prevention and mitigation measures may seem costly at first glance. But emergency managers, increasingly, understand mitigation as the foundation of emergency management – for people continue to live in harm's way without mitigation, which reduces vulnerability of communities to hazards.

Mitigation starts with:

- **Hazard analysis** to identify natural or technological threats to a community
- **Vulnerability analysis** to define the human and economic losses that can occur and special populations likely to be affected by disasters



Mitigation tools include codes that require structures to be engineered to resist hurricane winds and earthquakes. (FEMA photo)

Mitigation tools include:

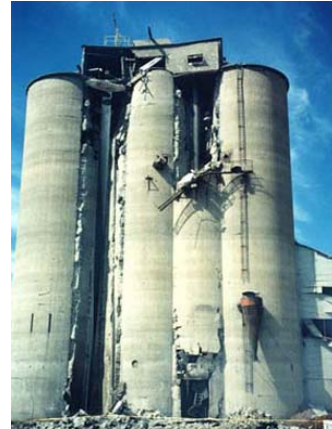
- Laws and ordinances related to zoning, building, public health, fire safety, hazardous material handling, inspections, traffic control
- Community and economic development, including job-creation and housing programs
- Structural measures -- levees, elevations for homes, etc.
- Financial incentives that promote health and safety and disincentives that discourage the creation of hazardous conditions
- Public information and education programs that motivate citizen action
- Land use planning
- Monitoring and inspecting potentially hazardous facilities
- Insurance coverage

### What Congregations Can Do

Congregations can encourage their communities to ask these important questions:

- Are existing disaster prevention and mitigation programs adequate?

- Do people know whether they are vulnerable to particular hazards?
- Are natural or technology-caused hazards considered when plans are made for new structures in the community – especially essential facilities such as hospitals and utilities?
- What kind of building codes does the community have? Have the codes been updated in recent years? How strictly are they enforced? Do people who purchase new properties know about the codes?



Does your community have a grain elevator – like this one that exploded? Learn about the hazards around you as a first step in reducing vulnerability to disasters. (FEMA photo)

Monitoring and controlling land use may be one of the most effective ways to prevent a hazard from becoming a disaster – especially as related to housing. Congregations can promote study of laws related to land use, building regulations, and public safety and identify mitigation measures that can be implemented through legislation. Through peer, neighborhood, and community pressure at a personal level, congregations can work to implement and enforce land-use planning, controls, and sound flood plain/seismic zone/beach front management practices. Zoning, building codes, and lending institution policies influence the use of hazardous areas.

In working to reduce vulnerability of communities to disasters, local congregations can also:

- Make sure their buildings are safe by adhering to construction codes, installing smoke detectors and fire alarms, and taking other appropriate measures
- Obtain adequate insurance for their buildings
- Foster understanding among community and service organizations about the human-caused component in disasters and what people can do to lessen the impact of a potential disaster or prevent a disaster altogether
- Encourage members and people in their communities to seek training from the American Red Cross and other agencies in first-aid, fire suppression, light search and rescue, disaster management, crisis intervention, spiritual/emotional care, etc.
- Map existing and potential hazards -- possible sources of explosion, contamination, and radiation -- and identify possible exposure during natural disasters
- Learn the history of natural disasters in their area

- Network towards developing allies among community groups, public officials and civil servants, government agencies, and business concerned about environmental, technological, and public violence
- Participate with others in identifying and advocating for the needs of the most vulnerable and working for a just, disaster-resilient, sustainable community
- Visit local agencies and corporations, express concerns, ask questions about public safety, and plans to respond to emergencies



Reducing vulnerability to disasters starts with planning by people who know their community. (FEMA photo)

- Advocate for adoption and enforcement of structural measures that assure soundly constructed residential housing schools, hospitals, churches and other critical facilities to withstand the effects of hurricanes, earthquakes, and tornadoes
- Capitalize on enhanced awareness following a disaster to advance hazard reduction policies and practices
- Support programs aimed at eliminating hunger and poverty and advancing human rights
- Advocate for the environment -- recycling programs, water and energy conservation, etc.

Congregations should also encourage their members to reduce the vulnerability of their homes. As individual families that are part of the congregation implement mitigation measures to reduce their own vulnerability, they just naturally increase the resilience of the congregation and wider community and their capacity to recover following a disaster. Some basic steps they can take:

- Acquire adequate insurance that reflects current value of property, meets minimum requirements of your denomination or mortgage holder, covers costs of recent additions, high-value items such as stained glass, temporary rental of facilities if damages require relocation and housing for clergy staff if their residences are affected
- Relocate or elevate appliances and electrical service entries on the lowest level of the house
- Retrofit their homes and plan any new construction with disaster mitigation in mind

- Depending on the type of home and geographic location:
  - Create safe rooms for protection from tornadoes
  - Learn about factors that make a home vulnerable to wildfires and take appropriate action to reduce vulnerability
  - Anchor mobile home to protect against high winds
  - Minimize concrete and paving around homes to prevent water run-off from property

In the long-run, action that gets people and property out of harm's way is the best way to protect people and communities from disasters rather than a detailed warning and evacuation system.



Elevating utilities in your basement like this hot water heater can save money that would otherwise have to be expended on replacement

## How Safe Is Your Community? Disaster Risk Assessment

How would you rate the probability of the following events occurring in your community within the next 10 years? Rate them in terms of the following six-point scale by circling the appropriate number:

1 - not probable   2 - low probability   3 - moderate probability  
4 - high probability   5 - nearly certain

Avalanche	1	2	3	4	5
Blizzard or Massive Snowstorm	1	2	3	4	5
Chemical Contamination or Spill	1	2	3	4	5
Dam Break	1	2	3	4	5
Drought	1	2	3	4	5
Earthquake	1	2	3	4	5
Electric Power Blackout	1	2	3	4	5
Epidemic	1	2	3	4	5
Extreme Cold	1	2	3	4	5
Flash Flood	1	2	3	4	5
Forest/Brush/Wild Fire	1	2	3	4	5
Hurricane	1	2	3	4	5
Ice Storm	1	2	3	4	5
Major Frost and Freeze	1	2	3	4	5
Major Gas Main Break	1	2	3	4	5
Meteorite Fall	1	2	3	4	5
Mine Disaster	1	2	3	4	5
Mudslide or Landslide	1	2	3	4	5
Oil Spill	1	2	3	4	5
Pipeline Explosion	1	2	3	4	5
Plane Crash	1	2	3	4	5
Radiation Fallout	1	2	3	4	5
River Flood	1	2	3	4	5
Sand/Dust Storm	1	2	3	4	5
Severe Fog Episode	1	2	3	4	5
Ship Disaster in Harbor/Nearby Coast	1	2	3	4	5
Smog Episode	1	2	3	4	5
Sudden Waste Disposal Problem	1	2	3	4	5
Tornado	1	2	3	4	5
Toxic Landfill	1	2	3	4	5
Train Derailment	1	2	3	4	5
Tsunami or Tidal Wave	1	2	3	4	5
Volcanic Eruption or Fallout	1	2	3	4	5
Water Pollution	1	2	3	4	5
Water Shortage	1	2	3	4	5

## How People Are Vulnerable to Disasters

### General Types of Vulnerability

Gender                      Race/Ethnicity Age  
Education                  Economics                  Language                  Spiritual/religious  
Physical, psychological, and emotional capabilities

### Pre-Disaster

Living in dangerous areas                      Limited resources to prepare  
Unemployment and underemployment                  Lack of information

### Disaster Impact

No way to evacuate                      No way to increase safety  
Loss of community social services                  Loss of livelihood  
Loss of personal and real property                  Fear, hopelessness, frustration, anger

### Relief

Limited access to aid  
Limited protection for life and property  
Loss of neighborhood and community support systems  
Few personal and community resources of all kinds

### Recovery

Fewer resources such as adequate insurance                  Renter or low income homeowner  
Dishonest contractors                  Discrimination in services  
Increased rent and housing costs                  Limited community resources  
Inadequate housing stock in the community  
Embarrassment, pride, and reluctance to request help

### Development

No input to planning and decision-making                  Loss of livelihood  
Loss of place to live                  Loss of community support system

### Mitigation

No input to planning and decision-making  
Lack of political power  
Abuse of legal rights  
No funding for family or livelihood mitigation  
Lack of sophistication within community leadership in order to access available programs

### Preparedness and Education

Preparedness programs may not reach vulnerable people  
Language and cultural differences that prohibit participation in planning  
No input into the implementation of planning and educational efforts

## V. Preparedness: Foundation of Effective Response

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Effective response to disasters depends on prior planning by individuals, families, businesses, religious organizations, voluntary agencies, and all levels of government. Congregations have a two-fold responsibility in disaster preparedness:

1. Planning so the congregation can provide continuing or expanding service to its members and community after disaster strikes
2. Educating member families about the need to prepare for disasters



### Disaster Plans

Disaster plans match emergency response resources to potential disaster needs. Formal plans normally include:

Preparedness starts with knowing what hazards may threaten your congregation and includes considerations related to insurance, protecting facilities and vital records, continuing operations, disaster plans of others, and employing resources when disaster strikes. (FEMA photo)

- A statement of purpose
- Likely emergency situations & assumptions
- Assignment of responsibilities
- A concept of operations

- Details on resource support and administration
- A process for modifying the plan
- Authorities and references
- Definition of terms

Congregational disaster planning revolves around seven considerations:

1. **Hazards** -- what exists today and threats that are on the horizon – natural hazards and sources of explosions, contamination, and radiation.
2. **Facilities protection** -- cutting off utilities, covering windows, taking down or securing exterior fixtures such as signs or lights, securing other loose items around the facility.
3. **Continuing operations** through arrangements to relocate in suitable alternative space where the congregation can resume business quickly if facilities are severely



damaged or destroyed and contingency plans for carrying on the work of the congregation if clergy and staff are affected. The survival of the congregation after the disaster and its potential to serve as a community resource will depend on how quickly it can meet as an organized unit. One of the highest priorities must be resumption of worship.

- 4. Church records protection** -- in an adequately-sized watertight, fireproof safe for those frequently used or in a safety deposit box for documents such as deeds, insurance papers, mortgages. Plans should call for regular back up of any computer records – financial, membership, etc. – and securing them safely.



A congregational disaster preparedness planning team should include people with special concerns about property protection, continuing service, membership care, repairing/rebuilding damaged property, and service to the wider community. (United Church of Christ photo)

- 5. Emergency communications** -- a telephone tree or system to check on member needs; contact information for out-of-town family members, judicatory staff, key support people, agencies.

- 6. Disaster plans** related to congregational work – those of families in the congregation, the community (with description of the congregation’s role in disasters), the wider religious community and organizations in which the congregation may participate in cooperative, collaborative, and coordinated programs.

- 7. Use of resources and facilities** in meeting disaster-related needs of members and the wider community – making facilities available to care-giving agencies or for use as a shelter, volunteer housing or distribution point for material resources; employing special skills of clergy, staff, and members in wider community service; donating material resources for wider community recovery efforts; expanding existing program/services for the wider effort.

Relevant and useful congregational plans are:

- Developed by a congregational team including people with special concern about property protection, continuing service, membership care, repairing/rebuilding damaged property, and service to the wider community.
- Informed by networking with other community groups to locate those who are most vulnerable and learn from them
- Tailored to the specific geographical situations and needs of members and the wider community – especially those who are most vulnerable
- Implemented and tested to the fullest extent possible before disaster strikes



Families should assemble an emergency evacuation kit including water, food, clothing, blankets, first aid kit, radio, flashlight, cash and credit care. (American Red Cross photo)

- Developed to include training for persons responsible for emergency procedures
- Reviewed and updated regularly

Disaster plans of individual families that are part of the congregation, like the mitigation measures they take in their homes, are important to the congregation as a whole and the wider community as well. As members are personally prepared for disasters and can readily recover from impact, it naturally affects the resiliency of the congregation and the wider community. Indeed, families have a responsibility to know what to do in an emergency. Congregations can encourage members to assume this responsibility. Here’s an action plan for family disaster preparedness:

Considerations	Actions
Knowledge & skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Talk to your local emergency management agencies and the American Red Cross chapter about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of disasters likely to affect the community and how to prepare for them</li> <li>• Community warning systems and evacuation plans</li> <li>• Animal care during and after a disaster</li> <li>• Taking responsibility for elderly and disabled persons</li> <li>• Disaster plans at work places, schools, day care centers, or other places where your family spends time</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Be sure you have adequate insurance coverage.</li> <li>3. Conduct a home hazard hunt to identify anything that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire.</li> <li>4. Take a Red Cross first-aid and CPR class.</li> </ol>
Family plan basics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify safe rooms or shelter areas for earthquakes and violent weather.</li> <li>2. Determine the best escape routes out of the safe rooms/shelter areas.</li> <li>3. Pick two places to meet in case you cannot return to your home—one spot just outside your home and another outside the neighborhood.</li> <li>4. Create a contact list.</li> <li>5. Identify an out-of-state relative or friend as a family contact in case family members are in separate locations at the time of disaster. Be sure work and school offices have this number on file.</li> <li>6. Discuss what to do in an evacuation and how to care for your pets.</li> <li>7. Teach young children how and when to dial 911 and what to say.</li> <li>8. Post all emergency numbers by every phone.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Hold fire and emergency evacuation drills periodically (every six months) with all members of the family.</li> <li>10. Quiz family members periodically, (children every six months), on procedures and contact information.</li> <li>11. Store originals of important family documents in a safe deposit box.</li> </ol>
Neighbors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meet with your neighbors to plan how to work together in case of an emergency.</li> <li>2. Know your neighbors' special needs or skills, such as medical, technical.</li> <li>3. Make plans for each other's children in case a parent is not able to get home.</li> </ol>
Supplies	<p>Store supplies – enough to survive in your home for 3 to 14 days -- in a sturdy, pest-free container and place in an accessible location:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water -- one gallon per person per day, in a plastic container. Mark date of storage on container, and replace every three months.</li> <li>• Non-perishable foods, including pet food if applicable. Replace every six months.</li> <li>• Manual can opener</li> <li>• Flashlights with extra batteries</li> <li>• Extra pair of prescription eyeglass, contact lenses (and cleaning solution)</li> <li>• Battery-operated radio or TV and extra batteries</li> <li>• Prescription drugs that are used regularly</li> <li>• First-aid kit</li> <li>• Extra set of car keys</li> <li>• One blanket or sleeping bag per person</li> <li>• Information (style, serial number, etc.) on critical medical devices (respirator, pacemaker, etc.)</li> <li>• Small amount of cash and a credit card</li> <li>• Children's toys, games, books, pictures, etc.</li> <li>• Extra battery for cell phone</li> <li>• Sanitation supplies</li> <li>• Special items for infants/elderly/disabled</li> </ul> <p>One change of clothing and footwear per person</p>
Utilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Locate and show all adults where and how to shut off main utility valves for water, gas, electricity.</li> <li>2. Teach family members how to use fire extinguishers and show them where they are kept. Test extinguishers once a year.</li> </ol>
Home evacuation & Go Kit	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create basic floor plan of home and clearly mark exits to be used for emergencies. Post in each room.</li> <li>2. Create an evacuation box (or Go Kit) to “grab and go”</li> </ol>

	<p>In a waterproof container. Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small amount of cash</li> <li>• Irreplaceable photos/negatives in plastic</li> <li>• Written inventory of valuable possessions (updated annually)</li> <li>• Insurance policy numbers and company phone numbers</li> <li>• Copies of other important family or home documents and contact list</li> <li>• Copies of prescriptions</li> <li>• Copies of important legal documents -- deeds, wills, birth certificates, immunization records, first two pages of prior two years' tax returns, etc. <i>Original documents should be kept in a safe deposit box.</i></li> </ul>
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## Preparing to Work with Special Needs Populations

True disaster readiness requires partnering with persons who are aware of their vulnerabilities in emergency situations.

Planning counters the dread of a natural or human-caused emergency by giving persons more control of their welfare. Developing a disaster plan is a first step. But developing a disaster plan that includes members of the congregation and community who are especially at risk unites practical wisdom and life experience. Network to locate, inform, and learn from those who are the most vulnerable in your neighborhood. Invite them to participate in your disaster planning. Form partnerships and work with their personal support networks.

Persons with disabilities -- whether physical, cognitive, or emotional; whether permanent or temporary -- are among those who are especially vulnerable to disasters if planning and development of support networks has not been completed. A community of faith encompassing a diversity of people will often need to assist disabled persons who are part of its membership following a disaster. In partnership with other groups working on behalf of disabled persons, your congregation can help reduce their vulnerability in disasters by:

- Advocating for TV news not only to post important phone numbers but also to announce them slowly and repeat them frequently for people who cannot read the screen
- Installing both audible alarms and visual alarm systems in your buildings
- Advocating for all news and emergency information to be broadcast in open-caption format

- Educating first responders re: speech, hearing, medication, and equipment sensitivity
- Planning for care of service animals

**Training & Resources:** Visit the Church World Service web site ([www.cwserp.org](http://www.cwserp.org)) for information on disaster preparedness, in general, and including special populations in the disaster planning process. Contact the **National Organization on Disability** ([www.nod.org](http://www.nod.org)), local emergency management agencies, and the **American Red Cross** for resources on family disaster preparedness.



Include members of special populations, such as persons with disabilities, in your disaster planning process. (FEMA photo)

## VI. Response: Your Call to Service

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The religious community normally begins its work in disaster response during the relief/remedy stage after the emphasis on public safety – getting people out of harm’s way – shifts to public welfare, restoration of services, and creating safe, secure, and sanitary conditions.

In the early stages of a disaster, local government agencies – following an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and coordinated by an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in large disasters -- are the major players. They issue public warnings, evacuate people to temporary shelters, and protect life and property. At this time, members of your congregation should focus on themselves and their property and stay out of the way of police, fire, search and rescue, and medical personnel. They should secure themselves and their families, evacuate if necessary, and take other protective measures.



A congregation with a healthy every-day service ministry need look no further than its regular programs to begin helping its members and people in the community. (FEMA photo)

In the immediate aftermath of the disaster, they should be prepared to administer first-aid after checking the situation and calling for assistance. If they are not directly affected by the disaster, they should look for constructive ways to assist. If congregational resources, for example, include people with knowledge and skills to assist in emergencies, call authorities to volunteer and receive site assignments.

In the relief/remedy stage, a congregation with a healthy every-day service ministry need look no further than its regular programs to begin helping its members and people in the wider community. In general, the religious community brings to disasters work with which it is very familiar:

- Spiritual care that renews hope of distressed people
- Coordination of volunteers & management of donations
- Direct assistance to people – particularly those who are most vulnerable and have special needs – in rebuilding their lives
- Among other things, a congregation may want to draw on its know-how and resources to:
  - Offer temporary shelter (in homes and church buildings), food and personal care items

- Organize volunteer work groups to help survivors clean up debris—and later to assist in repair and rebuilding
- Offer housing options and food for out-of-town volunteers
- Contribute money and material goods as requested



Congregations have special knowledge of vulnerable populations, such as children, that they can bring to disaster response in their communities. (Photo by Jay Marcom)

Because members of the religious community have special knowledge of certain vulnerable population groups, understand spiritual-emotional care, and are recognized for leadership, advocacy, and reconciling roles in their communities, they may take on special ministries:

- Offering emotional-spiritual care to children and youth
- Providing assistance to disabled persons
- Meeting needs stemming from technology-caused disasters, public violence, or public health emergencies.

### **Laying Groundwork for Cooperation**

The relief/remedy stage following a disaster is also the time to start building relationships that will be the foundation of a strong recovery process and nurturing community among survivors and otherwise disparate community groups. Disasters reveal the opportunity for cooperative work among groups that formerly may have had little contact and less initiative to cooperate. A response that is respectful and inclusive of all affected persons can create a fertile common ground for further cooperation and collaboration as the long term recovery continues:

- Coordinate your work other congregations and community groups.
- Bring together people to plan celebrations of successes and accomplishments – even small ones – in responding to the disaster. Assemble as diverse a group as possible, providing opportunities for the contributions of every segment of the community to be recognized during the celebration.
- Invite disaster-affected persons to participate in small group discussions, Bible studies and social gatherings. Relationships that begin in a shared experience in a disaster can develop into lifelong friendships and shared dreams for the future.



A congregation can make an important contribution in healing community trauma wounds by assisting other congregations whose buildings were damaged. (CWS staff photo)

## Helping Other Congregations

Your congregation can make an important contribution in building relationships as well and in healing trauma wounds in its community by assisting another worshipping community whose sacred space is affected by disaster.

For a displaced congregation, finding an alternative site for worship and developing a plan for continuing the church's normal program can be daunting. At the same time, a damaged church building – particularly a sanctuary – can have a significant impact on the wider community if it served as center of community life or has great sentimental and symbolic power. As a public building, a damaged church may remind people who pass it by each day not only of the congregation in need, but losses they suffered in the disaster as well.

A congregation can help another church, mosque or synagogue by making space available in its building for worship and other meetings, weddings, funerals and gatherings, and offices.

## Organize - Train - Coordinate

The opportunities to respond are many, but the quality of the congregation's response depends on:

- **Organizing to serve effectively.** Assess first. Determine the needs and who – if anyone – is addressing them. What are the service gaps? Can your congregation help fill them? Before starting their work, the people in your congregation who want to participate in the response need to know what to expect when they begin to serve and understand their capacities and limitations. Congregational staff and member volunteers should meet and discuss the disaster ministry they want to undertake, define their mission, establish desired and realistic outcomes, and delineate the specifics of their activities.
- **Training.** Depending on the disaster ministry the congregation chooses to undertake, its staff and volunteers may need training. Spiritual-emotional care, case work, and child care, for example, require specialized knowledge and skills.
- **Coordination.** Look before you leap into the work. Consult with other people and organizations. Remember the cornerstone of effective emergency management is partnership. Survey members of the congregation and neighborhood residents. Either directly or through your judicatory, connect with state and/or local chapters of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) or Community Organizations



Active in Disaster (COAD) where you can share information with emergency management officials and other human service organizations that will participate in the response. Look for other people and organizations to help you.

## 1. Spiritual Care: Connecting Survivors to Personal Resources

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Spiritual care is, of course, basic to the work of the religious community. Congregations bring people together to grow spiritually through study, worship, praying, singing, and sharing life's greatest moments, including tragedies, with each other. The nature of public trauma and catastrophe, however, thrusts it into a completely different and often unfamiliar dimension of service -- that of disaster spiritual care provider.



Disaster rescue workers, caregivers, and survivors need spiritual helpers to whom they can talk about what they saw, touched, smelled, heard, and felt – people who will listen to anger, hurt, frustration, and pain, and provide support. (CWS staff photo)

Following a disaster, your congregation will face varying needs at different levels within its membership and throughout its wider community. Members of the congregation will require spiritual support as they go through phases and transitions. Disaster rescue workers, caregivers, and survivors need spiritual helpers to whom they can talk about what they saw, touched, smelled, heard, and felt – people who will listen to anger, hurt, frustration, and pain and provide support.

This special ministry of a congregation following a disaster isn't so much about the things it does or the services it provides or any expertise it has. It is about helping disaster-affected people by being with them -- listening, laughing, occasionally crying with them, watching out for the people who are in a particular pinch, eating together, letting them teach you their history, loving their children, running a little interference for them, telling their story, helping to restore community and congregational life. In the final analysis, it is about helping people draw on their own emotional and spiritual resources in the midst of their pain.

### Emotional Care vs. Spiritual Care

Listening to acknowledge and recognize the validity of what someone is trying to share – whether in tears or words -- is basic emotional care. Through listening, you can determine if someone would be better served by mental health, physical, or spiritual services and facilitate access to those services. Spiritual care, however, goes beyond

emotional care. It devotes presence, attention, and respectful assistance to helping people discern:

- What is the meaning in their life now -- in a new environment of destruction and pain
- How they will seek to live out that meaning as recovery unfolds



In disasters, something that should not have happened did happen and survivors may lose the basic trust that enables them to function. (FEMA photo)

The time a survivor had to prepare physically and emotionally for the disaster and the predictability of the losses affect the nature of the spiritual care required. A flood survivor, who knew the river was rising and had only loss of carpeting, will often be able to say, “That’s life.”

A widely destructive human-caused disaster, on the other hand, may severely threaten a person’s basic trust. A disaster at a school yard, an office complex or a residential neighborhood in which family or friends die cannot be reconciled with an attitude of “that’s the way things go.” They are not predictable events. Beyond the personal pain of loss, there is a feeling in the human spirit that these things should not happen. Neither should they be allowed. And if something that shouldn’t happen did happen, what does that say about the other assumptions the survivor has made about life?

We assume the earth will keep spinning; the laws of gravity will remain in force; nothing out of the ordinary should threaten us; things are as they should be. Imagine what life would be like if our basic trust were not operative, if we could not rely on day-to-day continuity. How would you function?

When basic trust is threatened, there is confusion. Added to a wide range of possible feelings, including anger, bereavement, and pain, is an uncertainty about what might happen next. Where basic trust is severely weakened the most significant thing you can do is help the survivor start re-establishing the building blocks of basic trust by offering:



Emotional-spiritual care offers disaster survivors safety and security, an opportunity to ventilate, and reassurance. (FEMA photo)

- Safety and security. A survivor must feel secure before anything else can be done. Let the victim know, “You are out of harm’s way.”
- Opportunity to ventilate and be validated. When a survivor is ready to talk, a listening ear is the most valuable gift you can offer to allow expression of feelings, thoughts and experiences over and over again. This moment cannot be forced before it’s time, but you can invite survivors to share.

• Reassurance and direction through prediction and preparation. A disaster survivor will experience unusual behavior, thoughts and

feelings for a period of time. They will appear unusual even to the survivor. In helping survivors anticipate them, you can promote their recovery. Let survivors know from the beginning, “you can expect unusual feelings during this time.” Let them know those feelings are okay. (Research indicates, however, that you should avoid describing these feelings as “normal.” This can cause a negative reaction on the part of the victim.)

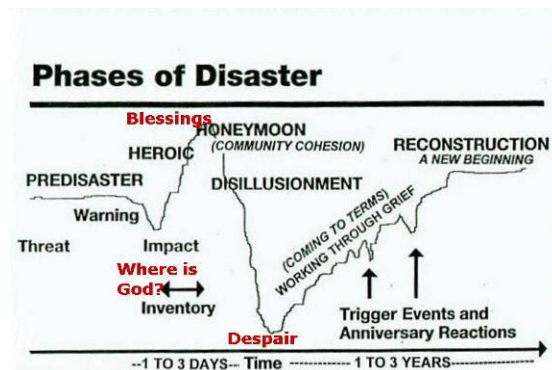
As the disaster life cycle progresses from early warning through long-term recovery, people who were affected by the trauma will experience fluctuating emotions. The initial traumatic event triggers fear, a fight or flight response, shock, and relief. During the rescue stage, people may even experience “highs” from working together and meeting early needs. Inevitably, disillusionment follows as the reality of disaster losses and the prospect of a long recovery process sinks in. People will have to work through their grief. Anniversaries and other reminders of the disaster may trigger post-traumatic stress reactions. Finally, people will begin to accept what happened and adjust to the new situation.

### Care Guidelines

Throughout the process, people will need care. Encourage survivors. Your prayers and personal caring are important. Leave serious emotional and stress problems to trained clergy and mental health workers. Form survivor support groups. Support appropriate chaplaincy at the scene, the morgue, and with rescue workers.

Some useful guidelines:

- Listen with an attentive ear. Guide the conversation when survivors don't seem to know what to talk about by asking: “What did you see?” and “How did you feel?” Relax and let them wander verbally.
- Allow survivors to take the lead in conversations. Do not interrupt. Ask questions only when they seem to want to talk. Their feelings are so intense they may not know where to begin. Reflect what you are hearing in natural pauses. Keep a quiet, composed attitude. When they grow silent, ask a few open-ended questions or make supportive statements. (Do not tell them you know how they feel. You do not.) If they do not respond much, sit with them quietly until they are ready to speak again. Sometimes simply knowing someone is there is enough.
- Be supportive. You may hear things that shock you. Survivors may have feelings that cause them to say things that are violent in nature. They may curse or describe a desire to hurt someone. Do not confront, judge, or correct at this time. Say: “You



As the disaster life cycle progresses from early warning through long-term recovery, people affected by trauma will experience fluctuating emotions.

sound really angry/upset/hurt. I think I would be too.” Let survivors know you are on their side.

- Stay theologically neutral. Survivors may try to explain things in ways that contradict your theology. Although you may be used to discussing theology with people and attempting to teach them your doctrine, do not preach at this time. Rather, let survivors preach to you. Affirm them: “That’s a comforting thought.”
- Avoid trying to answer questions like “how could God let something like this happen?” Attempts to explain God’s will or the human condition could anger or confuse them rather than help. Say: “I don’t know. But what I do know is that God is with us now.” Use prayer and scripture guardedly.
- Unless you are sure of a disaster survivor’s religious positions on certain issues, stay neutral. For instance, “Father” is a Judeo-Christian image of God. And in this day, even many Christians find it a troubling image. However meaningful it may be to you, unless you know it is meaningful to them as well, avoid using it. Wait for survivors to ask for a scripture reading. Ask if they have a particular passage in mind. If they do not have a preference, offer one which is affirming.
- Serve. Practice hospitality. Attend not only to survivors’ words, but to their needs. Offer to get them a drink. Ask if they’ve eaten recently and if they would care to go get some food with you if they have not. Ask if they are comfortable. Avoid offering what you cannot deliver.
- Avoid “fixing” things. While you can serve disaster survivors, you cannot fix things for them. You can only assist them. You may not be able to assess damage and clean their house, but you can offer to go to the house with them. You cannot make funeral arrangements, but you can help them find the phone book and sit with them while they make the call. You cannot promise their child will be found alive, but you can stay with them while they wait for news.
- Pray. Depending on the situation, this may be only a silent prayer which you offer internally as you sit with the affected persons, as you leave them, or even sometime later in the day. Prayer should never be forced. When the survivor is calm, you may say something like, “I’ll keep you in my prayers.” If they respond positively in some way, such as thanking you, ask if they would like you to pray with them now. Having spoken with them and listened to their concerns, you will know what is on their heart and mind. Pray only for those needs and things which will increase their comfort and healing. For example, if they have spoken of anxiety, pray for God’s presence and comfort for them in these anxious moments. On the



Prayer should never be forced. Pray only for those needs and things that will increase comfort and healing of the survivor. (FEMA photo)

other hand, if they have expressed anger at emergency workers, however you personally feel about their anger is, avoid praying for the emergency workers.

- Focus on the survivor's needs, not your needs. In a sense, you will be a disaster survivor, as well. You will find that you have your own needs. You should have an opportunity to deal with them at a later time. Continually gauge your ministry by asking yourself "whose needs am I dealing with?" This is the best way to assure you are staying focused on the survivor and not yourself.

Volunteer work teams and others who support survivors should be sensitive to the need of survivors to tell their stories and be prepared to help them to do so. Those assisting people on their damaged properties should also understand the importance of respecting the feelings survivors in handling or discarding what may have been once meaningful possessions but seem to be only debris following the disaster. Ongoing care for survivors is best provided by trained local caregivers and specialized community support agencies. Faith community leaders with training in traumatic stress management may be able to provide group experiences for survivors.

**Information & Resources.** Many faith organizations offer training in spiritual care for survivors. *Light Our Way*, published by National Voluntary Organizations in Disaster (NVOAD), is a useful and accessible guide on spiritual care in the aftermath of disaster. This manual intended for use by all caregivers, including lay persons who are fire service personnel or work in human services, is available online at [www.novad.org](http://www.novad.org).

## Caring for Children & Youth

Disaster child care -- specialized spiritual-emotional care that recognizes children and youth respond differently than adults to traumatic events -- has been an important ministry of the religious community.

Children and youth are especially vulnerable to trauma, but do not have the ability to fully express their feelings, needs, and fears. They need the assistance of trained adults who understand what they feel, how they act, and what they need:

- Pre-school/kindergarten children (ages 1-5) lack the verbal and conceptual skills necessary to cope effectively with sudden stress.
- Children in the 6-11 age group may be particularly affected by loss of prized objects or pets and become more withdrawn, on one hand, and/or more aggressive as well.
- Pre-adolescents (ages 12-13) will express anxiety through aggression, rebellion, and attention-seeking behavior. They need acceptance from their friends and need to understand that their feelings and fears are normal.



Disaster child care is specialized spiritual-emotional care that recognizes children and youth respond differently than adults to traumatic events.

- Fearing their feelings or reactions are unusual or unacceptable, adolescents (ages 14 – 18) may withdraw, exhibit symptoms of depression, and even have psychosomatic reactions. They may resent disruption of social activities and be frustrated by their inability to assume full adult responsibilities in community disaster recovery efforts.

Congregations, which want to work with children and youth following disasters, should be aware of potential legal issues and should run background checks on key staff members to make sure they have been properly trained.

**Information & Resources.** Church of Brethren (COB) and Lutheran Social Services (LSS), which are related to Church World Service, have developed two recognized and acclaimed models of disaster child care and can work with congregations to make it part of their ministries:



(Brethren Disaster Ministries photo)

- **COB’s Children’s Disaster Services (CDS)** sets up child care centers in shelters and disaster assistance centers where trained volunteers offer traumatized children a calm, safe and reassuring presence in the midst of the chaos created by natural or human caused disaster. CDS also works with parents, community agencies, and schools to help them understand and meet the special needs of children during or after a disaster.
- **LSS’s Camp Noah** is a weeklong, values-based day camp for children in kindergarten thru grade 6 who have experienced disaster. In a safe and supportive venue, children can talk about their disaster and recovery experiences with loving, caring adults and youth volunteers.

## 2. Managing Volunteers & Donations

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Managing volunteers and donations is fundamental to the everyday work of congregations and is an important contribution they can make in disaster ministry.

### Volunteers

The nature and quality of the disaster work taken on by faith groups, in the final analysis, depends on volunteers. You can draw on volunteers for all kinds of tasks: family advocacy, heavy lifting, washing dishes, filling out forms, telephoning, listening, cooking, typing, keeping lists, sitting and talking, writing to people, leading work groups, legal assistance, plumbing, roofing, electrical repairs, carpentry, driving, warehousing,

bookkeeping, computer work, babysitting, advertising, and public relations, child care. . . The list is endless.

Five keys to effective management of volunteers:

- **Job descriptions.** They do not need to be highly detailed, but should provide a brief description of tasks along with the optimum and minimum amounts of time needed to accomplish them.



(Mennonite Disaster Service photo)

- **Match volunteer qualifications and background to job needs** and the people with whom they will work. For example, develop a list of volunteer needs of service providers involved in the interfaith community, including job descriptions, skills and tools needed, and location. Keep this needs list current.
- **Clearly state policies** for volunteers, work groups, and service providers who will use the volunteers. Volunteers need information, protection, a sense of order, and a clear sense of purpose if they are to be effective in disaster recovery. They must clearly understand who has responsibilities for housing, meals, transportation, and insurance coverage.
- **Training and orientation.** Volunteer builders, family advocates, and spiritual caregivers will need special training. Orient them to (1) the history of the area and its population and (2) the disaster and its effects on survivors.
- **Work commitments.** Remind volunteers they have to do jobs that need to be done, not necessarily the jobs they want to do. Ask volunteers to make a covenant to work and live effectively with you and the community. Let volunteers know that the most important thing they do may be bringing hope and energy through their presence -- even if they never lay a brick!

An effective volunteer re-building program requires knowledgeable and skilled coordination of work sites, hospitality, and accommodations:

**1. Work Site Management.** If building and repair is part of the response, a coordinator/manager must oversee work sites, assuming multiple roles as a construction supervisor, building/repair teacher, and sometimes referee between homeowners and volunteers. Tasks of worksite and construction management may include:

- Arranging for equipment & tools
- Providing on-site building supplies
- Transportation to haul equipment & supplies

- Communication equipment (cellular phones, pagers)
- Scheduling houses for repair and rebuilding within the context of the survivor's recovery plan and case management recommendations
- Securing liability waivers from homeowners and volunteers
- Assessing skill needs and planning daily work schedules

Inspecting work and assuring repairs and construction conform to local building codes

**2. Hospitality.** Both the disaster-affected community and volunteers benefit from well-organized arrival and departure of work groups. Hospitality functions include:

- Assistance in resolving attitudinal problems -- withdrawal, snubbing, hostility
- Orientation and debriefing
- Special events involving work teams in community life
- Providing ready information on emergency medical care and other services
- Connecting work teams with community groups that want to interact with them
- Proper appreciation and recognition

**3. Accommodations.** Productive volunteers who stay overnight require decent housing, kitchen facilities, bathrooms/showers, laundry facilities. In coordinating accommodations, you need to develop in-depth knowledge of volunteer housing available in your community.

## Donations

Disaster survivors need essential items to reclaim their homes and lives. Your congregation can help assure this assistance by seeking donations that are truly needed. Too often, disaster-affected communities receive a flood of unusable donations such as used clothing. The result is a second disaster!

Cash is always preferred over material donations. Cash can purchase goods and services for survivors in their own community or country,

often boosting a local economy that has been hurt by the disaster. Response organizations at the disaster site can acquire exactly what they need right away based on assessments. Finally, cash can purchase items difficult to obtain or ship.

Be specific when requesting donations. Spread the word about appropriate donations via your church bulletin or newsletter and bulletin boards. Display items on a table, through a slide show, or in photos.



Congregations can assemble Church World Service Kits and Emergency Clean-up Buckets, donate the cash value of kits or buckets, and contribute cash to the Blankets+ Program to respond to the kinds of material donations requests often received following disasters. (CWS staff photo)



## CWS Kits & Emergency Clean-up Buckets

Congregations can assemble Church World Service Kits and Emergency Clean-up Buckets, donate the cash value of the Kits or Buckets, and contribute cash to the CWS Blankets+ Program to respond to the kinds of material donations requests often received following disasters.

Church World Service Kits are small packages of supplies related to educational, personal hygiene, clean-up, and infant care needs.

**Baby Kits** help young mothers care for their newborn babies. To assemble you will need:

- Six cloth diapers
- Two T-shirts or undershirts (no onesies)
- Two washcloths
- Two gowns or sleepers
- Two diaper pins
- One sweater or sweatshirt
- Two receiving blankets (one can be a hand-knitted or crocheted baby blanket)



(CWS staff photo)

All items should be new. Wrap inside one of the receiving blankets and secure with both diaper pins. Value: \$39. Processing/shipping cost: \$2 per kit

**Emergency Clean-up Buckets** enable people to begin the overwhelming job of cleaning up after a flood, hurricane, tornado, or other disaster in the United States. To assemble you will need:

- One five-gallon bucket with re-sealable lid
- Five scouring pads
- Seven sponges, assorted sizes
- One scrub brush
- Eighteen cleaning towels (reusable, like Easy Wipes®)
- One 50-78 oz. box dry laundry detergent
- One 12 oz. bottle of liquid concentrated household cleaner (like Lysol®)
- One 25 oz. bottle liquid disinfectant dish soap (like Dawn®)
- Fifty clothespins
- Clothesline, two 50 ft. or one 100 ft.
- Five dust masks
- Two pairs latex gloves (like Playtex®)
- One pair work gloves

- 24-bag roll of heavy-duty trash bags (33-45 gallon)
- One 6-14 oz. bottle of insect repellent (drops or lotion, not aerosol)

Purchase all liquids in plastic bottles. Send only new, unopened materials. Put all items in the plastic bucket, making sure they are packed securely to avoid damage during shipment, and seal lid with packing tape. Place each Bucket in a separate box. Value: \$50. Processing/shipping cost: \$3 per bucket

**Hygiene Kits** can mean the difference between sickness and health for struggling families. To assemble you will need:

- One hand towel measuring approximately 16" x 28" (no fingertip or bath towels)
- One washcloth
- One wide-tooth comb
- One nail clipper (no metal files or emery boards)
- One bar of soap (bath size in wrapper)
- One toothbrush (in original packaging)
- Six Band-Aids®

Do not add toothpaste to the Hygiene Kit. Toothpaste that has an extended expiration date will be added to Hygiene Kit shipments just prior to shipment. Seal all items in a one-gallon plastic bag with a zipper closure. Value: \$11. Processing/shipping cost: \$2 per kit.



(CWS staff photo)

**School Kits** give children in impoverished schools, refugee camps, or other difficult settings some of the basic tools for learning. To assemble you will need:

- One pair of blunt scissors (rounded tip)
- Three 70-count spiral or tape-bound pads of 8" x 10-1/2" ruled paper, for total of 200-210 sheets of ruled paper. (Please do not provide loose-leaf or filler paper.)
- One 30-centimeter ruler (12")
- One hand-held pencil sharpener
- One large eraser

- Six new pencils with erasers
- One box of 24 crayons (only 24)
- One 12" x 14" to 14" x 16" finished size cotton cloth bag with cloth handles

Pack all items inside the cloth bag. Value: \$13. Processing/shipping cost: \$2 per kit.

Pack CWS Kits in boxes with only one type of kit in each box. Complete a *kit coupon* (<http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/DocServer/KitCoupon.pdf?docID=362>), enclose a copy in the top of each box before sealing. Clearly indicate the kit type on outside of the box. Secure boxes with packing tape. Provide a return address. Ship kits prepaid to: **Church World Service, Brethren Service Center Annex, 601 Main Street/P.O. Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776-0188**. For individuals, churches, and groups west of the Mississippi River, CWS Kits may also be **Church World Service, Ferncliff Disaster Assistance Center, 1720 Ferncliff Road, Little Rock, AR 72223**.

### 3. Direct Assistance to Survivors

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Congregations, of course, stand ready to serve all persons affected by disaster regardless of race, national origin, creed, color, gender, or sexual orientation. However, the faith community does think in terms of two general groups of people in responding to disasters:

- Those who can recover from the disaster through their own resources and established programs
- Those who can't recover without additional assistance beyond established programs



Age and gender are two factors that affect the vulnerability of people to disasters. The religious community focuses its assistance on survivors who cannot recover without additional help beyond what established programs provide. (FEMA photo)

In its response to disaster, congregations will naturally focus on the second group. The faith community is especially aware of and sensitive to special needs of persons who are particularly vulnerable to the impact of disaster. In fact, it has a particular calling to seek out, assist, and advocate on their behalf.

#### Who Are Vulnerable?

Although there is a danger in stereotyping people, members of certain population groups may be particularly vulnerable in disasters. Minority and elderly families, for example, may require more aid. Elderly persons may have a longer psychological and financial recovery time. Low-income persons, the elderly, and young, in general, have the least resilience in bringing personal resources to bear on disaster losses. Minority families may be more dependent on kinship networks.

Identifying vulnerable groups provides a basis for planning and preparing program assistance that will give everyone affected by a disaster an equal chance for their own personal best recovery. Certainly not all persons in these groups will be vulnerable, but these factors are indicative:

- Economic -- income level, residence location, marketable skills
- Gender -- women especially
- Sexual orientation
- Age -- children and elderly
- Cultural -- ethnic, rural, historic, religion
- Social -- isolated, cultic, or inordinately suspicious



Your congregation can help its members and community residents apply for the assistance to which they are entitled from government and other care-giving agencies. (FEMA photo)

- Education and Literacy -- illiterate, low educational levels, non-English speaking
- Any condition or health problem that limits participation in work, school, or other daily activities -- hearing, sight, physical, speech, psychiatric disabilities; emotional and cognitive limitations; chemical hypersensitivity. Many of these and other medical situations (such as surgery) may render a person temporarily or permanently disabled or restricted. Often, the condition may not be obvious to a casual observer. For example, a person with diabetes may be as disabled, if not more so, than someone who is wheelchair-bound.

## How To Assist

The way you help survivors following a disaster is almost as important as what you do. Many well intended efforts start as a generous gesture of support for the community and end up mired in conflict. Four starting points in designing a disaster assistance program:

- **Do not provide the same assistance to all survivors.** This may seem fair because everyone gets the same support. But disaster survivors are not equally impacted. Nor do they have equal access to resources. At the same time, you will not have sufficient funds to help everyone.
- **Avoid distributing cash or checks directly to survivors.** You don't want to provide assistance that looks like an entitlement program which draws long lines of people waiting to receive their benefits as word about it spreads. Use funds designated for direct service to survivors to purchase goods or services that you, in turn, give to survivors in-kind.
- **Wait for the right time to assist.** Assist only survivors who still have disaster needs after exhausting their personal resources, identifying all other sources of assistance, and receiving commitments from other helping agencies to provide it.
- **Assist without regard to a person's faith, religious affiliation or membership in any group.** This can be difficult for some congregations that believe they need to

focus on their own members before helping others. It is a natural impulse to first help those you know or with whom you have some relationship. Favoring one group over another because of their affiliation, however, creates hard feelings that have a life far beyond disaster response and recovery. If you set up assistance programs with affiliation as a part of their criteria, do so with discretion.

Within this context, the faith community provides direct assistance in disasters through informal and formal pastoral care that empowers survivors to move beyond their current condition towards realizing the best possible recovery.

Congregations can offer a ministry of accompaniment that involves little or no paperwork, record-keeping, or formal counseling:

- Assisting survivors in salvaging personal property
- Referring survivors to resources – American Red Cross, The Salvation Army, Federal Emergency Management Agency, other care-giving agencies
- Encouraging members of the congregation and community residents affected by the disaster to apply for the assistance to which they are entitled from government and other care-giving agencies. This may include helping them through the application process, assisting them in completing forms, and advocating on their behalf.



Assist without regard to a person's faith, religious affiliation, or membership in any group. Favoring one group over another creates hard feelings that have a life far beyond response and recovery. (CWS staff photo)

Congregations may also work with survivors through a formal case management process that includes:

- Conducting initial needs evaluations to gather information about a person's situation and service requirements
- Developing recovery plans in collaboration with survivors that list and prioritize needs, identify all available resources for addressing their needs, and pinpoint unmet needs due to insufficient or non-existent resources
- Arranging for services to be provided to survivors and following up to assure services are delivered
- Reassessing situations to identify changes and measure progress from initial evaluations towards meeting goals of recovery plans
- Record-keeping -- detailed files that start on initial contact with survivors and service providers and track progress in delivery of services

Faith-based disaster case managers cultivate close relationships with survivors but maintain a healthy professional distance from them to assure that all information surfaces about their needs. They work proactively, seeking out individuals and families and advocating on their behalf with other agencies. Secular agencies also do disaster case work, but the faith community often provides an added “helping” dimension. Training such as that offered by the **United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)** is essential.



(CWS staff art)

## Sequence of Delivery

Whether your community of faith provides assistance through a formal case management process or more informally, it is important to understand that it is part of a delivery system encompassing other care-giving agencies and that assistance programs are accessed in a certain order known as the “sequence of delivery.” This sequence allows government agencies

and voluntary organizations to work together to maximize resources and avoid duplication of services.

In a disaster with a federal declaration, the sequence of delivery starts with local government and voluntary agencies providing emergency food, clothing, shelter and medical assistance. Individuals and families then turn to insurance and other personal resources after which they can look to the FEMA Individual and Household Program which addresses needs for temporary and replacement housing and/or home repair and construction.

If survivors still have not received sufficient assistance, they can apply for a Small Business Administration (SBA) loan or FEMA Other Needs Assistance if they do not meet SBA qualifications. Finally, long-term community-based recovery groups (see Section VII) -- including local religious and secular care-giving agencies which coordinate their activities and work cooperatively and collaboratively – address unmet needs.

In an undeclared disaster, community and agency resources must meet needs that personal and family insurance and resources do not cover following emergency assistance.

## 4. Special Case Disasters

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In large part, disaster response in the U.S. focuses on assisting people who lose possessions and whose homes are destroyed or heavily damaged. Yet disasters involve far more than property losses. Lost possessions and damaged homes, in fact, may be minimal following some kinds of disasters such as those caused by application or misapplication of human technology, terrorist incidents, and public violence or disease.



Public policy advocacy and spiritual care are common to response to special case disasters in which residential housing may not be affected. Terrorist incidents, public violence, disease, misapplication of human technology require responses that differ from those in more typical natural disasters. (FEMA photo)

These special case disasters require religious community response that draws on different resources and capacities than those employed to assist in physical rebuilding.

Congregations may even find themselves in uncharted territory as they did in New York City following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, when they were called to respond to an economic crisis, among other issues that involved no loss of possessions or damaged homes.

Any disaster, of course, can affect the economy of a community but economic disruptions can become an important focus of faith community response if its ramifications are deep and broad as they were in New York City with close to 100,000 people losing their jobs as a direct result of the terrorist attacks plus the ripple effects. Many of the jobless did not qualify for unemployment insurance. Along with other disaster responders, the faith

community helped people stay in their homes by providing funds to help pay their rents, mortgages, and utility bills. The faith community also worked with people to find new employment.

In general, special case disasters require a response that encompasses:

- **Advocacy** on behalf of people affected and in support of public policy initiatives. Because they have community trust, faith groups can call for facts and act as a go-between to assure all parties are brought to the table and that clear, accurate communication is possible.
- **Spiritual care**, including crisis intervention and ongoing counseling. Disasters related to technology, terrorism, and public violence, which are characterized by swiftness, suddenness, and surprise, can overcome individual and corporate coping mechanisms and cause trauma that goes far beyond the experience of helplessness that may affect survivors of any disaster. Peace-building may be a unique focus of this spiritual care as initial emotional responses -- shock, denial, disbelief, grief -- turn

to anger with people and communities looking for someone to blame or hold responsible for the disaster. People in the community rightly or wrongly associated with the disaster may be physically harmed by wounded survivors. Divorce rates, domestic violence, suicides, and drug addiction typically increase. The faith community can help people make peace with themselves and others.

## Technology-Caused Disasters



Medical and legal issues may continue for years – even generations – following technology-caused disasters. (Disaster News Network photo)

The environment and public health as well as property are issues when technological systems breakdown due to human action -- i.e., an accidental oil spill, deliberate or careless release of dangerous chemicals, leaks from illegal or badly designed disposal areas for toxic waste or storage facilities for chemicals.

Technology-caused disasters may occur alone as isolated events or as part of “natural” disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, or earthquakes which damage a community’s infrastructure.

They may be *acute* such as an explosion or toxic spill with effects over a well-defined and relatively short time period or *chronic* such as chemical contamination of soil or ground water occurring over a protracted time frame and often not readily identifiable. Rarely does a technology-caused disaster trigger a Presidential declaration with significant government assistance.

Because of its special sensitivity to human need, the religious community may be among the first to point out a technology-caused disaster – an existing event or one in the making. Because economics and politics are involved, it may find itself embroiled in controversy with disagreement about the kind of response required. Business and governmental partners in a natural disaster may not welcome faith community involvement in response to a technology-caused disaster.

During the emergency stage of a technology-caused disaster, a congregation may provide space for shelter while experts handle the most dangerous work. In the relief stage, faith groups along with other organizations may provide for basic needs such as food, shelter, medical care, and spiritual care. In long-term recovery, congregations and other community organizations may face on-going work for years – even generations – to deal with long-lasting emotional-spiritual, medical, and legal issues. The religious community could also find itself at the center of trying to meet the housing needs of affected people. Beyond providing temporary shelter to evacuees, it may need to help people find permanent housing if relocation is necessary

A faith community can build its capacity to deal with technology-caused disasters through:



- Education -- learning more about the nature of technological disasters.
- Community assessment – learning about emergency plans and the possible hazards such as federal and state superfund sites, nuclear power plants, clean-up sites, manufacturing and storage facilities. Do clusters of illness and citizen complaints suggest a problem?
- Building alliances and local networks -- getting to know the agencies and persons who will be its allies in responding and coordinating with them, building community action networks.

**Information & Resources.** The **United Church of Christ** offers special resources and consultation services for congregations and community groups where a technology-caused disaster has occurred or is occurring. A UCC manual – *The Silent Disaster: People of Faith Respond to Technology-Caused Disasters* – describes the nature of technology-caused disasters and how to organize a community-based response.

### Terrorism & Public Violence

In recent years, terrorism – a political tactic that makes a statement, gains public attention, or seeks to destabilize the political-economic-social milieu -- has been categorized as a disaster. FEMA first started defining acts of terrorism as disasters following bombings of the World Trade Center in New York City in 1993 and the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995.



Following acts of public violence like the shootings at Virginia Tech, congregations can provide space for trauma victims to congregate, comfort each other, and receive appropriate spiritual-emotional care. (Virginia Tech photo)

Likewise, school shootings, sniper incidents, rioting and looting, and other acts of public violence which are crimes have been recognized as disasters. Colorado declared the school shootings at Littleton High School where two gun-toting teenagers killed 12 students a state-level disaster.

After a devastating attack at a local community center in Binghamton, NY, in which a gunman killed 13 people and wounded 4 before ending his own life, congregations demonstrated the role religious groups can play in response to such events. In partnership with other community organizations, congregations conducted community vigils and private funerals to mourn the dead, provided space and expertise for debriefings, and developed a long-term community healing process.

Exactly one week after the attack, the local council of churches coordinated a special interfaith and multi-cultural ceremony that brought together people from the diverse nationalities – Vietnamese, Haitian, Hispanic, Chinese – and faith traditions of the community. Participants prayed and planted memorial tulips – one for each of the dead –

that will remind Binghamton residents of the victims each spring when they bloom and at the same time symbolize life and hope.

Community and religious leaders also planned to address unmet financial, emotional-spiritual care, and human services needs beyond funerals and crisis intervention immediately following the disaster. The long-term recovery program included:

- Travel grants so families of immigrant victims could attend funerals and claim bodies
- Scholarship funds for children of victims



In preparing to serve their communities in public health emergencies, congregations need to learn about the work of state and local health departments. (FEMA photo)

- Ongoing stress management
- Case management services

**Information & Resources:** Through specialized ministries which respond to acts of violence, **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)** and **Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR)** assist local religious leaders like those in Binghamton.

### **Public Health Emergencies**

Public health officials concerned about a pandemic flu crisis and other emergencies related to the spread of a communicable disease that could threaten the lives of hundreds of thousands of people look to

congregations as integral partners. Because people trust religious organizations and turn to them in crisis times, congregations can help:

- Maintain community morale and cohesion by facilitating communication among its members and people in the wider community through internet, email, telephone, and regular mail.
- Address rumors, misinformation, fear and anxiety. Through its unique communication channels, congregations can help tell an accurate and timely story and provide necessary information to the public.
- Reduce stress in the affected community by fostering a safe environment for people to talk about their stress, addressing theological questions that may arise about why innocent people suffer, helping people work through the grieving process, offering a mental health or counseling hotline, working with health authorities to create culturally and ethnically sensitive publications that explain the emergency.

- Assure medical treatment is delivered equitably as needed by identifying vulnerable neighbors, employees, volunteers, or members – low income persons, the homeless, senior citizens, people with disabilities or special health problems.

One of the most important things congregations can do is to get to know and work with their state and local health departments and other potential partners in a public health emergency. Learn about the roles of federal, state, and local public health agencies and emergency responders and what to expect and what not to expect from them.



(FEMA Photo)

State and local officials are developing, testing, and improving plans for pandemic influenza. Hospitals are planning how to deal with large numbers of people who become ill simultaneously. Businesses are planning how to continue operating during an emergency. Identify them. Learn about their planning. Begin collaborating with them.

A congregation also should consider how a public health emergency could affect its operations. Plan for situations likely to require increasing, decreasing or altering the services your congregation delivers. Prepare for staff absences due to personal and/or family illnesses, quarantines, and school, business, and public transportation closures.

**Information & Resources:** The Department of Health and Human Services has produced a quick-reference guide for the religious community – *Faith-Based & Community Organizations Pandemic Influenza Checklist*. Two other useful references: *Ministry & Hope During the Pandemic Flu* (Fairfax County, VA, Health Department), *Pandemic Influenza Planning for Episcopal Parishes*.

## VII. Recovery: Moving From Agency-Based Assistance To Community-Based Cooperation

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In disaster recovery, when communities begin the long process of getting back to normal, the focus shifts from protecting life and property and creating safe, sanitary, and secure conditions to addressing the growing unmet needs that may surface over the long-term.



In recovery, the source of assistance shifts from individual agencies with their own programs to efforts by community-based organizations through cooperative, collaborative, and coordinated programs. (FEMA photo)

- Damage assessments are conducted for press reports, insurance claims, and requesting a Presidential disaster declaration
- Vital services and facilities are gradually restored first to minimum operational standards and then to pre-disaster or better conditions
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) coordinates U.S. government resources, providing grants, loans, and technical assistance in a disaster declared by the President. FEMA usually receives disaster registrations through a national 800 number and usually provides information and other support services through Disaster Resource Centers (DRCs)
- American Red Cross and other agencies working in the immediate relief effort wind down their operations

### Spiritual Care for Caregivers

During recovery, the disaster-affected community also often experiences a sense of let down. The length of time that it takes government, the faith community, and others engaged in long-term recovery activities to organize to begin rebuilding is part of the reason. However, the acute stress of responding to the immediate needs of survivors which infuses caregivers with energy and focus can leave them drained when the urgency of the situation passes. In the aftermath, they can experience varied emotional reactions, confused thoughts, physical difficulties (i.e., normal sleep patterns may be disrupted), and spiritual distress.

Although long-term recovery planners understand the need of survivors to continue to share their stories and make sense of what has happened even as the repairs to their house moves forward and the reminders of the disaster begin to fade, they all too often overlook caregivers in offering spiritual and emotional care once the disaster relief period has passed. Disasters may, in fact, impact health professionals, social service workers, and

fire and police personnel more than the persons they serve. Indeed, hearing the stories of survivors and responding to the needs of others in acute stressful situations can leave them with secondary traumatic stress or compassion fatigue.

**Information & resources.** Several denominations now provide Care for Caregiver, Trauma Recovery and Resiliency, and Compassion Fatigue trainings to affected communities. A few denominations have special support services for clergy and church staffs. Contact your own denominational leadership for further information.

## Community-Based Response

Perhaps most significantly in recovery, the source of assistance shifts from individual agencies with their own programs – both from inside and outside the disaster-affected community -- to efforts by community organizations through cooperative, collaborative, and coordinated programs. Congregations bring their activities around spiritual care,



Religious and secular organizations in cooperation provide the greatest benefit to a disaster-affected community by avoiding duplication of services. (FEMA photo)

direct assistance to survivors, volunteer coordination, and donations management to the common table.

This shift to community-based groups occurs because a wide range of local people and organizations must own the disaster that has struck them and participate in the recovery process to address needs as fully as possible. For recovery to be most successful for the most people, representatives from all sectors of community life need to provide input and share in ownership of decisions and activities. At the same time, the shrinking limited resources

available to meet continuing needs require them to work cooperatively and collaboratively and coordinate their activities. No one agency has the resources to respond alone. Information-sharing is vital. Dollars must be stretched and used efficiently.

Because elements necessary for healing are often already present in disaster-affected areas, community-based recovery groups seek to maximize the effectiveness of existing resources – local churches, community services, and volunteer programs. They do not deploy human energy and time or precious financial resources to build duplicate structures, but rather *coordinate* connection of available resources and service providers with those in need.

## Long Term Recovery Models

Historically, the religious community – compelled by faith and a commitment to equitable distribution of recovery resources – assumed responsibility for addressing long-term recovery needs through cooperation among its members.

In today's world, however, it is safe to assume that at least one of several cooperative structures – secular and religious -- is in place as a foundation for developing community-based long-term recovery groups: a human services resource coordinating table, a local/regional Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), a ministerial association, Citizen Corps, United Way, the remaining skeleton of a past long-term disaster recovery group, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), a faith-based disaster response network, a state or local emergency management agency, American Red Cross.

While participation of the religious community is vital to community recovery, assistance reaches families most efficiently and effectively when there is cooperation, collaboration, and coordination of the work among not only members of the religious community, but secular organizations and agencies as well. Local governmental and community human services agencies, now more than ever, are aware of the long-term recovery mission and are committed to bringing their own resources to the recovery. Together, religious and secular organizations in cooperation provide the greatest benefit to a disaster-affected community.



There are two common models for long-term recovery groups:

**Long-term Recovery Committee:** The *committee* model brings together representatives from various disaster

response and/or recovery agencies that individually address survivor needs through the case work process. Agencies with cases requiring resources beyond their capacities present them at committee meetings in which other agencies consider what they can contribute to help address the unmet needs. The committee normally does not have its own resources, 501(c)3 status, an administrative board, or even a dedicated staff. The committee may or may not address community needs in addition to individual or family needs. This model is sometimes called an *Unmet Needs Committee*.

To do long-term recovery work, local agencies may create a new organization with its own programs or they may operate as a committee preserving their own identities while contributing funds, labor, and materials to assist survivors. (FEMA photo)

**Long-term Recovery Organization:** Like the *committee* model, the *organization* model encompasses multiple participants. However, it works as a single entity that may administer a pool of resources brought to the long-term recovery effort by its individual members. Separate funds as well may be administered by the organization members or partners. The organization has formal, identified leadership (board) and staff (volunteer, paid, or seconded), operates under its own 501(c)3 or an umbrella organization's, and includes representatives of local faith groups, human services agencies, and disaster recovery organizations -- all of which can provide resources. Often the organization has taskforces that address community-wide recovery needs as well as needs of families.

These two models may be adapted as a combination or refined in line with a community's resource assets and recovery needs. Some common adaptations or refinements:

***Interfaith or Faith-based Long-term Recovery Organization/Committee:*** In many situations, the faith community plays a significant role in the formation of the long term recovery group. Either the *committee* or *organization* model may be partially or wholly faith-based. Historically, the long-term recovery committee or organization was called an *interfaith* but this is much less the case now.



Working collaboratively, agencies expand their opportunity to assist survivors and stretch their resources to assist survivors most effectively and efficiently. (FEMA photo)

**VOAD or COAD (Voluntary/ Community Organizations Active in Disaster):** At the national and state levels, VOADs are understood to be planning, training, networking, and coordinating bodies whose members provide services and resources as individual agencies. At the local level, however, the VOAD or COAD may be the point at which collaborative assistance to persons and families begins and may, in fact, function as the long-term recovery committee/ organization.

Creating a new committee or organization may not even be necessary if recovery leadership can identify an existing organization that is willing to accept the coordinating role and is open to inclusion of new partners. Operating as a sub-group of an existing agency can provide instant tax-exempt status, built-in systems for receiving contributions and accounting, and association with an organization that has a history in the community.

The recovery effort will garner the greatest support and most resources when a collaborative partnership is created which includes the most responders. For individual care-giving agencies, a collaborative approach:

- Expands each agency's opportunity to assist survivors they might not have otherwise encountered & streamlines case work process
- Makes possible the best & most extensive use of each agency's resources and services (especially important when resources are limited)
- Allows agencies to share information about cases they are serving & avoid duplication of benefits
- Opens access for each agency's cases to the full range of resources available in the community

- Gives the agencies benefit of committee thinking/action on cases vs. single agency action, decision-making, and recovery plans resourcing (especially helpful for the client when the need is great and/or complex)
- Helps provide equitable and consistent levels of assistance to individuals and families
- For disaster survivors, benefits include:
  - Simultaneous access to all recovery agencies with assistance programs (they don't have to go from agency to agency)
  - Collective creative problem solving skills of many experienced case workers
  - A broad approach to their cases beyond the history or bias of a particular agency or case worker
  - A system of follow-up, referrals & consistent case work process across the scope of the disaster
  - Attention and assistance that is consistent with what is received by others in their community

## Organizing to Work Together

After a major disaster in your community, state and/or local VOADs and/or FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VALs) will call meetings of all care-giving organizations where they can share information and learn and about how the community was affected and the ongoing response. At these meetings, officials will also begin to look towards long-term recovery.



FEMA and state/local VOADs call meetings of care-giving organizations to share information and begin to think about long-term recovery. (FEMA photo)

Attend these meetings and encourage others from the religious community to participate as well. You will gather important information that will affect decision-making about religious community participation in the long-term recovery process:

- Geographic area affected
- Housing impact: primary homes or vacation homes
- Percentage of persons with adequate or partial insurance coverage



- The most vulnerable people (marginalized before the disaster) and where they are located
- Status of disaster: continuing or ended
- Nature of hazards
- Human-caused technological/environmental components of the disaster

Contact regional church executives and ministerial association, or councils of churches, not only to encourage them to participate in the meetings called by others, but – even more importantly – to initiate emergency meetings of religious leaders or an already-established interfaith group in which they can claim their unique shared concern, history,



and roles in the suffering and helping community. Also reach out personally to colleagues in ministry in your neighborhood who often will respond more readily than representatives of a formal group. In planning religious community participation in the long-term recovery process, faith leaders need to:

Members of the religious community must determine if they want to participate in a common, cooperative response and explore the resources they can contribute. (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance photo)

- Recognize the importance of working together in a shared ministry to those affected by disaster
- Determine if they want to participate in a common and cooperative response based on immediate relief and long-term recovery needs
- Explore the available resources (local, regional, state or territory) – volunteers, funds, material donations, spiritual care, case management services -- the religious community can bring to a long-term recovery program
- Consider the religious community's role vis a vis organizations outside the religious community
- Explore need for outside funding or technical assistance in doing carrying out their long-term recovery activities in the community
- Among key questions facing religious leaders:
  - Will a cooperative community-based recovery program be necessary based on the amount of unmet needs likely -- particularly among vulnerable people?
  - How will they participate in the effort? As separate congregations and agencies participating in a wider community-based program or through an interfaith organization which they join – or both? Will they need to form a new organization?

If religious leaders decide to work together as an interfaith group and/or within the context of wider community-based program, they will be part of an organizing process that encompasses:

- Writing and publicizing a short mission or purpose statement for the shared disaster response
- Fundraising immediately and saving resources for long-term recovery
- Projecting needed program
- Establishing criteria for assistance
- Projecting needed staffing
- Developing a flexible budget that can be revised up or down as more information comes available
- Planning a volunteer management program which includes recruitment, training, placement, supervision, nurturing, and evaluation
- Partnering with the American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency (in a Presidentially-declared disaster), and other immediate responders to assure a fully coordinated response



Organizing a long-term recovery group involves developing a mission statement, projecting program needs, building a budget, fundraising, planning for volunteer coordination, and partnering with the government and other helping agencies. (FEMA photo)

**Information & Resources:** As the transition from agency-based to community based recovery unfolds, Church World Service (CWS) Emergency Response Specialists (ERSs) can offer local groups important guidance through training and mentoring. Denominational disaster recovery organizing consultants trained by CWS are also available to counsel religious leaders and accompany them through the recovery organizing process.

ERSs coordinate on-site *Tools & Training Workshops* in which they and specialists from **Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Lutheran Disaster Response, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and United Methodist Committee on Relief** cover the basics of recovery program organization, donations management, volunteer coordination, and case work. They also provide regular and customized online webinar trainings via the internet. On request, they draw on the **CWS *Community Arise*** curriculum to conduct trainings on site or via teleconference in specific areas of long-term recovery management.

The CWS manual -- *Managing and Operating a Disaster Long-Term Recovery Organization* – and a web site version of it with complementary resources ([www.disasterrecoveryhelp.org](http://www.disasterrecoveryhelp.org)) – are handy references for directors and management staff of recovery groups. CWS may also help locate available resources and send blankets and emergency supply kits to congregations or faith-based recovery groups.

## Action Check List When Disaster Strikes

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To begin your disaster planning, fill in names and telephone numbers for as much of this checklist as you can now. When disaster strikes, this can help you mount an immediate, safe, and effective response.

Call 911 or "0" for operator and give required first aid to yourself, family members, and neighbors in need.

Locate close family members to assure their safety and whereabouts.

Contact church pastor or other church leaders:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Non-office hours telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

In major disaster, contact your church's regional, conference, or diocese disaster contact:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Non-office hours telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Contact local or regional ministerial association:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

and/or

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

In times of major disaster, contact regional or state council of churches, ecumenical or interfaith organization:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

and/or

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Church World Service Emergency Response Specialist for your state or territory:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

and/or

CWS Disaster Response Program

Office:

Telephone: (212) 870-3151

Fax: (212) 870-2236

Internet: <http://www.cwserp.org>

When disaster strikes and organizing for recovery begins, collect event and contact information:

- An emergency meeting has been called for (time, date, place): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Contact person and telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- The CWS staff person on site is:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Office \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Lodging Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- American Red Cross (ARC) Shelter addresses: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Federal Declaration for Individuals & Households Assistance: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
Counties declared: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL):  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- State VOAD Chairperson:  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- Interagency, and VOAD Meetings:  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Place \_\_\_\_\_

- If formal response is planned, representative and alternate from interagency meetings:  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
and/or  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- Location of ARC Service Centers  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Location of FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Mental Health contact persons:  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
and/or  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

• Name, address, contact, and telephone of Mental Health Centers:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- State Emergency Management Office contact:  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## VIII. Responding to Disasters Outside Your Community

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When disaster strikes outside your community -- in another city, state, or country, congregations and people of faith also want to help.

### Faith Community Response in Other Countries

Worldwide, the CWS Emergency Response Program and its member denominations respond to disasters through:

- Action by Churches Together (ACT) International -- an emergency response consortium of churches and church-related agencies coordinated by Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the World Council of Churches (WCC)
- Key partners and denomination-related agencies in Africa, East Asia, Europe, Latin America & Caribbean, Middle East, and Southern Asia



Match your capacity to assist with the need. What can you give? (CWS staff photo)

In general, response occurs where (1) there are existing partners, related staff, or member denominations in an area (2) the affected disaster area has limited resources and (3) response activities give priority to vulnerable groups -- including children, mothers, older persons, disabled persons. In its response, CWS:

- Functions as a communication center for receiving and analyzing information on disasters and managing a response
- Provides technical resources and training for building capacity of its partners to respond to disasters
- Represents interests, resources, and opinions of its member denominations in development of disaster response activities through ACT and its partners
- Provides financial support to ACT along with direct financial and material resource assistance to a local partners or denominational projects not under the auspices of ACT
- Second denominational staff or provides personnel for an ACT Rapid Response Team
- Supports partner capacity-building via financial grants, material resources, and/or technical assistance

## How to Help

You and your congregation can participate in response to disasters outside your community by:

- Checking with the people and organizations that know about the disaster. Your denomination's national disaster response program and/or the CWS Emergency Response Program office will know how the faith community is responding to the disaster. You can find out what survivors need now -- and what they'll need at the time you make a contribution. Survivor needs vary greatly depending on the type of disaster, how much time has passed, and in what region the disaster struck.
- Matching your capacity to assist with the need. After you know what's needed, there may be many ways to help. Collecting cash. Soliciting material aid. Sending a volunteer team to rebuild homes. Base your decision on what's most needed, what your church or organization is ready and able to give, and whether your gift represents a timely response.
- Supporting agencies that seek to keep costs low. Administrative and overhead costs are necessary, but you want to support agencies that seek to provide as much direct assistance to survivors as possible. You will find the Church World Service Emergency Response Program and your denomination's disaster response organization usually among the most cost-conscious.
- Thinking twice about shipments. Shortly after a disaster, roads may be inaccessible or open to emergency vehicles only. Donations of perishable items like food may go to waste due to delays. High shipping costs may dictate what you can send.
- Determining volunteer needs. Following disasters, volunteers may be needed to clean up debris, rebuild homes, provide office support services, staff recovery and assistance centers, and simply listen to survivors' stories. Disaster volunteers often cite their experiences as the most rewarding of their lives. But check first. Well-intentioned volunteers can cause havoc if a disaster-affected community isn't ready to accommodate them. Denominations or inter-religious organizations responding to the disaster can tell you about needs. Sometimes particular skills or tools are in demand at a disaster site. Volunteer coordinators working for response organizations can help you schedule your visit, arrange housing and meals, and plan meaningful projects.



Shipping material goods may not make sense if roads are inaccessible or only open to emergency vehicles. (FEMA photo)

- Thinking long-term. After media coverage of a disaster subsides, survivors continue to struggle with unmet needs. In fact, most faith-based disaster response organizations work for more than a year while the community rebuilds and recovers. If you've been involved with a disaster just after it happened, you may want to mark your calendar and check back periodically. It's very likely there will still be vital needs you can help to meet.



(CWS staff photo)



## **Appendix**

- I. Acronyms & Terms
- II. Website Addresses
- III. Informational Materials Offered by Church World Service
- IV. The Church World Service Emergency Response Committee

## **Appendix I Acronyms and Terms**

**ARRL** — The American Radio Relay League, Inc.

**ABC** — American Baptist Churches.

**AECC** — American Evangelical Christian Church.

**AME** — African Methodist Episcopal Church.

**AMEZ** — African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

**ARC** — American Red Cross.

**CDCC** — Cooperative Disaster Child Care Program.

**COAD** — Community Organizations Active in Disaster.

**COB** — Church of the Brethren.

**CRWRC** — Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.

**CWS** — Church World Service, Inc.

**DRC** — Disaster Recovery Center/One Stop Center.

**DFO** — Disaster Field Office established and managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) when a disaster is Presidentially-declared.

**DHS** — Department of Homeland Security, the federal agency responsible for emergency management.

**DNN** — Disaster News Network — a web site ([www.disasternews.net](http://www.disasternews.net))—reports on faith community activities in disaster mitigation/preparedness/response, provides an online mechanism for donors to give money to faith-based disaster programs, and details volunteer needs in disaster ministries.

**DWI** — Disaster Welfare Inquiry, an American Red Cross service that provides information about people affected by disasters to inquiring family members.

**EOC** — Emergency Operations Center.

**EOP** — Emergency Operations Plan.

**ELCA** — Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**ERS** — Emergency Response Specialist, a Church World Service field staff person responsible for assisting the local faith community in cooperative efforts around disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery through training, mentoring, and technical assistance in development of projects.

**ESF** — Emergency Support Function. Federal and often state government organize and deliver assistance programs around Emergency Support Functions. An example is the Federal Emergency Management Agency's ESF-6 which encompasses Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services programs.

**FEMA** — Federal Emergency Management Agency, the DHS office responsible for disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

**IHP** — Individuals & Households Program—a Federal program that provides financial assistance to disaster survivors for housing repairs, personal property losses, and other expenses related to disaster-caused needs.

**IOCC** — International Orthodox Christian Charities.

**MDS** — Mennonite Disaster Service.

**MASS CARE AND FEEDING** — The Red Cross uses local volunteers to set up shelters and feeding stations for evacuees and volunteers working immediately after the impact.

**NIMS** — National Incident Management System presents a federal template for managing response to emergencies and disasters, coordinating multiple agencies, training and exercising, managing resources, developing mutual aid and assistance agreements, certifying personnel, managing information, and crisis planning.

**NRF** — National Response Framework lays out key emergency management principles applicable to all disaster responders and describes Federal response in detail.

**NVOAD** — National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, a national consortium of agencies that seek to work cooperatively and collaboratively and coordinate their activities in disaster education, mitigation, response.

**PDA** — Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

**PNBC** — Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.

**RCA** — Reformed Church in America.

**REACT** — Radio Emergency Associated Communications Teams.

**RED CROSS ASSISTANCE OR SERVICE CENTER** — Facility operated by the Red Cross to provide immediate emergency provisions for survivors. Disbursement orders are written for the merchant of the survivor's choice for food, clothing, furniture, tools, and medicine. The amount is determined by the number of members within a family.

**RED CROSS SHELTER** — Temporary housing established by Red Cross usually in schools, community buildings, churches, or other large buildings near the disaster site.

**SBA** — Small Business Administration, a federal agency that provides disaster recovery loans to qualifying businesses and individuals at lower than market rates.

**SBC** — Southern Baptist Convention.

**SDA** — Seventh Day Adventist.

**TSA** — The Salvation Army.

**UMCOR** — United Methodist Committee on Relief.

**UCC** — United Church of Christ.

**VOAD** — Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster; State, territory or regional groups of NVOAD.

## Appendix II Website Addresses

The following web sites link you to important information about disaster response agencies and how to plan and implement disaster ministries.

American Radio Relay League .....	<a href="http://www.arrl.org">www.arrl.org</a>
American Red Cross .....	<a href="http://www.redcross.org">www.redcross.org</a>
Catholic Charities .....	<a href="http://www.catholiccharities.org">www.catholiccharities.org</a>
Census and Demographic Info .....	<a href="http://factfinder.census.gov">http://factfinder.census.gov</a>
Poverty.....	<a href="http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html">www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html</a>
Christian Church (Disciples Of Christ) .....	<a href="http://www.weekofcompassion.org">www.weekofcompassion.org</a>
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee .....	<a href="http://www.crwrc.org">www.crwrc.org</a>
Church World Service Emergency Response Program.....	<a href="http://www.cwserp.org">www.cwserp.org</a>
Civil Air Patrol .....	<a href="http://www.capnhq.gov">www.capnhq.gov</a>
Commission on Safety and Health .....	<a href="http://www.nycosh.org">www.nycosh.org</a>
Disaster News Network .....	<a href="http://www.disasternews.net">www.disasternews.net</a>
Environmental Protection Agency .....	<a href="http://www.epa.gov">www.epa.gov</a>
Federal Emergency Management Agency .....	<a href="http://www.fema.gov">www.fema.gov</a>
Federal government disaster news, regional office contact information, declarations, disaster resources, links to state emergency management sites, FEMA training courses, etc.	
Feeding America.....	<a href="http://www.feedingamerica.org">www.feedingamerica.org</a>
Humane Society of the U.S. ....	<a href="http://www.hsus.org">www.hsus.org</a>
Livable Communities— Info and Resources .....	<a href="http://www.livablecommunities.gov">www.livablecommunities.gov</a>
Lutheran Disaster Response .....	<a href="http://www.elca.org/dcs/disaster">www.elca.org/dcs/disaster</a>
Mennonite Disaster Services .....	<a href="http://www.mds.mennonite.net">www.mds.mennonite.net</a>

National Flood Insurance Program .....[www.fema.gov/nfip](http://www.fema.gov/nfip)

National Organization for Victim Assistance .....[www.try-nova.org](http://www.try-nova.org)

National VOAD .....[www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org)  
NVOAD members, links to other resources, Long Term Recovery Manual online

Natural Hazards Center .....[www.colorado.edu/hazards](http://www.colorado.edu/hazards)  
Online copies of the Natural Hazards Observer (magazine) and Disaster Research  
(newsletter)

Points of Light Foundation .....[www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)

REACT .....[www.reactintl.org](http://www.reactintl.org)

Telephone Pioneers of America .....[www.telephone-pioneers.org](http://www.telephone-pioneers.org)

United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries .....[www.ucc.org/disaster](http://www.ucc.org/disaster)

United Methodist Committee On Relief .....[www.umcor.org](http://www.umcor.org)

Volunteers In Technical Assistance .....[www.vita.org](http://www.vita.org)

## Appendix III Informational Materials Offered by Church World Service

*Church World Service offers a variety of online resources on disaster ministry to guide religious leaders in shaping programs at congregational, judicatory, and interfaith levels.*

### Congregational Disaster Planning

***Planning, Prevention & Mitigation.*** A booklet about how the faith organizations can work to reduce of vulnerability of people and communities to disasters through mitigation and preparedness activities. Visit the *overview page* at [www.disasterrecoveryhelp.org](http://www.disasterrecoveryhelp.org).

***The Silent Disaster: People of Faith Respond to Technological Disasters.*** A manual for local clergy and lay leaders that explores the special nature of technological disasters and how the faith community can respond to them. Visit the *resources page* at [www.cwserp.org](http://www.cwserp.org).

### Disaster Response

***Disaster Response: Donations That Make a Difference.*** A public education brochure providing guidance on donations following disasters.

***The Disaster Chaplain: Bringing God's Presence To Trauma Victims.*** A booklet for clergy and lay leaders on spiritual/emotional care of persons traumatized by a disaster. Visit *resources page (spiritual-emotional care resources)* at [www.cwserp.org](http://www.cwserp.org).

### Disaster Recovery Organizing

***Managing & Operating a Disaster Long-Term Recovery Organization.*** A manual with a related in-depth web site that provides guidance on policies, practices, procedures, and program for directors and management staff of disaster recovery organizations. Visit [www.disasterrecoveryhelp.org](http://www.disasterrecoveryhelp.org).

***Cooperative Faith-Based Disaster Recovery in Your Community: Why, What & How.*** A brochure for local faith community leaders that provides an overview of the disaster recovery process. Visit *overview page* at [www.disasterrecoveryhelp.org](http://www.disasterrecoveryhelp.org).

## **The CWS Emergency Response Committee**

National denominations and church-related agencies work together for the greater benefit of disaster survivors through the CWS Emergency Response Executive Committee and related Domestic and International Roundtables. The Executive Committee includes representatives of CWS member denominations who participate in discussions around policy. The committee's two Roundtables include representatives of CWS member and non-member denominations who look at disaster response field issues and how to cooperate in their work.

### **Executive Committee**

American Baptist Churches  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Church of the Brethren  
International Orthodox Christian Charities  
Lutheran Disaster Response  
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance  
Reformed Church in America  
The Episcopal Church  
United Church of Christ/Wider Church Ministries  
United Methodist Church/United Methodist Committee on Relief

### **Domestic Roundtable**

Adventist Community Service  
African Methodist Episcopal Zion  
American Baptist Churches USA  
Catholic Charities USA  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Christian Disaster Response  
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee  
Church of the Brethren  
Habitat for Humanity International  
International Orthodox Christian Charities  
Friends Disaster Service  
Lutheran Disaster Response  
Mennonite Disaster Service  
Moravian Church  
Nazarene Compassionate Ministry  
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance  
Reformed Church in America  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints  
The Episcopal Church  
United Church of Christ/Wider Church Ministries  
United Methodist Church/United Methodist Committee on Relief



## **International Roundtable**

Adventist Community Service  
American Baptist Churches USA  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee  
Church of the Brethren  
Habitat for Humanity International  
Interchurch Medical Assistance  
International Orthodox Christian Charities  
Mennonite Central Committee  
Moravian Church  
Nazarene Compassionate Ministry  
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance  
Reformed Church in America  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints  
The Episcopal Church  
United Church of Christ/Wider Church Ministries  
United Methodist Church/United Methodist Committee on Relief

## **Contact List**

**Adventist Community Service:** 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.  
Contact: Sung Kwon -- (301) 680-6438/6464 (FAX).  
Website: [www.communityservices.org](http://www.communityservices.org)

**African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church:** 475 Riverside Drive (#1935), New York, NY 10115. Contact: Kermit DeGraffenreit -- (212) 870-2952/2808 (FAX)

**American Baptist Churches USA:** Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482. Contacts: Lisa Rothenberger – (610) 768-2156, [lisa.rothenberger@abc-usa.org](mailto:lisa.rothenberger@abc-usa.org); Kenneth George -- (610) 768-2034/2453 (FAX), [ken.george@abc-usa.org](mailto:ken.george@abc-usa.org); Website: [www.abc-usa.org](http://www.abc-usa.org)

**Catholic Charities USA:** 1731 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Contact: Kim Burgo -- (703) 549-1390/1656 (FAX), [kburgo@catholiccharitiesusa.org](mailto:kburgo@catholiccharitiesusa.org); Website: [www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/disaster](http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/disaster)

**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):** Week of Compassion, Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Contacts: Amy Gopp (Executive Director), [agopp@woc.disciples.org](mailto:agopp@woc.disciples.org); Brandon Gilvin (Associate Director), [bgilvin@woc.disciples.org](mailto:bgilvin@woc.disciples.org); (317) 713-2442; (317) 713-2599 (FAX); Website: [www.weekofcompassion.org](http://www.weekofcompassion.org)

**Christian Reformed World Relief Committee:** 400 76 Street, Suite 17, Byron Center, MI 49315. Contact: Bill Adams – (800) 848-5818, (616) 560-2782, [badams@crwrc.org](mailto:badams@crwrc.org); Website: [www.crwrc.org](http://www.crwrc.org)

**Church of the Brethren Disaster Ministries:** 601 Main Street, Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776. Contact: Roy Winter -- (410) 635-8731/8739 (FAX), [bdm@brethren.org](mailto:bdm@brethren.org); Website: [www.brethrendisasterministries.org](http://www.brethrendisasterministries.org)

**Church of the Latter Day Saints:** 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-6800. Contact: Gary Flake – (801) 240-3022, [flakeg@ldschurch.org](mailto:flakeg@ldschurch.org)

**Episcopal Relief & Development:** 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Contact: Nagulan Nesiiah -- (212) 716-6020, [nnesiah@er-d.org](mailto:nnesiah@er-d.org); Website: [www.er-d.org](http://www.er-d.org)

**Friends Disaster Services:** 4609 State Road 45, Leetonia, OH 44431. Contact: Bob Winn -- (330) 332-2381, [bobwinn@copper.net](mailto:bobwinn@copper.net)

**Habitat for Humanity International:** 121 Habitat Street, Americus, GA 31709-3498. Contact: Giovanni Taylor-Peace – (229)-924-6935, [gtaylorpeace@habitat.org](mailto:gtaylorpeace@habitat.org); Mario Flores – (229) 924-6935, [mflores@habitat.org](mailto:mflores@habitat.org); Paul Wood (192 Chapman Road, Keene, NH 03431) -- (603) 357-5166, [pwood@habitat.org](mailto:pwood@habitat.org); Website: [www.interchurch.org](http://www.interchurch.org)

**Interchurch Medical Assistance, Inc.:** Box 429, New Windsor, MD 21776. Contact: Paul Derstine -- (410) 635-8720/8726 (FAX), [paulderstine@interchurch.org](mailto:paulderstine@interchurch.org); Website: [www.interchurch.org](http://www.interchurch.org)

**International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC):** 110 West Road, Suite 360, Baltimore, MD 21204. Contact: Constantine (Dean) Triantafilou. Telephone/Fax -- (410) 243-9820/9824; Email: [ctriantafilou@iocc.org](mailto:ctriantafilou@iocc.org); Website: [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org).

**Lutheran Disaster Response:** 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631-4190. Contact: Kevin Massey – [kevin.massey@elca.org](mailto:kevin.massey@elca.org); Website: [www.ldr.org](http://www.ldr.org)

**Mennonite Disaster Service:** 1018 Main Street, Akron, PA 17501. Contacts: Kevin King, Executive Director -- (717) 859-2210, [kking@mds.mennonite.net](mailto:kking@mds.mennonite.net); Scott Sundberg, Director of Communications -- (717) 859-2210, [ssundberg@mds.mennonite.net](mailto:ssundberg@mds.mennonite.net); Website: [www.mds.mennonite.net](http://www.mds.mennonite.net)

**Moravian Church:** Box 1245, Bethlehem, PA 18018. Contact: William C. Sibert – (610) 868-6271, [will@mcnp.org](mailto:will@mcnp.org); Website: [www.moravian.org](http://www.moravian.org)

**Nazarene Compassionate Ministry:** 102 Bennett Drive, Plymouth, NC 27962. Contact: Tom Nees -- (252) 799-6888 (cell), [tnees@tomnees.com](mailto:tnees@tomnees.com)

**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):** 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202. Contacts: Randy Ackley – (502) 569-5840, [randy.ackley@pcusa.org](mailto:randy.ackley@pcusa.org); Luke Asikoye – (502) 569-5837, [luke.asikoye@pcusa.org](mailto:luke.asikoye@pcusa.org); John Robinson – (540) 539-3233, [john.robinson@pcusa.org](mailto:john.robinson@pcusa.org); Website: [www.pcusa.org/pda](http://www.pcusa.org/pda)

**Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.:** 601 50th Street, NE, Washington, DC 20019. Telephone: (202) 396-0558

**Reformed Church in America:** 4500 60th Street, SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512. Contact: David Dethmers -- (616) 698-7071/6606 (FAX), [bvoskuil@rca.org](mailto:bvoskuil@rca.org); Website: [www.rcws.rca.org](http://www.rcws.rca.org).

**United Church of Christ/Wider Church Ministries:** 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. Contacts: Florence Coppola -- (216) 736-3211, [coppolaf@ucc.org](mailto:coppolaf@ucc.org); Susan Sanders -- (216) 736-3210, [sanderss@ucc.org](mailto:sanderss@ucc.org); Website: [www.ucc.org/global/disaster](http://www.ucc.org/global/disaster)

**United Methodist Church/United Methodist Committee on Relief:** 475 Riverside Drive, (3rd Floor), New York, NY 10115. Contacts: Thomas Hazelwood (100 Maryland Avenue, NE #330, Washington, DC 20002) – (202) 548-4002/4116 (FAX), [thazelwood@gbgm-umc.org](mailto:thazelwood@gbgm-umc.org); David Sadoo – (212) 870-3520, [dsadoo@gbgm-umc.org](mailto:dsadoo@gbgm-umc.org); Melissa Crutchfield – (212) 870-3909, [mcrutchfield@gbgm-umc.org](mailto:mcrutchfield@gbgm-umc.org) Website: <http://gbgm-umc.org/umcor/>

## **Program Descriptions**



(American Baptist Churches photo)

### **American Baptist Churches USA**

Organization: The National Disaster Response Office of National Ministries maintains a crisis intervention network for the American Baptist Churches in the United States and Puerto

Rico in conjunction with Church World Service. Executive Ministers of the denominations 34 Regions serve as disaster response officers.

Operations: When crises occur, the NDR Disaster Response Office contacts the Executive Minister in the region affected within 36 hours to assess needs. The Office also contacts ABC National Ministries and Volunteers In Mission and American Baptist Men Disaster Relief to coordinate clean-up and recovery efforts in communities stricken by disaster. It contributes funds to Cooperative Disaster Child Care and the Church World Service Disaster Response and Recovery Liaison Program.

Funds for the survival and recovery needs of disaster victims and their communities are made available to the National Disaster Response Office by the World Relief Committee of the American Baptist Churches from One Great Hour of Sharing offerings and designated contributions.

## Adventist Community Services

Accreditation: Adventist Community Services (ACS) operates under a written agreement (Memorandum of Understanding or MOU) with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the American Red Cross. It is also a member of the inter-agency compact, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) and the affiliated state VOADs.

Services Provided: Services are provided to the victims of disaster and their families in cooperation with the other government and voluntary disaster response agencies. They are provided without regard to any person's race, color, language or religion and include:



(Adventist Community Services photo)

- **Emergency Distribution Centers.** Supplies such as groceries, drinking water, blankets, personal comfort kits, disposable diapers, cleaning supplies, hand tools, plastic sheeting, tar paper and clothing are provided to meet immediate needs of families. Donations of groceries, blankets, clothing and other supplies are accepted from the general public and processed for distribution by ACS volunteers and through cooperating agencies. The centers are often based in community facilities such as a high school gym or church hall or in mobile units.
- **Listening Posts and Door to Door Visitation.** The emotional and spiritual needs of disaster victims, their relatives and neighbors are addressed by providing opportunities for them to ask questions, chat informally, or request personal prayer. Door to door visits are for the purpose of providing useful information about the full range of disaster services and agencies. Listening Posts are established with inter-faith groups of pastors and trained lay pastoral workers.
- **Mass Feeding.** At the request of government and other voluntary agencies, ACS volunteers are available to staff hot meal or sack lunch service as needed to feed disaster victims or emergency workers. Often mass feeding is operated in conjunction with an emergency shelter operated by the American Red Cross.

**Base of Operations:** The disaster response of ACS is based in a network of state disaster coordinators, each of which lead a team of trained volunteers. It makes use of all the resources of the 200 social services centers and inner city programs operated in the U.S. and Canada by ACS. All of these are coordinated by the North American Headquarters of ACS.



(Catholic Charities USA photo)

## Catholic Charities USA

**Organizational Structure:** Catholic Charities USA is the organization that unites the social service agencies operated by most of the 175 Catholic dioceses in the United States. The network of more than 1,200 Catholic Charities agencies and institutions and over 200,000 volunteers and staff carries out the Catholic Church's commitment to accomplishing the goals of charity and justice by assisting people of all religious, ethnic, economic, and social backgrounds.

The mission of Catholic Charities USA is to provide service to people in need, to advocate for justice in social structures, and to call others of good will to do the same. **Disaster Program:** The disaster response services of Catholic Charities USA complement the already established emergency assistance disaster organizations by providing assistance to communities in addressing the crisis and recovery needs of local families.

In addition to offering a diversity of services for emergency assistance whenever possible, Catholic Charities agencies emphasize on-going and long-term recovery services such as: housing assistance for low-income families, counseling programs for children and the elderly and special counseling for disaster care givers. Catholic Charities USA was commissioned by the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) in 1968 to monitor disaster response of Catholic communities around the country. In 1990, Disaster Response became a full-time department of Catholic Charities USA.

Currently there are 110 bishop-appointed diocesan coordinators representing 46 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These coordinators serve as the official liaison between their diocese and Catholic Charities USA for pre-disaster planning and post-disaster response.

## Church of the Brethren

**Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM)** promotes recovery in disaster-stricken communities by providing volunteers to clean up debris and to repair or rebuild storm-damaged homes for survivors who lack sufficient resources to hire a contractor or other paid labor.

The primary focus of BDM's mission is on the most vulnerable disaster survivors – the elderly, single-parent households, and persons with disabilities. By demonstrating Christ's love and putting their faith in action as they restore damaged homes, volunteers also restore broken lives.

Volunteer work teams are recruited from within the Church of the Brethren's 23 districts in the U.S. and commit to a week of service at the project site. Trained, skilled project

leaders supervise the work teams on site from week to week, and household managers provide meals and hospitality.

BDM cooperates with the local disaster recovery organization to enhance the long-term recovery of the community. BDM is supported by grants from the Church of the Brethren's Emergency Disaster Fund.

**Children's Disaster Services (CDS)** meets the needs of children after disaster strikes by setting up child care centers in shelters and disaster assistance centers. Specially trained to respond to traumatized children, CDS volunteers provide a calm, safe and reassuring presence in the midst of the chaos created by any natural or human-caused disaster.



(Brethren Disaster Ministries photo)

CDS volunteers participate in specialized experiential training, undergo a rigorous screening process, learn to work with children after a disaster, are mobilized rapidly, and respond both locally and nationally. Although CDS is administered by the Church of the Brethren, volunteers come from a wide variety of faith groups.

Through consultation or workshops specifically tailored to each situation, CDS also works with parents, community agencies, schools or others to help them understand and meet the special needs of children during or after a disaster.

The Critical Response Childcare (CRC) team is a group of experienced CDS volunteers who receive additional training and are deployed to work with children who have lost family members in an aviation incident or other mass casualty event. In partnership with the American Red Cross, the CRC team works in a Family Assistance Center. This partnership ensures that children's needs are being met in an appropriate and compassionate manner.

### **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

Week of Compassion (WoC) is the relief, refugee and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). WoC works through implementing partner organizations, such as Church World Service, to facilitate relief and development efforts in areas of great need by providing financial resources. Through Week of Compassion, Disciples across North America share offerings to assist in ecumenical relief and long-term recovery after natural and human-created disasters in the United States and around the world. Week of Compassion funds the Disciples Volunteering program of Disciples Home Missions which recruits and coordinates individuals and groups to assist in cleanup, rebuilding, and rehabilitation efforts under the auspices of interfaith and congregational projects. Week of Compassion is a faithful partner of the Church World Service Emergency Response Program.

## Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

**Organizational Structure:** The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) is a relief and development agency of the Christian Reformed Church of North America. Its principal mandates lie in the areas of community development and disaster response. In North America, CRWRC's disaster response occurs primarily through trained volunteers who are available for a variety of recovery-related tasks. These volunteers come from most of the 46 classes, or regional divisions, of the Christian Reformed Church in North American, in addition to other denominations. In smaller disasters and local emergencies, these volunteers are organized through Disaster Response Services (DRS) Area Managers (volunteers). In case of major disasters, the volunteers are coordinated, as needed, by a network of Regional Managers (volunteers) or through the office in Byron Center, Michigan.



(Christian Reformed World Relief Committee photo)

**Disaster Program:** CRWRC's Disaster Response Services (DRS) has the overall aim of assisting disaster affected communities and families with preparedness, response and recovery, while providing opportunities for Christians to serve. DRS is essentially a volunteer work force, prepared to offer several different types of service.

- **Management Consultation:** Trained and experienced volunteer disaster response managers oversee CRWRC long-term disaster recovery operations and consult with long-term community based recovery organizations. CRWRC-DRS has published a series of management booklets to complement this service. Certified Public Accountants are available to assist long term recovery organizations with the financial aspects of their programs.
- **Assistance to Red Cross:** All DRS volunteers are encouraged to be active members of their local Red Cross chapter, especially casework associated with Emergency Assistance to Families.
- **Needs Assessment:** Trained volunteers are available to assist a local long term recovery group to identify and prioritize disaster survivors that are in need of long-term recovery assistance.
- **Construction-Repair and Cleanup:** Volunteers with building trade expertise ensure quality control while assisting with the total rebuild or major repair of homes affected by a disaster. Other volunteers are available to assist with clean-up and minor repair work. Construction estimators are available as a stand alone service to long term recovery groups.

- Child Care: CRWRC-DRS volunteers are encouraged to be trained and serve as trainers with the Cooperative Disaster Child Care Program, managed by the Church of the Brethren.



(Episcopal Relief & Development photo)

## Episcopal Relief & Development

Episcopal Relief and Development provides emergency assistance and rehabilitative support to people affected by natural disasters, war, and civil strife. Episcopal Relief and Development is the collective response of Episcopalians to help people in need in the United States and around the world. It is the organized, tangible response to Christ's call to minister to the hungry and thirsty, the sick and those in prison, to clothe the naked, and welcome the stranger. We work

with churches in the Anglican Communion as well as with other denominations, local organizations, and partner agencies.

Our mission: To serve Christ in all persons, to love our neighbors, and to respect the dignity of every human being. Episcopal Relief and Development raises, receives, and disburses moneys and other resources for the relief of human suffering. Episcopal Relief and Development provides emergency relief in times of disaster; it assists in the rehabilitation of lives, property, and organizations; it initiates and joins in partnership with those who identify and address root causes of suffering; and it supports and extends the social ministry of the church. Under the guidance of General Convention and the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, Episcopal Relief and Development's Board of Directors raises and receives funds and distributes them for the following general areas of need:

- Relief: Immediate crisis response to areas affected by natural disaster, civil strife, war or famine. Emergency grants may be awarded up to \$25,000.
- Rehabilitation: Follow-up response to crisis situations to help people recover. Rehabilitation includes rebuilding communities, replanting crops, finding jobs, and providing post-trauma services that are often overlooked.
- Development: Longer-term support for projects that address the root causes of drought famine, disease, and lack of education.

## Interchurch Medical Assistance, Inc.

Interchurch Medical Assistance is a non-profit association of relief and development agencies representing a vast constituency of churches in the U.S. and throughout the world. Through the generosity of churches and product donations from U.S. pharmaceutical companies, IMA provides medicines and hospital supplies for overseas health care programs serving people in need. IMA annually distributes more than \$18



million in lifesaving medicines and related materials critically needed for refugee and disaster relief overseas.

Working with U.S. pharmaceutical companies, IMA obtains medicines through donations and purchases for its member organizations, associate groups and approved medical missions. IMA maintains its inventory of medicines and medical supplies at the Brethren Service Center's pharmaceutical warehouse at New Windsor, MD, which ships resources to more than 90 countries for 22 non-profit organizations.

### **International Orthodox Christian Charities**

In seeking to provide assistance to the poor, either in response to emergencies or long term socio-economic development needs, IOCC's fundamental policy is to develop a sustainable indigenous capacity to carry out such programs. Overseas offices are established by IOCC when, and if, the Orthodox hierarchy of the country in question have made a request; if there is a need to use IOCC skills to enhance the capacity of the Church and other institutions to reach the poor more effectively; and if the scale of the program requires an on-site presence to monitor targeting of beneficiaries, program implementation and reporting.



(International Orthodox Christian Charities photo)

IOCC's mandate is to undertake purely humanitarian activities. Thus, IOCC does not support programs of Church mission (Church reconstruction, religious education, seminary support, etc.). In an effort to mobilize all Orthodox Christians to its efforts to bring assistance to the poor throughout the world, IOCC has adopted a grassroots approach. Metropolitan Committees are, or will be, established in cities throughout the United States and Canada. Through these committees, parishioners are offered the chance to assist those in need and to engage their fellow parishioners and local communities in support of humanitarian assistance programs.

IOCC maintains relationships with other institutions so that Orthodox Christian humanitarian concerns and initiatives are appropriately represented. IOCC is registered with the U.S. Agency for International Development and is eligible to receive funds for foreign assistance from the U.S. Government. It is a member of InterAction, a coalition of U.S. based non-governmental organizations that carry out humanitarian assistance programs overseas. As a member, IOCC is bound by the InterAction code of professional ethics. IOCC is active in ecumenical initiatives both with the National Council of the Churches of Christ and with the World Council of Churches and Action by Churches Together.



(Lutheran Disaster Response photo)

## **Lutheran Disaster Response**

Organizational Structure: Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is a cooperative domestic ministry of two Lutheran denominations, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). LDR's mission is to demonstrate Christ's compassion for people by promoting health, healing and wholeness for disaster survivors. LDR strives to serve persons impacted by disaster in a timely, compassionate and competent

manner through a coordinated, community-based system involving all Lutheran entities.

Formal agreement and active memberships are maintained with Church World Service, the American Red Cross and National Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD). Disaster Program: LDR responds locally through its network of Lutheran social ministry organizations (Lutheran Social Services, Lutheran Family Services, etc.), judicatories and congregations to deliver services. LDR provides funding, resources and consulting to its local Lutheran partners (the coordinating Lutheran social ministry organization, judicatory offices, and congregations) to work in cooperation and coordination with other faith-based and secular voluntary agencies in response to the disaster. LDR generally provides funds for the following services: clean up, construction management, counseling services, case management, volunteer coordination, care for caregiver programs, pastoral/spiritual care and promoting local interfaith development.

LDR leads a coalition of Lutheran organizations to facilitate distribution of resources and services in order to build the capacity of the Lutheran community to respond to those impacted by disaster (LDR Coalition: ELCA Domestic Disaster Response, LCMS World Relief, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Laborers for Christ, Mission Builders, Lutheran Services in America, Orphan Grain Train and Lutheran Hour Ministries are the partners). LDR also develops preparedness networks among its social ministry organizations and LDR Coalition partners.

## **Mennonite Disaster Service**

Organizational Structure: Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) has four regions in the United States and one in Canada, and 49 local units. The local unit has the primary responsibility to represent MDS in a disaster response within its geographic boundaries, calling for and accepting help from the regional director, other units, and the bi-national office as needed. Each unit has a network of congregational contact persons throughout the Mennonite, Brethren of Christ, and related churches who communicate the need for volunteers throughout the 325,000-member constituency in North America.

The MDS regional and bi-national offices are organized to assist and support the units in programs. Names, addresses, and phone numbers of regional, state or local unit leaders can be obtained by calling the national office in Akron.

Disaster Program: The Mennonite, Brethren of Christ, and related Anabaptist constituent churches, in keeping with their Biblical and Christian service theology, respond through MDS to help meet the needs of disaster victims. Special emphasis will be placed on helping those least able to help themselves, such as the elderly, handicapped, widowed, etc. Although the major thrust of our traditional disaster assistance is in the areas of post-disaster cleanup and building repair, MDS personnel are willing to expand their areas of involvement where there is a need and when a sufficient number of volunteers are available. Mennonite Disaster Service workers are volunteers who serve without pay. They carry out their disaster assistance activities, supported by the larger regional and bi-national network, in a spirit of cooperation with the various agencies of the government and the other volunteer disaster service organizations.



(Mennonite Disaster Service photo)

The major contribution of Mennonite Disaster Service to most disaster situations will be supplying volunteer personnel for cleanup, repair, and rebuild operations. In most cases, the MDS organization will not provide resources for housing materials, anticipating that these will come from other sources. MDS will require no fees for services provided, although support via Red Cross, local interfaith groups, etc., for food and housing for volunteer personnel is usually welcomed and appreciated.

### **Nazarene Disaster Response**

NDR is a part of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, Inc., a charitable organization chartered and sponsored by the Church of the Nazarene to support a variety of worldwide development and relief projects. It aims to bring about social transformation for suffering and marginalized peoples by promoting indigenous leadership and local organizational development through training, technical expertise and fund-raising assistance. While NDR and NCM are new organizational structures, members and friends of the Church of the Nazarene have been active in responding to disasters in the U.S. and abroad for many years. The church recently organized itself into NCM and NDR in part to affiliate and cooperate with other agencies. It has recently appointed national and regional project directors and begun development of volunteer training programs.



(Photo by David Barnhart, PDA)

## Presbyterian Church (USA)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) responds to disasters through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA). “Out of chaos, Hope” summarizes its mission, which is to enable congregations and mission partners of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to witness to the healing love of Christ through caring for communities adversely affected by crises and catastrophic events. Part of the Compassion, Peace & Justice Ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),

the PDA program receives its primary funding from the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Additional support is generated by special gifts for specific crises throughout the world.

**Disaster Program:** In addition to providing support toward the core budget of Church World Service and the CWS Emergency Response Office, PDA supports the CWS Disaster Response and Recovery Liaison program. The PC(USA) seeks to work cooperatively with other voluntary organizations through NVOAD. When a major disaster occurs, response by PDA may include the following:

- **Human Resources.** Trained volunteers from the National Response Team (NRT) may be asked to assist congregations, middle governing bodies, or interfaith response organizations.
- **Volunteer clean-up and/or rebuilding teams** can be coordinated if needed, through the PDA Call Center, (866) 732-6121.
- **Financial Resources.** A portion of the church’s One Great Hour of Sharing offering is set aside to respond to situations where the needs of disaster survivors exceed the capability of the local or regional faith community. Ordinarily, a request for funding should be made to the appropriate presbytery office. Requests by interfaith disaster response organizations should be consistent with the budgets sent to CWS.
- **Material Resources.** Emergency supplies and building materials may be provided. PDA encourages Presbyterians to support the CWS “Gift of the Heart Kits” program.



(Photo by Barry Carlin for PDA)

- **Food and shelter** may be provided by Presbyterian congregations, colleges, or camps.
- **Pastoral care** is available through Presbyterian congregations, institutions, and NRT members.

To learn more about the work of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, visit our web site at

[www.pcusa.org/pda](http://www.pcusa.org/pda), contact us by email at [pda@pcusa.org](mailto:pda@pcusa.org), call (888) 728-7228, ext. 5839, or mail to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396.

## **Reformed Church in America**

The Reformed Church in America (RCA) responds to disasters through the office of Reformed Church World Service, a program of the Global Mission office of the General Synod Council. Grants are provided both for the core budget of Church World Service (CWS) and the Emergency Response Office.

Local congregations are encouraged to join in planning and implementing a coordinated interfaith response to disasters. Volunteers are invited to participate in needs assessment, clean-up, repair and rebuilding, contributing money, and preparing and sending material aid. The RCA channels funds received through partner organizations such as CWS, RCA mission personnel, local interfaith groups, or its churches in an affected community. The RCA maintains an emergency disaster contingency line item in its annual budget to respond worldwide to disasters when little or no designated money is received.

**Reformed Church in America:** 4500 60th Street, SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512



## **United Church of Christ National Disaster Ministries Program**

**Organizational Structure:** National Disaster Ministries is a program of United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries and is coordinated through the Office for Global Sharing of Resources. The UCC National Disaster Ministries Program is supported by the One Great Hour of Sharing offering and designated gifts from individuals and local churches.

(United Church of Christ photo)

**Program:** The UCC conducts its program of national disaster response in cooperation with Church World Service Emergency Response Program by membership on its Executive Committee; through funding of its Emergency Response Program and disaster appeals; and by supporting the Emergency Response Specialist program. Additionally, the UCC-CWS have a Memorandum of Understanding to work in partnership on Technological Disasters which has been a joint program initiative undertaken since 1997. An interactive web site, network of consultants and training materials are made available on behalf of the wider church-based and inter-faith community.

At the local level, the church's National Disaster Ministries are conducted in cooperation with and through the 38 Conferences of the UCC. Each Conference, drawing upon the gifts of its local congregations, determines how best to serve as ecumenical partners and witnesses of hope when disasters occur in their geographic area by developing preparedness measures before crises occur; helping organize volunteers for clean-up and rebuilding efforts; and coordinating their activities with both community-based and

church-based emergency response organizations. When disasters occur, financial assistance is channeled through Conference Offices, Church World Service appeals, and local community partners.

## United Methodist Committee on Relief

**Organizational Structure:** The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) responds to disaster within the United States according to in the Book of Discipline. UMCOR exists as a resource through which our connectional church empowers local ministries to respond to disasters. A disaster-impacted Annual Conference “owns” the way it responds to the disaster. UMCOR does not manage or perform the work of recovery. The following priorities define our United Methodist disaster response ministry:

- Assistance is given regardless of a person’s color, economic status, or religious affiliation
- Emergencies in marginalized and minority communities within a majority culture are given special consideration

Our ministry to disaster survivors is multifaceted, with theological, physical, mental health, advocacy, and social service components. The goal of disaster response ministry is to strengthen and re-establish relationships between persons and God, persons and families, and persons and communities. Because of this wide focus, UMCOR supports Annual Conferences as they seek out and give priority to those persons who can often be overlooked in a disaster. To



(FEMA photo)

determine need and reach those who are at risk of falling through the cracks, UMCOR considers income levels and other “quality of life” factors such as infant mortality rates, life expectancy, and literacy rates.

### UMCOR Can . . .

- Provide pre-disaster training to annual conference and district disaster response committees
- Provide cash grants
- Provide consulting services
- Lend generators, power washers, and other necessary equipment
- Use its depots for receiving, processing, and shipping donated items from across the church sent in response to a disaster
- Assist with the formation of a community-based interfaith recovery agency
- Assist with recruiting, organizing, and managing Volunteers in Mission teams

- Provide the services of UMCOR mentors and advisors

UMCOR Cannot . . .

- Come into a disaster site without an invitation from the bishop
- Send funds without a request from the bishop
- Administer or perform the work of a disaster recovery operation. This responsibility rests with the Annual Conference
- Allow its funds to be used for repair of damaged church property-unless there is a church-wide appeal which clearly states that the money is to be used for property repair along with relief of human need