

DEVELOPING A DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

- **TIMING IS CRITICAL**
- IT'S ALWAYS POSSIBLE TO HAVE A DISASTER.....A HURRICANE, TORNADO, FLOOD, FIRE OR SOME OTHER TRAGIC EVENT THAT CAN SEVERLY IMPACT OUR CHURCHES AND OUR PEOPLE
- BE PREPARED! IT'S TOO LATE AFTER IT COMES UPON US

THE CHURCH IS THE FOCUS OF THE DISASTER RECOVERY ACTION

- THE PASTOR IS THE SHEPPARD OF HIS SHEEP...YOUR CONGREGATION DEPENDS ON YOU FOR LEADERSHIP...MATERIALLY, SPIRITUALLY, PSYCHOLOGY AND JUST SHOWING LOVE AND CONCERN TO YOUR PEOPLE

- A GOOD PLACE TO START DEMONSTRATING LEADERSHIP IS TO START PLANNING FOR DISASTERS THAT MIGHT EFFECT YOUR FLOCK
- **PASTOR, HOW PREPARED ARE YOU? (A FEW QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF)**
- HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS FOLLOWING A DISASTER?
 - 1. IS EVERYBODY OK? (ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO NEED ELECTRICTY OR SPECIAL SUPPORT FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES)
 - 2. DID ANYONE REQUIRE MEDICAL HELP?
 - 3. HOW MUCH DAMAGE DID YOU HAVE?
 - 4. WHAT KIND OF HELP DO YOU NEED?
 - 5. COULD YOU HOST A RECOVERY TEAM?
 - 6. DO YOU HAVE PUBLIC UTILITIES, IE, WATER & ELECTRICITY?
 - 7. ARE THE ROADS SAFE TO DRIVE ON?
 - 8. DO YOU HAVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH YOUR PEOPLE?

- 9. IS YOUR CHURCH FACILITY READY TO SERVE AS A TEMPORARY SHELTER OR REFUGE?
- 10. ARE THERE PUBLIC SAFETY TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ESTABLISHED?
- 11. IS THERE ANYONE THAT I CAN CONTACT LOCALLY FOR IMMEDIATE HELP?
- 11. DO I HAVE SOMEONE IN MY CHURCH TO HELP ME THAT CAN TAKE OVER DISASTER RECOVERY LEADERSHIP SO I CAN CONCENTRATE ON BEING THE SPIRITUAL LEADER TO THE FLOCK?

OUR GOAL IN THIS PRESBYTERY IS TO HELP DEVELOP A PLAN SO YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

ANY CHURCH CAN DEVELOP A PLAN TO CARE FOR THEIR CONGREGATION'S WELFARE AND RECOVERY!

TO BEGIN WITH, I WANT TO SHARE A
SUGGESTED, FAIRLY SIMPLE PLAN TO HELP
YOU, THE SHEPPARD, KEEP TRACK OF YOUR
FLOCK IN A DISASTER SITUATION.

THREE DECISION POINTS FOR DEVELOPING OUR PLAN

1. DO WE IMPLEMENT THE CHURCH PLAN TO ALL EPC CHURCHES?

- Do we ask all EPC churches to develop our Church Plan or one of their own to account for their congregations and support their own needs as much as possible?

OTHER FACTORS RELATING TO THE QUESTION

- There is very little preparation expected from the church.
- Will the church depend on GA/Presbytery to respond in case of a disaster for assistance (EPC GA/Presbytery isn't staffed or funded to do much more than to react on an event to event basis)?
- Will the church depend on GA/Presbytery to come and help the church to organize/manage a recovery effort?
- Will the church depend on GA/Presbytery to assist by coordinating assistance from disaster agencies and other EPC churches for manpower/lodging/feeding?
- Will the church depend on GA/Presbytery to assist/ provide funding?
- How will the church provide their people training; will GA/Presbytery be expected to assist?
- During disaster relief operations receives, will the local church get local direction/assistance from officially established emergency services agencies?
- How does the Pastor get relief from directing the disaster operations at his church so they can carry on pastoral duties?

IF CHURCH HAS THEIR OWN MINISTRY FOR DISASTER RELIEF

- Church can train and deploy their own teams?

- - Should we encourage the church to join non-EPC Organized Disaster Relief Groups (locally organized community and governmental, Samaritans Purse, Salvation Army, FEMA Etc)?

DECISION POINT 2

WILL DISASTER RELIEF BE ESTABLISHED AS A GA SUPPORTED OUTREACH MINISTRY OF EPC ?

- We must determine our goal/objective for disaster relief:
- A. Is it primarily designed to take care of “our own” churches and direct our planning, staffing and resources to that end?
 - B. Do we approach disaster as an outreach “ministry” of the EPC to take care of “our own” **AND ADDITIONALLY** organize, train, and deploy teams to serve the “community at large” beyond our church walls?
 - C. If disaster relief is determined to be an EPC Ministry, are we committed to provide leadership, funding, training, on-site management of disaster relief operations for EPC churches?

OTHER FACTS BEARING ON THE DISCUSSION

Organizing and managing a viable and executable EPC-wide disaster relief program is a HUGE commitment and would have to be time-phased taking one step at a time.

Some EPC churches have disaster relief teams that have helped other churches in the past and are available to deploy teams as requested

Disaster relief is currently not an EPC designated ministry and a structure for organizing and managing is not funded or staffed at GA or presbytery level. There are funds that are available to help individual churches recover from disasters.

- Other major denominations have offered to assist the EPC in training and equipping recovery teams.

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- EPC is not affiliated or a partner with the government/NGO agencies that manage national, regional and on-site disaster recovery.
- Management of a large disaster program requires a lot of organization and management including training and refresher training.
- A viable disaster relief program requires continuing preparation and maintenance; it's more than a seasonal effort; it's a yearlong challenge.

DECISION POINT 3

DO WE PARTNER WITH OTHER DISASTER RELIEF AGENCIES ?

1. Will the EPC agree to support joining and/or partnership with the established Gov't recognized NGO disaster Management organizations such as VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster) and others at national, state and local level? This would provide a "seat at the table" that decides where the relief resources are used at the disaster area?

OTHER FACTS BEARING ON THE DISCUSSION

As a recognized NGO organization (EPC GA), we would be eligible to partner with Federal, NGO, regional and locally established disaster organizations to share in disaster relief operations at the disaster site location and benefit from mutual aid for our church family and others in the region.

The cost of joining Florida VOAD is \$50.00 a year.

Florida VOAD membership organizations include United Methodist, Baptist, PCUSA, Muslims, Mormons, FEMA, Red Cross, Samaritans Purse, State of Florida, Salvation Army and many others.

VOAD has a weekly ZOOM meeting for all it's members. There are disaster operations going on most of the time.

EPC churches could represent the EPC with the local disaster management organizations during a disaster which has the responsibility to direct manpower and equipment to disaster work sites.

National organization (VOAD) membership can be a link to large donor organizations that can provide equipment and training at no cost to it's members.

VOAD has a national organization and every state has one. They operate together. To belong to National , you must belong to a state VOAD.

VOAD operates in Puerto Rico which could be very helpful to our churches there.

VOAD acts as a "broker" for resources donated by their membership and would expect the EPC, as a member, to contribute and participate in their disaster relief operations. Donations could include manpower, equipment, food distribution, housing or other support that could enhance both material and personal recovery. This includes Chaplains. VOAD would not expect our EPC to contribute until we get organized and willing to help others.

VOAD is normally one of the key directing agencies at the disaster location and as an on-site member, we would have "a seat at the table" on a daily basis to participate in the decision of how resources are directed and used. They determine the priorities on how the resources are allocated.

At the disaster site, VOAD disaster managers use the member resources which are donated on a day-by-day basis by the members to the VOAD. So, if an EPC church or a congregation member needs help, the EPC can use their own EPC resources for their own tasks. Several VOAD members from other denominations told me that they benefit from their membership in VOAD and it's advantageous to them. They learn how to "navigate" conflicts concerning the management of their resources as members of VOAD.

Several NGO organizations offer team member training for other VOAD members like us.

