

## II. Natural Disaster Stage Two—Relief

Basic human needs are cared for in a temporary way in the second stage of disaster—the relief stage—which usually lasts about one month. Medical services, food, and temporary shelter become available from the American Red Cross, coordinated with the churches, interfaith response groups, and other helping organizations. Basic clean-up of homes, businesses, and streets begins in this stage. Utilities begin to be restored. Survivors begin making claims with insurance companies, American Red Cross, and, if presidentially-declared, the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

You and your church have an important part to play in the relief/rehabilitation stage, which usually lasts about ten times as long as the emergency stage.

### What You and Your Church Can Do

In a major disaster, fundraise immediately in coordination with other churches and faith groups, but allocate funds for long-term recovery after the larger programs end.

### How Church World Service Can Help

The trained Church World Service volunteer Disaster Resource Consultant (DRC) in your state or territory is equipped to advise and consult with religious leaders and ecumenical or interfaith groups to get the best assistance to the disaster survivors. Church World Service can advise religious leaders on such things as publicity, fundraising, spiritual/pastoral care, volunteers, care for the care-givers, advocacy, in-kind gifts, and program and

budgetary needs. If needs outweigh available resources in your area, the DRC provides access to assistance from churches nationally and internationally. See Manual, **When Disaster Strikes: Interfaith Response Field Manual.**

While Church World Service is NOT a major funder of most programs, Church World Service can help to identify available resources for relief and long-term recovery and publicize needs. Blankets and “Gifts of the Heart” health, school, medical, clean-up, layette, sewing, kitchen utensil, and bedding kits are available through Church World Service when other resources are not available (See page 23).



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Your contribution to the Church World Service Blanket Program is one important way you can provide comfort to disaster survivors.

## III. Natural Disaster Stage Three—Recovery/Reconstruction/Transformation

People and communities try to return to normal during stage three of disaster. People begin moving out of shelters and into temporary housing and homes, and lives begin to be rebuilt in the recovery or reconstruction stage.

The problem and challenge to the churches is that there can be no “return to normal” for most people. People with little or no insurance, renters, and the poor are often left with few resources. The aid given by the larger helping agencies is often not enough. Survivors and care-givers alike get very tired and stressed. The “high” that was part of the earlier phases as people worked and cried together can turn to bitterness, selfishness, and factionalism. In successful recovery, emotional and

spiritual renewal and transformation are as important—or even more important than physical rebuilding.

The recovery/reconstruction stage usually lasts about ten times as long as the relief stage or about one year except in complex socio-political situations in catastrophic disasters where several or many years are needed for full recovery and transformation to a new life.

### What You and Your Church Can Do

When disaster strikes your community, many people and organizations may come to help, but your church and other faith groups should take responsibility for complete recovery in your community. When other groups leave the disaster area, churches and other faith groups are often the only ones to follow through on unmet needs until the survivors approach full recovery.

You are not alone. You are a vital link in a large safety network of church disaster responders. Many people and churches are ready to help. You can coordinate volunteers and groups coming into the community to repair or rebuild, and give spiritual care to the survivors and the care-givers as well. Working together, you can find and advocate for/with those most in need—reaching out to all persons and families

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Andrea Wolf for Church World Service

An important part of disaster response is counseling survivors so they can claim their own strength and make use of resources in their community.

in the community who otherwise may be forgotten. Responding through an interfaith group can prevent duplication.

See also manuals:

**When Disaster Strikes: Interfaith Response Field Manual**

**Emotional, Spiritual and Pastoral Care for Disaster Survivors and Care-Givers**

### How Church World Service Can Help

When you are affected by a major disaster and long-term needs are greater than available resources in your community, contact your church, the Church World Service

Disaster Resource Consultant in your area or Church World Service/New York.

Church World Service can help the involved churches by:

- publicizing unmet human needs;
- advising on such matters as spiritual/pastoral care, renewal and transformation, training, length of the projected program, budgetary needs and revisions, managing and nurturing volunteers, and evaluation, closure, or transition of the coordinated program.

“You and your church are not alone in disaster recovery.”

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## **The Two Stages of Human-Caused Disaster**

### **I. Human-Caused Disaster Stage One— Acute Emergency**

The acute emergency stage can last from a few hours to several days or longer. After a disaster such as an explosion and/or contamination, substances involved in the human-caused disaster may be unknown. Immediate evacuation is urgent. A presidential declaration, which brings federal assistance for survivors of natural disasters, is not likely.

#### **What You and Your Church Can Do**

If you and your family are affected, leave the area immediately. Even before authorities arrive, it is urgent to evacuate children, the elderly, pregnant women, and those with respiratory illnesses.

As soon as possible, notify your pastor and regional church executives and the Church World Service-trained Disaster Resource Consultant or Church World Service Disaster Response headquarters in New York.

You may offer your church facility for temporary shelter. Having a pre-arranged agreement with the American Red Cross facilitates this.

Your church has the trust of the community and can call for clear information about what occurred and about how it is affecting people.

#### **How Church World Service Can Help**

A Church World Service Disaster Resource Consultant and/or Church World Service/ New York can help provide special expertise garnered from the denominational participants and other experts on the Church World Service Technological Disaster Task Force.

### **II. Human-Caused Disaster Stage Two— Relief & Long-Term Recovery**

After the acute emergency, evacuation stage of a human-caused disaster, there may be controversy about the point at which the area will be (if ever) clean and safe. Psychological, spiritual, and health

issues can be very serious and long lasting. Long-term medical and legal issues may continue for two to ten years or longer; many times they persist into the next generation(s).

#### **What You and Your Church Can Do**

Encourage representatives of your church to meet with other religious groups in the community and call for the facts. The church is most effective when it does not take sides, but rather acts as a go-between to call for information on all sides with integrity. The help of unbiased experts in the legal, health, and scientific fields is essential to the potential recovery of the disaster survivors.

Working together, you and your church and other religious organizations can search out those most in need in your community, and advocate for and with them. You can give spiritual care to the survivors and the care-givers as well. Effectively responding to disaster as part of an interfaith group will prevent duplication and give outreach to all persons and families in the community who otherwise may be forgotten. See also Manual, **Human-Caused Disasters: Prevention, Mitigation, Response.**

#### **How Church World Service Can Help**

The Church World Service-trained volunteer Disaster Resource Consultant has access to specific resources needed to respond to human-caused disasters. In addition to scientific, medical, legal, and other human resources, denominational participants and other experts on the Church World Service Technological Disaster Task Force have expertise in providing specialized advocacy and spiritual care, for those in need. Church World Service-supported interfaith groups assisted at Times Beach, Missouri, after the dioxin spill; Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, after nuclear contamination; Love Canal, New York; the Nevada rocket fuel plant explosion; and Edison, New Jersey, after the natural gas explosion.