



## What Disasters Teach the Church

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### **Abstract**

Churches and congregations are increasingly becoming engaged in disaster relief and recovery work as a result of several significant trends. Disasters are becoming both more frequent and destructive. NGOs (non-governmental organizations) see churches and congregations as having deep local connections to the community which can enhance their impact, and governments are increasingly willing to fund work by faith-based groups. In Japan, the church faces the reality of disaster response becoming a continuing mission rather than to rare events. While there are many benefits to this trend in terms of caring for people in need and the witness of the church, there are also risks the church and congregations should be aware of. These risks include the way disasters, and reporting of disasters, distorts our understanding of the community and community needs. There are risks to accepting resources from external groups, and there are risks to making disaster relief and recovery a focus of ministry. As an alternative, we propose several models for disaster ministry that we see as consistent with the core mission of the church and which reduce these risks. We conclude with recommendations for training and ministry.

### **Introduction**

In March 2011, the Christian churches in Japan, along with the rest of the country, experienced an epiphany: Long held assumptions about safety, the community, and how to serve the

Japanese people were, like many communities along Japan's north coast, overwhelmed by the tsunami.

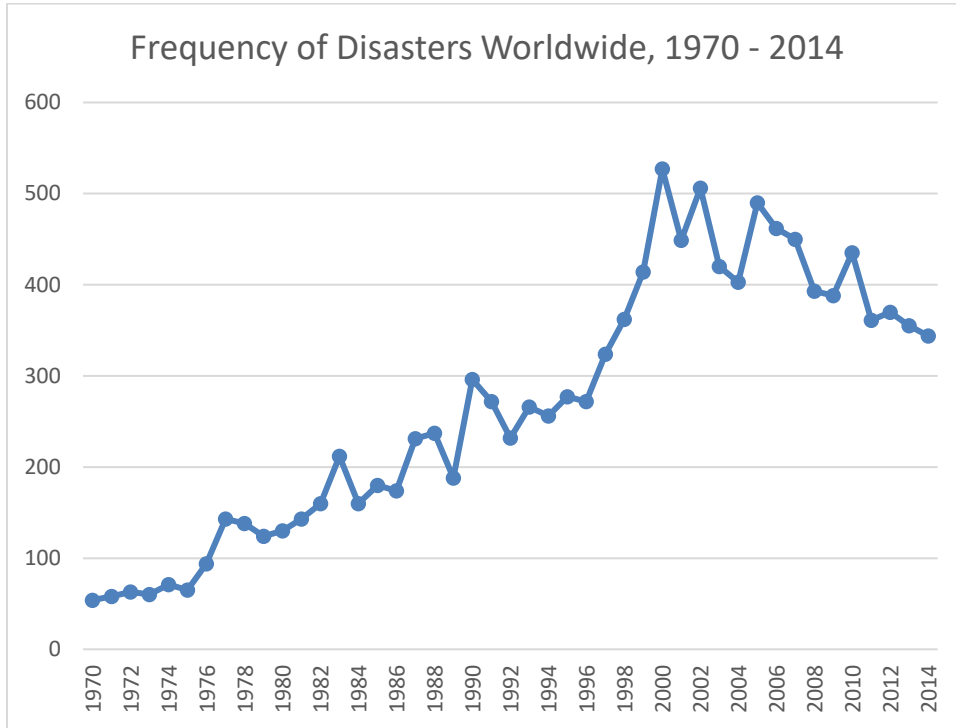
Such disasters demand our attention and action. They are called natural disasters, may also be called civic disasters, as entire communities are disrupted or destroyed and along with them, people are killed or displaced and suffer terribly. These disasters call into question our relationship to the community and our responsibility as Christians. When so many government and private groups respond to this disaster, what is the proper role for the church? If the church acts as another relief agency, how does it maintain a distinct witness? What are the risks to the church of devoting scarce resources to the seemingly never ending cycle of disasters?

The response to disasters, both the immediate response and the long term recovery, has increasingly engaged the church and faith-based groups. The number of faith-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide has grown significantly the past few decades. Supporting that growth has been the increasing willingness of governments and other funders to support faith-based groups, and in some countries, even directly fund churches for disaster care. This has been called the New Policy Agenda in which governments play less of a role in development while local actors, including churches and faith-based organizations, play a larger role (Hearn, 2002). For example, driven in part by the Charitable Choice provision of the George W. Bush administration, USAID funding to faith-based organizations between 2001 and 2005 rose to \$1.7 billion (US. dollars.) Driving this trend is the recognition that there are people that government groups do not serve well or cannot reach. In contrast to government and large NGOs, churches are seen as typically well connected to their local community, and as such, valuable extenders of the work of governments and NGOs. Engaging churches started from seeing them as sources for recruiting volunteers, and then evolved into recruiting the churches themselves to do the work of the agency or NGO.

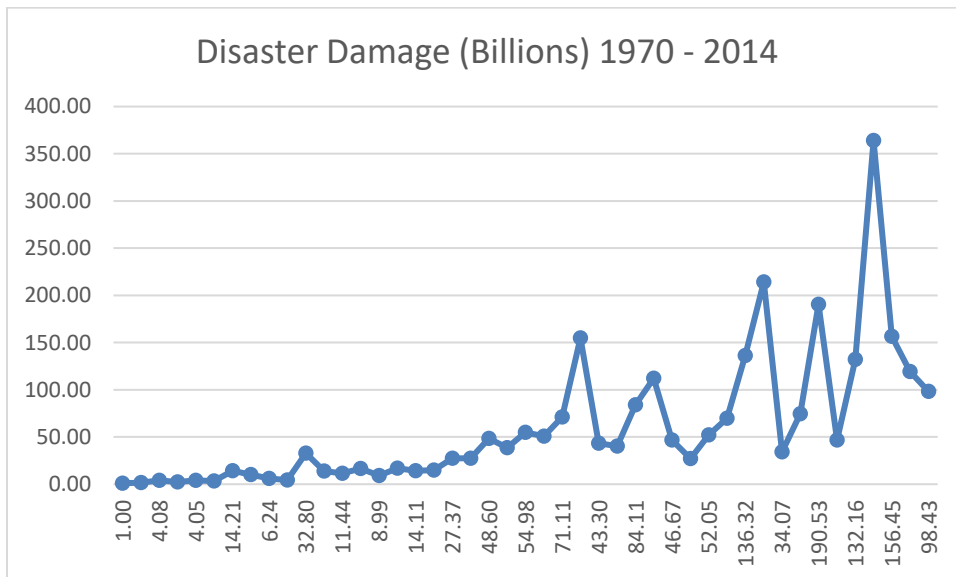
In tandem with these trends in faith-based organization engagement, there has been a dramatic rise in both the frequency of disasters (Graph 1) and the number of people impacted by disasters (Graph 2). While the reason for this increase is debated, whether it is because disaster are more

intense or more people are in the path of disasters, the increase in destruction and lives lost is clear.

Graph 1: Frequency of Disasters Worldwide, 1970 – 2014



Graph 2: Number of People Impacted by Disasters



These multiple trends have been both an opportunity and a threat to the church. They provide valuable lessons for Japanese churches and seminaries asking such questions as what is a proper

role for the church in disasters, is this something best left to government, and how do disasters relate to the basic mission of the church. The aim of this paper is to clarify these threats and their lessons so that other churches and congregations will be equipped to recognize them, and in that way address some of these questions. We then propose strategies with a clear theological basis that equip the church for disaster related ministry while minimizing risks to the church's essential mission.

## **The Mission of the Church**

In order to understand the risks of engaging in disaster ministry we must first establish what exactly is being put at risk. We start with the proposition that there are defining tasks for the church, that is, tasks that go to the essence for the reason for the existence of the church. Anything that threatens these defining tasks needs to be approached with great care, if not avoided altogether. In the extreme, when these defining tasks are compromised, then the primary mission and identity of the church is compromised. We see three of these tasks as especially relevant to our discussion of disaster care: The proclamation of the church as the salt of the earth, the call to the church as the light of the earth (Matt 5:13-16), and the repeated call throughout the Bible to serve the vulnerable (e.g. Matt 25:35; Acts 10:4).

Salt penetrates the earth. The analogy to salt is to say that the church preserves the world and acts to protect it from corruption. Note that Jesus does not say He is the salt, he says His disciples are the salt, and not the salt of the church, the salt of the entire earth. He also does not say *become* salt, or *you should be salt*, but that you *are* salt (Bonhoeffer, p.104). Therefore, our presence in the world is needed and expected. We are also cautioned that when a salt loses its taste, it then no longer has value (Matt. 5:13). This caution speaks to our main point, that anything that threatens the role of the church as the salt of the earth threatens the foundation of the church.

Light refers to visibility, being engaged in a way that is visible to others. Unlike salt, Christ does refer to Himself as light, and His followers are also to make their light visible to others. The work of the church is to be visible to the world.

But what kind of light? This question points us to exactly what is it that is to be visible. Bonhoeffer refers to these works as the work Christ has called all disciples to: serving the poor, peace, servitude, and the qualities of the beatitudes (Bonhoeffer, 1949).

In preserving the earth, and acting in a way that is visible to others, there is also a particular character to this work. Scripture is clear; we are commanded to do unto the least of these. We also have the parable of the Good Samaritan in acting when we see people suffering. This addresses the importance of serving the weak and vulnerable, with no reference to whether they are within the church. We are simply commanded to serve them wherever we may find them. Thus, it is natural for churches to be responsive in the event of disasters, and see this as an important area of ministry. The question we are examining is not whether to be responsive to a disaster, but rather how are we to respond in a way that is consistent with being salt, light, and compassionate to those in need?

This brings us to our central theme: In terms of disasters, we propose that the church must be engaged as the church, meaning in a way that serves the commandment to be salt, light and compassionate. There are ways to be involved that compete with and can do damage to the mission of the church. The church needs to understand the distinction.

We further propose that this speaks to the issue of what is known as “social gospel”. There is a long-standing concern among conservative groups that engaging in serving the community creates the image of the church as a social agency and fails to correctly convey the message of the gospel. Our analysis supports this concern. Some argue that the liberal theology movement of the 1930s and 1940s did a poor job of developing the theological basis for social mission while reacting to conservative theology, thus creating an unnecessary schism between social ministry and evangelism (Mataxas, 2011). This speaks to the point we are making. Again, we are commanded to be salt and light, and to serve others in need, and so have no choice about engaging with the community, but how the church does it is the key issue.

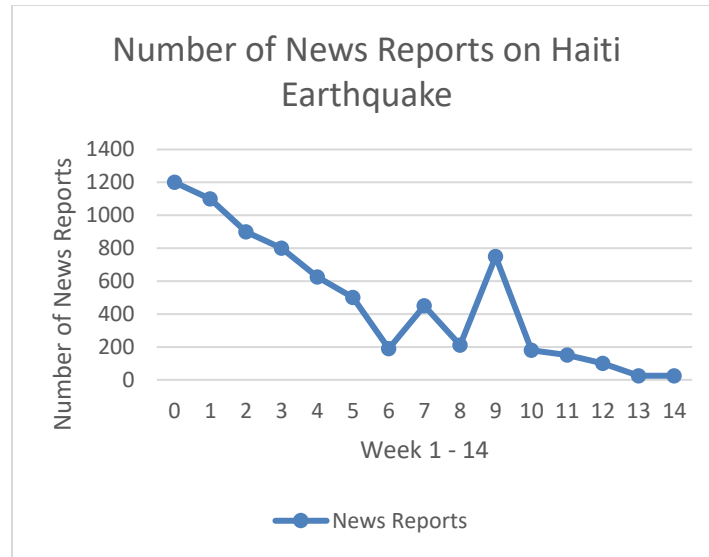
Unfortunately, there are two sources of distortion in how we carry out this mission in regard to disasters: Our understanding and response to disasters and the church’s relationship to other

agencies, both government and private. We will now consider each of these distortions and the challenge they present so we can then formulate models of response that address these concerns.

### **Our Misperception of Disasters**

When asked about disasters, the average person thinks of extreme events, e.g. tornadoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, etc. This is a bias to think of disasters as only those events that are unpredictable, extreme, and unusual. This bias is compounded by several related factors. First, the media focuses on extreme and exceptional events as most newsworthy. This is a brief focus, and soon the media is on to the next extreme event. Thus, we think disasters are also short lived. Further, the images from disasters are dramatic, clear and easily recalled. Consider the image of the ships swept inland by the tsunami, or the planes flying into the World Trade Center on 9/11. Events that are repeated in the media and associated with clear images seem to us to be more likely to happen. This is called the availability heuristic (Carroll, 1978). As a result of being presented with clear, dramatic images played over and over again, people distort risks. In the US, people have a heightened awareness of terrorism and many people avoid flying, even though the risk of being killed by terrorism in the US is lower than the risk of dying from your pajamas being set on fire, lightning, bee stings, or peanut allergies (Pinker, 2011). Put another way, when we consider the likelihood of an event, or the degree of need, people are guided by the vividness of their imaginations and the frequency of hearing about something rather than by facts. Consider Graph 3 showing the reporting of disaster events by the New York Times (below). Clearly, there is intense interest in the first ten days, and then interest drops quickly.

Graph 3: Number of News Reports on Haiti Earthquake



The response to disasters, as measured by donations, follows a similar curve, with donations to the Haiti earthquake peaking less than three days after the event. In addition to suggesting the short attention for news, this short term focus reinforces the view that disasters are about the immediate crisis.

From our work in disaster ministries, we see several consequences of this crisis view: First, it defines the disaster by the immediate crisis and neglects long term consequences and needs. Focusing on the immediate crisis creates an approach to disaster driven by episodes of extreme events rather than long term engagement. An episodic focus makes it very difficult to maintain a program as people lose interest and their skills decline. Further, it overlooks the very strength of the church and congregations, which is the long term presence in the community and connections to the most vulnerable as a result of serving those in need.

Second, like focusing on terrorism, these distortions cause us to over-estimate risk from dramatic events and under estimate risk from less dramatic events. There are many disasters that have a major community impact, but are not associated with dramatic events. Influenza and other contagious diseases, like MRSA, are major threats that are not considered disasters, but kill many more people than extreme weather. Less dramatic weather events, or slowly unfolding events, like heat waves or the impact of climate change, gather less attention because they are not associated with clear, dramatic images that make it into the media.

Third, the focus on extreme events causes us to overlook who suffers from disasters in the long term because our attention comes to an end as the initial dramatic phase of disaster passes.

Consider the following events:

In 2011 the largest outbreak of tornadoes occurred in the Southeast US. The worst of these struck Tuscaloosa Alabama where an EF5 tornado went through the suburbs. Of the more than 200 people killed, 60% were over age 55, and half of those over 80. 90% of the victims were active in their local church, and none of the churches had any plan for care of vulnerable people in a disaster.

In 2002, an ice storm in North Carolina knocked out power to 5 million people in the midst of winter. 34 people died, not from cold, but mainly from carbon monoxide poisoning. Most of those people were migrant workers from the south who had no experience with extreme cold and did not know the dangers of heating your home with barbeque or other open flame.

In 1997, Chicago experienced a major heat wave that killed 750 people over four days. Most of those people were elderly who lived in older, poorly insulated buildings in high crime areas. The deaths had as much to do with their social situation and vulnerability as with the heat wave (Klinenberg, 2002).

Finally, consider the victims of the 2001 tsunami. Nearly two and one half years after the earthquake and tsunami 103,000 are reported still living in temporary housing with no prospects of rebuilding their homes.<sup>1</sup> The people in temporary shelters are predominantly over 60 and from the small coastal towns destroyed in the tsunami. These statistics and those above reveal that the vulnerable are not only vulnerable in terms of the immediate impact, but also the longer term impact of disasters. This is a pattern repeated with every disaster around the world: The vulnerable suffer most of the long term consequences.

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<sup>1</sup> Downloaded from <http://recoveringtohoku.wordpress.com/category/housing/temporary-housing/> 12/17/2013



These examples, and many others like them, point out several characteristics of our perception of disasters and risk:

*Misperception #1 Disaster ministry means doing relief work.*

This misperception results from seeing disaster work as relief work during the peak of the crisis. Relief is viewed as specialized and technically demanding work that is carried out during the occasional episodes of extreme disasters. This focus on episodic and extreme events hinders our seeing those who suffer the long term consequences of disasters and those most vulnerable to disasters, the exact groups the church is in the best position to care for. For example, in Haiti, cholera has taken 8,000 lives since 2010 and is a growing epidemic mainly impacting the rural poor, but the amount of aid to the country and the number of medical teams operating continue to be cut dramatically.

*Misperception #2: Disaster work is mainly about caring for the immediate survivors.*

This is a corollary of the above issue. Medically fragile people suffer for long afterwards as care is disrupted. Further, the more a community is socially vulnerable, the greater the damage from a disaster (Thomas, et al, 2013). The needs of this group become more apparent as the disaster response moves into longer term recovery, which is also when aid and public attention drop dramatically. Addressing vulnerability and long term recovery are best done by the local church where the church has a long term presence in the community and a continuing relationship with those in need. However, awareness of the need and the importance of this role are compromised by the perception that the disaster is over once the destruction is cleaned up and repaired.

*Misperception #3: Disaster work is better done by professional agencies.*

We support church teams engaging in disaster recovery work, and do not see such work as a threat or concern. We do see a concern with the thinking that this is the sum of disaster ministry, a view that flows from focusing on extreme events. As we will see, there is a trend to teach churches specialized skills for disaster work, which can be useful, but can also imply that the core ministry of the church is insufficient for disaster related work. This does damage to the distinctive contribution by the church that is not in reaction to an extreme event, but flows from a

clear sense of mission and consistent connection to the community.

This brings us to the central hypothesis of this paper: That disasters reveal the need to redeem community and creation by revealing the people who suffer from inequality, lack of care, injustice, and lack of access to resources. As such, disasters reveal the communities basic need for the church as the body that gives agency to redemption. Therefore, disasters are not simply an opportunity for the church; they reveal the necessity for the work of the church. The work of the church is not primarily as specialists in disasters, but as the organization through which the redemption of the community and creation will be achieved.

### **Who Then Should the Church Work With?**

If churches are to engage more extensively in serving their communities, with disasters serving as both an opportunity to serve and a measure of the community need to be served, then what shall be the church's relationship with other institutions in this work? This brings us to the second of our two categories of risk, the influence of state and non-governmental institutions.

The theory of institutional isomorphism asserts that institutions that work in related fields will come to resemble one another over time. This has been shown with non-governmental institutions and government agencies alike (Frumkin & Galaskiewicz, 2004). Burchardt (2013) documented this occurring in a large group of churches engaged in the campaign to halt the spread of HIV in South Africa. In this campaign, there was a decided shift in collaboration between church and NGO from NGOs recruiting volunteers via churches, to directly funding the churches to provide the program services. The campaign was quite successful, and likely more so than would have been possible without church participation in reaching local populations (Gunderson & Cochrane, 2012). However, this program had a clear impact upon the participating churches. Over time, the churches adopted structures and management practices that were encouraged by their NGO partners so that they would more efficiently and effectively manage the programs. Church ministries that were not aligned with the HIV campaign began to receive less support while HIV programming, in many cases, came to dominate the ministries of

the participating churches. In one case, a church ceased to be recognized by the local community as a church, and instead was perceived to be an HIV service center.

The impact on the local church described by Burchardt took place in large part because a well-resourced organization (the Government and NGOs) was recruiting and influencing a poorly resourced organization (the church, especially poor and rural churches). This is a particular concern for rural and underdeveloped regions where it is often the case that churches and their staff cannot be fully supported from local resources. Under such conditions, receiving funding that provides employment for staff and allows them to focus on their church work can be a powerful inducement. This is a particular concern outside of the developed world, where churches are typically not able to pay their pastors or support them full time. This widespread poverty creates vulnerability.(Englund, 2003). Further, once resources are provided to churches, they may find it difficult to sustain their work, especially when serving the poor and rural communities where there are insufficient local resources to maintain needed programs. (Green, 2002)

This disparity in resources is only one condition under which such influence can occur. Dimaggio and Powell (2004) describe the multiple conditions under which one institution will influence another, with the result of the two becoming more similar. These conditions include a more organized institution influence over a less well organized one, and an institution with a more positive reputation for effectiveness or success having more influence over those with less of a reputation. As a result of these and other influences, simply by operating in the same field of endeavor (such as building community disaster resilience or recovery), it becomes more likely a group of institutions will move over time toward becoming more alike, and especially like the more powerful and respected.

Sometimes these influences are quite overt. For example, Hauck (2010) calls for actions to strengthen the management and leadership capabilities of churches so they can function as better partners with NGOs and be better equipped to help NGOs reach the local community. This seemingly helpful recommendation is made without considering the consequences for the

church. It implies that the church is not sufficient as it is but must become more like an NGO to be effective in serving the community.

The church's ministry does not need to be at risk when it engages in the community. Beckert (2010) notes that organizations working together do not necessarily become more alike. Under some conditions, cooperating institutions can maintain their distinctiveness and become even more distinctive from their co-operating institutions. When an institution has clarity regarding its own purpose and mission and a distinctive role, engaging with other institutions can serve to sharpen this mission. Applied to the church, it means the church needs to be very clear about its mission, including exactly why it is engaged in disaster ministry. It means that church members must be clear about how their role is related to fulfilling the core mission of the church rather co-opting the mission of an NGO. For the church, this speaks to the need to have a distinctive mission and clear role relative to other organizations and relative to disasters. Green (2002) recommends "churches come to a considered understanding of their desired role ... and communicate this to government [and, we would add, NGOs], entering into dialogue concerning relative roles and relationships." (p.351).

This then brings us back to our central aim, that the twin distortions of focusing on extreme disaster events, and operating together with NGOs and government agencies when serving disaster recovery, risks undermining the mission of the church. The solution to this is for the church to be the church, by which we mean that it carry out its core mission as salt, light and compassion. Further, that the church do so with clarity and an understanding of the distinctiveness and great importance of being the church. What then does it mean to be the church, and how is that carried out in practice? We offer several models, based on observations in the field, in which we see churches playing distinctive roles that point to the qualities of salt, light and compassion.

### **Models for Church-based Disaster Ministry**

#### *The Church as a Bridge to those in Need*

The concept of a bridge means connecting two communities. In this regard, the church can serve as a bridge between the vulnerable and those with the resources and responsibility to serve the

vulnerable. The church brings not only the special role of representative of the local community, but also the position of trust built up over time through consistent service and caring ministry. We have seen multiple examples around the world of how a church can act as a bridge.

The church can be a bridge to programs that serve the vulnerable, and which the vulnerable population lacks the skills to access (thus the church assists with skills and enables access), lacks the awareness, or lacks trust in the program provider.

The church can be a bridge to technical resources. In East Africa, drought is becoming an annual event where it was once a 10 or 20 year event. This is threatening local communities. The church can serve as a point of access, both to bring in those with skills and resources to address the problem, and also as a way to communicate out to the world where a community is not receiving attention and needs assistance.

Finally, and this is not an exhaustive list, the church can be the bridge between the external NGO and the community, serving as advocate for the community and the facilitator for the NGO. This is not as the NGOs agent, but as the advocate for the community and local community expert that can inform the NGO services.

#### *The Church as a Resilient Community*

As mentioned, communities are more resilient when a set of social strengths are in place, such as low barriers to information and other resources, justice, education, health, and more. As a the salt of the earth, a church impacts community resilience. First, it adopts the characteristics of a resilient community by promoting community, justice, and access to resources within the church. Then, by becoming a community characterized by openness, equity, justice and service, the church impacts the community in several ways. First, members gain experience with what is meant by resilience, and carry this into their interactions with the rest of the community. Second, by breaking down barriers, the church can demonstrate the benefits to the entire community and counter pressures toward isolation and privilege.

#### *The Church as a Healing Community*

Physical, emotional and spiritual healing are areas where the church can make a special contribution and highlight its distinctiveness (Aten, et al, 2013; Boan, 2012; Boan, et al, 2012). People often seek out the church and pastors following disasters and trauma as part of their effort to make sense of the experience and resolve conflicts around meaning and the nature of God. Churches are in a special position to equip volunteers to speak to these issues and offer comfort to survivors.

Healing is also a long term process. As noted at the start, the world's attention span is very short when it comes to disasters. Churches, especially when serving the local community, are in a position to demonstrate faithfulness and caring by persevering over the long term to aid with recovery. This means adopting disaster care not as an emergency service, but as a way of life, done on a continuing basis for as long as the need exists.

In addition to healing at the individual level, healing also occurs at two other levels. A church is a healing community when it offers group and community sources for nurturing, support and comfort. Social activities, community events, and other community level activities also serve to provide healing to those in need by demonstrating that they are part of a community that cares.

Finally, churches also heal by teaching healing, compassion and comfort. This teaching occurs in several places, such as from the pulpit during worship services, in Sunday School, and in other institutional programs. These more formal pronouncements influence the meaning people make of their experience and are a source of comfort and healing that can be overlooked.

### *The Church as Community Monitor*

In some cases, disasters reveal the need to take political action to address the failure of the state. Bonhoeffer spoke to this as the rare but important role of the church to confront government when it is failing in its role to maintain law and order and serve the community (Mataxas, 2011). This is not to be confused with the church becoming politically active. Bonhoeffer emphasizes the church remaining independent of the state but not uninvolved. The church becomes the ultimate advocate for the community when it observes the state failing in its responsibility and acts to restore the state to its proper role. In terms of disasters, we described how disasters reveal

the character of the community. In extreme cases, this can reveal corruption, failure of policy, or failure of justice in caring for the vulnerable. In these cases it is proper for the church to become an activist in revealing and correcting these failures of the state.

## **Implications**

In Japan, where there is not a long history of church engagement with the community, NGOs or government, carving out a distinct role for the church can seem difficult. We described how this can be the result of thinking of disaster work as technical or specialized work, rather than seeing disaster work as fundamentally an extension of the compassionate relationship to the community. The church is capable of playing a powerful role in a disaster when it knows the community and serves faithfully and compassionately for the long term. This is not a new role, it is the core role the church is called to fulfill. This is the role being carried out in the tsunami area in the north, and which is distinctive from other services. The church does not need specialists to carry this out. It simply needs to be what it is called to be; salt, light and compassion.

We conclude our discussion with listing four important implications of this discussion for preparing church leaders. First, the theology of church engagement into the community is fundamental to training church leaders. In our opinion, this topic has been unnecessarily complicated by the concern with social gospel that is seen as somehow undermining evangelism. The fact that this issue persists in many parts of the world shows that there is a lack of clear and well developed theology education on this issue.

Leadership is the second essential topic. We described how a lack of clarity in mission, and the failure to show members how the ministries of the church fulfill the mission, makes the church vulnerable to influence from non-faith-based institutions. Preventing this is a task for leadership, and schools need to address this in preparing future leaders.

Serving the vulnerable is fundamental to the identity of the church, but it is another topic that is distorted by media and politics. In some countries, being poor is characterized as being dependent, unmotivated, or overindulged by government programs. This is a distortion of what

it means to be poor, and further, a distortion of who is vulnerable. Many more people are vulnerable than is generally recognized, but acknowledging vulnerability and accepting assistance is equated with many negative images, thus interfering with ministry. In serving the poor and vulnerable, we need to educate future leaders about what it means to be poor and vulnerable.

Finally, leaders need to demonstrate to church members what it means to be an advocate, to be a healing community, to be the resilient community, and more fundamentally, to be salt and light. The mission of the church is not a matter of teaching concepts or theological positions, it is about actions. If the church is to fulfill its' role of being salt and light, it must take actions that are visible and penetrate the community. Leaders will need to be educated to show the way to do this.

### **A Case Example: the Philippines**

On November 8, 2013 Typhoon Haiyan (known locally Typhoon Yolanda) made landfall in Eastern Samar Province of the Philippines. When it landed, it became the largest typhoon to make landfall, with sustained winds of 315 kph. By the time the typhoon exited over the West Philippine Sea an estimated 9 million people were impacted, 5,200 killed, and a quarter million homes destroyed. In response, the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches began organizing to assist the churches impacted and also equip churches for survivor care. The initial proposal was to train disaster chaplains who would then provide care to adults and children, and also orient church leaders and member to provide emotional and spiritual care. Further discussions led to broadening this proposal to provide multiple models for engaging church leaders and members in ministry.

The rationale for expanding program starts with the potential for impact. If the focus is limited to disaster chaplains and emotional care helpers, then a minority of church members would be engaged. While 750 is a significant number, it represents only 2.5% of the 30,000 church members and leaders in the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches. Alternatively, if there are multiple roles available for church leaders and members, and if those roles included



recognition of how existing ministries can serve those impacted by the typhoon, then the opportunities for impacting those in need would expand dramatically, ideally engaging the majority of churches in this ministry. Further, the focus on survivors, while essential, overlooks the broader impact on the country and the fact that people not immediately suffering loss from the typhoon can still be impacted indirectly and the damage from the typhoon spreads across the country. Thus, in collaboration with the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, the proposed program added training and mentoring in the following types of programs:

- Strategies for informing existing ministries for disaster response, with an emphasis on recognition and care for the vulnerable;
- Advocacy for the vulnerable, including strategies for communicating the needs of the vulnerable and promoting distribution of resources to those in need;
- Monitoring corruption, especially monitoring for selective distribution of resources, lack of transparency, and lack of accountability;
- Serving as a bridge to resources by assessing the needs within a area of ministry and then connecting with external resources to service those in need;
- Collaboration and communication, with an emphasis on keeping other ministries informed of services and resources, making needs known, and promoting coordination;
- Providing support services, from supporting training for those serving as a relief staff, providing retreat and rest for relief workers, and making the needs of the relief staff known to others who can provide resources.

Taken together with disaster chaplain and emotional and spiritual care training, these programs provide an array of ministry types that create expanded opportunities for service without requiring people to change roles to helpers or chaplains. Most importantly, it emphasizes showing churches how their existing work can serve the needs of disaster survivors and broadly address the impacts of a disaster, without changing the church into a specialized disaster program.

At this time these programs and trainings are being prepared for implementation, and their impact and success will be measured and reported in the future. We will be assessing whether

people use the training provided, whether training reduces the risk for burnout among volunteers, and how many churches actually engage in one or more of the range of models of ministry promoted in the training.

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