



## **Disaster Response:**

### **A Guide for Local Churches And Presbyteries**

#### **Developed by:**

**The Presbytery of Southern Florida – Presbyterian Church In  
America**

**Based on the experiences from Hurricane Andrew**

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*Editorial note: This Guide is a “recreation of the original work” done by Presbytery of Southern Florida. The Editor has faithfully tried to recreate the document as closely to the original as possible. There were corrections made for spelling and word choice. Please address your questions, comments and corrections to the content to MNA Short Term Director Arklie Hooten. Please communicate with him at [ahooten@pcanet.org](mailto:ahooten@pcanet.org)*

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**Compiled 1992**

## Hurricane Andrew: An Overview

After Several days of meandering through the South Atlantic, Hurricane Andrew, the first major storm of the year reached landfall around 4 A.M. in the morning on August 24, 1992. The eye of the storm was centered in South Dade county in the vicinity of Homestead, Florida. Andre was officially listed as a Class IV storm (on a scale of I to V with Class V being the strongest), however, many seasoned observers and most victims felt it was more intense. *[Editor's Note: Andrew was officially re-classified as a category five Hurricane in 1996]* It was a fast moving storm with sustained winds recorded in excess of 160 miles per hour. Gusts were estimated to be over 200 miles per hour. Unlike previous great hurricanes such as Camille (Gulf Coast, 1969), Andrew generated a relatively small storm surge. There was destruction along the immediate coast but it wasn't necessarily any worse that five or ten miles inland. The great majority of the damage was from the sustained high winds and possibly tornadoes spun off by the storm. Andrew unleashed its fury over an area covering 600 square miles. One observer referred to the ravaged area as "A sea of destruction." Mile and mile of leveled homes and businesses, telephone poles and giant oak trees snapped like toothpicks, and in some areas concrete walls were blown over as if they were ply board. The wreckage in the aftermath of Andrew reminded some people of the war-torn areas in World War II that had been obliterated by constant bombing.

Though exposed homes and furniture were soaked from the rain accompanying the storm, scientifically speaking, it was a relatively dry hurricane in that it did not linger over the area and drop huge amounts of rain. There was no widespread street flooding from sewers, canals, creeks, and feeder streams as there had been in other great storms. In storms with massive flooding poorer segments of the population suffer greater losses because they are more likely to build on inexpensive land in flood prone areas. Andrew's high winds were no respecter of socio-economic classes. The destruction was heavy, widespread, and indiscriminate.

Andrew was directly or indirectly responsible for 52 deaths (In Florida, Louisiana, and the Bahamas). Based on the amount of devastation, this number undoubtedly would have been in the thousands were it not the mass evacuation of the area prior to the storm reaching landfall. Approximately 150, 000 houses, mobile homes, and apartment units were damaged or destroyed. Eighty two thousand businesses were damaged or destroyed. Nine public schools were completely destroyed and thirteen others were so heavily damaged that the children could not return to those schools. Over 1.4 Million people lost electric power. In some areas the power remained out for over a month. In the hardest hit area of South Dade practically every aspect of life was disrupted. The many basics that all of us take for granted (telephone communication, potable water, food supply, restrooms, safety of a secured home, use of public streets, etc) vanished in the aftermath of Andrew. As one observer put it "Andrew completely destroyed the infrastructure in several communities." Not only were the traffic signals destroyed but the street signs were blown away. That, coupled with the almost total wreckage, made it impossible for anyone unfamiliar with the community to locate a particular home or building. For weeks following the storm street maps were useless.

The devastation wrought by Andrew brought out the best and worst of people. Thirty thousand military troops were brought in to prevent looting and to maintain some semblance of order. On the other hand, thousands of people poured into the area to volunteer their time to help their fellow Americans in this time of crisis. A few took advantage of the situation to sell critical items such as much needed ice for five dollars per bag while some trucks came from as far away as Pennsylvania and gave ice freely to those who needed it. There are those on the periphery that suffered marginal damage making unreasonable demands of the relief agencies while many who suffered total loss patiently endured the ordeal.

## PCA CHURCHES RESPOND

Amid the chaos and confusion of those first hectic hours following the storm, groups and individuals immediately began to organize to deal with the emergency. Among these groups were dozens of churches in or adjacent to the affected area. Many had facilities intact so were able to serve as emergency distribution centers, as well as provide for relief of members of their congregations and nearby residents. As in all previous disasters, people tended to turn first to their church for assurance and assistance. Local churches efforts preceded those of the local government and large national organization such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, or FEMA. The churches of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) were no exception. After quickly securing their own homes as much as possible, pastoral and lay staff of the several POCA churches immediately began to minister to the spiritual and physical needs of their congregation. The effective and timely response of PCA churches in Dade County (supported by sister churches from around the country) provided the basis for this disaster response manual. It was prepared by the churches of the presbytery of Southern Florida after a retrospective review of their effort. Recognizing that another natural disaster could occur at anytime they wanted others to be able to benefit from their experience. The manual is not all-inclusive; it does not have an answer for every problem that may be confronted in a disaster. It is intended to be a practical guide for the individual that has either been previously been appointed or drafted on the spot to be the disaster relief co-coordinator for the local church.

### DISASTER RESPONSE \_ WHY THE CHURCH?

The contributors to this manual spent many hours walking through the devastation of wrought by Hurricane Andrew. They were there from the earliest hours and many remained after several months. Some directed relief activities. Others were simply volunteering their time. Some were pastors. Most were lay people. They worked mass shelters, distribution centers, and mobile feeding stations. They served as members of work teams cleaning debris and assisting with emergency home repairs. They helped the elderly and others to apply for assistance through the various agencies. They held discussions with those receiving assistance as well as those providing it. The one observation that was consistent among these people was:

### THE CHURCH PLAYED A UNIQUE AND VITAL ROLE IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE ANDREW.

The one quality that distinguished the church response from that of secular and governmental organizations was the spiritual element. The Christians who worked so hard after Hurricane Andrew were following Jesus' example and "doing for the least of these" what had to be done under varying circumstances. This, whether planned or not, was a form of evangelism. The disaster work, to them, transcended a mere urgent task. It was an opportunity to show unconditional love to their fellowman. It was a chance to encourage, to uplift, to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of a hurting

people and let the hurting people minister to them. The government is not concerned about spiritual needs, neither are secular organization that respond. But God's people are. This was evident in Andrew and it will be evident in future catastrophes.

#### A TIME FOR EVANGELISM

Repeatedly, the question came up "Should we evangelize during our relief effort?" This question was applicable to every Christian church not just those affiliated with the PCA. The answer was always yes, but the nature of the evangelism varied from group to group. As mentioned above, some consider the outreach to minister to the practical needs of the suffering as an important form of evangelism. On numerous occasions, these situations did lead to opportunities to share the "Good News" of Jesus Christ with individuals but it was not pre-planned.

In other cases, there were specific ministries set-up to evangelize. "Operation Andrew" was one of the more notable ones. Launched by Reverend Bill Iverson in the very early days following the hurricane this group trained and sent individuals to actively witness to victims while helping to meet basic human needs such as providing food and meals.

We hope the experiences of the Southern Florida Presbytery following Hurricane Andrew will benefit other PCA churches confronted with a disaster in their community.

## DEFINITION OF DISASTER

A disaster is any occurrence such as a hurricane, tornado, earthquake, flash flooding, and fires that severely disrupts the life of a community. It usually causes significant destruction and is often followed by widespread human suffering. Disasters create human needs that the victims cannot meet without organized relief efforts.

This manual does not deal with emergencies such as one-family fires or disasters that affect relatively few families. Churches can best handle these on a one-on-one basis. It was written primarily for the emergencies that affect multiple families. Each relief effort is unique. The response to Hurricane Andrew differed from that of Hurricane Hugo (Charleston, SC, 1989). The response to an earthquake in California would face a different set of problems. The basic human needs, however, are the same. Disasters invariably result in mass confusion in the affected communities. Along with food, clothing, and shelter there is also a need for emotional and spiritual stability. As Andrew has shown, the church can and should play an indispensable role in this area. The local church is in a unique position to provide spiritual nurturing while meeting critical human needs.

In times of disaster people also tend to be more receptive to the good news of Jesus Christ. Perhaps it is because as they walk through the ruins of their community they realize the fragile nature of the earthly existence. Several para-church ministries saw Hurricane Andrew as a great opportunity to share the gospel.

The manual is divided into three sections. Section I is a brief section for churches to use in planning for future disasters. It lists a number of questions that will help in planning a disaster response. By answering these questions prior to a disaster the church can have a more orderly and efficient response. Each church response will be different. The list of questions are a guide as churches begin to think about disaster preparedness.

Section II, the main section, covers the response of churches in the immediate area. It is written to the pastor and/or person who has been assigned the responsibility of coordinating the church's response. Most likely, these churches will have a number of members who have suffered personal or property damage or have had their lives disrupted in some way. What do we do first? What kind of supplies do we need? What is expected of the pastor and church leadership; what is the best use of their time? Should church disaster relief activities be tied to evangelism? This section will respond to these and many more questions faced immediately following a disaster. Section II is further divided to account for the various phases (emergency, damage assessment, and recovery) in their relief effort. It must be kept in mind that in day to day operations these various phases cannot be precisely delineated and may necessarily overlap one another.

SECTION III is another brief section dealing with the supporting role of churches outside the disaster area. It is also broken down into 1) the emergency phase and 2) the recovery phase. (The assessment phase does not relate directly to churches outside the disaster

area). The experience of Hurricane Andrew again proved that churches from all over America will respond in time of need. What is the most effective way a church can help? Who do they contact in the disaster area? When and where should volunteer work crews be sent? These are questions that face those leading the church relief effort.

## SECTION ONE

### PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

A question asked of church leaders involved in the Andrew relief effort was, “If you had it all to do over again what would you do differently?” The answer most often was heard was:

“I would see that my church appointed someone to be the coordinator in the event of a disaster.”

No doubt the harrowing events of the first few weeks after Andrew contributed heavily to this response. As time goes by will the commitment for such a position remain? Is it realistic to think that, considering all of the other demands on time and resources, churches will make the effort to plan for something that may never happen? Some may plan, however, experience tells us that the majority will not. On the other hand, most churches probably would use a “how to” manual immediately following a disaster if it were available. So our hope is that every PCA church in America will keep a copy of this manual in its church office. Pastors may want to review it once a year. They should bear in mind that, at anytime they could face situations comparable to their brothers and sisters in South Dade County.

Churches may not see the need to appoint a relief coordinator in advance. It would be wise, however, for the church leadership to consider potential candidates should it become necessary. The leadership needed in emergency situations differs from that of less chaotic situations.. This became apparent in the Andrew operation. Some individuals actually performed better amidst the chaos and confusion, while others, who would otherwise be good administrators could not handle the pressure.

Prior consideration to the following questions by the pastor and church leadership would be in preparing for a disaster:

**IN THE EVENT OF A DISASTER WHAT EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS FO OUR CONGREGATION WHO HAVE BEEN EFFECTED?**

- Where can they get emergency food and water?
- Where can they get personal hygiene items?
- Where can they stay in the event their home is rendered uninhabitable?
- Where can the church obtain a supply of blankets in the event of cold weather?
- Should the church maintain emergency supplies of this purpose?
- How will emergency supplies be delivered?

**IF THE TELEPHONE LINES ARE DOWN HOW CAN WE ESTABLISH COMMUNICATINS?**

- Do we have access to one or more cellular phones (hand or car)?
- Is there a battery operated-radio in the church for weather and/or information about relief efforts?

#### WHAT DO WE DO IF THE POWER IS LOST?

- Does the church have a portable generator?
- How many people in the congregation have portable generators?
- Where could we obtain one on short notice if we had to?
- Is there a supply of flashlights for use in an emergency?

#### SHOULD OUR CHURCH FACILITIES BE USED AS A SHELTER OR DISTRIBUTION CENTER?

- How many people could be sheltered (overnight) under emergency conditions?
- Are the bathroom facilities adequate?
- Do we have kitchen facilities for feeding large numbers of people?
- Is there sufficient parking?
- What if the shelter/distribution center was needed for several weeks?  
Would it affect worship services?
- Can the facility be secured to provide safety and prevent looting?
- Who would staff the shelter?
- Would the church in charge of receiving and distributing food?

Consider this very carefully. After the experience of Andrew some churches had second thought as to whether or not they were equipped to deal with such a challenge. The answers to some of these questions may be readily apparent and may require little input from outside sources. Others will require research. Find out how other groups in your community normally respond to disasters. A visit or call to the county or city civil defense agency and an office of the Salvation Army and the Red Cross will prove helpful. Other denominations such as the Southern Baptists and the Mennonites have contingency plans for disaster situations. Find out about the way they prepare and respond and how your church can coordinate with them.

The churches in the Southern Florida Presbytery were hit unexpectedly with a disaster of enormous proportions. They did a superb job of emergency management considering there had been no disaster planning or preparation. There were no guidelines to tell them what to expect. Periodically working through the above questions will make it considerably easier when your community and church faces such an emergency.

#### THE ROLE OF THE PRESBYTERY

As indicated above, Hurricane Andrew dramatically proved that a disaster can quickly overwhelm the financial and human resources of one church. The need for all of the churches in the presbytery to come together in a unified effort is paramount. Though not

essential, it would be beneficial to have some kind of organization in place prior to the onslaught of a disaster. The following are some of the questions which the presbytery must contend:

- Who will coordinate the over-all relief effort?
- Where will the headquarters for the relief effort be housed?
- how will the presbytery coordinate relate to the individual churches (pastor/lay leaders)?
- What kind of assistance will be provided to victims?
- Will church families have priority over other victims?
- Which church will be entrusted with funds that are contributed for the relief effort?
- How will relief funds be distributed to churches? Individual victims?
- How long will the presbytery stay in the disaster relief business (duration of emergency/recovery phase)?
- How does the presbytery dispose of surplus equipment and supplies after the relief effort is shut down?

The effort of the South Florida Presbytery was commendable in that several churches (Kendall, Granada, and Old Cutler for example), moved quickly to organize a unified effort. Though they had no prior experience, common sense directed them into a crisis management mode under which they dealt with the above questions and more. Under considerable confusion they were able to put together a basic organization to deal with the above questions and more. In retrospect, we can see the necessity and benefit of their actions.

## SECTION II

### CHURCHES WITHIN THE DISASTER AREA

#### THE EMERGENCY PHASE

The Andrew relief effort was divided into three phase: 1) the emergency phase, 2) the assessment phase, and 3) the recovery phase. This section will deal the emergency phase.

THE EMERGENCY PHASE is the period immediately following the disaster in which water, food, shelter, and emergency medical needs are met. This is done in mass shelters and church groups. Health hazards and dangerous debris need to be removed. Restoring essential services i.e. electric power, access to streets and roads, and communications, are priorities. Temporary repairs to homes are undertaken during this time.

The emergency phase is often marked by chaos and confusion making efficient administration very difficult. It is often said that “organized chaos” is the goal of relief coordinators during this phase. The first 48-72 hours of this period is marked by by the “pitching in and pulling together” attitude of disaster victims and relief workers. Adrenalin flow is high.

Within a few days victims begin to grow weary and question why they had to suffer the loss and inconvenience. Why my family. Why did it happen here? Why were we not better prepared? In the latter days of this phase, the questions and frustrations turn to anger, often directed to those churches and agencies remaining in the area to help disaster victims. This aspect of the relief operation is difficult for relief staff and volunteers because they often fail to realize that this anger is natural psychological response following a disaster even though its focus may be seriously misplaced. This phase usually runs from 10-14 days.

#### CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Through it will be mentioned throughout this manual the necessity of crisis management in disaster situations cannot be over-emphasized. Traditional management organizations have specific levels of line authority supported by boards, committees, and sundry advisory groups. Such organization strives for accountability by providing for checks and balances at all levels. This is a luxury that a disaster relief operation will not allow. Crisis management involves:

- Managing people and resources under tremendous pressure.
- The ability to make timely and critical decisions with a minimum of information.
- The willingness to take reasonable risks.
- The ability to deal with public criticism.
- A measure of understanding by denominational leaders when mistakes are made.

By its very nature disaster relief efforts dictate crisis management. In most cases, decision must be made on the spot with limited information. Though there are risks involved in making decisions in this manner, greater risks are involved by non-decision. If an individual is incapable of making critical decisions on the spot he/she should not have significant leadership roles in the operation.

Denominational and presbytery leaders need to recognize the necessity of crisis management. Someone in each local church will have to take this leadership role. In a few cases, this may result in what will later refer to as “poor decisions”. It is easy to look back and say “this should have or have not been done” but in the thick of battle it is not easy. As disaster operations are critiqued, it is important to bear in mind that the information now available may not have been available immediately after the wind had ceased and the water receded. An understanding of the conditions under which critical decisions were made provides greater appreciation for those responsible for making those decisions.

### A DISASTER STRIKES YOUR COMMUNITY

You are the pastor of a church located within a community that has just been ravaged by a hurricane. It is the morning after the late night storm and you slowly make your way back to your home from the temporary shelter you sought during the storm. You have to show police identification to pass the temporary barricades that have been erected to provide for public safety and protect the area from looters. As you approach the neighborhood you are shocked by the uprooted trees, downed power lines, and strewn debris. Not one house escaped the wrath of the storm. A few neighbors are already wandering around their homes assessing the damage. Your home has been badly damaged. Most of the roofing was blown off, all your windows have been blown out. Partially downed trees lean precariously against the house looking as if they could fall at any moment. The power is out all around. Since communication has been erratic you have no idea of the extent and scope of the damage around the city yet you suspect the worst.

You are thankful that you and your family escaped personal injury though you are anxious about the immediate future considering that state of your home. You begin to wonder about the members of your congregation. Are they okay? Did they lose their homes? What about the elderly ones that live alone? Do they need special attention? How can you find out? The staff? Are they okay? They need to be contacted but how? Thoughts keep racing through your head. What do you do first.?

This scenario is realistic and based on a real life situation. In fact scores of pastors, assistant pastors, and church leaders faced this very dilemma in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew. Several PCA clergy suffered heavy personal loss along with the members of their congregations.

**SECURE YOUR OWN HOME AND TAKE CARE OF YOUR FAMILIES  
IMMEDIATE NEEDS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.**

Taking care of immediate needs is key. Make sure your wife and children have water, food, and shelter. For the first few days your home could be unsafe, especially for children. If your home is heavily damaged, it is best to find secure shelter for them either in the home of a friend or relative. Most insurance companies pay for temporary housing following disaster damage to homes therefore the closest motel may be a possibility. Save all meal and lodging receipts. In the absence of these alternatives several relief agencies will be opening temporary shelters for those who have no where else to go. Locations of shelters will be announced repeatedly via the media. Meals are served in the shelters and usually personal hygiene kits are distributed.

There is very little you can do by yourself in the way of repairing your home so don't worry about permanent repairs at this time. Clean up any debris that pose a health hazard or danger such as broken glass. Remove all food from the refrigerator. It may be possible to save some if ice is available. If you have access to a large tarp or plastic sheeting it is advisable to cover the exposed roof to prevent further rain damage to contents.

Remember as you assess the damage in the yard and on the roof **DO NOT TOUCH OR STEP ON DOWNED POWER LINES**. Though power companies are usually very quick in cutting the power to downed lines, you cannot tell by looking them, therefore you do not want to take any chances.

If you have extra flashlights and batteries take them with you.

Invariably, many homes are looted by unscrupulous individuals immediately following any disaster even though a curfew has been ordered and the area is guarded. Secure your home as much as possible by nailing plywood or anything available over exposed windows and doorways.

## **GO TO THE CHURCH**

You may be pleasantly surprised to find out that several of your members are already at the church checking out the damage. A few others, not knowing where to go or what to do have come to seek comfort and guidance. In times of disaster people often gather at churches. They are searching for re-assurance and stability. [Prior to beginning the work at hand, call everyone together and lead a brief prayer of thanksgiving and ask for divine guidance in meeting the needs of God's people.]

Assign volunteers to assess damage to the church, clear access, and remove dangerous debris and help locate any emergency equipment that church might have. There may be enough volunteers on hand at the church otherwise it will be necessary to recruit others. Because of the lack of communications, someone may need to personally visit potential volunteers from the church membership to do the essential tasks. As word spreads through the church, presbytery other volunteers will become available.

- 1) The church appears to be uninhabitable or unsafe because of structural damage do what is only absolutely necessary to prevent further damage.

Secure the church facilities to the extent possible and place signs on the doors notifying the congregation that:

- 1) Services have been cancelled until further notice
- 2) Services will be conducted outside weather permitting
- 3) Services will be conducted at an alternate location

If you already have a telephone include the number so that you can be reached. Take the church roster including addresses and telephone numbers with you. Begin seeking another location that can serve as a temporary base of operations (When feasible you will need to report the condition of the church facilities to the presbytery). **DO NOT LET ANYONE WANDER AROUND AN UNSAFE FACILITY.** After you have located a temporary office follow the same procedure as below.

- 2) The church is in reasonably good condition and is safe as far as can be determined.

If you have not already decided, you must make a quick decision as to whether or not the church will be used as a relief center for members or your congregation and neighbors. In most cases after Hurricane Andrew churches were used in some capacity. So at this point we will process as if the decision had been made previously to use the church in the event of such a disaster.

**CONTACT CHURCH STAFF AND LAY LEADERS AND ASK THEM TO COME TO THE CHURCH AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER SECURING THEIR HOMES AND TAKING CARE OF THEIR IMMEDIATE NEEDS.**

It may be difficult to reach the church staff immediately following a disaster but an effort should be made to do so. If the phones are out send a runner to check on them. It is possible they, too, suffered damage. If you are unable to contact them you will have to delegate their responsibilities to other available workers. If you do reach them ask them to meet you at the church as soon as they secure their own homes.

After a brief time of encouragement pull them together in an organizational meeting. In large churches every staff member may be needed to call on members of the congregation (See pastors duties below). In some cases the staff will need to help locate needed resources. Pastors need to continually bear in mind that church staff and members will, more than ever before, be looking to them for spiritual leadership. With that in mind; 1) under gird every task with prayer and 2) constantly remind every church leader that the disaster offers a unique opportunity for spiritual nurturing.

**TURN OVER EMERGENCY RELIEF EFFORT TO THE RELIEF COORDINATOR**

In the event no one as been previously assigned to handle emergency situations that pastor (consulting with lay leaders) should quickly review potential candidates and appoint someone. Ideally, it will be a respected lay leader. This person should have good organization skills, work well under pressure, and be someone that you trust to handle church finances and resources. A recently retired administrator would be a good candidate. He would have the experience as will as the tine to spare. Andrew revealed that some were appointed to positions of authority could not function in emergency situations. In the event one is appointed who appears incapable of handling the job, it is best to re-assign him immediately. The longer one waits the more difficult it will be. A good relief coordinator will free pastoral staff for the important task of visitation of church members and other relief efforts.

#### **RELIEF COODINATORS MUST BE GIVEN THE AUTHORITY ALONG WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY IF THEY ARE TO BE EFFECTIVE.**

In normal times important decisions may come from a board of deacons or another administrative body, therefore, the pastor may be hesitant to delegate such authority. Under emergency conditions, however, the church does not have the luxury of submitting every matter to various administrative committees. The church must operate under crisis management. The pastor needs the authority to make emergency decisions as necessary to alleviate suffering and save life, limb, and property.

Once this individual has been appointed let him run the operation and report to the pastor and other church leaders periodically. (Later this individual may report to a relief coordinator appointed by the presbytery.) The coordinators authority must include permission to commit church funds. Spending authority can be handled by setting pre-approved limits on individual expenditures within a over budget. The budget is flexible and reviewed as necessary by the pastor and leadership of the church. Guidelines may be provided by the presbytery. In the Hurricane Andrew effort, the Presbytery of Southern Florida set up an ad hoc committee to handle designated relief funds (See Appendix). These guidelines provided specific spending authority for those in charge of the relief effort.

The main thing to keep in mind is that for anyone (the coordinator or pastor) to be effective under such emergency conditions he must have the flexibility to make decisions quickly. The nature of the situation dictates it. It is impossible to call together committees or boards for every case or every expenditure. Some reasonable method of expending funds in such situation must be pre-approved. It is important for the relief coordinator to know that he has the full support of the pastor and church leadership.

#### **THE SENIOR PASTOR (OR PASTOR IN SMALL CHURCHES) SHOULD BE RELIEVED OF SPECIFIC DISASTER RELATED TASKS SO THAT HE MAY OVERSEE THE VISITATION OF MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

Pastors affirmed that the single most important thing they did in the first few days following the hurricane was to visit members of their congregation. Though church

members never came right out and said it, it became apparent that such a call was expected. Later testimonial also revealed that it was greatly appreciated.

Several churches made an accurate assessment of the members of the church as soon as possible. As soon as word came in (by word of mouth, phone, field visits etc.) verifying the status of a particular member a note was placed by their name for follow-up if necessary. Some pastors called, first, on members they felt would have the greatest need (elderly, single mothers, widows, etc). Others took into consideration the difficulty of driving in the area and followed the quickest route to visit all their members without speculating as to who had the greatest need. Some pastors took water and ice with them when available. Others simply let the members know that they were there and that the church would be doing whatever it could to help them during this trying time. If there were small emergency chores that needed to be done some of them assisted on the spot or promised to get assistance for them as soon as possible.

## EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL ENCOURAGEMENT

The spiritual needs of people take on new dimensions following events that severely alter their daily lives. The shepherding role of the pastor becomes much more important than in normal times. Every disaster victim regardless of the social status needs encouragement and re-assurance. They knowingly, or otherwise, seek guidance in putting the catastrophic event in perspective. Disasters tend to be great socio-economic equalizers. People who may have never before sought help or guidance from the church are all of a sudden in need. This was especially true in Andrew. The following incident was shared by, Dominic Aquila, the pastor of the Kendall PCA church:

The day after the hurricane hit we were visiting our church members and eventually came to the house of one of the more affluent men in our congregation. As we had done with all the rest, we asked him if there was anything the church could do for him and his family. He said that they were fine and appreciated the concern. After we chatted for a couple of minutes he said he really could use a bag of ice. I told him I would be right back and went to the car and took one of the several dozen bags of ice we had brought along. His face lit up with gratitude as he accepted the simple gift of a bag of ice.

Do not assume that just because a person is affluent there is no need to visit them. Their emotional and spiritual needs may be as great as any victim in the disaster. As Pastor Aquila shared, here was a man who, in normal times, could buy several ice factories. For a few days, however, Andrew rendered his financial resources useless. A bag of ice, therefore, became a cherished gift.

One church staff member commented "A Church's goal should be to meet as many of the emergency needs as possible, but if we had only distributed ice and water during the first seventy-two hours following Andrew, we would have provided a critical service." He is right. In the aftermath of a devastating disaster, people just want to know someone cares

and are making a sincere effort to help. The kind of caring is natural for the Christian. It is a practical manifestation of Christ's agape, or unconditional, love.

**THE SENIOR PASTOR WILL ALSO SERVE AS LIAISON WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PRESBYTERY.**

Many calls of support and offers of assistance will come through the presbytery. From the beginning hours of the relief effort the pastor needs to continually keep the presbytery informed as to the needs and progress of the operation. This is crucial for the channeling much needed financial support as well as many of the volunteer efforts that will follow. Though there may be another bi-lateral chain of command established (i.e. church relief coordinator or the presbytery relief coordinator to the Mission to North America), the church pastor still needs to provide this personal observations to the denominational leadership.

## THE ROLE OF THE RELIEF COODINATOR

From this point on the manual will be addressing your specific tasks as the emergency relief coordinator (If such a person has not been appointed it will probably fall back on one of the church staff members as it did in many cases after Hurricane Andrew).

You have been designated the emergency relief coordinator following the previously described hurricane scenario. The pastor has asked you to come to the church to take charge of the church's effort. Though you feel as if you are a competent administrator you have never worked in a disaster situation. Where do you start?

### IDENTIFY THE MISSION

What is the job description? What will be expected of you in the next few weeks? Briefly, the job description of the relief coordinator is to:

- 1) Assess damage and immediate needs of church members and other victims
- 2) Determine resources needed for emergency phase and recovery phase
- 3) Using all available personnel and resources, meet the needs of the church members and other victims who seek assistance from the church

### WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

**ESTABLISH COMMUNICATIONS.** Ninety-five per cent of coordinating any relief effort is communications. You cannot plan the logistics for distributing water, food, and providing for shelter without first establishing a way to communicate. Following most major disaster, especially tornadoes and hurricanes the telephone lines are down from a few days to several weeks. After Andrew some areas still did not have phone service eight to ten weeks later. Previously in those first hectic two or three days following major disasters amateur short wave radio operators were the only means of getting information out of a heavily damaged area. With the advent of cellular telephones this has changed. Relief coordinators now have quick, effective communications and technology is improving each year. AS devastating as Andrew was, for all intents and purposes, cellular phone service was unaffected and literally hundreds of handheld cellular phones could be seen throughout the area the morning after it struck.

Even if you have a mobile cellular phone try to locate two or three hand held ones at this time. AS the coordinator, you will need one with you at all times. One must be at the church or relief headquarters and it is helpful if the pastor has one also. Following Andrew, one church relief coordinator said "My cellular phone was absolutely indispensable. I don't know how I would have managed without it." Immediately after Andrew struck, a para-church ministry working with the PCA and other churches contacted friends in a nearby city and secured ten cellular phones. This enabled them to begin immediately assessing the damage and the needs and communicating this information to the "outside world." They began immediately to receive and distribute

much needed supplies. The success of any relief effort is heavily dependent on the ability to communicate. **RESOLVE THE COMMUNICATION PROBLEM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** Even if you have to drive fifteen or twenty miles to acquire cellular phones it will still be time well spent.

At this time you may want to identify one person or two young adults with drivers license to service as “runners”. They will prove invaluable in the first few days.

#### **DO YOU HAVE ELECTRIC POWER AT THE CHURCH (OR OTHER OPERATIONAL BASE)?**

If your church or other facility did not lose electric power you are indeed blessed. If there is no power you need to procure a generator and a 7-10 day supply of fuel as soon as possible. Assign someone to contact builders, contractors, construction supply companies, and private individuals who may have one. Immediately following Andrew there were numerous offers of generators from churches outside the disaster area. Get the largest possible generator since some of the smaller ones can generate only enough power for one or two small appliances. Remember generators must be kept outside because of noise, fumes, and to reduce the chances of a fire hazard.

## SHOULD THE CHURCH BE USED AS AN EMERGENCY SHELTER?

This decision needs to be made very early. In most cases following Andrew local churches realized they were not equipped to serve as emergency shelters. Most shelters were facilities like schools, armories, government buildings, etc. that have adequate sleeping space and restrooms. Some larger churches may have adequate accommodations and would like to serve in this capacity. If so some questions that should be considered are:

- How many people (families) can we accept?
- How long will they need to stay in the shelter?
- What if they have not found other accommodations when we decide to close the shelter?
- Where will people sleep? Eat?
- Will there be facilities for children?
- What kind of personnel are required to run an emergency shelter?
- Who can I contact for Help?

It is one thing to provide a short time emergency shelter to stay in while the disaster is taking place (from two or three to as long as 36 hours) and quite another to operate one from seven to ten days. A shelter is like a small community. Every basic need that humans have must be met: water, food, personal health and hygiene, etc. It is no easy undertaking.

If your church wants to serve as an emergency shelter it would be wise to make contact with the American Red Cross who have a Congressional mandate to set up such shelters following disasters. Red Cross and civil defense shelters are usually pre-determined but since the occurrence of disaster is unpredictable, the planning for them is not an exact science. There may be need for others as was the case in Andrew.

If there is another nearby already being set up. If not, offer your facilities to be used with the understanding that the churches relief effort will keep its own identity (The church will be jointly identified with the Red Cross.) Determine the number of volunteers you can provide and how many the Red Cross staff and/or volunteers will be needed. Key personnel for a shelter Include:

1) shelter manager 2) a nurse (medical emergencies, hygiene, and sanitation) 3) person in charge of communication (messages to and from victims) 4) intake personnel to record individuals arriving and departing shelter 5) people to help prepare food. 6) someone to provide security 7) someone to be in charge of sleeping arrangements (cots, blankets, etc.)

Once a shelter is open and families and individuals begin to arrive many of the basic chores can be done by the victims that are staying there. In fact, this is recommended because it tends to be good for them psychologically. Let them help as much as possible.

In shelter operation common sense must prevail keeping in mind that almost any situation can occur from birth of a baby to very serious domestic fights.

Because of the massive damage following Andrew and the lack of suitable shelters (particularly in the Homestead area), tent cities were erected by the military to house victims. This presented another set of problems and the military spent considerable time policing the area around the clock.

One problem invariably facing emergency shelters is that a small percentage of occupants are full time transients and are in no hurry to leave the shelter. In some unusual cases the police have had to be called in to assist in their removal. This is not to scare churches away from serving as shelters but rather to assure that they are fully prepared to deal with such an activity.

Again operating a shelter is major and time consuming commitment. Make the decision only after careful consideration and contact the Red Cross (In many cities the civil defense will also work jointly with the Red Cross to help organize shelters) to help organize and staff the shelter.

## THE CHURCH AS AN EMERGENCY DISTRIBUTION CENTER

Working with the church leadership it has been decided either previously or immediately after the disaster that the church facilities would not be used as a mass shelter, but it would be made available as a distribution center for water, food, clothing, emergency supplies, etc. you are aware that such centers typically operate from seven to fourteen days.

Picking up from our shelter scenario let us assume that

- Electric power is now available (either it has been restored or one or more emergency generators are being used).
- the immediate areas around the church, including parking spaces have been cleaned of debris so that workers can get in and out.
- You have recruited 10-15 people to assist you in setting up for distribution of food, water, etc.

What is the next step? There is no exact procedure but since your church is a member of a much larger body and you will be depending on them for assistance and supplies you need to provide an initial briefing even if the information is somewhat sketchy.

## UPDATE THE PRESBYTERY

If it has not already been done contact the presbytery (there should be regular communication between the presbytery leadership and the relief operation) and provide them with as much information as possible including telephone number where message can be left at any time. Indicate any immediate needs of which you are already aware, ie. a generator, chain saws, water, ice, etc. Ask them to have someone on call for the next few days to take calls from disaster area. Keep in mind there may be several PCA churches involved in the disaster relief effort as was the case on Andrew. At some point in the time **THE PRESBYTERY MAY DECIDE TO APPOINT ONE PERSON TO HEAD THE ENTIRE EFFORT.** In such cases all church relief coordinators would work through that appointee who in turn would report to the presbytery. The presbytery should pass the information on to the denominational headquarters. By this time offers of assistance of all kinds are beginning to come into the headquarters. By being adequately informed, that can, working with the presbytery, concentrate on items of greatest need. They can also begin an appeal for funds based on the information they are provided.

After lines of communication are established you can turn your attention to meeting immediate human needs such as water and food both for emergency workers and victims. The priority now turns to water.

**DOES THE CHURCH STILL HAVE RUNNING WATER? HAS THE SUPPLY BEEN CONTAMINATED AS A RESULT OF THE DISASTER?**

Following Andrew over a million people completely lost their normal supply of potable water for several days to, in some cases, several weeks. They had to locate bottled water they could purchase or boil contaminated water. Families more experience in the effects of hurricanes cleaned and filled the bathtubs in their home with clean water prior to Andrew coming ashore. In any event having a supply of drinkable water is a high priority.

A) If the church still has running water check with local government officials to see if the water supply has been contaminated. If so, all drinking water must be boiled several minutes. Also see section B below. If it has not been contaminated, again your blessed and have just been spared a major headache.

B) If the water supply is no longer available or has been contaminated to the point that is not suitable for drinking, locating a source of potable water will be a priority. For the most immediate needs two or three people to:

1) stores that were not in the immediate storm area that sell drinking water by the gallon. Have them purchase enough for two or three days for the estimated number of people you will have requesting it (workers and victims).

2) locate any large containers (preferably 5 gallon or larger) suitable for carrying drinking water. These will be used when government officials announce water distribution locations.

Friends of some of the PCA churches in South Dade brought in dozens of gallons of water that they purchased in route to the disaster area. This was enough to tide them over until the government could restore supplies of water more closely to them. Local government officials usually act quickly (Within 24-48 hours) to set up water distribution points. Stay apprised of these developments to regularly replenish water supplies as necessary. This may be as good as time as any to find out about other groups working in the area.

## RELATING TO OTHER DISASTER AGENCIES (See Appendices for the list of other agencies)

Immediately after the disaster expect numerous organizations to mobilize on your community (See appendix). Some will be church efforts like yours. Others are private relief agencies. Governmental groups will also begin to descend on the area. Each of these groups will bring certain resources to bear on the relief effort. They were local and national, religious and secular, civic clubs and labor unions, ethnic and ad hoc community groups. All but a few of these groups were primarily serving a particular constituency. These constituencies, however, overlapped considerably making it prudent for relief groups to work with one another to avoid unnecessary duplication.

You should look on all disaster relief groups as complimentary and not simply as groups competing for resources. They may be reaching populations that you cannot or would not meet. Your primary mission is to meet the needs of your own congregation and then to the extent possible others who need assistance (Remember PCA-PLUS). Experience from Andrew and other disasters has shown that there is enough work for everyone and that each private relief agency brings another circle of support.

### DESIGNATE AN INDIVIDUAL TO BE LIAISON BETWEEN YOUR CHURCH AND OTHER AGENCIES.

What kind of assistance is available through the Red Cross? The Salvation Army? Civil Defense? Other denominations and organizations? Though each organization has basic guidelines for disaster assistance it does change from disaster to disaster based on the level of devastation, local economy, availability of housing and/or other resources. Who is providing shelters? Who is doing mass feeding in your community? Who is providing mobile feeding? Is the Civil Defense or military going to provide water? Where are they setting up headquarters and relief centers? From the very beginning you need to have some idea what these agencies are doing for people in your area. Assign someone to contact as many of these groups as possible and determine what they are doing. Throughout both the emergency phase and the recovery phase you will be dealing with many of these groups. Keep regular contact so that any disagreement can be resolved amicably. The American Red Cross has a disaster desk set up to work with other volunteer agencies. It is referred to as the VOLAG desk. The Red Cross VOLAG desk can give your liaison person an idea of how many other groups are working in the area and what they are doing.

As reports from the affected area comes into various relief groups, the scope of the relief effort begins to take place. The number of house damaged or destroyed. The number of people needing shelter, etc. By now individuals and families that suffered losses are beginning to look for help. Perhaps your church can provide them food and water but where do you send them to stay or to replace their occupational tools that were lost?

## HOW DO YOUR CHURCH MEMBERS AND OTHERS KNOW THAT YOUR CHURCH IS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE?

This is where the pastoral staff comes in. Previously we indicated the need to keep them free to visit members of the congregation. During their visits (and/or telephone calls if lines are not down) they should let affected members know that the church will be assisting with basic emergency needs and that they should come to the church if they need help.

For church relief efforts it is not recommended to broadcast your services over the radio and television. As was shown in Andrew this can draw individuals from far beyond your community and can so drain your supplies that nothing is available for needy members of your church and others close by. Let the government and the larger relief agencies handle such public announcements. You will have plenty to do taking care of those in your immediate area. If history proves correct you will not have to worry about spreading the word. It usually gets around very quickly. You may soon be inundated with requests even without making any kind of public announcement. With the exception of one, all PCA churches that provided disaster assistance estimated that about 20-30 percent of the victims were within their own church and the other 70-80 percent were people outside the church.

### TRANSPORTATION

Moving around after the occurrences of a major disaster (especially hurricanes and floods) can be difficult if not impossible in some areas. After Hurricane Andrew dating and adventuresome people dodged downed trees, power lines, ravaged automobiles, etc to get a look at the area. Many were checking on their home and belongings. Others were more curiosity seekers. Other than negotiating around tons of debris, they were free to go where they wanted during those first few hours. Within the next 48 hours, however, many streets were blocked off by police and military personnel to control looting and to prevent people from getting hurt. Only people who owned homes or businesses in the immediate area were allowed in along with various emergency relief vehicles. Movement throughout the area became so difficult that it took three to four hours to drive seven or eight miles.

Even though transportation into, out of, and through the disaster area may be difficult it is still necessary. You will have people obtaining and delivering supplies. Others will be traveling throughout the area visiting and assessing damage. The following are a few suggestions that can make travel less difficult during those first few days:

- Have your workers travel in a marked church vehicle if possible. You are much less likely to be stopped at various roadblocks if you are in a well-marked church van, etc. In Andrew some churches had their vans and buses temporarily marked as emergency vehicles.

-Make sure each vehicle includes someone very familiar with the community. Maps may prove useless as in the case of Andrew where all the street signs within a 200 square mile area were literally blown away.

- If possible carry a chain saw in case you get to a road blocked by a down tree

- Carry several tire repair kits to fix flats. Millions of roofing nails were blown in the streets by Andrew. Thousands of them ended up in automobile tires during the first few weeks.

- Put drinking water in each vehicle as least for the first 72 hours. (Drinking water can be difficult to find during this time)

## PROCURING FUNDS, FOOD, AND SUPPLIES

Let's continue our previous scenario. We will assume we are now in our second day after the disaster. Let's review what you have already done:

- You have a good location
- You have established communication among church staff and volunteers through several cellular phones
- You have restored electrical power to the facility in which you will operate
- The pastoral staff is already calling on church members in the affected area and have begun to give you a preliminary idea of the needs
- You have a limited supply of drinking water and have assigned someone to locate more
- You have briefed the presbytery on what you have done and asked for help in meeting the immediate needs

You now have the markings of a distribution center. What are you going to distribute? We have already talked about the need for water and ice. What are the other items that will most likely be requested by disaster victims? Based on the experience from Andrew, below is a list of some of the most requested items during the emergency phase. Though not comprehensive, this list will give you a good idea of what you may need:

Bottled Water	Baby food and formula
Ice	Non-perishable food items
Flashlights and batteries	Sheets and blankets
Chainsaws	Disposable baby diapers
Personal hygiene items	soft drinks
Disposable plates and silverware	milk
Cereal	Gatorade (to prevent dehydration)
Generators	Gasoline
Roofing paper (or plastic sheeting)	plywood

### WHERE CAN YOU GET THESE ITEMS?

You now know many of the items that you will need. By now hundreds of other individuals and groups are scrambling around looking for the same kinds of supplies. Where can you obtain these items? All of the stores within a ten mile radius are closed due to extensive damage. Not to worry, the Lord provided in Camille and Hugo and dozens of other disasters. He was on the throne before the disaster and He remains on the throne after it. A local church has several avenues to get needed items after a disaster.

**A PRIMARY SOURCE OF EMERGENCY SUPPLIES IS YOUR OWN CHURCH MEMBERS**

Not every member of the congregation will be seriously affected. In Andrew the percentage of members in any given congregation that suffered serious damage ranged from approximately 15% for churches on the fringes of the devastation to around 80% for churches located more directly in the path of the hurricane. In all denominations, unaffected church members responded willingly and joyfully to the needs of their brothers and sisters in Christ. They gave freely, both financially and in kind. Churches immediately began to accumulate stores of water, canned food, baby items, etc.

#### ANOTHER IMPORTANT SOURCE OF EMERGENCY ITEMS ARE THE SISTER CHURCHES IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE DISASTER AREA

Several such PCA churches in North Dade and Broward County responded very quickly with much needed items. Representatives from these churches began to arrive in South Dade County the morning after Andrew hit with tools, materials, water, non-perishable food, etc. Because they were only two or three hours away their assistance was received during the crucial first 72 hours. They also coordinated their help with local church and presbytery leaders to assure they were meeting the urgent needs and to minimize duplication of services.

#### HELP FROM CHURCHES ACROSS THE NATION

The disaster is already news across the country. Caring and kindhearted people across America are asking what they can do to help. Many private relief agencies have already appealed to the American public for support. PCA churches are already contacting denominational headquarters to find out about the extent of the devastation and offer funds, supplies, and laborers to affected churches in the area. Based on the information the denominational leaders receive from those on sight they will send out and appeal for help. History has shown that when this happens significant resources can be brought to bear on the relief effort. As offers of assistance come in be sure to tell them specifically what you need and don't need.

To avoid being inundated with items you do not need and cannot use, phone or fax the presbytery a list of your most pressing needs. In the call for assistance ask them to emphasize the need for cash to purchase needed items as close to the disaster area as possible. It is not cost effective to ship a case of canned food from California to Florida. The shipping and handling would be much more than what the item is worth. You will want outside churches to send you some of the items that cannot be purchased locally. If a church is going to send a truck load of supplies, you need to know 1) specifically what they are sending, and 2) when it will arrive.

At this point, and throughout the operation you must **DISCOURAGE THE SENDING OF USED CLOTHING**. Invariably, well-meaning citizens will clean out their attic or closets and send used clothing to the disaster area. Churches and most other relief organizations are not equipped to receive, clean, and sort clothing during times of disaster. Andrew, again proved that used clothing becomes one of the biggest log jams in a

disaster operation. The many hours spent trying to manage the distribution of used clothing could be used more effectively in other areas.

## ONE AGENCY THAT HAS TAKEN ON THE CLEANING AND PROCESSING OF USED CLOTHING IS THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Since they work year round in this area they are quite good at it. If you find that you are being inundated with used clothing, contact the local Seventh Day Adventist to find out where you can have them delivered.

## SETTING UP THE DISTRIBUTION CENTER

What kind of place is best for a emergency distribution center?

- A large room that is adjoined by one or more other rooms
- An area that can be arranged in a way to quickly process those coming for assistance
- An area with sanitary facilities
- An area that can be secured at night
- An area that can be used for at least two weeks

Ideally a church distribution center would include several rooms, each capable of being secured. One or more rooms would be used to receive and store supplies as they come in. These rooms should remain locked except when receiving goods. Only church workers should have access to them. Security is a major problem in large scale disasters. Practically every distribution center, church or secular, experienced pilferage and/or looting. With a little bit of planning this can be minimized.

One large room would be used for the actual distribution of food, water, etc. This room should be arranged where the victims can com to the front and explain to a volunteer worker their need (There should be a row of table or some barrier between the victims and the relief workers). A bag or bags of items that meet the need as close as possible will be prepared and given to the victim while they wait. Some distribution centers in Andrew had pre-prepared bags of food for one day. They would then add any special request to that if the item as available. This kept the lines moving faster.

## DO NOT LET DISASTER VICTIMS RUMMAGE THROUGH THE SUPPLIES PICKING OUT WHAT THEY WANT!

This is impossible to control. It can only result in confusion and eventually hard feelings when it has to be stopped. It is better to set up the distribution area in a way to prevent this from beginning.

In some churches the family life center was used as the distribution area with adjoining rooms for storage for donated and purchased items. Those requesting emergency food and water came in one door (the intake area) signed in, and proceeded to an area where the food items were distributed and the left out another door.

To keep an emergency distribution center running smoothly you will need from five to ten volunteers at all times based on the size of the operation. One or two will be needed to sign in those coming to the center. Two or three will be needed to distribute the items and several more will be needed to receive and organize incoming supplies.

Most churches close their distribution centers after the first ten days. By then the majority of the people affected had begun to pull their lives back together either with their own resources, or from insurance or government help. Some centers, however, in the hardest hit areas stay open for several weeks.

## ORGANIZATION OF VOLUNTEER WORKERS

Form the first few hours through the recovery phase Christian charity and the volunteer spirit will fuel the relief effort. Volunteers from within the local church and those from hundreds of miles away will provide countless of hours of manpower. It is safe to say that volunteer workers will be both your greatest asset and your biggest headache. Properly organized and effectively supervised volunteer workers can be invaluable in disaster situations. Unorganized and unsupervised they can impede any disaster relief effort. The last thing you need is dozens of well-meaning “loose cannons” running around the disaster area acting on behalf of the church. This tends to happen more in the very early days of the operation. Knowing that there will be many offers of volunteer help, it would be wise to consider the following guidelines:

### 1) ASSIGN SOMEONE TO RECORD THE NAMES, ADDRESSES, TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF EVERYONE THAT IS WORKING UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CHURCH

This includes yourself, the pastoral staff, church leadership, and other volunteers. It is important for the relief coordinator to know who is at his disposal and what they are capable of doing.

### 2) MAKE SURE EACH VOLUNTEER IS GIVEN A SPECIFIC TASK FOR WHICH THEY CAN BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE

This is beneficial to you as well as to the worker. It doesn't matter if the task is debris removal, answering phones, handing out food and water, or keeping the financial records of the operation. Each person should know what is expected of them and know to whom they report. Christians that want to serve as Jesus served will appreciate and respect this line of authority.

### 3) DO NOT REQUEST OR ACCEPT VOLUNTEER WORKERS FROM OUTSIDE THE AREA UNTIL YOU ARRANGE TO HOUSE AND FEED THEM AND HAVE A JOB FOR THEM

In the aftermath of Andrew, hundreds of volunteers suddenly appeared in the disaster area and without having made such arrangements. This strained the already scarce housing resources. Relief coordinators had a difficult time arranging living accommodations for them. It may be helpful to have someone identify places for volunteers to stay in the area. All volunteers during the emergency phase should be told to bring a sleeping bag and/or a blanket and sheets just in case there are no beds available.

### 4) KEEP VOLUNTEER WORKERS BUSY

It may be difficult at times to find assignments for some volunteer workers but it is important for them to be busy with productive work. Workers that just hang around tend to distract other workers and soon become a nuisance.

#### 5) MEET PERIODICALLY WITH YOUR VOLUNTEERS AS A GROUP TO THANK AND ENCOURAGE THEM

These people are giving of their time. Many have taken vacation, driven several hundred miles and are willing to live under harsh conditions just for the privilege of serving. It is important to let them know that they are loved and appreciated.

#### VOLUNTEER WORK TEAMS

Volunteer work teams will be needed in the emergency phase. There will be clean-up jobs, debris removal, minor roof repair, preparing and serving meals, handing out food, water, and emergency items, etc. the morning after Hurricane Andrew hit volunteers began to arrive at various churches. Some were local and some had driven hundred miles or more. Many of them brought their own tools such as chainsaws, axes, shovels, etc.

Some of the volunteers that come to help in the emergency phase will be needed to staff the distribution center and help with other disaster duties around the church or operational headquarters. All others should be organized into teams to send out to assist families in need. Below are a few recommendations regarding work teams:

- Teams should be made up of five or more people. Any less would not allow for timely completion of minor repairs and clean-up. Also, serving in a disaster is a form of Christian fellowship. Larger teams make for better camaraderie.
- One person should be appointed as team leader. It should be an older, more experienced and respected individual.
- Team members should represent a mix that will enable them to do minor home repairs, tarpapering, boarding of windows, check for electrical shorts, debris removal, general sanitation chores, etc.
- Teams should be assigned to do specific jobs. They should not be sent out in the area to "do whatever they can." The jobs should be something that the team can accomplish in a few hours and make a difference in the lives of the victims.
- Teams should bring all necessary tools, lumber, supplies, food water, etc. with them. They should assume that nothing is available in the area. (this was the case in Andrew).

Teams should be accompanied by a "guide" who lives in or around the area in which they will work. In Class IV and V hurricanes most street signs are destroyed and it is difficult to find ones way even with a map.

- Team leaders should report to the church relief coordinator at the end of every work day if possible.

In an area of devastation to 600 square miles one may ask "What difference will a few volunteer work teams make?" The answer is, "A big difference." The presence of

individuals giving of their time to help people they do not know and will probably never see again is heartwarming. People began to wonder, “Why do they do it?” That kind of Christian charity can be contagious.

\*Work teams in the recovery phase will be discussed later.

## RECORD KEEPING

In disaster relief efforts you must maintain a balance between keeping adequate records for the operation and becoming so bogged down in record keeping that you become ineffective. As in many other disaster related tasks you want to simplify it as much as possible. What are some of the things that must be recorded?

**CONTRIBUTIONS** (See appendices for emergency financial plan devised by South Florida Presbytery) – Churches active in disaster relief will begin to receive cash contributions donation of goods and services from day one. They receive funds from individuals, directly from other churches, and from other churches through the denomination headquarters. These need to be recorded in some way so that the church leadership will be able to properly budget for disaster related needs. Later, thank you letters should be sent to the donors. Churches usually have their bookkeepers to set up another account for all contributions related to the disaster so that there will be no change of co-mingling them with regular church finances. Its advisable to keep the presbytery informed of contributions received, especially form sister churches in the denomination.

Though it will be somewhat difficult an effort should be made to document all contributions of goods and services. What and how much was contributed? Who sent it? When was it received? In-kind contributions of tools, equipment, medical supplies, toiletries, food, etc. are valuable assets in a disaster operation. They enable you to stretch the cash contributions much further. For instance, in the aftermath of a hurricane, chainsaws are in great demand. If a company donates a dozen chainsaws that represents a \$2000 - \$3000 contribution because it is a needed item for which you would be willing to purchase if necessary.

Too often such contributions are accurately documented making it easier for them to disappear. The coordinator should designate one volunteer as sort a supply officer. One of his jobs would be to document such contributions and how they were used and/or distributed. For valuable equipment a simple check-out sheet should be signed by all using it in the field. This equipment was donated to the church to use during the relief effort. Invariably some will be lost, broken, or stolen. At the end of the operation, however, there should be an effort to account for the equipment. If it is no longer needed it is up to the church leadership to determine is disposition.

Since it may be difficult to set up accounts, organize ledgers, etc. in those very first days you may have to improvise the best you can. One assistant pastor found it helpful to make an index card for every transaction. The cards were arranged in some order in a small box in a way that he could use them immediately. The information was sufficient in that he could go back and more formally organize in less hectic times.

Remember you need to keep some kind of record for:

- 1) Income (contributions) and Expenses
- 2) Volunteer Workers
- 3) Supplies and Inventory
- 4) Families/Individuals Assisted

## PART B

### THE ASSESSMENT PHASE

The ASSESSMENT PHASE begins a few days after the start of the emergency phase and parallels it until all damage and needs assessment have been completed.

There are two types of damage assessment:

- 1) General assessment in which the mission is to determine an over-all view of the number of houses and business destroyed or that have major or minor damage.
- 2) Individual and family damage assessment in which the team determines the specific damage to family dwellings, other disaster related needs, and what assistance is needed to alleviate the victim.

General assessment is usually conducted by various governmental agencies (i.e. HUD, Corps of Engineers, FEMA) as well as the American Red Cross. They survey the entire area affected by the disaster to try to determine the approximate dollar amount of damage and estimate cost of recovery. This information is used to help determine whether or not there should be an SBA or presidential declaration made that would allow federal dollars to be used in recovery.

There is no need for individual churches to be concerned with this “global” view. It is helpful to know that other agencies will share their assessment reports. For instance, in Andrew churches could, upon request obtain copies of the Red Cross damage assessment reports for the neighborhoods in which they were working. This gave them an idea of the kind of damage to expect before they made home visits. It also gave a good indication of the number of volunteers needed to visit all of the families affected in a particular neighborhood.

Whether or not they have access to the above information churches should concentrate on the damage to and needs of individuals and families beginning with their own church members and others close to the church. Resources permitting they can then reach out to others in their community. It is the Assessment Teams job to carefully assess ALL THE NEEDS resulting from the disaster, record their findings, and determine what the church work team can do to alleviate that need. For instance, a poor family may not have had any structural damage to their home but the head of the house may have lost his job at the factory that was completely destroyed. Such a situation presents a critical need in which the church can help.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew the Kendall Presbyterian Church developed a very useful “I NEED FORM”. Since it proved very helpful in the churches effort in South Florida it is duplicated in the Appendices. In the event of a disaster, churches are encouraged to duplicate this or design a similar form.

Though not essential, it would be good for individuals assigned to church disaster assessment teams to have some knowledge of basic construction. Their notes will be used by future teams of workers. The more knowledgeable they are and the more detailed they are recording their findings the easier it will be for the work teams. Also, detecting some foundation and structural damage requires years of experience.

If enough experienced volunteers are not available, identify the most knowledgeable individual available and have them conduct a brief workshop on what to look for. A two hour training can:

- 1) Cover the basics of damage assessment
- 2) Allow everyone to be using the same format for assessment

Though not all inclusive, below are some things that damage assessment teams may want to note:

- 1) Deaths, personal injuries (Major and Minor)
- 2) Damage to living quarters (Apartment or Home)
- 3) Damage to yard and out buildings
- 4) Downed utility wires
- 5) Loss of job or means to make an income (workshop or tools destroyed)
- 6) Loss of transportation needed to get to work
- 7) Food spoilage (loss of refrigeration for extended period)
- 8) The presence of small children or frail elderly
- 9) Loss of eyeglasses, hearing aids, or any other devices required for individual to meet daily needs
- 10) Severely downcast or depressed individuals (especially elderly) that may evidence the need for medical attention

Each volunteer involved in the assessment phase should have reliable transportation and should be familiar with the area. Reliable transportation means not only mechanically sound but having adequate gasoline (try to keep half-full at all times). Like potable water, gasoline could be scarce because of damage to tank and equipment for the inability to work pumps. Having a local resident with each team is advisable. If the street signs are all blown away, road maps may prove useless (for several weeks after Andrew it was practically impossible for individuals unfamiliar with South Dade County area to locate specific homes).

Actually, the assessment phase begins when the pastor makes that initial visit to see if a church member is okay (Pastors in the South Florida Presbytery, not only provided spiritual encouragement, many of them were equipped to meet basic needs when they visited their members). Later, assessment teams are sent out to every home to study the damage in greater detail and talk to the homeowner or renter. They may or may not do any repairs at that time. In Andrew assessment teams tried to do minor repairs that could be done in an hour or two but waited on the more serious repairs.

## PCA PLUS

The assessment phase is where the PCA-PLUS plan must be considered. PCA-PLUS is a term coined by the PCA churches in South Florida recognizing that meeting the emergency and recovery needs of the their own members was their first priority.

As previously mentioned, the Kendall PCA church did this by distributing a “I NEED FORM” at the first two or three church services following Hurricane Andrew. The pastoral staff of other churches such as Granada, and Old Cutler, worked closely with church volunteers to make sure the immediate needs of the their members were met.

Under the PAC-PLUS plan the assessment teams visit every affected member of the church first. After that has been done the needs of other victims such as friends and relatives of members, neighbors of the church, etc. can be assessed. These should be taken based on a priority of needs taking into consideration the resources of the church. For example a single parent with several small children who lives near the church but is not a member may be a very high priority. Following a major disaster there are numerous demands on church resources. It is essential to determine some kind of priority before allocating limited resources. Remember there are many other governmental and private agencies serving the general public and there are many other denominations meeting the needs of their congregations so focusing first on the needs of those in your church is both practical and prudent.

## PART C

### THE RECOVERY PHASE

THE RECOVERY PHASE is that period when the actual restoring of personal and real property is undertaken. Because of the time and difficulty required to study the full impact of the disaster, there will be some overlaps between this phase and the assessment phase. There may also be some ongoing emergency phase activities but, for all intents and purposes victims now have a supply of water food, and clothing. Mass shelters are usually closed by this time (In Andrew mass shelters remained open approximately three months). Arrangements have been made for temporary living quarters if required, however, most people have returned to their homes. The damage was extensive following Andrew that the beginning of the recovery phase was delayed weeks for many families. They could not return to their homes and the availability of housing within reasonable distances was scarce. Tents and RV's were common sights throughout the area. Many who lost their home had not even seen their insurance adjuster some six weeks after the storm. Though, as in Andrew, victims may still be displaced, in the recovery phase, most have come to grips with their misfortune and are now ready to undertake permanent repairs to their homes.

A few questions that must be considered by any church prior to undertaking recovery assistance are:

- 1) To what extent should our church be involved in the extended recovery of disaster victims (home repair and rebuilding)?
- 2) Is our congregation financially committed to the effort?
- 3) How will the assistance be approved and organized?
- 4) Who in our congregation has the time and the ability to oversee such efforts?

The recovery phase is long term, it may require from several months to a year or more. Andrew revealed that some churches choose not to continue their efforts into this phase. After meeting emergency needs they felt their churches should resume their normal activities (worship services and other church functions). Disaster victims are referred to the government and other relief agencies. This was not the position of the PCA churches in South Florida. Because so many of their members had large scale needs that continued for months after the disaster, they felt it important to help alleviate those needs. Also a few church congregations were scattered after their church was damaged or destroyed so the rebuilding included the congregation as well as the church facilities.

In many ways the recovery phase is more difficult because the media, and therefore, the American public have begun to put the disaster out of their mind. For the first seven days after Hurricane Andrew there was some kind of article, if not a headline, in practically every major newspaper in the country. Six weeks later, a partial review of the nation's major newspapers revealed only South Florida papers had anything of significance about Hurricane Andrew or the ongoing relief effort. The rest of the nation had already moved on to other issues. Because of this lack of public visibility after several weeks it is very

difficult to raise financial support through fund appeals, etc. The needs may be just as great but, unfortunately it no longer captures the public's attention. That is why continuing support from other churches is so important. Such support is often dependent on how well the onsite coordinator keeps denominational leaders informed regarding the relief effort.

In every major disaster there is a percentage of families who either had no insurance or were under-insured. Their home is in need of repairs and they have no means to do it. They may get some support from the government or private relief agencies but even this is not enough to get their homes functional again. In such cases the church can and should help. The relief coordinator can go down his list of churches that offered to send skilled work teams and match them to the families in need.

For example: An uninsured home owner, s single mother, had her roof blown off.

On your list you have a church that offered to send a work team for five days. The pastor had indicated their ability to roof homes. You make arrangement for them to come and re-roof the home.

SECTION III  
SUPPORT ROLE OF CHURCHES OUTSIDE THE DISASTER AREA

PART A  
THE EMERGENCY PHASE

When a major disaster strikes a given community, churches from around the nation usually respond with offers of assistance, both financial and manpower. In Hurricane Andrew these calls started coming in to PCA churches immediately after the wind died down. Although all of the assistance was welcomed and appreciated those directing the relief effort felt it could have been coordinated much better. Often the relief coordinator was notified that a shipment of food was being sent after a truck was already in route to his church. What if there is no storage? Pick-up trucks and u-haul trailers begin to arrive with load and after load of used clothing. There are no volunteers or space to handle used clothing so coordinator has to find some agency outside the area to take it. Teams of workers suddenly appear at the door and say we're ready to go to work. There were no arrangements made for lodging, food, etc. for these people because they were unexpected. Many hours of coordinator's time is consumed trying to sort out these problems when they all could have been avoided. So, what should have been done?

**DO NOT SEND SUPPLIES OR WORK TEAMS WITHOUT COORDINATING IT WITH ONSITE LEADERSHIP.**

A few simple phone calls will make life easier for everyone. After a disaster strikes, call the denominational headquarters and express your willingness to help. Ask for the names and telephone number of the person in charge of the presbytery effort or if you prefer a particular church. Call this individual and inquire as to the most pressing needs. If it is early in the operation and your church is only a few hours away, he may ask you to send a truckload of water and ice.

**WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY A SITE CHURCH FROM OUTSIDE THE AREA CAN HELP?**

This depends on how close the church is to the disaster area. If it is only a three or four hour drive, it is likely that your church could purchase and deliver much needed supplies to the area. In Andrew several churches from Broward and Palm Beach Counties served in this capacity. They quickly brought water, ice, tools, food items, etc. to the area. These church sent work teams to help in clean-up and debris removal. Lodging wasn't a problem because they could go back to their own community at the end of the day.

For churches that are further away the single most effective thing that can be done is to send cash contribution preferably through denominational channels earmarked for the relief effort. Why cash? Because the coordinator can use it to purchase items of greatest need at the particular time. One day it may be ice. The next it may be baby food or milk. Needs change quickly as the effort progresses. Dozens of PCA churches around the

country took up special collections to help families affected by the disaster and it enabled their sister churches in the area to respond more readily.

#### ARE CHURCH WORK TEAMS NEEDED IN THE EMERGENCY PHASE?

Yes, but volunteer workers should be aware of the nature of the work in those few days. It is very hard work under rather primitive conditions. First, a church interested in bringing in a work team to the area should contact the relief coordinator. Find out what needs to be done. Discuss your arrival item, how long you will stay, accommodations (usually sleeping bags on a floor), etc. Ask the coordinator what tools will be needed. You can assume that tools and supplies will be difficult to get in the immediate disaster area.

During the emergency phase church work teams clean mud and debris from churches and homes. They remove trees and heavy limbs that have blown onto (and in some cases into) homes or blocking driveways. They clean up glass and nail plywood over doors and windows, cover an exposed home with plastic sheeting, or do other very minor emergency repairs. They may serve or deliver meals or help in an emergency daycare center.

Churches should not recruit skilled workers (plumbers, electricians, bricklayers, etc) for the emergency phase without talking to the relief coordinator. In Andrew it was several weeks before such people could be used efficiently. The new building codes delayed all home repairs. They were needed weeks later in the recovery phase.

## PART B RECOVERY PHASE

The recovery phase for churches outside the disaster area can be summed up in:

- 1) Financial Support
- 2) Materials and Supplies
- 3) Skilled work Teams

### Financial Support

As discussed briefly in an earlier section, the financial needs of victims in a major disaster may continue for several months or longer. Some may be displaced from their homes for months. In a few cases in South Florida where low cost apartment houses were completely destroyed, displaced individuals suddenly found themselves in an area with no affordable housing. If a family that in the pasts spent 30% of family income on housing and utilities is put in a situation where they must spend over fifty percent, they will need some assistance for several months.

As in the emergency phase, timely financial contributions are the most effective way to help in the recovery phase. By this time, all necessary materials and supplies are available in the immediate vicinity. Most of the stores are open and fully stocked. Necessary items can be purchased as needed, funds permitting. The spending of relief funds in the local area also helps stimulate the economy that has suffered as a result of the disaster. This has a pass down effect and aids in the overall economic recovery of the community.

Unfortunately, as time passes it is harder to raise support for them. The winds have died down, the water has receded, and the debris has been removed, and the press has gone home. Though many lives are still in a state of ruin, it is not readily apparent because the media is not interested. There are no headlines to appeal on behalf of hurting families. Realizing this, relief coordinators try to raise as much of the entire relief budget as possible in the first few weeks. An account is established and funds are held in reserve for the recovery phase of the operation. There are also churches that God has called to provide continued support to some relief efforts. This support cannot be predicted or quantified but often it comes just when some critical need arises. Churches across the country should be in prayer about their commitment to emergency relief efforts. Should they contribute a one time offering or should they give so much per month for six months or a year? In hurricane Andrew effort there was an outpouring from PCA churches, as well as those of other denominations. One pastor in Miami was so moved with the response to help his community that he immediately began to share with his congregation a desire for them to be able to give when a disaster occurs in another part of the country. Churches outside that disaster area need to be aware of the continuing needs on the aftermath of a major disaster. Their assistance may be needed for 12 to 18 months or more.

### Material and Supplies

Until the last home is repaired there will always be a need for certain kinds of materials and supplies (hammers, saws, nails, lumber, etc). As mentioned earlier it is more efficient to buy such material as close to the disaster site as possible, however, there are other considerations. For instance, building supply manufacturers and distributors will occasionally donate large quantities of material and supplies to a relief effort. In the past donations have included lumber, roofing materials, power tools, and appliances. Such donations can make a significant impact on the recovery effort. AS the operation progresses, however, such contributions needed to be thoroughly discussed with the on site relief workers. It can be burdensome and inefficient to receive unexpected shipments of supplies and equipment. Safe and secure storage space may be difficult to find. In the South Dade area significant equipment and supplies were stolen even though every effort was made to safeguard them. Such losses can be avoided by coordinating all shipments going into the disaster area with the designated relief coordinator.

### Skilled Work Teams

Many of the suggestions for work teams during the emergency phase will apply equally to the recovery phase. One major difference is that they should be more skilled. The recovery phase is when major repairs are being made and in some cases homes are being completely rebuilt. Work teams will need to have at least one person who has some general construction background. Other members should include carpenters, electricians, plumbers, painters, roofers, etc. Very often a church will agree to completely rebuild a home by sending one group to do part and then follow up teams to complete it. Such arrangements are fine as long as they are coordinated with a local representative. This is to keep all parties apprised of the progress and the expected completion date, especially the homeowner. The local representative will have to work continually with local building inspectors to make sure the new construction or repair meets the local building code. He can only do this if he is fully informed as the project progresses.

Because of the technical nature of work in the recovery phase it is not ideally suited for youth groups. It is okay for one or two younger workers to serve as helpers if they are closely supervised. It would be difficult, however, for one to adults to manage eight or ten untrained youth in building or making major repairs to a home.

To be most effective church work team sent during the recovery phase should:

- Have a servant's hearts (willing to do what ever is required)
- Should consist of at least five people representing several different skills (carpentry, electricity, roofing)
- Preferably take jobs that they can complete in a single trip
- Have all their own tools (sponsor church should provide supplies from donated relief funds)
- Be prepared to live under relative rigorous conditions such as long work hours, sleeping on the floor, and lack of bath and sanitary facilities.

Work teams are a tremendous resource in disaster recovery. They provide much needed skilled resources in times of need. The work they accomplish would have to be purchased at relatively high costs or perhaps not completed at all. Working in disaster situation also gives the worker/servant a special satisfaction that lifts the human spirit – being able to serve the “least of these.”

## SUMMARY

As previously mentioned, it is not a matter if another disaster will occur it is a matter of where and when. When another major disaster occurs the church will again be called upon to help in alleviating the suffering. Churches in the general and the PCA churches in particular will play a critical role as they did in Hurricane Andrew.

Each disaster is unique and, therefore, the effort to alleviate that suffering caused by disasters will vary considerably. Using the experience of Andrew, this manual has attempted to provide the basic information necessary to get an operation off the ground. It should be used as a guide and, not necessarily, followed step by step.

Though they may vary in time and complexity, all disaster relief efforts will go through emergency, assessment, and recovery phases similar to the ones described above. They will entail many of the problems and questions dealt with in the text. Hopefully this manual will make the job of coordinating a disaster relief effort much easier for the pastor and/or lay leaders by introducing them in advance to some of the problems they will face. This manual will and should be reviewed and revised as later experiences further document the church's role in disaster relief efforts.

## APPENDIX I

Below is a partial list of non-governmental groups and churches that responded following Hurricane Andrew. Most of them operated at more than one location. Since many of these groups are national in scope they will likely respond to other disasters in the future.

American Red Cross	Lutheran Disaster Response
AFL-CIO	Meals On Wheels
African Methodists Episcopal Church	Mennonite Disaster Relief
Catholic Diocese	Missionaries of Charity
Catholic Community Service	St. Vincent de Paul
Christian Disaster Response	Presbyterian Church USA
Episcopal Church	Presbyterian Church in America
Florida Jaycees	Salvation Army
Jewish Family Services	Southern Baptist
Church of God	World Vision
Interfaith Disaster Response	Seventh Day Adventist
Christian Reformed World Belief	Church of the Brethren
Church of World Service	MasterServe
United Church of Christ	Nation Association of Evangelicals

### BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF SOME OF THE ASSISTANCE USUALLY AVAILABLE TO DISASTER VICTIMS FOLLOWING A PRESIDENTIALLY DECLARED DISASTER

American Red Cross – According to the Red Cross Flyer entitled “Information for Disaster Victims” if you are a disaster victim the Red Cross will provide the means to assist you with:

- Food, clothing, and rent
- Urgent household needs
- Medical, nursing, and hospital care
- Temporary repairs to your home so that you can move back in.
- Replacement of personal occupational supplies and equipment

Red Cross Service Centers are usually set up throughout a given disaster area. All Red Cross help is free.

\* On December 20, 1986 the American Red Cross and the Presbyterian in American entered into a “Statement of Understanding” regarding disaster relief efforts. In the section entitled “Methods of Cooperation” the following were enumerated:

1) Close liaison will be maintained between Red Cross national headquarters and the PCA Disaster Response Service through the Disaster Response Director at Decatur, Georgia, by way of conferences, telephone, telecopier, and other means.

- 2) The Red Cross may provide maintenance for PCA volunteers for a designated period or within a specific financial limitation when they are assigned to the Red Cross at the request of the Red Cross to perform specific functions on a disaster operation.
- 3) The Red Cross will provide identification for PCA volunteers to wear in addition to their own identification when they are working with the Red Cross, as requested by PCA volunteers.
- 4) The Red Cross will assist the PCA Disaster Response Service in Obtaining proper recognition for its role in the disaster operations.
- 5) The Red Cross will encourage its chapters to share surveys and other vital statistical data with PCA Disaster Response representatives on the local level.
- 6) The PCA Disaster Response Service will encourage its local church groups to work with the Red Cross in preparedness and planning.
- 7) The PCA Disaster Response Service will, when possible, provide youth and adult volunteers to assist families who have special needs with repair and rebuilding of their homes or with clean-up of basements and property.
- 8) Liaison will be maintained between the headquarters offices of the PCA and the Red Cross. Staff from the national offices of the PCA and the Red Cross will meet at least once a year to evaluate progress in the implementation of this statement of understanding and to revise and develop new plans as appropriate.
- 9) Presbyterian Church in America volunteers will be encouraged to attend Red Cross training classes and may be assigned to assist the Red Cross in case work, damage assessment, shelter management, mass feeding, or other disaster services.

The Red Cross and the PCA will inform their respective chapters, classes or units and administrative offices about this cooperative agreement. This statement of understanding is in effect as of the date indicated below (11/28/86) and shall remain in effect until termination by written notification from either party to the other.

**THE SALVATION ARMY** – The Salvation Army is usually one of the first agencies to set up “soup kitchens” and mobile units for mass feeding following a disaster. They also provide counseling for disaster victims and help them with emergency food and clothing. Working with the government and other relief agencies the Salvation Army tries to find suitable shelter for victims. All Salvation Army assistance is free.

**SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)** – The SBA makes federally subsidized low interest home and personal loans to repair or replace home, personal property, or businesses which have sustained damages not covered by insurance. The SBA also makes disaster business loans for business facilities, inventory, machinery, or equipment. These loans are for a maximum of \$500,000.

**FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)** – This federal relief agency provides a range of benefits to individuals and businesses that are not insured (or underinsured) and who do not qualify for other programs. The “Individual and Family Grant Program” is administered by state or local government but is 75% funded by FEMA. It can provide grants of up to \$11,400 (maximum amount given during Andrew)

to meet disaster-related serious needs and expenses not provided for by other programs or insurance. One eligibility requirement for this grant is that the applicant is not qualified to receive a SBA loan. Grant funds can be used for home repairs, household items, trade tools (Carpentry, plumbing, etc.), clothing, transportation, and medical expenses.

**SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST** – Warehouses and distributes food, clothing, and other items. This group is usually very responsive in major disasters. They are, perhaps the most effective of all groups in handling used clothing. They have a ministry of collecting, cleaning, sorting, and distributing used clothes. Many agencies, churches, etc refer all used clothing to the Seventh Day Adventist.

**CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SERVICES** – This agency is usually on the scene in disaster areas in the United States. Working closely with local Catholic Churches that collect and distribute food, water, medical supplies, and miscellaneous other items.

**MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICES** – this group has tremendous credibility in disaster relief. They have been active in all recent major disasters. Their greatest strength is their commitment to provide trained willing workers for clean-up and home repairs. They usually work from referrals from other agencies.

**SOTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION** – This denomination has very strong and efficient disaster response program. They are among the first on the scene with mobile kitchens for mass feeding. Disaster response teams, working with local Southern Baptist churches also distribute water, non-perishable food items, and other items. Work teams coordinated by this group also helps with emergency repairs to homes.

APPENDIX II

I NEED A FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS OF YOUR HOME \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION OF YOUR HOME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE WHERE YOU CAN BE REACHED DURING DAY \_\_\_\_\_ AT NIGHT \_\_\_\_\_

WHERE ARE YOU STAYING? \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO TO HELP YOU? \_\_\_\_\_

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WHEN CAN WE MEET YOU AT YOUR PROPERTY TO PROVIDE THIS SERVICE?

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF INTERVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_

DATE AND TIME WORK WAS DONE \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE OF WORK CREW \_\_\_\_\_

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NAME OF WORK CREW LEADER \_\_\_\_\_

### APPENDIX III

Immediately following any major disaster many churches desire to send teams in to help with emergency needs, clean-up, repair, etc. This is often so spontaneous that little thought is given to the potential liability of the church and/or denomination if anything happens to one of the volunteer workers. Having every worker complete a release form is a good way to avoid problems. The following forms have been design to make this easier. They can be copied and used as is, however, local churches may want to have their own attorney review it.

## VOLUNTEER WORKER RELEASE FORM (Front)

The Presbyterian Church in America appreciates your willingness to serve other in their time of need. Because you will be working under difficult and adverse conditions at times, it is important that you read and sign this form before you leave for your assignment in the relief area.

If you have any questions, you or your pastor should contact the Mission to North America Office, Presbyterian Church in America, qt 1852 Century Place, Suite 205, Atlanta, GA 30345, telephone (404)320-3330. You (or parent or legal guardian if you are under 21) should sign each section in the presence of a Notary Public, who should then notarize the document. Give the completed document to the person in charge of the disaster team from your church.

PERMISSION AND MEDICAL CONSENT  
(required of members under age 21)

I give my permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to work in the  
(Name of Worker)  
disaster relief effort being coordinated by \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Name of church or presbytery)

In the event of medical emergency, I hereby authorize and consent to the emergency medical treatment for the child named on this form.

Signature of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the worker: \_\_\_\_\_

INSURANCE

I understand that neither the Presbyterian Church in America not the Mission to North America (MNA) provides any insurance coverage of loses, sickness, or injuries that may occur to me (or my child) while participating in the disaster relief effort. I am responsible for providing my own (or my child's) insurance coverage. I understand that I will be notified as soon as possible of any emergency. I will be responsible for any travel expense, should emergency transportation back home be required.

Name of your insurance company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of insurance company: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy and/or Group # : \_\_\_\_\_. Identification # of insured: \_\_\_\_\_

If the relief worker is not the insured (he or she is a dependent). Give name of the insured \_\_\_\_\_.

Signature of participant or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

I am aware of the potential risks to myself and my property (or my child and his/her property) as I (or he/she) participate(s) in the disaster relief effort. Knowing such, I voluntarily release the \_\_\_\_\_ Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in America, the MAN and any employees or representatives of these organizations from any and all liability related to the activities of this relief effort.

Signature of participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(or parent or guardian)

Witnessed:

State of \_\_\_\_\_

County of \_\_\_\_\_

Acknowledge before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC

My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX IV

### General Financial Guidelines Set-up by AD Hoc Committee On Hurricane Andrew Designated Funds (Approved September 9, 1992)

- A. All donation are to be sent to the State Clerk/Treasure of deposit in the bank account of the presbytery
- B. The Ad Hoc Committee will provide guidance and oversight for the distribution of funds.
- C. The stated Clerk/Treasurer will deposit funds as needed in the bank account of Kendall (local PCA church) to be use by John Swisher (the appointed presbytery relief coordinator).
- D. Sums under \$500 may be disbursed at the discretion of the coordinator. Disbursements over \$500 must be referred to the stated Clerk/Treasurer. At his discretion he may approve them to consult with the committee.
- E. Kendall will keep separate accounting records on the disbursement of Presbytery funds and will send summaries to the Stated Clerk's Office for the inclusion in Presbytery records.
- F. The coordinator will work closely with all churches affected for proper and equal distribution of funds.
- G. All members of Presbytery needing assistance should request it form the Ad Hoc Committee through the Stated Clerk.
- H. Ordinarily, the ceiling for aid to individual families will be \$1,000 a month.
- I. Request for aid form churches should be made through their governing bodies.