

CHAPTER 10

THE RED CROSS

And

THE SALVATION ARMY

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Quite often The Red Cross and The Salvation Army often work together in disasters. The Salvation Army is an evangelical arm of the universal Christian Church, while The Red Cross is an impartial, neutral organization. Both offer aid and comfort in time of disaster. I'll first cover The Salvation Army and how they worked in conjunction with The Red Cross to bring relief to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

THE SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army provided assistance to 1.7 million people after Katrina. They served 5.7 million hot meals and 8.3 million sandwiches, snacks and drinks. They dispatched 178 Canteens and 11 Field Kitchens to the disaster region along the Gulf Coast. They handled 282,000 social services cases and more than 188,000 individuals received "emotional and spiritual care." The Salvation Army disaster workers on the Gulf Coast logged more than 830,000 hours of service and more than \$84 million was expended just in the first three months of operations. The public donated \$394.4 million for the 2005 hurricane relief to date. So far they have spent \$239.6 million. As you'll see below, this is quite a bit less than The Red Cross spent in donations on the relief effort.

The Salvation Army are not first responders. They support the first responders who would include The Red Cross and government response. As you can see above, they are great at providing meals and creating shelters too, although they normally utilize buildings such as schools. They provided meals at numerous Red Cross shelters after Katrina. They are a mass-care agency and will be strained beyond their limits in 2008. They will need many volunteers for this service.

One of the best things that The Salvation Army provides during disasters is clothing to people whose clothes may not be wearable anymore. The Red Cross normally does not provide "used clothing," although Katrina forced them to bend the rules, as you'll see below. I would highly encourage everyone to clean out their closets of T-Shirts, jeans, flip-flops, tennis shoes, and jackets and donate them to The Salvation Army before September. If you have a garage sale, donate all the leftover clothing to The Salvation Army. They're going to need every piece of clothing they

can get their hands on by mid-November. I'll remind you in the chapter about your preparations outside the danger zones.

If you wish to contribute to The Salvation Army, you may do so online at

www.salvationarmyusa.org. By mail:

The Salvation Army Headquarters

P.O. Box 269

Alexandria, VA 22313

By telephone call 1-800-SAL-ARMY (725-2769). If you fly United Airlines, you can donate miles that will be used not only by Salvation Army personnel to fly to the scenes of disaster, but also for families to be flown to other locations. Donations can be as small as 1,000 miles.

THE RED CROSS

When Katrina struck New Orleans in 2005, thousands of refugees fled the storm's wrath and 25,000 of them ended up in Dallas, where I live. Most of them were processed and found shelter by the Red Cross. This organization, made up mostly of volunteers, handles everything from house fires to floods, to tornadoes and earthquakes. A few months ago there was an apartment fire here in Dallas that displaced 100 families. The Red Cross provided assistance to all of these people, **FREE OF CHARGE!**

In Katrina's case they had already provided shelter in the Reunion Area, the former home of the Dallas Mavericks and Dallas Stars to 1,000 people (they are called "clients"). Soon 2,000 more people arrived and they were given the parking garage at the Dallas Convention Center where they provided cots for all of these refugees. Then came a call that there would be 44 buses arriving from New Orleans with people that had to wade out through the filthy water to safety. A bus would arrive every 20 minutes with these poor people, whose skin had been burned by the chemicals in the water. They had to have clothing, showers, food, and shelter. By now the Red Cross was out of cots, so they provided blankets on the concrete floor. They allowed donations of clothing to be brought to the convention center.

Since then they have doubled their supply of cots in Dallas, so that's fine for a Katrina type emergency. But what if 150,000 to 200,000 refugees arrive from just the New Madrid Mississippi Valley earthquakes? I'll discuss this in more detail later. After Katrina, the Red Cross nationally has tripled their warehouse space and can supply up to 500,000 people with cots and comfort kits. Of course that will not be enough if there are suddenly several million refugees.

As Katrina was the largest disaster relief effort ever undertaken by the Red Cross, let's look at some figures that will amaze you—they did me. The storms affected approximately 90,000 square miles and severely damaged or destroyed 350,000 residences. The Red Cross opened 1,400 evacuation shelters in 27 states and the

District of Columbia, with overnight stays totaling more than 3.8 million. They sheltered 450,000 evacuees, and served 68 million hot meals and snacks to evacuees and rescue workers. And they provided emergency assistance to more than 1.4 million families—about four million people—with food, clothing, and other essentials. They received 2.1 billion dollars in donations. Can you imagine what a catastrophe 100 times larger will require?

I do wish to point out what a great “can do” attitude these volunteers have in order to get the job done. They come from all backgrounds, which are needed to accomplish what may seem simple on the surface, but in practice are highly complex and detailed. The American Red Cross responds to approximately 70,000 disasters each year. They “scale” to the disaster. The larger the disaster, the more people are needed, and then decreases as the situation returns to normal.

The Red Cross operates under seven fundamental principles:

- 1. Humanity—To alleviate and prevent human suffering on a world wide basis and to promote mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples;**
- 2. Impartiality—There is no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions;**
- 3. Neutrality—It will not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies;**
- 4. Independence—Although subject to the laws of the countries it operates in, they maintain their autonomy;**
- 5. Voluntary Service—It is a volunteer relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain;**
- 6. Unity—There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country;**
- 7. Universality—All societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.**

That last point is very important, as when our great earthquake and tsunami disasters take place, we will receive assistance from other Red Cross and Red Crescent societies around the world, just as we have done for them in the past.

The American Red Cross has a core set of values that guide their actions: 1. Accountability; 2. Collaboration; 3. Commitment to Results; 4. Trustworthiness; 5. Humanitarianism.

I want each of you reading this to seriously consider volunteering at your local Red Cross. There are a large number of volunteer positions available for every type of background. But we’re going to concentrate on Mass Care and Shelter Operations, as that’s where thousands of volunteers will be needed all over the country for the millions of refugees forced to flee their homes in these upcoming catastrophes.

Recently I took a one-day class at the Red Cross headquarters here in Dallas. It included their introductory “Fulfilling Out Mission” course that can actually be

taken on-line. Then in the afternoon came their Mass Care Overview and Shelter Operations. These are easy courses that will give you a very basic understanding of what the Red Cross does in times of disasters. You'll also get to meet some extremely nice and caring people—good-hearted people. You can even take this as a self-study course, using a workbook and a video supplied by the local Red Cross Chapter. Don't wait for these earthquakes to happen before you volunteer! You need to get your training NOW and hopefully take part in some operations before late October rolls around. In our class we heard more than once that caring for large groups of people was the hardest work a volunteer had ever done, but it was **THE MOST REWARDING!** When was the last time you could say that?

The refugees are going to need a place to sleep, blankets, food, water, First Aid and Medical Supplies, clean-up supplies, toiletries, teddy bears (they work great in shelters) and baby supplies. Emotionally they will need to feel safe, that someone is concerned about them and will listen to their stories. And finally they will need information that their family members are safe, that the disaster is over, what kind of assistance is available to them, and where to get help. Can you see where in these needs you could help with just a little training?

The “clients” will have had little or no time to prepare emotionally for these earthquakes. Supplies will be scarce and there will be huge needs of all kinds. Long-term staffing will be needed, so however much time you can spare will be **HIGHLY APPRECIATED**. If you are retired, what a great service you can offer your fellow men, women, and children! Why not suggest to your local club, church, or group that you all take a Red Cross class together? The Red Cross might even supply an instructor to come to where you meet and conduct the class there. Put out the word so that other clubs and associations can jointly participate in the class together. What a spirit of cooperation you'll generate!

The Red Cross likes to use community centers, schools, churches, and convention centers for shelters. Schools will be in session, so I think only some parts of them might be able to be used. I'm afraid that the number of buildings available will be insufficient for such a large number of refugees, and tent shelters that will swell into mini cities will have to be used. I believe the use of these shelters will go from weeks to months to perhaps years.

Doctors and nurses will be in short supply, along with school teachers to give the children a feeling of normalcy. If you can you perform any of these jobs, please volunteer!

The Shelter Cycle, as it is termed by the Red Cross is supposed to work in this fashion:

1. **Planning**—Agreements are established and updated periodically to use other organizations' facilities when a disaster occurs;
2. **Disaster Occurs**—Local emergency officials notify Red Cross Chapter. The shelter locations are selected;

3. **Pre-Occupancy Inspection**—Red Cross worker meets with the owner of the building to ensure it is currently safe and in good condition. This may occur simultaneously with the arrival of clients;
4. **Shelter Opens and the Clients Arrive**—Mass Care workers open the shelter, post signs, and organize cots, food and other supplies. As clients arrive workers perform key roles of registration, feeding and other duties;
5. **After the Disaster**—Clients return home, make other arrangements, or housing arrangements are made through Individual Client Services;
6. **Shelter Closes**—Workers pack up supplies and clean the building.

I'm sure you can see from the above potential problems. How many locations has your local Red Cross identified that can be used long term in the catastrophes that are coming? There will certainly be a number of "temporary" shelters, which is what the Red Cross only expects to operate; but these catastrophic earthquakes are unlike any we've ever experienced before, so I believe they will be forced to change their rules. The clients may never be able to return home, as several thousand families from the New Orleans area have not been able to return. You can multiply that number several thousand times.

In the Shelters there will be a number of jobs that have to be filled on a 24 hours-a-day basis:

1. **Shelter Management**—Provides supervision and administrative support;
2. **Registration**—Ensures that all shelter occupants are registered upon arrival. Maintains a system for checking occupants in and out when they leave for any period of time. Records must be kept;
3. **Feeding**—Supervise on-site food preparation and service for shelter residents and workers, order food, keep records, prepare and monitor the food service staff work schedule;
4. **Disaster Health Services**—The staff will protect health, prevent disease, provide first aid, maintain records 24 hours a day;
5. **Disaster Mental Health Services**—Provides mental health services for both clients and staff;
6. **Information Services**—Provides access to factual information about the disaster, posts the organizations that offer assistance, and sets up bulletin boards and holds shelter meetings to dispel rumors
7. **Dormitory Management**—Sets up sleeping areas, assigns clients to sleeping areas, coordinates with Material Support Services staff for cots, blankets, and comfort kits, if available (that's a big "if"!)
8. **Other Client Services**—Organizes and administers play areas, recreation, transportation, and other services when shelter stays are long. Identifies residents needing additional services;
9. **Material Support Services**—Provides support for the use of the facility. Ensures the safety, security, and sanitation for the shelter. Procures, stores, and distributes supplies and equipment at the shelter;

- 10. Staff Services—Recruits, places, and supports staff assigned to the shelter. Provides opportunities for shelter residents to serve as volunteers in the shelter.**

As you can see, there is a huge amount of work involved in setting up and running a shelter for the refugees. There are several problem areas that we can identify simply by knowing that there will be huge numbers of “clients” that must be serviced.

PROBLEM #1—I was quite surprised to learn in my class that the Shelter Registration forms are still filled out by hand by the shelter workers. Can you imagine several thousand people arriving hour after hour that need to be registered? The lines will be around the block. The shelter workers will not be able to write fast enough, and their hands will suffer fatigue from so much writing.

SOLUTIONS

- A. Offer the Registration form online for people to fill out in advance and then keep in a safe place with their other records.**
- B. Have computers for the staff to use to fill out these forms and then print them at a printer used by 4 or 5 computers. The computers ideally would be laptops that could be used and donated to the Red Cross by area firms. They would not need to be the latest versions, as their sole use would only be to fill out a form, unless other work could be performed later.**
- C. Have extra laptops available for those people that wish to fill out their own forms. This will speed up the registration process as one line could be designated for those with forms already completed.**
- D. In areas where there might not be electricity, or not enough power off a generator, why not at least have standard portable typewriters for use? Any person over 50 probably has used these in their old school days.**

PROBLEM #2—In my class I was shocked to learn that people with pets are not allowed in shelters! After Katrina, a Federal law was passed that states must provide for animals in times of disasters, but the Red Cross is not a state—remember they’re an organization. Their reasons may sound valid, but again looking at this as a catastrophic event, do you think that people who made it out of an earthquake area with their pets would want to turn them loose? As the dogs become desperate for food, they will form packs and attack people. It will become dangerous to set foot outside the shelters. This is just ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE!

SOLUTIONS

- A. The American Red Cross states that it works in conjunction with other organizations. If so, why not contact the local humane societies and work with them? They can contribute people to take care of pets at or near the shelter—perhaps a room in a convention center, a garage, even outside in a makeshift pen would be better than turning people away or seeing stray animals attack their “clients.” This should become a standard policy for all disasters. And please don’t forget large animals like horses!**

- B. If you work at or with a humane society, don't wait for the Red Cross to contact you; contact them offering to work with them on any disaster where there are pets involved. I'm sure you don't want to see videos of pets stranded as they were after Katrina. You'll also be doing a great service for the refugees, as that pet may be the only emotional contact they have to get through their crisis. You can also require anyone that brings a pet to you at a shelter to work taking care of all of the pets. This will be a good job to keep them busy and not thinking as much about their plight.**

PROBLEM #3—The October 2007 wildfires in both the San Diego and Los Angeles area displaced over 900,000 people. Many found shelter with friends and relatives, but thousands of people had to find shelter in Red Cross shelters. It was quite obvious from watching the San Diego TV stations on the internet that they were overwhelmed, as the stations broadcast requests for cots, blankets, prepared food, trash bags, towels, toiletries, sun screen, games and magazines. The Red Cross sent out a press release on October 23 that said they were sending 25,000 cots, 50,000 blankets, 50,000 pre-packaged meals, and 25,000 “comfort kits,” along with 2,000 workers. What happens when there are no friends or relatives to go to? And this was for much less than one million people.

SOLUTIONS:

- A. The American Red Cross must stock more heavily the above listed items. The wild fires should be a wakeup call that hundreds of thousands of people can be forced to flee their homes.**
- B. Be prepared to help supply these items to Red Cross shelters as there is no way they will have enough of these supplies.**

PROBLEM #4—The Red Cross has a rule that they do not supply used clothing to its clients. The victims of the earthquakes will come out of these areas filthy dirty from the dust, mud, dirt, and so on. The Red Cross does not have the resources to supply every one of their clients with new sneakers, jeans, underwear, t-shirts, and coats (if it's cold) to wear in the shelters.

SOLUTIONS

- A. Organizations that have used clothing, whether it is The Salvation Army, churches, or other organizations need to be ready to help supply the Red Cross with these basic necessities, not to mention toiletries. Volunteer to take these clothes to the shelters. The Red Cross had to bend their rule in Dallas when those 44 buses showed up at the Dallas Convention Center.**
- B. Be prepared to organize your group or church to gather clothing and tennis shoes, and even flip-flops in warmer climates, as soon as you hear that these earthquakes have taken place. Keep in mind that jeans, sneakers, and T-Shirts are best for shelters, along with coats if it is cold and clean blankets. I think they will accept flip-flops when they quickly run out of sneakers. They're also less expensive. Find out in advance what is contained in the plastic bags that are given to each client and then put together a group that will fill these bags. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of bags will need to be filled with toiletries.**

PROBLEM #5—If the state governments do not implement any of my proposals, the Red Cross should consider the following:

SOLUTIONS

- A. When the Mississippi Valley earthquakes occur, don't commit all of your resources from all over the nation to this one area. You must now seriously consider that the odds have greatly increased that the Pacific Coast will have an even worse series of earthquakes, along with tsunamis, within ten days and probably within seven. You need to have your own plan in place, to place shelters and feeding stations every five miles along the major freeways out of the major metropolises on the west coast. Just don't place them any closer than 20 miles from the Los Angeles coast, 70 miles from San Diego, and 25 miles from San Francisco. Do not use buildings—these have to be tents and such, perhaps set up on parking lots. Be prepared to publish these locations in the local papers and on TV and radio. Try to encourage The Salvation Army and other organizations to work with you. It will probably be impossible for you to cover that much territory by yourselves.**
- B. Contact local, state and Federal Governments, informing them of these locations, and ask for assistance in resupplying these aid stations with MRE's and other supplies.**
- C. Pull your ERV's and other major rescue vehicles and supplies off the coasts—the farther the better. You can always go back to the west, whatever is left of it.**
- D. Contact the satellite radio services (currently two but may be one by the time you read this) and ask for a channel to be used for National extreme emergencies. I would think they would love to give you a channel, as that gives people another reason to subscribe to their service. You can use this channel initially for floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes; then for the Mississippi Valley and Pacific Coast disasters, giving people information, but also giving instructions at certain times to rescue personnel that will be cut off without communication themselves. You can install these satellite radios in all your emergency vehicles.**

PROBLEM #6—The huge number of Red Cross Volunteers that will be needed to handle the enormous number of refugees that will stream in for weeks and perhaps months after the earthquakes. As the refugees find it impossible to live in structures that are repeatedly shaken and collapse from aftershocks, they will give up and make their way out of the ruins to shelters for processing.

SOLUTIONS

- A. Although the Red Cross does make some effort to offer their courses to corporations, churches, and other organizations, they need to redouble their efforts and contact EVERY company, church, and club in the Chapter area and offer to send instructors to their facilities to train the volunteers SPECIFICALLY for Mass Care and Shelter Operations. By offering to teach these courses at their facilities there will be more people that take**

these courses because they are in their “comfort zone” in a place they go every day or every week.

- B. Here’s where you readers can help. Convince your company, church, or other organization to contact your local Red Cross Chapter and arrange for an instructor to come out and teach these classes. There are 2,200 active chapters of AARP in the United States. What a great class to take together with other members! Convincing your church or group to take these courses will be one of the best things you’ve ever accomplished in your life, trust me!**

You can also donate to the Red Cross. Their website (www.redcross.org) gives you full information, but to donate by phone telephone 1-800-Red Cross or 1-800-275-7575. Donations by mail can go to your local Red Cross Chapter or by mail to:

American Red Cross

P.O. Box 37243

Washington, DC 20013

Your company can also donate pallets of food products, water, and toiletries. Plus you can donate airline miles to the Red Cross. The airlines are too numerous to list here (listed on the Red Cross website) with the exception of two that are not listed—American Airlines and Southwest Airlines. Shame on AA and SW for not allowing donations!

Certainly there will be many other problems that I have not thought of yet when the largest series of earthquakes to ever strike North America take place. I hope you’ll be there to offer your assistance and solutions to those problems. Go to www.redcross.org; enter your zip code in the search box. Then contact the chapter nearest you and find out what classes they will be offering and take one! You won’t regret it.

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