

FOOTSTEPS

No.18 MARCH 1994

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES... 

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Why do disasters occur?

by Vinay Samuel, Ian Davis and Mike Wall

A GREAT FAMINE in an African country some years ago resulted in many people dying. Some said that it was a judgement of God upon this country because the government persecuted the church. In Ezekiel 14:12-20 we

have a very clear example of disaster seen as a judgement from God. Are earthquakes, floods and famines a judgement of God? Unless God has revealed himself in a prophetic way we do not know whether they are God's judgement or not. **We should be careful of saying any disaster is a judgement.** Even if it is, it should not affect our compassion to those who suffer as a result.

In the Old Testament some disasters – the flood, the tower of Babel, Sodom and Gomorrah – are indeed a judgement from God. But many other disasters in the Bible – such as the famine in Egypt at the time of Joseph – are not seen as God's judgement, just a natural event.

We cannot claim an easy explanation for each disaster. Instead we should seek God's purposes in each different situation. Look at Nehemiah, for example. He did not rush in to build the walls of Jerusalem. First he asked God, 'Where are you in all this? Why did this happen and what should we do?' Do we really spend time with the people affected and think through together why this disaster has happened? In each situation we must ask God for his purpose in this event.



FOOTSTEPS

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Footsteps is a quarterly paper linking health and development workers worldwide. Tear Fund, publisher of *Footsteps*, hopes that it will provide the stimulus of new ideas and enthusiasm. It is a way of encouraging Christians of all nations as they work together towards creating wholeness in our communities.

Footsteps is free of charge to individuals working to promote health and development. It is available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Donations are welcomed.

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The church must also be careful not to exploit a disaster situation. 'If you don't repent of your sins and turn to Christ then God will punish you with another disaster.' This was the message of an Indian evangelist preaching in a village in Andhra Pradesh following a serious cyclone. Unless God has clearly revealed his actions to his Church, no Christian leader ever has the authority to declare that a particular disaster is a judgement from God.

Good can come out of disaster situations. For example, as a result of the drought in Israel and the Middle East, Joseph was made ruler of Egypt and

brought the Hebrews into Egypt where they settled and grew in numbers. In Acts 16:16-40 the earthquake in Philippi offered an opportunity for Paul to share his beliefs – the jailer and his family were converted and Paul was freed the following day. In the New Testament, disaster often gave the Christians a chance to share with one another and with non-believers.

God is all-powerful and can bring good even out of the tragedy of a disaster, whether it was a judgement on sin or a natural event.



FROM THE EDITOR

SCARCELY A WEEK GOES BY without us hearing of some kind of disaster on the news – earthquakes, coups, flooding, drought, civil war, dreadful accidents. None of us knows what the future may hold or where disaster may strike next. In this issue we look at a variety of thoughts and ideas which may help all of us to be better prepared to cope in difficult situations. The section which checks our knowledge of first aid is one we all need to read. How useful are we in emergencies? All of us face stress or temptations at some time, and the articles by Mike Wall and others give very practical advice on coping. Ian Davis explains how disaster and the following relief and rebuilding work can be seen as a cycle. He urges churches to help communities to be better prepared should disaster strike.

Following the helpful article in Issue 15 on whether community health programmes are simply community located or community controlled, Ben Osuga contributes to this discussion with an article on how to develop real community participation. Although he is discussing health programmes, his arguments apply to any kind of community work – agriculture, forestry, water etc.

Future issues will look at TB and AIDS, environmental issues, extension/training and appropriate technology. Do write in with any views or experiences which you would like to share on these issues.

We welcome Portuguese readers to *Footsteps* with this issue. If you would prefer to receive issues in Portuguese, please let the *Footsteps* Mailing List know – the address is in the box on the left of this page.

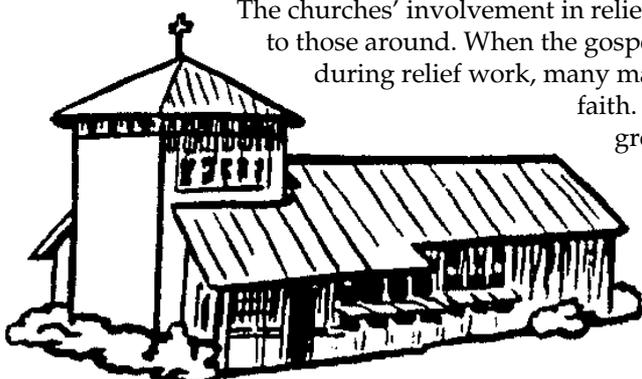
Isabel Carter

The Church and Disasters

by Jun Vencer

EACH DISASTER brings individual stories of great tragedy and human suffering. How is the church to respond to such need? Every church should be involved in providing relief for those who suffer – in whatever way. In the book of Acts, the early church in Antioch provides a good model for all churches to follow. When the famine in Judea took place, every believer in Antioch *...each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea.*

In some countries the church is uniquely placed to provide effective relief in times of disaster. Churches may be nearby and able to act quickly in the affected areas. Church leaders are usually reliable and able to identify those in greatest need in the community. After the relief operation the local church provides a permanent focus for follow-up. Relief agencies can come and go, but the local church remains.



The churches' involvement in relief can be a powerful witness to those around. When the gospel is put into practice during relief work, many may respond to the Christian faith. However, Christian groups need to be very

sensitive to this issue. It is very easy to encourage 'rice Christians' – those who believe that by saying they have become Christians they will receive more help and

Three case studies...

IN ARMENIA relief parcels were distributed to displaced people in hostel accommodation without any outward form of evangelism taking place. There was also no literature displayed. In this situation, their approach helped people to keep their dignity – particularly as some did not agree with their beliefs.

IN ZIMBABWE one group preached and sang Christian songs to people before food distribution took place. Something of a festival atmosphere was created, as the local people were sympathetic to Christian beliefs.

IN BOSNIA, food and other relief goods are made available to community groups who then manage the distribution themselves. These groups may be secular, Catholic or Muslim – evangelistic outreach is not part of the distribution. However, Christian literature and daily Bible reading notes are printed by this organisation these are made available to any contacts in the leadership of the community groups. Although the relief distribution and literature work are quite separate, they work together as two aspects of outreach to the whole person – practical and spiritual.

...and a letter

Rebuilding from nothing

The war in Sierra Leone in 1992 destroyed so many lives and so much property. But through these events, the Lord is teaching us many things as we are faced with a great number of challenges. I used to have machines for farming, all of which have been lost. Jesus has been challenging me: 'Were you depending on those tools, that equipment, and worshipping them instead of me?'

As a result of the traumatic events I have become very much attached to the people – they see that my interest in them is genuine since I stood with them during their time of difficulty. This makes them eager to work with me and I am challenged to continue living and working with them. The challenge to me is to stay with the people whether or not my employer keeps paying me a salary.

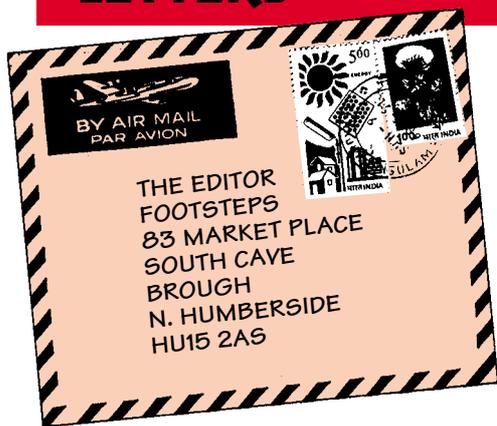
People are responding to the challenge to work harder because now they have nothing other than their own efforts on which to rely

for food. They are also challenged to accept new ideas. The war has destroyed so much that they are willing to start afresh. I believe God is challenging me to obey him and start farming again, this time in the way that the village people farm – maybe we can be built up again together from nothing.

Revd Musa Jambawai
RURCON Counsellor
Sierra Leone

food. The gospel should not be preached to captive audiences – for example, people queuing for help in a mission hospital or waiting to receive food aid. God's desire is for **willing** disciples.

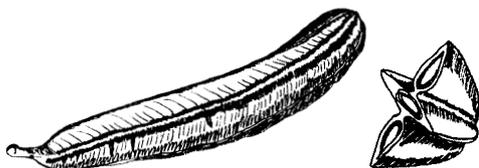
The church has a social responsibility to help needy people in the name of Jesus Christ. In disaster situations the caring actions of Christians will often speak louder than words.



Sticky pesticide!

I HAVE RECENTLY RECEIVED some back issues of *Footsteps* and was very interested in all the correspondence about the use of neem as a pesticide and would like to add a further piece of information.

I am currently working in Cross River State, Nigeria, in the rain forest belt and one of the wettest places in the world. Here, one of the problems is that neem pesticide is soon washed off by the rain. However, it has been found that by breaking up pods of *Tetrapleura tetraptera* and boiling the pieces, a mucus-like liquid is formed. When mixed with the neem pesticide, this helps to 'stick' it onto the crops for three to six weeks. I include a diagram of the distinctive seed pod, (about 150



cm long) – often known as *four corners* or *four sides* – to help people see if they have it in their area. If it is not present, why not try using another plant which is able to produce the same sort of sticky substance?

I am thoroughly enjoying *Footsteps* and hope to make good use of it in my work.

Justine Dunn
Calabar, Nigeria

Jepshi M Yonbish
drying maize cobs
outside his home in
Lagos, Nigeria.

Rabbits for healthy diets

OUR WORK is mainly concerned with the nutrition of children under five in Nicaragua and Honduras. We try to encourage vegetable production and small livestock – mainly goats and rabbits. We now help over 800 projects. The rabbit dens are made with local materials. People feed the rabbits with local food – banana leaves, bananas, vegetable left-overs, etc. Each family needs four or five female rabbits plus a male rabbit to ensure at least one plate of meat a week. The skins are also sold. At first it was hard to convince people to drink goat's milk – but now many people like it.

We find *Footsteps* very helpful and would like more copies to share with our groups.

J Francisco J Zapata
PROVIDENIC
Apdo 5051, Managua
Nicaragua

Reducing our need for chemical fertilisers

I RECENTLY COMPARED the yield of maize using poultry manure and chemical fertiliser on an acre of my land. I divided the plot into two and dug in poultry manure on one half (Plot A) and prepared the other plot (B) where I planned to use NPK fertiliser. Then I planted maize seed the same day. Two weeks after germination I applied NPK fertiliser using the ring method to Plot B.

Both plots grew well and looked alike. When the maize matured I harvested each plot separately. Again, I wanted to avoid the use of chemicals in

storage and knew that it was therefore very important to dry the cobs well. I tied cobs together in pairs and hung them in the branches of a large tree in front of my house.

The plot which was given NPK fertiliser gave a yield of 325 kg per half acre. The plot which received poultry manure gave a yield of 311 kg per half acre. Because the grains were dried well, I had no pest damage during storage.

The high cost of fertiliser in Nigeria has made it almost impossible for small-scale farmers to buy it. Why don't we launch a strong campaign to encourage farmers to use organic manure when the yields from its use are comparable to chemical fertilisers? When roasted, maize grown with organic manure tastes better. The same applies to crops like yam which store better if grown with organic manure. Organic manure improves the soil structure as well.

Jepshi M Yonbish
Boys' Brigade
PO Box 9, Yaba
Lagos, Nigeria.

Competition Winner

EPI Geneva offered a set of *Immunization in Practice* booklets as a prize for readers who could spot the missed opportunity for immunization on the health card on page 3 of *Footsteps No.14*. We are pleased to announce that the winner is **Simon Ahiataku**, of Enyan Abaasa, Ghana, who was chosen at random from those readers who correctly spotted the missed opportunity for the mother to receive her third booster of tetanus toxoid vaccine.





ALL OF US have probably experienced a real emergency at some time in our lives – situations when we wonder how best to help and no-one else nearby knows what to do. Most emergency situations will need medical help. However, what we do in the first few minutes before expert medical help arrives may be of huge importance. Making the wrong decisions may sometimes mean the difference between life and death. Sometimes there may be no medical help available for several hours. The following situations allow all of us to check on just how helpful we would be in an emergency...

THE EMERGENCY QUIZ!

Compiled by Isabel Carter, Bessie Cormack, Dr Elizabeth Swain, Sue Hanley and Sandra Michie

1 While walking along, you discover a man lying by the side of the path. He is unconscious but seems otherwise unhurt. There is no-one else around. Should you...

- a) avoid touching him in case he has an infectious illness and run quickly to get help?
- b) stay with him until he becomes conscious?
- c) check his breathing and move him into a safe position in case he vomits and then get help?

2 When walking down a street, you hear screaming. A young child has fallen into the fire. Both hands and arms are obviously badly burnt. Should you...

- a) cover the burnt skin with oil or ghee?
- b) put the arms into a bowl of clean water?
- c) wrap the arms in a clean cloth and take the child to a clinic?

3 A child has fallen out of a tree. One leg has obviously been broken and the bones can be seen through the damaged skin. Before carrying the child to a clinic, should you...

- a) wrap the leg in a clean blanket?

- b) gently push the bones back into place before wrapping the leg firmly to prevent movement?
- c) cover the injury and tie the legs gently to a stick or board to prevent movement?

4 You find a man lying by the roadside. You find he is bleeding badly from two large bullet wounds in his leg. You have no transport. Should you...

- a) press clean cloths directly into the wounds until the bleeding stops?
- b) tie a tourniquet above the wounds to stop the bleeding?
- c) try to remove the bullets?

5 Driving along the road, you discover an accident. A car has overturned, trapping two people underneath. They are unconscious and the engine is cool. There is a government clinic with a doctor, ten minutes' drive away. Should you...

- a) with help, carefully turn the vehicle over to release the two people and then get help?
- b) drive straight to the clinic and get the doctor?
- c) check that both are still breathing and loosen any tight clothing, before driving to get a doctor?

6 A friend is repairing his roof. Suddenly the ladder breaks and he falls to the ground. He lands on his head in an awkward position and is unconscious. The nearest hospital is one hour's walk away. Should you...

- a) straighten him into a comfortable position and check his breathing before running for help?
- b) ensure that no-one moves him, check his breathing and then run for help?
- c) lift him gently onto a door and take him to hospital?

7 A lady has been bitten on her leg by a poisonous snake. She is convinced she will die. The nearest hospital where they may have anti-snakebite venom is two hours' drive away. Should you...

- a) reassure the lady that less than half of poisonous snakebites cause death and invite members of the church to pray with her?
- b) apply a tourniquet above the bite and cut open the bite to suck out the poison?
- c) wrap the leg firmly with cloth or bandages and attach a splint to prevent it moving – then set off to hospital?

Write down your answers before turning the page to find out what should have been done...

THE EMERGENCY QUIZ!

How did you score?

- Question 1 a) 0 b) 1 c) 3
 Question 2 a) 0 b) 3 c) 1
 Question 3 a) 0 b) 0 c) 3
 Question 4 a) 3 b) 0 c) 0
 Question 5 a) 0 b) 2 c) 3
 Question 6 a) 0 b) 3 c) 0
 Question 7 a) 2 b) 0 c) 3

If you scored 18 or more – you are an excellent person to have around in an emergency.

Scores of 12–18 mean that you have some understanding of how to help in emergencies but should learn more about first aid.

Scores of less than 12 mean that your efforts to help may do more harm than good. Learn about first aid procedures now!



How to do it right!

1. The unconscious man

When a person is unconscious remember the **ABC of first aid** – see next page. First check that the person is breathing and that their pulse is OK. Move them into the recovery position which will prevent them from choking if they vomit. Then it is safe to run for help. By staying with the patient you would at least be able to stop them from choking but they may need urgent medical help.

2. The child in the fire

Burns should always be treated by immediate soaking in clean water (or other fluid – eg: milk, cola – if no water is available). This relieves the pain and reduces damage by cooling the skin. Never apply any cream or grease. Never try and pull off loose pieces of skin or clothing. Remove any rings (watches, shoes, etc) from the injured area before it begins to swell.

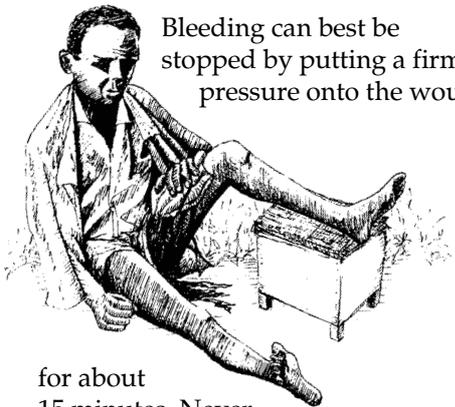
3. The broken leg

Fractures to limbs should be tied firmly to a support to prevent any

movement before the patient is carried to a clinic or hospital. Never try and push bones back into place as you may cause a lot of damage to the flesh.

4. The bullet wounds

Bleeding can best be stopped by putting a firm pressure onto the wound



for about 15 minutes. Never use a tourniquet. If possible, raise the bleeding leg to help lessen the blood flow.

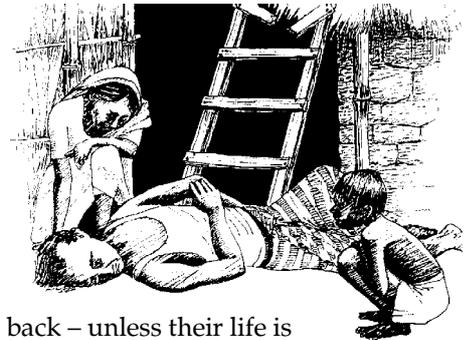
5. The car crash

Unless the accident has just taken place, it is **very dangerous** to release victims without a doctor being present. Crush injuries need expert

medical care. After about half an hour the blood pressure in the trapped body may be so high that simply removing the weight may be enough to cause death.

6. The fall from the roof

Never, ever move someone who seems to have injured their neck or



back – unless their life is in immediate danger. The damage caused by any movement may cause further injury and possible paralysis for the rest of the person's life. However, if there is no alternative but to carry the patient to hospital, use two or three helpers to lift him gently – without changing the position of his head – onto a door. Tie the patient so he cannot move, and secure his head with pillows to prevent any movement and carry him without jolting.

7. The snakebite

Movement makes the snake venom travel faster around the body. Tie the leg firmly with cloths and attach to a splint to prevent any movement, before taking the patient for treatment. Use ice if it is available, to cool the leg. However, in situations where medical support is so far away, it is just as important to reassure and calm the patient. In this situation the ideal would be a) followed by c).



The ABC of first aid

The priorities of first aid are...

A AIRWAY

B BREATHING

C CIRCULATION
(and bleeding)

Only then look at burns and broken bones.

A Airway

The airway of an unconscious person may be narrowed or blocked, making breathing difficult and noisy or impossible. This happens when the tongue drops back and blocks the throat. Lifting the chin and tilting the



head back lifts the tongue away from the entrance to the air passage. Place two fingers under the point of the person's chin and lift the jaw, while placing your other hand on the forehead and tilting the head well back. If you think the neck may be injured, tilt the head very carefully, just enough to open the airway.

B Breathing

Check for breathing by placing your head near the person's nose and mouth. Feel for breath on your cheek or moisture on the back of your hand.



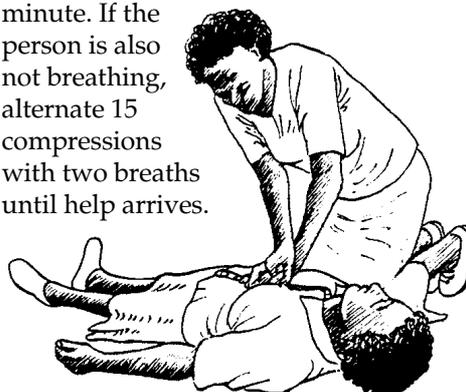
If a person has just stopped breathing use **mouth to mouth ventilation**. Make sure the airway is open and head tilted back. Pinch the nostrils together, take a deep breath and blow into the mouth, firmly sealing your lips around the mouth so air is not lost. You should see the chest rise.



Remove your lips and let the chest fall. Continue this, giving about ten breaths every minute until help arrives or breathing begins.

C Circulation

Check for circulation (to see if the heart is still beating) by feeling for the Adam's apple (lump on the windpipe) with two fingers. Slide the fingers to the side of the windpipe and feel for the pulse. If the heart has stopped beating use **chest compression** to try to restart the heart. Place your hand flat just above the point where the ribs meet the breastbone. Bring the other hand on top of it and lock your fingers together. With your arms straight, press down firmly on the breastbone, pushing it down by 4-5 cm. Release the pressure and repeat the compressions at a rate of about 80 per minute. If the person is also not breathing, alternate 15 compressions with two breaths until help arrives.



Stop bleeding by applying firm pressure to the wound for about 15 minutes. Never use a tourniquet.

First things first

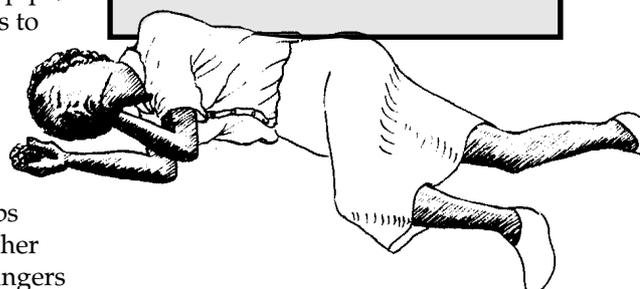
In an emergency any number of things may need your attention at the same time. If you try to do everything at once you may easily get distracted from the essential matters. On arriving at the scene...

1 Assess the situation

- Take in quickly what has happened
- Look for dangers to yourself and to the casualty
- Make the area safe

2 Assess casualties

- An unconscious person **always** takes priority and needs immediate help to make sure he or she can breathe
- Only then should you begin to assess any injuries



The Recovery Position

This is the best position for an unconscious person or someone having a fit. It allows them to breathe easily and prevents them from choking. After checking the ABC, bend the nearest arm to you, putting the hand by the head. Then bring the far arm across the chest and hold both hands in one of yours. With your other hand pull the furthest leg up at the knee and roll the person towards you to lie in this position.

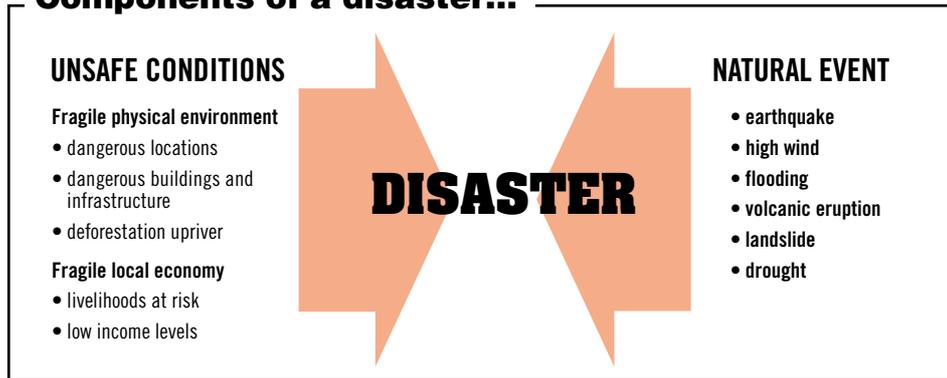
Try out the positions for all these first aid procedures **now** with a friend. Better still, join a first aid class if any are available. St John's Ambulance have many groups around the world. One day your knowledge of first aid may save a life!

RELIEF WORK

WHAT IS A DISASTER

by Ian

Components of a disaster...



NATURAL EVENTS such as earthquakes and floods are part of God’s creative work. For example, earthquakes are natural events that help to form the landscape. Hurricanes move water from warm seas to fall as rain over land. Floods provide irrigation and fertilise the land by leaving silt. Natural events should not be seen as always negative – they are part of God’s creation.

Natural events only become potential hazards when they threaten people or property. An earthquake will cause little damage if it takes place in an empty desert. It may also cause little damage if it takes place in a city like San Francisco, where people can afford to be well protected. A natural event only causes serious damage when it affects an area where the people are at risk and poorly protected. Disasters occur when these two factors are brought together...

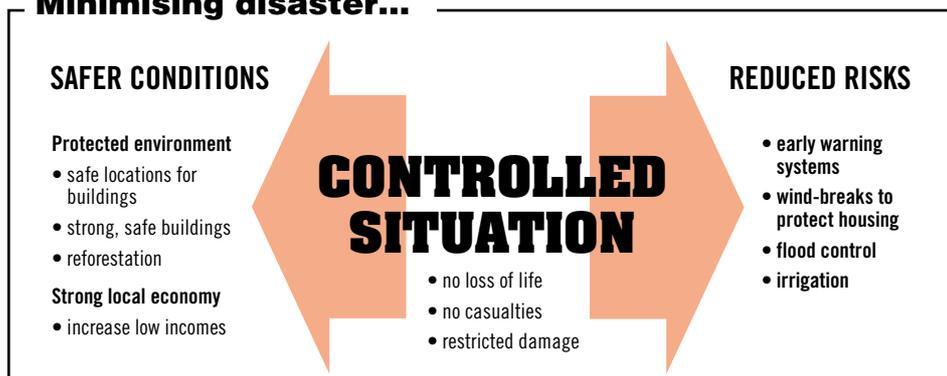
- people living in unsafe conditions
- a natural hazard such as a flood, hurricane or earthquake.

The natural hazard is often blamed for the disaster but, in fact, the real cause may be that the people were poor and unprotected. Many poor people know that they are living in areas with a high risk of, for example, regular flooding or earthquakes. Often they simply cannot afford to live anywhere else. They have no choice but to take these risks.

Understanding the real causes of disasters helps us to realise how situations could be improved through appropriate support and development programmes. The ideal situation is shown in the diagram below – balanced community development has resulted in a protected environment with stronger housing and buildings and a healthy local economy. There are also protection measures such as wind-breaks, flood control measures and an early warning system which provides at least 24 hours’ warning of likely cyclones, hurricanes, earthquakes etc.

No measures can ever fully protect against all possibilities but these ideas, if put into practice, would bring huge benefits.

Minimising disaster...



Risk reduction

Food storage in Egypt (Genesis 41:34–36)

Rebuilding

Rebuilding of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 6:15)

Restoration

Restoring mortgaged land (Ruth 4:1–12)



THE RECOVERY PROCESS

Relief

Once a disaster has taken place, the first concern is effective relief – helping all those affected to recover from the immediate effects of the disaster. This is known as *relief work* and includes providing food, clothing, shelter and medical care to the victims. Relief work takes place immediately after the disaster – usually for several weeks. With disasters such as droughts, it may last several months or even years.

MAKES STER?

Davis

PROTECTION
the
aster
cle

VERY
Relief

Preparedness

Noah building the ark (Genesis 6:13-22)

Disaster event

eg: earthquakes (Zechariah 14:5, Revelation 16:18, Luke 2:10-11)

Relief

Food aid to Judea (Acts 11:27-30)

Restoration

This phase involves helping to restore the basic services which the people need so that they can return to the pattern of life which they had before the disaster. For example: providing seeds for farmers or helping businesses to restart.

Rebuilding

This is linked to restoration. It involves the rebuilding of homes and businesses. Safety is important in the design of stronger buildings, able to withstand future disasters.

THE PROTECTION PROCESS

IT IS NOT SIMPLY ENOUGH to respond to the immediate disaster. Attention needs to be given to preparing for any future disasters. This process is known as *protection* – enabling the community to protect itself. All protection measures need to be available to those most at risk – the poorest in the community.

Risk reduction

This phase follows on from rebuilding. It describes things which will help to reduce the risks of damage from similar events in the future. For example, this phase could include the building of walls to prevent flooding or including safety features into houses to strengthen them against collapse during future earthquakes. It could include building grain stores to store surplus food during good years. Many actions in development programmes could also be thought of as risk reduction.

Some practical measures...

Tropical storm

- plant wind-breaks of trees and bushes
- tie roofs down with ropes and heavy weights
- build strong buildings

Floods

- water storage measures
- overflow channels
- sandbags in door
- build farm stores on high ground
- don't put electric sockets at ground level
- plan escape route through roof
- plant flood-tolerant crops eg: sorghum

Earthquake

- strengthen all new buildings – tie roofs, walls and foundations together with metal or timber bars
- build strong churches – people often gather in churches for protection – also schools
- build square buildings

Drought

- irrigation
- soil erosion measures
- water-harvesting measures
- grain stores

CASE STUDY

In the Rimac Valley, Peru, a group known as PIEVAR has encouraged community groups to build river defences and to prevent deforestation, overgrazing and soil erosion in the upper valleys of rivers. People are now more effectively protected from mudslides (*huaicos*) and flooding – which previously caused much damage and loss of life.

Preparedness

There is a close link between risk reduction and *preparedness*. Risk reduction involves helping to reduce the risks faced by the community. Preparedness helps the community to be able to cope better should another difficult situation develop. Preparedness includes planning measures such as making an evacuation plan for a community living near a possible source of flooding. It could include leadership training or community participation in planting windbreaks.

There is often a tendency for Christian groups to offer help just at the relief phase. However, the disaster cycle shows that the various phases are linked together and are all important in responding to a disaster. Unfortunately, many groups do not enter the disaster cycle until the disaster has occurred. If these groups had started instead at the risk reduction phase, they could have been working together to reduce the harmful effects of a disaster even before it happened. In a similar way, it is better to use health education to prevent ill health from developing, instead of waiting until serious illness develops. Prevention is better than cure.

This article is adapted from material in the manual Christian Perspectives on Disaster Management. Ian Davis is the Managing Director of the Oxford Centre for Disaster Studies – PO Box 137, Oxford, UK – with 20 years' experience in disaster management, disaster shelter and in training and consultancy work.



HOW TO PREVENT A SECOND DISASTER

BROTHER LAL (not his real name) was perhaps the most outstanding Christian worker in the whole region – very committed to his work, active in preaching and teaching in several villages and most reliable.

During the famine, the Bishop was asked if a trusted member of his churches might help with distribution of food and clothing to the needy. It was an easy decision. Brother Lal would take charge and make sure all was done fairly and openly.

After a few months the Bishop began to hear worrying reports. Villagers from one location complained that no clothes reached them. Several people commented that Brother Lal was extending his house and had bought a shop! How did he do that on his poor salary? An aid official reported that tins of meat, donated by his organisation, were on sale in the market.

On the wrong track

To cut a long story short, instead of serving God, full time trading is now Brother Lal's main priority. The Bishop very much regrets the loss of a fine worker who cannot easily be replaced. He also worries about Lal, personally and spiritually.

The first disaster (famine) helped produce a second disaster (for the church and for Brother Lal).

Temptations and pressures

This story serves to illustrate a problem which is becoming all too common as disasters and famines become more frequent. Relief agencies need trustworthy and capable people to oversee the distribution of aid. The churches 'lend' their best people. But for various reasons, some of these do not come through the test well. What are the reasons for this?

First, the temptations and pressures are enormous. The poorly paid worker suddenly has great resources at his disposal. There is also pressure from the rich and powerful who wish to buy the goods which are intended for free distribution. They may make threats, offer bribes or simply persuade the worker to give them what they want.

Secondly, such workers feel their responsibility towards their own families. Relatives beg for a bit extra. How can they neglect their own people? Does not the Bible tell us to provide for our own families?

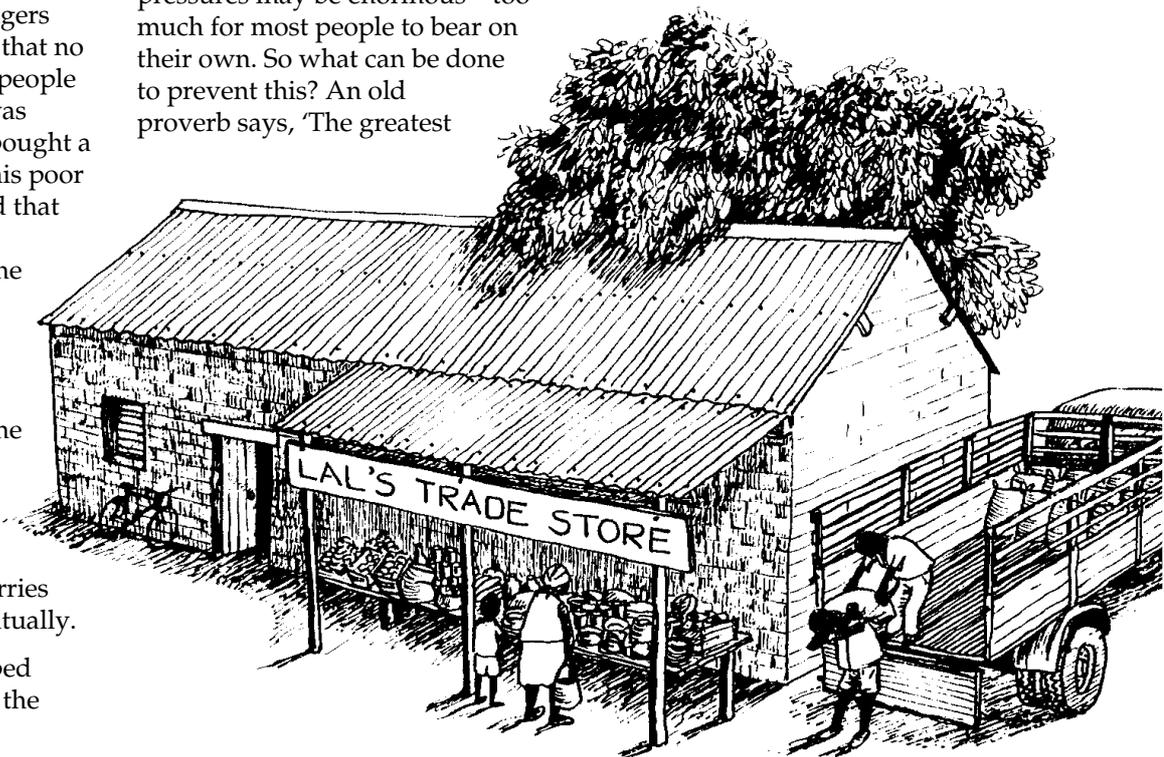
Thirdly, church members may ask for extra help. Should we not help our Christian brothers and sisters?

Working with wisdom

The weight of these and other pressures may be enormous – too much for most people to bear on their own. So what can be done to prevent this? An old proverb says, 'The greatest

evil is the corruption of the best.' I would encourage church leaders to consider the following...

- Be cautious in providing workers for relief work. The apostles clearly saw that those with great gifts of preaching and prayer should not be diverted from their calling to do work that others could do (Acts 6:1-7). If, after prayer, it seems right for church staff to become involved, be sure to choose wisely.
- Those chosen to help should be equipped with adequate training (for example, in administration, record-keeping and communication), or provided with suitably skilled people to work with them. Teamwork is less risky than depending on one person!
- State in writing the responsibilities and duties of all concerned, so that all know their responsibilities.
- Encourage openness and frequent reporting. Reports and accounting should be open to examination, not only by church and relief agency officials, but also by the community.
- Support the workers by prayer and visiting. Take an interest in their work. If suspicions arise, discuss them openly with the people concerned, but without judging before the facts are clear. Sometimes those who have remained faithful despite enormous



temptations can be terribly discouraged by false accusations and lack of trust.

Preparing for the unexpected

So often the church is thrust into relief work without a chance to prepare for it – disasters usually occur without much warning! But staff can be trained to be better administrators, to know how to keep records and accounts, to learn how to lead meetings and to be open and accountable. Investment by churches

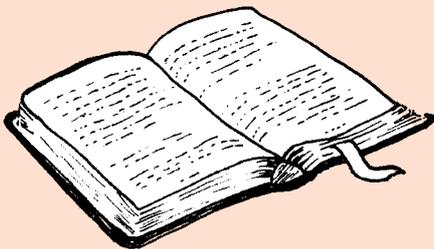
or donor agencies in developing people in this way is very important. It can help prepare the church or local community workers for unexpected situations – as well as helping them perform their normal daily work better. But all this will be of little value unless backed up by solid Christian teaching, Bible study and prayer which help to develop and strengthen the Christ-like character.

The author worked in Uganda for many years with Crosslinks (formerly BCMS).

What about the women?

'African women have a better understanding of economics than men; on the whole they are far better business people! So why not put women in charge of church and project funds? Once men accept the idea of women treasurers, the problem of poor bookkeeping and resultant fraud could be solved!'

The comment of a Senegalese man at a recent RURCON conference in Senegal



BIBLE STUDY

Joseph and his response to drought

By Mike Wall and Vinay Samuel

Read Genesis Chapter 41. Joseph, who was in prison at the time, was called to interpret some vivid dreams of the Pharaoh. His explanation of what God was saying through these dreams was so convincing that Pharaoh put him in charge of Egypt. Joseph organised the storage of all surplus grain during the seven years of good harvests. He asked that one fifth of each year's harvest should be required from farmers and stored on behalf of the government. The grain was stored in warehouses in nearby cities.

At the beginning of the drought, the warehouses were opened and people allowed to buy grain. As the situation got worse, livestock, labour and land were accepted in exchange for grain (Genesis 47:13-21). People from neighbouring countries were allowed to buy grain too (Genesis 42:1-5).

At the end of the seven years of drought, Joseph gave seed to people for planting. Because all the land in Egypt now belonged to Pharaoh, Joseph asked that a tax of one fifth of the crops produced should be given to Pharaoh. The remaining four fifths of the harvest belonged to the people.

Key points

- Joseph had the skills of good management. He was guided by God and so able to plan carefully, and to predict what was likely to happen. In order to carry out his clear planning, he needed authority and power. Anyone put in charge of a disaster management programme also needs authority to make and carry out quick decisions that others will respect and obey.
- Joseph's plan *seemed good to Pharaoh and all his officials* (Genesis 41:37). The local leadership accepted and trusted his plans. Joseph had the trust of all the people. In emergency situations there needs to be that trust in the

leadership. People are under great strain and need a leader they can trust.

- One fifth of the harvest was taken from the farmer for a food reserve. Joseph developed a new pattern of land use. Certain things which are developed in an emergency can become regular patterns of life.
- The way in which the grain was stored and distributed spread the work and responsibility all around the country. Instead of having one huge centre, Joseph encouraged each region to set up warehouses.
- Egypt was the only land that was prepared for the famine in the Middle East. It met its own needs as well as those of neighbouring countries. Good disaster planning can have far-reaching benefits.
- No indication was given that this drought was a judgement from God on Pharaoh and Egypt. It appears to have been a natural calamity. But God used the disaster relief project to save Jacob's family and the future nation of Israel. Disaster planning can be used by God to do good and achieve his purposes in the world.

For discussion

- How much can be learnt from Joseph's management skills that could help us in our own day-to-day management of our work?
 - What changes could you make in order to prepare your community to meet any possible difficulty or disaster? Do you have discipleship and leadership training programmes, for example?
- Discuss and pray together about possible plans and improvements you could make in your community.

People in Rural Development

by Peter Batchelor

Paternoster Press 240 pages

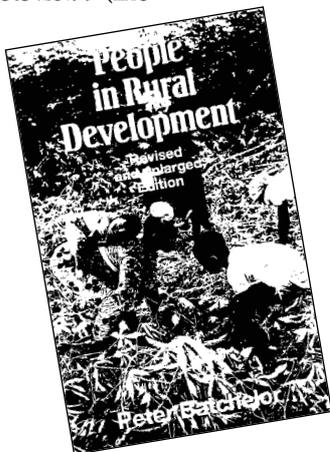
ISBN 0-85364-541-8

This is a new edition of a valuable book, first published in 1981. 'People First' – the title of the opening chapter – demonstrates Peter Batchelor's approach to progress in the developing world. He states, 'The essential philosophy of the book is that people matter more than things and that small is beautiful.'

This is a distinctly Christian approach to rural development, specifically in Africa. Issues such as change and motivation, relationships, priorities, funding and stewardship, training and health care are examined. Seven new case studies from Africa, together with questions for discussion throughout, make the book a valuable tool for students and teachers of development issues, together with aid and mission agencies.

The book costs £8.99 (inc postage) and is available from...

Paternoster Press
PO Box 300
Carlisle
Cumbria
CA3 0QS
UK.



Seed to Seed

by Suzanne Ashworth

ISBN 0-9613977-7-2 222 pages

This is a useful book on seed-saving techniques for the vegetable gardener – a complete and detailed seed-saving guide for 160 vegetable crops. The author has grown seed crops of every vegetable included in the book, so all the methods used are tried and tested. Some of the material is fairly technical (including information on cross-breeding) but it is always clearly and simply explained. This book would be a very valuable resource for any team of agricultural development workers, particularly in areas where vegetable

seed is hard to obtain or very expensive. Two shortened examples of seed-saving techniques from the book are given on page 13.

The book costs \$20 (including postage) and is available from...

Seed Savers Exchange
3076 North Winn Road
Decorah
Iowa 52101
USA.

The Church Health Educator

by Iris H Stober and Berry H Wecker

Published by Macmillan Press

ISBN 0333-57361-7

This is a practical book which can be used by anyone wanting to improve their family's health. Part One looks at the reasons for health education and discusses how to communicate and teach health. Part Two offers a series of very carefully planned lessons in which medical information is explained clearly. It deals with various problems which may arise during lessons. The topics cover infections, personal hygiene, diet, sanitation, dangers of alcohol and tobacco, family planning and AIDS. It is easy to use and very practical.

Based on Christian beliefs, the book looks not just at physical health, but also spiritual health.

English version £5.99, new French version – *Manuel de Santé pour Animateur Chrétien* – £10.99. This book should be available through major book shops in most countries. In case of problems, order from...

International Division, Macmillan Press
Houndmills
Basingstoke
Hants
RG21 2XS
UK.

Disaster Mitigation – A Community Based Approach

by Andrew Maskrey

ISBN 0-85598-122-9 100 pages

This is No 3 in a series of Development Guidelines produced by Oxfam. Based on practical experience in Peru, the book looks at the hazards from mudslides and flooding faced regularly by communities in the

earthquake zone around Lima and in the Rimac Valley. The author shows how effective protective measures can be when they are planned and carried out by community organisations. Various case studies are included.

This book is a very useful resource for any who work with communities facing the threat of natural disasters, or who are involved in training others in disaster relief and rehabilitation.

The book is available in paperback for £7.45 (including postage) from...

Oxfam Publications
274 Banbury Road
Oxford
OX2 7DZ
UK.

Christian Perspectives on Disaster Management

Editors Ian Davis and Mike Wall

Published by Tear Fund

This training manual is designed for relief and development workers. It answers some of the fundamental questions which are raised when Christians find themselves in disaster situations. It contains useful Bible studies, technical information, management advice, skills and training material for use in workshops or individual study.

The *Manual* costs £10.00 and the *Trainers' Guide* £5.00 per copy (surface postage included) from Tear Fund. However, copies are available free of charge to groups working to promote community development overseas. Please write with details of your work to...

Christian Perspectives Mailing List
Tear Fund
100 Church Road
Teddington
TW11 8QE
UK.

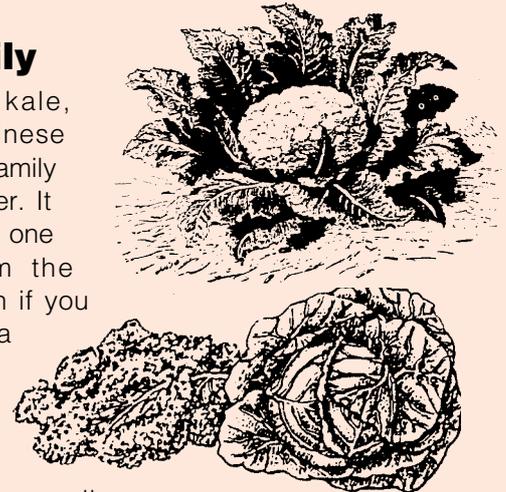


SEED-SAVING IDEAS

Adapted from the book Seed to Seed by Suzanne Ashworth with kind permission

The Cabbage Family

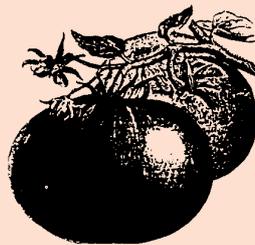
This includes cabbage, kale, broccoli, cauliflower and chinese cabbage. All members of this family can crossbreed with each other. It is better, therefore, to grow just one crop (of one variety) from the cabbage family in the garden if you plan to collect seeds. Select a few of the healthiest plants and do not harvest them when ready to eat. Leave them to carry on growing and they will all eventually produce yellow flowers and then seed pods. Cabbages will not produce seed until the next growing season. The seed stalks are often quite tall. When the seed pods begin to turn light brown and shatter easily, begin harvesting seed. The ripest seed pods are found at the bottom of each stalk and they should be hand-harvested as they dry. Harvesting will continue for several weeks. The entire stalk can be harvested when



the largest number of pods are dry, if there is no time for hand-harvesting. Dry the seed pods well out of the direct sun. Thresh the dry pods and winnow the remains of the seed pods. Store the dry seed in airtight jars. It will keep for up to five years.

Tomatoes

Tomatoes come from South America, but they are now found all over the world. Tomatoes are usually self-pollinating, so it is possible to grow several varieties in the same garden and collect seed from each variety. Tomatoes are easy to collect seed from.



Harvest ripe tomatoes and cut them in half across the middle (not through the stem and blossom ends). Squeeze out the seeds and surrounding flesh into a bowl or bucket. The rest of the tomato can be eaten. Add a little water to the seeds and mash the mixture really well to a paste. If available, an electric blender is ideal for this.

Each tomato seed is surrounded by a coat of gel. Under natural conditions (that is, if we do not pick and eat the tomato!), this gel contains substances that inhibit germination until the tomato fruit rots away, leaving the seeds in the soil to germinate. We need to duplicate this rotting process. Leave the container of seeds and gel to ferment for about three days. It will smell quite unpleasant, so do not leave it in the house or where children or animals could tip it over. Soon it will be covered by a layer of white or grey mould. Add enough water to double the mixture and stir well. The good seeds will settle to the bottom of the container, allowing the mould, flesh and hollow seeds to be poured away carefully. Add more water and repeat until you are left with clean seeds. Pour the seeds into a kitchen (or tea) strainer. Wipe the bottom of the strainer with a towel to remove as much water as possible. Then tip the seeds onto a plate to dry. Do not place them on paper because they are very hard to remove. Stir at least twice a day until dry. Do not dry the seeds in direct sunlight or in an oven. Store the dry seeds in an airtight glass jar – they should keep for between four and ten years.

THE COST and availability of vegetable seeds is often a problem for small farmers. Farmers usually have a wealth of knowledge about how to grow and propagate traditional crops. However, in many parts of the world recently introduced vegetables such as cabbage, tomatoes, onions, kale and peppers are now very common. Farmers often have little knowledge about how to save their own seed from these crops. They often depend on buying new seed for each crop. Here are some helpful ideas adapted from the book *Seed to Seed* (reviewed on the opposite page).

WHO EXPECTS WHAT IN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION?



by Ben Osuga

COMMUNITIES are often visited by various groups of people who hope to help the community. These visitors often bring with them *packages of assistance* which they expect the community to welcome. When communities are visited in this way, they develop their own expectations about the visitors and their future plans.

Questions and answers

When community members are told about visits, some questions are immediately raised – such as...

- Who are the visitors and where do they come from?
- What are their motives?
- Are they foreigners?
- Have they come here before?
- What did they give elsewhere?

Depending on the answers to these questions, the community will form their answers for the visitors. These answers are usually what the community expects the visitors will want to hear! For example, if an agriculturalist visits then the most important need will be for hoes and

seeds – but if a medical group visit, then the most important need will be for health services.

Communication problems

The visitors will then share a set of conditions which will help the community's chances of receiving the package of help. These conditions almost inevitably include so-called *community participation*. Many people talk of community participation but they only bring the community into their own, already-planned activities. Very rarely do leaders or visitors spend time with the community 'looking, listening and learning' so that they actually understand and share in the community's own priorities for action.

This is nearly always a problem – there are several common reasons...

- Activities which are really begun by the community are often rather slow, time-consuming and not quite professional.
- Leaders bring in their own ideas from other projects and do not want to adapt them.
- Donor agencies like to see results – sometimes the community has priorities which are not easy either to change or to measure.

Levels of participation

■ **Using the services provided** – The programme is introduced by outsiders. The community makes use of the services available.

■ **The pre-planned programme** – The programme is developed outside the community which is then invited to take part. Some efforts are made to develop skills within the community and encourage some input.

■ **Involvement based on community decisions and priorities** – This level means that communities are helped to develop significant skills, identify needs and plan future action.

■ **Community empowerment** – Here, the community becomes fully aware and can take control of their own development process.

There are several things which can block full participation. They include...

- believing that development matters are very technical and should be left to 'experts'
- encouraging curative services – clinics, hospitals – instead of preventive or primary health care
- poor communication between development centres and the community.

Encouraging real participation

We will now use primary health care as our example to show how its development should be seen as a process where the different stages are carried out in a flexible way. In this way, the community will take the process to be its own and will continue with activities.

The essential thing is to interest the community in becoming self-reliant. At first the outside programme will have most of the ideas, responsibilities and sense of ownership. They will make most decisions and bring in many of the necessary resources. However, in time the community will develop the ability and capacity to lead, plan, make decisions and organise many of the resources.

There are seven steps to encouraging real community participation...

1. Awareness-raising

The aim is to help communities understand the idea of primary health care. Raising people's awareness will help people to...

- understand what is happening in their village and surrounding district
- understand that preventing disease is useful and worthwhile
- begin to have a clear sense of ownership of their resources so that they improve their own health
- understand that the community is responsible for health and organising activities
- understand the different roles of health committees, health workers and traditional birth attendants.

2. Training

Training is needed at a variety of different levels...

National level – Training of facilitators

District level – Training of facilitators, trainers and programme leaders

Local level – Training of trainers, programme leaders and health committees

Community level – Training of resource people – health workers, traditional birth attendants, traditional healers, health committee members.

3. Identifying primary health care in the community

This, again, is done at a variety of levels...

District level – Discussions with the various government and health departments about primary health care and practical activities that would improve things in the communities.

Local level – Obtain the support of community leaders. Repeat the awareness-raising process. Agree on the practical ways to introduce primary health care.

Community level – Meet with community leaders to introduce these ideas and begin to raise awareness through home visits. Call a community meeting and select a village health committee.

4. Helping the community start its own health care

Continue the process of awareness-raising. Out of this process will come...

- an agreement of partnership between the community and the programme
- identifying the main problems and practical solutions to them
- the selection of committee members to lead the community-based health care project.

5. Understanding the present situation

Train the health committee and other resource people in gathering information about the present situation and understanding of health. For example, villages could be visited and encouraged to talk about the cases of diseases and their local names and treatment. Their hopes and needs have to be understood before the health project is begun.

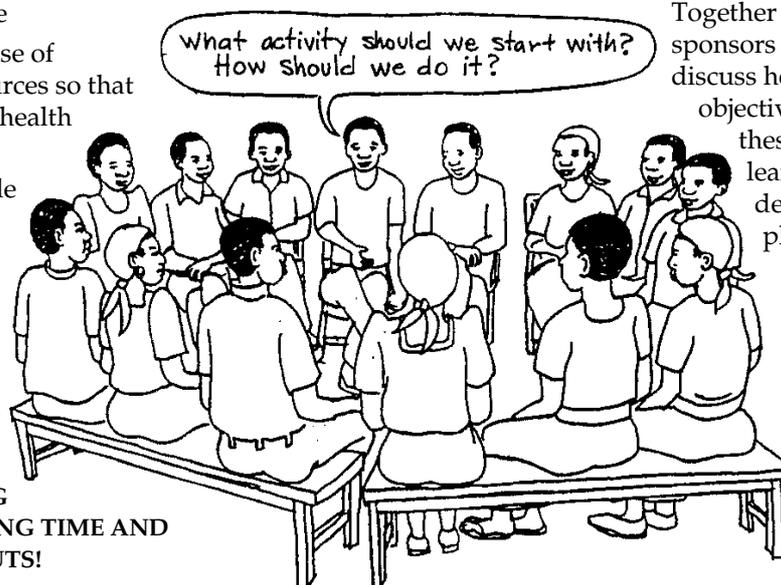
6. Action and monitoring

Once the health programme is in operation...

- make regular follow up visits (for up to five years)
- bring communities together to share experiences and plans
- reinforce links with the local health units and with extension workers
- provide refresher training.

7. Evaluation

Together with health committees, sponsors and extension workers, discuss how well the original objectives have been met. Based on these findings and the lessons learned, encourage the development of new ideas and plans for future work.

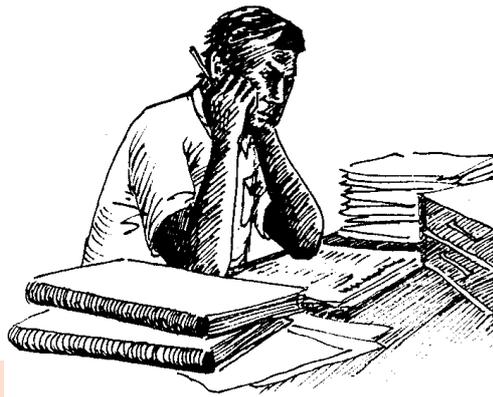


Ben Osluga is the OXFAM Technical Advisor to the Uganda Community Based Health Care Association. This article was adapted from a paper presented to Government officials in Uganda.

THE PROCESS OF RAISING AWARENESS TAKES A LONG TIME AND THERE ARE NO SHORT CUTS!

Coping with stress

by Mike Wall



'IF WE ARE THROWN into the blazing furnace the God we serve is able to save us.' (Daniel 3:17). People involved in disaster situations have to cope with high levels of stress, so it helps to understand what stress is and learn how to deal with it.

Three types of stress

Many everyday situations cause us stress. We feel healthy, necessary anxiety when faced with new situations – such as starting a new job, playing sport, meeting new groups of people. This kind of stress actually helps us to respond and deal with these new situations well. We can call this type of stress **productive stress**.

However, as the amount of this kind of stress increases, we feel more and more pressured. As time goes on we get more and more worried. Eventually we reach a point where we no longer cope very well with these very difficult situations. All our energy becomes taken up with our own survival. This could be called **non-productive stress**.

If levels of stress continue to build, there is a further level of stress which

we can call **paralytic stress**. The person is now at the point of collapse and quite unable to work at all. This extreme state needs specialist help.

The simple diagram below shows these three types of stress. Between points **A** and **B** the worker is able to work to the best of his or her ability. However, once point **B** is passed, the worker is able to work less and less effectively. In real life there are no sudden changes to tell that someone has passed into non-productive stress. Instead there are a number of warning signs.

Stress warning signs

Physical signs...

- ulcers
- headaches
- feeling tired
- difficulties with sleeping
- panic attacks

Mental signs...

- sense of failure
- anger and resentment
- wanting to run away from a situation
- inability to concentrate on what someone is saying
- suspicion of others
- difficulty in making decisions
- depression

Spiritual signs...

- God seems distant and uncaring
- no enthusiasm about serving God
- loss of joy in relationship with God
- emphasis on God's judgement rather than his mercy

Other people may not notice any of these signs for a long time. The person may have a mixture of any of the

above signs, but they would not have been typical of the person before they began to cope with a stressful situation.

How to deal with stress...

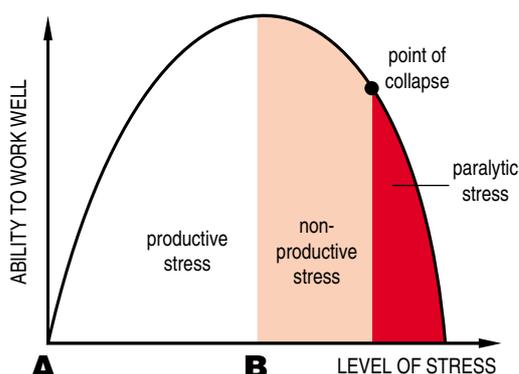
■ Ask God to provide you with extra resources to help with the difficult situation which you face. He has promised to equip us with all we need to serve him.

■ If possible, try to remove some of the stress. For example, if there is a difficult relationship with a fellow worker, try and talk openly about the problem. Of course, in the case of a disaster it may not be possible to remove the stress.

■ Develop ways of coping with the stress...

- Give proper attention to your health and to time for relaxing.
- Talk about your feelings with others.
- Look again at the way you work – are you setting impossible deadlines and targets?
- Learn to delegate – and share responsibilities.
- Count your blessings, not your problems, and live each day as it comes.
- Be open to receiving support, help and encouragement from others – friends, family, fellow church members and workers.

Mike Wall is in charge of the Disaster Response Unit, Tear Fund UK.



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