

TEXAS CRISIS RESILIENCY TEAM

After Action Report (AAR)
Hurricane Isaac Response
Belle Chasse, LA 7-9 September 2012



CH Dan Franklin with Texas Baptist Men



CH Dan Franklin talking with Local Pastor

SITUATION: Hurricane Isaac came ashore on the evening of 28 August and the morning of 29 August. It was a Category 1 hurricane at the time of impact, but because of the slow movement of the system caused extensive damage in southern Louisiana.

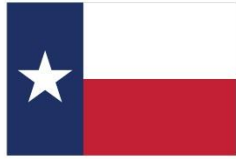
RESPONSE: On 29 August I alerted via e-mail and text messages the members of the Texas Crisis Resiliency Team about the situation. I encouraged them to be prepared in case there was a request for assistance. I kept members informed of developments during the next few weeks. Several members responded that they desired to deploy if needed.

There was no request for one of our NOVA trained Crisis Response Teams.

On 6 September, the Texas Baptist Feeding Unit from San Angelo was alerted that they would deploy on 7 September and planned to be there for 10 days. Arlen White from San Angelo called and asked me if we could provide a chaplain to go with them.

Since the Houston Region was closest to the disaster area, I coordinated the requirements with our Houston Region Coordinators. Dion Ainsworth and Brad Pennison worked with chaplains in that region to provide support. The final coverage plan was:

7-12 September – Dan Franklin
11-15 September – Eddie Tubbs



TEXAS CRISIS RESILIENCY TEAM

I met the group from San Angelo at a convenience store off Loop 1604 in San Antonio and followed them to Belle Chasse. We arrived there at about 11:30 PM on Friday, 8 September.

The group replaced another Baptist Men group and fell in upon their equipment. They prepared the first meal on Saturday and Saturday afternoon found out that the feeding unit would close on Sunday, 10 September. This was not a decision of the Texas Baptist Men, but a decision made by local, state and federal authorities.

On Sunday the group prepared one last meal and then loaded up the equipment.

DISCUSSION:

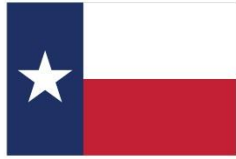
Everyone in the group was disappointed that they were not able to do more to assist the people in this area; however this is just the nature of disaster response. We do what we can.

In planning for Chaplain support: We had many willing to respond – but conflicts and short notice are a major issue. Most of our chaplains work and have to coordinate with their employers in order to respond. We need to have a larger pool of chaplains available to respond. This issue could potentially be addressed by working with the Texas Baptist Men to train others in providing emotional and spiritual care.

On the Chaplain ministry, the focus of this report is the potential for what might have developed. There was some ministry that did happen:

- To the Texas Baptist Men – I conducted a devotional on Sunday morning and was prepared to assist with any other needs that might develop.
- At the feeding site – visited with members of the Red Cross.
- FEMA Assistance Site – went to the site where FEMA assisted disaster victims with processing of paperwork. At this site there were some counselors, a child care unit from the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (I think this was also Texas Baptist Men), and others. I visited with one family at this site and the personnel working at the site. I had planned to come to this location every day.

Sometimes when a feeding unit is deployed, they are feeding people at the site. In those situations, there is a ministry to those who are being feed. That was not the case in this situation. In this situation the feeding unit was preparing the food and then Red Cross vehicles were taking the food to the impacted people. Once a positive relationship is developed with the Red Cross



TEXAS CRISIS RESILIENCY TEAM

and they trust the chaplain, there might be the possibility of going with the Red Cross workers when they distribute the food.

The critical factor in the ability to provide ministry at the FEMA site and with the Red Cross is the credibility of the chaplain. The chaplain must come across as an asset in assisting with emotional and spiritual care, and not as a person trying to force religion on those in need of assistance.

Any chaplain responding in these situations must be flexible and look for opportunities to provide ministry and support. Each situation is different and the requirements and opportunities will normally not be known until the chaplain is on site.

Recommendations:

The Texas Baptist Men do a tremendous job in responding to disasters. When there is a request chaplain assistance, we need to do everything possible to support their ministry.

Enlist and train more chaplains who can assist during disasters.

Be flexible when responding to disasters. Plan for potential ministry, but look for other opportunities. Potential ministry includes:

- Ministry to the Texas Baptist Men
- Ministry at the Feeding Site (if people are fed at that location)
- Providing Chaplain presence at FEMA location
- Providing Chaplain presence at Red Cross Location

There is a strong need for a chaplain presence, but it will only happen if the Chaplain establishes credibility.

Dan Franklin

Dan Franklin
Texas Crisis Resiliency Team Coordinator