

# When Crisis Rings

## Digital Strategies Using Zúme

By DR. MARY ROBERTS and DR.

**Mary Roberts**, Ph.D. focuses on equipping disciples, churches, and networks in multiplicative principles for physical, emotional, and spiritual response to disasters ([www.GodInCrisis.vision](http://www.GodInCrisis.vision)). She also serves on the 24:14 Global Facilitation Team, the Zúme Lead Team, and movements in crisis response.

**Curtis Sergeant**, Ph.D. pioneered work among a Frontier People Group, serves as co-facilitator for 24:14 ([2414now.net](http://2414now.net)), is on the lead team for Zúme ([zume.training](http://zume.training)), and runs a missions training ministry for multiplying disciples and simple churches.

According to the World Economic Forum, as of 2023, “there are more mobile phones in the world than people,”<sup>1</sup> and over 90% of the world’s population owns one. In the life of a mobile phone, very few moments are comparable to the desperation of its owner clinging to the device when a crisis or disaster hits. Disasters burst open the digital doors of caring for people’s hearts and lives through the phones held tightly in their hands.

Spiritual receptivity and openness are frequently encountered on the ground while meeting physical and emotional needs. The same is true in the virtual space and can be reproduced rapidly through the phases of readiness, relief, recovery, and rebuilding. Readiness is the phase we live in before disaster strikes. Sometimes, we can anticipate an event such as a hurricane or monsoon season or conflicts stirring towards war; other times, disaster comes by surprise, such as an earthquake or insurgence. The readiness phase allows us to multiply disciples and churches, who can be prepared to steward the harvest in response to disasters and crises. We can follow the pattern Paul gave to Titus: *Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good in order to respond to urgent needs and not live unfruitful lives* (Titus 3:14).

In the relief phase (first few weeks) after a disaster, a person might make dozens of calls for help, mark

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/04/charted-there-are-more-phones-than-people-in-the-world/>



themselves safe on social sites, or incessantly check for updates to find out if others are okay. Phones serve as a lifeline in efforts to collaborate and get resources to the right places. They also can function as a way to set up connections for the relief, recovery, and rebuilding phases, when emotional, physical, and spiritual needs are immense. In the transition from relief to recovery, as relief organizations phase out, people often are looking for spiritual community, and they wrestle with the hopelessness of the physical and emotional devastation.

Whether people have a phone that survived the disaster or they get one again as recovery becomes possible, digital strategies can be utilized significantly to love others and make disciples—through all the phases of disaster response. Parallel to boots-on-the-ground ministry in the wake of crises, digital doors briefly open much wider as communications and coping efforts reach their peak. In times of extreme distress, coping mechanisms of all kinds can emerge, such as excessive use of social media and pornography. Yet simultaneously, hearts also often turn, for a limited time, to searching for answers to life’s bigger questions. Spiritual hunger naturally surfaces when

people are faced with events that give them a fresh perspective on life. At such times, many people cry out to God—who they may not know but who created them to have a relationship with Himself.

Genuinely loving people well involves addressing their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs—caring holistically, especially in times of crisis, since *The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit* (Ps. 34:18).

When Hurricane Ian hit southwest Florida in the fall of 2022, a few of us rallied several on-the-ground collaborations and made a simple graphic entitled, “Looking for hope in the aftermath of the hurricane?” Through a quick social media ad, it reached 22,000+ people, yielding several hundred engagements in the blink of an eye. This enabled us to connect respondents with local disciple-making communities. Digital media-to-movements strategies like this not only find interested people but also facilitate connections with on-the-ground disciples and churches ready to minister to them. As part of the redemptive outcomes after a tragedy, many, who previously would not have been open, start actively searching for prayer after a disaster. Those seekers represent a host of untapped possibilities for multiplying disciples and churches digitally during times of crisis or disaster.

One great resource for facilitating the transition from online to in-person discipleship is Zúme, a digital training that aims to saturate the world with multiplying disciples in our generation. It presents 32 biblical principles, such as eyes to see where God’s kingdom is not yet and finding a Person of Peace. Ordinary people can apply these principles, through the different disaster-response phases, to reach people at their point of felt need.

During recent lockdowns due to civil conflicts in Myanmar, when travel was forbidden in or around the villages, disciples used Zúme over Zoom to grow in loving God, loving others, and making disciples through the chronic crisis. Several removed the idols in their homes, and shared the Gospel while in the markets during the government-restricted window. They also began discipling others over WhatsApp because they realized they couldn’t wait for other

leaders to do it for them. God used the crisis to change how the local church engaged in discipleship follow-up after relief distributions. They encouraged ordinary believers to obey the Scriptures as disciples, applying verses that previously had been overlooked or viewed as just for professionals. This paradigm shift multiplied breakthroughs as disciples applied and passed on what they had learned through Zúme.

Because disasters will certainly continue to come, Jesus’ disciples need to be ready. Therefore, training in the readiness phase, as with Zúme, equips people to make disciples in every season of life.

During the relief phase (first few weeks), disciples need to be ready to respond to prayer needs. In the recovery phase (next several months), disciples need to be prepared to share the Gospel and disciple in trauma-informed ways. During the rebuilding phase (the years after), disciples should be ready to serve and coach those affected by the disaster to become leaders who disciple others in ongoing relationships. As we walk with people through these phases, we can share with them a vision for being a disciple who makes disciples and a disciple worth multiplying. Utilizing foundational Zúme principles such as these during disaster response can help lead to long-term fruit, as the Lord wills. We can multiply disciples who transform communities through the recovery of God’s designs.

Digital strategies can be used in both event-based and ongoing responses to crises. For disaster-response organizations, churches, and ordinary disciples, digital strategies facilitate the spiritual feeding of the countless crowds hungry for God. At any given time, refugees speaking dozens of different languages are pouring into several nations—many of them coming with physical, emotional, and spiritual hunger. Because Zúme is available in 43 languages, disciple-makers are utilizing it effectively as a part of loving and caring in person for refugees who have come to their hometowns. Beyond our own backyards, those ministering to the diaspora have placed Google ads, quoting pieces of Zúme in various languages, to find people searching for God, and to connect, using Zúme over Zoom. This approach can reach both those nearby and those in other nations as part of digital strategies in the wake of acute disasters.


Across the globe, when the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the world, tens of thousands of people added to the numbers of those making disciples who make disciples using Zúme on Zoom. Small groups went through Zúme's 32 biblical principles as a pattern and paradigm for spiritual expression. This was especially valuable for those who had lost familiar spiritual patterns because of the loss of buildings or disruption of broader church relationships.

Gathering in small groups and going through Zúme during the recovery phase of a disaster or crisis event can provide much-needed relational connections with others, facilitate sharing resources together, and help meet the needs of those experiencing trauma. The 3-part discipleship pattern that Zúme trains can intentionally build community, faith, and purpose, which are necessary for recovering from trauma. Whether the disaster is acute or chronic, it's important to lean into new ways to meet together and spur each other on in pursuing Christ and teaching others to do so.

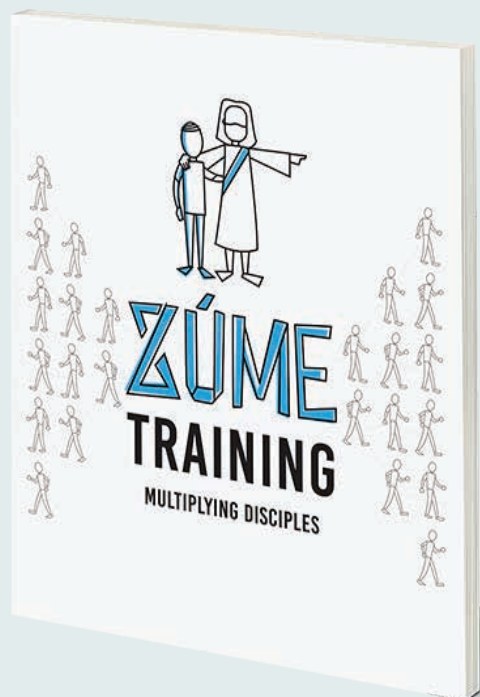


With the vast majority of the world holding internet-enabled mobile phones, it's important to know that Zúme is free and can be accessed online ([www.Zume.training](http://www.Zume.training)).

But the content also can be utilized in numerous other ways, including in remote areas without internet or situations that arise during crises and disasters. Renew World Outreach provides Zúme content pre-downloaded on solar-powered projectors, micro SD cards, solar-powered audio Bible players, and Lightstream file-sharing hotspots. The Zúme book can be distributed and apps can be used on Apple and Android phones to download the content so it is accessible without the internet. All these ways and more can be found on [www.Zume.vision/articles](http://www.Zume.vision/articles). These can provide access in areas where infrastructure has been destroyed and give the ability to distribute content to strengthen disciples and churches with ongoing multiplicative use.

Believers need to equip themselves to respond quickly to opportunities that crises bring. This also builds their own resiliency with a biblical response to suffering. Live training and Zúme coaches also are available across the globe to walk alongside people who have internet access. When crisis rings, Zúme disciple-making training can help disciples respond to the call, with digital strategies and on-the-ground principles that are rapidly multiplying around the world. 


## LEARN MORE



This book coaches you on the basic inward and outward life of an ordinary follower of Jesus, so that you can bear fruit as Jesus desires for all those who follow Him: *I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last* (John 15:16).

The training is organized into 10 two-hour sessions and is best done in groups of four to twelve people.

For more than 30 years, the principles and skills in Zúme training have been unlocking believers for more fruitful lives. These principles have proven that ordinary disciples living out immediate, radical, and costly obedience to Jesus can have a big impact—even to the point of catalyzing Disciple Making Movements.

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