

# P.R.E.P.A.R.E. to Respond to Crisis

By DR. MARY ROBERTS

*“What we do is not because there is a need, but because there is a God.”*

—Dr. Alicia Britt Chole

When walking the streets after disasters in several nations, including my own, I often asked people: “Was there a time when you cried out to God?” Time and time again, they would say “Yes.” In their darkest, scariest moments, people are often shaken to realize there may be more to life than what they have been living. When we share stories about God and the Gospel, it answers their desperate prayers with Good News—from the God to whom their inmost being had cried out.

How can we position ourselves to be ready for the opportunities God gives us? How can we join Him in caring for people through the phases of disaster response, for the long-term advancement of His kingdom through multiplying disciples and churches who transform communities?

One way is to P.R.E.P.A.R.E. to recover God’s designs out of disasters: knowing Him, making Him known, and living by kingdom principles according to Scripture. Whether our focus is across an ocean or across the street, we can prepare locally, regionally, and/or globally to increase effectiveness to be able to love others well in Jesus’ name.

**POSTURE | RESEARCH | EQUIPPING | PROCESSES |  
ASSESSMENT | RESPONSE |  
ESTABLISHING MULTIPLYING DISCIPLES & CHURCHES**

Walking through Scriptures, stories, and scenarios as we P.R.E.P.A.R.E. can make a significant difference. It may be as simple as changing the questions we ask,

as phases, information, and circumstances change. From micro (individual) to macro (network) levels, it is important to get the basics in place in order to lead to the long-term vision of movement efforts. Caring for an individual experiencing a crisis is then multiplied to caring for entire communities, nations, and regions experiencing crises. While large-scale responses contain added dynamics of complexities, the same basics exist at the smallest fractal level.

We must be led by Scripture and the Spirit, not the demands of urgent needs or the deception of feeling better if we help just one more person. Scriptures sustain us through suffering when strategies or stories alone fall short. Our response to suffering should be formed before we experience it, in order to effectively see and join God in crisis. Action is crucial, but so also is heart response, and the *way* we do what we do.

One of the greatest gifts we can bring to those suffering and afflicted is a sense of, “Peace, be still.” Into the pain of those searching desperately, we have the privilege of offering the peace that only Jesus can bring—while we do whatever we do.

What if we read Scripture through the lens of crisis and disaster? God consistently transforms the most destructive moments into the most redemptive stories. In the New Testament, the movement of God thrived in the context of multiple crises, such as persecution (Acts 8:1), famines (Acts 11:28-30), urgent needs (Titus 3:14), death (Luke 8:49-56), sickness (Luke 8:43-48), riots

(2 Cor. 6:4-5), and storms (Luke 8:22-25). The accounts of responses to disasters and crises were written to all the followers of Jesus. Still today, engaging in trauma healing and spiritual receptivity with reproducible tools is transferable across all cultures at the baseline level.

## P.R.E.P.A.R.E

**POSTURE**—How can you build a scriptural foundation to stand on in the face of suffering? What Scriptures do you need to write on your mind and engrave in your heart, to have on your lips in the midst of a crisis (Deut. 11:18-19)?

**RESEARCH**—What types of disasters is your area vulnerable to? What skills and resources do the disciples, churches, and communities around you have? What supplies and skills do you all need to develop?

**EQUIPPING**—What are the trauma-healing and physical-response skills that can be multiplied alongside the spiritual tools? In what ways can you equip small groups of people to hear, obey, and pass on these tools—for their own resilience and strengthening one another?

**PROCESSES**—From individual to network-wide, what principles will shape how groups of disciples and churches will make decisions? Communicate? Problem-solve? What processes can you put in place ahead of time?

**ASSESSMENT**—What are a few simple questions that can help people assess the surrounding physical, emotional, and spiritual states? In what ways can continuous (formal and informal) assessment help?

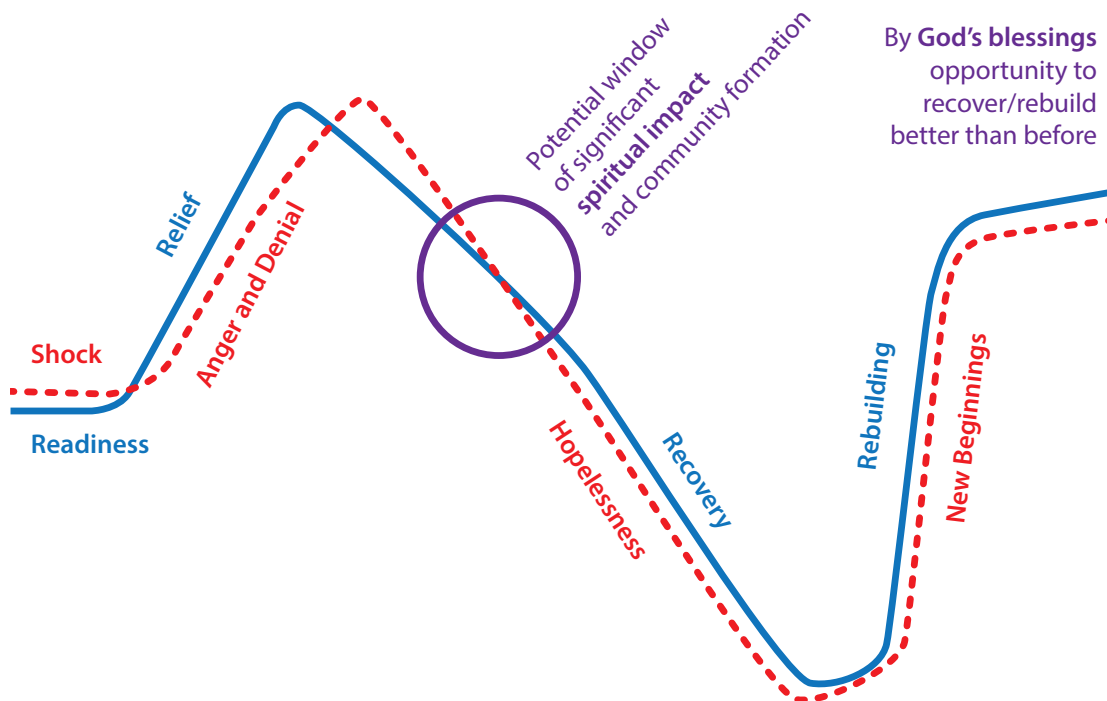
**RESPONSE**—In what ways can ordinary people in churches join God at work in each phase of disaster response: readiness, relief, recovery, and rebuilding? How can you connect, communicate, and collaborate with various professional skills and resources, with the main resource being ordinary people?

**ESTABLISHING MULTIPLYING DISCIPLES & CHURCHES** What will be your plan to respond rapidly with a long-term vision? How will the disciples and churches sustain the response through the four phases?

What could your families of disciples and churches put into action and pass on to others to P.R.E.P.A.R.E.?

If you read the P.R.E.P.A.R.E. template with “you” as singular, go back through and read with “you” in the plural form: “we.” How does it change your response?

Understanding the response phases is foundational to any strategic-planning and decision-making processes. The more you can access real-time information on the ground, asking questions appropriate to the phases, the more helpful your response efforts can be.



	Readiness	Relief	Recovery	Rebuilding
Biblical examples in each phase ( <i>not a comprehensive list</i> )	Noah (acute), Joseph (chronic), Jehosaphat (2 Chron. 20), Matt. 24:7, <b>Jesus talking to His disciples about His death</b> , Paul gathering the Ephesian elders and warning them about false teachers	Ministry in relief opportunities: Acts 11, Titus 3:14, many of Jesus' miracles such as healing official's son (John 4:43-54), calming the storm (acute), bleeding woman (chronic), <b>Jesus appearing to His disciples the day He was resurrected</b>	Exodus Journey of the Israelites, Ruth (Ruth 1:1) and others from famines (Abram, Isaac, etc). <b>The 40 days Jesus was with His disciples before His ascension</b> . The disciples displaced from persecution after Stephen was martyred <sup>1</sup>	Nehemiah, Job, <b>After Jesus' ascension, the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost and the Church was rebuilt</b> , New heaven & new earth (Rev. 21)
The average length of an acute event	As much as can be stewarded beforehand <sup>2</sup>	2-4 weeks after an acute disaster, sometimes turns into chronic	6-15 months	2-5+ years
Average emotion at each phase	People often go through these phases in various ways regarding other aspects of life before disaster hits	Anger and Denial	Hopelessness	New Beginnings
Focus	P.R.E.P.A.R.E.	Preventing more people from dying	Stabilizing to a new normal	Adapting and recreating what was destroyed
Characteristics	Urgency to prepare because unknown when or how disaster will strike	Chaos, numerous NGOs, shock, greed, survival mode	Relief fades out, wearisome & long days for responders & survivors, corruption	Things settle into new normal (good or bad), some things don't recover and start over
Kingdom Opportunities <sup>3</sup>	Entry into new areas and strengthening existing churches with disaster preparedness <sup>4</sup>	Rapid connecting, communicating, and collaborating to meet needs <sup>5</sup>	Follow up with people from relief, gather physical and emotional recovery groups around them, engage spiritual receptivity <sup>6</sup>	Restoring glimpses of God's designs through discipling His principles for how to live in the new normal and new structures <sup>7</sup>
Zúme spiritual principles <sup>8</sup>	All 32 principles (hear, obey, and share)	God uses ordinary people, spiritual breathing is hearing and obeying God, eyes to see where the kingdom isn't	Prayer walking, person of Peace and how to find one, simple definition of disciple and church, vision casting the greatest blessing, Gospel and discipleship patterns	Leadership development and coaching tools as new generations of disciples and churches hear, obey, and share the Good News

This chart is not comprehensive. An expanded description of the phases graph is located in the TRAUMA article on page 18.

- 1 See "Displaced and Redeemed" on page 24.
- 2 See "Insights from Movements for Effective Crisis Response" on page 16.
- 3 See "Movements Responding to Crises" on page 8.
- 4 See "APEST: Roles for Equipping Everyone in Disaster Response" on page 29.
- 5 See "50 Examples of Movements in Crisis Response" on page 32.
- 6 See "Rapid Response in Seasons of Receptivity" on page 13.
- 7 See "Organizations Shifting: Crisis Response and Movements" on page 21.
- 8 See "When Crisis Rings: Digital Strategies Using Zúme" on page 38.

	Readiness	Relief	Recovery	Rebuilding
Trauma Healing Tools <sup>9</sup>	Healing Conversations and New Hope (or Healing Hope) Trainings	The three listening questions, lament, prayer <sup>10</sup> , oral Bible stories	Healing conversations and grouping survivors around crisis response bridge groups to full trauma-healing discipleship	Ongoing trauma-informed discipleship groups or simple churches that multiply and respond to new disasters
Physical tools	CERT—Community Emergency Response Team training (and it can pair with discipleship training)	Food distribution, clean-water access, rapid shelter creation	Mud out homes/buildings, clean up debris, help find housing, jobs, transportation, resources	Appropriate technology, microloans, rebuilding homes, agriculture, micro-businesses

9 See “Trauma Healing in Crisis Response” on page 18.

10 See “Partnering with God: Prayer as a Crisis Response” on page 26.



More resources, including examples of P.R.E.P.A.R.E., can be found at: [www.GodinCrisis.vision](http://www.GodinCrisis.vision)

To learn how to partner with Kingdom Movements serving in crisis/disasters, you can write to [mary@2414now.net](mailto:mary@2414now.net)

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