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The Response of Faith-Based Organizations in New York City Following the World Trade Center Attacks on September 11, 2001

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[Return to Hazards Center Home Page](#)

[Return to Quick Response Paper Index](#)

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RESEARCH PROBLEM

On September 11, 2001, intense human-caused destruction devastated the City of New York and the entire United States. Two cross-country bound airliners were intentionally guided directly into the twin towers of the World Trade Center (WTC) in the financial district of Lower Manhattan, resulting in the death of several thousand persons and impacting the health of thousands of others.

Emergency responders were mobilized to coordinate search, rescue, and recovery operations immediately, while voluntary organizations and community groups assessed the situation and determined actions needed to attend to the needs of victims, survivors, and others affected by the tragedy. Faith communities and faith-based organizations in and around the City of New York were called into action by virtue of their proximity to the disaster and its impact on their congregants. National faith-based organizations mobilized from across the country. The question guiding this study aims to explain what the response of faith communities are and what kinds of services they provide to victims in the immediate aftermath of a mass tragedy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As the number of human-caused disasters is on the rise, little has been written about the role that faith communities and faith-based organizations¹ play in mass tragedies. One short strain of literature describes the role of individual chaplains in the context of disasters and hospitals. Reed (1977) and Jordan (1976) offer case studies of victim needs and pastoral care conducted with survivors over a long recovery period following natural disasters. These studies include an examination of long-range disaster effects, both psychological and spiritual, upon the lives of individuals and offer suggestions for effective pastoral care in the light of such factors. Landry (Landry 1996) explains the roles and activities of a chaplain within a level-one trauma hospital, seeing the chaplain as part of an inter-disciplinary team and providing a "ministry of presence" to the family.

Examples of coordinated spiritual care response, which include multiple chaplains, come from descriptive pieces on Oklahoma City following the bombing in 1995 and offer descriptions of the response and recovery activities of spiritual caregivers coordinated through local agencies (City of Oklahoma City 1996; Garipey 1996).

With so few studies available that record the activities of faith-based organizations in a disaster, there is a need for baseline information that will contribute to our understanding of disaster responses. This study provides a description of several faith communities' responses in the immediate aftermath of the attacks in New York City on September 11, 2001.

RESEARCH METHODS AND RESEARCH POPULATION

Due to the perishable nature of data immediately following a disaster, one of the first goals was to enter the field as quickly as possible in order to observe and collect data that would have otherwise quickly become lost. The plan for this quick response project was to observe and interview members of multiple local congregations of differing faiths in order to determine the particular services they were providing to victims of the WTC attacks. My research eventually encompassed interviews, and ethnographic observation at multiple sites around the city of New York. This is a chronological account of qualitative work in the field.

In the days following September 11, I made telephone contact with members of the New York City Presbytery, Church World Service, and the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance office. My goal was to identify congregations in Manhattan and local faith-based organizations that were heavily "impacted" by the disaster and were providing services to victims within the city of New York. The term "impacted" was purposefully broad because I did not know what particular impacts I might find that were being addressed by communities of faith.

There are several hundred religiously based faith communities and faith-based organizations in New York City. My choice to contact the New York City Presbytery and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance was based on my personal qualifications as a Presbyterian minister. I planned to use this insider status to gain access to information about the Presbytery response and to request interviews with local clergy members. The contacts I made with members of Church World Service were due to their connection with Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center on the campus of the University of Colorado at Boulder, where I am currently a graduate student in the Department of Sociology.

Upon arriving in New York, it became immediately evident that those congregations and faith-based organizations that were in the close vicinity of the WTC would be inaccessible due to access restrictions around lower Manhattan. Police and members of the National Guard were posted along Canal Street, preventing people from traveling through lower Manhattan (including SOHO, NOHO, Greenwich Village, the Financial District, and the World Trade District).

The initial contacts I had made by phone with the Presbytery of New York and members of Church World Service began a snowball sample of local spiritual care providers who were, fortunately, located to the north of these restricted areas. I made contact with the director of the Temple of Understanding (a broadly reaching interfaith educational center located on the East Side of Manhattan) and the Interfaith Center of New York (a Center directly involved in local education and outreach of an interfaith nature). Within the New York City Presbytery (PNYC), I was able to meet with and interview persons who work at an administrative level and several ministers within the surrounding boroughs of Manhattan, as well as attend a meeting of the Presbytery.

Also in attendance at this meeting were representatives from several disaster response agencies who came to provide information to ministers in the Presbytery. The representatives included

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Church World Service Disaster Relief, and the American Red Cross. As a result of interactions with these representatives, I was able to schedule interviews at the Greater New York Chapter of the American Red Cross, which was headquartered in Brooklyn, and the Family Assistance Center on Pier 94.

Qualitative interviews were conducted with persons at the Temple of Understanding, local congregational ministers, administrators and ministers in the PNYC, and representatives of Church World Service and the American Red Cross. These interviews were unstructured but were focused around questions about service delivery in this particular disaster event. Ethnographic observations were made at different sites around the City, paying particular attention to the activities at each site and any services that were being offered.

All interviews and observations were transcribed and key descriptions and themes were identified as part of the findings for this research. Specific findings are detailed next.

FINDINGS

The findings reported here are based on a very small sample of interviews and observations and are therefore not representative of the entire religious population in New York City. They are, however, descriptive of what I saw and heard in New York from September 19-26 and provide several examples of future areas of research that can contribute to our understanding of disaster vulnerability, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts as well as sociological theory building.

The first section describes the activities of interfaith groups, the New York City Presbytery, and four local churches. These are grouped together because they are permanently located within the city and they have pre-developed congregations and ministries. Additionally, these groups will continue to provide services locally long after the immediate response period following the disaster.

The second section describes the activities of Church World Service and the American Red Cross childcare and spiritual care disaster responses. These are examples of disaster response and relief agencies where these particular programs are tied to faith-based organizations. While maintaining a local presence in New York City, the mission of these agencies includes disaster response activities rather than congregational development and ongoing care.

QUALITATIVE OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEW

Interfaith groups. The Temple of Understanding is a small agency that provides education about the beliefs and practices of multiple faith groups. Following the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Temple continued to provide education and outreach to churches and academic

institutions in order to teach about the Muslim faith and Arab populations in New York City. They were particularly responsive to Christian church groups that called to request a representative from the Muslim faith who could provide education to their congregation. Additionally, the Temple was preparing to provide interfaith education to local and international universities as part of a program called "Education as Transformation." This program was designed to teach about multiple faiths and provide a forum for discussion.

In response to the terrorist attacks, the director of the Temple of Understanding expressed that in his 20 years of doing interfaith education at both the local and international level, he had never seen more interfaith statements coming out of one event. The religious aspect was much more visible on television media and in the newspapers. He also noted that individuals who hold political office were making very strong statements about the need to not generalize about any particular religious or cultural group when addressing the situation.

Prior to the attacks, the Temple and the Interfaith Center of New York assisted UNICEF in their preparations for the "Annual Interfaith Service of Commitment to the Work of the United Nations." This multi-faith service, designed to mark the opening of the 56th Session of the United Nations General Assembly was dedicated to "all those whom we have lost and their loved ones in this week's tragedy" and was adapted to include memorial prayers. Held on September 13th, it included representatives from faith traditions such as Jewish, Buddhist, Native American, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jan, Tao, Zoroastrian, Shinto, and Yoruba. In the weeks following the attacks, throughout the city, memorial and prayer services were held that were purposefully inclusive of multiple faith traditions.

One particular memorial service that I attended was hosted by the Interfaith Center and sponsored by the Latino Religious Leadership Project. It included members of the Jewish, Islamic, and Christian faith communities and multiple ethnic groups were represented. As one sign of inclusiveness, the service was voiced in Spanish, English, Hebrew, and Arabic. The following words come from the bulletin that was distributed at the service and emphasize the need for tolerance and peace in the aftermath of this disaster.

We pray for peace, to address the anti-Islamic and anti-Arab bigotry that we see being expressed in so many places and to urge that concrete assistance be offered to all immigrants who may have been affected by the World Trade Center disaster. As Latinos/as, we are often the victims of xenophobia and the use of stereotypes that unfairly single us out as a community, sometimes with violent results. This is why our communities should be more than aware of how events such as these can leave persons vulnerable to the hatred and anger that results from a strong desire to take revenge. We call for a peaceful response so that healing for all can begin.

New York Presbytery. The presbytery is responsible for mission and government of local Presbyterian Church congregations throughout its geographic district. The New York City Presbytery provides governance to 99 churches in all five boroughs (the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and Staten Island). Government within the Presbytery includes counseling

with congregations and providing pastoral care and counseling to its congregational membership and pastors.

In response to the attacks, the New York City Presbytery (PNYC) immediately began making calls to congregational pastors to determine the effects of the disaster and the pastors' future needs that the PNYC might be able to address. The PNYC also called an emergency meeting of member congregations for the purpose of learning about the roles of governmental and non-governmental disaster relief efforts in the WTC attacks.

This meeting was held in a building identified as the "God Box" on the upper West Side near Columbia University. The "God Box" is home to numerous denominational governing offices as well as multiple Christian organizations such as the National Council of Churches, Church Women United, and Church World Service. In attendance were approximately 100 pastors, assistant pastors, and lay leaders from the PNYC; several visiting pastors from New Jersey, Chicago, and Washington; and representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the American Red Cross (ARC), Church World Service (CWS), Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), and the National Council of Churches (NCC). The agency representatives were on hand to answer questions about disaster response and relief efforts and to explain the processes that congregational members may encounter as they apply for relief funds and assistance.

The meeting, which included a service of worship, became a forum for local pastors to share their experiences of the attacks, and to encourage one another, as they provide ongoing pastoral care and counseling to members of their congregations. One pastor from Chicago, who had been to Ground Zero, shared stories of the fading hope of the rescue workers: "On Tuesday, there was still hope of rescue. Now (on Thursday, September 20), the trucks are going in and out like a track meet." The movement of debris at high speed marked the realization that the rescue operation was becoming a recovery operation. Little hope was held out that any bodies would be pulled out of the rubble alive. Another pastor stood and shared "if you haven't seen war, this is it; the mangled steel, the smoke, the soot, the dust. You run out of words to say. What can you say to a person who's waiting for his wife to come home?"

Several pastors encouraged their fellow clergy persons to invite persons of other faiths to their churches in the weeks following the attacks. They believed that an interfaith dialogue was needed and that people of differing faiths would be receptive to an invitation to attend church at that time. They also encouraged a "ministry of accompaniment" where Christians would provide escort around local neighborhoods to those who are Muslim or of Arab descent in order to provide protection to those being harassed and stereotyped in negative ways.

Several persons in attendance inquired about the monetary donations that were coming in through the Presbyterian Church's national offices, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and the local PNYC. At the time of this meeting, no decisions had been made. However, in the weeks following, the Presbytery executive body made the decision to create a commission specifically responsible for attending to ongoing congregational needs created by the WTC attacks. This includes providing oversight to the financial gifts and donations, offering personal counseling to

the pastors of the Presbytery, and providing assistance and training to pastors who are counseling those affected by the WTC attacks.

Local congregations. As a result of my attendance at the Presbytery meeting, I was able to conduct brief interviews with four ministers whose congregations were directly impacted by the attacks.

The first minister I spoke with was the co-pastor of a white, upper-middle class congregation in Montclair, New Jersey, which is directly across the Hudson River from New York City. Twenty members of her congregation escaped from the towers on September 11. One person was killed. Those who escaped were experiencing survivor guilt. She and her husband had called every member of the church to offer counseling and services of healing. They also produced handouts for parents on how to talk to their kids and conducted support groups for spouses of survivors so that they could learn about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and ways to help in coping. The church sanctuary had been open for prayer and counseling, and she had seen many persons from the local neighborhood come. Additionally, as she called church members to check on them, she found that many persons, especially the elderly, talked about memory of past trauma that had been triggered by the events.

The second minister pastors a Hispanic congregation in Queens. He was finishing up his work at the Presbytery offices as part of the executive staff and was anxious to go to be with his new congregation. He explained that the city felt different; there was a sense of fear and an unusual quietness. In his own congregation, he had been holding prayer services and times for silence and meditation. The congregation seemed to be questioning life, faith, and community. He said "the amazing thing is that they are realizing that the only place they can go is to God. New York is a very secular place - theater, sports, Wall Street, etc. But people are desperately looking for God now."

A third minister pastors a small international congregation on Staten Island. "If I walk the four blocks around my church, I walk around the world," she explained. On the day of the attacks, the local children came to the church and they asked to pray and to sing "this little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine." The children, in particular, needed a place to go where there was stability and assurance that they would feel safe. Therefore, she opened the doors to the church and invited the neighborhood to come in while continuing the established programs for the local children. The international nature of her congregation raised concerns for her when American flags were posted on the pulpit the first Sunday after the attacks. "The flag at this moment is very dangerous - children who are normally very comfortable in their ethnic garb are becoming afraid because of the adults" and what it means to be an American versus "other." While nationalism was not discouraged, the church was left unadorned of patriotic symbolism, purposely providing a neutral space for worship and congregational meetings.

One phone interview was conducted with a former interim minister of a large Presbyterian church (over 800 members) located in Greenwich Village, near the World Trade Center. This is within the restricted area below Canal Street. This church, which also houses a church-run nursery school, lost three members and several nursery school parents. In the days following the attacks, the church conducted a memorial service, was open for nightly prayer, and collaborated

with a local synagogue on an interfaith service. Two weeks after the attacks, the church was no longer holding special prayer services for the community, but the pastors were preparing for memorial services for their congregants who were killed.

The local faith-based organizations and congregations were addressing the immediate needs of their congregants who were directly affected by the disaster. Ranging from offering interfaith memorial services to hands on assistance at Ground Zero to places of stability for children to support groups for spouses of survivors, these groups provided direct, concrete assistance while preparing for the long-term recovery ahead.

Within the interfaith organizations, the New York Presbytery, and the local congregations, there were internal and external support services provided. These services included memorial and prayer services and outreach in the forms of counseling to those emotionally affected and companionship to those who were targeted for harassment. Internally, these organizations provided a safe place for their membership and spiritual guidance to help make meaning of the event. A spirit of tolerance was upheld, and congregations joined together spontaneously to support, educate, and assist one another.

DISASTER RESPONSE AGENCIES

Church World Service. Church World Service (CWS) is the relief and development agency of the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) in the United States. The emergency response program of CWS assists faith communities in preparing for and responding to disasters. In particular, CWS

stands on the side of the oppressed through advocacy with and for those most in need; seeks out unmet needs of all survivors - particularly people who were vulnerable and marginalized before the disaster; provides a larger vision of life that includes emotional and spiritual care as well as physical rebuilding; assists in long-term recovery of those in need; and helps to restore and build community relationships. (from CWS Web site, <http://www.cwserp.org>).

In this disaster event, trained CWS disaster consultants facilitated the work of faith community partners as organizers-enablers, technical advisors, and links to outside resources. One of their first tasks was to organize an Interfaith Council and Task Force that would be responsible for short and long-term needs as a result of the attacks. This Council will provide for spiritual and emotional care response including counseling for local pastors and training on effective pastoral care with survivors of trauma. The Council will also provide stewardship of funds in order to meet the long-term unmet needs that arise as a result of the disaster.

Unmet needs are of particular importance to CWS responders. In this disaster response, thousands of dollars arrived within days for victims and survivors. There is an urgency to spend the money quickly so that needs can be met immediately. As a result of responding to disasters for several decades, CWS has learned that the long-term needs must be considered as funds are

dispersed in the immediate time frame. So, CWS partners with local congregations in order to determine ongoing long-term needs that were created by the disaster and to provide a structure for addressing and meeting those needs. However, as one CWS representative explained to me, this disaster is "a different animal," and CWS is currently "writing the book" on their new role.

American Red Cross. The Greater New York Chapter of the American Red Cross (ARC) has two offices: one on the West side of Central Park and another in Brooklyn. The Brooklyn office housed most of the Disaster Operations for the World Trade Center attacks. The three-story brick structure was attended by uniformed National Guard persons who stood at several security checkpoints. Throughout the building, there were lines of persons waiting to fill out applications to volunteer in some capacity.

I spent one day with a coordinator for the American Red Cross liaisons office where volunteers were responsible for gathering the names and services of organizations that will be available to victims of the attacks in the long-term recovery period. In a "normal disaster," the ARC would feed, shelter, clothe, and provide food or workers. The liaison coordinator explained: "This disaster is different in many ways. While the ARC is still meeting the needs caused by the disaster, it is not about flooded homes or tornadoes ripping through a town—it's a metro area. For example, there are 'yuppies' who have never gone through social service programs and they have cars, house payments, etc. They have no experience of not having money." Meeting these needs would require creative solutions and assistance programs for people from all walks of life.

While the ARC is a non-sectarian organization, it does partner with faith-based organizations that can effectively provide services in the event of a disaster. Its role becomes that of coordinator in relief and response, whereby it mobilizes volunteers from across the country, authorizes appropriate responses, and maintains standards in the highly political environment of a disaster response.

ARC - Aviation Incident Response Team. As a result of Federal legislation, the American Red Cross was mandated to provide specific Victim Support Tasks in the event of an aviation disaster. While the WTC attacks were not classified as an aviation disaster, the Red Cross' recently formed Aviation Incident Response (AIR) team, which included specially trained mental health, child care, and spiritual care teams, was called upon. The Childcare Aviation Incident Response (CAIR) team and the Spiritual Care Aviation Incident Response (SAIR) team were immediately mobilized to New York City to provide coordination, administration, and training of disaster volunteers.

Childcare Aviation Incident Response Team (CAIR). The CAIR team is a ministry of the Church of the Brethren and a program under the direct management of the mental health arm of the American Red Cross disaster services. Specially trained disaster childcare teams were designed by Church of the Brethren in 1980 when volunteers saw that families were spending hours in long lines for assistance. Children affected by disaster are in need of childcare that is sensitive to their traumatic experiences and their developmental stages. CAIR volunteers are located nationwide and rotate into the disaster site every two weeks until the ARC determines that the need for secure childcare is no longer present.

The CAIR team set up a secure childcare area in the Family Assistance Center on Pier 94 where parents or guardians could drop off their children with volunteers while they attended to the paperwork and tasks of applying for assistance. The secure childcare area was a large room with high walls and a locking door. Each child was photographed with a guardian and their name was taped to their back. As children played with the abundance of toys, read books, listened to music, or interacted with the therapy dogs, CAIR volunteers watched for signs of distress or need and intervened when necessary. The CAIR volunteers do not offer counseling but refer children and their parents to mental health services that are available through the ARC if they are needed.

One volunteer explained that there is a difference between a natural disaster and the attacks: "In a natural disaster, a child goes 'through' it." He or she may have personally experienced the flood, tornado, earthquake, etc. and can connect with the destruction. "Here, the children didn't go 'through' it. It is difficult to connect with as a reality. And yet, in this disaster, every person who comes here to the Family Assistance Center has lost someone. A mom, a dad, an uncle, a grandmother, a grandfather."

By the third week, the CAIR volunteers had seen a shift in the children who were coming in to the childcare area. There were many more internationals who did not speak English and the realization was setting in that those who were missing were truly gone. Additionally, the CAIR volunteers were gearing up for what could prove to be particularly stressful for children and parents: the announcement that death certificates would be made available at the Family Assistance Center. CAIR coordinators were preparing for larger groups of children who were reacting to greater levels of stress and would need extra volunteers to provide care.

Spiritual Care Aviation Incident Response (SAIR). The SAIR team is comprised of professional chaplains of multiple faiths located throughout the United States who are on call in teams of 8 for one month of the year. In the event of an aviation disaster, those team members who are on call are mobilized through the American Red Cross Disaster Operations Center in Falls Church, Virginia. Within three hours, team members travel to the site of the disaster to provide coordination of local clergy responders (known as local disaster volunteers or LDVs). National SAIR team members who respond to the disaster remain on site for up to 10 days. In the event that a disaster response extends past 10 days, an entirely new team will enter and this rotation process will continue throughout the course of the response.

Chaplains who are members of the SAIR team are responsible for three things: to provide care to people, to provide an administrative overview of local disaster volunteers, and to control who has access to victims and rescue workers. One SAIR team member explained that "in the days following the attacks, anyone with a collar could get into Ground Zero." Persons who claimed to be religious professionals but who lacked specific disaster training would often stop people on the streets and request to pray, hand out religious tracts, or proselytize. Those chaplains and local disaster volunteers who work with the ARC are required to provide non-sectarian spiritual care, meaning they do not proselytize, they are available to persons of all faiths and persuasions, and they do not force themselves upon anyone. Instead, they make themselves available to those who are in need of spiritual support and protect survivors and emergency personnel from inappropriate religious advances by persons who are unauthorized to be there.

Local clergy who meet ARC chaplaincy training standards are recruited, trained, and scheduled to provide ongoing spiritual care at one of several sites in the area of the disaster. The sites may include a family assistance center, the morgue, or the recovery area. The national SAIR team members provide ongoing administration of the operation and coordination of local clergy volunteers and support to emergency response workers and local clergy volunteers.

During their first days, SAIR team members trained over 500 local clergy members who would provide ongoing spiritual care at the Disaster Assistance Service Center, the Family Assistance Center and Respite Centers, and the morgue at Ground Zero throughout the rescue and recovery efforts in New York City. Local chaplain volunteers offered comfort to rescue workers in the form of a kind word, an offer to cleanse the dust from their eyes, or to bind the wounds on their heavily beaten hands. Chaplains posted at the Family Assistance Center where family members came searching for word about their missing child, spouse, or parent provided spiritual comfort through their presence and offers to assist in whatever ways they could.

In sum, Church World Service and the American Red Cross responded to this disaster by enacting pre-established programmatic responses. Team members were quickly mobilized and made contact with local congregations and emergency management organizations to determine needs and establish services to meet those needs.

CONCLUSIONS

In the event of a disaster, faith-based organizations respond at multiple levels within the effected community. Local organizations with pre-established congregations and membership affiliations serve as consistent source for support to the surrounding community. Their constancy in the time prior to the disaster make them a source of leadership in the provision of services in the immediate aftermath of disasters throughout their community. Their congregational base lends to an immediate pool of volunteers who can be mobilized to provide support to those who are directly affected by the disaster.

Those faith-based organizations located closest to the World Trade Center that remained open in the days following the attacks provided a physical space for prayer services and community gatherings while seeking out members who were directly impacted with the loss of a loved one, housing, or job security.

Due to the magnitude of the disaster and the number of people affected within the metropolitan area of New York, those congregations that were further geographically from the epicenter were also highly impacted and became sources of support. Faith-based organizations opened their buildings for memorial services, made phone calls and visits to congregational members, offered supportive counseling both individually and in group settings, and joined with other leaders as a unified front against religious and racially motivated harassment.

Organizing to meet long-term needs of ministers, congregations, and survivors directly impacted by the disaster began in these early days following the attacks. Interfaith and denominationally

identified coalitions quickly formed and began organizing in order to address future issues that were a direct result of the disaster.

Disaster response agencies, those that are faith-based and those affiliated with faith-based organizations, mobilized to provide technical assistance and direct services to victims and survivors of the attacks. As coordinating bodies with extensive experience in response, relief, and long-term recovery, these agencies provided information and assistance as local faith-based organizations offered care to their congregants.

Additionally, the ARC became the direct service provider to victims at multiple assistance sites in the City as it coordinated the work of the CAIR and SAIR teams. Trained ARC volunteers were mobilized from across the country to provide childcare and spiritual care to victims and their families at the Family Assistance Center. ARC Chaplains were also stationed at Ground Zero, the respite centers, and the Disaster Morgue to provide support to recovery workers.

This report has provided a limited view of the response and recovery activities of several faith-based organizations in the immediate aftermath of the attacks on September 11, resulting in a disaster of immeasurable proportions. Further research is needed to more fully understand the effectiveness of response activities within each of these organizations. This includes evaluations of practical and spiritual needs and the ways in which the faith-based organizations address these needs in the immediate aftermath of disaster. As a result of in-depth research of the local faith-based organizations, policy recommendations can be made for improving local coordination of disaster preparation and response. These local measures can be linked to the national disaster response agency plans, forging networks of service providers that are better prepared to respond in the event of future disasters. And finally, further study of faith-based organization disaster responses might be better understood if analyzed and thereby evaluated in light of sociological theory. In turn, study of such groups might contribute to sociological theory of organizational responses in disasters.

NOTES

The term "faith community" is used here to describe collective groups or congregations that are identified by a relationship with a particular faith tradition such as Christian, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, Interfaith, etc. Faith communities provide a central place for worship, education, and fellowship for their congregants. A faith-based organization is a collective that is based in a particular faith tradition or multiple faith traditions and provides services such as education, housing, disaster relief, health care, etc.

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[Return to Top](#)

[Return to Hazards Center Home Page](#)

[Return to Quick Response Paper Index](#)

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