



Overview

I. Background

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) opened a Billy Graham Prayer Center in New York City. In appreciation of the long term emotional and spiritual needs of the city, and at the request of churches, the BGEA developed the "His Presence in Crisis" training and taught thousands of people in the region to appropriately listen and share God's hope with the suffering.

II. The Need

During the 911 experience, it was clear many denominations and church groups were prepared to help meet the physical needs (food, water and shelter) of disaster victims. But most church volunteers did not know what to say or how to appropriately help people with emotional and spiritual needs at the moment. Therefore, the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team was formed to train and deploy Chaplains to man-made and natural disasters nationwide. The training is also offered to churches to help equip God's people for ministry everyday when co-workers, friends and neighbors are impacted by a personal or family crisis.

III. Resolution

To meet the critical need for emotional and spiritual care, the Rapid Response Team currently has a network of over 3,000 volunteer chaplains living in 40 states and Canada. These specially trained volunteers have been trained in crisis intervention and learned how to appropriately tell of the One who "heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds", Psalm 147:3. Since 2002, they have assisted more than 400,000 disaster victims, and have prayed with over 111,000 people with 8,200 decisions for Christ.

"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, the harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest field."

Matthew 9:36-38 NKJV



Deployment History

2002	Louisiana - Hurricane Lilly	2008	Picher, OK – Tornado
2003	West Warwick, RI - Nightclub Fire	(cont)	Joplin, MO – Tornado
2004	Southern Florida - Hurricanes Gulf Shores, AL – Hurricane Southern California – Fires		Macon, GA – Tornado Parkersburg, IA – Tornado Hugo, MN – Tornado
2005	Grenada, WI – Hurricane Ivan Gulf Coast – Hurricane Katrina Groves, TX Hurricane Rita Ft. Lauderdale – Hurricane Wilma		Yangon, Myanmar – Cyclone Columbus, IN – Flooding Terre Haute, IN - Flooding Cedar Falls, IA – Flooding
2006	Red Lake Indian Reservation – Shooting Hurricane Katrina (continued) Binghamton, NY – Floods		Baraboo, WI – Flooding Cedar Rapids, IA – Flooding Baton Rouge, LA - Hurricane Donaldsonville, LA – Hurricane
2007	Hurricane Katrina (continued) Americus, GA – Tornado Enterprise, AL – Tornado Greensburg, KS – Tornado Coffeyville, KS – Floods Independence, KS – Floods Virginia Tech – Shooting Rampage Minneapolis, MN - Bridge Collapse Rushford, MN – Floods		New Orleans, LA – Hurricane Port Arthur, TX – Hurricane Friendswood, TX – Hurricane Santa Fe, TX – Hurricane Beaumont, TX – Hurricane Grand Turk Island – Hurricane Galveston, TX – Hurricane
	Crandon, WI – Shooting Rampage Southern CA – Fires Arvada, CO – Shooting Rampage Kiln, MS – Hurricane Katrina (con't)	2009	Orange County, CA - Fires Santa Catarina, Brazil – Floods Poplar Bluff, MO – Ice Storms Melbourne, Australia – Fires Lone Grove, OK – Tornado Madisonville, KY – Ice Storms Clarence Center, NY – Plane crash Paducah, KY – Ice Storms Maryville, IL - Shooting
2008	Jackson, TN - Tornado Clinton, AR - Tornado Greers Ferry, AR - Tornado Lafayette, TN – Tornado Northern Illinois University – Shooting Kenya, Africa – Country Violence Piedmont, MO – Flooding Delta, MO – Flooding Suffolk, VA – Tornado		



Collaborations

In support of the emotional and spiritual needs of those affected by a disaster, listed below are just a few of the disaster relief organizations, institutions and government agencies the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team has collaborated with to provide chaplains:

- Samaritan's Purse
- American Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Southern Baptist
- Operation Blessing
- International Critical Incident Stress Foundation
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management
- Georgia Emergency Management Association
- Mississippi Emergency Management Association
- Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department
- St. Bernard's Sheriff's Department
- Hancock County Sheriff's Department
- Biloxi Police Department
- Virginia State Police
- St. Bernard's Fire Department
- Orleans Parish School System
- New Orleans Police Department
- Youth with a Mission (YWAM)
- Virginia Tech University
- Northern Illinois University
- Union University
- Intersivity Christian Fellowship
- Campus Crusade Collegiate Ministry



Training

I. Training Goals

- a. Train and recruit chaplains for deployment with the Rapid Response Team
- b. Equip God's people to appropriately share His hope and comfort with people everyday who experience a personal crisis
- c. Help churches develop Disaster Preparedness Plans

II. Training seminars/conference with topical sessions

- a. His Presence in Crisis Seminar (Friday-Saturday)
 - The Arena of Trauma
 - A Mission to Respond
 - The Characteristics of a Responder
 - The Ministry of a Responder
 - The Care of the Caregiver
- b. Sharing Hope in Crisis Seminar (Saturday)
 - A Mission to Respond
 - A Ministry of Hope
 - A Messenger to Serve
 - A Method to Prepare
- c. Rapid Response Team Chaplain Conference (4-Day)
 - Keynote Speakers (Theme: God's Hope in Times of Crisis)
 - Panel Discussions (Theme: How to Share His Hope)
 - Testimonies (Theme: How I Received Help & Hope in my crisis)
 - Critical Incident Stress Management Courses (CISM)

III. 2009 training schedule

Indianapolis, IN	March 7
Philadelphia, PA	March 13-14
Harbor Springs, MI	May 1-2
San Antonio, TX	May 16
Asheville, NC	June 15-18
La Mirada, CA	Sept 11-12
Wylie, TX	Oct 3
Greensboro, NC	Oct 17



Testimonies

Below are a few quotes to illustrate the valued need and opportunity to provide Billy Graham Rapid Response Team Chaplains when disaster strikes.

"The Billy Graham Chaplains appropriately share God's hope and comfort to the New Orleans Police Department and our community. This has been a great encouragement to me and the department."

Deputy Chief Tony Cannatella
New Orleans Police Department

"Following the Virginia Tech shootings, I was given comfort and direction for dealing with my loss from the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team. They came to me to comfort me and lift me up, and they performed those duties with great professionalism."

Neal Turner
Virginia Emergency Services Coordinator
Blacksburg, VA

"The Billy Graham Chaplains have made such a difference here at the shelter. It's great to see them praying with someone because I know they are really being helped."

Red Cross Shelter Manager
Shreveport, LA

"If it wasn't for the 'Blue Shirts,' I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't have made it after the storm."

Deputy Greg Hauck
St. Bernard's Sheriff's Department
Chalmette, LA

"I can't begin to tell you how much I appreciate the BGEA chaplains. They have really been a godsend. The Care and Comfort Center concept has worked out great here. The students know what the 'blue shirts' are about and there is a level of trust that is great. Again, words can't express how much we appreciate the BGEA chaplains."

Paul Deschenes, Psy.D.
Director of Counseling Services
Union University