



Scenes from New Orleans, May, 2006

What is a Disaster Chaplain?

A Disaster chaplain is a faith leader with special training and credentials to respond to natural and human-made disaster such as tornadoes, floods, terrorism, or pandemic illnesses. Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska (IMN) is the official credentialing body for Nebraska's Disaster Chaplain Network. IMN is responsible for interviewing, screening, background checks, approval of candidates and training.

How are Chaplains Deployed?

Nebraska is divided into six Behavioral Health Regions. A Chaplain Coordinator has been selected in each Region. The Regional Disaster Chaplain Coordinator is responsible for deploying Disaster Chaplains, providing detailed information about when and where to respond. Disaster Chaplains will serve primarily in the Region where their congregation is located.

The Role of a Disaster Chaplain

People are more likely to turn to faith leaders than anyone else in times of disaster. There are several reasons why:

- *There is a high degree of trust placed in those who represent our faith traditions.*
- *Faith leaders are approachable — there are no waiting lists and little or no stigma.*
- *The prayers and rituals of faith communities are coping mechanisms that are regularly used by individuals affected by disaster.*
- *There is a spiritual component to the process of healing following a disaster that can best be addressed by a chaplain.*

***Disaster Chaplains provide
"Spiritual First Aid."***

How to Become a Disaster Chaplain

- *Complete the application form*
- *Agreement to follow Code of Ethics and Guiding Principles*
- *Active participation in a faith community*
- *A letter of recommendation from someone in that faith community*
- *A letter of recommendation from someone who supervises your work*
- *Ability to work respectfully with people of all faith traditions or no faith tradition*
- *Participate in an interdisciplinary interview*
- *Allow a background check*
- *Maintain appropriate professional boundaries*

For More Information

Contact Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska at:
402-476-3391
im50427@alltel.net

We will be happy to provide you with an application and answer any questions you may have.

Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska
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"The ministers were also there to reach out personally and share the burden of people's grief. But their greatest contribution may have been that [they] were able to address the ultimate need of survivors to find meaning in their suffering. . . Inspiring a feeling of hopefulness."

After the Flood: The Response of Ministers to a Natural Disaster
Cecil Bradfield, Mary Lou Wylie & Lennis Echterling

The Tasks of a Disaster Chaplain

The Disaster Chaplain is a representative of God. Just as God's compassion extends to all persons, so does the care of the Disaster Chaplain. The Disaster Chaplain provides spiritual presence and nurture for all who are affected by the disaster, regardless of their faith affiliation. The Disaster Chaplain plays the unique role of responding to all persons affected, respecting each person's unique situation in life.

- Victims
- Rescue workers
- Families and friends of victims and rescue workers
- Volunteers and staff of relief organizations or agencies
- The community at large.

The Disaster Chaplain:

- Listens to the stories of peoples' disaster experience
- Hears cries of distress
- Promotes a sense of safety and security
- Is a reminder of God's presence
- Provides a spiritual presence of healing and hope
- Helps people find available resources and supports their efforts to find solutions which will be appropriate for their individual situations
- Provides respite and support for local clergy



NEBRASKA
DISASTER CHAPLAIN
NETWORK

*Providing
Spiritual Care
In Times
Of Disaster*