

Spring 2014

 **mna disaster response**
Mission to North America

RECOVERY REPORT



"... What do those stones mean to you?"—Joshua 4:6

Dear Partners in Ministry,

Today as I write I am mindful of races, endurance and celebration; today is the running of the Boston Marathon. In his letters, the Apostle Paul refers to his faith life as a race. On every track or course, there are mile-markers (or milestones) that allow the runner to know how far along he is in his journey and provide a tool useful for him to pace himself, change speed based on remaining distance, and push on toward the goal. Paul says we should run to win the race. Along the way supporters and family are there at each milestone to urge the runner on and to join in the celebration. In ministry reaching significant milestones should also give us pause to celebrate.

Dave Peterson, now retired MNA Chaplaincy Coordinator, used to remind me that it was a common mistake to not take time to celebrate what the Lord has done in our lives and ministry. I remember thinking that I could do that later on; I just needed to get some stuff done now...there would be ample time later on to reflect, give thanks and celebrate, ..., wait! I never really thought that celebrating is something we should do. We are Christians, right? I was so wrong! Dave's mentoring was Biblical truth; the Bible is full of accounts of His movement in peoples lives and their stopping to honor His provision through prayer and celebration.

After Jacob has a life-altering experience of wrestling with God and receiving a new name, Jacob/Israel builds an altar in remembrance of what God has done in his life. In Joshua 4, God purposefully teaches His people to slow down and reflect, "I want you to build something to remember where you came from. When you are in the Promised Land and enjoying your lives...don't forget that you were once slaves in Egypt and I brought you out. Don't forget those years in the desert before I led you across the Jordan River." Celebrating high points in our ministry should help us, and everybody else to remember what God has done!

We get so into the work of ministry and daily life that we forget the importance of celebrating milestones and God's provision. Celebrating is a reminder, a faith builder, and a hope promoter. So we pause here to remember the great blessing MNA Disaster Response has been to so many storm affected families. We celebrate the robust mobilization of God's people to serve one another, and some other significant milestones along the way.

Maybe what's more important than the actual milestones is the journey along the way—the ministry between the mile markers. You have been with us all along that way, supporting us, lifting us up in prayer, and caring for us. We couldn't be here without your love and commitment in seeing this ministry flourish. Thank you, please come consider what the Lord has done through you — join in the celebration with us!



MNA Vision Gathering - Celebrating Longterm and New Friendships

Early in January I attended the MNA Vision Gathering in Chandler Arizona along with the entire MNA Senior Staff. It was a special time to connect with other folks intent on seeing God's kingdom expand through church planting and outreach ministries. It was especially good to connect with churches from the western regions of the PCA.

The theme of the gathering — Following Jesus into Mission — included presentations by pastors Glenn Hoberg, Skip Ryan, Ligon Duncan, and Mark DeYmaz. Each challenged us in areas such as how to move forward in mission while maintaining our doctrinal convictions. How do we respect and work together with folks when our convictions and philosophies are so different? Other topics included discussions on developing multi-ethnic leadership, stronger community engagement, higher levels of evangelism, etc. There was also a panel discussion, many times of prayer and group interactions. James Ward and Michelle Higgins assisted in worship. I especially enjoyed Pastor Duncan's assessment that we have much more to **celebrate** than things that divide us. I am usually in a dead run going from one disaster site to another, so the time really was a serendipity — getting to spend some quality time with people whom I love, and who love and care for me. Catching up with friends and making new friends is a good thing.



One morning while in Chandler I walked to breakfast with pastors Dave Schutter (left) and Michael Langer, seen in the picture to the right. During the summer of 2008 Michael arrived in Iowa City to plant One Ancient Hope Mission. When he rolled in, Iowa City & neighboring Cedar Rapids were under water after catastrophic flooding. I arrived later the same day to help him; together we established relief operations that spanned nearly 18 months. More than 1,000 MNA mobilized volunteers worked on over 100 homes, and a church began to take shape. I had the privilege of going back recently to participate in the particularization of OAH, i.e., moving from mission status to a 'real' church. I was asked to give the charge to the elders and to the congregation. It was an honor to be there in the beginning, to take part in the service and now to regularly give thanks for the blessing that OAH has been to the city. **Join me in celebrating God's goodness to this city and for the lovely congregation.** OAH really was born out of the restorative work of God's people.

MNA Mercy Conference - Celebrating the Storm and Volunteer Efforts

Every other year MNA hosts the PCA Mercy Conference, last month it was held at Wallace PCA—College Park Maryland. MNA Disaster Response Specialist Curt Moore and I conducted two workshops on disaster response. The workshops were a 'sell out' as there were no additional seats available during our sessions. The workshops covered the foundational spiritual and biblical presuppositions of mercy and specifically disaster response. There is a huge amount of interest by new people who are exploring how best to get involved with us. **We recently celebrated a major milestone; the mobilization of our 100,000th disaster response volunteer.** Even with the record number of folks serving with us there is an apparent perception that folks need to be highly trained to serve with us; that is a misconception that we constantly strive to correct. We re-organized disaster response into a grassroots effort during 2006 to engage as many folks as possible going forward and the PCA has confirmed this strategic change by responding in unequalled numbers since then.



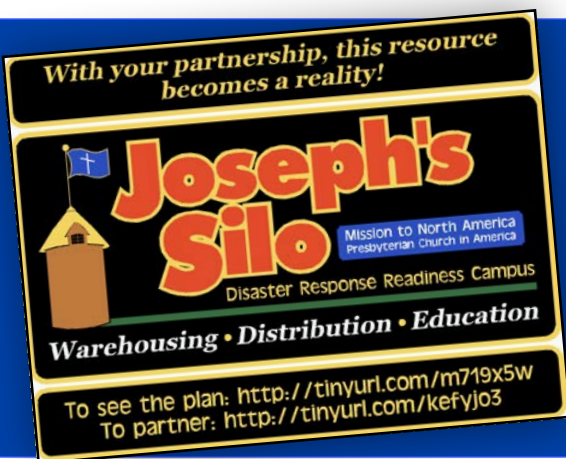
New City Fellowship Pastor/Church Planter Santo Garofalo (picture) was asked to present one of the mercy moments during the plenary sessions of the conference, and he told the story of being hammered by Hurricane Sandy — how his new church plant was unintentionally thrust into the chaos and how MNA Disaster Response came alongside them in recovery efforts to stand up their tiny church plant in the community through recovery efforts. He said that he was never more proud to be part of our denomination then when MNA volunteers showed up in great numbers and became ambassadors for him and his congregation. **We can celebrate God's people moving toward the pain in great numbers,** not running away as people without an answer. I pray the MNA Disaster Response staff might keep pace in serving alongside those who have already served so well.

Celebrating God's Continual Provision - North Cincinnati Community Church

Just a few years ago there was not even one church with a disaster response trailer equipped and ready to go, but with your great help and support MNA Disaster Response has been able to partner with 50 churches or presbyteries to help them acquire disaster response equipment trailers. I had the great privilege of delivering the 50th trailer to North Cincinnati Community Church. **This is a milestone we can celebrate!**



The purpose of our trailer grant ministry is to facilitate the enlargement of the PCA's grassroots disaster readiness footprint. A few weeks ago I had the high privilege of delivering the 50th trailer to North Cincinnati Community Church. The church submitted a proposal to us outlining how, if they were selected to receive the latest trailer, they would build their team, equip the trailer, train their team, and deploy going forward. A commission populated with MNA first responder team leaders from Florida, Iowa, and Mississippi jointly evaluated all proposals and choose the best submissions. As God provides the funds we will be able to equip several new teams each year. Visit www.pcamna.org/disaster-response for more information. The picture includes NCCC disaster team leader Jim Ertel (left), and senior Pastor Walter Wood.



JOSEPH'S SILO UPDATE

Since I last wrote you about the warehouse we have seen an uptick in fundraising efforts. We currently have commitments for approximately \$345,000 of the needed \$500,000 to build Joseph's Silo, our MNA Disaster Response Warehouse to be located in Dalton GA on the campus of Grace PCA.

I recently made presentations at a number of churches and Tennessee Valley and Nashville Presbytery. One major outcome of those visits happened when I was approached by an elder who asked me if we already had a firm contracted to provide engineering for the foundation. I told him "No, but we were ready to execute a contract with a firm". He then offered to provide those engineering services as a gift from his firm. What a blessing! **Join us in celebrating God's provision** in putting us in touch with folks who are now helping in many different ways to see this denominational resource become a reality.

We are making what we hope is a final push to see the remaining funds come in before July 1 so that we can begin construction. I am scheduled to meet with our architect and proposed contractor soon to finalize the site plan. Please keep praying—tornado season is now upon us and hurricane season begins June 1.

To know more about Joseph's Silo and options for you to give towards this project please navigate to the Mission to North America website at: <http://pcamna.org/disaster-response/>

Celebrating Sheds of Hope - 860 Families Helped

We recently completed our 160th SOH (Shed of Hope) in Moore Oklahoma; 860 total since 2005. **This is huge milestone to celebrate!** At the North Texas Presbytery / MNA Recovery Site in Moore OK, Laura Atherton and Matt Tesselink re-ordered priorities in their lives to provide leadership to the Sheds of Hope project for the last year and have done a fantastic job. Both are attending City Presbyterian Church Oklahoma City. **Thank you** for supporting this awesome component of relief work. I recently was in Moore and drove through the tornado damaged neighborhood. Everywhere you turn you see a Shed of Hope standing as a reminder of God's kindness, provision and care. It seems like building a shed for someone is a simple undertaking, but much work goes on behind the scenes before the work begins. Please consider joining the efforts by bringing a team between now and August.



Celebrating Expanding Ministry - Care & Comfort Training (CCT) Announced!

It's official! MNA Disaster Response is conducting a special training event at Grace PCA of Dalton, GA on October 17, 2014. CCT is intended for all who are called to serve Christ through mercy ministry (that's everyone). CCT is not only designed for those who may serve on the front lines as first responders to a disaster event; everyone knows someone struggling with a life-crisis such as divorce, sickness, loss of a loved one, wayward children, bankruptcy, loss of a job, addictions, etc.

The one day event will provide training on how best to compassionately and appropriately share the love and hope of Jesus Christ to the tempest-tossed. All future disaster responders, short term missionaries, church leaders, deacons, elders, ministry leaders and those working in mercy ministry should prayerfully consider attending this training. We have been praying and planning to host this important event for 2 years and we are super excited to finally announce the date!

Our training partner, Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) Counseling Center, has been involved with us at a high level for a number of years training and counseling staff, and traveling to our established recovery sites to debrief and serve church staff. Now RTS is partnering with MNA DR to conduct this very important event. Attendees will leave the training with their personal toolboxes filled with the essential skills necessary to serve people in crisis.

Attendance is limited to the first 100 folks who register. Visit www.pcamna.org to know more and to reserve your place now.



JIM COFFIELD



BARB MARTIN



DAVID FOSTER

A personal note of celebration & thanks from Arklie

A couple of weeks ago I quietly celebrated the beginning of my tenth year serving with Mission to North America. My time serving you surely has been a great blessing to me. My daily prayer continues to be the prayer I prayed way back then; that I can serve Him well in all my strength. My focus remains Luke 10:2. Over the years I have had the high privilege of meeting many folks across North America who are also quietly celebrating their years of being in the Lord and using their time and talent to serve Him. I want to be like these folks.



I sense profoundly that God has been more gracious, patient, and strong towards me over the past year than during any other period of my life. I know that I have not reciprocated His faithfulness, which compels me to embrace His forgiveness afresh each day. I enter this tenth season of ministry and life grateful that God is not like me, but that He does condescend to know me and to treat me kindly. Surely He is the best of all fathers — always strong and forever kind. Please let me know how best I can pray for you.

Serving you with my whole heart,

Arklie

Arklie & Katherine Hooten and entire MNA Disaster Response Team