



2011

**Metropolis of Atlanta Clergy Laity Assembly  
Disaster Response Report**

*By Dee Nicolaou, Chair*

*Metropolis of Atlanta Disaster Response Committee*

*Metropolis of Atlanta and National Philoptochos Disaster Response Chair*

In our daily lives, as we try to live with honesty and love, often we experience many obstacles and trials. Sometimes these obstacles and trials come in the form of natural disasters, such as the hurricanes, tornados, floods and fires. In such times, we find ourselves lost, afraid, alone and confused by the magnitude of the catastrophe that has upset our lives.

The hurricanes which devastated the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts from 2003 through the tragic 2005 season, the 2011 tornados and flooding disproportionately affected the faithful of the Metropolis of Atlanta. These catastrophes remind us of the on-going need and opportunity for Orthodox Christians to respond to their communities in times of need. They also point to the need for effective parish-based disaster preparedness planning that help parishes prepare to care for their members and others in their community in response to disasters.

With all of the devastation and destruction in our Metropolis of Atlanta from natural disasters, we are proud of what we have done, the generosity of our faithful and our response to those in need. However, it was time to organize ourselves on a permanent basis, so that we can respond even more quickly.

In response to the needs faced by parishes, the Orthodox faithful and their communities, the Metropolis of Atlanta began to coordinate direct assistance to the needy throughout the Metropolis. In the aftermath of the hurricanes, the Metropolis and IOCC coordinated efforts to provide assistance. In light of the devastation wrought by natural disasters affecting the Metropolis of Atlanta, His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios formed a permanent Metropolis of Atlanta Disaster Response Committee with Dee Nicolaou as its permanent Chair.

Great strides have been made in recent years to increase the capacity of Orthodox Christians to respond to disasters, including the creation of an Emergency Response Network by IOCC, the creation of our Metropolis of Atlanta Disaster Response Committee and the development of Emergency Plans for Families and Emergency Centers by AHEPA.

The formation of the Disaster Response Committee provides a more effective utilization of human and material resources of the Metropolis and will create a

comprehensive, integrated and national network for disaster response that will be capable of coordinating Orthodox resources and integrating that response capacity within the national disaster response framework.

Our vision is that we would be there to assist at the beginning, instead of coming later. In order to be prepared and to be able to help as many people immediately in a efficient, organized and effective manner it was necessary establish a committee with a mission statement, goals and objectives and an action plan during the disaster and after the disaster.

However, the emergency response efforts of Orthodox Christians in the United States have largely operated in parallel with one another and have inadequately engaged Orthodox parishes in disaster preparedness at the local level. The lack of a unified structure for coordination results in a reactive posture by the Orthodox Christian community following a disaster, inhibits a "real time" response, and may lead to the reduplication of services to target communities and regions.

Our primary mission will be to provide aid, compassion and ministry with dignity and hope to those in crisis by assisting the most vulnerable populations secure food, shelter and safety during natural disasters.

Father Angelo Pappas, Disaster Response Co - Chair of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and I in conjunction with IOCC will establish a Disaster Response Program and Protocol Procedural Manual for our Metropolis of Atlanta Parishes and for Disaster Response designees at all levels for in order to disseminate vital information to all parishes and Philoptochos Chapters within our Metropolis. Please make every effort to encourage all members of your parish to attend the training seminars that Father Angelo and I will be conducting within our beloved Metropolis.

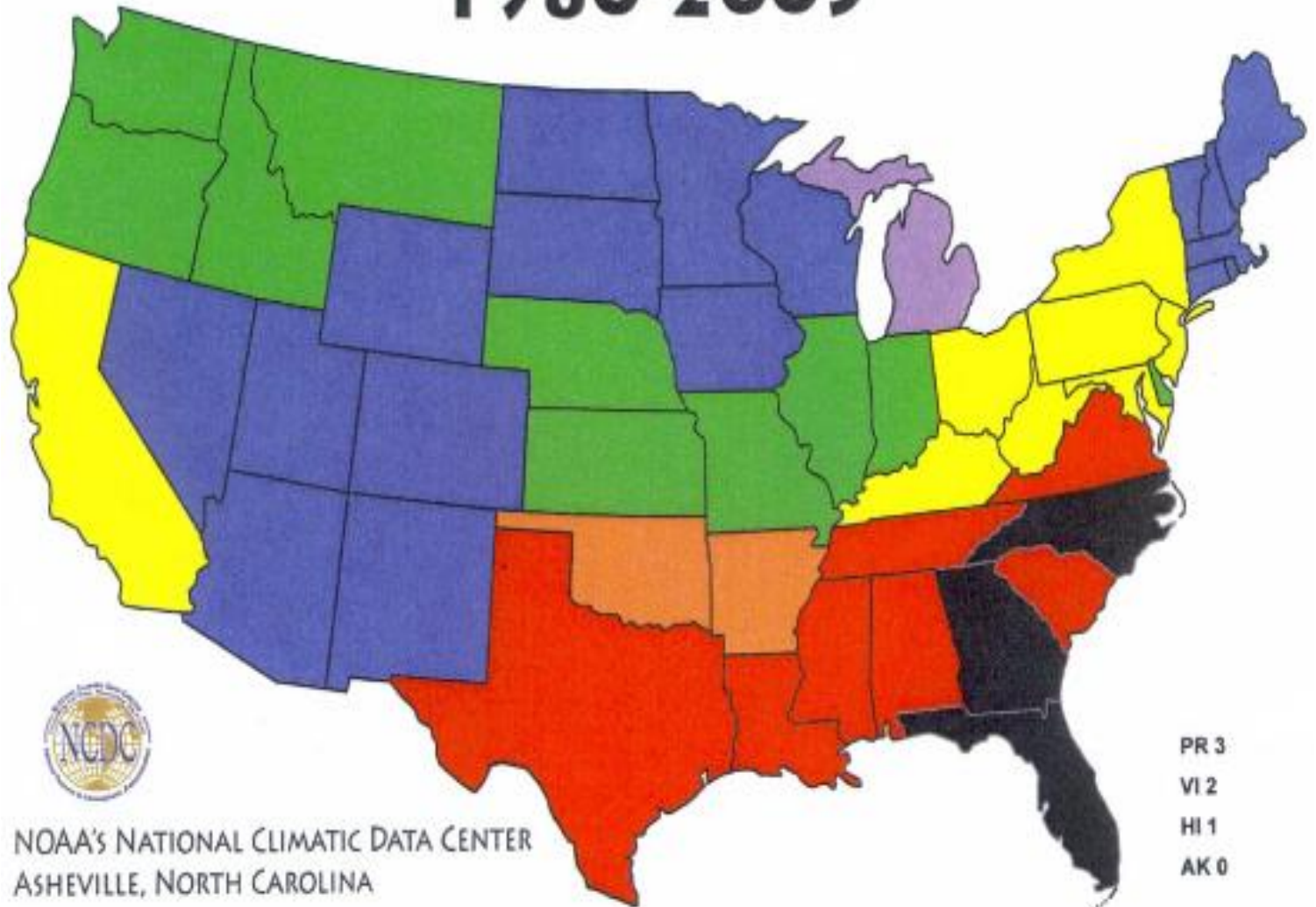
The Protocol Procedural Manual along with a detailed in depth Response Program will result in a coordinated Orthodox disaster response network that will be capable of providing training to its members and a platform for effective communication and coordination between disaster responders. The project will establish an emergency response protocol that can be utilized by our parishes, as well as coordinate the efforts at the Metropolitan and Archdiocesan level during pre/post and during the disaster.

The United States experiences an average of more than 3 disasters each year with damages of \$1 billion or greater (Attachment 2) that affect wide areas of the country. In addition, smaller disasters affect communities across the country on a far more frequent basis. While the frequency and severity of disasters cannot be predicted, they will continue to occur. As part of the community, Orthodox parishes have the opportunity and responsibility to respond to disasters. The need for a coordinated Orthodox disaster response capacity at a local, regional and national level is required to more effectively utilize the resources of the Church, avoid reduplication of efforts and foster communication and the sharing of resources between disaster responders.



# BILLION DOLLAR CLIMATE AND WEATHER DISASTERS

## 1980-2005



NOAA'S NATIONAL CLIMATIC DATA CENTER  
ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

PR 3  
VI 2  
HI 1  
AK 0

| NUMBER OF EVENTS | DISASTER TYPE              | NUMBER OF EVENTS | PERCENT FREQUENCY | NORMALIZED DAMAGES (Billions of Dollars) | PERCENT DAMAGE |
|------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--|----------------|
| 21 - 25          | Tropical Storms/Hurricanes | 24               | 35.8%             | 269                                      | 52.0%          |
| 16 - 20          | Non-Tropical Floods        | 12               | 17.9%             | 55                                       | 10.6%          |
| 13 - 15          | Heatwaves/Droughts         | 11               | 16.4%             | 145                                      | 28.1%          |
| 10 - 12          | Severe Weather             | 7                | 10.4%             | 13                                       | 2.5%           |
| 7 - 9            | Fires                      | 6                | 9.0%              | 13                                       | 2.5%           |
| 4 - 6            | Freezes                    | 2                | 3.0%              | 6  | 1.2%           |
| 4 - 6            | Blizzards                  | 2                | 3.0%              | 9  | 1.7%           |
| 4 - 6            | Ice Storms                 | 2                | 3.0%              | 5  | -1.0%          |
| 1 - 3            | Noreaster                  | 1                | 1.5%              | 2  | -0.3%          |
|                  |                            | <b>67</b>        |                   | <b>517</b>                               |                |

Please note that the national map color-coded by state reflects a summation of billion dollar events, for each state affected--ie, it does not mean that each state shown suffered at least \$1 billion in losses for each event.

# Top 10 States Most at Risk of Disaster

## 1. Louisiana



**Types of Disasters (2001-2010):**

**7 hurricanes, 2 tropical storms, severe weather**

**Estimated Insured Property Loss: \$31.9 billion**

The Pelican State has the unfortunate distinction of being the most disaster-prone state in the nation, largely because of Hurricane Katrina, which was the costliest disaster in U.S. history.

## 2. Florida



**Types of Disasters (2001-2010):**

**8 hurricanes, 5 tropical storms, severe weather**

**Estimated Insured Property Loss: \$31.5 billion**

The Sunshine State, with long coasts on both the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic, gets battered by hurricanes and tropical storms in late summer and early fall. It suffered through four major hurricanes (a record) in 2004 alone. It also has the highest number of tornadoes per square mile of any state. (Texas has more tornadoes overall, but is much larger.) Central Florida is known as the lightning capital of the nation.

### 3. Texas



**Types of Disasters (2001-2010):**

**Severe weather, 4 hurricanes, 2 tropical storms**

**Estimated Insured Property Loss: \$23.9 billion**

Severe thunderstorms and tornadoes are as common as tumbleweed in the Lone Star State. Cities close to the southern coast, such as Galveston and Houston, are often in the bulls-eye of destructive hurricanes that gain strength over the Gulf of Mexico, such as Hurricane Ike in 2008.

### 4. New York



**Types of Disasters (2001-2010):**

**Terrorist attack, winter storms, severe weather, 4 hurricanes**

**Estimated Insured Property Loss: \$21.5 billion**

The horrible death toll and destruction of property in the 9/11 terrorist attack puts the Empire State in the top ten of states with the highest casualty losses of the last decade. But New York also has suffered its share of havoc wreaked from heavy snowfalls over the past two winters.

## 5. Mississippi



**Types of Disasters (2001-2010):**

**Severe weather, 6 hurricanes, 2 tropical storms**

**Estimated Insured Property Loss: \$14.9 billion**

The Magnolia State was also hit hard by Hurricane Katrina, with the storm surge and heavy rains causing extensive flooding.

## 6. Oklahoma



**Types of Disasters (2001-2010):**

**Severe weather, winter storms**

**Estimated Insured Property Loss: \$5.3 billion**

Two words for the Sooner State: Tornado Alley. Severe storms and twisters are so much a part of the state's weather that the National Severe Storms Laboratory and Storm Prediction Center are located here. Most Oklahomans know how to protect themselves if a cyclone has been spotted.

## 7. Alabama



**Types of Disasters (2001-2010):**

**6 hurricanes, severe weather, winter storms**

**Estimated Insured Property Loss: \$4.9 billion**

When Gulf Coast hurricanes strike the Yellowhammer State, even inland areas take a hit from the wind and rain. And severe storms can be accompanied by hail and tornadoes, not just in spring but also in late fall and early winter.

## 8. California



**Types of Disasters (2001-2010):**

**3 wildfires, Santa Ana wind, severe weather, earthquakes**

**Estimated Insured Property Loss: \$4.7 billion**

The Golden State is home to more natural disaster threats than most states: floods, earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis and strong Santa Ana winds that fuel wildfires.

## 9. Missouri



**Types of Disasters (2001-2010):**

**Severe weather, winter storms**

**Estimated Insured Property Loss: \$4.5 billion**

Along with Texas and Oklahoma, the Show-Me State sees a lion's share of tornadoes and severe thunderstorms. Flooding also is a risk with two major rivers in the state -- the Missouri and Mississippi. Winters here can be bitterly cold, accompanied by hazardous snow and ice storms.

## 10. Ohio



**Types of Disasters (2001-2010):**

**Severe weather, 2 hurricanes**

**Estimated Insured Property Loss: \$4.1 billion**

Great Lakes-effect snowstorms blanket northern Ohio regularly in winter, and spring tornadoes plague the central and southern parts of the Buckeye State. Hurricane Ike blasted the Ohio Valley in 2008. The state also had more than 30 earthquakes between 2002 and 2007.



# Metropolis of Atlanta Disaster Response Committee

## Mission Statement

- To provide aid, compassion, ministry, dignity and hope to those in crisis.
- To assist the most vulnerable populations secure food, shelter and safety during natural disasters through the utilization of existing Federal Emergency Management resources coupled with local, municipal and National Philoptochos, Metropolis Philoptochos, Archdiocesan, Metropolis and IOCC efforts.

## Goals and Objectives

- Design and maintain an Emergency Response Protocol with Metropolis designees in place to assist.
- Training of committee members in FEMA Emergency Response Protocol.
- Training of Metropolis designees in Disaster Response coordination.
- Establish linkages to existing resources including FEMA, American Red Cross, IOCC and other relief agencies to ensure a smooth transfer of resources, supplies and monetary donations to those in need.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Create</b>    | design and implement Emergency Disaster Response Protocol for disaster relief efforts in the Metropolis of Atlanta.  |
| <b>Designate</b> | local, parish and Philoptochos liaisons to assist with gathering food, monetary donations and necessities for both pre and post disaster efforts throughout the Metropolis of Atlanta and Archdiocese.   |
| <b>Establish</b> | linkages with local public safety, federal organizations, and church ministries for transportation, reallocation and contributions pre and post disaster.  |
| <b>Designate</b> | and establish job duties and responsibilities for Disaster Committee in the Metropolis to coordinate local relief efforts.   |
| <b>Training</b>  | utilize and take advantage of FEMA Incident Command System, NIMS (National Incident Management System) CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) and Victim Advocacy Training all provided free by various federal and state agencies for committee and disaster relief team members. |
| <b>Utilize</b>   | current training materials available by the Metropolis for Disaster Response and mandate a Uniform Best Practice Protocol for all disaster relief efforts. Goal is to create uniformity.   |

**Communicate** established effective mechanisms of communication with the local community emergency management officials, parish level, Metropolis level and Archdiocesan level to coordinate disaster response efforts in “real time”. Meaning information updates scheduled at certain times per day. Updates need to follow a “chain of command” to reach the Metropolis leadership.

**Establish** a special response team consisting of Metropolis leadership in the disaster area to assess current needs.

**Pre Crisis** establish a person at the Metropolis of Atlanta to be the lead disaster coordinator to work with the Metropolis, Archdiocese, Archdiocesan Philanthropy Department, National Philoptochos, Metropolis Philoptochos, local emergency management agencies, local parishes and IOCC.

establish a Disaster Response Protocol Procedure Book for our Metropolis of Atlanta Parishes and for Disaster Response designees at all levels for dissemination to all parishes and designees within our Metropolis. Utilization of book will outline procedures to follow pre/post and during disaster.

**Post Crisis** establish Incident Command Center for relief efforts in disaster area. All relief efforts including IOCC should be coordinated through Metropolis command center.

complete reports on lessons learned, mistakes made and what was done correctly at the conclusion of the Disaster Response Incident.