

Community is Essential: Whether you call it a team, a band of brothers or whatever, a *'preparedness'* community is essential for safety and sustainability

Developing self-sufficiency is essential to basic preparedness, but extended emergency situations require more. A disaster of major proportions may, or may not affect you in the near future. But a *"confluence"* emergency event, in which one emergency incident is combined with another, is very likely. This type of incident is impossible to manage alone.

Consider what would happen if we experience a financial crisis, such as our national debt catching up with us. Inflation gains traction. The value of the dollar plummets. Prices soar. In this same time frame, Israel launches a preemptive strike against Iran. This sparks a major war in the Middle East. The flow of oil stops. As the effects of these events collide, U.S. businesses can't operate, paychecks stop, and overnight the economy crumbles.

Or, we are threatened with a new virulent strain of the bird flu which causes rapid death among humans. Within days, this epidemic spreads into the U.S. Fear runs rampant, and people stay home from work, so businesses can't operate. Sufficient food isn't being delivered to grocery stores, and the public panics. Food riots lead to general looting and anarchy. Government troops and police forces are ravaged by the disease, and unable to quell the spread of violence.

In scenarios such as these, if violence exceeds the government's ability to stop it, or if the incident lasts more than a few weeks, you will be on your

own. And even best laid plans for self-sufficiency will fly out the window. You will need more. *Those who think of themselves as independently self-reliant are delusional.*

Individually, no one can adequately protect themselves and their family if the situation decays into anarchy or rampant violence. And, if a disaster lasts more than a week or two, even a "prepared" individual will eventually need assistance.

Violence, medical emergencies, disease and illness, sanitation problems, a contaminated or damaged water source, extensive structural damage or collapse, limited energy resources, uninvited family members or friends, predatory neighbors, and many other developments can require assistance beyond our own ability and resources.

Nearby family members, friends and neighbors might be helpful short-term, but rarely can they provide sufficient help if the emergency situation becomes protracted. Time often exacerbates emergency situations.

Violence, or the threat of violence, is a very real concern, even for the prepared individual. One or two individuals can't stand guard 24-hours a day, 7-days a week, and simultaneously watch the front, back, and other areas of vulnerability. This requires a team, and teamwork.



Developed by Benjamin Franklin, "Join, or Die" was the first American political cartoon. Franklin's point was that the colonies needed to unite for mutual protection and support. Today, the same is true for individuals who face disasters or emergency situations. We can't do it alone. It takes *community*.

This need can be addressed in several ways. An “Interdependent Defense Force” is the most basic structure, followed by “Family or Fraternal Community,” but to maximize safety and security an “Intentional Community” is needed. If participants want to also aid rebuilding and restoration efforts, the additional features of an “Intentional Community *Enterprise*” are needed.

Interdependent Defense Force (IDF)

The most basic response to an extended emergency situation with the threat of violence is an Interdependent Defense Force (IDF). Essentially a Neighborhood Watch program on steroids, IDF is an organized security and mutual assistance pact, undertaken by a group of individuals who live in close proximity. Existing relationships, proximity and common need, make it possible for an IDF group to operate as a cooperative undertaking.

An effort such as this has inherent problems, however, especially if the emergency situation persists for more than a few of weeks. But short-term it may be your only viable option.

The members of a group such as this, with members who are essentially randomly selected, will not be uniformly reliable, possess the requisite abilities and the essential sound judgment required for the task at hand. This must be understood, and potential problems addressed frankly.

Since a security co-op such as this is only as strong as its weakest members, capable members will be forced to assume extra duties and more hours to compensate. Over time and under stress, this will result in strife between participants, impatience, and eventually burn-out of the

capable members as a result of them carrying the lion’s share of the load.

Since reliability of the participants will be untested, guard duty must be rotated more frequently and the number of guards increased. This is necessary to bolster limited skills, and to minimize the effect of poor decision making and laxity by inexperienced participants.

In an undertaking such as this, political correctness and tolerance of incompetence must take a backseat to safety. Nevertheless, leaders must operate as coaches rather than commanders;

deliberate and strong, while providing tactful supervision as the circumstance necessitates voluntary compliance. Therefore, the use of motivational skills, and peer pressure, will be essential to maintain viability.

A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.

Proverbs 22:3
Holy Bible, NLT

Family or Fraternal Community (FFC)

The next level of organized response to an emergency situation is the most basic level of community. This might be built upon an extended family, a group of friends, the members of a club or church group, or some other assembly consisting of individuals with pre-existing relationships, loyalty to each other, and natural affinity.

An FFC group, coming together in one location, can dramatically improve security, and also improve sustainability by sharing resources and through other cooperative efforts.

The joint efforts of this type of group typically include mutual aid activities made possible by living in the same house, or at least near each other on contiguous land. Operating together, safety is improved as each member has a vested interest in caring for the other members.

Similarly, the tasks of food preparation, physical care of each other and children, the sharing of resources, and the care of weaker members who are injured, infirm or elderly, are all facilitated. This structure assumes that there is a willingness to embrace a heightened level of sacrifice, and willingness to help others within the community.

Projects can also be accomplished more quickly within a family group or fraternal community. Members are often willing to help each other, even if the benefit of the effort isn't shared. (This is analogous to the barn building efforts which were undertaken by communities in early America). Though selection is not based in intentionality, this type of group will often enjoy the benefit of a diverse collection of skill-sets and abilities.

The family or fraternal community is a dramatic improvement over trying to do everything alone. And, its benefits far exceed the typically self-centered motivations of a neighborhood-based IDF group. However, it generally lacks the breadth and depth of skills necessary for long-term safety, health, and sustainability.

Intentional Community (IC)

When the emergency situation is protracted, the safest solution is an *Intentional* Community (IC). In this setting, the members have been pre-screened and selected based on anticipated needs, temperament, and contingency planning.

But more than this, the IC group will also have secured the use of an advantageous location in advance, and taken steps to prepare the location. It will have a reliable water supply, be defensible and secure, and be outfitted with their long-term food stores, provisions and equipment. All of this will be securely stockpiled at the retreat location.

Unlike the other groups which are an ad hoc collection of people based on pre-existing relation-

ships or neighborhood proximity, an Intentional Community is one which is conceived and formed in advance, for the specific purpose of coming together to respond to an emergency situation.

The benefit of an Intentional Community (IC) rests not only in the broad and diverse skills of its members, but in comprehensive preparation, and the selection of a viable retreat location.

Though members may have pre-existing relationships, their selection is based heavily on roles and skill-sets. Not simply proximity or prior relationship.

In an Intentional Community, participants are recruited to complement each other's skills, experience and abilities. This makes it possible for diverse needs to be better met, and so that the group can better respond to the unexpected. However, intentional selection of participants is only one aspect of being intentional.

The location selected may not be the best possible, but it should reflect reasonable compromise. The best location available to participants is better than being stuck in an untenable situation, particularly within the confines of a city.

It is far better to select a less-than-ideal temporary location while you continue to look for a better site, then to have no bug-out retreat location at all. Those who delay and fail to form an Intentional Community, or fail to select a location, may be surprised by an emergency, and become trapped in an indefensible and unsustainable location.

Don't wait. Everyone who is concerned about preparing for an emergency situation needs to develop a team, and pre-stock a bug-out location.

Individually and as a group, the members of an Intentional Community (IC) need to also be motivated to train, expand and hone their skills, and become cross-trained. Each aspect of sustainability and need must be anticipated.

Each participant must commit to refine their skills as they relate to operating in a sustained emergency situation, without government (or other) assistance. Each individual must demonstrate diligent preparation, work to deepen areas of expertise, while also developing skills and cross-training in the other arenas necessary to meet basic needs.

For example, a medical doctor might be a valuable asset in an emergency situation, but if the physician's expertise is limited to operating in conjunction with specialists and hospital facilities, that individual may not be a good choice. It might be more useful to have a wilderness paramedic or military nurse. (Don't forget to include physical therapy expertise in the mix, too, as you will encounter many work-related injuries. (Your community members will be operating outside the normal parameters of their physical labors, and in unusual circumstances, so expect to encounter many work-related injuries.)

However, if a medical doctor is motivated to aggressively expand his/her expertise, including dental and the care of animals, they would be extremely valuable to the group.

Highly motivated people, who are also committed to expand their education and abilities, represent another key facet of being intentional.

Consider what is actually needed to develop and maintain an independent and self-sufficient community. The following list of functional roles may be difficult to fill completely, but some provision should be made for each, regardless, even if the level of expertise is minimal.

If there is a vacancy, and a group is unable to recruit an expert to fill every role, members can divide that role into different components according to interest and natural ability. Each of these individuals can then be intentional about acquiring the knowledge, skills and resources necessary. Even if the group is later able to recruit an expert to assume responsibility for that role, the cross-training of the other participants will be extremely beneficial for sustainability.

When an emergency event occurs, all members may not make it to the retreat location, so every community member must be cross-trained.

Regardless of the expertise of the individuals recruited into the community, training materials and related tools, equipment and supplies, must be included with the other stockpiled resources at the retreat location.

Flexibility and cross-training is essential. Survivability requires it. Nevertheless, whenever possible, it is important for the group to recruit *at least* one member who is an expert in each essential role.

Community Needs and Roles:

The roles within an intentional community will typically include¹: (Listed alphabetically)

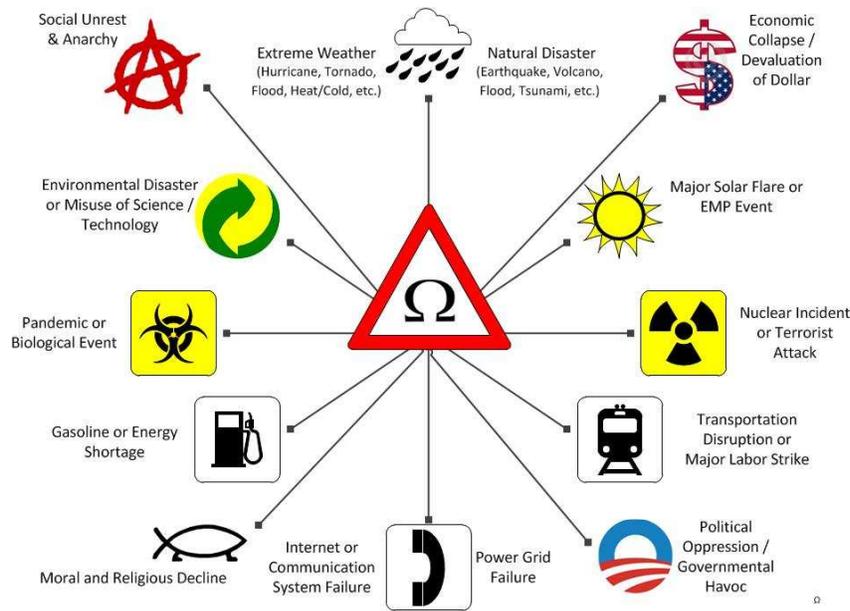
¹ This list of 20-roles is only a place to start. You will need to develop your own list, and perhaps add to it as you address the needs of your particular situation and geographic location. In practice, you will also want to divide-up your list of responsibilities differently, according to the expertise and interests of your community members. And every role needs a back-up person, too. Notwithstanding, be sure that all topics of expertise are represented in your group. Or, at the very least, have instructional books and supplies for every area of expertise not yet filled by a community member.

Community is Essential

1. Animal Husbandry and Veterinary
2. Building & Construction: Wood, Concrete, Metal, Stone and Available Materials
3. Chaplain / Counselor
4. Communications & Information: Amateur (Ham) Radio, Surveillance, Electronics, and Force Multipliers
5. Community Development and Oversight, Community Historian, Record Keeper, Inventory Control
6. Defense: Firearms, Tactics, Security, Training, and Defensible Space
7. Economics During a Disaster: Bartering, Trade of Goods and Services, Marketplace Development
8. Energy: Electrical, Electronic, and Mechanical Power Generation and Energy Storage
9. Food Preparation: Cooking and Nutrition
10. Food Preservation: Canning, Drying, Smoking, and Long-Term Food Storage
11. Gardening, Orchardist, Heirloom Seeds, and Agronomy
12. Hunting (including stalking), Butchering, Meat Preservation, and Land Navigation
13. Mechanical, Welding, Transportation, and Equipment Maintenance
14. Medical: First Aid, Emergency Medicine, Surgery, Contagious Diseases, Orthopedic, Naturopathic Treatments

15. Medical: Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy
16. Medical: Dental, Oral Surgery; at minimum, repairing fillings and painless tooth extraction
17. Music (Morale Boosting)
18. Nuclear, Biological, Chemical, and EMP Threats
19. Sanitation and Community Health

20. Water: Purification, Sourcing, Storage, and Irrigation



Confluence is when several disastrous events occur simultaneously, or develop back-to-back. Individually these may be serious, but when combined, they cascade with a multiplier effect. This increases severity and duration. This type of an emergency is not only possible; it is likely in the near future. In March 2012, President Obama signed the controversial Executive Order "National Defense Resources Preparedness." This created wholly unnecessary political conflict unless he expects to face a confluence emergency. Our government is obviously planning for major upheaval, shouldn't you, too?

This list of roles does not necessitate the inclusion of 20 different experts to fill the 20 roles, but rather the accommodation of all these different skill-sets within the context of the community.

If you are just beginning this undertaking,

you may not be able to identify more than a handful of likely prospects. That's okay; it's a place to start. So try to identify and recruit a networker-type person to help. They will be able to suggest many other prospective members, and your other participants can help, too.

Group composition is important, but it is only one aspect of developing an Intentional Community. The size of your community is also significant, as is the suitability of its location, preparation of the site, stockpiling of resources, training as a group,

skill enhancement, and cross-training of all participants.

Planning and preparation efforts must be comprehensive.

Does this kind of preparation sound extreme? Think about it. It's not.

Study the illustration on the prior page. Consider how easy it would be for a confluence of these events to merge, forming a major disaster with long-term effects.

Are you prepared for a chain-reaction of events? Few are, in spite of the fact that a confluence event is very likely in the months or years ahead.

There are many potential disaster scenarios, and even the unlikely must be considered. However, *an effective contingency plan starts with the most likely scenarios, prioritizes preparedness tasks, identifies the resources needed, and designs flexibility and adaptability into the response. Too many people plan for one type of event, and fail to adequately consider the universal needs which are part of most disasters.*

Whether you encounter long-term loss of power, anarchy, a pandemic or economic collapse, there are common features which are central to all disaster scenarios. These common needs are the place to start.

Examples of confluence disasters include events such as these...

Envision a major war in the Middle East. Our supply of gasoline and fuel oil is disrupted. People can't get to work. After a few weeks the electric grid fails as many power plants are unable to get fuel to operate their generators. A few days later, emergency generators at the phone companies, water districts, and hospitals run dry, bringing an end to these services. Toilets don't

flush and water no longer comes out of the faucet. Lack of sanitation breeds disease, but the hospitals are only operating at 5% capacity due to the lack of power and limited delivery of medical supplies, so most people are turned away. As a result, minor illnesses fester, and disease begins to spread faster and faster. Many die of simple diseases and injuries because they are untreated. Entire communities are quarantined, and left without sufficient food and water.

The consequences of the failure to adequately and comprehensively prepare may result in the loss of life and other catastrophic effects. It is irresponsible to depend on government assistance.

Or, al Qaeda strikes again but this time in seven cities across the country, simultaneously. Or, a terrorist group crashes the internet. Or, a new strain of the Avian Flu develops, and a pandemic emerges. At this point most businesses are unable to operate, and paychecks stop coming. Transportation is effected, and groceries and other essential products aren't delivered to the stores. Panic buying and hoarding empty the shelves of grocery and other stores. Hyperinflation strikes as people are forced to pay outrageous prices for essential goods. The value of the dollar drops, and savings are wiped out. The government steps in and begins to search houses for stockpiled food, so that they can distribute it equitably. Some people decide that they will protect what is their own, and good citizens begin fighting with the police and military which has been deployed to quell violence. Anarchy ensues.

Or, envision an economic crisis caused by our national debt. The government finally acknowledges that it can't just print more money to solve our financial problems. Government programs are cut, and increases in taxes and the lay-off of government workers spurs unemployment in the

private sector, too. Social Security benefits are cut substantially; entitlement and welfare programs are slashed, government pensions are cut. High inflation develops. Rioting starts. Parents can't afford to buy food, and their children are hungry and becoming sick. Looting is theft on a grand scale, and normally honest people find it easy to get lost in a crowd of looters, justifying theft if it is to assuage hunger. Theft to alleviate hunger morphs into theft of other goods to use for bartering. Those who resist these thefts are overrun, injured or killed.

Initially, it's others in the gang of looters who are the ones perpetrating the violence, but need begins to jade the outlook of the normally good person, so violence expands. Then, even the looters become victims as larger and more powerful gangs vie for dominance and the dwindling supply of goods. Skirmishes escalate into gang warfare as thieving factions collide. Ordinary people are afraid and caught in the crossfire, so they isolate themselves from their neighbors, and hide in their homes. Once the grocery stores are emptied, marauding groups of thieves and vandals start breaking into homes. Some houses and businesses are set on fire. Since the fire department is unable to respond, the conflagration spreads from block to block (a la, the Watts riots in Los Angeles). Occupied homes are also plundered, and residents brutalized with impunity because the phones don't work and the police can't be summoned. The police are already engaged elsewhere, anyway. After a few more days, many police officers abandon their jobs, feeling the need to care for their own families (a la, Katrina). Those who remain on the job are engaged elsewhere, so there is no help coming. The police, fire department, Red Cross and other relief services are overwhelmed. Anarchy has become rampant. The federal government responds by deploying regular soldiers to augment National Guard units. In the ensuing chaos, law-abiding citizens are abused and their rights trampled in a panic-filled



effort to restore order (a la, the aftermath of hurricane Katrina, but on a national scale). Businesses have closed. No one is going to work, money becomes useless. Government services start collapsing. The country becomes like a feudal state. Recovery will take years.

Intentional Community *Enterprise* (ICE)

An intentional community *enterprise* (ICE) is something more than an intentional community. Similar to an Intentional Community (page 3), it consists of a group of people who have been intentionally selected, but adding the *enterprise* criteria to the selection process. This is the compatibility and mutual desire to be part of a rebuilding solution, in

addition to surviving.

With an *enterprise* community, participants also prepare to take an active part in bringing an end to the emergency situation. These people are prepared to be peacemakers and equipped to serve others, outside of their own community. Their focus is not simply surviving, but restoration and rebuilding.

This preparation includes a multiplicity of community-building activities. This includes reconnecting isolated outposts to other communities, and these communities with others in a region. It includes the restoration of commerce (trade), medical care, and education. It especially includes improvement in community health and revival.

A well designed and established *Intentional Community Enterprise* (ICE) is the only social unit which can sustain itself, and then effectively aid rebuilding efforts after a protracted disaster.

Such a community must have the food, water and other resources necessary for an extended period of isolation, certainly. It must be prepared and ready to defend itself against those who would take these things away, of course. But more than this, its members must possess the diverse skills and specialty knowledge, with associated resources, to be equipped for the tasks of rebuilding the region.

ICE is not only a sustainable and defensible community which can operate independently for a protracted period of time; it is also the leaven for restoration and revival.

Since a confluence emergency will bring widespread adversity, participants in an Intentional Community *Enterprise* (ICE) must also be selected based on their rock-solid physiological stability, emotional preparedness, upbeat attitude, and be ideologically compatible. These individuals must be team and *enterprise*-task oriented, community minded, and industrious. These factors, combined with the requisite skills and experience of the more straightforward Intentional Community (IC), suggest that ICE participants be recruited with great discernment and care.

Since spouses and other family member will also be included in the mix, similar standards must be considered in regard to them, as well. This is a community, not just a group of experts.

As with an Intentional Community (IC), If spouses do not qualify as an expert in one of the needed roles, they must be anxious to learn, teachable, and have a desire to serve. Attitude is important.

There is a natural tendency to base selection for ICE based on friendships and existing relationships, such as those which exist through a church, sports team, neighborhood, business enterprise, or club. However, an uncritical selection method will become a serious detriment once disaster strikes and the community becomes operational. Capricious recruitment should be avoided, or at

least tempered, and this is especially important for an Intentional Community *Enterprise*.

The use of the term “enterprise” with this form of intentional community comes from its second community goal.

While the goal of a straightforward Intentional Community is security and sustainability, adding “enterprise” portends something more. The goal of the *enterprise* includes disaster amelioration and social reformation.

As the effects of a disaster diminish and peace is restored, the ICE co-op emerges to facilitate order, commerce and the restoration of society. This includes the restoration of Constitutional government; by the people and for the people. And, it includes the reformation of society, not just social structures.

Since government does not institute moral law, the ICE community needs to also be an advocate for truth, justice, forgiveness, and healing; and to publically extol virtue and pursue spiritual awakening.

To reestablish law and order will not be enough. As the Bible says, love will have grown cold.

Once survival is more assured, anger and the desire for retribution will abound. Therefore, ICE must boldly affirm the need for moral law and extol virtue as a part of community spirit. Experience suggests that the failure to act aggressively with these activities will produce the perception that those in authority do not care if the population is virtuous or vicious.

In our current society, self-centeredness and me-first attitudes and conduct is epidemic. Absent intentionality, a post-disaster society will become divided by two extremes; those who unabashedly seek their own welfare, and those who have become more compassionate. This will produce a rift and divide society unless intentionality is

applied to justice and the moral laws of Providence.

A healthy society can only be built in unity and based on virtue. Therefore, ICE must use all means available to bring visibility to those who are virtuous and have performed admirably during the disastrous times. This must be shrewdly followed by fervent endorsement of these individuals, and advocacy for them to be elevated to positions of community trust and leadership. Traditional politicians will be an anathema.

In addition to skill in consensus building, emerging leaders must exemplify virtue. Further, to win acceptance by their constituents, organizational efforts cannot be capriciously formulated by authoritarian means, but through external timeless truths which come from our Creator.

What about community governance?

Our Founders sought divine intervention and believed that the Creator, who provides unalienable Rights, also helped them pen our founding documents (Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights). This was important. Liberty and personal responsibility were at the core, and governance was designed to serve its constituents not subdue them. Since this was an external truth, it provided a solid foundation on which to base governance. These same tenets can be applied to developing a small community, as well, making control of the community only a derivative of serving its members.

Essential to the Founder's efforts was that their constituents also understood that the foundation for governance was based on attributes which were external to any individual. Through this mechanism, leadership caprice was minimized, and was less tainted by personal conceit and self-serving ambition. Constituents were encouraged to look to the Bible for standards of conduct, and these standards were applied to leaders and citizens alike.

These founding principles, and the rule of law they established as a byproduct, were based on the time-tested truths and unifying worldview of their Judeo-Christian heritage. (Plus, our Founders benefited from an unadulterated knowledge of human history, illuminated by their own experiences with oppressive self-serving government).

Whatever mechanism is used, it is essential for an Intentional Community to identify its purpose prior to formation. The objective, along with expectations for conduct and participation, must be communicated to prospective members before they join.

Whatever a person's faith, whether an adherent to Christianity, Judaism, Atheism, or some other religion, the Bible-based foundation used by our nation's Founders, provided equality with sufficient freedom *and* structure to make the formation of the new Republic viable. We need to learn from their example.

Though an ICE community will not have such grand aspirations, it nevertheless must establish these same foundational elements. These will be needed for community growth and health, and these same attributes will be essential for broader restoration efforts.

With rebuilding efforts as well as initial formation of the ICE community, a commitment to justice and fairness must be evident. Applied using common sense, these precepts are the building blocks on which to establish any community.

Nonetheless, without a document which clearly states core beliefs and the expectations of membership, a community will suffer the effects of shifting-sand governance; conflict ridden, unstable, and ultimately unfruitful. Founding documents are therefore essential.

Additionally, the founders of the community must not only provide prospective members with this documentation, but also secure their commitment to adhere to community rules, *and to wholeheartedly endorse them.*

There is no need to re-invent the wheel when it comes to organizing, but it is essential for each participant to affirm their commitment to the basic tenants on which their community is built. Other rules and operational procedures will naturally develop, but if formation lacks foundation and agreement on the founding principles, major conflict is inevitable.

Though harmony must be intentionally nurtured, periodic discord is unavoidable. It should be anticipated, and mechanisms developed to handle it expeditiously. Notwithstanding, proper planning and management can usually thwart the development of major conflict.

Community survival requires unity.

Unity is only accomplished through intentional planning and diligent daily efforts. This starts with a discerning selection of participants.

Strife must be castrated quickly. Each community member must understand that expulsion remains possible. Yet, proactive team-building is far more fruitful than heavy-handed discipline.

An operational foundation must be established on which to build community life, and these factors must not only be understood, but affirmed by all community members.

By mutual agreement, participants need to affirm the need for a militaristic structure during periods of intense threat, but normalcy must be reasserted as soon as possible.

In the Wild West of early America, a sheriff was elected to oversee law, order, and community

defense. Importantly, the sheriff was elected by those who would be called upon to form his posse. The early days of the Texas Rangers operated on a similar basis, with each unit electing their own Captain, annually.

A similar process can be utilized in an Intentional Community. Using an election process to select a “sheriff,” coordinated defense preparations and training can be undertaken, and the expediency of a military unit can be achieved but not abused.

Other roles within the community will usually be less stressful as the skills of the expert naturally put that individual in a leadership position over their field of endeavor. Notwithstanding, strife and interpersonal conflict can develop if the group feels underserved, so a similar election process can be used to affirm the role of each specialist.

Though the community will expect the “specialist” to champion the work within their sphere, it will be essential that other members, and other specialists, assist as needed. This is especially important during periods of unusually high work load, or other stress-inducing circumstances.

If a specialist feels overwhelmed, and observes other community members who are lax, strife or reduced efficiency will surface. This can be avoided by insuring that all members of the community have a similar workload.

ICE as a bastion of culture, can help bring organization amidst chaos. This is best accomplished by forging attitudes of optimism and rational hope, affirming moral law and re-establishing standards of just behavior, the restoration of trust in a justice system, dissemination of truth; and highlighting examples of forgiveness, and intentional efforts to bring about healing.

With intentionality, an ICE community can work to bring healing to a region. It is the duty of ICE to help heal the wounds that will remain region-

ally after base behaviors and abuses have been corralled.

What is the optimal size for an Intentional Community?

There is no universal answer to this question. If sustainability is the only consideration, and unlimited resources are available, a large yet balanced community can improve sustainability.

However, from a security standpoint, invisibility is equally important if the community is smaller than 80-100 field trained and equipped adults. (8-squads). Just as in real estate investment, the three most important features for a large or small retreat is "location, location, location."

Ideally, opposing forces will see your community as not worth the bother, or better yet ... not see it at all. Remember, invisibility is generally the best defense. Plan for it. Make your community as invisible as possible.

Location, Location, Location.

In regard to both defense and survivability, an Intentional Community located within an urban setting will fall first, followed by suburban. Unless fortified like a military camp, the next to fall will be upscale gated neighborhoods, including those which were designed for security.

If miscreants are aware of the location, enclaves of the rich will always be a prime target; all the more in a disaster scenario. Both the previously good citizen and the criminal will see an affluent community as one with volumes of desirable resources. Even the best security cannot stop hordes of desperate people.

Since opulent homes and estates are often separated by acres of space, any defensive forces will be spread thin in these neighborhoods, making them easy to attack and plunder. This weakness,

and possible breach points in the perimeter, must be compensated for in a preparedness plan for this type of neighborhood.

Since most wealthy communities consist of people who are used to being served rather than serving, the residents of these neighborhoods are even more vulnerable. Financial ability and acquiring physical resources are only part of the picture for sustainability.

Ideally, structures, community members, and animals should not be visible from the road. This is important.

Invisibility reduces the number of hostile encounters and makes them less frequent.

Vulnerability on par with the gated affluent community is the rural farm or ranch. City dwellers will rightly perceive that farms and ranches are a natural choice for sustainability, and that they provide a safe haven where they can escape the chaos of the city.

Livestock and cultivated fields with food growing, ready for the picking, is a tempting target. Even if gasoline is in short supply, many gangs will find a way to reach a rural area so that they can "claim" their new turf. They will look for a homestead that is inadequately defended and ripe for appropriation.

Conversely, if a rural farm or ranch location has suitable terrain, water and other desirable features; and is well situated, away from main roads and highways which city dwellers will use to flee the city; it might provide the infrastructure needed to quickly develop an Intentional Community.

This can be a win-win for the landowner and for the members of an Intentional Community. The landowner gets the benefits of a support com-

munity for sustainability and defense, and the Intentional Community gets a location where it can flourish.

On a practical level, even if a farm or ranch has a loyal and well armed staff, the regular resident population will generally be insufficient for defense and sustainability, no matter how independent they think they are.

ICE is a mechanism for developing personal responsibility and citizen-based rebuilding efforts. It provides a way to initiate cultural revitalization, and to unleash the indwelling Spirit of Providence which can heal and then resuscitate private and community life.

Though a large farm or ranch may have sufficient family and staff members to thwart the efforts of simple ton marauding attackers, it will likely not possess the right mix of skills and resources for long-term sustainability. But a motivated landowner can use these as the nucleus to form his own Intentional Community.

In any case, a farm or ranch can be used as an affordable base of operations to quickly develop an Intentional Community. A partnership between the landowner and the members of an Intentional Community will both be well served by developing a cooperative effort.

If buildings are visible from the road, efforts must be made to make them look ramshackle and unpromising to marauders. Since the community probably won't have the time and resources to turn the location into an impenetrable fortress, its best to make the location look like it's not worth the effort to plunder. At the very least, the location needs to look far less desirable than surrounding properties.

Land features which aid defense, and which make attack more difficult such as cliffs and uphill

approaches, are generally best. Add to this the ability to observe the progress of vehicles and those who are walking, arable land for cultivation, adequate sun and rainfall, and a reliable and uninterrupted source of water, and you have found a location worthy of serious consideration.

Compromise will generally be necessary when selecting a location, as well in selecting community members. Compromise, adaptability, and creativity are required for those who plan to establish an Intentional Community.

Is compassion compatible with sustainability?

Most of us desire to be compassionate and helpful to those who are hurting, especially during a disastrous situation. But when does helping others stop being commendable and start being foolish?

If you are operating alone, and don't have any responsibility to family or friends, you can be altruistic in sharing your resources with strangers. However, if you are with family or are involved in community, you should not engage in this form of sacrificial living.

Your responsibility is first to your family. So, you need to be circumspect when it comes to helping others, particularly if that aid puts your family or Intentional Community at risk. Yet, helping others is ingrained in our higher nature, and it is appropriate for us to help others who are in need.

How do we handle this? How can we be compassionate toward others, and still uphold our responsibility to care for the needs of our own family, our friends, and our community?

The first step is to consider these decisions before we encounter them.

If you have a 1-year supply of food, and you are facing a disaster that will likely last 2-3 weeks, we

can be magnanimous and give food to those in need. But even then, do we give to anyone who asks? What about those who don't ask or are invisible to us in our current situation? What about those who have a greater need than those who are asking?

One of the first realities to embrace when we face a protracted emergency situation, is the realization that even if we give everything away, we won't put a dent in solving the problem. Therefore, our philanthropy needs to generally be strategic or guided by a higher power. The most obvious needs may not be the ones that deserve our intervention.

These decisions are extremely difficult, so they need to be considered in advance, when emotions are not controlling the response.

Further, is it reasonable to help a stranger survive, and in the process put your own family at risk? Is this an act of kindness, or wrong-headed?

In Europe, during the plague known as the Black Death, it was Christians who cared for those who were infected. In the process, many of them died, or exposed their own family members to the infection, and this resulted in death.

Was this the right thing to do? Without a doubt, their selfless acts alleviated much suffering, and their proactive actions helped bring an end to the plague. But was it prudent? Was it the right thing to do?

You will need to make determinations such as this now, before you face these difficult decisions. But regardless of how you answer such questions, your responsibility is to understand the risk, so that you are making an informed choice. Blindly responding to emotion is not heroic, it is foolish.

If your decision will put you, or others at risk, that decision needs to be made in the full knowledge

of the ramifications of your actions. If you are living in community, you do not have the right to make this decision. If your choice will affect the lives of others, they have the right to participate in the decision making process. It must be a group decision; ideally unanimous.

If you are committed to helping others, that is commendable. However, even if your desire is to aid anyone who is in need, your decisions should still be made either prayerfully or pragmatically.

A decision to help someone might provide a salve to your conscience, but it may not be truly helpful. And, it may not be the right thing to do, either. Additionally, your decision to sacrifice may be helping the wrong person or group. The reality is that you can't save everyone, so you need to deliberately decide who you will help.

Since these decisions are extremely difficult, they need to be considered in advance, when emotions are not controlling the response. How will you make these decisions? Will you be controlled by emotion, or something else?

For those who are forming an Intentional Community, this decision-making process must be determined in advance. And, each member must fully buy-in to the process, and be in full agreement as to how these issues will be resolved.

Other parallel decisions include situations such as how to handle uninvited family and friends who "show up" at your retreat location? Will you turn them away? How will this situation be handled? Decisions such as this are additionally difficult if the uninvited guests arrive without adequate supplies.

Or, what if the uninvited guests are physically unfit, or possibly infected with a contagious disease? What if they aren't compatible with the other members of your community? What if the addition will adversely affect group loyalty, challenge existing leadership or stymie operations,

develop into a family clique, or create disunity in the community? What if they are lazy?

Living in survival-mode is always stressful. Adding people who don't contribute, or who sow seeds of strife or frustrate progress, is not just an annoyance – it can be a life threatening.

In any case, even if the location of your retreat remains private, these situations need to be anticipated. The community must determine, in advance, how these situations will be handled. This decision-making process must be codified in your documents of governance.

Jesus is universally respected as the epitome of loving kindness, yet He made it clear that sharing can sometimes be foolish not compassionate. This is particularly true when needy people had the opportunity to prepare, but didn't.

Jesus parable of the *10-Bridesmaids* (Matthew 25:1-12) is a good example of this difference. Though Jesus' parable was given to illustrate a different point, it nevertheless reminds us that sharing isn't always the right answer. During an emergency, we will face hard decisions—such as the decision to *not* help someone.

Yet another typical problem is whether or not to accept someone into your group who seems to have great credentials, but is unknown to the group. Will this person be a true asset to the community, or will that individual (or family) put the group at risk? When we contemplate accepting unknown people into our midst, we may be creating a serious problem. Not a solution.

Are we inviting in someone who will ostensibly be an asset to the community because they have needed supplies or skills, or are they a Trojan Horse? We need to avoid unnecessary risks. We need to determine how we will make these decisions.

The historical incident known as the “Guile of the Gibeonites” (Joshua 9:3-16), is an example of a seemingly small decision which later became a major problem. If something seems too good to be true, it just might be. We need to be deliberate and follow the decision-making plan.

Rather than accept needy people into the neighborhood group or Intentional Community, some groups have resolved to provide a 3-day *care package* to those who arrive—with the stipulation that they continue down the road. This is an example of proactive planning to address a problem in advance. Further, such plans also include stockpiling additional provisions for this purpose. When exhausted, they plan to stop giving. Does this sound harsh?

Beyond giving to those who are in need, for those who are not starving or disabled, there is yet another consideration. We need to remember that some situations are better handled through a trade of goods or services, rather than by an outright gift. Bartering for goods and services but without taking undue advantage of the needy person, will allow a community to be compassionate for a longer period of time.

Hopefully, every community will endeavor to be generous and helpful to those in need. But regrettably, most communities will miss their best opportunity. They fail to incorporate needy people *into* their community from the onset.

The selection process for members of an Intentional Community is usually based on the skills and resources that the individual (or couple, or family) will bring to the community. This is appropriate and wholly reasonable.

However, Intentional Communities who want to be compassionate, should consider compassion when they select community members. For example, adding a few people who can't afford to purchase provisions, but who are willing to work.

(This work should commence in advance, with everyone helping to get the retreat ready).

Others who might be included are those who are perilously disadvantaged; those who are truly alone, those who are elderly, those who are handicapped or infirm, single parents with a throng of young children, handicapped individuals, foreign students who have no nearby relatives, or anyone who does not have the capacity to properly prepare. These people are still worthy for inclusion, but the group (or an individual within the group) must stockpile provisions for them as an equal member.

Most communities cannot afford to have many members who fall into this category, but those communities who desire to be compassionate, are probably best served by concentrating on these needy people. Helping those you know is generally better than trying to help those you don't know.

There should always be room to "let the Spirit lead" in regard to showing hospitality to strangers. However, providing help to a stranger which is motivated solely by an emotional response, should be avoided.

However you handle it, plan to meet real needs, not just the needs of those sorry individuals who failed to prepare.

Conclusion

This article is only an overview, and it does not provide a check list for implementation. Hopefully it is a catalyst, however, and useful to help you understand the need for developing an Intentional Community as a hedge against disaster.

For those who have a heart to not only prepare to survive a period of adversity, but also to thrive in service during a time of disaster, an *Intentional Community Enterprise (ICE)* is essential. Even if it

is never activated, the development process, and the relationships built, will deliver many benefits.

Regrettably, if you want to help bring an end to an emergency situation it *and* develop a healthy community, it probably won't be through involvement with any existing government or NGO program. It will be through a local, citizen-based community effort such as ICE.

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3-Core Aspects

1. **Money** (Finances and Means of Exchange)
2. **Provisions** (GO-Bag; Short- and Long-Term Provisions: Food, Water, Shelter, and Gear)
3. **Sword** (Luke 22:36 - Firearm or means of self-reliant defense)

6-Vital Activities

To be equipped and ready requires far more than just being armed and stockpiling supplies. It also involves contemplating various scenarios in advance—and then planning and preparing for them. Those who commit to being equipped and ready live by ...

The 6-P Code

I will diligently:

- ▶ **P**lan for emergencies, be savvy to circumstances, and vigilant in my surroundings.

I will acquire...

- ▶ **P**ractical training to help me face plausible real-world challenges, including spiritual conflict, social and financial upheaval, hazardous events and disasters.

I will...

- ▶ **P**repare my body, mind, spirit, and family for healthy living today, and for future times of adversity.

I will assemble...

- ▶ **P**rovisions and cache gear, water and food; essential supplies for today and the days ahead; GO-Bags, firearms and ammunition; cash and means of trade.

I will undertake...

- ▶ **P**ainstaking logistics, and be systematic in my maintenance and management of the many different facets of readiness.

Plus, I commit to engage in regular...

- ▶ **P**practice; both personal and family / group exercises.

The 6-P Code is designed to help you live a lifestyle of readiness. When you fully embrace the 6-P Code you become prepared to face real-world disasters, emergency situations, and other social and economic challenges.

Moreover, if you truly care about helping others, you need to be personally prepared, first.

So, are you READY?

About the Author:

SIG SWANSTROM is a former police officer and police SWAT team operator who worked in the Los Angeles area. During his years of service he had many deadly-force encounters with armed criminals, he has operated in post-disaster urban environments, and he lived in Guatemala during that country's bloody civil war. As a result, his writing and teaching is real-world practical. And today, as the owner of a highly acclaimed firearms training academy (www.TXRFA.org), SIG has also learned how to capture the interest of his audiences and teach them practical real-world skills.

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