

## Rise of the Red Cross

On this day in 1881, Clara Barton organized the American Association of the Red Cross in Washington, D.C. During the Civil War, Barton had distributed supplies to injured soldiers. After the war, she headed the agency that tracked down information on almost 22,000 soldiers. Barton modeled the American humanitarian organization after the International Red Cross but added disaster relief to battlefield service. Barton served as president until 1904.

Volunteers lead the Red Cross and work to help people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. The American Red Cross offers health and safety training to the public and provides emergency services to U.S. military families. In the event of a disaster, such as an earthquake, tornado, flood, fire or hurricane, it provides relief services to communities across the country.

Disasters have occurred since Adam's and Eve's sin warped the perfect world God created. God sent the flood during Noah's time and often threatened to send disasters as judgment for sin. He identifies Himself as the One Who sends both good times and bad times (Isaiah 45:7). Disasters can also result because this world is under the power and control of Satan (I John 5:19), even though God ultimately determines the extent of that power.

The best way to prepare for disaster is to remember that God is always in control, and to use the good times to grow a strong faith and vibrant prayer life. Then when the bad times come, we can continue to trust Him to keep us safe and provide for our needs. If we are believers, we have already avoided the ultimate disaster that no one can provide relief from – dying without having accepted the gift of forgiveness for our sin.

--Beecher Hunter