

Disaster Management in Libraries and Information Centers: Biblical Insights

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze and discuss some skills and principles of disaster management in libraries and information centers as compared with the biblical disaster management plan insight. The study also looked critically at the application of biblical disaster management plans and principles to contemporary disaster management in libraries. The paper also provides an overview of disaster management in libraries and biblical insight. It identified types and causes of disaster in libraries as well as disaster management in libraries. The study argued that disaster management plans are essential for the library for the survival of an accident when it struck. The study concluded that the best disaster management strategy in libraries is the disaster recovery plan.

Keywords: Disaster, Disaster management, Biblical Insight, Libraries, Information Centers

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Bible book, which is an inspired word of God contains all strategic management skills and lessons of daily living right from the beginning of creation. From the start of human existence, the Bible recorded all activities of humanity. The Bible also goes further to give instructions and guidance on how to prevent lousy living and its consequences on human activities. The planet earth, where man lives, has experienced all types of events and occurrences, including disasters of different kinds over time. There is no form of disasters that are happening in this modern world that has not occurred in the Bible. The Bible has also predicted there will be disasters in the world. Disaster, when it occurs, can affect anything, including buildings such as schools, hospitals, shopping malls, factories, hotels, worship centers, and libraries. Disaster, in most cases, is unpredictable and the extent of damage equally unpredictable. A disaster is an event that no person, organization, institution, and country would wish for because of its devastating effects. Therefore, the biblical insight for the causes of disaster and disaster management approaches in the library is not a new phenomenon but to enhance and encourage the application of biblical disaster management principles and skills to library disaster management to conserve and preserve library materials for posterity.

The Bible is a record of the inspired words of God. Bible.org (2020) defined the Bible as God's communication to man of the truth he must know to be appropriately related to God. Biblical inspiration deals with the preservation of revelation so that what has been received from God was accurately transmitted to others beyond the original recipient. The Bible has always occupied the central place in the Christian faith, from the time of the writing of the first books of the Old Testament in the days of Moses until modern times the Holy Scriptures have been regarded by all Christian theologians as the unique and incomparable Word of God. All human activities on earth was originated from the inspiration of the word of God, including disaster management in libraries (2 Timothy 3:16).

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to analyze and discuss some skills and principles of disaster management in libraries information centers as compared with the biblical disaster management plan insight. The paper also looked critically at the application of biblical disaster management plans and principles to contemporary disaster management in libraries. This study further discovers the similarities between disaster management in libraries and biblical insight.

Concept of Disaster in Library

Eden and Mathew (1996) defined disaster in libraries as any incident which threatens to damage a library building, collections, contents, facilities, or services. Disaster could be natural or human-made. Love, Arnesen and Phillips (2013) define a disaster as an occurrence such as a hurricane, tornado, storm, flood, high water, earthquake, drought, blizzard, pestilence, famine, fire, explosion, building collapse, transportation wreck,

terrorist event, bioterrorist event, pandemic, power failure or other similar natural or human-made incidents. Common examples of natural disasters that can affect libraries include earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, tornadoes, hurricanes, tropical storms, and wildfires. On the other hand, typical examples of human-made disasters that can affect libraries include water-leakages, deliberate or accidental fires, floods from poor drainages, burst pipes, burst dams, acts of terrorism, and wars. There are records of significant disasters that have destroyed different libraries all over the world. For instance, in 48 BC, there was a fire disaster at the Great Library of Alexandria, Egypt destroying the cultural heritage of that period (Murray, 2009).

Furthermore, during the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake (tsunami), many Public Libraries at Banda Aceh were washed away by high floodwaters resulting in the loss of almost all the Library facilities and collections (Sakamoto, 2005). Another instance was the war in Croatia between 1991 and 1995, where some libraries suffered many direct and indirect war damages that resulted in fire and floods (Hasenay & Krtalic, 2010). In the same vein, the Morgan Library at Colorado State University also experienced flooding in 1997, resulting in the loss of about half of its collections (Alire, 2008). In Nigeria, Oluwatola, Ogbuiyi, Oriogu and Ogbuiyi (2015) reported a fire disaster at the President Kennedy Library of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria that damages some of the library collections. Also, the recent fire disaster at the University of Jos library where the whole library building was raised down, ultimately destroying the library collections resources and services, was another disaster occurrence in the library in Nigeria.

Causes of Disaster in Libraries and Biblical Insight

The natural causes of disaster in libraries may be compared to biblical events and occurrences. The biblical insights for the causes of disaster in the library are discussed below:

Earthquake: Encyclopedia Britannica (2020) defines earthquakes as any sudden shaking of the ground caused by the passage of seismic waves through earth's rocks. Seismic waves are produced when some form of energy stored in earth's crust is suddenly released, usually when masses of rock straining against one another suddenly fracture and slip. The Bible book of Zechariah 14:4-5 gives an insight into this definition that "And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, making a vast valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south". The Bible book of Zechariah quoted above gives the perfect insight into what exactly earthquake is and the negative result of its occurrences. In any event of an earthquake situation, where a library is situated, a split of the ground is expected, which will cause great damage to the library building, collections, facilities, and services.

Earthquake is expected to make a vast valley that can swallow a library building. Earthquake is also expected to separate ground and cause shaking of the earth's crust, which can make it difficult for any library building erected in such location to survive. In Isaiah 29:6, the Lord God punished the people with thunder and earthquake. This means that the result of an earthquake is a punishment that is not palatable for any library existence. The Bible book of Luke 21:11 also stated that "And there will be great earthquakes in various places". This also means that if an earthquake takes place where a library building is erected, such a library stands the chance of losing the library building, collections, resources, and services.

Floods and Tsunami: Flood is another natural cause of disaster in the library. According to Wikipedia (2020), a flood is an overflow of water that usually submerges dry land. The word may also be applied to the inflow of the tide. Floods are an area of study of discipline hydrology and are of significant concern in agriculture, civil engineering, and public health. National Ocean Service (2020) defined tsunamis as giant waves caused by earthquakes or volcanic eruptions under the sea. The Bible book of Genesis 6:17 best explains the destructive power of flood by saying, "And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all life under the heaven in which there is the breath and spirit of life; everything that is on the land shall die". This is a great insight of the Bible to the destructive power and extent of damage flood can do to the library building, collections, resources, and services.

Flood and tsunami are expected to destroy everything upon the earth, both living and non-living. Also, everything living under the earth is expected to die with the effect of a great flood. In Isaiah 28:2, The Bible book described the anger of the Lord God using flood by saying, "Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand". It implies that nothing good can come out of a flood and tsunami. It also means that if any library is attacked by flood and tsunami, the consequence will be the destruction of the library building, collections, resources, and services.

Tornadoes and Hurricanes: Tornadoes are another natural disaster that can destroy library building, collections, resources, and services. Cambridge Dictionary (2019) defined a tornado as a strong, dangerous wind

that forms itself into an upside-down spinning cone and can destroy buildings as it moves across the ground. A tornado is a rapidly rotating column of air that is in contact with both the surface of the earth and a cumulonimbus cloud or, in rare cases, the base of a cumulus cloud. The windstorm is often referred to as a twister, whirlwind or cyclone (Wikipedia, 2020). Wikipedia (2020) described hurricanes as a rapidly rotating storm system characterized by a low-pressure center, a closed low-level atmospheric circulation, strong winds, and a spiral arrangement of thunderstorms that produce heavy rain or storms. National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration (2020) defined hurricanes as rotating systems of clouds and thunderstorms that form over tropical or subtropical waters.

The Bible says in the book of Jeremiah 23:19 that "Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD has gone forth in a fury a violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked". The above Bible quotation in Jeremiah is perfect for the description of what exactly tornadoes mean. It shows that tornadoes have been in existence from creation, destroying life and properties. It means that any event of tornadoes is always violent and destructive. The book of Psalm 77:18 says, "The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightning lit up the world; The earth trembled and shook". The above quotation perfectly described the destructive power and result of tornadoes. This implies that whenever the earth trembled and shook, the destruction of the library building, collection, resources, and services is inevitable.

Wildfires: A wildfire is an uncontrolled fire in an area of combustible vegetation occurring in an area. Many organizations, including libraries, considered wildfire as an unplanned and unwanted fire. In libraries, a wildfire could originate from either external or internal sources. External sources include the risk of bush fire and lightning strikes. Internal risk of fire is ever-present with our widespread reliance on the use of electrical appliances, such as desk lamps, heaters, computers, power boards, and other equipment within the collection building. Other possible sources of fire in libraries could include chemical spills (Isa, Aliyu, Adedjeji & Rachel, 2012). In the Bible book of Joel 2:3-21, Joel exactly explained what a wildfire is. Joel 2:3 says, "Wildfire burn everything before this army and fire licks up everything in its wake. Before it arrives, the country is like the Garden of Eden. When it leaves, it is Death Valley. Nothing escapes unscathed".

The biblical insight of wildfire is a destructive phenomenon. It is true because whenever there is a fire incident in libraries, it is usually challenging to rescue such a library building and its resources unscathed. Wildfire disaster in libraries can be compared with the biblical wildfire incident at Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 19:24 says, "Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah from the LORD out of the heavens". It means that whenever there is a fire incident in libraries, it is usually the rain of burning sulfur, which is usually very difficult to extinguish. It can be emphasized here that wildfire disasters should be prevented in order to protect library buildings, collection, resources, and services for posterity.

Disaster Management in the Libraries and Biblical Insight

Disasters have adversely affected human activities since the dawn of our existence. In response, individuals and societies alike have made many attempts to decrease their exposure to the consequences of these disasters. Disaster management and planning is indispensable for the efficient functioning of libraries. It is because the library and information centers are vulnerable to a wide range of disasters. According to the book of 1 Corinthians 14:40, "But all things should be done decently and in order". It means that disaster management should be treated as a key area of library management. The comprehensive approach to disaster management in libraries comprises four phases, which are Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR) to ensure a balance between the reduction of risk and the enhancement of community resilience, while ensuring effective response and recovery capabilities (Queensland Disaster Management Committee, 2018).

God gives the gift and wisdom of management to humanity in order to effectively and efficiently manage whatever situation they find themselves in. The Bible book of Habakkuk 2:2 best described what effective management skill should be by saying, "Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it." Our God is good all the time, and He knows the end from the beginning, that is why He equipped humanity with management strategies. It is corroborated in the Bible book of Proverbs 11:14, which says, "Where there is no counsel, the people fall, But in the multitude of counselors there is safety". However, the four phases of disaster management in libraries, which are Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery (PPRR), are discussed below with biblical insight.

Just like the Bible book of Habakkuk 2:2 stated, disaster control plan should be a blueprint for action, and preparedness should involve familiarization with all its aspects. The staff should be trained, and they must be aware of the contents of the disaster plan and know their roles individually and in a team. There should be appropriately maintained stores of equipment and material to deal with any unexpected ominous occurrence. The response stage involves that staff should know how to raise the alarm, whom to call in, how to identify material for appropriate treatment, and how to protect undamaged material. The recovery phase should include activities such as arranging insurance assessment, treating materials, offering counseling to staff, providing a temporary service, and restoring storage areas and services to normal functioning.

Disaster Prevention: The Bible account of 2 Samuel 18:1-17 summarized the biblical insight for disaster prevention in libraries. Disaster prevention is an approach that is as necessary from an ethical perspective as it can be profitable on the economic front. The first step to take to prevent disaster is to first accept Jesus Christ as our God and Savior. John 3:16 says, “for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life”. Just like curses are real and applicable to all who are out of the will of God, so also are disaster real for libraries. However, curses can only be avoided by keeping God's commandments; also, disaster can be prevented in the libraries by engaging in all the necessary disaster prevention plans and approaches. The book of Proverbs 24:5-15 also gives an insight into what perfect disaster prevention plan should be. For instance, Proverb 24:5 says, “Being wise is better than being strong; yes, knowledge is more important than strength”. The above Bible verse revealed the potency of planning. The Bible stresses further the importance of disaster prevention plans in Proverb 24:6 by saying, “After all, you must make careful plans before you fight a battle, and the more good advice you get, the more likely you are to win”. This means that the more libraries put together effective and efficient disaster prevention plans, the more libraries may win the war against disasters.

Disaster Preparedness: Disaster preparedness refers to measures taken to prepare for and reduce the effects of disasters. That is, to predict and, where possible, prevent disasters, mitigate their impact on vulnerable populations, and respond to and effectively cope with their consequences. Disaster preparedness provides a platform to design effective, realistic, and coordinated planning reduces duplication of efforts. It increases the overall effectiveness of national societies, households, and community disaster preparedness and response efforts. Disaster preparedness activities embedded with risk reduction measures can prevent disaster situations and also result in saving maximum lives and livelihoods during any disaster situation, enabling the affected population to get back to normalcy within a short time period (International Federation of Red Cross, 2019).

It is a known fact that no library can know the day disaster can occur in the library. That is why the importance of disaster preparedness cannot be overemphasized. The Bible also knows the importance of preparedness; that is why God always warns Christians to be prepared at all times. The book of Matthew 24:43 says, "But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into". Also, the book of Revelation 16:15 gave a comprehensive insight into the importance of preparedness by saying, “Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed”. It means that libraries should always prepare for a disaster, just like all Christian are always warned to be prepared for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Disaster Response: Disaster response is the third phase of the disaster management cycle. It consists of search and rescue, providing immediate assistance, assessing damage, continuing assistance, and the immediate restoration or construction of infrastructure of disaster-affected facilities. The response aims to provide immediate assistance to maintain life, improve health, and support the morale of the affected population. The library should always respond to disaster occurrences to elevate the impact of the disaster. The Bible teaches Christians to always respond to the people when they are passing through unpleasant situations. The account in the book of Matthew 14:13-21, where Jesus responded to the need of the people by feeding 5000 people with two fishes and five loaves of bread, is a perfect example of responding to the need of people. In the book of Psalm 57:1-2, David cried for help when he was passing through disaster “Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed. I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills his purposes for me”. In this account, David cried to God because he knew that he could not help himself at that particular time when he was in a disastrous situation. It means that libraries should learn from this account and always respond to search and rescue, provide immediate assistance, assess the damage, and continue to assist the people that are involved in disaster occurrences.

Disaster Recovery: Disaster recovery involves a set of policies, tools, and procedures to ensure restoration following a natural or human-induced disaster. Disaster recovery can, therefore, be considered as a subset of business continuity. The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and Lazarus can be an insight into disaster recovery. In the book of Matthew 28:5-6, the Bible says, “The angel said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.” The above statement implies that Jesus Christ was destroyed through Crucifixion, and He was restored on the third day. In the same light, when libraries are attacked with any form of disaster, it is expected by the library management to restore the library into its original building, collection, resources, and services. Libraries should be recovered and restored after an encountered disaster, just like Jesus Christ recovered and restored Lazarus after he encountered disaster through sickness and death in the account Bible book of John 11:1-44. In this account of the Bible, it was discovered that Lazarus was attacked by the destructive impact of sickness, and he died and was buried after death for three days. The Bible went further to explain that Lazarus was already stinking in John 1: 39, “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said

Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” As the Bible makes provision for recovery and restoration, libraries should always plan for disaster recovery and restoration. The book of Joel 2:25 is another powerful promise of God for recovery and restoration “And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you”. Libraries should emulate biblical insight to recovery and make effective and efficient recovery plans and policies to restore libraries after a disaster.

II. Conclusion

In conclusion, disasters in the libraries and information centers are inevitable but mostly unpredictable, and they vary in type and magnitude. The best strategy is to have some kind of disaster recovery plan in place, to return to normal after the disaster has struck. For an enterprise, a disaster means abrupt disruption of all or part of its business operations, which may directly result in revenue loss. It is imperative to have a good disaster recovery plan for every business subsystem and operation within an enterprise, including library operations. The biblical insight of disaster management in libraries, as discussed in this study, is evident in the fact that God in the past had managed disaster and still managing disaster till the present time through his inspired word to humanity on every situation of life. God knew that humanity would pass through all kinds of disasters in life; that is why he provides recovery plans for humanity. The Bible book of Psalm 46 can be described as a Psalm of comfort.

The Bible says in Psalm 46, “*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah. Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. ‘Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.’ The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah*”. The biblical insight for disaster management is the hope God provided for humanity in the face of trouble. Therefore, the library should key to this provision and commit to effective and efficient disaster management in libraries.

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