**Leading Through Crisis**

Crises can be creeping, slow-burn or sudden and the key to leading through them (whether personal, community, national or global) is to understand that the challenges we face are within the sovereign plan of God and pose both threats to be mitigated but also opportunities to grasp. Crisis management can be divided into four phases – pre-crisis (warning and risk assessment), crisis (acute phase), clean up (emerging) and rebuilding (future direction). Leading through crises involves seven main elements: Self-Control (managing one’s own personal walk with God), Assessment (gathering information, anticipating impact and knowing which elements are within and without one’s control), Planning (gathering resources, reorganising the team and setting short and long term goals), Communication (of assessment, impact, needs and plans), Adaptability (adjusting strategy within organisational vision, mission and goals), Relationship management (empathy, support, encouragement, delegation and direction) and Creativity (grasping new ministry opportunities and reassessing one’s current focus). We will underpin this with biblical principles and case studies.

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*Crisis – a time of intense difficulty or danger requiring strong leadership where important decisions need to be made and actions taken*

1. **Types of Crises**
	1. Cause
		1. Internal – within the organisation
		2. External – from outside the organisation
	2. Threat
		1. Geopolitical event – pandemic, military coup, terrorist act, natural disaster, accident, technological disaster, financial meltdown
		2. Health-related – sudden death, major illness, mental breakdown
		3. Infrastructural damage – to equipment, systems
		4. Financial – serious fall in income or increase in expenditure
		5. Behavioural – sexual immorality, financial impropriety, relational breakdown
		6. Legal – litigation
		7. Reputational – attack by media, hostile agent
		8. Spiritual – false teaching, moral compromise
	3. Pattern – both onset and evolution
		1. Creeping – foreshadowed by series of events not recognised as pattern
		2. Slow Burn – some advance warning before actual damage caused
		3. Sudden – damage has already occurred and will get worse without intervention
		4. Is this a blizzard, winter or mini ice age? (Andy Crouch)
	4. Scope
		1. Personal – affecting primarily one key individual
		2. Community – affected primarily one connected social group
		3. National – affecting a whole country
		4. Global – affecting most of the world
2. **The Nature of Crisis**
	1. The Sovereignty of God
		1. God is absolutely in control of every element (Isaiah 45:5-7)
		2. God orchestrates crisis as part of his plan (Amos 3:6; Romans 8:28)
		3. He will work through it to fulfil his plans (Genesis 50:20)
	2. Threat plus opportunity
		1. Every crisis creates new opportunities
	3. Threats to mitigate
		1. Elements that need to be controlled to prevent further damage
		2. New threats that may arise
	4. Opportunities to grasp
		1. How can we do things in a different way?
		2. What do we need to stop doing?
		3. What do we need to start doing?
		4. What is God teaching us through this experience?
3. **Crisis Management – Four phases**
	1. Pre-crisis (warning and risk assessment)
		1. Have God/others been warning us of vulnerabilities?
		2. Risk register (risk, likelihood, impact, mitigation)
	2. Crisis (Acute Phase)
		1. Focus on the crisis and the threats it poses
		2. Consult with key stakeholders
		3. Be decisive in making key decisions
		4. Communicate decisions and actions clearly to all stakeholders
	3. Clean Up (Emerging phase)
		1. Repairing damage to structures, systems, staff, relationships
		2. Recognising new opportunities
	4. Rebuilding (Future Direction
		1. How must organisation change to embrace the future?
4. **Leading through Crisis – Seven elements**
	1. Self-Control – managing oneself – ‘crisis reveals character’
		1. Reminding oneself that
			1. God is absolutely sovereign
			2. Nothing can separate us from his love (Romans 8:38,39; John 10:27-29; Hebrews 13:5b)
			3. He is working for good in all circumstances (Romans 8:28)
		2. Managing one’s own personal walk with God
			1. Taking oneself in hand (Psalm 46; 2 Timothy 4:5)
			2. Personal devotional life – Bible and prayer (Luke 5:15,16)
			3. Balance of family/work/leisure
			4. Accountable relationships
	2. Assessment
		1. Gathering information
			1. What do I need to know and how can I access it? (Once you know all the facts the answer will jump out at you!)
			2. Who do I need to advise me and consult with?
		2. Anticipating impact
			1. On the organisation
			2. On staff and stakeholders
			3. On the community/nation
		3. Knowing which elements are within and without one’s control
			1. Identifying what you have control over
			2. Identifying what you can influence through others
			3. Stabilising the moving parts
			4. Trusting God and continuing to obey
			5. The alcoholic’s prayer
	3. Planning
		1. Gathering resources
			1. Information
			2. People
			3. Equipment
			4. Finances
		2. Reorganising the team
			1. What is it that I must do as the leader?
			2. What news tasks do I need to take on?
			3. What that I currently do can be delegated to others?
			4. What do I need to stop doing?
			5. What can safely be put on hold?
			6. What new roles are needed?
			7. What roles can be stopped/held?
			8. How can roles be reassigned?
		3. Setting short- and long-term goals
			1. What needs to be done immediately?
			2. What can be scheduled?
			3. What time frame of planning is appropriate?
	4. Communication (of)
		1. Assessment
		2. Impact
		3. Needs
		4. Plans

*‘Who do I consult, who do I inform?’*

*‘What is my message and what is best medium?’*

* 1. Adaptability
		1. Adjusting strategy within organisational vision, mission and goals
		2. How can we fulfil our vision and mission in a different way?
	2. Relationship management – board, staff, volunteers and stakeholders
		1. Empathy – displaying understanding of others’ pressures
		2. Support – strengthening people’s capacity to cope
		3. Encouragement
		4. Delegation
		5. Direction
	3. Creativity
		1. Grasping new ministry opportunities
		2. Reassessing one’s current focus
1. Case Studies
	1. Biblical
		1. Nehemiah’s rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah)
		2. David’s discovery of the sacking of Ziklag (1 Samuel 30)
		3. Job’s calamities (Job 1 & 2)
		4. Moses’ management meltdowns (Exodus 18; Numbers 11)
		5. Paul’s journey to Rome (Acts 27)
		6. Joseph’s selling into slavery in Egypt (Genesis 37-50)
		7. The arrest of Jesus (Gospels)
	2. Contemporary
		1. The COVID Pandemic
		2. Sudden death or serious illness affecting a key team member
		3. Scandal involving a prominent leader

*Peter Saunders – CEO of ICMDA*