

June 2015 East Central District News
By Jeff Campbell, Disaster Coordinator

The subject of my article this month is inspired by a real life incident. It's not one of those disasters that you can plan for, or even expect to unfold during the course of your day. It comes on suddenly when you least expect it. I am speaking of the all-too-common, everyday accident. This is no little accident that you can take an aspirin for or put a Band-Aid on and everything is better. I am speaking of the instantaneous accident that can and will alter a life in one way or another. As I mentioned this is an actual event and, yes, it is very personal.

On Memorial Day I thought I would get a jump on the day and begin the woodworking trim on the remodel of our back porch. Everything went fine for about the first hour. Then, as is so often the case of accidents I took my attention off of the wood joiner I was using; a machine with 3 sharp blades rotating at 3000 RPM. My middle finger of my left hand slipped off the piece of wood I was shaving and right into the business end of the joiner. I immediately pulled my hand away but the damage had been done. The tool I love so dearly had shaved the end of my finger right to the first joint. I said that there was no planning for something like this earlier, but I would like to amend my statement. Years of properly handling machines and equipment of all kinds, and knowing that something exactly like this could happen, in itself is a form of planning. Luckily for me, all of my "what-iffing" and safe work practices kicked in instinctively. As I pulled my hand away I immediately shut off the tool and took a quick look at my hand to inspect the damage. Upon seeing the extent of my injury I quickly closed my hand in a fist with my middle finger held as tightly as I could to my palm to stop the bleeding. I called to my wife, Anne, as I put my hand under the kitchen faucet and turned on the water. She came in immediately, took one look, and grabbed a rag for me to help control the blood.

All of the above can be related to the "event" itself; that part of a disaster scenario that comes first. The first phase of a disaster is personally "owned" by you. It is yours and it is unique for every individual. The rest of my story unfolds in parallel with a disaster chronology, that is, rescue, short-term recovery, and long-term recovery. The rescue for me came in the form of expertly-trained EMT and ER hospital staff. They gave comfort and a temporary repair until I could get professional help. The short-term recover is still unfolding. I was admitted into the hospital where I was made comfortable until surgery could be scheduled. Following surgery I would remain as an in-patient until the medical staff was certain that there was no infection and that healing had begun. The final phase of "my" disaster will start once I am released. I will have to determine how I will be able to reach the top row of keys on my computer with my altered middle finger, among other things.

As you can see in my experience above, a disaster response scenario can have no hard, formulated plan. If you are fortunate enough to be one of those persons who like to plan and have several alternate plans, good for you. You are on top of the game and should do quite well. If you have life skills and habits that equip you to handle just about anything that comes your way, kudos to you. If you don't like to make plans, please keep in mind that in a disaster there are people that God will put in your path to help you and that these people will have their hands full dealing with everyone who needs assistance. Please give them a thought as you decide whether or not to make a personal disaster plan.

I would like to dedicate this article to the medical personnel with both the Adventist Healthcare System and Orlando Health Group. Their dedication to their professions and interpersonal skills have made this experience one to be grateful for. I owe my comfort to them throughout this ordeal. And I thank God for putting such extraordinary people in my path this week.