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Meet a Scientologist—Al Adriance, Helping People Pick Up the Pieces

The meaning of the word "devastation" was brought home once again to Al Adriance. Although a disaster relief veteran who provided help after the 2007 Greensburg, Kansas, tornado, Adriance was stunned by the destruction he saw in Joplin, Missouri, in May 2011.

Al Adriance will long remember Memorial Day Weekend 2011, not for the celebrations and parties, but for what he confronted in Joplin, Missouri, after the May 23 tornado.

Learning of the disaster, the Kansas Citian left for Joplin the following morning and spent the next 10 days providing relief.

Adriance coordinated the work of a team of some 40 Scientology Volunteer Ministers who converged in Joplin from the Church of Scientology St. Louis and the Church of Scientology Kansas City, Missouri.

"Search and rescue was a monumental task because of the magnitude of the disaster," says Adriance. "So much of the city was destroyed—roofs torn off, cars overturned, entire city blocks leveled. All that was left of one house we saw was a stairwell and a closet. "

They set up their big yellow Volunteer Ministers tent and began providing Scientology assists—procedures developed by L. Ron Hubbard that address the spiritual and emotional effects of trauma, to help people recover from the stress and injury.

"Everyone was under pressure and physical strain. Search and rescue and cleanup activities are physically exhausting and can be extremely draining emotionally," he says. "We delivered Scientology assists to hundreds of people who came through the tent in a steady stream—residents, other volunteers, administrators, caregivers, police and fire fighters. People felt so much better after their assists that the word of mouth spread fast—we were always busy."

"We also helped recover possessions," he says. "Although some people had lost everything they owned, it was the loss of prized possessions, often little keepsakes they could never replace, that distressed them most. A box of dog-eared, faded letters sent from the front during World War II, a bicycle purchased as a wedding present for a man now serving in Iraq—we had to lift up the walls of a garage that collapsed to get to that bicycle."

To find a lost wedding ring, a family heirloom, volunteers waded knee-deep through a sea of rubble—bits and pieces of rock and cement, tree bark, mangled plants, mud, paper and who knows what—through what used to be the rooms of a woman's home. The Volunteer Ministers didn't give up until the ring was back on her finger.

"People were so appreciative," says Adriance. "It made a huge difference to them to get the help they needed."

Adriance, now 56, first learned about Scientology in 1974 when he was stationed in North Carolina in the Marine Corps. He borrowed a copy of *Dianetics: The Evolution of a Science* from a fellow Marine.

He had no idea what he wanted to do with his life at that time.

"No one would have suspected, but I really lacked self-confidence—you could even have described me as introverted," he says.

Adriance was so excited about what he found in the book that he flew up to the Founding Church of Scientology in Washington, D.C., to enroll on a course.

"I was looking for answers, and found them in Scientology," he says. "I had been filling my free time with skydiving and lots of other excitement, but I put everything else on hold and spent every weekend in D.C., studying at the Church."

"It was worth it," says Adriance. "I absolutely got what I was looking for, and a whole lot more."

To learn more about what Scientologists are doing to create a better world, watch "Meet a Scientologist" videos at www.Scientology.org. To learn more about the Scientology Volunteer Ministers, visit their website at www.volunteerministers.org.

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The popular "Meet a Scientologist" profiles on the Church of Scientology International Video Channel at Scientology.org now total more than 200 broadcast-quality documentary videos featuring Scientologists from diverse locations and walks of life. The personal stories are told by Scientologists who are educators, teenagers, skydivers, a golf instructor, a hip-hop dancer, IT manager, stunt pilot, mothers, fathers, dentists, photographers, actors, musicians, fashion designers, engineers, students, business owners and more.

A digital pioneer and leader in the online religious community, in April 2008 the Church of Scientology became the first major religion to launch its own official YouTube Video Channel, which has now been viewed by millions of visitors.



Scientologist Al Adriance