

[The Pointer Sisters'

"Yes We Can Can" plays]

>> Now's the time for all good men to get together with one another.

We got to iron out our problems and iron out our quarrels and try to live as brothers.

>> And try to find peace within without stepping on one another.

>> And do respect the women of the world.

Remember, you all had mothers.

>> We got to make this land a better land than the world in which we live.

>> And we got to help each man be a better man with the kindness that we give.

>> I know we can make it.

>> I know that we can.

>> Good morning, good morning, Virgin Islands, and welcome to "Ability Radio -- You and Your Life" -- a program brought to you by the Virgin Islands Lottery, Making a Difference.

My name is Iris Bermudez, and my cohost, Amelia LaMont, is off-Island, so I will be working along with my colleagues in St. Thomas, Archie Jennings and Julien Henley.

Please note the opinions expressed on "Ability Radio -- You and Your Life" are those of the Disability Rights Center of the Virgin Islands and those of our guests.

This is a call-in show.

Please feel free to call us at 713-1079.

Wow.

With us today, we have an awesome person -- Pastor Gary Moore, who is the Voluntary Agency Liaison for a recovery program -- long-term recovery program in the Virgin Islands --

not just in St. Croix,
St. Thomas, or St. John --
in the Virgin Islands, and
we are very, very pleased to
have him with us because I
personally have heard some
dynamic things about
Pastor Moore, and we're just so
pleased to have him here with
us, and we're going to ask him
first to tell us a little bit
about himself before the
[Laughing] hurricane.

>> Good morning, good morning.
It's a pleasure to be here.
I'm very excited about
the opportunity to just share
with you, Iris, and your
listening audience and your
cohosts what we're doing here
in the Virgin Islands.
I've been on-Island with my
wife, Alicia.

We're in our 17th year.
We arrived December 30, 2002
to take over the pastorship
of St. Croix Christian Church,
which is located in
Orange Grove.

We use the Caribbean Community
Theatre on Sundays for services,
but our main building is where
the old watch factory used
to be...

>> Yes.

>> ...and St. Croix Insurance,
and we now share that building
with fire service.

So we've been there,
essentially, since the spring
of 2008, operating, and we do
a lot of ministry outreach
in the community.

Through the years, we've served
the homeless community in
partnership with Southgate
through their Lighthouse
Ministry, which is right down
here in Times Square.

We've done prison ministry

through the years.

We've done other partnerships with various churches.

I even did a radio community development program years ago for a year.

We've just done a number of things and sort of put our fingers out there, but of recent import is in October, just after the storms hit both our Islands, the National Red Cross started a community interest group to try to bring together community nonprofits, faith organizations, interested individuals to form an organization known as a VOAD -- Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.

Those organizations ultimately are responsible for assisting the local emergency management agency -- in our case, VITEMA, with doing in-community preparedness work so that -- and even the local Red Cross district, so that in times of storms, they have a ready group of community volunteers who are trained and able to respond by anything from manning shelters to going into neighborhoods and checking on residents to manning phone banks to handing out food distributions and things of that nature.

However, for this particular set of storms, our VOAD, which was, at the time, called V.I. VOAD had been challenged in trying to establish a three Island partnership, which is really what's necessary in the territory, and at the time, the VOAD president was off-Island when the storms hit.
>> Oh.

>> So VITEMA was not able to field that large volunteer operation through what was the V.I. VOAD and their membership, in general, which was basically St. Croix-based. There were partners on St. Thomas and St. John, but it was in no way a real coordinated response in terms of the three Islands working together, though some efforts happened on each Island individually.

So, ultimately, the National Red Cross came in and felt that a new VOAD needed to be constituted.

So, over a series of meetings that happened in October, ultimately enough community organizations came together that the St. Croix VOAD was formed.

I was voted Chair by the other participating organizations. Chris Finch, the former Commissioner of Human Services, was voted Vice Chair.

Jerry Wininger, who is a leader of the Bah·'Ì Community here, and Jerry had actually served in the first VOAD and was part of the Interfaith Council that after you go actually from the first VOAD and help to come together -- because back then, there was no VOAD.

Interfaith Council is what really took charge and helped rebuild the Island and assist the government, and they, at that time, built over 200-and-some homes, and so Jerry is there serving as our Treasurer, and

Rev. Dr. Qiyamah Rahman of the Unitarian Fellowship, who also, by virtue of what was going on in the storm, created

a community action group
out of Frederiksted called
Neighbor to Neighbor, is our
acting Secretary.

Now, those four individuals,
we took up the charge
of organizing our group,
and to date, it has grown,
continued to grow, and now we
have many organizations at
the table, and we are now
at that point that we can begin
really within the next month
to start offering functional
services to the community.

We're somewhat a month behind
the VITEMA -- or really
the FEMA transition from
disaster Resource Centers,
where most people were going to
find assistance.

When that transitioned to our
local government Home Emergency
Repair Process, which started
March 1st, then people started
calling FEMA for assistance,
if they still had assistance,
and they do.

A lot of people still need help.
Those phone calls are now in
this month being transitioned
to us.

So we are still setting up our
structure.

We're in the process of securing
office space.

Our website is now up, which is
stxltrg.org.

Our Facebook page is,
[stxltrg](https://www.facebook.com/stxltrg), and we even have
a Twitter account -- [stxltrg](https://twitter.com/stxltrg).

So people can begin to go to
that to connect with us,
but right now the phone number
hasn't been publicized because
we are waiting to get our office
open so that we can have someone
man the phone line and take
calls for assistance.

So currently people can call me

on my cellphone, which is
340-332-6841.

Please leave a message,
a detailed message, and I will
get back to you, or you can text
your information, and, actually,
I would prefer that because then
that helps me to -- and if
you're going to text information
to me, I need your name,
I need your phone number,
I need your reason for
contacting me so that we can put
you into the direction, connect
you to the right people to
assist you, and as we continue
to organize ourselves, then we
can make sure to put more
directed information out into
the community.

So right now, it's still in
a state of development, but
we're moving forward.

So that's where we are, that's
who I am, and then the latest
role -- So I serve as Chair
of the Long-Term Recovery Group,
which will operate effectively
on St. Croix for five years,
is the projected period
of recovery work that we're
looking at, and I'll talk about
what that work looks like in
a moment, but then I was
approached by VITEMA to help in
coordinating a territorial voice
with FEMA, and what that
essentially means is, in my new
role, which I won't really more
effectively step into until
April as the Territorial
Voluntary Agency Liaison,
is to serve as the spokesman
for all the LTRGs that are
operating on each Island,
and so St. Croix has
a Long-Term Recovery Group.
St. Thomas has a Long-Term
Recovery Group, and St. John
has a Long-Term Recovery Group,

and each of them are in their own state of development and at their own point of work within the community.

All of us are committed to the same thing -- to see our communities completely recover as much as possible from the storm, but because we each had a different stage of genesis in terms of who came alongside to assist us, we don't look the same in regards to the activities we're doing right now.

>> Okay, but technically, basically they'll be providing the same type services?

>> Services, yes.

>> Okay, good.

>> Ultimately.

>> Yes.

>> So, to help people wrap their heads around that a little bit more, VOADs -- I'll just take a step back.

VOADs are organizations, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster -- voluntary organizations much like if you volunteered for the Red Cross. They're organizations that operate in all 50 states in the country, and they're designed to get citizenry involved in preparing for potential disasters that could happen in their communities. For example, if you lived in California, your VOAD would principally be focused on probably three main issues. Earthquakes would probably be number one.

>> Right.

>> Wildfires would be number two.

>> Yes.

[Laughs]

>> And flood issues would be

number three.

>> Okay.

>> And we've seen all those things happen in the last six months, in particular, in California.

Well, we haven't seen the earthquakes, but we've seen everything else happen dramatically.

>> Tremors.

>> Tremors, but everything else dramatically.

So, in our case, particularly on St. Thomas, we need to be concerned about earthquakes.

We're long overdue for a predicted earthquake -- severe predicted earthquake.

So everyone should be conscious of that and know what to do in case of an earthquake.

So that is a state of preparedness that we need to talk about, we need to help each individual family and community be prepared for.

Obviously hurricanes, and with the hurricane season being just two months away at the end of the month -- so June 1st, there's a level of anxiety that everyone is feeling regarding hurricanes.

>> Yes.

>> So that is one that we will focus on -- all the LTRGs. Regardless of the fact that we're focused on recovery, we also have to think about our public message and helping people prepare for the next storm, and we're going to talk about that a little bit more this morning, but we have things like brushfires that happen on all our Islands, potentially on all our Islands when things get dry.

>> Like now.

>> Like now.

>> Like now.

>> So, what can communities do?

What should people do in particular areas that are particularly prone to brush fires?

So we need to talk about that.

And how do you respond to that personally?

What can you do to be more prepared?

And certainly, everyone -- as my wife keeps telling me, so I'm going to have to be a little bit honest -- we have smoke detectors even in our home -- 10-year-battery-life smoke detectors that are sitting, needing for me to just quickly put them up.

And so my wife is all over me...

>> [Chuckles]

>> ...to put them up.

But everyone should have smoke detectors up and going, as a warning sign to get out of the house.

And then probably the other thing that, in conjunction with an earthquake, is tsunamis and the potential of a tsunami, as we had a false warning that happened a while back that had everybody -- that had everyone sort of aware of that.

But we should be cognizant that it is a possibility.

And for those that are in the tsunami track itself, which, in our area, this would be under that zone or in that zone, where would you go if you live in that zone and the tsunami warning alert went off?

Where would you go for high ground?

>> Right.

>> And you should already have that in your mind.

>> Right.
>> And if you have children,
your children should already
have that in their mind.
>> Regardless of where you live,
where you're at.
>> Right.
>> At work, school, whatever.
>> Right.
>> Yeah.
>> So, those are the things that
we need to help people address
as we go into this season.
And right now, everyone is
thinking hurricane.
>> Yeah.
>> I mean, there are these three
other things that are out there,
but, by and large, probably 95%
of our community is concerned
about June 1st.
There's just a natural anxiety
that people are feeling.
And you see it virtually
everywhere you go.
>> Exactly, exactly.
>> Yeah.
>> But you missed something that
I wanted you to share with the
audience about you, because when
I was looking you up...
>> Okay.
>> ...it said here that you
bring a wealth of experience.
What is that acquired experience
that you bring?
Because you seem to be wearing
so many different hats and you
have to store so much
information here that someone
was saying, "Well, who is this
guy?
Who really is this guy?"
>> Okay, I would say my wealth
of experience is more just as a
pastor.
I get to meet a lot of people.
And so, in that regard, I know
how to resource the community.
>> Excellent.

>> So, and I already know...
I went into this knowing that
none of this rests on my
shoulders.
This is going to be the
responsibility of the whole
community coming together.
And we talked about this before
we came on the air.
>> This question.
Oh, yeah, yeah.
>> So let me just sort of
challenge the community, for the
listening audience, and you
should share this with anyone
and everyone.
One of our great challenges in
the Virgin Islands is, being so
isolated...
>> Yes.
>> ...as an island community, we
can sometimes think of ourselves
in a way that...
And I come from Chicago
originally.
>> Okay.
>> And so it's easy to believe
that the major crises that may
happen in any given community
are the responsibility of local
government or even federal
government to resolve.
And on some level, that's true.
That's why we pay taxes, so that
the police department comes...
>> Mm-hmm.
>> ...and I'm going to say,
attempts to keep us safe.
>> Yes.
>> But I come from Chicago,
where that isn't going so well.
>> Okay.
>> We pay the fire department to
come and put out fires, but if
there's things we can do to make
sure fires don't happen, we
should be doing that.
>> Right.
>> We pay local government to
make wise decisions about how to

spend the tax revenue that we give them and to hold them accountable for how that happens.

But, as a community, we're the first in line, in terms of thinking through what our community needs, and we need to be immediate advocates for ensuring that those things happen.

And sometimes we also need to step out and do the things that local government, by virtue of bureaucracy, may not be able to do or it's way down on their priority list.

So, how does that relate to what we're talking about today?

I would love to say that either VITEMA is large enough that it has enough people on staff that they could put a person in every neighborhood in the Virgin Islands, or every state in the Virgin Islands, and ensure that you have a unique face to speak to your community and take ownership of alerting your community and guiding your community should a disaster happen.

But in reality, that's not going to happen.

>> Hmm.

>> What we can do is drive enough information into the community...

>> Right.

>> ...that every community should look to establish a coordinating point -- usually, an active neighbor or group of neighbors who come together -- and seek to be informed about what we can do to oversee our safety and consider our response, given what we may have learned from this recent set of hurricanes.

For example, in my neighborhood, which is just above La Grande Princesse, off of Rattan Road, within an hour of the storm passing -- and so this was -- and it seemed to be clear -- so, by 7:00 a.m. that morning, people were out with chain saws, removing...

>> Debris from the road.

>> ...trees and debris from the roads so at least we could start driving through.

>> Mm-hmm.

>> People went down the roads, checking on one another -- neighbors checking on neighbors. And you actually met people you didn't even know lived near you. And I think a lot of us had that experience.

>> [Chuckles]

>> And if there was legitimate need for assistance in one another's yards, people assisted on another, clearing their yards.

Now, we were blessed in our area that none of us really needed that kind of mobilized help in order to address our issues.

But in some neighborhoods, that's exactly what was needed, for people to get out of their homes, to get off their property, to get trees out.

And people did that.

So, in many ways, neighborhoods need to take note of that and begin now to consider forming neighborhood groups in every estate where they live and talk through, "How can we be prepared, as a community, should another disaster strike, should another hurricane strike?"

>> Okay.

This is "Ability Radio - You and Your Life," and we will be back after a brief break.

[Pointer Sisters' "Yes We Can Can" plays]

>> ...get together with one another.

We got to iron out our problems and iron out our quarrels and try to live as brothers.

And try to find the peace within without stepping on one another.

Remember you all have mothers. We got to make this land a better land than the world in which we live.

And we got to help each man be a better man with the kindness...

>> We're back, and you're listening to "Ability Radio - You and Your Life."

This is a reminder that if you have missed any portion of today's show, it is being recorded and will appear on our website at drcvi.org.

That's drcvi.org.

"Ability Radio" is sponsored by the Virgin Islands Lottery Making a Difference program.

Pastor Moore, after the break -- well, before the break -- we were talking about communities getting together and help each other out and what happened after the hurricane, where neighbors started helping neighbors.

And my question to you was, or is now, are faith-based organizations -- should they play a key role in the neighborhoods where they have their churches and their ministries, in order to really unite the community?

>> I think -- I think that is absolutely critical.

Our church is certainly working through that ourselves.

Our church is really

interdenominational, so we pull people from across the whole island.

>> Mm-hmm.

>> So our neighborhood is our community, but our community is much broader than that.

From some churches -- and I think the definition of "church" has changed, even here in the Virgin Islands, so what may have once been the idea of a neighborhood church...

>> Mm-hmm.

>> ...has grown from that.

And so I'm not sure how many communities look at the local church in that estate as being essentially the primary religious community that they subscribe to anymore.

>> Okay.

>> However, churches have a role to play in coordination of that community in a storm.

And we need to help pastors, in particular, and church leadership understand that role.

So I think that's a role that I hope to play as territorial VAL liaison, or territorial Voluntary Agency Liaison...

>> Liaison, mm-hmm.

>> ...to try to see if we can build that kind of community awareness.

During the storm, I think we've seen churches -- in fact, I know churches have stepped out and tried to assist where they can. Churches had food drives that took place in their neighborhoods.

One creative church, Frederiksted Baptist Church, in fact, ordered weather heads -- electrical weatherheads -- for people, because that was an essential need in their area as people were trying to get power

back on.

>> Exactly.

>> They couldn't go to Home Depot, they couldn't go to the hardware stores, they couldn't even go to Quality Electric and find that particular product, because they were being bought up as fast as they hit the shelf.

>> Mm-hmm.

>> So you had a number of pastors who thought outside the box to address that issue.

We, you know, for our church, St. Croix Christian, we ordered generators and we have a generator-loan ministry.

And we assisted people in the community, particularly other ministries, to keep going and to have power to do their services during the storm.

So we want to really help pastors, going forward, think about how they can serve their community more creatively beyond the individuals in their four walls.

>> Right.

>> And that's what the churches need to do.

Many churches have come together in a Long-Term Recovery Group, particularly those pastors who have the emotional ability to, because many pastors are overwhelmed with the needs of their churches.

A lot of churches were damaged because of the storm.

Because of how FEMA was initially rolled out -- and this is no discredit to FEMA -- it was the rules in the moment...

>> Right.

>> ...all of their funding was primarily driven toward individuals and small business. But in the course of the storm,

there was a new creation of assistance for churches.

>> Mm-hmm.

>> So a lot of new things happened, unique to the Virgin Islands situation.

And so pastors were able, on behalf of their ministries...

>> Mm-hmm.

>> ...to apply under the small-business structure...

>> Umbrella, mm-hmm.

>> ...through Public Assistance, under that umbrella.

And yet some pastors still ran into some challenges because a Small Business loan still operates under general business principles, and not every church operates that way, in terms of how they manage their money and so forth.

>> Right.

>> So it's more of a bookkeeping issue.

But FEMA is willing to step back, still, and they're trying to work even with those individuals to address those issues.

So it's not over.

>> Right.

>> So one thing I want to say to everyone that may have gone to FEMA for assistance, whether you're an individual or a small business, and you got denied for whatever reason, you can appeal and should appeal.

>> Right.

>> And if you need help appealing, you should call.

>> Right.

>> And we can assist you in writing your appeal letter. There is a process that you have to go through.

There's documents you need to supply.

But we can help you.

So, again, I'll give you my number -- 340-332-6841.

But I would say, instead of leaving me a long message, and because connectivity is so poor, it would be easier if you would send me a clearly written text, or you can send me an e-mail at pastorgvi@gmail.com.

And then I can send that information on to the appropriate person, either in our LTRG to assist you or connect it to, send it on to, the appropriate FEMA representative or SBA representative so that they can assist you with your question.

If you have a FEMA or SBA number, file number, you should include that within that e-mail so that we can help you.

Now, supposedly, let's say you never applied for FEMA, but you're hearing this and you're going, "Okay, maybe I should consider FEMA," in fact, I'm going to tell you you should. It's not too late.

You can actually start your FEMA application by saying, "I did not apply for FEMA, either because I did not have access to a computer, I did not have access to a cellphone or a landline, or I did not have access to be able to go to any of the Disaster Recovery Centers or Resource Centers, because I did not have mobility."

Any of those are ways to start your application for FEMA.

And then send that to me.

And then, if you can't send it to me, we're willing to figure out how to get to you and get this process going.

So there's no reason someone should be going through this process and saying, "There's

absolutely no help for me."
>> A couple of things from the DRCVI site.
>> Yes.
>> I think there's some confusion with respect to all the deadlines that are continuously given to apply for FEMA.
>> Right.
>> And as you are willing to help them with the appeals process, so is the Disability Rights Center.
That's an initiative that Attorney LaMont opened her doors for, that if anybody also...
Like, you mentioned referring them to the right place.
>> Right, right.
>> You could refer them to us.
>> Fantastic.
>> Okay.
>> And even if deadlines have passed...
>> Mm-hmm.
>> ...FEMA is willing to accept those applications anyway.
So a hard deadline on an individual level, or even on a business level, does not mean it's over for you.
>> Right.
>> We can still work with those applications, or they're willing to still work with those applications.
>> Okay, seems we have a caller.
>> [Speaking indistinctly]
>> Good morning. Hello?
>> [Speaking indistinctly]
Good morning.
>> Good morning.
>> Good morning.
>> This is a quick question for Pastor Moore.
Good morning, Pastor Moore.
How are you doing?
>> All right. How are you?
>> I'm doing well.

I heard your phone number, and I know there's many folks out here who didn't get all the digits.
Could you give that to us again, please?
>> Sure. 340-332-6841.
>> Thank you so much.
>> All right.
Thank you.
>> Thank you.
>> So, my hope is that as we move through this process with the Long-Term Recovery Group, we will ramp up and get our rhythm.
>> [Chuckles]
>> And I think everyone can identify that most of us still feel disjointed from the story.
>> Yeah.
>> Whatever your life's rhythm was -- and someone used this in a meeting with me yesterday, and they were saying, "Well, it feels like things are getting back to normal."
And I almost wanted to jump in and go, "Really?"
>> [Chuckles]
>> "It feels like things are getting back to normal for you? It doesn't feel that way to me." You know, things might be green again, which happened about six to seven weeks after the storm -- things began to green -- but all that did was hide all the damage that is still there.
>> Yeah. [Chuckles]
>> And so we have a long way to go to get back to what may be truly new normal -- a new normal...
>> A new normal.
>> ...for our community.
>> Exactly.
>> But I'm hoping that part of that new normal is a willingness to support each other in a renewed way that everyone has

told me was once the lifeblood
of living in the Virgin Islands.

>> In the Virgin Islands,
exactly.

>> Yes.

And somewhere along the way,
that sort of fell of the page of
being essential to being here.
Maybe it was with the influx of
so many outsiders.

Maybe it was the changing of the
generations and the lack of
generational enforcers.

Like, my family, my grandmother
was the enforcer of family
values.

>> [Chuckles] Yes.

>> And when she spoke, no one
talked back.

>> [Chuckles]

>> So I don't know what
happened, but we need to get
back to truly -- and I hear a
lot of this -- the "One Love"
philosophy -- "one love" for
everyone, that certainly pastors
express this within their
churches.

But in a disaster, it's where we
see the best of ourselves and
sometimes see the worst of
ourselves.

>> Yeah, because I recall -- I
recall -- you know, I've been
here most of my life -- well,
except when I was growing up,
until I graduated from college
-- but I remember, when I came
here for the first time, it was
like that.

And not only that, the religious
organizations, the churches,
everything was the trusted
source in the community.

I'll never forget those words,
because we used them all the
time when we were trying to
develop partnerships, that the
churches are the trusted source
in the community.

And we've kind of gotten away from that a little, but I think we need to go back to that because they are.

They are.

>> Part of that, I suspect -- and I can be part of the problem in that I think I have been part of the problem -- when you come from other communities as a pastor.

And in Chicago, I did community development work, and our ministry was in the poorest neighborhood in Chicago.

And we took a level of pride in that all the statistics in that community spoke death over anyone who lived there.

>> Mm-hmm.

>> It was the most, the highest unemployment, the lowest educational-achievement numbers, highest teen-pregnancy rates, incarceration rates -- you know, on and on and on.

>> Yeah.

>> And we went in and we actually started a women's homeless shelter there and a youth-outreach program there that was an after-school program, year-round sports program, and the like, and family-support ministry that now has been built into a huge FamilyPlex over the years.

And it went from being a satellite outreach of our ministry to being the home-base community of our ministry there. I still talk like I'm there.

I've been gone all these years.

>> [Chuckles]

>> But I take great pride in what it's become.

I was part of casting the vision, and they stayed on course.

And so I think part of this

challenge is we have gotten away, as the faith community, from a common vision for our communities that makes room for our individuality, that allows us to be what we believe God has called our particular ministries to be about, but still can support the greater picture that supports wholeness and wellness for the entire community.

>> Mm-hmm.

>> So that's what's missing.

And in the absence of a catalyzing common vision, it's very easy to just do your own thing.

And I think that's the same thing that happens in neighborhoods.

>> Right.

>> And so what's happening here is the same thing in the States.

>> Mm-hmm.

>> My wife and I sometimes go back to the States and we have to rent a place at times just to get away and not stay with family.

Sometimes you can go back and staying with family is more work, and you just need downtime.

>> [Chuckles]

>> So we were staying in this particular place in a high-rise, downtown Chicago, one year.

And because we live in the Virgin Islands, we're used to speaking to everyone.

I'm just giving you an example of how disconnected people can be.

We get on the elevator.

Elevator is full of people one morning, because it's the time people go to work.

People didn't look at you.

>> Tsk. Uh-huh.

>> They didn't make any kind of

acknowledgement of your
existence.

They didn't speak at all.

>> Yeah.

>> And we were shocked because
we're used to the Virgin Island
experience.

You know, "Good morning," "Good
afternoon," "Good evening."

>> That's what we sell.

[Chuckles]

>> Right, right.

So, here, I think we do that,
but do we do it genuinely?

So, when we say "good morning,"
do we really mean it, or is it
just sort of, "Okay, that's what
you say, but I could care less
whether you're having a good
morning"?

>> [Chuckles]

>> You know, we say "good
afternoon," but do I really care
if you're having a good
afternoon?

So are we really engaging more
deeply than that?

So I think, in our
neighborhoods, is that happening
with us as neighbors?

Do we really know our neighbors?
And we need to get back to that.

I grew up where neighbors would
sit on each other's porches in
the evening and have
conversations on a Saturday or
Sunday and have conversations.
Same thing can be true in
churches on Sunday.

>> Yeah.

>> We see each other for the
hour, two hours, or however many
hours you may spend in church...

>> That's it.

>> ...but is there any life of
your church community beyond
that?

>> That's like that anonymity
concept?

>> Yes, yes, yes.

>> Yeah.

>> So, if we're going to face hurricanes, we need to accept that we're facing these storms together and we need to be in this as a whole community. And since we're here talking about people who are differently abled...

>> Yes.

>> ...as opposed to disabilities, a lot of people, based on reports from the Red Cross that came in nationally to support our Red Cross chapter, found any number of individuals that were either isolated or, in some cases, because of debris, just trapped in their homes.

>> In their homes.

>> And because families no longer lived here, or maybe lived on a different island, phone lines were down.

Again, lack of communication with neighbors that may adjoin properties, but no direct interaction.

People were isolated in their homes, and some individuals were found to have been in their homes for days or even longer without adequate resources, medication, food, in some cases, water, things of that nature. Even if they had water, they didn't have the strength to pull it up from their -- or even get their cistern cap off.

And so we need to really take stock of what's going on in our communities.

And I know part of this is the trust issue.

"Am I willing to let people into my home?"

>> Right.

>> "Am I willing to let people know what my level of vulnerability is, particularly

if I'm a senior and am by myself?"

>> Yeah.

>> So who's my safe community that I can do this with.

Even in our own church, our seniors are well-connected. We have Life Groups, and so they have a small group of members that they meet with and are clustered with...

>> Mm-hmm.

>> ...in times of crisis.

But they even had times sharing more directly in the community. So this can happen.

>> And we'll be right back.

This is "Ability Radio - You and Your Life."

[Pointer Sisters' "Yes We Can Can" plays]

>> Now's the time for all good men to get together with one another.

We got to iron out our problems and iron out our quarrels and try to live as brothers. And try to find peace within without stepping on one another...

>> ...a better land than the world in which we live.

And we got to help each man be a better man with the kindness that we give.

>> We're back.

And you're listening to "Ability Radio - You and Your Life."

Again, this is a reminder that if you've missed any portion of our show, it is being recorded and will appear on our website at drcvi.org -- drcvi.org.

Pastor Moore, one of the things that we were talking about during the break was trust, because that's really rampant here in the Virgin Islands,

especially, you know, with some of the things that are happening with the drug scene and all those different other...

>> Well, the lack of trust.

>> Lack of trust, lack of trust, yes, exactly.

So, besides that, what do you see as barriers, obstacles to what the group is hoping to accomplish?

>> Really, it's probably previous history.

One of the stories that people constantly tell me -- Well, virtually, people tell me all the time their story of having tried to initiate something in the community, and then it doesn't happen, it doesn't go anywhere.

So virtually everyone has a story of being disappointed...

>> Mm-hmm.

>> ...about something that they hoped would be achieved and then it wasn't.

So I constantly have to deal with that within our organization that's still very new, is forming, because many of those executive directors or leaders within the community have experienced a lot of disappointment over the years.

So, in a sense, they come in and there's a level of mistrust they have about --

>> And there's a lot of cynicism.

>> Yes.

>> Yeah.

>> Yeah, so I've had to beat that back.

But in beating that back, we've been able to get 72 community organizations.

St. Croix Community Foundation is part of our group.

Disability Rights Center is part

of our group.

Any number of churches,
Frederiksted Health Center,
Interfaith Coalition, Island
Therapy Solutions, Jewish
Community Center.

I'm just reading down the list.
St. Croix Reformed Church, the
Salvation Army, the Department
of Human Services, Department of
Justice, Department of Health,
Department of Human Services,
Juvenile Prevention and
Rehabilitation Services, V.I.
Domestic Violence, the National
Guard, V.I. Partners for Healthy
Communities.

We have a lot of organizations
that are participating, all of
us with one goal -- to help
restore St. Croix, actually
bring St. Croix back to a new
sense of normalcy and recovery.
And we all know it's going to
take a lot of effort.

>> Yeah.

>> So the trust factor is that
we just keep it honest, we walk
through and talk through the
things that we're trying to
achieve, and then we put
together the processes and plans
that we believe are meaningful,
that represent a mutual
partnership between government,
community organizations, and
community residents, and we just
move forward.

Two things I just want to
mention quickly that we're
doing.

On May 5th, we recognize that
the future of the Virgin Islands
lies in what we do for our youth
in preparing them and in really
undergirding them in their
efforts.

So we're doing a youth outreach
and fair to really connect them
with organizations in the

community, to offer them potential work opportunities, service opportunities, educational opportunities, and the like on May 5th.

And we'll have more information out, but we, again, have our website that people can go to or our Facebook site -- stxltrg.org or STXLTRG -- to look at that.

Those are new, and so all that information will be updated and put on those things in the coming week so that you can keep track with what we're doing.

But the other thing that we're focused on, beyond really investing deeply in our young people, is really wanting to get out and...

I don't know if you're familiar with the AmeriCorps program...

>> Yes.

>> ...that was here doing a lot of work in the community.

Well, we inherited the AmeriCorps work project when they finished several weeks ago.

And so, right now, we are working through transitioning that work to a different organization in our community, Neighbor to Neighbor, which has been working in Frederiksted. And they have essentially about 50 jobs -- somewhere around 50 muck-and-gutting and debris-removal jobs under their belt that they've been doing since October, November in the Frederiksted area.

And we want to continue that work.

In fact, we want to see all of those individuals that have submitted applications and requests to AmeriCorps completed and continue to build on their work.

So that's one of the initial projects that we want to get started right away, because people can then see results and see our commitment to the community.

>> Right.

>> Even while we're working to get disaster case management up so we can begin connecting with people and then funding what's called an unmet-needs table. And I'll quickly explain that in a sec.

>> Yeah.

>> But there are 337 cases -- work projects -- in process that we are looking to support throughout the island.

So that's what the LTRG is looking to get started with right away.

So, how can we help?

One, we need the business community and individuals who want to donate money to do so. St. Croix Community Foundation is our fiscal agent, and so you can donate to our organization to them, and that will help fund these projects.

And so we need community support.

So whether you're an individual, whether you're a business, whether you're another nonprofit and you might have grant resources that you can direct our way, we need help.

We're doing this together as a community moving forward.

So that's the first thing.

If you want to volunteer or join us, our meetings take place every other Thursday.

So the next meeting is Thursday, April 5th, at my church, St. Croix Christian Church in Orange Grove, which is 3019A Orange Grove, and it starts at 3:00

p.m.

And we meet every other Thursday in order to continue our work.

We currently have a number of working committees that are moving our work forward.

And so if you have a particular interest in serving in a particular way, we can also help you with that.

I know there are a few people out in the community -- you may be listening this morning -- who have written me and want to get involved, and I haven't responded to you yet, because we've had so much going on.

But I will get back to you this week.

And I want to connect you with a meeting, and so I'll get back to you.

I'm going to have you attend a meeting so you understand what's going on before I put you to work.

[Both laugh]

So I at least want you to hear what we're all about before I ask you to do something.

But we need everybody at the table, because it's only going to happen if we all work together.

>> You know, I'm wondering if the high schools can use that AmeriCorps as a community service that the student...

>> Oh, well, exactly.

That's what we're also working on.

We have a very active youth committee, led by Professor Louis Jackson...

>> Okay.

>> ...who some know as Sensei in the community, because he's a martial-arts master.

>> Okay.

>> And he's very committed to

reaching our youth.

So that committee, their dream is that...

In fact, we're going to drive a lot of things through the youth committee.

We're doing an art program, an art contest, in all the schools right now, in which we are having kids design our logo.

>> Okay.

>> And so, we've got -- In fact, all the prizes have already been donated.

We're very excited about that.

And then, from that, we're hoping that youth will help drive our campaign of preparedness in all the families, because we know, when kids start thinking about safety, preparedness, health, those kinds of campaigns, it has a great impact on the family.

>> Exactly, because they'll know what to do and what needs to get done...

>> Yes, yes.

>> ...to help their family weather the storm.

[Chuckles]

>> Right, right.

>> So to speak.

>> Yes.

>> It was wonderful having you here, and we want you to come back and continue to provide updates on what the group is doing, how it's meeting its goals.

>> Oh, anytime, anytime.

>> Amelia is sorry she missed you, because she's a big fan of yours.

>> Oh, and I of her.

>> Now I've become a fan of yours, too.

>> [Laughs]

>> Thank you for being here with us.

We appreciate you.
And I'd like to wish everybody
Happy Easter.
>> Yes.
>> Next weekend is Easter.
>> Yes.
>> Enjoy your Easter vacation or
weekend.
Thank you.
>> All right. Thank you.
[Pointer Sisters' "Yes We Can
Can" plays]
>> Now's the time for all good
men to get together with one
another.
We got to iron out our problems
and iron out our quarrels and
try to live as brothers.
And try to find peace within
without stepping on one another.
And do respect the women of the
world.
Remember you all have mothers.
>> We got to make this land a
better land than the world in
which we live.
>> And we got to help each man
be a better man with the
kindness that we give.
>> I know we can make it.
>> I know that we can.
>> I know darn well we can work
it out.
>> Oh, yes, we can.
I know we can can.
Yes, we can can.
Why can't we?
If we wanna, yes, we can can.
>> I know we can make it work.
I know we can make it if we try.
>> Oh, yes, we can.
I know we can can.
Yes, we can.
>> Great gosh almighty.
>> Yes, we can.
I know we can can.
[Instrumental music plays]
>> And we gotta take care of all
the children, the little
children of the world,

'cause they're our strongest
hope for the future, the little
bitty boys and girls.

We got to...

>> Make this land a better land
than the world in which we live.

>> And we got to help each man
be a better man with the
kindness that we give.

>> I know we can make it.

>> I know that we can.

>> I know darn well we can work
it out.