

Improving Mountain Safety Programs

Being Prepared For Opportunities:
***The ICAR “Best Practices” For
Avalanche Safety Programs
Survey***

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Canadian Avalanche Centre



We Believe....

Rescue, Prevention Is “God’s Work”

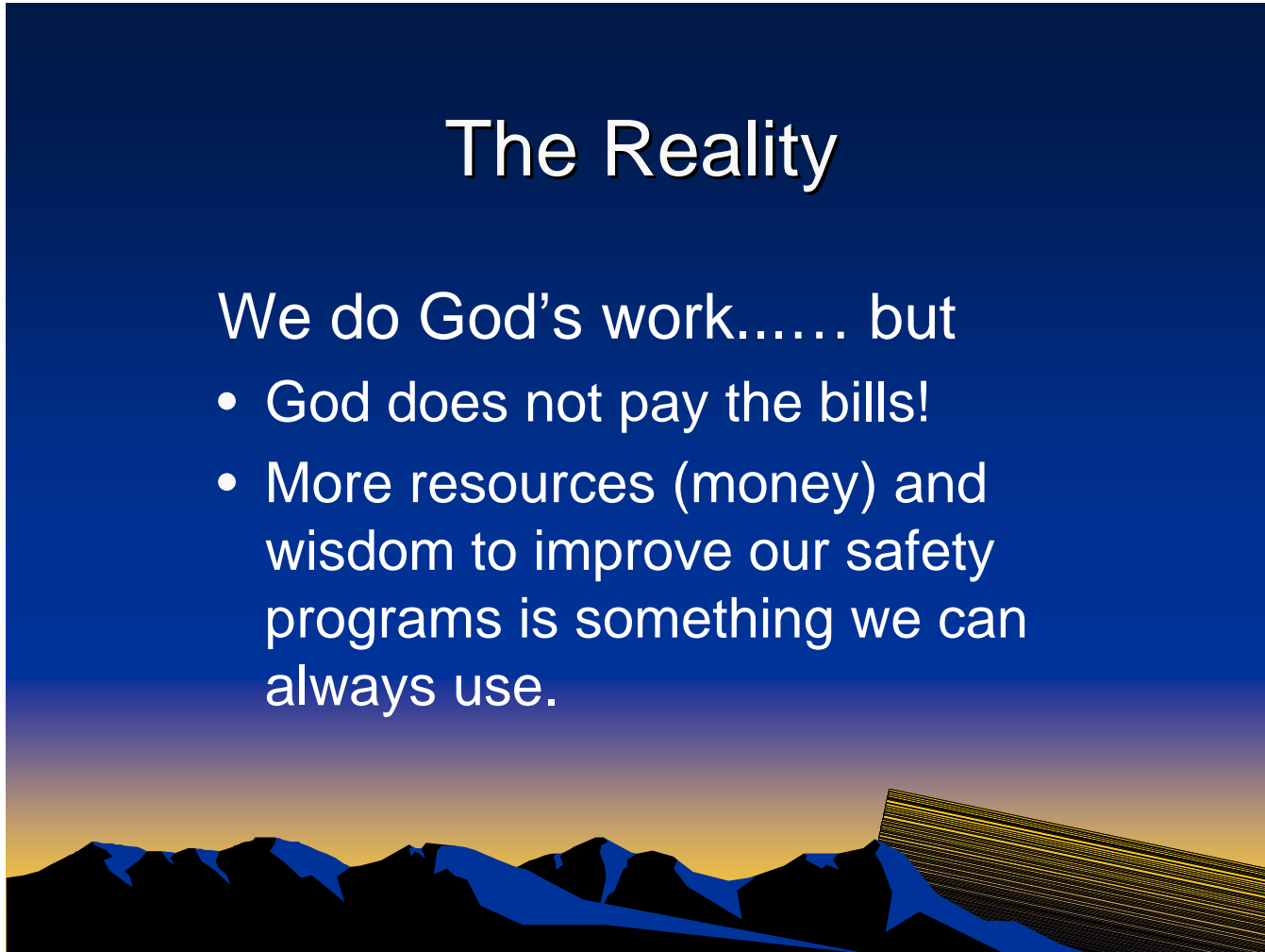
- Saving human life is a noble humanitarian cause
- Improving safety programs = less suffering, more lives saved!



The Reality

We do God's work..... but

- God does not pay the bills!
- More resources (money) and wisdom to improve our safety programs is something we can always use.



When Safety Programs Are “Good Enough”

- Public, politicians, bureaucrats complacent
- When programs static - staff enthusiasm, volunteerism is a challenge.
- Incremental, low cost improvements are still possible, necessary for morale.
- Vision, strategy, priorities required: *What can / should we do to improve? What are international best practices?*

“Public Outrage Bomb” prompts major program change; be ready!



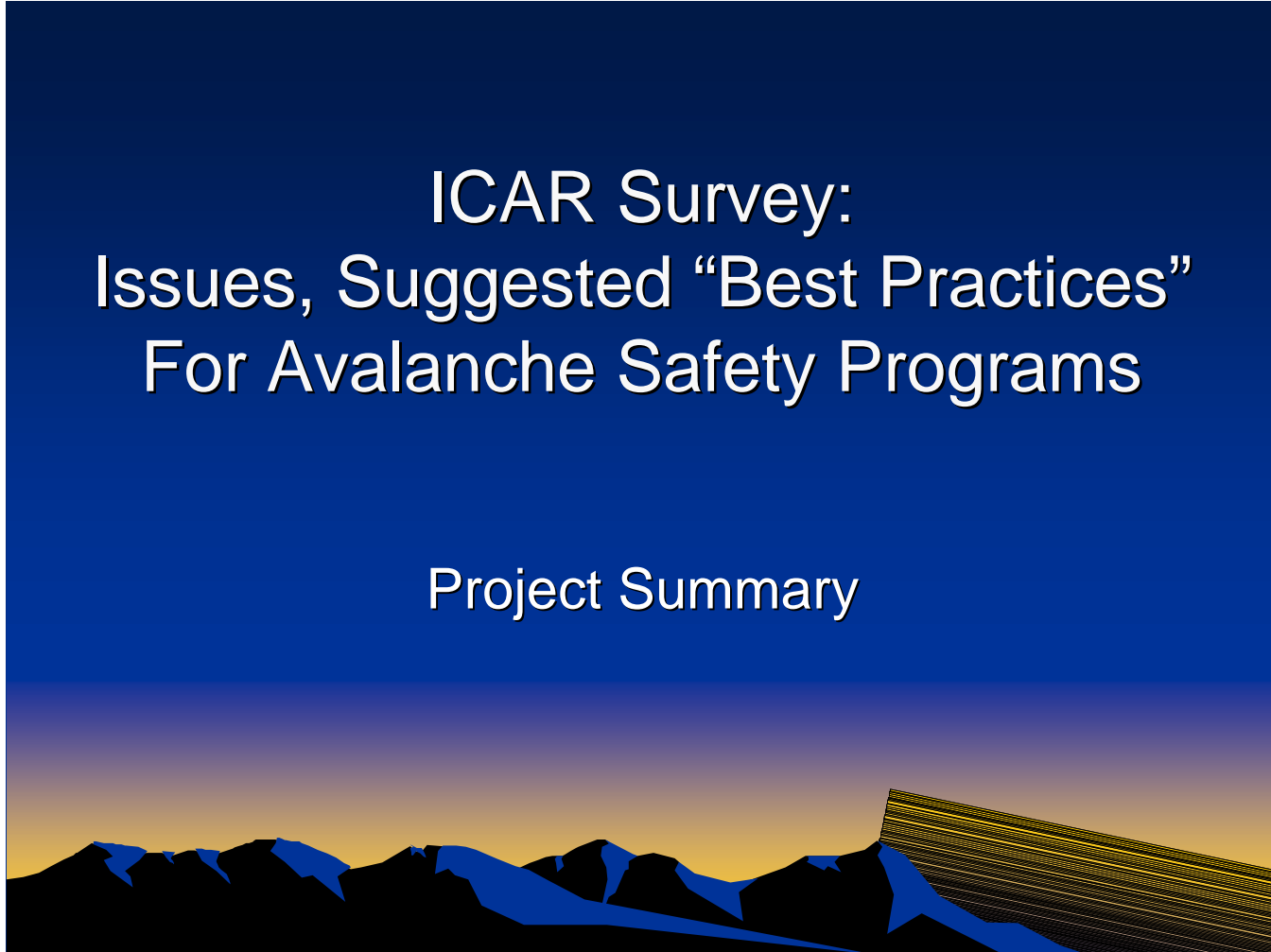
OPPORTUNITY = LOSS X OUTRAGE

Disasters = Opportunity For Major Program Improvements

- High profile fatal accident(s), major media coverage sparks public empathy, outrage.
- Politicians engage, bureaucrats wake up.
- Rescue, prevention programs scrutinized.
- Be proactive, “on the record” with solutions.
- Vision, strategy, priorities required: *What improvements are needed next? What are international best practices?*

ICAR Survey: Issues, Suggested “Best Practices” For Avalanche Safety Programs

Project Summary



Project Goals

- Identify avalanche safety issues, programs and practices in ICAR countries.
- Suggest ICAR “best practice” benchmarks for avalanche safety programs.
- Facilitate awareness, sharing of avalanche safety programs & ideas between countries.



“Prevention Working Group” Established, 2006

- Hans-Juerg Etter , (*Pres*)
ICAR Avalanche Com.
- Dale Atkins, US
- Francois Sivardiere, FR
- Ion Sanduloiu, ROM
- Albert Lunde, NO
- Christophe Berclaz, CH
- Manuel Genswein, CH
- Clair Israelson, CA

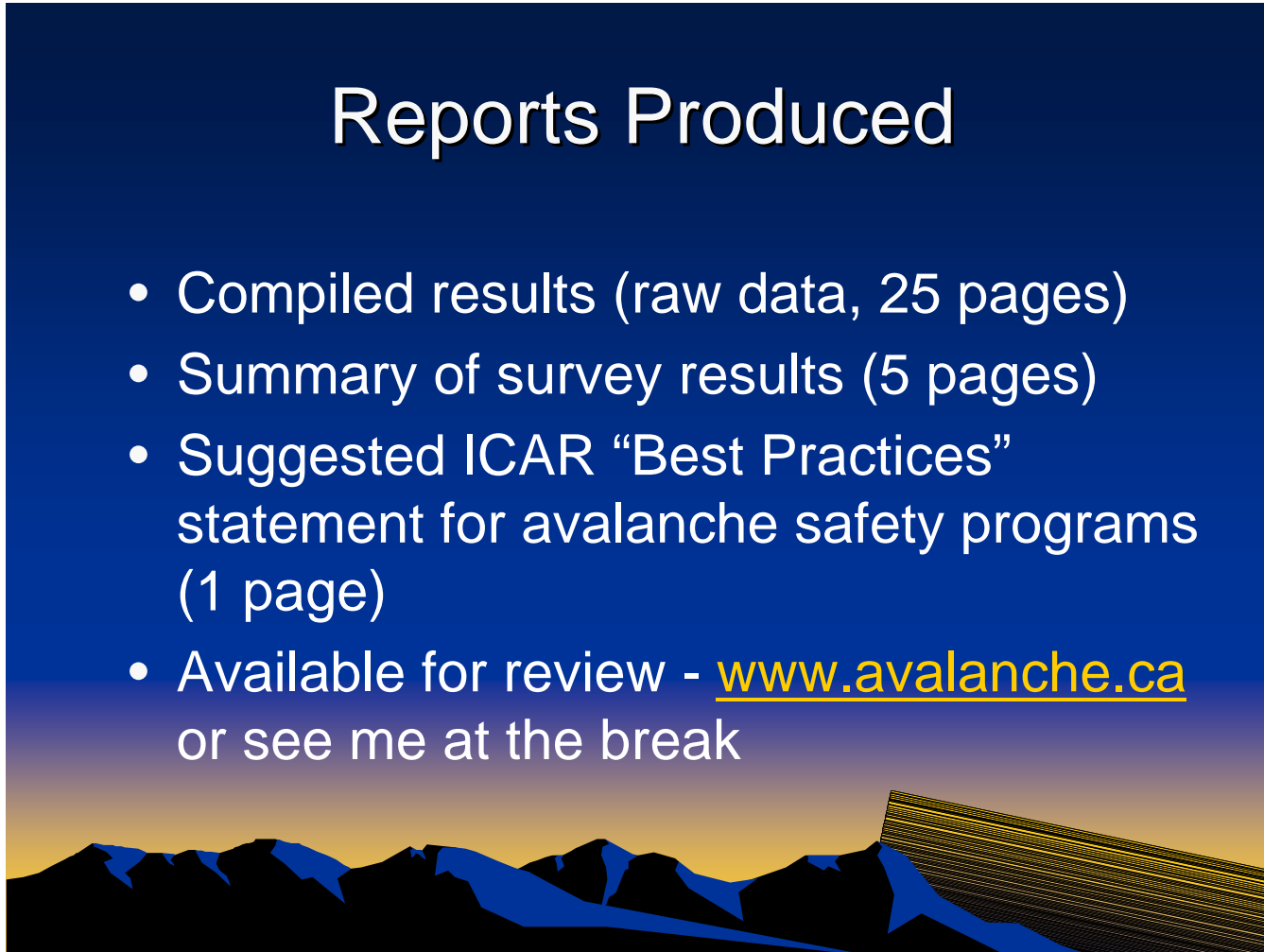


Survey Respondents, 13 ICAR Countries

- B. Gebhard, AT
- W. Wurtl, AT
- C. Israelson, CA
- F. Bebic, HR
- F. Sivardiere, FR
- D. Le Gall, FR
- B. Zehetleitner, DE
- A. Kjartansdotter, IS
- S. Pivot, IT
- G. Frangioni, IT
- S. Sterpinio, IT
- P. Lampert, LI
- A. Lunde, NO
- I. Sanduloiu, RO
- J. Peto, SK
- H. Etter, CH
- J. Rhyner, CH
- D. Abromeit, US
- E. Greene, US

Reports Produced

- Compiled results (raw data, 25 pages)
- Summary of survey results (5 pages)
- Suggested ICAR “Best Practices” statement for avalanche safety programs (1 page)
- Available for review - www.avalanche.ca or see me at the break



“Best Practice”

Organized Avalanche Rescue Services

- **Organized avalanche rescue services exist for all avalanche prone areas of the country.**
 - Rescue teams are fully integrated; modern SAR technologies, avalanche dogs, helicopters.
 - Time, alert to dispatch of first party is < 20 min.
 - **Successes:** coordination, cooperation, integration; live recoveries.
 - **Challenges:** developing, maintaining capacity and motivation (volunteers); inter-operability.

Suggested ICAR Best Practices For Avalanche Safety Programs

1. A credible professional organization issues scheduled avalanche forecasts for popular winter mountain recreation areas.
2. Avalanche training courses for non-professionals are readily available.
3. Comprehensive programs protect highly used public places from avalanches.
4. Avalanche professionals require specialized training / credentials / certifications.
5. Organized avalanche rescue services exist for all avalanche prone areas of the country.

“Recipe For Success”

- Vision – right program(s) for time, place
- Good people, right mix of skills, partners
- Organization, equipment, infrastructure
- Effective media, public relations
- Public demand for safety programs
- Political support, funding



“Public Outrage Bomb” prompts major program change; be ready!

