



Motivational Madness E-Newsletter

Devastation Gives Way to Determination

Written by Pam Bozeman, Publicist for Paul Vitale

During life's journey each of us, in some form or fashion, experience fury. Over the course of my lifetime, I've learned this emotion isn't just limited to living beings, but encompasses all of God's creation. As a lifelong resident of Biloxi, Mississippi, I've seen firsthand nature's unpredictability all too often.

I long ago stopped remembering the names of hurricanes like Betsy, George & Elena, the years they visited and the mark they left on the beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast. There is one storm I've never forgotten, the benchmark of all hurricanes before and since: Camille. Though her memories will never diminish, they are now and forevermore overshadowed by Katrina. Fury such as hers is not only humbling, it's incomprehensible.

Venturing out for the first time after Katrina roared inland on August 29th, I was prepared for the worst; or so I thought. What I wasn't prepared for was the total devastation of our bustling peninsula. The beach I walked along each day and loved so much was now silent--littered with remnants of lives. The familiar antebellum homes, businesses and landmarks were gone, some places laid so bare that they seemed to have never been there at all. So many memories collected over the course of a lifetime--washed away in an instant.

A place so notorious for tourists and guests to visit, was now being occupied by another type of sightseer. Search and rescue teams with their trusty dogs picked among the rubble, hoping for signs of life. Refrigerated trucks with makeshift morgues made their way around downed trees and collapsed roads that blocked their paths. The devastation was complete; no one left untouched.



The sights of the Coast, as we begin to piece our lives back together are familiar, yet surreal. Military humvees patrol the roads. While braving intense heat and humidity, the National Guard wave cars through intersections with mangled traffic signals, their rifles and side-arms in place. Everywhere you look, men and women who give their lives in service to others offer help along the way. Law enforcement from across the Nation work together as one unit; from as far away as New Hampshire to Oklahoma, Florida to Oregon. These tireless officers put their own lives on hold, while living in tents and a makeshift city.

We look to our neighbors in Louisiana, Texas and Alabama and sympathize with those who were forced from their homes, unsure of how and when they will return. We share their pain, and their determination and passion to rebuild.

In the aftermath of this devastating hurricane, the outpouring of camaraderie and friendship has been evident everywhere. The goodness of people continues to shine in the face of this disaster--neighbors helping neighbors, those with nothing sharing what little they have, so others can be comfortable. Children from schools across the country donate their lunch money so others can eat. Pickup trucks from neighboring states move through residential areas, offering hot meals and fresh water. People you've never met before, and will most likely never see again, arrive to help clear the tangled trees blocking the entrance to your home.

The spirits of resilience and hope are abundant; from the flag draped cross at the cemetery to the people standing up in church offering jobs to anyone who is willing to work hard. Somehow, a glimpse of humor peaks through amidst the piles of debris in the form of signs: one daring another storm to come back and clean up the trash, another offering a "Home for sale cheap--bring your own chainsaw", and yet another that simply says "God Bless America."

Once again, our nation has risen to the challenge of unforeseen circumstances. Thank you to all for your prayers, support and compassion. You've opened your hearts and communities to us, and we on the Coast, and me in particular, appreciate everything you have done. The light of America shines brightly in the love of its people for one another and their land, never so evident as in the darkness which followed this storm.



Vital Information

Desire Street Update

This past summer we featured Desire Street Academy in our newsletter. They, like so many others, have been devastated by flooding in New Orleans. Though their staff and community have been scattered to the four winds, they're working heroically to accomplish a number of goals.

Please keep Desire Street Ministries in mind with special gifts and offerings. There's a lot of need. And there's a lot of loss. But they also have a lot of vision and passion for the work God has called them to.

For an update on Desire Street and to find out how you can help, please log on to desirestreet.org

Reflections of Hope

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. What I can do I ought to do; and with the help of God I will do.

-Anonymous

Those who turn back know only the ordeal, but they who persevere remember the adventure.

-Milo L. Arnold

Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome.

-Booker T. Washington

To dream means to live. To live means to share. To share means to improve the place that we call home.

-Paul Vitale

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