



# The National Disaster

Ed and I met at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Ed lived his whole life in Louisiana, spending many hours fishing and hunting on the Gulf coast. We lived four years of our young married life in Louisiana. New Orleans has always been a place we love to visit. Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent hurricane, Rita, have been overwhelming to us. The images have haunted us, our hearts have been broken over the drowning of New Orleans and the destruction of so many places along the Gulf Coast.

We have seen the hundreds of thousands of people who did not heed the warning because they thought it wasn't going to happen to them. The weather forecasters were sounding the alarms but they fell on many unbelieving hearts. We were horrified at the houses wrecked by floodwaters. The separation of parents from children, of husbands from wives brought tears to our eyes.

Many of these same families became exposed to a second storm. Could they hold up through another battering of wind and rain?



Those who stayed behind and saw their lives crumble became vulnerable to the attack of those who take advantage of others' misfortunes. Those whose homes were destroyed lost most of what they owned. Their standard of living has suddenly plummeted.

We wonder how so many displaced people can rebuild their lives. We wonder if their life will ever have a sense of normalcy. We wonder if they will step in the path of danger again.

In no way do we want to minimize or devalue the destruction or hurt that has occurred with these hurricanes. But there is an even bigger **National Disaster** going on in the United States year after year.

**Over a million homes are destroyed every year by divorce.** Husbands are trying to hold onto wives but the strong currents of unrest or dissatisfaction sweep them away. **Children** are handed off to a caring friend or relative as **mom's** try to put their lives back together after being abandoned.

**Over a million children each year find themselves suddenly without a home** because their family has been destroyed, and they don't know why. Standards of living fall

dramatically for women and children after divorce. FEMA won't be there to hand out a check or find them food or shelter.

The church was on the front lines during the hurricane aftermath, serving thousands of meals to displaced families. In 48 hours, the Southern Baptist churches of Oklahoma put together a clean, warm, loving environment for the possibility of thousands of evacuees.

**What would happen if** the church recognized the magnitude and impact of the disaster happening to the family because of divorce, cohabitation, same-sex attraction, and children born outside of marriage? **What would happen if** we mobilized our people to bring the resources needed to put families back together, bring normalcy back to their lives?



As we look at the images of displaced families during recovery from these two hurricanes, visualize **many more families who need healing and recovery for their family unit. The National Disaster** that has occurred to the family was not an event, like the hurricanes; it has been **a process over the last few decades that has crept into our lives.**



Many do not heed **the warning that it could happen to them.** They do not take **the precautions to avoid the storm that is brewing.** They don't seriously consider **the harm that could befall their families.** They stay **in harm's way until they are destroyed.** Then, they become more **susceptible to a second disaster.** They still do not have **skills to manage a crisis.** **Their families are again pulled apart by flooding emotions.**

**What resources do each of us have that would could give towards saving marriages and families?** Some can give **instruction.** Some can be **mentors.** Some can **encourage** young husbands to be faithful and encouraging to their wives. Some can **show** wives how to respect and care for their husbands. Some can **train** young moms and dads how to discipline and be engaged in their children's lives. Others can **support** those who are out in helicopters and boats trying to rescue the ones in distress. **Ask God** how He wants you be a **part of recovery** from the larger **National Disaster.**