

# HURRICANE KATRINA

## PRAISE REPORT

Hurricane Katrina thrashed the coastal areas of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama on August 29th. If you watched the news at all, you saw the near total devastation of the great city of New Orleans. Closer to home, I saw areas of Biloxi and Gulfport be erased before my very eyes.

The effects of Katrina reached as far as the central parts of each of these three states. Many less impacted parts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama experienced rain and winds between 80-135 miles per hour and resulted in loss of power, phone service, drinking water and a severe gas shortage. In the mist of this crisis I witness an amazing thing about these folk. Although trying to recover from a Category I storm themselves they reached out to those who were experiencing greater suffering on the Gulf Coast. They realized in the wake of Hurricane Katrina there were literally thousands who had no place to go back to. The homes they lived in were gone, the businesses where they were employed were gone, and the way of life they knew was gone.

On Saturday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> McClain Ministries initiated an emergency teleconference to determine what we could do to help the victims of this traumatic storm.

We initiated four major projects, one of which was the creation of 1500 Care Packages - 250 of which would be dispensed immediately to local shelters. Members Mary Simpson and Denise Jones agreed to coordinate this incredible effort.



On Saturday September 17<sup>th</sup> several volunteers met at Denise's home to stuff and deliver the care packages. We delivered 150 packages to individual shelters housed in the Greater Fairview, New Jerusalem and Christ in Life Churches. An additional 100 care packages went to Christ United Methodist Church-the designated distribution center coordinating all local shelters.



Needless to say, the experience delivering these care packages proved to be a life changing event. The gratitude in which they were received was overwhelming. The volunteers participating in this project were visibly struck by the joy and humility this loving gesture represented. Their expressions are captured in the "Higher Mountains, Higher Praises" section of the September Newsletter.

To those of you, who have given so generously to this effort, please know that your gifts of love and sacrifice have been a source of tremendous comfort to those who are in so much need.

I have been encouraged by the number of those displaced persons with whom I have spoken with-the amazing number of them who are looking to go forward. I have found very few who do not have a positive attitude. It has been surprising to me that there are so many with such stamina. Almost with out exception, those with this attitude have a fundamental faith in

the power of God in the lives of His children. I am not sure, but they may have actually done more for me than I have for them. I have not found one who "blames" God. I have not found one who has asked, "Why me?" Perhaps they are experiencing what so many believers experience daily. The decision of "... forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what is ahead," (Philippians 3:13).