

# Hurricane Harvey Victims

## [Prison Ministry]

Buck Griffith

When Janet and I began preparing for Harvey (we decided to stay and ride it out), we got up at 5 a.m. to beat the crowd at the supermarket. This was a terrible idea! Everyone else had set their alarms earlier. There were traffic jams everywhere. We figured we would buy the place out but others beat us to it and we found empty shelves. So, I would be going to Wal-Mart, Lowe's, Sutherland's, McCoy's, Advance Auto Parts, Stripe's, 7-Eleven, Family Dollar, Radio Shack (closed), Aaron's, the dry cleaners, pharmacy, another supermarket on the other side of town, and filled my car with gas. I wore out and ran out of money simultaneously! Then, as "Cat One Harvey" drew closer, it became "Cat **Four** Harvey." Experts predicted Corpus Christi to be its #1 target. We shifted gears. We loaded clothes plus what we had purchased and headed out. God blessed us in avoiding most of the harmful effects. We laid low for 4-5 days and returned home to minimal property damage. At the same time, others were badly hurt and it will take a long time to fully recover.

I thought about our friends who recently were released from jails and prisons. What is the "Hurricane Preparedness Plan" for them and their families? They are blessed to have any roof over their heads. They have no cash to buy flashlights, batteries, candles, and extra food and water (to outlast the "water boil"). They have no car or gas to evacuate, no credit card to get an out-of-town motel room, etc. If one has a job, the company will likely shut down for several days or weeks. Paid by the hour, his paycheck will be small or non-existent. If he has small children, this family is in a world of hurt. The storm will blow away but serious struggles remain.

The photo to the right are boats a few feet from Shoreline Drive in Corpus Christi. Before I got back to town, we were receiving calls from Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, Missouri, Oklahoma, and cities throughout Texas. Many are co-workers in prison ministry and asking if they or their local congregations could help. These offers lifted our spirits. Contributions are already coming in to *NewLife Behavior Ministries* and these funds will be strictly used to help ex-offenders and their families. Other organizations/congregations are helping church members and we rejoice they are receiving assistance. However, NLBM will focus on our mission among the incarcerated and their families – in and outside the Lord's church. We will exhaust our contacts and then work through the local district parole office servicing eight counties. Doors are opening for us to tell our friends as well as strangers about Jesus.



A man I worked with while he was IN prison came by BEFORE the hurricane needing help. His hours were cut at a local refinery. He, his wife and two children have visited us at church. Now, the refinery is shut down due to the storm and he is getting *no* check. I hear a refinery takes up to two weeks or longer to restart once the decision is made to do so. A paroled member of our congregation was unable to get an approval evacuation address by the deadline and was picked up to stay on a jail floor in Edinburg until they decide to bring him back. His wife and mother-in-law had to evacuate elsewhere. Their home is a pre-fab structure and no one has reported its status yet but it may have blown away. If nothing else, they both have lost more than a week's worth of income since both have jobs. We have another parolee and his wife who are members in a sister congregation. We are checking on their status.

Donations may be made to *NewLife Behavior Ministries*, P. O. Box 270720, Corpus Christi, Texas 78427 and marked: "Hurricane Victims Relief." Electronic contributions can be made through our web-site: [www.nlbm.org](http://www.nlbm.org) but please add a similar note so gifts are properly used. Other cities appear to be in greater need: Refugio, Rockport, Port Aransas, and especially Houston! *Disaster Relief* is set up in Portland at North Bay Church of Christ. The Westbury Church of Christ, 10424 Hillcroft Street, Houston 77096 is receiving donations. Also, IMPACT Houston, 1704 Weber Street, Houston 77007 does effective inner-city work. There are likely others but, together with the Lord's help, we will get through this with glory brought to God!

On my way home tonight, I stopped to pick dinner up at Luby's. A couple in their mid-40s walked by, looked at me as if they knew me and waved. I waved back and drove off. I wanted to get home before the food got cold. Something told me this couple might be in need so I went back and found them. They evacuated from Houston to Corpus Christi but were broke. Their car (parked blocks away) was almost out of gas. They will sleep in their car for days. I gave them all I had on me - \$69.77. I wish you could have seen their faces. You would have thought I had given them a million bucks! By the way, I forgot to ask if he is a felon. Oh, well . . .