

As we sit and watch the developments of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we all are asking who is to blame? We are the richest, most advanced country in the world and it baffles us that we can't even respond to our own people in a time of crises. Emotions run high. Fingers are being pointed in every direction. All of us have an opinion.

No matter what religion you believe, I can guarantee you that every religion follows one very basic principal: treat others the way you want to be treated. You will be judged by how you judge others and let there be no mistake about it, the measuring stick is at the bottom of the food chain, not the top.

You may be a fine, generous citizen, but let me hear your thoughts about those who struggle in the world and that will tell me who you really are.

You may have a nice church and fill your Sunday School classrooms every Sunday, but let me see what you do when one of your members falls on to bad times - whether their own doing or not - and that will tell me what kind of church you are.

You may be the most powerful, wealthiest country in the world, but when you pool your resources together in a crisis plan, let me see what that plan holds for the least amongst us and that will tell me if you even have a plan worth acknowledging.

What happened in New Orleans should make all of us in America feel ashamed. As a country, we made a plan for the haves, yet we failed to have a plan for the have-nots. Since 9/11, we have planned and re-planned our response to terrorist and natural crisis situations. Four years later we clearly see that we developed a plan that responded to everyone but those who need it the most. It truly is a national embarrassment.

It is not a race issue, it is a wallet issue. There was a plan for those who are living the American dream, be they black, white, old or young. They will get back to their homes, rebuild and I am certain that Louisiana - as well as Mississippi and Alabama - will come back greater than ever.

But there are so many who are unable to live that American dream. They barely get by living paycheck to paycheck- if they GET a paycheck. They live in a world where a simple flat

tire can throw their ability to keep current with their bills right out the window. For them, there was no plan. They simply got screwed.

Should we blame the President? Not necessarily. But we certainly should be disappointed in his lack of outrage in what has happened. We certainly should be furious at all those who are in a position to do something who spent most of their time trying to cover the failure with excuses instead and showing anger and contempt at how poorly our plans responded to our own people. We should all feel a real sense of sadness for anyone who doesn't look at this whole situation without getting upset.

We are the greatest country in the world. We will do the right thing and get those communities that have fallen back on their feet again. We will work hard to insure that this failure does not happen again. We are America and what makes us great is our history of pulling together as a nation during difficult times. We have done so for over two hundred years.

But let there be no mistake about this. What Katrina showed us is that our President, FEMA and all those who were put in charge of coming up with a plan failed measurably in understanding how to develop a plan successfully. The foundation for any emergency plan must give top priority to those who do not own cars, live paycheck to paycheck and have little resources or are laid up in a health care facility unable to respond on their own. Start with them and build your plan from there and you will have a plan to be proud of.

We failed ourselves this time. Let's stay mad enough to make sure we don't ever let this happen again. We are better than this.

Just A Thought