

For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.

Psalm 36:9

the LifeWord

with Michael Green



August 29, 2008



Dear Friends:

THREE YEARS LATER...

(As I write this, a storm named Gustav is gaining momentum in the Gulf.)

I won't kid you; there have really been some challenging moments over the last three years. Today, many are still dealing with the sting of the largest natural disaster in our Nation's history. I know it sounds nuts but that vicious storm was actually a blessing to many people. Big problems, inequities and inept leadership still exacerbate much of the healing but great things have also happened. To some, the bumbling "Road Home" program has been a road to nowhere but, inexplicably, others have done well with new homes, new possibilities and new neighbors.

The contrasts are amazing. During this difficult time we have seen the beautiful and the pathetic. People grabbing and people giving. We've seen the selfish and the selfless. Some who lost the most were some of the most beautiful in their sweet spirits of gratitude. They were a delight to help.

Quietly, without fanfare, we, and those who continue to stand with us, have been quite active and we have encountered many appreciative spirits. On the other hand, after such devastation, you wondered what it would really take to change some of the miserable and petty. Some, who had so much done for them, exhibited the same bitterness and ungratefulness as in their pre-storm lives. Go figure.

I learned, if you could grasp the concept, that things would never go back to what they were, you were immediately better equipped to handle the task ahead. More about that later.

Another big time truth...life down here would have been over long ago if not for church volunteers and Christian ministries from across America. The "*Church*" is clearly quicker and more efficient in handling the needs of those in pain. No governmental agency can touch even

the smallest storefront. We have been blessed by so many friends, old and new. We are glad to be part of the "Church".

We needed help and the "Church" came to help this church and we are eternally grateful. Immediately, we began pouring back into the needs of the people. Today, our actual dollar amount in help, benevolence and ministry is well into six figures. Our in-kind giving and influence networking has generated millions more in materials, food, furniture, appliances, clothing and medical assistance.

In contrast, we have witnessed a good bit of windbag pandering and fundraising with little trickling down. We've seen letters telling dramatic, sad stories that have increased personal bank and expense accounts but not benevolence. That is not us.

Ministry wise, God put us on a change course. In delivering us from a lifeless orbit, He broadened our world and expanded our call. The storm washed away much and ushered in a new vision, a multi-site vision. A new church has been birthed. Although we have faced tomfoolery courtesy some with active myopic motives, there has been a welcome, discernable change in the atmosphere. We have embraced a new call, a new sphere of fellowship, friendship and faith. We walk circumspectly in that knowledge. We now have one wonderful facility with another on the way. You'll also see some terrific folks at both locations who have embraced the new call.

As for the four of us, the story is also delightful and difficult. I am very proud of the other three precious ones who live in my house. They are strong and have learned the meaning of sacrifice; they have had their share of tough moments. Through it all, they have blossomed. Actions to discourage and denigrate have been disappointing and disillusioning, especially to our boys. Unfortunately, they have been made to suffer (some of it delivered in "Jesus' Name") for some of the tough ministry and business decisions we have had to make. In the face of covert and overt, we're still standing. Our sacrifices have been deep and heartfelt. We've served, "As Unto The Lord" and thus, we proceed.

After three years, we are blessed, alert and faith filled. We will not go backwards. In the process, I've often been reminded of Rusty Goodman's classic lyric, "I Wouldn't Take Nothin' For My Journey Now". As the journey proceeds, please keep us and the LifeGate Family in your prayers.

Linda and I have held strong to David's words from Psalm 27. "One thing I desire, one thing I seek, to dwell in the House of the Lord, to behold His beauty and inquire in His Temple". I'm often asked, "What is your biggest lesson from the last three years?" My answer is just three words, "God Is Faithful!" I just wouldn't care to go through it all again.

Michael



"Building Christ Into Every Life"
