

7/5/08

“Iowa vs. Katrina”

by

Tom Holbrook

Though Iowans are strangers to hurricanes they are not strangers to the biblical proportions of rainfall and flooding that hurricanes normally bring to other areas. The residents of Iowa and other mid-western states are currently suffering from a “500 year flood” that has completely inundated entire cities and surrounding farms, destroying homes, businesses, livestock and valuable crops that normally feed the nation’s populace. Truly it has been a “Katrina-like” scenario in the devastation and emotional upheaval of those affected.

Those who have been watching the news coverage of these floods have got to be moved by what they have seen. When warning came of the impending floods many were warned and ordered by public safety officials to evacuate their homes and businesses and they did; other areas further down river were warned of the coming rampaging waters and, as one body, neighbors and strangers went to work, side by side, filling and placing sandbags in hopes of stemming the raging waters; farmers and white-collar workers working together to move their farming machinery, cattle and other livestock out of harms way; the Governors of the states involved on the levees helping to place sandbags; and those same people will be coming in behind the floods to begin the massive and horrific cleanup efforts to bring some sense of normalcy back to the area.

I, for one, have been tremendously moved by what I haven’t seen in Iowa. Number one, there were no fingers pointing at the federal government accusing them of not properly keeping the dikes and levees in proper order thereby causing the flood; no accusations that the government actually “planned” the flood to punish those who happen to live in the flood plain; and I have not heard of any prisons releasing their prisoners into the streets. Also, thus far, I have not heard the Governor of Iowa, or Governors of the other flooded states, asking for over \$100,000 per resident (\$175 Billion in Louisiana’s case), from the American taxpayer, as the former Governor of Louisiana did to underwrite the rebuilding of that entire state.

I’m pleasantly overwhelmed by the lack of any reported rapes, looting, murders, or indiscriminate shooting in the streets; nor have the city and state governments had to go door to door to confiscate all weapons as was attempted in New Orleans. I have not heard that the farmers, and others, whose homes

were destroyed were moving to other states in droves, at government expense, nor leaving their destroyed homes sitting abandoned for someone else to clear away.

I'm also happy that the Reverends Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson have not been leading any protest demonstrations on Iowa's city streets crying "Foul against any of the governmental bodies."

My question, prompted by an e-mail I received, is this. Why is there such a difference between the New Orleans "Katrina" scenario and the Iowa "500 year flood" scenario? How can such devastations, both caused by a natural phenomenon, result in two entirely different outcomes and attitudes of the citizens of both areas?

Many would say the primary difference is the race of the citizens of the two areas involved... one is predominately black and the other white. That would be the easy way out, but I would have to disagree that is the cause. To say the color of a person's skin would make him act as the citizens of New Orleans did during and after Hurricane Katrina would be an insult those whose skin is black and have chosen to persevere and rise above prejudice and circumstances with which life presented them and claim the promise of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, that all Americans have been given. Those people in New Orleans who acted as they did, be they black, white, yellow or tan, chose for themselves, for years, to be sucked into a "victimology rhetoric" of one political party, and preferred to be kept on the dole of local, state and federal governments. Their weakness and poor choices led to the inevitable consequence of being so dependent on "The Man" handing out the money that they couldn't make a move nor a decision without orders or instructions from on high. And those orders did not come.

Those who chose to remain under "The Man's" thumb and recipients of his pitiful handouts did not know how to fend for themselves and, unfortunately, when they needed him most, "The Man," whom they had voted into offices of power and authority, didn't have the intelligence or the inclination to help them. "The Man" I'm referring to was the corrupt and inept local political hacks whose only concern was their own welfare and the cash cow of Federal subsidies that would soon be lost.

The citizens of Iowa, multi-racial in their make-up, are hard working men and women who live close to the earth, existing by the sweat of their brow and the grace of God to honor their labors with a good and bountiful crop. Nature's rebellion to their efforts is nothing new to them and they've learned to handle catastrophe with the stoic attitude of "We will overcome this as we have overcome all that has come before," then they roll up their sleeves and get back to life and work as usual... not expecting anyone to do their job for them.

As one writer stated, “Apparently Iowa, an historically red state, has fallen through the cracks and missed out on the Democratic Victim Mentality Re-Education Programs in their schools,” such as was taught for years in New Orleans.

Thank God.

#