

# Are You Prepared for The Storm?



By Dr. Henry Harbuck—AEGA Overseer/President

First, I want to personally say “Thank You,” to those who called and emailed to say they were praying for us at AEGA Headquarters before the fury of Gustav struck, and during the aftermath. Also, your prayers are appreciated for the many other families in Louisiana who were blitzed by *the storm* -- Hurricane Gustav. We, at AEGA, have also have been praying for families who lost loved ones, and for those who were displaced by *the storm* (hurricane).

The AEGA Headquarter facility in Monroe endured *the storm*; suffering only a minor setback with a few leaks in the roof. We lost electrical power for one day, as well as our phone systems. Some of our staff members were trapped in their homes by the high water; and due to the flood water and power outages, some employees were unable to get to work for a couple of days. However, the work load was carried on by those who were able to get here. Regrettably, there are still power outages in our city, and the flood waters are still with us. However, crews from around the country are working hard to restore power -- not only in North Louisiana, but in the southern part of our State (see photos below that show some of the damage). Unfortunately, as I write this article, another storm is approaching the Gulf Coast. So, once again we ask for your continued prayers concerning *the storm*, Hurricane Ike. Hopefully, this time around, we will be better *prepared for the storm*, if it comes our way.

We are proud of our first term governor, Bobby Jindal. He did a magnificent job orchestrating the necessary evacuations and relief groups who were assisting those in harm’s way. This time our national and state government officials were better prepared; therefore, the outcome was much different than during Hurricane Katrina. The churches and charitable organizations have also been a tremendous help to those in need. We also wanted to help, so we offered our Retreat Center to those who were displaced by *the storm*.

Being prepared for a *storm* is very important. To illustrate this point, permit me to tell you a story: Some years ago, a television news camera crew was on assignment in southern Florida filming the widespread destruction of Hurricane Andrew. The camera panned the area where, amid the devastation and debris, one lone house was still standing on its foundation. The owner was cleaning up the yard when a reporter approached him and said, “Sir, why is your house the only one still standing? How did you manage to escape the severe damage of the hurricane?” “I built this house myself,” the man replied. “I also built it according to the Florida state building code. When the code called for 2x6 roof trusses, I used 2x6 roof trusses. I was told that a house built according to the Florida code could withstand a hurricane (storm). Well, may I say, ‘I did, and my house did.’ It could be that no one else around here followed the code.” This story gives us a good example of how one may survive *a storm* ... be prepared!

On a spiritual note, I am reminded of that moving hymn, “It is Well with My Soul,” written by a Presbyterian lawyer, Horatio G. Spafford (1828-1888) and composed by Philip P. Bliss (1838-1876). Without doubt, it’s a matchless and deeply moving hymn that has long been cherished by people everywhere. As you may know, the story began when Spafford received news that his four daughters had drowned on a voyage to Europe when the ship went down (he later learned that not all had perished in the sea and were safe). After boarding a ship himself, he made the voyage to the exact spot where his family had endured shipwreck. Once there, Spafford looked over the waters where the tragedy occurred. Moved to tears by the sight, he sat down and wrote this poignant text that so accurately described his own personal grief -- “When sorrows like sea billows roll ...” From that beginning sprang the words of the hymn, “It is Well with My Soul.” We should remember that Horatio Spafford did not dwell on the theme of “life’s sorrows and trials.” Instead, he focused on the third stanza which spoke of “the redemptive work of Christ” and also on the fourth verse which anticipates “His Glorious Second Coming.” Spafford has given us an example: When the difficult *storms* of life come our way (whether they are natural, emotional, or financial disasters), God will give us the strength to endure them and the ability to look beyond the tragedies of life to that blessed hope we have in Him of eternal life.

Are you prepared for the *storms* that will come in your life? A genuine believer in Christ may be tattered and worn by wind storms and life storms, but faith and endurance are the keys to bring us through them. As such, I close with this Scripture to encourage us all: “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” (Hebrews 6:19)



8 1/2 ft. Alligator seeking higher ground is found walking on Hwy 165 which is about 15 minutes from the AEGA Office. Photo by Christi Harris



Monroe, Louisiana Subdivision not far from the AEGA Headquarters—Photo by Michael Dunlap