

**The
BLACK
C o M M e n t a t o r**
Commentary, analysis and investigations
on issues affecting African Americans
www.blackcommentator.com

Issue 152 – September 29, 2005

***A Personal Commentary on the Hurricane Katrina Aftermath
by Faye Kennedy
Guest Commentator***

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Friday, September 16 was declared "National Day of Prayer" in honor and in memory of those who died due to Hurricane Katrina's wrath and our government's lack of actions.

As I watched the horrific images of our beautiful brothers and sisters on the television and in the newspapers I was teleported back 400 years in America when enslaved Africans had to beg for food, water and a little human dignity. I saw history repeat itself in September 2005.

Please let's pray for our brothers and sisters, but also let's use this day to make a commitment to hold our government accountable (accountable for their lack of actions) for these deaths.

- We want reparation now!
- We want a national dialogue on race, poverty and the high cost of oil led by people with some sense.
- We want an independent commission (similar to the 9/11 Commission) to investigate what went wrong.
- We want our brothers and sisters treated with dignity and respect by the various relief agencies and numerous volunteers.
- We want our brothers and sisters reunited with their missing children (it's estimated that 2,000 children are now separated from the parents).
- We want funding for local community-based job training programs staffed by sensitive people with some sense.
- We want funding at the local level for affordable housing for the survivors and their families.

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- We want funding for local schools and training for staff to assist the survivors.
- We want funding for local culturally appropriate mental health services to assist in the healing process for the survivors (many of us need some healing just from seeing these horrifying images).
- We want banks to provide low interest loans to assist survivors, businesses, and local government to rebuild their communities.

So, mourn the dead. But please make a commitment to struggle for justice for the living (the survivors) by writing, calling, e-mailing, and faxing your congressional representatives, Mr. Bush and his administration. Send letters to editors of your local newspapers. Call for local community town halls meetings to discuss the issues. Write a check to an organization that is providing aid to the survivors. Volunteer to host a family. Hold family meetings to discuss how your family will handle emergencies. Do whatever you can to pray this never happens to any people again. History does not need to repeat itself. Please Take action now, contact the following:

Mr. Bush: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

Home Land Security: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/homeland/>

Honorable Barbara Boxer, CA Senator: <http://boxer.senate.gov/contact/>

Honorable Doris O. Matsui, U.S. House of Representatives: http://www.house.gov/htbin/wrep_findrep

Honorable Dianne Feinstein, CA Senator: <http://feinstein.senate.gov/email.html> <http://vitter.senate.gov/>

Honorable David Vitter LA Senator: <http://landrieu.senate.gov/contact/index.cfm>

Honorable Mary L. Landrieu: contact@gov.state.la.us

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