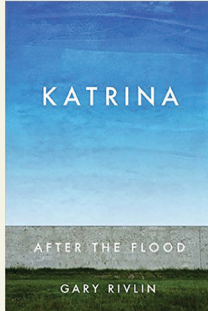


In Reading Groups

Book Discussion Guide from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

by Jeff Langford



Katrina: After the Flood

by Gary Rivlin

Ten years after Hurricane Katrina made landfall in southeast Louisiana—on August 29, 2005—journalist Gary Rivlin traces the storm’s immediate damage, the city of New Orleans’s efforts to rebuild itself, and the storm’s lasting effects not just on the city’s geography and infrastructure—but on the psychic, racial, and social fabric of one of this nation’s great cities.

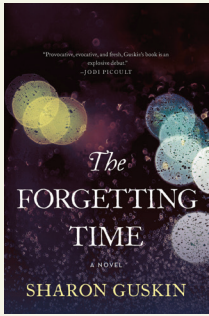
1. The book’s Prologue offers a powerful and infuriating story of the breakdown of communication and civility in the wake of the Hurricane Katrina disaster. What were your initial reactions to the story? Did your perception of this event change as you read about subsequent events throughout New Orleans and the surrounding region?
2. Alden McDonald is an important figure throughout the book. Why was he successful in helping his business recover when so many other businesses failed? How did his long history in the community help him post-Katrina?
3. While many government agencies and programs seemed to fail or fall short of expectations, the Katrina recovery gave rise to several helpful volunteer groups and leaders. Why do you think dedicated individuals and groups sometimes succeeded when larger, better-resourced efforts sometimes failed?
4. Churches and religious organizations are rarely mentioned as key leaders in the New Orleans recovery efforts. What are some reasons Christians’ efforts may have been less visible to the author? How would you evaluate your personal and congregational response to the Katrina disaster?
5. The book offers many examples of how race was a factor in the recovery of New Orleans. Which example most affected you? How much of the racial inequality seen in the recovery was historical (i.e., African-American neighborhoods being built in lower lying, flood-prone areas) vs. current (i.e., business leaders advocating for a richer, whiter New Orleans)?
6. How did the public education system change after Katrina? In your opinion, how will those changes be viewed in the long run?
7. Some of the first horrifying stories that emerged from post-Katrina New Orleans (such as New Orleans

police chief Eddie Compass’ report that babies were being raped in the Superdome) ended up being falsehoods or exaggerations. What lessons can this teach us about crisis and communication?

8. In chapter 12, The Urban Land Institute outlines issues that need to be addressed in order to successfully rebuild New Orleans. How do you assess the group’s suggestions in retrospect? What do you think officials and leaders would do differently if given the opportunity?
9. What was your impression of Ray Nagin in the immediate aftermath of Katrina? How did your opinion of Nagin change throughout the book?
10. Several individuals seemed to find a greater purpose through the Katrina recovery efforts, including Connie Uddo and Mack McClendon. How do these stories resonate with the Christian idea of calling and vocation?

Jeff Langford is coordinator of CBF Heartland and serves as editor of CBF’s missional formation curriculum.

NEXT MONTH



The Forgetting Time

by Sharon Guskin

Single mom Janie is trying to figure out what is going on with her eccentric son Noah. As psychologist Jerome Anderson approaches the end of his life, Noah may be the case to validate his belief that there is something beyond what anyone could see or comprehend.