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Wednesday 6th September I wasn't sure I'd be able to say that. Those were without a doubt the most harrowing 6 hours of our lives."

Many of you have asked for an update and more details.

Our little island nation of the British Virgin Islands -- formerly dubbed 'Nature's Little Secrets' -- were hit directly and ravaged by the Category 5, history making, most powerful hurricane to ever hit the Atlantic. Thankfully God was merciful beyond what we can imagine and we are alive to "tell the tale" and sing his praises.

A very big thank you to all who prayed, hoped and inquired about our well-being. Our home and cars suffered extensive damage (as did those of all our extended family members island-wide; no one was untouched) but with breath in our lungs we hope to recover and rebuild as God allows.

Tortola DamagePlease keep praying for families here in the BVI and other areas affected by this monster storm, including our sister community of the US Virgin Islands). Sadly, five persons lost their lives in the BVI and my heart goes out to their families who have been dealt a double blow.

The humanitarian needs are beyond our capacity to cope with a majority of persons having lost their homes and or livihoods (or both). Electricity and running water are curently things of the past and life as we knew it is a distant memory. In spite of what seems like a major setback, I maintain that God remains good and I invite you to sing his praises today.

By the way, if you wish to help, please pray for our continued safety (another storm is expected in the next three days). Also pray for the recovery process and for discernment in figuring out the next steps. You may also consider contributing to the GoFundMe account which was set up by Lori Schumaker and my Blessing Counters/Higher Ground Conference Retreat family. We also are in contact with Caribbean chapters of HOPE worldwide to offer wider support to our community.

Thank you for your love and support as we climb out from under this. In 2 Chronicles 20 I'm reminded that the battle belongs to God, not me. It will be some time before we can get back to 'normal' but I know you will be praying right alongside us. In the meantime, let's shine bright. With love and blessings (and gratitude in abundance), Sylvester and Marva.

The photo at the top shows the view from our home on the morning before and after Hurricane Irma. Every single tree was stripped of its leaves and pieces of homes (including mine) litter the hillsides. Yet, I will be joyful and praise the Lord! (Habakkuk 3:17-18)

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Kendall Albert, Nashville, TN, USA
— Monday, 18 September 2017
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- **Indianapolis Disciple Wins Peabody Award for Journalism**
Katie Thompson, Indianapolis, IN, USA
— Sunday, 17 September 2017
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- **Most Meaningful Christmas: A Mother's Perspective of HYC**
Allison Reynolds, Manchester, England
— Sunday, 17 September 2017
Allison Reynolds is a wife and mother from the UK. She and her family served on the HOPE worldwide Youth (and Family) Corps in the Philippines over Christmas 2016. Read about their trip from her...
- **Florida Spared – Give God the Glory!**
Jeff Chacon, Tampa, FL, USA — Thursday, 14 September 2017
Disciples in the state of Florida are so grateful for your faithful and fervent prayers for us! We are still trying to assess the damage of the storm, but so far, the report...



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Caribbean Disciples Face Daunting Recovery After Irma - While Bracing For Another Hit

Richard Beadle, St. Georges, Grenada

Editor's Note: Please continue to pray for those in the Caribbean as Hurricane Maria is now bearing down as a Category 5 storm.

When Hurricane Irma passed through the Caribbean in early September as potentially the most dangerous hurricane in recent history, it hit some of our smallest islands head-on, causing severe damage.

Several islands were devastated; some even declared "uninhabitable" by their governing authorities. Now, even as their inhabitants navigate the challenges of the immediate future, they face the daunting possibility of another direct hit - this time from Hurricane Maria - which is heading in their direction, and threatens to become a Category 3 hurricane over the next few days.

Disciples on two of the affected islands - Tortola (British Virgin Islands), and St. Thomas (US Virgin Islands), are still singing praises to God, grateful to have escaped without loss of life. The following is an update from the disciples who were directly affected by Hurricane Irma:

From Marva Smith in Tortola (from her Facebook page)
Church: Tortola Church of Christ
Number of disciples: 2
Sylvester and Marva Smith, son Jadan and daughter Jan

"Friends, words cannot express how very thankful I am to God for his mercies. As you know by now our family made it through Hurricane Irma with our lives intact! If you've seen images of the widespread devastation, then you know that was no small feat. For six hours on



CONNECTING DISCIPLES IN CHURCHES AROUND THE WORLD



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