

Inquiring Minds topic – 8 June 2018

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Disaster

The unabridged edition of the Random House Dictionary (copyright 1966) defines disaster as "a calamitous event, especially one occurring suddenly and causing great damage or hardship". Does it occur as a result of windstorm, such as a hurricane or tornado, or a flood, or a fire, or an earthquake, or some man caused event? Does it need some special severity? How would that be measured? People harmed? Dollar damage?

Who should respond to a disaster? How?

Should each person be responsible to fend for herself or himself by preparation or insurance? Should charities such as the Salvation Army, Red Cross or churches provide the fall-back?

Should taxpayers be responsible? If so, when and for how much? Does that include construction of protections against floods or provision of fire fighting capability? Is FEMA the appropriate response? When is the FEMA response inadequate? Puerto Rico? Florida citrus growers? If this is a political decision, what are the proper criteria?

Should the government restrict land use or construction to avoid the potential of a disaster? How much government action is appropriate to protect each of us? When we refuse to comply ,what penalty should be applied? If that failure is the failure of local government should that disqualify the residents of that jurisdiction from aid?

The hurricane season has started. Does it matter that we know a hurricane may well come our way?