

## *Seeing God's Creation when things go wrong*

**H**urricanes. Earthquakes. Floods. Tornadoes. When natural disasters occur, many people flee. As a disaster relief first responder, I travel to the scene as quickly as possible.

I'm part of a team of volunteers that offers hope in the aftermath of disasters. When we arrive at a site, we always find that God's creation is affected. Sometimes rivers overflow their natural boundaries, or trees are uprooted from the ground. But disasters usually impact God's greatest creation—people—the most.

God has called me to share His love and comfort with the adults, youth, and children affected by such tragedies. Traditionally, though, only men have participated in disaster relief work in my area: feeding, mud-out, and clean-up and recovery. At first, some of these men were hesitant to involve a woman like me. But their attitudes gradually became more accepting. Perhaps my encounter with one tornado victim helped.

On that day, a team member was preparing free meals in a church parking lot. Suddenly a car pulled up next to him. A woman stepped out and asked, "Are there any women on this team?" The team member immediately summoned me. For the next hour, I listened as this woman told her story. I wasn't able to change her circumstances—but I *did* offer empathetic hugs and a shoulder to cry on, in a way that only another woman could.

I often remember that woman when I discover I'm the only female in a room full of disaster relief workers. I don't have any extraordinary skills or talents. I'm just a country girl from rural Mississippi, USA. But God has shown me that He can work through me—a woman—in a special way when I choose to see creation through His eyes.

And if God can use me, God can use you too.

-By Donna Swarts

***More testimonies are posted at [www.bwawd.org](http://www.bwawd.org).***