

# Another Look at Survival

by Chuck Baldwin

One does not have to be a prophet to know that we are on the precipice of some potentially catastrophic, or, at the very least, challenging-days. In fact, most of us are already in challenging days, and some are already enduring catastrophic events. That is, if one would call being out of work, losing one's home, facing life-threatening medical conditions without any prospect of medical insurance, several families being forced to live in one house due to homes being foreclosed, etc., catastrophic.

The potential for an escalation of cataclysmic events, however, is very real. Only a "blooming idiot" would now call someone who attempts to prepare for "the day of adversity" a Chicken Little. Anyone who does not see the storm clouds on the horizon isn't paying attention.

For example, can one imagine what would happen if terrorists nuked a major American city or cities? (Once again, I encourage readers to go get the videos of the CBS TV series "Jericho" to get an idea of how quickly life, and even civilization, could change.) Imagine if there was another 9/11-type event. What would happen if some form of Zimbabwe-style inflation hit the US? What would happen if anything disrupted the distribution of Welfare checks, or food to local grocers? Imagine a Hurricane Katrina-style natural disaster in your town. I think people everywhere are beginning to awaken to just how vulnerable we all really are.

As a result, people from virtually every walk of life have recently been asking my thoughts on how they should prepare. Therefore, I will attempt to share with my readers some of the counsel I have given these folks.

First, a disclaimer. I am not an economist; I am not a survival expert; I am not a firearms expert; I am not an attorney; I am not a physician. In fact, I am not an expert in anything! For sever-

al years, however, I have tried to learn from others. I am an avid reader. My work has allowed me to travel extensively. I have had the privilege of sitting at the feet of—and learning from—many of America's most learned, most trained, and most qualified "experts" in a variety of fields. What I write today, I have learned from others. I've formed my own opinions and priorities, of course, but everything I'm sharing has been said, or written about, before. But if I can share something in today's column that will help someone be better prepared for the days to come, then my goal will have been achieved.

## Location:

First, analyze your living conditions. Where do you live? Do you live in an urban or rural environment? Is it a big city or small town? Do you live in an apartment or condominium? How close are your neighbors? Do you even know your neighbors? Would you trust them if the electricity was off and they were hungry? Could you grow your own food, if you had to? How easily could you secure your home? If you live in a cold weather environment, how long could you stay warm without electricity? These are the kinds of questions you need to ask yourself now.

Over the past several decades, masses of people have migrated into large metropolitan areas. More people live in urban areas than at any time in American history. While this may be well and good for times of prosperity, it is an absolute nightmare in any kind of disaster. Does anyone remember what New Orleans looked like after Hurricane Katrina came through? Can anyone recall what happened in downtown Los Angeles during the 1992 riots? Needless to say, any inner-city environment could become a powder keg almost instantaneously, given the right (or wrong) circumstances. And the bigger the city, the bigger the potential problems.

If you live in the inner city, I suggest you consider moving to a more rural location. Obviously, now is a very good time to buy property (especially rural property), but the downside is, selling property is not as favorable. If you can afford it, now is a great time to buy a "safe house" outside the city. If you are fortunate enough to have family or some true friends nearby, you might want to put your heads — and some resources—together in preparation for serious upheaval. Obviously, a team of prepared people is much better than being alone.

If you must stay in your urban location, have some commonsense plans in hand in the event of a major disaster. Get to know your neighbors: find out whom you can trust and whom you can't. Keep some extra gasoline on hand, in case you need to get in your car quickly and leave. Have several exit routes planned ahead of time, in case roads are blocked. Have a "bug-out" bag containing essential ingredients to live on for 3 or 4 days. If leaving is not an option, have a plan to secure your home as best you can. You'll need to think about things such as food, water, medicine, warmth, self-defense, etc. But at this point, to do nothing is absolute lunacy!

## Provisions:

During a major disaster, food will quickly disappear. Living for over 3 decades on the Gulf Coast, I can tell you with absolute certainty that whenever disaster strikes (usually an approaching hurricane, for us), food and provisions at the store sell completely out in a matter of a few hours. People panic, and within hours, you cannot find food, bottled water, ice, generators, batteries, candles, etc. In a matter of hours, every gas station in the area will be completely out of gas. Not days. Hours!

Furthermore, almost all disasters include a complete loss of electricity. The water supply is compromised.

Bottled water becomes more valuable than bank accounts. Dehydration becomes a very real and present danger. I remember witnessing a man offer an ice vendor \$100 for an extra bag of ice during Hurricane Ivan. My wife and I went 2 weeks (14 days) without electricity in the aftermath of that hurricane. Believe me, I got a taste of just how precious bottled water, ice, batteries, generators, fuel, etc., can become.

I suggest you have a supply of food and water to last at least 2 weeks. A month would be even better. Personally, I can live a long time on tuna fish or peanut butter. You can purchase MREs from a variety of sources, as well as “camp-style” packaged food from stores such as Academy Sports & Outdoors. Of course, bottled water is available everywhere during normal times. Stock up! Plus, I suggest you have some water purification tablets or a Katadyn water filter on hand. And, if you are able, prepare to grow your own food. Canning food is another very helpful hedge against deprivation. If your parents were like mine, this was standard operating procedure.

Get a generator. Keep a supply of fuel on hand. Stay stocked up on batteries, candles, portable lights, first aid supplies, and personal hygiene items — especially toilet paper. Trust me, during times of intense and prolonged disaster, toilet paper could become more valuable than money. I also suggest you never run out of lighters or matches. You never know when you’ll need to build a fire, and during a prolonged survival situation, fire could save your life. If you live in a cold weather climate, you probably already have some sort of wood stove or fireplace.

Obviously, you need to take stock of your clothing. Do you have clothes suitable for extended outdoor activity? What about boots? During a disaster, you would trade your best suit from Neiman Marcus for a good pair of boots. Do you have gloves? Insulated underwear? What about camouflage clothing? These could become essential outerwear in the right conditions. Plus, any “bug-out” bag will need to include spare clothing.

Communication and medical provisions are also a high priority in any kind of emergency. How will you communicate with your loved ones when the phones (including cell phones) go down? A preordained rally point (or safe house) might be something to think about. And what about medical supplies? Do you have enough to take care of routine (and not-so-routine) emergencies? What about your prescription drugs? How long could you function if you were cut off from your druggist for any length of time? Think about it now.

And one more suggestion, while we’re on this subject: the best resources in the world are of little use if one is physically incapable of making good use of them. In other words, GET IN SHAPE. During any kind of emergency situation, physical exertion and stamina become immensely important.

#### **Commodities:**

I suggest you have at least some cash on hand. Just about any and all disasters will result in banks being closed for extended periods of time. That also means credit card purchases being suspended. You need to have enough cash to be able to purchase essential goods (if they are even available) for an undetermined amount of time.

Of course, some survival gurus insist that during any cataclysmic climate, precious metals will become the only reliable currency. But when most of us are trying to feed our families and pay our bills, it is difficult to get excited about buying gold and silver. Obviously, I would never recommend that anyone jeopardize the present on the altar of the future. My parents made it through the Great Depression with canned goods and garden vegetables; gold and silver were certainly not a priority with them. On the other hand, a little gold and silver could go a long way in a prolonged emergency — if you can afford it without jeopardizing present needs.

In fact, in a disaster, what is considered a valuable commodity can change rather quickly, as the barter system takes a life of its own. What is valuable is determined by what you need and how badly you need it. In a prolonged disaster,

simple things such as toilet paper, canned goods, ammunition, and clothing could become extremely valuable; while cars, video games, televisions, etc., could be reduced to junk status. In antiquity, wars were fought over things such as salt.

Speaking of cars, remember that during a prolonged “national emergency” that might involve some sort of nuclear attack or widespread civil unrest, an Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) might be employed; in which case, most every late model vehicle would be completely inoperable. Accordingly, if one can keep an older, pre-computer-age vehicle in good working order, he or she might be driving the only non-government vehicle capable of going anywhere.

#### **Self-Defense:**

Needless to say, during any kind of disaster, your safety and protection will be completely up to you. If you really think that the police are going to be able to protect you during an upheaval, you are living in a dreamworld.

In both the New Orleans and Los Angeles disasters, police protection was non-existent. Lawless gangs quickly took control of the streets, and people were left to either defend themselves or swiftly become the helpless prey of violent marauders. In fact, in New Orleans, some of the policemen actually abandoned their oaths to uphold the law and joined with the criminals, turning their weapons upon the public.

Face it, folks: in any kind of disaster, you must be able to defend yourself, or you and your family will be meat for these animals of society that will quickly descend without mercy upon the unprepared, unsuspecting souls around them. This requires that you be armed! It also requires that you be skilled enough to be able to efficiently use your arms.

Therefore, I strongly suggest that you purchase firearms sufficient to keep you and your family safe, and also that you practice sufficiently to know how to use them.

Now, when it comes to a discussion of which firearms are preferable for self-defense, the suggestions are as varied as the people who proffer them. These are my suggestions:

I believe every man (along with his wife and children of adequate age) should be proficient with the following weapons: a handgun in .38 caliber or above, a .22 rifle, a center-fire hunting rifle, a semi-automatic battle rifle, and a shotgun.

My personal preference for a self-defense handgun is either a .45 ACP 1911 (either Colt or Kimber) or a .40 S&W. In the .40 caliber, my favorite is a Glock 23. In the 1911, I like the Commander size configuration. I also like the Glock 21, 30, and 36 in .45 caliber. My wife prefers to carry a Smith & Wesson .38 caliber revolver in the snub-nose, J-frame configuration. But this is primarily due to the reduced weight of these weapons for carry purposes. If needed, she could make a good accounting of herself with a Glock 19 in 9mm. If you are someone who has never owned and seldom fired a handgun, I recommend you buy a Glock. They are as simple as revolvers to operate, reliable, and almost indestructible. Plus, they provide increased magazine capacity, and are safe. They are also very easy to disassemble and clean. Of course, in dangerous game territory, you will need the power of a .45 Long Colt, .44 Magnum, or even a .454 Casull. These calibers are not for the limp-wristed, but when one is facing a brown bear or mountain lion, it is what one will need to

survive. Plus, when your life is on the line, you'll never feel the recoil.

For a .22 rifle, I really like the Ruger 10/22. For a hunting rifle, my suggestion is either a .270 or .30-06 caliber bolt-action rifle. I prefer the Remington Model 700 BDL or Browning X-Bolt, but there are several fine weapons in this configuration and caliber by numerous manufacturers. In dangerous game territory, a Marlin .45-70 could be a lifesaver. For a battle rifle, I suggest an AR-15-style weapon (I prefer Bushmaster) in .223 caliber or a .308 Springfield M1A. For a shotgun, I suggest a 12-gauge pump. Here I prefer a Winchester Model 1300, which is not made anymore. So, you'll probably have to choose between Mossberg and Remington. For ladies, however, a 20-gauge shotgun is probably a better choice, and at "bad breath" range (where a shotgun shines, anyway), it is just as lethal.

Whatever you choose, practice with it to the point that you are able to use it proficiently. And be sure you stock up on ammunition. A gun without ammo is reduced to being either an expensive club or a cumbersome paperweight.

Go to your local independent sporting goods store (I don't recommend the large national chain stores to do your firearms shopping) and get to know your hometown firearms dealer. Most of these people are kind and helpful folks who will be more than happy to assist you in finding exactly what type of firearm is suitable for you and your family.

## Spiritual Power:

I firmly believe that man is created to have fellowship with his Creator-God. I really don't know how people can face the uncertain future that we currently face without the spiritual knowledge, wisdom, comfort, and power that is made available through Jesus Christ. I believe the maxim is true: "Wise men still seek Him." I strongly suggest that you seek to possess a personal relationship with God's only begotten Son. In truth, spiritual preparation is far and away the most important preparation of all. Accordingly, be sure to pack a copy of God's Word in your survival gear.

That we are facing challenging days is a certainty. Exactly what that means is yet to be determined. I trust that some of my suggestions will help you be better prepared for what lies before us. Plus, here is an excellent online Survival Blog chock-full of great suggestions and resources for all things survival. Check it out:

<http://www.survivalblog.com/>

I am sure that I have left out several items that others more qualified than me would include. I welcome their suggestions, as I am always desirous to learn from those who are wiser and more experienced. In the meantime, remember your Boy Scout motto: "Be Prepared."

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