



-- BAPTIST PRESS

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September 6, 1979

79-150

Dominica Devastated, Baptists Will Aid Families

ROSEAU, Dominica (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries hope to aid 500 families in an area served by one of their churches as part of their effort to help this island nation recover from Hurricane David.

John R. Cheyne, associate consultant for relief ministries of the denomination's Foreign Mission Board, relayed this plan in a telephone report from Barbados.

Cheyne, who conducted a personal survey of Dominica, said the island is a picture of almost complete devastation. Ninety percent of all agriculture, including 100 percent of the banana crop, was destroyed. Bananas account for 70 percent of the nation's income and it will take two years to produce another harvest, he said. All of the citrus and 80 percent of the coconut crops were lost. Ninety-five percent of the timber is down.

He reported 90 percent of the houses were damaged, with about half of them beyond repair. All of the hotels, factories and schools were destroyed. The hospital is also beyond repair and all of the clinics were demolished.

Rebuilding from the hurricane will involve the entire nation, Cheyne said. Officials plan to seek United Nations help to build a hospital and have asked various relief agencies to take responsibility for helping a specific segment of the population.

Cheyne said missionaries will ask for \$65,000 for food aid during the next six months to provide a basic food supplement for the 500 families. Plans are to provide a weekly supply of seven pounds of rice and seven pounds of flour--plus powdered milk, beans, salt, and oil--for each family.

Two construction teams of four men each have been requested immediately for Dominica. The teams are scheduled to work consecutively. James W. Cecil, associate consultant for laymen overseas, worked with state Brotherhood organizations to have 150 volunteers on standby to begin reconstruction.

Water is now available in limited supply, but to live on the island missionaries will need electric generators for their homes. The island's utility system was destroyed, Cheyne reported, and officials estimate it will take eight months and \$8 million to make repairs.

Thirty-seven are known dead on Dominica as a result of the hurricane and 60,000 more are homeless.

Volunteers, Funds Sent
To Aid Hurricane Victims

By Ruth Fowler

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists, through the denomination's Foreign Mission Board, are sending \$85,000 for relief and an 11-person medical team to begin aid to Caribbean hurricane victims.

Hurricane David swept through the Caribbean during the long Labor Day weekend, taking lives, destroying crops and property, contaminating water supplies and closing down industry.

Medical care, food, and blankets are among the first needs missionaries will try to meet.

Foreign Mission Board officials released \$40,000 in hunger funds to missionaries to begin food distribution in the Dominican Republic. Another \$25,000 in general relief funds will be used for blankets, medical supplies and chartering a plane to get the supplies into the country. Many of the medical supplies will be donated by the Medical Assistance Program (MAP) organization.

The board also has approved \$10,000 in aid from general relief for disaster response for Dominica in addition to the \$15,000 in food aid which John R. Cheyne, associate consultant for relief ministries, took on the survey trip to Dominica he just completed. The Baptist World Alliance gave \$5,000 of the food aid figure.

A Southern Baptist medical team of eight physicians, a pharmacist, a nurse-surgical assistant, and an emergency medical technician will go to the Dominican Republic. Working out of schools, the team will divide into smaller teams to cover a wider territory. Harold E. Hurst, associate to the board's medical consultant who coordinated the planning for the team, will accompany the group.

W. Eugene Grubbs, the board's consultant for laymen overseas and relief ministries, indicated that this would be just the beginning of reconstruction and relief efforts in the nations of the Dominican Republic and Dominica.

"This is our biggest challenge since Hurricane Fifi in 1974," Grubbs said. "Factories are down. Crops are destroyed. People will be without work for months and will need food."

After the latest relief appropriations, only \$39,611 remains in the board's general relief fund. This amount is small compared to the immensity of the need, according to Grubbs, who asks Southern Baptists who want to give to hurricane relief through the board to designate their gifts for "relief." He said that will allow money to be used for whatever aid is needed most.

More than 800 persons died in the hurricane and more than 200,000 are homeless in Dominica and the Dominican Republic.

In Dominica, Dr. John Ross, a Southern Baptist special project dentist, began immediately to help with first aid. Other missionaries began to repair missionary residences damaged by the storm.

Reporting to Grubbs by phone from Barbados, Cheyne said the Dominica missionaries will make a request for an additional \$65,000 in food aid.

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The board also approved \$5,000 from regular operating funds to help repair missionary residences. Four missionary personnel and a missionary child remain on Dominica. A Mission Service Corps volunteer couple returned to the United States and three other mission personnel and three children evacuated to Barbados.

The Dominican Republic is about half the size of Kentucky. Together with Haiti, it forms an island just southeast of Cuba. Dominica (pronounced dough-min-ee-ka) is one of a handful of tiny islands making up the Windward Islands, the most easterly group of islands in the Caribbean.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Norman Jameson, feature editor in the national office of Baptist Press, Nashville, Tenn., has flown to the Caribbean to assist the Richmond Bureau of BP at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in coverage of the damage and relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane David.

Commission Redoubles
Public Interest Concern

Baptist Press
9/6/79

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Reports that the broadcast industry may try to resurrect parts of the "dead" rewrite of the Communications Act has triggered the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission to "redouble" its efforts to "see that the public interest is upheld in any broadcast legislation."

A bill introduced last year by U.S. Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin, D-Calif., which would have completely overhauled the present Communications Act, ran into widespread opposition and failed to emerge from the House Commerce Subcommittee on Communications before the August recess.

Many religious leaders, consumer advocates, and representatives from labor, education and broadcasting criticized the bill, H.R. 3333. Most of the religious community's objections to the bill's broadcast sections focused on provisions to deregulate the television and radio industries.

Although Van Deerlin has admitted that H.R. 3333 is dead, Broadcasting Magazine reported recently that proponents of broadcast deregulation are now urging members of the House subcommittee to sponsor common carrier amendments to the existing law.

In a letter to Van Deerlin, William H. Elder of the Christian Life Commission voiced strong opposition to any amendments which would lay the groundwork for eventual deregulation of the broadcast industry. Elder also asked Van Deerlin "to resist any movement away from the Fairness Doctrine or the necessity to include public affairs in programming"--two regulations in the existing law.

Another Christian Life Commission official, Harry N. Hollis Jr., said he believes the withdrawal of H.R. 3333 resulted from "the demands of many Southern Baptists and others throughout the country" that the "public interest" standard be included specifically in any broadcast reforms. Hollis, who testified before the Van Deerlin subcommittee last year, said the same standard should be sustained through the amendment process.

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"I believe the message that the American people are not going to abandon their responsibilities as owners of the airwaves came through loud and clear," he said. "The public does not intend to lose the battle for the airwaves, and it would be tragic if this message is ignored by Congress."

Hollis urged members of the broadcast industry to "stop trying to take the airwaves from the people through the legislative process" and to "concentrate on meeting their responsibilities as trustees of the airwaves."

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**Baptist College To Purchase
\$1 Million Worth of Land**

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP)--Palm Beach Atlantic College's board of trustees has voted to purchase \$1 million worth of land from the First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach, Fla. The land surrounds the college's current campus on South Olive Avenue.

The purchase consists of five parcels of land composing 14 lots in the area around the campus. The \$1 million purchase price will be paid over 10 years.

The purchase, according to George R. Borders, president of the 12-year-old private Baptist college, is a step in the college's efforts to develop its permanent campus on a 21-acre area in West Palm Beach. The college is also preparing for construction of its first new structure, a \$1.5 million student services center.

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CORRECTION: In Baptist Press story mailed 9/4/79 entitled "Skyrocketing Crime Rate Unites Clergy, Politicians," paragraph 2, line 2, should read "Cleveland Mayor Dennis Kucinich even told..." instead of Dennis Ducinich.

Thanks,
Baptist Press