



# The Alliance Southeast response to Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas

In cooperation with  
the Bahamian Alliance Churches,  
EnVision Miami,  
and CAMA Services

*"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us." – 2 Cor. 1:3-4*

## **Good news in the midst of tragedy**

- The Alliance Churches in Nassau were spared much of the damage from Hurricane Dorian and are taking the lead in responding to the crisis
- The Bahamian people are working together to assist their fellow countrymen in overcoming the disaster
- Immediate material needs (clothing, water, food, shelter) are being met by many groups
- Good contacts have been made between our Bahamian Alliance Churches and other local congregations, other aid groups, and the local and national governments in the Bahamas. These outside groups are reaching out to our Bahamian Alliance Churches to help meet the needs of the people of the Bahamas.

## **A different kind of disaster**

- This will be a long-term recovery, not just a simple clearing of homes of mud and water damage
- There are 9,000 people evacuated from the more devastated islands to refugee centers in Nassau
  - Many of these will not be able to return to the islands they used to call home
  - Many face post-traumatic stress and emotional and spiritual needs that surpass their physical needs
- These issues will continue to need to be addressed long after the first-responder aid agencies leave by the end of this year
- Four distinct groups needing help today in the Bahamas:
  - Bahamian refugees from Grand Bahama (Freeport) and Abaco (Marsh Harbor) who lost everything and are living in large numbers temporary shelters
  - Bahamian refugees from those same islands who are temporarily staying in small numbers with family and friends in Nassau
  - Haitian residents who are refugees and are facing "second-class" status due to lack of papers documenting their status in the Bahamas
  - The people of Nassau who are welcoming the refugees now, but will face overcrowding, congestion, and job competition with the new arrivals as time goes by
- The largest needs are for housing and jobs, a task greater than we can solve. So, what COULD we do?

## **Ways we could come alongside our Bahamian congregations**

- **Counseling teams (short-term)**
  - Teams to come to the Bahamas in the remaining months of 2019 and beyond to listen and provide counseling help to the victims of Hurricane Dorian. Medical screenings also occurring at the same time.

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- These teams would help in refugee centers in cooperation with the Bahamian government under Dr. Allen and also do counseling training at our Bahamian Alliance Churches for other local pastors
- These teams would help provide triage of those who just need to vent and those who need further counseling help
- These teams would provide Christ-based counseling that would not only provide emotional healing but also help people understand that God still loves them in spite of all they have been through
- **Christmas program in early December 2019**
  - Pastor Nathan Wells of Chapel on the Hill Church has spoken of his dream to see the children most affected by Hurricane Dorian have a special Christmas program to lift their spirits and point them to Jesus Christ this December. This would involve multiple local congregations working together.
  - Alliance congregations in Florida would be encouraged to donate toys, new clothing, school supplies, hygiene items, etc. that would be taken to the Bahamian Alliance Churches in Nassau
  - The churches there would put on a program lasting several days between December 4 and 10 that would focus on children one day, youth one day, and the entire surrounding community on Sunday, December 8, to cheer up and to point to Jesus Christ.
  - Games, food, programs, and other outreach activities would be coordinated by the local churches. Florida congregations would send people as needed to assist during these outreach events.
- **Material disaster relief supplies (long-term)**
  - The Chapel on the Hill Church has identified a need to have a ready supply of long-lasting items on hand in a safe location so that in future storms they will be ready to help immediately
    - Tarps, tents, long-lasting foodstuffs, water filtration, etc.
  - Some of these can be purchased much more cheaply in the US and shipped to our churches in the Bahamas for meeting future needs
  - Some of these can be purchased locally in Nassau with donated relief funds, helping the local economy recover
- **The special needs of displaced Haitian residents of the Bahamas**
  - The Kemp Road Alliance Church is focused on helping the Haitian refugees from the other islands
  - Many Haitians lost residency documents in the storm
  - Other Haitians were in the Bahamas without proper documents
  - Most Haitians in the Bahamas face “second-class” status and some are afraid of seeking aid due to their concern about being sent back to Haiti.
  - Our Haitian association of churches in Florida under the leadership of Rev. Marc Horace would like to come alongside the Kemp Road congregation to help meet the specific needs of the Haitian refugees
- **Support help for the above recovery efforts**
  - Coordination of existing “home-grown” relief efforts in our Alliance Southeast congregations so results are maximized (First Alliance International Church in Fort Lauderdale and others)
  - Work team(s) to help improve the Chapel on the Hill facilities so more relief and outreach can be done:
    - Guest house improvements (installation of A/C units already on hand, electrical repairs, termite damage repairs, bringing in additional fans, building of additional bunk beds, etc.)
    - Fellowship Hall improvements (new A/C units, roof repairs, new tables and chairs) so can be used for counseling training of Bahamian pastors, counseling of refugees, Christmas outreach
  - Work team(s) to help with Kemp Road Church repairs to exterior of building and A/C to be better able to minister to the Haitian refugees
  - Replacement of inoperable bus at Chapel on the Hill Church with a used bus they have already identified so transportation of work teams and greater outreach to local youth and children can happen again
  - Soul care for our local Bahamian pastors (sabbath rests, development of a local team to come alongside to lift some of the day-to-day burdens of juggling family, congregational ministry, and disaster relief).

### **What is being asked of the Bahamian congregations?**

- To take the lead in praying about, identifying the details of, planning the strategy for, funding, and staffing the above recovery efforts with human and financial resource assistance from the Alliance Southeast, EnVision Miami, and CAMA Services so that the local community is reached with the love and Good News of Jesus Christ.