

Pray for Puerto Rico

September 29, 2017



The situation in Puerto Rico has not improved. However, The Alliance is already taking practical steps to help those most severely affected. Two disaster coordinators from the Puerto Rico District are assembling a task force consisting of two pastors from each of Puerto Rico's six regions to gain a better understanding of the extent of the damage and how to best respond.

Mike Sohm, president of CAMA Services, the Alliance's relief and development arm, spoke with Javier Gómez, Puerto Rico District superintendent, who expressed his gratitude for the love and concern coming from churches. However, because of the difficulties associated with communications

on the island, he has asked that at least for now, calls and emails from the U.S. be curtailed to better enable crucial communications within the island. Phone and Internet service on the island is hard to come by, and 90 percent of those with cell phones have no service.

Instead, Javier requests that inquiries and offers to help be e-mailed to cama@camaservices.org. CAMA will track calls and e-mails and summarize offers of help for the disaster coordinators.

"Please pray!" Mike urges. "When people on the island call or talk with Javier, they are crying, and all he can do is cry with them. Let's weep with those who weep."

Please pray for

- those who have suffered great loss and find themselves without adequate shelter or basic necessities;
- ongoing protection; potentially life-threatening rain and flooding is forecast for the island this weekend;
- wisdom for Javier and the Puerto Rican relief coordinators and pastors. They are struggling to know how to help because they are suffering alongside their congregants;
- communication to be restored. Only 20 of the 63 churches in Puerto Rico have been reached, and it is difficult to assess the damage as a result;
- Alliance churches on the island, as many have been badly hit. One was flooded with seven feet of water;
- God's peace and hope to cover the nation as they grieve all that has been lost and destroyed.

PUERTO RICO NEEDS OUR PRAYERS AND SUPPORT

September 25, 2017

Although access to the hardest hit areas is severely hampered, damage assessment and relief has begun.



Hurricane Maria
Cripples Puerto Rico
Hurricane Maria entered Puerto Rico's southeast side on Wednesday, September 20, with category 4 winds of 155 miles per hour. This is the worst storm the island has experienced in eighty years. As of September 26, the situation remains dire as the first wave relief from the outside world is just reaching the island.



The infrastructure of the island (electricity, airports, communication, and buildings) was severely damaged. It may take up to a year to restore the power grid. Only a few of the 63 Alliance churches in Puerto Rico have been reached, and report minimal damage so far.

Updates

September 23, 2017

From Javier Gómez, superintendent of the C&MA Puerto Rico District:

To our Alliance Family

Greetings dear brothers and sisters. We are so thankful you are there praying for us and caring.

It is redundant to say that Puerto Rico was badly hit by Hurricane María. But we want to assure you once more that we have never experienced such destruction before. Puerto Rico looks like a war zone. The infrastructure (including electrical power, aqueducts, airports, dams, communication, streets and avenues, houses, and buildings) was severely damaged. There is almost no fuel, at least for now; so we have to conserve what is in the tank. The towns in the mountains are isolated from the rest of the island because streets and bridges have collapsed. We have no means to communicate with our pastors (nor some of our family); but we did manage to contact a few; those are doing well.

There are 63 Alliance churches on the island, and yesterday I could barely visit 10 of them. Some were damaged (from lightly to severely), and some were miraculously spared. I'm planning to keep trying to reach them, but some remain completely out of reach.

Please pray:

- For those who have lost everything
- For those most vulnerable (elderly, children, and those hospitalized)
- For those who are helping one another
- For the church—that we can leverage this opportunity to be the church for God's glory
- For those outside of the island who are gathering resources to help
- For quick reestablishment of communication
- For good weather
- For wisdom for our leaders (in government, church, and industry)
- For the safety and courage for our pastors and elders as they reach out to serve their communities
- For healing miracles
- For spiritual discernment, empowerment and physical stamina for the long haul
- For Puerto Rico as a whole—that with God's help we will persevere through this catastrophe and emerge stronger

Thank you, Alliance family. Knowing you are there for us is such an encouragement.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Javier Gómez

LONG ROAD AHEAD FOR PUERTO RICO

All of Puerto Rico, home to 63 Alliance churches, is without power.

Puerto Rico

Hurricane Maria entered Puerto Rico's southeast side on Wednesday, September 20, with category 4 winds of 155 miles per hour. This is the worst storm the island has experienced in eighty years. The entire island, home to 63 Alliance churches, is without power. CNN reports that 3 million people will be without power for four to six months.

A [video](#) taken in the city of Manati, where five Alliance churches are located, shows a home with its roof blown off and several downed trees. Many Alliance people have reported they are safe. Gabriella Martinez, children's director at La Cumbre, said, "We are fine. We have no water or electricity and hardly any connection, but God is faithful and good."

The National Office received news from the C&MA Puerto Rico District on Thursday that Superintendent Javier Gomez has designated Pastor John E. Sierra as the disaster relief coordinator. We will provide additional updates as they become available. Meanwhile, please pray for the people of Puerto Rico to have hope and peace in the midst of their current circumstances.

Mexico

The Betesda ACyM in Juchitan, Oaxaca, was severely damaged in the first earthquake and has been condemned.

According to a September 20, 2017, [report](#) from The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada, an Alliance church in Juchitan, Mexico, was severely damaged from recent earthquakes and condemned as a result. The church hopes to rebuild not only a church building but also a refuge center that can serve as a multipurpose space.

Immense restoration work throughout the region is needed. There are approximately 200,000 living on the streets in the affected areas, with a majority of homes being damaged as well as having the risk of collapsing as a result of the aftershocks. "The towns outside of the city are not receiving much assistance, and the need is overwhelming," the report said.



