

~~H.M.B.~~

Disaster Relief ~~Report~~

DISASTER RELIEF REPORT
OF THE HOME MISSION BOARD, SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
September 22, 1969

By

T. E. Carter, Secretary
Department of Christian Social Ministries, HMB

BACKGROUND

At the Spring 1966 Board of Directors meeting, the Home Mission Board established a Disaster Relief Fund in accordance with a request from The Southern Baptist Convention. An amount of \$50,000 was appropriated at that time from the Home Mission Board budget. The hope was expressed that subsequent appropriations would bring the amount to a level of \$250,000. The administration of the fund was assigned to the Department of Christian Social Ministries on behalf of the Home Mission Board and the Southern Baptist Convention. (As of January 1, 1969, the fund had a balance of \$217,789.31.)

A policy for our involvement in disaster relief was adopted by the Home Mission Board in 1967, and a copy is enclosed.

HURRICANE CAMILLE

General

The current disaster, labeled Hurricane Camille, has been described as the most destructive hurricane ever to hit our country. It headed toward its target on August 17, 1969. Early indications were that it would come inland around Panama City, Florida, but later in the day changed its course toward New Orleans. An immediate call was made to several of our Christian Social Ministries missionaries in New Orleans with instructions to board up and secure property and to make arrangements for providing disaster relief after the strike.

Again, however, the direction of Camille changed to a more northerly course and late in the night it struck southeastern Louisiana, the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Dauphin Island, Alabama, and headed inland. After the initial destruction it began to decrease in power, yet continued to have strong

winds and heavy rainfall. In an unusual fashion it later regained strength on August 19 and 20 causing much loss of life and property in Nelson County, Virginia, before going out to sea in the Atlantic. Maps follow for your review.

Immediate Response

Since the Disaster took place during Home Mission Week at Ridgecrest, reports were at once given to those attending and special prayer was made on behalf of those in the affected areas. Dr. Foy Rogers, state director of missions, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, was in attendance at Ridgecrest and the situation was discussed with him. Together, on August 18, we called Dr. Douglas Hudgins, executive secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, to begin development of plans. He was informed of our interest, and involvement in disasters on behalf of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the resources available. It was his feeling that because of the great confusion and utter destruction brought about in the areas hit, that no money, volunteers, nor supplies should be sent at that time.

Calls were made to discuss plans and needs with Dr. Robert L. Lee, executive secretary, Louisiana Baptist Convention, and Dr. George Bagley, executive secretary, Alabama Baptist State Convention. The situation of volunteers for relief work was discussed with Dr. George Schroeder, executive secretary-treasurer, Brotherhood Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, and we issued a joint Home Mission Board - Brotherhood call for prospective volunteers.

Local Baptists in Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and Virginia were in the areas before the disaster occurred and stayed at their posts in order to minister to the people. They were at work helping people in the name of Christ before relief organizations reached the scene. They have continued

to do so up to this moment.

Calls were made throughout the Southern Baptist Convention for food, clothing, personal comfort items, et cetera. Those who were going to send money were asked to send it directly to the affected state conventions in order to make it available sooner. Some sent money to the Home Mission Board and this was forwarded.

Two main points were established for the reception of relief supplies. One was under the direction of J. W. Brister, superintendent of missions, Gulf Coast Baptist Association, Gulfport, Mississippi. From there he supplied churches throughout his area. The other point was the bus barn at New Orleans Seminary, directed by Dr. Mercer C. Irwin, executive secretary of the New Orleans Baptist Association, in close cooperation with Christian Social Ministries missionaries, Charles McCullin and Warren Rawles of New Orleans. These distributed relief supplies throughout affected areas of Louisiana and made several trips into Mississippi.

On-the-scene investigation and planning meetings started shortly after the hurricane struck and have continued to the present time. Included in these trips have been personnel from the state conventions affected, the Brotherhood Commission, and the Department of Christian Social Ministries, Home Mission Board. In each case the purposes have been to provide disaster victims with food, clothing, shelter; secure accurate information; establish procedures for relief work.

On August 22, after telephone conversations between Dr. Porter Routh, Dr. Arthur B. Rutledge, and Dr. W. Douglas Hudgins, the sum of \$5,000.00 was sent to Mississippi Baptist Convention for immediate emergencies. On August 25, five thousand dollars was also sent to Louisiana for the same purpose. Assurance of further financial aid was made to these conventions and to

Alabama and Virginia, but no requests have been received.

The Church Loans Division, Home Mission Board, recommended to the Board of Directors Executive Committee a ninety (90) day moratorium on principal and interest for the loan of the East Howard Baptist Church, Biloxi, Mississippi. It was also recommended that the same be done for the other churches damaged by Hurricane Camille. This recommendation was adopted on September 11.

Only a small number of people live permanently on Dauphin Island, Alabama. The one Baptist Church, though small, did considerable relief work and has been active in repair since then.

Nelson County, Virginia, is located between Charlottesville and Lynchburg. The latest count is that 131 people were killed or still missing due to the rain and resultant floods. Small creeks became raging torrents. Water from mountainsides brought mud slides with huge boulders and debris crashing on everything and everyone below. Church and associational leaders of that region have done an admirable job of relief and rehabilitation.

Condition of Church Buildings and Property

The Baptist Record included the approximate damage to Mississippi Church buildings and other property. In some cases these figures include the pastors' personal loss also.

Gulf Coast Association

Bayou View, Gulfport.....	\$1,000
Bay Vista, Biloxi.....	800
Bay St. Louis.....	1,000
Bay View, Biloxi.....	14,000
Beach Blvd, Pass Christian	19,500
Bel Aire, Gulfport.....	10,000
Biloxi, First.....	6,000

Big Ridge, Biloxi.....1,200
 Broadmoor, Gulfport.....3,050
 Calvary, Gulfport.....1,000
 D'Iberville, Biloxi.....none
 East Howard, Biloxi.....25,000
 Emmanuel, Biloxi..... 2,000
 Faith View, Saucier..... 100
 Fernwood, Gulfport1,000
 Forrest Ave., Biloxi..... 200
 Grace Memorial, Gulfport.....27,500
 Gulf Gardens, Gulfport.....5,350
 Gulfport, First.....360,000
 Gulfport Heights, Gulfport.....1,500
 Handsboro.....none
 Lakeshore, Hancock County.....5,000
 Lizana, Gulfport.....none
 Long Beach, First.....300,100
 Lyman, First..... 500
 McHenry, First..... 500
 Michael Memorial Gulfport..... 100
 New Hope, Gulfport.....3,000
 Northward, Gulfport..... 300
 Mississippi City, Gulfport.....10,000
 Olivet, Gulfport..... 300
 Pass Christian, First.....4,000
 Pass Road, Gulfport.....4,285
 Pearlinton..... 500
 Perkinson, First..... 100
 Providence, Gulfport..... 500
 Riverside, Long Beach..... 100
 Sharon, Long Beach.....7,000
 Shifalo Memorial, Kiln.....1,800
 Success, Biloxi..... 500
 Trinity, Biloxi.....1,500
 Waveland, First.....1,150

West Gulfport.....1,000
 Wiggins, First..... 500
 Woolmarket, Biloxi.....3,000
 Delisle Chapel, Delisle.....1,000
 Shoreline, Bay St. Louis.....15,000

TOTAL \$841,935

Jackson County Association, superintendent of missions, Zeno Wells, estimated about \$50,000, but felt most would be covered by insurance.

Pearl River Association reported these estimates to church building: Western Union, \$20,000; Flat Top, a total loss - over \$12,000; First Church, Carriere, \$5,000; Oak Hill, \$15,000; Juniper Grove, Poplarville, \$7,500; Crane Creek, \$35,000.

In Louisiana the buildings were: Triumph, Buras, \$250,000; Riverside, Buras, \$35,000; Empire, \$45,000; Venice, \$250,000--\$300,000. All except Riverside is considered a complete loss.

An incomplete report on Virginia indicates Rockfish Church building a complete loss.

LESSONS FOR FUTURE ACTIONS

Disasters, whatever their cause, create a situation in which the day-to-day patterns of life are suddenly disrupted, for people are often placed in a condition of helplessness and suffering. This very situation, however, presents an opportunity for Baptists to act out the Gospel of Christ in meaningful ways of helpfulness. Time and again Baptists have done just this since Hurricane Camille. Yet at the same time one of our greatest problems is that other Baptists will not do anything with anybody except other selected Baptists, in the traditional Baptist way - do it mainly for Baptists or Baptist property - and thereby miss one of life's most unique

ways of witnessing for Christ through concrete expression of love, compassion, and concern. If we are to do an effective work of disaster relief we will have to minister to any people who are in need, and we must have cooperative efforts with others who deal with disasters.

When disaster strikes, the responsibility of government remains the same as in normal times: the protection of life, property, public health, and welfare and the maintenance and repair of public property. Disaster increases but in general does not change government responsibility. None of the funds made available through the Federal Disaster Relief Act can be used for direct grants-in-aid to individuals or to families affected by the disaster.

The main arm of disaster relief is the American National Red Cross. Their responsibility for disaster relief is included in the congressional charter of Red Cross. Along with responsibility there is authority vested in the Red Cross by Congress which makes it unnecessary to issue special permission or license by state or local governments for the organization to activate and carry out its disaster relief program. As Baptists, however, we have neither the ready authority nor the resources. The Red Cross has long recognized the need for cooperation from other organizations in carrying out its responsibilities and seeks to serve as a channel for the generosity of the American people. We are now exploring ways to cooperate with the Red Cross in future disaster relief, thereby, gaining status, credentials, definite responsibilities, and authority to be in the area. We can do this with definite plans for immediate and identifiable Baptist relief action. We should not have to be asked to go into action in a disaster but should have well-developed procedures for keeping informed on any potential or actual disaster

situation and for activating the disaster program. At this stage in our development we can say that much experience has been gained, mostly by trial and error. Even so, God has used this disaster to save many people and to bring churches and communities together in a genuine closeness. We will continue to refine our plans and disaster relief programs for the future.

TEC

9/22/69

DISASTER RELIEF -- HOME MISSION BOARD POLICY

Definition

Disaster relief refers to assistance to persons and/or churches who are deprived of the essential needs of life because of widespread natural disasters resulting from flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane or similar catastrophe, including the effects of war or public disorder causing physical or economic deprivation. Disaster relief generally, as defined here, does not apply to assistance to persons deprived of the means of support through loss of income caused by unemployment, illness, or old age and known as poor relief or assistance, welfare, or public assistance.

Objective

1. To provide material, physical, and financial help to churches and/or people suffering from widespread disaster.
2. To provide methods, techniques, and plans for rendering such help in Christian social welfare.

Implementation

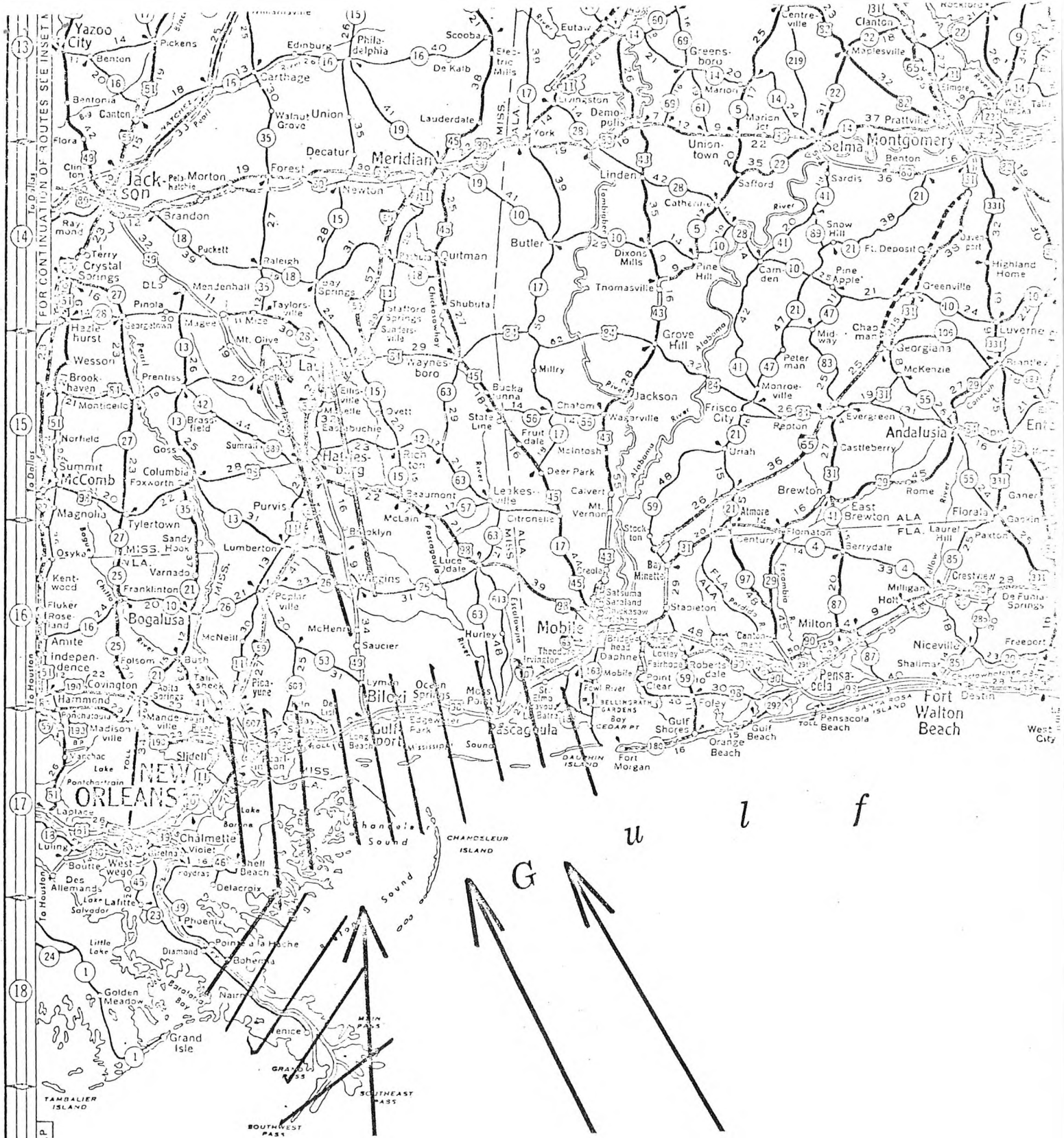
1. In keeping with its program assignment the Department of Christian Social Ministries will administer disaster relief operations within normal fiscal provisions.
2. A comprehensive report of the work accomplished at the disaster area will be made to the Home Mission Board.

Types of Service

1. Emergency Service
 - 1) Feeding
 - 2) Housing
 - 3) Clothing Distribution
 - 4) Medical Aid
 - 5) Transportation
2. Long-range Service
 - 1) Financial assistance for rehabilitation of damaged and/or destroyed church buildings, and/or denomination owned buildings.
 - 2) Assistance in cleanup following a disaster.
 - 3) Services of volunteer workers.

Limits of Service

1. Care shall be taken to enlist the cooperation of the Baptist constituency in the disaster area.
2. Every possible effort shall be made to cooperate fully with the Office of Civil Defense, public and/or private welfare agencies, always maintaining the identity of the Home Mission Board and/or state convention.
3. Caution shall be exercised to avoid duplication of services.



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