



PICKING UP THE PIECES

Those who had nothing have even less now. In August, Hurricane Dean battered Haiti's southern coast and ravaged destitute coastal villages like Bainet and Jacmel. Before the storm hit, hundreds of Bainet's frightened families fled from their fragile huts to makeshift government shelters. Today, in the storm's wake, these poor families' shacks lie decimated. The devastated families now realize that what little protection they once had no longer exists.

"I didn't think I would lose everything," lamented Geranine, a destitute mother of six. The incredulous mother and her children stood together, surrounded by the remains of their stick hut. With thatches of palm fronds — parts of their former home — nestled at their feet, Geranine concluded, "It was a catastrophe."

What meager belongings families like Geranine's had were washed out of their huts and strewn about Bainet's coastline. In the midst of such a chaotic mess, however, Geranine's steadfast faith is apparent. "I'm still alive, thank God," she said. "I rely on God because I don't know what to do now.... I ask God to help me to find new shelter to live with my children... a new home."

"It was a catastrophe."



The storm forced 111 people to live in this open-walled shelter.



Across Haiti, the hurricane claimed 11 lives, and thousands of homes were badly damaged or destroyed. Approximately 100 families who lost their homes in Bainet are now living in three temporary shelters.

"I would soon find a shelter from the raging wind and storm." (Psalm 55:9)

The storm's waves rose to heights of 10 feet and landed only yards away from Bainet's open-walled shelter. At the sight of such waves, a young boy named Pierre was so frightened that he sprinted down the road and tripped, falling into an open cooking fire. His hands broke his fall but were badly burned. Pierre's family lost their entire home and all their belongings in the storm.

Guillen Beauquin, a mother of infant twins, covered her little girls with a plastic tablecloth to shield them from the gusting winds and rain. "I cried, 'God protect me and my children!'" recalled Guillen.

The day following the hurricane, Guillen thanked God for sparing the lives of her two newborns. "Thank You. My children are alive," she prayed. Although Guillen is grateful that her children's lives were spared, the family's shack was completely destroyed. The distraught mother observed, "My life is now in the hands of my neighbor."

The impoverished families of Bainet and Jacmel were already endangered by the region's extreme poverty. Now, after Hurricane Dean, they are completely exposed and in greater jeopardy. Your compassionate gifts will help these families pick up the pieces after such devastation and rebuild their lives. By protecting unsheltered families, your support will help replace misery with hope. ❖