



Disaster Relief Project Update



RELIEF EFFORT IN JAMAICA

By Damion Countryman, Pilot-in-Training

On October 28, 2025, Hurricane Melissa made landfall in Jamaica, an island in the Caribbean. Melissa was a category 5 hurricane with winds up to 160 miles per hour that decimated Jamaica, Cuba and the Bahamas.

When we heard about the hurricane's aftermath, we immediately got into action. We started planning a trip to take our Cessna 206 Pathfinder airplane from its base in Florida to Jamaica. We began by contacting the Jamaican Aviation Authorities and the local church Conference. Did you know that 1 in 8 people in Jamaica are Seventh-day Adventists? At the same time, we were working on getting a permit to fly into Jamaica and an overflight permit for Cuba, so we would not have to fly the long way around to reach Jamaica. Surprisingly, the Cuba overflight permit was easier to obtain than the Jamaica permit. On Tuesday, November 4, we received all our permits and were ready to begin our exciting trip to Jamaica. It was a beautiful day to go flying. I would be flying our Cessna 182 to pick up a second pilot at a town on the coast of North Carolina. His name is Sky, and he is one of our volunteer pilots. He would be joining me as we ferry our Cessna 206 to Jamaica.

God is abundantly able to fulfill His promises. Every earthly good comes from His hand. The resources of the Lord are infinite, and He employs them all in accomplishing His purposes. Faithful

stewards, who wisely use the goods which God has entrusted to them to advance the truth and bless suffering humanity, will be rewarded for doing so. God will pour into their hands while they dispense to others. He is advancing His cause in the earth through stewards entrusted with His capital. Every good thing upon the earth was given to us as an expression of the love of God. He makes people His stewards and gives them talents of influence and means to use for the accomplishment of His work on the earth. Our heavenly Father proposes to connect finite human beings with Himself. As laborers, they may be His instruments in the salvation of souls....

Those who walk in the light of truth will emit light to those around them. They are living witnesses for Christ. They will not be like the world, living in moral darkness, loving themselves and the things of the world, and seeking earthly treasures. God has made us our brother's keeper and will hold us responsible for this great trust. God has taken us into union with Himself, and He has planned that we shall work in harmony with Him. He has provided the system of beneficence, that we, whom He has made in His image, may be self-denying in character, like Him whose infinite nature is love. (From the Heart p73)

Once we met up at the airport, we went into the Pilot lounge to plan our IFR flight to Tri-County Airport in Florida to pick up our Cessna 206. After we finished preparing our flight, we departed around 3 pm. It was a fabulous, clear day with not many clouds in the sky. Since we started off so late, we got to see an incredible sunset when we landed at Tri-County around 7 pm. Flying at night is one of the best times to fly. You get to see all the beautiful lights on the ground, and you get to see the stars when the sky is clear. The following day, we went up in the Pathfinder Airplane to get used to how it flies and how it feels to control. Our Pathfinder 206 airplane is a six-seat, high-wing aircraft that can carry about 700 pounds of cargo, making it the perfect airplane for disaster response in Jamaica.

We started on our journey. Our first stop was going to be in Miami to pick up cargo bound for Jamaica. On this leg, Sky was flying the airplane, and I was working the navigation and the radios. It was another beautiful day and an exciting part of the trip. I got to fly my first STAR (standard terminal arrival route) into Miami Executive Airport. We landed and met Dr. Balvin Braham, the vice president of the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. He brought much-needed supplies for Jamaica that we loaded into the airplane. We loaded up four generators, three starlinks, two chainsaws, and some oil for the chainsaws. Since we landed right before dark, we spent the night with Dr. Balvin and his lovely wife in their wonderful home. The next morning, we set off for Montego Bay, Jamaica. We made a stop in Marathon, Florida, in the Keys to refuel before continuing on. Since we had a full load, it took a long time to reach our cruising altitude of 9,000 feet. Once we reached 9,000 feet, the flight to Jamaica was very slow and over lots of water. Before we left, we packed a life raft, an emergency radio, and life jackets in case we had to make a water landing. Before every flight, we prayed for a safe trip and for God to use us wherever we were.

"For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways." Psalm 91:11 We made it safely to Montego Bay Airport. One thing I did not expect was that customs would take over an hour for our small airplane. After we finally made it out of the FBO, we were greeted by some people from the Conference who were there to pick up the supplies that we had brought in. Also, they had brought us a treat, fresh coconuts with coconut water. It was so delicious; we had not had lunch that day and had not had much water since we had been flying for 5 hours.

We were given a ride to the West Jamaica Conference, where we met the Conference President, Glen Samuels, who would help us coordinate our flights around the island. We also got a much-needed delicious dinner of beans and rice, something that we would get a lot of while we were there. For our first night in Jamaica, we stayed with Gideon's Rescue, which was also there to help with the relief efforts. The next day, we refueled the airplane after our long trip and saw some of the damage the hurricane caused to the island. Everywhere we looked, we could see roofs missing from homes, power lines in the streets, power poles gone, and all the trees lining the streets or along the side of the road. While we were there, we did a couple of flights moving water and food around the island.

When we did not have the weather to go flying, we helped around the Conference headquarters wherever help was needed. We helped by packing food bags to send to the areas hardest hit by the hurricane. It's such a fantastic experience, even though many of the conference personnel have homes that are damaged. The conference building is severely damaged and without power; they are still doing all they can to help those across the island. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19-21

Sky was only in Jamaica for 1 week because he had to get back to his airline job, and I was there for 2 weeks. Then I came back to the States to finish up some more of my training. While we were in Jamaica, it was decided to permanently deploy the Cessna 206 to further God's work. Deyvid Batista, our President, told Glen Samuels about a pastor-pilot he knew, and Glen was so excited that he decided that day to schedule a meeting to hire him for the Conference.

During the third week of December, Jarret Moss, our Chief pilot, flew commercially to Jamaica to check out some local pilots so we could continue our flights while our permanent missionary was in the process of moving. While Jarret was there, he checked out a couple of pilots. Before Deyvid and I left, we had discovered another really short grass airstrip in the most affected area. So Jarret also flew into that airstrip to see its condition. While Jarret was there, he flew with these pilots multiple times, taking supplies into the Saint Elizabeth Airstrip.

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Revelation 21:4

But the day is coming when the battle will have been fought, the victory won. The will of God is to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. The nations of the saved will know no other law than the law of heaven. All will be a happy, united family, clothed with the garments of praise and thanksgiving—the robe of Christ's righteousness. All nature, in its surpassing loveliness, will offer to God a tribute of praise and adoration.

The world will be bathed in the light of heaven. The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold greater than it is now. The years will move on in gladness. Over the scene, the morning stars will sing together, the sons of God will shout for joy, while God and Christ will unite in proclaiming, "There shall be no more sin, neither shall there be any more death." (MH 506)

Thank you for earnestly praying for Jamaica and for your support. Christ proposes that men shall become laborers together with God. He makes human beings His Instrumentalities for drawing all men unto Himself.



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