



*Cross International*

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**PROJECT 0290**

# **New Testament Baptist Church Soup Kitchen**

— Philipsburg, St. Maarten —



A generous man will himself be blessed,  
for he shares his food with the poor.

Proverbs 22:9

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## Project Synopsis

### Description

Provide hot meals five days a week for needy individuals suffering from homelessness, unemployment, and hunger.

### Purpose

To prevent malnutrition among unemployed adults, single mothers, the homeless, some school children, and other needy people — many of them Haitian immigrants.

### Location

Philipsburg, the capital city of St. Maarten in the northeast Caribbean.

### Cost

**\$9,900** to help feed about 75 people per day, five days a week, for a year; or \$825 per month. This provides about half of the budget for the program.

### Summary

- A declining tourism industry, plus an influx of poor Haitian immigrants, has put a lot of strain on St. Maarten, the Dutch half of a Caribbean island known more for its beaches and casinos than its slums. But the poverty is very real.
- New Testament Baptist Church in Philipsburg provides a hot meal a day, five days a week, for those who would otherwise go hungry — the homeless, the unemployed, single mothers, drug addicts, and even some children on their way home from school. Many of the beneficiaries are Haitians.
- Cross International is committed to providing financial support for the feeding program, so that the poor will not be forgotten during these difficult economic times.
- This outreach is a way for Christians to demonstrate the gospel message through tangible acts of mercy.





## Trouble in Paradise

St. Maarten — the Dutch side of a tropical island in the northeast Caribbean — is not a place usually identified with poverty. The popular vacation spot is better known for its beaches, casinos, exotic drinks, and wild nightlife.

But in such a small place, no amount of cruise ships and luxury hotels can shelter tourists from the reality that paradise has a dark side — the slum neighborhoods of tin shacks hidden among mango and banana trees.

Still, St. Maarten is heaven-on-earth compared with the deplorable conditions of nearby Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. And that is why Haitians, desperately seeking better lives for themselves, sometimes flee to St. Maarten, only to discover once they arrive that they cannot find work.

Exacerbating the problem is a recent 20 to 30 percent downturn in the tourism industry, around which so much of the island's economy has been built. A bad economic year for the U.S. equals fewer tourists to put money into St. Maarten's businesses. As the locals put it, "When America sneezes, we catch a cold."

The result is homelessness, unemployment, insecurity, and hunger. And that is where New Testament Baptist Church has chosen to step in, with help from Cross International. The church's soup kitchen provides a hot meal five days a week to anyone who needs it: the homeless, the unemployed, single mothers, drug addicts, and even some children on their way home from a nearby school. Many of these people are Haitian immigrants living in the slums. The program is easily accessible to the poor because of the church's convenient location in the heart of Philipsburg.

Cross International has committed to helping New Testament Baptist Church cover the cost of running the soup kitchen, so that nobody has to go hungry during these tough economic times.



## Bring the Gospel to Life!

We should not be surprised to find poverty existing side-by-side with wealth and prosperity. Whatever its causes, it has been part of every human civilization. As God taught his people in Deuteronomy 15:11, “There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.”

Likewise in our own time, the plight of the poor is an opportunity for us to reach out a helping hand. A daily meal means so much to those who have no money for food; people who, if not for the help of compassionate Christians like you, would suffer the painful effects of malnutrition. But the New Testament Baptist Church soup kitchen is more than a simple feeding program — it is a chance to back up the gospel message with Christ-like action. As the old saying goes, “They will know us by our love.”

We hope you will prayerfully consider joining with Cross International in support of this great outreach to the poorest residents of St. Maarten.

### Our Promise to You!

100 percent of the proceeds of this appeal will be used for this project. In the rare event that we receive more than needed to fund this project, additional gifts will be used for other urgent needs for the poor.