

The Commonwealth of Dominica

Dominica (pronounced “dom-i-neek-uh,” and not to be confused with the Dominican Republic) is a small Caribbean island located in the Lesser Antilles that covers 290 square miles of real estate. Her original name was “Waitukubuli” (Why-too-Ku-bool-ee), which means “tall is her body,” because her landscape is the most mountain-ness of all the Caribbean islands. She is also the most volcanic, which is why Dominica is home to the world’s second largest natural hot spring. Christopher Columbus sailed past the island on the Lord’s Day, November 3, 1493, and renamed it “Dominica,” derived from the Latin word for “Sunday.”



The island became a French colony in 1727 and then a British colony in 1805, though the French influence still dominates Dominican culture. Although English is the official language, many of the indigenous people also speak French Creole. The majority of the island’s more than 66,000 inhabitants are the descendants of African slaves, but there are also 3,000 members of the Kalinago people (commonly called “Carib Indians”) whose ancestors inhabited Waitukubuli before it was colonized. The Kalinago live on an isolated reservation on the northeastern end of the island. Dominica formally gained her independence as “The Commonwealth of Dominica” on November 3, 1978; 485 years to the day since Columbus had sailed past her shores.

The Dominicans have historically been an impoverished people. At the beginning of the 20th century, the island was the largest exporter of limes in the world, but this would not last due to disease that devastated their lime crops. At the end of the 20th century, they were a leading exporter of bananas. But monopolies gained in the market by companies like Dole and Chiquita channelled most of the banana business to Central America and away from Dominica. Blight ravaged the remaining banana crops at the beginning of the 21st century. In recent years the Dominican government has built *The Waitukubuli Trail*, an extensive hiking trail that runs through the middle of the island, attempting to attract tourist dollars to subsidize their struggling economy.

The island is frequently subjected to brutal hurricanes. On August 29, 1979, *Hurricane David* hovered over Dominica from 9am until 3pm, pounding the landscape with 150 mile per hour winds for six solid hours. By the time it was over, 75% of the island’s inhabitants were



homeless. More recently, in September of 2017, *Hurricane Maria* subjected the residents to brutal 160 mph winds, causing massive mudslides, damaging 80% of the buildings, and killing over 30 people.

As devastating as these physical hurricanes are, they cannot compare to the devastation caused by the spiritual hurricanes that ravage the land. The Dominicans are a people tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine imaginable.



Among the inhabitants of the island, over 90% profess some form of Christianity. More than 60% are Roman Catholic, and 12% of the population are Seventh Day Adventists. Despite these outward forms of Christendom, over 75% of the children born in Dominica are

born out of wedlock. The island's foremost historian, Lennox Honychurch, says of this: "The West Indian pattern of high illegitimacy and low percentage of marriages features prominently in Dominican society. The problems of paternal negligence and lack of the father figure has contributed to the complex nature of our modern social issues." There are clearly many citizens of Dominica who profess to know God while in works they deny Him. There is a great need for the Lord to send elder qualified men into Dominica two by two who will preach the biblical gospel with heaven sent power.

Berean Baptist Church of Powder Springs, GA (USA) has a potential missionary couple who are interested in the possibility of being sent to Dominica: **Jesse & Avery Dudek (and their children Florence, Suzie, and August)**. Jesse currently serves as a deacon and gifted brother at Berean. If Jesse is called to serve as a church planter in Dominica, his elders believe his sending is 4 to 5 years away. The Church wants him to gain tenure as an elder, and the congregation will not send the Dudeks unless the Lord raises up a second elder qualified man and his family to serve in harness with them as part of a missionary team. Pray that the Lord will give discernment to the officers and members of Berean and will provide a second family along with the finances necessary to make these things a reality, if it is His will.

Pray that sound local churches will be planted who will boldly preach the whole counsel of God, scripturally administer the ordinances, and lovingly hold God's people accountable to walk worthy of the name of Christ through restorative church discipline. May the King of all kings be pleased to establish a strong association of confessional Baptist churches for the glory of His own name!



A publication of Berean Baptist Church (Powder Springs, GA, USA) berean1689church.org. If you would like to receive the Harvest Field Prayer Guide each month via email, please send your request to: contact@berean1689church.org

Pastor Jerry Slate, Jr. wrote the national prayer focus on the Commonwealth of Dominica. We wish to thank Mrs. Angela Slate for her diligent labours in editing the national prayer focus each month.

The information on Dominica was taken from the following sources: Lennox Honychurch, *The Dominica Story: A History of the Island* (Macmillan Education, 1995); Lennox Honychurch, *Resistance, Refuge, Revival: The Indigenous Kalinagos of Dominica* (Papillote Press, 2024); Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, 7 th ed. (Biblica Publishing, 2010); Various online sources.

Photo credits: Flag: Wikipedia Map: Encyclopaedia Britannica Kalinago people: dom767.com Young People: dom767.com Dudek Family: personal photo