

Houston faith communities plan for future hurricanes

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Houston faith communities plan for future hurricanes

By Karen Campbell

Union Baptist Association

HOUSTON—A conference on disaster preparedness—scheduled in 2005 but ironically postponed due to Hurricane Katrina—stressed the importance of planning ahead for hurricanes.

Interfaith Ministries sponsored the day-long event that drew more than 400 participants.

LIFE GOES ON: Crossroads project aims to rebuild in New

Orleans

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Habitat for
Humanity
houses in
New Orleans
are being
built by
church-based
volunteers
and by
future
residents
who provide
at least 350
hours of
“sweat
equity.”
(Photo by
ABP)

LIFE GOES ON:

Crossroads project aims to rebuild in New Orleans

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS (ABP)—Last year, New Orleans' Upper 9th Ward was one of the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina, with more than 90,000 homes ruined.

This year, it's the site of the largest Habitat for Humanity project ever undertaken by a single denomination anywhere in the world.



Teens from a youth group at First Baptist Church in Salado work on a Habitat for Humanity housing project in New Orleans. (RNS photo by Ted Jackson/*The Times-Picayune* in New Orleans)

East Texas church sends minister to southern Louisiana

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A team working with Celebration Church in Metairie, La. help clean up hurricane damage.
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East Texas church sends minister to southern Louisiana

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

METAIRIE, La.—When David Jochum felt God calling him to leave First Baptist Church in Marshall to help a New Orleans-area church in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the East Texas congregation decided to send him as their missionary to southern Louisiana.

First Baptist Church agreed to pay Jochum's full salary and benefits as

pastor of enlistment at Celebration Church in Metairie, La., for one year. The Marshall church also pledged to continue their financial support up to four years on a sliding scale, as Celebration Church becomes capable of gradually assuming responsibility for the position Jochum will continue to fill there.

Texas Baptists urged to adopt unreached groups in Houston

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Texas Baptists urged to adopt unreached groups in Houston

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

HOUSTON—Significant numbers of people in Texas' largest city never have heard the gospel.

But the Baptist General Convention of Texas is seeking to change that with a new ministry opportunity supported by the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions.

Special: One Year After Katrina

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Miracle Farm offers refuge to Hurricane Rita evacuees

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Miracle Farm residents display a mirrored tile that was presented as a gift to the Texas Baptist child care ministry by the Little Cypress-Mauriceville Bears. (Photo by Courtney Cole)

Miracle Farm offers refuge to Hurricane Rita evacuees

By Courtney Cole

Miracle Farm

BRENHAM—When Hurricane Rita struck southeastern Texas, residents of communities near Orange found shelter from the storm at Miracle Farm. And everyone involved believed the provision was a miracle—or at least a

divine appointment.

“We had extensively planned and were prepared to minister to families that had been displaced by this catastrophic storm,” said Jack Meeker, executive director of Miracle Farm, a childcare agency for boys operated by Children at Heart Ministries. “We soon realized that God had hand-picked a special group to be directed into our circle of care.”

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Nederland church marks new beginning in new sanctuary

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Nederland church marks new beginning in new sanctuary

By Elizabeth Staples


Communications Intern

NEDERLAND—Hurricane Rita destroyed the facility of First Baptist Church in Nederland, but it also reinforced the importance of unity among the congregation.

Winds from the Sept. 24, 2005, hurricane stripped the roofs off all the church's buildings. The steeple fell through the roof, allowing water into the sanctuary and ruining the carpet. Most of the pews, the steeple and carpet in other buildings needed to be replaced. The building suffered nearly \$1.5 million damage.

Pastor
David
Higgs
prays with
a couple
who joined
First
Baptist
Church in
Nederland.

The
decision
took place
during the
re-opening
of the
church's
sanctuary.

 [View
a video
clip from
First
Baptist
Nederland
here.](#)

Nehemiah's Vision helps Southeast Texas recover from Rita

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Nehemiah's Vision helps Southeast Texas recover from Rita

By Elizabeth Staples

Communications Intern

VIDOR—Texas Baptists continue to help restore homes destroyed by Hurricane Rita, even as Southeast Texas residents make their way through another hurricane season.

This summer, volunteers from around the state lent a hand through Nehemiah's Vision, a nonprofit organization facilitating disaster recovery ministry in Southeast Texas.

Nehemiah's Vision, a nonprofit organization started with the help of BGCT disaster response funds, has brought volunteers from across the state to help rebuild portions of Southeast Texas.

New Orleans churches radically changed by Katrina

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New Orleans churches radically changed by Katrina

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS (ABP)—In once-vibrant New Orleans, the liveliest things in vast swaths of the city seem to be weeds exploding from once-manicured medians, lawns and parks.

And the rats, mosquitoes, mold and nutria—huge rodents that thrive in the Louisiana swamps—are the only other creatures swarming neighborhoods that—a year after Hurricane Katrina—still are largely devoid of human beings.

A boarded-up theater in a once-thriving area of New Orleans illustrates the toll Hurricane Katrina took on the Crescent City. (ABP Photo)

Churches become rallying points for New Orleans recovery

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Churches become rallying points for New Orleans recovery

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS (ABP)—Hurricane Katrina is changing New Orleans' churches as surely as it changed the face of the flooded city itself—and some of those churches are serving as rallying points in the city's recovery.

On a recent sweltering August day, Steven Meriwether sweated through his white T-shirt as he knelt inside the living room of a shotgun home on Toledano Street in the Mid-City neighborhood.

**How to volunteer
Nehemiah's Vision**

Contact: Andy Narramore
(409) 769-1616

nehemiahsvision@sbcglobal.net
www.nehemiahsvision.com

Baptist Crossroads Project

Contact: Inman Houston
(504) 482-5775

i-houston@mindspring.com
www.baptistcrossroads.org

NAMB Project NOAH

Contact: Tobey Pitman
(504) 782-6122
Or (504) 362-4604; (877)
934-0808

noah@namb.net
www.namb.net/noah

**Baptist Builders
International**

(225)775-2053
info@baptistbuilders.org
www.baptistbuilders.org

Baptist volunteers make impact

on Crescent City

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Southern
Baptist
volunteers
worked
alongside
others in
building
new
housing in
the hard-
hit 9th
Ward of
New
Orleans
following
Hurricane
Katrina.
(Photo
courtesy
of
NAMB/BP)

Baptist volunteers make impact on

Crescent City

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS (ABP)—After serving the homeless for decades in New Orleans, Tobey Pitman finally is making significant inroads among leaders and homeowners in the predominantly Catholic region.

That's not to say he hasn't had noteworthy success with his Brantley Mission Center for the homeless. But since Hurricane Katrina hit, the Baptist missionary has led volunteers to help storm victims in ways other groups—religious or otherwise—have not. And that has made all the difference.

Volunteer director feels calling to restore Mississippi town

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Volunteer director feels calling to restore Mississippi town

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

PASS CHRISTIAN, Miss. (ABP)—When Amy Hardee came from North Carolina to what locals call “the Pass” immediately after Hurricane Katrina, the place was a mess.

A year after Katrina’s monstrous storm surge virtually wiped Pass Christian, Miss., off the map, it’s still something of a mess. But thanks in part to Hardee, at least it’s a far better-organized mess—and one she is working diligently to return to its former glory as a Southern beach town.

Amy Hardee of North Carolina, volunteer relief coordinator in Pass Christian, Miss., explains some of the plans the Hurricane Katrina-decimated town has for redeveloping its historic beachfront while remaining family-friendly. (Photo by Robert Marus/ABP)

Sabine Pass churches focus on rebuilding community

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Hurricane Rita destroyed the facilities of Sabine Pass Christian Fellowship (pictured) and First Baptist Church of Sabine Pass, as well as nearly half the homes in the small, historic Southeast Texas community.

Sabine Pass churches focus on rebuilding community

By George Henson

Staff Writer

SABINE PASS—Sabine Pass lost both its Baptist churches to Hurricane Rita. Nearly a year later, the two congregations are looking to rebuild a community as much as they are their church buildings.

Dale Martin, pastor of Sabine Pass Christian Fellowship, has put his emphasis on rebuilding homes lost at the same time the hurricane destroyed his church's facility.