TOGETHER: Texas Baptist students go into world

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The temperature in Texas is starting to rise as summer approaches, and that means Texas Baptists are once again on the verge of sending hundreds of college students on mission throughout the state and around the world.

I was both proud and humbled last year as I took part in the commissioning service for our student summer missionaries. To see a church choir loft filled with hundreds of students willing to give their summer to missions and ministry is to be overwhelmed by the continuing reality of God's call upon his people to serve him and upon their willingness to do so.

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This year, 500-plus students will participate in our GoNow Missions effort and other mission opportunities.

Texas Baptists have laid the ministry foundation for this by funding Baptist Student Ministry efforts throughout the year on more than 100 campuses. Now we have an opportunity to go with these young missionaries by giving our prayer support.

A great prayer tool is available—a poster with the name and photo of each missionary. To order, send $1 to BGCT GoNow Missions, P.O. Box 195439, Arlington 76019. If you want to send more, it will be added to the funds that support these students.

Summer missions is a capstone to all that Texas Baptists are doing on our state's college campuses. Our student ministers and many volunteers work during the school year to reach students for Christ and to disciple believers in what can at times be a difficult challenge. In an environment rife with distraction and temptation, students learn to live for Christ.

More than 1.1 million students are enrolled in Texas colleges and universities. This mission field is immense, and through our BGCT Cooperative Program giving, we work with local Baptists to touch more than 50,000 students each year.

I recently met with some of our student ministers. They are focused on the indisputable fact that lost people matter to God, and they are spending more time with NYCs (Not Yet Christians). They are teaching students to prayer walk, to build genuine friendships with NYCs, and to see evangelism as who you are and not just what you do or say.

And these ministers stress that other Texas Baptists can be a part of student ministry, as well, by finding ways to become involved in the lives of students. One example is to adopt a school drama, volleyball, baseball or other team—attending their events, praying for them, getting to know them

and responding to their needs so that when the Holy Spirit draws them to himself, you are there to encourage and to be a spiritual coach.

And only God knows where such involvement can lead. A number of years ago, Bertha Vaughns left a responsible government job to follow God's leading into ministry. She now is BSM director at Texas Southern University in Houston, and she has experienced firsthand how God can take young lives with so much potential and turn them into productive ministry that will, she hopes, last a lifetime.

Texas Baptists make student ministry possible. Churches close to college campuses can work directly with students and staff, but through the BGCT, we can all be involved. It is never more true than with BSM work: What we could not do alone, we can do together.

We are loved.

Charles Wade is executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.