

# **TOGETHER: Texas Baptists not slowed by summer heat**

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In the midst of one of the hottest summers in recent memory, when many people are simply looking for the coolest place to escape the heat, our Texas Baptist family is deeply and richly involved in kingdom work.

We have sent Texas Baptist World Hunger Offering and disaster response funds to help with the needs of refugees caught in the war zones of the Middle East. Our Baptist brothers and sisters in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Israel are seeking to be instruments of grace and peace in the heartbreak that surrounds them, and Texas Baptists are helping them.



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Every region has its own politics to deal with, but Jesus followers are called to minister wherever they can. From Lebanon came the appeal for help as the Lebanese Baptists minister to the refugees from southern Lebanon who in previous years sometimes persecuted the Christian believers. How do you ask people to care for people who have abused them? In Jesus' name. Let all of us who serve the Prince of Peace pray now for peace in this troubled and dangerous land.

There is a different kind of devastation in El Paso—flooding. In the first six months of the year El Paso received one inch of rain. In a few hours on July 31 six inches of rain fell in the city. Pray for the people who are hurting and pray for your Baptist family as they minister to the needs. The BGCT will be glad to forward funds to help in this situation, as well.

South of the border, Texas Baptists are helping in yet another ministry. Some of our BGCT churches have been partnering with Primera Iglesia Bautista of Acuna, Mexico, to minister to needs in the small villages just south of Big Bend National Park.

One of our BGCT health care coordinators who lives and works in Acuna, along with a doctor who is a member of Primera Bautista, communicated with Mexican government officials about the unsanitary water supply in those villages. They have received a response for which they are praising God. The governor has sent representatives and help to correct the problem and to assure long-term clean water for the villages.

And finally, Texas Baptists have been blessed again by the availability of one of God's choice servants. With the unanimous recommendation of the search committee in hand, I have asked Suzii Paynter to take the

responsibility of the director of the Christian Life Commission for Texas Baptists.

Suzii is a remarkable leader, a passionate advocate for public righteousness and justice, a gifted pastor's wife, a beloved presence in her church, an experienced and persuasive voice on behalf of children and education, a thoroughgoing Christian and a Baptist by deep conviction.

Phil Strickland asked her to work in the CLC four years ago, and she has done her work with amazing creativity and dependability. He mentored her in the work of the CLC, and she is ready now to take up this great task.

As the interim director, she showed that she could handle the task of working in the Dallas office, while also living in Austin where her husband, Roger, is pastor of First Baptist Church there. Please pray for her and for all that we Texas Baptists need to do to help our people and our churches be a transformational, Jesus kind of presence in Texas.

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.