

Sam Porter named national director for SBC disaster relief

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ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board named Sam Porter national director for disaster relief. He succeeds Mickey Caison, who will retire Aug. 31.

Porter, volunteer missions specialist for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, was one of the first disaster relief leaders to respond after the 9-11 attacks in New York City. He made numerous trips to the area for two years and served as a chaplain in the morgue at Ground Zero.



Sam Porter also led more than 100 volunteer mission projects and more than 40 international relief missions. He headed recovery efforts for a year in Haiti following, 34 volunteer teams from Oklahoma in the wake of the devastating earthquake Jan. 12, 2010.

'Proven to be a great leader'

"We've been praying and looking for Mickey's replacement for about 18 months," said David Melber, a NAMB vice president. "Sam has been in the disaster relief world for a long time working around the nation and throughout Oklahoma.

“He’s proven to be a great leader. I’m excited to see how he’s going to continue unifying our state disaster relief leaders during crisis and how he will bring a new direction for disaster relief that’s going to further build its future.”

NAMB communicated news of Porter’s appointment to state disaster relief leaders during a July 11 conference call.

“We started looking for someone who was well-respected in the disaster relief world,” Melber said. “Sam had that respect because of his historical work in the disaster relief world. He’s highly regarded as a leader among state partners, and he truly understands how disaster relief works.”

Porter noted he is “thrilled to get to continue in the ministry I’ve already been doing 19-and-a-half years.” He called the network of Baptist state disaster relief directors “a fellowship of incredible men that help believers learn how to put themselves in the mission offering plate.”

“My prayer is that we can see every state convention have a strong disaster relief team to impact their part of the U.S.A. for the Lord by serving when individual’s lives are torn apart by disasters of various types,” he said.

Porter plans to retire from the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma Aug. 15 and begin his role with NAMB in mid-September.

“I know of no one in the SBC who more exemplifies the ministry of disaster relief than Sam Porter,” said Anthony Jordan, state executive of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

“He has the respect of state and national leaders, as well as governmental leaders. He will be a bridge for building a solid and dynamic relationship between states and associational leaders with the North American Mission Board for disaster relief.”

Seek greater involvement by Millennials

Porter identified helping state conventions add to their volunteer force as one of his top priorities.

“We want to see every one of the 42 state conventions reach out to include collegiate students and many more Millennials,” he said, identifying the rising generation as “doers” with a “desire to be in hands-on ministry.”

“They are perfect to be (disaster relief) volunteers. We will seek to have more join their local state teams to serve across the nation,” he said.

Porter has served on the board of trustees at Golden Gate Seminary—now Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention—and was chair of the board two years. He was a trustee of Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children and vice president of the Oklahoma Pastors’ Conference. He also served as a men’s ministries specialist and was pastor for 20 years at several churches.

Porter has an undergraduate degree from Baylor University and holds a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Sheryl, have two adult sons, Aaron and Josh, and five grandchildren.