

Texans on Mission join California churches in fire response

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LOS ANGELES—A four-person Texans on Mission team is in California working to multiply the ministry of churches and chart a long-term relief effort in the area devastated by raging fires.



The four-member advance team of Texans on Mission serving in Southern California is (left to right) Mitch Chapman, director of Texans on Mission Water Impact; Ann and Curt Neal, volunteer disaster relief coordinators; and Rand Jenkins, chief strategy officer. (Texans on Mission Photo)

“The situation here is heavy,” said Rand Jenkins, a team member and chief strategy officer for Texans on Mission. “We’re striving to find a way to

multiply efforts to meet needs in the name of Christ.”

About 150,000 people have evacuated as a result of the fires already, and 50 mph to 65 mph winds are forecast in the area this week. More than 99 percent of those people have taken shelter with family or friends or are staying in hotels.

“Texans on Mission is partnering with local churches to meet needs,” Texans on Mission Chief Executive Officer Mickey Lenamon said in a letter to supporters. “As these families left their homes, they had no idea what they would return to. Even if their house isn’t burnt to the ground, it’s highly likely it will be so covered by ash that it will need rebuilding.

“Working through these church partners, the strike team is discovering ways to meet expanded physical, emotional and spiritual needs. The weight of the fire literally hangs in the air everywhere these families turn.”

Lenamon said the government has “designated regions that have been burned as hazardous areas and have significantly restricted access for safety.”

“We expect our fire recovery teams will not get access to the area for at least four weeks. It may be longer. If you remember, there was a similar waiting period after the Maui fires,” he stated.

‘A beautiful image of the body of Christ’

Chief Mission Officer John Hall noted that Texans on Mission has been “working on these California church connections for over a year, thinking about how we could help them respond to a disaster. Now, the time has come.”

The local churches are saying: “We want you to train us how to do the fire recovery. We want to do this together” Hall said. “It’s a beautiful image of the body of Christ.”

Texans on Mission is focusing on an “area that is varied economically,” he said. “A lot of people, even more well-off ones, have had their fire insurance coverage dropped. Needs are and will be significant for a long time ahead.”

The Texans on Mission team now in California is working specifically on possible needs regarding water filters, meals, showers and laundry, and fire recovery.

“As we always do, we’re taking a step of faith,” Hall said.

Lenamon, in his note to Texans on Mission supporters, said: “We are early in this disaster. The situation is evolving each day.”

He asked people to pray specifically for:

- A swift end to the fires.
- Those who have been affected by the fires.
- Strength for the firefighters who are valiantly serving.
- The churches serving with Texans on Mission to minister to people impacted by the fires.
- The clear proclamation of the gospel.

To give financially to support Texans on Mission disaster relief, [click here](#).