

Baptist disaster relief in Texas sets new records

December 6, 2017

Texas Baptist Men disaster relief workers may have wondered this time last year how they ever could top the 12,000-plus volunteers days they gave in 2016. If so, they could not have foreseen surpassing 40,000 volunteer days this year.

Due primarily—but not exclusively—to Hurricane Harvey, TBM and its out-of-state partners who worked alongside them in Texas set new records in 2017 in most categories for disaster relief ministry.

Year to date, TBM volunteers responded to 19 disasters at 54 sites, beginning in mid-January and continuing throughout the year with few breaks.

As a result, Baptist disaster relief volunteers working in Texas made 25,925 personal contacts with affected individuals, compared to 8,294 last year, and they prepared more than 1.6 million meals—about 10 times the number they cooked the previous year.

They distributed 5,592 Bibles so far this year, compared to 762 in 2016. Consequently, they recorded 265 professions of faith in Christ, compared to 23 the year before.

‘Largest response in our history’

“This has been the largest response in our history,” said Terry Henderson, state director of disaster relief with TBM.



An Arizona Baptist mud-out crew begins their day with prayer before resuming work on a home in South Houston. (Photo / Ken Camp)

In particular, Hurricane Harvey stretched TBM beyond its available resources—but not beyond its ability to respond in partnership with other Baptist volunteers, he noted.

“Our mutual aid plan went into effect, and we had 31 states come here to help,” Henderson said. Baptist groups from as far away as Canada, Hawaii and Guam have worked in Texas after Hurricane Harvey, he noted.

Because of the rapid response by volunteers, TBM was able to begin rebuilding efforts in some locations while continuing disaster relief at other sites.

Volunteers needed for TBM Rebuild

All that has contributed to “volunteer fatigue,” Henderson acknowledged. The rebuild currently is on hiatus until January, and disaster relief also expects to suspend its operations Dec. 16 and resume as needed after Jan. 1.

While TBM Rebuild projects are scheduled in January, the demand currently exceeds the number of groups who have volunteers so far, he noted.

“We need volunteers for rebuilding,” he said.

For more information about the TBM Rebuild, click [here](#) or email TBMrebuild@texasbaptistmen.org.

To contribute financially to TBM disaster relief, click [here](#) or send a check designated “disaster relief” to Texas Baptist Men, 5351 Catron, Dallas 75227.