

# **El Paso TBM volunteer: ‘Love beats hate every time’**

August 5, 2019

EL PASO—Even by Glenn Pennington’s standards, Saturday was going to be busier than usual.

He just came home from leading a weekly men’s Bible study and was preparing to run errands to get his daughter ready for college when an alert on his phone stopped him in his tracks.

There was an active shooter at the shopping center 15 minutes away.

He and his wife turned on the television and discovered with the rest of the nation that a shooter had killed 20 people and injured 26 more.

“It was shock—disbelief. I’ve lived here since 1997. It really is a family-oriented community. I’ve never had any problems. People help each other out,” said Pennington, a member of Del Sol Baptist Church in El Paso.

“Just to see what happened at that Walmart was shocking. My wife and daughter went there the night before. It could have been them there.”

## **TBM called to respond after tragedy**

The phone rang shortly afterward. Mike Moss from Del Sol Baptist Church was letting Pennington know Texas Baptist Men volunteers needed to respond.



Texas Baptist Men disaster relief volunteer Glenn Pennington serves in the wake of a mass shooting in El Paso. (TBM Photo)

TBM mobilized volunteers to serve in partnership with the Salvation Army to feed first responders, serve at the family reunification center and meet other needs, said Dwain Carter, TBM state disaster relief director.

Moss and Pennington met at a police station, where they directed traffic, accepted donations and loaded them on trucks for distribution for the next six hours.

They worked alongside a growing number of people from the community, each wanting to make a difference in some tangible way.

“When we got the call, that’s what we’re trained for—whether it’s feeding migrants at a migrant center or responding in the wake of a disaster,” Pennington said. “We’re just here to do whatever is needed.”

# **‘Love is stronger than hate’**

Pennington estimates they unloaded hundreds of cases of water and bags of ice. TBM volunteers thanked people for the supplies and offered an encouraging word when possible.

“Young kids, old people, college and high schoolers brought in cases and cases of water and supplies,” Pennington said. “I’ve never seen so many cases of water or ice before. It was pretty amazing.”

A day after the shooting, Pennington said the community was resolved to push forward.

People are making a distinct effort to reach out to each other, he noted. People are friendlier, he observed

El Paso is a community where people care about each other, Pennington concluded.

“Love beats hate every time,” he said. “You can see hate on social media. It’s just toxic. What we do at TBM and other people do in the community, it just shows love is stronger than hate every time.”