

# **Hardage highlights Texas Baptists' calling to missions and making disciples**

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ARLINGTON-Texas Baptists are taking the gospel across the state, country and world, David Hardage said during the Baptist General Convention of Texas executive director's report to the 2018 Family Gathering.

Hardage highlighted significant work in which Texas Baptists have engaged over the past year, beginning with an outpouring of support in South Texas and Southeast Texas following Hurricane Harvey.

"We are all aware of how dramatically that storm affected our state," said Hardage. "I want you to know how dramatic our Texas Baptist response has been to that."

From Day One, Texas Baptist Men faithfully responded to the need for help and have continued to serve in recovery and rebuilding efforts. Texas Baptists responded with financial assistance for more than 100 churches and pastors from Corpus Christi to the Louisiana border.

"It's been especially heartwarming to take the hands of pastors and staff members in affected parts of the state who have given so much of themselves and provide them with a check and say, 'Thank you,'" Hardage said.

Hardage highlighted Bounce Student Disaster Recovery as a significant ministry raising up the next generation of men and women who will walk alongside communities, families and churches in times of need.

He described a recent trip to Dickinson, where 15 students repaired the hurricane-damaged roof of a 90-year-old widow's home. Not only was the homeowner blessed by the students' ministry, but the neighbors in the community also witnessed God's love through their work, he noted.

"It was the Great Commandment at work," Hardage said of the students who demonstrated their love for God and others.

Eighteen months ago, Texas Baptists entered into a partnership with Brazilian Baptists to adopt indigenous missionaries along the Amazon River through the Missionary Adoption Program. Now about 50 Brazilians are serving on the Amazon as Texas Baptists missionaries, taking the Good News of Jesus Christ to those who need to hear, Hardage said. Other partnerships are in development to support indigenous missionaries in areas including Myanmar, Portugal, India and Canada.

Hardage reiterated his appreciation to Texas Baptists for partnering together to accomplish significant ministry efforts locally and internationally.

"We are not a stale or stagnant convention," he said. "We are a convention on the cutting edge and sharing the gospel."

He concluded by encouraging Texas Baptists to continue giving to the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions. The 2018 Week of Prayer for State Missions is September 9-16, with a statewide offering goal of \$3.6 million. Hardage encouraged churches to exceed gifts in previous years to continue the work of reaching the spiritually lost in Texas with the gospel.

"Disciple-making is who we are. That's our call. That's our DNA. We are in the disciple-making business," Hardage said. "We want to see people know about Jesus all across Texas and beyond."