

Rebuild marks new disaster ministry for Texas Baptist Men

November 12, 2017

KATY—When volunteers from First Baptist Church in Frankston began to install insulation and drywall in a storm-damaged Katy home Nov. 6, it represented a new phase of disaster response after Hurricane Harvey and a new era of ministry for Texas Baptist Men.



Peggy Hopkins and Pastor Scott Wiley from First Baptist Church in Frankston work on a home in Katy during the TBM Rebuild. (Photo / Ken Camp)

Since the hurricane hit the Texas Gulf Coast in late August, TBM volunteers and their Baptist disaster relief partners from 30 other states have prepared more than 1.5 million meals, removed damaged sheetrock and flooring from 900 homes, and provided about 48,000 boxes to enable affected residents to collect and store their belongings.

Disaster relief continues on a limited scale in several areas, but many South Texas and Southeast Texas residents have moved from a need for

emergency relief to long-term recovery and rebuilding.

Fifty years ago, TBM pioneered disaster relief ministry among Southern Baptists. Last year, TBM also assumed responsibility for assistance with [long-term recovery](#), a ministry previously performed by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Earlier this year, TBM facilitated several long-term recovery projects BGCT personnel had initiated—notably the [Super Week of Caring](#) effort in Houston around the time of the Feb. 5 Super Bowl.

However, the rebuild after Hurricane Harvey represents the first seamless disaster response—from preparing meals for first responders in the storm’s immediate aftermath to helping residents restore their homes—fully implemented by TBM.

“For the individual, the disaster really isn’t over until he is able to lie down and go to sleep in his own house,” said Dwain Carter, deputy director of disaster relief for TBM.

The TBM Rebuild offers volunteers opportunities not only to provide assistance in Christ’s name, but also to build relationships with affected homeowners, Carter noted.

TBM is prioritizing the rebuilding projects, first meeting the needs of elderly residents, families with special-needs children and single parents, he explained. Additional needs-based projects will be scheduled as more volunteers become available.

‘Finding a way to help’

The first TBM Rebuild church groups began working in the area around Kingsland Baptist Church in Katy, which is providing volunteers overnight lodging and access to its facilities.



Director of Missions Gene Pepiton and Pat Robbins from Wichita-Archer-Clay Baptist Association prepare meals for TBM Rebuild volunteers, working in the kitchen at Kingsland Baptist Church. (Photo / Ken Camp)

Disaster relief food-service volunteers from Wichita-Archer-Clay Baptist Association working with Director of Missions Gene Pepiton prepared meals in the kitchen of the church's fellowship hall.

The shower and laundry mobile unit from First Baptist Church in Amarillo, which was in service 38 consecutive days along the Texas Gulf Coast immediately after Hurricane Harvey made landfall, returned to Kingsland Baptist, and volunteers with the unit provided support services for the TBM Rebuild crews.

Over the next few weeks, the TBM Rebuild will expand to two others bases of operation—University Baptist Church in Houston and a county-owned facility in Orange.

The volunteers from First Baptist Church in Frankston originally offered to help with the mud-out phase of disaster relief—removing soaked sheetrock, discarding damaged flooring and disinfecting surfaces in flood-damaged

homes.

When the church's members learned they could serve a greater need at this point by participating in the TBM Rebuild, the volunteers rescheduled their trip to the Houston area and accepted the new assignment.

"This church has a long history of mission trips," said Pastor Scott Wiley, who has served the Frankston congregation seven and a half years. "From the moment the hurricane happened, our people were interested in finding a way to help."

First Baptist in Frankston sent two crews to Katy for the TBM Rebuild—eight volunteers who worked Monday through Friday, and seven who arrived on Friday to work through a long weekend.

'Creating a bond here'



Homeowner Marvin Booker talks with R.L. Barndard, on-site coordinator for the TBM Rebuild in Katy and member of First Baptist Church in Duncanville. (Photo / Ken Camp)

At one house, the Frankston team worked alongside the homeowner, Marvin Booker, a licensed vocational nurse whose job was eliminated a short time before Hurricane Harvey hit, and his 19-year-old son, Morley.

The pair—along with Booker’s wife and their 11-year-old nonverbal autistic son—initially sheltered in place in their home after the hurricane. However, when the floodwater began rising in their neighborhood and totaled their vehicles, they had to evacuate on foot.

“We walked out in waist-deep water until we were picked up by a boat,” Booker said.

The family spent three nights at an emergency shelter established at a local high school before moving in temporarily with friends. After utilities were restored and water-soaked debris was removed, the family moved back into the upstairs of their home.

When Booker signed up for a class at Kingsland Baptist Church to learn how to install sheetrock, he met Carter from TBM, who told Booker he and his family qualified for assistance through the TBM Rebuild.

Booker expressed gratitude not only for the help he received, but also for the friendships he developed with the team members.

“We are creating a bond right here,” he said.

‘Serve the Lord where he sends us’



Pastor Marco Castillo from Grace Temple Baptist Church in Dallas works on a home in Katy during the TBM Rebuild. (Photo / Ken Camp)

While the Frankston team continued its work, volunteers from Grace Temple Baptist Church in Dallas arrived to devote an extended weekend to installing drywall.

“We are big on the Great Commission and doing everything we can to reach out to the community,” Pastor Marco Castillo said.

Members of his predominantly Hispanic congregation have served in the past with student missions groups who traveled to the Dallas area to remodel the homes of senior adults. So, when they learned about the opportunities for service along the Gulf Coast, they wanted to volunteer.

“We want to serve where the Lord sends us,” Castillo said. “He put it on our hearts to come here.”

For more information about volunteer opportunities in response to Hurricane Harvey, click [here](#). To donate financially, click [here](#) or mail a check designated “Hurricane Harvey” to Texas Baptist Men, 5351 Catron, Dallas, TX 75227.