

Risenhoover to coordinate BGCT Native American initiative

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The Baptist General Convention of Texas chaplaincy office named Georgia Risenhoover coordinator of the Native American Missions Initiative for chaplaincy.

Risenhoover, who coordinates Texas Baptists' Hands on Ministry training program for volunteer chaplains, is a Cheyenne River Sioux (Lakota) and a fifth-generation descendent of Chief War Eagle. Her father was born on the Cheyenne River Reservation at Eagle Butte, S.D.

"Native Americans, especially tribal leaders, are accepting of Georgia because she's a descendent of a well-known and respected chief," said Bobby Smith, director of BGCT chaplaincy, who noted President Martin Van Buren presented Chief War Eagle a peace medal.

"Beyond heritage, the primary reason Georgia is a perfect fit for this position is because of her heartfelt concern for the spiritual and physical needs of all peoples, no matter what their ethnicity. But I do think God has especially prepared her for a vital role in what will be one of the greatest evangelistic efforts in the storied history of Texas Baptists."



Georgia Risenhoover Risenhoover noted "the stark reality

of a nation of people on reservations who are wrestling with unrelenting poverty, drug cartels, and with astounding rates of suicide, rape and murder, disease, alcoholism, drug addiction, domestic violence and infant mortality.”

“The conditions that exist in some Third World countries would be an upgrade for many reservations, where many Native Americans die of starvation and the bitter cold of northern winters,” she said. “But the needs on reservations are not merely for the physical necessities of life, but for the spiritual planting and growth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

BGCT Executive Director David Hardage emphasized the importance of training and equipping indigenous Native American Christian leaders.

“What we propose doing spiritually is a massive undertaking that will take time, a lot of prayer and boots on the ground,” he said. “It will take trained Native American pastors, missionaries and people in all areas of ministry to help bring Native Americans on many reservations out of spiritual and physical poverty.”

Risenhoover will conduct training events on reservations, speak to mission groups in churches and in other venues, and help identify Native American pastors for church starts on reservations.

“We are in the initial stages of this initiative and understand how important it is to provide Texas Baptists with factual information on each step of the process,” Smith said. “But this initiative is actually global in scope, so we anticipate Baptists from around the world becoming engaged in it. Georgia is available to speak to any church or mission-related organization in a church, and we are developing materials that will help any church to become fully engaged in this initiative.”

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