

Editorial: Add the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering to your Christmas list

December 10, 2015

Have you finished buying Christmas presents yet? If your shopping list doesn't include the [Texas Baptist Hunger Offering](#), please add one item—which will bless people around the world.



Editor Marv Knox More than any moment in recent memory, the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering needs your support. During the first 10 months of this year, Texas Baptists contributed \$543,518 to the offering. That's a drop of about 15 percent compared to the same period last year and a decline of more than 34 percent from the year before that.

A decreasing hunger offering represents heartache—on top of starvation and destitution—in a world of increasing need.

If the current pace of contributions continues, the offering will take in less than \$700,000 this year. That total is more than 12.5 percent below the \$800,000 goal, which is far too low in light of the world's agony.

Support for Middle Eastern refugees—particularly Syrians fleeing civil war and persecution—stands out in this year's hunger offering. It has allocated \$21,000 to a Lebanese Baptist ministry, the Lebanese Society for

Educational and Social Development, to provide relief for Syrian families. An [additional gift](#) of \$15,000 from the Eula Mae and John Baugh Foundation has enabled the European Baptist Federation to minister to Syrians pouring into Serbia.

Those needs are vital, but they are not comprehensive. Others range from food distribution in Midland, to food for pregnant teens in Richwood, an education project in McAllen, supplies for a dental ministry in Alvin, and life-skills education and community gardens in North Texas. They also include feeding programs for underprivileged families in Missouri and Virginia, a jobs-skills program in New York City and food for children in the Bronx.

The needs span the globe, too. Your gifts can provide medical coverage for needy families on the West Bank, training for hunger-relief workers in Turkey and sewing supplies in Romania. Also included is education for orphans in the Congo, food distribution in Kenya and language classes in Uganda. The offering supports job opportunities in India, seedlings and livestock in Sri Lanka, ministry to sex slaves in Bhutan and a water filtration project in Indonesia.

The Texas Baptist Hunger Offering delivers at least four significant benefits:

- **It provides aid**—primarily food and hunger relief—to some of the poorest people in Texas, across the United States and around the world. These are the folks Jesus meant when he talked about serving “the least” (Matthew 25).
- **It supports worthy ministries** across the geographic spectrum. Some, such as Syrian refugee relief, make the news globally. Some, such as small ministries in poverty pockets across Texas, serve almost anonymously. But they all need support.

- **It guarantees every penny** of your gift goes to support hunger relief and fight poverty. That begins at home. All the costs of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, which administers the offering, are supported by Texas Baptists' Cooperative Program unified budget. But that guarantee extends on down the line, because the offering is channeled through Baptist ministries, out of reach of corrupt governments and questionable intermediaries.

- **It fuels the gospel.** The Christians who operate the relief ministries serve people in Jesus' name. Their ability to feed people and alleviate suffering validates the gospel they proclaim to the recipients. So, not only are people fed and served, but also many place their faith and lives in the Savior—because you supported the offering.

Because the plight of the Syrian refugees is so grave and has been played out on our television screens, many people want to give specifically to ease their plight. This aid is vital. But so is the support that reaches needy people in Texas' cities and rural areas, as well as the aid that goes to others globally.

This year, you may want to contribute matching year-end gifts—one designated for refugee relief in the Middle East and Europe and another to the overall offering. And you might want to multiply your gift by encouraging your church to take up a collection before the end of this month.

Your support will help the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering finish strong this year and get a solid start on 2016, when we'll need to raise at least an additional \$800,000. You know the needs won't go away at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve. As Jesus said, the poor always will be with us. That means we always will be responsible for keeping our global sisters and brothers, wherever they may live.

For a bounty of information about the offering and how to give, [click here](#).