

Voices: How cataract surgery was my spiritual formation

April 23, 2025

Patti Greene lays out cataract surgery as more than physical correction. For her and us, it's a practice in spiritual formation.

Voices: A 'ninja warrior' and his ministry

April 23, 2025

From youth ministry in rural Texas to competitor on NBC's American Ninja Warrior, Jared Greer is intent on communicating the gospel.

Voices: Counseling: What does it mean to 'get help?'

April 23, 2025

Ruth and Joe Cook offer insight and advice about counseling. She shares some of her own personal experience receiving counseling.

Voices: Is it preaching or teaching?

April 23, 2025

Some prefer being taught. Others prefer to be inspired. Ron Danley considers the difference between teaching and preaching.

Voices: Who is the breadwinner?

April 23, 2025

Johnny Teague has counseled enough married couples to know money is a primary cause of marital strife. Here, he reframes the issue.

Voices: Shower and laundry are

disaster relief

April 23, 2025

On March 15, an EF-3 tornado tore through the Poplar Bluff, Mo., area, leaving one person dead and causing widespread devastation, impacting about 500 homes and 50 businesses.

In response to a call from our Missouri Southern Baptist disaster relief partners, Texans on Mission sprang into action.

Chainsaw teams from across Texas quickly mobilized, but the response went far beyond tree removal and debris cleanup. Support teams, such as shower/laundry units, also responded and are essential in our ability to demonstrate God's love to the survivors.

Disaster relief isn't just about clearing trees and debris. It's also about serving our volunteers on the front lines, providing them with clean showers and clean clothing, often in great volume, all while selflessly showing God's love through these acts of service.

Laundry before sunup

At 4:30 a.m. on March 20, Eileen Anderson, our shower/laundry Blue Cap, awoke from a restful night's sleep energized and ready to dive into the day.

Without hesitation, she got up and headed straight for the shower/laundry unit. Eileen quickly began running the used towels through the washer and dryer, ensuring fresh towels would be ready for the teams that evening.

As daylight broke, she and the rest of the shower/laundry team gathered for breakfast with the rest of our Texans on Mission disaster relief teams staying at Temple Baptist Church in Poplar Bluff.

Following breakfast, Eileen and her team focused on scrubbing down the shower stalls while the laundry machines hummed away in the background. Towels were folded and organized in preparation for the teams arriving later in the day.

It was a constant back-and-forth—cleaning stalls, starting new laundry loads, moving towels from washer to dryer, folding and cleaning. Once the towels were fresh and neatly folded, the shower team shifted focus to washing the team's dirty clothes, keeping the rhythm fast and seamless.

Laundry through the day

They started by heading into the church building, hauling out dozens of bags of dirty clothing, each carefully labeled with the volunteer's name. Without pause, the shower/laundry team dove into washing, drying and folding the clothes. The chainsaw cutters' protective pants, which should not go through dryers, were hung carefully to air dry.

Load after load, they washed, folded, stacked and bagged laundry, then returned everything to the church and placed it on the designated laundry pick-up table.

Finally, they had a brief moment of respite, a time to sit and relax in the warm sunshine as the machines cycled through their work. However, there was little time to rest as they quickly jumped up to fold, stack and bag again each load as it finished the cycle. They started new loads and kept the fast-paced cycle going until every piece of laundry was finished.

It makes me tired just trying to write an account of their day.

Laundry when the sun goes down

As the Texans on Mission teams began arriving late in the afternoon, the volunteers bagged their dirty clothes and headed straight for the clean showers and clean towels. Meanwhile, the shower/laundry team shifted their focus to serving the volunteers, ensuring they have everything they needed for their showers.

Each day, 60 volunteers come in from the job site with clothes covered in dirt. They've been asked by the laundry team to sort their laundry into two days' worth and then place it in a small garbage bag with their name clearly marked on it. This reduces 60 loads of laundry down to 30 loads.

The time and effort required to process 30 bags of laundry is no small task. Each load takes 15 minutes to wash and 45 minutes to dry.

We are thankful the laundry unit is equipped with four washing machines and four dryers, allowing the team to complete the volunteer laundry in about eight hours. But that doesn't include the additional 10 hours spent on towels.

The reality is the shower/laundry team works tirelessly behind the scenes, faithfully ministering to their brothers and sisters on the front lines of the disaster.

Your place in disaster relief

When disaster strikes and your heart is moved with compassion to help, but you know the physical demands of chainsaw or mud-out ministry aren't for you, there are still many ways to get involved.

Consider praying about joining a shower/laundry team. Jesus taught us the blessing of humbling ourselves to serve others as he washed his disciples'

feet. The shower/laundry ministry is a beautiful example of this kind of humble service.

If you're interested in learning more, I encourage you to reach out to Phil Elery, specialty coordinator for shower/laundry, at showerlaundry@texansonmission.org or visit [Texans on Mission's volunteer page](#).

Paul Henry was the first incident commander for the Texans on Mission Disaster Relief deployment in Poplar Bluff, Mo. He noted later this was Eileen's first time as Blue Cap, and long-time volunteer Monica McDougal "was right there with her" providing training. Henry lives in Horseshoe Bay and is a member of First Baptist Church in Marble Falls. The views expressed in this opinion article are those of the author.

Voices: School vouchers or religious freedom?

April 23, 2025

"When you see 'school choice,' know that is a surreptitious cover-up for 'Christian school vouchers,'" Michael Maness contends.

Voices: Prayers against human trafficking on Galveston Island

April 23, 2025

Mary Madison Weaver explains how she became involved in opposing human trafficking and how others can engage through prayer.

Voices: Depression: God delivers

April 23, 2025

Ruth Cook shares from her own experience of depression, seeking help in Scripture and from medical professionals, and of God's deliverance.

Voices: The image of God in the immigration debate

April 23, 2025

True Head contends how Christians interpret the Bible on immigration is less a political issue than it is an understanding of God's image.

Voices: A man one dark night

April 23, 2025

“I was running late for church. I tried to justify not helping, but this did me no good. God gave me ... a visible need, and I drove by.”

Voices: Unintended consequences and rural life

April 23, 2025

Changes to rural Texas have been drastic and rapid. Many of these changes are unintended consequences. Stacy Conner describes a few.