



Disaster Relief Ministry ***Striking Back when Disaster Strikes***

In a recent 12-month span, trained volunteers with Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief responded to needs in Kentucky; West Virginia; Louisiana; North Carolina; Illinois; Florida; Texas; Virgin Islands; Madagascar; Lesotho, South Africa; and Zimbabwe. They provided in excess of 317,000 meals, 7,800 showers, and 500 loads of laundry in North America. They assisted more than 1,500 families with flood recovery, fire clean-up, chainsaw work, and roof tarping. Famine stricken areas in southern Africa received more than 1.2 million meals. Disaster Relief leaders also assisted South Africa with training to begin their own disaster relief ministry.

While they did all that, they shared their faith. In addition to personal testimonies through casual conversation, they exceeded 10,000 ministry contacts and 3,500 chaplain visits. As a result, close to 100 people made decisions for Christ.

Major damage from 2017's hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria in Texas, Florida, and the Caribbean Islands kept teams busy with clean-up efforts, meals, and chaplain visits. Hurricanes may have hit those areas hard, but disaster relief volunteers struck back. Through their words and actions, thousands learned about the power of God's light in the darkest circumstances.

As Coy Webb, Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief Director, said, this ministry seeks "to bring practical help, healing grace, and the hope of Christ to those affected by disaster. We are living out the truth of God's word, which instructs us: 'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.'"¹



Kentucky Baptists partner with other state conventions, the North American Mission Board, the International Mission Board, and Baptist Global Relief. A far cry from its 1984 birth with hardly any volunteers or resources, today's 5,000-plus trained Kentucky volunteers and 45-plus mobile disaster relief units stand ready to serve when and where needed. As part of the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief network, it's "one of the three largest disaster relief entities in the United States, along with the American Red Cross and Salvation Army." Often some of the first to arrive and last to leave, they provide "mass feeding, damage assessment, chainsaw assistance, flood and fire clean-up, roof tarping, chaplaincy, water purification, laundry and showers, and emergency child care."

Webb first became involved with this ministry during Hurricane Katrina while he was pastor of First Baptist Church in Monticello. He accepted the role as director of Kentucky Disaster Relief in 2008. His responsibilities include training, coordinating, and mobilizing volunteers. His greatest joy comes from serving in "a role that fulfills both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission." It also includes "the privilege of serving beside the faithful and wonderful volunteers from Kentucky Baptist churches who love the Lord and who have a passion to serve." At the same time, he constantly faces the challenge of "making decisions when and how it is best to respond and to do this in short windows of time during crisis events. Disasters come without notice and often leave a trail of devastation behind." Few people realize the challenge, chaos, and complexity of responding to major disasters. "It is never easy to wade into the pain and suffering of others." Yet that remains God's call on Webb's life.



Consistent disaster relief needs include fervent volunteers and the resources to go wherever and whenever a crisis occurs. Gifts through the Cooperative Program and Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions, plus partnerships with Kentucky Baptist churches, keep this ministry running and ready.

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer can register for training and learn more about disaster relief at <http://www.kybaptist.org/dr/>. Volunteer requirements include basic orientation to disaster relief (provided at regional training events in different parts of the state) and a background check. All volunteers receive photo IDs.

Although not everyone can go as a volunteer, everyone can pray.

Prayer Requests

- * Pray for God to use Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief to bring help, healing, and hope to those suffering in times of disaster.
- * Pray for God to use Kentucky Baptist volunteers to sow Gospel seeds as they respond to physical needs.
- * Pray for those affected by crisis events to be reminded of God's love and care as volunteers minister in the aftermath.
- * Pray for God to continue to call volunteers for training and service.
- * Pray for God to continue to provide resources that enable teams to respond effectively when disasters strike.

www.kybaptist.org/dr

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