

After Action Report
Wildfire Disaster Response Ministers Get-Away Retreat
Hyatt Lost Pines Spa and Resort, Lost Pines, Texas
January 23-25, 2012

The Texas Baptists (BGCT) Disaster Response division planned, coordinated, and funded a retreat for Texas Baptist Ministers and spouses following the Texas wildfires of 2011. Marla Bearden was the planner and coordinator for the retreat.

The target group was Texas Baptist ministers and spouses who had been directly impacted by the fires in the Bastrop area. This included ministers from Bastrop, Smithville, and Magnolia. Several had personal losses of houses and property, but all were directly involved in the response and their churches had served as places of refuge and assistance for victims of the fires.

The goal was to allow these ministers and spouses to pause, debrief, and refresh. All of these ministers are under tremendous stress due to the events of the few months and the Texas Baptist Convention (BGCT) desired to provide as much assistance as possible.

Marla Bearden contacted the Texas Baptist Office of Chaplaincy to provide group facilitators for the retreat. The plan was to have separate sessions for the ministers and spouses. Dan Franklin and Sherri Bearden were selected to do this role. Ample free time was planned to allow the participants to relax (see attachment for retreat schedule).

POSITIVES:

- The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) Group Crisis Intervention model was utilized for the de-briefing sessions. Modifications of the model were made because a full NOVA team was not appropriate for this event. Feedback from participants was very positive. They were allowed to tell their stories and felt like they were heard and affirmed.
- Having separate groups for ministers and spouses in this situation was very positive. Many of the spouses would not have said anything if they were all in one group.
- The location for the retreat was outstanding. While the Hyatt Lost Pines Resort was certainly more expensive than a Baptist Retreat center, it was well worth the money. The ministers and spouse felt “special” as a result of this retreat. This was money well invested in the lives of these ministers and their spouses.
- The “free time” was crucial. Although these ministers and spouses were in the same general area, most did not know each other except for denominational meetings. The total process allowed them to visit with each other and feel support from one another.
- It was emphasized that the Texas Baptist Convention continues to be available to support the ministers and their spouses. The recovery is still in its infancy. Much still needs to be done.

IMPROVE: None noted!

DISCUSSION: This retreat far exceeded my expectations. We had never done anything quite like this before. I did not know what to expect and how everyone would react to the program. The ministers and spouses responded very positively to this retreat and it will help them continue to serve in their churches and communities. This model could be utilized by other organizations. I highly recommend it.

The Texas Baptists (BGCT) did a great service with this retreat. The timing was perfect. It was after the initial disaster response and early in the recovery phase for the community. Hopefully we will not have any fires of this magnitude again, but we know that we will have community disasters impacting multiple churches. This type retreat should be considered for each of those situations.

CONCLUSION: This is only part of the Texas Baptist response to the disasters in Bastrop. The Texas Baptist Men did a tremendous work in the Bastrop area. Marla Bearden and others had frequent contact with the ministers and spouses. There is still much to do and Texas Baptists will continue to be involved in the recovery. This retreat serves as a vital ingredient in the Texas Baptist Disaster Response. I highly recommend that it be considered as part of the plan for all major disasters.

Dan Franklin
Texas Crisis Resiliency Team Coordinator



**24 Jan 2012
Bastrop Pastors and Spouses Retreat**



**24 Jan 2012
Bastrop Pastors and Spouses Retreat
Men's Group Crisis Intervention Session**

WILDFIRE DISASTER RESPONSE

MINISTERS GET-AWAY RETREAT

JANUARY 23 – 25, 2012

Hyatt Lost Pines

Spa and Resort,

Lost Pines, Texas

TEXAS ★ BAPTISTS

BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF TEXAS

Monday, January 23 4:00 pm Meet at the Retreat Center and check in to room

6:00 to 8:30 pm Dinner, Introductions and Debriefing led by Dan Franklin (MINA Room)

8:30 pm - on your own

Tuesday, January 24 8:30 am - Breakfast Buffet in the Robertson-Leftwich Room

9:30 – Noon – Robertson –Leftwich Room- led the Dan Franklin and Sherry Bearden

Noon – Lunch in the Robertson-Leftwich Room

Recreation of your choice – (Golf - call 512-308-WOLF for an afternoon tee time, Spa - call 512-308-4789 for a message or facial appointment, There is hiking and horseback riding in the McKinney Rough Nature Park. It may be too cold to do anything outside but wanted you to know what was available.)

6:00 – 8:30 pm Dinner in the Ranger Room

8:30 pm - on your own

Wednesday, January 25

8:30 am - Breakfast Buffet in the Robertson-Leftwich Room

Morning Session to close the retreat led by Marla Bearden and Dan Franklin

Retreat will end at 10:30 am. (checkout is at 11:00 am)

**We have invited a film crew to film some testimonies that we would like to share at our BGCT Annual meeting in the Fall in Corpus Christi.*