

“The hands and feet of Jesus”: John-Travis Smith discusses the disaster relief efforts of Texas Baptist Men in Israel

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TRANSCRIPT



NOTE: This transcript was AI-generated and has not been fully edited.

Additionally, the timestamps are incorrect.

[00:00:00] **Dr. Mark Turman:**

Welcome to The Denison Forum Podcast. I'm Mark Turman, Executive Director of Denison Forum. Glad to have you around for our conversation today. This is yet another special episode of The Denison Forum Podcast, focusing on the crisis in Israel. We hope that you're staying abreast of events going on there, that you're continuing in prayer.

We have many resources on our website. You can just look at the title. War in Israel, and that will connect you to all of our resources, podcasts, articles, and other things, uh, prayer reminders and guided prayers that you can use as we walk through this tragic crisis going on in our world today.

We also want to help you continue to think biblically and act redemptively in the midst of this crisis and in other opportunities that God gives you. Today, we're going to be focused on humanitarian needs in the area of Israel and Gaza. We're going to be joined today by John- Travis Smith. who is the Associate Executive Director of a ministry called Texas Baptist Men.

John grew up in a Southern Baptist congregation and has been serving in this ministry for the last several years. Prior to that, he was Pastor of Young Adults at the First Baptist Church of Bryan and then also served at the First Baptist Church of Hempstead. Texas. Uh, he was there as youth minister, later as associate pastor, and also as interim pastor.

Today, John is the chief financial officer in charge of overall financial operations. He oversees office staff, develops policies and procedures and handles everything for Texas Baptist men ranging from accounting to human resources.

He has a bachelor's degree in finance from Texas A& M University. He is also the holder of a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. He and his wife Kayla have four children. And he is currently helping with a number of efforts of supporting people and relieving suffering in Israel and Gaza. He's joining our conversation today to help us with that.

As we again, think biblically and act redemptively.

[00:00:00] **Dr. Mark Turman:**

John Travis, welcome to the Denison Forum Podcast. We're glad to have you with us

[00:00:04] **John-Travis Smith:** Thank you so much. Glad to be here.

[00:00:05] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah, thanks for taking the time. We're going to help our folks to understand some of what's going on in the crisis in Israel and how your organization, Texas Baptist Men, are involved. But before we get into some of those details for those in our audience that may be unfamiliar, you and I come from Southern Baptist congregations.

And so this is somewhat second nature to us. But give us a brief explanation of what is the Texas Baptist Convention, also known some people will hear it referred to as the Baptist General Convention of Texas. What in the world is a Texas Baptist Convention? Okay

[00:00:42] **John-Travis Smith:** BGCT, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, now Texas Baptists, has been around for quite a while, a mainstay in Texas Baptist life, and the Texas Baptist Men started out under BGCT, the Baptist General Convention of Texas. And kind of the the auxiliary, the other mirror to WMU, the Women's Missionary Union. Back in 1967 is when TBM actually formed with a guy by the name of Bob Dixon and Joe Linneman, who I consider friends and knew them very well. Mickey Lenamon our executive director, is actually a son of Joe Lenamon. So, we go way back and just, just some great godly men that started that. And so, TBM has always had a very close connection with the BGCT, with Texas Baptists and Texas Baptist Men.

So, sometimes it can get a little confusing. But we are affiliate partners together. A few years ago that we fully separated out from the BGCT, but we are still their disaster relief arm. So whenever there's a disaster, we go out in coordination and in connection with the BGCT, Texas Baptists.

[00:01:46] **Dr. Mark Turman:** and tell me if I'm on track. Texas Baptist s is about 5, 000, 5, 200 churches, something like that, across the state of Texas that voluntarily associate, cooperate together and is, am I get the numbers

[00:02:01] **John-Travis Smith:** That's right. That's correct.

[00:02:02] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Okay. So, you know, from a denominational standpoint, Southern Baptists are strongly autonomous as congregations, but choose voluntarily to work together, to pool resources and to share information, to collaborate.

And one of the ways that we do that and one of the things we focus on is disaster relief. And one of our best strongest ministries is Texas Baptist Men and the relationship that they have with our churches and the relief that they do. John Travis, give us some a sense of, we're going to talk obviously about stepping into and trying to come alongside the crisis of what's happening in Israel, but give our folks some sense of some of the other kinds of disasters that TBM has been involved in. And some of the real practical things that they do. I know some of it's food, but it's not just food. What are some of the expressions of disaster relief that texas baptist men are involved in?

[00:02:59] **John-Travis Smith:** So, love to speak to that. Right off the bat, what I'd also like to just share with the audience, just so they're aware that TBM, which is what we go by now Texans

on Mission. Because we have so many ladies that that join with us. So about almost half of our workforce is female and even right now serving in Israel several ladies are there on the forefront.

So that's been the case for several years, but we love partnering across the board with that because we just, we love joining together as men and women and doing the work of disaster relief. So disasters really have a broad definition in our terms. So it used to just mean a hurricane, but that has expanded over the years.

That could mean a fire, flood, tornado. It could unfortunately mean a mass shooting or a pandemic or any of those things, that fit in those natural or manmade disasters. And so it is an incredible thing that we see from Scripture from disasters that happened there where the church steps in and they just say that we want to join together, partner together, and and be the hands and feet of Jesus. So we will do that in a lot of different ways.

It could be anything from what we call flood recovery, where we go in and we just completely remove debris and anything wet from a house that's flooded and a lot of people think that's easy work, but that's some of the most difficult work we do.

Because if you can imagine a flood could be anything from raw sewage to run off from cemeteries to anything and everything you can imagine in someone's home. Taking all that out and getting that prepared to rebuild that and get a family back in a home. We do ash out, which is what we're doing in Maui right now, where they're going in and they're literally sifting every piece of ash from a home.

Trying to find anything that's salvageable and working to get those people back in some type of a good shelter. We do things like child care, laundry, shower units. Of course, we have the feeding units. We do chainsaw work. We do heavy machinery. We come in with with large pieces of equipment and really get a lot of work done.

So there's just so many things in and among disaster relief, even from the water filtration, so that we can use that in our kitchens and also in our shower units. So there's just a lot of things that we've gone on and done.

And one of the ones that we see just so much fruit is in our chaplain ministry. So we, every team that goes out that we want to have a chaplain there that can sit with a homeowner. That can help them to process everything that they've been through. That can pray with them. That can point them to that hope that we bring. Not just the help, but the hope that we bring. And also, they help our team.

Because our team, even like right now in Israel the things that they see are so traumatizing. Just to have someone that they can go and and care for our team. So all those different things come together , to help in a disaster.

[00:05:42] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. Thanks for that. In the area where I live north of Dallas. We've had some direct assistance a couple years ago during the great freeze of February where a great deal of electricity was knocked out across the state of Texas. We had Texans on mission, Texas Baptist Men, they brought one of their feeding units to set up in our parking lot. And we were fortunate as a congregation to still have electricity. And we actually became a shelter for some senior citizens who had to evacuate from their nursing homes. And they stayed in our church for a few nights and Texas Baptist Men came with their feeding unit and supplied the meals. And so we experienced direct assistance in that way.

I know when I was first starting out in ministry, some 35 years ago, started to learn about the work of Texas Baptist men, then it sounded like, well, okay, well, this is what we do to help people in Texas, but obviously, because we're going to talk about Israel, you just mentioned what's been going on in terms of relief in Hawaii.

Talk about the fact that this ministry is not regionalized in terms of its focus that you could be almost anywhere in the world certainly almost anywhere in the United States and find expressions of ministry coming from what y'all do. Talk about that as a part of your mission how it's not simply Texas focused.

[00:07:02] **John-Travis Smith:** Absolutely. So we, we are heavily Texas focused, Texas first, as we like to say, but like you said not just our Jerusalem, but our Judean Samaria that's really where we take our ministry strategy from. And so we could be anywhere in the country to anywhere in the world, and we've been in a lot of places we can't even really openly talk about and share about that we've been fortunate enough to go in and do some ministry work and sometimes have some long term partnerships in some of these areas. Sometimes if you just turn on the news and you see something going on, there's a good chance that we're serving and helping in some way there, even though we can't always talk about it.

I just kind of bring to your attention the war in Ukraine. There's just some things that, you know, you just can't talk about the way that you're helping and serving there. But it's great , as a Texas Baptist to know that no matter what's happening there, they're probably someone around the world that is doing ministry work in Jesus name to help those people and that people can be a part of that right in their own congregation.

So that's incredible. But we've really tried to see things, not just as Texas like you said, but across the world. So we have partnerships all around the world that we can get in contact , with and

they can help us get to different places. And even if we can't physically go ourselves, they have ways that we can be a part in helping them do ministry there.

[00:08:15] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Well, let's pivot in that direction to Israel, obviously with this crisis. That's now two weeks old with just tragic and horrific stories coming out of the attack by the terrorist group Hamas into Israel and now Israel's response. Talk a little bit about what y'all have mobilized to do in, in terms of supporting people that are in this crisis very unique thing, very different thing I would think from going to a natural disaster like a hurricane, a tornado, or a fire, but now going into an active war environment.

But tell us a little bit about what Texas Baptist Men and Texans on Mission has mobilized to do in this current crisis.

[00:08:59] **John-Travis Smith:** So about six years ago, we started a partnership in Israel because we were worried about a earthquake that might happen because they were due for a hundred year earthquake. So even back then, we started to say you know, I think there could be something in this region that we really need to help with, and we want to be on the forefront to be able to go in and , be prepared and be able to really help.

And so, several months ago that, along that same fault line that happened on , the Turkey Syria border but that's the same one , that basically comes through Israel. So that's what we were worried about , in the first place. So we started getting together kitchens and equipment and getting that in Israel and then developing now even a secure compound that we can host volunteers.

So right now we can host 20 volunteers comfortably. And we look to double that in the next six months. And ever since then, the last two years, we've had groups go every month. And they're just regular church folks just like people listening, that just said, hey, I want to be a part, I want to serve.

And we they go over to Israel for a week, and , we basically give them a crash course on how to cook kosher food. Because as you mentioned, it's a little bit different, because we can't just cook all , the same way that we do and the same food that we do. There's a incredibly delicate process that you have to go through.

We've even gotten specific food certification from some of the most noteworthy kosher organizations in Jerusalem there so that , they know exactly what we're doing. They've looked over our process and how we do things and have given us that seal of approval. But to go over there like I said, once a month and take a team and train them so if something happened, like we're seeing now that we have a list of people who are already trained have the security briefing,

all those kinds of things have been background checked and that they can get over there and and be serving. And so , we're on our third team right now, working on our third team that's going to be over there, but it is a much different situation, like you said because there's, we have to worry about security and we do take the security of our volunteers , that's our number one priority so that we have them in the safest possible place that we can but doing incredible work even despite that.

So. Not just, not just cooking, but also doing the security aspect, and we're we're quite fortunate in some ways in the United States if we have a natural disaster, we're not really worried about a terrorist attack coming in with that, but in Israel, that is the case, so , we've trained our people, and they kind of know I have a security training , to work, to watch and pray, as we would say that we can do the work as we're praying, but someone else is watching the security of the situation and what's going on so it is very much a you know, the Bible comes alive in some of that when it gives us those warnings because , we take those seriously and gives us how we function.

But , we're fortunate here because we don't have to worry about that there. But every time they have a natural disaster, that is at the forefront of their minds as well. So that's something we've had to train our people in into just doing things differently because it's, you know, something happens and we, here, we just want to rush in and go help, but you really have to be careful the way that you do that over there , and so it's just something that, that we do have the training on. Just focused on training our people at keeping them safe and all those parameters, but it is quite different in some ways,

[00:11:59] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah, sounds like lots of intentional , and thoughtful effort going in both on this side as well as with some partners in the region and Israelis and that type of thing. Are you able in this particular context, are you able to take your chaplains, as you would, if you were operating in the United States, are they able to be a part of this dynamic as well?

[00:12:23] **John-Travis Smith:** you know, we do have chaplains on our team because like I said, our people themselves need someone to talk to and need someone to pray with to decompress at the end of the day. So that is something that we always take now, as far as the outward facing ministry, that , looks quite different. We were told when when we did the partnership that we weren't going to come if , if we weren't allowed to talk about Jesus.

So that was kind of one of our non negotiables, and the the authorities looked at our director Mickey Lenamon, and they said you know, if anyone asks you why you're here, you're perfectly free to tell them why. And so we don't have to go over there , with big crosses on our chest or a big Christian fish or something so people know who we are. they know who we are and they find out real fast. And I have yet to be over there and serve a meal or do anything where someone out

of bewilderment hasn't asked, why are you here? Because they're used to Christian tourists who are not normally known as the best people there, that's, their interaction, with Christians is either on tour or you know, either just as the churches that they see there.

So just a different, a very different picture of what we would think Christians would be. So they have a lot different idea, but when they see us and we're there to serve and to help. And we're doing so cheerfully, and in spots that tourists don't normally go, it is shocking to them, and they really want to know why.

And, we had no problem with, sharing with them why we're there, and that's to bring that help, hope, and healing that only comes through Jesus.

[00:13:47] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Well, such an important part of this dynamic, like you said, both with the people who are serving the volunteers and staff that are serving, but also those opportunities that God may open up for other kinds of conversations for sure. There's a lot in the news, John Travis about there's at least a three part dynamic going on here. There's the Israeli government. There are obviously the people that are directly participating as terrorists, as members of Hamas, Hezbollah to the north, and likely other groups as well. And then there's the Palestinian people. What have y'all been able to learn?

What have you been able to implement in terms of serving both Israelis, Jewish folks as well as Palestinians in this current crisis.

[00:14:37] **John-Travis Smith:** It's the same thing that we do everywhere back here. And that's if someone's hurting or needs help, we want to provide that to them. And we don't ask a lot of background questions of even back here, what's your faith or anything else? Because we just believe that we're to be that light on the hill. We shine our light and we let the Holy spirit do his work as he sees fit.

But I think a lot of people, and I know many of your audiences has been to Israel and they've seen that, but, there are so many Jewish and Arab settlements right together, maybe just across the roads and things like that. So it's really kind of impossible to go. And, if you were and say, we're just going to serve this people or that people, it's a hard thing to do.

And a lot of people forget, there's a Christian minority that also lives in Israel that that is often overlooked. And so that is a group that we serve as well. And so we have a lot of partners and friends in Israel that are believers, and there are a lot of believers who are Palestinian, and I think that sometimes people don't really think about that, that even in some of these villages that there are Christian Palestinians.

So, it, it is a complicated, complicated situation to say the least, and everyone that goes over there and does the training, and the, even our group spending time over there just kind of comes away with a greater appreciation for the complexities that are there and how difficult it is just to come to an easy solution because, it is complicated and just like back here in our own country, there, there's a wide gamut of beliefs and understanding even in the Baptist world, much less the Christian world people on different sides of the aisle and all across things.

So, it is a difficult task, but, it's easy when you go in to. Simple, I should say, is probably a better word. None of the work we do is easy, but simple in the fact of we just want to help people. And so, we go back to what Jesus says, and we just we want to let our light shine, we want to do unto others, and we let him take care of the rest.

[00:16:25] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. It's such, a great spirit of the organization that, that spirit of the good Samaritan who, didn't have a lot of questions and, and criteria for the guy that was laying on the side of the road and he just saw the person in need and decided to stop and engage and be sacrificial and generous toward him. It's, that same spirit that really drives Texas Baptist Men.

I know that you're planning to be in Israel yourself soon. What are you getting in terms of reports of what it is like in Israel, in Gaza?, don't know exactly. And certainly probably don't want to reveal anything that would compromise any of your efforts.

But to the degree that you're getting information, what are you learning about what the real time experience is today, these days in Gaza or in Israel, those places where you're able to be in connected relationships?

[00:17:16] **John-Travis Smith:**, it is hard. The last time I was over there was just in May with a group of pastors, so we're over there quite often, and it was very hard for me when the news first broke. Because we had, actually visited many of those kibbutzim kibbutzes, as I guess we would say here and met so many of those people, likely some who perished or have been taken hostage.

We were, right along there. We've actually, fed along the Gaza border about a year ago. And so, that was difficult. Even sitting back here so far away to know and to understand that there's likely people that we had come across that that were involved in that. But, even our people that are there now, it, is a difficult situation and the people that they talk to there is, a mass migration from the South and now from the North.

And so they're at a place and just It's almost become like a shelter in some of these places because people are just trying to escape from the south and from the north and kind of just

collect in the central part , of the country. And so just imagine having a ton of kids around and you can't really let them go outside and play.

So there's a lot of kids going stir crazy. And , it's just a fearful situation because they're just living through hearing , the sirens go off. I know in our area, the woods it's kind of different because I'm closer from the Houston area. It's where we came from. So when we came up here, we, they just didn't have , the alarms that went off when a tornado or severe storm was blowing through.

And that was kind of new to us of , what is that siren? What does that mean to do? Which seems kind of silly now. But that's the kind of sirens that they hear all the time and they have to go running for safe rooms, running for bomb shelters, those kinds of things. Our teams have had to stop cooking on occasion take shelter and then continue on and again, safe area.

There was nothing around them, but just the warning that something , was impending and coming. So it, , they've kind of been through that and seen that what that is to just try to go about your daily life and go about your normal routine. And that gets broken up by rocket sirens and having to take shelter and just hearing some of the stories of these people that have moved out of their homes that may not have homes anymore that have had to flee because of what's going on.

There's a lot of uncertainty. They know that there's a larger opening front that's coming. Everybody kind of knows that it's just a matter of when. And so I mean, school has been disrupted. Lives have been disrupted, and it's just it's been a very stressful situation for a lot of parents. , we're very close with with some friends there that have four daughters, one of which entered military service this year because they have to when they turn 18.

So, just to hear the mom and dad talk about the fear that they have that their daughter , is having to help in this conflict and , not being able to protect her, and then the younger three who are experiencing some almost PTSD trauma because of , all the things going on. It's just it's really hard to hear and to see some of that. So we're glad we can be there and be a small help in that. If

[00:20:03] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah. And just so many stories got got word from a friend of mine in Israel yesterday. And he's very, very deeply involved in a lot of different aspects in Israel, just to hear , the sense of pain and disappointment and concern. And as he said, in his message to us, just fatigue and just an overwhelming burden about where they are and where things are likely to go in coming days is really, really a burden.

John Travis, so much of what our ministry at Denison Forum is about is about helping people think biblically about all kinds of things, including this crisis we've been writing and podcasting in, ways over the last couple of weeks.

We'll continue to do that. But we don't want to just help people think well and think biblically about these things. We want them to be able to act redemptively. And for us, at least here in the short term, that comes down to at least two things.

One of those is prayer. I wonder before we talk about the practical side of how people can help through ministries like yours, Texas Baptist Men do you have two or three specific prayer requests that you might share with us just from again, , the amount of knowledge and understanding , of what you have of the situation ,you and, and your teams are trying to do? Do you have two or three specific things that you would want our audience to pray with you about?

[00:21:29] **John-Travis Smith:** they would just lift up our team, it is long, hard work and it is difficult with everything going around that they would just lift them up in prayer because it is very easy to get discouraged sometimes and to when you're doing the work to just to allow the flesh , to come in , and complain and all those kind of things.

And that's not how our people are, but we have them over there for two weeks at a time. And , it is very hard because... You know, sometimes you just want to make food the way , you're used to making food and you've got to do it by strict rules. And there's times where you just want to get out. We really want to do even more than what we're doing now because of safety that we have to kind of pull them back.

That's kind of our volunteer base. They just really want to get out there and keep going. But if they would just pray for our team and if they would also just pray for opportunities just to share the gospel and to be a light to whomever they come across. It's just incredible to hear the stories of people coming in and just the work of the Lord really being done.

It's an incredible thing to feed in the same place where Jesus fed, but to have that same opportunity that He had , just to share that gospel. That I think sometimes it's so lacking because you're surrounded in the Holy Land, and sometimes you take that for granted, even the people who grew up and live there.

But if they would just have opportunities to share the gospel, and also for the safety of the people, it's not just one side that's being targeted. When they fire these rockets, they're unguided, so they could fall on any community, anywhere. And a lot of times there's a lot of civilian casualties there and it is very hard especially for the children who, who are so, it just breaks my heart because like I said, I have kids and to to not allow them to go out and play and to have them be fearful and scared and not knowing.

But they would just even lift up the people because that a peaceful resolution would be soon in coming. Because , it is just weighs so heavily on anyone and everyone in that situation. Whether

you're on the Gaza side, or the Israel side, or wherever it may be. There's just a lot of people, including believers, who are trapped in this.

And it weighs heavily on them. So if they would pray for those three things, that would be great. But that peaceful resolution is what we were all seeking.

[00:23:39] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah, such , a powerful word. Just made me think when you were talking a minute ago, I heard a story a few days ago about some of these people in Southern Israel and also in Gaza that they finally came and connected to a ministry like what you're doing. And the people were asking them as they were offering them food, what have you been eating?

And they say, well, for the last five, six days, we've been simply eating raw rice that the only thing they could get their hands on was uncooked rice. They didn't have water in many cases, to prepare that rice in any way. So they just ate it raw and that was the way that they had survived for a number of days.

And it's hard for us to even conceive of that. What would that be like for us individually? What would that be like if we were parents taking care of children or taking care of senior citizens? All of those kinds of things, just overwhelming.

It also makes me think of that statement of Jesus when he said, and you will do even greater things than I've done. And it's like, How could we do anything greater than what Jesus did when he healed people and fed 5, 000 people and that kind of thing. But this is an expression of that. This is an expression , of his people being the expression of his body and of his concern and of his desire to help people. What you are doing, what Texas Baptist Men are doing is an expression of that greater things in some way.

Before we wrap up John Travis give us some real clarity. Obviously praying is the first and most important thing that we should do. And we'll close in a moment with a word of prayer.

And we should never ever underestimate how important that is. The Bible is very explicit about praying for each other. Very explicit about praying, for Jerusalem, praying for the peace of Jerusalem and for the peace of Israel. And we want to pray that not only for our Jewish friends and our Israeli friends. We want to pray that for the Palestinians. We want to pray that for everyone. And as you said, for a peaceful and quick resolution.

But it is also something that we can do to help by giving tangibly because it takes money to get people into position to help. It takes money to buy resources to have the equipment that you've talked about, to have feeding kitchens to house volunteers to provide food just to be able to buy

it so you can cook it so that you can give it away for free. All of that requires an enormous amount of resource. So share with us where and how people who may be moved by the Spirit of God, hopefully by our conversation, how can they partner with you at Texas Baptist Men in this particular effort, or even more broadly than that, where and how do they do that?

[00:26:25] **John-Travis Smith:** If they would like, they can always go to our website. It's TBMTX, like the state of Texas, TBMTX. org, and we have a lot of updates where they can be a part and how they can help us. I know there are a lot of people , that feel called to give. I can tell you we didn't really talk about, but we actually sent 50 medical professionals, doctors, nurses, first responders, paramedics over there just over the weekend.

And so, there's several more that we have that we could send with more funds, because it is , a critical need as well. But just like you said, there's so many of those people living on crunchy rice, is what what they've called it to us, just uncooked rice. And so, they can be confident when they get the TBM that 100 percent of their funds goes to victim relief.

And so that's just something that we kind of pride ourselves in. I think it's an important thing there. So if they go to our website and they get to that internationalrelief, tbmtx. org, and there may be some people that say, you know, I really want to be a part of this , in a, even more tangible way.

I want to get involved. Like I said, we send groups once a month. And so if they want to sign up to be on one of those groups in the future, I know 2024 is already kind of filling up fast, but they can certainly get on that wait list and say, Hey, I'd like to stand up beside our brothers and sisters and be a part of that solution in a physical way.

There's information on that website at TBMTX. org where they can also find more information on how to be a part in that way as well.

[00:27:55] **Dr. Mark Turman:** Yeah, and that would becoming a volunteer would include all the training and all of that orientation. I'm sure that would be important participating in this kind of of an effort,

[00:28:05] **John-Travis Smith:** Absolutely. Best training you can get. I think so.

[00:28:08] **Dr. Mark Turman:** And yeah, so just exciting to be a part of that as you said i'm i'm like you i'm sure many of those listening to us today have been to israel perhaps on a bible study tour and they've been a pilgrim in that way as a disciple as a a follower of Jesus as a worshiper.

But now to come alongside and to say, you know what, maybe God wants me to go back and be a servant and to help out in this crisis.

Well, what a great opportunity that is for all of us to consider. And great to do it. through such a, a very, very dedicated organization such as yours John Travis, let me pray for you and pray for all that is going on in Israel, particularly through the efforts of Texas Baptist men. Let me just offer a prayer and thank you for sharing with us.

We'll include in our show notes all of those website information links so that people can get to those quickly. Whether they want to give financially, whether they want to volunteer personally, we want to make sure those links are clear and we'll do that. But as we wrap up today, just want to thank you John Travis, thank you for what you're doing and for all that you're helping to lead. Want to also pray for this effort. And let's do that right now as we close.

Father, I just want to thank you for John Travis. Thank you for our conversation today. We pray that you would, Lord, just use him in mighty ways and that you would guide his steps and keep him safe as he travels to Israel and as he serves there.

God, we do pray along with him, as he mentioned today. Lord, that there would be peace in Israel and in this region and that it would come soon. And Lord, not only in this region, but in Ukraine and in other places around the world. God, we just know that you desire peace and we pray that God, you would bring it through your gospel and through your people.

God, we pray for the ongoing work of Texas Baptist men and others in this region. We pray God that you would use them to meet physical needs and also Lord, that you would give opportunities to meet spiritual need that Lord, there would be opportunities to talk to people about the gospel that Jesus came and made real in this part of the world.

And God, we just pray that you would do what only you can do and that you would involve us, use us. God, I pray today that if somebody listens to this, that if they've never given or they've given a lot either way that they would be moved by you to respond and to open up not only their heart, but also their pocket book.

God, you may be calling someone listening to this podcast to step up and become a volunteer. They have the time, they have the resources, they have the desire and they're sensing a movement from your Spirit that they should volunteer. Lord, help them to know that doing that through Texas Baptist Men is one of the best ways that they can do it and that Lord, they would take action even today to investigate the website, to seek information, to sign up and to become trained and to go and to help in this particular crisis.

And God, we pray for those that are serving today, people that are there on the ground helping to minister to those who are hurting those who are scared, those who are hopeless. God, we just pray that you would use all of those efforts. We pray for the release of the hostages. We pray father again for peace.

And again, God, just thank you for letting us be a part of what you're doing. We pray that your hope and your help will come in strong ways as we seek , to think biblically and live redemptively. And God, just thank you for what you are doing and what you're going to do. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

John Travis, thank you again for your time today. Safe travels, my friend. And let us know how we can be useful to you going forward.

[00:31:55] **John-Travis Smith:** Thank you so much. Appreciate it. Thanks.

[00:31:57] **Dr. Mark Turman:** All right. God bless you.