

TEXAS ★ BAPTISTS®

BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF TEXAS

A MISSIONARY

A MISSIONARY BY ANOTHER NAME



In the heat and hardship of Iraq was exactly where God wanted U.S. Navy Chaplain Ray Rivers to serve. In addition to his duties of caring for troops' spiritual needs, Rivers helped officers understand religious customs in the area, related to community religious leaders, and built relationships with soldiers and people throughout the region. He encountered people from around the globe – Iraq, obviously, but India, Nepal and Uganda, as well – who worked in Iraq as contractors. The chaplain was amazed by the spiritual openness he encountered in Iraq. Troops, contractors, interpreters and others came to the Lord.

“A lot of [people] sought the Lord,” Rivers said. “I was there as their pastor. It was just an exciting thing. That was the best six months of ministry I’ve ever had in 16 years of ordained ministry. The best. It was super. We baptized 10-15 in those six months. We did the wonderful study Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God right there in the combat zone. Here we were in a Muslim country doing a Christian study.”

After a roughly three-month tour of duty, Rivers returned to North Carolina. But he didn't stay long. He was deployed to Afghanistan for more than five months. There, his battalion was engaged in the military conflict. Some of the men lost their lives there.

“When a soldier loses his life, it ripples through the battalion,” Rivers said. “It affects people in different ways.” The chaplain spent much of his time counseling people who were trying to deal with combat-related stresses and others who were confronted by the loss of friends.

“There was some good ministry there,” Rivers said. “Hopefully there were some seeds planted, not just with our Marines and sailors, but indigenous people also.”

Roughly 130 Baptist General Convention of Texas-endorsed chaplains are sharing the hope of Christ around the globe. Will you pray for them today?

