

NOT Your Average Week

The final week of Disaster Relief (DR) teams working in Dawson, GA after Hurricane Michael began like countless other weeks, with new teams getting to know each other, the church, and the community. Assessors were out coordinating jobs to be done, team leaders had the teams out beginning the work after safety briefs, and the Incident Command (IC) team was beginning to plan for closing down the site at the end of the week. But the week would be anything but average by Friday.

On Monday, a team was scheduled to do some work at a home and arrived to find that the homeowner was away. This is not unusual, as homeowners try to balance life, work, and recovery from a disaster. So the team arranged to work the following day. Things went well Tuesday. Trees were cut, debris was removed, and the Gospel was shared with the homeowner. While they were there, one of the team members noticed a young man walking down the road. The volunteer shut down his chainsaw and walked over to talk with the man, ultimately sharing the Gospel with him. This young man named Tobias said he had been wanting to talk with someone about God for a while. He ended up asking Jesus to be the Lord of his life! If the DR team had been able to do the work as planned on Monday, Tobias would still be walking the streets of Dawson today, lost, and headed for hell. Praise God for divine appointments!

The week progressed as usual for the next couple of days. On Friday, the teams departed after breakfast and the daily safety brief. About 20 minutes later, SBCV Disaster Relief director Mark Gauthier received a phone call that the one of the trailers had a flat tire and the team would be delayed in starting work. A few minutes later, the other team called to report a flat tire too! When the teams got back on the road and headed to their job sites, one of the trucks went off the road and got stuck in the mud.

They used the tractor they were towing to pull the truck out and finally made it to the work site. By lunchtime, word

came that the tractor now had a flat and another team's Bobcat did too! DR leaders and teams began praying because it was obvious Satan was working overtime to disrupt the teams. Just after lunch (after the Bobcat's flat tire had been repaired), a large branch fell on the Bobcat and broke a hydraulic block, rendering the equipment useless.

But God is bigger, stronger, and ever-faithful! By the end of the worst DR workday Gauthier had experienced since SBCV's DR Ministry began in 2002, five people came to faith in Christ! In seven days, a total of seven lives were changed for eternity because of the ministry of Disaster Relief.

All of this was possible only because of the faithful prayers, sacrificial giving, and incredible volunteers who are willing to go. Without the churches of the SBCV and your faithfulness, this vital ministry would not exist. In 2018, hundreds of volunteers from over 45 SBCV churches invested more than 31,000 hours of volunteer time bringing help, healing, and hope to those impacted by disaster. Thank you!

As the 2019 training season begins, prayerfully consider attending one of the nine scheduled trainings across the Commonwealth to become a trained volunteer.

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