



# FIRE & ICE: A Disaster Relief Reflection

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At the end of February, I had the opportunity to go on my first SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief deployment to Louisville, CO [after wildfires there]. In our time there, we faced a lot of agnosticism and indifference to the Gospel. Moreover, we learned there was much political tension between the local and state government and religious organizations, such as churches and SBC Disaster Relief.

The irony of this unfortunate reality is the natural beauty that encircles this community. Located at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, Louisville's surroundings blatantly point to the reality of an all-powerful Creator of the universe. Yet most people there are blind to it. As Romans 1 says, the evidence of God's existence is all around, but the people are darkened in their understanding. However, in my short time in Louisville,



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## ...eternal hope in the face of a tragic loss

it was evident how God was using the efforts of SBC Disaster Relief to serve as a light to this blind and disaster-ridden community.

Amidst political tension, agnosticism, and indifference, God was working in many ways. We saw evidence of this on the state, local, and individual levels. While our conversations with homeowners seemed unfruitful, the fact that we were there from Virginia, working in zero-degree temperatures, and without knowing if we would find anything [amidst the ashes] spoke volumes to the homeowners, their neighbors, and the community as a whole. While I do not know what will come of our efforts, I trust the Lord will water the seeds planted during the months of Disaster Relief work in Colorado. The community has many years to go before they will be able to start healing from the wildfires; my prayer is that this healing will include physical and *spiritual* healing.

Because this was my first deployment and it was on the other side of the country, I was not sure what to expect. While I tried to go in with minimal expectations, the training I had completed a few months prior set a

high standard for what to anticipate, specifically in terms of sharing the Gospel. However, the trip exceeded my expectations. The people whom I served alongside were very intentional and excited to share the Gospel with everyone they talked to. While our official task was to sift through ashes and look for [homeowners'] valuables, every volunteer understood our ultimate task—to present eternal hope in the face of a tragic loss of earthly treasures. As such, it was an encouragement to the community but also to me personally.

Additionally, it served as a wake-up call to the Gospel need in my own state and country. Living in the Bible Belt of the United States makes it easy to forget just how much lostness is all around us. Disaster Relief provides a unique opportunity to present the Good News to our neighbors through word and deed. While we do not want to pray for disasters to happen, the fact that they do is the reality of living in a fallen and broken world. As Romans 8:22 says, all of creation groans as a result of the fall. I am excited to be a part of a ministry that is willing and well-equipped to



come alongside people whose lives have been dramatically impacted by such disasters, serving as the hands and feet of Jesus and, most importantly, presenting them with the hope of the Gospel. ■

*\* Author's name withheld because of ongoing mission work in other countries*

### RESOURCE:

For more information on Disaster Relief, visit:

 [sbcv.org/disasterrelief](https://sbcv.org/disasterrelief)