

What mission work is all about

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Darden

During the weekend of Sept. 26-27, I was able to be a part of a team of 18 students and four adults from the University of Southern Mississippi's Baptist Student Union (BSU), which served in the ongoing hurricane relief effort in Lake Charles, La. It had been a month since the Category 4 hurricane, Laura, devastated the city and it was very clear that there was still a lot of work to be done to rebuild what was once Lake Charles.

Our team was split into three groups, along with some students from McNeese State University Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM) in Lake Charles. My group was able to go to four sites during our two-day stint. We saw roof damage, fallen trees, debris-littered yards, and much more. Most importantly, we sat and talked with distraught homeowners as they watched us clean up and throw away their destroyed belongings.

Our final site was at a townhouse in a cute, small neighborhood. The owner, "Ms. Barbra," a widowed Catholic with a single son who loves and cares for her, had more damage around her home than our team could handle, but we committed.

While we were there, I had the pleasure of sitting with Ms.

Barbra and learning about her family, her spiritual life, her love for her son, and her love for her city. She told me that she appreciated all of the physical labor we were doing for her, but she especially appreciated being able to sit with me and tell me about anything and everything she could think of. Ms. Barbra just wanted someone to talk to her, to laugh with her, and to hear her share her story. To be able to serve Ms. Barbra was amazing, but to be able to have fellowship with her and love on her was the true mission.

Our short weekend was exhausting for our team physically, but spiritually it was replenishing. To be able to live out the Great Commission here in our own nation is just as important as going overseas. We are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus daily, and this weekend of hard work showed that we can do that just as easily in our own back yard. Lake Charles still has a long way to go, but it's comforting knowing that the Lord led us to Ms. Barbra and the other homeowners to be an example of His love and grace. Mission service is never solely about the physical work we do, it is always about knowing Christ and making Him known, and this weekend was evidence of that.

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Darden is a sophomore at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, studying psychology. She will be serving her campus this year as the leader of the BSU's Outreach Team. For more information on BSU ministry in Mississippi, visit mississippibsu.org.