

2010 Beaumont, Texas Mission Trip

I have always prided my real gift of service to be my gift of “gab”, and with that in mind I had mixed feelings about my ability to perform during First Christian Church’s mission trip to Beaumont, Texas. Those mixed feelings heightened when my mission-mates and I pulled into Northwood Christian Church’s parking lot and saw that that previous group completed one wall (gasp) the previous week. The men in the group immediately began to discuss their willingness to “do *way* more than that” (i.e., complete more than one wall during the pending week). Being the “reflective” worker that I am, I was absorbed with the idea that we mission-mates were in Texas for one important reason: to use our talents and numbers to achieve a goal.

After the first day, I realized that the men on mission had two important goals: the first being to “get er’ done” as I heard our leader, Michael, reference several times, and the second to utilize as much time as possible on the plethora of power tools that the women and myself readily avoided. My personal goals included doing things I had never done, such as to use a hammer correctly and to spend time in the blazing heat with minimal complaints.

While our days consisted of nailing, cutting, drilling, taking directions and giving directions, and the ever present reminder of remaining flexible, it was through our daily devotions that our true connectedness as a team was developed. Though many of our meetings, weekly goals, or projects within our respective careers are overseen by our supervisors or bosses, during our mission, we all answered to our Heavenly Father, as He was the chief executive officer of this mission; and we had the luxury of being able to proclaim that every morning before we returned to the ever growing “one wall” we started with. It was in those devotions that we were both motivated and guided by our purpose as Christians and as diverse individuals brought on this mission.

Mrs. Suzi Ross and my mother, Melinda Williams, led us in a particular daily devotion in which they related our team to a quilt. Essentially, a quilt is a multi-functional item comprised of diverse parts that are strengthened by the use of threads. Thus, in Beaumont, Texas in the sweltering heat, my own unique piece of cloth coalesced with other unique pieces of cloth bound by Christian love and God’s grace (our threads) to help create something of impact: a place for other individuals to serve, grow, and rejoice in a church house of their own. We met individuals who were skilled in developing structures, individuals with tenacity to work hard, those who were skilled at being able to pinpoint people’s strengths and to help foster them. We also met those who were able to do those “little things” that could go overlooked, such as keeping the team hydrated during the scorching heat and those who cooked bountiful feasts each day.

During our last full day in Beaumont, Texas my mission-mates and I had the opportunity to take a boat cruise down the Naches River. On this lazy river we were surrounded by intricately twisted trees and limbs, sweeping foliage, soaring birds, one particularly bold alligator, and our reflections in the peaceful, rolling river. While cruising in the sherbet-colored sunset, Mr. Doug Buis led us in a closing devotion in which we reflected on the value of working hard in our own lives to complete the “daily” missions that God seeks for us to achieve. We discussed our aspirations as growing Christians, our individual God given gifts, and our hopes for our future walks in continued faith. It was there on the Naches River, surrounded by an example of the expansiveness of God’s work that we realized while we had accomplished something amazing down in Beaumont, Texas, we had a lifetime of continued work to do.

Written by

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