

Finding Hope Amid Colorado Ashes

Caroline found herself desperate, sifting through ashes.

Her mother's home was charred to a crisp, the chimney and basement walls were the only things left standing.

But Caroline was on a **mission** to find family jewelry heirlooms and most important, irreplaceable photographs of her father, who died in February.

"She was there looking for things, somewhat disenchanted," said Leo Grabowski, a chaplain with the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team.

Grabowski and his wife, Barb, who are originally from the Detroit suburbs but now live in Fort Mill, S.C., couldn't help but notice the Michigan license plates when they saw Caroline's car.

She came to Estes Park, Colo., from Ann Arbor, Mich., to check on the house owned by her mother, who was in North Carolina on a missionary reunion. Caroline's parents spent 40 years as **missionaries**, mostly to Indonesia and Malaysia.

But by the time Caroline arrived, the house was gone, a casualty of the Woodland Heights Fire. Only a three-foot thick layer of ashes remained.

Still, Caroline, a woman in her 50s, longed to find a few things that would remind her of her parents.

"She had no pictures of her father," Leo said. "She was afraid she would forget what he looked like."

So when the Grabowskis pulled up on Saturday morning, saw the license plate and made the Michigan connection, Caroline was

excited to report that her mother was currently reading Billy Graham's book *Nearing Home*.

The Grabowskis started chatting with Caroline, inquiring about her own spiritual health.

"How's your walk with the Lord?" Leo asked.

"I haven't been doing that," Caroline said. "I've been away."

Grabowski continued: "If **Billy Graham** was here, he'd ask you another question: Do you know where you'd spend eternity?"

Caroline paused. She talked about a relationship with God that she used to have, but had let slip away. She talked about wanting to get back to that place.

"She prayed to rededicate her life and assure her **salvation** right there on the spot," Leo said.

Grabowski noticed an immediate difference. "Her countenance changed," he said. "And just then the pastor of her mother's church came by and they talked and hugged. He's going to follow up with her. She was excited."

And then, 30 minutes later, the excitement level went up a couple notches.

"They found the pictures," Leo said. "God was at work."

Hearing the news was a blessing to the Grabowskis, who also volunteer at the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, N.C.

"It means I'm right smack-dab in the middle of God's will," Grabowski said. "When someone reaffirms their life to Jesus Christ, Heaven rejoices. He is using me and that thrills me to no end."

Estes Park is not the only area chaplains have been blessed with ministry opportunities. In the Fort Collins area, chaplains have prayed with 150 people surrounding the High

Park Fire, which destroyed more than 250 homes and more than 87,000 acres.

[Click here to read the original article on .](#)