

NASCAR Drivers Become Hands and Feet of Jesus

For these five NASCAR drivers, it was not just an early Saturday morning.

Oh, it was early all right. When you race the night before, 7 a.m. can really sneak up on you.

But these guys didn't care.

There was ministry to do.

An 83-year-old man's yard was full of trees and fallen debris from the recent tornado that had swept through Dallas.

And with the help of Motor Racing Outreach, the opportunity to join **Samaritan's Purse** and the **Billy Graham** Rapid Response Team in being "the hands and feet of Jesus" was offered up, and five NASCAR drivers hit the ground running.

"They worked like it was a pit stop," said Rapid Response Team Chaplain Dennis Sanders. "I've never seen people work so hard and fast. It seemed like about 20 seconds to do it all."

Of course, if you don't follow NASCAR closely, you wouldn't know that these five young men wearing bright orange shirts were famous drivers racing at nearby Texas Motor Speedway either the night before or later that day.

And even 83-year-old Jay Vaughn, a NASCAR fan who watched qualifying the day before, didn't recognize Trevor Bayne, Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Josh Wise, Mike McDowell and Blake Koch when they were busy whipping his back yard into shape.

"The sheer amount of work that got done in a short amount of time was just amazing," said McDowell, who estimated that 20 to 25 Samaritan's Purse volunteers were working on the lot.

"I've never done anything like this. It was crazy."

"They moved a mountain of trees," Sanders said.

Bayne, the 2011 Daytona 500 champion, hadn't exactly prepared for such an adventure and trudged through the debris in his ostrich-skin boots. McDowell, trying to carry some branches down an embankment, slipped and fell on his rear bumper.

"We're race car drivers," Koch said. "We like to get down and dirty."

Stenhouse Jr., who likely had the least amount of shut-eye the night before after winning the O'Reilly Parts 300 race, ran into a tree branch. With his face.

But the mishaps didn't stop these guys from working 2.5 hours all in the **name of Jesus**.

"What was really cool to me was to see how many people were out there just to help, like the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team," Koch said. "They were just there to listen to people and to pray with them. It's really cool to be around people like that."

Koch, who had lost his sponsor recently due partly to his Christian faith avoided driving a blank car with a last-minute one-race sponsorship deal with .

Along with a smattering of NASCAR pit crew volunteers, Koch and the four other drivers devoured the work, cutting down trees with chain saws and hauling the wood away as if they were competing in the Lumberjack Games.

For one morning, anyway, Koch was convinced more than ever that he was right where God wanted him to be.

"We weren't NASCAR drivers there," Koch said. "We were there to share the love of Christ."

And that's exactly what happened. As the drivers showed Christ's love by meeting Jay's physical needs, Jay started opening up to Dennis and Ginger Sanders about his spiritual needs. When the Sanders asked Jay if he hadn't survived the storm, would he live eternally in Heaven, he replied, "I'm not sure."

So on the porch of his damaged home, the Sanders led Jay in a **prayer** to receive Christ, and word quickly spread among the NASCAR drivers.

"The most gratifying thing I took from it was the homeowner who accepted Christ into his life," said McDowell, who couldn't help but notice all the houses around Jay's that appeared unscathed by the storm. "It's kind of mind-boggling. That path was particular for a reason.

"I think it's very clear in these situations that God intends to use everything for good and draw people to Him in the process."

When Koch heard about Jay's conversion, he could hardly contain his excitement.

"It was very cool," Koch said of the man whose wife had passed away last year. "His life was changed forever in this one day. That's what we were hoping for, coming out here.

"God just reveals his power with an 80-something-year-old man getting saved. It just goes to show you, it's never too late."

The five drivers, along with the other Samaritan's Purse volunteers and the two Rapid Response Team chaplains presented Jay with a Billy Graham Training Center Bible, signed by all the volunteers, and covered an emotional Jay in prayer.

"Ginger and Denny are so compassionate," said Richard Andrew, worship leader with Motor Racing Outreach. "You can just see the love of Jesus in them."

Dennis had the same sentiments about the drivers.

“They were extremely hard workers,” Sanders said. “It was just great to see people with that big of a platform do something so humbling. I was very, very, very impressed.”

Used with permission from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. [Click here for the original article.](#)