



An Outreach of John 8:31 Ministries

A 501c3 Non-Profit Organization

November 20, 2005

The Race to Rebuild Churches Affected by Hurricane Katrina

A Season of Thanksgiving as The Rebuilding and Renewal Process Continues



Dear Family and Friends:

Hello From Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Boy has time flown by. It has been three weeks sense we have last written, "shame on us". Much has happened in the past three weeks.

Where to start? On the construction side we have completed four projects and we have adopted another church that is receiving a complete remodel.

Jean and I along with a few local volunteers have completed approx. 60% of this remodel project so far. We expect to deliver the church back to Pastor Michael Chatman on December 16, 2005, one week before Christmas. This is a complete remodel including a new front entry roof and a room for their Baptistry. This church is very old and is made out of rough cut lumber so we decided to reframe the interior walls with new metal studs and drywall. We are installing a new five ton HVAC system. Also, a completely new electrical system including a new breaker panel is going in. Our son, CJ, and daughter, Wini, will join us over Thanksgiving weekend to install new exterior siding. You will recall we re-roofed the church just a couple of weeks ago. This church is looking so good.

As rewarding as the construction work has been, particularly to see the results of repairing the broken and the battered, I must tell you the personal relationships that we have made are even more fulfilling. The gift of love and friendship overwhelms Jean and me as we look back on the wonderful people we have met during this short journey. We have met so many loving and caring people in the different churches we have visited it is hard to express in words the feeling we have for these people. They have made our stay so enjoyable and so rewarding.

We have seen the love of Christ manifest itself richly in an area that has so little right now. Let me share one example with you. It concerns the gentleman in the picture above.

For about three weeks we have been working daily on the total remodel of Pastor Mike's Miracle Temple Baptist Church. Each day a very elderly man in a wheelchair meets us. He cannot speak, so I don't know how old he is or, where he is from. I don't know what he did as a career or where he did it. I really don't think he should be out in the heat we have here right now. The temperature has been blistering hot, in the high 80s and 90s with muggy humidity. It's even more uncomfortable inside the small church. Yet, each day he is there in his wheelchair just observing our work.

After a few days of watching us, I think it became clear to him that we were in the process of a complete remodel of the church. The next morning when we arrived, this gentleman started waving his hands in order to bring Pastor Mike over to him. Slowly he reached into his back pocket and took out his wallet. He extracted a \$20 bill and put it Mike's hands. There were no words that came from the elderly man's lips, but I know this—the living spirit of our Heavenly Father is within this man. And that spirit guides our hands and hearts as we rebuild and remodel houses of worship. It is also the blessing that we receive daily from each of you at home through your prayers, contributions and materials.

To date Jean and I have looked at over 30 damaged churches. There are at least 50 to 70 churches in this area that are still in need of some repair. Some need major repairs, most need roofing, siding, drywall and painting. We could use a crew of 10 people full time that has good construction experience. Even then we would have a hard time keeping up with the demand needed to help these damaged churches. We have been limited to the local inexperienced help. To compensate, we have been trying to hire some local experienced labor to help us complete some of the projects we cannot get to. We feel an urgency to accelerate our rebuilding program so we can button up as many churches as possible before the winter sets in. And that brings us to the future, and what happens next.

Jean and I have slowed down doing church assessments because we have enough work for the next six months if we were going to stay here that long. You want to help them all but you simply cannot. One other way we are trying to help is by showing them different ways to get in

touch with other organizations that might be able to provide assistance. It is a very hopeless feeling knowing that so many need your help but you only have the resources to help a few.

Jean and I are planning to leave this area December 19, 2005. We will be back in Ramona before Christmas. By then it will have been three solid months working 6 days a week and loving every minute.

We plan to keep this mission active when we return home.

The plan is to create an Adopt-a-Church SWAT team powered by construction workers who will give us a week of their schedule to swoop into a church and hammer it out! More on that process in the future.

I would like to close this letter by sharing one of the most important lessons Jean and I have learned; There are so many people willing to help out people in need, we just don't read about them in the newspaper or see them on TV. Yet, they are ready, willing and committed to serving their community and the Lord. It has really excited us and we look forward to continuing our effort to help people in need.

We Love You All.

Chip & Jean Rumis