

Hurricane Ike Texas Wrap-up

The trip was a lot of fun, thanks to Chuck, and we were able to get a lot of work done and share Jesus with many. I'm going to end this email with a copy of what Chuck wrote and passed out to his group as I thought you'd be interested to get a view from someone else for a change, but I do want to share a little.

On the ministry side of things, God never ceases to amaze me as to how He wants us to minister, rarely is it what we think. There was a couple who had traveled quite a distance that were staying in the camp, a male and a female who were not married to each other. They are part of a group that ministers to drug and alcohol addicts. They are believers and a little different than myself, but isn't everyone. There was quite an uproar with prior camp attendees before we arrived and we were warned ahead of time concerning certain things. I prayed and we finally arrived and met them. They were sharing the same tent (which he told me had a divider) and they were volunteering, but also seeking side work to help pay for their trip back home.

I figured as long as he was honest with the people he worked for and still helped us out on the volunteer side of things, that the money thing was not an issue. As far as I knew, he was telling the people up front what he was doing and was in no way connecting his for hire jobs to any type of volunteer agency or group. They were a hard working couple and the amount of money they were getting was far below what other people in the area were charging. The work they did while I was there was for rental property, what we consider commercial and therefore rarely do volunteer work on this type of property, though we have made exceptions in the past.

As far as the living quarters, I wondered, had anyone offered them an alternative to their sleeping arrangements, I found out later that because of a misunderstanding with something the pastor said, that answer was no. So I talked to the pastor and he said of course they could move into the church, and move into the church they did and they slept in different parts of the building, the man with us and the woman in another room.

I say all of this to let you know that because we looked past what we saw on the outside and sought the Lord to see what He would have us to do, we not only were able to rectify a bad situation, we got some help on the roof and in camp, but most importantly, we were able to minister to these folks in a way that only God could orchestrate. Major things didn't happen overnight, but I know they left San Leon heading to places that before they came would've seemed miles away. We thank God for the opportunity He gave us to minister to these folks as well as the church folk and others He put in our path, including a man from our church who was released from rehab while we were Texas. I immediately purchased a bus ticket for him and put him to work as God began the work of changing his heart. I won't mention any names here, God knows them, but please keep these folks in your prayers. The road ahead of them is hard, I've been down it many times myself as we all have in one way or the other.

Continue to pray for our ministry, like I said, God always seems to use us in ways that totally blow my mind, we just want to be vessels where He is the pilot and we are in the back seat listening, not telling Him where to turn or go next!

I've included some pictures for your enjoyment at the bottom of this message!

Now on to Chuck's letter. I hope you enjoy it like we did!

Greetings all,

I just returned home from my first mission trip. Some will scoff in disbelief and others will wonder when did he go but, I'm back safe and kinda sound.

We went to Texas to a little town called San Leon about 20 miles from Galveston and 60 miles south of Houston .

Curt (he's the organizer) and I drove a 3/4 ton ford pickup loaded with plywood and tarps and pulled an 18 foot trailer loaded with tools and some food. Took about 16 hours of driving and we got into San Leon around 3:30 AM on Sunday morning. Slept in the cab. ahhhhh the joys of togetherness

Around 7 AM Texas time we woke up and started looking around at the situation. Other Calvary Chapel chapters had already been there and had left additional equipment for us to us. There was a cooking trailer with propane gas tanks and 2 open burners, a grill top, a small oven, coolers full of drinks and food (age unknown). A trailer full of food and a freezer. And inside the church were sleeping bags, air mattresses and running water. Thank heaven for that - at the corner of the church also was an area the other groups used for showering, and 2 porta johns. By the time we arrived inside plumbing had been restored.

Trash piles down both sides of the road as far as you can see, buildings pushed off their foundations or missing all together, and people still walking around in a daze looking for places to get food, water, and even clothing. I have pictures of area if you want some - let me know.

We made breakfast (oatmeal on an open fire) and attended the morning church service.

Brother Bill (an elder at the church we were staying at) was a singer and led the singing. He was also our main contact with the church.

We headed out after church to see the house we were going to re-roof. Met Jean (the owner) and made up out list of materials and headed for home depot. Not much response there so off to Lowe's. Much better. They allowed us a 10% discount which helped Jean a lot. Jean purchased the materials we would need and we headed back to her house to start. We unhooked the trailer and left it on site and started moving materials.

Curt (he's the youngster) hauled 21 bundles of shingles up the 18 foot extension ladder and placed them on the roof. I (the OLD GEEZER) helped lift the bundles onto his shoulders so he didn't have to bend over and pick them up - I'm old ya know Found dry rot and termites inside walls so treated for termites and mold.

We decided to start early Monday. We woke to a snapping sound and found the wind blowing around 20 - 30 mph. It had dismantled the 2 tents over the cooking trailer and was whipping and cracking like a whip. We secured the damaged tents and tied the 4 remaining tents in place. What a way to start. . . . After a robust meal of OATMEAL we made our noon meal to take with us - peanut butter and jelly sandwich accompanied with a mouthwatering side of potato chips and a thirst quenching drink of air temperature cured warm water (gettin hungry just thinkin about it

Curt bought me this really cute shovel for popping shingles off - if he offers to get one for you don't fall for it - you're back will hurt for days! !!! Anyway we started removing shingles. Soooo, there I am up on the roof working away, Curt's radio blasting out windows 50 feet away and I'm trying to ask Curt how much longer. No answer. I look around and ohhhh, there he is down by the truck TALKING ON THE PHONE !!!!!!! I keep working (old man that I am). Curt finally climbs back up and says he was talking to a local Christian Radio station and they interviewed him. He asked for manpower. That was fine. We go back to work and then the phone starts ringing again.

Anyway, we get the shingles off in 2 days and survey our situation. More dry rot. Now Curt has to cut out and replace all bad wood before we can continue. I think this would be somewhere around Tuesday. John calls Curt and arrangements are made to have him hop a bus and come out to join us. John's trip out is a story in itself - seems it takes 34 hours to come from Sarasota to Houston .

Wednesday I go pick up John and Curt finishes up replacing the bad wood. We return and now Curt wants us to go around the roof and pull out or hammer in all remaining nails !!!!!

Each day we would work until DARK - it's a Curt thing and then come back to camp cook a meal and clean up and go to bed. John had a run of bad luck, seems his air mattress kept going flat at night so he would wake up lying on a hard cement floor. Poor Johnyou gotta wonder was it air leaks or vandalism

Thursday is back to the roof for more cleanup, add drip edges and start tar papering.

Friday my brother-in-law's brother (Ken) drove down from outside Houston to help. We tore off remaining front porch and rebuilt it so Curt and John could have a place to stand and survey the job. More tar papering. And started shingling. There is hope. Ken departs back to Houston that evening. He is my buddy forever for helping out. Thanks Ken.

Saturday Jean's grandson and son in law help with the work. Now Curt wants all edges tarred down !!!!! What is that man thinking? ? ? ? The grandson and I go to work on this while Curt and John continue shingling. Boy are they slow We finished off Saturday with about 2/3 of roof shingled.

Sunday we have a brief service in back yard and then back on the roof. Shingling is finished and attic wind turbines reinstalled and roof cap finished. The family treated us to breakfast and afternoon meal. GOOD eating. Now all we have to do is clean up our mess and reload the trailer and head back to camp.

Brother Bill is there and asked if we could check on a lady that needed some trees cut down.

Monday we check on the trees - they're on another property and we need permission to cut and move. So while we're there we rebuild the steps to her porch. 3 steps in front and 4 steps in back.

Tuesday we're back to cut trees with permission papers in hand. I'm not saying there was a lot but the pile was larger than our 18 foot trailer. Finally finished late afternoon and back to church. Curt and John installed some insulation and I worked on some wiring problems with the truck.

Then Curt asked if we wanted to rest tonight and head home Wednesday. I suggested take a shower and head out. We broke camp and headed out around 9:30 Tuesday night. Drove straight thru and got back into Sarasota around 3PM on Wednesday.

I'm still trying to catch up on all my naps I missed out on and can't wait for call on next mission. If anybody wants' to come along (Ken) let me know.

God was good - he watched over us and nobody was hurt. All glory was given to him and we are happy but tired.

Chuck

If you are interested in donating to our ministry to help offset the cost of this and future trips/needs, we have set up an online giving section of our web page, <http://calvarychapelsarasota.com/306287.ihtml>, or you can contact us directly. All donations are tax deductible.

Thanks for all your prayers and support.