



October 2, 2005

Week Two of the Race to Rebuild Churches Affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Dear Friends:

It's sun up to sundown (and then we start burning the midnight oil!!) with the work for Jean and me here in the Gulf. With the help from Mr. Bobby Shurden, Pastor of the Crestview Baptist Church, we have inspected 12 churches this week and discussed rebuilding options with their pastors. The damage is pervasive throughout this region, and all of the churches we examined have lost a major part of their roofing materials and some have structural damage.

We are challenged in several ways including materials, labor, construction supervision and helping devastated congregations, who often lack sophisticated business experience, how to understand and begin the rebuilding process. There is still a materials shortage locally; meaning that roofing shingles are difficult to get and the prices are going up weekly. Also the labor pool of experienced roofers and carpenters is virtually non-existent. But, the Calvary is on the way! A tractor trailer full of supplies is headed here from San Diego thanks to some incredibly generous folks. We expect it in a few days. More on that subject next week.

Many churches we have visited are struggling with the recovery process. I have offered to host round table meeting with the leaders of these churches to help them get started in the sometimes very painful rebuilding process. We pray that helping them create a plan and a roadmap will give them hope and peace of mind that, yes, they will recover and renew their lives and spirits. We are currently working with other volunteer organizations to assist us in this effort.

Bobby Shurden has made contact with a church group out of Memphis, TN to help with our immediate need to dry these churches out, particularly walls and floors, before the rains start. We have scheduled a work party with at least 10 people to start on October 13th through the 15th. These are experienced construction volunteers. We are so blessed and very excited that they have stepped forward to help out. Watch for pictures soon. We have also made a good contact with the group called Church Building Ministries out of Brookhaven, MS. I think they will be able to help us and we will be able to help them in the future. We look forward to exploring this possible venture.

Last Friday we drove approximately 70 miles to Gulfport, MS to visit churches in the affected area closer to the Gulf of Mexico. The pictures on TV do not do that area justice. These communities are so disrupted, physically and emotionally, that we fear any sense of normalcy will be years away. The damage is so pervasive and wide spread; the task to rebuild is almost over whelming.

On a personal note, we have to tell you about The Crestview Baptist Church of Petal, MS. It has been so terrific to Jean and me. We could not have been more blessed to unite with their dynamic pastor. They have opened their arms to our efforts and needs, and we been accepted into their Congregation. Bobby and his wife Peggy have been so instrumental in opening doors and making things happen. It is sure fun working with a man that has a sense of urgency and vision of what it is going to take to complete this massive rebuilding project. Jean and I offer prayers of thanksgiving for Bobby, Peggy and their church.

In closing we want to thank everyone that has put time and effort, plus all the donors who have sent Adopt-A-Church money and materials. We simply could not and cannot do it without you. Thank You from the bottom of our hearts. We are hopeful the pictures we are sending back with our thoughts will inspire the community to continue to support this desperately needed mission. Through your generous contribution of time, materials and money, you truly are repairing buildings and rebuilding lives.

God Bless You,

Chip & Jean