

“... see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” 2 Corinthians 8:7

Grace of Giving



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 8 NOVEMBER 7, 2008

A Week on the Front Line

by Pastor Keith Blanton

One day after returning from Mexico I find myself exhausted, weary from the week on the front line of the battlefield for Christ. Even in the midst of this sleep deprived state, I am excited about the week that was. Many were the opportunities for ministry, and plentiful are the ways in which we were allowed to see God's hand at work. The first of our group pulled into Mexico one week ago today (Oct. 19th). The last of us left yesterday, but not before we handed keys to a new home to four deserving and needy families.

Without direct experience, it is difficult to imagine the immense feeling of gratification and blessing that comes with this great privilege. My challenge in writing this article is to communicate with you, the faithful supporters of Grace of Giving, something of the week, so you can participate in the same gratification and blessing we were able to see first hand.

It is on these building trips we observe the tangible reality of the ministry Grace of Giving has been to an entire community. The landscape of Jimenez is now dotted with a dozen homes built with your support. The local church is growing and, contrary to the predominant culture, seeing men not only committed to their families but openly worshipping Christ. The children's home is still going strong and teaching young people what it truly means to have faith in Jesus.

The fact is that none of these wonderful things are nor have they ever been the primary focus of Grace of Giving. From the very beginning the main focus and desire of this ministry has been providing the daily needs of food, some personal hygiene items, and basic medications for people and ministries along the border.

This week I witnessed a convergence of the tangible act of home building and the critically important ministry of feeding people. From atop the southern wall of the house we were building for Isabel and her two sweet children, I could look to the west and see a woman pushing a stroller toward us. Inside that stroller were two small children. One had a fever when he was younger, and his mother had

no way to treat it. - no Tylenol, no cold compress, no cool water, and no doctor or medical treatment. To the east I could see the house we built last year and their next door neighbor who faced the same circumstance with her own daughter a couple of years earlier.

The common thread between these children is twofold. They were both perfectly healthy before getting a fever, and unfortunately, they were both severely disabled after it finally passed. The little boy in the stroller is now blind, and the girl suffers from permanent brain damage.

Standing on that wall with hammer in hand, the magnitude of the moment began to overtake me. I thought how my own children have many times been sick. When faced with this dilemma, most often I or my wife would get out of a comfortable bed, go to the medicine cabinet, choose from a variety of fever reducing medications, go to the

kitchen and get a cool glass of water and a cold compress, grab a quick snack to pop in our mouth on the way to our child's room, and when there, administer all of the above. Most of the time the problem was solved, but if not, all we had to do was grab an insurance card, get in our car, and go to the doctor.

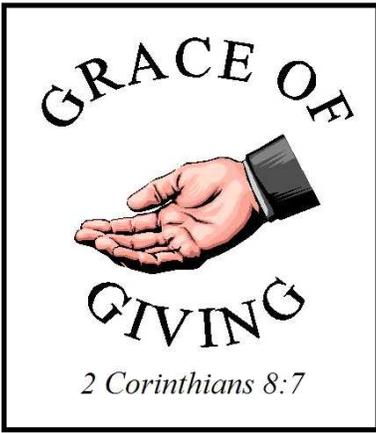
My heart began to break. I tried to imagine the despair a parent would feel when unable to care for a child, and I realized that I cannot.

At the beginning of this article I referred to my week "on the front line of the battlefield for Christ." I must confess that I went to Mexico with the perception that building a home was the very front of that line. What I have learned is that the physical structure, while very important, is peripheral to the area of greatest need. That need is the consistent supply of food and other supplies to keep families fed and healthy. The front line of this ministry is not lumber and dry wall, but rather parents and children and every day life. The battle on the front line of this wonderful ministry is not fought by those who raise walls and ceilings, but by you who give so others may live.

Thank you for being on the front line. I pray God's every blessing on you for your support of Grace of Giving!



Three lovely young ladies in their new house!



Grace of Giving
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Please visit our website!
www.graceofgiving.org

Grace of Giving

Grace of Giving is a non-profit, charitable organization that is exempt from federal income tax as a 501(c)(3) organization. Accordingly, the Internal Revenue Service has advised that all contributions to Grace of Giving may be deducted for federal income tax purposes as specified in section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Our priorities for using your gifts are to purchase food and to purchase fuel to deliver the food. The officers of Grace of Giving accept no compensation for their services and currently cover all of their travel expenses.

Officers

Greg Beard — President & Treasurer
 Dara Beard — Vice President
 Pastor Keith Blanton — Secretary

In Honor of Others

Grace of Giving was blessed recently with a gift from Ruby and Janice Collins as a memorial to honor Mrs. Shirley Gray, mother of our dear friend Jean Finney.

Shirley was a devoted supporter of the Clifton Ministerial Alliance Food Bank and took great pleasure in meeting the needs of others.

We are honored that we too may serve God and others as a tribute to Shirley!



The team at the Cedar Shores Baptist Church house - working!



The FBC Clifton crew!



The FBC Burleson team and their family!

Financial Update

Here's a summary of where we stand financially year-to-date as of November 3, 2008:

- Contributions for food or undesignated: \$51,855
- Net food costs: \$64,468
- Percent coverage: 80.5%

As a point of comparison, the percentage coverage we reported in our August newsletter, which reflected operations through the end of July, was 95.7%. So, since the end of July we have spent \$21,755 on food (including \$457 on 120 school supply kits) but have received only \$12,928 in contributions that could be used for these purposes. This is a deficit of \$8,827, which we have covered from our own resources.

So you will have an idea of the cost pressures that we (along with you in providing for your own needs) face, please note the following:

- Jan - Jul 2008 average food cost per trip: \$6,273
- Aug - Oct 2008 average food cost per

trip: \$7,252

We would prefer to continue to make food deliveries in the same quantities as we have so far this year. You can see, however, that this is becoming increasingly difficult with food costs skyrocketing and contributions covering less of our total food cost.

We are very grateful for your continued support for the heart of our ministry - feeding God's children!! Please consider whether you could help us to erase our recent deficit and to catch back up on meeting our program costs for the entire year.



Another great job from Harris Creek Baptist Church!