

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

# Grace of Giving



VOLUME 6, ISSUE 8      NOVEMBER 23, 2009

## And All This For Only Four Dollars!

by Keith Blanton

Grace of Giving's recently completed house building trip to Mexico was by all accounts a rousing success. As in years before, our building activity was centered in the little border town of Jimenez in Coahuila state of northern Mexico. People came from all over the state of Texas to provide a collective labor of love. Construction began on Monday morning, October 12<sup>th</sup>, and when we left town mid-afternoon on Friday of that same week, we had given keys to a new home to three different families.

This year's trip was the fifth time I had gone to Jimenez to build a house, but it was the first time for several in our group, including my cousin Kevin. One of the highlights of the week for me was being able to drive around Jimenez with Kevin and some of the other "first timers" and show them many of the homes we had built over the years.

As we drove, I was surprised by both the memories and stories I have from our building trips and also the familiarity and closeness I feel to the people we have come to know and love in Jimenez. I showed everyone the very first home built by Grace of Giving and told them how it is now home to four generations. We were invited into one of the homes and were able to see how this sweet family had made their house a genuine home. When we went to church in Jimenez on Wednesday night, we noticed how the homeowners we had built for in the past are now leaders in the church.

Even though the landscape of Jimenez is rather barren, the social condition is bleak, and the economic situation is extremely poor, we were met at every turn with the sheer joy of people who have incredible faith. And through that faith, they are making the very best out of their situations. I guess it is the shared love we have for God through Jesus Christ our Lord and the resulting spiritual connection that draws me so close to these sweet, dear people.

The intensity of this deeply personal bond was never more evident to me, oddly enough, until

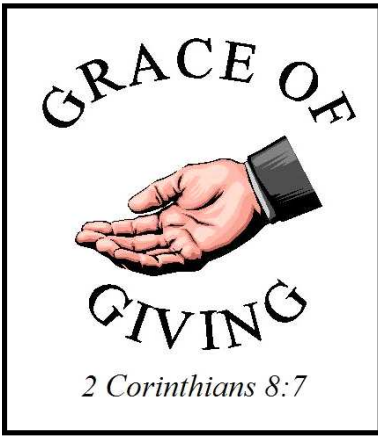
after I got home from the trip this year. Oktoberfest was going on in our home town of Clifton on the day we got home. My daughter, who is in the high school jazz band, was playing at the event, and we went to watch. There was entertainment at every corner and more food and drink vendors than you could shake a stick at. Everyone was having a great time, but it was crowded, and I began to get hungry. Just then a lady with a container of food – enchiladas, refried beans, and Mexican rice – sat down at a table next to where I was standing. I was more than tempted (I love Mexican food!), so I asked her where she got it. She pointed out the booth from where it came and then said these words to me, "It's really good, and look, you get all this for only four dollars."

My first thought was to immediately go and get a meal. But for some reason, it hit me at that moment that exactly twenty-four hours earlier I was in Jimenez surrounded by poverty. I couldn't help but remember the people I had left just the day before who literally pray for their "daily" bread, who often go without so their children have a meal, and to whom four dollars is not a great deal but about half a day's wage.

Even though I was surrounded by my family, the jazz band was playing music, and I had not one worry in the world, my mind traveled back to that little town. I couldn't help but think of the contrast between my life and the plight of my friends in Mexico. I was in the midst of plenty, while I knew that many of them were, at that very moment, without some of the very basic needs of life.

Surrounded by revelry, I literally wept at the thought of four dollars meaning so little to me but being so much for some. As I thought about how many meals I eat in restaurants every month, tears continued to roll down my cheeks. I thought further – just what sort of sacrifice would it be for me to

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Grace of Giving  
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Please visit our website!  
[www.graceofgiving.org](http://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

## Memorials & Acknowledgements

Grace of Giving has been blessed in recent weeks to receive several gifts:

- From Dee Anna Nichols of Clifton in memory of Hazel Wilkey, Clifton resident and member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Clifton, and in memory of Billy Hardcastle of Meridian, Texas;
- In memory of Hazel Bradley, mother of our dear friend Joann Abercrombie, from:
  - \*Mike and Jean Finney of FBC Clifton;
  - \*The Adult II Sunday School class at FBC Clifton; and
  - \*Paul and Ann Hollingsworth of FBC Clifton.
- In memory of Juanita Harris, mother of FBC Clifton friend Bill McCleary, from:
  - \*The Adult II Sunday School class at FBC Clifton; and

\*Paul and Ann Hollingsworth of FBC Clifton.

- From our FBC Clifton friends Terry and Debbie Spicer in memory of A.L. Padgett of Winnsboro, Texas;
- From Mike and Jean Finney in honor of our faithful friend and prayer warrior, Herman Burghdorff;
- In memory of Christine Kleibrink, mother of Von and grandmother of Kevon Kleibrink, from:
  - \*The Adult II Sunday School class at FBC Clifton;
  - \*Dee Anna Nichols; and
  - \*Joe and Anna Beth Clay, Quitaque, Texas.

Grace of Giving's November and December activities are dedicated to these loved ones. We are indeed grateful for the opportunity to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in their honor.

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give up only one of those meals? My glasses fogged up, and I took them off and dried my face.

You see, spending four dollars means nothing to most of us. Eating out one time less a month would be no burden at all, but it could save at least \$25.00. That paltry amount could feed

dozens of people somewhere along the Texas/Mexico border.

Something changed for me that day. I believe I gained a bit of much needed perspective. It seems reasonable to me that I now must stretch myself just a bit for the good of my fellow man, and frankly, I hope you feel that need now too.

*Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people;...I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way." Matthew 15:32 (NIV)*

## Financial Report

Year-to-date Grace of Giving has received contributions totaling \$131,180. Of this total, \$68,720 was designated for non-food purposes (including, for example, \$23,875 for various building projects in Jimenez and \$39,630 toward the New Jerusalem Church building project in Terlingua), leaving \$62,460 for food purchases. Through November, the food delivered to our ministry partners cost \$68,475. When we reported to you last in October, we were

just under \$1,500 short of covering our food purchase costs for the year. As you can see, that deficit has now grown to just over \$6,000 for the year. Clearly, we need your help to eliminate this deficit and continue to feed people along the border. As we celebrate the incredible blessings God has given us during this Thanksgiving season, will you stretch yourself a bit more for the good of your fellow man?