

Biloxi Mission Trip Update
Sunday, July 6, 2008

Hello to everyone!

Just a quick "along the road" update. We arrived safely in Grenada, Mississippi at about 11:45pm last night. All are fine (kids, adults and vans) Most are sleeping, but will be up soon. Consumed massive amounts of cookies and practiced singing to each other along the way, but ran out of songs in 850 miles! Everyone is doing fine. We'll worship here this morning and then head south the last 4 hours to Biloxi. God is an amazing God! We are excited to see how the Lord will use us in this week of ministry to those who have so little in Biloxi. We will update you tonight when we arrive in Biloxi. Thank you for your prayers. Have a great Sunday!

In Christ
Kevin.

Biloxi Mission Trip Update
Sunday Night, July 6, 2008 11:22pmish

Hey Y'all!!

12 of us have arrived at Lemoyne Baptist Church safely but tired from a LONG drive.

This morning we had delicious breakfast followed by a hotel Sunday service where we enjoyed worship and communion as a team. 6 hours later we arrived at the church. However, we did get delayed from some fierce rain and had to pull over to wait it out for a bit. When we got here we were met by Alan who is the Katrina re-builder coordinator. He gave us a tour, told us a little bit about what we would be doing this week, and invited to a welcome back service for the church's youth who had just returned from camp. At the service we sang familiar songs and heard testimonies by kids who had been influenced by the camp. We were deeply touched by this instant welcome and moved by the stories of these individuals and we able to see the universal church first hand. Then we shared a home-cooked meal together made by most of our females. IT WAS FANTASTIC!! :) After diner we had a meeting and prayer and we are all excited to hit the hay!

This trip has already built more relationships and memories and it's only the second day!! We've learned that many of the men are GREAT singers and fabulous at serenading us ladies. We've learned many more car games....one of them is YELLOW CAR! You'll most likely experience this game with the next car trip you take with one of us. :) We're all in the process of receiving nicknames like Big Chief Little Bladder and Big Chief Talk-a-lot.

We're getting tired and tomorrow (Monday) looks like a full day with home-made breakfast to start it off! Hope you are all having a great day....keep praying for unity, humility, and safety. We appreciate your support!!

In His work, Team Biloxi

Biloxi Update
July 7,2008

Hi all y'all (no, there is no misspelling, and yes that is a word..trust us!)

Monday has come and gone... building homes and relationships. Temps today day were in the low 90's (but it was a wet heat!) Started the day at 6AM, breakfast at 7, and then divided into two teams and went to 3 homes being rebuilt. The A Team, consisting of Alyssa, Josh, Eryn, Paul, Sheri, and Steve went to Jimmy and Amy's and Miss Cheri's home to clean up, clean up, clean up and enjoy the largest of God's bug creation! (Paul was carried away on the wings of a "small squirrel" which was really large bug) The B team, consisting of Ron, Leif, Amy, Steph, Carina and Kevin went to the home of Pete to hang sheetrock.

This evening, as we worshipped and reflected on the day, various thoughts came up.....the most prevalent being the work that God is doing before our eyes. We feel like we are in God's presence as we see the work being done here. "Work" may be an inadequate word... we are witnessing and participating in an amazing ministry meeting people like Allan, Jim, Harold, Gail, Judy, Ruth, Billy and Katherine. These people have made us as comfortable in their church as we are in our own. With humble hearts, they have shown us God's grace and love through their ministry to the community.

Today, in the midst of building houses, we began to build relationships with the people that we have come to serve. We have learned of their pain, their suffering and loss, and of their will to overcome the disaster of Katrina. With one home owner, who had been addicted to drugs and alcohol, we learned that through the rebuilding ministry of LeMoyne Baptist Church, he came to see Christ's love for himself and his family. Another home owner who had lost everything, including one son to Katrina, told us that without this ministry, she would not have a home.

This evening, as we worshipped and reflected on the day, we began to taste the awesome potential that God has for us in our lives, if we will only let Him. As we close this update, we look forward with open hearts to whatever God has in store for us tomorrow. Henry Blackeby, in his book "Experiencing God", reminds us that God is always working around us, and that we are simply called to join Him in His work. Our prayer as we closed our day, simply asked God for that desire.

In His Name

Josh, Steve, Ron, and Kevin on behalf of the Biloxi team

Biloxi Update
July 8,2008

Hi,

Temps were again very warm and muggy with a period of rain making it even more humid. Today at various times through out the day we had teams working on three different projects. One team was hanging sheetrock and was able to complete the sheetrock project at Pete's home, another team cleaned and began painting at Lillian's home, and the A team (as they liked to be known) unloaded trailers and hauled trash, mowed, trimmed, organized the project shed (oh and once again they experienced southern wildlife at it's best. They fought with cockroaches, fire ants, and green salamanders. It has been decided that the sweet tea and biscuits and gravy is what makes it all worth it!

Actually what makes it all worth it is the time spent with the homeowners and seeing their thankful smiles. They literally glow when they talk about moving into their new homes or seeing the progress that is being made.

As our team reflects on the day we continue to recognize God's blessings. God's grace is being demonstrated through the people that we meet whether that be the homeowners, church members or team members.

Today was not a day about sheetrocking, painting, or trash hauling - but we were reminded that it was about people and time spent hearing about their lives. As we close the day we remember that people are God's passion, and that rebuilding homes is truly secondary.

Until tomorrow,
Biloxi team

Biloxi Update
July 9,2008

Hey Y'all!

Today started off even hotter than the day before...but much got accomplished! :)

The women and Paul went to Lilian's house and proceeded to paint! They are STELLAR painters! We put a fan in her house today to help keep it cool and it was AMAZING! It helped quite a bit. The rest of our crew went to Cheri's house to put in flooring. It looks BEAUTIFUL! The boys got to work in air conditioning which is good because those boys have been working hard!! Some of the girls came and cleaned the church. They did a great job! :)

Tonight our group shared dinner with the congregation of Lemoyne Church. After we ate some of the group went to youth group with this church and the enjoyed a prayer service with the church family. Our very own Sherri Weathers was asked by Pastor (Brother) Bill to share her testimony and about her previous trips here. She did a GREAT job and touched our hearts with her sincere words.

Today is laundry day and we are super excited to wash all our stinky clothes.

Tomorrow we are going to be working hard in the morning...and then in the afternoon we get a special gulf tour by our very own Alan (Projects Coordinator). We are SUPER excited!! Weather permitting we'll be going to the beach.

We're going to have our team devotion and get some extra sleep tonight! Email y'all tomorrow!

Bye now!

Biloxi Team

Thursday, July 10

Tonight, the update will be from just me....kids are asleep, and it is late. It is hard to believe that the week here in Biloxi is nearing an end. You've heard about the projects, the people, and the church we are serving. Every person and project has led us to a more complete understanding of our Father in Heaven.

Today, we worked the morning, and then took a half a day and relaxed and toured the Biloxi area. The power of the storm was truly amazing. To this day, the remains of homes that "once were" are everywhere. And yet, through even Katrina, God has been raised up by his people here in Biloxi through the faithfulness of this small church that we are serving. By His hand, they have repaired and rebuilt over 500 homes, and have built from the ground up a dozen new homes! God's infinite resources seem to be just poured out on this congregation as she seeks to do His will. We ARE unquestionably being blessed to serve with them this week!

Tonight, just before we worshipped and had devotions, our work coordinator shared with me the story of a 16 year old girl from Georgia who, a while back, had come to minister with the LeMoyne Church in the same way we are. She had been making bad choices, had been rebellious and had displaced God in her life. She came here, served Him, saw what really mattered and turned her life back to the Lord. When she left, she went home to her family and church and publicly confessed her sin and made a public decision to place Christ first for the rest of her life. Two months later, she died in an automobile accident. At 11pm tonight, her parents arrived from Georgia to serve Christ here in Biloxi, for the third time since their daughter's death. Why? Because the very same love that transformed their daughter is transforming them, and is transforming the lives of people here in Biloxi.

As I shared that story with our group, we realized in a more powerful way, how much God calls us to love and serve Him, and how powerful He is at changing us! We may not have many days, and the window of opportunity may be short. I ask for your prayers on behalf of the kids (and us "hard headed" adults :-), that tomorrow as we serve Him for the last day of this trip, that we will not just conclude a "mission trip", but that we will realize that we have been created to serve a transformational God, where ever we are! **Pray that this is not the end, but the beginning of a new way of life in Christ!**

Jesus never stood for religion, in fact, I don't think he really liked it a lot! Changed lives is what He stands for....transformation is the way of our God! And, a transformed life is entirely different than a religious life. I've been thinking, what if this youth group caught that vision? What if His church understood the power of Christ in us!

This week, we caught a glimpse of that vision! Thank you for sending us, for praying for us, and for loving us as you do! Until tomorrow.....

In Christ
Kevin

Biloxi Update
July11,2008

Hello Everyone,

Thanks for all your prayers for the week. In just 7 hours we leave Biloxi for Minnesota. Thanks to each one of you for your prayers, love and care. We will depart Biloxi at 6:30 am, Saturday morning and stay Saturday night at the Holiday Inn Express in Warrenton, Mo. From there, we will depart for Minnesota on Sunday morning after breakfast and worship, and hopefully arrive in Plainview around 8pm.....vans, drivers and riders willing! Please pray for safety for the trip home.....CU soon!

We love all of you!
The Biloxi Team

Biloxi Update
July 12,2008

Hello Everyone,

We left LeMoyne Church this morning at 6:40am. They woke up early and provided french toast, coffee and prayer before we hit the road. They are a wonderful group of people! Tonight, we arrived safely in Warrenton, Missouri at about 8:30pm. All went well, no problems with vans, or kids, or adults for that matter! Thanks again for all your prayers. Sunday we will worship here at the motel, and leave around 10:30am, with an ETA at Plainview of 8pm.

See You Soon!

Love, The Biloxi Team

FINAL BILOXI TEAM UPDATE

Monday, July 14, 2008

The Biloxi Team made it home safely to Plainview at 7:47pm last night. We traveled about 1125 miles, and arrived about 40 degrees cooler! Thank you to each of you for your prayers and love. Thanks to the Plainview Church for the financial backing that sent us! It was so great to know that people were praying and cared about the needs of those in Biloxi that lost everything.

Thank You!

In Christ,
Kevin, and the Biloxi Team

PS: Plainview Church members, we'll try to pull the team together in the next week or two and compile pictures, etc to share on a Sunday morning sometime soon.