

## Wilmington Mission Trip 2008

During this year's trip to Wilmington, NC we will be doing roof repairs, painting, and yard work at a local house during the day and helping with a Bible School during the evening at Hope Baptist Church. We'd also like to extend a special thanks to Pine Valley Baptist Church for providing accommodations for us.

### **Saturday, July 12:**

Fourteen of us left for Wilmington, NC for another great week of being on mission in this wonderful city. After a pretty uneventful eight hour drive, in which we decided to give up on the East, West, North and South directions and just use right or left instead, we arrived at Pine Valley Baptist Church. We were greeted by the Youth Pastor and the Head of Maintenance who gave us a tour of the facilities and keys to the building. We feel somewhat guilty staying here. They have a beautiful Christian Life Center, a Youth house with a pool table and several other game tables and lots of couches and stuff to lounge on, as a Singles Ministry house at our disposal. We all agreed that these accommodations would be just fine.

We ate supper at Jackson's Big Oak Bar-B-Que, which is quite possibly the best I have ever eaten. We met with some of the people we would be working with this week and got all our plans in order. It promises to be a very busy week, but hopefully a very profitable week for God's Kingdom.

### **Sunday, July 13:**

Our host at Pine Valley Baptist Church are simply amazing. They have made us feel so warm and welcome. During their 10:30 AM service they had us all stand so they could recognize us and then prayed for us. Afterwards, we left and went to Hope Baptist Church For All Nations (or just Hope Baptist as the locals call it). We enjoyed a spirited and spirit filled worship service with Pastor James Jamison and his people. They to were very warm and made us feel right at home.

After the service we moved outside to a large pavilion where a local ministry has a service called "The Church Without Doors". This is a service for mostly homeless people, but there were several from the housing projects across the street as well. We had a small part in the service as our puppets "sang" a few songs and then talked about what we would be doing in Vacation Bible School this week. After that I talked a little about our theme verse, Psalm 86:11, and what it meant to learn God's Word and walk in His truths. Then Pastor Mel came and gave a sermon after which a meal was served, free of charge, to those in attendance. It was a really neat thing to be apart of.

### **Monday, July 14:**

Today the fun began. We left PVBC at 8:00 AM and went to the house we will be working on this week. It is situated in a part of town that was once, I'm sure, a very upscale part of town but is now in desperate need of renovation. The plan for us this week is to take the shingles off of the existing back porch and replace some rotten boards and then cover the roof with some sort of roofing material. Also, we will be painting and trimming the nineteen windows in the house as well as cleaning up the backyard. All in all it looks like we have our work cut out for us because once we got into taking the shingles and felt off the roof there was more rotten wood than first thought which will require more work than we thought. The back yard will take lots of work to get even close to being usable and after inspection, many of the supporting beams of the porch its self will need to be replaced.

In the evening we went to Hope Baptist Church for our first night of Bible School. The children kind of trickled in at first, but once the two church vans rolled in and the kids across the street saw the kickball game going on, our numbers began to swell. Overall the children are well behaved and seemed to really like the puppets. A good time was had by all.

## **Tuesday, July 15:**

I'm not sure why it is that our projects never seem to go as planned. I'm sure God is teaching us patience and perseverance or something. The plan of putting a simple roof on the back porch turned into a MAJOR remodel job today. Once we started getting the shingles off we found that not only were the boards on the roof rotten, but the support beams, many of the rafters, the walls of the porch and even the floor. Now, our new plan is to tear everything off the porch. Strip it down to the 2x4 studs and what few good support beams that are left.

Several of our people got a lot of work done on painting the inside windows today and work is progressing on the removal of the chain link fence along the side of the yard. The huge vines and tree trunks that have woven themselves between the links have slowed up the pace on that project but we will see what we can do.

Bible School went well today. We had close to fifty kids and they all seemed to have a good time. They really love the puppets and Ronnie and the youngsters are doing a great job with them. One of the neat things about mission trips is to see people interacting. Tonight I looked over at the kitchen pavilion and Ronnie Nease was sitting there talking with a young lady and giving her words of encouragement. I walked around to the front of the church and Nick Barnard, Caroline were right in there with the other kids playing the games. Erin Conley had a little boy, probably age three or so, that just became attached to her. The kids' song, "Jesus love the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight," kept running through my head tonight.

## **Wednesday, July 16:**

Work on the porch is moving along. We ran into a minor challenge when we realized some of the rafters were different sizes. Could make getting it level a challenge but our bossman, Billy Anderson, had a plan and we are rolling now. Today we began to replace some of the roof boards and shore up the support beams. The set me free with a sledgehammer to finish getting some of the more stubborn boards loose. Windows are about done and we had to stop on the backyard clean-up because we had made so many piles of junk while tearing the porch off.

Everyone was really tired tonight but the minute we saw all those smiles on those precious faces we got our second wind. I never knew Scott Barnard was an All-American in Frisbee football. Tonight we presented the Gospel. They really listen well and a few were asking questions later. Tomorrow will be our longest day. We are going to work until we get the roof finished and we also have a cook-out at Hope B.C. following Bible School.

## **Thursday, July 17:**

Let me tell you, God is good!!!!!! We finished the roof today! Late Tuesday it wasn't looking good for us to get done but we did. Ronnie Nease, Debbie Conley, and Scott Barnard spent the whole week up there and did an amazing job. Not only did we finish the roof, but Susan Boling led the painting crew of Ginger, Caitin, Caroline, Rachel Conley, Erin Conley, Paige Fultz, and Emily Boling and they finished the windows before lunch today. Tiffany Barnard came up with the golden idea to fix the flower beds and flower pots in the front yard. She and a few of the others got to work on that and now it looks like Better Homes and Gardens. One of the sweetest moments was when the homeowner came out and was almost in tears. He had pictures in his hands and he was showing them to Ginger. He told her, "Before I got sick four years ago I loved to work in the yard." The pictures were of a beautiful yard full of flowers. He said, "You'll never know what this means to me." With the roof completed, the windows painted, the front yard landscaped and the chain link fence mostly taken up, Bossman Billy called the work done and we loaded up our tools and headed back to Pine Valley.

Bible School was crazy tonight. It was hard to keep their attention with the smell of hamburger and hot dogs floating through the air. We cut the program down a little so we would have more time to eat and

fellowship. Best count we got tonight was eighty kids. Once the food started getting served I think we grew to over one hundred, and that's not counting all the adults. Overall it was a tremendous week of VBS. Pastor Jamison gave us a standing invitation to come back every summer if we want to. We'll see what God does.

Tomorrow is our "off day" so we will take in the sights and sounds of Wilmington and enjoy a fine meal at a local restaurant. Everyone has worked so hard and had such a great spirit all week. Every time I take a group on a mission trip I always seem to get a bigger blessing than anyone else. I would be remiss if I didn't say a HUGE thank you to Tiffany Barnard. She came as our cook this week and let me tell you, she did her job above and beyond the call of duty. Three things you need for a successful trip like this; one, good lodging, two, plenty of showers and restrooms, and three, good food. Thank you Tiffany for helping make this trip great.

Saturday we will leave here around 9:00 AM or so. Please pray for us as we travel back to the greatest state in the country, to the greatest community in the state, and to the greatest church in the world! I can't wait to see all of you Sunday and we will give our trip report Sunday night.