

MISSION CONNECTION



Miracles through Medical Mission with PC(USA) Partners

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NORTH CAROLINA CHURCH DELIVERS KATRINA KITS AND MORE

Thousands of "Katrina Kits" from the MBF/Project C.U.R.E. warehouse found their way to Mississippi when First Presbyterian Church of Greenville, NC responded to the Hurricane Katrina victims.

Shortly after Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, thirteen men from the church loaded up a trailer full of food and one thousand sets of towels and washcloths and set off for D'Iberville, MS. There, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance had set up a tent village to house and feed volunteers. The men planned to take shifts cooking for people who had come in from all over the country to help.

One of the men from First Presbyterian, MBF Board President Jimmy Hite, was eager to see if the Katrina Kits in the MBF/Project C.U.R.E. warehouse could be distributed in D'Iberville. The answer was, "Yes!" So Hite and four others from the group rented three trucks and drove to Houston. Back in D'Iberville, they distributed the kits to four elementary schools and two relief centers.

"The whole church pitched in."

How did thirteen men arrange this impressive relief effort? David Chappell, who is credited with much of the behind-the-scenes arrangements, says, "The whole church pitched in." In fact, the church immediately gave \$25,000 for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and raised another \$15,000 before the men (who paid their own way) left for Mississippi.

"One great thing about going down there is that we met

people from other churches in the area who were volunteering," says Chappell. "It was an unforgettable experience."

"We're not done yet."

Rev. Dr. Bill Neely, First Presbyterian's pastor, wasn't surprised when his church responded so quickly and generously.

"We're a church involved in mission on a regular basis,"

Neely says. "But, we're not done yet." The church sent groups back to the disaster area twice in December and plans to go back every two months for the next few years. "We hope there will be thousands of volunteers in the next months because there is destruction all along the gulf coast. Then you add that Florida got hit again. There's plenty of opportunity to help," says Neely.

What's next? By the time you read this, First Presbyterian will probably have finished building a shower

trailer for volunteers—a project the congregation has already backed with an additional \$15,000.

"One thing we realized when we were there [at the volunteer tent city]," says David Chappell, "is that volunteers really need a place to clean up. There was only a tarp with running cold water for showers."

The hurricane left its tragic mark. But, Presbyterians like the people of First Presbyterian Church in Greenville are leaving the mark of God's love with food, clothing, helping hands, and thousands of Katrina kits.



Children in an elementary school in D'Iberville, MS receive "Hope-in-a-Box" kits.

THANK YOU!

“G

od is good, and the people of God are awesome in a crisis,” says George Pope, MBF’s Executive Director. He reports that Presbyterians’ response to MBF’s appeal for Katrina

Kits has been overwhelming: 678 churches, individuals, and organizations sent thousands

of kits! Some of these personal hygiene and “Hope-in-a-box” children’s kits were distributed to evacuees in local hotels and the others sent to the disaster area.

We applaud these churches who are sponsoring the building of Community Based Orphan Care centers, one in Zambia (First Presbyterian Church, Wilton, IA, left) and the other in Malawi (Madison Presbyterian Church in GA).



JUST SOUTH OF THE BORDER

Five minutes from the Texas border in Reynosa, Mexico, Maria Medina has been trying to help the people in the “colonia” (neighborhood) understand why it’s important to drink purified water. People are suspicious because the new water tastes the same as the water they have to boil before they drink it. Maybe this new water isn’t really pure. Then Maria fills a glass and drinks it.

“That’s all it took,” she says. “One glass of water showed them the water was okay.”

Maria is a registered nurse at Puentes de Cristo clinic, sponsored by Presbyterian Border Ministry, a coordinated effort between the Presbyterian Church of Mexico and the PC(USA) to share a holistic gospel with people living along the 2,000-mile US/Mexican border.

“We serve the poorest of the poor,” says Maria. “We want to help people help themselves, so education is very important.”

Besides two clinics, Puentes de



Cristo offers a vocational program for youth and adults, a maternal program for mothers and babies, a feeding program for children, and “Muchachos” for 9 to 15 year-olds. Muchachos offers kids scholarship money for public school, help with homework, sewing lessons, and instruction on personal hygiene, with an emphasis on pregnancy prevention.

Teen pregnancy is one of the big problems of the area. Maria is proud to report that, in the last four years, only two teenage girls have gotten pregnant—a real record.

Puentes de Cristo is in need of funds for simple medicines and vitamins, but its greatest need is support for their food program. Every day they feed 130 children at the center. For some, it’s the only meal they get.

To help support the work of Presbyterian Border Ministries, contact MBF at www.MBFoundation.org or by phone at 800-547-7627.

At Puentes de Cristo on the Mexican border, young people are nourished physically, mentally, and spiritually.

WHEN YOU GIVE, YOU RECEIVE

AN INTERVIEW WITH JIMMY HITE

PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, MBF

Jimmy Hite, president of MBF's board of directors, is a member of First Presbyterian Church, Greenville, NC. We talked with him soon after he, and twelve other men from his church, returned from a mission trip to Katrina-ravaged D'Iberville, Mississippi.

MBF: It sounds as though your church moved quickly to send help after the Katrina disaster.

Hite: Bill Neely, our pastor, is a member of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. One of his responsibilities is to go with the group that does evaluation right after a disaster. He went to Mississippi and Louisiana and was able to see the damage first hand and make contact with Presbyterian Churches in the area. When he returned, he said to some of us, "We need to make a trip down there." So, thirteen of us men drove down to D'Iberville, MS.

What kind of help did you offer?

We went to work in the relief kitchen and took some supplies with us. But we made arrangements ahead of time and pre-purchased food for the kitchen down there because it helped their economy.

What about the Katrina kits PC(USA) received at the MBF/Project C.U.R.E. warehouse?

That was one thing I wanted to see when we got down there: would we find a use for the kits? They were piling up in the warehouse. MBF received thousands of kits and wanted to get them to people who needed them.

We found out that the kits were badly needed.

What is your perspective as you look back on this experience?

Mission is a transforming experience. You realize that what Jesus said is true: when you

give, you receive. I hear that all the time from people returning from mission trips. They find they got more out of it than they put into it. It lights a fire under them.

It was a great opportunity to connect my church with MBF and that's what MBF is about: connecting. When I go to talk to churches

I like to tell them that the people who began MBF were always looking to the places where mission was needed, but they were also looking back to the church. They recognized that their role was to connect the givers to the receivers.

Jimmy Hite carries a box of Katrina kits to be loaded into trucks for the trip to Mississippi.



"That's what MBF is about: connecting the givers to the receivers."

UNUSUAL CHURCH DINNER BENEFITS MALAWI CRISIS NURSERY

Children and adults sat on stumps and logs and ate fish, porridge, and sponge bread during a dinner last summer at Wabash (Indiana) Presbyterian Church. "We sponsored the meal," says Missions Committee member Isabel Deter-Lewis, "to demonstrate what people in Malawi typically eat, and to present the needs of the crisis nursery in Lilongwe, Malawi."

As in other developing countries, there is little hope in Malawi for a baby who is malnourished and ill. In 2002, PC(USA) mission workers Frank and Nancy Dimmock began taking babies into their home. Their first, Angelina, was too weak to survive, but she began a min-

istry that Nancy has seen grow to the point that a separate house was built to accommodate the need (16 babies a month in 2004). When the babies are stabilized, they are sent to foster homes in the village.

Wabash Presbyterians who attended the Malawi meal watched a Power Point presentation prepared by MBF explaining the Crisis Nursery and its needs. The results? "It was a giving time," says Deter-Lewis. As a result of the project, MBF received a generous donation for the support of the crisis nursery.



Frank and Nancy Dimmock and their children. Nancy founded and manages the Crisis Nursery for ill and malnourished babies in Lilongwe, Malawi.

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Katrina Update & Mexican Border Ministry



WHAT HAPPENS TO THE UNSUNG HEROES?

A child in the Katrina disaster area clutches the "Hope-in-a-box" kit she received from Presbyterian volunteers.



What happens when a mission worker's support dwindles, or money is needed to ship a container of medical supplies, or when a hospital in a developing country needs money for charity patients? While these "unsung heroes"—our partners in health ministry—pray for help, funds coming in to MBF are often designated for other projects that have received special attention.

Many of us enjoy giving to a specific project or a favorite mission worker, but undesignated funds not only keep MBF going, they can be used for urgent requests, for mission workers' support, and for the everyday needs that keep a mission hospital or clinic functioning. These unsung heroes need your help. Consider an undesignated gift today.

Administrative Charge Continues

Restricted donations increasingly outstrip unrestricted donations coming to MBF. The Foundation is dependent on unrestricted gifts, not only to send overseas, but to continue the ministry of mission interpretation to Presbyterian congregations and to collect and ship medical supplies and equipment. Due to the shortage of unrestricted funds, the MBF Executive Committee continues to place a 5% administrative charge on restricted cash donations. In other words, out of every restricted dollar, five cents will be used for mission interpretation and administration.

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