

WHEN WE WALKED WITH GOD

When I asked God "Where do you want me to serve?" the answer came back that I was to share the gifts that were given to me. When I was asked to serve on the Habitat for Humanity board of directors the answer was obvious. You see, I am a builder. I began as a laborer back in 1965 and with the Grace of God I became a partner in HCS Builders in 1995. It was 1997 when my Habitat journey began. It was then that I became a member of the Habitat for Humanity of Story County board of directors.

Our most ambitious project wasn't even a Habitat home. Emergency Residence Project (our local shelter for the homeless) asked if Habitat would partner with them to build a new four-plex apartment to serve as transitional housing for homeless families. The plan was for Habitat to supply the labor and ERP would supply the materials. We did them one better. We were able to raise over one hundred fifty thousand dollars of cash and in-kind donations of materials. Over eighty local businesses donated to the cause. Even more remarkable than that was how we built it. We partnered with the Iowa State University Homecoming Committee, the Story County Building Trades class, and the local homebuilding subcontractors to build the project from foundation to drywall in only six days. Following is a list of the types of companies that were involved:

2 excavation companies	1 window company
3 electrical companies	1 truss company
2 electrical supply companies	1 siding company
5 plumbing companies	1 cabinet company
3 plumbing supply companies	1 counter top company
2 drywall companies	1 sod company
5 lumber yards	4 carpet companies
1 roofing company	1 landscape company
4 finish carpenter companies	1 glass company
1 heating company	1 appliance company
6 painting companies	4 discount stores
4 paint supply stores	2 trucking companies
2 concrete companies	1 building company
2 redi-mix companies	1 architect

During the week of the "Blitz Build", I had the feeling that we were walking on Holy Ground. We worked three shifts of about 50 students per shift. At the beginning of each shift, we had a short safety talk and then a person from Campus Ministry would give a short devotion. All of the devotions were inspiring, but I particularly remember one. The Minister began with the creation story about how God breathed the breath of life into Adam. He then asked all of us to join hands in a primitive prayer. We gathered into a huddle and breathed onto the ground saying "RUAH!" (Hebrew for the Wind Breath or Spirit of God). I could see that we were the body of Christ, and that we were making this ground Holy.

That week we prayed for good weather and what we got was blue skies and record high temperatures for November. We prayed for safety. I witnessed one student being pulled back from certain injury as he was falling from the second story. It reminded me that when He wants us to know that "He is God", He does wonderful things. As the week progressed I felt like I was walking with God. For the first time in my life, I felt like I was doing exactly what God intended. It also reminded me of how little time I really spend "hitting the mark". I am indeed in need of God's mercy.

The work was very physical and by the end of the week we were totally exhausted, but I don't remember when I have been more at peace. Here are some pictures of the project.

Monday



Friday



Finished



Since that time I have had many times when I felt a special closeness to God, but none more powerful than the time when we walked with God as we built the Emergency Residence Project.

Alan Christy
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