



NEWS FROM THE FRONT

LIFE UNDER CONSTRUCTION



At left: With the demo complete, the guys had to get down and dirty on the foundation.

Below: Sam, Sam "The Cabinet Man" put all of the new cabinets and fixtures together.



“Just by spending a couple hours every day, I could make a positive impact on someone's life. I got to work with the most genuine, good-hearted people I have ever met. I couldn't have asked for a more worthwhile, beneficial experience.”

— Meredith Palmer



A “Touchy” Subject: Too Messy for God?

In 1990, rapper MC Hammer released a song entitled “U Can't Touch This.” It was a huge international hit and to this day you can even get a ring tone for your cell phone with the catchy phrase “you can't touch this.”

This fall I experienced a new play on those words. The new version goes “I Can't Touch That.”

When we started helping Betsy I contacted a lot of folks for help and expertise. I knew it was going to be a consuming and demanding project for us. You have to realize that my neighbors worry when I operate hedge trimmers or a power tool or get up on the roof to hang Christmas lights. I knew I needed help with the project!

As I asked for help I encountered a wide range of responses. Everything from “what can I do to help” to “Ya' know what George, that's a real mess over there. I can't touch that!”

Since that day I have asked myself the following: “What if God looked at me and said, “I can't touch that.” What if Jesus looked at us and said “Nope, no way... it's too messy... nope... not gonna' do it.”

Isn't there a verse that says something like “Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the gospel”? Do we really mean that? Or does that only apply to the needy overseas? Does it not also apply to folks living under the shadows of our steeples or a block or two away from church?

Fortunately the lyrics of another song called “The Face of Love” by Sanctus Real flooded my heart and mind during each day of the work at Betsy's. Especially the chorus:

You are the face that changed the whole world / No one too lost for you to love / No one too low for you to serve / So give us the grace to change the world / No one too lost for me to love / No one too low for me to serve / Let us see... let us be your face.

Please be assured, I don't share any of this to elevate myself or be judgmental of other people's decisions. I know (only too well) who and what I really am.

But I do encourage all of us to be careful in how we qualify who we help and who's too messy to touch. I encourage all of us to be “the face of love” as we encounter people who might be too messy.

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Plan Comes Together

(Continued from Page 1)

At the end of the show, Smith (with his black-leather-gloved hands) would bring a cigar to his mouth, clamp his teeth around it and growl to his rag-tag team of men, “I love it when a plan comes together!”

Our first season of The Gideon Project continues to crescendo even as I write this article on December 12th. I trust that the testimonials and pictures inside this issue will prove that to you.

Thanks for your prayer and financial support this past year! Please remember FrontLine with your year-end giving and in the coming year!



Box 9, Tipton, PA 16684
(814) 684-1515

Thanks For All of Your Prayers and Financial Support!

As I have said so often, there would be no ministry if it were not for you!

Additional thanks to so many of you who pitched in with financial support, supplies, equipment, donations of appliances, materials and hard work for the Bellwood Outreach Project.

Several local churches, The Hope Center, over 25 individuals and 13 busi-

nesses contributed. On Betsy's behalf I thank you for getting involved!

Have a Merry Christmas and remember FrontLine in your year-end giving and in 2009!

Blessings!

Henry Palmer

P.S. I know you are busy — it's the holiday season after all, and you are probably fed up with year-end appeals. But I encourage you to take a moment and check out the information included in this edition of our newsletter!

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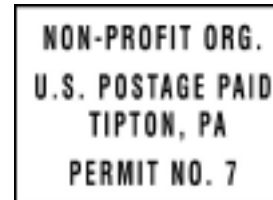
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FrontLine Ministries Inc.

P.O. Box 9

Tipton, PA 16684



The Gideon Project: Three Stories from Betsy's House



“Just when I thought things were at the very worst in my life, I said a prayer; this was something I hadn't done in many years.

I sat down and wrote a letter to an old classmate asking if he knew of ANYONE who could help me. I had finally reached the very bottom — my life seemed as if there was NO hope for me ever to have a safe, warm home for myself and my two dogs. Then it happened!”

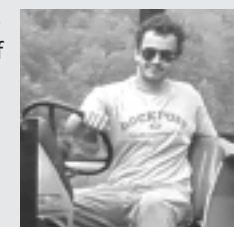
(Read Betsy's Story on Page 3)



“The Gideon Project was about getting the opportunity to build up something and someone.”

(More from Cory on Page 4)

“Gideon made me step out of college and into being a man with a real job and real responsibilities.”



(See Cody's Story on Page 5)



The Gideon Project had a good plan (and plenty of helping hands) for Betsy's house.

I Love It When a Plan Comes Together

This year-end edition of our newsletter focuses on The Gideon Project, FrontLine's most recent startup ministry. All of our other projects continue to steam along nicely. So I'd like to open up The Gideon Project and let you peek inside and see what's going on there.

The vision for The Gideon Project is

to mentor young men and women of quality and character. Working together side by side we develop friendships and relationships. In that context I can mentor and enhance their world view and work ethic. It's my goal to see these young folks be leaders and initiators in whatever field or ministry they end up in.

As I wrote in September, “Take an honest objective look at life at society, culture, the arts, government, and the Church. What's missing? My answer is “we are missing men with a Biblical world view who are able to be leaders

and influencers. We need men who will be good husbands and fathers; and endeavor to be proactive leaders in their families, the workplace, government, the arts and the Church.”

I continued with the following: “

FrontLine's Gideon project will focus on mentoring young men and women in all



Gideon Project guys (and gal) in Sherwood.

aspects of life. We'll work, sweat and get blisters together.

We'll teach about business and what's involved in running a ministry.”

Now, back to the title of this article; I love it when a plan comes together...

Maybe you recognize that phrase

and can picture George Peppard as Colonel John “Hannibal” Smith in the 1980s TV hit called The A Team.

Smith and his team of Vietnam veterans would spend each show saving a damsel in distress or someone in need, while surviving a variety of challenges, difficulties and narrow escapes.

(See ‘Plan Comes Together’ on Page 2)

The Gideon Project: Betsy's Side of the Story

(Continued from Page 1)

My dear friend found me an angel from FrontLine. His name is George — unlikely name for an angel, but nonetheless he is one!

George did what all angels do — he gathered his angels to help me. Before I knew it I had all kinds of people coming to “look and see what they could do to help me.”

I had not had many people (actually NO company) in my house for years due to the disrepair of my home. BUT with George's prompting that “things will be okay ... I promise” and his famous “keep smiling,” I let people with hearts bigger than I had ever seen come through the mess I called home. And then a day or so later George would say, “Well today we are going to...” and there it began!

Taming the Jungle

My back yard looked like a large unkempt jungle! I have a heart condition and the trimming of the hedges and weeds were just too much. It looked really nasty back there.

George brought into my life some young men that I will NEVER forget. These young men were the most polite, courteous young men I have ever met.

They worked hard those days cleaning up back there, not a minute of complaining, even though it was really warm outside!

I offered to get them a drink at the local store and their response was, “No thank you ma'am,” something you RARELY hear from young people these days! I was impressed.

I stayed out back and watched them take down the jungle and turn my back yard into a yard again!

While they did this work, in the heat of the day, can you believe they SANG gospel songs! Their voices are indeed a treat to hear!

Angels With Power Tools

During the next few months these young men did LOTS of work at my home for me. They worked with the elec-



To Betsy's surprise, her angel's name was George.

trician, plumber and anyone who would show them how to do this work, shadowing and learning the whole time.

They learned how to run power tools (safely). They put together the new cabinets that will be in my kitchen. They did in a short time become dear to me.

In fact, two of the young men went to New York in November and they invited me to hear them sing at church before they left. What a wonderful treat that was!

They never questioned anything that was asked of them, and they looked always for guidance from George. They looked on him as a spiritual guide and were/are very much his young angels.

Peace Through Christ

There are more “young angels” that have been helping me. A young man

whose father is my friend has put up dry wall, cut and pounded nails all with a smile. Even a young woman who has her father's “beautiful heart” — that would be George's daughter. She cut and sanded and painted and not once without a smile.

The FrontLine Ministries are lucky to have such a man to serve. I have seen him in tears worried about me, my health and the condition that I lived in.

He has taught me a lot about things I thought I had forgotten — about God and the need to keep Him close to your heart.

One of the volunteer helpers took the time to help me understand the need for a personal relationship with Christ. I now

have that and I have been to church every weekend in the last few months, and my whole life seems calmer. I am more at peace than I have been in years!

Leaky Roof and a Long Cold Winter

My kitchen roof had leaked for years since my husband left me. The bathroom roof had leaked long enough that the tub went thru the floor!

I had no heat, only ONE brick wall heater outside my bedroom. That was a very cold winter! I would come home from work, go into my room, get into bed and see my breath!

I would cover up as best I could, call my trusty “heaters” (my dogs) into bed and we would cuddle and go to sleep.

I am not sure how George found all the help he came up with to get my home into the shape it is now, but I KNOW it had to take a lot of time and effort.

He never got upset when he would get one thing done only to find some-

thing underneath that which was “fixed” needed repaired as well. He just kept on saying the profound words, “keep smilin’, it will be okay.”

The bathroom that was in such disrepair and the kitchen with the

leaky roof soon disappeared off the house.

New House, New Friends, New Life

My house is becoming my “HOME” now, thanks to all of the wonderful people who helped with their time and expertise, donations or just plain elbow grease.

There were over 25 people that I never knew before or knew just by name. Now I call them friend. At least 10 businesses helped and they didn't even know me either.

Can you imagine how that makes me feel? I went from feeling so alone and scared because I had NO idea what was going to happen to me, to making new friends, ones that helped “just because.” This amazes me!

Trust in the Lord and all things are possible. ONWARD AND UPWARD!

Well, my prayers for help and guidance were answered. With nothing asked for in return, this man and his ideals have changed my life forever.

Betsy, Bellwood, PA

LIFE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

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At right: Andy supervising my use of the digging bar. Be assured I had my chance to supervise too!

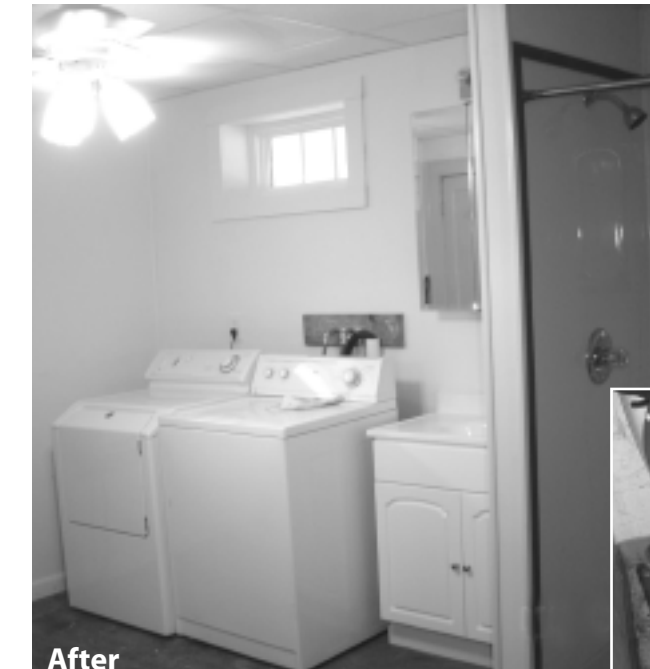
“ This whole project was rewarding for me to be involved in. All of our lives were impacted and improved as we worked together and saw the changes take place in Betsy's home and her life.

— Josh Beaver



After

When we first got involved, Betsy had 4 days remaining before she would lose her home. The Hope Center crew got us started by replacing the front porch.



After

We had to demolish a good portion of the original structure, and in the end we were able to provide Betsy with a multipurpose room.



Gideon Project Testimonial: Cory's Story (Continued from Page 1)

This past summer and the Gideon Project changed me.

It was not just a job or a chance to make some money. It was not just weed eating, shoveling, and tearing down and remodeling a damaged house (even though we did plenty of these things).

The Gideon Project was about getting the opportunity to build up something and someone.

I first started working with the project in the beginning of June. When Mr. Palmer asked us if we were interested in some work this summer, I immediately said yes. He then gave us fair warning that we were going to be doing some “tough guy” work. I remember kind of smiling and then thinking, “oh crap...well I will just do it for a month or so.” Little did I know I would be a part of the project for over five months.



Cory and his trusty crowbar.

Mr. Palmer was not lying about the work we did. I am proud to say we were down and dirty all day, every day. I could also feel myself getting stronger every day. I have a somewhat spotty medical history, but praise God for his goodness and strength. I was learning new skills every day and actually having fun working hard. I started to learn to take real pride in my hard work and the results of what I was doing.

I also learned the value of a positive attitude in the workplace/everyday life. Waking up every morning and going to work, sweating and laughing with my best friends made the summer something I will never forget. You get to learn a lot about someone when you are in the “trenches” together. I learned that I am capable of so much when I, as Mr. Palmer says, “Just attack it!” and that if I want to do a lazy job I will get a lazy result.

I will also never forget all of the beautiful moments of stillness that we all

shared sometimes as a group and sometimes individually with God throughout the summer and fall. I spent more time the past five months in the glory of God's creation than probably my whole life. Whether in prayer or simply just praising God and saying, “this is beautiful” it was hard to at any point this summer feel like God was not near.

God's involvement in the project was never more evident than in the repair of Betsy's house, life and soul. It was also amazing to feel/know that I was a part of that reconstruction.

Mind you I can at times have a weak stomach, but the first day I walked into her house I had to step outside faster than I walked in. I really thought I was going to vomit. I saw a woman who was reaching out, but had lost all hope.

How great is our God? To see the Lord reach down and touch someone and say, “No, you are not too far gone. I am not finished with your life,” was the most amazing thing about this summer. It was so crazy to see God use a group of young men willing to work and smile to change this woman's house, life and soul! God is good!

Cory Jones, NYC

Cody Experiences 'Life Changing' Gideon Project (Continued from Page 1)

Gideon made me step out of college and into being a man with a real job that had real responsibilities...

The Gideon Project offered me the opportunity to make a change. I had just graduated from college with the goal of moving to New York City this fall. What I learned this past summer through The Gideon Project prepared me in ways I couldn't understand until now.

To be honest, I needed something to take my world and turn it upside



Wild Man Cody saddles up the Great White Beast!

down. Having to be up at 6:00 every morning will do that to you. I had never done much heavy physical labor and was intimidated to say the least. But I was confident that I was a hard enough worker to get by.

I cannot fully explain the gratification I took away from The Gideon Project. Before I knew it, I was doing things I never could have imagined doing. Mind you that I went to school for theater and dance and now I was working with lumber, building floors

and steps, repairing a house's foundation, removing windows and toilets, digging endless holes for landscaping, trimming shrubbery, mastering the art of the grass whip, using a weed-eater and I was able to drive a really, really, really big tractor.

My experience was life changing. Gideon made me

step out of college and into being a man with a real job that had real responsibilities. Sure there were times in late July when I was out in a field sweating buckets and thinking, “This is nuts!”

It is truly great to work with the people you love and a mentor who is invested in you as a person. Every day may not have started with a smile, but it always ended with one. Those are the moments I cherish most looking back. I saw so much of God this past summer in his beautiful creation, and how he works through fundamental relationships. I'll never forget this summer or the men I shared it with.

We are all called by Christ to love. I believe one of the best ways to show his love is to do the jobs no one wants to do, and to help the people no one wants to help.

Christ said in Matthew 23:11, “The greatest among you will be a servant.” I am not too good to do any job or help anyone. I would tell myself every day, “Get dirty!” Christ got so dirty. Praise God!

Cody Jones, NYC