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Building With LOVE

**TIH Homes helps rebuild
homes for Katrina
Victims and construct
churches in South Africa**

By Jason Chatraw



Steve and Renee McKenzie don't have television crews following them around, nor do they have a one-week time limit, but their own version of Extreme Makeover is warming the hearts of the residents in one of the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina.

As the owners of TIH Homes in Kennesaw, GA, Steve and Renee added TIH Ministries to the mix just three years after starting their business. They founded the ministry based on the idea that while building homes is important, sharing the love of Christ in a practical way by using their talents is of the utmost importance. So when Hurricane Katrina hit, it was no surprise that they answered the door when opportunity knocked.

The McKenzies learned about Bay St. Louis, a city only a few miles from where the eye of Katrina made landfall, from their neighbors. They also learned that there were many elderly people in that community who were unable to rebuild their home because of their age and protracted legal battles with their insurance companies. TIH Ministries quickly swung into action.

"There was a lot of publicity and press about the commercialized areas of New Orleans and Biloxi, but there was nothing being said about Bay St. Louis," Steve says. "We knew some people who were trying to raise money for a house that needed to be built in Bay St. Louis, and they asked if we would get involved. One thing led to another, and we made a trip down there and got involved with Jeni and Mart Ward, local residents trying to impact their community. On August 5, 2006, a family moved into their new home."

A Step of Faith

If giving is contagious, the McKenzies have contracted a serious infection. Now they are looking to help build three more homes in the Bay St. Louis area. "We committed to helping to build three more homes in 2007 before we even finished rebuilding the first one," Steve says. "And we said 'yes' to doing this when we didn't have a lick of money. We felt like the Lord was asking us to do this and to be obedient. We said we would do it, but we need the Lord to step up and provide the funding for us to follow through."

TIH Ministries functions through

the generous donations of others and through a healthy investment made by TIH Homes. The McKenzies are hoping to get others involved in this contagious spirit of giving. TIH Ministries will raffle off a \$500,000 home in Cherokee County for \$100 a ticket, with the net proceeds going to TIH Ministries, funding their project in Mississippi and the building of churches in South Africa.

who need it the most. It is not getting to the folks who are doing the living and dying in these communities. We're just trying to support the grassroots effort to help people that are already going on down there."

Ministry with a Mission

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the



Homes being rebuilt by TIH Ministries in one of the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina.

"We need around \$500,000 for these projects," Steve says. "And we also need people—electricians, plumbers, people to hang dry wall and roofers—to go to Mississippi to work. America has given in a big way, and millions and millions of dollars have poured into the funds to help these people. However, that money doesn't always go to the people

least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40

TIH Ministries has built its approach to ministry around Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the sheep and the goats. Jesus explains that serving the least of these is the same as serving God. But Steve and Renee aren't content to just serve those who happen to come

their way. They actively seek them out. "It's what we live for," Renee says.

Just take their TIH Ministry projects in South Africa for instance. TIH began going to Africa to build churches in 2004. After meeting a mission-minded pastor intent on populating the northeast sector of South Africa with churches, TIH offered to provide help. They now

process of meeting the people, to actually going and building the churches, God does phenomenal things. You get this holy energy that touches everyone at the point of their deepest need. It makes a dramatic impact on your life."

Steve adds, "I watched many of the 15 people who went on our last trip go out of obedience to God, and I saw

areas of prayer, financial oversight and logistical planning. "Mt. Paran is there as an anchor and has been doing it as long as Jesus has been framing houses," Steve says. TIH Ministries works in conjunction with Malan Moolman, a South African Missionary, who determines the areas that need churches and devises plans to make it happen.

The results have been amazing, and include getting the attention of one province's king, who attended a church dedication. "Their kings are equivalent to our governors in ruling power," Steve says. "But the people hold their kings in much higher reverence than we do our governors. Having the king show up in their village is like having President George W. Bush show up. The people



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Steve and Renee McKenzie, owners of TIH Homes in Kennesaw, GA.

build 30x80 foot cinder block churches, which are erected in eight days, in a culture where it normally takes three to five years to build such a structure because of a lack of funds and materials.

"When those church buildings go up in eight days, it blows their minds," Steve says. "And they don't understand why we do it—why a group of Americans fly half way around the world just to help them build a church. That gives us an opportunity to tell them that we love them and their brothers and sisters in the United States love them too."

While Steve and Renee enjoy helping others, they can't ignore the power of God that is changing the hearts of those who go on these trips. "Whenever I go, I keep saying, "Wow!" because I come back totally changed," Renee says. "From making the decision to go, to the

the Lord dramatically change them. You don't even recognize these people when they come back. It's a phenomenal experience, not just for those of us that are blessing the people in Africa, but for the way they bless us and leave us forever changed."

A Powerful Partner

"While TIH Ministries isn't interested in becoming a mission agency, it is interested in becoming a powerful partner that gets to participate in existing works, which adds another component of ministry to what churches are already doing," Steve says.

Steve and Renee have partnered with their home church, Mt. Paran Church of God in Marietta, in their mission ventures into South Africa. Mt. Paran provides a solid support base in the

flipped out last year when their king not only showed up, but also publicly recognized Jesus Christ as Lord."

Whether it is helping people two states away in a region ravaged by Hurricane Katrina or helping a small village a continent away, TIH Ministries is serious about using their talents for Christ—and about changing the world in the process.

To purchase raffle tickets go to www.tihhomes.com or www.perimeteratlanta.com. To participate with the TIH Ministries projects in Mississippi or Africa, please visit their website, www.tihhomes.com and click on the "ministries" link at the bottom of the page. Or call their Kennesaw office at 678-331-8490.