

First Step Ministries, Inc.

Rev. Lawrence E. Blakeslee

JANUARY, 2005
VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

Miracle on Sheridan Street

God's blessings can come in various forms. As Believer's we all love to see God's hand extended in some miraculous way. Sometimes miracles come from unusual or unexpected places or people. Sometimes the miracle may not be as exciting as winning a battle against cancer, a marriage saved or a teenager who returns home.

Some of the greatest miracles come simply from the faithfulness and love of one Believer towards another and they might be strangers at that. I propose that sometimes human beings are clearly "angels" in disguise and we should be very grateful for them. Let me give you some background.

In September, 2004, Farmer's Insurance advised me the wood trim on my house in Scottsdale, Arizona needed painting and in some areas replaced. Farmer's also cited a "missing" attic access cover and an "unknown" roof ventilator problem. If these repairs were not made by mid October, they would cancel my home owner's insurance.

Farmers Insurance has insured this house for over thirty years. I have never sustained any claims, large or small in all those years. In fact my other homes and cars have always been covered by this company.

When asked for the reason why, my agent could not provide any substantial reason other than they were out "checking houses". He "assured" me that he had four or five other home owners who were also being "checked".

In order to comply I needed to know the details of what needed to be fixed. After repeated requests for photographic proof of the ventilator and attic access problems, they never provided them. A number of friends checked the house and they could not find anything. Nothing could be found except the trim needing a bit of paint and some wood that could be

replaced.

Labor and material estimates came in at over \$1,000 dollars. Whether Farmer's claims were valid or not and no matter what their motivation I had to find a solution to the issue.

It was time to pray. My First Step Ministries Prayer Team was called into action to be in prayer agreement to find the answer to this new and immediate challenge. Little did I know that God would provide the most incredible answer within forty-eight hours.

Friends on the FSM Prayer Team, Eric and Denise Kliskey came up with an idea that was completely "out of the box". Denise works for Alaska Air-
(Continued on page 2)



God's Angels after a job well done.
Back row (L - R): Scott Harden, Chris Rickett, Denise Kliskey, James Shin, and Angela Russell. Front row (L-R): Eric Kliskey, Holly Alexander and Royce Tyler.

Upcoming Travel Schedule

Larry will be back in Arizona for four weeks starting March 19. Hope to see as many of you as possible.

Inside this issue:

Miracle On Sheridan Street	1
Eric's On Scene Report	2
The Rest of the Story	4
Rhema Germany	4
Stateside Travel Info	4
Denise's Report	4

Miracles (Continued)

(Continued from page 1)

lines. Resourcefulness is one of Denise and Eric's gifts. Denise proposed that she and her husband put a team of young people together to do the work over a weekend. What a blessing this would be. In addition, they also offered to pay for all the materials and their expenses. The amazing part is that they all live in the Seattle, Washington area.

Denise proposed that she could arrange to fly the team down to Phoenix using Buddy Passes on Alaska Airlines. But first she called on some of their College and Young Singles Group they had pastored in the past to see if they would be willing to help.

With the mid-October deadline looming, it

didn't give much time. Finding an open weekend for eight people would be a real challenge. Plus, all of the team needed to depart Seattle preferably on the same first morning flight out to Phoenix.

The only weekend that all of these factors would work would be New Year's weekend. This was past the deadline. I contacted my agent and Farmers extended the deadline to January 5, 2005. This gave no room for error and took it right to the deadline with no alternate plan. It had to be done on that weekend. There were no other possibilities.

Nothing to Do But Wait

For my part, there was nothing much to do but wait and pray that it would all come together. The ball was in the Kliskey's court. I provided as much info on the house and the work that was needed.

A friend went by the house and took digital photos of the trim and the house so they would have an idea of the size of the house and the amount of work needed to be done before they arrived. My next door neighbors, the Zavala's were gracious enough to open their home to use the phone and facilities. This would turn out to be very critical because the team got hit

(Continued on page 6)

Eric Kliskey's On Scene Report

**32 STANDBY
PASSENGERS
AND 22 OPEN
SEATS**

[Eric emailed me this report from his point of view. L.B.]

Miracle #1

Due to our flight benefits, our entire team of eight people needed to fly standby to Phoenix. It's usually not a problem at all, especially since the first flight of the day departs Seattle

at 6:30am. However, when we did the final check of the flight loads on Thursday night, there were only 22 open seats on the flight with a total of 32 standby passengers listed.

To complicate matters, some members of our team were flying on "guest passes" which meant they would receive the lowest priority for standby and would be the last to board the plane if open seats still existed. We needed God to provide a miracle to get our team together on the plane. We prayed the night before, leaving it God's hands. We left our house at 4:30 a.m. Friday morning, again praying all the way to the airport. We shuttled through security

and out to the gate, praying during the whole process. We waited at the gate, talking with another passenger and, of course, praying. When they got around to calling the standby passengers, one by one, each member of our team received a seat assignment with the exception of James. We waited ever so patiently for his name to be called knowing the plane was extremely close to capacity. Finally, when the ticket agent called James' name, there was such a loud "Hallelujah"

(Continued on page 3)



Three of the guys working on the front of the house.

Eric's Report (Continued)

(Continued from page 2)

shouted from our group, I'm sure it sent the ticket agent into a state of shock. We all quickly boarded the plane bound for our mission in Phoenix.

Miracle #2:

When flying standby, there is little choice on the actual seat assignment you get. Most of the time, we get the middle seats assigned because nobody actually chooses those seats. Window seats and aisle seats are highly coveted and the middle seats are usually the ones leftover.

MOST PEOPLE WERE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE WEATHER...

WE AWOKE TO THE MOST AMAZING BLUE SKY AND SUNSHINE...

In addition, usually the exit row seats are not available because they provide extra leg room. When our group finally all received seat assignments, we boarded the plane

and quickly made our way to the various assigned seats throughout the plane. Our tallest team member, Scott, who happens to be about 6 feet 4 inches, received a window exit row seat. How amazing!! The Lord orchestrated it so Scott could have additional leg room at the exit knowing that he'd definitely need it with his long legs.

Miracle #3

After arrived in Phoenix, Denise and I went to claim the rental car reservations while the rest of the team waited for the luggage to arrive. We had a lot for eight people.

When we got to the counter the agent

noticed we had reservations for two cars and asked how big our group was. We said eight people and he reiterated it would be too many for a minivan, but they did have a 15 passenger van available.

I questioned him since the fifteen passenger van option wasn't available on the website when I made the reservations. He said usually they don't have them available but they "just happened" to have one that came in from Los Angeles. It turned out we could rent the fifteen passenger van and keep our group together with plenty of space and save money in the process. Again, the Lord was looking out for our best interests.

Miracle #4:

Apparently this is the "rainy season" for Phoenix and the weather didn't look like it would be cooperating with us during the weekend. We knew this wasn't something we could control and ultimately could only leave it in the Lord's hands.

We meet a couple of people on the plane and talked of the project we we're about to do. Most



Angela taking care of the details

people were rather pessimistic about the weather since it's been rather bad in Phoenix lately. We said we've prayed and we believe God will provide for us. Friday was mostly cloudy but we worked throughout the day without getting a drop of rain that was forecast.

Then on Saturday we awoke to the most amazing blue sky and sunshine that God provided for us. What a miracle for us to paint with and we prayed that the pessimistic people would remember that we said God would provide as such.

There are so many more provisions that were lavished on us that I could go on and on, but that's just a sampling to signify the amazing things the Lord did. What tremendous faith He built in our hearts as we stepped out to serve him.

“The Rest of the Story” by Larry Blakeslee

As you read this story about the Kliskey’s blessing me, you should also know “The Rest of the Story” as radio broadcaster Paul Harvey would say.

The facts are that I have never met Denise or Eric Kliskey face to face. We have never spoken on the phone, seen each other or been closer than 1,500 miles. Until a couple of years ago, we had never seen photos of each other until.

Through the strangest of circum-

stances, I “met” Denise shortly after the Alaska Airlines crash off the coast of California, 31 January 2000. Denise was a close friend of someone I knew in Phoenix. The friend and I were talking about the crash and she mentioned that she had a close friend, Denise, that worked for Alaska Airlines. Since DHL is considered an “airline”, I decided to email Denise a sympathy letter. Those kinds of tragedies hit your company and it affects everyone.

At that time, Denise and Eric were heavily involved in their church’s College Age Group before the birth of their daughter, Kiana. Over time, we started emailing and sharing our “ministerial adventures”.

Somehow, God made this interesting connection. Somehow, God will provide a means to finally meet them face to face. Despite its problems, the Internet and Email was used by God to have an impact on a couple of His children.

Opportunities to Share?

If you would like me to come and share the vision of First Step Ministries with you, your prayer group or church, it would be my blessing to do so.

Please email me at:

Larry@FirstStepMinistries.Net

Rhema Germany

The first six months of my one year commitment to help Rhema Germany as their Administrator has been very interesting. We have experienced a wide variety of opportunities and challenges.

Improvements and progress have been realized in the areas of computers and technology. They have increased the number of and better utilize our volunteers. Rhema has also began an Internship Program. There are many opportunities to develop in the future.

In the next few months, they will be looking at various internal and external areas of growth for the church and bible school. The long term goal is to have a greater impact in the City of Bonn, in Germany and Europe as a whole.

There is much potential to grow in all aspects of church, bible school and ministry. It will be exciting to see how God does it.

Upcoming Stateside Trip in March

I will be traveling to Arizona for my annual trip on March 19 and return to Germany around 19 April. I would love to see everyone and some how we’ll have to figure out a way to make that happen.

Unlike past trips, I will not be going to Florida to visit my sons on this

trip. My youngest son, William will be getting married to a wonderful young woman, Stephanie, on June 4 in Winter Haven, FL. I am blessed to be able to officiate at this ceremony and will be traveling from Germany for the wedding and to visit my oldest son, Shawn.



Looking towards an exciting future and the opportunity to serve God’s children.

Denise Kliskey's Report

[Denise sent me this email report a few days after their return to Seattle. LB]

I have to add a couple of other miracles to this list...one was that one of our team members was supposed to work on New Year's Eve and had been trying for over a month to get someone to take his shift (of course no one wanted to work that night!) but he had it work out for him at the last minute and was able to join us. His help was very significant in getting the project done.

(Below) Holly is offering some advice and technical suggestions about scrapping to Scott as he observes.



Had our entire team not made it down Friday we never could have been done by the end of the day Saturday. If we had not been done by then the illness that hit our team Saturday night would have meant an unfinished project. Praise the Lord that He provided all the way!

We had a mistaken reservation for one

queen bed in a smoking room (two reservations) on Friday night. We realized this on the way to the hotel. There were five guys in one of the rooms and three gals in the other. How difficult that would be to put five guys into one queen bed! But the Lord opened the door and we ended up with two rooms that had two queen beds each, and a hide a bed couch! Everyone got a bed! :) Having the neighbor's toilet was a HUGE miracle and blessing! We would have been greatly crippled without that avail-

we drove place to place on "working in a hostile environment". It was an incredible teaching that really blessed everyone in the group and we still are making jokes about it now that we're back.

Thank you for the chance to do this, Larry. It was the greatest blessing to everyone there.



The end of the day clean up is always a welcomed event. The team is looking forward to a great meal and a little relaxation.

ability.

The Lord was so good....He used this time to really build and restore relationships in our team too, Larry. And we had a great teaching that we listened to in the van as



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Miracle (Continued)

(Continued from page 2)

with the flu on Saturday night. Despite this, they pressed on, believing God to heal them and to finish the project in the timeframe allowed.

The Weather

Normally Arizona has pretty wonderful holiday weather but the week before it took a dramatic change to bad. Weather fronts started hitting California and moving into Arizona dumping huge amounts of rain and snow. Granted Arizona has been in a drought for five years and the water was desperately needed. But the drought could have continued for just a few more days until after the New Year's weekend.

As I checked the Internet for Arizona weather a little concern started to come up in my heart. I contacted a few people to have them agree with me in prayer for a weather change, at least during that weekend. Amazingly enough Friday morning the team arrived, it was overcast but the weather was holding. Saturday when it was time to do the painting, there was a bright blue sky above. On Monday, the storms began again and on Tuesday, parts of Phoenix were under a Tornado Watch. Amazing.

God Is So Good.

Despite the challenges the project was completed on time, in the only time frame that was available. Additionally, the team went ahead and repainted the entire front of the house, giving it all a fresh look. When I read Eric and Denise's email report on how it all came together I was amazed.

Amazed at God's love for me, for them and to take care of this challenge in my life. Amazed at how some very special people with God's heart would travel 1,500 miles, work on a holiday weekend, take care of all their own expenses, food, lodging, transportation, and rental car, pay for the all the materials, replacement wood, paint, etc. And do this for someone they had never met and may never meet. I will always be grateful to them and the Lord for providing these "angels" for this help.



Royce (L) pulling some weeds. Scott (R) doing some painting in a tough spot

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