



Tanna Kinnaman/DN
Volunteers from Eustis, Fla., wear shirts pledging their allegiance to Jesus Christ, a Jew and a carpenter, as their savior. Below: Tom Tindall, a CPA from Birmingham, hammers roof supports to the main sanctuary. Tindall has participated in 16 mission trips.

Ala., architect, said many of the volunteers have little to no experience as carpenters or electricians, but make-up for their lack of ability with a strong spiritual commitment.

Mac Holcomb, who is making his second trip with the Brookwood congregation, said he was unsure about making a construction trip but was inspired by the stories he heard from other members of the congregation.

"I usually need a handbook to screw in a light bulb," Holcomb joked as he nailed in a beam. "My wife would probably be better at this than I would but she stayed home to take care of our children."

Holcomb, a Birmingham attorney, said he originally thought the trip would be like an "adult summer camp" but quickly learned there was a lot of work involved.

Even though he said he still wanted to come back this year, he had to leave Wednesday to return to his law practice and be in court on Thursday trying a case.

"When you see the members of New Covenant come out here and express their gratitude, you realize that you're really a small insignificant part of a bigger plan," Holcomb said. "You really start to focus on the real purpose of why you're here."

"Plus this helps to bring our church (Brookwood) together. People who don't come will bake food before we leave and other members will receive a prayer card and pray for our safety while were here."

Melanie Cannon, who just graduated from high school, said the trip has helped her to see a different side of the members of her congregation.

"Most of these people you only see at church when they are all dressed up," Cannon

said. "But here you see them in work clothes and you're able to call them by their first name."

Cannon, who made the trip with her parents, said she became interested in the building missionary by listening to other members talk about their experience.

But because of the groups' rules about taking only members who have graduated from high school this was her first opportunity to travel.

However, an exception has been made for 14-year-old Bobby Mike Michael who was making his third building missionary trip with his 85-year-old grandfather Bobby Kelly.

Kelly, who has been making building missionaries for 11 years, said the trip is a chance for him to spend some time with his grandson as well as receive a reward.

"A lot of people ask me why I would want to do this?" Kelly said. "But I tell them that what I do now is a payday in gold."

Although Carolyn Josey, Loretta Littlejohn, Dixie Hall and Wilma Guy don't do construction work at the site, they still receive rewards by preparing the meals each day for the workers.

Brookwood will bring most of its utensils with them they still have to buy most of their perishable foods in Nebraska.

For Monday's breakfast, the women cooked 162 scrambled eggs and over 250 strips of bacon. Also, the women have to be at the site by 4:30 every morning in order to have breakfast ready by 6:15 a.m., when the crew arrives.

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