



FOND MEMORIES

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CAMPFIRE
NEWSLETTER

There is something powerful to consider as one walks through the 'camp' at Dunklin. There is a beautiful story being written that began way back in 1962. The book is getting thicker and thicker as time passes by as it is filled with different characters and memories that bring glory to a God whom the story is really about. We are not put on this earth to do ordinary things; through Him and His Son, Jesus Christ, the extraordinary happens. As I ponder and consider what has been done and is continuing to be done here at Dunklin Memorial Church, the thought that overwhelms me is, "This is extraordinary."

Initially, when the pioneering began everyone lived in tents, campers, buses, or anything else they could find that was usable. Eventually, buildings were donated or built in time to help with the growth. The first two cottages that were bought from Ft. Pierce are still standing to this day. They were old tourist cottages and they ended up being the first home that Mickey and Laura Maye lived in, along with their boys (Clint, Dean, and David) sleeping in the one next to them. The first building was the old Indiantown bar. It was relocated, cleaned, and used for a kitchen, classroom, dining hall, and a church. The first office was an old farm labor house in Ft. Pierce that was relocated as well. This was eventually converted to a medical building and is still used for that purpose. And so, the stories continue – precious memories and people that have been involved over the years to make this place special.

I have been contemplating this as we have recently had to demolish a couple of structures that have been here for quite some time. It is difficult to topple something that carries so much history with it. Unfortunately, as the years go by, some of these buildings have disintegrated into being unusable and even dangerous. I realize that they are just 'wood and brick', but with each one comes unforgettable & meaningful moments.

The first one of these was 'Ms. Mary's house'; this is what it was affectionately called after her husband, Wilbur, died, leaving her and their daughter, Ms. Martha, living there. Many nights you could walk by and hear music and singing filling the environment from within that little house. There wasn't a more welcoming place to be. Their home was the heart of the camp, physically and spiritually. Our plans are to erect a memorial in its place that commemorates the 'Pioneers' and 'Builders', the first and second generations, that sacrificed so much in those early years.



The second structure that was necessary to tear down was our Main Office. This building was an old house that was on a shopping center site in Okeechobee. Mr. G.L. Royal donated this to us in 1972. Initially, it was utilized as our training and retreat center. Eventually, it became the hub of intake and our administrative offices. As this was tumbling down, I thought of all the people who have walked through the doors, receiving love and ministry from various staff members over the years. Through the front door was the very beginning of a new life as many were introduced to the person of Jesus Christ. This is where they first became aware of a hope and a future that was now possible for them.

Although it is difficult to remove such iconic and nostalgic buildings, it brings us great joy to consider the fact that we have now been given the privilege and responsibility to build new landmarks that highlight the rich history and inheritance we have been given. Some of the buildings may come down, but new ones will be built as we carry on the tradition and calling of ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ to drug addicts, alcoholics, and their families.

We are grateful that the Lord has brought all of us here for such a time as this. We will continue to build upon the sure foundation of Jesus Christ, being very careful to lay brick upon brick in a way that brings Him glory, honor, and praise. We will keep you updated as we are in the beginning phases now of having a new administration building erected. This will be another chapter written to the story that will be well documented for the purpose of passing on to the next generation the Lord’s goodness and faithfulness.

We will always remember that He is the One whom the story is being written about. He is the one who brought us out of slavery and has given us a place with houses that we did not build, wells we did not dig, and vineyards we did not plant. (Deuteronomy 6:11-12)

In gratitude and love,

Nick

