

# Baptist COURIERS FOR CHRIST

June 2024



Front row left to right: Dick Ives, Debbie Ives, Sue Goodrich, Diana Ardt, Larry Ingalls, Cheryl Ingalls, Jeff Shergalis, Grace Shergalis, Joshua Stertz, Kelli Stertz, Esther Meyer, John Meyer, Laura Stertz  
Center row left to right: Keith Sweitzer, Karen Sweitzer, Becky Pope, Brianna Auchmoody, Olivia Navratil, Jackson Johnson, Tricia Stertz, Ken Stertz, Ben Brandt, Vivian Brandt, DeRenda Rasmussen  
Back row left to right: Steve Banks, David Ingalls, Caleb Stertz, Wayne Crow, Amy Crow, Paula Roslansky, Don Stertz

## TOGETHER 4 Split

BY JOSH STERTZ

Thank you for praying for the Together 4 Split Scripture Distribution Campaign. Between April 29 and May 11, a team of 29 Americans from 10 different states joined missionaries Johnny and Tori Leslie in the city of Split, Croatia. Split is located on the coast and is an ancient city, founded around 250 BC by the Greeks. It is a city of high contrast, with a mix of historic Roman architecture adjacent to sleek modern buildings, and tall mountains sloping directly down to the Adriatic Sea. Of Split's 160,000 souls, most call themselves Catholic because being a Catholic is (to them) synonymous with being a Croatian.

After two days of travel, the CFC teams hit the streets on May 1. Missionary Johnny Leslie did a lot of preliminary work to divide up the city by districts and blocks so that each of the four teams could have a precise area to canvas. The goal was to place two items in each mailbox: a booklet containing the gospel of John/Letter to the Romans (John and Romans) and an invitation to a meeting where the gospel would be preached. Some groups spent much of their time on the streets offering literature to people who were walking by. Those of us from more "flat"



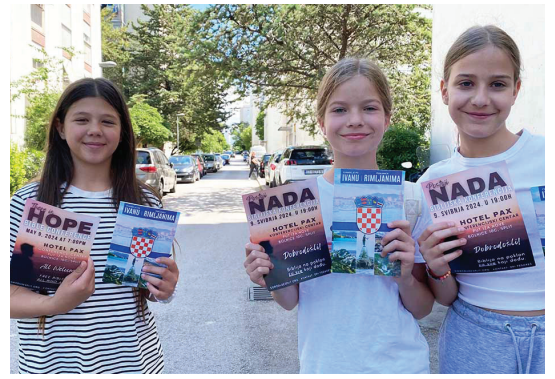
states (think Midwest) realized quickly that the hills of Split were going to be a challenge. Carrying 40 pounds of scripture on our backs while hiking up a steep gravel pathway required us to be VERY sure of our footing with each step. The older stairs and sidewalks could also be precarious. The narrow streets had cars parked on both sides with traffic taking turns from each end driving down the center. We all had to be extra careful not to get run over!!

God made up for those challenges by giving us open hands and open doors. Many of the apartments had open doors due to the beautiful weather, or the doors were already unlocked, allowing us access to the mailboxes. A majority of the citizens of Split were gracious and friendly, and we had very few negative experiences. By Thursday afternoon, May 9, we had handed out around 55,000 John and Romans and invitations.

An added blessing was working with several members from Anchor of the Soul Baptist Church. The Leslies planted that church in 2023, and they already have over a dozen regular attendees. For the last few days of the campaign, we were joined

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## Together 4 Split

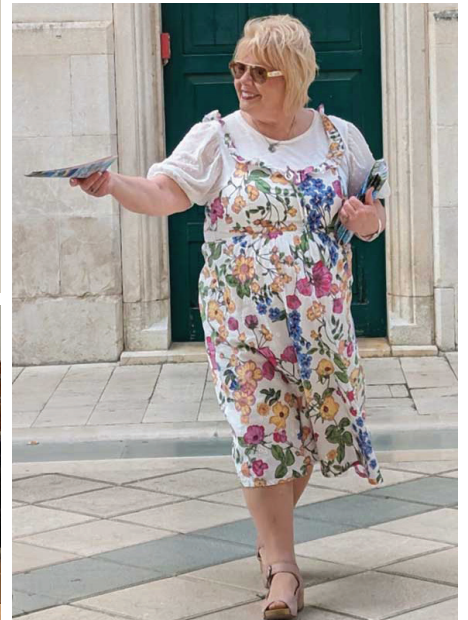
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by missionaries Jeff and Grace Shergalis (Bulgaria), Brad and Connie Lowrie (Zagreb, Croatia), and Matt and Kaylin Miller (Serbia). The fellowship was sweet as we worked side by side with one another--different in nationality, culture, and language, but united in the mission to reach Split for Christ.

The meeting was held on Thursday evening, May 9, at a conference hall in our hotel. Previously it was owned by a Catholic monastery, but that night the room was being used to lift up the name of Jesus Christ. About 50-55 people came to hear the message of hope. The American team, the church in Split, and the Lowrie family sang hymns. A man named Nanad gave his salvation testimony, and Brother Leslie preached from Genesis 4, about how there are only two religions. Man can try to come to God his own way (works), or through the sacrifice of the only pure Lamb of God. Five people raised their hands indicating that they knew they were not saved, and three left their seats to talk with an altar worker. Two of those received Christ as their Savior at the meeting. We gave away 42 Bibles and received 42 visitor cards, with multiple requests for more information.

Please pray for the Leslies as they host Bible studies on Tuesday evenings (late mornings in the United States). Also, pray for those that accepted Christ, for growth, and for those who are still waiting for more information to make a decision.

We could not have done this campaign without the prayers and support of our partner churches. Thank you for investing in souls in Croatia through Baptist Couriers for Christ!







# John and Esther Meyer Update

## *Tribute to Esther's Mom*

My mom, Lela Marie Nielsen Musgrave Adams Frantz, was truly a trophy of God's grace and mercy! She grew up in a broken and fractured home. Life was difficult for her, as she experienced feelings of being unloved and unwanted and also experienced abuse. However, through a series of divinely orchestrated events, she ended up in Bible college, where she finally was able to grasp the love God had for her. She received Jesus as her Savior and allowed God to transform her heart and life. She surrendered to God's will and walked daily, even moment by moment, with Jesus! Her love for her Lord and Savior and her desire to please him, increased her desire to share Jesus and his offer of forgiveness.



*Graduating college*



*Last Musgrave family photo 1991*

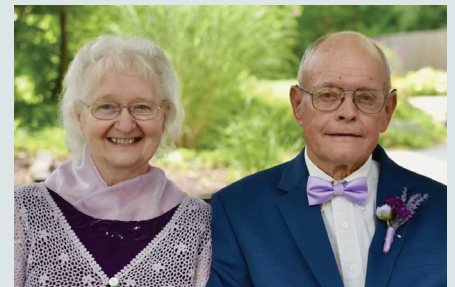
Lela married my dad Ronald "Keith" Musgrave at Eastside Baptist Church in Denver, Colorado, on November 27, 1970, and God blessed this union with five children. My dad passed away with cancer in 1993. Ten years later, Mom married Missionary Bob Adams, founder of Wings Bearing Precious Seed, whom we had known for many years. Brother Adams battled diabetes, heart issues, and dementia before he passed away in 2012. But God had more plans for Lela! In 2022 a dear friend called my mom and asked her if she would be interested in corresponding with a widowed gentleman in his church, Mr. Bob Frantz. My mom would soon be getting married for the third time!

Last July God placed a window of time in our schedule that we were not able to fill with meetings, as he had other work for us to do. What a privilege it was to spend that time with my mom and help her move! We used those weeks to help her pack, clear out her apartment, and load up some of her belongings in our vehicle to move her from Nebraska to Indiana. Right before the trip to Indiana, we had meetings in Kansas on Sunday, so on Monday we rushed off to Warsaw, Indiana. It was a whirlwind week as we had to figure out a plan of attack for all the details of the wedding, which took place on the morning of July 29. As soon as the bride and groom left after the wedding, we headed back to Kansas for a Sunday evening meeting! It was a week full of treasured memories.



*Mom and Brother Bob Adams*

Just a few months later on October 28, 2023, we were leaving Kentucky headed toward Butler, Pennsylvania, for a meeting, never dreaming of the life-altering day that it would become. Halfway to Butler, I received a call from my new step dad, saying that Mom had had an accident and had fallen down a set of pull-down attic stairs to the concrete garage floor. She was being life-flighted to the hospital in Fort Wayne. Not knowing the full extent of her injuries, we were counseled to continue to our meeting. However, the moment we pulled into the parking lot in Butler, my step dad called to tell me the doctor had said to call in the family. We immediately left Butler and raced towards Fort Wayne, grieving for my beautiful mother! Within 10 minutes of our reaching my mother's bedside, the physician turned off the machines keeping her alive. A group of family and friends gathered at her bedside along with John and me and sang "Face to Face" as Mom met Jesus face to face within a matter of seconds, never taking another breath on her own.



*Mom and Brother Bob Frantz*

Beyond the grief and heartache of losing my mom, my first best friend, my first thought was that I don't have my personal prayer warrior behind me anymore, and that thought crushed me. Mom was our greatest support in as many ways as she possibly could be and was excited for us to share the hope of Jesus in Eastern Europe and beyond, taking the gospel to places where she herself could not go. We have safely traveled thousands of miles due to our faithful prayer warrior partners--especially our mothers.

How blessed I am for my mom and dad's testimony, their example, their godly teaching of God's word, and their heart for souls. I can now be a part of reaching others, even other "Lelas," with the good news of Jesus Christ, giving them the opportunity to have the hope of heaven, just as I have that hope to see my parents again!



Part of the Split team with the Hotel Pax managers



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