

Baptist COURIERS FOR CHRIST

Divine Appointments



Divine appointments...we believe that God is sovereign and that he indeed is involved with the daily affairs of his creation—especially human beings. God is not willing that *any* should perish; therefore, many times he makes the impossible, possible. Our team members, the Meyers, had this happen during the last missions campaign to Split, Croatia, this past May.

“Please also pray for Misha. She is a young girl from Copenhagen, Denmark, that John and I met on our free day in Split. Unfortunately, all I was carrying with me that day were Croatian tracts. As God is in the business of miracles, he divinely changed our flights coming home. Instead of London, we were redirected to go through the airport in Copenhagen. Imagine my surprise when I met Misha again in the airport restroom!! I was able to locate a couple English tracts to give to her. She was eager to receive them and gave me a hug. I am very excited that I got to plant the seed of God’s word in Denmark, as my paternal great grandparents were from Copenhagen.”—Esther Meyer

As believers we need to look for those “divine appointments” that the Lord may bring our way on a daily basis. Only God knows how he can use a gospel tract, John and Romans, church invite, or a shared testimony of salvation to change someone’s life for eternity. Let’s commit to take any opportunity that we have to share the life-giving message of the gospel.

1 Thessalonians 2:4, “But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak....”

HISTORY Highlight

But he himself knew what he would do...

History Highlight Series

by Joshua Stertz

As I glanced over at the former NFL linebacker turned (by God’s leading) missionary holding both doors in a braced fashion, I noticed the panic flash in his eyes. I felt it myself too. How could this happen so quickly? One minute we were calmly inviting masses of Moldovans into the large hall for the evangelistic service, and the next we were having to bar the doors. The building had reached capacity so quickly. There were over 100 people already on the veranda just outside of the entry doors, and they wanted in! Even more were ascending the wide three-level steps toward the entrance. Those closest to the door were banging on the glass with the palms of their hands. As I looked through the windows while bracing a set of doors myself, I met the eyes of those people. Their eyes filled with longing to come inside and receive their free Bibles. But...what if someone picked up a brick or rock and threw it at the windows?

I had the privilege of taking part in my first Couriers for Christ scripture campaign in September 2003 to Chişinău, Moldova. We had a fairly small team, as far as CFC teams go, but we were joined by several Ukrainian Christians that had also participated in the previous CFC campaign.

Continued on inside page...



Continued from front page...

The reception of the locals was overwhelmingly positive to our daily distribution of John and Romans. It wasn't uncommon for us to distribute 15-20,000 John and Romans per day. I'm not sure if it was curiosity, genuine hunger, or the drawing of the



Holy Spirit, but by the midpoint of the campaign more than 100,000 booklets and invitations had been distributed. We were working with veteran missionaries Paul and Susan Hamilton and new missionaries (at that time) Clayton and Robyn McCurdy. Couriers had reserved a hall that would seat about 700 people for the

evangelistic service, but because of a double-booking glitch we were offered a larger hall that would seat about 1500. That seemed to be too large for our needs, but as the week progressed, we were distributing more scriptures than we had on previous campaigns. When the night of the meeting finally arrived, we were expecting great things.

I'll never forget what it was like standing at my post in the foyer watching dozens of people enter the building and distributing to them their visitors' cards. It seemed like the stream of folks, young and old alike, wasn't going to stop. About 20 minutes before the service was scheduled to start, I noticed some people coming back out of the hall, and I shouted over their heads to Sasha (a Ukrainian believer in town to help with outreach), "Sasha, please tell these people to stay in their seats! We need to get an accurate count on how many people are in the auditorium and make sure all open seats are filled!" Sasha yelled back over the hum of the crowd, "The main floor is full--these people don't have a place to sit!" I couldn't believe my ears--and then my eyes as I looked across the foyer and then through the glass to the grand staircase. I knew that there was overflow seating for about 200 in the upper balcony, but I was pretty sure that the number of people within view would bring that space to capacity in mere minutes. Beyond those in front of me, I could see more people getting off the buses as they arrived at the building. What were we going to do?

As expected, the balcony filled up quickly, and we were forced to close the doors. Missionary Paul Hamilton had played college football and was set to play linebacker for the Denver Broncos before the Lord worked on his heart to surrender to missions work. Paul ran over to lock one set of doors, and I took the other set. That moment of panic was real! The Lord often will bring us to the point where we don't have the answers, just the faith in him to know that he can do the impossible. John chapter six records the feeding of 5,000 men (plus women and children) with a sack lunch of only five loaves of bread and two small fishes. Before that lad comes up

to give his little to Jesus, the Lord asks Philip, "**Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?**" Aren't you glad that the Lord wants to use us, even in spite of our inadequacies? The passage goes on to say, "**And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.**" I am so glad that Jesus knows what he is going to do even before we know that there will be a problem or challenge. We must be willing to follow his leading in those seemingly impossible moments where we can't make sense of the situation.

I heard a voice behind me saying, "Let me out!" I thought to myself, "Who is asking to get out when all these people are trying to get in?" I looked back into the eyes of one of our Ukrainian brothers holding a concertina in his hands. He repeated, "Let me out!" I could see by the look in his eyes that he wasn't joking, nor was he afraid. I opened the door just far enough to let him through, and as he stepped over the threshold, he began to play soothing hymns. Unbeknownst to us, Missionary Richard Mayer felt led of the Lord to come from Ukraine for the night of the meeting to help with altar work following the preaching. He had gotten off the bus in front of the hall to see the crowd of several hundred folks on the steps in front of the building. He saw one of the Ukrainian brothers and asked, "Why isn't Brother Stertz letting these people in?" When he was told that the hall was full and that they weren't sure what to do next, he said, "Let's preach to these people right here on the steps!" Brother Mayer preached to nearly 300 people on the steps of the building while we set up the Bible tables in the vestibule from one set of doors to the other. At the close of his simple salvation message around 30 people raised their hands indicating that they had received Christ as Savior! Then we funneled all 300-plus people through our makeshift line to give them Bibles and send them home before the main service was finished.

"Let's preach to these people right here on the steps!"



Do we serve the same Lord as the one that stood on the hillside and fed thousands with a sack lunch? Absolutely. Even when we don't know what to do about the challenges we face, he always does, and his way is perfect. I have been blessed to witness some of his modern-day miracles including the night that we passed out over 2,000 Bibles at a hall in Moldova to a beyond-capacity crowd. That lad also experienced a miracle. Notice from our text that the lad was close to Jesus and made all that he possessed available to him. The Lord's plan for our lives is perfect because he *always* knows what he will do... "**Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.**" John 6:14

Don and Laura Stertz Update

In early January of 2024 (for the last time as director of Couriers for Christ), I conducted the 34th Annual CFC Banquet at a beautiful hall in the Oshkosh Convention Center. Kyle Stephens, pastor of Blessed Hope Baptist Church in Minnesota, graciously agreed to be our special speaker. It was a tremendous evening with delicious food, wonderful fellowship, and a fantastic challenge from God's word.

In the middle of January I took my bride of 50 years on a special trip, since this is the year of our golden anniversary. We had a marvelous time focusing on each other and the many years God has given us together. *(A party was given later on, photos and info to follow in next newsletter).*

February saw us in Alabama, Louisiana, northern Florida, and Indiana reconnecting with supporting churches to report, as well as getting the privilege to present the ministry in new churches. During that time I had the great opportunity of speaking for the first time at Indiana Baptist College to their student body (top right). There was a very good response from the young people, with many on the altar during the invitation.

Laura happily had her last cochlear implant follow up with the audiologist at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee. She got excellent scores on most of her hearing tests with the exception of fully understanding conversation well in noisy background settings. (We understand this is not unusual for cochlear implant wearers).

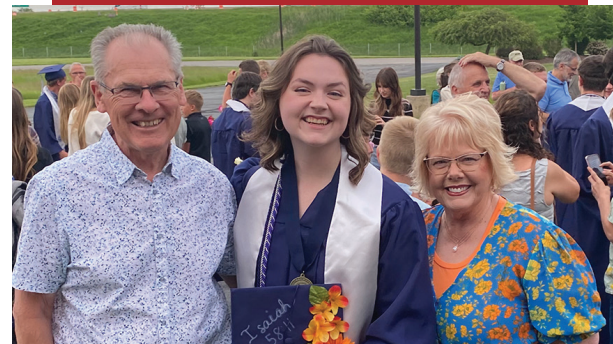
Resurrection Sunday began as any normal day for me. We went to an excellent service at Wyldewood Baptist Church, and then we took Josh's family out to dinner. Later that day I started having some pain in the lower right side of my back. The pain increased during the night, so the next morning we went to emergency. They discovered that a large kidney stone was lodged in the tube and needed to be surgically removed. The following day I had surgery to remove the stone, but on the table my heart rate skyrocketed. It ended up being quite serious, so I was put through a number of tests and required to wear a heart monitor for several weeks. The cardiologist prescribed a calcium blocker and blood thinner pills to regulate my heart. Praise the Lord I am doing fine now.

On April 14 we held the emotional Passing the Torch service at Wyldewood. Josh is doing a great job as the new director. Laura and I continue to represent the Couriers ministry in supporting churches, as well as in new churches. On April 29 we headed with the team to Split, Croatia, where I had the privilege of being a team leader and a driver. If you have never driven a nine passenger van on narrow European streets, I suggest that you don't try it. It's quite a challenge! The results of the campaign were written in a previous newsletter.

Our oldest granddaughter Claudia graduated from Christian high school in late May (her open house was in late June) with top honors, a scholarship, and several special awards. We rejoiced with her, continue to lift her up in prayer, and wish her well as the next chapter of her life unfolds.

June was a really tough month for Laura. Because of a pre-existing condition in her eyes called basement membrane dystrophy, and because she had tried a myriad of other things to help her, the eye doctor suggested keratomileusis (surgery to reshape the cornea). On June 3 she had the left eye done. The pain following was severe, and to top it off, she got a horrendous infection three days later in the eye. She was on antibiotics and steroids hourly for several days and then every two hours for several

Continued on back page...



Continued from inside page...

days to knock it out. She had lots of pain, and her sight in that eye was like looking through a dense fog! Garnering prayer from family and friends got her through it all, and now she is finally over the infection and is seeing very blurry images in that eye. She is on steroids twice a day for the rest of July and then once a day in the month of August. Please pray for the vision in that eye to return to normal and also that there would be no scarring.



Now at the writing of this we are in Kentucky and Ohio for a series of meetings. At the tail end of July we will be in northern Wisconsin churches.

As always we are most grateful for each of you and your support in prayer, finances, and encouragement along the way! We value you, our co-laborers, in this great work more than we can fully express! *-Ephesians 1:16-*



WYLDEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH
3030 Witzel Ave.
Oshkosh, WI 54904-6599
www.wyldeewood.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. Postage
PAID
Oshkosh, WI
Permit No. 441

DIRECTOR

Rev. Joshua Stertz

**FOUNDER/ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR**

Rev. Donald Stertz

REPRESENTATIVES

Rev. Kenneth Stertz

Rev. Larry Ingalls

Rev. John Meyer

Opposed to all forms of compromise and deviation from God's Word.



Please scan the code at left
to visit our ministry web pages
for more information.

A ministry of  *Wyldeewood Baptist Church*