

## Fall Banquet 2013 (New Fairview)

Good evening. Thank you very much for coming. We are so excited about what our great God is doing through this ministry. We are very intentional about saying it's not about us. It's God's ministry. He deserves the glory.

It's been a very interesting year with several opportunities brilliantly disguised as problems. We received a pair of opportunities at TA / Petro. Travel Centers of America (T/A) has been managing the Petro Stopping Center. For many years we had been allowed the privilege of having a small book / tract rack by the restaurant for the drivers. Over the years we distributed 1,000s of books, bibles and Christian literature from it. Last spring T/A embarked on a "decluttering" program. All literature racks, signage, etc. had to be removed. We were disappointed but prayed about it and pressed on. Scott Weidner with TFC has met with T/A corporate people about the problem. So far it has not been resolved. God however had an idea. I was sitting in the office one day when there was a knock on the door.

A gentlemen from NJ explained to me that he was interested in buying the CB shop in the Petro. He was here to look it over; did I think T/A would allow his wife to put Christian literature on their counter? I said, "Please sit down—I've got a story to tell you". I told him the story of T/A's decision to shut down our literature rack. I told him if he is renting the space from T/A I don't see how they can refuse to allow him to put literature on his counter.

Rick and Jane bought the CB shop. They have been distributing our bibles and NTs ever since. It is only a small fraction of what we used to distribute, but it is something.

The second opportunity we were presented with at T/A Petro was the visit of our division manager's boss. He saw our cookie trailer and immediately said, "That trailer can't be there." Also he said we cannot allow cookie distribution at the store or fuel island. He felt that there was a liability issue since our bakers do not list ingredients. If, heaven forbid, a driver were to have an allergic reaction they would be liable. In approx. 15 years of distribution there has never been an issue.

Local management has been very supportive, and we are going to have a cookie trailer. It will be parked on the grass behind our ministry trailer. There may be a few more issues in accessing it. We will have plenty of people to help you unload cookies. If it snows we will have a few more feet to shovel.

We may not be able to distribute at the store or fuel island, but there are plenty of other places to distribute.

Cookie season is right around the corner. Last year we distributed over 13,000 bags of cookies. They are distributed at three truck stops, appo. 15 motels, appo. 6 trucking terminals and three police stations. They are received with such enthusiasm. I call it "soft evangelism". Many times these guys and gals are far from home. They want to be home for the holidays. Then someone hands them a bag of cookies. Their first reaction is "How much?" When they understand that people are doing something nice for a driver and it's free it blows their mind. Often the bags have verses, cards, tracts or drawings which point them to "the reason for the season". Their hearts are open. You cooks have the opportunity to touch hearts for Jesus that many of us pastors would never have. I encourage you to get your young people, kids and older people involved in this exciting ministry. Many churches have their kids decorate the bags. They often get together at church to package the cookies. It's a unique way to foster community and touch hearts all at once. You all should have received complete details in our last mailing. If anyone has been missed, call me. We'll be happy to send you a copy of our 2013 "cookie poster".

It is incredible to me how God moves in spite of us—In spite of major corporations that try to hinder the distribution of His Word and His cookies. Please pray with us for a more permanent solution.

We are deeply grateful for the way God continues to touch lives at the truck stops. Allow me to tell you about some of them. Rose is an over-the-road truck driver who received the call none of us wants to get. The love of her life was cruelly snatched away in a tragic truck accident. In her grief Rose was frantically searching for a ministry trailer and a chaplain. She spotted ours and came in to find it empty. My phone rang and Rose said through tears, "Chaplain, are you coming in to the trailer today?" Thank God I was two minutes away. When I got there Rose was sobbing uncontrollably. For an hour I sat with her, prayed with her, got her some literature and just was with her.

After an hour she needed to check her Calcom in the truck. She called me later to say, "Chaplain, I would have made it if you hadn't been there; I have God; but it was such a comfort to have that time with you".

God wasn't through helping Rose. Later she went out to Flying J. God just happened to have a female driver parked next to her. She saw Rose was distressed and came over and spent some time with her.

Later Rose pulled into the T/A at exit 77 where God just happened to have the chaplain in

to comfort and minister to her.

Brothers and sisters, that's the God we serve. It is such an incredible privilege to be allowed to partner with Him in this ministry.

Some of you have heard the incredible story of Richard and Smokey. Please bear with me as I repeat it for those who haven't. I was called to transport a driver to the Carlisle Hospital. He was suffering from chest pains radiating to the back. I thought it was cardiac. I took Him to the ER and told him I would check with him later. They examined him and diagnosed kidney stones. They admitted him and scheduled surgery for the next day.

That evening before I left I stopped in to see Richard. As I was leaving he handed me a truck key and said, "I have a dog in the truck. Would you take care of him till I am released?"

I love dogs, but I said, "What if he won't let me into the truck?"

Richard said, "You just say, 'Smokey, sit!'". I found the truck, and as I was unlocking the door I heard a great growling and gnashing of teeth.

I assumed my best stance and said, "Smokey, sit!". Smokey looked at me like I had four eyes. I could see the wheels turning, like, "How does he know my name?"

After about five minutes of talking to him and allowing him to smell the back of my hand, Smokey decided it would be ok for me to let him down to do his potty thing.

I got him water and food and left. The next morning there was much less growling and teeth gnashing. By the third day Smokey and I were best buddies.

Richard had his surgery. I talked the patient advocate into allowing me to bring Smokey into the chapel. They brought Richard to the chapel where man and dog had a joyous visit.

On Thursday I brought Richard back to his truck. The plan was for Richard to recuperate till Monday. Then I would take him for a post-operative check, and he would resume driving. At 5am on Sunday morning Richard called to tell me he was being airlifted to Hershey Medical Center with a leaking aortic aneurysm.

He told me where he had put a key and asked me to take care of Smokey.

Richard had 12 hours of emergency thoracic surgery. He was in a drug-induced coma for appo. a week. I visited with his sister who came in from Maine. I picked up his daughter at HIA when she flew in from Florida. Richard improved enough to be released. Smokey went to Maine to be with Richard's sister. Richard went to Florida to recuperate.

I lost track of Richard for about three months. Then I got a telephone call. It was Richard. He said, "I'm sitting in front of your trailer. I'm driving my car to Maine to be reunited with Smokey and to live there. I'd really like to talk to you."

I rushed to the trailer, and during a delightful God-arranged visit I had the incredible joy of leading him to the Lord!

Our sovereign God had arranged for this hard-drinking party animal to be at Carlisle with a life-threatening illness. He allowed him to survive an operation where the fatality rate is normally well over 80%. Then three months later he led him to salvation. That's the kind of God you and I serve. That's the way He touches lives—Because people like you provide the resources to make it possible.

Jim and Sharon Maxwell's lives were also touched by our great God. I received a call from the general manager at Pilot / Flying J. He said the wife of a very sick driver had just contacted him to tell him her husband was very sick in his truck. He wondered if I could get him to the ER or urgent care center.

I called Sharon, assuming she was with her husband Jim in their truck. She said, "I'm in New Hampshire. Can you help us?" I asked her how I would find the truck.

She said, "It's an old purple Freightliner in the fourth row by the maintenance shop." I found the truck, pulled right up to it and got out. Jim was so sick that the effort of getting out of the truck and walking three steps to my car completely exhausted him.

They triaged him at the ER and put him in ICU on a ventilator. Sharon drove most of the night to be with him. Next morning the doctor told her he was shocked to see Jim was still alive. He fully expected him to die before he returned.

Jim was on the ventilator for 12 days. That's two days longer than they like to keep patients on ventilators.

They decided to take him off the ventilator and do a trache tube to help him breathe since he wasn't able to breathe on his own. God stepped in, and Jim began to breathe on his own when they removed the ventilator. The trache wasn't necessary. Jim still faced months of physical therapy. The tube had irritated his voice box, so he could not talk. He could hardly move his arms or legs.

After another week he was moved to an intensive care facility in Harrisburg. The plan was for him to begin intensive long-term physical therapy. They got Jim on his feet. He could make two steps before he was completely exhausted. Then God stepped in again. Two days after two steps exhausted him a jubilant Sharon called me to say, "Jim is walking the halls and steps. They are going to release him without physical therapy!" That's the kind of God we serve! During Jim's illness Barb and I were able to minister to the family. We had several meals together. We visited with Sharon and Jim many times in the hospital and the ICU center.

Another aspect of touching lives occurred during this time. Each year several seminary students visit with me for 10 days. The students are required to fulfill a cross-cultural experience in order to graduate. The students with me during Jim's illness were pastors from Chambersburg and Virginia. They assisted with visitation and ministry to the Maxwell family.

We received an email from Jim's brother. He said, "I'll never know how or why Chaplain Dan came to help my brother Jim. I understand that he saved his life. Words fail me to say thanks, but they are all I have. May God bless you."

Brothers and sisters, these exciting things are made possible because you provide the resources.

One morning I checked the donation box. There was a note which read something like this, "I'm at the end of my rope. My marriage is a shambles. God help me. -Frank"

A driver from South Carolina had signed the driver's log and left a phone number. The name was Frank, and assuming he was in South Carolina I dialed the number.

I told him I was the chaplain. I had gotten the note, and was he the right guy? He said he was. I asked how he was doing. He said, "Oh, I picked up a bible in your chapel. I started to read it (Genesis), and I'm feeling much better." I prayed with him and went back to work.

Two hours later there was a knock on the door. A driver came in and said, "Hi, I'm Frank." It went right over my head. I knew Frank was in South Carolina. After we had chatted a while he said, "I'm Frank from South Carolina. I was sitting next door in Love's parking lot when you called."

We had a great visit during which I was able to lead him to the Lord. What a divine appointment!

Recently I've been helping a driver whose daughter was tragically taken from him in an auto accident. I've been able to provide him transportation several times, pay to renew his phone and pray and talk with him.

Recently one of the fuel drivers asked if I have any camouflaged bibles. He wanted one for his son. I ordered a case and already have been able to give bibles to several of the fuel drivers who we see often. Let's pray that God opens hearts to salvation because of those bibles.

A significant opportunity for ministry occurred when one of the cashiers at one of the Hess Express stations was senselessly murdered last November. On the day of the shooting I was able to pray with a group of employees. Later I had times of ministry with several employees.

The manager is planning a "balloon release" this Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> and has asked me to attend and offer a prayer. We are grateful to be allowed to minister in the community like this.

We recently had new carpet installed in our office and chapel.

Frank Calaman did some repairs to the railings at our trailer.

The Love's truck stop has opened a tire and light maintenance shop.

There have been many improvements made at the T/A Petro. Paving, fencing, interior renovations are some of the improvements.

We are planning a spring banquet in 2014 on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The good folks at Newville CoB have agreed to host it again. We hope many of you can attend.

Some numbers from the first 8 months of the year may be of interest.

From Jan. to Aug. we:

distributed at least 335 books and bibles

...and 251 brochures and tracts.

27 people were helped with gas or food.

42 prison, hospital or convalescent home visits were made.

Significant visits were made with 174 drivers,

...487 staff people

...and 115 travelers.

5,127.2 miles were driven in ministry.

11 presentations of the ministry were made,

...and 29 meetings were attended.

These numbers speak of the many lives which were directly touched by the ministry. We estimate 3,000+ lives are impacted directly by the ministry each year.

We are profoundly grateful to God who gives us the resources, arranges the divine appointments and gives the power and words to say.

Thanks to all of you who pray for and support this vital ministry. Know that you can give with confidence that lives are being touched for Christ. We promise to be very careful in using the resources. May our great God and savior richly bless you.