

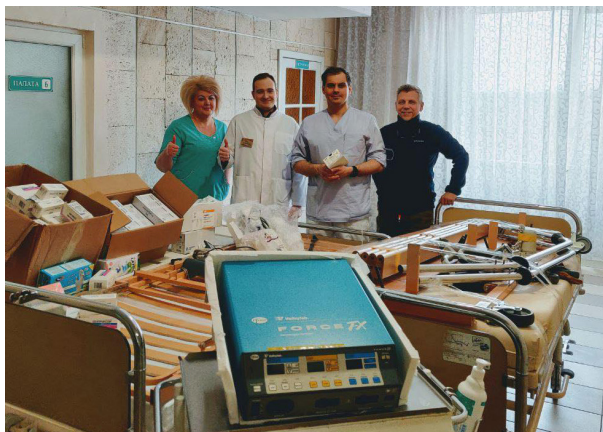
Covenant Stories

CELEBRATING GOD AT WORK

“The Pony Express”

by Anita Montgomery

Shortly after the war broke out in Ukraine last spring, I got a chance to see an example of how God “works all things together for good.” He used experiences and contacts in my life, some going back decades, to get people from various parts of the globe working together in order to get a badly- needed piece of medical equipment



to a hospital in Ukraine. Several of those people are members right here at Covenant (CCC). Here is the story.

As a member of the Missions Team, prior to the war I had been reading newsletters and blog posts from Zhenya and Liliya M., CCC missionaries in southwestern Ukraine. My husband and I had also had several video conversations with them through interpreters.

After the war started, I became Facebook friends with Liliya and learned of the need for an “electrocoagulation” machine at one of the hospitals in their city. Their only one had broken. Because of my work for various doctors’ offices over the years, I suspected that the correct translation was “electrocautery machine,” but I was not certain. An electrocautery machine is used in surgery to stop bleeding. It is a very important tool for a hospital to have, especially when treating casualties of war. God gave me a desire to help them get one.

Looking online I found that a used machine would cost several thousand dollars. Even if I were able to buy one, how would I get it there? I contacted a large Christian organization that was starting to send plane-loads of supplies to Ukraine. I quickly found that there was no way to cut through the red tape and get a machine exactly where I wanted it to go. So, I was getting discouraged. But God, who gave me this desire to help Zhenya and Liliya, had a plan.

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A few days later I received a call from Sandra Boules, another Missions Team member, asking about the machine and offering to help find one. I said, “First, let me text a doctor I used to work for to confirm that ‘electrocoagulation’ and ‘electrocautery’ are for sure the same thing.”

When I texted Dr. Mike McGee of the Otologic Medical Clinic, he replied, “Yes, they are, and I ‘happen’ to have a refurbished one here at my house. Would you like to have it?” He went on to explain that, several years ago, he had acquired two used machines donated by a local hospital. He had them refurbished and took one to Africa on one of his



The Machine

many medical mission trips. He thought he would eventually take the other one there as well, but an opportunity never arose. For years, only God had known that this donated electrocautery machine, idly sitting in a house in Oklahoma City, would one day be used to save the lives of many Ukrainians. Of course I said yes, and I could not get to his house fast enough!

Next came the problem of how to get this machine to Ukraine. It was heavy and included various accessories. Again, God had a plan.

Earlier that same day, I “happened” to talk with a sister of one of our other CCC missionaries who serves in another Eastern European country. She had mentioned that she was planning to go to Poland to work with Ukrainian refugees on the border. So, the next day I called her back. The sister, Lilly, lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She said she would be willing to take the machine as far as Krakow, Poland. However, she was going to be in California until a couple of days before the trip to Poland. She told me to ship the suitcase to her brother who also lives in Philadelphia.

Now the issue became what would happen to the suitcase once it got to Krakow. Enter Jeff and Carol Laughlin, longtime CCC missionaries to Eastern Europe. They put me in touch with Marek, a Cru missionary living in Krakow. Marek agreed to meet Lilly’s plane and get the suitcase across the border for pick up by Zhenya and Liliya.

Before sending the delicate machine to Lilly’s brother, it needed to be properly packed so it would ship without damage. God then prompted me to call on Geoff Jordan of Water Serve Foundation, Inc., another of our CCC missionaries, to help me with the shipping details. Geoff is also a member of the CCC Missions Team and has had a lot of experience shipping items overseas. He and his daughter Amanda not only went out and bought a suitable suitcase and packed the equipment properly,



The Packing

but Geoff also offered to include 20 of the Water Serve water filters in place of some of the packing material. Amanda completed the paperwork AND got us a discount on shipping costs to Philadelphia. We prayed the suitcase, wrapped in plastic wrap, would not be tampered with along the way.

When I contacted Liliya to ask if they could use some water filters, I was amazed to learn that their town had been without potable water for over two weeks due to the war. The Lord knew their needs, and it was for more than just an electrocautery machine. Those filters would come in very handy! Another example of how God goes before us to work things out according to His will.

So now the water filter instructions needed to be quickly translated into both Russian and Ukrainian. While the suitcase was in transit, Amanda contacted two other CCC missionaries, one of whom had lived in Russia for years. They arranged for the translations to be done quickly, and copies were then emailed to Liliya.

The suitcase was successfully shipped to Lilly's brother who made the transfer to Lilly. The airline waived the extra luggage fee, and Polish customs also waived their fee. Marek received the suitcase. I do not know the details, but Marek managed to transfer the suitcase to a church in Lviv, Ukraine where it sat for a period of time. Finally, it was loaded onto a semi-trailer filled with supplies headed to Zhenya and Liliya's city many miles away over dangerous war-torn roads.



The Handoff

At last, Zhenya and Liliya received the unopened suitcase. The water filters were distributed to those in need. Zhenya delivered the electrocautery machine to the hospital where they have been putting it to good use saving lives. (See top photo.)

Throughout all this, prayers were going up from the CCC Missions Team, Missions Prayer Team, elders and others, and God answered. Carol Laughlin remarked that it reminded her of the Pony Express, but it was all because God, in His plan, worked "everything together for good."



The Arrival

Ukraine Crisis Aid

In addition to the equipment in the story, thousands of dollars in humanitarian aid have been sent from Covenant Community Church to Ukrainian pastors, chaplains and missionaries. They, in turn, are delivering the Gospel along with food, medical supplies, transportation, etc., to people caught up in the tragedy unfolding in their country. Your gifts have allowed churches to feed and house citizens impacted by the war. Churches that before the war may have had 100 in attendance are today hosting 1,000 for services.

To send financial aid directly to our representatives on the ground in Ukraine, you can give a check to CCC marked “Ukraine” or online at <https://cccyukon.org/giving>; select “Ukraine.” The need and the opportunities are both great.

Join the Missions Team

If you have a heart for missions, please join our Missions Team. We meet by Zoom on the second Monday each month, except in December, at 6:30 p.m. We hear reports from our missionaries and make financial decisions on where to send the funds generously provided by Covenant Community Church contributors.

For example, during the height of the recent pandemic, we learned of a pastor in an Asian country who was feeding day laborers and their families. They were starving because they were not allowed to leave their homes to work. We joined him in his effort using your gifts. As a result, 25 new churches have been started, thousands have accepted Christ and been baptized, about 10,000 attended the Easter service and Bible college classes are filled with young believers.

If you are interested in joining the team, email Allen Boules at aboules@sbcglobal.net or Rick Moore, rdmoorf@gmail.com. If you would like to receive news and prayer requests from our missionaries as part of the Mission Prayer Team, email Wilma Schramm at wschramm@cox.net.