



DAVE KISTLER

### **Gifted for Service**

"A man's gift maketh room for him and bringeth him before great men."  
(Proverbs 18:16)

As some of you know, this past Friday, several of our H.O.P.E. Ministries team were in Washington, DC for two special events. On Friday (August 10) at 1:15pm, it was our privilege to lay a wreath, from H.O.P.E. Ministries, at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. The solemnity and sacredness of that event has to be experienced to be fully appreciated. Approximately 300 tourists witnessed our ceremony and a number asked for information on H.O.P.E. Ministries, one of whom was a family from Israel, who were significantly moved by the wreath presentation. It was an incredible experience for me, personally, and one that I'll NEVER forget. The entire ceremony was captured on video and should be posted on our website soon.

The second event that took us to DC was a meeting at the Chinese Embassy. An Embassy diplomat attended our DC Crusade in June and requested this meeting. Though we prayed for this to open a significant door of opportunity for us, never did we imagine what would happen. As soon as we arrived at the Embassy, we were escorted to a beautiful meeting room, complete with leather sofas and crystal drinking glasses. Our Embassy official friend immediately got right to the point. "I want to do something memorable for you, my new friends," he said. He went on to say that he was moved by the music and message he'd heard at our crusade and wanted to do three things for us.

1. Introduce us to the Embassy Cultural Secretary, so that H.O.P.E. might do a musical performance at the Chinese Embassy in Washington
2. Utilize his connections at the United Nations to pursue an identical musical presentation at the UN in New York
3. Invite us to Beijing, China for participation in the Chinese Music Festival (he wants us to do there exactly what we do at our crusades, as part of a cultural music exchange).

Needless to say, this was above and beyond anything that we imagined would happen. In the next several months, we will be working with our Embassy friend to facilitate preparations for these potential events. Pray that our Lord will allow this unique and unusual door to continue to swing open and that a strong gospel witness will be the result.

In the hours following our unique meeting at the Embassy, a verse from Proverbs kept ringing in my head. "A man's gift maketh room for him and bringeth him before great men." (18:16) I couldn't help but think of our H.O.P.E. Ministries team, all of whom have labored for years, perfecting their skills in their respective areas of expertise. From preaching to music, to audio/video all have worked tirelessly to be the most effective ministers of the gospel that they can be. Now, it seems, God is bringing them before those the world calls great. Faithful ministry on a smaller stage is resulting in opportunities on a larger one.

Permit me to make three observations about the unique gifts that God gives to each of us His children. First, we must PERCEIVE our gifts. That is, we must discover what it is that God has gifted us to do. One of the vital roles of a parent is to help our children discover the unique giftedness (talents) that they have been given. Proverbs 22:6, an often misunderstood verse, says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This verse is NOT a wholesale promise that a child, if taught correctly, will never stray. Rather, it is a vocational promise. It means that if you train a child in the "way he should go" (literally, "according to his/her bent"), when old, that child will still be in that way. For example, my wife's parents discerned early that Betsy had a unique giftedness in piano. They began to provide opportunities and training for her to go in the direction of her "bent" (the way she should go). It should be no surprise that she is still going in that way. Music, her particular "bent" is now her life and ministry. May God help us to discern our own gifts, as well as those of our children, and faithfully serve God in that/those areas.

Second, we must PERFECT our gifts. That is, we must cultivate and develop the gifts God has given. I heard it said once, "When character makes an appearance, it's often disguised as talent." God gives the natural talent, whether its music, sports, drama, preaching, teaching, etc. However, that talent has to be developed and perfected. Very few ever witnessed the long hours of free throw practice, jump shot practice, drills, etc. that characterized Michael Jordan's early basketball life. But, all of that, and more, preceded his hall of fame career. Yes, he had great talent. Yet, that talent had to be perfected by him and dedicated coaches who saw his raw talent. My wife's hard work with our children has been her labor of love to cultivate the gifts God has given each of them. It's been hard work, but it has been more than worth it and is now paying eternal dividends.

Last, God-given gifts must be PRACTICED. It is our privilege and responsibility to employ the abilities God graciously grants to us. David, as a shepherd boy, perfected his skills with a sling. Because he faithfully served in a realm where he went virtually unnoticed, God allowed him to stand on a stage where all noticed. He'd discovered his gifts and perfected them on lions and bears that came to destroy his father's flock. Because of his dedication and humility, God allowed him the privilege of employing (practicing) his craft as leader of a nation.

Dear friend, I trust that you have discovered what God wants, and has gifted, you to do. I pray you are perfecting those talents for future employment for the King of Kings. You never know what door of opportunity will open up for you to practice your craft in an influential place for the glory of our Savior.

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