
“All in God’s good time”

This part of the Adelphicare.org website is really for and by younger people. I would, however, like to contribute because I see value in providing some personal stories of older people that may help younger people during the development of their lives in Christ.

The purpose of this story is to try to indicate that if we place our trust in God, He will always look after us and do what’s right for us. However, when we ask for something, and believe were asking in faith and prayer, God does not always answer us immediately; but answer He will!

A prayer answered?

My story goes back to when I was about 18. I had just completed two years of training at Wagga Wagga Teachers’ College in New South Wales and had applied for a teaching appointment in Sydney, the place where I grew up. I had not long been baptised and I wanted to re-join the Sydney young people because I believed there was so much I could do in God’s service. So, I prayed earnestly that this would happen. Eventually a telegram (a kind of hand-delivered SMS!) arrived from the Department of Education which read something like this: “Commence duty 27 January as Teacher-in-Charge of Williford Creek public school. House rental is 30 shillings a week; kerosene lamps and well-water provided.” This was a total surprise to me. I had asked for Sydney and I couldn’t even find Williford Creek on the map! I thought that there must be some error so, I took a train to the centre of Sydney to go to the Department of Education, marched up to the public counter and asked the lady behind the counter, “Please could I see Mr Jones”. (He had signed the telegram.) She asked me what was about. I told her that there must have been some error and I would like my teaching appointment in Sydney. The lady smiled kindly at me and said, “I’m sorry, Mr Jones will not be able to see you as he is the Director General of Education, and you had best pack your bags for Williford Creek”. So, I descended the stairs again somewhat deflated. What had happened to my prayers? Why wasn’t I appointed back to Sydney?

Why?

So eventually I thought I had better try to find this Williford Creek. I climbed on board the steam train to the nearest railway station to my destination I could find. The only “official” way I could get to the school was in the mail delivery van which went there on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. I was there on Sunday. Monday, being Australia Day, was a public holiday so no mail delivery. I had to start work on Tuesday. Mmm. So, I made some enquiries and found out that there was a milk truck driver who took people out to the Creek occasionally. All I had to do was to get into the cabin of the truck at 4 AM and when the driver came out to drive the lorry out there to collect the milk, he would take me there. It didn’t cost anything, but truck driver’s compensation was his amusement at seeing me, a city slicker, trying to manhandle a 10 gallon can of milk!

Rejection

We eventually arrived at the Creek. He pulled up outside the post office which was the hub of the community and shouted out to the postmistress (who was known to everybody as ‘Aunty’) “What will I do with your school teacher?” Pause. “We haven’t got one!” “You have. He is here the truck with me!” Pause. “Take him up to the Jacksons”. So, we went, and a few more milk cans later, we

arrived at the Jacksons. The truck driver introduced Mr Jackson. He didn't really greet me but looked up and said, "Are you married?" No. "Well, we can't have you here. We asked for a married teacher. We will talk to the Inspector tomorrow and you can go back to town then." He invited me down to the house to have some breakfast.

Providence

We went down to breakfast and during the course of the conversation, and I can't remember how the topic came up but we started talking about religion. He asked me what religion I was. I said, "I'm a Christadelphian, you may not have heard of them." He just looked at me quietly and said, "My mother is a Christadelphian." So, we chatted on for a little bit. Eventually he and his wife went out into the kitchen while I was still eating my bacon and eggs. After a few minutes, they came back and he said, "Look this is just providence for us. God has brought you here to us; we wouldn't send you away. You're welcome to stop with us and teach here for the next 12 months." This was amazing because it was a complete change for them. For me? Of all the places I could have been sent, here I was in the middle of nowhere (literally) spending time with people who were very sympathetic to Christadelphians and their beliefs.

That commenced 12 months of what was a marvellous time as far as I was concerned. Mr Jackson was well-versed in Scripture. He had decided not to be baptised for his own personal reasons yet he knew so much Scripture I learnt an immense amount from him. During winter-time, for example, on Saturdays I used to go down to the hay shed with him to get some feed for the cattle. We used to sit down on hay bales and talk about prophecy for an hour or so. We worked out that over the 20 or so years he had been living on the farm there had always been somebody who was a Christadelphian calling in and seeing him and keeping in contact with him. He also used to get the Present-Day Events every month and that's one of the reasons he knew so much about prophecy.

I was appointed back to Sydney 12 months later and eventually Mr Jackson was baptised. He and his wife eventually sold the farm and they retired to the NSW coast and joined an ecclesia there.

Individuals – like you – matter to God!

There were a number of learning experiences for me here. Firstly, I felt honoured and privileged to think that God had chosen me to help this man in his development in the Gospel until he eventually become baptised. God looks after individuals and He was using me to help His purpose. We must never forget that if we place our trust and confidence in God he looks after us as individuals. He looked after Mr Jackson as an individual. It was so wonderful that he eventually became my brother.

A prayer answered!

From a personal level I learnt a salutary lesson – God will always answer prayer but, **in His good time!** He knew very well what I wanted to do but it was not His plan for me so I had to learn the lesson that I wasn't going to have it all in my own way. I spent 12 months helping in the sharing of the Gospel and learning a fantastic amount. For the young people reading this, please be aware that when we desperately want something, we must always recognise that the answer is according to God's will. Remember Jesus' prayer in the Garden just before his crucifixion?

God can answer prayer in three ways: **Yes; No; or Not yet!**

May God be with you in your life and help you to realise that if you place God first, He will always do the best thing for you, even if it's not the way you wanted to go initially.

Laurence Lepherd

(Names of people and places mentioned in the story have been changed.)
