

Chapter 20

“Yes, He Brought Me Through!”

Rarely have I enjoyed any project as I have enjoyed looking back over my long life and seeing how “*He brought me through!*” I am grateful to our two girls for insisting that I stay with the job, as well as to my wife for all her help.

When I think what a nasty little brat I was as I attended Chefoo schools, how few friends I had, and what pathetic grades I earned all the way through high school, I marvel that even God could use me at all in His service. No, I have no grand achievements to brag about; there are very few people in the world who have even heard of me, but I feel as though I am indeed one of the Lord’s spoiled children. Gradually it has dawned on me that in those early years God was preparing me patiently because He wanted to use me for a special purpose. And the way He prepared me was to use a whole host of people to whittle, cut, hammer, shape and stretch me so that He could use me in the small places He had in mind for me.

First of all of course I am deeply indebted to my parents who willingly gave of themselves to serve our Lord in inland China. Only in Heaven will I begin to understand all their sacrifice for my two younger brothers and me. And the way they gave themselves unstintingly for the Chinese in our part of China set an example of service it would be hard to match.

Travel to and from school demanded hospitality from a huge number of missionaries to whom I am in debt. I gave little thought to the sacrifices that some wonderful people made, who would have preferred to have a more glamorous field of service, but they took care of homes where we could spend a night or a week if necessary, and took care of all kinds of business for us. Then I think of the teachers and housekeepers at the Chefoo Schools. Looking back I wonder that some of them controlled the urge to murder some of us selfish, rambunctious, little

troublemakers. Some of those gifted men and women had earned highest honors from Oxford and Cambridge Universities. If they had chosen to stay in England they could have gone to the top of their fields, but instead they gave their lives for the sake of us youngsters. God used these and a huge number of different people to prepare me so that He could use me in the places where He planned for me to serve Him. I often think of the selfless lives of some of those who served in the China Inland Mission and marvel at their sacrificial work. I remember one man serving in the mountains of the southwest. When Standard Oil approached him offering a huge salary he turned them down. When they came again and again he turned them down because although his ”salary was miniscule, the job was terrific; he was serving the King of Kings; why would he want to change simply to make lots of money?”

When I moved away from China and found myself in Canada, I lived for the first month in the China Inland Mission home in Vancouver enjoying the gracious hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Judd, who demonstrated the love of Christ to a poor kid who knew nothing about how to live in the modern world. I learned basic lessons from them concerning how to go shopping and how to mow a lawn. From there I went to Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta, and there I saw hundreds of other young people who showed me how to serve the Lord in my daily life. I will never forget Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Murray and Miss Dorothy Ruth Miller. They taught me how to study, how to live, and how to serve the Lord. One lesson it took me several years to learn was how to look after the money the Lord supplied. It was because of the frugality of the management at Prairie that my first six months’ tuition and board came to ninety-eight dollars! The sacrificial life of the staff taught me the meaning of service. Indeed “*He brought me through!*”

For my “summer vacation” in 1936 while the Great Depression still reigned I hitchhiked from Prairie to St. Louis. As I look back I marvel at how the Lord had a job for me, through my father’s Uncle Tom, and I went to work for him. I didn’t begin to realize how the Lord was going a step ahead of me all the way, to prepare me for His service. Yes, the Lord planned every detail. He prepared Dad’s sister, Aunt Essie who ran a boarding house on McPherson Avenue, and that is where I stayed.

After graduating from Prairie in 1938, I found that the Lord had prepared a place in the beautiful Missouri Ozarks, where He used Watson and Mary Thornton and their family to teach me so many invaluable lessons. All this time I had no idea that the Lord was carefully preparing me for His service, nor did I recognize the tremendous self-sacrifice made by many of those whom the Lord chose to train me. In total I spent almost ten years at “Tadmor In The Wilderness,” and almost everyone I met there, it seems to me now, contributed significantly to my future service.

By far the most life-changing event in those Tadmor years was meeting the girl who would become my wife. I rejoiced as Psalm 68:6 was fulfilled in my life, “He sets the solitary in families.” Without Bernadine I cannot imagine what my life would have been. Not only was she the life-partner the Lord had planned for me; she also taught me so much that I had failed to learn because of my mixed up childhood. But giving her the proper credit would require a long book by itself. And the children the Lord gave us – there is no way I could express adequately my gratitude.

When World War II made it necessary for us to move to St. Louis for a few years, the Lord went ahead. While health problems kept me out of the army, the Lord provided people who gave me employment and guided me in many different ways. There was Clarence Burton who

helped me find a job at the Quick Meal plant. There was Sylvester Howie at American Thermometer Company, who trained me in carpentry work for six months, then plumbing for another six months and then electrical work for a third period of six months. Then Charles Mellis invited me into a group where we built some thirty or forty five-room houses, one of which would become our home for a year or two. I had no idea that the Lord was carefully preparing me for building work and remodeling in churches where He planned to place me later.

After the War, I spent four years as a camp director, where scores of young people made professions of faith in the Lord. When the time came for me to leave our beloved Camp Tadmor, I still had not learned to search carefully for the Lord’s will, and as a result I found myself taking my family to Canada to work for a crook! There our whole family went through considerable grief unnecessarily, but the Lord used my stubbornness to let me see close-up what it might mean to live outside God’s will, and He used a crook, Dr. George Martin, to teach me to look to Him before making any big decisions. Although I had gone completely outside God’s will, once again, ***“He brought me through!”***

Soon after that experience the Lord took us to McClure, Illinois, a difficult place where we had to learn to take the time to seek the Lord’s guidance. Then to Hillsdale, Oklahoma, where we found ourselves working with the greatest church we had ever known. When we left those wonderful folks, we knew we were not the same as when we arrived. They left an indelible impression on our lives, and we are deeply grateful for the experience.

What a contrast when we left Hillsdale and moved to St. Joseph, Missouri! We felt sure that the Lord was directing us to this desperately needy church, but when we started working there we found that the folks seemed to be playing church like little children. About twenty-five folks met in a dance hall that had been closed because of a murder committed there. The pastor

invited me to take over the work. I did not realize that most of the “congregation” consisted of his large extended family. Suddenly he left to start another church in town, and took his family with him. When the dust settled we found ourselves left with two great couples, Carl and Martha Marriott and Gene and Ona Lea Dewey. Our “church” now had to be supported by exactly two wage-earners. They were joined later by Ted and Ella May Heintz. The situation could not have been more unpromising, but these three families stuck together, and God blessed.

From the dance-hall we had to move, first into the basement of our home and later into a Union Hall, but those three couples stayed with us, and by the time we left St Joseph, the new Maranatha Bible Church with more than a hundred folks, met each week in a positively beautiful sanctuary. What a privilege we had as we worked with these three outstanding couples who served faithfully! Again, God used these faithful men and women to change us forever. And again, *He brought us through!*

In the next place we served, Woodstock Bible Church some sixty miles northwest of Chicago, we found a lovely group of keen Christians. Unfortunately one or two men who relished their authority dominated the leadership of the church at that time. Shortly after we arrived on the scene the church moved into in a fine new building. My son-in-law, Bill Daughaday, who served on the board of the church, developed an active evangelism team, and while the elders argued, we on the evangelism team worked hard reaching unsaved men, women and children. Our team spent time learning to evangelize, enjoying the fellowship of a team at work. We spent time together in prayer in order to do the job of making disciples, and were thrilled to see souls saved week by week. This was in many ways the most difficult church I have ever had to work with, yet we saw a large number of folks coming to the Lord in those difficult days. *Yes, He brought us through!*

When we moved to Carlsbad with the goal of reopening a closed church, it proved to be extremely difficult. Starting with an almost empty church building lacked the drama of work such as we enjoyed in Hillsdale, or the challenge of leading the Maranatha folks from a condemned dance hall into their own lovely building. We did not find anything like the brutal warfare we faced in Woodstock, yet we met a stubborn resistance that we were unable to overcome. We thank the Lord for souls that came to Him and for the believers we were able to help along the way.

The time came when we found the Lord leading us out of the Bible Church, and for the past few years we have met with the folks at Carlsbad’s First Baptist Church. Here both of us have found places of service and have made many friends. Age-related physical problems have now forced me to give up some of the opportunities I greatly enjoyed, but the Lord has opened doors.

A phrase from the King James Version, often repeated in the earlier books of the Bible, comes to mind: **“Full of Days”**. Indeed our lives have been full of great days! Yes, even in retirement years we are so grateful to our wonderful Lord, for indeed:

“He brought us through!”

[go to next Chapter](#)