

Chapter 21

The Lord Again Sends Rescue

To many people the location where we proposed to establish our church was the most unlikely that could be imagined. When we had opened the original work, renting space in a small brick building never intended or designed for such activity, there was not too much criticism because we were fortunate enough to find room of any kind, anywhere with our small resources. None of us dared to take a long range view that would include concern for a permanent location.

But as the work grew and more and more people visited the little mission, nearly everyone would make the same inquiry: "Why in the world are you located way out here in the sticks? Is this the best location you could find?" When it was proposed that we not only remain here, but actually expand on the spot the questionings, doubts, and criticism were redoubled.

Actually one could not blame them. We were within a half-mile of the city limits. The territory all around us was unsettled - nothing but bleak commons. It was truly the end of nowhere, without bus or street-car facilities. We were on a street that was practically deserted except for the Deaf and Dumb Institute, which at the time was nothing but a two-story brick home and few other small dwellings. One could hardly imagine a less reasonable place to establish a church which should demand an atmosphere of activity and some degree of population.

But we knew from the beginning our field of endeavor for God, so the answer to all questionings and ridicule was, "God knows His business." We knew that God had placed us where we were. So naturally, when our generous friend offered to purchase the lots for us, we were convinced that God had not changed His mind and must have reserved some property for us near the old building for erection of the new.

On the day we had planned to search for property, Mr. Ed said, "I will go with you." He was very tender, sweet, and solicitous - a miraculous change from the stern, gruff, serious business man I had met that first day when God had guided me steps to his office. Just as I had hoped and expected, we found lots right next to our present location for a reasonable price, and Mr. Ed purchased two of them. Thus, with a

new building, the property on which to erect it, and a congregation, it would surely seem that our immediate troubles were over, and we were on that easy road to expansion. However, we have always found there is no royal road to success.

During that very week, my husband came down with double lobar pneumonia and was almost at death's door. Instead of the normal crisis usually experienced with this illness, it went on and on. When he had lain in a state of unconsciousness for a long period of time, the doctor reluctantly told me there was no chance of his recovery since he had an enlarged heart with fluid and pleurisy. It would be only a matter of days as his heart was growing weaker all the time. He had wasted away to a virtual skeleton with fever.

It seems that troubles never come singly. There was no pay coming into our house, and the church was as yet unable to do anything financially for me. We had to buy oxygen by the tank for my husband's treatment, and we had completely run out of funds. Then in the midst of this dilemma, I received a telephone call from the lumberyard telling me that a large shipment of lumber was coming in that day and they needed space for it. Our new little church would have to be moved off their property immediately. They said they could not understand the delay in moving the building, and they felt they had gone as far as they could go in storing it for us. I had previously made inquiry about the cost to transport the building across the city to our lots. The best price I had been able to get was \$300 cash. I did not have 300 cents. My husband was lying at home at death's door. The building had to be moved that day. The problem seemed almost more than I could bear. So, I did what I always did when faced with a seemingly insoluble problem, I went into my bedroom and knelt down before God and prayed.

It was a very strange prayer. I said, in effect: "Lord, it is your fault that we have the building; and it is your fault that we have the lots, and it is up to you what you're going to do with it from here out." I did not say this in any spirit of bitterness or resentment, but I am sure that it rose up to the ears of God as despair and desolation for surely I was at the end of myself. In addition to all the other complications, my daughter was ready to graduate from the 8th grade and needed the things that every little girl needs when she graduates. Perhaps this was a minor matter when compared with the more important difficulties, but as a mother it struck close to my heart and made me even more depressed.

There was nothing “to do” with, and the entire situation seemed more than hopeless.

After I had cried my heart out before God, Ollie, a little orphan girl who had lived with us for eleven years, came to my door and said, “Mother, there are two gentlemen at the door to see you.”

I shook my head and replied, “Ollie, you will have to take care of them yourself, for my eyes are all swollen, my nose is red, and I am in no condition to receive anyone just now.”

She left, and in a few minutes returned and said, “I got rid of one of them, but the other insists upon seeing you.”

So, I dried my eyes and came out, very embarrassed, to meet a man I could not remember ever having seen in my life.

He said: “I beg your pardon, but I was in prayer this morning. God made me to know you are in need of some money, so I brought it to you, and here it is.”

And with that, he laid in my hands six fifty-dollar bills. I was thunderstruck and awed. Though my prayers to God in all sorts of difficult situations had always been answered, never before had they been answered so promptly or so directly. When I saw the hand of God, a perfect confirmation of that which He had called me to do, I was strengthened in heart, in mind, and in purpose to go all the way my Savior would lead me.

I thanked the gentleman as best I could, but words were too little for the great help he had given us through God’s direction. I don’t think he fully realized what a messenger and angel of mercy he was in the hands of God. Before he left, he told me he had been healed of arthritis and tuberculosis while just sitting in a meeting in our church. He said he felt so honored that God used him to help one of His servants.

I lost no time in calling the lumberyard to order the building moved. So it was that almost overnight our neighbors saw the church grow up like a mushroom. The expansion work that was the Bethesda Missionary Tabernacle was on its way to becoming the Bethesda Missionary Temple - the great armory of God in this manufacturing city of Detroit.

God again had sent rescue in time of disaster. We all felt strengthened, refreshed, and resolute in the happy task of performing His work.