

Chapter 4

God Plans My Training for the Future

In my early twenties, having made a success of my business life in my home town, I experienced the urge to enter a larger arena of action. I felt I had something to sell that the world wanted, and in a city the size of Cleveland my opportunities would be greatly expanded. Accordingly, I made the journey to the “pulse of the Middle West.”

I was in Cleveland only one month when I was offered a position to assist the buyer of ladies’ wear in its largest department store. But God, who was ordering my life, decreed otherwise. I had neither relatives nor friends in Cleveland, and I was persuaded by a loved one to go to the city of Detroit where I could be near my brother, Jack, my only relative in that city.

Although I did not realize it, it was in Detroit that God would begin my training for the ministry – that difficult combination of spiritual, humane, and practical activities so vitally necessary for doing His work upon earth among men. I began work in the welfare department of a large business concern, the Champion Sparkplug Company, and also helped in first-aid work. God blessed my efforts and soon I was invited to work in the pay office and take charge of the payroll. Thus, step by step, Providence led me along the path to His work: training in meeting the public, in filling the spiritual and corporal needs of people in welfare and first-aid work, and finally in the administration of finances. As I look back, I can see the heavenly blueprint in action, and I thank God for this invaluable preparation for His work.

It was while working in the pay office that I met Harry Lee Beall. Happy and fun-loving as I had always been, I had many male admirers and was, in fact, even at the point of accepting an engagement ring. But when it came to actually marrying, I was not truly interested until I met Harry Beall.

One day a little Southern girl in my office remarked with enthusiasm: “Say, have you met Mr. Beall? He has just returned from the service and is he nice!” With some amusement at her remark, I replied that I had not met the gentleman. Nothing would do for her except to bring Mr. Beall to the pay office window right then and there

to meet me. After I saw and spoke to him, I was constrained to say to myself, "Well, he is nice."

Harry was a department foreman, and it was surprising how frequently he found it necessary to call at the pay office window to discuss imaginary payroll discrepancies connected with his department. Strangely, amid the banter and conversational exploration of each other's tastes and backgrounds so eternally characteristic of a young man and woman in such a situation, I could not help but sense that our lives had crossed paths to a more serious purpose. And, it seemed that he knew it, too. I am convinced that we cared for each other from the very start.

But an age-old and seemingly insurmountable barrier was interposed between us. We were of different faiths, and each confirmed in the belief that ours was the right way. I had been raised in Catholicism, and Harry was a Protestant and a Mason. Neither of us could imagine for a moment the possibility of adopting the other's faith in marriage. We both suffered much, not knowing what to do. One moment we would decide we must stop seeing each other, the next we knew we could not bear the idea of separation.

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One Sunday we were invited for dinner at the home of friends and co-workers. While we were sitting in the living room waiting for dinner to be served, I idly picked up a little black book, being an inveterate lover of reading. Upon opening it at random, I discovered it was a small Bible.

I was, like most Catholics, not intimately acquainted with Bibles. Catholics are not encouraged to read and literally interpret the Bible, so my knowledge of Scripture had only been gleaned through a Bible history class and official ecclesiastical interpretations of the Holy Book. Actually, at this time I had never before had a Bible in my hand, so naturally I was not prepared for its contents. Having opened it at random, I found that the page was one in the book of Ruth. The heading at the top of the page held no significance for me, but I have realized since that God must have guided my idle fingers as I turned to this page.

It must be remembered that Harry and I were sitting in this house at a time in our lives during which we were in a terrible quandary about how to reconcile our feeling for each other with the inescapable fact of

the difference in our beliefs. It seemed that help and guidance would never be forthcoming. Now, having cast my eyes curiously at the printed page to which I had turned, I read the following:

“Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God...where thou diest will I die and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.”
(*Ruth 1:16-17*)

These brave, eternal, and uncompromising words engraved themselves upon my mind and heart so immediately and so deeply that they became a very part of me throughout that whole day and evening. I kept going over them, going over the resounding parade of the immortal words of those verses: “thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God, where thou diest, I will die and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee me.”

I did not know then the power of the Word. I did not know, as I later found when the Bible became my constant companion and guide, that in another part of the book these words are written:

“For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (*Hebrews 4:12*)

God had indeed discerned the very intents of my heart, and in His unerring wisdom deigned to reveal to me the answer to my problem. The confusion, bewilderment, and troubled sorrow of the past many months were dispelled in a moment of revelation of His holy words. It was as though a heavy cloud were lifted from the face of the sun, and I could see my path clear and straight before me. I greeted it with joy and resolution.

That evening, when Harry escorted me home to my brother's house where I was living, he again asked as he had so hopelessly done many times before, if I would marry him. Much to his astonishment and

gratification, as well as to my own, the words tumbled out that had been echoing in my mind all day:

“Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God;
and the Lord do thus to me and more also, if aught but
death ever separate thee and me.”

So we were engaged, and then married in the sight of God on June 15, 1920 in the Methodist Episcopal Church on Woodward Avenue at Grand Circus Park in the city of Detroit, Michigan.



Methodist Episcopal Church
Now known as the Central United Methodist Church