God Calling!

Romans 8:28

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.
He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm.

—William Cowper
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God Calling!

Where is God? Job once asked that question when his life had been shattered into a million pieces. Job was the most righteous and godly man on planet earth.

God said so. Yet, in a matter of months, his children are dead, his financial assets are decimated, his wife is distraught, and finally his health fails. He has literally fallen from riches to rags. His friends condemned him. His character is attacked. Job could not understand why God did not come to his rescue or why the Redeemer seemingly was far away.

Job pleaded, “Oh that I knew where I might find him” (Job 23:3). However, Job knew that somewhere out there, somewhere in the darkness, the eyes of God were watching and loving.

God was working out a plan and it would all become plain in due time. Job said, “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

On July 7, 1851, ten years before the Civil War, a slave couple Charles and Hester Tindley in Berlin, Maryland, gave birth to a son and named him Charles. That son in adult years recalled scenes of slavery and hardship. From those dark and dreary years, Charles Albert Tindley put in verse the striking words below.

Trials dark on every hand,  
And we cannot understand,  
All the ways that God would lead us  
To that blessed Promised Land;  
But He’ll guide us with his eye,  
And we’ll follow till we die,  
For we’ll understand it better by and by.  
...And we wonder why the test  
When we try to do our best.  
But we’ll understand it better by and by.

Charles Tindley’s song expresses faith in the loving providence of God. This is so unlike some people in today’s world who ignore and neglect God every day of their lives. Then when trouble comes, they quickly turn on Him with. “If God is a God of love, why would He allow bad things to happen?” The truth is that no one deserves anything but judgment and hell. It is because of sin that our world is cursed.

There is no reason why God should ever look with favor on this humanity. Yet, He does. Still He pleads, “Come unto ME.” In Revelation 3:20 He calls, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him.” Man rejected God in the beginning and the only alternative was a cursed earth. Even so, throughout the ages of chaos, God could be seen moving and working out His planned redemption to bring fallen man BACK.

Job recognized that all the tragedy and darkness was allowed by God. All of that was, in reality, God Calling. God was not pleased with Satan’s attack on Job or of those of his fickle friends, but even before the words were written, God was working all things together for good in Job’s life. Through the darkness and gloom, Job knew that He was there—that it was GOD CALLING.

Our world staggers in spiritual darkness. Could it be that God is allowing the present darkness that has descended on the whole earth to Get the world’s attention?

Dear Reader, is it possible that your present darkness just might be in your life...
Some days are unforgettable and embedded in our hearts forever. My wife, Frankie, and I were driving from Germany to a missions revival in the Netherlands. As we made our way through Holland, a man in a car behind us flashed his lights, indicating for us to pull over. We had German plates on our car, so he told us in German that our brake lights were not working.

I thanked him in English and he told me that they loved Americans. As a child, he stood holding hands with his family as they looked up in the sky and they promised not to ever forget what the Americans did for them. He asked me to follow him to an Opel G.M. dealer where my car could be repaired.

When we arrived at the dealership, he translated for me. Before he left, he told me again that as a child, he stood with his family, looking up into the sky and they pledged that they would never forget what America was doing for them. Waiting for the repair, my newfound friend continued to express gratitude to me for what my country had done for him and his people in one of their darkest hours.

Although I had heard of the horrible Nazi occupation of Europe, my newfound friend’s story personalized it. Later, studying the events of the war in Holland, I understood more what had so impacted this man as a child.
Around the end of World War II by the third week of April 1945, the Russian army was hammering its way through the suburbs of Berlin. With the German capital doomed, the American and British air forces ended offensive combat operations in Europe. There was simply nothing of importance left to bomb.

One nation still suffered under German occupation. The Netherlands had been under the German’s harsh control since May 1940. In western Holland, the German command stubbornly held on, waiting for word from Berlin.

These German ground forces were a deadly curse on the Dutch people. The Dutch people were resisting the enemy occupation and Holland’s underground forces blew up bridges and railroads. The Germans retaliated by blowing up dams and flooding most of the farmland.

Dutch workers went on strike and then came the cruel winter of 1944. No fuel and no food! By spring, 1,000 people a day were starving to death. Famished people and hollow-eyed young girls and boys searched in bins and gutters for anything edible with food value. It is documented that from October 1944 until early 1945, starvation claimed the lives of 20 to 30,000 people. Hunger ravished the Netherlands.

General Eisenhower heard through the underground about their crises and negotiated with the Germans in Holland for food drops. Amazingly, the Germans agreed that Allied bombers would not be fired upon as long as they were unarmed and stuck to specified air corridors.

Drop zones were set up where the bombers would be allowed to fly in at about 400 feet and drop the food without being fired on by the German anti-aircraft guns. A total of 3,100 flights were made by four hundred B-17 Flying Fortress bombers of the United States Army Air Forces. RAF and Canadian planes also participated dropping tons of food.

The BBC broadcast, reaching into Holland, gave the news of the coming missions of mercy known as Operation Manna. Operation Manna was the codename for the bread that rained down from heaven onto the Israelites in the Book of Exodus.

Hollanders were lined up along the streets waving and cheering
the unbelievable scene before their eyes of American and British planes. They waved with anything they had, even with sheets. People were everywhere—leaning out of windows, on balconies of windmills, and in the street hailing the incoming planes. Airmen reported that it was an incredible scene.

The Americans could not hear them above the noise of the B-17 engines, but what they could see stirred their hearts—thousands of starving people lined up, weeping and waving. With white sheets they spelled out “Thanks, Yanks.” Along all the drop zones it was the same. They spelled out “Thank You” with Holland’s famous tulips.

The Americans could see the grateful, hungry people waiting for the life-saving food. Little children darted between occupying German soldiers to gather food parcels. That day the men, women, and children vowed never to forget the Americans.

When my car was repaired, I discovered that the man had paid my bill before he left.

He told me, “We were determined that we would never forget the Americans.” We left the dealership that day with his words embedded in our hearts. We too...will never forget...

...a stranger who made our day!

I Walked a Mile with Pleasure

I walked a mile with Pleasure;
She chatted all the way;
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.
I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And ne'er a word said she;
But, oh! The things I learned from her,
When Sorrow walked with me.

— Robert Browning Hamilton

I assure you that Dr. Ray’s book will lead to a better understanding of the subject of death and will give an assured peace to sincere but troubled hearts. Read thoughtfully and then share with others the message of Christ who said, “I am the resurrection, and the life.”

— Lee Roberson

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Czechoslovakia was ruled by a communist regime after World War II. In 1989, the Velvet Revolution or the “Gentle Revolution” threw out the Communists and reestablished democracy. Protestors assembled in Prague numbered into the hundreds of thousands. The communist leaders resigned. Due to the weakness and turmoil in the USSR, it was accomplished without violence or bloodshed. In June 1990, Czechoslovakia held its first democratic elections since 1946. Czechoslovakia was free!

Historically, the region now known as Czech Republic was once part of the Austrian Empire and the Slovak area was a part of the Kingdom of Hungary. In 1993, to resolve conflict between these two main groups, the country divided and formed the Czech and the Slovak Republics.

The population of Slovakia is 5.4 million. The country is in need of the Gospel as it finds its way and refines its identity. Pray for missionaries to be called of God to Slovakia. Local churches are needed. Christian resources are limited with most of the Christian literature being available in the Czech language but not in Slovak. Slovak is the official language and is spoken by more than 80 percent of the population. The Bible or parts of the Bible have been around since the first printing in Slovak in the 15th century. Today, there is a need to distribute Scripture to the general population.

Prayer Request: Pray that God will call missionary couples to Slovakia. Pray that the Bible might be distributed to these people so long in darkness.

For more information on Slovakia, contact Ed Hembree, BIMI Director for Europe. Speak with him at BIMI 423-344-5050.
Reverend Wayne Zimmermann has led Life Gate Baptist for over 40 years as pastor. To help celebrate the occasion of the church's 50th Anniversary, James Ray, founding pastor, was invited to speak. A great weekend of activities was planned at the church. However, James Ray and his wife, Mary, were not able to be present due to the restrictions placed on the country with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pastor Zimmermann led a beautiful online service on Sunday, April 12. He cited past pastors, including Glen Weeks, Clyde Simpson, and Robert Meyer. He read letters of greetings, including a letter from the Rays.

James Ray recounted early events and experiences of the founding of the church in 1970. He praised the believers who in the early days formed the foundation of the church as well as those whom God had brought into the work in the years following. The city of Brisbane
Dear Pastor Zimmermann:

It is with great pleasure that I offer my warm congratulations to Life Gate Baptist Church on reaching your 50th Anniversary. This is a significant achievement for any organization given the many changes that have occurred over time in our community. Since its establishment, the Life Gate Baptist Church continues to serve and spiritually nourish the people of Mount Gravatt and surrounding areas.

I am particularly appreciative of Life Gate Baptist Church for the important role it played in the life of my own family and my early life as an infant. I have enclosed a copy of the photograph which shows my dedication ceremony at the church in 1977.

As Lord Mayor, I commend you all for the invaluable support and service the Life Gate Baptist Church continues to provide for the community and I again congratulate you on this significant milestone. Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours Sincerely,

Adrian Schrinner
God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.
He plants His footsteps in the sea
and rides upon the storm.

—William Cowper
Take away the modern signs, replace the road paving with cobblestone and the cars with carriages... and you have left a village as it was 300 years ago.

I love Olney. This little village in central England is perhaps one of this writer’s favorite places in the world. Olney offers the atmosphere of old England. I love to go there. There in the middle of the village is a beautiful little park right across from the Cowper home. Sitting there on one of the park benches, I gaze at the old home place of William Cowper, the famous poet and writer of hymns.

There it seems I return to an era long gone. There I can almost hear the beat of the horses’ hoofs as they pull the carriages along the cobblestones. When I sit there, the noisy world of the 21st century with its information overload and avalanche of violence and moral decay disappears into a world where men still wrote and thought and believed.

Olney brings me back to the Christ of “Amazing Grace” and the holiness of God. Again I walk with men who wrote mighty hymns exalting God in contrast with today’s empty religious lyrics. William Cowper was perhaps the greatest poet and writer of hymns who ever lived. If not that, he surely takes his place in line with the Wesleys, Isaac Watts, and Fanny Crosby. Unlike the shallowness of most of today’s writers, Cowper’s hymns strike deep into the soul with a divine message from God.

When William Cowper was two days away from his sixth birthday, his mother, Ann Donne, died. Her death profoundly affected the young child. The weeping child heard the tolling of the church bells announcing the funeral of his mother. Looking out the window, he watched the black horse-drawn hearse slowly move from the house, carrying his mother to the grave.

Young William waved goodbye to the one he loved most and wondered where she had gone. Would he ever see her again? This tragedy affected William Cowper for life. His poetry reflected the impact of this sorrowful loss of his mother.

“I heard the bell toll’d on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse, that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nurs’ry window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!”

At night William missed the tender touch of his mother. Remembering his pain and her sweetness, he wrote: “Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou mightest know me safe and warmly laid.”

Sixty-three years later when William Cowper was sixty-nine years old, he received a picture of his
mother from a cousin in Norfolk. Memories flooded his mind. The years had been traumatic and threatening. His mind wandered back to the only time in his life that he had known complete safety.

He studied the picture of his forever-young mother. He mediated on every feature of her face—loving her, adoring her, and remembering the gentle touch of so long ago.

Soon after his mother’s death, Cowper was sent to a boarding school in the nearby village of Market Street. The little boy, grappling with the death of his mother, now had to experience the absence of his father in a strange place. One of the older boys bullied young William into a complete state of terror. Years later, William recalled the experience in complete detail.

Cowper later attended Westminster, then one of the foremost public schools in England. Here he excelled in the classics and general academics. When he left Westminster, he could write as easily in Latin as he could in English.

At eighteen Cowper became the apprentice to an attorney and in 1754 was called to the Bar. Two years later he was appointed to the post of Commissioner of Bankrupts with a salary of £60 a year.

That lifestyle came to an abrupt end in 1763 when Cowper was 32 years old. There is no clear explanation as to what happened to Cowper’s health in 1763. He became very melancholic and at times greatly depressed. Some writers have suggested that he could not stand the pressures of his law profession. Many causes have been suggested such as psychological, religious, neurological, physiological, and even nutritional. No one can speak with absolute certainty.

Modern terminology would describe Cowper’s dilemma as a “complete nervous breakdown.” Underneath the happy, carefree face of William Cowper was a storm ready to break. The breaking point came when he faced an examination before a public panel as a candidate for the Clerkship of the Journals for the House of Lords.

The examination loomed over him like the incoming clouds of a storm. As the date drew near, the pressure increased. Now the seeds of all of William Cowper’s fears and insecurities germinated. The death of his mother, the brutal treatment in his early school days, and the upcoming examination now all met in one emotional moment. Cowper had reached the breaking point. Growing up without the guiding hand of his mother he struggled between the extreme Calvinism of the day and the reality and assurance of personal faith. Inside of the great man was a doctrine that said, “You might be cursed and damned as the non-elect” and another voice of personal faith and experience.

There seemingly was no one in his life to steady him from the depths of despair. One foggy night he called for a horse-drawn carriage and asked to be taken to the London Bridge on the Thames River. He was so overcome by depression that he intended to commit suicide. But after two hours of driving through the mist, Cowper’s coachman reluctantly confessed that he was lost.

Disgusted by the delay, Cowper left the carriage and decided to find the London Bridge on foot. After walking only a short distance though, he discovered that he was at his own doorstep! The carriage had been going in circles. Immediately, he recognized the restraining hand of God in it all. Convicted by the Spirit, he realized that the way out of his troubles was to look to
God, not to jump into the river. As he cast his burden on the Savior, his heart was comforted. With gratitude he sat down and penned these reassuring words:

“God moves in a mysterious way
   His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
   And rides upon the storm.
Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
   The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
   In blessings on your head.”

Under the kind attention of Dr. Nathanael Cotton, an evangelical believer, Cowper began his journey back. It was a beautiful morning in July of 1764 when Cowper picked up a Bible and began reading from Romans. Nick Rhodes in his book describes the event:

“Suddenly, for the first time in many months, he began to experience an in-rush of hope, an almost hysterical joy. This was, in true Evangelical tradition, the moment of his conversion, the turning point in his life.”

Cowper had lived a moral and honorable life. His father had been a minister. His mother an honorable, righteous woman. All of his life had been, in a sense, “religious,” but until this moment there had been no personal experience. From this moment onward, Cowper was a new man. His world changed and he changed the world. However, he was a damaged man. Still at times he would be plunged into despondency.

God sent along helpers. When he moved to Olney in 1774, he was visited by Rev. John Newton. John Newton was a great help to Cowper and a calming, assuring voice in his life when he needed it most. Together they published the Olney Hymns, containing some of the greatest hymns ever written. Of these hymns, 280 were written by Newton and 68 by Cowper.

Newton’s hymns include the following:
“How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds”
“Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken”
“May the Grace of Christ Our Saviour”
“Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound”
Among those written by William Cowper are the following:
“O for a Closer Walk with God”
“Hark My Soul It Is the Lord”
“God Moves in a Mysterious Way”
“Jesus, Where’er Thy People Meet”
“There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood”

The publication of the Olney Hymns propelled Cowper into fame. His influence, along with Newton, spread throughout Great Britain into the vast Commonwealth of Nations, including America.

As I sat on a bench in the beautiful little park across from his home, I thought of the words of one of his hymns. Feeling that he had strayed from Christ, Cowper wrote the following:

“Where is the blessedness I knew
   When first I saw the Lord?”

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2 Ibid.
Where is the soul-refreshing view?
Of Jesus, and his word?
The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be;
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee."

People in Cowper’s era read poetry. For one hundred years after his death, Cowper was a household name in England. He has been regarded as one of England’s greatest poets.

Often when Cowper was gripped by depression, he came to the vicarage for help from his pastor, John Newton. Both John Newton and his wife, Mary, had great affection for “Sir Cowper.” William Cowper was a great man—a great man propped up by those whom God put in his path. There had been Dr. Nathanael Cotton, John Newton, and others. All of these had calmed William Cowper in his hours of need.

Did Cowper have assurance of his salvation? Yes! Did he have doubts in times of depression and sickness? Yes! This writer is certain that William was saved and that in normal and ordinary times he had great assurance, based on his experience and the Word of God. After all—we too, must hold to the promises and not to OUR feelings that come and go.

Read again the great hymn “There Is a Fountain” and feel the assurance that gripped Cowper’s soul. NO ONE—NO ONE—could write such words without assurance.

“There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.
The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day,
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.
When this poor lisping, stamm’ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave,
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I’ll sing Thy pow’r to save.”

April 25, 1800, at the age of 69, William Cowper lay down to die. John Newton stated the following:

“About half an hour before his death, his face, which had been wearing a sad and hopeless expression, suddenly lighted up with a look of wonder and inexpressible delight. It was as though he saw his Saviour.”

Those who attended his funeral, at which John Newton preached, said that this look of wonder remained even as he lay in his coffin.

The “poor lisping, stamm’ring tongue” lay silent in the grave—yet, for centuries since, that tongue has lifted the hearts of condemned men to God. Through that noble writer of hymns, throngs of souls in conflict have found assurance and peace. Perhaps, dear reader, YOU should go to Olney and sit there in the park, meditate, and say with William Cowper . . .

“The dearest idol I have known,
Whate’er that idol be;
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only Thee.”

“And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

—William Cowper

Dear Brother & Mrs. Ray,

We pray that this note finds you both in good health. Enclosed is our check for the Bible purchases to Scotland and the reseeding effort. Please know that this ministry is near and dear to our hearts and we praise the Lord for using both of you mightily in this endeavor.

Sammy & Laureen Bakri, Fairfax, Virginia

Dear Brother James,

It was a surprise to see our story in the Nations. Reba has been with the Lord 20 years. I miss her every day. I am amazed, viewing you and Sister Mary’s ministry. The Nations is inspiring to my soul. My longing is in Hebrews 12:2, “Looking unto Jesus.”

Love & Prayers,
Garland Cofield, McDonald, Tennessee, Retired missionary to the Far North, Founder of Camp of the Woods, Canada

Dear James & Mary,

Time is passing and soon we will be in heaven with Jesus. Praise God! This is another day to praise the Lord for His goodness. May this little amount of money go for Bibles to those who are in need. May God bless you two for all you have done and do for our Lord Jesus Christ. I am trusting God and leaning on HIS understanding. Proverbs 3:5
With Love, Lula Mae Wright, Hendersonville, North Carolina

Greetings to you Brothers & Sisters,

I am writing to you from Russia from the city of Ribinskaya. In our city there are a lot of young people. Some dying in ignorance, some in unbelief and sin. I found out your address through a church in St. Petersburg. I found it in the front of a large, black New Testament marked, BIMI. I am 16 years old and have been saved a few months. My life is not my own. I’m God’s. God be with you. If we don’t see each other on earth, then we will in heaven. Your brother in Christ Jesus.

Roman, Ribinskaya, Russia

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After all, I was going to marry their “fair-haired preacher boy” who had been ordained in that very church. “What if they thought I was not a suitable wife for him?” Before the service was over, my fears were relieved. They had taken me into their hearts and claimed me as their own.

When we became missionaries, they became our “sending church” and they were everything a “sending church” should be. Few people, other than missionaries and their children, truly understand the depth of the words Home Church.

Home Church means that wherever in the world the missionary is, he has a spiritual home and a sense of belonging. It means people who love and pray for you. It means people who support you financially because they believe in you and the ministry you are doing. It means having a pastor that you can call at anytime from anywhere. It means that missionary children know that they have spiritual roots in America.

Recently, Pastor Lance Buckless and members of Hardison Baptist Church honored us for being missionaries for fifty years. The special service, the gifts, the flowers, the love offering, and the wonderful lunch with family and friends made it a memorable day for us. We were humbled by their expressions of love, but we felt that they were the ones who should be honored.

The first time I went there, I was a shy young woman just out of college. It was a white framed church in the beautiful countryside of middle Georgia. I had to calm myself before entering the door. My mind was full of questions. “What if they don’t like me? What if they don’t accept me?”

Hardison Baptist Church, Byron, Georgia

by Mary Ray
The pastor and many of the dear believers who were in our Commissioning Service fifty years ago are now with the Lord. Pastors have come and gone throughout all the years, but every pastor has demonstrated the same passion for missions and, consequently, the church has kept its love for missions and missionaries.

The following article was written by our son, Jim, who grew up in Australia and England. He and our daughter, Joy, as Missionary Kids always knew where their spiritual roots were.

Dear Pastor Buckless and Hardison Family:

Thank you so much for honoring my dad and mom this coming Sunday. I’m so sorry that I will be traveling next week and not able to attend, although I believe my sister, Joy, will be there. I’ve attached a little story I wrote about Hardison’s connection to my parent’s ministry. Perhaps it will be a blessing.

Jim Ray

AN MK Remembers...

I saw it, the first time, when I wasn’t even tall enough to reach the drawer. In my parents’ bedroom in Australia, where I wasn’t supposed to be without asking. I maneuvered a chair over, hopped up, and slid it open. I don’t know what you would call it officially. I called it the tie tack drawer.

Dad had a lot of tie tacks. He had a lot of ties. Always wore a tie. In almost every situation. He was never going to be caught out anywhere dressed less professionally than anyone else. One time, he was deathly ill in the middle of the night and an ambulance was called to take him to the hospital. Before it arrived,
Dad staggered to his closet and put on a suit for his visit to the emergency room.

I loved the tie tack drawer, the repository for the greatest collection of tie tacks you have ever seen. He had gold and silver and pewter, some with monograms, a few embedded with precious stones or pretending to be. Some shaped like states or crosses. My favorite was the gold kangaroo tie tack—he had a bunch of those.

He purchased the kangaroos at some Brisbane jeweler to give as gifts when back in America, and there were always four or five of them in the tie tack drawer. And also, a couple of old watches, a bunch of cuff links, and some silk handkerchiefs.

And in the back corner, a little brown envelope. It was a bit crumpled on the edges and had been sealed at one point, but the years had dried up and cracked the adhesive. And it had writing on it. Too bad I wasn’t old enough to read because I couldn’t very well go ask Dad what the words said on the envelope in the drawer in his room I wasn’t supposed to be in. Inside the envelope were three shiny silver dollars.

I loved rifling through the tie tack drawer whenever I had the opportunity, loved the little clinking noise the trinkets made when I stirred them around, loved to pick up the cuff links and feel their weightiness in my palm.

But always, in the back corner… that little envelope. A little tilt of the hand, and those silver dollars would slide out smartly. I would think about what I could buy with those coins. American money was no good in Australia, but I imagined their value as immeasurable—certainly enough to acquire everything I could ever want. Why they would be just sitting here, unused and useless, I couldn’t fathom. And then, gingerly, I would slide them back in their weathered packet and replace it with careful precision in its assigned place in the back of the drawer. When I started school, I could read what was on the envelope but I didn’t understand what it meant. The words were in Dad’s handwriting and they said—To Be Used When God Stops Providing. What could it mean? I wondered. For years, I wondered. It was a decade later, perhaps, and we were moving again. Among my duties was the packing of the tie tack drawer. Finally, an opportunity to ask the meaning of the words on the envelope, the reason for the three silver dollars.

“There was this lady,” Dad said. “I was 17 and was leaving home to study for the ministry. She came up to me in church, at Hardison Baptist, and gave me the silver dollars. Gave them to me in this very envelope.”

It was a nice gift, from a woman who maybe didn’t have much money, given to a farm kid who definitely didn’t. “I took them to college with me,” Dad continued, “and I wrote these words on the envelope. If I ever got to the point of really needing this money, I would know God had let me down and I could go back to the farm.” He stood there for a moment with a wistful look. “That was a long time ago,” he said. He handed the envelope back to me. “Don’t lose these,” he said.
To Be Used When God Stops Providing. More than 50 years ago now it’s been since he wrote those words and tuck the coins away.


Tie tacks have come and gone and come and gone again. Watches stopped their ticking. Cufflinks, who knows where. The envelope with the three silver dollars remains. Unused.

It started here, at Hardison Baptist. And for more than half a century—sustained and strengthened through your prayers and gifts. What a blessed and magnificent legacy this church has around the world!

Thank you.

With Deepest Gratitude,
Jim Ray
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