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In My Life...

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In My Life . . .

GOD STILL HAS A PLAN

By Stephen William Farr

I GREW UP LISTENING TO MY FATHER PREACH SERMONS AND LEAD WORSHIP WITH HIS GUITAR. I remember saying to myself, “*One day I am going to grow up to be just like you, Dad.*” As a boy I dreamed I would one day be a world evangelist.

When I was 10 years old, everything started changing. I can remember going to bed at night and listening to my parents fight. I spent many nights praying with tears running down my cheeks, “Lord, please don’t allow my family to fall apart.”

When I was 12 years old, my parents told my siblings and me that they were getting a divorce. My heart was broken. Over the years, I watched as my family continued to be torn apart by the enemy. My life began to go on a downward spiral and, when I was 19 years old, I attempted suicide.

I will never forget the day when the Lord reminded me of the calling He placed in my heart when I was only a boy. I was homeless on the streets, sleeping in a bus stop. I didn’t think I had anything to offer God, but nonetheless He spoke to my heart through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus called out to me, “Stephen, put your feet on the ground and get up. I want you to go and help other people who are worse off than you are.” To me this sounded an awful lot like the words Jesus said to the men He called to be His disciples. *Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!”* (Matt. 4:19).

I was running from the calling God had placed on my life because I didn’t want to be in heaven unless my family was going to be there. The Lord impressed me that if I would give my life to Him, He would turn it into a living testimony. As my mother, father,



Courtesy Stephen Farr

▲ Stephen Farr graduated from Andrews University in May 2021.

brothers and sister witnessed God working in my life, they, too, would one day give their hearts to Jesus.

Another reason I was running from God’s calling on my life is that I felt I had nothing to offer God. Satan convinced me that I had wasted too many years of my life and committed way too many sins for God to use me. I remember telling the Lord, “I have nothing to offer you. I am weak and worthless, but you can have me if you want me.” The Lord replied to me, *My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness* (2 Cor. 12:9a).

In 2005, I was baptized, and I recommitted my life to the calling God placed on me when I was a boy. Over the last 16 years, God took me from homeless in a bus stop without a penny in my pocket to where I am now. In 2016, I graduated from Walla Walla University and received a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Theology. I was then hired by the Upper Columbia Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. After a two-year internship at the Pasco Riverview Adventist Church, I was sponsored to attend the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and, on May 9, 2021, graduated from Andrews University with a Master of Divinity. I then received a call to be the district pastor for the Pendleton and Pilot Rock Adventist churches in Oregon.

I thank God for making my life one of His stories. ■

GOD STILL WORKS MIRACLES

By Monica Desir

With tears in my voice, I called the English Department at Andrews University to say that I could not come to do my master's in English because I had no money.

I had worked hard at trying to sell Christian literature but, with no car and in a strange country with long winters, it was not the same as when I canvassed to pay for my undergraduate education at University of the Southern Caribbean. In New York, I made little more than bus fare. I had prayed and fasted multiple times for God to provide, but nothing seemed to work. What's more, my visa was about to expire. A letter from immigration said to either return to St. Lucia by a given date or show up in court.

"Don't give up hope yet," the professor on the other end of the line encouraged. "We will see what we can do for you."

Since I had been a strong English student and a published author with Pacific Press, the department decided to give me a teaching assistantship. I would teach Freshman Composition for two semesters. On the same day that I should have been returning to St. Lucia, I found myself on the train going to Andrews. "Thank You, Jesus!"

Over the years, I have seen God's continued leading, including in my faith journey to complete doctoral studies at Andrews. More recently, I was faced with a huge challenge for which I really needed God's answer. I decided I would pray and fast for three days and present my case to God. He answered my prayer in no uncertain terms toward the end of the first day. I was elated!

I have a habit of thanking God with a \$25 gift when He answers a big prayer on my behalf. This one was so very important to me that I decided to double it and give Him \$50 instead. Then I said, "No! I will double that!" So I set aside \$100 cash for God — not that He needs my pittance but that is my way of saying "thank You."

Prior to that experience, I would go ahead and give such an offering to some worthy cause I wanted to support, but this time I asked God where He wanted the money to go and prayed about it for two days.

Toward the end of the second day, I walked from my office in the lower level of the Seminary at Andrews where I work to the main floor deans' suite. I was going to ask the assistant about something but, when I got there, she was talking with a young man. I overheard the student's lament: "But I don't *have* that money in my account! I don't *have* that money!"

I quickly disappeared and made my way back to my office without taking note of the student's face. Even today, if I ran into him, I would not recognize him. Shortly after, I picked up the phone and called the assistant.

"Is the student in financial trouble?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied.

"How much does he need?" I continued.

"One hundred dollars," she replied.

I knew this was God's answer to my prayer. I gave the assistant the \$100 to pass on anonymously to the student. The next day I received a thank you card from him via the assistant, since he did not know who I was. He expressed his gratitude to God for using me to answer his prayer.

And I was grateful to God for revealing once again His presence in my life. ■



◀ Monica Desir works as assessment coordinator in the Seminary.