

Grace Notes

"God's grace for everyday living"

God's in the miracle business

By: Debora M. Coty

When you throw your hands in the air with a primal scream of frustration, when all efforts seem futile and there is no Plan C, God lays a miracle on you and suddenly your eyes are opened to His supernatural fingerprints on your life. Things start to make sense and details mysteriously fall into place. The great Shepherd is on duty, just like He said He'd be, caring for His sheep...even that scruffy, headstrong ewe that struggles against all reason to crawl beneath His shepherd's crook at shearing time. (Her name is Debbie.)

My miracle story begins as 2004 was ebbing to a horrendous close, exactly one year ago. My beloved sister, Heather, and her husband, Sean, both believers, were in a mess. Sean had resigned his job under duress. Heather's energies were depleted from home-schooling their cerebral palsied daughter. Pressure was high, stress unbearable, relationships strained to the breaking point, finances plummeting south. Things were bad, really bad, with no end in sight. Our family's prayer knees became thickly calloused.

The first miracle occurred when 50-year-old Sean happened across an opening listed on the internet for a high level job in Tampa. Realizing he was decidedly under-qualified for the position, he figured, "What could it hurt? Things couldn't get any worse." Before e-mail-ing his application, he dialed the company's general phone number to ask a question and mistakenly got patched through to the unlisted cell number of the national personnel executive.

It should have never happened.

Initially annoyed at the unauthorized

interruption, the busy executive warmed up as she conversed with Sean and ended up conducting an impromptu phone interview. Superseding company protocol, she instructed Sean to send his application directly to her, bypassing hundreds submitted via the web site. Half a dozen interviews later (and quadruple that many prayers), he got the job!

The Shepherd was indeed tending his sheep.

I had been praying for many years that God would somehow bring my only sibling's family closer to us here in Seffner. Now that it was a distinct possibility, I decided to help God out by calling every house for sale within a ten-mile radius. No dice. I was a day late or many dollars short on each one.

Weeks turned into months and Sean's 3-hour daily commute to his new job was getting old. Heather felt abandoned and overburdened since he left the house at 5am and returned dog tired at 9pm each day. I was frustrated and disheartened at the lack of appropriate homes in the area and began to doubt that *any* would turn up with the specific qualifications they needed.

Then without fanfare, Heather and Sean received an offer on their old house *above* their listed price and the same day a "For Sale By Owner" sign appeared on the lawn of a house just down the street from mine. Miracle #2.

The house was not only perfect for their needs, but after the owner won a Frazier vs. Ali *discussion* with his adverse wife (as we tried to discreetly fade into the wallpaper), he dropped the price 30k and voilà, the house was suddenly affordable. The reluctant wife eventually overcame her grumpiness



and even threw in the big screen television in the living room for my visually impaired niece. Miracle #3.

Overwhelmed and prostrate in thankfulness (I want to say "prostate" there but I don't think I have one of those), the scripture sprang to life for me: "He tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart" (Isaiah 40:11, NIV).

What more comforting place can there be for a lamb in trouble than next to the beating heart of One who loves him infinitely?

Jesus also took on the role of our shepherd/protector: "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:14-15).

As the poster child for stubborn, clueless sheep (and I understand sheep have all the sense of a turnip), it gives me a feeling of warm security to know that I'm grazing in the pasture of this omnipotent Father/Son shepherding team.

"Debbie's articles have appeared in dozens of magazines including *Discipleship Journal*, *MomSense*, and *Today's Christian Woman* and she has just completed her first book. Contact her at GraceNotes1@earthlink.net for comments, commiserations, or speaking engagement requests." She is a member of the Christian Writer's Guild.