

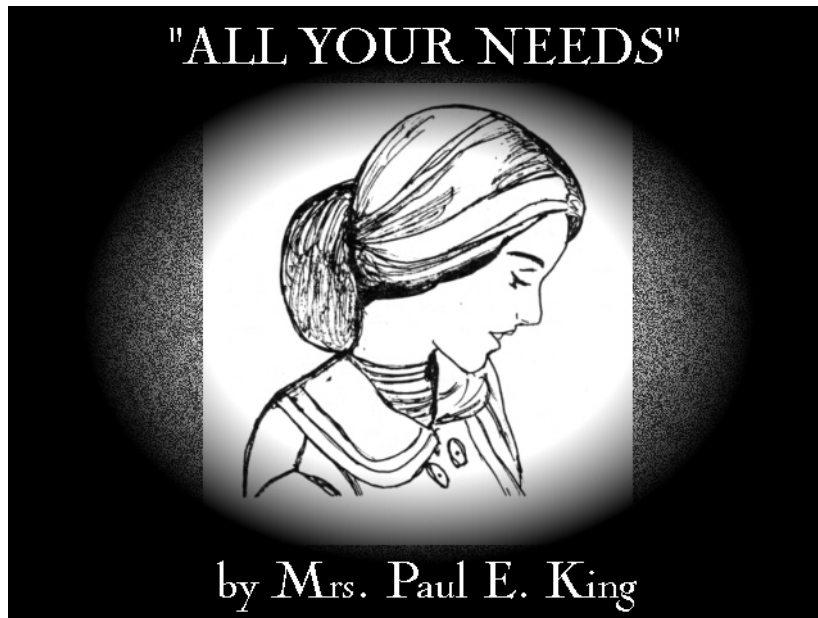
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"ALL YOUR NEEDS"
By Mrs. Paul E. King

"You'll have to raise your own support if you go . . ." The announcement fell with a blow upon my heart as I heard the decision of the leaders in the denomination to which I belonged. "Th . . . thank you," I managed to stammer, hoping the impact of their final decision wasn't revelatory of my feelings. Frankly, I was stunned.

Feeling like I had lead in my shoes, I walked away. Tears coursed down my cheeks. Here I was, just out of Bible school feeling very green and scared and knowing precious few people of influence. I was from a poor family; money was scarce. But I knew the Lord had called me to serve Him on the foreign field and I also knew that He never called without providing.

From the day I was soundly converted, I knew God wanted me for a missionary. Gladly, willingly and joyfully I yielded to him at the altar while seeking to be sanctified wholly. There was no drawing back, no withholding of self or saying no; I was totally yielded. The fire fell. I died out to self and had a glorious spiritual resurrection. It held good to this present hour. Oh, how thankful I was for this Blessed Comforter who was comforting my heart even now, in my state of shock and bafflement.

I thought of my father and mother then and wondered how they would take this news. It was God who had so definitely called me to go into missionary work, but He used my parents' lives to prepare me. Their influence upon my life was a continual thing. A day by day happening. I learned about attitudes from my folks -- attitudes of love, joy, kindness, adaptability, deep devotion to God -- attitudes that were to determine mine in adult life. Mother and Father were living demonstrators of these good and righteous attitudes and so built them into me.

I learned to love because love was manifested and demonstrated in Father and Mother -- a love that constantly reached out even to the unlovely: a filthy looking, foul-smelling tramp; a ragged beggar; a drunk; the prostitute. All were loved, fed, clothed and prayed for with tears of compassion, and some were loved into the Kingdom.

I also learned the value of joy, and of being joyful in any and all kinds of circumstances, through the God-like example of my parents. In good days or bad days, sunshine or storm clouds, poverty or plenty, they had an abundant supply of joy and thanksgiving that invariably overflowed and ran like fragrant perfume from their lives, blessing and encouraging and uplifting as it overflowed.

Adaptability the same way. If we were housed in a single small, crowded dorm room at camp, they praised God for, "a shelter over our heads and for the comforts of this room which is so cozy for all four of us"...my father's beautiful prayer of acceptance to God for His blessing of the

(crowded -- to me, then) room. There was never an utterance of dissatisfaction; no hint of complaint that "certainly, something better and larger" could have been given to us. Nothing but praise and thanks. They practiced moment by moment the Scripture, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." I Tim. 6:6.

With the thought of adaptability whirling around in my brain, I started for the door. To God, this situation I now found myself in was no more than any others I had faced; no bigger than some of the things my parents had hurdled and triumphed over through faith in God. I would believe Him to open doors for me and to close those which He wanted closed. Yes, I would believe in and trust Him.

I was ready to step down into the large foyer of the building when someone called my name. Softly at first, then more loudly. "Patti. Patricia, wait a minute. Please! "

I looked around and saw a tall young man come striding toward me down the aisle. He was a stranger to me. I stepped aside, away from the flow of exiting people, and waited for the man to join me where I stood. In a little while we stood side by side.

"I'm Dawain Riggs," he said, extending his hand to me in greeting. "What you said impressed me greatly. I wanted you to know that I'm behind you and what you are called to do with everything that's in me. I pastor a small church fifty-six miles from here. I wonder, would you come and speak to my congregation on Wednesday night of next week, the Lord willing? You have a message we need."

Would I come! My heart skipped for joy. "Oh Brother Riggs, you are God's first answer to my still-not-verbally uttered but deep inner heart-cry. Yes, I'll come. God willing, I'll be there."

Smiling down on me, he handed me his card with the name and address of both the church and parsonage on it then he turned and walked away.

I stood along the wall of the building and clutched the card to my heart: the 'first-fruits' of His answer to my inner heart plea for help. I thought, smiling through my tears.

With a lighter step, I joined the milling, jostling crowd on their way out through the enormous swinging doors of the convention hall. Outside, the sun was shining. The warm breezes brought a hint of apple blossoms and yellow forsythia with them. I inhaled deeply and long of the delightful fragrances, feeling and knowing that with God's perpetual springtime-summertime in my heart, the bleakness of winter...the board's decision...would have to give way to the virility of the "exceeding great and precious promises."

I hadn't walked far from the convention building when I felt a light tap on my shoulder. Turning, I came face to face with a squinty-eyed wrinkled, lottery old woman. "You that new missionary who must raise all her own salary?" she asked without preamble or apology.

"I'm called of God to serve Him on foreign soil," I replied, smiling and noticing for the first time the now-lowered cane which had tapped me on the shoulder.

"That's not what I asked," she answered quickly, squinting up into my face as if trying to synchronize the young woman on the distant convention platform with the present close-up embodiment. "You the same girl who must raise her support if she is to become a full fledged missionary?" Again, the question.

"I am she. I am Patricia Miller, called of God to go."

"There. That's more like it," she said with a sigh of relief. "My eyes aren't the best anymore," she half apologized. "I'm an old woman, as you can plainly see All my life I've helped missionaries. Couldn't go myself, due to a physical handicap. But I can still 'go'...in another way. I'll support you monthly, Miss Miller. You can count on me. It's my way of letting the Lord know how very much I love him. My way of saying thanks to Him for picking me up out of the pit of sin and setting my feet on the solid Rock."

"O thank you, my dear. What is your name?"

"Amanda Boers. But that matters little; what does matter is that I am a child of the King, rejoicing on my way to Heaven. God bless you, child," she said tearfully, tucking a bill firmly into my hand and walking briskly away.

I stood looking after her retreating figure, wishing I knew more about her but sensing that Amanda Boer wanted things to be exactly as they were - no plaudits no fanfare, no praise or glory. Again, I felt tear stream down my cheeks.

Just as I was ready to cross the street, another pastor approached me. He looked embarrassed and uncomfortable as he said half-apologetically, "Our congregation is small, Miss Miller; we're not a wealthy crowd, In fact, we're poor. But my people and I want you to come by for a service this Sunday morning, God willing . . ."

He shifted his weight from one foot to another searching my face for a reply.

"I will be delighted to do so," I answered marveling at God's timing and His help. I felt my spirits soar. The devil was a liar, like I knew he was, like the Word said he was. He was not only an "accuser of the brethren" (and sisters, too), he was also the "father of discouragement," an equal appellation to the biblical "father of lies," I realized. In adverse circumstances especially, he was always nearby with his thoughts and suggestions of discouragement- "the young people just don't appreciate you"..."You may have missed your calling, you know!"..."You can serve God just as well in some other way, surely!"..."You'll starve to death over there; or be killed by a wild beast"...On and on he'd continue with his lies.

The pastor handed me his card with all details on it concerning time, place and location of both church and parsonage; then he hurried away and was swallowed up in the crowd.

My heart was full and overflowing as I left the convention: I had one promise of support plus two churches in which I was asked to speak. I knew this meant I would be receiving monthly support from each of them, however meager and small. God was providing. I felt like shouting my softly-spoken "Hallelujah" to the world. God and I were together in this. He was the Commander-in-Chief; I was his lowly, humble, happy joyful soldier-servant. The work was His; I was merely the "gardener" the sower of seed -- for Him. For His kingdom.

I unlocked my fisted hand and began opening the tightly-folded and well-wadded bill that lay securely in the center of my palm. The crisp hundred dollar bill crackled and rattled. I had a shouting spell. Raising it above my head, I cried joyfully, "My heave offering to Thee, My God!"

I arrived at the church that Sunday morning in a downpour of rain, my spirits high and anything but dampened. True to what the embarrassed pastor had told me, I found the congregation small indeed. What they lacked in numbers, however, I noted they made up for in fervent praying, joyful singing and exuberant praise. And all with radiant, shining faces. They were a spiritual people. Immediately I was at ease; I was among brothers and sisters in Christ.

Behind the pulpit, the pastor was fearless. Alive. And as I stepped up to speak, I felt the Holy Spirit speak through me. My timidity fled with the reading of Scripture, and when I had finished speaking I felt as much at ease as if it had been a daily, routine thing.

Small church? Indeed so. Yet they pledged a phenomenal amount of money -- monthly -- toward my support on the field and gave me a large cash offering toward my fare over. The same thing happened after my Wednesday night speaking engagement too. Soon there were others wanting to support, one after another. And then I was ready to leave; the necessary support was all either in or pledged and forthcoming, mostly from small churches, widows, tottery old men and women, and poor people. These were the generous-hearted, the "cheerful" givers.

My first night on foreign soil I knelt beside my bed and thanked God for getting me there. I asked Him for souls. Many souls. Precious souls. I knew that however many I may help win to Christ, my supporters back home would someday share wondrously in the rewards. I felt the weight of my responsibility settle in upon me with force and holy passion.

The first convert was a young mother. I wrote a letter to my supporters, telling them of the beautiful "New life in Christ" this young woman was displaying, urging them to be fervent in prayer for souls in the land of God's calling for me.

The days skipped by on sunny feet, turned into months, and finally emerged into a year. One entire year. What a wonderful year!

I met a missionary from a sister denomination whose support was sure and guaranteed from denominational headquarters. I thought back to that day at the convention and how I had thought this would be my good fortune -- my denomination would support me fully, taking it on themselves to be surety for my transportation over and back, plus a monthly stipulation.

And now, looking back, I thank God for the experience I had. It was the strengthening of my faith, the "projectile" that landed me, body, soul, mind and spirit upon Phil. 4:19. Firmly, fixedly, here I stand. All my needs...supplied. I stand amazed!

(Notice -- This was written around one from another denomination other than our own. The Bible Missionary Church supports its many missionaries on a regular monthly basis, and also pays their fares to and from the field. The Editor.)