

Column

A story that could easily go into Guidepost magazine (the inspirational publication founded by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale in 1945) involves one of Fannin County, Georgia's most colorful and celebrated citizens. I am thinking of Jere McConnell, the county's town crier. "Mr. Jere" departed this life Jan. 3, but his legacy of service and bringing smiles lives on.

The story I have in mind happened in the 1990s. As Mr. Jere related it to me, he and his wife Patience were in Tampa at the home of her parents, I believe just after her father's death. On this occasion, Mr. Jere was offered a handsaw. He was very happy to receive it but did not put it in the family car. It was only after he and Patience had left to come home that he remembered that the saw was still in his father-in-law's workroom.

At this point, he debated going back to retrieve it. Turning around would delay their trip home, but something (or Someone) compelled him to return.

Several hours into their journey, they came upon a wreck. A car was off the side of the road leaning up against a tree. They passed it, but again Mr. Jere felt compelled to turn around and see if he could give any assistance.

As it turned out, that decision, along with the earlier one of going back and getting the saw, made all the difference. A saw was exactly what was needed to extricate the people in the car, and no one, including the state troopers working the accident, had one. So, Mr. Jere took his out and turned it over to those in charge, and the people were safely removed.

The story could well have been much grimmer. If the vehicle against the tree had caught fire or exploded, as vehicles sometimes do following a crash, those trapped would have perished. Thank goodness Mr. Jere was there.

You could say that Mr. Jere's feeling that he should retrieve the saw was just a happy happenchance . . . or was it the work of the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth? I choose to

believe the latter. According to Ephesians 1:11, God “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” Surely it was He orchestrating the show that day.

A takeaway from this story might be to always be open to hearing and obeying God’s voice. Perhaps you have had an experience similar to that of Mr. Jere’s. If so, give thanks for it and share it with others . . . perhaps even with a publication like Guidepost.

O GOD, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light riseth up in darkness for the godly; Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what thou wouldest have us to do, that the Spirit of Wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in thy light we may see light, and in thy straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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