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Miracle in the Details

If Scott Thom ever needed evidence of the hand of God in everyday circumstances, he got it in the spring of 1990.

Scott, then associate pastor of Calvary Chapel in West Covina, Calif., was making a call with a colleague at Queen of the Valley Hospital. A nurse asked if he would pray for the patient behind the curtain in the other bed. "She had a stroke and has been in a coma for several days," the nurse said. "We don't expect her to last much longer."

Scott slipped into a chair by the elderly woman's bed, idly noticing on the monitor that her heart rate was steady in the low 70s. He lifted her limp hand and read the name off the wristband. "Barbara," he said quietly, "I know that sometimes people who are comatose can hear and understand what is going on around them, so I'm going to talk to you that way.

"Normally a pastor would read something comforting, like Psalm 23. But I don't know you, Barbara, or where you stand with God. Before I read Psalm 23, I'd like to read Psalm 22. Before Christ can become your shepherd, you have to know how much He loves you and how He became that shepherd."

Scott began to read: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?" Before he got to the third verse, Scott

Scott explained how she could repent of sin and ask Christ to save her. "Would you like to pray with me and do that?"

"Yes!"

And so he led her in prayer. As soon as she finished, she released her grip and grew calm. Her pulse dropped to normal.

Scott moved to help his colleague finish with the other patient. As they were leaving, he ducked into Barbara's area to say goodbye. She had slipped back into her coma.

The next day Scott had to meet with a young man to arrange a funeral. The man was angry. He had called earlier to ask someone to visit his mother in the hospital, and no one had gone. Later, they concluded that he had mistakenly called a different church.

"I'm pretty sure my mother was not a believer," he said. "She died last night after a stroke and several days in a coma."

Scott looked up. "Was she at Queen of the Valley?"

"Yes."

"Room 203?" The young man nodded.

"I was there," Scott said. "And do I have a story for you." Both wept as they planned the funeral and graveside service.

A couple of days later, when Scott showed up at the funeral home, he was asked, "What are you doing here? The hus-

band changed the arrangements to graveside only!"

Scott raced to the cemetery but arrived late, and another funeral procession had been put in line ahead of Barbara's. The rest of the family was bitter, and the husband would not speak with Scott.

Four other relatives had not heard of the change either, and they didn't arrive

until an hour-and-a-half later when the graveside service finally began. Scott told the story of his amazing encounter with the dying woman and asked if anyone else wished to receive Christ as Savior.

Two of the four late arrivals raised their hands. Later the husband received Christ, and Scott officiated at his funeral.

It just so happened that Scott was at Queen of the Valley.

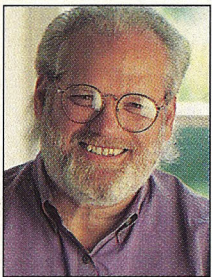
It just so happened that the nurse asked him to pray with a dying woman in the same room.

It just so happened that he selected Psalm 22.

And that the woman's son called the church for a minister.

And that the burial was late.

It just so happened. ■



"BEFORE CHRIST CAN BECOME YOUR SHEPHERD, YOU HAVE TO KNOW HOW MUCH HE LOVES YOU AND HOW HE BECAME THAT SHEPHERD."

felt the fierce grasp of the old woman and was startled to see her heart rate race to more than 100. She opened her eyes and cried out hoarsely through the half of her mouth that still functioned, "He has not forsaken me! I've forsaken Him!"

Afraid the woman would expire any moment, Scott spoke earnestly. "Barbara, let me share something with you from the New Testament." He turned to John 6: "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.'... Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty'" (vv. 29,35).

"Barbara, would you like to come to God, to never thirst and hunger again?"

"Yes," she managed.