

Chapter 10

JEHOVAH JIREH -OUR PROVIDER

Our welcome to Canada was less than auspicious. First, our plane had to turn back over Iceland with suspected engine trouble. After a further wait of four hours in a stuffy departure lounge at Heathrow, we left again at midnight in the same plane - different crew!

Our delay caused us to arrive in Toronto at 1 am local time, and it was soon evident that some of the customs officials took exception to being made to work at such an unearthly hour. Ours was so unpleasant that we began to wish we had stayed home in Wales. When we finally got through, an immigration officer welcomed us and assured us that "not all Canadians are like her". We looked around for a welcoming face as we had sent a telegram to Hazel Weech, Sharon's mother, a week earlier, informing her of our flight details. There was no such face and soon we found ourselves alone in a deserted arrivals lounge. We were all very tired and the children were able to sleep on the lounge seats but Anne and I stayed awake, guarding the luggage and waiting for Hazel. At 6.30am I decided to telephone her, only to discover that she had never received our telegram and was just about to leave for work.

"Take a taxi" she said, giving me the address to which the driver should take us. So, thirty hours after leaving Heathrow the first time, we were tucked up in nice warm beds, fast asleep.

Our first month in Toronto was very exciting. We explored the shopping malls, attended People's church to hear Dr Oswald Smith and a visiting Nicki Cruz (of "Cross and the Switchblade" fame), enjoyed listening to Dr John Wesley White speaking at a local United Church of Canada, and bought a house!

This was a small, dingy bungalow in a suburb of Toronto, which had been empty for two years. The colour scheme was simple - brown and dark green throughout, walls, floors and ceilings. My first task after moving in was to hammer down a mound as large as 'molehill', in the centre of the living room floor. To keep it down I had to use a 4 inch spike! Then we painted some window frames white. That was enough for the first day so I climbed in the bath for a shower. Turning on the water, I was startled by a clattering as several tiles fell off the shower walls into the bath. They had been held together with Scotch tape! You're probably wondering why we bought such a house - believe me, it was the only one we could afford as the prices in Toronto were almost three times their equivalent in Wales, and renting would soon have done away with our limited savings. Now we discovered just how little my salary was compared with the cost of living in Canada. Our first year was a great struggle financially but we found the Lord to be rightly named, Jehovah Jireh, our provider (Gen 22:14). Three times in that school year we were without any money or provisions by the middle of the month. We told no one but were amazed at how the Lord supplied our need. On one occasion, a lady at our church gave us a small gift though she was unaware of our need. "I hope you are not offended" she said, "but the Lord told me to give you this". At another time, a belated Christmas gift, from the parents at the school, arrived at exactly the right time. However, the most striking provision came early in our year. Things were tight when a letter arrived by hand from the Ministry of Immigration inviting me to visit their office. I was concerned. Was there something wrong with our papers? Would we be sent back home? At the office I was given an envelope, inside which was a letter welcoming us to Canada and a cheque for \$1,000. This was, apparently, a gift from the Canadian Government to everyone purchasing a first home in Canada. Two other cheques of \$250 were to follow. It was not until a year later that it was discovered that an error had been made and that we were not entitled to this grant as we had owned homes in Wales. The Government wanted their money back but as the mistake had been theirs, they agreed that we should pay it back, interest free, over three years. Who else can boast of receiving such a sum from the Government, interest free! Evidently, Jehovah Jireh controls even the financial departments of government!

For the summer months I received no salary but we had a promise to keep. John and Eileen Weibe had been good friends of ours in Germany where he served with the Canadian Forces. They were now working in

Northern Manitoba with the Church Army and, hearing of our arrival in Canada, had begged us to come visit them. We had initially agreed, but, seeing our limited income, Anne had twice written to tell them that we would have to delay our coming. Each time she was stopped from sending her letter as we received letters from Eileen telling how much they were looking forward to seeing us again. So, in July, Anne took the girls on a long journey to Dauphin, Manitoba, while I stayed in Toronto studying for a specialist teachers' certificate - but that's another story.

The visit was wonderful but the journey there, by bus, and the return by train, are events that Anne would rather forget. The amazing thing is, that when Anne worked on our finances, our end-of-month balance was exactly what it should have been if no such trip had been taken! Again the Lord must have provided.