

HIS
MYSTERIOUS
WAYS



More than Coincidence

edited by EVELYN BENICE

foreword by EDWARD GRINNAN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, *GUIDEPOSTS* MAGAZINE

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FOREWORD

One night I was trying to explain to a group of non-*Guideposts* magazine readers (yes, such people exist) what a “His Mysterious Ways” story was and why the feature was so beloved by our subscribers. “Oh,” said a man finally, “it’s like that old TV show *Unsolved Mysteries*.” The others nodded, seeming to agree that he had hit the nail on the head. “Not quite,” I was forced to say, “because there’s no mystery about ‘Mysterious Ways.’”

No mystery? They looked at me as if I were talking nonsense. Then why on earth call it “His Mysterious Ways”?

Why, indeed.

One of the first “Mysterious Ways” I read when I got to *Guideposts* was about a young mother whose son was inside a kindergarten classroom when a tornado struck the building. Out of her mind with worry, she called the school and was reassured by someone answering the phone that all of the children were safe. “Your son is all right,” the kind voice said. School officials would be in touch. The mother hung up, immensely relieved and grateful. Hours later, the school finally called to tell her that her son was unharmed and where she could pick him up. The officials were baffled, however, when the mother

mentioned the first call. The building had been completely evacuated well before the tornado hit and, besides, the phone service had been knocked out for hours. No one could have possibly answered. Then who was the person on the other end of the line with those comforting words, “Your son is all right”?

New to Guideposts and coming from a journalistic background, I was suspicious. Surely there was a logical explanation for all of this. I took it upon myself to investigate, combing through the story file and double-checking the facts. I was frustrated I could find nothing to justify my skepticism. The mother was completely believable, and the school confirmed the particulars of the incident. No one could have answered the phone.

Still, during that first year or so at Guideposts, I persisted in playing the role of gadfly, always trying to find a rational explanation for every “Mysterious Ways” that dropped over the transom. At one of our weekly editorial meetings, Van Varner, then the editor-in-chief, threw up his hands and shouted at me, “If YOU were in charge of ‘His Mysterious Ways,’ we would never have any!”

Wouldn’t you know it? I *am* in charge of “His Mysterious Ways,” and we have plenty, as the book you are about to read attests. Story after story offering hope, reassurance, comfort and guidance. Wondrous accounts

of unspoken prayers answered, unknown yearnings realized, unexpected healings received. Each and every one true.

Have I grown less skeptical through the years? Actually, no. We still choose these stories very carefully and check them out thoroughly. But my understanding of what lies at the heart of this unique feature's overwhelming popularity has closely paralleled my spiritual growth, as I've been able to see a divine hand at work in my life in ways that never cease to astonish and inspire me.

God's ways may be mysterious, but His presence and purposes are not. Which is why "Mysterious Ways" are never unsolved mysteries.

Edward Grinnan

Editor-in-Chief, *Guideposts*

INTRODUCTION

*God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.*

*Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.*

William Cowper (1731–1800)

As children and teens, my siblings and I would gather around the piano late on Sunday afternoons to sing through the hymnbook. That's where I grew to appreciate this hymn by the British poet William Cowper. Years later I learned more about Mr. Cowper, who was befriended by his neighbor and pastor, John Newton (author of "Amazing Grace"). Mr. Cowper wrote these lines based on his personal experience of faith amid—or despite—professional failure, overwhelming anxiety and deep depression that prompted several mysteriously thwarted suicide attempts. Sensing the hymn's power,

Pastor Newton published it, and indeed its message is as true today as it was two hundred years ago.

“God moves in a mysterious way.” It’s an underlying theme of every personal story in this newly compiled book, *Guideposts’* fifth volume of *His Mysterious Ways*. In keeping with the format of the popular “His Mysterious Ways” column of *Guideposts* magazine, most of the selected stories are very short, giving just the highlights of an unusual encounter with a stranger, a perfectly timed provision, an unexpected reconnection with a “lost” person or possession, a prayer answered by a surprising turn of events. A few of the true stories in each section are longer, fleshing out the details of God’s dramatic work; one of my favorites is “Heaven’s Trail,” in which God miraculously honors a woman’s memory of her recently deceased father.

Turn the page. Again and again you’ll find reason to take “fresh courage,” bolstered by a new awareness of God’s watchful presence and inexplicable ways. The mystery starts with a phone call unaccountably routed to Anaheim, California.

—*Evelyn Bence*

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GIVING ASSURANCE

“I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS,
EVEN TO THE END OF THE AGE.”

—Matthew 28:20



*Lord, remind us today that we are not
traveling alone on this life journey.*

CROSSING THE LINES

Terri Kilroy



Ten o'clock and I'm still at the office, I thought. I'd been putting in a lot of extra hours lately. I barely had a moment to think, pray, talk to my friends—just to relax. Everyone else had left hours ago. I'd promised myself I would get home early tonight. So why was I still at work? *Just one more fax*, I told myself. *Then I'll leave.*

I put the papers on the machine and punched in the number of a client in Los Angeles. Then I pressed the “send” button. An error message flashed on the display beside the number. I looked at it closely. *Odd. That's not the number I dialed.* This one was a 714 area code. *That's Anaheim*, I thought. *Why would the fax machine be calling there?* I tried again, carefully dialing my client's number. The same thing happened.

Finally, I decided to call the mysterious 714 number. The phone rang a few times. Then a woman answered shakily, “Hello?”

I explained to her that I had been trying to send a fax.

“There's no fax machine here,” she said. “This is a convalescent home. You called an old lady.”

I quickly apologized for bothering her so late at night.

“Oh no, my dear, I’m glad you called. I hardly ever get any visitors. In fact, I was just sitting here asking the Lord for a friendly voice.”

The old woman and I chatted for a few minutes. Then a few more. She told me all about her life in the nursing home. I talked about my job. Before I knew it, we were talking about faith too.

“Thank you so much for calling, dear,” the woman finally said. “You made my night.”

Now it was really late. But all the way home a good feeling stayed with me. I didn’t even think about the fax until the next day, when I got to work. I called my client to apologize for not sending him the papers.

“What do you mean?” he asked. “I got your fax late last night. It came in just after ten.”

I guess I must have had the right number all along.