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Our Creative Creator

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways..."

— Isaiah 55:8

As I approach my 40th year of practice, it has become increasingly apparent through so many different experiences that I have learned to appreciate how creative our God can be. One of the early occasions where I made note of that was in a change of circumstances in my first year of practice. I graduated from National College in August 1979. I went immediately to Cincinnati, Ohio, to start practice as an associate with a doctor who had mentored me from the beginning of my education, and, in fact, had introduced me to the field itself. The timing seemed so perfect. He had practiced for over 20 years with his father, and his father retired just before I was graduating, so I was stepping into a busy 2-doctor practice with my chiropractic mentor.

To me, at the time, everything seemed perfectly in line to set up my future in chiropractic practice. Surely this was God's hand guiding me, and I felt very secure as I practiced those first few months under my mentor's direction. What would happen in a 10-minute period on a Friday morning starting my third month of practice would teach me a valuable lesson that God's creativity does not always line up with man's plans.

I remember it well. It was a beautiful fall Friday morning as I arrived to work, only to be told by the office manager that the other doctor needed to see me privately in his office. As I walked in, he asked me to close the door behind me. As I sat down, he slid me a paycheck telling me that this was my final paycheck, which included a small severance. He told me that he had come to the conclusion that he could not practice in tandem anymore, and he wished me well in my future in the field.

I was shattered and confused. How could God allow this to happen when I had assumed that it was His plan that was going so well? This was an enlightening lesson to me of His creativity that doesn't always line up with our way of thinking. Over the weekend I had many discussions with my Lord and was reminded of so many promises and assurances in His Word that His plans are not always our plans. Sometimes we must act in faith and not sight.

I packed my belongings, including my wirehaired dachshund, which had been a gift from the Cincinnati doctor, and headed south to my hometown of Jacksonville, Florida. There, I moved in with my parents for the next year of my life as I sought to reset the course of my chiropractic future. Little did I realize at the time that God was gently redirecting me in what He had as His plan for my life that would be far better than what my plans could have produced if I had stayed with the doctor that brought me into our fine profession. This included the blessing of finding another elder, a second-generation chiropractor who would prove to be my greatest mentor in the field of chiropractic for the rest

continued on next page,

Our Creative Creator, concluded,

of my life. We practiced together in Jacksonville Beach for nearly 20 years. When he retired, he gifted me the practice, and I purchased the location from him.

Interestingly, this location was only five miles from what would become the national headquarters of the PGA tour and open the door for me to meet and treat many golf professionals, as they would come in town to play at the Player's Championship at Sawgrass. Golf had always been my favorite hobby, and now I could

combine my passion for that sport and chiropractic in treating some of the most famous golf professionals in the world, many of them having been my sport's heroes for years. I was ecstatic! I provided services for such



Dr. Popwell (right) with Lee Trevino and his wife, Claudia in 1991.

patients as Lee Trevino, Tom Weiskopf, Tom Kite, John Daly, Bobby and David Duval, Mark McCumber (*who I played against in high school golf matches*), Vijay Singh, and the late Payne Stewart. One year, Peter Jacobson, who is now a commentator for NBC sports and was an appreciative and avid chiropractic patient, came to me with an idea. I was more than willing to go along with it, so he approached the PGA tour asking if I could be allowed to come to *The Masters* and set up chiropractic care in the hallowed locker room at Augusta National during the Masters tournament. That year my wife and I had the privilege of enjoying a wonderful week at Augusta, and chiropractic made its way into a place that it had never been before by providing services to the top players in the world. The Lord had brought me a long way from that day in Ohio. He had reminded me that His creative plans were far beyond my small and restricted ones. To this day, I thank Him and continue to be amazed at His powerful creativity.

As another mentor taught me in my early years of practice, I have settled into a mode of retiring in practice that I hope my Father in heaven will allow for years to come. However, as I have learned so many times since, His creativity and plan prove far better for me than what I could imagine and create on my own.

So what about you? Perhaps you have also seen your life's plans dashed as God allowed a set back to your own plans while He was at work with creative plans of His own. Perhaps you too are getting the chance to experience the truth of Isaiah 55 where God reminds us: *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

Dr. Lee Popwell became a member of the CCA in 1982 and has served on our Board of Directors since 2011. He lives in Greenville, South Carolina.