



Hope for the world

Trust God To Change Hearts

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It doesn't matter how complicated the situation looks. Don't lose hope.

In March 2002, I was in my second year of a PhD programme in environmental sciences at Cambridge University. As a normal requirement of the department, my degree committee requested me to submit a final research proposal with an approved budget.

As a Gates scholar, the Gates Cambridge Trust expected my PhD supervisor to endorse my research budget before they could release money for my field studies in Zambia. However, there was a problem. The budget for my upkeep and field experiments in Zambia, and for laboratory analyses at the World Agroforestry Centre in Nairobi, was £16,000 – far above the average allocation of £5,000.

My supervisor sat me down to explain that I risked forfeiting project funding, if he forwarded such a huge budget to the Gates Trust. He therefore advised me to reduce the size of the project to fit the normal budget. But I insisted I wanted to implement the whole proposal as presented.

I don't know how my supervisor felt at this point. But he forwarded the budget to the Gates Cambridge Trust as it was. The outcome was as predicted. The director of the trust wrote to my supervisor, informing him that the trust would not fund such an expensive project, and gave him a second chance to submit a revised budget.

My supervisor called me and explained the decision of the trust, and asked me to cut the budget by almost two-thirds. My response shocked my supervisor, because I asked him to resubmit the original budget. This sounds absurd.

What could give me such confidence to resubmit a budget that was rejected by my supervisor and sponsors? The secret is that I held on to the Word of God, which says, 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water, he turns it wherever he wishes' (Proverbs 21:1).

Armed with this scripture, I asked God to turn the hearts of my supervisor and the director of the trust to accept my original proposal. I had hope that the budget I requested for would be approved in full – although it far exceeded the trust's normal allocation.

Reluctantly, my supervisor told me he would resubmit the budget, although he didn't believe it would be approved. A day after our final meeting, he informed me he had resubmitted the budget. And I continued to pray for a positive outcome.

After two weeks of silence, I received an email from my supervisor, congratulating me for winning a full grant – £16,000. The director of the trust informed my supervisor that it was not the practice of the trust to give a scholar such a hefty amount, and that this was an exception and must be treated as such.

Praise God! Is there anything impossible with our God? Regardless of how complex your situation is, God is able to turn things around according to his will. And this is the hope that I have.



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