

Minnie Whiting Priestley's son Don E.:



He had a beautiful blessing from Bishop Roskelly who was our stake patriarch. I got permission from the doctor to take Don E. to Brother Roskelly's home. They were both ill and in their pajamas.

His blessing told Don E. he would live to go on a mission, and that he would talk on the radio to many people. I was petrified. I thought, What a wicked thing to do to a boy that sick. It also promised him that he would get married and have a family. It said Don E. had the privilege of choosing a mother and father before he came to earth and waited to come until that could be accomplished. He was told that Satan had put stumbling blocks in his path.

I was afraid that Don E. couldn't understand how all this could ever come true. How would he feel, and how would his testimony be affected if all these things did not come to him? I thought he was too ill to possibly accomplish all these things. I could only pray harder. Even though Don E. and Roberta were young when they fell in love, Don E.'s blessing had told him that he would fill a mission. Roberta wanted that for him too. She sang a beautiful song at his farewell. More important, was her loyalty to him while he was on his mission. She was not only true to him, but she encouraged him all the two years he was out.

He had developed diabetes before he was called to go on his mission, and I did not think he would stand a chance of getting to go. He kept saying that he was positive that he would be called to go. I didn't want him hurt, but I knew that they were very strict about sending boys who were not well.

Don E. went right on planning for his mission. Dr. Lee Berry said there was no way that boy could go on a mission. He had a brittle type of diabetes [very hard to control] and medication had to be changed daily. I worried and I told Don E. that he would have to be content that his blessing would probably be filled somewhere else.

He'd say, "Mother, I'm not a bit worried about that. You see, I'm going because my blessing tells me I will. I'm not going to let it ruin my disposition, or lose my testimony worrying about it. If you just let the Lord look after his business and you look after your, we will be a happier family."

Our bishop was a fine doctor. When Don E. was old enough, he went to the bishop and told him he was ready to go on his mission. The bishop showed him the qualifications for missionaries. It started out, "Please don't send us sick boys to go on missions." He told Don E. that he couldn't recommend for him to go on a mission.

Don came home just as happy as a lark. I told him I hoped that settled him down and he would get his school work scheduled for the next year. Because of missing so much school when Don E. graduated from high school, he was old enough to go on a mission. He kept telling

me not to worry if he didn't go, he wouldn't lose his testimony. He also reminded me that he had not done anything to forfeit that blessing.

Thorpe Isaacson came down to California about that time. Thorpe knew how sick Don E. had been because he was at the Whiting Reunion when all the Isaacsons came. We went out to the Church where Thorpe was speaking. Roberta and Don took me out to hear him. I went up to speak to him after it was over.

He said, "Where is your boy? I was going to call you."

I told him Don E. was there and he said he wanted to see him. He didn't tell me what he wanted to see him for. He talked to Don E. and told him that he wanted him to get ready to go on a mission. Don E. told him that he had tried, but his bishop was a doctor and didn't think he was able to go on a mission. Thorpe told him to tell the bishop that Elder Isaacson told him to get the papers ready and send them to him. I told Thorpe, you know how sick Don E. is. He just said to never mind, he wouldn't go if he wasn't supposed to.

I was worried to have Don E. go. I didn't think he was well enough, but Don went to the bishop and got his papers. He said that he wanted to go to Lee for his physical. I told him he would have to go to another doctor if he wanted those papers filled out. Lee would never okay him to go on a mission.

He said, "Mother, I don't want to sneak on a mission." He went to see Lee and Lee wrote all the things he could think of that was the matter with Don E., in the most profound words that he knew. Then he wrote in where remarks were asked for, "This boy should not be on a mission where he has to fix his own food."

Don came home and I asked him if that satisfied him; he said it did. He took the papers back to the bishop and the bishop sent them on to Thorpe. We didn't hear anything for a few weeks, but finally we got notice that he had been called to Chicago.

Mark E. Petersen saw Don E. at the mission home and asked if he could give him the blessing to set him apart. He told Don E. that he would finish his mission; I felt a little better then.

After Don E. got home, I saw Thorpe and he said, "I didn't have anything to do with Don E. going on his mission. I was just the messenger that carried the notes. The First Presidency took that name in their own place of worship, in the temple, and prayed about it. They said to send him on a mission, in the states."

Elder Don E. Priestley