

**Devotional Thoughts :: Finding Woody Woodpecker****Finding Woody Woodpecker - posted by PastorEdP (), on: 2004/11/6 6:54**

Finding Woody Woodpecker
By Ed Price

But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. - Deuteronomy 4:29

When animation producer Walter Lantz created Woody Woodpecker in 1940, he had no idea the red-headed scamp was going to be so popular, nor that his laugh was to be such a problem.

Lantz felt Woody needed a distinctive voice so he turned to the versatile Mel Blanc. Blanc created a laugh for Woody which, at first, was rather cruel-sounding. But he improved on it over the next several years. Then he abruptly left Lantz to work for Warner Brothers, where he created the familiar voices of Bugs Bunny, Foghorn Leghorn, Daffy Duck, Sylvester, Elmer Fudd, and dozens of other cartoon characters.

Nineteen forty-eight was a banner year for Woody. When the novelty tune, "The Woody Woodpecker Song" was released, it was immensely successful and climbed rapidly on the charts. Unfortunately, Lantz used Blanc's recorded laugh on the record and Blanc sued for half a million dollars. Lantz settled out of court, but decided that Woody needed another voice to avoid legal complications in the future.

Lantz began casting around and even his wife, Grace, wanted to try out. But Lantz said "No." Soon Lantz was at his wit's end. The new Woody cartoons were in production, but none of the woodpecker voices he heard was right.

One day, a director brought in a new stack of voice auditions. When they got to audition No. 7, Lantz suddenly perked up. "That's perfect!" he shouted. "Who is it?"

"Your wife," the director answered with a grin.

Lantz put his head in his hands and moaned. "What are people going to say now when the producer's own wife is doing Woody?"

The solution, of course, was to bill Grace under her maiden name in the credits. From then on, until the last Woody Woodpecker cartoon was made in 1975, Woody's voice was provided by Grace Stafford.

Lantz could have saved himself a lot of grief had he stopped searching everywhere for answers and granted his wife an audition right away. He would have discovered the solution to his problem was right beside him all the time.

So many times Christians search for the answers of life's dilemmas and reach their wits end. Then, in desperation, they look to the Lord for deliverance and find that He was right beside them all the time.

Soli Deo Gloria