



# Scripture in Action



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Romans 12:13 (New International Version)

<sup>13</sup> *Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

When I was an undergraduate student at the University of Adelaide in the late 1970s, my best friend was a guy named Scott. As I was living at Fulham and he was living at Underdale, it was easy for us to socialise in the evenings and on weekends. Each summer, we would head off in my 1970 XW Ford Falcon on a camping vacation, usually to the surfing beaches on the south coast of Victoria.

On one such trip, we had camped at Port Campbell, Johanna's Beach, and Apollo Bay, amongst other stops. We had decided that Apollo Bay was as far as we would go, since in those days Apollo Bay was reasonably peaceful in January, but any closer to Melbourne, such as Lorne or Torquay, and you couldn't find a square metre to pitch a tent!

One morning while camping in the bush near Apollo Bay, we awoke to heavy rain. There was clearly a cold front sweeping across that part of Victoria from the west. Since we were intending to start heading back towards Adelaide, we decided to spend that day driving, on the inland route, in a westerly direction. That way, the storm would be heading east, and we'd be heading west, the sooner to find calmer conditions. We reached the town of Hamilton late in the afternoon and we decided that we'd escaped the cold front.

Back then, there was no internet or world wide web, no smartphones – in fact no mobile phones at all. I had never heard of an ATM. There was not really any system of credit cards in Australia, other than large department stores having in-house credit schemes; it was around that time that 'Bankcard' came into being, but there was not yet a lot of take-up. If you needed cash on a trip, then you either took enough with you at the start, or you took your passbook (remember those) with you, having had your signature recorded in the back in 'invisible ink'. You could then make a passbook withdrawal at a Branch of your bank by having the teller check your signature against the hidden one in the passbook using some magic light!

When we reached Hamilton, we thought it only really feasible to camp in the caravan park. So, we paid for a tent site for the night. And then we had a dreadful realisation. We had just used up the last of our cash, it was a Friday evening, the banks had shut, and therefore there was no access to any money until Monday morning! We had some supplies, but not enough. Oh dear!

Scott and I decided that the dilemma would be best dealt with after a hot shower. But during this process, I locked the shorts with the car keys in the pocket in the boot of the car. We had to virtually jemmy our way into the boot from the back seat – no nice fold down boot access back then. Oh, Hamilton! What a welcome you gave us.

We were discussing our plight, when the father of a family in a caravan on the neighbouring site came over. He said hello, and asked us what the problem was. He told us that he and his wife and kids were from Fiji, and on vacation in Australia. He peeled off several red banknotes from his cash wad and gave them to us. “We’ll still be here on Monday morning, so you can pay me back on Monday morning after you get to the bank.”

What an amazing act of Christian charity!

#### Epilogue.

On Monday morning, we withdrew cash from the bank, paid back our Fijian friends, and then headed out of town towards the Grampians. A short distance out of Hamilton, a car coming the other way drifted a bit off the bitumen onto the gravel, up came some stones, and our windscreen shattered. We limped back into Hamilton to have that fixed. Hamilton was not letting go of us that easily! After getting the windscreen fixed, we decided we’d had enough of Hamilton and finally managed a dash into Hall’s Gap. But, given the cost of the windscreen, we were now again low on cash. Tuesday saw an unplanned trip to Stawell to get yet more cash. What an adventure!

