



# Connections

◆ A Journal by & for Women in Ministry ◆

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## Thank God He's Not Like Us!

By Hilary Buck

Once we cry, "It's not fair!" at some childhood wrong, we rarely abandon the sentiment in adult life. We want justice whether it's for murder, tax evasion, welfare cheating or just inconsiderate self-serving behavior. We want it to include retribution and we can get upset when it doesn't. We know it's a forlorn hope but occasionally the world is fair, if only in small ways.

Our supermarket was squeezed onto a site smaller than normal and at busy times it gets congested. At Christmas it gets gridlocked. During my visit, the queues for the checkouts extended halfway down the aisles. By unspoken agreement a gap was left between the top of all the aisles and the checkouts so shoppers could still move about. As one person paid up and left, and before we could all move up, we watched someone take advantage of this alley and nip in, positioning their groaning trolley second in line and leaving all of us still staring at soups and cereals in the aisles, obediently waiting our turn.

No one said anything, but I wouldn't like to put to print the collective thoughts of the weary shoppers toward this blatant queue jumper, even in the season of goodwill. However, our queue jumper had pushed in behind someone who got into an argument with the cashier and we actually reached the tills and got our groceries scanned and paid for, whilst the queue jumper was still waiting. I bet all those who saw what happened left feeling rather pleased!

God knows we don't like to see people getting away with things. But more important than our reactions even to the most heinous crime, the disposition of our hearts to condemn others

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## Thank God

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can leave us struggling with God's grace. How well Jesus portrayed our wrong-headed reaction to his grace at the end of the parable of the Prodigal Son. "It's not fair," the elder brother shouts as he stomps out of the house in an angry resentful sulk, offended by his father's forgiveness and complete restitution of his younger, undeserving, disrespectful, dissolute brother.

But God does not discriminate, and his grace extends to all of us, however unworthy we may consider each other to be. Look at the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22:1-14. The king commands his servants to go out into the highways and invite everyone they can find to come to the wedding. It says the servants gather up everyone, both the bad and good. So who's left out? Regardless of what we have done everybody can come to the marriage feast. Because Jesus didn't come to give us our comeuppance—he came to save us.



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## *Connections*

### Mission Statement

**Primary:** The Connections for Clergy Support Department provides intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual support and encouragement in the personal lives of GCI ministry families.

Three primary means of serving are the *Connections* journal, the Connections for a Successful Ministry and Life web pages, and the Nurturennet forum. We highlight women in ministry but are inclusive of the needs of the entire family.

**Secondary:** To promote respect, understanding and support for women, their personal ministries and ministries that serve them.

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• CALIFORNIA •  
TAM 2 U

## A Day Like Any Other

The day Jesus was born was a day much like any other. Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem for the census, which wasn't a normal occurrence, but for the rest of the world, on that day it was business as usual. Virtually no one was aware that all the prophecies of the Bible were about to be fulfilled in this one special but unpretentious event. Even the weary travelers didn't realize the import of this birth. They knew something was different—the conception certainly was—but neither they nor anyone else could foresee all that would happen during the next 33 or so years.

The birth and life of Jesus made waves from Judea to Galilee, with a ripple effect still felt today. Because of his birth, the whole world is different. His life and teachings affect human society the way no other human being or culture ever has. Many if not all colleges and universities were founded by Christians and based on Christian principles, giving education Christ-centered direction.

Science and government were affected too. Until recently both were heavily influenced by theology. Theology was called the Queen of the Sciences because it informed and illuminated all other branches of study. Government, at least in the United States and some other Western countries, was based on belief in God and the principles of the Bible, including the Ten Commandments.

Jesus elevated the status of women, children and the elderly and all marginalized

people. In him, we are all equal.

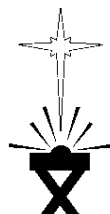
The biggest difference is in the life of his followers. The transforming work of the Holy Spirit has changed countless lives and given many people peace and purpose. The hope of the resurrection inspires those with no hope in this life and helps them face death with acceptance rather than fear and dread.

If Jesus hadn't been born, who knows which influences would have dominated the world? Well, we know which influence—the powers of darkness. The battle against those powers continues to this day. But the outcome is certain, all because God sent his Son as a baby, to live, die and be resurrected and to sanctify human life. He conquered sin and death and gives us hope and a future.

The day Jesus was born was indeed a day much like any other, but what happened after his resurrection was more like the aftermath of many earthquakes, hurricanes and tsunamis. As we celebrate the birth of God with us, let's remember what that baby started—redemption, reconciliation and life in Christ. The ordinary, normal day of his birth gave us the new norm, which is anything but ordinary.

May our lives continue to manifest and reflect his grace.

Tammy



A little child  
a shining star  
a stable rude,  
the door ajar.  
Yet in that place  
so crude, forlorn,  
The Hope of all  
the world was born.

—Anonymous

# The Gloves Are Off

By Sue Berger



It's a beautiful sparkling day as I walk into the clinic. One of the technicians quickly greets me and gives me a hug. We've gotten to know one another over the years and enjoy catching up on each other's lives during my regular visits. We chat and laugh easily while doing my weigh-in and checking vitals. She jots figures in my chart then pulls a couple latex gloves from a box on the wall, tugs them onto her hands and gives the top edges a satisfying snap.

Suddenly I feel as if my chair has slid across the room to the opposite wall. I'm untouchable. For some invisible reason, precautions are taken and barriers are erected. Neither speaks while she pricks my finger, creating the bead of blood required for the test. After a quick daub with gauze and a bandage taped in place, my friend peels off the gloves and shoots them into the trashcan like rubber bands. We joke that she's had a lot of practice on that shot. Our pre-glove chatter resumes as I follow her into the next room.

Later, I'm still haunted by that momentary feeling of alienation. The simple act of pulling on gloves made me feel rejected, distanced and isolated. While I rationally understood the precaution required, it evoked an emotional response. A friend had shielded herself from me. She'd taken preventive measures before touching me (although she'd hugged me in the lobby). The mixed message caused me to feel suspicious and distrustful, emotions I had to squelch by reminding myself of the professional legalities involved.

But the feeling was undeniable and as I muse on it, I begin to think of Jesus. (OK, you knew it was coming.) What an amazing

thing it was to have Jesus walking this earth among us—born as a human infant. Does it get any messier or more personal than that? He was an unsteady toddler, an exploring child and a gangly teen. All stages with their quota of bumps, bruises and scrapes, undoubtedly treated, bandaged and kissed by his mother. That reassuring care and human touch are evident in his ministry as he reached out to heal those around him. Nobody was untouchable. Even those who for all rational purposes, should have been.

I'm not advocating unreasonable contact with communicable diseases, although I admit to having great admiration for missionaries who live with quarantined populations. Some eventually succumb to the same disease. I can think of no greater demonstration of love than to be willing to die alongside our fellow brothers and sisters.

And isn't that exactly what Jesus did? Emmanuel. God with us. Here on earth, mucking it up with the average Joe, experiencing our frailties, touching our diseases, mingling his blood, sweat and tears with ours. No precautions. No alienation. No gloves.

Small wonder the masses were attracted to him. Nothing repelled him. Nothing caused him to draw back or avoid them. To the contrary: he was moved by their pain and reached out to touch, hold and heal. He embodied God's willingness to gather us into his heart regardless of our human condition.

The gloves are still off today. And that is Good News for you and me.



Sue says: "My flowerbeds look barren after summer's brutal heat and drought took its toll. I'm dreaming of drought-resistant plants to take their place come spring." You may email Sue at [sueberger2000@gmail.com](mailto:sueberger2000@gmail.com).



## Briefly Speaking...

### Leaving the Building

She noticed the two bikes parked in a church parking lot next to a makeshift sign, “Motorcycle Parking.” Someone’s got a sense of humor. She had gone for a ride on her Harley that Sunday morning, not really planning to attend church services, but the motorcycles in the parking lot intrigued her. Maybe this was her kind of church.

As it turned out, it was her kind of church. She walked in to find a friendly pastor and a group of people she felt comfortable with. And some months later many of these same people attended her baptism.

Isn’t it amazing how God draws people? He’s certainly creative about it, that’s for sure. Who would have thought motorcycles in a parking lot would do the trick. Motorcycles in a parking lot aren’t enough, of course. Motorcycles aren’t for everyone. Though I suggested to Ed that we buy motorcycles when we retired, he discouraged that idea before it got out of hand.

Churches want to attract people. Some use humorous signs. More traditional churches build large edifices and provide formal services. Megachurches offer contemporary entertainment, lots of programs and come-as-you-are environs.

But attracting people to church hasn’t been working too well. It’s obvious church is not for most people these days. What’s more important is bringing the church to people. It’s how we allow Christ to shine through our daily interactions with others that shows how good the good news really is.

—Sheila Graham  
[sheila.graham@gci.org](mailto:sheila.graham@gci.org)



## I Am Thankful

*By Norma Thibault*

As we celebrated Thanksgiving Day in Canada, I asked myself, “What am I thankful for?” First I am thankful we have a God who is love and whose love includes all humanity. He loves us so much he gave us the greatest gift he could ever give—his Son. He also gave us the fruit of his Spirit and all he asks in return is our gratitude.

I am grateful that over the centuries God has inspired people to labor in love to copy and translate the Scriptures so we are able to read them today. I am also grateful for those who have written the beautiful hymns we sing, whose words are filled with hope and promise.

I am grateful for the abundant life he gives us, a life not measured by physical or material possessions, but by the fruit of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. I am grateful for the knowledge and understanding God has given us and the opportunity to share it with others by being lights to the world.

I thank God for putting us in the fellowship we are in, Grace Communion, and for the leaders he has given us who have remained loyal and faithful to him and who have helped and encouraged us through the changes God inspired. I could go on all day. These are only a few of the things I am grateful for.

One last thing I would like to thank God for is the family he has given us, for our parents and grandparents who set a good example for us, for my loving husband Dennis of 52 years, our five wonderful children and their spouses, our ten grandchildren and three

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## I Am Thankful

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great grandchildren. Thank you God for the beautiful relationship we have with all of them and our extended family as well as our neighbors and friends.

And thank you Tammy and all who are responsible for this publication for giving me the opportunity to express my gratitude.

“To God be the glory, great things he hath done.”



*Norma says: “My husband and I spend a lot of time traveling as our five children are scattered throughout Canada and the U.S. We had a family reunion in Indianapolis where we attended the wedding of one of our granddaughters. We are looking forward to the birth of our eleventh grandchild in the spring.” You may email Norma at [dentbo@shaw.ca](mailto:dentbo@shaw.ca).*

### Please Write!

*Connections* needs you! When I ask for articles, the first thing I hear is, “I’m not a writer.” Well, I wasn’t either, but with practice and a good editor, I’ve become one. You can too. Please take that idea, journal entry or *aha* moment and put it in article form. Just make sure it’s between 500 to 700 words and read it over a few times before sending it in.

We’d love to hear from our ordained women! We’d like to share your experiences as a pioneer in this exciting new world of women elders. Please send your article, photo and bio to Tammy Tkach at [tammy.tkach@gci.org](mailto:tammy.tkach@gci.org).

## Old and in the Way

### Ugly Sweaters

*By Joyce Catherwood*

“Please! Can’t you help me? Get me out of here!” my mom pleaded as she tugged on the hospital bed railing. And then she pointed, hand trembling, at the crimson red cardinal on a bird feeder just beyond her bedroom window. “I wish I could fly away,” she said longingly. All day long, she begged me to rescue her. From time to time, I had to leave the room because it was too much to bear.

It had taken years, but we had finally arrived at this place. My mom’s body had totally betrayed her. She was bed-bound—trapped and imprisoned by a series of debilitating health issues, including surgeries for colon and breast cancer. Her memory had faded almost completely.

I felt I was failing her because all I could do was be present, sitting on a chair drawn close to her bedside. My own coping and caregiving resources were hanging by a thread. Sheer exhaustion prevented me from being fully engaged in her profoundly disturbing emotional struggle. What do you say to a loved one who has reached her final days, but is unable to grasp what that means? Whatever words of comfort or explanation I could say didn’t matter. They were quickly forgotten.

Now, lest you get the wrong impression, my decade-long caregiving journey with my mom started out on a high note and stayed that way for the most part. It was a shared adventure that made me feel worthwhile and

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## Ugly Sweaters

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useful. Under normal circumstances, my mom was light-hearted, easy going and fun. As we navigated her numerous serious illnesses, we laughed a lot.

Trips to the doctors' offices were eventful. Having become somewhat childlike, Mom would say whatever popped into her mind. If she noticed a woman in the waiting room wearing a sweater she didn't care for, she had to comment: "Look at that ugly sweater!" Saying, "Shh, Mom! She can hear you!" made no difference.

Or she might decide to put her finger in her nose, declining my polite offer of a tissue, with a big smile on her face. More than once, I wanted to move to the other side of the room and pretend she wasn't with me. Sometimes I wondered if she put me in awkward predicaments just for the fun of it.

She always forgot what her colostomy bag was for, and then thought it hilarious when I explained it once again. Sometimes she watered her artificial flowers. When I reminded her they didn't need water, she thought that was funny too. Then there was the daily morning ritual helping her get dressed. I'd get her all fixed up, everything matching and

colorful and come back an hour later to find she had changed clothes. I tried to hide one particularly frayed and snagged old gray sweater I didn't have the heart to throw away, but she always mysteriously managed to dig it out and put it on. (Yes, she had her own ugly sweater.) Most of the time, it didn't matter. But when we were expecting company, I know guests wondered why I didn't buy her some decent clothes.

Mom had not always been a mischievous and forgetful great-grandma who delighted great-grandchildren by tickling them under their chins. She had been a beloved daughter, a fun sister, a faithful wife, a best friend of many, a concerned caregiver. She made the best cheesecake in the world.

Talk about having a green thumb—amazing flowers and exotic plants would grow in dirt she left behind on her potting table. She loved traveling, camping and desert rock hunting. She was a top-notch bargain hunter. I'm told she was quite the gal in her younger years. She enjoyed looking snazzy and throwing hen parties with her friends. She was a devoted grandma and mom. I was the girl she always wanted, born

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## Nurturenet

Nurturenet is a computer forum for women in ministry. Its purpose is to help you stay connected through digest-mode communication (each day's messages compiled into one email). You may use it for requests for information, prayer requests, to share ideas and resources, to receive updates on *Connections* news or just to stay connected!



Do we  
have  
your  
email  
address?

To join or update your email address, please send Tammy a message at [tammy.tkach@gci.org](mailto:tammy.tkach@gci.org). Please do not reply to a post unless you want to address the entire list.

## Ugly Sweaters

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eight years after my brother, the boy she always wanted.

Because dealing with dementia means living in the moment with the one afflicted, often I would forget the able-bodied and sound-minded individual that was my mom. She was too easily overshadowed by the intense caregiving required as she approached old age. Had she been able to verbalize it, Mom would have wanted me and everyone else to remember all she had been and accomplished, now unrecognizable behind the façade of infirmity, wrinkles and failing memory.



The next time you look into the limpid eyes of an elderly, worn-out human being who may feel old and in the way, try to see beyond the frail exterior and search for the essence of his or her youth and beauty, good times, love, values, hopes and dreams, including the wounds and scars of living. Despite the debilitation or diminished memory, you may be surprised by their response.

I will never forget my mom's last words

to me. Her quality of life continued to ebb and we arranged a place in a hospice care facility. She had to be transported by ambulance. Unusually alert and talkative, she chatted to the attendant riding with her, saying who knows what. I was afraid to ask. At least he wasn't wearing an ugly sweater.

When they put her on a stretcher and wheeled her to her room, she was awake and propped upright. I remember thinking how pretty she looked. Before I left her room, she pointed at me and told the nurse, "That's my beautiful daughter!"

Mom suddenly fell into a coma-like state. We lost the ability to reach each other. And then she was gone, her God-given purpose in life fulfilled. I hate to admit it, but it took me a long time to throw away her favorite frayed and faded, ugly gray sweater.



*Joyce says: "It's remarkable what lessons one can learn from two frightened and skittish rescue cats.*

*Gaining the trust of my new kitties requires unconditional love and unbelievable patience. I think I have a glimpse of how God feels when we needlessly live in fear." You may email Joyce at [joyce.catherwood@gci.org](mailto:joyce.catherwood@gci.org).*

### Confidential Peer Listener Line

Shall we talk? We're here for you!

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# Zorro and Me

## Are We There Yet?

By Barbara Dahlgren

Zorro never takes the direct route anywhere. I don't say this to be demeaning. It's just a fact. If he ever dies en route somewhere I will never know where to tell the police to look for the body because he takes a different road every time. This of course drives me crazy.

Once we had been transferred from the Midwest to the Northwest. It was almost evening when we finally got the car all loaded, kids belted in and headed out. About two miles down the road I asked, "Where's the map?"

He said, "I don't have one."

"You mean we are moving 2,000 miles and you don't have a map?"

"I don't need one yet. I'm just following the sun. The sun sets in the west so I know we are headed in the right direction."

Needless to say "following the sun" became one of the catch phrases in our household. It wasn't the route I would have chosen but we got there just the same. Actually it's a life lesson we can all learn from because it seems God doesn't take the direct route in our lives either.

A good example is the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness. "When Pharaoh

let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, 'If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt'" (Exodus 13:17, *NIV*). Therefore a trip some suggest would have taken nearer to 40 days ended up taking 40 years.

Today we are on a journey as well and it often doesn't seem to be the direct route. God will almost never take the route we would choose if we were in charge. We want that direct route because we don't want to waste time. And as we travel I'm sure we must sound like a bunch of whiners.

It reminds me of an Animaniacs (an American animated series from Warner Brothers) song (I do love Animaniacs!) called "Are We There Yet?" It's a takeoff of three kids in the back seat of a car driving their parents crazy as the family forges ahead to their destination. I often wondered if they didn't spy on our family to get some of these lyrics: "Are we there yet?" "I'm tired." "I'm hungry." "How far?" "My nose is snotty." "Gotta use the potty." "Ow, he hit me!" "Ow, she bit me!" "He said he's gonna get me." "No I didn't!" "Yes, you did!" "Are we there yet?"



*Zorro and Barbara are looking forward to the whole family being together in Austin, Texas, for Christmas. Their granddaughter Sophia just turned 4 and loves to sing "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer!" You can read Barbara's blog, Barbara's Banter, at [www.barbdahlgren.com](http://www.barbdahlgren.com) and contact her at [bydahlgren@pacbell.net](mailto:bydahlgren@pacbell.net). She loves hearing from you.*

To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover the prisoner was you.

—Author Unknown



## Gabriel's Mission

By Cathy Emerson

We overhear a conversation at the center of the universe as the triune God speaks. Gabriel is being assigned the ultimate of important missions. Listen in as Gabriel picks up the tale around A.D. 4-6:

“On to other matters—I have a commission for you that will entail much travel to earth.” The Eternal smiled. “You shall become my special messenger.”

I listened in amazement as the Eternal divulged his wonderful ideas and plans. The whole throne area had obviously given their input. The 25 elders, most ancient of all created beings in the universe, added their wisdom. Even the angels at the throne area had their say.

The more I listened, the more awestruck I became. For a smidgen of eternity, the God-head planned to do something mysterious and inexplicable—we might call it being in two dimensions at the same time—and enter the womb of a woman while remaining omnipresent. Never before had anything like this happened. The very one who is responsible for all things, was going to enter the constraints of time. He was about to empty himself of divinity as he entered humanity.

The Logos would grow for nine months in total darkness, restricted by a developing human body. He would be born small, weak and helpless, relying on the mother-love he had instilled in woman from the beginning. He would cry, feel hunger, cold and pain for the first time. He would face rejection and ridicule, only to die in agony for the sake of those people.

He would give honor to an imperfect

mother and an imperfect stepfather. All this from one who is perfect! As Creator, he was willing to risk everything for those he so lovingly created. Nothing short of perfection would do.

I remember the time when he put the first man to sleep to create a woman from the man's rib. The Logos was so particular about dusting off the last speck of imperfection before presenting her to Adam. Even there, his craftsmanship was perfect. He knew, even then, that he would be entrusted to a young mother. Logos wanted everything just right.

Someday, humankind will have perfect peace, perfect rest and perfect purpose. All will begin with that perfect sacrifice of Logos, decided from the beginning of the world. So many people long for the power shown when the Logos returns a second time, forgetting the power of his humiliating death. Only God would have the sense of love and purpose to endure such travesty upon self to perform a rescue.

As the meeting drew to a close, I jumped up quivering with justifiable excitement and joy. Using my human form (so as not to frighten people) I, Gabriel, prepared to deliver a message of hope to an older couple in Ain Karim. They would become the parents of a boy called John the Baptizer. After that I would be having a talk with a graceful young teenager in Nazareth! And so began one of the most exciting times in my long service to the family Eternal.



*Cathy says: “We put up blue lights to show respect for four police officers gunned down execution-style by a deranged, angry gunman. We have such glad tidings at Christmas—today would be a good time to come back, Jesus! The pain is getting so big.” You may email Cathy at [ceewee@juno.com](mailto:ceewee@juno.com).*

(This article is from the San Jose, California, October 2011 newsletter *A Light in the Valley*. It has been slightly modified for use in *Connections*.)

## An Unexpected Honor

By Jim Roberts

**B**ut I'm not even a Presbyterian!" This is how my wife Hazel protested June 5 when we received a stunning surprise.

First a little background. For some 13 years Christ Presbyterian Church (CPC), where our Grace Communion International (GCI) church meets, has employed Hazel. She manages use of the facilities by all seven churches that meet there weekly. She also coordinates use by a day care center and several scout troops during the week. There are also many office business duties, plus she ministers to the members of CPC.

Four pastors have been in the pulpit during her tenure, plus periods in between with no pastor. Hazel had to procure pulpit supply each week, including myself. During a three-year period of one pastor's employ, Hazel

and I did most of the personal ministry to CPC members because the pastor would not.

With that history in mind, I switch to June 5 and review what happened. We attended at CPC that Sunday because a long-time pastor was retiring. He had helped to fill the pulpit often and mentored the present pastor. He is also a friend. We noticed there was to be an ordination ceremony at the end of services. We looked around to try and figure out who might be ordained.

At last the speech was given to announce an ordination of a deserving person. Hazel was called forward! We felt like we were shot with a stun gun. As Hazel got to her feet and tried to walk, she said out loud, "But I'm not even Presbyterian!" The pastor responded, "We decided not to hold that against you."

They read off 20 questions for Hazel to affirm agreement. They handed her an ordination certificate titling her "Minister of Congregational Care." They gave her a stole or vestment, white with gold embroidery, and a lovely gold-and-silver cross necklace. We looked to see if we still had our socks on or if they had been knocked off!

The next Sunday was Pentecost. Yours truly was scheduled to speak in CPC and our own GCI church. However, I woke up too ill to get out of bed. It was too late to call someone. Hazel stepped up and said, "Well, I know about Pentecost. I'll fill in for you." So, this brand new minister took two impromptu pulpits one week after her ordination. And she was definitely inspired because she did a remarkable job.

Jesus was always surprising and sometimes shocking his disciples. God seems to be a God of surprises. He doesn't seem to operate with what we call logic. He has his own plans and purposes, and they often seem

The next moment is as much beyond our grasp, and as much in God's care, as that a hundred years away. Care for the next minute is just as foolish as care for a day in the next thousand years. In neither can we do anything, in both God is doing everything.



—C.S. Lewis

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## An Unexpected Honor

(Continued from page 11)

to run contrary to ours. I believe we are supposed to walk by faith, not by sight, right? That's what Hazel and I will try to do as we discover what God has in mind with this new affirmation of Hazel's value to the church who employs her, as well as to our own church!



*Jim and Hazel Roberts pastor the Grace Communion International Church called the One in Christ Community Church in San Leandro, California. They have built a wonderful relationship with the Presbyterian Church where GCI meets and Hazel has worked for 13 years. They love spending time with their grandkids in the Santa Rosa area. You may email her at [hazel.roberts@gci.org](mailto:hazel.roberts@gci.org).*

### Blog Roll

Sue Berger:

[www.onepilgrimsusings.com](http://www.onepilgrimsusings.com)

Joyce Catherwood:

<http://i-love-to-tell-the-story.blogspot.com>

Barbara Dahlgren:

[www.barbdahlgren.com](http://www.barbdahlgren.com)

Sheila Dela Peña:

<http://velvetconfections.multiply.com>

Leslie Howard

Sister Circle Prayer Network on Facebook

Tammy Tkach:

[www.ttkach.wordpress.com](http://www.ttkach.wordpress.com)

Send us your blog address.

## Connecting & Bonding

Dear sisters in ministry,

As we begin our 15<sup>th</sup> year of *Connecting & Bonding* (C&B), I can honestly say the passion I feel for this ministry remains strong. Our goal is still to connect ministers' wives with one another and create a bond of friendship cemented by the love of God. Many have told me C&B has made a positive impact in their lives. I am thankful when I see how our sisters continue to be blessed by this ministry.

*Connecting & Bonding* had another exciting year! At our Lexington, Kentucky, conference we were admonished to tend our gardens (our lives) and keep out the weeds that always try to creep in. In Ontario, California, we were encouraged to stay in the Word of God. One suggestion was to read the "One Year Bible." We were also reminded no matter what we are going through, Jesus is right there with us. We are never alone.

As we plan for 2012, we would like to invite you to come and share a weekend with many of your sisters. Each year we are blessed with wonderful speakers.

**March 9 to 11: Lexington, Kentucky.** The guest speaker will be Heidi McLaughlin ([www.heartconnection.ca](http://www.heartconnection.ca)) from Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada. In addition to being a speaker and pastor's wife, Heidi is author of *Beauty Unleashed*, *Transforming a Woman's Soul*, and *Sand to Pearls: Making Bold Choices to Enrich Your Life*. We look forward to hearing her journey.

*Continued on page 13*

**March 9 to 11, Ontario, California.** Heidi will be joining us along with Carol Rischer ([www.carolrischer.com](http://www.carolrischer.com)), author, speaker, pianist, worship leader, radio commentator, teacher and pastor's wife. Carol was such a blessing to us in Lexington last year we've invited her to the California conference.

Please mark your calendars with the conference dates for 2012. Our theme this year is "Renewing Our Hearts With Jesus" taken from Romans 12:2 (*NIV*). "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

You may register on our website at [www.connectingandbonding.org](http://www.connectingandbonding.org) and pay with credit card or mail the application form on the next page to:

Connecting & Bonding  
300 South Highland Avenue  
Suite 6-C #156  
Banning, CA 2220

Please keep C&B in your prayers. Once again our mission is to build up and edify one another by connecting and bonding in the presence of God. Always remember whatever we are going through we are not alone. We are blessed to have Jesus and many sisters who are willing to help in any way. I hope to see many of you this year.

You are in my prayers!  
Jannice May

### **Being a Light...*has a lighter side!***

Once upon a time in their marriage, my dad did something really stupid. My mom chewed him out for it. He apologized; they made up. However, from time to time, my mom mentions what he had done. "Honey," my dad finally said one day, "why do you keep bringing that up? I thought your policy was 'forgive and forget.'"

"It is," she said. "I just don't want you to forget that I've forgiven and forgotten."

The young man ahead of my father at the flower shop was taking an unusually long time to place his order. When the clerk asked how she could help, he explained that his girlfriend was turning 19 and he couldn't decide whether to give her a dozen roses or 19 roses—one for each year of her life.

The woman put aside her business judgment and advised, "She may be your 19-year-old girlfriend now, but someday she could be your 50-year-old wife." The young man bought a dozen roses.

—cleanlaffs

# Ministers' Wives Conferences 2012

## Registration Information

Full Name	
Address	
City, State, Zip	
Phone	
Email	

*Please mark the conference(s) you wish to attend and mark which type of room you need.  
The following prices are for accommodations, meals and registration fees.*

<p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> <b>LEXINGTON, KY</b> Embassy Suites March 9 -11, 2012</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Triple (\$303/person) or 3 payments* of \$101</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Double (\$351/person) or 3 payments* of \$117</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Single (\$492/person) or 3 payments* of \$164</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If you should cancel, the registration fee of \$150 is not refundable.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> <b>ONTARIO, CA</b> Hilton Ontario Airport Aug 31 - Sept 3 2012</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Double (\$417/person) or 3 payments* of \$139</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Single (\$555/person) or 3 payments* of \$185</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If you should cancel, the registration fee of \$150 is not refundable.</p>
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<p>*If you are making 3 payments the due dates are: 1st payment—January 13, 2012 2nd payment—February 10, 2012 3rd payment—March 2, 2012</p> <p>If final payment is not received by March 2, there will be an additional charge of \$50.</p>	<p>*If you are making 3 payments the due dates are: 1st payment—March 23, 2012 2nd payment—June 15, 2012 3rd payment—August 3, 2012</p> <p>If final payment is not received by August 3, there will be an additional charge of \$50.</p>
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<p>I plan to share accommodations with the following person/people: (No need to send forms together.)</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p>I plan to share accommodations with the following person/people: (No need to send forms together.)</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>
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Please indicate if you have any physical limitations that would require wheelchair accessibility or limit your stair use:  
 Yes  No (If yes, please explain in comments below.)

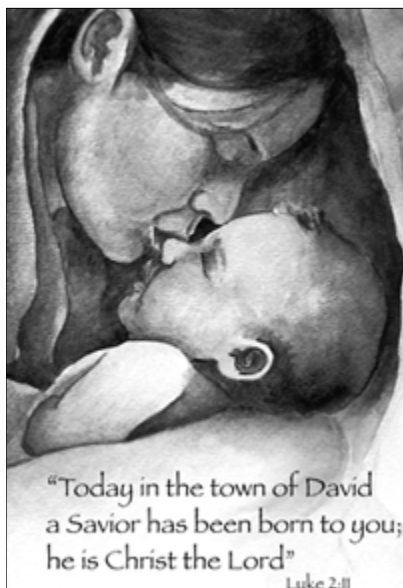
Please indicate if you have any dietary needs:  
 Yes  No (If yes, please explain in comments below.)

Comments:

If you have questions, contact Jannice May at 626-379-0505 or conbond@acninc.net  
Please send completed form to:  
Connecting & Bonding, 300 S. Highland Springs Ave., Suite 6-C #156, Banning, CA 92220

*“Was there a moment, known only to God, when all the stars held their breath, when the galaxies paused in their dance for a fraction of a second, and the Word, who had called it all into being, went with all his love into the womb of a young girl, and the universe started to breathe again, and the ancient harmonies resumed their song, and the angels clapped their hands for joy?”*

*“Power. Greater power than we can imagine, abandoned, as the Word knew the powerlessness of the unborn child, still unformed, taking up almost no space in the great ocean of amniotic fluid, unseeing, unhearing, unknowing. Slowly growing, as any human embryo grows, arms and legs and a head, eyes, mouth, nose, slowly swimming into life until the ocean in the womb is no longer large enough, and it is time for birth.”*



*—Bright Evening Star,  
Mystery of the Incarnation  
by Madeleine L’Engle  
Submitted by Joyce Catherwood*

*Have a wonderful Christmas!*