



# Connections

◆ A JOURNAL BY & FOR ELDERS' WIVES & FAMILIES ◆

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## Our Father in Heaven

By Shirley Henderson

One Christmas day, our adult children suggested we watch *The Miracle Maker*, a wonderful animated film of the life of Jesus. I was struck by a scene of the Pharisees muttering at the audacity of Jesus calling God *Father*. It was an *aha!* moment for me. For possibly the first time I stopped to think of the wonder and privilege of being able to refer to this wonderful, patient, merciful and loving being as Father. All my life I prayed to my Father in heaven without understanding this rare, sacred and valuable privilege.

The magnitude of this realization caused me to dwell on it at length. None of the prophets and leaders in the Old Testament experienced the privilege of a father-child relationship with God. Not David, a man after God's own heart, whose psalms expressed the depth of love and appreciation for God few of us could hope to equal. Not Abraham, from whom God made a mighty nation because of his unquestioning faith. Not Noah, who was willing to do the unbelievable because God told him to, or Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and many others. People who were awesome examples of faith and obedience did so without fully understanding the relationship that was possible with the Lord.

No matter what our personal relationships have been with our physical fathers, we have an all-powerful, all-loving Father who would do anything for us—even die for us. He came to earth to set an example of what a vital relationship is all about. Do we grasp the precious reality of that relationship—the incalculable value and honor of being called a child of God?

My husband once gave a sermon about how God was the father he never really had, as he was a child of divorce. It was a good sermon but because I had an up-and-down relationship with my biological father, it didn't have the same effect on me. The reality of a father who loves us unconditionally was still too hard for me to grasp. And yet, how many of us begin our prayers with "Our Father in heaven"? Imagine trying to pray without using the word *Father*. How that distances us from

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## Our Father in Heaven

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God or God from us. Jesus was teaching us what true love is through the relationship he had with God and that we can now have with God our Father.

In the Old Testament, those God called approached him with fear and trepidation. They stood in awe of him and viewed him from a distance. They lived in fear of angering him because they did not see him clearly, and didn't understand the enormity of the love he has for mankind. Their ability to connect with him was blocked.

When Jesus came to this earth to live and to die and then live again for us, to set an example we should follow, to reconcile us to the Father, he ripped the veil that kept us from the kind of relationship that allowed us to call God *Father*. Sometimes we view that relationship through a glass darkly, as Paul says. It helps me to picture Jesus holding out his hand, and as I take his hand he reaches up to God the Father and places my hand in God's.

We can call God our *Abba Father*. *Abba* correctly translated would be Daddy! How that changes the relationship. The Bible tells us perfect love casts out fear. We can experience perfect love through Jesus our Savior by living in the relationship with our Father he made possible through his Holy Spirit.

The next time you pray to your Father, take a moment to pause and reflect on the magnitude of the honor of being able to do just that!



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*Shirley has returned to the United Kingdom after 14 years in Africa when her husband James took up the post of National Director for the WCG, UK. They live in Scotland. Shirley is looking forward to getting involved with women's ministry. She's especially looking forward to being a few thousand miles nearer to her three children. She has a married daughter living in England and two sons living in Scotland. E-mail her at [shirley.henderson@wcg.org](mailto:shirley.henderson@wcg.org).*

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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 WCG ministry families.

Three primary means of serving are the *Connections* journal, the "Connections for a Successful Ministry and Life" web pages, and the Nurturernet forum. We highlight ministry wives 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.



## What's Important?

As I write this, it's just the beginning of November, but the holiday season is well under way. The newspapers, television and radio are starting to advertise, persuading us to buy gifts. Everyone has a hand out, waiting for you to buy or donate. I'm already tired of the hype and commercialism. It makes me want to give up on Christmas—that part of it anyway. I want to keep the part about the Incarnation and the miracle of God becoming one of us.

*The Case for Christmas* by Lee Strobel is an interesting little book written from a curious journalist's point of view. His goal is to sort through the myths and get to the facts. And there are plenty of both. Strobel interviewed scholars and theologians, asking the hard questions a Christmas skeptic would ask. His conclusion, based on historical facts, eyewitness accounts and archeological data, is what you would expect—the baby in the manger was Jesus, the Savior of the world, and the story is true.

The modern world has long been throwing out the baby, but keeping the bath water, so to speak. Christmas is more and more about giving and getting gifts, rather than the greatest gift God gave humanity.

Some are trying to change Christmas to an all-inclusive holiday. They want to call the Christmas tree a holiday tree. They want us to eat a holiday dinner and sing holiday songs. Just substitute holiday anytime you see Christmas and you'll make the secularists happy.

But it's more than a holiday, more than the biggest shopping month of the year, more than an excuse for parties and

overeating. Just the name *Christmas* reminds people of Christ, and perhaps that's what makes the secularists so uncomfortable. By reducing it to a holiday, they can ignore who we celebrate and honor as the reason for the season.

Christmas remains a reminder as well as an opportunity. It reminds us of our need for a Savior and how God fulfilled our need through Jesus. It's an annual opportunity to talk about what we celebrate when we put up a tree, lights and decorations, including nativity scenes.

For the most part, I intend to stay home from the stores and away from the shopping frenzy. I don't like all the trappings of the modern-day Christmas season, with the attendant stress, fatigue, maxed-out credit cards and meaningless, forced gift giving. But I do need Christmas and celebrate it in my low-key way. We all need Christmas because we need to celebrate the greatest story ever told, the greatest life ever lived and the hope of all people.

The case for Christmas is strong. Let's keep it real and meaningful, remembering what's important—Immanuel, God with us!

Tammy



Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look what they can do when they stick together.



—Vesta M. Kelly

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# Book Review

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## Tired of Trying to Measure Up

**Author: Jeff VanVonderen**  
Bethany House Publishers, © 1989

*Reviewed by Sue Berger*

Admit it, if trying hard were the key to the victorious Christian life, we'd all probably be in the Hall of Fame by now. We're emotionally and psychologically drained and many of us are spiritually tired as well. The last thing we need is another book, seminar or sermon giving us something more to do. What we need is rest! Jesus' response to tired people is rest (Matthew 11:28).

Part I of *Tired of Trying to Measure Up* discusses our being wounded by shame and its ramifications. Unwritten expectations and rules give us a sense that we are not acceptable as we are. We believe we are deficient, defective or worthless. Not only does this deep-seated belief alienate us from others, but also, worse, it can keep us distanced from God.

Author Jeff Van Vonderen offers a checklist just in case we don't think we suffer from shame. Indicators include using negative self-talk, not allowing ourselves to make (or admit to) mistakes, being overly responsible, martyring our own needs or acting like a victim, not trusting our radar or



gut feelings, suffering from stress-related illnesses, an inability to have guilt-free fun, inconsistent actions (flip-flopping between perfectionism and couldn't care less), difficulty in receiving gifts, procrastination, having a high need for control. See yourself there? Congratulations. You're normal. Wounded, but normal.



Part II is about being healed by grace. For those of us who have difficulty accepting gifts, grace can be a struggle. But the author teaches us to fight a different kind of battle from the one we've been trying to win through our own self-effort. Instead of being caught in the never-ending try-hard-then-give-up cycle, he introduces us to God's rest cycle where there's no performance on our part. That's good news!

We're invited to renew our minds and thinking concerning God—a God who is kind, loving and involved with people. That he likes us, wants us and handpicked us. He didn't wait until we cleaned up our act and he didn't ask for references. He's not just putting up with us and we aren't bothering him with our problems. His response to those in pain is comfort, not shame. Jesus' compassion toward people in pain always resulted in acting on their behalf—feeding them, healing them, comforting them, meeting whatever need they had. Our identity as children of God is a settled issue.

This book is wonderfully encouraging. It shows us afresh that God has already done everything necessary for us to be in close relationship with him. The problem is we have lost sight of who we are, what is true about us from God's perspective and what was done for us on the cross. The battle's frontline is in our minds. We all put our confidence in something as our source of life, value and acceptance. Give it up! Get off the works-righteousness treadmill and rest in Christ. ☺

It is only possible to live happily ever  
after on a day-to-day basis.



—Margaret Bonnano

## Growing Older

By Dixie Marino

Everyone will be older someday, right? Well, guess what I've discovered: for me, someday is here and the subject demands a little reflection on my part.

What about the old adages such as: "It's all in your mind" or "You're only as old as you think you are"? Of course it's all in my mind—and my knees and my elbows and my back and my ankles and, oh yes, in my sinuses. And on days when all the parts hurt in concert, I'm as old as I think I am.

We are able, and sometimes we are forced, to reason out most of our questions and moments of dismay as to the physical aspect of growing older. I have begun to practice the art of pacing myself. I pick my battles in the sense of does this have to be completed today? I have become a master at delegating. It's amazing how many other souls out there are more capable than I.

The slowing down adjustment I learned from Maggie Cat. Yes, Maggie is 12 years old and has adjusted beautifully. I remember long ago sitting down to write and hearing little running paws coming toward me. She would jump and land on the desk right in front of the computer screen. A while ago I noticed she would jump up onto my lap first and step up to her place in front of the screen. Now she just sits and sweetly reminds me to pick her up and set her in her proper place on the desk. She doesn't mind asking for help.

We need to let others know we are making adjustments, especially our family. People tend to keep original ideas about the

familiar—mothers don't lie down in the middle of the day. And how are they to know unless we tell them?

Being able to laugh about things helps too. It puts others at ease. I finally relented and got hearing aids last year. My family teases me about turning down the volume so they can talk about me. What they don't know is mine are digital and set by a computer so I can't regulate the volume. I hear all!

The real question for me is how—how to balance (what is a priority today), how do I gracefully decline (the holy no, thank you), how to give up doing some of the things I love doing (I can listen to others singing in the choir), how to honestly assess my ability in daily living (am I just procrastinating or do I really need to rest?). My answer is in prayer. I say prayers of thanksgiving for what still works. I pray for a positive attitude. I pray for acceptance of the things I cannot change.

Psalm 118, verse 24, says, "This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (NKJV throughout). This verse causes me to think of another word of the Lord: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). But let us not stop there. Verse 24 reads: "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."

This is the denying of the self, the laying down, shoving aside, getting tough with the self we confront everyday. The self that wants to beat me up when my knees don't

But those who hope  
in the Lord will  
Renew their strength.  
They will soar  
on wings like eagles;  
they will run  
and not grow weary, they will  
walk and not be faint.

ISAIAH 40:31



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## Growing Older

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want to work or my back is aching. You know, the pitiful self that gets discouraged and demoralized after days of non-productive or uncreative activity. It's the old self that wants to condemn and throw guilt on us.

For me it's essential to choose to be all right with this day, whatever it brings, otherwise I begin to lose peace because I haven't trusted it all to God for his blessings.

A few verses of God's promises are so important now. Isaiah 46:4: "Even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and and deliver you." Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." Isaiah 40:31: "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." We're promised when God gets through with us here and we go to be with him we will be like his Son—glorified.

Love to you all and hang in there!



*Dixie and Charles are eagerly awaiting their great granddaughter's arrival. She has almost finished crocheting a woolly pink blanket for her. Dixie says they had a beautiful fall season and she relished it—the leaf colors were sensational! Email her at [CMARINO001@ec.rr.com](mailto:CMARINO001@ec.rr.com).*




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## Voices of Our Sisters

*By Joyce Catherwood*

**Luke 1:5-80**

Immediately after the visit by an angel and being told she would be with child, Mary left to be with her extended family, Elizabeth and Zechariah, the priest. Elizabeth and Mary experienced a unique and special bonding during their miraculous pregnancies. Listen to the voice of our sister Elizabeth:

"Mary danced across our threshold. Even after several days of mountainous travel, her lovely dark eyes sparkled and she was full of smiles as she greeted us. Her tunic was tattered and dusty from traveling and her sandals were worn thin. Stones and thorns had etched deep scratches into her feet, but Mary didn't notice as she moved about lightly with the ease of youth. My little cousin was accustomed to trekking up and down narrow hillside footpaths, tending sheep or carrying water.

"And now, she was carrying greatness, the Son of God, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit. I was also with child, miraculously conceiving in my old age after spending many barren years of disappointment and disgrace. At the sound of Mary's voice, the babe in my womb leapt with great gladness as though he knew his Lord had entered our home. Exhilarated, I shouted: 'Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear! Why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me?' As we embraced, Mary burst into song, glorifying God, thrilled she had been chosen to be the mother of

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## Voices of Our Sisters

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Messiah—the longstanding dream of every Jewish girl.

“Over the next three months, it became clear why Mary came to me. In spite of our age difference, we instantly had so much in common. We talked about how we would both bear our firstborn children. We knew in advance we would have sons and knew their names. We shared the same angel messenger, Gabriel, who told us our sons would be great men. We pondered the angel’s words and wondered what it would be like for Mary to be mother of the Son of the Most High. We mused over how John would turn hearts back to God, preparing the way for Jesus. We wept as we realized that I, because of my age, would probably not live to see all this come about.

“We shared apprehension of the birth process, having seen many a sister deliver a bundle of wrinkled newborn flesh, encircled by women, bracing and soothing the moaning mother. Women’s work, it’s called, while the men sit in silence in the courtyard. Little did we know Mary would have to bring her baby into the world alone, without the usual feminine support and only Joseph to rely on.

“My John was born as expected, with family and neighbors sharing in the festivities. And my husband, Zechariah, a priest, who was struck dumb by the angel Gabriel before my pregnancy, finally spoke again.

Don’t regret growing older. It is a privilege denied to many.



—Unknown



He prophesied even more wondrous things about John and Jesus. John’s birth was an answer to our prayer, but Gabriel said it would also strengthen Mary, confirming nothing is impossible with God. She returned home refreshed and ready to face the cruel slander of her neighbors and dismay of her family as it became obvious she, though still a virgin, was with child.

“Six months later, Mary bore her holy infant in the most humble of circumstances, unnoticed by the rest of the world. But in

celestial realms, the day of Jesus’ birth was cause for jubilant celebration! Shepherds in a nearby field described how the heavens opened and an angel appeared in a blaze of glory, terrifying them. The angel said: ‘Don’t be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy for everyone! Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is Messiah and Lord!’

The shepherds recounted how suddenly a massive angelic choir appeared around the angel. They sang as though they could no longer hold back their delight and amazement, praising God in the highest, proclaiming peace on earth, goodwill toward men. Heaven erupted in joy that day because the earth had finally received her king!”



*As she recently worked on a family history scrapbook for her daughters, Joyce says she relived many memories of her childhood and especially her parents who are no longer alive. It reminded her life is about making memories. More time and effort goes into making good ones, but it’s worth it. E-mail her at [joyce.catherwood@wcg.org](mailto:joyce.catherwood@wcg.org).*





## Uncle Ben's Resolution

*By Ron Stoddart  
Bountiful, Utah*

**B**enjamin Franklin had a plan to change himself. He wrote in his autobiography: "I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection."

Of course, Franklin failed miserably. He found working on his faults improved his behavior but not his real, inner self. After weeks of concentrating on being sincere or frugal for example, he came to the conclusion he could never reach moral perfection. He'd find himself being insincere or buying something he could do without.

I have tried for years to stop sinning. Isn't that what Christians are supposed to do? We are told certain life-styles are not acceptable to God and so we fight a daily struggle to overcome and live like Jesus. Day after day, year after year, we face our personal failures because we, like Franklin, don't have the ability to change our hearts.

Every year millions of us make New Year's resolutions. We'll do better, smoke less, drink less, eat less, watch less TV, pray more, read the Bible daily. And this often lasts at least one day. Why do most New Year's resolutions fail? They fail because they depend on the same person who made the resolutions necessary!

What is the solution? How can we be perfect? In his best known sermon Jesus told people: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48, *NIV* throughout). It's an impossible task, as Franklin discovered.

What is impossible for me and you, is not impossible for God. When we admit our failure to reach perfection is when we are literally forced to depend on God's mercy. As Jeremiah wrote in Lamentations: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23).

God's mercy made a remarkable exchange possible, our sin for Jesus Christ's righteousness. Our imperfection for Jesus' perfection is a bargain nobody should pass up. If only Benjamin Franklin had known! ☺

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# What Goes Around...

By *Hannah Knaack*

If we were perfectly honest with each other, we would have to admit to a long list of “I’ll never” statements we’ve carried over from childhood. “I’ll never make my kids work this hard,” or “I’ll never give my kids dorky haircuts like this.” What we really meant was, I’ll never be like my parents!



Humor me just a moment and let’s do a quick review of those childhood promises. How many have we kept? Uh-oh, I feel an Ecclesiastes 1:9 moment coming on. Did I hear a faint snickering in the heavenly realm? Is he telling us what goes around, comes around?

I’m reminded of the time I put a permanent in my daughter’s hair when she was just 5. Out of necessity mind you, as desperate times call for desperate measures! I wasn’t trying to recreate Shirley Temple, but when my angel cut a hair band from the top of her hair leaving shorter strands sticking out all over, we were desperate.

I sure wish someone had warned me not to use the smallest perm rods. While I hadn’t used a bowl over her head as a haircut measurement, like some mothers I know, I did send her off to kindergarten with the bounciest hair of all. Who was it who said we learn as we go?

I recall something my mother did that was a stroke of pure genius. We four sisters liked to hover around Mom in the kitchen on baking day. We took turns “helping” her, as the queen bee in a busy bee hive is surrounded by her buzzing worker bees.

As she put the ingredients into the large yellow earthenware bowl, she’d select her assistant. To this day, I swear my mother



kept an entire cupboard filled with nearly empty bottles of oil just for baking day. Assisting meant one thing—holding the bottle of oil upside down over the bowl. I was so excited about being chosen as helper it didn’t occur to me I’d had this same assignment before.

Now I know you’re thinking I wasn’t the brightest bulb in the socket, but did I mention we were young, very young, and oh, so gullible? My mother could have danced the hula in a grass skirt and coconut bra over a bed of hot, glowing coals, and I would have missed it all, so intent was I on getting that last drop of oil out.

My older and much wiser sister figured it out first. Mom was doing all the fun stuff with that spoon and those ingredients, not to mention taste testing, and we got stuck holding that bottle until, and I quote, “You get to the last drop.” Where was the fun in that?

As we’re being honest, I admit to using this same genius in my kitchen when our kids were small. And while I can’t dance the hula, I’ve consumed more than my share of decadent dark chocolate in between drops of oil. Come to think of it, that was right around the time I put on those 10 pounds I can’t seem to lose.



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*Hannah and John serve the Buffalo, New York, congregation.*

*After a lovely 25th anniversary trip to the Carolinas this past October, Hannah is starting to dream about other locations—the New England states, Hawaii, New Zealand. Well, one of those might happen! While the snow is piled high this winter, she’ll be cozy with a cup of hot chocolate and the atlas, planning their next trip. E-mail Hannah at [justmomhkl@juno.com](mailto:justmomhkl@juno.com).*

## Hallelujah Coffee and Holy Water

By Sheila Dela Peña

It's the second day after the massive I storm—aptly named Milenyo, Millennia in English—that hit all of Metro Manila. Storms, or hurricanes as they are more commonly known elsewhere, regularly visit and devastate the Philippines. Yet their impact and the damages they cause are never taken for granted. This is especially true when they hit Metro Manila, the center of the country's business and industry.

I woke up this morning to the hum of our electric fan and felt so much hope and gratitude welling up inside my heart. Electricity and water were cut without any warning and everyone was literally left high and dry. The storm brought more strong winds than rain in our area, which prompted a lot of our neighbors to head for the village pool to have their baths and collect water for flushing their toilets. My dear hubby was able to collect a small bucketful from the meager rain that dripped from our downspout two days ago. Somehow, that small bucketful of water lasted the first day of the storm.



As I brewed my coffee this morning, I smiled at the sheer pleasure of the act. My hubby and I love coffee and the smell of freshly brewing dark roast Arabica beans permeating our home. We missed this simple pleasure the past two days and were grateful for the coffee sachets stashed in our pantry. I set my fresh mug of coffee and buttered toast on the table and praised God for such abundance. I am alone with our two dogs while my hubby is away on an outreach activity. I have never felt more peace and joy in my heart. As I prayed, the words *hallelujah coffee* jumped out from my lips, and how apt! There's no question what I would name our coffee shop, if we ever have one.

As I slowly sipped my coffee, I reflected on the blessings our Father had poured out on us. The storm veered away yesterday, but the power and water supply remained absent. We had run out of water and prayed all day for the Lord's supply. My hubby and I longed for a bath while the skies remained dry.

Just days before the storm, we marveled at how God sustains the birds singing their praises outside our window. I remember looking up at the heavens from our bedroom window every day for the past eight months and asking our Lord for the same provision and care. I longed to know what it was like to receive manna from heaven and water from a rock, to be sustained by the hand of God in the midst of emotional and spiritual storms. I desired what the birds had in abundance and to sing my praises to Jesus.

As evening came and the skies grew ominously dark, rain began to fall intermittently, and then in full force. It was probably a

Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day.

—Sally Koch



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## Hallelujah Coffee

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leftover from the storm. My hubby rushed outside with his bucket and we grinned in excitement like two kids who had just received permission to play in the rain. I handed him his shampoo and towel and giggled while he lathered his hair and took a semishower in our garden. We collected enough rain water to fill our 15-gallon plastic water drum and more! The feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:30-44) and the four thousand (Mark 8:1-21) became a stunning reality in our lives. We thanked our Lord for his mercy and for sending his “rain in due season.”

The rain stopped just as we ran out of containers to catch the overflow. Without knowing when our water supply would be restored, we rested last night with the assurance of the heavenly supply—the holy water—stored in our buckets. This morning, despite the restoration of both power and water in our village, I am loathe to waste any of the precious rain water we collected. I am overwhelmed and humbled with gratitude for God’s holy water that not only filled our empty buckets but also watered and revived our parched hearts and spirits. It was a much needed balm.

When God woke me up before dawn, he not only gave me the opportunity to enjoy the hum of the fan, but also he revealed to me answers to my prayers and so much truth about him and his greatness that I had

to write them down. I was never more awake and 3 a.m. was never more holy. (I can now throw the term *unholy hour* outside the window!)

The effects of the storm linger in many parts of our country and much restoration work needs to be done. But God reminded us he is sovereign and his mercies never fail. The Holy Spirit has breathed new life into his word for us when he said in Luke 12:22-24: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!” (NIV).

Yes, we are ultimately more precious to our Father in heaven and he is eager to remind us of this truth. Thank you, Lord! Hallelujah coffee and holy water!



*Sheila is busily cleaning up after the storm and is only too glad to be writing down the many thoughts and lessons from the One who sent the rain. Her continued prayers are for those whose lives and property were damaged by the storm. E-mail her at sheila\_delapena@yahoo.com.*

The Christian life isn’t difficult—it is impossible. If we don’t know that, we will try to do things ourselves. Faith is not necessary when we think we can do it ourselves. Faith comes along when we realize that we cannot do it on our own.



—Joseph Garlingen

Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe your critics are right.



—Ralph Waldo Emerson

# Zorro and Me

## My Christmas Angels

By Barbara Dahlgren

Zorro and I have done a lot of youth work through the years. Zorro is the one gifted with a certain rapport with the youth and I do a lot of behind the scenes organizing. That way I don't have to interface much with teenagers. Just kidding! I love the little darlings—just not as much as Zorro does.

One year we were returning late at night with a bus load of teens from an activity in the Portland, Oregon, area. Zorro was driving the bus and I was following with a van load of moms. We stopped about 45 minutes outside of our destination, Tacoma, Washington, to gas up the vehicles and let the kids call their parents to pick them up at the church hall. The moms and I finished quickly and decided to head for home.

Zorro looked at me wryly. I knew what he was thinking. My wife, who has no sense of direction, wants to go off on her own with five women on this foggy night. Should I say anything? Being a wise husband, he wished me well and said he'd be there soon. With the fog and some snow residue left in the medians and on the side



of the freeways, he did say, "Be careful!" Then he added, "And whatever you do, don't get a ticket!"

Men don't have much of a sense of humor when it comes to women with cars and tickets and such. Of course, the reason I couldn't get a ticket is because Zorro had a heavy foot in those days and already maxed us out ticket-wise. One more and our insurance would go up. But I digress.

Did I mention it was Christmas Eve? That's important to note.

The ladies and I hopped in the van, eased onto the foggy freeway, and buzzed down the highway. Well, it didn't take too long for us to discover we were going the wrong direction. Don't ask me how all six of us missed the fact we got on the south freeway ramp instead of north. Unfortunately, it was 29 miles to the next exit and there didn't seem to be any rest areas or turn-around spots. What to do? What to do?

Suddenly, I thought, "There's snow in the median, but it's not deep. I bet I could just drive the van to the other side." Yes, it was against the law, but the other women thought it was a good idea, too, so I turned left and headed across the median. We reached the middle before the car got stuck. Then I learned a big life lesson: Just because there is snow on the ground, doesn't mean the ground is frozen. It could be thawed just enough to get your van stuck in the mud.

Now here I am with five chattering women stuck literally in the middle of nowhere. The only way to quiet them down was to say, "Let's pray!" I did. No sooner had we said "Amen" when a car stopped on the north side, the direction we wished to go, and two men full of the Christmas spirit, if you know what I mean, hopped out and said, "Don't worry. We've called the police to help."

The fact that I can plant a seed and it becomes a flower, share a bit of knowledge and it becomes another's, smile at someone and receive a smile in return, are to me continual spiritual exercises.



—Leo Buscaglia

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## Zorro and Me

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It's amazing how much can flash before your eyes in a split second. Visions similar to one of Dickens' ghosts in *A Christmas Carol* appeared hazily before my eyes. Yea verily, it looked like Zorro, pointing a finger at me and spookily saying, "Whatever you do, don't get a ticket."

The jolly men started walking toward the car. The women were concerned. I could tell because one said, "Lock the doors. I think we're going to die." I on the other hand sized up the situation, considered the stature and happy condition of the guys and figured, if necessary, three of us could sit on one, and three could hold the other until the police arrived. Besides, had we not just prayed for rescue? I said, "These are our angels."

Visions of George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life* flashed in my mind. When he meets his angel Clarence for the first time, he hears his squeaky voice, looks at his polka-dot bow tie, and surveys his stodgy demeanor. "Well," he says. "You look about the kind of angel I'd get. Sort of a fallen angel, aren't you? What happened to your wings?" That's about how I felt looking at my two inebriated angels.

In less than a wink, we were pushed out

of the mud and onto pavement. We thanked the men profusely. They ran to their car, turned around and waved, saying, "Happy Christmas to all!" Thoughts of Clement Moore's poem *A Visit From St. Nicholas* ran through my mind. Not to be out-quoted by a drunken angel, I yelled the next line. "And to all a good night!"

Our little adventure lasted less than 10 minutes—and my Christmas present was not receiving a police citation. When we arrived at the church right behind the bus, my husband said, "I thought you'd beat us here."

"Well, we took our time," I replied. I lifted my eyes to heaven and whispered, "Thank you, Lord." Then I thought about what Tiny Tim said in *A Christmas Carol*. "God bless us everyone!"



*Zorro just had hip replacement surgery, which is slowing him down a bit. However, he should be up to his old tricks soon. Barbara is doing some free-lance writing and works part time as a CA (chiropractic assistant). She loves hearing from you. You can e-mail her at [bydahlgren@pacbell.net](mailto:bydahlgren@pacbell.net).*



## Nurturennet

Nurturennet is a computer forum for elders' wives. Its purpose is to help you stay connected through digest-mode communication (each day's messages compiled into one e-mail). You may use it for requests for information, prayer requests, to share ideas and resources and to receive updates on *Connections* news.



To join or change your e-mail address, please send Tammy Tkach a message at [tammy\\_tkach@wgc.org](mailto:tammy_tkach@wgc.org).

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# Don't Lose Heart

# 14



By Anne Gillam

My week started with a bolt of lightning when the phone rang about 5:30 in the morning. It's amazing how fast you can wake, dress and get out the door with a shot of adrenalin. I picked up my dad and headed for the emergency room. We were in an examining room by 6:30 a.m., but it took until 7:15 that night to get him into a room upstairs. It was not until Tuesday night that the doctor suspected appendicitis and my dad went into surgery. This is usually a surgery for young boys and men, not those who are 93 years old. I wondered if he would make the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

As he lay there, he looked so frail and I couldn't help thinking of 2 Corinthians 4:16: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day" (NIV).

We and the world are in a constant state of decay. We mourn the past, the good old days and our youth. Yet those were not the best days of our lives. The best days of our lives are now in Christ. I like the way *The Message* puts it: "So we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace. These hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever" (2 Corinthians 16-18).

Just as Paul and my dad, we are all being saved daily from a perilous situation. It is in our Lord and his power we must set our hope—hope he will continue to deliver us and help us as we send up our prayers to him.

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When we are hurting and the world is falling in on us, it's hard to consider these good times. We are in the process of wasting away. Henry Martyn once said, "If I am going to burn out, let me burn out for God." If the body is wasting away, where are the good times, where is the renewal?

Paul was not talking about the physical but the spiritual eternal life God is preparing for us, the things we can't see now that will last forever. This is more than a physical battle; it is the deposit of the Holy Spirit. The residence of the Holy Spirit within us sets in motion the regenerative overhaul of ourselves that continues day by day as we follow Christ and allow him to work within us. This continues until the day we stand face to face with our Maker.

Alexander von Humboldt tells of a tree in South America called the cow tree. It grows on the barren flank of a rock its roots are scarcely able to penetrate. To the eye it appears dead and dried, but when the trunk is pierced, sweet and nourishing milk flows from it. This is not unlike the Christian who outwardly may appear to be withering and dying but within possesses a living sap welling up to eternal life.

Paul continues, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (verse 17, NIV). No matter what our troubles may be, whether human affliction or persecution, we must not let it take away from our faith. Paul was saying the affliction we as Christians experience at the hands of unbelievers is not worth comparing to the glory God has in store for us. Affliction does not give way to glory; affliction produces glory. The Greek verb for *achieve* means "to work out," for our light and momentary troubles are working out for us an eternal glory.

This is similar to the process of physical

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## Don't Miss the Wonder

By Sue Berger

It was an eventful year for me, and a somewhat frustrating one too. Even though God had sent me, Gabriel, to them, I had trouble getting my human charges to believe my messages. What's an angel to do?

My first assignment was Zachariah. He and his wife Elizabeth were up in years and hadn't had children. God picked them to be the parents of John the Baptist and I was the bearer of that great news! Sure, they had quit praying for children a long time ago, but God's timing is, well, God's timing, and he'd decided to answer their prayers.

Now ol' Zach was chosen by lot for the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enter the temple and burn incense. That heavy sweet-smelling smoke symbolized prayers rising to God's throne, but it also served to shield the priest from God's presence because if he were accidentally to see God, he'd die on the spot. What better theatrical set-up could an angel ask?

It started out well. I appeared to Zach in the smoke next to the altar. I launched into my speech about him and Liz having a son, how their son would be special to God and have a unique ministry. Even though I told him not to be afraid, Zach was quaking in his sandals.

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## Don't Lose Heart

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exercise that builds up the muscle. It is not something we achieve overnight; it is worked out in us day by day as we go through the process of spiritual renewal. That is, provided we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.

Our physical existence declines with the passing of time. We can't stop the process; we may slow it down, but it is inevitable. We will all waste away like an old garment. The unseen reality, our eternal glory, though not visible to our eye, is being built up daily so when we shed the coat of our temporary lives on earth, we will be clothed in the glory God has been working out in us day by day.

My father made it through that operation and two more before pneumonia took his life. The bite of sin is death for us all, but be-

cause my father put his trust in the Savior who conquered death on the cross, he achieved the victory of Christ over death, eternal life with God.

So, don't lose heart, God is already at work within you!



Anne's days are filled with taking care of her 4-year-old grandson and family and facilitating their little church group in Klamath Falls, Oregon. She considers herself blessed with all of the activity. When time allows Anne loves working on quilts. She would love to hear from you. E-mail her at [WEBEBASS@aol.com](mailto:WEBEBASS@aol.com).

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## Don't Miss the Wonder

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But he wasn't speechless. He had the nerve to tell me my message was impossible because he and Liz were old. How dare he rebut an archangel! I struck him speechless on the spot and told him he wouldn't be able to talk until after his son was born. I still hold the record for the longest timeout in history. Ol' Zach had become jaded over the years and it was time for him to be quiet and watch God work.

It was somewhat embarrassing for him not to be able to pray the blessing over the people waiting for him outside the temple that day, but they got the point something had happened in there. God's Plan would not be thwarted and Zach's muteness proved to be motivating. If he ever wanted to talk again, he was going to have to get real friendly with Liz. It worked!

My second assignment came six months later with a teenager named Mary. She was engaged to a kind and caring man named Joseph. God had selected them to be the human family his Son would grow up with. What a wondrous message that was to deliver! It's still a great story!



I decided to skip the drama this time around and try not to scare the girl to death. Mary was visibly shaken by my appearance and needed my reassurance as I shared my message with her. But can you believe it? Mary questioned me too! But this time it wasn't doubt and skepticism, it was youthful innocence. How was she going to become pregnant when she wasn't married yet? What an honorable young couple she and Joseph were! As I explained how the Holy Spirit would cover her, she willingly submitted herself. I was awed by her quick surrender to his will. She was also elated to hear about Liz!

Breaking this development to Joseph was a tough assignment for Mary. Although her conviction and enthusiasm were infectious, Joseph wrestled with the ramifications. Joseph became my third assignment. I decided to appear to him in a dream, so he couldn't argue with me. Trust me, it was a very vivid dream and did the trick. Joseph was on board with the Plan immediately after that. Maybe he'd heard rumblings about Zach.

Yep, that was a point in history I remember fondly. It's nice the events are still commemorated.

What would an archangel say to you today? I'd tell you only what God told me to tell you. But a word of friendly advice? Never doubt God. His timing is impeccable. Never give up on your prayers and the desires of your heart. Recapture your childlike trust. God is faithful. And if I do show up with a message just for you, please don't talk back.



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*Sue's blown the dust off her past articles and book reviews. Check out her new website at: [www.OnePilgrimsMusings.com](http://www.OnePilgrimsMusings.com). E-mail her at [sue@onepilgrimsusings.com](mailto:sue@onepilgrimsusings.com). (© 2005 Sue Berger.)*



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# In the Shadow of His Grace

By Trish A. Clauson

*“Love Your Neighbor as Yourself”*

In all the ways God has blessed me, I believe his greatest gift is my husband. Without his love and commitment, I would be writing a very different story.

Arnold grew up on a farm in South Dakota. Life was an adventure, and he was given the freedom to explore it. While I lived in 30 places, he lived in only two. Instead of 20 schools, he attended a one-room schoolhouse through the eighth grade and only one high school.

Given his more stable upbringing, I often observed his responses to life to learn what normal might look like. At one point in my recovery, I began to question my belief that it was a sin to love myself, so I decided to check out his views on it.

I explained I had an important question to ask him, and would he please take some time to think about it before answering. I then asked, “Do you love yourself?”

Without hesitation he replied, “Yes.”

Concerned he had responded too quickly, I insisted he take more time to consider his answer. Slowly and more deliberately, I asked again, “Do you love yourself?”

This time, he waited a moment before repeating emphatically, “Yes, I do.” I asked why, and he said it was because he was a pretty nice guy.

I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble.



—Helen Keller

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# 17

“But, you’re not nice all the time,” I retorted.

“That’s true,” he agreed, “but when I’m not, I take it to God, ask for his forgiveness and then go back to being a pretty nice guy again.” Then he added, “Why do you ask? Don’t you love yourself?”

“Love myself?” I lamented, “I don’t even like myself!”

With a sad and puzzled look he then asked, “How do you live there?”

I didn’t expect his response. Because I believed it was a sin to love oneself, I thought Arnold believed it too. But instead, there he stood not only telling me without hesitation he did love himself, but also wondering why I didn’t.

This shook me up. I didn’t want to live there. If it wasn’t a sin, I needed to know for sure. I began by studying Matthew 22:39, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” As I meditated on it, I was struck with an unpleasant thought. I called myself terrible names. I berated myself for the smallest mistake. I even punished myself. If I loved my neighbor the way I loved myself, my neighbor wouldn’t even like me. Surely this wasn’t what Jesus had in mind. I wished he had ended the passage with a list of what loving yourself meant.

What I didn’t know is that the abuse I suffered didn’t end when I left home. With every verbal assault, I had become an extension of it, feeding my own self-hate and shame. Given this reality, even if I had believed it was OK to love myself, this hate would have surely stood between me and my ability to do so.

What else I didn’t know is that shame is a lie of the heart. It can’t be erased with truths from the head. The only real defense against shame is love. As long as I continued to berate myself with negative self-talk, I was fueling my shame and

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## In the Shadow

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smothering every opportunity for me to feel loved or even to understand what love was. Jesus had cleared me of my parents' shame, but he wouldn't force me to stop hating myself. I had to do that.

As I continued to ponder Jesus' command to love my neighbor as myself, I noticed it looked like an equation with *as* being the equal sign. Remembering from algebra that two equal sides can be switched, I switched them. "Love yourself *as* you love your neighbor."

This put a whole new perspective on things. Through God's Spirit, I knew how to love others. Besides, there are lists in the Bible about how to love my neighbor. I just didn't realize I could use them for myself. It became clear what I had to do.

From that moment, I set out to begin loving myself as my neighbor. Whenever self-deprecating thoughts emerged, I asked myself, "What would you say to your neighbor right now?" Knowing what to say was the easy part. Speaking so kindly to myself was harder.

I determined to repeat this process every time, which usually meant several times a day. I wasn't conscious of when the voices in my head were finally silenced, but I think it took about a year. I no longer had to think about talking to myself as I would talk to my neighbor; it had become a habit.

Being kind to myself resulted in something I didn't anticipate. Without realizing it,

I had been in an unrelenting battle with myself, but now I was experiencing a peace of mind I had not known before. This peace along with the absence of self-hate finally made it possible for me to accept God's love. And it seemed in the months to follow he used every opportunity to impress upon me just how great his love could be.

It's been a few years since I stopped hating myself. Only since then have I been able to grasp how all-pervasive shame had been for me, and it scares me to realize where I lived. Unfortunately there are still times when I am able to be pulled back into its grip, but love keeps me from going too deep and staying too long.

Learning to love myself, as Jesus intended, has borne good fruit. I not only feel loved and lovable, but also I even like myself. Remember my friend who told me I needed to let Jesus hold me and receive all the love that goes with it? She was right.



*Trish is enjoying a wonderful peace in her life right now. God is indeed very good. E-mail her at [trishanson@juno.com](mailto:trishanson@juno.com).*



The repetition of small efforts will accomplish more than the occasional use of great talents.



—Charles H. Spurgeon

To be content with little is hard; to be content with much is impossible.



—Marie Ebner

## Upon Further Reflection

### As the Wild Geese Fly

Maggie and I can see wild geese flying over the tops of our trees on cool wintry mornings. We hear them honking first and then—there they are! It is an amazing sight as they wing across the first streaks of sunrise. Canada geese winter down here in the marshlands of our river and dine on the plowed cornfields nearby. When we see them so early in the morning, flying in their perfect V formation, they are on their way to breakfast.

An interesting thing about the V formation is the pointman position. When the geese travel a long distance they rotate the position of the point. The flyer on point has the hardest job. He has to cut the air currents, smoothing the way for the flock. As he tires he drops back and a wingman takes over point.



Now here is what is so interesting. When the point flyer needs to be relieved, the geese do not land and sit in a gaggle talking over whom to nominate to take point. No, it is smooth sailing all the way. I think it's because they all have the same destination and the course has been set from the beginning of takeoff.

Of course, our point Man does not tire and his position is forever, but the analogy of the same destination and the set course holds up. As believers we are destined to be with God and our course is set through Jesus Christ our Lord.

One of my favorite God-promises is Isaiah 40:28-31: “Have you never heard or understood? Don't you know that the Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth? He never grows faint or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. Even youths will become exhausted, and young men will give up. But those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint” (*NLT*).

Maybe the Canadian geese aren't eagles, but they sure present a magnificent display reflecting the glorious grace of God.

Watching them, Maggie and I soar in our imaginations to where the wild geese fly! We rise up and praise God. We know he is working to make us into a perfect transformation. When we arrive at our destination looking like his Son Jesus, we will sit down to dine at his table! Isn't creation wonderful?

—Dixie Marino (and Maggie)  
E-mail her at [CMARINO001@ec.rr.com](mailto:CMARINO001@ec.rr.com).



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## The Birth of Jesus

(Based on Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-15; Luke 2:1-20; John 3:16-17)

*By Senior Pulley*

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ our  
Lord came about,  
Pledged to Joseph, his mother Mary, with  
child was soon found out

Because her husband, a righteous man  
sought not to see her face.  
He quietly planned to let her go and avoid a  
public disgrace

But soon after he'd considered this, an angel  
of the Lord appeared  
And said, "Joseph, son of David, take Mary,  
do not fear...

"For what's conceived in her is from the  
Holy Spirit's power;  
She will give birth to a holy son at the Lord's  
appointed hour.

"And you are to give him the name of Jesus,  
a name to be known among men."  
All this took place, as the Lord had decreed.  
He would save his people from sin.

A prophet said, "The virgin with child will  
give birth to a Son,  
And they will call him 'Immanuel'—which  
means 'God with us'"—He's the One!

When Joseph woke up, he knew from the  
dream the Lord had entered his life,  
And he did just what the Lord had com-  
manded and took Mary home as his wife.

Now in those days, Augustus Caesar a  
Roman decree did make.  
Everyone must go to his town for the  
census that the Romans would take.

*Connections*

So Joseph went to Bethlehem in Judea  
at that time,  
for he belonged to the house of David,  
which was his ancestral line.

And when he went to register, he took his  
Mary with him,  
And while they were there, her time came  
for birth, and they looked for a place in the  
Inn.

But, wouldn't you know it, there was no  
room in the Inn for her to give birth,  
So she and Joseph went to a stable, a most  
lowly place on earth.

And from that very lowly place, she birthed  
her firstborn son.  
She wrapped him in cloths, in a manger did  
place him; besides Joseph, there was none.

Now there were shepherds in the fields  
watching their flocks at night.  
An angel of the Lord appeared to them,  
and the glory of the Lord shone—  
what a sight!

They were sorely terrified, but the angel said  
to them,  
"Don't be afraid; I bring good news, and  
you must go and see Him!

"For on this day, there is great joy and good  
news for everyone!  
For there's been born in the town of David,  
the Christ, the Lord, the Son!

"This will be a sign to you...a baby wrapped  
in cloths,  
Lying in a lowly place—a manger; do not  
scoff!"

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*Winter 2006*

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## The Birth of Jesus

*(Continued from page 20)*

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A sudden great company of heavenly hosts  
appeared with the angel and were  
praising...

“Glory to God in the highest place!” and  
their voices, loud and strong, they were  
raising!

“Peace on earth be on all men on whom His  
favor rests!”

‘Peace on earth’—can you imagine the  
whole world being this blessed?

When the angels had left them and gone  
into heaven, the shepherds said one to  
another,

“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see what’s  
happened! Soon they found Joseph, Jesus  
and his mother

And when they’d seen the child with their  
eyes, they went about and spread the good  
word.

And all who heard it were assuredly amazed,  
the most amazing thing they’d ever heard!

While Mary treasured up all these things  
and pondered them all in her heart,  
The shepherds returned glorifying God for  
what they’d heard and seen and their part!

After Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, some Magi  
came from the east.

They went to Jerusalem in search of a king;  
seeking directions, if you please.

“Where is the one who’s been born king of  
the Jews? For in the east we have seen his  
star,

And we have come to worship him, hence,  
we have come this far.”

But when King Herod heard the news, he  
was more than a little disturbed.

Along with the chief priests and teachers of  
law, they sought the Christ—what nerve!

With cunning deceit, King Herod  
questioned where was the Christ to be  
born?

He had in mind to kill the child, rip the  
Savior, from earth be torn!

He found out from them that a ruler would  
come who would shepherd the people he’d  
call;

Found out the exact time the star had  
appeared; sought to do mischief, that’s all.

So he sent them on a careful search and told  
them to soon make report

Of where he, too, could find the child and  
worship him in a way of some sort!

After hearing the king, they went on their  
way, and the star they’d seen in the east  
Went ahead of them until it stopped over  
the place where the child was at peace.

When they saw the star, they were filled  
with joy, such joy they’d never found!  
They came to a house, saw the child with his  
mother and worshiped and humbly  
bowed down.

They opened their treasures to present to  
him; gifts of incense, myrrh and gold.  
What an honor to stand before the King of  
the Universe; his beauty to behold!

When the Magi were ready to return to their  
home, the Lord warned them in a dream  
To avoid Herod and go not to him;  
it wasn’t as hard as it might seem.

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## The Birth of Jesus

(Continued from page 21)



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of why the Father sent His Son to earth from His place of glory.

Then God warned Joseph in a dream, “Get up! Go to Egypt at once! And take the child and his mother with you, for Herod is waiting to pounce!”

So he got up and took the child and his mother sometime during the night They left for Egypt, and there they stayed until the time to come back was all right.

This was the beginning of our Savior’s days on this demanding earth. Although just a babe in his mother’s arms, the world didn’t realize his worth!

As went his birth, so went his life; He always faced opposition. Remember, as a youth sitting in the temple, men were astounded with His rendition?

He never came to receive accolades; He made Himself of no reputation. Throughout His life, He was rejected; so WHAT was God’s motivation?

If you’re unsure of what I mean, or what the answer could possibly be, Pick up your Bible and turn to John, the Gospel, that is, chapter three.

For there “in a nutshell” you’ll find an account, in other words, an amazing story

For God SO LOVED THE WORLD this much, He gave His one and only Son That whosoever would believe in Him, eternal life would be won!

For God did not...send His Son... into the world to condemn. No, never would He desire such a thing, but the world would be saved through Him!

He came as a BABE with a lowly birth, and He grew into a very fine YOUTH. He became a MAN of the greatest sort, and served mankind with truth!

He died a very lowly death; gave His life of His own free will, But praise be to God! He’s our RISEN SAVIOR, and He’ll return but not until

The time is right—the second time—an altogether different thing! He will return, but not as a babe, but as THE CONQUERING KING!

So let’s celebrate the life of Christ; it will give your spirit a lift! He gave you His love. He gave you His life. He’s given you the ultimate gift!

December 23, 2003

This is Christmas: not the tinsel, not the giving and receiving, not even the carols, but the humble heart that receives anew the wondrous gift, the Christ.

—Frank McKibben

NOEL HALLELUJAH MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR  
*Noel Hallelujah Merry Christmas Happy New Year*

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

According to an article I read on nutrition, eating right doesn't have to be complicated. Nutritionists say it's simple. Colors. Fill your plate with bright colors—greens, reds, yellows.

So I did that this morning. I had an entire bowl of M&Ms. It was delicious! I never knew eating right could be so easy.

I now have a whole new outlook on life.

—www.cybersalt.org

The man who gives in when he is wrong...is wise. The man who gives in when he is right...is married.

—Unknown

Some ministers would make good martyrs; they are so dry they would burn well.

—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

My friend's 5-year-old granddaughter looked at the stars one night and exclaimed, "God's home! All his lights are on!"

—Unknown

The first thing dieters lose is a sense of humor.

—Unknown

As a dental hygienist, I always encourage patients to floss. During one cleaning, the dentist I work with asked my patient if he was "flossing religiously."

"Well," the man hedged, "I floss more often than I go to church."

—www.cybersalt.org

An old snake goes to see his doctor. "Doc, I need something for my eyes, I can't see very well these days." The doctor fixes him up with a pair of glasses and tells him to return in two weeks.

The snake comes back and tells the doctor he's very depressed. The doctor says, "What's the problem? Didn't the glasses help you?"

"The glasses are fine doc, but I just discovered I've been living with a water hose the past two years."

—www.cybersalt.org