



# Connections

◆ A Journal by & for Women in Ministry ◆

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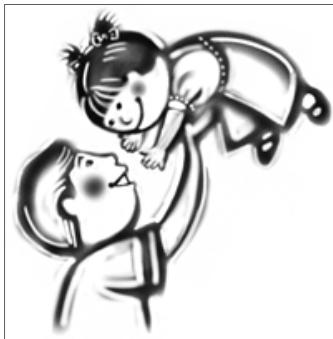
December 2013

## Our Hearts Cry Out

By Anne Gillam

As we began our flight from the Portland airport, we quickly ascended and went from looking up at the clouds, to looking down at them. I wondered, is this how God sees us? Am I any closer to him now than at any other time? The answer to that, of course, is no. He is present everywhere we go. Yet we constantly need to know he is with us.

We were made to need God in our lives and we are not whole or complete without him. We look up seeking God, we raise our hands in praise and we seek his face in the clouds. We visualize God looking down on us. He does this, but not to condemn us. He looks down on us in love.



Sitting nearby, a small child constantly called out for his mother's attention. He repeated over and over again—mom, mom, mom, mommy, mom. It was obvious mom was ignoring him. At first I and my fellow passengers didn't pay

much attention, but after four hours eyes began to roll. I usually have a higher tolerance for this sort of chatter, but the constant droning made it hard to concentrate on anything else. I wanted to jump up and tell her to please answer the child.

Garrett Dawson, one of the presenters at the GCI Orlando conference, gave us the visual of his son dancing in his crib with his arms raised up and calling out for his dad to "wake him up." It was his son's way of saying, pick me up so I may begin my day with you. What a lovely picture. Who could resist the pure call of our children and not want to reach down and pick them up? It was bliss to hold my children and grandchildren in my arms and rock them to sleep, even if this meant to do so throughout the night.

One of my grandsons suffers from gluten and dairy intolerance. We did not know this at first, and my daughter and I often took turns trying to comfort him through difficult nights. We sometimes did not sleep more than two hours a night for a long time. We thought we would go

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## Our Hearts Cry Out

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insane from the lack of sleep and the constant stress of not knowing how to help him.

Is it any different for our loving Father? Imagine all of his children with their arms raised up, calling out for our Heavenly Father to pick us up; calling out over and over again—dad, dad, dad, daddy, dad. We cry out with the pain of our fallen human nature. Does he not reach down and pick us up, gaze into our eyes and smile, knowing we are his own?

We constantly call out to God with our need for help. He is never far away. He is always present, and always longing to take us up in his arms to bring us this comfort we seek. God loves to gaze in our eyes. He loves us!

Daddy, we love you, and we long for you to lift us up and take us in your loving arms. We want to gaze into your face and feel your presence all around us!



*Anne says, "It is getting harder and harder to endure winter. We already had temperatures of -26 here. And I am looking with deep longing for spring. I got involved with our SMART program in Bonanza. I began reading one day with a child and it has grown to two days with three children. It has been a blessing." You may email her at [webebass@aol.com](mailto:webebass@aol.com).*

## CONNECTIONS

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Submit your ideas and articles to *Connections*, GCI, P.O. Box 5005, Glendora, CA 91740-5005, or email: [tammy.tkach@gci.org](mailto:tammy.tkach@gci.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 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

## Connecting for Twenty-One Years

Happy birthday to us! With this issue, *Connections* wraps up its 21<sup>st</sup> year. I thought you might enjoy a walk down memory lane as I rehearse the history of this journal with you. It started with the idea that the wives of the elders of the then Worldwide Church of God needed a publication to help bring them together.

We were and are all over world; most of us will never meet in this lifetime, but by writing and reading articles, we could share part of our lives with each other, develop empathy and sympathy with one another and maybe most important, realize none of us are alone in our role as pastors' wives.

The first issue was published in August 1994. The creators and editors were Beverly Kubik, Jennifer Swenson and Ruth Root. Sheila Graham worked behind the scenes from day one. It was 12 pages, contained nine articles, including one from a pastor and a book review. The first two issues were printed on shiny paper with two colors. Because of the cost, starting with issue 3, it was copied rather than printed, with different colored covers. I talked to a man in England who told me he has every issue! It later grew to as many as 20-plus pages, with contributors from Australia to Canada to South Africa, the Philippines, Europe and Asia.

In September 1995, Denice Orr took over as managing editor and I became the editor,

which included laying out each issue. Denice retired from the journal and edited her last issue in May 2003, at which time I became the managing editor/editor and continued to lay it out. Sheila Graham continues to make sure it goes out with no mistakes! Until November 2007, we printed and mailed *Connections* around the world. It then became too expensive to print and mail, so we went the way of many publications, sending it electronically.

As far as magazines go, *Connections* could be considered a little long in the tooth. Because of the declining number of articles we've been receiving the past two years, I seriously considered calling it a day with this issue.

But I heard from several people who really enjoy reading it (I'm sure there are many more whom I haven't heard from) and would like to see it continue. So it will continue, even if we publish only a few articles. This doesn't let any of you off the hook. As I've said many times, *Connections* is only as good as the articles we receive and we can only continue with your support.

*Connections* will continue as a journal "by and for women in ministry." While we've opened up readership to the general public (available on the women's ministry page of the GCI website), the articles will be written by women in ministry, will focus on their experiences and be from their perspective. This includes ordained women, women who serve on a pastoral team and who are involved in the leadership of a congregation.

With your help, we can keep going for many years and continue to bring women (and men) in ministry together through our shared experiences.

Merry Christmas!

Tammy



## I Just Wanted to Say...

By John Stettaford

A big *thank you* for continuing to send me *Connections*. After all, the masthead says it all: “A Journal by & for Women in Ministry.” It’s true to say few would ever mistake me for a woman in ministry, so *I just wanted to say*, thank you. You see, as a lone male minister, the church I pastor has a mixed congregation—men and women, would you believe! When I began this ministry business late in life, I wondered how it would be possible for me to help the women in the congregation to the same extent as the men. Children? Well, that was a slightly different question again.



But over the years the women have gotten used to asking me difficult questions concerning their marriages and lifestyles. I suppose the answers must have helped at least a little. And each time I’ve wondered what to say, a friendly ping of “You’ve got mail!” would come about. There in my in-tray would be a cheery two-liner from Tammy, and attached, the latest incarnation of *Connections*.

And *I just wanted to say* how often the question I was puzzling with was the topic of an article in *Connections*. Sometimes your comments about your menfolk helped too.

Many of you have had a ministry that you never knew about across the pond, helping out with a congregation or two in a distant land.

So *I just wanted to say* please do write for your magazine, or continue to write, because more often than not, it helps in places and ways you cannot imagine.



John Stettaford, now 70, slowing down but still carrying on disgracefully, pastors the Reading congregation in the U.K., and visits other congregations as a speaker from time to time. Travelling to Reading each week from home is 50 miles, which is nothing on American roads, but a bit more of a challenge on British roads. If you dare, send him an email on: [j.stettaford@btinternet.com](mailto:j.stettaford@btinternet.com) or visit the Reading website on <http://WCG-Reading.org.uk>. Forgive the photo, he adds, it’s a bit old, but it does show him with more hair than he now has!

God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can, and the wisdom to know it’s me.

—Author unknown, variation of an excerpt from “The Serenity Prayer” by Reinhold Neibuhr



The unthankful heart... discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day and, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings!

—Henry Ward Beecher



## He Knows Where They Are

By Mary Bouchier

Oh, no! I've lost another earring! Immediately feelings of panic, disbelief and helplessness set in, and I pull out all stops to search high and low for the missing earring. Handbags are emptied, jacket pockets cleared of tissues and fluff and the contents of the vacuum cleaner thoroughly examined. I peer under the beds, beneath cushions, scout tabletops and benches.

No luck. Maybe it's in the car.

But wait! There's a news flash on the TV. A 5-year-old girl is missing in a busy shopping center. Her distraught mother is crying and pleading for anyone who can give any information about the disappearance of her little daughter to come forward. And now, with yet more urgent pleading, for the perpetrators to please return her child.

I stop in my tracks. My selfish prayers and concern for the missing earring changes and my prayers are now for the distraught mother's comfort. I pray for calm, patient

persistence to be given to all involved in searching for the missing girl. And please God, give her family peace during the agonizingly long hours of waiting. I pray for the little girl, thinking of her anxiety and feeling deeply her fear and terror.

I stop looking for the lost earring and am reminded what is really important—people, not things.

I've decided to use this odd earring, along with the other odd earrings in my jewelry box, to remember all the lost and missing children. They are reminders not to give up hope they will be found and to persist in prayer to our loving Father for their safe return—because he knows where they all are!



*Mary has been married for nearly 40 blissful years to Randall, senior pastor for the Moorolbark, Newlands, Ballarat and Bendigo (Australia) churches. They have three wonderful children and one terrific grandson. She enjoys art, music, gardening, reading, sewing, writing and producing puppet skits. You may email her at [mary.bouchier@optusnet.com.au](mailto:mary.bouchier@optusnet.com.au).*

Fail not to call to mind, in the course  
of the twenty-fifth of this month, that  
the Divinest Heart that ever walked the  
earth was born on that day; and then  
smile and enjoy yourselves  
for the rest of it; for mirth is also  
of Heaven's making.

—Leigh Hunt



Christmas gift suggestions:  
To your enemy, forgiveness.  
To an opponent, tolerance.  
To a friend, your heart.  
To a customer, service.  
To all, charity.  
To every child, a good example.  
To yourself, respect.

—Oren Arnold





# Your Invisible Crown

By Joyce Catherwood

“Always wear your invisible crown.” I lifted this phrase from the Facebook timeline titled, “We the Women,” which focuses on inspiring every woman to feel appropriately empowered to be the best person she can be.

But my immediate reaction was, Wait! Crown! What crown? Knowing me, even if I had one, it would be carefully wrapped up, still in the original packaging and perched high on a shelf in my closet waiting for some special occasion to be worn. I’ve not been in the habit of imagining myself wearing a crown, invisible or not. It would have struck me as vanity because for years my definition of humility was just a little warped. Well, actually a lot warped.

How did my interpretation of humility get so bent out of shape? Let me count the ways. For starters, I thought humility equaled self-hatred. One classic example: did you ever tape little notes on your college dorm bathroom mirror as a reminder, first thing in the morning and last thing at night, how worthless and sinful you were, to be precise: “Less than a worm”?

You think that’s funny? It is, kind of, but I’m serious. This was only the tip of the iceberg of unfounded and faulty information I soaked up through the years. The result? I

grew up hating myself, honestly and sincerely thinking this was how to be humble.

Now, what if the note I put on my mirror had read: “Always wear your invisible crown.” What a difference that would have made in my life! Though we are made of dust (where worms live), we are made in the image of God. He assigns eternal significance to our temporal existence. In Scripture, we’re promised a crown of life. In fact, the Son of God wore a crown of thorns so we could wear a crown of glory. It is definitely possible to humbly wear an invisible crown (or a real one if you happen to be royalty).

“Always wear your invisible crown” brings all kinds of radiantly positive imagery to my mind. Who doesn’t need a touch of shiny and sparkly to boost cloudy moods now and then? To me, wearing a crown has a ring of dignity and respect, a reminder to consciously treat yourself and everyone you interact with respectfully, from the youngest to the eldest, regardless of their station in life. And it follows, if we devalue ourselves, we will lack respect for others, barely noticing them because self-hatred is time-consuming and emotionally draining.

So what does “wearing your invisible crown” say to you? It can bring a smile to your face as it jogs your memory that you are indeed a child of God. Depending on where you are in your life journey, imagining yourself being adorned with a dazzling crown can make you stand taller, be braver, regain perspective, feel special, hang on longer, reinforce your vision, appreciate more, sense you are unconditionally and eternally loved.

I took my invisible crown off the closet shelf, unwrapped it and tried it on. It felt really good! If you aren’t already wearing yours, put it on and you’ll see what I mean. I think I’ll have to dust mine off though and

Great little One! whose  
all-embracing birth  
Lifts Earth to Heaven, stoops Heaven  
to Earth.



—Richard Crashaw

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## Your Invisible Crown

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shine it up a bit. I plan to make it a permanent, treasured accessory in my wardrobe. It may surprise you how good it looks with baggy PJs or sweat pants or a tee shirt you just spilled chocolate on. And it can work marvels on those bad-hair days or nobody-loves-me moments.

Once you've gotten used to wearing it, you may find yourself helping an acquaintance or friend or loved one locate her invisible crown and perhaps straighten it for her ever so slightly as she tries it on for the first time. Be sure to tell her how awesome it looks! And remind yourself to always wear your invisible crown.



*Joyce says: "What a bright and beautiful season of the year, allowing us to focus on the amazing birth of our Savior. This precious infant brought light to humanity for the first time, piercing the darkness of the world and bridging the gap between heaven and earth." You may email her at [joyce.catherwood@gci.org](mailto:joyce.catherwood@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.gemsofgodsgrace.wordpress.com](http://www.gemsofgodsgrace.wordpress.com)

Send us your blog address and we'll publish it here.

## 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!



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.

# Zorro and Me

By Barbara Dahlgren

## Sunrise, Sunset

One of my favorite musicals is *Fiddler on the Roof*. I must admit bewilderment at how the depressing scenario of people getting kicked out of their homeland can produce anything to sing about. Yet in the midst of this strife comes beautiful songs such as *Sunrise Sunset*, a poignant parental reflection about children. The lyrics remind us that days and years fly by. All too soon those “little girls we carried” and those “little boys at play” are grown, getting married and having children of their own.

Zorro and I love recalling stories of our kids when they were young. Shelly was so mature for her age that when I took her to kindergarten she said, “Mom, you’d better stick around a while until they get this thing organized.” When Matthew was 4, he kept telling everyone his name was Matthew David Alan Dahlgren Exactly Right Donut. We still don’t know why and neither does he.

And we’ll never forget going to Sherisa’s second grade open house. The teacher had decorated for autumn. Each child’s name was written on a bright orange construction paper pumpkin and placed in a pumpkin patch farm

scene drawn on the wall. All the little pumpkins were close together, except for Sherisa’s. Hers was outside the patch, toward the top—all by itself. My mother hen hormones kicked in as indignant thoughts kept running through my mind. How dare this teacher single out my child. There would be hell to pay for this injustice!

Feigning a calm voice I gently asked, “I couldn’t help but notice that Sherisa’s pumpkin isn’t with the others.”

The words barely left my lips when Mrs. Horn replied, “Oh, Sherisa did not want her pumpkin with the others, so we let her put it wherever she wanted.” Ah, well, knowing Sherisa, that made sense. She has always marched to the tune of a different pumpkin.

When our babies are born we dream of what they will be when they grow up—a professional baseball player, a famous singer, a top scientist, a Pulitzer Prize winning author, the president of the United States.

When we find out they can’t catch a ball, carry a tune, add two and two, write a sentence or give a speech, we settle for them being happy, productive members of society. Most of us in ministry yearn for them to become preachers, Christian leaders or missionaries. In the end we are ecstatic if they are happy, productive members of society who have a relationship with the living God.

And what if they aren’t happy, productive members of society? What if they haven’t accepted Jesus as their personal Savior? What if they don’t even believe in God? Do we love them any less? Probably not, but we do feel guilty.

Guilt and parenthood walk hand in hand. As parents we continually ask ourselves why our children made some of the choices they made. Did we fail them in some way? What



If your baby is “beautiful and perfect, never cries or fusses, sleeps on schedule and burps on demand, an angel all the time,” you’re the grandma.

—Teresa Bloomingdale

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## Sunrise, Sunset

*Continued from page 8*

could we have done differently to help them? The sad fact is even if we know what we could have or should have done, it won't help our children now. So guilt and regret plague us.

Let's face it, a lot of guilt and a little self-pity is part of the parental process, but eventually we have to stop asking why and what, and ask ourselves who.

Who can really make a difference in their lives? Who can open their hearts? Who can help us build a healthy relationship with them now? Who can turn the worse situation around? Who can heal their hurts? Who can ease their pain? Who loves them even more than we do? We all know the answer: God!

Ultimately, we are limited in what we can provide for our grown children. God can do so much more. Sometimes we forget this as our kids become adults. So we need to bathe them in prayer—year to year, season to season, day to day, sunrise to sunset. We *never* stop praying for them. If we don't pray for them, who will?



*Zorro and Barbara are excited about the whole family being at their house for Christmas. Barbara says, "I must admit I love Christmas. In the words of that great western philosopher, Dale Evans: 'Christmas, my child, is love in action. Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas!' So happy trails to you! May Jesus Christ, God's great present to the world, dwell in your heart, not just at Christmastime but all year long! Now please pass the figgy pudding." You may email Barbara at [bydahlgren@pacbell.net](mailto:bydahlgren@pacbell.net). She loves hearing from you!*

## Grandmothers

*By Yvonne Davey*

An interesting experience at church drew my attention to grandmothers, and my relationship with them. A woman in our congregation brings her four grandchildren to church. They live in three different households. Her daughter has a new boyfriend who has two sons. This particular Sunday, she brought two of her grandchildren and one of her daughter's boyfriend's sons.

As we began to greet each other, she enthusiastically reached into her purse and presented me with five report cards! Quickly I recovered from this surprise of grandmotherly power.

As I gazed at the yellow printouts, the three kids gathered around us. None was embarrassed. They looked at me with positive expectation. So I stood there, doing what was expected: intelligently interpreting, cogitating, examining and commenting on each of the subject areas. I was sure to recognize the outstanding grades and even comment on the areas needing improvement.

The boyfriend's son's report card was in the pile. He's in 8<sup>th</sup> grade (in that emotionally awkward age group) and this was only his second time meeting me. Report cards are personal but I could see he was quite proud of his too, and not at all shy about someone else viewing it. This grandma loves all of these kids, and they care about what she thinks—and what I think too!

Her grandchildren know me because I work with them in Children's Church and was there with them at camp this summer. Their photos are posted on our wall along with the other children in Children's Church.

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## Grandmothers

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I do care about them. I could clearly see that I am in a partnership with this grandmother.

Grandmothers can be a treasure to their grandchildren. Because of their loving relationship with them, they are in a unique position of influence. In her wisdom of years, this grandmother makes it a point to bring her grandchildren to church. It's a deliberate effort to help them develop a relationship with their Maker and learn his ways. They know she is concerned about the success of each of them.

How beautiful, how admirable, how dear are these loving, dedicated grandmothers to me!



*Yvonne is the wife of Marty Davey, pastor of the Jacksonville, Florida, congregation of Grace Communion, called Christian Family Fellowship. She works as a substitute teacher and piano teacher. At church her area of special service is children's ministry. Most of the children who attend their congregation are grandchildren of church members. They are praying and preparing to bring in young couples with children from the neighborhood while gratefully serving the grandchildren God has provided them to care for. You may email her at [yvonedavey@comcast.net](mailto:yvonedavey@comcast.net).*

What a bargain grandchildren are!  
I give them my loose change, and they  
give me a million dollars'  
worth of pleasure.



—Gene Perret

## Briefly Speaking...

### From Fear to Faith

Believe it or not, the book I've been working on has finally been published. You can download it from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). It's an ebook I have priced as low as Amazon would allow.

*From Fear to Faith* is a slice of the history of the Worldwide Church of God, basically from the late 1950s through the transition, seen primarily through the eyes of women members.

The women who contributed to this book (some of you—you know who you are!) are just a token of the thousands of women who experienced putdowns, emotional and physical stress, for inconsequential so-called faults conjured up to keep them in their place. It wasn't all bad. The women also relate what they value from their WCG experience.

The WCG was not alone, of course. Discrimination against women is not an uncommon practice in authoritative religious organizations. My hope is women who read the book may recognize and question abusive practices in their own churches.

Please pray with me that what we've shared in this book makes a difference in other women's lives.



*Sheila Graham spoke at the Cheer You On Rally November 15 in Gainesville, Texas. The title of her speech was "Beat Up by Religion?" The rally's proceeds benefited Abigail's Arms, a women's shelter there. Sheila may be contacted at [grahams@ntin.net](mailto:grahams@ntin.net).*

## The Birth

*By Senior Pulley  
(Based on 1 John)*

That which was—from the beginning was witnessed by mere men  
They heard with their ears; they saw with their eyes, and they touched His skin!

The Life appeared right in plain view; The Eternal was His Name  
And these men who saw, they testified; it was their job to proclaim.

They proclaimed to us what they had seen and heard while here on earth  
And fellowship with the Father and the Son became possible because of “The Birth!”

The message that they heard from Him is what they declared to us  
God is Light; He shows the way, and we must walk and trust!

And if we walk right in the Light, although we are but men,  
The blood of Jesus draws us close, purifying us from our sin!

And if we claim to have no sin, ourselves, we only hurt,  
but if confessed, we are forgiven, and all because of “The Birth!”

We have someone who’s our Defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One  
Atoning sacrifice for all the world, the Father’s Begotten Son!

We know Him when we keep His word; His commands in us are hid  
God’s love is made complete in us as we walk as Jesus did!

The old command was from the beginning; the message, strong, was heard  
Yet, the new command is seen in Him, True Light Who came by “The Birth!”

To be in the Light, one must not hate, for this would make him stumble  
And he would grope around in darkness, complain and gripe and grumble!

These words were written for all of us on account of His great name  
And the evil one’s been overcome, and we’ve been freed from blame!

These words were written cuz we’re made strong; it’s amazing now what we are worth! We  
have life eternal abiding in us and we’re God’s children because of “The Birth!”

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How great is the love that the Father has given? How great is the hope we now hold?  
To be called by His name into live everlasting! The value is more precious than gold!

A Life was laid down so that we could exist, a Life of great value indeed!  
And our lives should, in love, look after our brothers and do something  
when others have needs!

The Spirit of God is easily tested, for the Spirit itself asserts  
That he is true who acknowledges God sent His Son in the flesh by “The Birth!”

Dear friends, let us love, let us love one another, for it shows we’ve been born, born of God  
And the one who pretends that his brothers are friends; he’s like Cain, not a son, but a fraud!

We live ‘in Him’ and ‘He in us’ and John, he testified  
The Father sent His Son as Savior, and this cannot be denied!

The great love that God has for us saved us from being accursed  
And on Judgment Day, there’ll be no fear cuz Perfect Love came here through “The Birth!”

This is the love that we have for our God, to obey His commands, which are just  
And they’re never a burden, and we do as He says and we live by our faith—that’s a must!

Who is the one, who overcomes the world? It’s the one who believes in the Son  
And He came by water, and He came by blood, and the Spirit testified ‘He’s the One!’

God’s testimony of His one and only Son imparts vital wisdom to our hearts  
And the one who refuses, who refuses to believe, holds the Father in complete disregard!

“This will be a sign for you:  
you will find a child  
wrapped in bands of cloth  
and lying in a manger.”



Luke 2:12, NRSV

But please listen closely to the testimony given! It’s the news that defines  
our very worth! He who has the Son has eternal life, made possible by the  
Son’s holy birth!

So when you think—of tidings of joy—of wise men and great peace on  
earth  
Remember the Gift God gave through His Son, made possible because of  
“The Birth!”

—spulley@bott.bm