

Connections

◆ A Journal by & for Women in Ministry ◆

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Fill 'Er Up!

By Sondra Peters

A couple of years ago, we dealt with a death in our family. It wasn't unexpected, but the last will and testament was. I'm not going to reveal the identity of this person or my relationship to her because she was fiercely protective of her privacy. One day, I hope to meet up with her in heaven. Even if she's a saint, there'll be hell to pay if I reveal her identity.

Our family knew she had issues of resentment, bitterness and anger, but we didn't realize the degree or how far back it went until the will was read. It was not unusual for her to be angry at someone in the family, but her anger usually covered the family like a shotgun blast. No one ever knew who she was specifically angry at or why.

She found her voice in her will. It was reminiscent of the book of Revelation when God tells the churches what their weaknesses were ("This is what I have against you..."). She listed offenders by name and their specific offenses. Some hadn't thanked her for gifts. One offender committed the unpardonable sin of bringing only a fruit salad to a family potluck dinner. And another relative jokingly referred to her spending her children's inheritance when she'd bought a new sofa.

Unbeknownst to her family, for at least four decades she had regularly revisited her hurts, making sure she didn't forget any details, nurturing them like a master gardener babies his prized heirloom roses. She had comforted and wrapped herself up in these old hurts and held onto them as a child does with a favorite blankie. Her final act was to document them.

She hurt her family like they had hurt her. What a tragic waste on so many levels. She had believed for more than half her lifetime that her sins were forgiven and erased by Christ's death. Had she allowed God to mend her hurts, she could have become a spiritual powerhouse.

Not one of us has escaped being hurt by a loved one. The reverse is true as well; not one of us has escaped hurting someone we love. Our hurts may be imagined or blown out of proportion, but the pain is real. How you deal with the pain is the difference between a life of consuming bitterness and a life of irrepressible joy and peace.

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Fill 'Er Up!

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The problem is everyone is quick to tell you to forgive, but no one tells you *how!* The key is the Master of forgiving and forgetting. Let me explain.

Several years ago, I was hurt over a situation. I truly wanted to forgive the person involved and to let it go. I asked God for help and managed to muster up a temporary forgiveness. The next day the pain would resurface, and I'd be rehashing all the details and justifications of my hurt all over again. This went on for weeks.

Finally, I cried out to God: "I can't do this! I don't just need your help, I need you to do it for me! I need you to put in me the forgiveness I need to show my friend!" He did. That was the key. We can't do it on our own. We can't even do it with God's assistance. *He* is the one doing the work in us—not us with his help.

"Now all glory to God, who is able, through *his mighty power at work within us*, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20, *NLT, emphasis mine*).

We can either struggle with hurts or surrender to Christ. Just asking for *help* implies I can take care of this forgiveness business with a little assistance from God. I can do 90 percent of

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CONNECTIONS

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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 Nurturernet 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

Reflections

December is a time for celebration and reflection. Every year, people make lists of the worst-of, the best-of, major events and people of the year. The years fly by so quickly, I often forget what happened just a few months ago, so I enjoy this kind of reflection. During a conversation about what we were doing in August, I was surprised how quickly the big solar eclipse in North America had slipped my memory.

More important than remembering major events is looking back on how God may have worked in our lives over the past year, lessons we learned or prayers answered or unanswered (sometimes the latter is a good thing). Reviewing these things will undoubtedly lead to prayers of thanksgiving and praise because God is always good.

Every year we experience ups and downs. Some of my ups included the beautiful wedding of our daughter in October, a great trip to South Africa with Sheila Graham to attend two retreats, the GCI conference in Orlando, another great trip to Europe and the UK, as

well as lots of bike riding. Unfortunately, a lot of these ups contributed to some downs. Being gone so much, I didn't stay on track for my decluttering and downsizing goals. Oh well, there's always next year.

When I look around and start to beat myself up for not making more progress, I go back to my One Word—*value*. My value is not in how well I maintain my house or how much headway I make on the clutter. My value lies in who I belong to: God. He's the one who gives me my value as a human being.

I didn't understand this for a long time. When I was a little girl, I used to wake up almost every morning to remember what was special about me that day. It could have been a haircut, a new pair of shoes, a new toy or a trip or activity. It was the way my little girl mind worked to help me feel valued.


But now I understand that nothing like shoes, clothing or toys (even grown-up toys) give me value. The world chases after all these physical things and more, but the thrill is short-lived. That's why no one is ever satisfied with his or her possessions. They are just things.

Now, I wake up with different thoughts (how soon will my tea be ready?). While waiting for the kettle to boil, I thank and praise God I'm alive and in Christ, with my identity and value in him and him alone. Nothing else has any lasting value except knowing him (Philippians 3:8).

This year as you look back on all God has done and all you have learned, think of how much you've learned about Jesus, about who he really is, about the value of knowing him and being known by him. After all, that's why he came to earth to be one of us. We're that important to him.

I hope you had a merry Christmas and wish you a blessed New Year!

Tammy

At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises: Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

—Luke 2:13-14, MSG

Zorro and Me

Transitions

By Barbara Dahlgren

Life is full of transitions. I'm going through one right now. I just turned 70. I'd like to say I'm going through a midlife crisis, but can one really be considered in midlife at age 70? They say 70 is the new 50, but I don't think that's true. I guess I could say I'm going through an old-age crisis, but I don't really like to think of myself as being old. However, I must admit turning 70 seemed to affect me more than any other birthday.

Zorro had no problem turning 70 in August. Maybe he just can't remember how old he is. He's never really had a good memory – except for scriptures, addresses and phone numbers. Thank God he became a pastor!

I seemed to breeze through aging milestones like 40, 50 and 60. I must admit when I turned 65, signed up for Social Security, got on Medicare and started thinking about retirement, I felt I was getting older. But 65 didn't sound old. Then I turned 70. Seventy sounds very old to me.

I've tried to analyze why I've had a bit of a problem adjusting. After all, I've had a relatively full life—a loving if somewhat predicament-prone husband, fantastic if somewhat vexing kids, wonderful if somewhat mischievous grandkids and fairly good if somewhat unpredictable health. I've even fulfilled most of my bucket list items.

To be honest, Zorro and I never had a bucket list. It's just that as we did things, people kept saying, "Well, you can mark that off your bucket list!" So we marked it off an imaginary list. If you've followed our lives in this column for the past 14 years, you know we've had some great adventures. Did I say 14 years? Yes! I've been writing this column for 14 years. No wonder I feel old.

To cope with my funk or what some like to call a later-life crisis, I turned to scriptures

(and music). What seemed to resonate with me the most was Ecclesiastes 3, or the song "Turn, Turn, Turn" by The Byrds from 1965. (Yes, I realize this date just reconfirms how old I am). I may not be able to recite it from memory, but I can certainly sing it. The bottom line is I am transitioning from one season to another in my life.

For me, this doesn't mean I have a bunch of things I want to do before I die. It just means it may be time for me to make a few changes, shake things up a bit and not be satisfied with the same old, same old. This may not seem like a big deal to you, but to someone like me who loves consistency, dislikes surprises and hates change, it's a major mindset adjustment.

I had an *aha* moment when my girlfriend Evonne gave me a birthday gift card for a Baggallini, a stylish functional purse designed by flight attendants for travel or every day. (Do I sound like a commercial?) Evonne had one I loved. I surfed the net to find just the right one. I emailed her I had narrowed it down to a black one but wasn't sure of the exact style. She said: "What a big surprise! All your purses are black. Now that you are turning 70 I thought you'd step up your game!"

Bingo! A light bulb went off! That's my problem. If I'm going to do anything a little differently, now is the time. So I bought a red Baggallini! It's the new me. Suddenly I seem to be embracing this time in my life.

Another scripture I read about aging was Titus 2:3-5. It speaks of the older women teaching the younger women. Finally, at age 70, I might qualify to pass some life lessons on so I've decided to write a new column for *Connections*. This means I will need to transition from my *Zorro and Me* column to a new one called *Life in the Goldfish Bowl* about lessons Zorro and I have learned in almost 50 years of ministry. Some might be disappointed with this change, but I think 14

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Let God’s Light Shine

By Anne Gillam

Coffee is something we really enjoy. We try different kinds of beans. Two varieties we like are Kenyan and Mexican, organic and fair-trade. I like to think buying them helps those who grow the coffee beans.

One morning I needed to grind the beans and I had to move the night light in the kitchen so I could plug in the grinder. A spider has made its home in the space behind the light. I usually let the spider be, letting him or her do his or her work, eating the fruit flies and gnats that gather there. I only clean the night light when necessary. It is a symbiotic relationship.

The tiny spider jumped to the wall as I removed the light, and I heard a voice telling me to pay attention to this. The spider wandered around looking for its home; at least that is how I saw it. I got excited when it came close to its home but did not recognize it or return to it.

When I finished grinding the coffee, I replaced the light, watching for the spider the whole time. It didn’t take long before the spider was home, guided by the light. “Teach me what I need to know Lord,” I said, though I had a clue already. Anything can be a learning experience when I stay open to God’s voice and teaching.

The light is what guides the lost to find

God has a bottle and a book for his (people’s) tears... What was sown a tear will come up a pearl.
—Matthew Henry

their way home. They can be close to their goal and yet not see it because of the darkness. As they wander around in the dark, they cannot save themselves, but need the guiding light of God to bring them home. The light dispels the shroud of lies covering their eyes, heart and mind.

I can help make it possible for them to find their way home to the light, by shining the light God has given to me. Though at times we would rather fly home to Jesus, our place here now on earth is important. We need to shine where God has placed us and be that beacon of light to the lost.

Or as Paul said, “‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’” (Romans 10:13-15, *NIV*).

So many in the world dwell in the darkness and do not see the depravity of their condition. They keep trying to find their own way, to work up the power within themselves to become the light they desperately need. They cannot discern that only the one true light can guide them home.

Merciful Lord God, teach us to be that light that shines for Jesus and shows the way for others to come home to you. Amen.



Anne says: “With all of the past and ongoing disasters, we decided not to gift each other this year but give to others in need. Everyone has a different idea of what that should be. It will be interesting as we gather to spend time together and hear where each one has offered their gift of love. Have a wonderful Christ-centered Christmas.” You may email Anne at annegillam48@gmail.com.

One of Those Days

By Sheila Graham

I'm one of those who has an obsession about always putting things back where they belong. My goal is to never misplace or lose anything. When I do, which does happen, I'm upset and can't think of anything else until I find the missing object.

Early one morning I arrived at choir practice without my cell phone. It should have been in the side pocket of my purse, but it wasn't. My purse had fallen over in the car so I searched all around the passenger seat. No phone.

Oh no, did I drop it somewhere else? I looked all around and even under the car, and back at home I parked outside the garage until I could look inside.

I finally found it right where I left it, on the recliner chair! Whew! Never again, said I. I'll be more careful next time.

But that same day I went out to my shed (art studio) to get something and later, after I returned to the house, I couldn't find my keys. They weren't in my purse or on the key rack. I knew I opened the shed with them, so I backtracked, but no keys.

They weren't in my jacket pocket either. It wasn't only my house and shed key on that ring, it was also my car key. My blood pressure rose again.

The grass is not, in fact, always greener on the other side of the fence.... Fences have nothing to do with it. The grass is greenest where it is watered. When crossing over fences, carry water with you and tend the grass wherever you may be.

—Robert Fulghum

I prayed about it, and then remembered I had changed my jacket. Sure enough, the keys were in my other jacket hanging in the closet. Thank you, Lord.

Have you ever had a day like that? I hope not. Maybe I shouldn't worry so much about stuff, but some of that stuff is expensive to replace!

When I found those lost items, I was so happy and relieved. My joy and thankfulness reminded me of Jesus' parable of the woman with the lost coin.

“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin'” (Luke 15:8-9, *NIV*).

The commentaries say each of those silver coins, or *drachmas* in the Greek, were worth a day's wages at the time. They weren't pennies—these were valuable silver coins. No wonder she was upset and searched so diligently. And no wonder she was elated when she found her coin and shared her joy with her friends and neighbors.

Jesus used this parable to show how valuable all human beings are to God. Before we come to God in repentance, we wander around like lost sheep. When we are found, much rejoicing goes on in heaven. Verse 10 tells us, “In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Isn't that amazing? And so good to know and understand!

Such parables about lost coins or sheep also show God doesn't give up on us. A person is much more valuable to God than a silver coin or a sheep. No wonder Jesus commands his followers to go and make disciples and to feed his sheep. Nothing is more important to God.

God's love, forgiveness, mercy and grace

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One of Those Days

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toward us have no limits. He loves us, every single one of us, so much that he goes all out to find us and bring us home. If you're concerned about a family member, friend or loved one who has not yet come to repentance, don't forget, God hasn't forgotten about them. I might finally give up on finding something I lost, but God doesn't give up on anyone!



Sheila said that night when she went to bed, glad this particular day was finally over, she reached over in the dark to get something off her night stand and knocked over half a glass of water. Water on her bedroom floor's carpet—the end of a not-so-perfect day! She can be reached at grahams@ntin.net.

O, Divine Master, grant that I may not
so much seek to be consoled
as to console; to be understood as to
understand; to be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying that we are born again
to eternal life.

—St. Francis of Assisi

Fill 'Er Up!

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the forgiving if God will provide the additional 10 percent.

No, I need 100 percent from him. On my own, I don't have it in me to forgive or forget hurts in my relationships. What I can do is ask God to fill me up from the soles of my feet to the top of my head with his love and with the forgiveness I need to show others. None of the forgiveness I show others comes from me; it comes completely, and without my assistance, from God.

As I ask God to fill me up with himself, along with daily surrendering to him and asking him to change me, someday I will be a spiritual *giant!* God will have made me completely into a new creature and there won't be anything left of the old me. I will have grown "in every way more and more like Christ," as it says in Ephesians 4:15. In the meantime, I'll keep asking God to fill me up with himself!

P.S. If you'd like a good read, try Corrie Ten Boom's *The Hiding Place* (book one) and *Tramp for the Lord* (book two). They are autobiographical and very inspiring. She knows a thing or two about forgiveness!



Sondra Peters and her husband Ed attend the GCI Grace Fellowship Church in Clarksville, Tennessee. She leads a weekly Bible study at a nursing home as well as The You Matter Club, a weekly program in which children in an affordable housing community are given the message of Jesus. You may email her at sondrapeters@bellsouth.net.

Growing to Feel Safe

By Denise de Moei

I nervously looked at my phone for the third time that morning. I wondered whether I would send the message to my dear friend or not. Being emotionally exhausted after long weeks of giving intense pastoral care, I needed some time to unwind and be refilled myself. I needed some relaxed talking and laughing, and some deeper emotional support.

My good and caring friend told me several times she would welcome me if I came to her with these kinds of needs, yet I still hesitated to ask for help. Why? Why weren't her words enough for me? Why was I still afraid she would think I should be able to manage myself because my own relationship with God should be enough?

I recognized in myself something I often see in my pastoral work. Words of truth are important and indispensable, yet often they are not enough. Our feelings are a product, a consequence of what we think, believe and hear, but also of what we experience.

Perhaps someone has suffered unfair anger in the past, coming from parents or others, and that has produced a lot of fear. It usually won't be enough to say you won't get angry with him or her. They'll also have to experience your lack of anger before trust grows and fear subsides. Another example is when someone has had a car accident. The best way to get over the fear is to get back in

the car and have a number of normal experiences again.

This is important because we grow in trusting God this way too. We definitely need to hear, accept and believe the good and true words in the Bible about our loving triune God, but we also need to experience these truths about him. When we hear that God is love and we also experience how he indeed loves us, we become more able to deeply trust him.

Some of us have had traumatic pasts and are filled with feelings of fear, sadness, loneliness or anger. It can be frustrating that the good and true words of the gospel somehow don't seem to reach our hearts. Our brains may tell us they are true, but our hearts tell us otherwise.

But take courage, God understands us! He knows it takes time to hear these words and to experience them time and again. As we hear good words about God and start believing them, we become a bit more open to the possibility of experiencing his love and also more aware of it. At the same time, when God lets us experience his love it becomes easier to believe his words. Words and experience work together. They are both important.

This reminds me of a funny song in the musical *My Fair Lady*. Audrey Hepburn in her role of Eliza Doolittle sings about her frustration with so many words, but not experiences: "Don't talk of stars, burning above, if you're in love, show me!"

We can help others by giving them words *and* experiences that convey God's love for them. And it is good to know some people may need this for a long time before trust can start growing.

I was in need of my friend doing some repeating that morning. She not only had given me words more than once, she also had shown me a few times already that she meant those words. Yet I still hesitated. One of my non-Christian friends put it this way: "It's

God tells us, don't give Me a
schedule—trust Me. Watch me do it
My way in My time, and see what
happens...pray, "Lord, I'm available—
do whatever You want with my life,
and show me what to do."



—Charles Stanley

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Growing

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not God's fault, I just don't even know what the word *trust* means!"

I did send the message. Not out of my own willpower, but because our loving triune God worked through some friends on Facebook who posted words about God I needed to hear. An hour or so later, I got a message back. "Yes, you are always welcome Denise! Would somewhere after one o'clock be convenient for you?"

That afternoon we spent a lot of happy time together. We laughed, talked and shared our inner troubles. I told her about my insecurity concerning her. She cared for me with love and understanding and gave me a much needed experience again when she told me she really liked our time together. When I went home I felt so much lighter and back to normal again.

It occurred to me that once I had this positive experience, it felt logical for me to believe the truth about my friend and about myself. It is normal to be emotionally exhausted now and then. My caring friend doesn't reject me for that. That's who she is! I didn't have to fight anymore to believe these things. They have become natural.



Denise says: "I am enjoying spending lots of fun time with our son Maarten lately. We are thankful for our two lovely children and son-in-law!" You may email her at denise@gemeentedehoeksteen.nl.



Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it with the handle of anxiety or the handle of faith.

—Henry Ward Beecher

Magic Tonic

By Senior Pulley

I don't know about you, but I have this innate desire to *fix* things. Yes, I understand our heavenly Father is always present and hears our every plea. However, sometimes I find myself using the phrase, "I wish I could...."

Some years ago I watched an old TV show where a traveling salesman was selling what he called Magic Tonic. It was supposed to cure anything, and people stood in line to buy it. One of the townspeople (one of the richest and most gullible), bought several bottles. She said it made her feel so good her aches and pains just vanished. Well, it turns out she felt no pain because it was about 90 percent alcohol!

Time and circumstance happen to us all, but it's terrible to feel sick and easy to wish we had some kind of magic tonic that would strengthen bodies and minds, lower blood pressure and blood sugar, cleanse our organs, rejuvenate, refresh and just make us feel great. Well, the Lord is always ahead of us! He has indeed created a *tonic* that does all of that. It's called water. It isn't magic, but it is miraculous stuff.

Our bodies, being mostly water, seek replenishment all the time, and when we drink water:

It strengthens our bones and our bodies.

It helps regulate the working of our bodies, lowering blood pressure and blood sugar.

It cleanses our organs, and when we fail to drink enough water, the body will seek it from various organs to make up for the lack. This can cause problems.

It's refreshing and cooling when we are tired and feeling hot.

It makes us feel rejuvenated.

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Magic Tonic

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How interesting it is that no matter how many health reports we hear on the benefits of drinking water, so many don't do it. Some reasons are: "It doesn't have any flavor," "It doesn't taste like anything," or "I don't have time." But like any other good habit, drinking water can be truly addicting.

It's amazing that along with these physical facts, coinciding spiritual analogies also apply.

In John 7:37-39 (NIV), Jesus said: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive."

When our thirst leads us to Jesus and we drink from the Living Water he provides:

We feel strengthened spiritually and even physically.

We need not suffer with pressure to handle the tough stuff.

The Spirit of life cleanses us from the inside out, making us feel great.

It refreshes us when we are tired, weak, heavy laden and weary.

It doesn't contain sugar, but this water is truly sweet!

Like the health experts trying to encourage people to drink water, Jesus had quite a time trying to teach the people of his day about Living Water. They wanted a quick fix to their problems, like some sort of magic tonic. But if they had listened more carefully and "knew the gift of God...[and] would have asked...he would have given...living water" (John 4:10, NIV).

Physical water refreshes the one who drinks it. Living Water not only refreshes the one who drinks of it, but also flows like a fountain from one's innermost being, springing up to eternal life and refreshing all those in its path.

The Lord has given us so much more than a magic tonic, he's given us physical water, which is delicious and sweet, to quench our thirst. But more so, he's given us Living Water, springing up and flowing out so we may never thirst again!



Senior admits she used to avoid drinking water because it didn't have any flavor but soon found it the best-tasting drink giving physical sustenance, but it pales in comparison to the Living Water which Jesus gives! You can email her at cjpulley@logic.bm or cecil.pulley@gci.org.

Keep loving. Keep loving because of.
Keep loving in spite of.
Keep loving when to love is most difficult. Keep loving when you have no strength. Keep loving because Jesus loves you. In good times and bad, on mountain tops, in valleys. When all else fails, keep on loving.

—Anita C. Donihue



O dear God
Help me to grow
More like You
In spite of my circumstances.

*My child
You will grow
More like Me
Because of your circumstances.*

—Ruth Harms Calkin

'Til we meet again...

Jane Parsons
December 11, 2017

Lynn Lawrence
October 28, 2017

Carole Grinnell
October 15, 2017

Donna Bechtold
October 1, 2017

Betty Shamus
August 12, 2017

Marilyn Sue Zvorak
May 7, 2017

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants” (Psalm 116:15, *NIV*).

Suffer me never to think
that I have knowledge enough
to need no teaching,
wisdom enough to need no correction,
talents enough to need no grace,
goodness enough to need no progress,
humility enough to need
no repentance,
devotion enough to need
no quickening,
strength sufficient without your Spirit;
lest, standing still I fall back
for evermore.

—Eric Milner-White
1884-1963

years of articles along with a *Zorro and Me* book is a pretty good run. And rest assured, Zorro will play a prominent role in the new column. After all, he’s much more dynamic than my new red purse.



Barbara says: “In honor of my birthday, my family and I had a week-long celebration. We enjoyed many dinners out and a few movies. Here’s a picture of Zorro and me at my birthday bash at El Amigo after a few margaritas. I’m the one in the sombrero. Good times!” Be sure to check out Barbara’s weekly blog at www.barbdahlgren.com or just Google Barbara’s Banter. You can email Barbara at bydahlgren@pacbell.net. She loves hearing from you!

True faith...rests upon the assurance
that God is who he is.
Indeed, on that we must be willing
to stake our very lives.

—Charles Colson

Briefly Speaking...

Once Upon a Time

Can you imagine a time when people weren't tied to tiny increments of time? It's difficult isn't it? Our world today is run on time. You're expected to be at work on time. Your kids are expected to be at school on time. Meetings should start on time and end on time.

Even though I'm retired, I make lists along with allotted times to complete daily projects. Isn't that nuts? I have no one to blame but myself for that craziness. I think I'm getting better but sometimes I wonder.

Jesus said we worry too much—about everything, not just time. Matthew 6, verse 27, *NIV*: “Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

Does worrying about how long we're going to live make us live any longer? Well, if it causes us to change some bad habits, it might. But then it might not. Excessive anxiety and worry can also shorten life.

Look at verse 34: “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Again, when we look to God and his grace, whatever happens tomorrow, we know God will be there. Worrying about the future is counterproductive.

Remember when you were a child? You lived in the moment. What was important

Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were
the skies of parchment made; were every
stalk on earth a quill, and every man
a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above would
drain the ocean dry; nor could the scroll
contain the whole, though stretched
from sky to sky.

—Frederick M. Lehman 1917,
The Love of God

was what was happening right now. It was agonizing when your parents said you couldn't do or have something until tomorrow. Tomorrow? It seemed so far away. And yesterday—yesterday was gone. Today, right now, that's what was important.

As children we weren't burdened with the world's worries. As one author put it: “The pressures of life had yet to find us.” That was once upon a time.



Sheila says: “I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and I wish you a New Year full of happy adventures. For what's life without adventure? May God bless whatever ministry you are involved in now and that may come your way in 2018. My prayers are with you always.” You can contact her at grahams@ntin.net.

Nurturenet

Nurturenet is our 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 to request information, to request prayer, 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. Please do not reply to a post unless you want to address the entire list.



Please let us know if
your email changes!

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

I had given our daughter, who was 15 at the time, a driver's manual. On the way to town one day, I was coaching her as I drove. I told her to be studying her book so as to be ready when it came time to get her driver's permit.

"Oh, she said, "I already know everything in the book."

"You do?" I returned.

"Yep," she said, very smugly.

I thought, OK, I'll give her a hard one. So I asked her, "How many feet does it take to stop the car if you are driving 60 miles an hour and have to slam on the brakes real hard?"

"One," she replied.

"What?" I asked. She repeated her answer and then because of the confused look on my face, she added, "You always told me never to use my left foot on the brakes, only use my right one."

While trying to explain to our 6-year-old daughter how much technology had changed, my husband pointed to our brand-new personal computer and told her that when he was in college, a computer with the same amount of power would have been the size of a house. Wide-eyed, our daughter asked, "How big was the mouse?"

I was recovering from surgery when a charity representative phoned asking me to take part in a door-to-door fund-raising effort.

"Sorry," I replied, "but I've been incapacitated."

Undaunted, the caller kept trying to convince me to change my mind and volunteer. I interrupted and said, "I'm incapacitated. Do you know what that means?"

She hesitated. "It means your head was cut off?"

I went to McDonald's and I saw on the menu that you could have an order of 6, 9 or 12 Chicken McNuggets. I asked for a half dozen nuggets.

"We don't have half dozen nuggets," said the teenager at the counter.

"You don't?" I replied.

"We only have 6, 9 or 12," was the reply.

"I can't order a half dozen nuggets, but I can order 6?"

"That's right."

I shook my head and ordered 6 McNuggets.

—*clean laffs*

If at first you don't succeed, you'll get a lot of advice.

—Bits & Pieces, Volume 16, #1

Lord, where we are wrong, make us willing to change. And where we are right, make us easy to live with.

—Peter Marshall

More people have died taking selfies than have been killed by sharks. My policy is you should treat selfies like you treat drinking. Try not to do it alone, definitely don't do it while you're driving, and if you take more than two or three a day, you should probably seek help.

—James Corden