



# Connections

◆ A Journal by & for Women in Ministry ◆

Vol. 22, No. 2

July 2015

## God-Given Gifts

By Anne Gillam

One morning I awoke realizing I had the whole house to myself and had nothing better to do than stay in bed and read my book. I was visiting my daughter and today she had to work, but tomorrow I would be able to be a ride-a-long as she did her landscape job. So I began to consume my book, chapter after chapter. I couldn't remember the last time I was able to read a book just for entertainment.

Click, click, click; the sound interrupted me. Or maybe it was the other way around, I interrupted the sound by my curiosity. What was that sound? It had an occasional steady beat, but it was not constant.

During my stay with my daughter I occupied her spare room and though it served as my temporary place of refuge, it was first and foremost a refuge for her many house plants. They varied in size, shape and health. Some seemed to thrive and some were barely clinging to life.

I began to look for the source of the sound, but it was hard for me to move around. Every time I reached for or stepped toward anything, I had a battle trying to reach my goal and at the same time not kill a defenseless plant in the process.

The clicking sound, I found after some searching, was a small, sun-powered plastic sunflower dancing in joy to the gift of the sun shining on it in the windowsill. The steady drone was hypnotic, soothing and comical—all wrapped in one.

As I looked around I could see the God-given gift of a nurturer, a healer and a rescuer of the forgotten and the discarded. I wondered if she knew this as well.

Though many had given up on the potential of these discarded treasures, my daughter had not. She saw the potential and beauty in what they were. What others saw as clutter, she saw as life and possibility.

Isn't that what God sees in us? We often focus on the negatives in ourselves and in others, but God sees our potential. We do not have to develop wings so we can fly and be successful; we just need to see that we can soar even as we are. We have the saying hung on the wall of our laundry room, "Life is not about weathering the storm, it's about learning to dance in the rain."



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## God-Given Gifts

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I am convinced God has given us all we need to succeed in his plan for our lives. But we often put up road blocks and walls to hide behind, feeling sorry for ourselves. Instead of putting God into a box, we put ourselves into boxes and as we do so we shut out the possibilities.

According to Nick Vujicic, in his book, *Life Without Limits*, we can have an abundant life even when we are thrown for a loop. We can look to the possibilities, reach for the impossible and make a ridiculously good life out of our circumstances.

When we think no one could ever love us; when we see the world pressing down on us with no glimmer of hope; we need to turn our hearts to the one who died for us and never thought once about turning his back on us.

Like a true valiant warrior, God stepped in and fought an amazing battle for us. He won by the way, and he saved us from destruction, placing us under his nurturing love. He allows us to heal and grow into our God-given potential. We are not forgotten or discarded. God loves us all!

Merciful God, thank you for giving us purpose and giving us your worth. Thank you for rescuing us from our brokenness. Amen.



*Anne says: "Please feel free to write me. I love to hear from you!" You may email Anne at [webeboss@aol.com](mailto:webeboss@aol.com).*

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*Connections*, a journal by and for women in ministry, is published by Grace Communion International to promote the constructive exchange of ideas and experiences. Opinions of the writers do not necessarily reflect official church policy.

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 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

## Wait for It...

The microwave is one of the greatest inventions for the kitchen. It allows us to quickly reheat or cook food, including popcorn (my favorite). But it might have been only the beginning of the trend to deliver instant gratification and a cause of the increasing lack of impatience rampant today. Everyone wants what they want right now!

Impatience isn't the only consequence of our want-it-now, get-it-now society. We've stopped thinking about the future. In an article in the autumn 2014 issue of *The American Scholar* titled *Instant Gratification*, Paul Roberts talked about how the growing problem of wanting and getting what we desire instantly is causing more problems than just a lot of impatience. "Under the escalating drive for quick, efficient 'returns,' our whole socioeconomic system is adopting an almost childlike impulsiveness, wholly obsessed with short-term gain and narrow self-interest and increasingly oblivious to long-term consequences."

We see this everywhere we look, from drivers cutting each other off in traffic because they're in a hurry to students cheating on tests rather than patiently studying to really get the material. Get-rich-quick schemes have always been with us, but more and more we see corporations focusing on making profits over the long term good of society.

Instant gratification is having a negative effect on overall maturity, as Roberts says in the above mentioned article: "The notion of future consequences, so essential to our development as functional citizens, as *adults*, is relegated to the background, inviting us to remain in a state of permanent childhood."

People as a whole used to be able to wait patiently: farmers waited for their crops; we waited for letters in the mail; travel took longer, news wasn't instant; we didn't have mobile banking, mobile shopping or overnight deliveries. Everything took time.

I think this has affected the way we think of God's plan and anticipate the Kingdom. With the focus on getting what we want immediately, have we forgotten this life isn't all there is? We want everything to be perfect now, forgetting the perfection of heaven is far off and is what we wait for with great anticipation.

Peggy Noonan, former speech writer for Ronald Reagan, said something that struck me as a profound truth in our impatient times: "I think we have lost the old knowledge that happiness is overrated—that, in a way, life is overrated. ...Our ancestors believed in two worlds, and understood this to be the solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short one. We are the first generations of man that actually expected to find happiness here on earth, and our search for it has caused such unhappiness. The reason: If you do not believe in another, higher world, if you believe only in the flat material world around you, if you believe that this is your only chance at happiness—if that is what you believe, then you are not disappointed when the world does not give you a good measure of its riches, you are despairing" (*Forbes Magazine*: September 14, 1992).

Life is not about getting everything we want right now. It's about doing the best we can, "living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17, *NLT*) and looking forward, with patience, to the time when God will make all things new. This life isn't all there is: we have a future well worth waiting for.



Tammy

## Where Are You?

By Angelita Tabin

A week before it happened, I was eagerly anticipating the “Journey With the Master” meeting. I said to myself, I will sleep early the night before the meeting so I can understand everything and absorb as much as my brain can get.

But that night I needed to visit one of the members in our congregation whom I had not talked to for quite a while. She had not responded to my texts or my calls. I began to worry. I had asked her roommate to let me know when she was around so I could visit her.

I told my husband Saddie I am already tired but if I miss this chance, I don’t know what might happen. I thank God for having a supportive husband. So we went and visited this friend of mine.

She was almost asleep and did not expect our visit. She was always sweet and happy even though she faced a lot of challenges. That night she was a bit serious, though still talking of her experiences at her work. Saddie and I listened to her story and before we left, I prayed for her and with her.

Two weeks passed and I still didn’t see her at our church service. I left a message on her Facebook account and lo and behold she was online! I told her I would visit her before going back to work. I asked Saddie to buy some food for her. When I saw her, she explained what happened and why she was not responding to me.

My heart went out to her. I could only once again listen and have empathy for her. I prayed for her, and this time, Saddie prayed for her too. After our prayer, she cried like a child, sobbing and saying: “Thank you for not leaving me, in spite of what I did to you, not responding to all your texts and calls. I don’t know what to do if you just left me after ignoring you.” She was so depressed. We told her, “God loves you and so do we.”

After leaving her, while Saddie was driving back home, we were both quiet, thinking of what had happened. I thank God, for he enabled us to love her and helped us be flexible, to change our schedule so we could be there for her. He gives us what we need to be involved and to help as much as we can, to share the love of Jesus when someone needs us. He places us where he wants us to be (Esther 4:14).

God continues to guide us, to be effective where he has placed us for such a time and moment as this. “Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11, *NIV*). Lord, thank you for letting us be your hands and feet to make a difference and to be the light in this darkened world.



*Angelita and Saddie, her husband of for 28 years have three children, Heidi, Herbert and Hazel, who are helping with church planting in Eagle Rock, California. They came to the U.S. three years ago to plant a church. Her passion is to speak and share the love of God. You may email her at [angie\\_saddie87@yahoo.com](mailto:angie_saddie87@yahoo.com).*

O Lord, this is our desire, to walk along the path of life that You have appointed us, in steadfastness of faith, in lowliness of heart, in gentleness of love. Let not the cares and duties of this life press on us too heavily; but lighten our burdens, that we may follow Your way in quietness, filled with thankfulness for Your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—Maria Hare  
Transformation Garden  
[transformationgarden.com](http://transformationgarden.com)



## Aww...

By Joyce Catherwood

A photo is circulating on Facebook of a super-cute, fluff-ball of a kitten who thinks his name is “Aww,” because that’s what everyone says when they see him. Few can resist having a softhearted reaction to a kitten. And what about a newborn baby or adorable toddler? It comes quite easily, doesn’t it?

So why is it often challenging to have the same gentle reaction toward people? Obviously



it’s because we are not all cute little things and can be downright annoying in our off moments. Then instead of going “aww,” the reaction is often, why in the world did he or she say that? Or, what’s their problem anyway?

It’s human to misjudge or misread someone. Wouldn’t it be remarkable if we could read hearts like Jesus did as the Son of Man on this earth? Things would be decidedly simpler. But as that’s impossible, the next best thing is to sympathetically assume someone has a reason for getting up on the wrong side of the bed or falling short of our expectations. The underlying motives for unpleasant reactions are not always bad. In fact, they may be completely understandable.

In her fascinating book, *My Stroke of Insight*, Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, an advanced brain scientist, speaks of the necessity of being sensitive to the plight of others. She describes suffering a massive, rare form of stroke in the left hemisphere of her brain. Losing her left brain consciousness and functions caused her to fall out of sync with the external world.

Jill retained right-brain consciousness, enabling her to continue processing information as a scientist. Within a few hours, she sensed her mind deteriorate to the point she could no longer walk, talk, read, write or re-

call any of her past life, including family or friends. Ten years later, after her long recovery, she documented her experience.

It was easy to judge Dr. Taylor as less than what she had been before because she could no longer function as a normal person. Even though everyone was a stranger to her, she could read volumes from facial expression and body language. Hospitalized by the stroke, she felt safe with some medical personnel and unsafe with others. A few staff members, oblivious to her needs, were loud, impatient, brusque and abrupt in handling her.

Yet another’s eyes were soft and kind as she reassuringly touched Jill’s foot, then her shoulder and came close to her face so she could hear as she spoke softly. Dr. Taylor says, “Although I could not completely understand her words, I completely understood her intention.”

She describes how, as she lay on a hospital bed unable to speak, she perceived sounds, touch, light—any incoming stimulation—as highly discordant and unbearably painful. Vulnerable and confused, Jill recalls desperately wanting to tell those around her: “Bring me your gentle spirit.... Be kind to me. Be a safe place for me.”

Her mother arrived on day three after the stroke. Dr. Taylor didn’t recognize her when she walked into the room. But her mom went straight to her bedside, lifted the covers and crawled into bed with her. Jill explains how her mom “immediately wrapped me up in her arms.... I felt perfectly content all wrapped up in my mother’s love. She was kind and soft and obviously freaking out a little, but overall, I thought she was nice and I liked her.” Her mother instinctively knew she needed tender loving care in the wake of a life-changing calamity.

Usually we have no idea what difficulties or life lessons the person standing next to us may be experiencing. So why not assume for

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Aww...

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the moment there may be valid reasons for their conduct, rather than immediately and superficially judging and reacting negatively? This gives us time to mellow out, allowing for a more gentle response on our part and the chance to reflect the graciousness and tender mercies of Jesus.

Quoting Maya Angelou, beloved and celebrated poet and author: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."



*Joyce says: "I joined the FB group Butterfly Enthusiasts to share my butterfly photos and enjoy those of others. Little did I know many in this group not only cultivate host plants, but they also tenderly raise their own caterpillars like family, from the egg to the adult butterfly, then joyfully release these enchanting creatures into nature. Their comment threads are fascinating and enlightening, showing deep respect and care for God's beautiful creation." You may email Joyce at [joyce.catherwood@gci.org](mailto:joyce.catherwood@gci.org).*

## My One Word From Readers

**Becky Deuel:** *Submit.* This is submitting mostly to the voice of the Holy Spirit, but also to my husband and the members of our congregation, to truly be a servant leader.

It is mostly trying to overcome selfishness.

**Barbara Dahlgren:** *Trust.* Trusting God is a conscious moment by moment choice I need to make. God is with me every step of every day, whether I feel it or not. Trusting God is how I try walk by faith and not by sight. So when disconcerting situations come up I just whisper, "God, I choose to trust you!" Then my perspective changes. My focus turns to God, his love and power, instead of me and my circumstances. "But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, "You are my God!" (Psalm 31:14, NKJV).

**Senior Pulley:** *Rest* (see page 9).

## Nurturennet

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



**Do we have your mail address?**

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

# Zorro and Me

By Barbara Dahlgren

## Par for the Course

Christian writers usually try to come up with a *take away* from their articles. They want to leave you with some spiritual tidbit you will remember and take away with you when you think of what they've written.

Well I've racked my brain trying to come up with some take-away value for this golf story, but so far nothing has come to mind. Perhaps that's because I don't play golf. The only birdies I'm familiar with are in the trees, although from what I understand, that's where some golf balls are as well.

When I watch golf on TV I find it incredibly boring. Yes, I know among golf enthusiasts it's unthinkable, but what can I say? That's how I feel. Who wants to see an instant replay of a tiny ball you can barely see rising, somewhat sailing in the air and falling back to earth—again and again and again—especially in slow motion?

Hit the ball, watch the ball, walk to the ball, hit the ball, watch the ball, walk to the ball, try to hit the ball in a little hole, then get it out of the little hole and hit the ball, watch the ball, walk to the ball—again and again



and again.

That's why I don't like golf, but Zorro does. So I'm just going to relate my golf story and leave it to the golfers to make deep spiritual analogies about staying the course, avoiding sand traps and water hazards, keeping the ball in bounds and not cheating on the score card. So here goes.

Zorro has always enjoyed the game of golf. However, after we were married it became obvious living on a pastor's salary would not give him the chance to play a lot, as golf can be a pricey game.

Early in our marriage we were living in Kentucky when Zorro's brother David, who lives in California, was being groomed to become a professional golfer. Dave had been invited to train for a couple of weeks at a golf resort in Hawaii. He and his wife were going and they invited us to come along. What a wonderful opportunity! Neither Zorro nor I had ever been to Hawaii, plus Zorro would have the chance to play some golf.

The resort was fancy and Zorro got to play a lot of golf. Guests were in a higher income bracket than us, but that didn't stop us from having a great time. It didn't take Zorro long to figure out most of these rich golfers bought expensive golf balls and would abandon them around the water hazards and sand traps. If a ball was hit out of bounds they would just use a new golf ball, instead of going to the trouble of finding the one they hit.

So Zorro got up early each morning to hunt for golf balls. By the time we were ready to come home he had quite a collection. Now most tourists would bring home souvenirs like dancing hula dolls, Hawaiian print shirts, carved Tiki bottle openers or chocolate-covered macadamia nuts from a trip like this. Our luggage was full of golf balls. We managed to get most of them in one hard-cover suitcase, but we had to sit on it to make it close.

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## Par for the Course

*Continued from page 7*

Airport security in those days was not as sophisticated as it is now. There was no scanning equipment. However, they were very strict about not taking any fruit from Hawaii to the mainland. So they would choose one suitcase at random from a group of travelers to open and inspect.

Zorro and I had three to choose from and of course they pointed to the one full of—you know what. I said to the inspector, “You really don’t want to open that one.”

He smiled and said, “I really do.”

I smiled and said, “Not a good idea.”

He smiled and said, “Oh, yeah, I want to open it.”

I looked at Zorro and said, “You are on your own.” Then I walked away.

The inspector took the tiny key, unlocked the suitcase and it exploded. Golf balls propelled all over that airport. They hit the tiled floor and bounce, bounce, bounce until they seemed to settle down a bit and then just rolled here and there and everywhere.

The inspector looked at me and said, “You’re right. I really shouldn’t have opened that one.”

Well, I tried to tell him. This kind of stuff always happens to Zorro. You might even say it’s par for the course.



“Be sure to check out Barbara’s weekly blog at [www.barbdahlgren.com](http://www.barbdahlgren.com). You can email Barbara at [bydahlgren@pacbell.net](mailto:bydahlgren@pacbell.net). She loves hearing from you.

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

Helping me sort old clothes into *save* and *give away* piles, my six-year-old daughter came across a garter belt. “What’s this?” she asked.

“It’s a garter belt,” I said. Seeing that meant nothing to her, I added, “It’s for holding up stockings.”

“Ah,” she said, carefully placing it in the *save* pile, “we’ll use it next Christmas Eve.”

A boy watching his father, a pastor, write a sermon, asked: “How do you know what to say?”

“Why, God tells me.”

“Then why do you keep crossing things out?”

—cleanlaffs.com

“I write down everything I want to remember. That way, instead of spending a lot of time trying to remember what it is I wrote down, I spend the time looking for the paper I wrote it down on.”

—Beryl Pfizer, American Journalist

Real Letters to Pastors:

“Dear Pastor, My father should be a minister. Every day he gives us a sermon about something.” Robert, age 11

“Dear Pastor, I think a lot more people would come to your church if you moved it to Disneyland.” Loreen, age 9

“Dear Pastor, I liked your sermon on Sunday. Especially when it was finished.” Ralph, age 11



# My One Word Journey

By Senior Pulley

As we neared the end of 2014, I began to wonder what my one word would be for 2015. I spent a lot of time talking to God about the old year, what he had taught me through my one word in 2013 and my two words in 2014.

Choosing a word each year has become an inspiring, thought-provoking and enjoyable exercise. It's become a special project the Lord and I share together, where I talk and he listens. And then he speaks in that still small voice and I stop talking and listen.

It was during a listening mode God introduced me to having one word. At the beginning of 2013, my family and I found ourselves in the middle of a trying situation. The concept of having one word to express my feelings was introduced to me in a class. Then hints came by way of songs on the radio, conversations, messages in church about peace and peacefulness.

In his still small voice, God showed me I was caught up in a trial that was making me frustrated, tired and distressed. But he wanted me to be peaceful, and he helped me by introducing me to the concept of focusing on one word through Tammy's encouraging article, "My One Word."

In 2014 God showed me through two words that my peacefulness, and everything else I needed, was available just because I am "in him." I've learned I can be confident he has everything under control.

Working in the secular world it is sometimes easy for me to be drawn into a situation and before I know it, I'm mentally and emotionally charged up. At the beginning of this year, I kept experiencing moments where

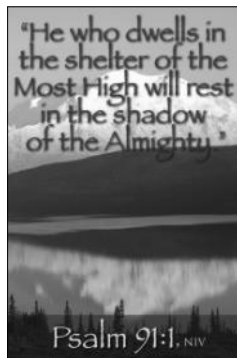
something inside would remind me to "just relax, stop fretting, stop thinking so much, take a break and leave it to me." As the still small voice continued to remind me to slow down, relax and cease worrying—or rest—I found my word for 2015. As soon as I concluded my word should be *rest*, more reminders kept coming my way.

For example, one morning in my office something happened that sent my emotions into a whirl. A moment later, the words *just rest* came to mind and made me stop. I immediately decided to step back and divorce myself from the frustration by opening up my daily email devotional, which I hadn't had the chance to read yet. The bold title startled me: "YOUR 'WORK' IS TO ENTER HIS REST."

The accompanying scripture quoted Hebrews 4:10-11, "Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest." I had to smile and say, "Lord, I hear you. Thanks for reminding me." And then I realized what had upset me was not so important anymore.

The same afternoon, my husband called to tell me a good friend had sent a package. When I got home, I excitedly opened it and found a beautiful handmade gift: a picture with the word (you guessed it) *REST* across the top! Below was a cat relaxing on a lounge chair and a passage at the bottom, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). I was laughing now as I said, "Yes Lord, I hear you loud and clear!"

I've found the word *rest* has great significance, not only spiritually, but mentally, emotionally and physically. Spiritually, I can rest—be confident in—Christ's saving work on the cross and know my salvation is secure in him. Mentally, my brain can relax and not send negative vibes and worrisome reactions



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throughout my body. Emotionally, my nerves get a break from feeling splintered and frayed. Physically, I am reminded to have adequate sleep and rest each night so my body can recharge and function the next day. Besides that, I know I need to take care of this physical body, which is his temple.

Choosing one word for each year has become an enjoyable journey for me. I am also finding my words, *Peaceful*, *in HIM*, *Rest* are seemingly stringing together and creating a statement just for me. Therefore, I know if I am *peaceful* and I realize I have everything I need *in him*, I can truly *rest*.



Senior says you can *rest* assured she won't truly *rest* until she's learned all she can about this word *rest*.... She also enjoys having pun.... You can email her at [cjpulley@logic.bm](mailto:cjpulley@logic.bm)

Who Are You?

Who are you? How would you answer that question? I would probably respond, I'm just an ordinary person, nothing special. I'll never be famous or rich. And I'll never do anything extraordinary I'll be remembered for. No one will put up a bronze statue with my name on it when I die.

Maybe that's how you feel too. If so, C.S. Lewis says we're both wrong.

Lewis said, "There are no ordinary people.... Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses." He said that's because Christ dwells in us.

Hard to comprehend? Yes, when I look at myself with my bad habits and no telling what sins I don't even recognize in myself yet, I sure don't feel special. The Holy Spirit still has his work cut out when it comes to me.

Maybe we won't have bronze statues set up, engraved with our names and mighty deeds, but we are not ordinary people. We are going to live forever. The ever-living Christ is in us. We are immortals!

So, let's treat one another that way, with joyful love and respect.



You may email Sheila Graham at [grahams@ntin.net](mailto:grahams@ntin.net).

How can God stoop lower than to come and dwell with a poor humble soul? Which is more than if he had said, such a one should dwell with him; for a beggar to live at court is not so much as the king to dwell with him in his cottage.



—William Gurnall

Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God's gift of Himself.

—Mother Teresa

## Body in Motion

By Ruth Miller

One Wednesday morning when I got to the church where I work, I couldn't help but be inspired. Saint Mark was a virtual hubbub of activity. The preschool teachers were arriving to face a busy day with the children. In the kitchen, two groups were at work. One crew was preparing for the Wonderful Wednesday meal for that evening. Others were busily preparing a meal for a funeral, as one would take place later in the day.

One staff member tended to the parking spaces and signs needed to manage the carpools for the preschool, visitation and funeral. A volunteer was preparing a Hospitality Room for the grieving family. Later the church music director, organist and pianist would get involved providing music. The two pastors would be officiating at the service. Other members would be arriving to help with whatever was needed—ushering, helping with the family meal, and just being extra pairs of hands and feet.

I was in the midst of all of it—loving every minute! What inspired me most was watching the body of Christ in motion. I've been privileged to serve in ministry at Saint Mark for almost 17 years and what I love best is seeing the amazing amount of ministry accomplished here. I wish all the members could see the church from my perspective. Though not a member of this church, I love being on staff at a church that is not a museum. Saint Mark's fabulous facilities are used throughout the week. Jesus loves it when the body is carrying

out his ministry of love to a lost and hurting world.

Bob and I attended a Pastors' Retreat in Georgia. Our regional pastor, Ted Johnston, and his assistant, Dennis Wheatcroft, planned an inspiring and encouraging time for us to be together in an atmosphere of honesty and openness.

One of the topics discussed was our small churches. We talked about how even our small groups can make a difference for the Kingdom. The purpose of corporate worship is to prepare God's people for works of ministry, and that can be done quite effectively, even in our small congregations and small groups.

At one point we were described as a mega church with lots of locations. We came to realize we are part of a bigger picture, including a rapidly growing international work. It seems GCI, like other churches, is growing most outside the United States.

Churches have life cycles and we are living in an era where larger metro churches are replacing the small country churches. It has been a challenge for many of us as we wonder exactly what God has in mind for our future.

But I believe what I experienced at Saint Mark as I saw the body in motion is an important lesson for us. We have to be about our Father's business. I like to consider the words of Oswald Chambers, "God has not called us to success but to faithfulness."

At the retreat we heard many inspiring stories of individual and group ministries. Sometimes we wish to do some great thing, but Mother Teresa was right when she said: "I have an opportunity to love others as he loves me, not in big things, but in small things with great love" (Nobel Lecture, 1979, [nobelprize.org](http://nobelprize.org)).

The scriptures speak of ministry as small as giving a drink of water, washing feet, sewing clothes for others and visiting the

The love of liberty is the love of others; the love of power is the love of ourselves.



—William Hazlitt

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## Body in Motion

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widows and fatherless. As the body of Christ we are to be sharing God's love with a broken and hurting world and we are to be showing fervent love among ourselves. We are to do good, especially to the household of faith. As church congregations, no matter how large or small, we still have the call to be lights, to serve, to be salt flavoring the world and to share the Good News!

Let's not be weary in well doing. Instead, let's pay attention to Jesus' words in Matthew 24:45-46 (ESV): "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes."



*One of Ruth's passions is women's ministry and part of that focus is organizing an annual fall retreat in Cullman, Alabama. The dates for this year's event are October 9 to 11. She would love to hear from any of you who might be interested in attending. Her email is [ruth.miller@gci.org](mailto:ruth.miller@gci.org).*

When we are linked by the power of prayer, we hold each other's hand, as it were, while we walk along a slippery path, and so by the generous bounty of charity it comes about that the harder each one leans on the other, the more firmly we are bonded together in love.

—St. Gregory the Great  
540-604  
*101 Inspirational Stories  
of the Power of Prayer*

## In Over Their Heads

*By Sheila Graham*

I sing in a community choir. Every third Sunday about 20 of us, attired in our long blue choir robes, sing hymns for the local chapel services. The service is only 30 minutes long so I can sing in the choir there and we can still make it down to our church. It's traditional to end the pastor's opening prayer by the congregation joining in to recite the Lord's Prayer.

As I say the familiar words along with the others, I have to admit I usually repeat it without thinking too much about what I'm saying. Are we really talking to God or is it just rote memorization? I think the latter. I suspect our private prayers are when we really express who God is to us.

If you're like me, you're most fervent when you're in deep trouble or one of your loved ones is in trouble, ill or in the hospital. It reminds me of the story in Mark 4:35 about Jesus sleeping through the storm.

The disciples were in big trouble. They knew these waters. Several of them were fishermen, but they hadn't experienced a storm like this one. They were frightened out of their minds. I imagine they were frantically bailing water, but to no avail. They were being flooded by the high waves crashing over the sides of their boat. The water was coming in so fast they couldn't keep up, no matter how hard they tried.

The disciples handled this situation by first doing everything they knew how to solve their problem. But they seemed to have a little too much confidence in their own abilities. They waited until the boat was actually swamped and beginning to sink before they sought Jesus' help.

But finally, in over their heads, soaking wet, bedraggled, worn out and desperate, they wake Jesus who was sleeping soundly in the stern of the boat. And how do they wake him?

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## In Over Their Heads

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The first words Jesus hears are accusations. Why aren't you concerned? They insinuate he doesn't care about their situation. How in the world can he be sleeping when they are all about to die?

Jesus was probably exhausted—how else could he sleep in a boat being tossed around like a cork by roaring, raging winds and waves? Though he may have been somewhat protected from the wind and water in the stern, he certainly was exposed to extreme

ups, downs and sideways movement as the boat struggled to keep upright in the storm.

But then Jesus gets up, yawns, stretches, looks out and rebukes the winds and calms the sea. To the disciples' surprise, he speaks to the material world as its

creator and master and it obeys. Like a parent speaking to an upset child: OK, wind, OK, water, now just calm down.

And the wind and the water obey! In an instant it's all over. What a rollercoaster of emotions that must have generated in the disciples. One minute you see your life flashing before your eyes and the next, no waves, no wind; it's as if the storm never happened.

It makes me think about my own prayer life. I wish I could tell you I'm in a constantly prayerful attitude, but I can't. How about you? No big deal, we can handle it—that is until disaster strikes, and then, like the disciples, we get fervent about going to God for help.

When we do finally go to God, are we impatient for his answer? The disciples delayed going to him, but they were impatient with Christ. Don't you care, Lord? Are we also like the disciples, surprised when God does answer our prayers? Even though our



Jesus Calms the Storm

prayers have been answered many times, he sometimes shows his purpose and plan in an unexpected way. He is a surprising God.

When we come to God in prayer, we bring our images of him to the forefront. Quoting A.W. Tozer: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

Let's picture God the way Jesus taught us to see him, as both loving father and mother. The Gospels portray Jesus as moved with compassion for the multitudes, seeing them as sheep without a shepherd.

He loves us. He hasn't changed. This is who God is: loving, kind, compassionate and concerned about us. We can trust him with our lives now and for all eternity. Just as Jesus did when his disciples cried out to him in their distress, so can we, knowing in faith, God, through his Son, is eternally there for us.

So the next time we repeat the Lord's Prayer, let's think about who we are talking to and be oh, so grateful.



*Sheila says she is still battling the squirrels attacking her bird feeder. She is now greasing the pole holding the feeder, which works, she says, at least most of the time. You can email her at [grahams@ntin.net](mailto:grahams@ntin.net).*

God the Father is the giver of Holy Scripture; God the Son is the theme of Holy Scripture; and God the Spirit is the author, authenticator, and interpreter of Holy Scripture.



—J.I. Packer