

**Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth, peace to men on whom his favor rests! (Luke 2:14)**

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son,
that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.
For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world,
but to save the world through Him! (John 3:16, 17)*

Thank you, God, that You gave Your most precious Son, born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. He became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth! (John 1:13, 14)

Yes... HE is so gracious! He is so generous! He is so good! The ultimate GIVER! He loved the world so much that He GAVE! He gave His SON. This Christmas season may we all rejoice in God's greatest gift... our Savior, Jesus Christ!

Christmas was a special time of my childhood years! We never had a Christmas tree and colored lights, but we had a "manger scene" and, even as a youngster, I understood the story of Jesus coming to earth in human form. I loved the stories of the shepherds and the wise men and the sad "no room at the inn" part.

I'm glad that our family didn't get so caught up in the "glitter and bright lights" but emphasized Jesus' birth. This year, in the midst of all the glitz and noise, let's purpose to focus on the true meaning and significance of the day... Jesus coming to earth. May HE be the center of attention and may HE receive our love, our gifts, our very being... our ALL!

Thank You, Jesus, for coming!

John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)

P.S. Rather than including a new full-length Christmas Story in this December letter (as has been our tradition for 20 years), may I suggest that you consider purchasing one or both of the *Christmas Tales* books pictured on the back page of this letter. Each book contains 12 of Sharon's delightful Christmas stories. Adults and children alike enjoy the tales!

At this year's end, THANK YOU for your prayer and financial support. We are grateful!

Some of you may wish to give a special year-end gift which is tremendously helpful. Thank you so much!

If you want the tax receipt to be dated in 2022, the check must be dated AND the envelope postmarked by 12/31/2022. (This is an IRS requirement.) Hand-delivered gifts must also take place by December 31.

If you prefer using your credit card, please call our office (717) 626-9575 to process your gift, using VISA, MasterCard, or Discover.

And, you can always give through ALM's website, via PayPal. Just go to AbundantLivingMinistries.org and click on "Donations."



 **Abundant Living Ministries**

December 2022

The Teddy Wagon



I opened a cabinet in our study the other day and pulled out a small bin. I couldn't even remember what it contained. How delighted I was, when I removed the lid and discovered its contents.

The box contained a stash of my father's papers... some of his poetry (he wrote over 150 poems in his life-time), sermon and Bible lesson notes (he was a life-time Sunday School teacher and much-appreciated lay preacher in many Ontario churches), and miscellaneous articles and clippings he had decided to save for future reference.

Looking through the stack, I took the time to read a few of these treasures. And then I unfolded two sheets, held together with a rusty paper clip. I couldn't help but sigh. Top to bottom was my father's hand-writing, certainly not worthy of an "A" in penmanship... but as I ran my hand across the page, my heart ached. How I would love to talk with him again! Hard to believe he's been gone 40 years.

As I read the first couple of lines, memories overwhelmed me. Handwritten on these two papers was a story I had often heard Dad tell. He used to repeat this true story at Christmastime to impress a spiritual lesson on his young daughter... *me!* I share it now, hoping it will do the same for you.

MERRY CHRISTMAS
from Sharon Charles



**As told by Sharon's dad,
Frank Torry (1898-1982)**

I was walking through the factory and saw three men in conversation. I wondered what they were discussing. As I approached, it was evident that the topic was Christmas (which was only three weeks away) and the gifts which their children were begging their parents to buy. One of the men spoke up... a certain sadness in the tone of his voice...



"Well, let me tell you, I will never forget last year. My wife asked our son what he wanted for Christmas and he said he wanted a Teddy wagon.

(These wagons were all the rage at the time and you would often see a boy or girl with one knee on the wagon and the other leg used to propel them racing along the sidewalks... they were beautifully crafted and built to last through years of wear and tear.)

"Work wasn't very plentiful last year and we were not sure that we could afford to get our boy what he wanted. But we started to save. We spent nothing on gifts for each other and sometimes we even went without dinner to put away the extra towards our goal. Finally... and only three days before Christmas... we had saved enough. We rushed out to buy the wagon, then taking it home to hide until Christmas!

"We had also managed to scrape together enough to buy a small tree so, the day before Christmas, after we put our son to bed, we set up the tree and decorated it with a few hand-made decorations. We also hung a couple of small 'five and dime' items which some relatives had sent us. But... right in front of the tree, we placed our most-precious gift where our boy would spot it first thing the next day.

"Christmas morning, my wife and I were up early. We waited so eagerly to see the look of pleasure on our boy's face when he discovered the wagon.

"Then we heard him coming! His feet were flying down the stairs. The door opened and our child's



face lit up as he saw the tree with the colorful decorations.

"But do you know what? What really caught our boy's attention was a little plastic trinket on a tree branch. That's what he asked for."

(Here the man's voice broke and tears blurred his eyes)

"We just couldn't understand. I'm telling you the truth... our son spent the entire day playing with that cheap toy and barely even noticed the Teddy Wagon we had sacrificed to buy for him."

At this point, the factory whistle sounded and the conversation ended. The man who had told his story shrugged his shoulders and sighed as the four of us parted to return to our jobs.

I can only imagine how my co-worker must have felt as he anticipated his boy's discovery and enjoyment of the finely-crafted gift. I'm sure that both father and mother forgot the huge sacrifices they had made and the high price they had paid. Those sacrifices must have seemed small compared to the joy which the present would bring to their lad.

And then... the sorrow and disappointment! All their saving and sacrifice seemed to have been in vain.

The young boy was oblivious to the treasure that had been presented to him by his parents. I guess it's understandable, since children often make immature and foolish decisions.

But how sad that, this Christmas, so many who consider themselves clever and mature, will ignore the timeless gift of salvation that Christ provided for us by paying the debt of our sin through His enormous sacrifice. They will admire the nativity scenes, attend the candlelight services, and even sing the carols, but they won't give serious consideration to God's most-precious Gift... Jesus!

I urge you... never opt for the cheap "toys" of this world. You know what they are. They look attractive but, trust me, they will bring pleasure only briefly and will never stand up to the tests of time and adversity. Do not neglect the most valuable of all gifts purchased at great cost by the One who loves us more than any other.

Thank you, Dad, for that very-timely challenge... hidden away in a forgotten bin. May we all find our greatest joy this Christmas in the most priceless and everlasting Gift... Jesus Himself!

*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.
(John 3:16 NIV)*

The Lord Jesus Christ (Frank L. Torry)

Dreaming, I went on Christmas day
To Bethlehem, far away.
And I looked within the manger where
The baby Jesus lay.
Dreaming, I heard the heavenly host
Announce the Lord of light.
And this is what I heard them say
Upon that holy night...

"The greatest of all mysteries
Has come to pass this night.
For God's own Son has laid aside
His glory and His might.
Now, in the flesh of man He comes;
God's precious Son's been given
To save the lost from sin's dark ways
And bring them home to heaven."

The perfect justice of our God
Demands an awful price,
So the path marked out for Christ to walk
Will end in sacrifice.
But, from the grave He'll rise in power...
Triumphant victory!
And all who claim Him as their own
Will live eternally!

I gazed upon the Baby there
And in a whisper said,
"Sleep baby Jesus, sleep in peace
Tucked in your manger bed.
That brow so smooth, those eyes so bright,
That face so calm, so small...
Will one day glow with joy and light,
As men before You fall."



Upcoming Events at ALM



Open Arms

Childbirth Class

Four Consecutive Thursdays
January 5-26, 2023

Covering the important information offered in a hospital course, *Open Arms* adds a distinctively-Christian perspective. You will enjoy meeting other expectant couples as you gain practical help in preparing for a great labor and delivery. There is no cost for this course.

Register by contacting the ALM office.

Everyone loves a good story...especially at Christmas! *Christmas Tales that Warm the Heart Volumes 1 and 2* (each with 12 stories)

AVAILABLE ON AMAZON

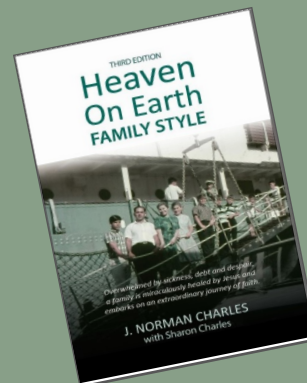
Volume 1: \$12.99 paperback or \$9.99 e-Book

Volume 2: \$13.99 paperback or \$9.99 eBook

AT THE ALM OFFICE

Volume 1: \$11.00 (+ shipping & handling)

Volume 2: \$12.00 (+ shipping & handling)



Also available:
***Heaven
on Earth***

AVAILABLE ON AMAZON

\$12.99 paperback or

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AT THE ALM OFFICE

\$11.00 (+ shipping & handling)



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