

DAYSPRING DAYBOOK

Monthly Newsletter of Dayspring Presbyterian Church, 11445-40 Ave, Edmonton, AB, CAN, T6J 0R4

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ENTERTAINING ANGELS UNAWARE

When I was a young person, growing up in the community where I lived and being a participant in a nearby church (Paterson Memorial Presbyterian Church, in Sarnia, Ontario), I was frequently exposed to the stories of missionaries of the PCC.

These missionaries would return from their posting on sabbatical every seven years (or so). For them, it was a time of renewal and refreshment - but also of weekend "deputation." That is, they would travel from wherever they were based during their sabbatical (usually Toronto, Montreal, or Vancouver) to PCC congregations in the region to talk about their work.

While I was living at Knox College in Toronto and studying at the University of Toronto and Knox, we had opportunity to become friends with several of these "overseas" missionaries. It was not surprising that two members of my Knox graduating class became "overseas" missionaries - as did two of the Ewart College students who studied with us (in India, Guyana, and Nigeria).

But back to me as a young person. I was particularly impressed by the stories shared by one of the PCC "overseas" missionaries who spoke about his work in my home congregation. He was serving in SE Asia and told the story of going into remote villages and sharing the story of Jesus among people who has never before spoken with a Christian people.

He told us about one particular occasion when, after he presented the Jesus story and the meeting had adjourned, a woman came up to him and said something like the following: "Sir. Thank you for sharing the story of Jesus with us." I always know there was someone like that but I never knew he was until today."

"I always knew there was someone like Jesus ..."

Does that story change your understanding of what it means to be a minister, and evangelist, and "angel?" Whether we sit in a Dayspring pew (or participate in worship on ZOOM); whether we are a minister in Canada or find our ministry in SE Asia, India, Guyana, Nigeria, or wherever, we are telling the story of One who is already known - helping people discover One whom they already know.

"Angels" are what this issue is all about.

- John Carr



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Hebrews 11:2

In This Issue

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- Pauline Brown: an Angel in India
- From our Minister: About Angels
- PCC "Angel Factories"

CELEBRATING A REMARKABLE LIFE: Pauline Brown



After a long and rich life of 97 years, a faithful ministry as a nurse in rural India and a brief illness, Dr. Pauline Brown died in her adopted and beloved hometown of Jobat, India, on the morning of Saturday, April 1, 2023.

Pauline was a devoted public health and missionary nurse. As a young girl, Pauline dreamed of working in India. While serving as a nurse in the navy in the 1950s, Pauline met a former missionary to India, which intensified her sense of a calling to work overseas.

The Women's Missionary Society (WMS) appointed the 25-year-old Pauline for a four-month posting. A few months became a 55-year-long ministry working with the Bhil people under the Church of North India. Her focus was always on health care and education in the region of Bhopal. In 2001, Pauline received the Order of Canada for her dedicated service, and the church recognized her ministry with the degree of Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa).

Pauline lived by grace. She understood that God's graciousness filled her every waking moment. She was a natural preacher who lived out her faith in word and deed, never missing an opportunity to proclaim God's grace. Her capacity to build community, to lead in times of trouble, and to find the good news in every moment meant that she transformed people and situations. Her wit, humour and honesty ensured that she was a trustworthy and entertaining companion on every journey. Pauline cannot be described with mere words—she was a force of nature—always a blessing, always encouraging, always participating in the transformative activity of God. To receive her blessing was to know beyond the shadow of a doubt that you were loved.

Pauline retired in Jobat, India, where she was hailed as a beloved and respected elder and wise community leader. Pauline welcomed visitors warmly from around the world into her charming, laughter-filled, book-lined home.

Pauline was buried on Saturday evening near her beloved community in the cemetery outside the front door of her home.

The large banner that welcomed visitors to her home read:

She is radiant like the rising sun;

Her beauty lights up the world.

She wears sun and moon as her jewels.

Her eyes are like fish and lotus and darting deer.

Her face is fragrant like champaka.

her hair like incense

She has capacities, she is active, she is aware, she is fearless, and she is free.





FROM OUR MINISTER: About Angels

When the word "angel" comes to mind, many envision a cherubic baby with wings and a halo. However, the biblical descriptions of angels differ greatly. From "heavenly hosts" to stars and possible "demi-gods," the biblical picture of angels is a tad blurry. Yes, angels are spiritual beings created by God for worship and various tasks. They are firstly, "servants." And not to contradict the movie *Highway to Heaven* but people do not "earn their wings" and become new beings. Angels are not all-powerful and must be present in one place at a time. Engaging with the presence of innumerable angels during worship in particular, we are also cautioned against worshiping them. Let us explore the diverse nature of angels, their roles as messengers, and their fascinating appearances.

Hebrews 13 reminds us that we may have interacted with angels unknowingly, as they can appear invisible unless specifically revealed. These encounters often display human-like characteristics, emphasizing their relatability. Notably, biblical accounts such as 2 Kings 6:17 and Matthew 28:5 showcase angelic interventions that blend seamlessly into ordinary human experiences. The idea that people have guardian angels likely stems from these.

The term "angel" derives from the Greek word "angelos," meaning messenger. Determining whether an angel represents a malevolent intermediary or a person delivering a divine message requires careful consideration of context and description. Some accounts, like Judges 13 and Genesis 18, depict angels as almost indistinguishable from humans, blurring the line between their celestial and earthly roles.

Angels often serve as messengers, described with human-like appearances rather than gendered characteristics. While the term "angel" is used approximately 40 times to describe human messengers, in the Hebrew Bible, angels are also referred to as members of God's heavenly court or the hosts of heaven. They are distinct from God but serve at His will, often associated with the celestial bodies and represented by symbols like cherubim and seraphim.

Angels, as described in biblical accounts, do not typically have wings. However, when identified as specific types such as cherubim or seraphim, they are often depicted with six wings. These angelic beings, such as cherubim, play roles like holding up the ark or mercy seat of God. Biblical imagery, including terrifying visions and symbolism like the **Tetramorph**, provides glimpses into their awe-inspiring nature and their connection to God's presence.

Ezekiel's vivid description of an angel for example comes to the reader covered with eyes and rolling on "wheels within wheels" in a profound image of God's presence departing the city. Though initially terrifying, this passage likely symbolizes the Ark of the Covenant being carried on poles, signifying God's omniscience and omnipresence as it could be carried in any direction. Other images of terrifying beings could also be less miraculous and more driven by the art painted on the walls of the temple. Or, perhaps not.

In the New Testament, angels consistently appear in human form, radiating brilliant white with light - a miniature **theophany** representing God's fire and divine presence with the people of Israel while they wandered in the desert. Exploring the multifaceted nature of angels reveals their role as messengers and heavenly beings, bridging the gap between the divine and human realms while captivating our imaginations with their mysterious and awe-inspiring existence. It appears to me that some "angels" in scripture are human beings with divine messages. Some "angels" may be **Christological** in nature. Some appear to be spiritual beings sent by God to aid us, and even interact with us in disguise. And one thing is for sure, every time they appear, we get another little glimpse into the kingdom which awaits us.

- Brad

ABOUT ANGEL FACTORIES

When Marilyn and I were preparing for ministry during the early 1960s at Ewart College (Marilyn) and Knox College (John) in Toronto, Ewart College (and its predecessor, the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training School) was known (affectionately) as the “Angel Factory.” I know. From this 21st century vantage point, that term was rather sexist but it can be resurrected with new meaning when we get a “handle” on what it means to be an “angel” - which is what this issue is all about.

I think that we might legitimately say that Knox-Ewart College (Ewart has since been absorbed into Knox), Presbyterian College (Montreal), and Vancouver School of Theology, where PCC Ministers learn how to be “angels,” along with all the PCC congregations across Canada, might be called “Angel Factories.”

That is, participation in communities of worship and learning is intended to prepare us to be Angels or, maybe, to help us to be persons who know how to tell the Jesus story in ways that enable people to say that they “always knew there was someone like Jesus.”

Does this change your understanding of what it means to be a Dayspringer, a Presbyterian, a Christ-follower???

If so, the editors would love to know.

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- John Carr.



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