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Thousands of people have been helped, guided, saved or comforted by their guardian angels and are eager to reveal their close encounters with these heavenly beings.

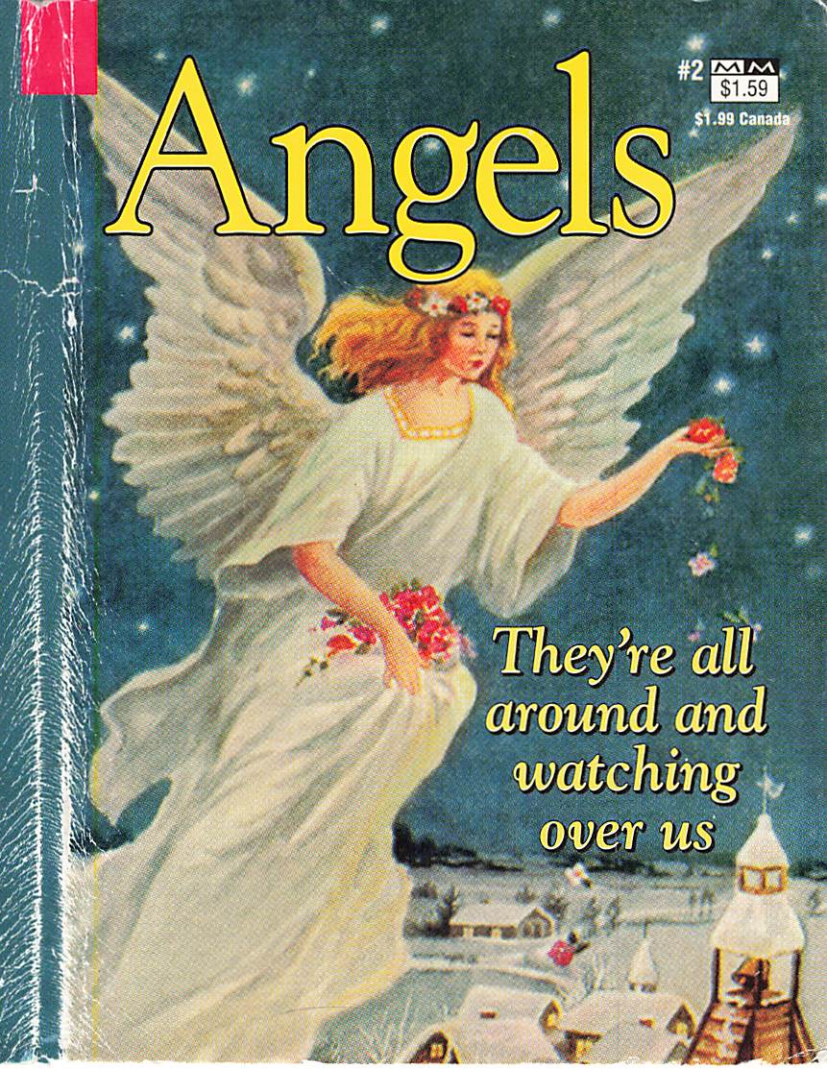


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# Angels

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*They're all  
around and  
watching  
over us*



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*by Bernie Ward*

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# Angels

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**Angel Fact:** An angel is a supernatural being who mediates between God and mortals. Angels are held to minister over all living things in the natural world and all things in the cosmos. The term angel comes from the Greek *angelos*, which means messenger. In Persian, *angaros* means courier. In Hebrew, the term is *malakh*, which also means messenger. The name refers to the angel's primary duty — to shuttle back and forth between realms, bringing human prayers to heaven and returning with God's answers.

— *Encyclopedia of Angels*

## Angels and Religion

The three major western religions — Christianity, Judaism and Islam — accept angels as an intervening force between a Supreme Being and the human race. Angels also are major figures in Buddhism and Hinduism.

In the 14th century, students of the cabala (or Kabala), a mystical Jewish doctrine, decided after long study that there were 301,655,722 angels.

Another Bible scholar of the Middle Ages, St. Albert the Great, figured there were 399,920,004 celestial beings. Jewish tradition puts the number of angels at 49 million. Others, including some

followers of Martin Luther, put the angel population at 10 trillion.

In the Bible, Daniel had a dreamlike vision of angels in which he saw “a thousand thousand that kept ministering to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand that kept standing right before him.” (Daniel 7:10)

Most modern versions of the Bible carry approximately 300 references to angels and their various duties here on Earth. In fact, most of us first learn about angels through these wonderful biblical stories.

The earliest appearance of these “shining ones” is found in Genesis when an angel armed with a flaming sword drove Adam and Eve out of Eden and was then instructed to guard the gates so they could never return.

When God sent an angel to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, he told them: “Pay attention to him and listen to what he says, since my Name is in him.” (Exodus 23:21)

An early mention of angels as personal “guardians” is in Psalms 91:11: “For he will command his angel concerning you to guard you in all your ways.”

Angels in the form of men came to Abraham — the patriarch of both the Jewish and Islamic religions — and to members of his family.

An angel told Hagar, the slave woman who was running away from the home of Sarah and Abraham, that she should return to her mistress. She obeyed and gave birth to Ishmael, who is historically seen as the forebear of the Arabic peoples.

Later, a jealous Sarah banished Hagar and Ishmael to the desert. As they were dying of thirst, the angel reappeared and "opened her eyes" so Hagar could see a nearby well of water. The angel assured Hagar that "a great nation" would descend from her son.

Three angels came to Abraham and his wife, Sarah, when the couple was more than 90 years old to tell them that they were going to have a child.

Another trio of angels visited Lot and his family to warn them of the pending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

When Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, Isaac, as a test of his faith, God sent an angel, said to be Michael the Archangel, to stop him at the last second.

Jacob, Abraham's grandson, dreamed of countless angels ascending and descending a ladder to heaven. One came to him in the middle of the night and the two wrestled until dawn.

Angels appeared to many other biblical proph-

ets. Two of the most profound encounters involved the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel, who lived almost a thousand years after Jacob.

Ezekiel had a vision in which he saw the throne of God surrounded by cherubim with four faces. The sound made by their wings could be heard from one end of heaven to the other.

Daniel was the first to call two prominent angels by name — Michael and Gabriel. Daniel was saved in the lions' den by an angel who held the mouths of the lions closed. And Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, were rescued from the fiery furnace by an angel who appeared in the midst of the flames.

When King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah, his mighty army camped outside the gates of Jerusalem, preparing to invade and destroy the Holy City the next day. But during the night, an angel went through the Assyrian camp and killed 185,000 of the invaders.

In the Book of Tobit (part of the Apocrypha, or the books deleted from the Bible in the 4th century), there is an account of how Raphael, the Angel of Healing, appeared to Tobit's son, Tobias, disguised as a traveler. Raphael healed Tobit's blindness and saved Tobias from a demon.

The many references to angels in the Old Tes-

tament demonstrates that the earliest Hebrews believed that angels were active in their daily lives. An awestruck Gideon proclaimed: "I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face." (Judges 6:22)

**Angels and religion:** That rich angel tradition is also found in ancient Jewish writings other than the Scriptures. According to the Talmud, the Jewish body of religious laws, every Jew has 11,000 guardian angels.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that at birth each person is assigned a guardian angel who remains always at his or her side. In the Islamic religion, everyone is said to have two angels — one to record good deeds, the other to keep track of bad deeds.

As in Judaism and Christianity, the angels of Islam are messengers bringing words of inspiration or revelation.

Djibril (or Jibril) is the Arabic name for Gabriel. On the Moslem Night of Power and Glory, Djibril (often referred to as the angel of truth) appeared to Muhammad and dictated the contents of the Koran to him. And in Muhammad's ascension into heaven, he was met by two angels. One was half fire and half snow; the other had 4,900 tongues to better praise Allah.

In more recent times, the angel Moroni appeared in New York in 1823 to guide Joseph Smith to the buried golden plates that, when translated into the Book of Mormon, became the foundation of the Mormon Church of Latter Day Saints.

***The New Testament:*** Angels are also important figures in the New Testament. Gabriel appeared to Zacharias to tell him that he and his elderly wife, Elizabeth, would have a son, John the Baptist, who would be the forerunner of the Messiah.

Gabriel also came to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus. An angel proclaimed the good news of Jesus' birth to the shepherds of Bethlehem and a host of angels appeared singing joyful praises.

A guardian angel came to Joseph in the night and warned him to flee into Egypt with Mary and baby Jesus to escape the wrath of King Herod.

Following Jesus' ordeal in the desert during which he resisted Satan's temptation, "the devil left him: and behold, angels came and ministered to him." (Matthew 4:11)

It was an angel who supposedly rolled aside the great stone that sealed Jesus' tomb and was waiting inside the empty chamber to inform his followers of Jesus' Resurrection.

In Acts 5:19, after the apostles had been thrown in prison "... an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison and let them out ..."

Another time, when Peter was imprisoned by Herod, bound with chains and guarded by sentries, "... an angel of the Lord stood beside him... The chains dropped from his hands... They passed through the first and second guard and came to the iron gate (that) opened to them of its own accord." (Acts 12:6-10)

**Angel Fact:** The halo became a symbol of heavenly beings in the 4th century. It signifies divine radiance and the nearness to God — the Kingdom of Light. The halo, often worn by angels, signifies a supernatural force and superior intellect and advanced spiritual development. Many cultures use the halo, including the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Indians, Romans and Christians.

## Angels in Art

The second wave of angels occurred in the Middle Ages and was reflected in the art and poetry of the times.

This intense interest in “the shining ones” developed throughout the Christian, Jewish and Muslim worlds.

The major poets and writers of the era focused on angels. Thomas Aquinas wrote extensively about them. In Italy, the poet Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* is filled with images of angels, both good and bad.

John Milton, a 17th century poet, spent most

of his life writing his masterpieces, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, which explored the mystery of fallen angels and their impact on human history.

Emanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish scientist, wrote about celestial encounters that lasted until his death in 1772. Through these visions, he was able to accurately predict future events.

Swedenborg's writings influenced other thinkers of his time. One of those was the poet and painter William Blake.

In the 18th century, Blake produced some of history's greatest angel art by illustrating *Paradise Lost* and *Divine Comedy*. Both the angels he painted and those in his poetry were based on angels he had seen since boyhood. He wrote that he awoke one morning to a vision of innumerable angels chanting "Holy, holy, holy is Lord God Almighty!"

The great Renaissance artists also painted angels. Fra Angelico, the 15th century artist, saw angels and then painted these personal encounters. He is considered one of the greatest angel artists of all time.

Raphael loved to paint the celestial kingdoms often occupied by Raphael the angel. And the works of Michelangelo overflow with images of

angels. The beautiful ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is perhaps history's greatest example of Michelangelo's angel art.

George Handel experienced a celestial encounter while completing *The Messiah*. When finished, a servant found him in tears. "I think I did see all heaven open before me!" he exclaimed.

**Angel Fact:** From ancient times, music has brought us closer to the presence of God and the angels. Chanting, singing hymns, repeating mantras and even rhythmical drumming are ways of getting God's attention. In every sect — ancient or modern, Eastern or Western, Christian, Jewish or Muslim — music is a part of religious services.

Musicians through the ages have said they were touched by a divine voice. Bach wrote only for God, and his compositions are heavenly. Mozart heard notes from another sphere and simply captured them. In fact, almost every major composer has written sacred music, even if he or she is best known for other works.

## Angels in Modern Times

Today, we are in a third wave of angels. They are making their presence known through modern communications and are especially prominent in the entertainment industry.

Movies featuring angels have always been popular. Unquestionably, the best loved "angel movie" of all time is *It's a Wonderful Life*, the Jimmy Stewart classic that is shown repeatedly at Christmas time.

Stewart's character, George Bailey, is saved from suicide by his guardian angel. There's never a dry eye in the house when, at the end of the

movie, a tinkling bell signals that Clarence, the bumbling angel in training, has at last earned his wings.

The hit movie *Field of Dreams* does not actually refer to angels, but audiences are left wondering if the disembodied voice that told Kevin Costner, "If you build it, he will come," might have been an angel sent to heal the father-son relationship between Costner's character and his deceased father.

*Heaven Can Wait* (a remake of the 1940 movie *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*) featured Buck Henry as a mischievous angel whose job it was to fix the untimely passing of star Warren Beatty.

**Television:** For many years, one of the most popular shows on television was *Highway to Heaven*, in which the late Michael Landon played an angel named Jonathan Smith whose mission on Earth was to persuade people to love and help one another.

Landon said he began to think about what a better world this would be if people put all that energy into being kind to others, rather than into useless and destructive anger.

Suddenly, he recalled, the concept of a television series sprang to his mind. In his idea, the main character would be an angel who helps peo-

ple solve problems through kindness rather than anger.

Today, one of the most popular shows on television is *Touched by an Angel*, in which three angels intervene in the lives of ordinary people, providing comfort, guidance and hope.

**Angel Fact:** Classic movies about angels: *A Guy Named Joe* with Spencer Tracy (1943); *Heaven Can Wait* with Don Ameche (1943); *It's a Wonderful Life* with James Stewart (1946); *The Bishop's Wife* with Cary Grant (1947); *I Married an Angel* with Jeanette MacDonald & Nelson Eddy (1942); *The Horn Blows at Midnight* with Jack Benny (1945); *One Magic Christmas* with Harry Dean Stanton (1985); *Always* with Audrey Hepburn (1989); *Michael* with John Travolta (1996); *The Preacher's Wife* with Denzel Washington & Whitney Houston (1996); *City of Angels* with Meg Ryan & Nicolas Cage (1998); *What Dreams May Come* with Robin Williams & Cuba Gooding, Jr. (1998).

## The Order of Angels

Anyone whose life has been touched by an angel will agree wholeheartedly with the idea that angels are "... messengers from God; beings of beauty, purity and kindness; or guardian spirits."

But according to the dictionary, an angel is "... a celestial attendant of God; one of a class of spiritual beings who, in medieval angelology, were the lowest of the nine celestial orders: seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, virtues, powers, principalities, archangels and angels."

However, for most people today, an angel is an angel, regardless of rank.

In the 5th century, a Middle Eastern scholar named Dionysius studied references to angels in the Scriptures and other non-biblical sources.

He concluded that there were nine classes, or choirs, of angels which were divided into three different "spheres." Although there are some minor discrepancies among scholars, Dionysius' hierarchy of angels is still accepted today.

In the first sphere are those closest to God: seraphim, cherubim and thrones.

The second sphere includes dominions, virtues and powers.

The third sphere, which includes those closest to humans, is inhabited by principalities, archangels and angels.

The seraphim, the highest order of angels, are sometimes called "the burning ones" because they are closest to God. These are the angels who constantly sing God's praise and whose duty it is to regulate the heavens. Lucifer — or Satan — was said to be a seraph who once outshone all other angels. He has since become the head of the fallen angels.

The cherubim were sent to guard the Gates of Eden. Originally, they were depicted as the bearers of God's throne and as powerful beings with four wings and four faces. However, in modern

times, cherubim have evolved into chubby babies with wings.

The duty of thrones, or the "many-eyed ones," is to carry out God's decisions. They are often represented as fiery wheels, such as those that appeared to Ezekiel in 580 B.C.

The second sphere is led by the dominions. It's their job to regulate the duties of other angels. Many believe that the dominions ensure that God's wishes are carried out.

Virtues are the angels of grace who bring God's blessings to Earth, usually in the form of miracles. Known as "the brilliant" or "the shining ones," the virtues are associated with acts of heroism and bring courage when needed. These angels accompanied Christ on his ascension into heaven.

The job of the powers is to prevent the fallen angels from taking over the world. They also keep the universe in balance. Powers are also seen as the angels of birth and death.

In the third sphere, the principalities or princes, are the guardian angels of cities, nations and rulers. They guard against the invasion of evil angels. Cervill, the Prince of Strength, helped David slay Goliath.

Archangels are probably the best-known of all the angels. They carry God's most important mes-

sages to humans. Archangels also command "God's armies" of angels in the constant battle with the "sons of darkness."

Angels are the celestial beings closest to humans. They act as intermediaries between God and mortals. Many believe guardian angels come from this class of ministering angels. The archangels are in charge of the guardian angels.

In today's wave of angel popularity, most people who report angel encounters say it was their personal guardian angel who appeared to them.

The best known and most popular angels are the four primary archangels — Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel.

The "el" ending found at the end of many angel names is an ancient root word that is found in several languages. Some translate it to mean "of God" or "from God" or simply "God." Malcolm Godwin, the author of *Angels: An Endangered Species* (out of print), writes that it also means "radiant one" or "shining being."

Michael means "Who is God?" or "Who is like God?" He is usually depicted as the warrior angel. It was Michael who defeated Lucifer in the heavenly battle and who overnight destroyed 185,000 soldiers in the Assyrian army to save Jerusalem.

In Jewish tradition, he is the guardian angel of

Israel. Islamic lore says Michael has “. . . wings the color of green emerald . . . covered with saffron hairs, each of them containing a million faces which implore the pardon of Allah.”

Michael — the one who saved Daniel from the lions’ den — is known as the Angel of the Last Judgment.

Gabriel (“hero of God” or “God is my strength”) is the messenger angel, often shown with a trumpet that symbolizes the voice of God. Gabriel was the angel who told both Mary and Elizabeth that they would bear sons — Jesus and John the Baptist.

To the Muslims, Gabriel is the Spirit of Truth who dictated the Koran (the Muslim holy book) to Mohammed.

Most angels are either genderless or male. But Godwin contends that “. . . Gabri-el is unique for it is almost certain that this great Archangel is the only female in the higher echelons.

“She is the only one mentioned in the Old Testament by name, except for Micha-el, and is said to sit at the left hand of God, which is further evidence of her being female.”

Raphael (“God heals” or “the shining one who heals”) is the angel of healing and creativity. He also is the guardian angel of the human race, es-

pecially young people or those embarking on spiritual quests.

According to Godwin, Raphael is "... the chummiest and funniest of all the angelic flock and is often depicted chatting merrily with some unsuspecting mortal."

**Angel Fact:** There is a chief angel for each day of the week:

Sunday	Michael
Monday	Gabriel
Tuesday	Samuel
Wednesday	Raphael
Thursday	Sachiel
Friday	Anael
Saturday	Cassiel

## **Famous Angel Encounters**

In the Middle Ages, Joan of Arc, a 16-year-old farm girl, led an army that defeated the English and saved the French throne. She said she was inspired by the voices of the two archangels, Michael and Gabriel, to take up arms against the invaders.

South Pole explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton reported he and his party were always aware of "one more" who traveled with them across the treacherous ice until they reached safety.

When Francis Sydney Smythe tackled Mt. Everest in the 1930s, a “friendly presence” climbed by his side throughout his journey and made him feel safe in the midst of great danger. At one point, this friendly presence seemed so real that Smythe divided his meager ration of chocolate to share with it.

“In its company,” he recalled, “I could not feel lonely, neither could I come to any harm. It was always there to sustain me on my solitary climb.”

**Angels and celebrities:** More recently, such celebrities as the Reverend Billy Graham and country music legend Johnny Cash talked openly about their visitations from angels.

When Dr. Billy Graham published his book, *Angels: God's Secret Agents*, he wrote that he was convinced angels exist to provide unseen aid on our behalf.

But, he admitted, “I do not believe in angels because I have ever seen one — because I haven't. I believe in angels because I have sensed their presence in my life on special occasions.”

Since then, however, Graham has experienced a profound and personal experience with a guardian angel.

Graham was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and was afflicted with a variety of other ail-

ments. After half a century of spreading the gospel around the globe, Graham begged God to take him home:

That's when the beloved minister told associates he experienced an incredible encounter with his guardian angel who revealed to him that his work on Earth was not yet finished.

After his meeting with the angel, Graham resumed work on his long-awaited memoirs, insisting that he wouldn't allow his ill health to hinder his ministry.

"Like Jacob, who wrestled all night with God, I fought with my guardian angel when he told me I could not enjoy the bliss of heaven until my work on Earth was done," Dr. Graham confided to his official family.

"Unlike Jacob, I didn't win," Graham admitted. "Once I realized that I was resisting God's will — and not my guardian angel's — I accepted it, as I always have. The angel convinced me I must continue my work on Earth. He saved my life!"

Said a source close to Graham's ministry: "Billy's never made a secret of his yearning to lay down his burdens in this life and move on to the glories of the next, but he's always been content to await God's call."

Another colleague added: "Billy has told his

family and friends of a spectacular celestial experience in which he glimpsed heaven, but he says that words alone can't convey to the world the splendor of what he saw.

"His incredible journey to heaven happened during a series of angelic visits several months ago.

"His guardian angel appeared to him as a winged warrior dressed in radiant white garments. The angel spoke to him but not in any language he recognized . . . although he understood every word the angel spoke.

"He said the angel told him he had been looking after him all his life."

Later, Graham's angel appeared again. This time, the angel revealed a glimpse of the heaven that awaited him.

"Its beauty was so inspiring, Billy could not describe it, other than to say it was the most wonderful experience of his life," continued Graham's confidant.

"Billy said his guardian angel whispered that God would welcome Billy when he finally came before him.

"The third time the angel appeared, he brought a message that God wasn't ready to call Billy home, and that he must continue to spread God's word as long as the Lord wants him to.

“That triggered his face-to-face struggle with the angel. Billy insisted that all he wanted was to join God in heaven, and the sooner the better. But he finally gave in at the angel’s insistence.

“Now he has a good explanation for why he’s working so hard,” added the friend. “He has direct orders from his guardian angel, and even if he doesn’t relish it, he’s determined to obey.

“There is excitement among Billy’s closest friends, and despite his health problems and his yearning to join his Lord, Billy has accepted God’s will that he remain here a while longer and continue his work. He’s a new man.”

Legendary country music star Johnny Cash also believes in angels. Three times in his life, beings that Johnny is convinced were angels came to comfort him and deliver messages saying people close to him would soon die. But each message came with the reassurance that the deaths were part of God’s plan and not to grieve.

The famed singer revealed his encounters with angels (one of them who appeared as his own father) in his book *Man in White*.

The first visit came when Johnny was a child. A luminous being that Johnny believes was an angelic messenger appeared to warn him that his beloved brother, Jack, would soon die.

Two short weeks later, Jack was killed in a freak accident.

“Another time, I had the same forewarning of a close friend’s death. I called his home the next day and he had been killed in an auto accident the night before.”

But the visit that made the greatest impact on Johnny was when his father appeared to him as an angel with words of comfort.

“The day after my dad died, I visited the funeral home with the family,” Cash recalled. “He looked so handsome in a fine blue suit and burgundy tie.”

Grieving and exhausted, Cash went to bed early that night. As he slept, his father appeared to him in the guise of an angel.

“I was standing in front of my parents’ house,” Cash described the dream. “A long, bright car stopped at the curb. The car had no driver, but the left rear door opened and my father got out and started walking toward me.

“His clear eyes sparkled; they were not covered with the dull film of age I was used to seeing. His teeth were like a young man’s, and his hair was full and dark.

“‘I was waiting for you to come home,’ I said. I reached out my hand toward him to shake

hands. His hand reached out toward mine, and we were only a few paces apart when suddenly a long row of light streamed up from the ground between us."

Johnny wrote that his father smiled and dropped his hand. The stream of light widened and brightened. Then his father spoke:

"Tell your mother that I couldn't come back," the angelic spirit told Johnny. "I'm so happy where I am. I just don't belong here [on earth] anymore."

The light grew in intensity and then his father was gone. "The next day, I took my mom aside and explained the whole dream to her. She cried and then she laughed. And we both felt great peace that day," Cash said.

**Sightings:** Sometimes angels may show up for no apparent reason, such as in the following famous account.

S. Ralph Harlow, a former professor of religion and philosophy at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, described an astonishing encounter with a group of angels that he and his wife, Marion, experienced when strolling in the woods near Ballardville, Massachusetts.

According to Harlow's account, published in *Guideposts* and other religious magazines:

“From behind us, we heard the murmur of muted voices in the distance, and I said to Marion, ‘We have company in the woods this morning.’ We saw nothing, but the voices were coming nearer and we looked up. Ten feet above us, and slightly to our left, was a floating group of spirits — of angels — of glorious beautiful creatures that glowed with spiritual beauty. We stopped and stared as they passed above us. Their faces were clear to us. They seemed to float past us.

“As they passed, their conversation grew fainter and fainter until it faded out entirely and we stood transfixed on the spot, still holding hands and still with the vision before our eyes. For those split seconds, the veil between our world and the spirit world was lifted.”

**Angels and atheists:** Angels may appear to anyone regardless of religious beliefs. The so-called “godless” Communists of the former Soviet Union told of an astonishing encounter in space between angels and atheists.

This remarkable story came to light in 1985 after a Russian space scientist defected and told what happened to six cosmonauts aboard the Soyuz 7 space station.

The cosmonauts had been orbiting Earth for an incredible 155 days when a band of angels miraculously appeared outside their spacecraft.

Leonid Kizim, Vladimir Solevov and Oleg Artkov were working on routine experiments when they were nearly blinded by a brilliant orange light from outside the orbiting laboratory.

It took a few seconds for their eyes to adjust to the astonishing radiance, but then, according to the secret report, they saw "... seven giant figures in the form of humans, but with wings and mist-like halos as in the classic depiction of angels. They appeared to be hundreds of feet tall with a wingspan as great as a jetliner."

The stunned Soviets watched the angels for about 10 minutes before they vanished. The Russians described their visitors as smiling, round-faced and cherub-like.

Convinced they'd been hallucinating, the trio kept the sighting to themselves. But 12 days later, the group of seven identical angels paid a return visit. This time, three more of the "atheistic scientists" witnessed the sight.

Said cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya: "We were truly overwhelmed. There was a great orange light and through it we could see the figures of seven angels. They were smiling as though they shared a glorious secret."

## Guardian Angels

Angels are here to guide us, guard us, warn us, comfort us, teach us or just be a friend and companion.

They may appear as humans, as wondrous flashes of light, as a soft, unseen touch or as a “still small voice” we hear in times of crisis.

As the following stories reveal, angels will do just about anything to help us live more joyful lives.

One account of the power of angels appeared in *Time* magazine. Atlanta filmmaker Melissa Deal Forth related the touching story about how

an angel brought peace and serenity to her husband, Chris Deal, in the hours before he died from leukemia following months of torturous chemotherapy.

She'd been sleeping beside her husband's hospital bed when she was awakened at 3 a.m. by an agitated nurse. Chris' bed was empty, and he could not be found. Despite his weakened condition, Chris had taken his I.V. pole and vanished.

Melissa searched the hospital and found her husband sitting quietly in the chapel talking to a stranger.

When she expressed concern, Chris smiled and assured her that he was fine. The stranger, who remained quiet, with his eyes staring at the floor, was dressed in a flannel shirt, Levis and workboots, much like Chris wore before he got sick.

Melissa noticed that the man appeared to be ageless. "No wrinkles. Just this perfectly smooth and pale, white, white skin and ice-blue eyes. I've never seen that color blue on any human before. I'll never forget those eyes."

She went back to the room and when Chris returned, "He was lit up, vibrant. Smiling. He didn't have the air of a terminally ill man anymore."

When she asked Chris who the stranger was, he replied: "He was an angel. My guardian angel."

Melissa said: "All I had to do was look at him to know something supernatural had happened.

"Chris told me his prayers had been answered. It wasn't a cure, it was the blessing of peace of mind."

Once the fear and pain had been removed, Chris died.

The same issue of *Time* carried another amazing story of an angel with an important message.

In 1977, Ann Cannady received word from her doctor that she had cancer of the uterus. The news had a devastating impact on Ann and her husband, Gary, who had lost his first wife to the same type of cancer.

Gary didn't believe he could again watch someone he loved be destroyed by this terrible disease.

"We spent the next eight weeks scared and praying," Ann said. "I kept begging God, saying 'Please, if I'm going to die, let me die quickly. I don't want Gary to have to face this again.'"

Not long afterward, Ann was scheduled for surgery, although she was given no hope it would stop the cancer.

Three days before she was supposed to go to the hospital, there was a knock at the front door, Gary opened it to find an unusual stranger standing there.

The man was tall, even taller than 6-foot-5-inch Gary.

“He was the blackest black I’ve ever seen,” Ann related years later, the wonderment still in her voice. “And his eyes were a deep azure blue.”

The man introduced himself as Thomas and called Ann by name. He calmly told her not to worry, that her cancer had vanished.

Ann was stunned by the news and the fact that the stranger knew her name and that she had cancer.

The man repeated his message that Ann no longer had cancer and quoted the Scripture found at Isaiah 53:5: “And with his stripes we are healed.”

When Ann demanded to know who he was, the man simply answered: “I am Thomas. I am sent by God.”

With that, he held up his hand, palm facing her and leaned forward.

“I’m telling you, the heat coming from that hand was incredible,” Ann insisted. “Suddenly, I felt my legs go out from under me, and I fell to the floor.

“As I lay there, a strong white light, like one of those searchlights, traveled through my body. It started at my feet and worked its way up.

"I knew something supernatural happened."

Ann fainted. When she awoke, Gary was leaning over her and Thomas was gone. She made her way to the telephone, called her doctor and told him the surgery wouldn't be necessary because her cancer was cured.

The doctor insisted that she come in for another biopsy. When she awoke from the procedure, the doctor was standing at her bedside, a perplexed look on his face.

"I don't understand what happened," he told her, "but your test came back clean...you appear to be in the clear."

Later, the stunned doctor admitted that he had "...witnessed a miracle."

**Angels and children:** Angel lore is filled with stories of children and their angels. Perhaps it is their innocence that attracts the "shining ones." Or, as some suggest, children haven't yet learned to disbelieve in angels.

In *Answers from the Angels*, Terry Lynn Taylor recounts a typical child-angel encounter told to her by a mother in North Carolina:

"I have twin daughters named Katie and Amy, who are a blessing from God," the woman wrote. "They are 10 years old and they came to me with a beautiful tale of angel help.

"Amy and Katie were swinging on the swing set in the backyard. Katie was swinging so high she went way above the edge of the garage roof.

"Then Katie's foot got caught on the swing bar and pulled her out of the swing way up in the air.

"Katie turned a complete flip in slow motion and landed on her bottom in the grass. On each side of her was one boy angel and one girl angel and lots of pretty colors like dark pink and light pink and pale blue and yellow. Where the angels were touching her, on her shoulders and hips, was a pretty white light and she landed so softly for being so high up in the air.

"I told Katie to thank the angels for their help. She explained that even though she couldn't feel them touching her, she knew in her heart everything was going to be okay even though she was falling."

Joan Wester Anderson, in *Where Angels Walk*, tells another miraculous story of an angel helping a child.

In the late 1980s, Bobby and Debbie Durrance and their sons, Buddy and Mark, moved into a new home in a semi-rural area in southwest Florida. The subdivision was so new that telephone lines hadn't been installed yet.

One afternoon, 12-year-old Mark left to play in

a drainage ditch nearby. As he leaped across the ditch, he felt a vicious pain in his ankle. A rattlesnake had sunk its deadly fangs into his foot just below the ankle. He shook the snake loose, but the venom was already doing its damage.

He was more than 150 yards from home, and the strength was draining from his body. Mark struggled to reach the house and get help.

The next thing his mother knew, Mark was calling from the front porch. "I've been rattlesnake bit!" he cried and collapsed.

The family was without a phone and 17 miles from the nearest hospital. The parents scooped up Mark who was already going into convulsions, leaped into the family pickup and raced for help.

All the way to the hospital, Debbie clutched Mark and prayed that his life be spared.

At the hospital, Mark lapsed into a coma. For 12 hours, doctors labored frantically to halt the spread of the poison.

According to Joan Wester Anderson's account: "During the next few days, every part of Mark's body stopped functioning, except his heart. The venom bloated him, swelling his eyes so tightly closed that his lashes were barely visible. His kidneys failed. A respirator moved his lifeless lungs up and down.

“Internal hemorrhaging caused blood to seep not only from his ears, mouth and eyes but also from his pores; he required transfusions of 18 pints of blood before the nightmare had ended. There was a 90 percent chance he would lose his leg, and it swelled so large that eventually the doctors slashed it from top to bottom to relieve the pressure. Every new symptom was worse than the last.”

Then, Mark awoke from the coma and gradually improved. The stunned doctor shook his head in disbelief. Mark was too far from home when he was bitten and so much poison was pumped into his system that he should have passed out almost immediately.

Mark's explanation: “The man in white helped me.

“He was just there. When I knew I couldn't make it to the house, he picked me up and carried me. He had on a white robe and his arms were real strong. He reached down and picked me up, and I was hurting so bad that I just sort of leaned my head on him. I felt calm.

“He talked to me in a deep voice. He told me I was going to be real sick, but not to worry. Then he carried me up the stairs to the house and I didn't see him again.”

Later, as he continued his recovery, Mark said that while he was unconscious, the spirit of his dead grandfather had come to comfort and encourage him.

When his mother suggested that the man in white might have been the spirit of his grandfather, Mark replied firmly:

"No, Mom, that wasn't Grandpa. I didn't dream about the man in white. He was real."

**Extra time:** After Sophy Burnham's *A Book of Angels* appeared, Jacquelin A. Gorman was among the hundreds who wrote to tell of their angelic encounters. Her story was included in Burnham's second best-seller, *Angel Letters*.

"I've never seen an angel," Jacquelin Gorman began, "but my mother was visited by a group of them."

Her mother was suffering from a cancerous tumor in her abdomen. Doctors warned the family she likely would die within 24 hours. The family agreed to take their mother home, so she could die among loved ones.

Everyone expected the night would be her last, Jacquelin wrote. But, incredibly, her mother awoke bright and chipper the next morning. The swelling had vanished. She got up and made coffee for the rest of the family.

“There were four angels with me last night,” she announced quietly. “Four angels came in the night, and each held one corner of the sheet a few inches above my stomach. They said I must have faith because there’s still time left.

“It was not a dream. It was not even a vision. It happened, and they were here, as surely as you are standing here right now,” she added.

“The angels told me that God has chosen my time. But He is allowing me to choose the hour.”

Jacquelin’s mother miraculously lived another six weeks, just as the angels had promised, giving her time to fulfill her last wishes — a ride across the lake in the family’s boat, a farewell dinner party for her closest friends and one more visit from her beloved granddaughter.

“Then,” the letter concluded, “six weeks later, my mother chose her hour. She was home, sleeping, holding my father’s hand. I am sure God was nearby. And I am surer still that even closer to her side were those special friends that only my mother and our dog had been granted the privilege to meet, returning once more to reclaim their precious charge.”

William Lindemann wrote to Burnham to tell him about an encounter that is similar to the angel stories that have been reported for centuries.

Lindemann wrote that as a youngster he often roamed alone through the woods around his Great Lakes home. As a scout, he had learned survival techniques and felt comfortable in the wilderness.

But he always felt a presence with him that he called his "General Direction."

One bitterly cold February day, Lindemann bundled up for a hike across a frozen lake bordering his college campus. The lake was about nine miles long, five miles wide and, in the dead of winter, frozen solid.

"From where I stood overlooking the bumpy hillocks of ice and snow, I estimated it would take me four hours to reach the middle and return," Lindemann wrote.

But by the time he reached the turnaround point, an intense and deadly winter storm swept across the frozen lake. Blinded by the stinging snow, he stumbled through the roaring blizzard becoming weaker with each step.

"Please, dear God," he cried out, "Help me find my way!"

Suddenly, a loud foghorn sounded from a rescue station only blocks from Lindemann's house, and he heard a voice call out: "Be careful! The breakwater is open and deep."

Lindemann crawled toward the sound of the foghorn and the calm voice that cut through the howling wind.

“Be careful,” the voice repeated. “Stay to the right, and climb the concrete wall when you reach it.”

Inching forward on his hands and knees, Lindemann finally reached the shoreline and safety.

“I felt my way up through the deeply drifting snow to the door of the rescue station,” he continued. “The next thing I felt was being half pulled and half carried inside. A man with dark hair and a beard was there with hot coffee brewing.

“When I asked him why he was there in the middle of winter, he said he was finishing some research.”

After regaining his strength, Lindemann thanked his rescuer and continued home.

The next day, he returned to the building only to find it locked. When Lindemann dug through a snow drift to reach the door, he found a tattered sign that said: CLOSED FOR WINTER.

“I called the sheriff and was told that no one had access to the rescue building during the winter and no one had been there the day before,” Lindemann concluded in his letter.

Only then did he realize it was his guardian an-

gel who had appeared to guide him through the blinding storm.

In his book, *Angels: God's Secret Agents*, Billy Graham describes some inspiring examples of angels at work in the world:

"A celebrated Philadelphia neurologist had gone to bed after an exceptionally tiring day. Suddenly, he was awakened by someone knocking on his door. Opening it, he found a little girl, poorly dressed and deeply upset. She told him her mother was very sick and asked him if he would please come with her. It was a bitterly cold, snowy night, but though he was bone tired, the doctor dressed and followed the girl.

"As *Reader's Digest* reports the story, he found the mother desperately ill with pneumonia. After arranging for medical care, he complimented the sick woman on the intelligence and persistence of her little daughter.

"The woman looked at him strangely and then said, 'My daughter died a month ago.' She added, 'Her shoes and coat are in the clothes closet there.' Amazed and perplexed, the doctor went to the closet and opened the door. There hung the very coat worn by the little girl who had brought him to tend to her mother. It was warm and dry and could not possibly have been out in the wintry night.

“Could the doctor have been called in the hour of desperate need by an angel who appeared as this woman’s young daughter? Was this the work of God’s angels on behalf of the sick woman?”

**The protection of angels:** Graham also told the story of the Reverend John G. Paton, a pioneer missionary in the New Hebrides Islands.

Hostile natives surrounded his mission headquarters one night, intent on attacking Paton and his wife. The couple prayed through the night. As daylight arrived, they were amazed to find the threat had vanished.

Later, the chief converted to Christianity. Reverend Paton asked him why he had not carried out the attack.

The chief replied it was because of the army surrounding the Paton home.

Startled, Reverend Paton said that only he and his wife were present.

No, the chief insisted. There were hundreds of big men in shining garments, standing guard with drawn swords and encircling the mission.

“Could it be,” Graham asked, “that God had sent a legion of angels to protect His servants?”

**Lifesavers:** Eileen Elias Freeman talks in her book *Touched by Angels*, about how her life was possibly saved by her personal angel.

Eileen was on her way to visit a good friend who lived near Broadway and 121st Street in New York City. As she stepped up to the building, Eileen said: "Suddenly, I felt a strong hand on my left shoulder that brought me to a dead stop."

But when she looked around, there was no one close enough to touch her. Again, she started to reenter the building, she was grabbed a second time, and forcibly jerked backward.

"It was then that I heard my guardian angel's voice, as clear as a bell. 'It would not be wise for you to go in there just now.'"

Heeding the warning, Eileen crossed the street and entered a small church to pray. When she emerged several minutes later, the street was filled with police and emergency vehicles. To her horror, she later discovered a woman had just been murdered in an elevator in her friend's building.

"My God! I thought. If my guardian angel hadn't warned me, I might have been the one who was killed."

That encounter inspired Eileen to establish the Angel Watch Network and publish her best-selling book on angels.

**A Christmas visit:** Joan Wester Anderson (*Where Angels Walk*) became convinced that angels are real and were watching over her family

on Christmas Eve 1983, when a howling blizzard roared through the Midwest.

Her son, Tim, 21, and his two roommates were en route home from college for the holidays.

Tim dropped off one roommate in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He and his remaining companion decided to press on through the storm, determined to reach their homes in Chicago to celebrate Christmas with their families.

With snow blocking highways and a wind chill factor of 80° below zero, travelers were warned to stay off the roads. But the boys ignored the warnings and continued on their way.

Without warning, the car sputtered and died. There was no other traffic in sight, not even the lights of a distant farmhouse.

“For the first time,” Anderson wrote, “they faced the fact that they were in enormous danger. They couldn’t run for help. The temperature would kill them in minutes.”

Then, bright lights suddenly appeared behind the car. Miraculously, the lights belonged to a tow truck. The driver knocked on the car window and asked if they needed help.

Tim asked to be towed back to the roommate’s home in Fort Wayne. The man only nodded and hooked the stalled car to his tow truck.

“He was calm,” Anderson continued, “seemingly unconcerned about the life threatening circumstances in which he had found them.”

When they reached their friend’s home, the boys stumbled to the door numb from the cold. When they caught their breath, Tim asked to borrow money to pay the tow truck driver. But there was no truck.

“There, parked alone at the curb, was Tim’s car,” Anderson wrote. “Stunned, Tim raced back down the driveway to the curb. Then Tim saw the tire tracks traced in the windblown snowdrifts. But there was only one set of marks ringing the cul-de-sac curve. And they belonged to Tim’s car.”

Curious to learn if others had similar encounters, she wrote letters to several national magazines asking people to share their experiences.

“A few weeks later, I went to the post office, swung open the mailbox door — and stepped back in amazement. It was filled with envelopes,” she said.

“Though none could fully explain (what happened), all seemed transformed in the light of their encounter.”

**Voices:** There are countless reports of people driving down the road who have escaped death by heeding a voice telling them to slow down or

pull over. In many accounts, invisible hands actually reach out and pull them to safety or somehow divert the danger in other ways.

For example, Gail Buchanan, in a letter to a national magazine, told how she was driving home one night on a dark, abandoned road.

Taillights from another car suddenly appeared in the road in front of her. Two cars were side by side while the drivers conversed with each other.

“The road was too narrow for me to swerve around either car,” Gail wrote. “I was going to crash.”

She slammed on the brakes as hard as she could and closed her eyes tightly, knowing in that brief instant that there wasn't room to stop.

“Then, my car suddenly stopped short,” she continued. I had missed the other car by less than an inch. The emergency brake handle was standing straight up. Someone had pulled it — but it wasn't me.

“As I drove off,” she said, “the words of Psalm 91 ran through my head: ‘For He will give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.’”

**Strong hands:** Rita Rizzo came from a broken family whose poverty-stricken mother struggled to raise her six children.

When she was 11 years old, Rita, feeling sad and lonely, was walking the streets alone, not paying attention to where she was going.

"I started to cross a busy street, then heard a woman's shrill scream behind me," she recalled. As she turned to look back, Rita saw a car speeding directly toward her. Rita froze, expecting to die in the next second.

Instead, a pair of strong hands grabbed her and lifted her high in the air. When she opened her eyes, she was standing on the sidewalk.

The onlookers who rushed to the scene thought Rita had been hit by the speeding car and hurled to the sidewalk by the impact. Instead of a crumpled body, they found Rita, shaken but unscratched.

One of the witnesses was a dumfounded bus driver who insisted he had seen Rita suddenly catapult high into the air, easily clearing the car that was about to hit her.

The experience made Rita realize that she was being protected and guided by an angel.

When she grew up, Rita entered a convent. She changed her name to Angelica and founded Our Lady of the Angels Monastery near Birmingham, Alabama.

**Killer storm:** Spring is tornado season in the

Midwest. In April 1974, a series of violent thunderstorms bore down on Louisville, Kentucky.

Among those in the path of the killer storm were Glynn and Lynne Coates. Their two older children arrived home from school before the storm struck, but six-year-old Collyn was still at kindergarten at the Baptist Theological Seminary.

When the tornado warning sirens sounded, the Coates took refuge in their basement. The storm passed them by, but radio reports said that a funnel was sighted directly over Collyn's school.

Frantic, Lynne tried to telephone the school, but got no answer. Glynn jumped in the car to drive there, but ran into the awesome devastation caused by the tornado and couldn't get through.

Meanwhile, Lynne kept trying to reach the school by phone, growing more distraught each time the phone failed to ring.

Please, she prayed desperately, please watch over Collyn and the other children, and keep them safe. Suddenly feeling calmer, Lynne tried the phone again. This time a relaxed, pleasant-sounding voice answered.

"Don't worry," she soothed. "The children are fine. They were all taken to another building before the storm. Their teachers will stay with them."

Crying for joy, Lynne hung up and waited for Glynn to return with their child.

When classes resumed a few days later, Lynne went to thank the woman who had spoken to her on the phone.

"You couldn't have spoken with anyone," Collyn's teacher insisted. "We put a sign on the door, locked the building and moved the children before the tornado struck. There wasn't anyone here and our phone lines were destroyed by the storm."

**A near-death experience:** Many encounters with angels have occurred during near-death experiences. Joan Wester Anderson's favorite story is that of Leonor and David Reyes.

Shortly after they were married, David was sent to Vietnam. While he was gone, Leonor underwent surgery to remove a growth from her neck.

Leonor reported that when she was on the operating table, "I began rising. I could see my body lying on the table with my neck still open, and my head tilted way back. Then I entered a place where there was total light. Others seemed to be around me."

Leonor said she realized she was in the presence of angels. They told her not to be afraid because she was going to meet someone who was very special to her.

The angels took her to a beautiful meadow where she was met by a figure dressed all in white. She recognized Him as Jesus. He told her, "I know you have been tired, sick and worried. Would you like to come and be with me now?"

Leonor was overcome by joy and wanted to stay, but a longing for her new husband held her back. She said she was given three choices: She could stay by herself, her husband could join her there or both could return to the physical world together.

The angels then took her to Vietnam and showed her David, who was lying in a bunker on a hill and engaged in combat.

Told to make her choice, Leonor said she wished she and David could return home and be with their families. At that instant, she saw a hand reach down and over a grenade that had landed next to David.

Suddenly, she was back in the hospital with doctors and nurses calling her name. The malignant growth had been removed and the operation was a success.

When David returned safely, Leonor asked him if he was ever in a bunker on a hill with another soldier when a grenade fell near him.

"Only once," he replied. "But it was a dud."

## How To Meet an Angel

If you want to hear from angels, the experts say, the first step is to get out of the rat race. Slow down, relax and be receptive to that mysterious small, still voice inside that all of us hear at one time or another.

Another step is to simply believe. Communication with angels starts by accepting the idea that they exist and are all around us.

According to those regularly in touch with angels, they may appear in many forms — not just

the winged creatures with bright halos we see in paintings (although children and the elderly often report seeing this version).

Angels may look like the guy next door, a sweet-faced child, a beloved relative who has passed on, a beautiful woman, a bright, unearthly light. Or they may be nothing more than a strong and overpowering feeling of love, peace and contentment.

Frequently, the appearance of an angel is accompanied by a greatly heightened sense of brilliant colors — especially blues and greens — the hues commonly associated with angels.

St. Bartholomew was one of the first who reported that angels may appear trailing wonderful fragrances in their wake. The unexplained scent of roses or pines in the air may be a clue that an angel has passed by.

The refreshing smell of a pine forest is associated with angels on a healing mission. A sandalwood fragrance may also mean healing angels, but more often it indicates those with creative and inspirational messages or instructions.

Guardian angels are said to radiate a fragrance that is sweeter than a flower garden in bloom.

Sophy Burnham tells us there are three ways of knowing that an angel has come:

1. "It brings a calm and peaceful serenity that

descends over you, and this is true even when the angel is not seen.”

2. “Their message is: ‘Fear not! Don’t worry,’ they say. ‘Things are working out.’ Never once do you hear an angel trumpeting bad news.”

3. “You remember (what you’ve seen or felt), and you are never quite the same again. Angels come in all sizes, shapes and colors, visible and invisible to the physical eye. But always you are changed from having seen one.”

For those who wish to reach angels, here are suggestions from the experts:

In *Rediscovering the Angels*, Flower A. Newhouse writes: “As we develop through noble and unselfish efforts, we shall draw nearer to them, and at the same time they will be patiently awaiting and seeking our recognition.”

To help make contact, she suggests following these steps:

1. Study literature that contains mention of the angels. Familiarize yourself with all the known realizations about them.

2. Keep praying that you will be drawn into an association with one who sees and understands the great ones. Strive to live so that your teachers will seek to become your friends.

3. Once a year, take a pilgrimage into nature

and practice sending the angels love, devotion and your receptivity.

4. Every day be eager to feel the guidance and the nearness of the “shining ones.” Be grateful for the slightest token of their helpfulness.

“Just be aware that you are in the presence of angels and the angels may make their presence known,” she added.

**Ask for help:** Terri Lynn Taylor, the author of several angel books including *Guardians of Hope* and *Messengers of Light*, says this:

“Angels speak to us through our thoughts. You don’t need to do anything fancy or be at a ‘high’ spiritual level. All you need is to trust yourself and practice the attitudes of the angels, such as taking yourself lightly, going lightly through life, thinking positively, meditating on self-love, being kind in your thoughts and actions, and realizing that angels love you unconditionally.”

She reports that angels are always available to encourage us to be the best we can possibly be.

And if angels temporarily slip your mind, don’t worry. They’re always forgiving — even if you forget about them. The key to remember is to just ask for their love light to shine on you, through you and around you.

Terri Lynn Taylor also says angels deliver mes-

sages in ways we don't expect. "Angels have many ways of reaching you, but often you miss them," she continues. For example, a child, in a moment of spontaneity, may blurt out a statement for which only you know the meaning.

"While thumbing through a book, a page may fall open with a clear message in the print. Headlines in the newspaper might contain your message. Angels with messages appear to us in dreams. Angels are very creative in the ways they communicate with us; we have to be just as creative when we listen for our messages."

If you're not sure you're in contact with an angel, ask yourself if the message is filled with love. Also, angelic messages are usually general and seldom give detailed instructions.

In *Touched by Angels*, Eileen Elias Freeman tells how to recognize if you really are in contact with your angels:

"Angelic encounters don't leave us with feelings of anxiety and fears we can't put a name to. Most people, on first contact, are afraid. That's why initial encounters may begin with the angel gently advising: 'Don't be afraid.'

"Angels don't leave us confused. If a message is full of confused signals, then perhaps it stems from our own minds."

Angelic messages come from God, not the angels. They don't try to force us to do anything. And they don't make themselves the focus of attention. They want us to pay attention to the message, so they don't stay longer than it takes to deliver their message or complete their mission.

Ask yourself if the encounter and the message were filled with love and light. Study what the angel said and did.

Angels' words are filled with "... light, joy, peace, wisdom, love, courage, confidence..." that come from God.

"An angelic encounter leaves us changed for the better," Freeman continued. "Perhaps the encounter awakens new curiosity or interest about the spiritual realm. Perhaps the encounter reminds us how blessed we are and moves us to greater gratitude and compassion for those less fortunate. Maybe we experience a still, small voice that reassures us of God's personal love for us, which often happens when our angel actually rescues us from a dangerous situation."

Finally, any being you can summon at will probably isn't an angel.

"We cannot force an angel to come to us or to speak to us. Any being you can compel to come is not an angel."

Usually, you meet your angels through prayer and quiet seeking, but it can't be forced. Angels will appear when God decides it's right to do so.

**Designer angels:** In *Guardians of Hope and Messengers of Light*, Terri Lynn Taylor outlined methods for getting in touch with what she called "designer angels."

"There may be areas in your life that the angels I described don't seem to fit. No problem! Ask that an angel suited to this area take over," she advised.

First, define the problem or circumstance that could use angelic assistance. Next, name the angel you want to put in charge of that area.

"Designer angels help in a variety of situations. If you are a teacher, you may want to name an angel of education to watch over you. If you are a student, you can call upon a designer angel to help you study.

"Angels can be assigned to groups or organizations that have a purpose of promoting well-being," Taylor continued.

"Any group with an enlightened cause, whether it be promoting healthy fun for the individuals in the group or working toward world peace, has a group mind."

Perhaps the best way to meet an angel is Billy Graham's way:

“Believers,” he wrote, “look up and take courage. The angels are nearer than you think. For after all, God has given ‘his angels charge of you, to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”

**Angel Fact:** Angels often appear in dreams — usually as messengers with important information. In ancient times, dreams were prophecies of things to come — both good and bad. The Bible is filled with stories about visions through dreams. Joseph learned his son, Jesus, was the holy spirit through a dream.

## Our Readers Write...

I had traveled from Sacramento, California, to Washington, D.C. to visit my family. But when my children and I arrived, we found ourselves unwelcome. The gifts I had brought were tossed in the trash. We were told to leave. I had five dollars and no return ticket. My husband had drunk up the money for our fare and we were stuck and broke.

Not knowing what to do or where to go, I called a cab.

"Please take us to a homeless shelter," I directed the driver.

“Why do you want to go there?” he asked me.

So I told him the long, sad story and he drove us to the nearest shelter. But they had no room. Incredibly, the driver waited while we were turned away. Without speaking, he drove to a hotel and carried my bags inside. He paid for the room and said, “I’ll be back in the morning at nine sharp.”

Sure enough, he showed up, took us to breakfast and said, “Child, I know you’re having a hard time. Here’s money for two more days and tickets to get back home. May God bless you.”

He gave me his business card and that was the last I heard or saw him.

Six days after I arrived home, I called the cab company to thank him. I gave his name, cab number and description.

“Lady, we don’t have anyone like that working here,” they told me. I called the police, but they’d never heard of him either. Nobody had!

I was so overwhelmed that I began to weep. I thanked God for sending his angel of mercy to me. And from that day in 1981 until this very day, I tell people that when they are as low as they can go, an angel will come and take them by the hand, just as my taxicab angel did to me.

— *Sheila Carter*  
*Reston, Virginia*

The day after Labor Day, 1996, I was involved in a car accident on Interstate 294 North in Oaklawn, Illinois.

I was traveling the speed limit, about 65 mph, when I lost control of the car. I hit a lamppost, knocked it down and lost consciousness.

When I came to, I noticed the car was smoking. The first thing that crossed my mind was to get out before it exploded. I unlatched my seat belt but my feet were pinned and I couldn't move. I started screaming for help. I didn't want to be burned alive!

Just then a man with blond hair and a black leather jacket pulled up on his motorcycle. He tried to free my legs but couldn't and his attitude changed drastically.

"What's your name?" he asked me.

I told him.

Then he said: "You're going to get out of here okay. The Lord will free you."

As he moved around the car, it was like a slow motion movie. Then he bowed his head on my arm and prayed for a few seconds. When he finished I felt calm and serene.

"I have to leave," he told me.

"Please, please don't go," I begged.

“I have to, but praise the Lord and you’ll be okay.”

Sure enough, in forty minutes the police arrived with the emergency vehicles to cut me loose. Incredibly, I had no broken bones. My car was totaled but I was fine, just sore all over.

I’ll always be grateful for that angel who gave me the opportunity to live another day.

— *Lurdes Ruiz*  
*Bensenville, Illinois*

I’m not famous or super religious. But you might say I’ve been touched by an angel.

The day my father passed away, my family went to the funeral home to make all the final arrangements. I stayed home to answer calls. I had been sitting in my father’s favorite chair looking out the front door, remembering, when suddenly someone laid a hand on my head. The pressure was enough for me to feel and it startled me so much I jumped up to see who was behind me.

In that instant, I had an incredible feeling of warmth and love come over my body. Then peace descended upon me.

When I mentioned it to my family, each of them related a similar experience.

At the time, my husband and I had been trying

to conceive a child for three long years. We had been through test after test. To our amazement, one year to the day after my father died, our son was born.

What's even stranger is that one year to the exact day before I was born, my grandmother had died. Was there divine intervention going on here? I certainly felt it was more than coincidence.

— *Melanie Seippel*  
*Oil City, Pennsylvania*

I was having dinner with my family at a fast-food restaurant when my husband began choking. A piece of food had lodged in his throat. His face was beet red. I didn't know what to do and neither did the other diners. We were helpless as my husband was choking to death.

Suddenly, the door opened and a strong-looking middle-aged woman walked past the cashiers and other patrons right to our table. She put her arms around Greg, placing a fist just below his rib cage and pushed with a quick upward thrust of her other hand.

Out popped the piece of food. His face returned to its normal color as he caught his breath. I held him tightly thanking the Lord for the woman who saved him.

“Who was she?” he asked.

I looked but she was gone. The cashiers said she wasn't a customer, she hadn't ordered food at all. As quickly as she appeared, she vanished — as though she were an angel on assignment to rescue Greg. It was a meal I'll never forget.

— *Sandy Ridge*  
*Fostoria, Ohio*

I was driving home from work on the Friday afternoon before Thanksgiving in 1994. My car was a Cougar with a supercharged engine and bald tires. I couldn't afford new ones so I was going below the speed limit — about 45 mph — through a sun shower. The road was wet and the sun shone bright in my eyes. I couldn't see too well.

A motor home pulled up alongside me. I tried to stay in his shadow to see more clearly as we pulled out of the shower. The truck in front of me sped up and I could see my exit. I had to move across two lanes of traffic so I stepped on the gas.

That part of the highway catches some bad wind currents and as I passed the RV, the car began to fishtail and finally went into a spin. The car careened across three lanes of traffic and when I hit the brakes, I traveled back to the other side of the highway — backwards. I hit the guardrail and

my front bumper wedged under it, but the back of the car kept moving until I flipped over the rail and landed in the path of oncoming traffic. Amazingly, the car rolled over onto the median.

Not one car hit me — even though it was rush hour on a Friday!

A couple of cars pulled off the road and the drivers ran over and asked, “Are you okay?”

I didn’t feel any broken bones so I told them, “I’m all right.”

Then a man and his son stopped and offered me their mobile phone to call home. Sitting with them, I felt peaceful even though I’d had the worst accident of my life.

When the police arrived I turned to ask the man his name and number but he was gone. I don’t even remember him leaving.

Was he an angel? Who knows?

— *Brenda Wallace*  
*Lake Worth, Texas*

My husband Kim and I had been invited to exhibit his handmade masks, crowns and head-dresses at the grand opening of the Osborne Convention Center in Jacksonville, Florida.

The celestial masks — representing the ancient culture of Cambodia — were very large and had

to be transported by car from our home in Virginia. Some of the crowns had spires that were sixteen inches tall and studded with many colored stones. The large eyes formed many expressions: gentle, sad, wise, smiling.

The exhibition was an incredible success and, as we packed our Honda for the trip back to Virginia, our voices were singing joyfully at the wonderful praises Kim had received on his artwork.

We stopped at my brother's house in North Carolina on the way back. After our visit, although dusk was approaching, we decided to continue anyway since traffic was light.

Suddenly, the engine failed. Kim turned to me and said: "We have no power."

We pulled out of the fast lane and coasted to the side of the road. It was dark now and our car was loaded with priceless artwork.

Before we could figure out what to do, an old blue station wagon with wooden sides stopped. A large burly man came around to the door. I was scared.

"I'm sorry I'm not a mechanic," he said to Kim. "But I can offer you a ride to the next exit where you can call the sheriff or a tow truck."

What a dilemma! Should I stay alone in the car or should I go with a complete stranger? The man,

in spite of his rough exterior, had tenderness in his eyes. Without a further thought, I grabbed my jacket and followed the stranger to his car. To my surprise, he opened the door and inside were his beautiful children and his lovely wife.

"I hope you don't mind riding with the kids," he said.

Mind, I thought, they looked like angels as they scooted over to make room for me.

As we pulled into traffic, he said: "Note the road markers so you can tell the sheriff where your car is." He pointed to the road markers. "You're between fifteen and sixteen."

The exit appeared soon enough and I called the sheriff from a motel office phone. He said he'd pick me up in a few minutes.

"Everything okay?" asked the stranger from the station wagon.

"Yes," I answered.

He said, "God bless" and left.

I never got to thank him or get his address. But I often think of the station wagon full of highway angels and give thanks for the tenderness they offered me, my husband and our car full of celestial artwork.

— *Amelia Varney-Kiet*  
*New York, New York*

Five years ago, I was coming home from my son's house at Christmas time. The snow was falling fast but I made it back to my neighborhood 12 miles away.

Just a short distance before my driveway is a ditch. Because of the blinding snow, I missed the driveway and headed down into the ditch that was very steep.

Amazingly, just as I was trying to figure out what to do, my guardian angel appeared! He looked like an ordinary young man and he had a black pickup truck. Within minutes, he had pulled my small car out of the ditch, put me in his truck and delivered me to my doorstep. This young man was not a neighbor. I had never seen him before nor have I seen him since.

Thanks, guardian angel, wherever you are.

— *Katie Stevens*  
*Lockport, New York*

Shortly after I had my second baby I was numb from the epidural and didn't realize how heavily I was bleeding.

A student nurse by the name of Julie came in to check on me. She said, "That's not normal. I'm calling my instructor to look at you."

I was frightened after her visit — all alone and

bleeding. Julie returned with an older woman and they quickly took control of the situation. As they were leaving they said, "Everything's fine. Just rest now so you can regain your strength and take care of your beautiful son."

I drifted off into a peaceful sleep and was awakened a little while later by a nurse who had come in to change my dressing.

"Julie just changed it," I told her. "She's a student nurse. She was here with her supervisor."

She gazed at me as though I had lost my mind.

"There's nobody named Julie on this shift," she said. "And this isn't a teaching hospital. We have no students and no instructors."

It's taken a few years to realize that what I experienced was a blessed visit by a divine Spirit that allowed me to remain on Earth to take care of my kids.

Thank you, angels. Thank you, Lord.

— *Eva Stealey*  
*Baltimore, Maryland*

I lost Billy, my eldest son, on his twenty-first birthday. He was killed in a motorcycle accident in 1994. When I arrived at the funeral, I was astounded to see the number of people who'd gathered to pay their respects.

Although I was touched that so many people cared about my wonderful boy, I was not prepared for such a large crowd giving condolences and offering their sympathy.

I spotted a neighbor from a few streets away. We always waved in passing but we never talked, other than to say hi when we met at the local grocery store. He and his wife came up to me and gave me a hug. As the woman embraced me, she said, "Turn around. Can you hold up through this with so many people here?"

I told her I was overwhelmed.

"Walk with me," she said, taking my hand. Instantly, I went from being numb with pain and weak in spirit to feeling hopeful and strong. I knew then that my son was in the Lord's kingdom. Without any help, I rose from my seat and peered into my son's casket. He was more handsome than I ever saw him. When I touched him he was not cold to me. He seemed to be saying, "I'm all right, Mom. I love you."

I turned and there was my neighbor lady. She, too, was more beautiful than I had ever seen. She glowed with light and her eyes mesmerized me. Then she said, "We have to leave now. You are going to be just fine and don't worry about Billy. He's with God."

A few months later, I called her to say thank you. We talked about the funeral and how she had helped me get through a most difficult time.

She said, "A voice came to me that morning and told me that it was my duty to be there for you that day, to help you say good-bye to Billy and not to fall apart."

"I don't know how to repay you," I said.

"You have a special angel now," she replied. "God will always be with you."

I have moved away from the old neighborhood and have only seen my neighbor once or twice. There is no gleam like the day of the funeral, but she always makes me feel as if I'm shining.

— Shirley Hammer,  
*Apache Junction, Arizona*

Although this happened twenty-five years ago, I recall the incident as clearly as though it were yesterday.

My daughter, Jessica, was about a year old. I was a single mom and dirt poor. In order to get some money to pay for food, I had to walk many miles in deep snow. I had a cheap pair of boots on and got a blister as I was walking. I didn't have gloves or a warm coat.

As you can imagine, I was miserable and upset.

I cried and the tears froze on my lashes. I couldn't believe this was happening to me.

I made it to my destination, got the money and was able to take the bus home. The bus stop was out in the open and there wasn't anyone around except an elderly man sitting quietly on the bench, which was very dry when it should have been wet.

I sat down next to him. He smiled at me. His smile was so radiant I felt warm and at ease. I can't remember much about our conversation except his asking about my daughter. I showed him a photo of her and he said, "She'll be very successful." Then he told me my blister would be better real soon.

"How do you know?" I asked.

He just smiled and said, "Everything will be okay."

The bus came around the corner and I called to him, "The bus is here."

But he was gone. There hadn't been time for him to go anywhere since, as I said, the area was wide open with no buildings around. I was shocked. All the way home all I could think of was that I'd been visited by an angel. I thought it might have been my dad who died when I was a toddler.

When I got home, the blister was completely

gone. And my daughter is doing very well — exactly as he predicted!

— *Pamela Medford,*  
*British Columbia, Canada*

You wouldn't expect snow in May, but in Minnesota anything can happen.

It was May 5, 1993, and our travel club was returning home to Chicago. The day dawned sunny and clear, but it turned downright nasty as cold, wet snow began falling. Night was coming and the bus driver was having a hard time seeing the road.

He was polite and friendly, but he became very quiet as he focused on getting us home safe and sound.

"How are you doing?" I asked.

With a serious expression, he said softly so the others couldn't hear, "I've been driving for twenty years and I've never seen the roads this bad."

I was frightened. Along the side of the road were cars and trucks overturned in ditches. Ambulances, police cars and tow trucks surrounded the accidents.

I began to pray. "Please Lord, help us get home." I closed my eyes and a picture appeared: It was a big, black bus with a yellow stripe running

across the side. Snow was everywhere but on top of the bus were four angels – two in the front, two in the back. They were large and grey in color with folded wings, sitting perfectly still like statues guiding us to safety.

Suddenly I felt safe. We drove down the dark, snowy highway past auto mishaps toward a rest stop. When the driver let everyone out to use the facilities, I said: “You’re really doing a great job in this weather.”

“I don’t know how I did it,” he admitted. “We were in trouble back there, but somehow the bus managed to stay on the road.”

As we pulled out of the rest stop, I sat back again and closed my eyes. This time only one angel was riding. I smiled and thanked God for sending His messengers. We were going to be okay.

— *Shirley Caldwell*  
*Chicago, Illinois*

Being the mother of a highway patrolman is exciting and rewarding. And I am able to rest easy knowing that God will give me the strength to accept and endure all that befalls my family. My son has chosen his profession and believes the Lord wants him to protect and serve others.

Thank goodness He sends His angels to patrol the highways!

Early on the morning of January 23, 1996, I received the phone call I'd always dreaded.

"Your son's been injured in the line of duty," said a deep voice, rousing me from slumber. "He's in the X-ray room now, so wait by the phone and we'll call you back as soon as we have more information."

I hung up the phone numb with shock. The details were sketchy, but I learned that he'd been run over by some kids in a van he was pursuing. The hospital was an hour's drive away and I was in no shape to drive. So I prayed.

"Please Lord, let him be okay."

The phone rang again at dawn. My only son was at his house.

"The ligaments in my ankle are torn," he said, "and I've got some bruises. But I'm okay."

Later, I learned he'd been dragged behind the van, but his angel was looking after him because he didn't have even one scrape from the asphalt. There were, however, threads from his uniform embedded in the roadway!

When they were loading him in the ambulance, someone spotted a gun that the kids he'd been chasing had dropped. They never fired a shot!

Some people may call it luck, but I know God sent precious guardian angels to make sure my son wasn't seriously injured or killed.

— *Janice Hancock  
Graham, North Carolina*

If you have enjoyed this MicroMag and want a sequel, please send us your angel stories and ask your friends to do the same.

Mark the envelope "Angel Stories" and send to:

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