



# HELLO, MY NAME IS...

by Anna Jensen

**"The scepter of the King, Father God, is held out to me because of that name and I can freely enter the very throne room of heaven."**

**I belong to several online writers' groups. At the start of the year, the leader of one of the groups challenged us to introduce ourselves as the meaning of our names, rather than the name itself.**

I thought this sounded fun, and so I did a bit of research on my full maiden name—Anna-Louise McNally.

"Hello, I am Gracious-Warrior, son of the Hound of Ulster!" Sounds quite impressive, I think.

In our modern, Western communities we rarely concern ourselves with the meaning of names, simply choosing one for our children because we like the way it sounds, or perhaps because we like and admire someone with that name.

It was not always the case. I am currently reading a novel set in the time of the mythical King Arthur, when Britain was being threatened by the arrival of the Saxons, and war was being fought on nearly every side. Each man, woman and child had a name which held meaning, perhaps surrounding the circumstances of their birth or the hope for their future. Names could also be changed. A warrior could be renamed for his prowess on the battlefield, signifying to friend and enemy alike that this was someone to respect, even to fear. Even their weapons were assigned titles of significance. For example, Arthur's famous sword Excalibur meant, amongst other things 'voracious'.

Not only was the individual's name of importance, offering as it did a glimpse of destiny, but so too was the family name, or surname. This clarified what tribe, region, or background a person was from, or what trade their family was known for. My own married name, Jensen, means 'son of Jens', the Scandinavian equivalent of John. My mother-in-law's family are Wrights. Could it be that they were a family of wheelwrights, known for manufacturing and repairing wooden wheels back when wagons were used for transport and whose name was shortened simply to Wright?

Here in Africa, names of both the individual and the family still have considerable meaning and

importance. I know one man from the Democratic Republic of the Congo whose name is Dieudonn—'God Gave'. What a lovely reminder to him, each time his name is spoken, that his parents saw him as a gift from God. I know another man whose name, when translated, means 'Be quiet'. Not such a happy reminder of his childhood, perhaps? There was even a lady in our church for several years whom everyone called 'Baby'. I thought this was just a nickname until I discovered it to be her real, legally registered name. I'm not sure I'd like to go through my whole adult life as 'Baby'.

A little while ago I met with a friend of mine, Dumile, for coffee. We hadn't seen each other for some time and we had much to catch up on. In the course of our conversation, she mentioned a project she was currently working on involving King Goodwill Zwelethini, the king of the Zulu people in South Africa. He is a powerful and influential man in both traditional and modern affairs in the country, and not someone I would expect my friend to be visiting and working alongside, even though she is a woman of much influence herself.

Somewhat in awe, I asked her how that had come about. She explained that her family name before her marriage was Zulu. This gives her the right to call upon any other member of the extended Zulu 'family' whenever she had a need. Whether they were a regular person living in a simple home or the King of the nation living in a palace, they could not refuse her approach. Even though she is now married and has taken her husband's name, she is still Zulu, and so benefits from all the associated rights and privileges. She also carries the responsibilities. Just as a fellow Zulu cannot deny her request for help, so she also cannot refuse to give when asked.

Our time together ended and we went our separate ways, but that conversation has stuck with me ever since. In the Bible, we see the value of names almost every time an individual is introduced to us. Adam was taken from the ground and his name is a play on the Hebrew word for 'earth'. Abram 'an exalted father', became Abraham, 'the father of a multitude' when God made his covenant with him (Genesis 17:5). In the same chapter, Abraham's wife Sarai is

renamed by God himself to Sarah; a princess in name alone becomes a princess of nations by divine calling.

How does this relate to you and me? Paul tells us in his letter to the Ephesian church, “In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself,” (Ephesians 1:5). Romans 8:15-18 declares that, “you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”

And in Revelation, John sees the vision of the new heavens where, “there will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.”

When I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior, I was “rescued ... from the domain of darkness, and transferred... to the kingdom of His beloved Son,”

(Colossians 1:13). I have been adopted and my name changed to one bestowed on me from heaven itself. I have been given the same family name as Jesus himself. The scepter of the King, Father God, is held out to me because of that name and I can freely enter the very throne room of heaven. That is simply mindblowing.

Just as my new name brings immense privilege, so too does it bring tremendous responsibility; to bear the family name well so that I don’t bring it into disrepute; to carry into the throne room that which is in line with the Father’s heart; and to be committed to covenantally love, honor and assist my fellow brothers and sisters in this divinely named family.

I may have a little chuckle when discovering the meaning of Anna-Louise, (Gracious-Warrior, son of the Hound of Ulster), but may I remain in awe of the name ‘belonging to and beloved of God’ written on my forehead.



## Labeled / Named

By: Anna Jensen

A multitude of labels abound  
    seeking to define  
and characterize me.

Yellow sticky-notes of impermanence --  
I am tired, happy, sad.  
I am fat or ugly  
    or dazzlingly beautiful.

Then there are those engraved  
    embossed  
in layers of living.

I am alone  
    unloved  
Wrong place, wrong time  
    Guilty

A voice in the desert calling  
    ‘Make way for the coming of the Lord’  
And a crimson tide of love  
    overflows from the throne.

You are purchased and redeemed  
    adopted  
    welcomed  
embraced  
    heard  
A never-separated overcomer  
A soldier, a priest.  
    My bride  
    Steadfastly held  
accepted in the Beloved.

No longer labeled,  
I am named.



HYMN SPOTLIGHT



# Blessed Assurance

By: *Fanny Crosby*

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
Angels descending, bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
I in my Savior am happy and blest;  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.

# Hymns Heal Hearts

*Before my mother fell deeper into Alzheimer's Disease, our favorite thing to do each day was to sing hymns together. My dad purchased a piano for her upon moving here to help take care of them. This gift kept giving and quickly became the means by which our new bond as an older adult daughter and her mother could form.*

*She would play the piano for the first few months and then, as her hands and mind couldn't remember what keys to reach for, I took over the playing. And we sang and even cried to our favorites like "The Old Rugged Cross," "Be Thou My Vision," "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" and "Blessed Assurance."*

*One day I found a book in my mother's library called "Then Sings My Soul," by Robert Morgan that told the stories behind the hymns. This made our time together at the piano that much more special, and the stories brought new healing through words, music and togetherness.*

*~Claire Kerrigan*

**Fanny Crosby was born in 1820 and wrote over 8000 hymns throughout her life, including "Blessed Assurance."** Her works were so well received that she went by as many as 200 pseudonyms in a single hymnal because publishers didn't want to list so many hymns in one book under one writer.

When Fanny was six weeks old, she became ill with a cold that caused inflammation and the treatment used ended up causing damage to her optic nerve and blinded her. When she was eight, she wrote her first poem about her blindness, later saying that "It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow, I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me."

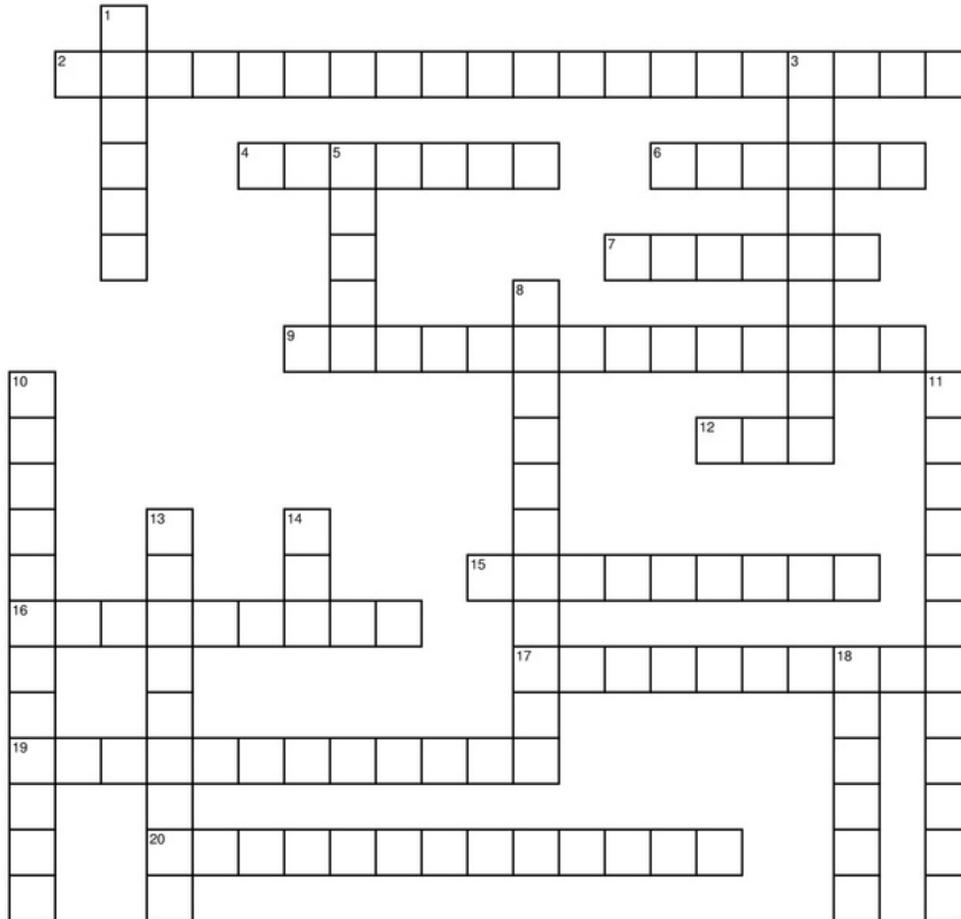
Besides writing, she worked in the rescue mission, teaching and public speaking. At age 60, she made a commitment to Christ and to serve the poor. She passed away in 1915 after a six-month illness, at age 94. Before she died she said, "when I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior."

# JOHN 9:1-38



BY MARY WELSH  
from the Bible Puzzle Book A to Z Edition

# BORN BLIND



## ACROSS

- 2 The one God listens to (5 wds)
- 4 Day the healing took place
- 6 Anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah was \_\_\_\_\_ of the synagogue (2 wds)
- 7 The parents were \_\_\_\_\_ of the Jewish leaders
- 9 They were sent for (3 wds)
- 12 Jesus put it on the man's eyes
- 15 They asked if it was the same man
- 16 The man told them what happened
- 17 After washing (3 wds)
- 19 Where the man went to wash (3 wds)
- 20 " \_\_\_\_\_, when no one can work" (3 wds)

## DOWN

- 1 Previous occupation of the blind man
- 3 What the disciples wanted to know (2 wds)
- 5 The man was blind from \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 What the Pharisees did to the man who was healed (2 wds)
- 10 What the healed man told the Pharisees (4 wds)
- 11 What the healed man told Jesus (3 wds)
- 13 The parents confirmed it (2 wds)
- 14 "I was blind but now I \_\_\_\_\_"
- 18 This word means "sent"

**SOLUTION ON NEXT PAGE**

# BORN BLIND

