

Lullaby for Timothy

By Katherine Clement Poulsen

My heart ached for my struggling baby until I remembered the gifts brought by another Child 2,000 years ago.

I remember the terrifying words of my labor nurse: “I think he has some anomalies.” At the same time, the population in the delivery room escalated to allow for the resuscitation of my severely compromised newborn.

I had lived similar scenes many times before, but from the other side, as a nurse. I was supposed to be the one reviving the newborn. Now I was the mom reaching through an incubator door to touch the hand of my son, while a transport team waited to take him to another hospital.

The next morning I received a telephone call from the newborn intensive care unit (NICU), where my husband, Andrew, sat surrounded by doctors, as they explained the surgery Timothy would immediately require to remove giant abdominal tumors.

I clung to the hope that surgery would cure our child and that he would lead a normal, happy life. I envisioned him as a chubby toddler with a cute scar, a reminder of the short-lived scare he gave his parents.

Three weeks later in that same

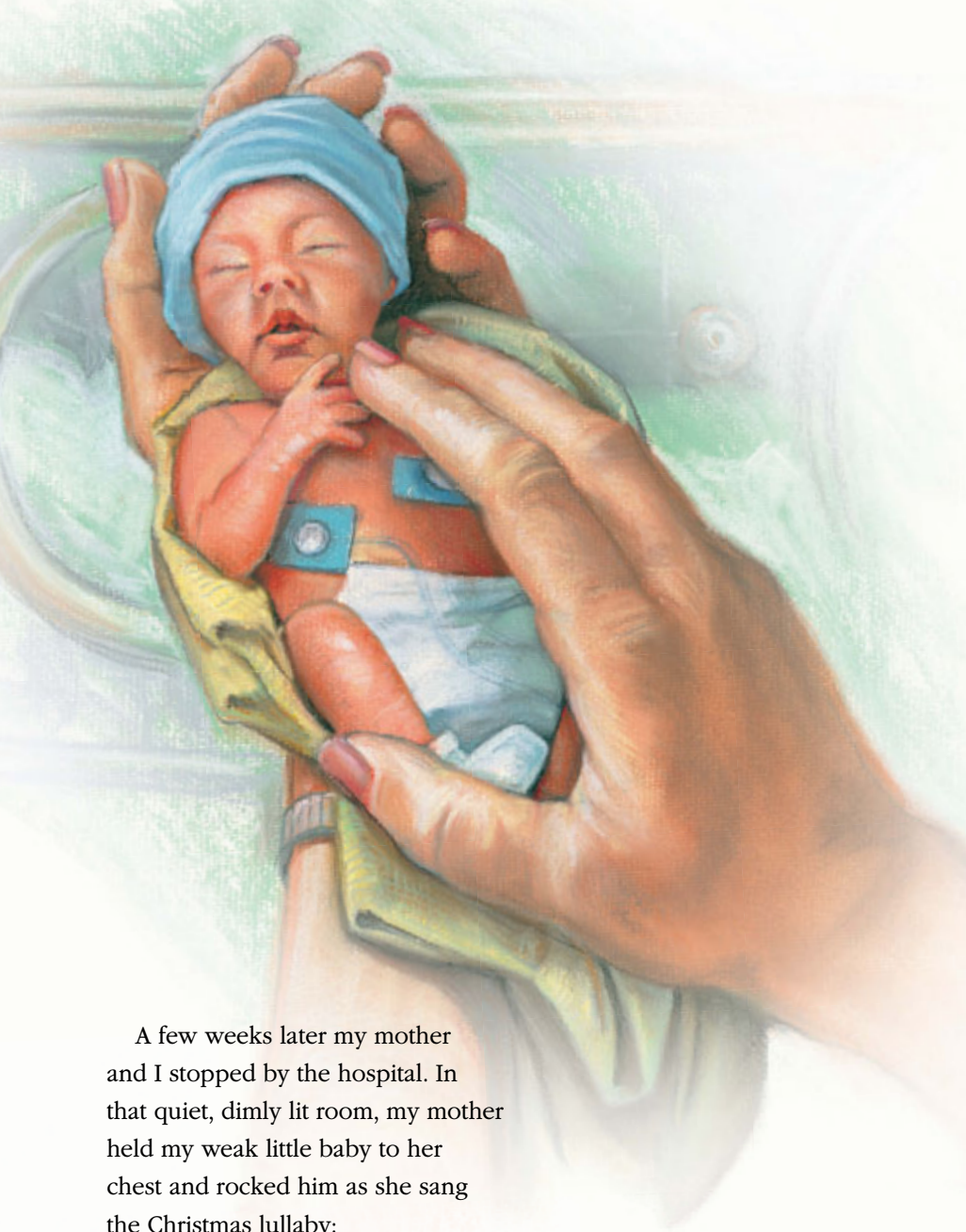
hospital conference room, a neurologist attempted to explain the brain malformation that would leave our child with significant cognitive delay, speech difficulty, and eventually seizures.

A few days after that, in the same room, the neonatologist said, “I can’t conceive that Timothy will go home without a feeding tube.” Our baby was an emaciated three pounds (1.4 kg) less than at birth, anemic, and virtually unresponsive to stimulation. When offered a bottle, his suck was weak at best, and he choked on its contents.

Expectations for our baby seemed reduced to nothing. My world was crashing down on me. I questioned the Lord’s promise that He will never allow a trial that is beyond our capacity to bear. I felt this burden was crushing me physically, mentally, and spiritually. During long daily hours at the hospital, I longed to be with my two older children and to resume our peaceful life. When I was at home, I obsessed over the welfare of my baby and, honestly, what I thought were our newly destroyed lives.

At my lowest point I pleaded with the Lord, letting Him know all the wonderful ways I would serve Him if He would just take Timothy back, let me mourn his loss, and allow me to get on with my life. Anything else was clearly more than I could handle.

While all of this was going on, my own personal miracle was beginning. Many members of our ward, along with several family members and friends, were fasting and praying for our family. One Sunday morning when I woke up, I had a strong impression that something great was going to happen that day as a result of all the fasting and prayers. I was hoping, of course, that Timothy would suddenly become alert and miraculously begin to feed. When I arrived in the NICU, Timothy was as nonresponsive as ever, and he still had no interest in bottle-feeding. Naturally, I was disappointed, but as I held him, an intense feeling came over me that he was going to be OK. I didn’t know what “OK” meant, but I had no doubt the Lord was in charge and was aware of our family.



A few weeks later my mother and I stopped by the hospital. In that quiet, dimly lit room, my mother held my weak little baby to her chest and rocked him as she sang the Christmas lullaby:

*Oh, hush thee, my baby; a story
I'll tell,
How little Lord Jesus on earth came
to dwell;
How in a far country, 'way over
the sea,
Was born a wee baby, my dear one,
like thee.
Lullaby baby, lullaby dear.
Sleep, little baby; have nothing
to fear.
Lullaby baby, lullaby dear.
Jesus will care for his little one
here.¹*

I knew peace would come through my Savior, who came to this earth to bring peace and eternal happiness for each of us. Surely He would care for this dear little one and lift those of us who were chosen to care for him.

A few weeks later Timothy was transferred to the special-care nursery where I currently work. There he miraculously learned how to eat. And I again experienced an incredible feeling that he would be OK. And although he has improved in so many

ways, I still don't know exactly what that means. But I have had such a comforting presence with me since that time. And whenever I find something that I should probably worry about, that feeling washes over me, and the message is the same: "Don't worry. Everything is going to be OK. Just enjoy him."

This Christmas season my thoughts turn to the beautiful gifts the Savior has given us. In so many ways He allows us to have peace here on earth. One of the most wonderful gifts of peace is the opportunity to prayerfully do all we can and then give *our* sorrows to *Him*.

By putting our trust in the Lord, we can give our worries to Him, and He in turn will lift us, giving special gifts to sustain us—often through other people. For me these gifts came in the form of babysitters for my two older children, meals from ward members, wonderful nurses and doctors, and loving support from family and friends. The most powerful gift, however, has been the peace granted by Heavenly Father as His Son has carried my sorrows and worries. Because of Him, I am free to love and enjoy baby Timothy and to celebrate all of the people and blessings that have been placed in my path because of his special life. ■

NOTE

1. "Oh, Hush Thee, My Baby," *Children's Songbook*, 48.