MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

Psalm 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

SEPTEMBER 2011



TRUE PEACE

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 14:27

've often returned to this verse in John's gospel. It is, to me, a remarkable, powerful verse in several ways. Jesus spoke these words as a comfort to His disciples shortly after He had told them that He would be betraved and, ultimately, go to a place where His disciples could not go, though He tells them they'll follow afterward. Chapters 14-17 in John's gospel contain Jesus' words to His beloved, but distressed, followers as He both comforts and teaches them, preparing them for what was to come. Jesus speaks of a "peace" that is foreign in this world, and says that the peace He gives is not like that which the world gives. How I yearn and long for this peace more and more! Some time shortly after Jesus finishes speaking to His disciples, the peacefulness of that intimate moment between Savior and sinner is shattered as Judas, the betrayer, leads soldiers and officers of the chief priests and Pharisees to the garden where Jesus was in order to arrest Him. Jesus brought and proclaimed peace to earth and goodwill between God and fallen man; mankind laid hands upon the

Prince of Peace, submitted Him to the violence and bloodletting that is of our nature, and slew Him... "not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

Throughout the history of mankind, "peace" has been sought through the oppression and/or elimination of the other. For one example, think of the two atomic bombs dropped upon Japanese soil which basically brought our foe to its knees, bringing WWII to a close and "peace" to the world, at least to some degree. Pictures of devastation in Pearl Harbor, Germany, much of Europe and other locations of the warfront reveal an ironic picture of the cost of earthly "peace." Most recently (and, as I am writing this, details are still coming to the public), a troubled man in Norway sought to make a point against the openness of his country (concerning immigration) and, specifically, the danger and violence that this welcomed from an influx of (radical) Islamic peoples. How did he choose to proclaim his desire for "peace" within his own country? By violently, mercilessly slaving between 70 and 90 people, mostly children and young adults.

You see, "peace" on earth is an unachievable dream. Even when there is a ceasefire in some conflict, it is usually only for a moment in time. Sooner or later, the bullets will fly again, and the ultimate goal of domination of the other will resume. Jesus Himself said that there would be wars and rumors of wars nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom—and implied that this would be ongoing (Matthew 24:6-8). Still, in the midst of the incomprehensible violence and bloodshed that exists in this world, Jesus spoke to His disciples, granting them peace, even His own! What does this mean? What peace does Jesus possess, and what does it mean for us that He offers it freely, especially to those who would follow Him?

First of all, we understand and believe that the peace Jesus offers us is a peace between the Most High God, our Father, and those who have strayed far from Him, rejecting not just His statutes, but His very "being." This wasn't just to some, but to all, as ALL were in sin and had fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). So many of the things we label as "sin" are, to me, though sinful, actually symptoms of SIN, which is simply unbelief, after we boil it down to its essence. And so, in thought, word and deed, we are sinful, and often walk in sin, by which I

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mean that we walk, live, function as if God isn't really out there, much less "in our midst." To us, then, God offers an eternal "ceasefire" which, grasped by faith, will never be undone. He does not wait for us to seek Him out first, but, in the fullness of time, sends His emissary/Son to procure this treaty by the very blood of the Christ (see Romans 5:1-11).

Can you see how vast is the difference between our ways and God's way? We seek peace through might and oppression: God opens the door to peace through humility, humiliation. personal sacrifice, through His wrought in love out

To us, then, God offers an eternal "CEASEFIRE" which, grasped by faith, will never be undone.

Jesus! Our worldly "peace" selfishly focuses entirely on us. God's peace, selflessly, ALSO focuses on us. Jesus, above all, knows and does testify to the loving heart of the Father. He KNOWS what true peace is, seeing in the Father not only the absence of hostility, but even the proclamation of favor to those who opposed Him! Herein, where earth's "peace" is always temporary and illusory, God's peace is eternal, offered to all, and freely so.

I'll close with a portion of Ephesians 2 (though I would certainly encourage you to read the epistle as a whole, as that is how it is meant to be received!):

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. (Ephesians 2:13-17)

Truly, God's peace to you! Pastor Andy Whitten Northville, Michigan

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THE TIMES ARE IN HIS HAND

Autumn is a special time of the year. With the change from summer to fall come crisp mornings, colorful leaves, ripened apples, fresh pumpkin pies, and thoughts of by-gone times.

Wonderful thoughts from seasons past encourage us to create similar memories for our children and grandchildren. Hay rides, jumping into piles of leaves and other fall activities provide special enjoyment. Fall is, also, a time of preparation for the winter months and holidays to come.



For others, however, autumn is not such a happy time. Unfortunately, thoughts of the past may cloud the bright skies of perfect autumn days with sad thoughts of days that cannot be recreated. Also, this time of year brings other changes. Children may be leaving home to begin lives of their own. Work situations may change with the seasons. As the days shorten and the climate changes, people often find themselves overwhelmed by the everyday rigors of life. The long, sunny days of summer are gone and with their departure may come dark feelings of loneliness and despair. If our focus is fastened upon the uncertainties and changes of life, our reactions to this life will be bleak. That is why our focus needs to change from the bleak to the positive. We need to be accepting of the unexpected as well as expected changes in life. Otherwise, we are in danger of losing not only earthly but also spiritual joy.

First, let's remember David's prayer in *Psalm 31:15a: My times are in thy hand*. From there we can look to Scriptures such as those found in *1 Thessalonians 5*. Several verses there offer advice that will help us to live through a period of discouragement by making us feel better about our current situation.

Rejoice evermore! Many of the prayers and psalms in the Bible begin with praise to the Lord. In doing so, we are reminded that He has cared for us in the past and will certainly

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do the same in the present and future. He gave His very life so that we could enjoy the fullness of heavenly blessings here in time and in heaven for an eternity.

Pray without ceasing. Use prayer for assurance of the Lord's presence in our lives. In prayer we comfort our own hearts, thus calming our spirits. This allows us to see more clearly than when we are stressed and overwhelmed by whatever it is that is pulling us downward.

In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Thanking God in all circumstances is obviously very difficult. Doing so, however, is a significant reminder of the will of God in our lives. His will is that we would be saved, and no earthly discouragement has the power to take our salvation from us. We thank God in Christ Jesus for giving us the strength to prevail in patient endurance.

Quench not the spirit: This admonition teaches us to tune into the lessons we can learn from our present situation. Also, as David wrote in *Psalm 31:24: Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.* His Word and His Spirit will reveal His will and His way to us, providing us with assurance of His presence in every aspect of our lives.

When we dwell in these heavenly places of rejoicing, prayer, thanksgiving, and searching for meaning, our thoughts are lifted upward toward a cloudless sky. God's in His heaven, and we discover His all-encompassing grace. *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. (Psalm 23:6)*

In Christ, Pastor Earl B. Kaurala Tapiola, Michigan

hristians are like several flowers in a garden that have each of them the dew of heaven, which, being shaken with the wind, they let fall at each other's roots, whereby they are jointly nourished, and become nourishers of each other. John Bunyan

GOD ENCOURAGED THEM

In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts: According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts. (Haggai 2:1-9)

always liked doing elaborate projects in school, such as the miniature Roman galley I decided to make in grade seven. I started off with enthusiasm, but somewhere around the midway point I ran out of steam. I



looked at the bits of wood, glue, and cardboard and I was ready to give up—but then my Mom stepped in. I'm sure that Mom probably helped me put the actual pieces together, but what I remember the most isn't the physical help but the encouragement she gave me. With that encouragement, I managed to finish my project and be proud of the results.

After the Israelites returned from their Babylonian captivity, they were instructed to take on an elaborate project as well: the rebuilding of the temple. They also grew discouraged, especially when they compared their work to the grandeur of

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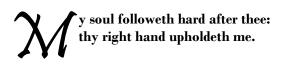
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the first temple. However, they also had a Parent who spoke words of encouragement to them. God sent a special prophecy through the prophet Haggai. God encouraged them to keep working and to remember that He was with them. God also promised that this second temple would be greater than the first. This prophecy was fulfilled over five hundred years later when Jesus, the "treasure of all nations," stepped into the temple and taught the people.

Thank You, God, for the encouragement You give us through Your Word and through our brothers and sisters. Show us people in our lives whom we can encourage as well.

Leona Matson Langley, British Columbia



Psalm 63:8

Christian theology teaches the doctrine of prevenient grace, which briefly stated means this, that before a man can seek God, God must first have sought the man.

Before a sinful man can think a right thought of God, there must have been a work of enlightenment done within him; imperfect it may be, but a true work nonetheless, and the secret cause of all desiring and seeking and praying which may follow.

We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit. "No man can come to Me," said our Lord, "except the Father which hath sent Me draw him," and it is by this very prevenient "drawing" that God takes from us every vestige of credit for the act of coming. The impulse to pursue God originates with God, but the outworking of that impulse is our following hard after Him; and all the time we are pursuing Him we are already in His hand: "Thy right hand upholdeth me."

A. W. Tozer

SOUL FOOD

ast year I prayed to God that He would clearly show me the difference between the sermons I was hearing at church and what I was hearing on many radio sermons. To the untrained ear, all preaching may sound good, unless something is truly alarming or clearly false teaching. While at church one Sunday, it came to me loud and clear: What I was hearing fed my soul. It filled a need that no practical message, although often biblical, could fill. That is why it's so hard to explain the difference. It doesn't matter how eloquent the pastor is, or how intellectually deep the sermon may be; if he preaches the Gospel of repentance and remission of sins in Jesus' name, it is food for a hungry soul. Generic "lifeapplication" type of preaching is not only found on the radio, it can creep into any church. How does this happen? It happens when we stray from complete and sound doctrine. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. (2 Timothy 4:2-5)

A pastor preaching the Word has perhaps one of the most difficult jobs there is. It is of utmost importance that we pray for and encourage our pastors to boldly preach the fullness of the Gospel, each and every Sunday. Once we know the power of the Gospel we should strengthen one another with it, but especially our pastors. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3:13) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you (the Gospel of Christ), let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. (Galatians 1:8-10)

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Luke 24:47 says repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his (Jesus') name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. The inside of one's soul must be cleansed by the blood of Jesus, not just polished from the outside. The problem is that we don't want to hear that. It hurts our pride and pricks our consciences. It is humiliating and humbling, and requires dving to self each day. But the freedom and peace Jesus Christ offers when we do, is so much more than we could ever fathom. Our ears would rather hear "user-friendly" sermons that instead tell us what we can do to make our lives better on this earth, but our souls will remain hungry with this type of preaching. We may hear sermons or "messages" on tithing, giving to the poor, relationship psychology, or Bible history, but how often do we hear about our sin and what to do about it? It doesn't even have to be sin, but also the weights that we accumulate through this walk of life. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us... (Hebrews 12:1)

The interesting thing is that if our consciences are clean, hearing about sin has no sting. It is reassuring to hear that our sins (yes, even mine!) have been forgiven! If we do have sin on our con-

It is reassuring to hear that our sins (yes, even mine!) have been forgiven!

sciences, hearing about it prompts us to take care of it in the proper manner and gives us the strength to do so. Every single text in the Bible can be used for preaching the Gospel. The way of salvation can be interspersed throughout the whole sermon, while learning the many other truths of God's Word.

So what are we to do? Ponder these thoughts: Does this sermon feed my flesh with things that I can do to make me a better person on earth, or does it feed my soul by telling me what to do with my sin and the weights that burden me on this journey? Does it reassure me that I am God's child and that Jesus died for me? Does it prompt me to read my Bible, seek His will, listen to my conscience, and stand up for the truths of Scripture that are continually being attacked by the world?

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We also need to learn the difference between tradition and doctrine. Often they are lumped together, though they are very distinctly different. Some doctrine is tradition for good reason (such as the way of salvation), but tradition is not always doctrine! Knowing the Bible will give you discernment between false doctrine and sound doctrine, but we must continually study it prayerfully and humbly for ourselves. *Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.* (*Titus 1:9*) We need to pray that God's Word would be sufficient for us and that we would not be satisfied with anything that does not feed our souls (empty calories, so to speak), but rather that God would fill us to overflowing through His Word and through His power, giving us the strength to stand up for truth and boldly share it with others.

In God's love and peace, Rachel Somero Kalama, Washington

TO EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

In her 12th grade Economics class, my daughter, Abby, was asked to write a few paragraphs describing the responsibilities of employers and employees in their relationship with each other. I thought it was inspiring and would like to share it:

Employees and employers are both to submit to their job as unto God. An employee must obey his or her employer and do their best when working, even when the employer isn't watching. Employees should work without complaining and realize that work is a gift from God and is for His glory.

Employers are not to take advantage of good employees. An employer must work diligently and not make the employees do all the work just because they are the boss.

The best way to enjoy a job is to not get caught up in the drama and realize that none of us are perfect. Just get along with everyone and have fun! ~Abby Estola

Sharon Estola Ironwood, Michigan

Hello Children,

How are each of you? I hope you are well and having a good day. It amazes me how quickly the months go by.

I want to share the Lord's Prayer, that perfect prayer Jesus taught His disciples. It is the best prayer you can pray if you don't know what else to pray, as it came from the



heart and mouth of Jesus. You can find it in St. Matthew 6: 1-16.

J esus was teaching the people. He wanted them to learn some important things and He taught them how to pray. Jesus told them that when you do your good deeds of charity, don't make it known in an outwardly loud way so that people see you and think that you are a good person or to get the praise of men for your kindness. Jesus does not like that. He wants His people to do good but not to do it for praise from men, but rather He would want us to do good even secretly, and God will reward us openly.

Jesus talks about praying. He says not to be as the hypocrites (people who say they are something they are not) who love to pray standing in churches and on street corners to be seen of men. Verse 6: But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Jesus also does not want us to use vain repetitions (praying about things that have no real value or purpose) as the heathen (ungodly) do. He says these people think that they will be heard because of their long prayers. Jesus does not want us to be like them as He says our Father in heaven already knows what we need before we ask. We know that God knows all about us.

Now we come the prayer Jesus would want us to pray, and He says to pray after this manner:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. Christian Monthly September 2011 11 So, children, when you don't know what to pray, pray this prayer and Jesus will hear you and will be pleased. This prayer covers all we need to ask for and they are all the most important things. God bless you as you put this prayer into your heart and memory. Keep Jesus in your heart and you will be blessed.

> God's peace, Gwen Wilson

The Body of Christ

The members in the Body of Christ seem, over time, to fall into a lull, the hand not caring about the foot, the eye not caring about the ear, and all of them ignoring the mouth, which every Sunday, incessantly, keeps preaching to the Body. We all are together; we need to care for one another or this Body will fall to the wayside!

Suddenly, somewhere deep in the Body, a member is hurt. The whole Body reacts: the feet stop walking, the mouth stops talking, and attention turns to the wounded member. The ear will listen to its needs, the mouth will say encouraging words, the feet will take gentle steps, the hands give a gentle touch.

The overwhelming flow of care and love cannot stop there. It continues, reverberating through the Body, reaching out to the most far-flung members. There are more prayers for one another. There is more care and love for one another in this precious Body of Christ.

We always want to ask why. Why is God our Father letting His children suffer? We don't always see the answers; we don't always understand.

I don't know the answer. But this I DO know: through our suffering, through our trials, we will grow stronger in our faith; we will be drawn even closer to our beloved God. But not only we, but all our Christian brothers and sisters in this precious Body of Christ, in sharing pain and burdens, also are strengthened in their faith; they are also drawn even closer to God.

> Juha Tyni Battle Ground, Washington

Our Blessed Heritage Apostolic Lutheran Church of Champion

Finnish immigrants of the Laestadian movement began gathering for services in Champion, Michigan, in about 1885. They built a small church near the Champion mine. In 1903, they leased a lot from the Champion Iron Company and built a new church, which was completed in 1907. The congregation was incorporated as the Finnish National Lutheran Church on April 22, 1907, in Marquette County. The original lease was \$1 per year. In 1978, this went up to \$5 per year. The land was purchased from USX Corporation in 1991 for \$1250.

Some of the original members were Herman Nikulas, Peter Patron, Axelson, Hedetniemi, and Victor Manginen; no relatives or descendants are currently members. Nikulas was the first pastor. Patron, who passed away about 1926, was the first chairman. Axelson was the main carpenter on the building.

The Champion congregation was one of the original ALCA members, associated since 1929. Champion was a thriving locality of 3,000 people at that time, with an iron ore mine, a large three-story school, a hospital, five grocery stores and three post offices. The mines began to decline in the 1930s



and the last mine closed in the 50s. The school consolidated with West Ishpeming in 1976 and finally closed in 1994. Today, the post office along the highway is the only original business left. The current area population is about 500 people.

Pastors and Preachers

Services were held in the Finnish language until the 1960s with speakers coming from various areas, especially Bruce Crossing and Ironwood. Services were not held on a regular basis, but as preachers were available. Often services were on weekday afternoons when only the women, small children and older men could attend. Many preachers served the congregation through the years. Rev. Evertt Maattala baptized Martin

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Beck at the John Beck home in 1936 and then died of a heart attack just before entering the church for services. In 1991, Andrew Kandoll moved to the area and has been the pastor along with David Lappi.

The Champion congregation has always maintained an open pulpit, with pastors of different backgrounds or denominations sometimes sharing the pulpit. Rev. Andrew Mickelson and Pastor Heideman spoke from the same pulpit. Pastor Nathan Ruonavaara of Laurium and Bro. Arvind Christian from India spoke together. Also, pastors visiting in the congregation are always welcome to bring a message and are often asked to share testimony of their conversion experience and life of faith.

Revivals and Conversions

Victor Manginen was a hardworking, successful immigrant potato farmer. A preacher from Finland, a former neighbor, visited him and he was converted. When his sins were forgiven, without saying a word, he ran out of the house and did not return for several hours. He had gone to friends, converting many of them and bringing them back for services. Such was the change God made in his heart.

Poot (August) Axelson remembered as a boy going to tell all the families when preachers came to the area for services. After some wayward years, he reminisced in the pews with a former traveling companion from the world, "This is the best place to be. When you are young, you don't know any better."

Old Mrs. Hedetniemi was remembered for her diligence in coming to services in icy weather, even on her knees when she could not walk.

Peter Koski moved to the area in 1918 to work in the mines. He bought a lean-to on property west of the church; he brought his wife and three girls to live there. He was a longtime secretary of the church. The girls remained members all their lives.

Mrs. Lappi was converted by a neighbor; her husband, Matt Lappi, was converted later. Lauri Lappi is the oldest living member at 87. Aili is also with us and lives in the homestead. Dave Lappi is the third generation. Lauri Lappi joined the Navy in WWII with many exhortations from his parents, Alice Koski, and a 10 year old boy in Boston ringing in his ears. He was converted and saw action from the ship's bridge in Leyte Gulf and until the final surrender with Japan.

Missions and Schools

The congregation has regularly supported world missions since 1909 when Finnish missionaries traveled through on their way to China. Lauri and Elsie Lappi's first dinner guest was the Finnish missionary, Ojanperra, after he was exiled from China in 1949. Missionaries were later supported in Africa and Israel.

Before any of the local churches had a Sunday School, the Koski sisters and several other ladies held community Sunday School in Humbolt Township Hall for many years, with up to 40 local children attending. In the 1980s, Sunday School began to be held in the church, and Vacation Bible School in the summer. Emma Koski loved the children; she picked them up, got them out of bed from some homes, dressed them and brought them to Sunday School and home again. "Jesus Loves Me" was sung every Sunday at the close of Sunday School and goodies were provided for the children. Christmas and Easter programs were held for the parents and community.

Restoration, Renovation and Coffee

A concrete foundation, small kitchen and a dining area were added in 1958. A larger entry with a furnace and bathroom was built in 1982. A metal roof, handicap ramp, and insulation were added in 2009; the interior is being restored and renovated. In 2010 the congregation purchased the Axelson house next to the church and took it down to enlarge the lawn and purchase the shared water well. The kitchen has served over 200 people at a time and has never had running water.



Coffee is served at 10:00 am every Sunday with a church service at 10:30 am. Holy Communion is served the first Sunday of month. Coffee each is often served after the service also. Uncle Bill Lappi always said, "Never throw away a good cup of

coffee." You are welcome to stop in for services and coffee anytime. The door is always open.

> In God's peace and love. Pastor Andrew G. Kandoll September 2011 15

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OUR FOREIGN MISSION

recently renewed my association with the ALCA after an absence of a few years. I often wondered, during that time, if the ALCA was still involved in missionary work. To my total delight, I found they have indeed been involved, and with a zeal for work in the kingdom of God.

I began to explore the Foreign Mission website www.themissionsite.com—and read the newsletters. All of those actively involved in the live mission field (boots on the ground, as they say) are doing a stellar job! I rejoiced that the ALCA is still so alive in Nigeria and the believers are still so fervent in their joy of the Lord. Excerpt from *Where He Leads*, Oct-Dec 2007 edition:

The newly-formed Foreign Mission Board sent Pastors James Johnson and Bob Maki to Nigeria in 1999 to attend their annual convention. It was a joyful reunion. The fruits of living faith were clearly evident. Many desired to hear assurance that all their sins were forgiven in Jesus' name and blood. Pastor James Johnson could clearly see that the seeds that were sown by his brother Philip, Pastor Mickelson, and Pastor Yliniemi so many years before, along with the watering, had borne much fruit. The work and sacrifice was not in vain.

There are still many struggles as there are many winds of doctrine in the world. The enemy is always out to destroy living faith within the heart of a believer. The struggles in Nigeria are not much different than we have in the USA or any other place in the world where there is living faith. When the church is founded upon the solid rock, which is Jesus Christ, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

- Pastor Bob Maki and Pastor Elmer and Miriam Yliniemi The church membership "out there" in other countries is huge. What touched me as I read is the true zeal that members "out there" have for the Lord Jesus Christ, while we here in the good ole USA have a hard time rolling out of bed on a Sunday morning to attend our local church, or maybe we haven't been born again and couldn't care less about church, or we are no longer in love with Jesus like we once were. We don't even know how privileged we are to have a church building we 16 September 2011 Christian Monthly can go to without worrying about some army or radical group coming in and beheading us or persecuting us—at least not yet—or how privileged we are to be able to partake of Holy Communion. The people **know** in many other countries where we are working. They walk many miles to church. Would we? They attend church sometimes for 5 hours to hear the Gospel; it's not just a social hour but church **for 5 hours.** At a house service in China where they risk jail or prison and physical beatings if caught, they don't say, "Well, my 1 hour is up... time to go." Plainly and simply, we are spoiled and don't take salvation seriously. **That's ETERNITY, for real, for ever!** We say, "Tomorrow I'll get in touch with God." Hello! There may not be a "tomorrow" for you or me.

On another note, in the Jan-March 2007 *Where He Leads* there was an article about Nepal. Here is an excerpt:

The next day we went to another village to share the Gospel; that evening we held a service in the local Nepali church and presented shoes to 12 children. A sister, who saw some of the pictures of Nepali children and noticed that they did not have shoes, donated the shoes. This border area is at a high altitude and the climate is cold."

–Pastor M.P. Sugandharatnam

How many of us own 12 pairs of shoes? The needs are great "out there." I decided I can "fit in my budget" \$1.00 per day to donate to the ALCA Foreign Mission. The majority of people "out there" **live** on \$30.00 per month. Could you? I may not be led to go into the field, but the monies God has provided me can go a long way to assist those less fortunate financially. Would it be too much to ask each congregation in America to put Foreign Mission donation packets front and center in their church entry where members can find the information?

Do you have an intimate personal relationship with God, or is He somewhere "out there" to you? Only you can answer that. Only God knows your heart. I don't know your perception of God, but mine was of God just waiting for me to step out of line so He could rub my face in the dirt for everything I'd ever done wrong, and then toss me into hell. I was wrong in my perception! That's one of Satan's lies! When you get to know God intimately, you'll be amazed at how awesome God is! He truly is our FATHER. Give Him a chance—you'll be glad you did.

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Just a reminder, folks, as members of the ALCA we **should** and **need** to support the Foreign Mission. As Christians it is our duty; not only our duty, it should be our JOY! A few should not have to be the sole support of the Foreign Mission, Master's Mission, or your local congregation. Tithing, offering, giving is the responsibility of everyone—that's why it's called **support**!

Donations can be earmarked to support any of the areas identified. Support for the foreign mission should be sent to:

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America 1601 NW 4th Avenue Battle Ground, WA 98604 On check, write: **ALCA Foreign Mission**

In His joy & peace, (for real) Val Anderson Taylors, South Carolina



Have you ever thought about the history of the hymns we sing? This 275-page book explores the histories of over 600 hymns in the *Hymns and Songs of Zion* from the earliest centuries to more recently written hymns. Here is an excerpt from the Introduction:

With this book, I hope to share with other hymn-lovers the richness that I have found in learning about the backgrounds of our hymns. I hope the words take on a deeper meaning so hymn singing will be a richer experience that enhances our lives as well as worship services.

Read *Christian History Through Hymnology*, by Marilyn Karlsen. Appreciate our hymn heritage that illustrates the multigenerational faithfulness with which the Christian Church has been blessed. To order, mail check or money order for \$17 US (\$15, plus \$2 postage) to:

Marilyn Karlsen 17614 NE 167th Ave Brush Prairie, WA 98606 Phone: (360) 892-4392 Email: marvin.and.marilyn@gmail.com

CLIMBING MOUNT EVEREST

e was born a little baby, just like all of you, a child of the King. With black hair and dark eyes, sweet and innocent. Born to Christian parents who loved him. He was rocked, and fed, and cared for, just like all of you. His mother has prayed countless prayers for this child. Prayers for healing when he was sick with pneumonia, bronchitis and chicken pox. Prayers that he would grow up to be a godly young man. Prayers that God would always guide and keep him. Prayers that he would find good Christian kids to spend time with. Prayers that God would someday bring him a godly Christian wife. And prayers that he would turn to Jesus, especially when temptations came. Prayers like your mother has surely prayed for you.

(continued on back cover)

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The temptations came daily, just as they have for me and you. Some of you have been tempted in different areas, like lying, stealing, premarital sex, pornography, cheating, alcohol and drugs, the list goes on. Sin is sin. And this child yielded to the temptations of drugs. But does that make this child someone not worthy of loving?

How do I know all this? Because I am this child's mother. I'm the one who prayed all those prayers. Maybe you have a picture in your mind of what the mother of a drug abuser would look like. Does she look like me?

> Two weeks ago I feel God placed me in front of Mt. Everest and said, "Marlene, climb this mountain—in your flip flops." I know Rowan is beside me, in his flip flops, facing the same mountain. But we know

climbing Mt. Everest in flip flops is impossible. Then God gave me a Clear picture, and it's you, the Body of Christ, on that mountain above me, with a tow rope in your hands, and hand over hand you will pull us up the mountain. We may not all go to the same church, and I may not know you personally, but if you are walking with Jesus, we need you on that mountain with us.

Because I love music, God will often speak to me in song, and one verse has played over and over in my mind:

Like a mighty army moves the Church of God; Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod. We are not divided, all one body we,

One in hope and doctrine, one in charity. (*Sabine Baring-Gould*) For you young people, y'all need each other. Reach out to those who are hurting, those who stand on the side lines and who don't have many friends. Remember that many times under a smile is a hurting heart. Remember that we are ALL a child of the King.

For you mothers who have walked this same walk, my heart is with you. We need one another.

Love in Christ, Marlene Samuelson Ridgefield, Washington