

# Christian 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.

June 2014

## The Works of God

Pastor Gerry Southerton  
Vancouver, Washington

**T**HROUGH OUT THESE LAST FEW MONTHS I have been thinking and looking at what modern-day America says about doing the work of God. Often, we think that the work of God is being a pastor or a missionary, or leading music in the church, or doing something where people can see that we are serving God. None of these services are bad, but we shouldn't think that if we are not doing these things that we are not doing the work of God. Looking at the history of Christianity we realize that most of the Christians in the past 2000 years went to church once a week, heard the Word, partook of the Sacraments and went home to scratch out a living. In modern times, it seems that many people have a lot more time to worry about if they are "doing" the work of God. This question often comes up when people are "choosing" an occupation or a vocation. Jesus addressed this question in an account in the book of John.

*When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. John 6:24-29*

Here, Jesus is talking to a crowd that had come looking for Him because He had fed them the day before. Most of the time, we would think, "Isn't it great that the crowd wants to hear Jesus again?" But this crowd is looking to fill their bellies. They are searching out Jesus for selfish reasons. At times, we also may do things for God or search out God for our own selfish gain, or even to look good to



others or to feel good about ourselves. When that is the case, our focus is wrong. Instead of a selfish focus, we should look to Jesus and His words. It's also important to know that even if we are serving God for our own selfish reasons, God can still make it work for His own good.

No matter where we find ourselves in this life, if we believe, we are doing the works of God. So, as a believing parent, we are doing the works of God. As a carpenter who is a believer, we are doing the works of God. We, as believers, are led by the power of the Holy Spirit and our focus comes away from ourselves to others. We may not be serving in the mission field or leading a church, but that does not make our role as a believer any less important. Actually, I would say that the calling of being a parent and raising children in the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is a much greater calling than being a pastor. In fact Paul tells Timothy that if he does not manage his own household well then he should not be in the ministry. Wherever God has put us in our daily vocation we are serving him by serving our family, neighbors and church family. We continue to do the work of God by believing in the one that He sent. ~



# Encouraging Others in Faith

Pastor Orval Wirkkala  
Kingston, Minnesota

**I**F YOU KNEW YOU HAD only a short time to live, what would you tell your children, your loved ones? You would share those matters of utmost importance concerning life, namely spiritual life. In our text of meditation, Apostle Paul, who shortly will be martyred for his faith, is writing from prison (possibly the last letter that he ever wrote) to Timothy, a young man who was converted through Paul's ministry. He is concerned about the Gospel being handed off to Timothy intact so that it may continue to bring salvation through Christ to multitudes. Let us read the first 7 verses of 2 Timothy:

**Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.**

Paul, vested with the authority of Christ as one who was sent by Christ, pours out his heart to his dearly beloved son, reminding him first of all that God through Christ has been and is yet gracious, merciful and peaceful toward Timothy. Paul then shares with his son his prayers for him, his longings for him, and his joy in him. Then before Paul shared of his main concern for the writing of the letter, the source, foundation, guarding, teaching and preaching of the Gospel, he focused on four things that were instrumental in the bringing of Timothy to where he was now in his Christian faith.

**The first was his upbringing.** Biographies never begin with the individual themselves, but with parents and grandparents for they bring/have brought/will bring to bear the greatest influence on our lives. *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

**The second influence on Timothy** was his spiritual friendship. After our parents, it is our friends who influence us most. Through Paul's ministry, Timothy had been led to Christ, and Paul did not desert, forget, or abandon him. Paul constantly remembered him. Three times in our text we see the bond of friendship between Paul and Timothy. *I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which*

*dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

**The third influence in Timothy's life** was a special gift of grace. Even though the gift that Timothy received most likely was a call into the ministry, nevertheless, in general we all have been uniquely gifted by Christ according to His grace and for His purposes, so that glory would be brought to Him and salvation to lost souls. We may not have as of yet fully realized our special calling of the Lord, but in time we will. We are members of His Body, therefore that which He has given us has been and will continue to be used to strengthen, protect, nourish and enhance His Body, the Church. All gifts and talents that are given to us are for the purpose of bringing glory to God by being used directly or indirectly to gather people to a saving relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*

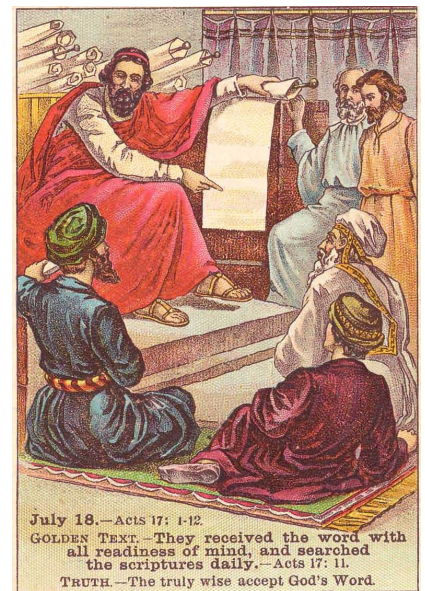
**The fourth influence on Timothy** was personal discipline. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up (rekindle, stir into flame) the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power (word for dynamite), and of love, and of a sound mind (sound judgment, self-control).*

We are called to rekindle, reignite, the gift that is within us/in others so that we/they may not only live in the benefits of the Gospel, but so that we/they may also teach and preach the Gospel. We that are in a place of influence need to recognize the Timothy's among us, such as the younger ones in our congregations, and especially the graduates this year.

May we follow the example of Paul so that the Timothy's among us will be loved, appreciated, prayed for, sympathized with, rejoiced over, challenged, equipped and supported. May we continue in this training, teaching and transition process that already has begun from our/their infancy so that the Gospel will be taught and preached in the grace and in the truth of Jesus Christ until the end.

May we ask today: Who do we know that we could take "under our wing" in order to bring them encouragement and direction for their life today and tomorrow?

May God bless you. ~



# God and Lamentation

Jill Carattini

Submitted by Alvar Helmes; Battle Ground, Washington

**L**AMENTATION" IS NOT A WORD that is heard very often. Words like sadness, regret, sorrow, and mourning are far more common. But I believe something is lost in the dismissal of lament from our vocabulary.

The Christian hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" is for me a song of lament. Because of certain associations, it is a song that immediately evokes a sense of grief, and yet it is the sort of mourning that is both held and expressed in worship. Whether the Christian story is one you embrace or not, the connection of these two ideas—worship and lamentation—may seem even more foreign than the word itself. Nonetheless, lamentation as worship was once a significant element in the Judeo/Christian vision and experience of the world.

Worship leader and songwriter Matt Redman was in the United States shortly after the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. Leading worship in several churches in the weeks following, he was immediately struck by the powerful sermons that were being preached, eloquently expressing the love of Father, Son, and Spirit to a shocked and vulnerable people. He was also struck by the distinct lack of songs he had on hand for worship in the midst of suffering. Where were the songwriters for such a time as this? Where were the poets and prophets to help the people of God find a voice in worship? Writes Redman, "As songwriters and lead worshipers, we had a few expressions of hope at our disposal; but when it came to expressions of pain and lament, we had very little vocabulary to give voice to our heart cries."<sup>(1)</sup>

Certainly hope is a needed expression, a gift not afforded by every worldview, and lamentation in this sense is similar. But more so, lamentation is a vital aspect of a life in relation with God. Seventy percent of the psalmist's words are words of lament! "Hear my prayer, O LORD," the psalmist pleads. "Let my cry for help come to you. Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly. For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers." Sadly dissimilar to many public and private expressions of grief as well as many worship services today, the writers of Scripture identify with the pain of the world and do not hold back in addressing it before a God they believe needs to hear it. For these voices, lament is not a relinquishing of faith, but a cry in worship to the one who weeps with them.

**A**T A FUNERAL ONCE, a fellow mourner caught me with tears in my eyes and told me that neither God nor the one we mourned would want me to cry. Her intentions were good; she meant to encourage me with the powerful hope of the Christian story, which holds at its center the resurrection of Christ. But I desperately needed permission to lament, permission to look up at the



cross with the sorrow of Mary and the uncertainty of the centurion. I needed to be able to ask why with the force that was welling up in that moment of grief, even as I clung to hope in the Son, trust in the Father, and life in the Spirit who holds us.

***"Hear my prayer, O LORD," the psalmist pleads.  
"Let my cry for help come to you."***

For anyone who needs permission to mourn, the Christian season of Lent is a time to walk the labored steps of Jesus toward the agony of the cross, the reality of its injustice, and the despair of human death and suffering. This is a profound gift for a world in need of permission to ask why, to cry out in pain, and to know there is one hearing. While songs of hope are essential in a world that is not as it should be, lament is often the honest, needed pathway there, just as the iniquitous sufferings of the cross and the darkness of a cold tomb were the way to resurrection. Neither our worship nor our journeys can deny this if they are truly to lead us to hope.

The Christian story holds a unique capacity for tears because the story itself is filled with tears. And thus the Christian can sing through the disorienting sting of cancer and unemployment and injustice, even as it moves us to reach out to those who are suffering with the love of one who will one day wipe away every tear from our eyes. It is this God who gives us permission to utter the words in the pits of our stomachs and the Spirit who helps us groan them, as we follow the one who cried: "I am deeply grieved, even to death."

"God and Lamentation," by Jill Carattini, *A Slice of Infinity*, originally printed 7 March 2014 ([www.rzim.org](http://www.rzim.org)). Used by permission of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries.

(1) Matt and Beth Redman, *Blessed Be Your Name: Worshipping God on the Road Marked with Suffering* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2005), 3



# The Valley of Dry Bones

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

God's peace to you all. I have been reading the Bible from the start and am going to read it all the way through. The story I read today gave me the idea to share. You can find it in *Ezekiel 37*.

**E**ZEKIEL WAS A CAPTIVE IN BABYLON. He was also a prophet and God used him to deliver many messages to the people of Israel who had forgotten Him. *And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me (not submitted to God's authority): they and their fathers have transgressed (sinned) against me, even unto this very day. (Ezekiel 2:3)* While in captivity the Lord came to Ezekiel in visions.

After God had given Ezekiel many visions and spoken to him many times, in chapter 37 Ezekiel is being shown a parable (a word picture that represents something real). He is taken in the spirit and set down in a valley of dry bones. You are probably wondering if only dry bones were there. The Bible says: *...behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. (Ezekiel 37:2-3)*



*The Valley of the Dry Bones*  
engraving by Gustave Doré

God then told Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones and say, *O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD. (vv. 4-6)*

So Ezekiel prophesied to the bones and suddenly there was a noise of the bones shaking and they all started to come together making bony skeletons, and then flesh came over the bones, and skin covered the flesh, and there stood a great army of men, but they had no breath in them. Wouldn't that be quite a sight?!

God told Ezekiel to say to the wind: *Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. (vv. 9-10)*

You may be wondering, "Who are these men?" *Then he (God) said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. (v. 11)*

**T**HIS LAST VERSE IS WHERE this account represents something that IS real. The Israelites were a real people. They were God's people, but they were rebelling and not doing the Lord's will. They were doubtful they would ever get back to the land that was theirs. They were as good as dead in their hearts and souls. But God in His power is able to make them have new life in them, to breathe His Holy Spirit into them and bring them back to their promised land. They would know that it was the Lord who said He would do this for them and they would know that He is their God.

God always stands by His promises. When you read them in the Bible, know that they are truth and will be done. I pray that God's children will keep their eyes on Him and serve Him only. God be with each of you children as you walk with Him each day. I want to leave you with some verses: *My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart. (Proverbs 7:1-3) ~*

**M**Y FRIEND, GOD IS THE ANSWER to your problem today. I don't know who you are or what your problem is, but God is the answer. God has a purpose in your life, and He intends to carry it through. You can have faith and confidence in Him. You can trust Christ, and when you trust Him you will find that He begins to work in you. He wants to conform you to His image—it is God's intention to make you like Christ.

J. Vernon McGee

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:28-32)*



# Husbands and Wives

Shane Juuti

Gimlet, Alberta, Canada

**T**HIS FAMILIAR PORTION of Scripture is very important, especially in the time in which we live, because it is so contrary to how our society in general thinks and lives. The opposing lifestyle is so preva-

lent I fear the worldly thinking on this subject is creeping into the Church.

*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*

*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*

*This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. (Ephesians 5:22-33)*

This speaks of husbands and wives but, more importantly, God is giving us a natural example in order to help us understand how He deals with the Church.

He tells us that wives should be subject to, submissive, and reverent to the head of the house, who is the husband. Why is this? Is it because men are smarter, wiser, or more spiritual? Is it because women are less than a man in some way? Is it because men have done something to deserve it? The world would like to suggest that any of these ideas are what the Bible tells us so that they can discredit what the Word says as being old-fashioned, or just plain wrong.

*Galatians 3:28 says ...there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* Any Christian can see that women are as smart, wise, and spiritual as men. Men, also, if they are honest with themselves, know that the same problems dwell in their flesh as in their wives', so they have done nothing to deserve anything close to this reverence. For this reason, I worry that many men, instead of meditating on the real reason God tells wives to do these things, decide that perhaps God's Word isn't saying what it is saying. They think that obedience to this Scripture isn't really necessary because it goes very much against our natural reasoning, especially in today's society.

So why are women told to do these things? It is because God has put them in a position to picture, spiritu-

ally, where the Church is in relation to Christ. This portrays the order for all the world to see. Christ very much deserves all of these honors from the Church. But, while the man does not deserve any of them, God instructs wives to adhere to them because it brings glory to Him. If a woman says, "I don't need to be subject to my husband because I am being subject to God," she is on dangerous ground because God has told us that she shows her subjection to God by being subject to her husband.

We can see the results of this disobedience in many churches. The thinking is: We are going to do this certain task for God, and we'll pray for Him to help us. Instead, should we not be asking God what it is He wants of us, and pray that He will be so gracious as to lead us in His will?

Let's look at men for a minute. Do the wives deserve to be loved as Christ loved the Church? No, but do we as the Church deserve to be loved as Christ loves us? No. So, as husbands, we love our wives because we are portraying the natural picture of how Christ cares for us spiritually.

We seldom, in our day, would have to die for our wives, but we must make it our purpose in life to see that they can walk as unhindered on their Christian journey as is absolutely possible. First and foremost, there should always be forgiveness, both giving and receiving. Husbands should be truthful, merciful, and humble. We could go on and on about the kind attitude and behavior we should offer them. It's a very tall order (and only done with the help and strength of the Holy Spirit), but again, the reason is to bring glory to God through obedience.

It is also sidestepping our duty if we, as men, would in any way indicate that the duties that God asks of women aren't really necessary to any of us husbands individually. We need to put great effort into making it as easy as humanly possible for our wives to do the things that the Word instructs. We know that we often fail miserably. Adherence to God's instruction is necessary, however, and this is why: we know that God requires them of His people, and His Word is very specific about what He requires of men. Yet we see many churches willing to overlook many of the things that Scripture is very blunt about, saying that observance of those things is not necessary.

Another way we men give our lives is this: that we mean what we say. This means that we keep our word and promises, and we don't threaten. We explain the consequence of a disobedient or dangerous action to our children, and follow through as fathers with the right discipline. It takes a lot of thought to make sure that we can do what we say. It can often put a real wrench in our plans to fulfill a promise, perhaps; but to be faithful is needful. Has God ever not fulfilled a promise, or not done what He said He would do?

Our love to our wives needs to be unconditional. Christ said, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34)* when His bride, so to speak, hung Him on the cross?

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If we look at some of the problems in families and the Church in the light of all this, we soon see the importance of following God's Word. If a father is a picture of God, but the mother has no respect, let alone reverence for him, or subjection to him, then why would children see a need to reverence, or be subject unto, God? If what the husband says isn't truth, or doesn't need to be heeded and followed, why would they think that God should be? If the husband isn't the wife's all in all, why would Christ be that to the Church? If a husband isn't loving, merciful, or forgiving to his wife or children, why would they think God is that way to mankind?

Husbands need to put their wives before their children, and likewise wives put their husbands before them. Why? Otherwise, the spiritual example becomes distorted. We get the idea that God is more concerned that others would feel "loved" than that His Church could feel the security of only truth, and rest in the righteousness, peace, and joy of having the Holy Ghost. Or that the Church would be more concerned that a member is not offended than that only the simple complete Truth is spoken, so that God would not be offended.

May we, as Christians, be attentive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, for that is the only way we have any hope of following God's instruction. May He open our ears and make us gracious and forgiving one to another. ~

## Christianity Begins at Home

*Pastor Wayne Juntunen  
Esco, Minnesota*

**M**ANY TIMES IN THE BIBLE we can read how important is the home in the eyes of God. God begins with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1:26-3:24) from whom have come all nations, kindred, peoples and tongues. But as they yielded to Satan's lie, the effects of that "fall" infected all of creation and home life became a battle ground. And from there the infection of sin has spread to all peoples.

God, the All-Knowing, All-Powerful, and Everywhere-Present Lord of all, provides the blood sacrifice Himself in and through Jesus Christ to reclaim and restore all that was lost in the Garden of Eden. Jesus, God in the flesh, is born of a woman. A new home begins through Mary and a substitute father, Joseph; God, the Father, being the true Father. Even though Joseph was not the true father of Jesus, it was necessary that he be a godly man. The beginning of the Gospel according to Matthew records a long history of Joseph's godly heritage (Matthew 1:1-16). Mary, too, came from a godly heritage being a relative of Elisabeth (Luke 1:36), the wife of Zacharias, a priest, whose genealogy would go all the way back to Levi from whom the entire Old Testament priesthood started.

While it was important that the home was a godly one into which Jesus was to be born and in which he would be raised to manhood, the timing of Mary's conception was also important. Engagement in Bible times was as binding as the marriage itself. It was important that Joseph and Mary were engaged before the angel brought the message from God that she was to conceive a son through the power of the Holy Spirit. Had it occurred before Joseph and Mary were engaged, Joseph could simply separate from her and have no further connections. He would be breaking no law but Mary, quite likely, would have been stoned to death—the punishment for adultery (Deuteronomy 22:23-24). At best she would have been left to raise Jesus outside of marriage. God waited until they were engaged to guarantee the marriage, although an angelic message to Joseph was necessary in order for him to understand the reason for Mary's pregnancy. Mary was not to raise Jesus as a single parent. Beginning with Adam and Eve, the blueprint for marriage is one man with one woman for life. Children need both a mother and a father for proper nurturing.

As Jesus began the work of saving creation and mankind from sin, death, hell and the devil, the first miracle He performed was at a wedding (John 2:1-11). Why? Because only a home where Jesus Christ is present can mankind's history and civilization itself survive and flourish. In every home where Christ is not enthroned as Lord, there the fruit of our fallen nature will reign. Since the original home from which God was to build humankind had departed from the Word of the Lord, Jesus, the Word made flesh, began in a home at a wedding to reveal both His human and divine nature that was needful not only for life after death, but life before death. For, as the Apostle Paul said in his sermon to the gathered crowd on Mars Hill in Athens, "In Christ we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:28)."

While Christ, through His life, suffering, death and resurrection, has finished the work necessary to save mankind from his destructive course, each of us is still responsible to be the "doers of that Word (James 1:22)." And the Bible is full of instructions as to how marriage and family life is to be carried out in the home. Each of us has a responsibility to live in harmony with God's Word as parents, children, brothers and sisters within a household. It has been said, "The light that shines the farthest shines the brightest at home." May the light of God's Word, the two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12), penetrate into our hearts. And as it reveals our thoughts and intentions, may each of us yield to its truth. The only way Christianity can spread is from heart to heart, from house to house because the church, as a body of believers, is only as strong as each household within it. Then out of each heart and out of each home, Christianity can then spread to the neighborhood, the community, the nation, and the world. ~



# In Memory of Alvin Amberg



**O**NE YEAR AGO ON FEBRUARY 24, 2014, our dearest friend and spiritual brother was called home to be with the Lord. Alvin never lost sight of the prize that is promised for all who are faithful to the end.

My wife and I still remember the first time we had the pleasure of meeting Alvin and his loving wife, Louise. It was at special services in Toronto, Canada, and since that day some 40 years ago our families have been bound together by that spiritual love and concern for the truth of God's Word.

Alvin loved his wife, children and spiritual friends with an unconditional love. His concern for all was that God and His Word would be first in our lives. So many from the outside testified of Alvin's love for his God and his desire to convey the truth of God's Word to all. "He not only spoke the truth, he lived it," was their testimony of Alvin.

For all of Alvin's life he was a member of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of New York Mills, Minnesota. He served on the church board as well as the Eastern Mission Board for many years. The last few years of Alvin's life he began preaching with me at our

home services in Wadena. He always spoke the truth from God's Word as the Holy Spirit gave utterance. He was a great source of comfort and strength to all of us. For Alvin, it was impossible to walk without the traveling staff of God's grace and forgiveness.

Our thoughts often go back to his last day when we were all gathered at his home. Knowing his time with us was growing short, we sang songs from *Hymns and Songs of Zion*. Alvin wanted to hear his favorite, #440 "My Weary Soul Longs Evermore." When one by one we would encourage Alvin, "Hang in there and don't give up!" he would be looking right past us and would say as if he were already there, "But heaven is so beautiful!"

That night Louise was sleeping in the living room and awoke to a light flickering in the hall just outside their bedroom where Alvin was asleep. Amazingly there is no light in that hallway. It was a sign to Louise that Alvin's end was close. The angels were coming to carry him to Abraham's bosom as the Scripture says. Louise spent the last hour or two with her true soul mate and our dear friend.

Alvin will always be missed by all who were blessed to have known him. A part of our hearts are gone with him. Alvin was much more than our Christian brother, he was also one of our closest and dearest friends. We are all with God's help and grace fighting for the truth as Alvin to the very end encouraged and admonished us to do, so that someday soon we will meet again in those services that will never end.

With all our love to Alvin's family, we are always yours in the mutual faith. God's peace, dear brother. Rest in the arms of the almighty God and our Father. Till we meet again in heaven, God's peace!

Bill and Gitta Warren  
Wadena, Minnesota

## Gifts



GOD the Father, thank You for the gifts.  
GOD the Son, thank You for the gifts.  
GOD the Holy Spirit, thank You for the gifts.

Given gifts of Heaven's treasure,  
Given gifts beyond all measure,  
God's only Son, sent from above,  
As the Gift of God's great love.  
The gift of life, the gift of grace,  
Behold our God in Jesus' face.  
Behold the Lamb, behold the Man,  
Behold the Living Great I AM.  
Explain this gift I know now how,  
I know Him present even now,  
At times like wind, at times like rain,  
A dove, a shadow, balm for pain,  
Holy Spirit, gift and giver,  
Bearing fruit and with us ever.

Jay Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

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## First Preface to "The Hymns of Martin Luther" —1884

**T**HAT IT IS GOOD, AND PLEASING to God, for us to sing spiritual songs is, I think, a truth whereof no Christian can be ignorant; since not only the example of the prophets and kings of the Old Testament (who praised God with singing and music, poesy and all kinds of stringed instruments) but also the like practice of all Christendom from the beginning, especially in respect to psalms, is well known to every one: yea, St. Paul doth also appoint the same (1 Corinthians 14) and command the Colossians, in the third chapter, to sing spiritual songs and psalms from the heart unto the Lord, that thereby the word of God and Christian doctrine be in every way furthered and practiced.

Accordingly, to make a good beginning and to encourage others who can do it better, I have myself, with some others, put together a few hymns, in order to bring into full play the blessed Gospel, which by God's grace hath again risen: that we may boast, as Moses doth in his song (Exodus 15) that Christ is become our praise and our song, and that, whether we sing or speak, we may not know anything save Christ our Saviour, as St. Paul saith (1 Corinthians 2).

These songs have been set in four parts, for no other reason than because I wished to provide our young people (who both will and ought to be instructed in music and other sciences) with something whereby they might rid themselves of amorous and carnal songs, and in their stead learn something wholesome, and so apply themselves to what is good with pleasure, as becometh the young.

Beside this, I am not of opinion that all sciences should be beaten down and made to cease by the Gospel, as some fanatics pretend; but I would fain see all the arts, and music in particular, used in the service of Him who hath given and created them.

Therefore I entreat every pious Christian to give a favorable reception to these hymns, and to help forward my undertaking, according as God hath given him more or less ability. The world is, alas, not so mindful and diligent to train and teach our poor youth, but that we ought to be forward in promoting the same. God grant us His grace. Amen.

*Martin Luther*

## Come, Christian Friend, and Help Us!

*Alvar Helmes*

*Battle Ground, Washington*

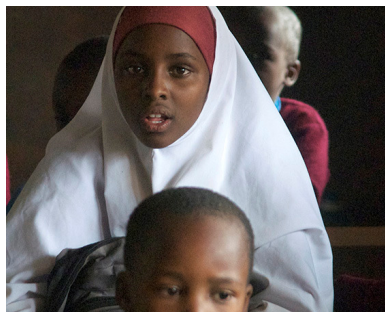
We have heard there is a Savior  
Who can wash away our sin,  
But we don't know where to find Him  
In our land, so dark within.

We feel guilty for our actions;  
We need help along the way;  
We have burdens in our lives;  
We're in need of your presence today.

We need teaching from the Bible,  
In truth, from heav'n above.  
Dear Christian friend, please help us,  
Hear our plea, with all of your love.

Come, Christian friend, and help us!  
We need the Gospel of truth.  
Come, spread your Savior's message  
To our aged and youth.

Come, Christian friend, and teach us!  
We long to be in God's favor.  
Come, guide and point the way;  
Tell about Jesus, the Savior.



Photos courtesy of [www.missionwi.org](http://www.missionwi.org),  
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guidance to the poor and destitute.

## Convention Notice

The Hockinson congregation invites you to attend the 106<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America. Devotional Services will be held Thursday, July 10th through Sunday, July 13th, 2014 at the Skyview High School in Vancouver, Washington. Further information is available on the ALC of America's website:

**[alcconvention.com](http://alcconvention.com)**

PLEASE NOTE: A Spanish service will be held in place of the Friday 5:00 pm Finnish service.

We pray for God's blessings as we organize this event and look forward to this time of fellowship.

*Pastor Phil Wilson  
and the 2014 Convention Committee*