

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.

March 2012

The Water of Life

Pastor James Johnson
Houghton, Michigan

Water is one of the most important elements for giving and sustaining life. It is necessary for all living things. Man cannot live without water. It quenches our thirst and cleanses our bodies.

How appropriate that the Word of God describes Jesus as the "Water of Life," for without Jesus, man cannot live. Without Jesus abiding in our hearts, we are dead in trespasses and sin. Jesus came to give life and to give it more abundantly (John 10:10). *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins... Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. (Ephesians 2:1, 5)*

The invitation is extended in God's Word to come and drink the Water of Life freely:

...Jesus stood and cried, saying,
If any man thirst, let him come unto
me, and drink. (John 7:37)
And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.
And let him that heareth say, Come.
And let him that is athirst come.
And whosoever will, let him take the
water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17)



When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, He offered her living water. He said, *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water... But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. (John 4:10-14)* Jesus said, *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:38-39)*

Where and how is this water of life dispensed to thirsting souls? In no other way than through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the penitent.

The Word invites: *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:22)* Jesus told His disciples, *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. (John 15:3)* Christ gave Himself for the Church *that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. (Ephesians 5:26)* God has given a blessed Gospel to His kingdom; we can assure one another that in Jesus' name and His atoning blood all sins are forgiven and washed away.

How necessary it is that we are led by the Spirit of God. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (Romans 8:14)* God be thanked for the Comforter He has sent to us. Without Him we surely would be lost on the journey, for without Him we can do nothing. We are *...kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:5)* Jesus said unto His disciples: *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:12-13)*

God has bestowed a precious gift upon us: the gift of the Holy Spirit. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (Romans 8:14-17)*

Dear fellow traveler! All signs point to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ soon to take us to our heavenly home. Hold fast that no man take your crown. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)*



Create in Me a Clean Heart

Pastor Ivan Seppala
Clayton, California

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10) Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8)

In this Lenten season, our hearts are turned to the wondrous works of God for and in us. The way to a clean heart is revealed in the Word of God. *Revelation 13:8* tells of ...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, was provided before we were created. It was announced in *Genesis 3:15*: *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* Blood was shed for a covering for Adam and his wife when the LORD God made coats of skins (verse 21). The promise of a Savior is made throughout the Old Testament. It was fulfilled when the Seed of the woman was conceived in Mary by the Holy Ghost as revealed to Joseph (Matthew 1:20) and Mary (Luke 1:35). He was true God and true man without sin so that He might be the complete atonement for our sins.

In order for us to need His atonement, God works a godly sorrow for sin. *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. (2 Corinthians 7:10)* Also *Matthew 5:3*: *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* God is not giving a natural blessing but a spiritual one, to prepare the heart for the sprinkling of blood. In Exodus, God instructed the people to prepare an unblemished lamb and, after killing it, to take the blood and strike it on the two side posts and upper door post of the houses. *And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. (Exodus 12:13)* We are redeemed by the blood. *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Peter 1:18-19)* But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

How is this forgiveness accomplished? We have the words of our Savior proclaiming sins forgiven. When a man was brought to Jesus for healing, He said...*Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth*

to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. (Matthew 9:2-6)

In this Lenten season we understand that it was far harder for Jesus to say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." The agreement in heaven before the foundation of the world required that He would become flesh, fulfill all things of the Father and die the death of the cross. In it, however, we see the power of the spoken word of God. In Romans we hear of the blessing of preaching God's Word. *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? ...So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:14-17)* Before Jesus ascended, He empowered His disciples to preach repentance and remission (forgiveness) of sins in His name (Luke 24:45-49 and John 20:21-23).

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts...

When the Psalmist desired that God would create in him a clean heart, we see that a child of God has need of this, as well as one in unbelief. David was a man after God's heart, but he fell into grievous sin. Prophet Nathan told him a parable to which David replied that the man who did such a thing should die, unaware that he was the one until Nathan said, "Thou art the man." Note David's response: *...I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. (2 Samuel 12:13)* David did not make any excuse or deny it but allowed God's words given to Nathan to humble him and confessed he was guilty. The pardon by Nathan's words was not of his forgiveness but of God's forgiveness. This was not the case with Saul who tried to excuse instead of acknowledge his sin (1 Samuel 13:11-14), and his kingdom would not continue because of his sin. Jesus instituted foot washing for the children of God so they can wash one another's feet when they fall into sin, not a literal washing of feet but rather the proclamation of the Gospel to the penitent by His authority as ambassadors in His stead.

It is a wonderful blessing that the work of redemption and of bringing us into His kingdom is totally of God. **For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.** (Ephesians 2:8-10)

The Psalmist gives us a prayer in the Lenten season: *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)*

Keep us in Thy everlasting arms of love. Amen. ~

Man's Reason and God's Truth

Donny Matson
Yacolt, Washington



Reason constantly prompts us to "wrap our mind around" things before we accept them.

Though wholly inadequate for understanding the infinite God, it can make a useful companion when carefully kept in line with the Bible. Indeed, I'll employ its services to a degree in this writing. But as we ride along on Scripture Road we should be sure our sometimes useful, but otherwise unreliable, friend is not belted in too tight. Due to its divine origin, Scripture Road can take sharp turns (things we just don't understand) and reason must be allowed to continue his forward momentum into the tall grass while our carriage of accepted teachings takes the corner and proceeds on the narrow way! Belted in too tight, reason may be heavy enough to tip our carriage on some of the curves.

Too often this happens to individuals and, consequently, to the Church. Even worse, if he takes up too much room on the driver's seat, our carriage of accepted teachings may roll straight into the smooth grassy fields of reason without us even knowing we left Scripture Road! In this case, picture the Church or individual rolling along on the reasonable way with complete disregard to what the Bible actually says. Think of the news story of a girl laying on her back in a hay field listening to music on her iPod, completely oblivious to the mowing machinery bearing down on her until it was too late. A similar fate has undoubtedly met many souls unfortunate enough to fall under some of the well-reasoned teachings of the Church.

The influence of reason has grown so large, much of Christendom is unable to take the sharp turns in Scripture at all. Unwilling to stand by biblical truth, together with secular society many Christians regard Scriptures as mere traditional literature. Even if we've not slipped that far, grace is often taken for granted to the point where, other than Sunday morning worship, Christian conduct is no different than unbelievers' and the Bible is largely ignored. In this compromised condition, the Church can only offer a dying world more of what it already has (2 Timothy 3:5). On the other hand, when blinded by reason, religious people easily become conscious only of their own good works. In this frame of mind, they righteously strive for a perfect world strewing countless souls in their wake. This "us against them" mindset has likely done more to harden souls against the God they confess than open heathenism has (Matthew 23:13-15). I hope these few examples help portray the danger of giving reason even an inch against the written Word of God. "The Bible says it; that settles it!" is the motto we must live by, no matter how impossible to understand the sharp turns in Scripture may seem.

Since the Bible is the bedrock on which all truthful teachings are based (2 Timothy 3:16), understanding what its inspired writers originally intended to convey should be the objective principle

or goal of those who accept it as such (2 Peter 1:20). Without all feet planted firmly on this bedrock and principle, the Church or the individual is doomed to walk a staggering course toward chaos. Readily available to possess and study, the Bible offers the modern world its only physical intersection with unchanging eternal truth (1 John 1:1 and John 1:14). Its every historical record, every philosophical point, and every Christian teaching is truthful and accurate. Can you imagine what the world would look like had Jesus not made an entrance here? I submit that if the biblical Jesus Christ is the only constructive answer to the destruction and decay that plagues the human race, if He is our only hope for the future, then the best thing we have going today is that His Word and Spirit can still be found in the Holy Bible (Ephesians 6:17).

Since we have such a treasure we should learn from it line by line, even word by word if necessary, exactly what the writers intended to communicate (Acts 17:11).

Without this principled approach to understanding the Bible we lose the foundation on which our hope is built, as truth is left to the many various whims of mortal men. Like Pontius Pilate, knowing only the cynical question, "What is truth?" we'll miss the answer, because we attempt to understand it in a way that answers to our own ideas (Proverbs 16:25). Considering the millions doing the same thing with different but equally flawed reasoning, you get a glimpse of the chaos resulting from ignoring the original intent of the inspired writers when interpreting the Bible. With the many seemingly reasonable teachings out there, with the many temptations to destructive behavior (sin), it's very important that we walk closely with our Lord. He alone is able to preserve us to the end (Jude 1:24). The Bible links us arm in arm with Jesus as we walk through this world. He has the answer to any questions we may have. He speaks to us in the Bible, so remember this: if you need answers that is where you find them. These answers haven't changed a bit since they were originally written. ~

Portland Winter Services

The Portland Congregation will host winter services March 2-4. Pastor Earl Kaurala from Michigan will be our guest speaker. We invite everyone to fellowship with us around God's Word. Our schedule for the weekend will be as follows:

Fri, March 2	7:30 p.m.	Evening Service
Sat, March 3	2:00-5:00 p.m.	Bible Study, followed by dinner
	7:30 p.m.	Evening Service
Sun, March 4	11:00 a.m.	Morning Service, followed by lunch
	2:00 p.m.	Afternoon Service

On behalf of the Portland Congregation, Burton Farley, Chairman



Children's Page

Jacob Wrestles

Pastor Phil Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

My wife, Gwen, typically writes the Children's Page. I see her, month after month, at the computer "telling" Bible stories about God's love in Jesus. Today, I cannot do any physical work around the house because I injured my back. It is not a bad injury, but it has stopped me from doing what I was planning today: cutting firewood. Gwen suggested, "Since you can't do anything else today, maybe you can write the Children's Page." So, that's what I will do.

As I sat in my easy chair, resting my sore back, I thought of a man with a sore leg (*Genesis 32:24-32*), a story of the patriarch, Jacob. A patriarch is a man in the Old Testament who was a forefather of a great race of people, the Israelites.

Many years before our story, Jacob lived at home with his twin brother Esau. Esau was the older twin, so when the time came, their father Isaac would give the birthright (a larger portion of his inheritance) and a blessing for a prosperous life to Esau. But Esau sold his birthright to Jacob and Jacob tricked their father into blessing him instead of Esau, so Esau was angry and Jacob left home for fear of his brother. God appeared to Jacob in a dream and repeated the words He had spoken to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac ... *I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.* (*Genesis 28:13-15*)

Jacob spent many years away. During this time, God blessed him with many sons and also large herds, but Jacob wanted to return to his homeland. I am sure he was nervous or scared to meet his brother, Esau, who

was probably still mad about losing the birthright and blessing. Our story takes place on Jacob's trip back home. While Jacob had sent his family a way apart from him, Jacob wrestled with a man through the night until early morning. Many people have wondered who this man might have been. He must have been very strong because he injured Jacob in the thigh; he also had to have the right to bless Jacob as he did, after Jacob pleaded with him for a blessing. This man must have been God! Jacob was afraid to meet his brother who had wanted to kill him and now, in the dark of night, Jacob's faith was failing him for fear of his brother. God had promised that He would bless him and through his seed (a child) all the world would be blessed. God never broke His promise, even though Jacob doubted if God would be faithful. Jacob met up with his brother and all turned out well. God was with him. The two brothers were at peace with each other.

Have you ever doubted? Maybe I should ask myself, "Have I ever doubted?" Do we ever wrestle with God in our minds, wondering if God is still with us and will He keep His promises to us, His children? Yes, we may doubt at times. But remember that God is faithful and is not *slack* (slow to fulfill) *concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* (*2 Peter 3:9*) Remember the promise that was given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the promise that a great, great (many times great) grandchild would bless all the people of the world? That child was Jesus (*Galatians 3:16*), the fulfillment of the promise. So as Jacob was wrestling with God concerning his doubts, God reminded him of that promise as He renamed Jacob. Do you remember what Jacob was renamed (*Genesis 32:28*)? And do you know the remarkable thing about the new name given to Jacob? His new name means "Prince with God." God reminded Jacob that He was still going to fulfill His promise through this royal line, now named Israel. You can also be assured that God will keep His promise to you through His Son Jesus, the "Prince of Peace." Because of Jesus you have a name written in heaven. ~

Whether trials come from within or without we have the Lord's promise: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (*Hebrews 13:5*). "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." (*2 Corinthians 4:8-9*) This is assurance.

"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine!

Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood." (*Fanny J. Crosby*)

Jesus said, ... *In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* (*John 16:33*) With all that the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh throw at us, we learn and are learning that our assurance and confident hope does not depend on the present circumstance or how we feel, only on the Rock of Ages under our feet which cannot be moved. It is in Christ we stand; all other ground is sinking sand. This is confident hope.

Pastor Mark Matson
Pasco, Washington



The Transfiguration of Our Lord

Nicholas Kandoll
Hancock, Michigan

And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves. And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

Mark 9:2-9

Have you ever heard someone talking about a "mountain top" experience, a point in their life where things were really looking up? This phrase is often used in Christian circles today. If the term "mountain top" was named after the Transfiguration, it seems a little misleading. The mountain top experience of the disciples was not one of excitement and peace, but it left them scared and not knowing what to say.

Before Jesus led Peter, James and John up to the mountain, He had just finished telling the disciples of events that were about to transpire: His death and resurrection. *And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. (Mark 8:31)* The disciples, specifically Peter, did not like this idea. Jesus rebukes Peter and tells the disciples to take up their cross and follow Him. In saying this He meant that they, too, must suffer.

Jesus leads the chosen witnesses up the mountain and is transfigured before their eyes. He changes; they

see His heavenly glory. The interesting thing is that His earthly clothing also changes, becoming supernaturally bright white. They also see Jesus speaking with Moses and Elijah. Peter has an idea that I think we would all be on board with. He wants to stay on the mountain, set up some tents and worship. It's amazing how vivid the imagery is. After Peter finishes speaking a dark cloud overshadows them and God says, "This is my beloved Son: Hear Him." Matthew's Gospel says, *And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. (Matthew 17:6)*

It's easy to look at Peter and think we would do better, that we would understand what Jesus was speaking of. We need to understand we would be right there with him. You see, we suffer from the same condition Peter did: sin. We expect Jesus to be healing the sick, raising the dead and casting out demons. We like the Jesus Who's transfigured on the mountain talking to Moses and Elijah. We like the Jesus Who takes care of our needs, Who answers our prayers and gives us what we want. We don't like it when Jesus says He's going to take away our sin by subjecting Himself to the authorities and dying on a cross. We don't like it when He says we must take up our cross and follow Him, that we must suffer. We want prosperity. We much prefer the mountaintop. We want a God Who takes away our pain and sorrow, Who walks beside us in the sand, Who carries us when we can't walk anymore. We want a God Who makes our life better.

It's easy to look at Peter and think we would do better, that we would understand...

Praise God that He doesn't always give us what we want, but He gives us what we need. He promises us a life full of trials and heartache, but also full of grace. God loves us enough to come into our lives and crush our idols, however unpleasant the experience may be for us. Sadly, oftentimes when God removes an idol from our life we blame it on Satan. We blame Satan for taking away our toys or money. God knows what we need, and it isn't toys or money. We need Jesus, the Risen Savior, Who joined us with Him in baptism, Who comes to us in a tangible way in bread and wine, forgiving our sins and strengthening our faith. ~

Without fear of challenge Jesus could say: "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). His claim does not surprise us in the least. What is surprising, however, is that He should then say to His disciples, and so by implication to us: "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). For He does not exhort us to be that light; He plainly says that we are the world's light, whether we bring our illumination out into places where men can see it, or hide it away from them. The divine life planted in us, which itself is so utterly foreign to the world all around it, is a light source designed to illumine to mankind the world's true character by emphasizing through contrast its inherent darkness. Accordingly Jesus goes on: "Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Watchman Nee



Our Blessed Heritage

Savo Apostolic Lutheran Church

Pastor Reino & Janet Maunu
Watertown, South Dakota

Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. (Joel 1:3)

Along the border of the Dakota prairie there is a rich legacy of living Christianity. Faithful pioneers labored and sacrificed so the Word of God might be sown. What they left behind cannot be measured: a simple example of Christian faith and life. Building a church was of foremost importance and one of their first acts after arriving in this country. Many lived in sod houses, but they gave of themselves to have this place to worship, to hear the Word and humbly pray, and with joyful and longing hearts raise their voices in hymns of supplication, assurance and exultation.

This beautiful original house of God, built in 1884, still stands as a reminder of those who gave so unselfishly to have this holy place to worship the heavenly Father in Whom they had such faith and trust. This was a foreign land; they had come from afar (mostly Finland) and faced many hardships. Language and education were barriers, but they worked by the sweat of their brows and lived by their strong faith in God.

There were long services in the afternoon and evening hours. Men of God would come and preach. The precious "Old Book" would come to life, and God would enter this house and walk and talk with those who waited on Him. Those who were troubled in their relationships and/or with God publicly acknowledged their weaknesses and pleaded for human understanding and God's forgiveness. There was a reverent stillness before a service for a faithful Christian who had finished his course on earth. The service would begin with music at its most beautiful—human voices alone—strong voices of men, and clear lovely voices of women.

They came with empty hands but a strong faith. They built this church that their children, and their children's children, might be taught a simple faith in God.

A Brief History

The pioneers who settled here in 1882-83, feeling the need of Divine guidance, held worship services in their homes. Scarcity of space led to mutual agreement that a church building was needed. Matt Hanhela volunteered to relinquish 10 acres in Savo Township for church and cemetery in exchange for the breaking of 50 acres of his land. This met with approval, so 40 men with oxen or horses hitched to plows arrived at Hanhela's home and in one day broke the 50 acres of ground. He in turn deeded the promised 10 acres to the "Finnis Apostolis Lutheran" congregation.

By united effort the foundation for the church was laid June 3, 1884. The necessary materials and labor were by contribution. On June 7, 1884, the first "Finnis Apostolis" Lutheran church was in sufficient form to hold services. Rev.

John Takkinen, who had made one visit in 1883, arrived from Calumet, MI for St. John's Day services June 24, 1884. He was the first clergyman in the new church. Carl Daniels performed the duties of layman. Confirmation instruction began in March 1887. Instructors were Rev. N. P. Starkka, Rev. Carl Daniels, and Henry Nikkila. For several years singing was led by "lukkarit." Sunday School was held regularly. Sunday School Superintendent was Mrs. Delbert Maunu. Julius Johnson, layman, instructed the Bible class.

Records were kept by William Gabrielson in 1883, later by Rev. Starkka. These priceless records contain dates and places of births and baptisms; also confirmations, marriages and deaths. The congregation was legally organized in 1887 and officers were elected. Articles of Incorporation and by-laws were adopted and W. Gabrielson was chosen minister.

The cemetery is west of the church. Walborg Hanhela, wife of Matt Hanhela, and Joshua Walter, young son of Carl Daniels, were the first deceased to be buried there.

On Sunday the people traveled great distances to church, on foot or by horse and buggy; some had made two-wheeled carts and hitched oxen to them. Even the hay rake was at times used for transportation.

This original church was in regular use for 70 years.

Joki Kontri Kirkko (River Country Church)

Members who lived in the James River locality and considered the distance too great to the Savo church decided in 1887 to construct a church building in Portage Township, ND. This congregation was under the same authority as the Savo church. The building was later moved from Portage Township to land deeded to the congregation in Lovell Township. In 1954 the River Country Church disbanded.

Present Day Savo ALC

On May 14, 1944, a meeting was held to decide whether to repair the old church or build a new one. A building fund was begun and continued for several years. It was decided to build a new building in Ada Township on a plot of ground bordering the SD/ND state line, a more central location for both congregations. Work was begun on the new church September 11, 1952. Much of the labor was contributed by members of the congregation.

Dedication services were held April 15, 1954, and were officiated by Pres. of the ALC Council Rev. Andrew Mickelson, Rev. David Romberg and Rev. George Wilson.

Before Rev. Werner Visto was installed, several ministers served, including Rev. Wayne Juntunen, Rev. Carl Niemitalo, Rev. George Wilson and others. Rev. Visto served, with Reino Maunu as assistant, until his death in 1995. Pastor Reino Maunu continues to serve and meet the needs of the present congregation.

**"We thank Thee, God, for saints in times long past,
For fathers brave who laid foundations strong;
These pilgrims true, in living faith held fast,
And blest the wilds with strains of sacred song.
They built their homes, they turned the virgin sod,
Fair temples raised to Thee, Thou Living God.**



Original Savo ALC, built in 1884



Savo ALC, State Line Rd, Frederick SD

"What treasures vast which live from age to age;
(How great our debt! Thou, God, has sought our race!)
Thy Holy Word which glows on hallowed page,
Sweet psalms of hope, the sacraments of grace—
For all, dear Lord, we render thanks to Thee,
Of treasures vast, O may we worthy be." (E.B. Lawson)

Submitted with hearts full of unspeakable gratitude and love to the heavenly Father who has blessed us, our children and our children's children with a great heritage of living Christianity. May we continue to reverently hold fast to the Word so richly given to us on those "hallowed pages." ~



Where Is Our Anguish?

Calvin Matson
Spokane, Washington

Anguish is deep pain and distress. Do we have deep pain and distress for the Church, or are we just "concerned?" Concern is an interest in a need or cause, or even a good program, but it does not bring you to your knees and make you pray and seek God.

When God wanted to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, He did not find a preacher or leader who had an amazing gift or talent. He did not want a man who would have a flare of emotion or a great surge of "concern" and then let the log roll out of the fire and die out. He chose Nehemiah.

When Nehemiah learned of the affliction and reproach of the remnant in Jerusalem along with the wall broken down and the gates burned with fire, he said ... *I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.* (Nehemiah 1:4) When God chose Nehemiah for His restoration, He chose a man who would not say, "It is all ruin;" He chose a man who would weep and pray, who would mourn and confess, who would turn and follow His commands, who would cry out and plead for the Lord to hear the prayers of His servants.

Our prayer life must begin at the depth of our anguish, but we cannot get to the depth of our anguish until we begin to cry out and pray to the Lord; then God will start sharing His heart with us. God's heart is filled with anguish. Does any of this convict you? Are you willing to let Him break you? Do you want to be broken to the point of change?

Let's quit saying we're concerned when we spend our days and nights consumed with television or on Facebook, on the internet or even in Redbook. Let's be real; let's be true. Some of us need to confess we don't have God's heart, we don't have God's burden, we are not where we are supposed to be, we want to be happy, we want life to be easy. Do not be deceived; there is nothing in our flesh or nothing physical that can give us joy. True joy comes from anguish. Let us obey the call of the Holy Spirit and take on the heart of God.

Father, bring us to our knees. Hear our cry; be attentive to our prayer. We confess our arrogance and disobedience. Redeem us by Thy great power and strong hand. Break our hearts with the things that break Your heart, Lord.

He spread a cloud for a covering;
and fire to give light in the night.

Psalm 105:39

The Lord guided and protected His people on their journey through the desert of Sinai. He spread out a cloud as a covering in the daytime and at night gave them fire that provided both light and warmth.

I made a journey through the same desert from Cairo, Egypt, to Tel Aviv, Israel. I learned one thing there that enhanced my appreciation of the wonders of God's provision. In the daytime, the desert is very hot, but at night it becomes bitterly cold. I understood how beautifully God had provided. In the daytime the cloud was a shield that protected them from the heat of the sun's rays, but at night, it became a fire that gave them both light and needed warmth. That is how God guided His people for forty years through the desert.

For us Christians, the cloud that guided the Israelites vividly prefigures the place of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Paul tells us that those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God (Romans 8:14). As God guided Israel through the desert by the cloud, He now guides us through His Word by the Holy Spirit. What the cloud was to Israel, the Holy Spirit is to us. In times of heat, He overshadows us. In times of darkness, He gives us light. When it becomes cold all around us, He gives us supernatural warmth. In all circumstances our environment is tempered by His presence.

Pastor Nick Nagola
South Africa

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HAVE YOU MOVED? Please notify the Book Concern of address changes. We must pay return postage on undelivered mail.

An Experience in India

As most of you are aware, our Foreign Mission Board strives to reach each foreign country that we are involved with at least once a year. Most of the trips deal with conducting seminars for the indigenous pastors of the churches with which we are in contact. In addition, services are conducted in the evening at village churches after the daily seminars are completed.

Eight years ago I was on the mission trip to India where seminars were being conducted at several different locations. It just so happened that I was at one of the seminar locations the evening before they started, and the ministers from our church who would conduct the seminar would not arrive until the next morning. That evening the native pastors were having an evening service. I went to the service early because I enjoy listening to the people singing even though I could not understand their language. Singing before a service is very common in many foreign countries.

Whenever one goes to a foreign country, it is normally expected that you will speak to the people. It may only be a testimony of your faith, a word of encouragement, or perhaps a prayer for the people. In my case, the translator at this location insisted that I expound on the Word. I selected a well-known text from Matthew 13 on the Parable of the Sower. Not being a minister, I was quite nervous and prayed that the listeners would be able to understand my message. There were perhaps 10 pastors in attendance.

After I finished, the translator, who was a minister, thanked me profusely. He told me that he was confused about the text in *Matthew 13:8: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.* He had been wondering "what he must do (what works he should do) to bring his fruits from the sixtyfold point (where he thought he was) to a hundredfold." My clarification of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers was very enlightening to him.

Why have I related this incident? It shows the typical need of many believers in foreign countries to better understand the Word of God and the importance of the work of the Foreign Mission.

Alvar Helmes
Battle Ground, Washington

T rue faith rests upon the character of God and asks no further proof than the moral perfections of the One who cannot lie. It is enough that God said it, and if the statement should contradict every one of the five senses and all the conclusions of logic as well, still the believer continues to believe. "Let God be true, but every man a liar," is the language of true faith. Heaven approves such faith because it rises above mere proofs and rests in the bosom of God.

A. W. Tozer

Help! Help!

We need hundreds—yes, hundreds—of you to switch to the electronic *Christian Monthly*. Our reasons for moving to online access were multiple:

1—to reduce costs: Current expenses for printing/mailing hard copies are more than triple the price of a postal subscription, which has not changed in nearly 18 years. The cost for printing full color is not substantially different than black and white, but this cost will decrease as we print/mail fewer copies.

2—to reach a larger audience: Electronic media, not paper and ink, are the younger generation's communication tools. To appeal to them, we must first reach them. Tell someone about our website and Facebook page. Also, more and more people in foreign countries, who read the *Christian Monthly*, have internet access.

3—to offer an archived, searchable index: As the database grows, this will become an increasingly valuable tool.

4—to allow those who use the internet the opportunity to subsidize those who are unable to afford a subscription or do not have internet: Your donation will help pay for those who cannot receive the *Christian Monthly* electronically. Without your generous financial support, this ministry cannot continue.

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Lois Matson, Editor