



March 2017

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

*To love means loving the unlovable. To forgive means pardoning the unforgiveable. Faith means believing the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless.—G.K. Chesterton*

**T**he intersection of a vertical pole/stake and a horizontal crossbar on the Cross of Christ reveals its earthshaking, far-reaching significance. This intersection of two pieces of lumber reminds us of the cosmic collision at the crossroads of **the vertical love of God and the horizontal hatred of our world.**

The Prince of Peace came down from the eternity of the kingdom of heaven and responded to human hatred and violence with non-violence—he returned love for hatred. *The Cross of Christ stands as an eternal memorial of a head-on collision at the intersection of the vertical power of God's love with the horizontal love of power.*

Jesus died on a Roman cross—Rome was, at the time, the ultimate symbol of power on this planet earth. Rome brutally enforced its will and maintained its authority by crushing all adversaries and silencing all voices that dared to dissent. Crucifixion was the most painful, humiliating and shameful form of torture—an effective display of power that sowed fear in the hearts and souls of any who would dare to get in the way of Rome.

When they killed Jesus, all who were part of the tyrannical power of Rome (not to mention authoritarian religion) thought they had won! When the vertical power of God's love intersected with horizontal love of power it seemed, for all intents and purposes, that violence, hatred and lust for power triumphed in this cosmic collision! Initially, when Jesus fully incarnated the fullness of God's love on his Cross, it seemed that he was a loser. Perceived as it was, from *our human horizontal dimension*, no one who witnessed Jesus on his Cross would have described him as the victor!

Anyone watching the agony, pain and shame of his Cross had to perceive Jesus as a loser! Bystanders must have concluded that the Cross was a disgraceful and ignominious display of the weakness and powerlessness of Jesus. How little did they know!

We humans often make fun of and ridicule values and beliefs that differ from our own. If we don't understand something, then we tend to mock it, assuming that our perceptions and knowledge will forever stand unchallenged. The Cross of Christ was such a humiliating spectacle that those watching could only resort to nervous derision and laughter:

*The people stood there staring at Jesus, and the ringleaders made faces, taunting, "He saved others. Let's see him save himself! The Messiah of God—ha! The Chosen—ha! The soldiers also came up and poked fun at him, making a game of it. They toasted him with sour wine: "So you're the King of the Jews! Save yourself!" Printed over him was a sign: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. (Luke 23:35-38, The Message)*

The unseen reality of all the cosmic forces being unleashed at the Cross is astonishing and

amazing. The true significance of the Cross was not realized or understood by anyone who witnessed it then, and there is still much confusion about its meaning, even within Christendom at large.

Sadly, many are taught that the significance of the Cross of Christ was that God was pouring out his wrath on his Son, because the Father's justice and holiness had to be vindicated. Many within Christendom believe that God the Father was so outraged with the sins of humanity he would not have been satisfied unless all human life was obliterated, but Jesus stepped in as the substitute for all humanity, taking the beating and torture and humiliation and shame the Father would have rained down on us. So the Cross of Christ was God the Father torturing and killing God the Son, instead of you and me!

- But a collision of the vertical power of God's "wrath" with the horizontal crossbar of the Son's incarnate revelation as a human being was a divine impossibility—Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God—thus the Father could not, by definition, have killed Jesus!

- If Father God could only be "satisfied" by innocent blood that would calm his "wrath" then why didn't he "let" Herod kill Jesus just after he was born?

- If Father God cannot bear the presence of sin and sinners then why did Jesus, God in the flesh who came to fully reveal the Father, spend so much time with the lowest of the low, the sick, diseased, enslaved and addicted of his day?

- When you read the Gospels, it is clear that Jesus was forgiving people all the time—if the Father can't forgive anyone unless his holiness is vindicated and his wrath is satisfied, and since Jesus **was and is** God then what was Jesus doing?

*The Cross of Christ is about the vertical love of the One God* being met with the hatred, bloodshed and violence of the horizontal world of humanity. The Cross of Christ is when horizontal human hatred poured out its wrath on the divine, vertical love of God, and crucified God in the flesh.

But far from losing this cosmic confrontation, the Cross of Christ stands supreme as the once-and-for-all historic event when God rejected and reversed human violence and hatred. The love of God turned the other cheek on the Cross—Jesus drew out and ingested all the dirt and filth of humanity and absorbed it into his love. The Cross of Christ was when the power of God's love, a divine lightning bolt from above, shattered the brutality of hatred and violence, winning this titanic cosmic collision.

**But from our human vantage point the Cross seems like a victory for the greater power of human hatred over the power of God's love! Therein lies the great divine irony of the Cross—the Cross of Christ is when the power of God's love non-violently overcame the human love of power.** The Cross of Christ is the critical intersection when God's love clashed with human hatred, and in the person of Jesus, transformed and redeemed hatred and violence with non-violence. Jesus willingly accepted all human hatred and violence, without responding in kind, and in so doing the power of God's love overcame the human love of power.

- If the Cross of Christ represents God's wrath being poured out, then how is his love superior to human hatred and violence?

- If God the Father had met the violence of human hatred with an outpouring of his own retributive, vengeful, raw power, then our God is no different than the pagan gods who are believed to rule by brute force and who react in punitive anger when they are displeased.

God is not hate. God is love. The power of God's love overcame the human love of power on the Cross of Christ.

Thus, in our practical, everyday lives the Cross of Christ assures us that God is present and working in our world even when our lives are falling apart—even when we are discovering that we are powerless and we cannot overcome the odds stacked against us. The Cross of Christ is Jesus meeting us in the midst of our own shame and humiliation—of depression, of abandonment, of disease, of envy, of lust, of hatred and greed.

The Cross of Christ enables and empowers us to **walk in the light, rather than in darkness—to be transformed from our weakness by the power of God—to embrace the grace of God that conquers our guilt and shame—and to exchange our past failures for hope in Christ.**

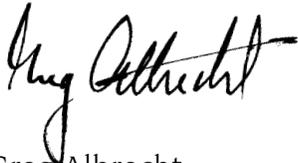
The Cross of Christ stands as the crowning, never-to-be surpassed monument to the power of God's love—when Jesus, out of his love for us, gave us the ultimate gift—himself. The Cross of Christ is *the vertical love of God meeting the hatred of our horizontal world—and triumphing over it.*

The Cross of Christ is the presence of Jesus in the most ugly, foul and reprehensible evils that will ever occur in the horizontal dimension experienced on our planet earth, taking on his shoulders all of the perversion and corruption that mankind has ever or will ever generate—and letting it all be swallowed up in his death on his Cross.

All the corruption and evil of our entire world—past, present and future—is on the Cross of Christ. The Cross of Christ is the love of God being fully and ultimately demonstrated and revealed as it is irrevocably and deeply intertwined with suffering and sacrifice.

Join me and all our Friends and Partners around this world in grateful thanksgiving for the Cross of Christ—the greatest demonstration of the greatest love—when **the power of God's love overcame the human love of power**. And thank you for joining forces with us as we continue to proclaim that God is love, not hate—forgiveness, not retribution and vengeance.

In Jesus' Precious Name,



Greg Albrecht

President, Plain Truth Ministries

Here are two notes from folks who have been blessed by the ministry of CWR/PTM, which you help to support with your prayers and donations. THANK YOU!

*The New PT and CWR magazines are great! I am enjoying the encouraging and inspiring reading.—Nevada*

*CWR/PTM is very much needed in today's world. I find your ministry extremely helpful in telling us about the real Jesus, rather than religion's version of Jesus. I am thankful for the inspiring and uplifting messages you send each month and I pray for you daily. Thanks and may God bless you always.—North Carolina*

## CWR/PTM Prayer List—March 2017

These requests for prayer represent just a few of the thousands we receive and pray for. We invite you to join us in praying for these and the others that space does not permit us to include here. Thanks for joining with us as a CWR/PTM Prayer Partner.

*I'm experiencing ongoing stage-4 lung cancer and my breast cancer has returned for the third time.—California*

*A dear friend who will soon be 80 has been suffering with a hernia for several years. He is also diabetic and suffers from IBS. I request prayers on his behalf.—Texas*

*Thank God and thank you all for your prayers for me. The doctor said that I am free from of my cancer.—Minnesota*

*Please pray for my daughter who is having back surgery to relieve her severe pain.—Wisconsin*

*I have been listening to and reading about God's love and grace. I understand it and appreciate it, but somehow I really cannot experience it to its fullness. I still have a lot of anxiety to deal with as a result of false teachings from many years back. Please pray for me that the love and grace of God will be a reality for me in my life.—Sweden*

*Please pray for me—I am having eye surgery so that I will see better.—South Carolina*

*Please pray for my daughter-in-law. She has a head concussion and is in constant pain.—Minnesota*

*God blessed me with a successful cancer surgery and I am now at home healing. It's painful but I know as each day goes by I get better. Please pray that God will allow me to sell a piece of land so I can pay these hospital bills.—Delaware*

*Please pray for an older widow to have a better relationship with her daughter so they can help each other.— Maryland*

*Please pray for my health to improve—I have dizzy spells with lightheadedness.—Florida*

*Pray for my niece who has had a lonely life without her biological mother who rejected her because of differences with her husband. She is now living by herself with a child she recently gave birth to.—Texas*

*I lost my husband of 65 years to cancer. I am grieving and having a lot of pain in my stomach. Please pray.—Minnesota*

*My daughter is in the middle of a very ugly divorce from a man who is vicious and cruel. Please pray for them.—Illinois*

*Please keep praying for my son, so he will come back to the Lord.—California*

*Please pray that I will be able to maintain my composure in the midst many challenges.—Texas*

*I pray for God's peace to strengthen and bring comfort to all those who are suffering.—North Carolina*

*Please pray for my family. We're going through a rough time right now and we need God's help.—Colorado*

*My daughter desperately needs a place to live. Please keep her in your prayers. Thank you!—Mississippi*

*Please pray for my wife. She has swelling and pain in her feet and legs.—Alaska*

*Pray for my husband's relief and healing from debilitating chronic lower back, neck and shoulder pain.—Florida*

*Please pray for my sister as she is still having trouble walking because her legs and ankles are swollen.—Minnesota*

*I am requesting your prayers that my husband will get a job soon. Thank you!—California*

*Please pray for my healing. In addition to sclerosis and arthritis, I also developed Hepatitis C from a blood transfusion that I had in the past. Thank you for your prayers.—Texas*

Dear God: We bring you many requests and needs. You know each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for your love and grace, we pray in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—Amen.