



January 2019

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

On Christmas Eve 1939, King George VI of England gave a BBC radio broadcast to the British Empire heard around the world. During his message he quoted the preamble to a poem given to him by his daughter, Princess Elizabeth, written by Minnie Louise Haskins (1875-1957). Then titled “God Knows” the poem later became known as “The Gate of the Year.”

Upon the death of King George VI in 1952, Princess Elizabeth became Queen of England—as I write she is the longest living monarch in the world. She had “The Gate of the Year” engraved on brass plaques at Windsor Castle, where her father is interred. In 2002, when her mother, the Queen Mother, died, Queen Elizabeth had these words read at her funeral.

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: “Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”

And he replied: “Go out into the darkness and put your hand in the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.”

So I went forth, and finding the hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And he led me toward the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

When King George VI quoted these words in his 1939 Christmas Eve radio broadcast, Great Britain was one of the most powerful nations on earth—yet it was at war with the fascist totalitarian state of Nazi Germany and its leader, Adolph Hitler. The Nazi military machine was marching across Europe, spreading chaos, hatred and terror. The encouraging words of “The Gate of the Year” were sorely needed in 1939 for a nation and empire staggered by fear and loathing of Hitler. These thoughts continue to be inspiring for us as we stand at *The Gate of the New Year* of 2019.

God is our only hope in the face of hatred, terrorism and fear mongering. God alone is our fortress in whom we may safely absolutely trust and find refuge from the twin scourges of our day and age: 1) the *beast of totalitarian governments and politicians*, and 2) the *false prophets of authoritarian, Christ-less religion*. God, in Christ, will light our path during this New Year of 2019 and direct our steps in the unknown days ahead of us.

We approach this New Year knowing that God came in the person of Jesus to be one of us, and that he is now and forever with us. Jesus is the incarnated love of God—he is the revelation of the fullness of the mercy and grace of God. Jesus proclaims I AM *the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life* (John 8:12). Jesus opens our eyes to see and perceive him, for our natural eyes cannot see the LIGHT OF THE WORLD. When we accept the outstretched hand of God, he embraces us and the Light of Jesus provides illumination for our path forward—giving us hope for the days ahead. He will never leave or abandon us.

As we approach this New Year the words of Isaiah 9:2 lift us and fill us with hope:

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light...

Corrie Ten Boom was a Dutch Christian imprisoned in Ravensbruck, a Nazi prison camp, and although her sister was killed in the camp, Corrie survived. After World War 2, Corrie Ten Boom traveled around the world, sharing the story of God's love in her life. To illustrate God's love Corrie would often display a piece of cloth with a crown embroidered on it. She would hold up the cloth before her audience so that they could see the threads that, when sewn/interwoven together, formed a beautiful crown. Then she would flip the cloth so that her audience could see the tangled and confusing underside, which was an apt description of the depression of her dark and desperate times in Ravensbruck. She would then speak of how limited our human perspective of God's love is, and how our human limitations prevent us from seeing the pattern God uses to weave a beautiful story into our lives.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light...

Years ago I met the gifted and celebrated French author, Dominique LaPierre, in his home in Paris. Though he had written many best sellers, I was interested at the time in his most recent novel, *City of Joy* (published in 1985), later turned into a movie by the same name. In the movie, *City of Joy*, actor Patrick Swayze plays a medical student confronted with overwhelming poverty in modern India. In Hollywood's version of *City of Joy* a woman confronts the young medical student with one of three choices: **You can run. You can watch. Or you can count on getting involved with compassionate response.**

Those same three choices are available to you and me as we stand at *The Gate of the New Year*.

- We are a small band of brothers and sisters committed to Jesus—we are Christ-followers who proclaim *faith alone, grace alone and Christ alone*.
- We pool our resources and collectively, together, we make a real and lasting difference in the lives of men and women all over this world.
- We pass on the grace of God, which has been lavished on us.
- We share the goodness of God to a world in such desperate need, enslaved with totalitarian religion as surely as Hitler enslaved, terrorized, murdered and destroyed all who stood in his path. We proclaim freedom in Christ to religious captives, passing on the grace of God to all we can.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light...

My fellow Christ-followers, my brothers and sisters in Christ: **We can run. We can watch. OR we can continue to be involved with compassionate response in this ongoing ministry of CWR/PTM.**

This New Year may find you or a loved one battling a terminal disease. As you face *The Gate of the New Year* you may be grieving a spouse or parent you lost this past year. I know of many of your battles, through personal contact, on the phone, via email and letters and the prayer requests you share with us. My prayers are with you. Many of you are facing trials of finances and family—struggles with family and relationships.

There are times when *we not only walk in darkness, we battle through the darkness of nightmares and regrets*. Though we have embraced freedom in Christ there are times when we wake up in the middle of the night/early morning, devastated with doubt, contending with shame and guilt. Could God have really forgiven those sordid secrets we hope no one ever discovers?

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light...

Believe it or not, God has forgiven all of everything—all your yesterdays and all of mine. Believe it or not, God loves you and me because of his goodness, not because of our own (or the lack thereof).

God stands at *The Gate of the New Year*, opening his arms to us with his extravagant, unbelievable, over-the-top, too-good-to-be-true love, welcoming home all prodigals, including you and me.

God stands at *The Gate of the New Year*, welcoming us into his grace whereby we rest, with blessed assurance, in Christ, who has done, is doing and will do all that we can never do. The LIGHT of Jesus has exploded out of the tomb of darkness and death, and he now lives his risen life and light in us!

So let us *go out into the darkness and put our hands in the hand of God*. Let us walk in the LIGHT OF JESUS, who illuminates our path. Let us resolve, as Christ-followers, at *The Gate of this New Year*, that our collective ministry will continue to pass on the grace of God he has given us, so that we reflect the light of Jesus to as many as we can.

At this *Gate of the New Year* WE CAN RESPOND ONE OF THREE WAYS:

1) We can run away and hide.

2) We can watch what others do.

3) OR...we can continue to follow Jesus, deeply committed in our collective mission to reach out to people walking in darkness, reflecting the light of Jesus, directing them to him, as we pass on the grace of God that has been given to us.

I am ready to enter this New Year with you, in faith, filled with hope, following Jesus, who is our Light. Thank you for joining me as we move forward together into this New Year.

Your brother in Christ,



Greg Albrecht

President, Plain Truth Ministries

PS. We share this note of thanks with you, and **THANK YOU** for your prayers and faithful donations, which help us continue to provide many helpful resources to people around the world.

The Plain Truth has been with me virtually all my life, and I am 63 years old. We give thanks as God leads us in His truth.—Texas

CWR/PTM Prayer List—January 2019

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.

Please pray for me. I suffer from heart fibrosis and high blood pressure.—New York

I have had several kidney stone attacks the past few months. I would appreciate your prayers.—Georgia

Please pray for me. I'm 96 years old and I've just been hospitalized with a broken hip due to a fall.—Pennsylvania

Please pray that I will be granted more employment opportunities.—Arizona

Thank you so much for all your prayers. Even though it has been a rough year, I'm feeling so much better. I thank God for His love and mercy each day.—Illinois

I owed three different companies thousands of dollars; a debt that I couldn't pay. Praise God for His goodness as these debts were cancelled.—Missouri

Please pray for my 12-year-old grandson. The condition of one of his kidneys required a stent to be inserted. His kidney may have to be removed.—Louisiana

Please pray for our friend who had a massive stroke; my sister who has Parkinson's; my cousin who has congestive heart failure; and our friend who has cancer.—Oregon

Please pray that my grandson finds a job soon and that my daughter's job either improves or that she will be able to find a better job.—Massachusetts

Please pray for my wife and me—we suffer many health problems including anxiety and depression. Please pray for comfort, relief and healing so we can sleep better.—Tennessee

Please pray for my two grandsons who are slowly losing their eyesight.—Arizona

Pray for my two cousins—one has prostate cancer and is undergoing chemo. The other had kidney cancer and a kidney was removed, but doctors found cancer in the muscles around it.—Louisiana

Please pray for my daughter; she has many doubts and fears about God.—Kentucky

Thank you for all your prayers. My wife's cancer has stabilized. Her PET scans have been positive but she also suffers from chronic bronchitis.—New York

Please pray for my son who has been very ill with aplastic anemia. So far his treatment is not working.—Pennsylvania

Please pray for my sister who lives alone and suffers with emotional problems and also for my sister-in-law who suffers from bladder infections and is in a lot of pain.—New York

Please pray that God will heal me of my liver disease and help me to stay positive so that I'm able to encourage others in my family.—North Carolina

Please pray for my husband who is in pain and very weak because of a deteriorating disc in his back. He is also anemic. It's getting very hard for me to take care of him.—Alabama

Please pray for my great grandson who is unemployed and homeless.—Louisiana

Our Father in Heaven: We thank you for your grace, mercy and love. You love each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our suffering servant who heals us, in whose name we pray—Amen.