



February 2020

Dear CWR/PTM Friends and Partners,

Caterpillars are part of the life cycle of a butterfly. The humble, worm-like caterpillar that emerges from a butterfly egg has a voracious appetite—starting with eating the leaf on which it is laid. At that stage of life caterpillars eat and eat and get bigger and fatter all the time (unfortunately, I personally can relate to this stage). Some caterpillars eat so much that they grow 100 times their original size (thankfully, few of us relate to that prodigious weight gain!).

When it is done growing a caterpillar forms itself into a pupa/chrysalis—a stage of life in which the caterpillar seems to be resting and doing nothing. That's the stage grade-school children often watch during science class in school. It normally takes several weeks, depending on the climate, for the complete transformation from a creepy, crawly caterpillar to a staggeringly beautiful butterfly.

The word *metamorphosis* describes this remarkable **transformation** from ordinary to extraordinary. While the caterpillar is undergoing a metamorphosis, its old body parts are changing—cells that were present in the original caterpillar become new tissue, organs, antennae and of course wings. Thus the earth bound, overweight worm-like caterpillar is transformed into a radiant, glorious and elegant butterfly that effortlessly glides and soars far and wide.

While we stare in amazement at those beautiful butterflies, we should also give some thought to what happens between the caterpillar stage and the butterfly stage in the life cycle of a butterfly. When the caterpillar enters the pupa/chrysalis stage it is undergoing a complete change from crawling to flying, *from an old life to a new life*. It is a physical *metamorphosis*.

You know where I am going with this illustration, don't you? A **butterfly is a metaphor of resurrected spiritual life because it surrenders its former existence in order to be born to a new life**. Technically, the caterpillar doesn't die, and neither do we literally die, before we are spiritually **transformed**. But we do surrender all—we are given the divine riches of resurrection life when we set aside our creepy, crawly caterpillar life and embrace the glorious grace of God.

Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it (Matthew 10:38-39).

God invites us to be **transformed**—he will perform a *metamorphosis* in our lives, so that we are changed from mortality to immortality—from the boundaries of time and space to the endless universe of eternity with God.

Each one of us is like a caterpillar, beginning as an egg laid on the leaf of this world—invited to then take part (if we accept the invitation) in a grand transformation so that we become a new creation in Christ. Paul explains our metamorphosis taking place, by the grace, mercy and love of God, in and through Jesus, our risen Lord, so that *"the old has gone, the new has come!"* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

By God's grace, our caterpillar days are over! We have been given wings and we soar with our risen Lord!

Jesus has conquered death and the grave—something we, apart from God, can never do. Jesus

rose triumphant over death, gloriously emerging from the death and dark limitations of his tomb. Because he has done what you and I can never do, we are invited to accept God's invitation to live in his grace and love, to spiritually die to our desires and goals (Galatians 2:20) so we might live in Jesus and he in us.

The gospel proclaims the good news of our *spiritual metamorphosis* by the grace of God so that we are **transformed**—as caterpillars are transfigured into butterflies. Our ultimate hope is Jesus, who, when we die in and with him, resurrects us to new life—he becomes our risen Lord.

God's love loves without expectation of return in kind. Jesus gave and extended God's love on his cross with no guarantee that we would reciprocate his love. **Everyone knows that dying on a cross is unsafe—but that's exactly what Jesus did.**

When we receive God's love and embrace his grace we are *converted* from a creepy, crawly worm-like caterpillar existence to a glorious life in Christ, free in Christ, *spiritually transformed* like a butterfly, in and through Jesus, by the grace of God. The butterfly-like resurrection we are given, by the grace of God and because of our crucified Lord, is not determined or measured by our calculations or careful planning. Our *transformation* from a caterpillar to a butterfly is a miracle—it is not accomplished by what we earn or deserve.

Sadly, even though the miraculous gospel of Jesus clearly articulates our spiritual *transformation*, we are besieged by legalistic teaching and preaching. This legalistic teaching and preaching overwhelms Christendom and overshadows the love and grace of God. Legalistic teaching and preaching is bad news, not good news, as Paul says in Galatians 1:7, this un-Christ-like message “is really no gospel at all.”

This legalistic, un-Christ-like gospel of teaching and preaching insists humans can change whatever they want to change. In the name of Christ preachers and churches fill people with positive thinking, so that some church services end up being one big “rah-rah” session of hot air.

In the name of Jesus people are told that the sky is the limit and that they can be anything they want. People think they are hearing the gospel when they are urged to work harder and do more so that they can achieve their potential.

Caterpillars don't work hard so that they deserve to become butterflies!

We do not have the power to spiritually fix and **transform** ourselves. We cannot recreate ourselves. We do not have the innate power to become a new creation in Christ. Our spiritual **conversion** is the work of God alone, who miraculously **transforms** you and me, like a caterpillar, from the inside out.

This spiritual *metamorphosis* is from a self-absorbed and self-centered life so that the mind of Christ lives in us (Philippians 2:5). When we are new men and women in Christ we live *from, out of* and *because of* him, serving others in his name, rather than living simply to prolong our earthly existence.

After a breathtaking, inspiring explanation of the “greater glory of the new covenant”—in which Paul contrasts the ministry of the Spirit with the ministry engraved on letters in stone that brought death—Paul concludes the third chapter of 2 Corinthians like this:

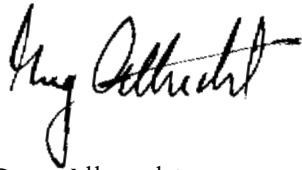
And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed in his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).

By the grace of God we are all, like caterpillars, miraculously *transformed* into the ever-increasing glory of butterfly-like resurrected life—from a worm-like creepy, crawly existence in the muck and mire of this planet earth, limited and constrained by time and space, into the glorious eternal life in Christ our Lord. This is our spiritual *metamorphosis*—accomplished miraculously by the grace of God.

We are spiritually *transformed* now—so that we live in and by and through Jesus, given eternal life now. But we are still encased in this human body of pain, heartache, limitations and flaws—we await, with the hope of our own resurrection, that final and consummate transformation of our mortal bodies to immortal bodies, the gift of *transformed* bodies that will never age, wear out or break down. Then we will forever soar like eagles...and butterflies! Then we will live eternally with God, when God brings his new heavens and new earth to this earth (Revelation 21-22).

What an astonishing and amazing future God has in store for each and every one of us. Be encouraged, inspired and uplifted, my dear friends...and continue with us and your brothers and sisters around this world who are also Partner and Friends of CWR/PTM. *Do not be weary in well doing* but continue in prayer and support as we, in the name of Jesus, share the gospel of Jesus Christ around this world.

Your brother in Christ,



Greg Albrecht

President, Plain Truth Ministries

P.S. Here are a few notes of thanks from people around the world who have been blessed and changed by the ministry of PTM. Thank you for all you do to support this ongoing work.

PTM is one of the great assets and blessings of our retirement. We struggled away for many decades, both spiritually and physically. Now, my wife and I are enjoying our retirement partly because we have left the exhausting, never-ending work we experienced in our church and in my career. You have helped us to know rest in Christ!—Alberta Canada

Our prayers are with all of you at CWR/PTM. Thank you so much for all the reading material you send. God bless all the hard work you do and to reach so many people with the truly good news of God's grace.—Louisiana

As a reader, listener and supporter of CWR/PTM, I must tell you I take enormous satisfaction in all these years I have been part of your work. You have taught me, helping me to grow in Christ, and in turn I have helped you help others. Thanks for all that you do.—Scotland

CWR/PTM Prayer List—February 2020

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 as I have rheumatoid arthritis. My neck stays swollen and my shoulders sound like they are breaking when I move my arms. I am alone since my husband recently died.—Alabama

Please pray for God's healing for my son-in-law who has cancer.—West Virginia

Please pray about a painful sore on my body that needs healing; also my neck pain.—South Carolina

I have arthritis on the ankle of my left foot and other issues. I fell four times, and my nerves got damaged.—Mississippi

Please pray for everyone who is struggling with anxiety and depression, that they may find out with the help of the Holy Spirit what they can do to help themselves and to accept help from others.—Tennessee

My restored eyesight is a huge blessing. I just read and read and read! I love it. I love all of you and continue to know that I'm involved in the most important work on earth—CWR/PTM!—California

Please pray for me and my family. I pray for the work of CWR/PTM. May God bless all of you daily.—Virginia

Thank you for all your much-appreciated work. I'm always encouraged by you in these times of sorrow.—Washington

Please pray for the cure of the ocular migraines that I'm having more frequently.—New York

Please pray for my brother, who is having trouble with being disoriented and also has memory problems.—Ohio

Please continue to pray for God's intervention for my sister who is losing her eyesight.—Mississippi

I'm under incredible stress—hit on all sides by work demands and family sickness and a drunken neighbor who won't leave me alone. Please keep me in your prayers.—Wisconsin

Please pray for my husband as he had brain surgery and has been in the hospital now for two months. He needs healing so he can come home.—Oregon

I am going through probate to inherit my family's occupied four-plex. I also have a problem tenant whom I need to remove. Please pray for wisdom and the finances to complete this process.—California

Please pray for my sister, who is 84, blind and living mostly alone. She is discouraged with her life.—Colorado

Thanks for your prayers for my pastor's wife who had successful cancer surgery. She requires no more treatments and is now cancer free.—Pennsylvania

Please pray for me—I have a paraganglion tumor in my neck. It's very large and may cause a stroke or even death. I am waiting to see a surgeon.—Missouri

Please pray for my nephew who was in an accident and left a quadriplegic.—Ohio

Please pray for healing from my heart and kidney troubles. Thanks for all your prayers.—New York

Please pray for my son (on dialysis for kidney problems) and for my daughter who has lung cancer.—Nevada

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.