



September 2020

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

I've asked Ed Dunn to write this month's letter. Some ten-plus years ago Ed's initial involvement with Plain Truth Ministries started with his service as a Board Member. For years he served as an advisor regarding strategic planning and now, for well over a year, he has joined forces with us as a staff member in our collective, ongoing media ministry. Ed wears many hats, working in our fulfillment center, with our electronic and digital systems, with editorial and mission planning, and contributing to our blog and magazines. He is in the process of publishing his own book, titled "Peripheral: The Journey from Partial to Perfect Sight"—a memoir of his experiences and reflections over three-plus decades with his rare eyesight disorder (he alludes to this challenge in his remarks that follow). It has been a treat for me to know Ed for over 30 years. With a nod to the historic introduction of Johnny Carson by his friend Ed McMahon...here's Ed! —Greg Albrecht

It is with great excitement and a deep sense of appreciation that I write this letter to you. Over the past decade, I've experienced the pure pleasure of serving all of you, much loved and deeply appreciated CWR/PTM Friends and Partners, along with Greg and the entire Board of Directors. In addition, I've been privileged to assist Greg and the CWR/PTM team in both strategic and operational planning. My long relationship with Greg and the entire team has been nothing short of a gift.

Not long ago, I stood in a long line in front of a ticket counter at a multiplex-type movie theatre. This was of course a time when standing in line to buy tickets for a movie was part of life, before the restrictions we are experiencing caused by COVID-19. I was there to see whatever big block-buster movie had just been released for which tickets were in high demand and short supply. As I stepped forward toward the counter, I was greeted by a youthful and cheerful uniformed movie theatre attendant:

"Good afternoon, Sir. Welcome to our theatres. May I please see your driver's license or other form of identification?" As I reached for my wallet, I had to admit the request seemed a little odd to me.

"Ah, sure," I said with a curious smile. "Here you go."

"Thank you, Sir," she said as she took my ID card. "Great! It looks as if your movie this afternoon will be half-price."

"Half-price?" I asked with a surprised confusion. "Why would my movie be half-price this afternoon?"

"Why, you're a Senior now, Sir." Her words seemed to hang in the air.

"I'm a what? A Senior? How is *that* possible?" I'd just turned 50 and had given no thought to that fact actually meaning anything at the ticket counter. "I'm sorry, *Fifty* is the age at which you begin to classify a guest as a Senior in this establishment?" I was more than a little taken back.

“Why yes, Sir. You are a Senior now,” she announced with a touch too much youthful perk. “Please consider it a gift!” Somewhat confused and not a little crestfallen, I took my movie ticket and receipt stub from her hand and shuffled off toward my movie theatre. I was lost in thought.

Please Consider It A Gift

Please consider it a gift? What...the *gift* of aging? *Really?! Although I knew well the sweet, youthful, uniformed, movie theatre attendant was referring to the gift of a half-priced movie ticket, I was stuck on the reality of my new classification. How could I consider that a gift?*

Some time has passed since the exchange between us. Now that I’ve managed to turn a hard corner on reaching the age of 50, hopefully with some small amount of grace, I’ve been thinking more than ever about the reality of aging. Specifically, I’ve been thinking about the tension between our physical aging process and the process of renewal and transformation that is a central part of our faith and spiritual lives in Christ Jesus.

Paul writes of the tension between the experience of our physical lives and the reality of our spiritual lives in Christ Jesus. In his writings to the Corinthians he states: “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

The entire context of the passage in which this verse is found (2 Corinthians 4:8-18) speaks to an eternal reality. The verses speak to our ongoing renewal. Paul’s words encourage us to watch as Christ Jesus matures and ultimately transforms us. As he does, we are encouraged to give thanks.

What a gift to consider!

As Christ-followers, it’s so important to remember that our lives are in Christ Jesus and his life resides in us. By his grace, we mature and are transformed from the inside out. We are renewed day by day. Although our physical lives may show the signs of real wear-and-tear, our lives within, our spiritual lives, thrive. **What a gift to consider!**

I am extremely fortunate to have both of my parents still with me. They have lived full lives rich with the gifts of family and strong faith. Both have enjoyed many years of good health free from chronic health issues and prolonged illness. However, both of my parents now find themselves slowing quite considerably.

Now at the age of 53, I live with my own physical challenges. I’ve lived for over three decades with a rare eyesight disorder that has slowly robbed me of my central vision. Although the extent of the disorder is a story for another time, I live with a continual reality of physical limitation.

Even Greg, who has been a father-figure, mentor and friend to me (with his kind introduction above) has to admit with a wry smile that he’s slowed just a touch over the years since we’d first met (all the way back in 1986). Some of that “slowing” Greg has graciously shared with us in his letters.

I’ve watched the physical aging process of those closest to me as I’ve had to watch the same taking place in myself. It’s not always been an easy process to witness. Yet, I’ve also watched the process of renewal and transformation that has taken place in their lives. To see the ever-deepening love, joy and peace, the renewal and maturing in their lives, and by his grace, in my own, has been a pure cause for thanksgiving.

Without a doubt, you've watched the same gift of renewal and transformation take place in your own lives and in the lives of your loved ones. Thanks be to Jesus for that gift! **What a gift to consider!**

One of my favorite authors, Frederick Buechner, speaks of the gifts we are given and privileged to pass on: "the forgiven man starts to become a forgiving man. The healed man to become a healing man, (and) the loved man to become a loving man."

By God's grace, our spiritual renewal takes place day by day. As we live our lives in him, and he lives his life in us, we are transformed spiritually, no matter what physical challenges and limitations we may face. **What a gift to consider!** What a magnificent gift, indeed!

With deepest joy,



Ed Dunn

P.S from Greg: *There are few subjects as near and dear to me, and to so many of you, as that of aging and the spiritual maturity that can come as a result. My friend Ed spoke of watching me, over the many years of our relationship, slow down. Guilty as charged!*

Of necessity slowing down is something that accompanies getting older—but is isn't necessarily a negative—it may even be a positive. Merging from the fast lane of life into a slower lane enables us to see more clearly, with greater perception—not as many details of life fly by, and we have more time to probe and ponder their significance.

We live in a world that seduces us into states of permanent distraction, amusement and entertainment. When we are in a hurry to get nowhere fast, we miss a great deal. So thank you, Ed, for reminding us to slow down and smell the flowers, admire the sunsets and commune with our God—all the while serving others in the name of Jesus!



Greg Albrecht,
President of PTM

P.P.S. Here are a few notes of thanks from folks who are being blessed by the ministry of PTM:

I want to say "thank you" for all you are doing in God's work for all of us here on this earth.—Florida

My prayer is that CWR/PTM will continue the wonderful service you do in the name of our Lord.—Colorado

I've received spiritual help, teaching and encouragement from PTM for well over 20 years. I've been involved in numerous churches and ministries—nothing comes close to PTM! Thank you so much!—Massachusetts

CWR/PTM Prayer List—September 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'm 79 years old, suffering with level 3 kidney disease and neuropathy in my feet and hands. My wife suffers from severe back pain.—Georgia

Please pray for my wife who is having heart issues. May God continue to bless your work.—Quebec, Canada

Please pray for my sister-in-law—she has been diagnosed with Stage 4 pancreatic cancer.—Virginia

Please pray for my wife's arthritis and advancing dementia and for me as her primary caregiver.—California

My sister just recently died. She was 92 years old. Thankfully, God has comforted us.—Minnesota

Please pray for my blood pressure which has been high for years and is creating other health problems.—Ontario, Canada

Please pray for my sister who has heart problems and her kids who are having problems with family members.—Arkansas

Please pray for my wife who has eye problems and osteoporosis.—Louisiana

I need prayers for my upcoming knee surgery as I have heart problems. Thank you for all you do.—Kentucky

I lost my husband several weeks ago and I am in poor health. Please pray that God will give me more strength.—Arizona

Please pray for healing for all those who have fallen ill from the corona virus.—South Carolina

Please pray for God's comfort for a close family member who has recently been widowed.—Minnesota

I have a lot of sinus problems and headaches. Please pray that I will get better soon.—Alabama

Please pray for my eyes. My eyesight is getting very bad. Thanks in advance for praying for me.—Texas

Please keep my husband in your prayers as he is battling pulmonary fibrosis.—Florida

I am still suffering from depression accompanied with PTSD. Please continue to pray for me.—Tennessee

Please pray for my son who had the courage to adopt and financially support four children.—Quebec, Canada

Please pray that religious confusion in this world would be cleared up, including any in ourselves.—Pennsylvania

My mother has been diagnosed with dementia, and it's putting a lot of stress on our family, especially my dad.—Wisconsin

Please pray for our family. My wife has neuroma in her foot and it's very painful. My son still is suffering from various problems from a roll-over accident which wasn't his fault.—Florida

Please pray for my neighbor who is suffering from Parkinson's disease and she has now lost her will to live.—Massachusetts

I want to thank all of you at CWR/PTM for your prayers. God has been very loving, gracious and merciful to me and has taught me many things during my troubles with health.—British Columbia, Canada

Please pray for my sister and her two sons who have heart problems and also for my brother-in-law.—Arkansas

Please pray for my roommate and myself as we both have poor health conditions.—Maryland

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.