



October 2021

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

In 1942 the United States was at war with Japan. Many citizens, and for that matter, our state and federal government, found it hard to distinguish between Japanese-American residents and citizens of the United States and the sovereign nation of Japan, who had launched the infamous surprise attack at Pearl Harbor. Something like 120,000 Japanese Americans were forcibly relocated to internment camps located primarily in the midwestern, southern and western United States.

Carole Doi was born as a third generation Japanese-American while her parents were interned in one of the many camps which were officially named institutions of the War Relocation Authority. In 1971, after she married, Carole gave birth to a little girl she named Kristi. When she was born Kristi's feet were turned inward, with the toes facing each other... a condition known as club feet. *Carole was determined to do whatever was necessary to help her daughter walk normally.* For most of the first year of Kristi's life she had casts on her legs and then Carole purchased corrective shoes which were connected to a brace.

Carole then encouraged her daughter Kristi to use her legs athletically. Kristi decided to become an ice skater, and a doctor agreed that skating would help her strengthen her feet. As Kristi improved her skills and as her love of skating grew, Carole started to do all she could do to give Kristi every opportunity to excel.

Carole made many sacrifices, born out of her love for her daughter, including waking up at 4 am in order to get Kristi to the ice rink for practice. *After 15 years of lessons and hard work on Kristi's part, and boundless giving and selfless service on the part of her mother Carole, Kristi Yamaguchi represented her country in the Olympics.*

In 1992 Carole and Jim Yamaguchi stood as the US flag was hoisted at the 16th Winter Olympics in Albertville, France, and proudly watched their daughter Kristi, born with club feet, receive the gold medal in ladies' singles ice skating. Kristi became the first Asian-American woman to win an Olympic gold medal in large part because her mother self-sacrificially helped her to conquer her handicaps and eventually stand on that victory platform.

Kristi Yamaguchi was given life by her mother Carole, and then, having been given life, as she grew and matured, through the endless love of her mother, Kristi was enabled, empowered and encouraged to overcome. No one would have guessed, hoped or predicted that a little baby girl with club feet would one day become known as the graceful and elegant world champion figure skater she eventually became.

When we are re-born spiritually, we are transformed from the old, former human being, into a transformed new man or woman, in whom Jesus lives his risen life. We experience the spiritual reality Paul describes: *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me* (Galatians 2:20).

As inspiring the story of Carole and Kristi Yamaguchi is, to recast Paul's words, the way in which Carole *loved her daughter Kristi and gave herself for her* is but an imperfect physical example of the spiritual reality we experience by the grace of God.

In our spiritual lives we are first of all given new life, eternal life, by the gift of God the Father. Then, as a child of God, God the Son lives his life within us. *It is Jesus who helps us walk with straight feet. It is Jesus who enables us to conquer obstacles and impediments. It is Jesus who gives us wings like eagles.*

We are spiritually reborn and become new men and women by the grace of God. We live in Christ and he in us because of the self-sacrificial love of God, demonstrated and revealed to us in Jesus, most particularly in and through his cross. As Jesus said, *Because I live, you also will live* (John 14:19).

The miracle of life in Christ, the product of the love, grace, mercy and presence of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit is a spiritual transformation and growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18) far beyond any earthly glory, trophy or medal we might attain. While victory platforms and gold medals can exhibit the work of God—it is far more common to find his work in people and places not humanly revered or applauded.

Jesus had a way of raining on the human parade of success, popularity, fame and fortune. **Jesus rewrote the religious playbook about winning, turning it upside down so that in the spiritual arena losing is winning, and winning is losing.**

Jesus taught us that the Father glories in things the human race considers a failure. Jesus taught us that accepting his invitation to follow him means forsaking our cherished principles and standards and embracing the values of God we naturally avoid at all costs because we see them as counter-productive, upside-down and inside-out.

Jesus lost his life—he self-sacrificially gave his life, for us. We now live in him because he gave himself for us and because he rose triumphantly from his tomb. The loss of Jesus' life on his cross and his subsequent resurrections amounted to the greatest victory ever achieved.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it (Mark 8:35).

This is the life we lead in Christ as we follow him. **Losing our lives for Jesus is the life we live because Jesus lives in us.** This is the life Jesus produces in us as we yield to him, serving others in his name.

The world is filled with hurting people whose feet are not straight, whose lives are filled with impoverishment and oppression. It is within this world that Jesus lives in us, and we become his hands and feet, serving others in his name.

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me (Matthew 25:40).

We need not be perfect specimens in order for Jesus to shine his Light in and through us. We may have spiritual club feet—we may be crippled or diseased or handicapped in some way. We may follow Jesus as we push a walker in front of us. We do not serve others in Jesus' name because we are spiritual Supermen or Superwomen—we serve others in Jesus' name because he lives in us. In fact, being fully aware of our needs, flaws and failures may allow us to more readily embrace the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Paul said that the grace of God compelled him to boast of his weaknesses: *Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong* (2 Corinthians 12:9-10, my emphasis).

There is a recurring and unmistakable theme throughout the Bible which glorifies God's work as being accomplished in the least, lost and broken. **Abraham and Sarah** were too old to have children. We read of **Joseph** who rose from the dungeons of Egypt as a slave and a prisoner to high places in government. The Bible tells us **Moses** was afflicted with stuttering, and we read of **David** being chosen instead of his more impressive brothers. **Rahab**, who made her living by selling her body, helped the Israelites capture and conquer the city of Jericho. **Mary**, the mother of God the Son, was but an unmarried teenage girl. The pattern is clear.

The strength, beauty, love, grace and mercy of God is complete as we experience his peace, as we acknowledge our need of him and dependence on him—even and perhaps especially is this so in the midst of our failure and remorse.

It is not wrong to succeed—we do not cease being Christ-followers if and when we are healthy and prosperous, but our health and prosperity, or lack thereof do not define our faith nor are they priorities for God. Jesus called the weary and heavy-laden to rest in him—the call is not to rest in, luxuriate in and enjoy the fruits of our hard work, but the call is to rest in him, whether or not we enjoy success as physically defined.

The way up (to and toward God, his heaven and his will) is often down (as failing and falling and being “down” is physically and materially defined). The way forward, following Christ toward his kingdom, is through physical sufferings. **Following the Jesus Way means serving others**, losing ourselves in serving others in the name of Jesus. Following Jesus means that losing is winning and winning is losing.

Thanks be to God who has rescued, transformed and healed us so that we in turn might be his hands and feet, reflecting the Light of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Thanks be to God that we are privileged to serve Jesus through serving others in his name.**

Serving Him, with you, by his grace,



Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

P.S. Here is a note of thanks from someone in Washington who has been blessed by PTM.

I cannot even begin to put into words that which Jesus has given to me through PTM over these many years. May God continue to bless you all as you continue this wonderful work in his name.

CWR/PTM Prayer List—October 2021

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 and my wife. I can barely walk now, and my wife has a serious back problem.—Georgia

Please pray for my sister-in-law who is suffering from liver cancer. Our son had severe skin cancer, which you prayed for and he is now okay—thank you for your prayers. To God be the glory!—North Carolina

I pray for PTM and thank you for all you do. Your work helps me stay centered on Christ, which has helped me so much. Though I'm living with problems and pain I still have joy in Christ.—Colorado

I fell and broke a bone in my arm. I also feel light-headed and have ringing in my ears.—Indiana

Please pray for all who are struggling to survive, and for all the little children that they will know their Lord and Savior and how much He loves them.—Colorado

Glory to God in the highest! I now have an apartment to live in. No more shelters! Thank you for all your prayers! Please pray for God to help the homeless, no matter what walk of life they are in.—New York

I've had seizures over the years, which cause confusion. I had a bad one recently. Please pray for healing.—Louisiana

My son-in-law is getting treatment for cancer. Both he and my daughter need your prayers. Also please pray for my other daughter who has stomach problems.—South Carolina

Please pray for my arthritis condition, for healing and comfort. Thank you!—California

Please pray for my brother who has cancer and also for my boyfriend's brother who has cancer, as well.—Maine

I am recovering from COVID. My wife had pneumonia due to COVID and still needs a lot of oxygen support. Pray for God to strengthen our faith and trust in our great Healer and Lord.—New York

Please pray for my sister who will be on chemo for a year for colorectal cancer and for my cousin who suffers from schizophrenia.—Michigan

Please pray for the relationship between my daughter and me. She won't allow my three-year-old grandson to visit me and this is causing a lot of stress in his life and mine.—Delaware

Please pray for all those who have lost loved ones due to COVID and are unable to say a proper goodbye.—Georgia

Please pray for my friend who has ALS and the suffering she is enduring. Also please pray for my daughter-in-law who has pneumonia caused by COVID.—West Virginia

Please pray for my Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), high blood pressure and enlarged prostate.—North Carolina

Please pray for me as I was having trouble with my heart and the doctors have placed a pacemaker in it.—Indiana

Please pray for my mother who is currently experiencing stage-five dementia and also for my 92-year-old dad who is having difficulty taking care of her.—Wisconsin

I request your prayers for the healing of my back and legs. Please pray for relief from the pain.—Minnesota

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.