



September 2021

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

Just as his insights graced our September 2020 letter, Ed Dunn returns to write our letter for September 2021. Ed is one of our key staff members, and he wears many hats. He contributes as a Board Member, a blogger, writer, and most recently, as the host of our monthly video This Month at PTM. He works with electronic and digital systems in our fulfillment center, and is one of the voices those who call 1-800-309-4466 hear.

Ed is an uplifting co-worker who enriches our office team and a fellow Friend and Partner with all of you, another team member who shares this ongoing work with you. We thank God for the gifts Ed provides with all those we collectively serve.

One of the incredible roles he fills in our ministry comes directly from his own experiences and the cross he bears as he follows Christ. Ed, as you will see in this letter, has compassion and understanding for all of us as we face adversity and cope with unwelcome and uninvited limitations.

In this letter Ed transparently reveals some of his own struggles enabling us all to get to know him so much better. My life has been blessed by knowing Ed for well over three decades, and I am confident he will touch your life as well.—Greg Albrecht

Thirty-six years ago, I began to lose the ability to see whatever it was I was looking at directly. I began to lose my central vision. As a college freshman at the time, new to the Los Angeles, California area from the hills and hollows of rural Western Pennsylvania, I was already overwhelmed by my new “big-city” environment. When I suddenly and most unexpectedly faced the deterioration of my eyesight, after a life of perfect 20/20 vision to that point, I must admit, I was completely terrified. How would I go on? How would I find my way with so much of life ahead of me?

After a long journey of testing, the eye specialist who ultimately diagnosed my vision condition gave it to me straight. He told me that I had a rare retinal disorder known as Stargardt’s Disease—a disease found in only one-in-fifteen-thousand people and rarely in someone so young. He informed me that there was no cure, no current course of treatment and that eventually, over a period of ten years or so, I would lose my central vision altogether. He wanted to ensure I knew clearly and without a doubt what I would be facing from the age of eighteen-years on.

At first, I didn’t care much for the direct manner in which the eye specialist delivered my personalized news. I had an extremely hard time accepting what he was saying. Almost overnight, I was forced to give up my driving privileges.

I had to begin to learn how to do everything in life, i.e., reading, writing, sports and interacting with others socially, using my peripheral vision (I’d no longer be able to see when I looked directly; I’d have to look around, above and just off to the right to see what I was looking at). I’d need to find a new way of looking at my life, and a true strength to draw upon.

A Faith Based on Religion

I was fortunate to be raised in a strong family environment and taught a set of core values which included good old-fashioned hard work, the importance of healthy diet, sportsmanship and a deep biblical faith. Our family went to church every weekend and tried our best to live our lives in line with how we understood biblical teaching.

Although there were many treasured aspects to this type of upbringing, looking back, I admit that much of my identity as a younger person of faith came from the culture, the rules or “do’s and don’ts” and the expectations of the church we were a part of at the time.

My strength came from holding on to and closely following a religious faith and practices that came far more from the outside in than from the inside out.

A Faith Rooted in Christ

The sudden and most unexpected deterioration of my central vision, so early into my new college career, truly shook me. For reasons beyond me, I was being forced to face something no one else I knew, in my family or otherwise, had faced before.

The circumstance felt unfair and very scary. Although I was deeply grateful for my strong family upbringing and years of faith, the strength I would need in order to find a new way would have to come from within. **That strength would come from a faith rooted in Jesus Christ.**

The concept of strength from within, strength from Christ within, has been shared with the body of Christ, and the world at large, by a beautiful variety of voices since the time of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

In the first century A.D., Paul wrote to the Philippians: *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me* (Philippians 4:13, NKJV). Paul emphasized, again and again, the concept of Christ in you as his letters gave encouragement to early Christians facing desperately challenging times and circumstances.

Paul knew well where his strength came from. His strength came from a faith rooted in Christ, from Christ living in him.

Thirteen-hundred years later, a renowned Persian poet and teacher named Hafez was famous for saying: *I am a hole in a flute that the Christ’s breath moves through; listen to this music.* Hafez’ words convey a teaching, a personal understanding, that Christ moved in him.

As such, Hafez’ life (and I would argue our lives as well) can be both rooted in Christ and like beautiful music to the world around us, no matter what challenging times and circumstances we may be facing.

Six-hundred years later, the Scottish Olympian and preacher, Eric Liddell, offered some of my favorite words on strength when he addressed a crowd of enthusiastic spectators track-side and drenched in the pouring rain: *And where does the strength come from to see the race to its end? From within.*

Liddell’s words, made famous in the 1981 movie, *Chariots of Fire*, touch on the analogy that life is like a race. As with Paul, who used the very same analogy many times, Liddell knew well that the strength to face whatever race life might present comes from within. Life may well pour down on us. The strength to weather such downpours comes from Christ in us.

And lastly, in more recent times, the words of Martin Luther King Jr. echo those written and spoken by many voices over the last two-thousand years: *In the midst of outer dangers, I have felt an inner calm and known resources of strength that only Christ could give. In many instances I have felt the power of God transforming the fatigue of despair into the buoyancy of hope* (my emphasis).

Our lives can seem to be full of *outer dangers*. Our times and circumstances can be extremely challenging and may lead us to feel a sense of despair from time to time. I could certainly relate as I slowly began to lose my central vision. I feared for the future and for the challenges I would eventually face in my life.

As Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, **the power of God transforms us**. Christ living his life in us brings a strength we could never find on our own. I'm fifty-four years-old now and yes, I have lost all of my central vision, every last bit of it, just as the eye specialist said I would. Yet, I know I've been very fortunate to live many years learning how to do everything in life with only peripheral vision. I've learned how to face the fears and challenges of my vision, albeit not without some periodic worry. More than that, I've come to accept my vision as it is.

When we understand Christ lives his life in us, and we then live from that strength, our lives are transformed. We live in the reality of our humanity and the richness of Christ's indwelling divinity. The two work together in beautiful harmony. **Christ lives in us and we live in him.** Living this way helps us to face whatever challenging times life may present.

Thankful for Christ in us—your friend and fellow partner,



Ed Dunn

P.S From Greg: Many thanks Ed, amen and amen! *Christ lives in us and we live in him.* Thanks be to God for his amazing grace, and to Jesus, who walks all of our paths and roads with us, and willingly, out of his love, climbs in with us into the most unwelcome ditches and potholes we sometimes occupy. We thank God with a grateful heart that *Christ lives in us and we live in him,*



Greg Albrecht

President, Plain Truth Ministries

CWR/PTM Prayer List—September 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 my daughter who is having a lot of pain in her back and pressure on her chest.—Arizona

I am having an irregular heart beat and I have been feeling weak. I would appreciate prayers for my heart. Thank you.—California

Please pray for my daughter who is in a nursing home due to her bi-polar depression. Please pray for my son-in-law who is getting treatment for his back.—South Carolina

I have struggled with debilitating migraines, almost daily, for years. I have an MRI of my head and neck scheduled—please pray that the MRI results will help doctors know how to treat me.—Ontario, Canada

My husband is still stuck in legalism. Please pray for me in my spiritual loneliness.—Colorado

I am a Christian and I have a gambling problem. Please pray for myself and others with this problem.—Washington

Please pray for me. I have a severe case of hemorrhoids and if the current treatments don't work, I will need surgery. Thank you for your prayers.—North Dakota

Please pray for my oldest brother who has end-stage liver cancer. His liver is inoperable and he has been taken off chemo. The doctors give him six months to live, but he can hardly eat or drink. Please pray for peace.—Minnesota

Please pray for my daughter. She is a drug addict. She will not talk to me or listen to anything I say.—Tennessee

I'm having a skin eruption on my right bicep that is not healing very well. Your prayers would be much appreciated.—Idaho

I request your prayers for my back pain and for the swelling in my feet and burning sensation on the bottom of my feet.—Minnesota

Please pray for my nephew who is in jail—pray for his protection and encouragement. Thank you.—Arkansas

Please keep praying for God to take my family out of this bad and dangerous neighborhood.—New York

Please pray for me. I'm 94 years old and my eyesight is so bad I can barely read.—Indiana

Praise God for delivering my dad from loneliness after my mom's passing. God's blessings can be seen beautifully in this life.—Oklahoma

My mother, who is failing physically, continues to ask for healing and comfort. May God bless all the staff at PTM in proclaiming the gospel.—Illinois

Please pray for my only son, age 59. He was a picture of health, but he was recently told he has terminal, aggressive cancer throughout his body. He is now on chemotherapy. Please pray for God's will to be done.—Georgia

Please pray for those of us who struggle with and suffer from clinical depression and nervous anxiety disorders. It is real and it is hard to deal with. Thank you for the encouraging support CWR/PTM provides for us.—Tennessee

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.