



January 2022

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

*In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it.—John 1:4-5*

Robert Lewis Stevenson, well-known for his adventure story *Treasure Island*, was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, into a well-to-do family. His father and his uncles and his maternal grandfather all designed lighthouses. During Robert's childhood he was in poor health, suffering from severe bronchial problems, and was thus often confined to his room, particularly in cold winter months. But his creative mind was active, even at a young age, giving evidence of the rich and colorful literary word pictures that would later fill his writings.

One cold, dark evening, the young man pressed his nose against the window of his second-floor bedroom to better observe a lamplighter at work. Since light was part of the family heritage and profession, Stevenson was entranced with the work of the lamplighter as he worked his way down the street, lighting each street lamp along the way. Young Robert called out to his nurse who had just entered his room to check on him, "*See, look there; there's a man poking holes in the darkness.*"

You and I do not start work every evening in our neighborhood, walking along, lighting street lamps along cobblestone streets. But our collective spiritual work is very much like a lamp-lighting mission, poking holes in the darkness. As CWR/PTM Friends and Partners we are spiritual lamplighters making our way down dark and gloomy streets and places, slowly but resolutely, one by one, reflecting the Light of Jesus Christ to and for a dark world.

### **If Not You, Then Who?**

*For you were once darkness. but now you are light in the Lord.—Ephesians 5:8 (my emphasis)*

We used to be darkness, but NOW, by the grace of God, we are light IN THE LORD. We do not produce spiritual light, we reflect his light...HE IS LIGHT. We shine his light, not our own. We are not only "in" the light, but more than that, we are, by his grace, light. Just as God, in the physical beginning, through his creative power, created light out of darkness, so too does he produce a spiritual creation of light from darkness. He has changed and transformed us from and out of darkness into his Light, so that we are now "light in the Lord."

*For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.—2 Corinthians 4:5-6*

I love the translation of Ephesians 5:13, in the J.B. Phillips: *It is even possible (after all, it happened with you!) for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also.* We can and we do, by God's grace, make a real and lasting impression in the lives of others. Never underestimate the worldwide impact of our

collective work at CWR/PTM—never think that your prayers and your financial support is insignificant or unimportant. We, together, by God's grace, are Christ-following lamplighters illuminating one life at a time. *We, together, by God's grace, poke holes in the darkness.*

*PTM is the sum of its parts. That is, PTM is the sum of its PART-NERS!*

As partners in and with this ongoing work, we join together to lose ourselves in a greater cause. The greater Cause is Jesus Christ. Jesus is our Cause—our Mission—our Path—our Shepherd—our Leader—our Teacher—our Focus. **He is our all in all.**

Many years ago, a small church congregation had a ground breaking service for its new building. Instead of a traditional photograph with the pastor and a few leading members posing with shovels, they recalled the words of Jesus, *"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls"* (Matthew 11:29) and brought one of those old one-horse plows to the service.

Two members agreed to be hitched up to the plow and pull it for a few yards. They couldn't budge the plow through the hardened soil. The pastor joined them, along with a few other members of the church. Still, this larger group could not budge the plow. Finally, every one of the 40 members of this small fellowship helped pull the rope attached to the plow. Their combined teamwork moved the plow.

*The point is obvious. The point is so very true.*

Lighting the LIGHT of Christ is an opportunity, a high honor and enormous privilege to which he has invited us. He doesn't need us to help him, but he invites us and allows us this honor. The work of a lamplighter is not easy—there is work involved. With the illustration of the small church who all unitedly hitched themselves to the one-horse plow in mind, we recall the words of Jesus, explaining what it means to follow him.

*"No one who puts a hand on the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."*—Luke 9:62.

Jesus' point was not that we buy our way into his kingdom as a result of our work. Jesus' point was our selfless commitment to follow him, no matter what. We are "fit for service" as we look ahead, focus on him, pull our weight along with all others on our team, together accomplishing a work with and for God.

What does our work do? Does God need us? Perhaps the dynamic between our efforts and the work of God is a bit like that old story of the father whose son wanted to help him mow the yard. This was a long time ago, before lawn mowers had engines—push mowers were just what they were called, and (I recall, during my early years of earning money mowing lawns for neighbors as I grew up) pushing a mower through thick grass is not easy.

The young man wanted to "help" his father, and his father was pleased...not because it would make his job easier (because it wouldn't at all—in fact, it made it more difficult) but because it was something they could do together, as father and son. Because the little boy was not tall enough to reach the handles of the lawn mower, the father placed the little boy between himself and the mower and lifted him up so the hands of his son could join his father's hands on the handles of the push mower. "Together" they mowed that lawn.

TOGETHER we are honored by our heavenly Father to be lights of Christ, that is, reflecting the light of Jesus that shines within us. TOGETHER it is our high honor and profound privilege to light

lamps, pull plows and mow lawns—as we follow Jesus, as we share him and his Light and his mission with as many as he allows us.

Our task is beautiful. Our calling is breathtaking. **We, by the grace of God, are able to poke holes in the darkness.**

As I conclude this January letter, please allow me one final story. During the time I was writing this letter, I thanked God for your faithful financial commitment to this ongoing Christ-centered work and in doing so I reflected on an old Mark Twain story.

It seems Mark Twain once attended a church (he attended church infrequently and reluctantly, and as the story goes, for good reason!). As the pastor prepared the congregation for the offering he talked about the missions and goals of the church, and the ways in which the church was serving so many, both near and far. Twain was moved and decided to give five dollars when the offering was taken.

The pastor continued to give examples of how the church was serving others, and Twain was further impressed and decided to give ten dollars. The pastor then gave moving and inspiring examples of the people the church had served and Twain then decided to give twenty dollars. The pastor did not quit—he continued to illustrate how the church was giving and helping.

Twain grew tired of listening. He then decided to give only ten dollars because of the long-winded pastor. But the pastor was not finished—he went on and on and on...at which point Twain decided to go back to his original five dollars, if the pastor would just shut up in the next five minutes. But the pastor wouldn't (or couldn't) and kept talking...Twain then wanted to get up and walk out. But instead, he decided to stay and when the offering baskets were passed around he would take twenty dollars out!

**Before you grow tired, I will quit...**but not before reminding you that we are working together to Poke Holes in the Darkness! Thank you for your commitment to be a partner and a part of our team!

Your brother in Christ,



Greg Albrecht  
President, Plain Truth Ministries

## CWR/PTM Prayer List—January 2022

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.

*Thank you for your prayers for my son. He will start his third round of chemo treatments soon. I really appreciate and love all of you at CWR/PTM.—Georgia*

*Please pray for a friend of mine, whose husband passed away from a traffic accident. She has taken over operating her late husband's company and the contractors are taking advantage of her lack of service experience. She truly needs God's help.—Louisiana*

*Please pray for the families who lost loved ones in the Florida condo collapses.—Texas*

*Thanks for all your love and prayers. God opened the doors and I'm able to continue working.—Puerto Rico*

*Thank you for all your prayers concerning my physical health. I was getting sluggish, but I'm doing better now. Please continue to pray for me.—Arizona*

*Please pray for me as I am anemic and will have a scope placed down my throat to see where and why I'm anemic, so I can begin treatments.—Louisiana*

*Please pray for a friend who will be having hip replacement surgery soon. Thanks for your prayers for her and for everyone on this list. I pray that God will continue to bless CWR/PTM and everyone involved in this ministry.—North Carolina*

*Please pray that people with mental illness will search out God for answers they need and seek whatever help they need. Thank you for your prayers and for all you do to encourage people.—Tennessee*

*Please pray for my friend who just recently found out that he has a cancerous mass in his stomach. I pray that despite this illness that God will grant him many more years of life.—Florida*

*Please pray for my mother's mental and physical welfare. Thank you and God bless everyone at PTM.—Texas*

*Please pray for my two sons and a daughter. They believe there is a God, but they really don't know him. Please pray they will get to really know God and worship him.—California*

*My prayers are with you all at CWR/PTM every day. I thank God for all the blessings people are receiving from hearing your wonderful sermons and messages daily.—Louisiana*

*Please pray for rain—it's so desperately needed all over the western United States and Canada.—Arizona*

*Please pray for God's healing of my knees, hips, lower back and high blood pressure.—Saskatchewan, Canada*

*I have had bad hearing most of my life and I'm now 92. The doctors can't seem to help me. I really need Divine help and healing.—Illinois*

*My husband has been struggling with his eyes for over a year now due to cataracts. His right eye continues to be difficult for consistent measurements. Which means the doctor can't do the cataract surgery. He still needs to work, which is difficult with his diminished eyesight.—North Carolina*

*Please pray for my daughter—she recently had a large cancerous mass removed and she is now receiving chemo treatments.—California*

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.