



January 2024

Dear CWR/PTM Friends and Partners,

**A**s this New Year of 2024 begins, North America (as well as Europe, the Middle East and Ukraine, not to mention the entire world), is tired and weary of war, conflict, poverty, epidemics, pandemics and crises of one kind or another. It is an understatement on a grand scale to realize this second decade of the 21st century has introduced colossal upheaval in individual lives, mentally and physically. So much that what once seemed settled and secure is and in a state of agitation, stress and even conflict. *We are sick and tired of being sick and tired!*

Of course, many now realize the first decade of this 21st century only “seemed” peaceful and serene—the climate crisis, the COVID pandemic, the religious turmoil, the political polarization, economic upheaval, unrest, uncertainty and deep-seated antagonisms that boil over into violence and warfare have a history—they didn’t appear out of thin air.

People all over this world crave a “return to normalcy”—to times that at least seemed more simple and secure. Everyone desires “normalcy.” Everyone craves and yearns for peace.

In times of high anxiety, along come the religious prophecy mongers and the political opportunists who assure us that what we are seeing are all “signs” of the end. They recognize discontent, anxiety and fear and further stir the pot to achieve their own goals. They are manipulating the human desire for an end of troubles. They know we all dream of a better world, and well we should, but their answer and what they sell and market is the wrong answer. *They sell and market fear, not peace!*

**The political and religious leaders of our world offer peace—but whose peace, what kind of peace and at what price?** Jesus offers an entirely different kind of peace, one that is ultimately superior and eternal to the short-lived peace humans can produce.

Jeremiah categorically castigated the self-serving politicians of his day, insisting that when they tried in vain to assure the people that there was no cause for alarm, that there were no enemies on the horizon, and that there were no reasons to be concerned, they were offering, selling, marketing and promising an illusion, because they had no power to give the peace of God (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11).

*As Christ-followers we must focus and realize a better world will not be produced by humanity, but by Jesus.* We believe that. We know that. A better world is our hope, in Christ, by Christ, through Christ. In John 16:33 we read three promises and assurances of Jesus that reverberate in their relevance to our world right now—1) **in me you may have peace**, 2) **in the world you will have trouble**, 3) **take heart! I have overcome the world.**

As we begin this New Year of 2024, let’s take stock of how “bad” our world is today, compared with recent history, and remember that **tough times, particularly of warfare and bloodshed, driven by human lust, can last a lot longer than we would like to think:**

- *The war for American independence* commenced with military conflict in 1775 and lasted until a peace treaty with Great Britain was finally signed in 1783.

- By contrast, it took over 400 years for Canada, our North American neighbors and friends, to transition from European exploration, control and military rule before it became an independent nation. Canada endured a long and gradual road away from violence and war, until the Canadian Confederation occurred on July 1, 1867.

- *The American Civil War* started on April 12, 1861 and ended on April 9, 1865.

- *World War 1* was fought from 1914-1918.

- *World War 2* is dated from September 1, 1939 until September 2, 1945.

- *The War in Vietnam* started on November 1, 1955 and ended on April 30, 1975. Conflict and armed aggression took place throughout the 20th century—the earth was only without the violent conflict we call “war” for extremely short periods of time in the 20th century.

- *The War in Iraq* lasted from 2003-2011.

According to historians Will and Ariel Durant, there have been slightly over 250 scattered years featuring the absence of armed conflict, without a war of some kind, over the past 3,400 years. And now, as we begin the New Year of 2024, some experts say this world hasn’t been this close to self-destruction since the Cuban missile crisis in October, 1962.

Most of the warfare in these first few decades of the 21st century has been or is now wreaking havoc in Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and in the Ukraine. But most of the time it’s a different kind of conflict.

In the main, the 21st century has pioneered a new form of war, called “shadow warfare,” with unconventional tactics and weapons used against conventional, traditional and historic enemies. The nation of Israel, it may be argued, exists on a continuous war footing, always experiencing some level of aggression.

Perhaps that is the kind of crisis we are now facing—not always a traditional (in our era) war of tanks and jet fighters and hand to hand combat, but an unconventional and even virtual shadow war—and make no mistake, a physical and spiritual shadow war is being waged, day in, day out, all over this world! The battle of spiritual terrorism intent on control of hearts and minds is taking place every second and minute of every day!

What do we do—what do we think—where is our focus—how can we find peace and assurance during these troubling times?

- **Don’t underestimate the power of hope.**

- **Don’t underestimate the power of faith.**

- **Don’t underestimate the power of love.**

- **Don’t underestimate the peace of God!**

Paul lifts our attention beyond what Peter calls “*the corruption in the world caused by evil desires*” (2 Peter 1:4) when he says “*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us*” (Romans 8:18).

God the Father, who is love, lives within us in and through God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, filling us with faith. God, who is love, lavishes us with his grace and love. No matter what we endure and suffer now, love will win in the end. **Love will always win.**

God's love rescues us from terrorism, tyranny and authoritarianism, much of it, ironically, imposed in God's name. Don't underestimate the power of freedom in Christ. God is love, don't underestimate God and don't underestimate the power of his love which gives his peace. **God is an equal opportunity lover.** God's love is unconditional, perfect and complete.

Sometimes we trust people and doubt God. In so doing we underestimate God. There are times when we cannot trust people and therefore doubt them—but **there is never a time when we cannot trust God.** Don't underestimate the love God has for us, the relationship he offers—we are Jesus' friends, not his underlings or servants or slaves (John 15:15). God graciously invites us into his inner circle. We are heirs of his kingdom, by his grace.

God will always be with us and never forsake us. **Never underestimate God!** Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of warfare, suffering, disease and death, **the Lord is our Shepherd.** We shall not "want" (Psalm 23:1 KJV)—we "*lack nothing*" (NIV)—we "*don't need a thing*" (MSG). We, in and through him, can have and experience *the peace of God, which passes all understanding.*

Don't underestimate the power of hope. Don't underestimate the power of faith. Don't underestimate the power of love. **Don't underestimate the peace of God!**

**In conclusion**—here is a compilation of uplifting passages that inspire us to appreciate the goodness and grace of God and to **never underestimate Father, Son and Holy Spirit:**

*Christ dwells in our hearts through faith. Christ strengthens us with power in our inner being. Those who are one in Christ rest in him. The God of peace will make us lie down in green pastures, we will live in his house and eat at his table forever and ever. We will mount up on wings like eagles. We will run and not be weary. We will walk and not faint. We will come unto Jesus, when we are weary and heavy laden, and he will give us rest. He is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever.*

As this New Year of 2024 begins, now and through all of this year, no matter where your journey during this year may take you, may God's peace dwell in your hearts, minds and souls, in and through our risen Lord.

Your brother in Christ, your fellow pilgrim in this world, looking for a better world with you,



Greg Albrecht  
President, Plain Truth Ministries

## CWR/PTM Prayer List—January 2024

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 keep me in your prayers. I just found out that I have lung cancer.—Michigan*

*I have advanced glaucoma and I'm rapidly going completely blind in my right eye. Please pray for me.—Virginia*

*Please pray that my disability will be approved soon. I'm 60 years old. I had open heart surgery and it went well, but I'm unemployed and living in my car. Thanks in advance for your prayers.—Texas*

*Please pray for me. I struggle with AFIB and my blood pressure goes up and down.—Georgia*

*Please pray for peace in all of the Middle East!—California*

*Thanks so much for your ministry. I look forward to the monthly letters and magazines and I pray for all the prayer requests.—Missouri*

*Please pray for children around the world who suffer from disease, hunger and abusive situations.—Idaho*

*Please pray for my family, especially my son who is a pastor. Thank you for all you do.—North Carolina*

*Please pray for my healing. I'm losing my hearing and I have vertigo all the time.—West Virginia*

*I'm having surgery for intestinal issues and a hiatal hernia. Please pray everything goes well.—Maine*

*My love and prayers are with everyone at PTM and all those you minister unto.—Pennsylvania*

*I'm having pain in my shoulders and I have a bladder infection. Please pray for healing.—Canada*

*Please pray for healing of my chronic prostate issues and high blood pressure.—Texas*

*Please pray for me—I have a kidney stone and other kidney issues.—Tennessee*

*Please pray for me as I'm having some health complications. Thanks for your prayers.—Arizona*

*I had a full right knee replacement and it's still very painful. Please pray for complete healing.—Alabama*

*I'm 83 years old, I have Stage 3 kidney disease and I'm addicted to pain meds. I appreciate your prayers.—Georgia*

*Please pray for my healing—I have Lyme disease and other ailments.—Maryland*

*Please pray for our family. My father recently passed away. Your ministry was so meaningful to him.—New York*

*Please pray for all those suffering from the after effects of hurricanes, flooding and wildfires.—Texas*

*Pray for our leaders to get crime and homelessness under control. May God's kingdom come soon!—South Carolina*

*Please pray for all who are suffering with addictions of various kinds.—Michigan*

*Please pray that I will continue to have the physical and mental strength to care for my mother.—Arizona*

*I have neuropathy in my hands, feet and knees (the worst pain is in my knees). Please pray for me.—Georgia*

*Pray that people will see how self-destructive we are living apart from our Creator and Savior.—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.