



July 2024

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

Many of you are well aware, perhaps painfully and heartbreakingly so, that in our North American culture “assisted living” describes the extra services needed by seniors living in communal homes who need more “assistance” with daily tasks than other residents. Now that I am closer to 80 than I am to 70 (that’s as much as I will divulge in this letter!), I don’t need to be convinced that aging happens and when it does, capabilities, abilities and agilities start to diminish.

Perhaps we don’t fully realize what it means to get old(er) until we pass age 60 or 70, or until we provide care-giving to a loved one or parent, or until we suffer an accident or illness that leaves us in need of help. *None of us gets through life unassisted, though we would like to think, in younger years, that such a thing is possible. We are all going to need help, perhaps sooner than we would like to think.*

Christ-less religion assures its followers they can get through their spiritual journey in life **without much, if any, assistance**. Christ-less religion places great emphasis on the responsibilities of each person to earn God’s love and deserve his blessings. It’s an attractive proposition, because all of us are hard wired to prefer to “do it” ourselves. We all want to do whatever needs to be done ourselves. We don’t want “assistance” - physically or spiritually.

Spiritual assisted living means we cannot do what is necessary to sustain and maintain our spiritual lives without divine help.

The natural state of humanity is to resist help and mercy and care—we humans don’t want to be or admit to being “at the mercy” of someone else. But physical independence only lasts for several decades. We don’t begin life living independently—we are “at the mercy” of our parents or guardians, in need of “assisted living.” And we normally don’t end life completely independent of the assistance and help of others.

The desire for freedom and independence overshadows our logical minds. For example, not to “pick on” teenagers, but they (and once “they” was “us”—let’s not forget we were teens once too!) can’t wait to leave home. Many teens are oblivious of the costs of the independence they desperately seek. They have little idea about the costs of rent, groceries, electricity, gas and insurance for their car, for their cell phone—the list is endless. *While they are home and can’t wait to get away from the “oppression” of parental rule and supervision, young people often don’t factor in how mom is still washing their clothes and the refrigerator is fully stocked.*

What an irony! They (and again, we all realize “they” was once us, back in the day!) want to be INDEPENDENT of their parents while they desire to continue receiving financial assistance and in the process, benefiting from and enjoying their dependency on their parents! Whether we are young or old, we are often so attracted by the lure of independence of being able to do whatever we want when and how we want, we often ignore the truly important relationships in life—this is one of the lessons of the parable of the Prodigal Son, is it not?

Let me highlight two lessons of spiritual assisted living:

1) *Growing closer to our Father in heaven is the most important thing in our life—life in his house, trusting him, accepting and embracing his love and grace, is what it means to be a Christ-follower.*

Thankfully, in the physical realm of assisted living, many, if not most, mature beyond the freedom they wish for their own self-centered pursuits, and, particularly when they themselves become parents, they begin to provide “assisted living” for their own children, whom they dearly love. As the life cycle continues, many then become caregivers for parents and grandparents who need “assisted living.” Eventually we all return to a time and place when once again, as we did when we first started life on this planet, we need “assisted living.”

None of us gets through life unassisted! It’s a delusion to speak of “self-made” men and women. Every human being stands on the shoulders of others—we all have been blessed by others who have helped us along the way, opened doors of opportunity, taught us a trade, mentored us in our marriage and parenting challenges.

Here we are in July—in both Canada and the United States we hear words like “freedom” and independence” and “self-determination” and “autonomy” and “self-sufficiency” endlessly repeated, almost ad nauseum. Like so many churches and denominations that stress the necessity of earning God’s love by the sweat of the brow of those who work, pay, pray, and perform, so too nations remind their citizens that freedom is never free. Of course, there is truth to that maxim, and we all appreciate those who have paid “the ultimate price” for the safety and security of their fellow citizens, whether that price was paid in the military, or in service of a police or fire department.

As we in North America celebrate Canadian and American independence, we hear and read these glorious words of “freedom,” “independence” and “self-determination” and we hear rousing patriotic music, magnificent parades, spectacular displays of fireworks. But when we examine the hoopla of all this talk and rhetoric from a Christ-centered spiritual focus, these are paper thin, temporary, short-lived, and beyond that, seductive concepts.

Generation after generation, century after century, our history books tell us of young people in nations around the world who are commandeered via a draft or urged and lured via the false seduction of “glory” to march off into far-away places to die for their country so that their country can be “free.” Young people are seduced with the “respect” they are told others will give them after their country issues them a uniform and when they do what their country demands. They buy a promise—a dream—a vision of freedom.

Again, I quickly qualify—I am deeply grateful for the “ultimate sacrifice” that so many paid, and I am aware that, from one perspective, freedom is never free.

But I also believe, in a deeper and more profound way, that no one can ever earn freedom. Ultimately, freedom, particularly freedom in Christ (Galatians 5:1) is a gift of God which no human can deserve. Again, that freedom is not free, is it? Freedom in Christ is all about the “ultimate sacrifice” that Jesus gave, pouring himself out on his Cross, for you and me.

But when we are truly free in Christ, we are also utterly dependent on him. We live in him and he lives in us. We enjoy “assisted living” in Christ, our risen Lord. He gives us freedom, and we give thanks for the fact he does all that we need and all that we can never earn. True freedom in Christ is all about Him, and all about our dependence in and on him!

The second lesson of spiritual assisted living:

2) *As we mature in Christ, by the grace of God, we grow less dependent on ourselves and increasingly more dependent on God.*

While there is no doubt that many countries offer a more open form of democracy than others, and there is no doubt that you and I are thankful to enjoy freedoms other countries do not offer, any kind of humanly derived, produced or maintained freedom is never absolute. “Freedom” in terms of a national system of governance is a matter of degrees.

Winston Churchill spoke to this topic when he said “democracy is the worst form of government—except for all the others that have been tried.”

But is any nation truly “self-sufficient”? Is any nation truly free from all oppressors, foreign and domestic? Like the mirage of independence in our physical and spiritual lives, the idea of absolute national freedom is a fantasy. We all are in need, at all times in our lives, regardless of the country in which we reside, assisted living. We all need help.

Accepting our own dependence on God is a huge step toward embracing his grace. What a joy it is—what an indescribable blessing it is—to live in God’s house, enjoying “assisted living” by his mercy, love and grace. In Asian cultures senior citizens in need of “assisted living” are not regarded as a burden or a liability to their families, but a treasure. By his grace, we are God’s treasures. We are all always his precious children.

Our spiritual assisted living is the greatest blessing of life, and this time of year as national independence and freedom is celebrated, is a beautiful time to reflect on the GREATEST FREEDOM of all—*assisted living by God’s grace and love—total and complete trust, faith and dependence on God, who will never leave us or forsake us.* Happy spiritual assisted living one and all!

Living with you, in Christ, thankful for the spiritual assisted living he provides,



Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

P.S. We share this note of thanks from a friend in North Carolina. And THANK YOU for your consistent and generous support of the ongoing ministry of CWR/PTM!

Thank you so much for all you do to share the message of God’s grace. It’s all about grace. I have experienced traveling that difficult road from legalism to grace. The newfound freedom and peace I now know is indescribable! The journey from legalism to grace has been liberating beyond description.

CWR/PTM Prayer List—July 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.

Thank you for prayers for my recovery after major surgery of my intestine. I'm doing a lot better!—Maine

Please keep me in your prayers. I'm recovering from a double-hernia surgery. I'm still in a lot of pain and dealing with the swelling in my abdomen.—Georgia

I pray for everyone involved with the ministry of PTM. I'm glad I can contribute in a small way to this ministry which has helped so much to correct my wrong-headed thinking about God.—Arizona

Please pray for healing of fractures in my back. Also, pray for my son who is suffering from depression.—Ohio

Please pray for me—my blood pressure is not getting better, even with medication.—Michigan

I pray for everyone on the prayer list. Thank you so much for the opportunity. PTM helps me focus on Jesus when I feel discouraged.—Kentucky

Please pray for a dear friend who just started chemo treatment for cancer.—California

Thank you for your prayers for my sister. The last MRI showed that the fractures had healed, but she is still in a lot of pain. Please pray for her new course of treatments to help with the pain.—Virginia

I pray that God will continue to bless CWR/PTM throughout the coming year.—South Carolina

Thanks for your prayers! My husband was able to get another job after being laid off months ago.—New York

I pray that God will continue to bless you all with health, wisdom, peace and love.—Florida

We are filled with love and prayers for all Christ-followers. May God bless everyone at PTM.—Puerto Rico

Thank you all for your prayers. My foot is doing much better. Please pray for all who suffer with illness, loneliness, depression, hunger and other troubles.—Texas

Thank you for your ministry. I pray for God's blessings on all of you!—Indiana

I pray for everyone at PTM—that you will be well and stay strong in the Lord!—New Jersey

Please pray for our physical and spiritual healing. I cannot thank you all enough for this work.—Louisiana

You are in my daily prayers. I enjoy everything from PTM, and I thank God I'm part of this work.—Alabama

Please pray for my wife's brother, who is now in hospice care. He has dementia. It is so sad to see him going into his last days. Pray that God will be with him at this time.—Oregon

Please pray for my daughter as she struggles with depression. Thanks so much!—Tennessee

Thanks for the encouraging inspiration reminding us of God's love and grace. Please pray that I continue to keep my eyes on Jesus and not sink down in the depths of despair that surround me.—Washington

Thanks for your prayers for me. I have lived through several dark chapters in my life. The loss of my husband due to illness, the loss of my church, and times when I wondered if I wanted to go on living. PTM has been a lifeline for me, helping me know the love of Christ. Thank you so much!—Kentucky

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.