

THE SHEPHERD'S LOVE

New York Mills Apostolic Lutheran Church • 315 Main Ave South • New York Mills, MN 56567 Vol 3 No. 31

From the Pastor's Desk

February 2023



My grandparents passed away in August of 2021. A couple of months ago my aunt shared this article that my grandpa had written in 1989 for the ALC Christian Monthly with the family. I was visiting a member of our congregation and we ended up visiting about faith and new believers. I shared this with her and she encouraged me to share it with you. My grandpa wasn't a theologian and we might disagree with some of the statements that he makes. That's fine, this is a snapshot in the life of one new believer. I especially appreciate his musings about heaven and request for prayer for his family now that he is with our Lord. It's entitled **"My Travail and Conversion."**

God's Peace,
Pastor Nicholas Kandoll

Greetings of God's Peace! What a privilege to be able to greet the people of God with God's Peace! My wife and I just returned from the '89 Convention, having again experienced with the children of God the marvelous blessings of receiving the crumbs from the Master's table. What must Heaven be like?

I have been in faith just a short while and I am a novice in God's Word. Thus, it is with very serious fear that I dare to write. I must trust in God. I am

writing because in several points my conversion has given me a very different experience that may shed more light on an issue within our Church, God's people on earth.

I believe that a strife is being caused (perhaps unintentionally) by some of God's people. In their zeal to expand the Church, they fail to remember that there is great power in the Name of Jesus. When the name of Jesus is used by the ungodly or the carnal ministers of the world, a true believer's spirit can be quickened, causing them to think that it was the speaker's spirit that moved instead. Certain favorite passages read by someone schooled in dramatics can be especially convincing. The true believer's intentions are very good and understandable.

Those of us who have experienced other doctrines are more able to recognize this "false holiness" and discern the truth. I believe that part of God's reason for having believers in His kingdom with a similar experience to mine is so that we will be obliged to speak out. Only Satan can benefit by our silence!

I was raised in Northern California, being taught the Christian Science religion. Later, I became vocally convinced that God was a myth. When I was about twenty-one years old, became unusually good friends with Del Halone (from our Church). His family had moved to the Chico, California area as well as Ted Halone's family. Del was a prodigal son. He and I traveled in the ways of the world. Later, we both married and became very

active in politics. One evening, to my shock, Del told my wife (who was a Catholic) and I that he had received the grace to repent and was believing. He confessed faith to us. In my heart, I "laughed him to scorn." We grew apart, except for political matters.

One evening he began to explain the forgiveness of sins to me and said, "what a relief it was to have his sins forgiven." He asked me if I would like to have my sins forgiven (my wife had fled to the kitchen). I said "yes" which was more of a polite response than any conviction on my part. He immediately blessed me, much to my embarrassment.

The next day he introduced me to Gordon Halone as the new convert. I knew I wasn't converted, but I pretended to be. It only lasted for a few days until I could not pretend anymore.

There was a change in my heart but I knew it was not new birth. What I believe happened would be similar to "accepting Christ," or "making your decision for Christ." I received the faith to believe there was a God, but knew that this was not a saving faith.

I decided that now that I knew that there was a God, I had better become a Christian. But I did not want to become an Apostolic Lutheran. I did not want to give up my former life of drinking, etc. I did not want to give up all that was important to me. I wanted an easier, broader way.

I decided to take lessons to become a Catholic. Next, I tried the Mormon Church. After that I tried three, or more, Protestant denominations.

When Gordon Halone saw that I was trying "other ways," he said to me words that would haunt me for many years. He said to go where I would, but to pray for the truth.

I did this many, many times, day and night. I tried making my decision for Christ through TV Evangelists. In one church, I "gave my life to the Lord," then told an elder that I still had no peace (it was worse than before). He told me not to worry, as this often happens. He said that a group of them would pray for me for 30 days, and in that time the Holy Spirit would enter in. (He said that it has never taken longer than that.) Even in my condition I thought that this was not sound advice. This "awakened state" lasted about seven years. I truly saw the fires of Hell beneath my feet. I chewed my nails until they bled. I had insomnia. Life got worse and worse. During this period I would occasionally attend house services at the Halone's, and my family and I would be included in gatherings. We would see the believers greet each other with "God's Peace," and feel sadly left out. They had something that we did not have.

I experienced more fear – more sleepless nights. Then things got worse. I was taken to Berkeley, California for "formal" services. We were delayed about 10 to 15 minutes because of Interstate 5 construction. We sat down in the back of the church, which was very crowded. I heard John Riikonen preach. I don't remember anything unusual except that I heard his sermon. Later in the meal line, Del turned to me and said, "I am sorry. If I had known it was going to be a Finnish service, I would have brought you another time." I immediately began to truly feel dread. I didn't even realize that the sermon was in another language. From that time on, I knew more and more what Hell, or outer darkness, would be like. Travail! True travail!

I gave up looking elsewhere for salvation. I knew God was speaking to me. This must be the truth. We had lost most of our material possessions. I began trying to repent. What a simple, easy thing to do, but not for the flesh. One more step

had to be taken. Over and over, I tried to repent, and then found out I couldn't do it.

For seven years I had looked elsewhere and now I couldn't do it. What was wrong? One day I found myself again outside of the Halone's store. I cried out in despair, "God, I cannot take any more of this. Please stop this pain and terror!" Del came outside and we went to lunch, then to see the new Chico Church. He only asked if we could pray together. We got on our knees and silently prayed. I finally realized what was the last step, and in my heart cried out, "Oh God, I cannot repent. You must do it for me." In that instant He made my voice cry out loud for my sins to be forgiven. And immediately, with unspeakable relief and joy, I felt my own new birth. Travail had ended! I rejoiced with all the Angels of Heaven. My sins were forgiven. It became the work of Jesus, not my own work. Oh, what a beautiful lesson.

I ask those believers who have been faithful since childhood to listen to those of us who have walked this kind of path. We have seen and experienced the imitation fire from Heaven that Satan is empowered to call down in these last days. Do not flirt with this deceiver who is so beautiful that he would deceive us all if these days are not shortened. Do not pay the terrible penalty for spiritual adultery.

When we read of Cornelius, we realize that because his prayers had been heard by God, that at that point he was justified according to the world's understanding. I am sure that he prayed the "sinner's prayer." If it is true that we can make a decision for Christ, Cornelius was at that moment converted. It seems, however, that God had more in store for Cornelius. Think how much anguish he felt (travail) after the angel told him to send for Peter. Now the servant (Peter) arrives and new birth occurs. I can find no conversion in the Bible where man "accepts" or "commits" without the servant or without travail. There will never be a time when people will believe more or stronger, or cry out the "sinner's prayer," or accept Jesus more fervently, than when Jesus comes and takes His own. Why then are

they that are left not saved? It is because the living containers of the Holy Spirit are gone. How many times have you sat in church and your spirit cries out for the unbelieving one to repent? We yearn to share in his new birth. Who doesn't experience joy at birth (new birth)? The same is so of the erring brother.

Oh, we the little people of His church yearn for reconciliation and a peaceful, joyous fellowship. We need to stand together and defend the faith, as well as to preach repentance and remission of sins. We must all be lovers of truth, cost what it may - only the truth! Incline thine ear and believe.

Please pray also for my family and me, that we will all be at the wedding in Heaven with a wedding garment. -

Mike Patterson Longview, WA

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalms 1

A Thought For Today: Age Is Just A Number Every generation has had concerns for the one coming behind. Martin Luther grumped, "The young people of today are utterly dissolute and disorderly." Before him, the philosopher Plato lamented, "The youth are rebellious, pleasure-seeking, and irresponsible."* Sound familiar?

Those opinions have been expressed by many in our time. In truth, the same descriptions could be said of many from older generations, proving that age is just a number. What counts is a person's heart for God. Think of the young people in the Bible who were used by God to do great things. David was a young shepherd boy when he was set apart by God. Daniel and his three friends were youths when they took a stand for their faith. We suspect that Mary was a young teenage girl when she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus. Many of the songs of worship in our hymnals were written by young people. Isaac Watts, one of the most prolific hymn writers, wrote many of his songs at the tender age of nineteen.* His songs include such favorites as "Joy to the World" and "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." His song, "Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed," so touched a thirty year-old Fanny Crosby, that she gave her life to Christ upon hearing it sung in church one Sunday. Crosby went on to write 8,000 hymns!

Likewise, we are never too old to be of use for the kingdom of God. With their seasoned wisdom, senior saints have much to offer, and are a blessing in the church. Even those who may have physical limitations can be powerful prayer warriors and mentors for others. When it comes to serving God, age is just a number. No one is too young or too old to be of use! For today, whatever your age, consider how God may want to use you to accomplish His work. Thank God that He looks at our hearts, not our age. Praise God that we can be of use to Him, whatever our age! "Alas! and did my Savior bleed? And did my Sovereign die? Would He devote that sacred head, For sinners such as I? At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light, And the

burden of my heart rolled away, It was there by faith I received my sight, And now I am happy all the day!" Isaac Watts, "Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed?" Public Domain

"When they (Jesse's sons) came, he looked at Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD's anointed is before him.' But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.'" 1 Samuel 16:6-7 ESV "Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he gets here.' And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, 'Arise, anoint him, for this is he.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward." 1 Samuel 16:11-12b ESV "Then I said, 'Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.' But the LORD said to me, 'Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.'" Jeremiah 1:6-7 ESV "Command and teach these things. Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." 1 Timothy 4:11-12 ESV *Source: "Then Sings My Soul, Special Edition," Robert Morgan

Submitted by Elma Keskitalo



Fredrick Blom remembered well the day when prison gates clanged shut behind him and he was incarcerated. He deserved it, and he knew it. As a minister of the gospel there was no excuse for him. He had emigrated from Sweden to America, joined the Salvation Army, and later became a minister in the Evangelical Covenant Church. Then he fell into sin. He wrote about it later: "I drifted from God and became embittered with myself, the world, and not the least with ministers who looked on me with suspicion because I was a member of the Socialist party." It took a term in prison to remind him of God's great and wondrous love. God could still forgive, even the sin of a pastor who had betrayed his calling. Shortly after he was let out of prison he wrote this hymn about the gates of heaven, pearly gates that would open, even for someone like Fredrick Blom.

Love divine, so great and wondrous,
deep and mighty, pure, sublime,
Coming from the heart of Jesus--
just the same through tests of time.
2. God has given you His promise,
that He hears and answers prayer;
He will heed your supplication,
if you cast on Him your care.

3. Love Divine, so great and wondrous,
all my sins He then forgave.
I will sing His praise forever,
for His blood, His power to save.
4. In life's eventide, at twilight,
at His door I'll knock and wait,
By the precious love of Jesus,
I shall enter heaven's gate.

CHORUS He the pearly gates will open,
so that I may enter in;
For He purchased my redemption,
and forgave me all my sin.

(This hymn is no. 343 in our hymnal)

Submitted by Louise Amberg-Jokela

Church Information

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New York Mills, MN 56567

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9 a.m.-noon

Church Website
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View live or archived services

Federation Website
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If you want to be added or removed from our mailing list please contact me. All newsletter items to be considered can be emailed to me at the above address by the 20th of each month.

Echoes of Mercy
Radio Broadcast
920 AM KWAD

Sunday mornings
English at 8:05 am

*Sponsored by
New York Mills, Spruce Grove
and Menahga Apostolic
Lutheran Churches*

Church Hours

Sunday School @ 9:15
Worship @ 10:30

If you choose to watch the services online and would like to donate to the church please send checks to:

Louise Amberg-Jokela

206 South Broadway #107 New York Mills, MN 56567.

Thank you to everyone that has taken the time to send contributions. It is greatly appreciated!

Meals/potluck, will be served on the
first Sunday

Group 7 in FEB
Group 8 in MARCH

The serving group will make the main dishes for **potlucks** (unless announced otherwise) and others are asked to bring salads or desserts.

There is a sign up sheet for Sunday coffee in the dining room.



NYM Emergency Food Shelf

FOR EMERGENCY HELP CALL NYM
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218-385-2853 (work)

218-385-3669 (home)

BONNIE WELTER

218-385-3385

218-639-4100 (cell)

TERESA MUCKALA

763-843-3269

ALL INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL

LOCATION:

400 S WALKER AVE

NYM MN

FOOD SHELF HOURS

JAN 30, 2023

FEB 27, 2023

HOURS 9-NOON

