

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION®



## Walking With Jesus

By Greg Albrecht

**D**uring Jesus' earthly life, walking was the primary and popular form of transit. Most people traveled from point "A" to point "B" by walking. If they needed food, they didn't walk out the front door and get in their car, nor did they step out the front door and hop on their donkey and go to their local Super-Sol/Super-Sal (the largest supermarket chain in Israel today). They didn't call Door Dash, Grubhub or Uber Eats for a home delivery. They walked.

There are of course times when the word "walk" is used in the Bible in a literal sense, describing how people moved their bodies on foot from one place to another.

But the Bible also uses the word "walk" in a metaphorical or symbolic way—when used in this manner, the word "walk" has to do

with *following a course of action or a way of life.*

Older versions of the Bible like the King James Version of 1611 use the word "walk" in such a way while a modern version may speak of living a "way of life."

- **Walking With Jesus** is a life-long commitment—a way of living. **Walking With Jesus** is not a short leisurely stroll through our neighborhood, but a long-term endeavor. It is not a "walk in the park" or a "day at the beach." It is not a hobby we try and then discard when we lose interest.

As Christ-followers, we often think of the Old Testament example of the nation of Israel when, having left the nation of Egypt where they were enslaved, started a 40-year journey in the wilderness as they were on their way to the Promised Land.

Many of the adult Israelites who left Egypt did not have 40 years of life left on this earth. Their journey in the wilderness was a lifelong commitment—all but two (Joshua and Caleb) never crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

To this very day, we live in desert places—spiritually parched places—on this earth.

Through our risen Lord who lives within us, we are given the kingdom of God in our hearts and souls even while we struggle to live and eventually die in the wilderness, still longing for the Promised

Land—the fullness of the kingdom of God.

The Christ-centered journey we are on, as we walk with him and he with us, does not find its goal in our temporary sojourn here on earth—but in a new heaven and a new earth.

Like Abraham, we seek for and travel toward a city whose builder and maker and architect is God (Hebrews 11:8-16).

Do not be deceived! **The road toward the kingdom of heaven is not defined or laid down by religious construction crews—the road is Jesus and the destination is Jesus.**

- **Walking With Jesus** means that we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Our physical vision is not an accurate navigational device in **Walking With Jesus**. Employing human logic, cognition, vision and

*Continued on page 3*



## Our Daily Walk

*Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes (Matthew 6:34, MSG).*

**T**here's an old tale of two priests who went for a long daily walk in the woods just after a prolonged and stormy downpour. As they walked and meditated along their way, they came upon a small river that not long before had been a shallow stream. As they did, a young woman from the neighboring village dressed in fine clothing stood by the rain-soaked, muddy bank trying to see how she might get across.

Without a word, the older and wiser of the two priests picked up the young woman and carried her carefully across the watery deluge. Upon reaching the far side safely, the priest then put the young woman down and the two priests continued silently on their way.

Several hours later, the younger of the two priests suddenly broke the silence with an angry question:

*Why did you pick up and carry that young woman across the river?* he asked, with a tone of condemnation. *You know we priests are not supposed to do such things!*

Upon hearing the younger priest's question, and the accusation within, the older and wiser priest thought for a moment before responding.

*I put the young woman down hours ago,* he replied simply. *Why are you still carrying her?*

We all do our fair share of **carrying** on our daily walk, don't we? We can get worked up over many things from time to time. We may not **carry** a person, as in the tale just told, but we can **carry** plenty of fears, doubts and worries in our hearts and minds.

Along with those fears, doubts and worries, we can **carry** a preoccupation with the past or

*Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes. (Matthew 6:34, MSG)*

with the future. This sort of **carrying** is common to us all and can happen more than we care to admit. We're human.

The words of Jesus as recorded in the gospel of Matthew break our daily walk, and where our hearts and minds are best focused, into a manageable increment of time.

*Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now,* Jesus says. **Right now** is the only place, the only time, in which we can truly live.

We can be mindful of our future and of our past, but Jesus reminds us that it is best not to be preoccupied with either.

So many of the fears, doubts and worries we **carry** begin with these preoccupations. So much of what we get worked up about, or **carry** with us on our daily walk, has

little to do with the **right now**.

We all try to live the fullest lives we can, to the best of our abilities, **right now**.

Our work, if we work in the traditional sense, or whatever we put our hand to do one day at a time—spending time with family and friends, or the pursuit of hobbies, interests and pastimes—all serve to help us find purpose as well as joy on our daily walk.

But we know our daily walk can be full of far more than things that bring us purpose and joy.

Challenges and difficulties are as much a part of our lives as the people and pastimes we love.

Jesus reminds us to trust that God will give us what we need in the moment we need it:

*God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.*

That encouraging reminder creates a space around whatever challenges and difficulties we may face.

That joyous truth, that of God's gracious help, leads us through the prolonged and rainy downpours of our lives.

As Christ-followers, we walk with Jesus one day at a time. We keep our entire attention on the sure knowledge that we are in Christ Jesus, and Christ Jesus is alive in us, helping us.

That precious thought, by the grace of God, fuels everything we do. That cherished reminder, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, feeds our purpose and our joy. □

—Ed Dunn

*Continued from page 1*

all our senses, we would often choose another direction and think we are following Jesus.

So many people who dogmatically claim to speak for God and know exactly how God wishes for them to order their lives are actually speaking out of their disordered desires and dressing them up as “God’s will.”

There is nothing easy whatsoever about walking with Jesus—it means walking the narrow and difficult road, not the broad and easy four, six or eight lane highway. More often than not, the Jesus Way is not the path we would naturally choose.

- **Walking With Jesus** implies movement and it implies progress. By definition, following Jesus is a non-sedentary spiritual life. It means we are going somewhere, even when we don’t fully see or appreciate our destination. When we walk with Jesus we know we are going to wind up in the right place. We will not get lost if we walk with him.

- **Walking With Jesus** does not imply ease or pleasure, for it is a dynamic tension in which the life of our risen Lord lives in us, even as we are mortal flesh, filled with anxiety, doubt and fear.

- **Walking With Jesus** is not an endless sightseeing vacation where we live on this earth as tourists, expecting Jesus to pay our bill at

the best hotels, providing us with delicious food and expensive accommodations.

- **Walking With Jesus** means we pick up our cross and follow him. When we accept Jesus’ invitation to walk with him, our cross of illness, affliction, addiction, family difficulties, financial hardship or persecution is not automatically taken away or healed and resolved.

Jesus knows when we carry our cross and learn to carry “our own water,” we will more deeply value every drop.

As we follow Jesus we realize that storms do not only disrupt our lives, sometimes they clear our path helping us to see Jesus as we never have before.

- **Walking With Jesus** is all about faith and trust wherein we surrender control of our lives (human “control” of life is only a perception, a mirage) and follow him, where he leads.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Think about control in the history of our lives. We start as babies in charge of nothing whatsoever: everything is done for us, nothing by us. But then*

***Walking with Jesus is not an endless sightseeing vacation where we live on this earth as tourists...***



*come the “terrible twos,” and we begin a lifetime of putting whatever arm we can on everybody we run into. Next come our teens, when we despise all control except our own. After that come our own offspring, whose helplessness tricks us into controlling them as we were once controlled. Then come their teens, in which we find ourselves out of control all over again... And during all those years of trying to manage our lives, we lose control more and more until our death—when we have none at all. Yet all the while we go right on thinking that one more effort at muscling things and people into religious order will make our identities come up roses. It’s a wonder God even puts up with us.*

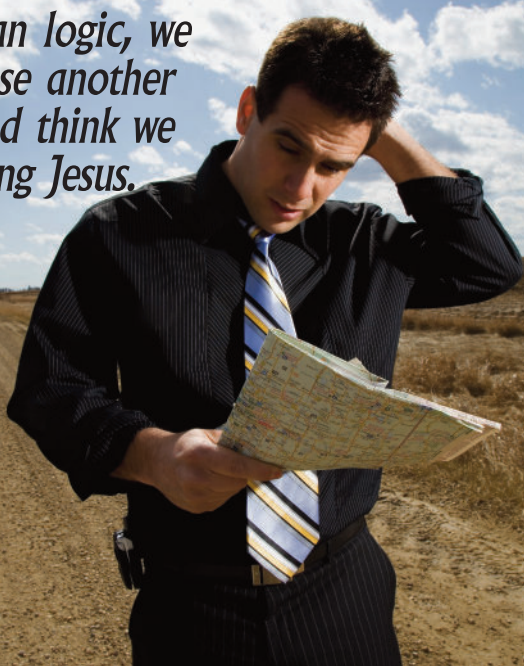
(From “The Foolishness of Preaching” by Robert Farrar Capon, pages 39-40).

\*\*\*\*\*

As much as we long to be out front, walking with and following Jesus means he is in the lead. Jesus’ invitation is not for us to take the lead and set the pace but for us to follow him. Following Jesus means going where Jesus wants us to go at the pace he determines.

- **Walking With Jesus** means not being too far behind him, nor daring to go ahead of him as if Jesus should follow our lead. We adjust our speed to match his—when he pauses and stops for rest, then we do so. We follow him at his pace, emulating his gait.

***Using human logic, we would choose another direction and think we were following Jesus.***



• **Walking With Jesus** is all about spiritual vision, not physical eyesight. It is all about his goodness and how he enables us rather than our goodness and the virtues we attempt to produce.

• **Walking With Jesus** means we don't decide what Jesus should do, how he should behave, and what direction he should take.

• **Walking With Jesus** means yielding our lives to him—we don't try to make him over into our image, but rather we seek to be transformed into his image.

• **Walking With Jesus** defines the meaning of life as receiving the free gift of God's grace and serving others by passing on the grace we have been given.

• **Walking With Jesus** is a life of joy and gratitude, wherein we do not wait for the road to be clear of all obstacles and the weather to be perfect. Christ-followers know that life will always be filled with challenges and struggles and therefore embrace the present with Christ-centered joy regardless of road conditions.

...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith... (Hebrews 12:2). □

*Christ with me, Christ before me,  
Christ behind me, Christ in me,  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down,  
Christ when I arise,  
Christ in the heart of every man who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees  
Christ in every ear that hears me.*

(Saint Patrick's Breastplate, an old Irish hymn dating to the 5th century).

*Walking with  
Jesus means  
we pick up  
our cross  
and follow  
him...*

## Listen to Greg 7 days a week!



### CWR audio



### Podcast

Join us daily and listen to audio teaching from Greg Albrecht from a grace-based, Christ-centered perspective on your phone, tablet or iPad.

For an easy-to-follow listening guide, visit [ptm.org/audioinstructions](http://ptm.org/audioinstructions)

or search CWR/PTM on any of these podcast formats:

- \* Apple/iTunes
- \* Amazon/TuneIn
- \* Google Podcasts
- \* Spotify Podcasts
- \* Sticher Podcasts

## Now you can listen to podcasts by Greg Albrecht seven days a week!

**Plain Truth Radio** — Monday through Friday. Programs produced to play on radio stations available every day of the working week.

**CWR Unplugged** — Saturday. Our latest podcast, an impromptu, off-the-cuff discussion of a relevant and timely topic.

**Christianity Without the Religion Audio** — Sunday. Once-a-week sermons, complete with music, prayers and communion.

**Join us any and every day of the week!**

# Living in the Way

by Jim Fowler

"To be is to do" – Jean-Paul Sartre  
"To do is to be" – Albert Camus  
"Do, be, do, be, do" – Frank Sinatra

**T**he issue of "being" and "doing," and which precedes the other, is an age-old philosophical consideration that goes back as far as the different perspectives of Plato and his student, Aristotle. In fact, it may go back as far as the dilemma of "what came first ...the chicken or the egg?"

The question of being must begin with the divine Being of God, who identified Himself as the "I AM Who I AM" (Exodus 3:14)—the God who IS the essence of all being. God's Being is not established by his doing, but his active doing is expressive of his Being. God does what he does because He IS Who He IS.

In like manner, the created being of God's creatures determines what they are capable of doing. Human beings are unique creatures who derive spiritual character from a spirit-source. The spiritual character of godliness or sinfulness will be evidenced in whatever a person decides to do. A Christian has the indwelling presence and being of JESUS, allowing one to behave like the *Christ-one* he or she has become.

C.S. Lewis put it like this in his book, *Mere Christianity*: "...the whole of Christianity is 'putting on Christ.' Christianity offers nothing else... the Christian is in a different position from other people who are trying to be good... the Christian thinks that

any good he does comes from the Christ-life inside him."

## THE DIVINE WAY

We hear admonitions in religious circles today about "following the way of Jesus," "teaching the way of Jesus," and "practicing the way of Jesus." This sounds good to the religious folk who see Jesus as the historical model of yesteryear—who established a benchmark of behavior to which his followers are obliged to conform.

Jesus did not say, "I came to show you a way of thinking and behaving, to which you are obliged to conform." Nor did Jesus say, "I came to bring you a structure that provides the principles, procedures and techniques for the correct religious way of life."

Jesus did not come to provide a way of learning, or a way of behaving, or a way of living, or a way of serving. Jesus did not come to give us a way of doing or performing anything!

Jesus came to BE and live out the divine Way in and through those who are faithfully receptive to His activity in them. Jesus told His disciples, "I AM the Way, the truth, the life; no one comes to the Father, but through ME" (John 14:6). He is the "new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20), providing in himself the complete dynamic and sufficiency of what it means to be a *Christ-one*!

It is a false perspective to think of Jesus as a far-removed, separate and detached Savior with expectations that we conform and perform in

accord with his methods and procedures for living and serving.

Jesus desires to be the divine Way in us, as we participate in the intimate indwelling presence of Christ. Jesus, the "resurrection and the life" (John 11:25), wants to live out his resurrection-life in us.

## HOW THEN, SHALL WE LIVE?

The Christian life is not lived by our best efforts at conformity to an ideal. We live by the dynamic expression (grace) of the life of the living *Lord Jesus living within us and through us*. The Christian life is the Christ-life lived out behaviorally as *Christ-ones* are captive (by faith) to the living-out of the indwelling Christ in us. Apart from the dynamic of God's grace in the living Christ, religious morality will continue to make Christianity a hypocritical laughing-stock.

How then, shall we live? We allow JESUS to live out His life in and through us. The only One who can live the Christian life is JESUS Christ. He has lived that life out perfectly once during His redemptive mission here on earth, and now, having become the "life-giving Spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45) living in our spirit (Romans 8:9), Jesus wants to live his perfect life out in us.

Having received him as our life (Colossians 3:4), we are responsible as *Christ-ones* to be receptive by faith to the re-presentation of His life in our behavior. □

*Excerpted from Jim Fowler's book, The Issue Is Jesus.*

# God Surrenders to Us in Love

*Dr. Ilia Delio and Richard Rohr*

*Dr. Ilia Delio is a theologian and teacher who sees the Incarnation as God surrendering to us in humble, human form. She writes:*

Surrender to God expresses one's belief that God is love and love never fails. We would be remiss to think, however, that surrender is a movement in trust and love only on our part, as if God might be waiting for us to hand over the reins of control. Such an idea misses out on the tremendous mystery of God as love, for our surrender to God is based on God's surrender to us...

The surrender of God in the person of Jesus Christ is the great mystery of God. God does not hold back and wait until we get things right; rather, God loves us where we are and as we are. In the Incarnation, divine love has found us and has surrendered to us. It has handed itself over to us to do as we please.

What do we do with this tremendous gift of divine love so freely given to us? Some of us are blind to this love, so we ignore it. Others do not believe that God surrenders—completely in love with us—and therefore reject it. Still others fear that a God of self-giving love could be weak, and so they question the divine love. But for those who breathe in the Spirit of God, the surrender of God in love is the greatest act of humility, and one can only receive this love in poverty and humility. Receptivity marks the person of surrender.<sup>1</sup>

*Richard Rohr cites Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) and Clare of Assisi (1194–1253) as two powerful examples of people who surrendered their lives to God, and discovered who they really were in God:*

God is the only one we can surrender to without losing ourselves. It's a paradox. I can't prove it to you, and it sure doesn't always feel like that, but I promise it's true. Francis and Clare lost and let go of all fear of suffering; all need for power, prestige, and possessions; and all need for their small self to be important—and they came out on the other side knowing something essential: who they really were in God and thus who they really were. Their house was then built on "bedrock," as Jesus says (Matthew 7:24). Such an ability to really change is often the fruit of suffering, and various forms of poverty, since the false self does not surrender without a fight to its death. If suffering is "whenever we are not in control" (my definition), then we can understand why some form of suffering is absolutely necessary to teach us how to live beyond the illusion of control and to give that control back to God.

Francis and Clare voluntarily leapt into the very fire from which most of us are trying to escape, with total trust that Jesus' way of the cross could not, and would not, be wrong.<sup>2</sup> □

1. Ilia Delio, *Ten Evenings with God* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 2008), 79–80.

2. Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi* (Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Media, 2014), 20–21.





## Donkey Rescue

Calling a player a donkey, especially when shouted by UK football fans, is a term of derision. He's clumsy, dim-witted—laughably so. But, in fact, donkeys are smart, sure-footed, and quick to anticipate their next move. Anyone who's watched an Amish donkey-basketball game knows that.

One of my teenage friends in Northern Wisconsin lived on a few acres of land along Spooner Lake. The draw for most of her school mates was the lake. Not for me. I loved hanging out with her burros. In fact, Jeannie and I bonded over burros and I was top on her list for overnights.

I learned only recently that there is no difference between a burro and a donkey—burro, the Spanish name. A young donkey is a burrito.

Jesus was hailed in Jerusalem, not riding on a white stallion, rather on a burro accompanied by a burrito, and that prophesied by Zechariah: "See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Donkeys are great pack animals, and unlike horses they don't startle easily. Farmers in the West often intermingle them with their flocks to ward off coyotes. But with all their favorable qualities, donkeys these days are in danger, their hides used in Asian countries for medicinal purposes.

Enter Ron King, a top publishing executive who would leave the corporate world to purchase a 75-acre California ranch. Now Oscar's Place, the ranch is a donkey refuge and adoption agency. Gone is his high salary, designer clothes, first-class world travel and fine dining.

Ron's extraordinary success in the corporate world could not have been imagined during his younger years. Born and raised in small-town Arkansas, his father was a Baptist preacher whose authoritarian God would have cast the

boy into hell. Ron's secret: his sexuality. He enrolled in college, but he couldn't get away from God's awful judgment. "For years," he writes, "I was in a really bad place... a drug addict... homeless when I was 26."

Yet he would pull himself together and find work. A waiter at Hard Rock Café, he encountered "a crotchety old waitress named Mary Ann." She was on to him almost immediately and saw in him what few other people had. She vowed to help him turn his life around. His response was *bug out old woman*—until he was so low he attempted suicide.

Mary Ann found out and pushed her way right through all of his

defenses. She shared her tip money and took him to AA. After the first meeting she told him she would be back the next morning. Another meeting. It was a difficult road, but he prevailed: "I have never had another drink or drug."

Back waiting tables, he was noticed by an advertising agent who recognized his affable personality. The agent took a chance and offered him a job in sales. "He taught me almost everything I know about business," remembers Ron. "From there, I was off and running."

And he's still running. Oscar's Place is the most difficult job he's ever had: "It is physically exhausting. I'm throwing bales of hay and carrying 50-pound bags of concrete, and chasing after animals who kick and bite when you're trying to give them injections."

Does he ever miss the perks of corporate life? Perhaps when he's administering injections, but he sums up his life succinctly: "I've never been happier."

Considering all the mentoring Ron has given and received throughout his career, one situation stands out above all others—tough love and tender mercies from Mary Ann, the "crotchety old waitress." □

—Ruth Tucker

...one situation stands out above all others—tough love and tender mercies from Mary Ann, the "crotchety old waitress."



## Quotes & Connections



"The feet of saints are as much of clay as everybody else's, and their sainthood consists less of what they have done than what God has for some reason chosen to do through them."—Frederick Buechner

"Walking with God down the avenue of prayer, we acquire something of His likeness and unconsciously we become witnesses to others of His beauty and His grace." —Edward McKendree Bounds

"Smart men walked on the moon, daring men walked on the ocean floor, but wise men walk with God."—Leonard Ravenhill

"People who walk by faith don't see obstacles; they see opportunities."—Warren W. Wiersbe

"God tells us, 'I'm here. Let's walk together.'" —Anonymous

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight." —Proverbs 3:5-6

## MISSION STATEMENT

Plain Truth Ministries proclaims Christianity without the religion. We express our Christ-centered ministry as *faith alone, grace alone and Christ alone*.

## HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

For an electronic subscription go to [www.ptm.org/sub](http://www.ptm.org/sub). The Internet allows us to serve readers around the world. Archives of *Plain Truth* are available at [www.ptm.org](http://www.ptm.org). Printed copies of *Plain Truth* are a benefit mailed to generous, regular PTM Friends and Partners. If you would like to contribute go to [www.ptm.org/give](http://www.ptm.org/give).

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Plain Truth Ministries gratefully accepts contributions (tax deductible in the U.S.) to further the ongoing work of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. We accept donations in U.S. funds by check, money order or credit card. Please call us at 1-800-309-4466, visit our secure website, [www.ptm.org/give](http://www.ptm.org/give), or write to us at Plain Truth Ministries, Pasadena, CA 91129.

## TO UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS

Be sure to notify us immediately of any change in your address by calling us at 1-800-309-4466, visiting our website at [www.ptm.org/contact](http://www.ptm.org/contact) or writing to *The Plain Truth*, Pasadena, CA 91129.

## TO SEND A LETTER OR E-MAIL

Write to *The Plain Truth*, Pasadena, CA 91129, or email us at [managing.editor@ptm.org](mailto:managing.editor@ptm.org).

The editors reserve the right to print or not print comments so addressed, in whole or in part, as deemed in the public interest, and to print your name and edit the letter for clarity and space. We will protect the confidentiality of correspondence that we deem to be of a personal nature. Correspondence published by Plain Truth Ministries does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Plain Truth Ministries.

## EDITORIAL STAFF

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** Greg Albrecht  
**EDITOR/ART DIRECTOR:** Laura Urista  
**EDITOR:** Brad Jersak  
**PUBLISHING AND CIRCULATION DIRECTOR:** Dennis Warkentin  
**ASSOCIATE EDITORS:** Ed Dunn, Monte Wolverton

## COPYRIGHT & POSTAL INFO

*The Plain Truth* is published six times a year by Plain Truth Ministries, Pasadena, CA 91129. Copyright © 2022 Plain Truth Ministries. Printed in U.S.A. All rights reserved. Volume 87, Number 5: September 2022. Unless noted otherwise, scriptures are quoted from the *Holy Bible, NIV*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 International Bible Society. UBP of Zondervan. *The Plain Truth*® is a U.S. trademark.

## SUBMISSIONS

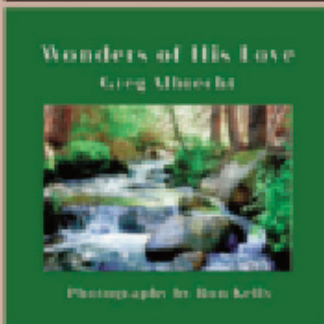
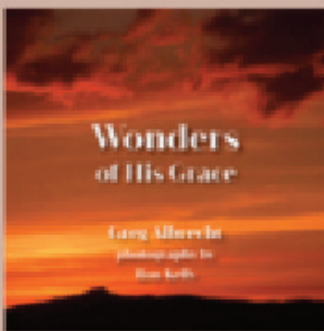
*The Plain Truth* does not publish unsolicited manuscripts. The publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited artwork, photographs or manuscripts.

## PLAIN TRUTH MINISTRIES

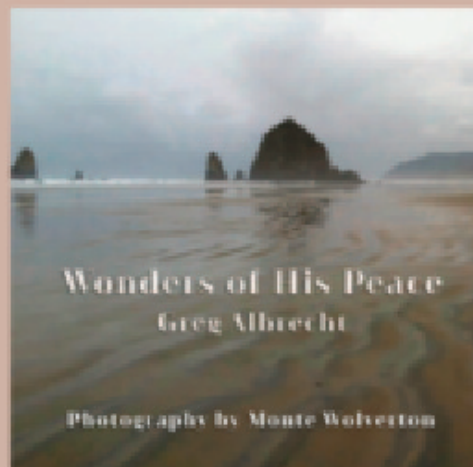
*The Plain Truth* is published by Plain Truth Ministries (PTM). If you are interested in learning more about PTM, visit our website at [www.ptm.org](http://www.ptm.org) (and email us) or write us at Plain Truth Ministries, Pasadena, CA 91129.

# The Wonders Series!

## By Greg Albrecht & Friends



## COMING SOON! VOLUME 3 WONDERS OF HIS PEACE



To order volumes 1 and 2  
call **1-800-309-4466**