



LWML CNH CHRISTIAN LIFE LINE

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LaVada Terrell - VP, Christian Life

A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST

In the fall, we think of harvesting grains, vegetables, and fruits. A successful harvest is a bountiful one. Scripture tells us of another very important harvest. That is the harvesting of souls for the Kingdom of God. We have a bountiful God who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). According to Jesus, a key element of this harvest is prayer. And He [Jesus] said to them, *The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.* (Luke 10:2).

When Jesus taught the people to pray, His prayer included the petition, *Your kingdom come ...* (Matthew 6:10a). The kingdom belongs to those who believe in God's Word and His message of Jesus Christ the Savior. In this petition, we pray that the kingdom would come to all. In his Small Catechism, Dr. Martin Luther explains what we are asking in this petition: "a. That God would graciously grant us true faith and a godly life; b. That He would extend His Kingdom of Grace on earth (missions); and c. That He would hasten the coming of His Kingdom of Glory." (The Second Petition, Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism. Concordia Publishing House, 1943)

In Acts, the believers prayed for boldness in spite of persecution. *And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness ...* (Acts 4:29). That prayer was answered with a gift from God. *And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness* (Acts 4:31). We can pray for that boldness too.

In his letters to the churches, Paul continuously prays for the workers in the harvest field and asks them to do the same for him. His prayers are both requests and thanksgiving. *We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints ...* (Colossians 1:3-4). *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding ...* (Colossians 1:9). *Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored ...* (2 Thessalonians 3:1).

In the LWML Pledge, we consecrate ourselves "to the great task of bringing the lost and the erring into eternal fellowship with Him." One way we do that is with our mission grants. It is easy to put money in the Mite Box, but consistently praying for the mission grants is more challenging. As Jesus urges His disciples in Luke 10:2, let us pray earnestly for those who administer the grants and those who benefit from the grants that the *harvest may be bountiful*. When the mission grants are paid and we hear of their success, let us give thanks to our bountiful God *who desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of faith.* (1 Timothy 2:4).

O God of Creation, you have blessed us with the changing of the seasons. As we welcome the autumn months, may the earlier setting of the sun remind us to take time to rest. May the brilliant colors of the leaves remind us of the wonder of your creation. May the steam of our breath in the cool air remind us that it is you who give us the breath of life. May the harvest from the fields remind us of the abundance we have been given and bounty we are to share with others. May the dying of summer's spirit remind us of your great promise that death is temporary and life is eternal. We praise you for your goodness forever and ever. Amen.

*Pray for a Bountiful Harvest [originally] Written by Colleen Spahr, Superior, Colorado
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