

# Eastern Mission

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

July 2021

***“But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. <sup>20</sup> For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:19-2***

After God poured out His Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the apostles boldly proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The same apostles who beforehand were afraid to come forth from the upper room, now go out to fearlessly preach the wonderful words of life. After God miraculously healed the lame man outside of the Temple by the command of Peter, Peter and John are ordered to refrain from preaching Jesus Christ. Peter and John responded by saying that they have no choice. They *must* “...**speak the things which we have seen and heard.**” The Gospel was simply too good for them to keep silent.

This is the portion of God’s Word that continues to come to my mind as I grieve the loss of my friend and Brother, Orval Wirkkala. Upon reflection, Orval had the heart of an evangelist. He had an overwhelming passion to share the Good News of God’s grace to anyone who would listen. Orval shared the Gospel, not only because he was commanded to do so, but because the news was simply too good for him to keep silent. Orval preached the grace of God, because he *knew* the grace of God. The more Orval learned of God’s forgiveness for himself, the more he desired to share that message of forgiveness with others.

I was struck by a picture of Orval that I saw on Facebook that was posted by his daughter, Lynn, I believe. It shows Orval seated outside, studying his bible with telling smile on his face, as if he had discovered yet another treasure from God’s Word. ***“Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.” Matthew 13:52*** Orval was always studying, always learning, always growing “...**in grace and in the knowledge of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.**” **II Peter 3:18** We enjoyed his fellowship as a part-time student at the Inter-Lutheran Seminary for several years. Even after retiring from serving the Kingston congregation as their pastor, Orval remained steadfast in his passion for Christ’s church. He faithfully served in the Foreign and Eastern Missions of our church federation. Along with Brother Ansten Tretten, Orval coordinated weekly prayer and bible studies on the telephone in order to deepen the fellowship of fellow pastors and preachers. Even up to a few weeks before his death, Orval called me with an important concern. *“How can we help encourage young men who are just starting out in the ministry? I feel very strongly about this, and I am willing to help.”* It was only one of many such offers that I heard from our dear brother. When Orval saw a need, he set out to meet that need. Orval was a servant. ***“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” Matthew 25:23*** Our beloved brother Orval has now entered into that joy. He will be greatly missed and not easily forgotten. We continue to pray for Beth and her family as they grieve Orval’s passing. God bless us all as we continue our fellowship in the Gospel of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Orval’s daughter Renee offered this fitting bible quote as a tribute to her father:

***“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; <sup>2</sup> Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; <sup>4</sup> And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. <sup>5</sup> But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. <sup>6</sup> For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. <sup>7</sup> I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: <sup>8</sup> Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”***  
**II Timothy 4:1-8**

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Chuck Bylkas