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1920 Argyle Drive,  
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604 321 0555 FAX: 604 321 0555  
E-MAIL: editor@todistaja.com

**Editor:** Outi Alopaeus  
**Layout:** Keijo Sakara  
**Copyreading:** Anita Kuparinen,  
Tapani Alopaeus

# Special Edition

COMPLIMENTARY ISSUE

## God's Love & Power To Transform

by Stephanie Sutton

*As a child, I remember walking through a field of tall grass and flowers at a camp. Each light touch on my skin brought fear and terror. I lived constantly with so much of both that my body could never fully relax. I was unable to fully enjoy a touch as simple as a hug or a cuddle with a child. Constantly on "red alert" from the time I was born, even as a baby I was never able to fall asleep in my mother's arms.*

In my early twenties, I learned that I had a condition that amplified all five senses, and caused extra adrenaline to be created in my blood. At the time, daily "skin brushing" therapy was available for patients to help them cope. There was not much known about this condition, but the theory was that misfiring in the brain caused a sensory overload.

Near the end of 2011, I called out to God and asked, "Is this all there is to life?" If it was, then I was done. In retrospect, I think if God hadn't answered me, I would have killed myself because of the inner conflict and turmoil I lived with every day.



**Stephanie Sutton**

Soon after, I met a woman who was living proof of God's power and love to transform lives. She was passionate and eager to share her story. The powerful and simple gospel came bubbling up out of her as she spoke. My own heart hungered for what she had. This in itself is evidence of God's patient pursuit of me, His desire that I would become fully his. So

when she invited me to visit her Pentecostal church, I accepted. The first time I went, it was very different than anything in my Anglican roots. With His tangible presence, God the Father began to display and reveal His heart of love. I saw the Holy Spirit recognized, honoured and given permission to move. Jesus was slowly building trust with my distrusting heart.

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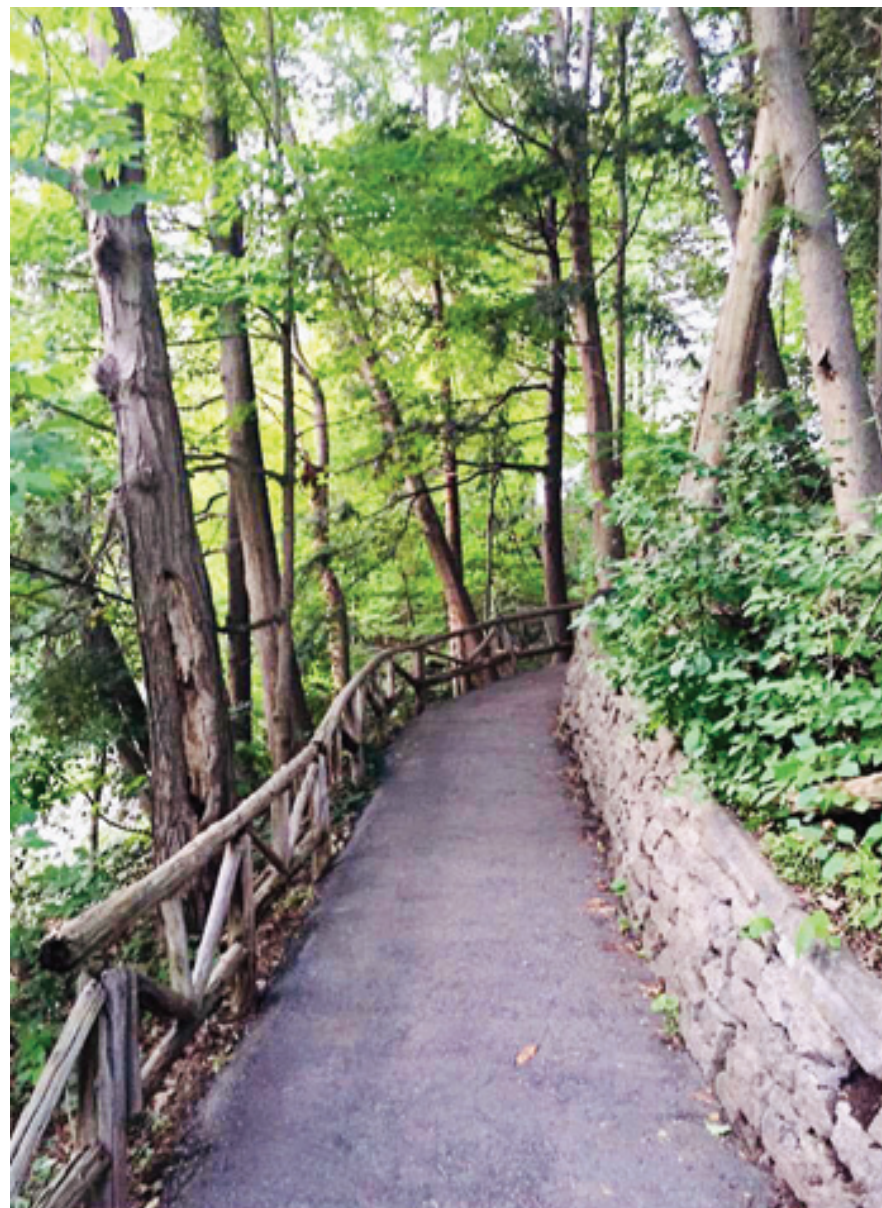
# Just Around the Corner

I was reminded recently of something that happened a number of years ago, when I was in Sudbury for a weekend with some friends. We wanted to go out for a nice dinner and were driving around looking for a restaurant in New Sudbury (a more recently built up part of the city). After a number of enquiries and attempts, we thought we were on the right road. We travelled for some time and still saw no sign of the restaurant or New Sudbury. It seemed almost like they were being hidden from us! Finally we saw a bend in the road, and decided that if we didn't see anything there we would turn back. Well, we didn't see anything, so we turned back.

We discovered a little while later that we had been on the right road after all, so we decided to try again. As it turned out, had we gone just about a hundred meters past the point where we turned back, we would have found what we were looking for earlier! This really spoke to me, and the friends who were travelling with me, about our journey in life.

Often when I'm tempted to just quit, I remember that trip, and remind myself to keep going even when it seems like I'm struggling with something and not getting anywhere. One of my biggest struggles has been with my insecurities. In fact, there were many times that I got very discouraged. I didn't think I would ever be able to get past them, but it was soon after I most felt like giving up that God brought about a real breakthrough, over a simple breakfast with a friend at a diner. Once again, just like on that memorable trip, the goal turned out to be just around the corner!

Anita Kuparinen  
Toronto, Ontario



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## God's Love & Power To Transform

I am amazed by God's incredible patience with me during this time.

The following year, I rededicated my life to Jesus. In the spring of 2013 I made the choice to be baptized, officially setting down roots in the church I called home. God was wooing me, yet I still hadn't personally experienced His transforming power and love for myself.

A year later, I was at an evening service when a young man's wrist was miraculously healed. This sparked faith in me that God is able to heal the im-

possible. At home, the Holy Spirit led me to pray a specific prayer that broke spiritual curses. Immediately, I felt a tingling in my body and my five senses were adjusted miraculously. That was over six years ago and since then, I've been able to joyfully thank God every single day.

That summer, God led me to join an 8-person team from my home church on a 10-day mission trip. The trip was wonderful, but after the trip, it felt like something was still missing in my life. Then, one Sunday morning at church, I was thinking about all the ways that I had personally observed and experienced God's love. The Holy Spirit showed me that I was rejecting the priceless gift of new birth that Jesus died for. God kept offering it to me even though I'd said "no" to Him countless times because I felt I was too broken and unworthy. Finally, I imagined how

heartbreaking it was for Father God, having paid a high price for a gift that His daughter kept refusing. Yet in love, God kept offering it to me. That image broke my heart. Finally, I chose to accept God's love and new life. Immediately, God's acts of selfless love thawed my frozen heart. It became tender and I was truly able to give and receive love in relationship with God and family. "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love." *"Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them."* (1 John 4:16 NIV).

Stephanie Sutton  
Thunder Bay, ON

Stephanie is an emerging artist and writer. Visit her website at [www.beauty4ashstudio.com](http://www.beauty4ashstudio.com) [beauty4ashstudio@gmail.com](mailto:beauty4ashstudio@gmail.com)

## REFLECTIONS

I sometimes try to imagine how those who have left us, and who have gone to heaven, are doing... What an incredible feeling to wake up this morning from a dream that felt so real. A young child was headed towards Wellington Street after not listening to a mother's plea to hold onto her hand. Just as the child was about to step into traffic, this energetic woman comes running out of nowhere (from the direction of my Mummi's old house) and runs fast alongside the road towards the child. Instead of the child going into the traffic, the focus is directed to the lady running with her back straight, her face flawless and smiling so radiantly at the child. My grandmother gigg-

les and invites the little one to chase her and follow her instead. The child laughs in pure delight at my Mummi, and begins to chase her away from the dangerous road. The dream ended with a snapshot of my grandmother's angelic smile as if she was letting me know she was alive and well! And boy could she run! Wow! All I can say is that my Grandmother was beautiful, youthful, flawless and running like she was an Olympian. I will never forget this vivid dream. Oh how I miss my Mummi but I am so blessed to know that she is doing very well where she is.

Liisa Amirault  
Sault Ste. Marie, ON



Liisa and her Mummi (Vilma)



# Father Does Know Best



**Greetings from Sault Ste. Marie! It is June and it seems that nature here is at its loveliest! The Word of God says in Psalm 107:7, "And He led them forth by the right way, that they may go to a city for a dwelling place."**

More than a year ago, living at Suomi-Koti in Thunder Bay, I felt happy and settled. We had our family nearby and a wonderful community of very good friends. We weren't even thinking of moving. We had lived there on and off for 20 years and seen our grandsons grow up to be fine young men. Then, last April, we were invited to come to Sault Ste. Marie for a month to help with the Finnish meetings. In August, Saara and Sam moved away to Waterloo, and we attended the annual conference, which was being held in Sault Ste. Marie. Again, we were gently invited to move back.

It is not easy to pack up and leave, especially as you get older. We should be used to it by now though, having moved so much and lived on three different continents and four Canadian provinces! During this time, a Bible verse I have loved all my life resonated in my heart. It is from Deuteronomy 33:27. *"The Eternal God is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms."*

Why did we choose to come back here? Actually, we have come full circle, as Sault Ste. Marie was our first home when we immigrated to Canada in 1973. The church here, together with the church in Vancouver, sent us to Ethiopia in 1975, so we have learned to love this city. In fact, some dear old friends still live here today, and we felt so welcomed when we stepped into the church that first Sunday after moving back. Veikko Alopaeus embraced us in a warm "bear hug"

and we were then blessed into the church as members!

There were no apartments available at the Finnish Home at first, so some resourceful friends found us a beautiful place with big panoramic windows, which faced the sunrise! In the book "The Pilgrim's Progress" it says, "The Pilgrim they laid in a large upper room and the name of that room was peace." When we first moved, we were both extremely tired, having just been very ill with a bad flu, so it was wonderful to rest and watch the beauty of the sky from the bedroom window!

From "Streams in the Desert",  
by Lettie B. Cowman

*"Loved, then the day will not be drear,  
For One we know is ever near,  
Proving to our hearts so clear  
That we are loved!"*

*Loved when our sky is clouded o'er,  
And days of sorrow press us sore;  
Still we will trust Him evermore,  
For we are loved.*

*Time, that affects all things below,  
Can never change the love He'll show:  
The heart of Christ with love will flow,  
And we are LOVED."*

During the last year, the old hymns have been such a comfort and inspiration to me. My Mother's favourite hymn was "Abide with Me." In one verse, it says, "Change and decay all around I see, Oh Thou, Who changeth not, Abide with me." We sang it together the last time I saw her in England before she died in 1970. I also have memories of her mother, watching Nanno as she sat in her rocking chair, listening to hymns on her little old radio, with tears streaming down her face. Now, I tend to do the same!

The Bible has also become more precious as life goes on. It is my rock of refuge! Recently, I read Robert Morgan's book "100 Bible Verses Every Christian Should Know." It is so important that we hide the Word of God in our hearts so that whatever comes our way in life, we can open its treasures to comfort and guide us. Psalm 119:162 says, *"I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure."* Indeed He is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Yes, the Lord does lead us when we trust Him. Father does know best!

This morning, I was once again wondering about our future as we become increasingly older, and I remembered the promise, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him!" What a prospect we have! Praise the Lord!

As we live through these difficult days of the Corona virus pandemic and social distancing from those we love, let us cultivate our love for the Lord and learn more about Him. He is always close by. He just a prayer away!

Anne Lappalainen  
Sault Ste. Marie, ON.



# A Life of Peace

Every person desires peace in life, even if it's just for a moment, but sometimes we have difficulty finding it. So many factors can keep us from peace, whether it's an external influence like our busy daily schedules, or something internal that we battle in ourselves like fear or anxiety. Whatever it may be, one thing is for certain, life is hard at times and these tough times tend to rob us of our peace. Thankfully, believers in Jesus do not have to look for peace in this world alone.

Jesus says in the gospel of John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." What comforting words from our Lord and Saviour for us to hear this day. With the current world situation being what it is, we are prone to feel fear and anxiety over what tomorrow may have in store for us. However, the beautiful thing about the peace that Jesus offers is that its source is not from this world.

When we look at the life of Jesus, we see that the peace He had wasn't a product of the circumstances or environment around Him, but the presence of God with Him. He knew God was in control in every situation and Jesus trusted God's leading in all aspects of His life. So the question is, can we have this same lasting peace in our lives? The answer is, thankfully, yes. The next question is how?

The peace Jesus offers is free. It's a gift. Jesus provides us peace with God through His work on the cross, atoning for our sins. We are forgiven because Jesus suffered and died for our sin, even though He never knew any sin. He is the sacrifice worthy to pay for our transgressions, the greatest exchange in history. He gives His righteousness to you so that you can have peace with God and more than that, a relationship with your Creator. When we are prepared to face life and eternity, our soul is at rest, and we find a true and lasting peace that this world cannot give.

It's like the age-old story of the old farmhand who was hired



by the farmer. When the farmer asked him if he's a good farmhand, the old farmhand replied, "Well, I can sleep when the wind blows." One night when the winds began to howl and a great storm was blowing in, the farmer jumped out of bed to wake the farmhand to help secure the farm. The farmhand's reply was, "I told you I can sleep when the wind blows." When the farmer went outside, he realized that all the supplies, animals, and equipment had already been tied down and secured for the coming storm. The farmer finally understood what the old farmhand meant by his words. The same is true for you and me. We can have peace even in the midst of the storms of life, when we have properly secured our faith in Jesus Christ. God bless you,

Pastor Jarno Karjanlahti,  
Vancouver, BC

## Take Hold of Eternal Life

This column provides a brief overview of God's plan of salvation, and tells you how to be a child of God.

- 1. Every human being is a sinner.** "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Sin condemns a person to eternal punishment.
- 2. God loves you.** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).
- 3. Jesus is the only savior.** "Neither is there salvation in any other, it has no other name under heaven by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).
- 4. You need to repent of your sins,** ask forgiveness and believe in Jesus' atoning work on the cross, and personally accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. When you receive Jesus, you become a child of God. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12). This is called new birth. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God (John 3:3).
- 5. Pray like this:** The Lord Jesus, I understand that I am a sinner, and I believe that You died on the cross for me. I would now like to open the door to my heart and accept you as my Savior and Lord. You control everything from now on and help me to live according to Thy will.

*If you prayed that prayer with a sincere heart, you are now a child of God, saved, and on your way to eternal life.*

**We're living in unprecedented times. Our family experienced this first hand – not at the hands of the virus directly, but indirectly – as unexpected COVID-19 travel restrictions were implemented.**

It was impossible for family members to travel from abroad to be with our grandmother, Sinikka, as she was dying, with the exception of my mother who was already in Florida, visi-

ting. It was heartbreaking.

As a result, I joined an online COVID-19 Global Church, "Hackathon" (hosted by FaithTech), a few weeks after her passing. FaithTech brings "techy" Christians together to create solutions to global problems, and, along with my team, we created a service for families separated from dying

## Sound of Your Love

loved ones called "Sound of Your Love."

The service offers families remote communication with minimally responsive patients who are too weak to hold a screen or a conversation. Since hearing is usually the last of the senses to remain at the time of death, Sound of Your Love gives family and friends

the opportunity to share memories, prayers, encouragement, and comfort through audio messages that are accessible from any phone. Nurses and care workers simply call in, enter an access code, and all the messages play back to back for the patient.

I consider [www.soundofyourlove.com](http://www.soundofyourlove.com) a tribute to "Mummi" Sinikka's life.

Michelle (Mise)