

finished the race, I have kept the faith.” Similarly, we also want to close our last ministry letter to you with some personal reflections.

God at Work: Reflections



A Purpose runs through It.

One of the first questions we ask ourselves as we reflect back on our missionary service is **Why?** Why did God call two young and very inexperienced kids, who knew so very little about the world and had

lived, frankly, a very sheltered life in America, why did God call us into cross cultural missionary service? OK, truthfully, that question might never be answered. God seldom explains the why. What we can know is that God's **purposes** ran through it all. Romans 8:28-30 reads:

“We know that in all things. God works for good for those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, and those He predestined he also called. Those he called he also gives.”

The reason we originally thought we were called to the mission field, to train national church leaders and pastors behind, what was then called, the Iron Curtain turned out to be only the first part of God's call for us--the first act. Leadership roles, women's ministry, member care and pastoral care developed over the subsequent years. As Debbie has always often said, our vision was only an inch high but God's had purposes beyond our imagining. There is no power in heaven or earth that can prevent God's purposes from coming to fruition. Purpose runs through all our lives and it is called the Sovereignty of God. We can trust God for His purposes in our lives.

The Surpassing Power of God

II Corinthians 4:5-7 reads:

“We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus's sake. But we have this treasure and jars of clay to show that all that this all surpassing power is from God and not from us.”

To try to understand God's purposes in one's life is much harder and more uncomfortable when your gaze is upon yourself. For then your awareness of

personal sin, failure, and inadequacies becomes acute. But these verses remind us that the **Power** of God does not rest in “these jars of clay”, but in God Himself. We attest today that through these many years we have seen God’s power through His Word and His Spirit in all the over 60 countries we have ministered in. It has never been by our might nor our power, but by His Spirit (Zechariah 4:6) that God’s love has been lived out through us. It is all about God. God is real and God is good. We so identify with Henri Nouwen’s description of a “wounded healer”. Though we are broken jars of clay, we are still somehow usable to God because His power is all-surpassing, sustaining, and overcoming. There is no power on earth or in heaven that can match God’s supreme power to accomplish His will. Power runs through our lives and it is called the Holy Spirit. We can trust God for His power to overcome our inadequacies.

The People of God kept us Running

We openly acknowledge that we could not have come this far without **People!** Our communities have been used by God to keep us going on. Hebrews 12:1-3:

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and not lose heart.”

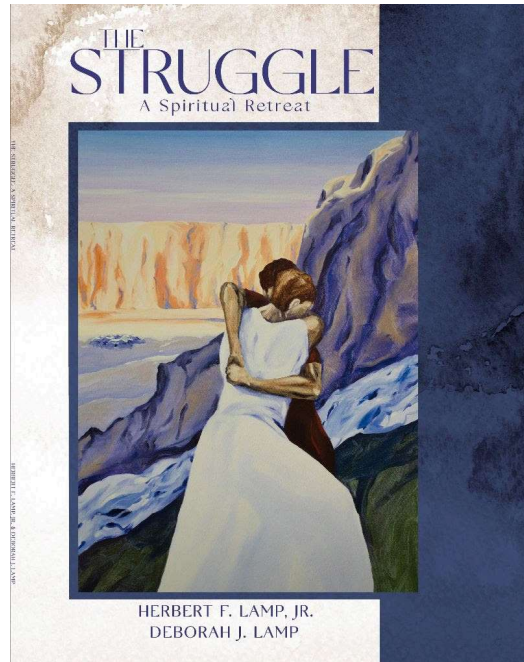
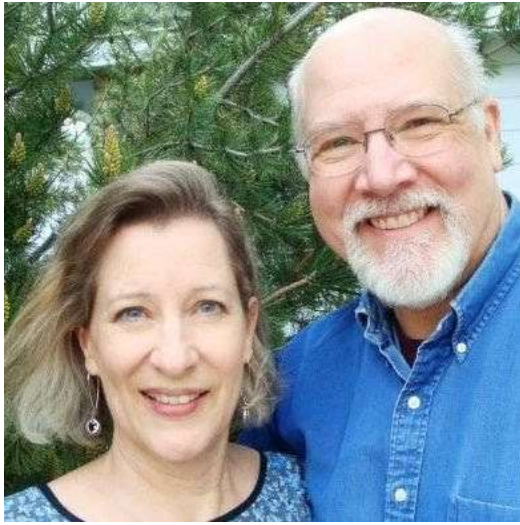
The great cloud of witnesses that surround us all call us to run strong, with perseverance, so we do not lose heart and fail to complete our race. Today we can say that without the people of God, both those like you who sent us, financed, and prayed for us, and for those who received, taught, encouraged and ministered with us, we could not have gotten to this finish line. We never ran alone. In Romans 16, Paul lists 24 names of people he wants to thank as he moves into his last stage of ministry. These are not just names and lists. They are real people who helped him in real ways.

We will not attempt here to list all the people who have helped us throughout the years. But we hope that you know that **your name** is on our own list of gratitude. Together we will share in the glory of the Father’s works. There is no power on earth or in heaven that can overcome God’s people. People run through our lives and they are called the Church of God. We can trust God that

He brings His people along our life's path so that we are encouraged to keep running the race He has laid out for us.

Praise and Prayer Notes . . .

- **Praise the Lord with us for the work He has done these 43 years together for the Kingdom.** God has done great things through these humble jars of clay and all glory goes to Him alone. **Thank you for being a part of it all!** God bless you, and bless you deeply.
- Two final ministry projects left for this month.
 - 1-**The Struggle** was published on Thanksgiving day – pray for its usefulness (**The Lament** will be published early next year) – and
 - 2) our final trip for BI, **Dec 8th-14th to Portugal**, where we will lead a Prodigal Retreat for some 30 European leaders of Word of Life. We need final strength and the Power of the Spirit in us. Pray we may be emptied and He may be lifted up!
- **Surprise, surprise**—Unbeknownst to us Herb's book *Journey With Me* has been translated into Spanish and released by William Carey Publishing this month.
- **Please know that no more gifts can be received for us after December 15th.** If you want to give a final gift you must do so before that date or it will go instead to the general fund of Barnabas. Gifts received now will go toward our final salary, the publication of the Lament, and our trip to Portugal.
- **Also, please note that after January 31st our email addresses will change to:**
 - hlampjr@outlook.com (slightly different from what we wrote in our last letter)
 - lampdeborahj55@gmail.com respectively.
 - Please add our new e-addresses to your address books.
 - Our street address & phone #s will stay the same.



With much joy and gratitude in Jesus!

Herb & Debbie

The Lamps

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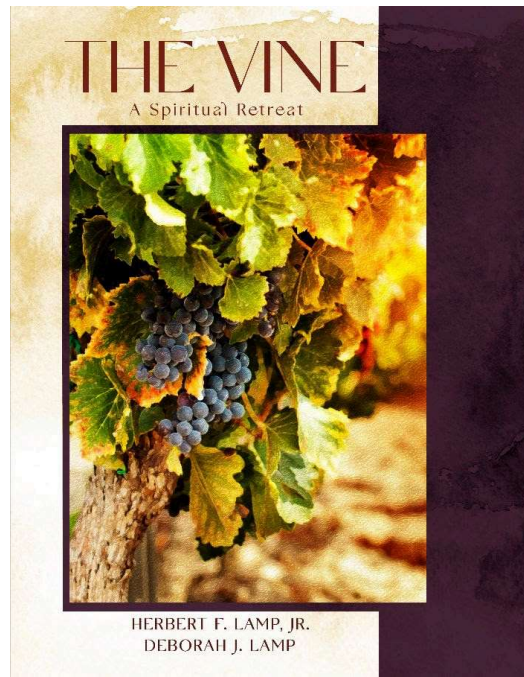
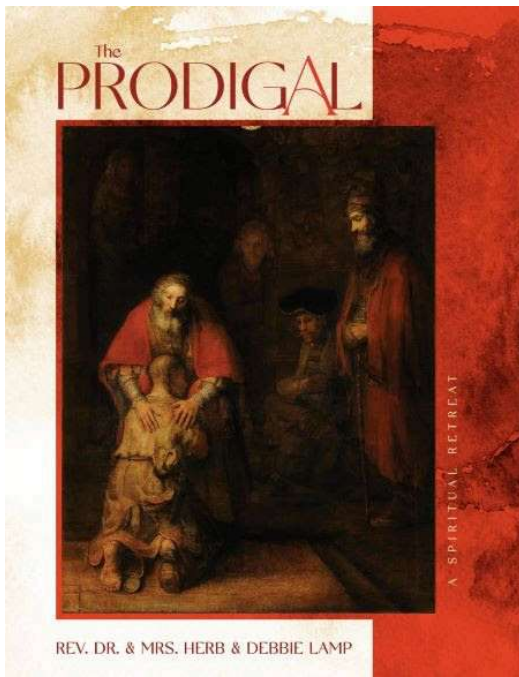
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Contributions to Lamp Ministry Welcome~~Give Here By Dec. 15th

Buy on Amazon--The Struggle: A Spiritual Retreat

If one of your goals for 2024 or 2025 is to spend a day in retreat with the Lord, please consider

**The Prodigal,
The Vine
or The Struggle**



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