

The Best of GodTouches.org

By John J. Boyer



Cover Art by Anglinia Washington

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Dedication:

To the Author and Perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-3).

Author's Note

The full contents of the website are available at <http://www.godtouches.org> This is a work in progress. If you wish to make a comment just click on one of the posts in the blog.

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Poems

by John j. Boyer

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THEME

May I tell of your love in song and in story,
 For the tale of your love is the tale of your glory.

TO THE TRIUNE GOD

Amazing Advocate, the torch of grace,
 Whom Jesus asked the Father for his friends.
 Your holy light illumines this darksome place.
 Upon your warmth our very life depends.

The souls you baptize with your living flame,
 Who first have found the pearl so highly priced,
 With burning zeal the wondrous news proclaim
 Of life eternal at the side of Christ.

Indwelling Spirit, set my heart ablaze
 With love of God and neighbor stronger than
 The strongest earthly wish of all my days,
 And strongest urging human nature can.

Pray in the hearts of those you set aflame
 With ardent cries that language cannot frame.

* * *

You are the tiny mustard seed
Your Father took and planted on the earth,
Counting for little to the world indeed,
Yet dwarfing all the kings in future worth.

You are the tiny bit of yeast
The Spirit buries deep within our hearts,
In hearts that differ little from the beast.
And yet your presence spreads to all our parts.

You are the single grain of wheat
Which fell upon the ground and seemed to die.
Yet you are he who cannot know defeat.
Your fruit shall ever grow and multiply.

In you the humblest and the highest meet.
In you the world is made and made complete.

* * *

Father, I thank you. Son and Holy Spirit
You sent to save and guide the human race.
They came to us from love, not our merit
That we might some day see you face-to-face

Father, I thank you. All the things of earth
Are signposts pointing to your holy place.
Like signposts we must pass them by. Their worth
Is cheapened if enjoyed without your grace.

Father, I praise you. Fountainhead of life,
From whom proceed the Son and Spirit both,
In perfect love, with neither strain nor strife,
Unchanging, yet the source of birth and growth.

With thanks and praise and love your children gather
Adoring round you, crying "Abba, Father!"

GOD'S ONLY CARE

To what shall I your love compare
Of all the things in earth and sky?
What reaches out to light and air,
And binds together low and high?

Your love resembles curving space, *
which holds all matter in its hand,
Whose fingers focus light's quick trace,
Whose curve can even time command.

Its cosmic web embraces all,
The wheels of stars, the grains of dust,
The airy atoms; great or small,
Nothing can escape its thrust.

Likewise your love embraces all:
Each angel, sparrow, seed and hair,
Each human soul despite its fall,
As though it were your only care.

* Gravity, but it wouldn't fit in the meter, and curving space is more poetic.

WHAT GOD WANTED

Why, Lord, have You created me
And all the rest of humankind?
A proud and sinful lot are we,
Though weak of body, soul and mind.

The universe obeys Your laws.
Your mind's impress it bears within.
Though we may think we see its flaws,
It cannot ever fail or sin.

The angels see You face to face;
Your vibrant life they bear within.
But those who sinned have spurned Your grace,
And shall not ever turn again.

So why have You created me,
My God, in Whom I move and live? I dare to ask You: Could it be
You wanted someone to forgive?

THE STRAY

"What man among you with a hundred sheep
Would not, if he should find that one had strayed,
Enfold the others on the grassy steep
And seek that single one with heart dismayed?

"And when he found it would he not rejoice?
Not check its feet and limbs with patient care,
Not soothe its trembling fear with hand and voice,
And then upon his shoulders homeward bear?

"Arrived at home he would his neighbors call
Saying: 'Rejoice with me, for I have found
The sheep which I had lost!' The angels all
Rejoice with me and make a joyful sound

"Over a single sinner who repents
Far more than nine and ninety self-styled saints."

AND YOUR YOURSELF AS CHIEF

Jesus, meek and humble of heart,
Make my heart like yours.
Let wrath not reign in any part,
For only Love endures.

Jesus, joyful washer of feet,
Teach my heart to serve,
Not as a job I must complete,
But with a smile and verve.

Jesus, tender healer of ill,
Heal my heart of grief.
Your peace and joy and love instill,
And You Yourself as chief.

TWO BLESSED WIDOWS

"Observe this widow, how her back is bent
From years of toil to earn a scanty crust
Washing the clothes of wealthy fops intent
on feasting grandly and the joys of lust.

"See now these others, standing tall and straight,
Their bodies manicured with perfect care,
Arrayed in garments for affairs of state,
With not an errant spot or speck or hair.

"These of their abundance have given so;
She of her penury has given little.
But all their lavishness is but for show,
While she has given all, her every tittle.

"Therefore I tell you, she is greatly blest,
For she has given more than all the rest."

* * *

This is my mother as she might have been,
Had she been childless and reduced to toil
To earn a scanty crust, the drudge of men
And women living off of heartless spoil.

Or like that widow of the town of nain,
Whose only son had died, whose sobs and tears
So moved my heart that I could not refrain
From granting her the hope of all the years.

And yet my mother's son shall also die.
But she will not despair. Her first assent
To God's eternal love shall magnify
His glory through the People's whole extent.

For she has given most and given best.
Therefore shall all the ages call her blest.

THE SIGN OF LOVE

When the apostle to the Gentiles wrote
His ode to love, he said what love is not,
But first of all its virtues, most to note,
He cited patience, which the world forgot.

And when he came to reckon up the fruits
Bestowed on those whose birth is from above:
Here, too, of all the outward attributes,
Patience was foremost as the sign of love.

Patience is peaceful waiting till the time has come
To act, then acting strongly, waiting with respect
While creatures grow and till the Lord shall come,
While doing what we can, without neglect.

Measure your love with patience as the rod,
Patience with self, with others and with God.

HYMN OF GOD'S LOVE

(To the tune of "creation's Lord, We Give Thee Thanks".)

O God of love, we sing Thy praise
That we are in Thine image made,
To walk with Thee in all our ways,
In perfect love and unafraid.

To cultivate this wondrous earth,
A garden ringed with desert space,
Thou gavest us as home and hearth,
While knowing we would flout Thy grace.

And yet, where sin did so abound,
Thy love and grace abounded more.
Old death in Thee its Master found,
And with its mace erased the score.

Thy new creation, burnished bright,
We even more Thy likeness bear:
The earth's true salt, the world's true light,
We venture forth Thy love to share.

HYMN TO THE LOVING CREATOR

(To the tune of "O God, our Help in Ages Past")

O God, the skies Thy glory shout,
And Earth proclaims Thy love.
Thy handiwork is all about,
Around, below, above.

More lasting than a house of stone,
Thy Church is built on rock.
Sufficient is Thy Word alone
For strength in ev'ry shock.

Before the stars in splendor shown,
Or space received its frame,
While time itself was yet unknown,
Thou wert, and art, the same.

The flow of time from start to end
Thou viewest at a glance;
Thy creatures on Thy love depend
In ev'ry moment's dance.

All time for us is as a flood
That sweeps all things away.
But if we love and seek the good,
To Thee we come to stay.

O God, the skies Thy glory shout,
And Earth proclaims Thy love,
And we, with hearts and minds devout,
For Thee affirm our love.

WITH PRAISE AND JOY AND LOVE SUPREME

Shall I conclude that daily joys
of beauty, feeling, thought and breath
Are nothing more than pretty toys
To pass the time 'twixt birth and death?

Or think of all of them as snares,
Or toothy jaws with poisoned bait,
To trap my soul in worldly cares
And drag me through the nether gate?

Oh no! for You have better ends
in mind for these delightful things.
They mark the rutted road that wends
Through desert wastes devoid of springs.

>

As signposts to the lasting city
We must, however, pass them by
Without a sense of selfish pity
That soon this fleeting breath shall fly.

For when it does our spirits rise,
Awaking from a childish dream,
And dwell with You beyond the skies,
With praise and joy and love supreme.

MISCELLANEOUS VERSES

Help me Lord to please our Father
In all my thoughts and words and deeds,
To follow your example, rather
Than worldly wants or niggling needs.

Help me Lord to please our Father
And not imagine praise or blame
From any human being, rather
To value only His acclaim.

Make me a mystic, Lord,
To see you face to face,
In silent love, without a word,
And brimming with your grace.

Make me a fountain, Lord
That gushes forth your grace,
And let the flowing waters cleanse
My soul of sin's last trace

Jesus, Mary, your humility,
Surrender to the Father's will;
Complete obedience, not servility,
But loving trust in good or ill.

Help me Lord to seek perfection
In perfect love of you and neighbor,
With perfect trust in your direction,
And perfect, patient, faithful labor.

Help me Lord to turn to you
Before all else in all my needs

And even wants. Your grace is true
To guide my thoughts and words and deeds.

Help me Lord to bring to you
Decisions, questions, plans and doubts,
Concerns and feelings, moods and dreams
Remembrance too of all things past.

Help me Lord to look ahead
And not to brood on past events,
To let the dead past bury its dead,
Mistakes and sins and failed intents.

Help me Lord to rise above
Discomfort, comfort, pleasure, pain,
The need for effort, mere convenience,
Annoyance, anger, petty fears.

Help me Lord to use your gifts
As you would have it, not as I.
Grant grace when resolution drifts
From pleasing you, or I shall die.

May any act, however small
You cannot view with joy and pleasure
Disgust my taste like bitter gall;
For only you are all my treasure.

Grant me Lord a pleasant mood,
But first of all to joy in you,
Despite my feelings, bad or good;
For such a joy is sure and true.

Were I the only soul on earth
That ever had been led astray,
You still had come with lowly birth,
And still have died to show the way.

Teach me, Lord, to seek the best
In all I do at your request,
Whether from myself or others,
In the service of our brothers.

BREATHING IN THE LORD

The following verse is an example of how to breathe in the Lord.

This is my Father's world.
I breathe him with the air.
In its gentlest press his hands caress.
He touches me everywhere.

Prayer is spiritual breathing. Physical deep breathing is well known for its relaxing effects. Why not, then, combine the two? Consider the above adaptation of a verse from a much-loved hymn. Recite it silently to yourself, and while you are reciting, breathe. Breathe in on the first line. Breathe out on the second line. Similarly, breathe in on the third line and out on the fourth. This is the basic prayer-breathing relaxation exercise.

I hope it will work for you, because for me it is a great way to reduce anxiety. Try it, too, when you are waiting and have nothing to do. It is a good way to follow St. Paul's advice to pray without ceasing.

As you may suspect, hymns form a good basis for prayer-breathing. Other prayers with a strong rhythm and well-defined lines of suitable length are also good. You will find many such on the [prayers](#) page. All of the [poems](#) are also suitable.

Below are some hymns which I have found particularly helpful. If you would like others to be added please let me know. In some cases I have made slight changes or added verses. Please bear with me. You can find the originals in many good hymn collections. But note that even here there are variations. If you follow one of the links in the following table of contents it will take you to the hymn whose first line is in the link.

CONTENTS

- [Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;](#)
- [Make me a captive, Lord,](#)
- [For the beauty of the earth"](#)
- [Fight the good fight with all thy might;](#)
- [Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken,](#)

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart,
Wean it from earth, in all its pulses move;
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,
And make me love thee as I wish to love.

I ask no dreams, no prophet extasies,
No sudden rending of the veil of clay,
No angel visitants, no opening skies,
But take the dimness of my soul away!

Hast thou not bid me love thee, God and king,
All, all thine own, heart, soul and strength and mind?
I see thy cross; there teach my heart to cling.
Oh let me seek thee, and oh let me find.

Teach me to feel that thou art always nigh.
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh.
Teach me the patience of ungranted prayer.

Teach me to love thee as thine angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame,
The baptism of the heaven-descended dove,
My heart an altar, and thy love the flame.

Make me a captive, lord,
And then I shall be free.
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand.
Imprison me within thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.

My heart is weak and poor
Until it master find;
It has no spring of action sure;
It varies as the wind.
It cannot freely move
Till thou hast wrought its chain.
Enslave it with thy matchless love,
And deathless it shall reign.

My power is weak and low
Till I have learned to serve.
It lacks the needed fire to glow;
It lacks the will to nerve.
It cannot drive the world
Until itself be driven.

Its flag can only be unfurled
When thou hast breathed from heaven.

My will is not my own
> Till thou hast made it thine.
If it would gain a monarch's throne
It must its crown resign.
It only stands unbent,
Amidst the clashing strife,
When on thy bosom it has lent,
And found in thee its life.

For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth,
Over and around us lies:
Jesus, lord, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of thanks and praise.

For the beauty of each hour,
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flower,
Sun and moon and stars of light:
Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of thanks and praise.

>

For the joys of ear and eye,
For the heart and mind's delight
For the mystic harmony
Linking sense to sound and sight:
Jesus, lord, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of thanks and praise.

For the joys of nose and tongue,
For the hands that touch and know,
Joys when old and joys when nung,
Heeart and mind that ever grow:
Jesus, lord, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of thanks and praise.

For the joys of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,

Friends on earth and friends above,
For all gentle thoughts and mild:
Jesus, lord, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of thanks and praise.

For each perfect gift of thine,
To our race so freely given,
Graces human and divine,
Flowers of earth and buds of heaven:
Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of thanks and praise.

Fight the good fight with all thy might;
Christ is thy strength and Christ thy right.
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally.

run the straight race with God's good grace;
Lift up thine eyes and seek his face.
Life with its path before us lies;
Christ is the way and Christ the prize.

Cast care aside; lean on thy guide;
His loving mercy shall provide.
Trust, and the trusting soul shall prove
Christ is its life, and Christ its love.

Faint not nor fear; his arms are near.
He faileth not, and thou art dear.
Only believe, and thou shalt see
That Christ is all in all to thee.

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God.
He whose word cannot be broken
Formed thee for his own abode.
On the rock of ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose.
With salvation's walls surrounded,
Thou mayest smile at all thy foes.

See, the streams of living waters,
Flowing from eternal love,
Well supply thy sons and daughters,
And all fear of want remove.
Who can faint when such a river
Ever flows their thirst to assuage,
Grace, which like the Lord the Giver,
Never fails from age to age?

Blest inhabitants of Zion,
Washed in the Redeemer's blood,
Jesus, whom their souls rely on,
Makes them kings and priests to God.
'Tis his love his people raises
Over self to reign as kings,
And as priests his solemn praises,
Each for his thank-offering brings

Savior, if of Zion's city,
I, by grace a member am,
Let the world deride or pity:
I shall glory in thy name.
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boastful pomp and show.
Solid joys and lasting treasure
Only Zion's children know.<

PRAYER COLLECTION

there is a lot of "I" in these prayers. That "I" is *you*. Please make as many of these prayers your own as you wish.

Teach me to live at every season
First by faith, and then by reason
Not by envy nor by pride"
By which so many souls have died; Not by feelings nor by "shoulds",
Nor passing lusts for earthly goods.
Not by comfort nor by ease,
But always You, my Love, to please;
Faith and reason working through love,
My heart rejoiced by things above.

Lord Jesus grant me both the motivation and the strength to form good new attitudes, expectations, feelings and habits, and to learn new skills. Through Your Spirit, to please our Father.

Create a clean heart in me, O Lord,
And your Holy Spirit take not from me.

God, be merciful to me, the sinner.

Jesus, YOU are lord.

May I listen to your voice,
That I may enter your place of rest.

May I rejoice in you always.
May I pray without ceasing.
May I give thanks
In all circumstances.

Holy Spirit, pray in me constantly,
especially in moments of weakness and sin.
Fan the spark of my freedom into flame.
for where you are, there is freedom.<

How happy are they whose strength you are!
They go from strength to strength.

You have given so much to me; give me one thing more, a thankful heart.

Make my heart's desire maximum participation in your own divine life, here, now and forever.

Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of thanks and praise.

Teach me, Lord, to love the cross,
Nor pine for gain, nor fret for loss.

Joseph, careful craftsman, pray for me.

Holy, holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Blessed be your holy and glorious name,
Praiseworthy and exalted above all forever!

My being proclaims your glory, Lord,
And my spirit exalts in you, my Savior,
Because you have looked upon your lowly servant.
You have done great things in me.
And greater things shall do.
Hallowed be your name!

I hate vain thoughts,
but your law I love.
To do your will is my delight,
and your law is within my heart.
Had not your law been my delight,
I should have perished in my affliction.
May I meditate on your law day and night.

Unite my pain with yours.
In you do I place my hope.
In faithfulness you have afflicted me.
You wound, but you also heal.
You give and you take away.
Hallowed be your name!

Lord, give me neither riches nor poverty,
But only my daily bread.

You are my strength and my salvation.
Of whom should I be afraid?

May I be holy, as you are holy.
You are the Lord my God.
May I be pure as you are pure,
That I may see you as you are.

Your mercy endures forever!

Blessed are you who come to us so rich in love and mercy!

Not to me, O Lord, not to me,
But to your name give the glory.
May your name, not mine, be praised.

I thank you Lord, that I am not like other people. (ironical)

I thank you, Lord, that I am fearfully, wonderfully, made.

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Everything with You, in the Spirit, to please the Father.

I WILL be glad and rejoice in your gift!
This is the day that you have made.
I WILL be glad and rejoice in it!

Would that I were strong with love!
I shall follow your love wherever it leads.

Shall I turn to you in sorrows and not in joys?

Unless you guide the thought,
the thinker ponders in vain.

One thing I ask of you, Lord, one thing I seek;
To look on your loveliness,
now and forever!

Make my ways your ways, and my thoughts your thoughts.

Dying you destroyed our death;
Rising you restored our life;
Lord Jesus, come in glory!

I do believe. Help my unbelief!

May it be done to me according to my faith.

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
And kindle in them the fire of your love.

With you there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

You are my Lord. Apart from you I have no good thing.
You are my portion and my cup!

Guide me in your ways and teach me,
For you are God my savior.

Speak Lord, for your servant listens.

I live now, not I, but you live in me.
In you I live and move and have my being.

Father, glorify your name!

Mother, teach me to be as obsessed with Jesus as you are.
Teach me to stand at the foot of the cross,
uniting my sufferings with His.
Teach me to adore with you the risen Christ.
Teach me to intercede with Him
That all may come to share His life and Spirit.
And may I adore and intercede with you forever.

You guide my feet in right paths,
For your name's sake.

How sweet are your words to my taste!
May I always taste and see how good you are!

My suffering is useless unless it is one with yours.

Though I fall, I shall not be utterly cast down,
For you uphold me with your hand.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in your house forever!

How happy are they who dwell in your house.
Continually they praise you!

You must increase, I must decrease.

If I have found favor in your eyes show me your face.

May I not hide your righteousness within my heart.

I must go apart, with you, from the crowd.

For you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts!

COMMUNION PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in this sacrament of sacraments. I love you above all things and desire to give myself to you as fully as you give yourself to me in this host. And I give you thanks for remaining with us until the end of time in the Eucharist. What other God has given his people his own flesh and blood??

Autobiography

John J. Boyer

I was born on a farm in Minnesota in 1936 in Wadena County. My family is of German descent on both sides. They are devout Catholics. My parents ultimately had 12 children. My youngest brother had Down Syndrome.

My mother told me later that she knew there was something wrong with my eyes because they were white inside, not black like the other kids'. So she took me to the doctor, and he told her I was blind. One of my older sisters has suggested that our mother may have had rubella while she was pregnant with me, because the kids had measles about that time.

I was sent to the Minnesota school for the blind at a young age. Neither I nor my parents were enthusiastic about this, but at that time it was the only way for a blind child to receive an education. There I was taught Braille and became a proficient Braille reader, a skill that has served me well ever since. However, at the age of seven I got an ear infection that took most of the hearing in my right ear, and a year later the same happened with the left ear, though it left enough hearing to understand people if they were close.

The next few years were spent in and out of school. However, I became an even more avid reader, especially of books on science. This was true in spite of the fact that good scientific reading in Braille was then, much more than now, in short supply. This lack was to motivate me many years later to do something about it. I also established a lab in the basement and had dreams of becoming another Edison.

At the age of 13 I was sent to the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind, because they had a deaf-blind department. My first three years there were not happy, partly because of the long separations (ten months) from my family. This increased my appreciation of family life. My parents had already provided an excellent example. However, there was a priest who worked with the deafblind students and gave me a good grounding in my faith. I also had my first look at the New Testament in Braille. I found the verse which has guided me ever since "These things happened to him that the works of God might be manifest in his life." (John 9:3)

High school was much better. I graduated in 1956 as salutatorian of my class. My enthusiasm for science continued. I took the radio and electronics course offered by a fabulous blind teacher and thought I would become an electronics engineer.

Next I went to the College (now University) of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. I majored in mathematics and took a lot of psychology courses. The math major was a preparation for a career as a computer programmer. At that time there were no real departments of computer science. I graduated in 1961, second in the class.

Sometime during the college years I read "Give us the Tools" by Henry Viscardi. It told of how a man with no legs set up a company to employ disabled people. This gave me the idea of perhaps doing the same. Years later it was realized.

There were no suitable jobs immediately available. My hearing had deteriorated to the point where I could no longer understand people unless they spoke directly into a microphone. I learned to live alone in an apartment, to do most of my own shopping, and to ride the city buses to an assembly-line job. In my spare time I designed and built a hearing aid. It was a big box, but it had better features than anything I could afford. During this time I also became an agnostic, primarily because I was unable to marry my high school sweetheart.

In 1964, I went to one of the first courses to train blind computer programmers at the University of Cincinnati. After completing this, I worked as a programmer at various places for a number of years.

In 1972 I took a job at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. A few months later I trained my own "seeing eye" dog, because at that time the guide dog schools would not accept deaf-blind students. At this time I also met Hazel, who became my wife in 1973. I had become a Unitarian and met her in church. We were happy for a few years, but then she was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis or Lou Gehrig's disease. She had a son from a previous marriage who has now also been similarly diagnosed. She died in 1977. (Her son died in 2001.)

The evening of the day she died I had my only paranormal experience. She seemed to return to me with the message that she had learned something and wanted me to share it. This brought about a religious reawakening. I decided to return to my Catholic traditions as recounted in the [history of the godtouches Internet Ministry](#). I left my job at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside and moved to Madison to continue my education in computer science. My objective now was to use my knowledge of computers in God's service. In practice this amounts to using it to benefit others. In 1982 I obtained a master's degree in Computer science, with a minor in electronics engineering and began studying for a Ph.D. My dissertation was to be on a robotic guide dog.

In 1981 I had started the nonprofit company Computers to Help People, Inc. (CHPI). It was intended to employ people with disabilities in the computer field. Gradually this organization assumed more importance than completing my Ph.D. I never did finish my dissertation.

About 1983 I had also slid into depression, precipitated apparently by the failure to find another marriage partner. This was a great detriment to my work. However, CHPI did grow slowly. In 1994 we moved to a new building with much more office space and an apartment upstairs for me.

In 1989 I received a cochlear implant. By this time my hearing had deteriorated to the point where I was deaf without a powerful hearing aid. The implant greatly increased my ability to hear environmental sounds, but it did not enable me to understand speech.

In 1996 I began to consider becoming a deacon in the Catholic Church. Over the years I had come to enjoy solitude and contemplation, and I had developed a strong desire to do something more direct for the spreading of the Gospel. I also realized that I had been specially called even as a child. I investigated the diaconate quite thoroughly, but in the end it seemed that God's will for me was to keep on doing what I was doing - using computers in his service - just doing it better. What this "better" was became clear a few years later.

In 1996 I also sought counseling for depression. This helped a great deal.

In 1998 I started the Technical Braille Center at CHPI. I had developed mathematical translation software for the MegaDots Braille translator. This made it more feasible to start such a center to ameliorate the dearth of good scientific books in Braille that I had noticed even as a child.

In 1997 I enrolled in Sister Maureen Langton's Ministry Formation Program for Catholic Deaf Adults. This gave me a firmer grasp of my faith and experience with other deaf people. It also provided insights into my own personality and training in pastoral counseling. This led to the establishment of the [godtouches Internet Ministry](#) later that year.

In 2002 I began a long collaboration with [ViewPlus Technologies, Inc.](#) They produce embossers (Braille printers) capable of producing not merely text but also high-quality tactile graphics. Originally I was asked to write a Braille translator program, so that they could have better control over their software. It also was to be open-source and available to all without cost. This resulted in [liblouis](#). Over the years many features were added, including back-translation and special facilities for handling mathematics.

But simple translation was not enough. The Braille also had to be formatted into lines, paragraphs, pages, etc. The mathematical facilities also needed enhancement. So I wrote another member of the suite, [liblouisxml](#). This could produce good Braille documents from files in plain text or in the html and xml languages. It could also produce mathematics in a number of different Braille codes.

But CHPI was having troubles. We never could get adequate funding. In 2004 we sold our building and moved into a suite in a commercial office building. I moved into an apartment in senior housing and set up a home office.

The next step in the collaboration with ViewPlus was the development of UTDML (Universal Tactile Document Markup Language), which could represent tactile graphics in addition to Braille text and mathematics. I implemented this and called the result [liblouisutdml](#). It is also available from the [liblouis website](#).

[By this time the liblouis software suite was attracting wide attention. Bookshare](#), an online library for people with print disabilities, was using it to make its Braille translations. Some Braille printing houses in Europe were using it in production. It was also being used in some screenreading programs, which show visually impaired people what is on computer screens. Other programmers were also contributing new features and enhancements.

Meanwhile CHPI continued to have problems. In 2006 it went out of business and I started [Abilitiessoft, Inc.](#) It has the mission of developing software for people with disabilities that is available without cost. So far we have produced software to increase the availability of Braille, but we are looking for opportunities to help groups other than the visually impaired.

in 2010 ViewPlus proposed another software application. This would have the ability not only to represent text and graphics but also be able to edit them and create new documents. It would also

have a user-friendly graphical interface and be capable of running on Windows, Mac OSX and Linux. Java was chosen as the language in which to implement it. I proposed the name "BrailleBlaster" to signify that it was intended to let loose a blast of Braille for those who were suffocating for lack of good material, just as I had felt as a child and even in high school. This was accepted. I implemented the initial version of [BrailleBlaster](#) together with some great volunteers. Development of BrailleBlaster continues. It has been taken over principally by [The American Printing House for the Blind](#).

I have now (2014) retired from active programming at the age of 78, but it was time to let younger,, more knowledgeable and more vigorous people take over in any case. They are maintaining the liblouis and brailleblaster websites. Work continues on liblouis as well as on BrailleBlaster.

Because of the damage to my ears by the early infections I have now developed serious balance problems, so I go out very little. My objectives now are to encourage others to develop software for people with disabilities through Abilitiessoft, Inc., to write Christian sci-fi and to become ever closer to God through prayer and contemplation.

2019: Now at 82 I am expanding my efforts as a digital missionary, primarily through the website <http://www.godtouches.org> and a Twitter account. My health is good and it seems likely that I will be able to work in God's vineyard for a number of years.

Through all this my faith has remained firm and deepened. I am more convinced than ever that "These things happened to him that the works of God might be manifest in his life." (John 9:3.)

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