



Rev. Norwood N. "Woody" Hingle III, Ph. D; Sunday School: 9:15 AM; Sunday Worship: 10:30 AM
(504) 288-2242; email: office@LakeVistaUMC.org website: <http://www.LakeVistaUMC.org>; Vol. 20:8–August- 2019

A Word from Woody. . .
The Real Story on I Can Only Imagine

Have you ever had questions about *I Can Only Imagine*? I'm referring to both the MercyMe song as well as the movie that explains what led Bart Millard to write the song. There are several parts of the movie that an inquiring mind wants verified. Here are a few of the answers I got from Millard's book *I Can Only Imagine: The True Story that Inspired the Hit Song and Major Motion Picture*, especially in chapters 1, 4, 6, 9-10. (If you are unsure if you know this song, please go to youtube.com; if you have not seen the movie, the church has a copy you can borrow.)

What does this song have to do with Bart's Dad? On first hearing, the song just sounds like Millard's wondering what it will be like when we see Jesus face-to-face. I don't think the movie explains that well, but the book does. The story is that as they were driving away from the graveside after his Dad's funeral, his Dad's Mom, Mammaw Millard, said to Bart, "I can only imagine what Bub [Bart's Dad] must be seeing right now." Those first four words stuck in Bart's brain and he ended up writing that phrase down on everything—from his journal to random jottings. Years later MercyMe needed one more song for their next record, so late one night he started looking through his journal for song ideas and he noticed that phrase continuing to pop up—which the movie depicts accurately. Bart shared the origins of the song with Amy Grant: "My dad was a monster. I mean, that's the only word for it. And I saw God transform him from the man I hated into the man I wanted to become, into my best friend. This song was born out of that experience. It took me about ten minutes to write it late one night on the bus." Amy perceptively replied—as the movie shows, "Bart, you didn't write this song in ten minutes. It took a lifetime."

Some may question: did Amy Grant really change her mind in the middle of a concert and have Bart come on stage to sing it and claim it? Not exactly. Yes, she knew this was not only an intensely personal song, but also a career maker. And yes, she wanted very much to record it, and did so after getting the recording rights. But she hesitated about releasing it when she heard MercyMe was struggling to get serious airplay on the radio for their first single. She told him, "Bart, you need to finish what you started. This is your story. Its your song. You guys need to release it as your own single", and she released her rights to the song. Bart was astonished at her graciousness, and remarks, "Who does

this in the entertainment industry, much less in the music business?" It is true, however, that he and Amy sang the song together in a concert after MercyMe released their recording of it.

The movie depicts Bart's Dad giving Bart his pension to have when he died so that Bart could pursue music. This was true. It came to a \$600 check per month for 10 years, which he really needed. What is remarkable is that the very day he received his last check Bart heard the news that "I Can Only Imagine" was the number one song in Christian music!

How big was that song? It won Dove Awards (the Christian equivalent of the Grammys) for Song of the Year and Pop/Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year. Bart won Songwriter of the Year. And shockingly, the song impressively crossed over into mainstream secular radio—even though it mentions the "J" (Jesus) word! Bart shares, "They [his label partners] sent it out to every reporting radio station in the country, with a simple, singular printed message: 'Play it once. If you get a response, great; if you don't, throw it away.' The song went to number one in virtually every market where it was played."



Two other items of interest. Bart's Dad, who once played at Southern Methodist University on a football scholarship, was not always a "monster". In fact, he was greatly beloved in his hometown! His personality took a tragic turn a few years before Bart was born. He was hit by a truck and launched 50 feet in the air, knocking him unconscious. Nevertheless, it was when he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, when Bart was in ninth grade, that Jesus got his attention and transformed him. He no longer went to church for social reasons; his church attendance was "completely about the Lord". Bart explains, "For as long as I could remember, Dad's anger and pride had always gotten the best of him. He could never admit he was wrong. Now the anger began to show up less, the pride took a back seat to a new humility, and he began leaving room for others, including me, to have something to say." He died just before Bart turned 19, but Jesus' profound work was evident. Bart shares, "After just five years of growing spiritually, Dad was a 'man after God's own heart,' the godliest man I knew."

The second item: at a Christian youth camp at age 15, he actually did see what the girl-to-be-his-wife, Shannon at 13, wrote in her journal—"I ♥ Bart Millard", and there they really did have their first kiss!

Yours in Christ,

Woody

Youth Corner

Waterpark Splash!

Thank you to all our volunteers during Vacation Bible School! You were a wonderful help in every area of this outreach as we taught children the Good News of Jesus.

This month on Saturday, August 17th we will travel to Gulfport, MS to Gulf Islands Waterpark. We will meet at the church at 9:00 AM and return by 5:30 PM. More information will be forthcoming. Please invite friends to this fun event!



Church Family Night

Church Family Night has recessed for the summer, and will meet back on Wednesday, September 4th with a meal from 6:00-7:00 PM and a speaker from 7:00-7:30 PM.

VBS Success!

Our Vacation Bible School program called "Roar: Life Is Wild—God Is Good" was held on July 22-26 and went wonderfully. Many thanks to Mary Ellen Herbert, the VBS Director who also organized the suppers each evening. Thanks also goes to Yolande Goudeau (Registration), Dr. Debby Grimm (Science), Wendy Westbrook (Arts and Crafts), Brian Westbrook (Recreation), Randy Roberts (Storytelling), Emily Hingle (Music), Patricia Hallberg (Photography), and the many other adults and youth who so generously donated their time and energy to make all go so smoothly so the children could both hear and see the Gospel of Jesus!

The VBS mission collected \$350.00 to provide education and nutrition for 35 women and babies in Zambia. The girls seemed to have barely beaten the boys in collections, but we got an anonymous donation that leaves the end results in question—except that we know the Zambian women and children won overall!

Have a Strong-willed Child?

Pastor Hingle will teach a parenting class beginning Tuesday, September 10th from 6:30-7:30 PM. This class has eight meetings and is based on Dr. James Dobson's *The New Strong-willed Child: Surviving Birth Through Adolescence* and the accompanying workbook. To register please contact the Church Office or register during Sunday morning worship.

We ROARED at VBS!



Sermons for August

On Sunday, August 4th Rev. Dr. Lloyd Harsch will bring the message. He is Professor of Church History and Baptist Studies and Chair of the Theology and Historical Studies Division at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Pastor Hingle will continue the sermon series on the Fourth Gospel "Good News for Life". On August 11th his message will be "Testimony to the Truth: Human and Divine" on John 5:30-38, and on August 18th "Testimony to the Truth: The Lawgiver" on John 5:39-47, and on August 25th "Feast and Famine" from John 6:1-15.

Class on United Methodist Beliefs

On Sunday, August 25th Pastor Hingle will teach the class, "Matters of Heart and Mind" from after church to 3:00 PM. This class reviews the United Methodist Doctrinal Standards, discusses The UMC's position on "hot potato" social issues, and explains how we can apply these beliefs to our daily lives. This class is especially important for those seeking to teach in the church. The class is free, and lunch will be provided. Please contact the Church Office to reserve your spot, or indicate your interest on the attendance sheet at Sunday morning worship.



Prayer Focus

- ✠ Barbara Velasquez, health
- ✠ For The United Methodist Church to stay united under the final authority of Scripture and to follow the Book of Discipline
- ✠ Beryl Lynn Jones, recovery from back surgery and broken foot
- ✠ Brenda Marks, in the death of her beloved husband, Mr. Herbert Marks, Sr.
- ✠ Yolande Goudeau, recovery from back surgery
- ✠ Judith Martin, healing from hip surgery

A Time for Guys' Fellowship!

Pastor Woody Hingle is leading a Men's Sunday School Class that meets in the Library at 9:30 AM, and we are currently studying the Gospel of Matthew. The men will have their supper gathering on Roger Cull's boat on Tuesday, August 13th from 6:30-8:00 PM.

Metings This Month

On Monday, August 26th: Finance Committee, 6:46 PM; Church Council, 7:30-8:30 PM



Read your newsletter online at <http://www.LakeVistaUMC.org>

Skeptic's Class

Our next meeting will be Friday, August 16th at 12:00 Noon in the Parlor. We will review atheist Duke University philosopher Walter Sinnott-Armstrong's book *Morality Without God?*, chapter 5, "What's So Divine About Commands?"

New Worship Time!

On Sunday, June 23rd Lake Vista UMC experienced a shift in worship time from 10:30-11:30 AM to its new time of 10:45-11:45 AM. This time shift will continue at least through the month of September. The reason for this time shift is that Lakeshore Church will be renting and using our sanctuary from 9:00-10:15 AM as they are in need of a larger worship space. They will also use three Sunday School classrooms during their worship time, and have an after-worship fellowship in our Fellowship Hall. Let's be sure this church knows how much we value their ministry for Jesus' Kingdom!



Small Group Offerings

Wednesday SONrise and Wonderful Wednesday Bible Study—The SONrise Prayer and Communion services and the Wonderful Wednesday Bible studies will restart after a summer respite on Wednesday, August 14. The SONrise service is from 6:30-7:30 AM, and the Wonderful Wednesday Bible study going over the previous Sunday's sermon meets at 7:00 PM.

The S(tudy), P(ray), A(ct) Ladies' The SPA Ladies' Summer Reading book is *Weight of Mercy* by Deb Richardson-Moore. The paperback is on sale at Christianbook.com for \$7.49 which would make it \$8. The e-book is \$9.29. We will meet 2-3 times this summer. Our first meeting, on about half the book, was Sunday, June 30, from 1:00-2:30 PM. Future meetings will be announced as they are scheduled.

Sunday School classes for women begin at 9:30 AM on Sunday mornings in the Fellowship Hall. **Men's classes** meet in the library at 9:45 AM. Youth meet in the Education Building, and children on the playground also at 9:45 AM. A nursery sitter is available for children during worship services.

Prayer Walk Around the Neighborhood

This month's Prayer Walk is Saturday, August 24th, 10:30-11:30 AM. Please join us for this important ministry.

A lighthouse for Christ in the heart of the lakefront.

Lake Vista United Methodist Church

6645 Spanish Fort Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70124