

# Where Heaven Touches Earth

By Jim Reese

The horizon is that horizontal line where heaven touches earth.

How refreshing to sit by the ocean shore and watch the sun rise from the deep to begin another daily race across the sky. Or, how breathtaking to stand on a mountain peak and gaze across vast distances of beauty till earth below blends with the blue above.

Shortly after the opening of our first Christian Horizons home in 1976 I wrote these words which I sang at a C. H. celebration:

*Climb with me to the top of the hill  
And view my new horizons.  
Side by side we will see far and wide  
Such beautiful horizons.  
Let me show you what God did for me  
When he touched me and made me see.  
All these vistas of glory are free;  
Come, share my new horizons!*

The story of Christian Horizons is about a group of people who have climbed the hill of adversity and from that vantage point have discovered that God intended great blessing for all who will trust Him. He delights to turn what began as foreboding valleys into glorious mountain-top experiences where he spreads before us awe-inspiring horizons.

For my wife Adrienne and me, the Lord took what at first seemed dashed dreams and turned them into hope-filled horizons. The day our son Steven was born the doctor told us that his many physical abnormalities pointed as well to cognitive impairment.

This was not our first exposure to such a challenge. When I was seven, my baby brother John suffered considerable brain damage from a nasty fall. Though his physical growth was normal, my parents knew he would always need considerable daily care and they began seeking such help for when they could no longer provide it. In John's 21<sup>st</sup> year God said, "Let me care for him," and took him home to Heaven.

Having observed my parents' accepting response to John's special needs, Adrienne and I were learning how to face the realities of Steven's birth just one year and one month after John's "Home-going." The day Steven was born two Bible verses fixed themselves on our consciousness: to me, "Wait on the Lord" (*Psalm 27:14*), and to Adrienne, "Rejoice in the Lord" (*Philippians 4:4*). It was as though a set of twins were also born into our home that day named Wait and Rejoice.

As we searched for answers to our special challenges we found hearty support in the prayers and fellowship of those who shared with us a distinctively Christian perspective on life. My years of travel across Canada and beyond in inter-

denominational evangelistic outreach brought me in contact with hundreds of families and friends of persons with special needs.

From many, I heard a growing plea for programs and facilities that could support them in bringing opportunities to their challenged ones for developing their full potential. Many parents told me of their strong concern that when they could no longer care for their child, residential programs might be provided which would continue to nurture their vulnerable ones in the love, biblical truth and life-style taught by Jesus Christ.

These emerging horizons, that we witnessed spreading across the land, prompted us in 1965 to invite all who would share this vision to join us in what we now know as Christian Horizons.

Since then, this vision has been expanding to include 2500 competent and Christ-centered staff serving over 1300 persons in our residential care, over 800 in our camping and conference programs, and many hundreds more in our global ministries to special needs individuals world-wide.

The uniqueness of Christian Horizons is its unswerving commitment to the grace and truth of our Lord Jesus Christ. He's the only one who can supply his vertical answers to our horizontal challenges.

In fact, that's what the cross is all about: two sticks – the vertical intersecting the horizontal. He died there to provide forgiveness, healing and fulfillment to all who will receive him by faith, as I describe in the second stanza of that song above:

*Jesus took me to Calvary's Hill  
To show me new horizons.  
There I see what the Lord did for me  
To give me new horizons.  
There he conquered the darkness of sin,  
There the light of new life came in,  
Now he's changed me without and within;  
Come, share my new horizons!*

Our thousands of members, staff and friends can truly say that, by God's grace, Christian Horizons is a place where heaven touches earth!