

11.1.14 THE FAITH TO LIGHT THE NATIONS: *An Epiphany Lament*

“ I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations....” (Isaiah 42:6 NRSV)

“The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. (John 1:9 NRSV)

The faith to light the nations shines dimmer than before,
for cross and empty grave hymns lead fewer hearts to soar.

Our Church* alone once numbered eleven million strong,
but less than eight now worship or say that they belong.

Did leaders lack the vision? Were members' wallets tight?
Did clergy preach too meekly? The Church not stand for right?
We seek divine forgiveness, with many churches more,
for God's Good News unspoken, un-acted for the poor.

We pray that God who loves us will call us yet today
to serve the world's great peoples, and model Christ-like ways.
And may the Holy Spirit with fresh new winds of pow'r
renew the Church's mission and set our hearts on fire.

O Light of all the nations, shine through your Church once more,
that glowing with the Gospel it will again explore
the ways to win our children, to serve You, and adore
that Light attracting others to live forevermore.

Words: R. Frederick Crider, Jr. ©2011 All Rights Reserved (While not written originally as a hymn, this poem could be sung to:
Tune: *Aurelia*, 76.76D by Samuel S. Wesley 1864 Cf. tune for “*The Church's One Foundation*” or *Blairgowrie*, 13.13.13.13 by
John B. Dykes, 1872. Cf. tune for “*O Young and Fearless Prophet*” #444, UMH) *United Methodists in the USA, 1968.