



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## MY FRIEND A. W. DICUS

*Our God, He Is Alive*

by Rick Lanning

It was August, 1971. My parents were with me that Sunday morning as we entered the Temple Terrace church building across the street from Florida College. I was entering my freshman year the very next day. I saw my dad start talking to someone he obviously knew from his past. He soon introduced him to me as one of his old college professors at Tennessee Tech in Cookeville, Tennessee. "Rick, I want you to meet brother Dicus, my former physics teacher." I politely said to this very old gray-haired man, "Hello sir, nice to meet you." But I was far more interested in seeing if there were any pretty girls. Soon worship began. J. D. Evans was the song leader that day. He announced we would sing "*Our God, He Is Alive*." I turned to the page. I happened to notice the writer of the song was some man named A. W. Dicus. We began singing this beautiful hymn. Suddenly I looked at my dad, who was singing while looking at brother Dicus. He looked at me and just smiled, then nodded as if to say, "Yes, he is the author." Whoa. Now that's pretty cool. I sat with him many times the rest of that year. A grand man!

Aaron W. Dicus was born in 1888 near St. Louis, Missouri. His family soon moved to Indiana where he spent his growing up years. He was born with an incredible curiosity for the sciences and his education and career moved in that direction from an early age. In 1912 he received his Bachelor's degree in Marion Normal College, then later was awarded the Master's and Doctorate degrees from the University of Indiana. He taught science in both high school and college for several years before becoming a science professor at Indiana University until 1930. He then accepted a professorship and was made Head of the Physics Department at Tennessee Tech University until 1950. During that time he became President of the Tennessee Academy of Science and a member of the Southern Association of Physicists.

He was a preeminent scientist who actually trained a number of the physicists who worked at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, which helped develop the atomic bomb for the famous Manhattan Project. This helped end World War 2. His keen intellect, fueled by curiosity, led to his inventions of such things as the automobile turn signal, the electric pencil sharpener, the automobile speed governor (which limits how fast a car can drive), and the electric skill saw. So if you drive, write or build things then your life has been impacted by this man more than you know.

I wanted to give you his technical background so that you would better appreciate some of the hymns he wrote late in his life. Brother Dicus was baptized at the age of 20 and remained a faithful Christian until his death in 1978. During his 70 years as a disciple of Christ he made his life's priority, not the fame of an inventor, nor the notoriety of a scientist, or the prestige of a university professor, but as a preacher of the gospel. Nearly every Lord's day he would drive somewhere to preach. "*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*" was his main vocation in life (Matt. 6:33). Having known him, I knew how well he loved God's word and studied it daily.

At the encouragement of his wife Flora he spent the last years of his life writing gospel hymns. He wrote about 38, among them "*Lord, I Believe*" and "*Our God, He Is Alive*." He wrote them to counter our age of skepticism and secularism which shouts, "God is dead!" Dr. Dicus understood that just as an invention must have an inventor, so must creation have a Creator. He read Hebrews 3:3-4 and drew the natural conclusion that all rational people can clearly see. It says: "*For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.*" Being a nationally recognized physicist he did not let his academic achievements override his common sense. A design must have a designer. Duh.

I saw old gospel meeting posters of him where he preached on Evidences of God. He focused on scriptures like Romans 1:20-21, which reads, *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."* This humble Christian, with a great scientific mind, saw no contradiction between the Bible and Science. Truth and Science are compatible. This led him to write two hymns which became popular in the Lord's church and are now sung throughout the world.

**Lord, I Believe** (©1970)

When we behold the wonders of creation, The flowers that bloom, the raindrops as they fall;  
The spacious skies, and life's perpetuation, We cannot doubt that God controlled it all. (Chorus)

No finite mind by mortal calculation, could frame the truths revealed within His Word,  
In every trace of nature's operation, They voice, O God, in mystery can be heard. (Chorus)

When we perceive the state of alienation, in which the soul from Thee, O God, was lost,  
We must believe, by heaven's ordination, our Lord redeemed and paid the bitter cost. (Chorus)

Some days are filled with joy and expectation, some days are dark with cares we are beset,  
In hours of joy, or hours of tribulation, be with us Lord, lest we, lest we, forget. (Chorus)

Chorus: Lord I believe, yes I believe, I cannot doubt, or be deceived  
The eye that sees each sparrow fall, His unseen hand is in it all.

**Our God, He Is Alive** (©1966)

There is, beyond the azure blue; A God, concealed from human sight.  
He tinted skies with heav'nly hue, And framed the worlds with His great might. (Chorus)

There was a long, long time ago, A God whose voice the prophets heard.  
He is the God that we should know, Who speaks from His inspired word. (Chorus)

Secure, is life from mortal mind, God holds the germ within His hand,  
Though men may search, they cannot find, for God alone does understand. (Chorus)

Our God, whose Son upon a tree, A life was willing there to give,  
That He from sin might set man free, And evermore with Him could live. (Chorus)

Chorus There is a God, He is alive, In Him we live and we survive;  
From dust our God created man, He is our God, the great I Am.

Go back and read the words again. Slowly. Carefully. Prayerfully. Let them sink in. Make them a personal creed (which simply means "I believe"). Say it, then sing it, "There IS a God! Lord, I BELIEVE!" I pray these two great hymns, from this one great man, will become trapped in your memory today and cause you to repeatedly sing your faith in a living God who is the great I AM. God will be listening, and smiling.