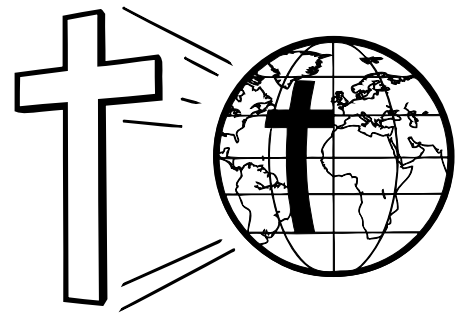


# Foundation of Faith



## *The Heavenly* PRESENT

GOD WANTS TO  
GIVE US MORE

WHO  
STARTED CHRISTMAS?

A CHRISTMAS LETTER

GOD'S OFFER

REPORTS  
CHILLIWACK & KAZAKHSTAN

EXPERIENCES WITH GOD

# Content

## THE HEAVENLY PRESENT

**4** "It's About What's Inside"

**5** Wrapping Paper

**6** The Most Priceless Christmas Present

*People have all kinds of wishes for Christmas, but the best gift is the one that God is offering us.*

**7** God's Great Gift

**8** God Wants To Give More

*What God gives us brings not just momentary joy, but a joy that lasts into eternity.*

**10** A Christmas Letter

Radio Broadcast

**12** God's Offer

*His gift is priceless and yet free. The time to accept it is running out . . . .*

**3** Editorial

Youth Page

**14** Advent

**15** Who Started Christmas?  
Questionnaire

Children's Corner

**17** Grandma's Favorite  
Christmas Present

Story

**16** Give Something of Your Best

Report

**18** Chilliwack

Report

**20** Kazakhstan

For the New Year

**22** What Is Your Life?

**23** Your King is Coming to You

**24** Experiences with God

**25** Letter from the Publication  
Committee

**27** Obituary of Pastor Erich Henschel

**28** The Passing of Another Year (Poem)

## FOUNDATION OF FAITH

*Editor*

Hans-Dietrich Nimz

*Editorial Team*

Sieghard Schulz

Harry Semenjuk

Ron Taron

Hermann Vogt

•  
The FOUNDATION OF FAITH is a journal of vital Christianity, published in the interest of the Church of God, that takes a clear and decisive stand for full salvation in Christ, the unity of all true believers, and the truths of the Bible.

The editors reserve the right to abridge and edit all materials and information submitted for publication. Research sources are listed for information only and should not necessarily be construed as an endorsement or recommendation.

•  
Questions and suggestions can be sent to:  
contact@foundationoffaith.cc

Please address all other correspondence and subscription requests to:  
Christian Unity Press  
5195 Exchange Drive  
Flint, MI 48507  
Tel.: (810) 732-1831  
or email us at  
cupress@thechurchofgod.cc  
www.christianunitypress.com

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.

FOUNDATION OF FAITH (USPS 9008) is published monthly by Christian Unity Press, 5195 Exchange Dr., Flint, MI 48507, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Flint, MI, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Christian Unity Press, 5195 Exchange Dr., Flint, MI 48507, USA  
Volume 14 Issue 12

FOUNDATION OF FAITH is a trademark owned by Christian Unity Press in the United States and foreign countries.  
Printed in USA.

FOUNDATION OF FAITH is published free of charge. All expenses are covered by freewill donations.

## Editorial

*Dear Reader!*

*We all likely have countless traditions that we treasure during the Advent and Christmas season. For most of us, giving and receiving gifts is an important part of our celebration.*

*As I reflect on past Christmases in my life, I think back to Christmas 1944. I had received a brand new bike! And I had so many other wonderful things to play with: a scooter, building set, and many more toys!*

*Then one January night in 1945, at 1:00 in the morning, the last German soldiers thumped on the windows and doors and shouted, "Save yourself, if you can! The enemy will be here at 5:00 a.m.! There is no time to lose!" The memories of that night, and escape on foot through snow and cold, are unforgettable.*

*What remained of all presents and gifts? Nothing, nothing! Everything was gone and lost! Everything that was so important to me as a child, all the gifts I possessed were gone! Then I think of what Solomon says: "And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind" (Ecclesiastes 2:11).*

*All earthly gifts are ultimately meaningless and transient, and in perspective of eternity, they are worthless and have no lasting profit in this world. Are there still people today who really realize that?*

*O, dear reader, I am so grateful that there are divine gifts! Yes, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15). Thanks be to God for His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer! "But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).*

*God, through his Son, offers forgiveness, peace, and eternal life to all who believe and receive Him, to all who serve Him and remain faithful until the end, when they see the reward of their faith.*

*Yes, God gives! But, dear reader, you should also give something to God: "My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways" (Proverbs 23:26).*

*To all our readers, God's richest blessings this Christmas!*

H. D. Nimz



THE HEAVENLY GIFT

# “It’s About What’s Inside”

It was Christmas Eve. A small Christmas celebration had just come to an end in the men’s ward of a hospital. The nurses had decorated a tree for their patients and had handed out small presents. Finally everyone, even the night nurse, had gone home.

The patients started talking and came to the conclusion that although it was admirable of their caretakers to want to give them some Christmas cheer, no one could ever truly celebrate Christmas in a hospital.

“If we’re not at home with our family, how could we ever be in the Christmas spirit?” one young man asked. “Christmas roast and the smell of pine needles simply has to be a part of it,” another threw in. A third added, “Christmas is only half as good if I can’t see the happy faces of children with their glowing eyes.”—They counted up a few other things that were a necessity for them to be able to celebrate Christmas.

“No one has mentioned anything yet about the true Christmas,” Grandfather Meng joined in the conversation. “What do you mean by ‘true’ Christmas?” the

others asked.—“Christmas is the celebration of the birth of God’s Son. God gave us Jesus. That is why I rejoice. That is my reason to celebrate.”

The younger men in the room had often pityingly laughed at and mocked Grandfather Meng because of his Bible reading and had dismissed his simple piety as a quirk of his age.

“As you were listing what was so important to you at Christmas, I had to think of a wonderful present, beautifully packaged in Christmas paper and gold ribbon; yet when it is opened, the box is empty,” Grandfather Meng explained to them. “That is how you are celebrating your Christmas! On the outside, nicely decorated—Christmas tree, presents, songs, and whatever else you mentioned, but on the inside it’s empty. For me it’s about what’s inside. I can forego the wrapping. The birth of the Savior is my Christmas joy.” Grandfather Meng’s eyes sparkled so happily, that the others knew he meant every word.

Heinz-Lothar Worm



# Wrapping Paper

Aunt Amalie was a special person! She dug deep into her wallet and bought little Jan an authentic silver spoon. Since it was such a special gift, she wanted to wrap it just right. The spoon came in its own charming case. The dear aunt then bought some especially beautiful wrapping paper. The paper was very colorful and had many animals printed on it: elephants, parrots, monkeys and horses, in fact, an entire zoo.

Christmas Eve arrived, and with a cry of joy, Jan made a dash for the colorful present. When everything had been unpacked, Jan showed no interest in the authentic silver spoon. The colorful paper with the many animals had aroused his excitement. He did not want to part with it. Again and again he had to look and admire it.

We laugh at this story. But I fear that most adults act just like this little boy.

Christmas is coming soon. We feel a joyous anticipation and get busier and busier as the day draws closer. Old and young are busy with mysterious purchases and preparations. In the stores there is a constant hustle. Advent wreaths and lights adorn homes, halls, and shopping malls. Each workplace and group has its own Christmas party. A festive busyness overcomes us all.

Soon everything is over again. The daily routine begins. Scarcely anyone noticed the main thing: all the pleasures, all the unrest during the pre-Christmas season was just the wrapping paper in which the actual gift was wrapped.

It is about the gift! It is a wonderful gift! It is a gift that our living God gave to us. Do we still feel the wonder of it?

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). This is the actual gift. All the

pre-Christmas, festive restlessness is just the gift wrap around the actual gift. What does this gift mean to you?

What could happen if you allowed the Savior in and gave Him full reign in your heart and home? Perhaps your messed up marriage could be restored. Perhaps your children would enjoy being at home again. Surely your life would be brighter and you would find joy in spite of your troubles! If Jesus has forgiven your sins and given you eternal life, you could sing:

Go away, mournful spirits,  
for my joyful master,  
Jesus, now enters in!

This is true Christmas joy. With all the pleasures of the beautiful Christmas traditions, should we not be prepared to gain this gift for ourselves?

It is not about the wrapping paper, it is about the gift itself: Jesus!

# The Most Priceless Christmas Present

Who does not like to celebrate Christmas? Even in the hut of the poor, in the bed of the sick, among the sad and sorrowful, this celebration of joy does not go by unnoticed. Although opinions in the world are very divided, no one wants to miss Christmas. And yet among the many who are joyful, there are few who truly celebrate Christmas.

On that quiet first Christmas on the field of the shepherds near Bethlehem, the joyful message rang: “There is born to you this day a Savior!”—Are we truly joyful today that the Savior was born? Do our thoughts travel with a joyful heart to the stall where the Jesus child lay in a manger? And can we truly rejoice with our whole heart about it? Perhaps we belong to those who attend a church service on Christmas Eve out of habit and hear the ancient Christmas message and sing the well-known Christmas songs. But what good is it that Christ was born into our world as a child over two thousand years ago, if He isn’t born into my heart where He lives and grows?

“There is born to you this day a Savior!”—What a spectacular, blessed message for those shepherds! But why did this message come precisely to these shepherds? Why didn’t it enter the palace of Herod? Why did the great of the world discover nothing of these heavenly tidings? How could it be that Bethlehem itself, the town of Jesus’ birth, wasn’t aware of this wonderful occurrence? Was it because the hearts of these shepherds were open to receive the King? The heart of Herod was filled with other things. It was filled with his desire for power. The hearts of the great and rich were occupied by their earthly pleasures, wishes, and thoughts. But the hearts of those poor shepherds lived in expectation of this great event. Maybe, on this starlit winter night, they had been talking about the Messiah who was to come soon and had been watching expectantly for Him. Oh, that He would come

soon! That He would make all wrongs right again! That they would see Him, the King! And He came to them, those who were waiting. Not to those whose minds were filled with worldly things but to those who were longingly waiting. The King entered the lives of the shepherds. In the stall, He revealed Himself. In a manger lay Jesus the Messiah. These simple men did not need to cower in fear. No, they could trustingly approach Him.

The shepherds are only the leaders of a large group, a vast crowd. And every single person in this crowd knows the same that these simple men knew: He belongs to us! The Son of God was born into our humanity and became fully human. He stepped down into the depths of our poverty, helplessness, and even more, into the depths of our wretchedness and sin, and He willingly and fully made Himself one with us. Jesus Christ stepped down into my very own personal wretchedness, into the depths of my sin, and testified that He would be my substitute, for only by being such could He become my Savior.

Have you considered this wonderful, freeing truth? Or better yet, have you experienced it? Isn’t this Child of Bethlehem a beautiful picture of how greatly and deeply God has loved us? Yes, God loved us so much that He sent us Jesus Christ as a weak, helpless baby. He allowed this Child to grow and to know all of our sorrow. Yes, ultimately He let Him die so that He could become our Savior.

Oh, what a blessed mystery of the love of God! Who can understand it? Although we cannot fully grasp it, we can, however, discover it and experience it. “The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him,” says the Word of God. Fearing Him is something all of us can do. The shepherd’s desire for the Redeemer can also become our desire. When the pleasures of this world no longer satis-

fy us, when we are remorseful over our shortcomings and sins, then the Savior is there for us as well. Then He comes as the good Healer who heals all hurts, the Friend who shares everything with us, and the Savior who wants to set

up His place of glory in us as well. The heart in which Jesus Christ lives is filled with the purest, deepest, and most genuine Christmas joy!

G. D.

# God's Great Gift

Sometimes the most valuable gifts are given in the smallest packages. And if you receive a small package such as this, then you certainly hope it contains exactly what you have wished for.

God has given us a gift. Never before had humanity received such a valuable gift. And it came in the form of a child in Bethlehem. He was wrapped in cloths and laid in a manger. The angels announced it to the shepherds on the field. Even the wise men from the East were drawn to this unspeakably great gift of God. They came from the far East and brought their gifts.

Is this gift of God what we had wished for? Is it very precious and valuable to us? Let us take a look at the gift, as well as the Giver. Our hearts were weighed down by sin and guilt. But if we accept this gift of God, we find deliverance and redemption. Oh, this brings us great joy! Before, we often did things that we ourselves actually detested. How often we resolved not to do those things anymore, but again and again we felt guilty and condemned. However, this gift of God has given us power to be victorious over all that formerly held us in slavery. The gift of God has given us redemption from all power of sin. Praise God!

Yes, this gift of God in His Son has power not only to bring the peace of God to a once restless and unpeaceful heart, but also to renew both heart and life so that we can live in a relationship with God, as the first humans before their fall. Only through His valuable gift, His Son, can we really be happy and content.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The Giver of this gift is God, Who has created everything and there-

fore owns everything. He knows us through and through and also knows exactly what we need in order to be truly happy and joyful.

We were not at all worthy of this great gift. On the contrary, we had turned away from the God of love and turned our backs on Him. We were disobedient to Him and did not seek His counsel. Yet in all this, He was not deterred from giving us this great gift. He gave it for everyone who wants to accept it. All that we have to do is take it with gratitude.

Of course, no one can accept it without renouncing sin. “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Those who have not accepted the gift of God are spiritually dead. But by accepting the great gift of God, we can be freed from sin and have victory over it. “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17). Formerly, we used our members as instruments of unrighteousness in the service of sin. But now, as the redeemed, as those who have accepted the gift of God, we present our members as instruments of righteousness to God (see Romans 6:13).

Jesus came into this world, lived, died, and rose from the dead. He ascended to heaven, where He intercedes for us to the right of His Father. He is willing to give every one of us what we need, as long as we are willing to accept it.

Dear soul, open your heart and accept this gift of all gifts, this gift of love, Jesus Christ! Live for Him and thank God for His “incredible gift!”

C. B. Miles

# God Wants To Give More

*“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11–13).*

## **Time and Eternity Meet**

Some time ago, a preacher was asked, not maliciously, but in complete earnestness: “Is it not difficult to preach during these holidays? You always rehash the same thing for the young and the old on four advent Sundays, in various advent celebrations and in two Christmas services. Our world has become 2000 years older since the events of Bethlehem. We live in a completely different age today with new people, new values and different goals. The events at Bethlehem which you call a miracle are, for me anyway, like a dusty, worn out and old fashioned coat.”

No! Christmas is something completely different than what people have made of it. The message of Bethlehem demonstrates a unique power. The door to God’s world has opened. Surely, your salvation is coming. It is only for this reason that we have the courage to share the same message year after year. Each time we realize anew how difficult it is for us to grasp that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became man, that is advent. This event, from the announcement of Jesus’ birth from the lips of an angel to the babe in the manger, is so unique and wonderful that it can hardly be expressed in human words. Our Bible reference unfolds the meaning of Christmas with the words: “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”

Christmas wants to place this rousing message into our hearts: The living God has entered the his-

tory of the world and mankind through Jesus Christ. This is the only point where time and eternity meet. Here the lines intersect and form a cross.

The manger in Bethlehem begins that which is fulfilled on the cross at Golgotha: your and my salvation. Therefore what Philip told Nathaniel also applies to us today: “Come and see!”

What we are able to experience in that poor stable is surprising and joyful at the same time. God graciously lowers Himself to humanity and gives this sick world their Savior. Is that not unfathomable? God has unmistakably declared to all people: “For God so loved the world.”

God acts in such an indescribably great way. His love does not consist of Him simply waving to us every now and then from heaven and providing us with a few holidays. He does not treat us like certain masters who every now and then have a gracious moment. God’s grace is by no means exhausted by mere paternal benevolence. It is much more than philanthropy and kindness. God sacrifices the life of His only Son for our salvation. God’s gracious condescension is so great that He lays our Savior in the manger and finally allows Him to die on the cross for us, so “that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16b).

No one is excluded. This all applies not just to a select few or for a few especially pious people. The word is specifically “whoever”—so all people!



We classify people into groups—rich and poor, healthy and ill, good and evil, friendly and unfriendly, those who are long-established and newcomers, and we treat them as such. God loves us all equally. No one, no matter how burdened or repulsive, is excluded, not the man in a prison cell, nor the woman in a hospital bed. Even the person in the darkest of places is to know: God loves me.

Christmas says: I am like a lost penny, lying in the gutter of the street, who everyone walks past. But now God, in Jesus Christ, bends down, picks me up and polishes me until I shine.

Is that not the greatest Christmas gift imaginable? However, God wants to say even more: “This grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.”

We can celebrate Christmas in many different ways. We can create a mood: “During this holiday, everything is so celebratory and has such a great ambiance. It is so uplifting!” Or we say: “Christmas consists of so many profound thoughts!” In doing so, it remains a matter of the mind. Or—and this is likely the case with most people—Christmas is celebrated out of habit as a break from work. Afterwards, all the tinsel is packed away and put in storage until next year. What remains is an empty wallet, a hangover, and an empty heart!

### **We Have a Living Hope**

This grace did not appear for our general edification and reassurance. The Son of God did not take upon Himself the poverty of the manger and the bitter agony of the cross so that we can be comfortable and idealistic.

God’s grace will teach us a life of firm discipline and persistent hope. If this is not what you want, then Christmas will be completely misunderstood. God’s goal is for you to bring your entire life in order.

Christmas is God’s question to you: “Are you prepared to give way to the drawing power of My love and place your entire life in My hand?” You thereby lay all your days, whether they be light and radiant or dark and burdensome, in God’s hand. It will hold and protect you every day.

“[L]ive soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.” What are these words in the midst of our busy lives? We hardly understand them. Whenever I hear them, I have to think of the young man who stumbled over these words when reciting them in religion class. Smiling, his classmate slyly whispered to him: “[L]ive like everyone else, brash and gregarious in this world.” Is it not true that this is much closer to the nature of many: In order to stand your ground, you need to go through life living like everyone else, brashly and gregariously. Then your life will be in your control. Here however, in this Bible verse, God wants our life to be in His control. His saving grace will shape our lives even after Christmas as He—the Lord Jesus Christ—teaches us.

However, the power of God’s saving grace extends infinitely further. Not only will my disordered past be cleansed, not only will my present be shaped by this grace to be sober, righteous and godly, but my future is no longer bleak. Whoever belongs to Christ has a living hope. Is that not truly good news for us who live in an age where hopes and expectations die as if they contracted a deadly disease. Think only of the disappointment and discouragement found in many marriages and families. They have grown apart and become strangers to each other, husband and wife, parents and children. Joy will not be found here, not even at Christmas.

Then the sounds of Bethlehem are heard: There is a hope that lives, that does not die, even at our own death. No iron rings can hold us captive. The walls of misery and death have crumbled. Now, no one needs to stay hopelessly imprisoned by guilt and distress, in a dark and aimless existence. Our life receives the wide horizon of eternity.

This is how we should celebrate Christmas! We are receiving a visitor, an exalted visitor who wants to bring us the greatest of all gifts. Jesus Christ brings God’s saving grace. Let us take care not to get stuck in the outward celebrations, otherwise when Christmas is over, we are left with a glittering shell in our hands, but without anything inside it.

G. K.

# A Christmas Letter

Ordinary things happened this year—and unusual events occurred as well. I believe everything really started when I had my eye operation. Looking back, I recognize that this was probably the biggest blessing that I have ever experienced. For therein my inner eyes were opened so that I examined myself. Even though I grew up in the church, I discovered that I actually did not know Jesus Christ personally.

But then I got to know Him personally and that changed my whole life. My Bible, that had been lying somewhere for years collecting dust, became the most interesting book in the world to me. In the gospel of John it says: “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:11).

For many people this Christmastime will be a time of giving and taking. But, what will be given and taken?

Lovely packages? Clothing that doesn't fit? Gadgets for the household that we don't really need? Personal items that we don't actually want? Some of them are practical, useful things, while others are unnecessary and expensive.

Then I asked the Lord of Christmas what kind of gift He desired, and the answer came from the Holy Scriptures: “In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life” (Revelation 22:2a).

Yes,—Jesus is the tree of life that is placed in this world with gifts for everyone. Those who do not have the privilege of receiving gifts from someone else can turn to Jesus and find the gift that is perfect for them. On the heavenly “gift table” there are gifts waiting for you with your name on them.

## The Gift of Love

In John 3:16 it says: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” God gives each of us His love. It is given unconditionally. Would you like to receive this gift?

## The Gift of Forgiveness

In Romans 3:23 it says: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Man was created to have a relationship with God. But, because of his own self-will he chose to go his own way and his relationship with God was broken. But the gift of forgiveness shines as brightly as Jesus' kindness. Forgiveness is indeed the most precious gift on the heavenly gift-table. All people need this gift, for no one can say he has never sinned against God. No one can erase his own sin. For everyone who has experienced forgiveness, this occurred alone through Jesus Christ. The gift of forgiveness belongs to you as well. You just need to accept it.

## The Gift of Peace

It is a perfect peace that fills your soul when you know that you have accepted the gift of peace and forgiveness. Philippians 4:7 says: “and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” The things of this world are so uncertain and unreliable. The friendships of this world stand on wobbly and fragile feet that collapse so easily. But the friendship and peace we find with Jesus Christ is incorruptible.



No one can say that all problems will disappear when we become children of God. But His gift of peace is a constant possession that we can count on. Even the apostle Paul complained about the thorn in his flesh. Yet, he lived a fulfilled life of contentment because he had accepted the gift of peace that allowed him to overcome.

### **The Gift of Liberty**

It is a very precious gift. In John 8:32 it says: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” In most of the western countries freedom reigns. But, many people don’t know what true freedom means. True freedom is first possible when Christ is given control of someone’s life. Then and only then will an individual experience true peace. In Romans 8:2 we read: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”—Would you like to receive peace?

### **Abundant Life**

The Lord Jesus said: “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10b). If you were offered a gift of a million dollars, would you accept it? Would you reach out to grasp it? There is a gift that is much more valuable than a million

dollars. It is the gift of abundant life. But do you want it? Will you accept it?

### **Eternal Life**

In John 1:12 it says: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” Our lifespan on this earth is tiny in comparison with eternity. But, eternal life is to be given to us even today.

**Those who do not have the privilege of receiving gifts from someone else can turn to Jesus and find the gift that is perfect for them. On the heavenly “gift table” there are gifts waiting for you with your name on them.**

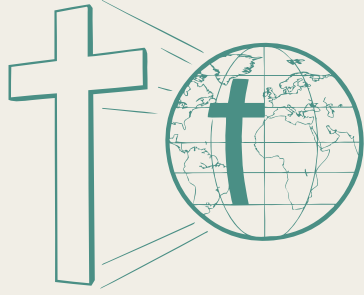
Christ says: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). He does not say: “I am a way, a truth, and a life.”—No, He is the only way, the only truth and the only life—and this life is eternal.

Think about the packages on your gift table.

Will you find gifts there that are comparable to God’s gifts? Is there a single gift on earth no matter how large or precious it may be, that can compare to the gifts that God offers you?

But, a gift only becomes a gift when it is accepted. This Christmas celebration could be the most wonderful celebration of your life, if you recognize that Jesus Christ wants to give Himself to you.

Frances E. Gardner



# Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs, Kitchener (ON)

## God's Offer

Year after year, in the weeks before Christmas, many things are offered for sale. We see these offers practically in every store and even directly in front of our door. One hopes for success and profit and expects positive reactions and decisions. The business world wishes us to act, to access, to accept, to take with us and thus be a motivating example for others to follow. We all know this, don't we?

Today we want to consider a far higher and valuable offer from our God. Paul explains: "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His son" (Galatians 4:4). With Christ, a new era began and since then God's wonderful and essential plan of salvation is offered to us. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The apostle Paul came to this conclusion: "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

God's offer leads back to Christ. And in that everything is included that we need for our temporal and eternal happiness. His offer is free! The prophet Isaiah recognized this when he joyfully exclaimed: "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1). Yes, God's offer and gifts are free! And they are priceless because we would never be able to pay for them! In Revelation 22:17, God's free offer is again repeated by John when he says: "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' . . . And

let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely!" This is about the inner, spiritual life that we all lost through a life of sin and can only regain through Christ. The Holy Spirit works in us to bring about this new life through salvation. Whoever has experienced this new birth can testify with John: "We know that we have passed from death to life" (1 John 3:14). This is precisely the purpose of God's free offer. We are free to accept or reject it.

We ask ourselves: "What does God offer us?" In John 1:5,11-12 we read: "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. . . . He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." Let us examine some of these incredible offers:

### **The Light Shines in the Darkness**

This light is Jesus Christ! The prophets of the Old Testament knew about this light and in reference to Christ, Isaiah said: "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth" and "Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you" (Isaiah 60:2a and 1).

Light is the only element that can displace darkness. Nothing can change this. Jesus is the light that drives out spiritual and moral darkness. Since Jesus' coming into this world until this present day, the whole world should be standing and living in the light of God. Unfortunately, we see the complete opposite. The people of our time are largely living in spiritual darkness and are threatening

to sink in it. We can not expect a different result since Christ, as light of the world, is misunderstood and ignored. Darkness dominates where there is no light! We need not stay in darkness since the light is there and God offers it to everyone. His light illuminates and works in us the knowledge of God, sin, Christ and salvation for a happy and eternal life. This is God's offer!

### **God Offers Grace**

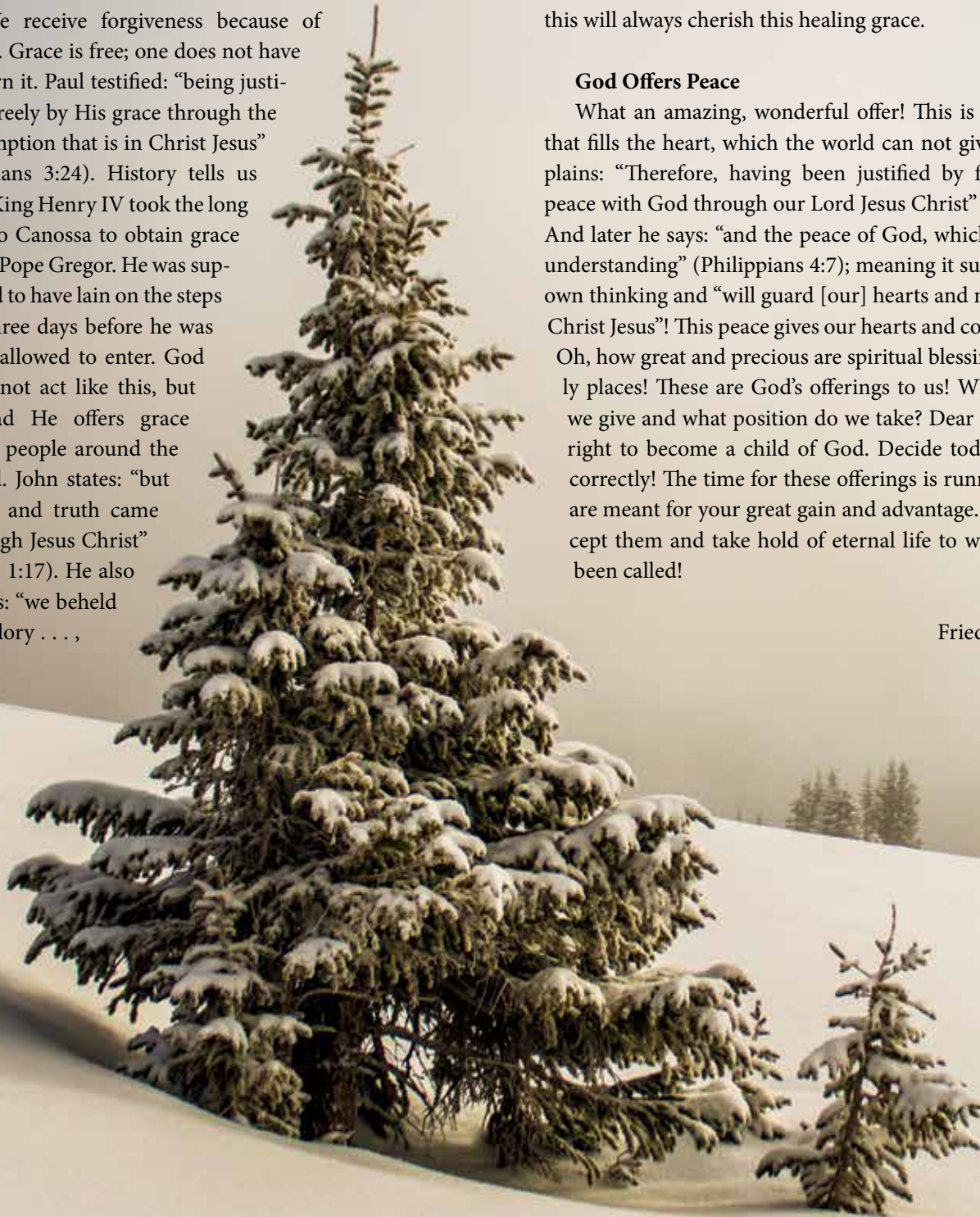
We receive forgiveness because of grace. Grace is free; one does not have to earn it. Paul testified: "being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). History tells us that King Henry IV took the long trip to Canossa to obtain grace from Pope Gregor. He was supposed to have lain on the steps for three days before he was even allowed to enter. God does not act like this, but instead He offers grace to all people around the world. John states: "but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). He also writes: "we beheld His glory . . . ,

full of grace and truth. . . . And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace" (John 1:14b,16). The whole gospel speaks of this grace. It has appeared to all men and admonishes us to renounce our godless nature and worldly desires and live chaste, righteous and godly lives. This is the purpose of grace and it is offered to you, dear soul. Paul testified: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:10). Through God's grace one can become what one otherwise could not. Whoever experiences this will always cherish this healing grace.

### **God Offers Peace**

What an amazing, wonderful offer! This is about a peace that fills the heart, which the world can not give us. Paul explains: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). And later he says: "and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7); meaning it surpasses all our own thinking and "will guard [our] hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"! This peace gives our hearts and consciences rest. Oh, how great and precious are spiritual blessings in heavenly places! These are God's offerings to us! What answer do we give and what position do we take? Dear soul, it is your right to become a child of God. Decide today and decide correctly! The time for these offerings is running out. They are meant for your great gain and advantage. Therefore, accept them and take hold of eternal life to which you have been called!

Friedrich Krebs



# Advent

The next time you run errands in town, pause for a few minutes and observe the people around you. What does the season of Advent mean to them?

Family, gifts, Christmas lights, snow, stress, anticipation, Christmas holidays, Christmas markets . . .

What does Advent mean to you? Does it mean the same thing to you as well?

The word Advent means a coming or arrival. Before the Lord's first coming, the world was filled with darkness, and only a few people were waiting for Him to come.

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned" (Isaiah 9:2).

And then, light dawned throughout all the earth—the miracle of Christmas. The Messiah, the Son of God, was born as a baby boy.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

Today, the time before the Lord's second coming is also a time of darkness. People do not see the light. Although the cities are illuminated by thousands of electric lights, the true light is hidden from most inhabitants. And the people are busy, busy in the darkness. Driven by consumerism, the business of Christmas is bigger than ever. And year after year, people overlook the true meaning of Christmas and Advent.

But, Christians, you know the light. Jesus has lit a fire in you. Therefore, do not think like the other people do. Focus your thoughts on Christ. Think about how He came and what He brought. Think about how He will come again and what He will bring.

May this time of year motivate you to find more joy in the Lord. Pass this joy on to others. Do not think about gift-giving as a burden or duty, but think about it as an opportunity to show your loved ones the joy that you have found. Actively look for opportunities to bring this joy to the many discouraged and tired people around you.

Live in the expectation of His return. Watch. Pray. Make use of your time. Be a blessing.

## *Advent*

*The Son has come, the Father's graceful gift,  
To save a sin-filled world;  
To us, though separated by a rift  
This plan unfurled.  
He, the One foretold by prophets long ago;  
He, the One of whom the shepherds soon would know  
This child poor, a lowly manger for a bed:  
They came and found him as the angels said.  
Hallelujah.*

*And still today, to all who welcome Him,  
He comes, the Son of God.  
To every heart that prays and lets him in,  
True joy and life is brought.  
He comes as Word and Light upon our way,  
He comes, a Comforter in Life to stay.  
He comes as Savior from the realm above,  
As King to fill our poverty with love.  
Hallelujah.*

*And He will come, with glory in the skies;  
He'll come on Judgment Day.  
Be diligent, and do not be surprised,  
For we must watch and pray.  
For every eye will see Him when He comes,  
And every tongue confess before the Son.  
Wake up! With all the saints of God proclaim:  
Lift up your eyes, and praise His holy name.  
Hallelujah.*

Dora Rappard

# Who Started Christmas?

A woman was Christmas shopping with her two children.

After many hours of walking down row after row of toys and after hours of hearing both her children asking for everything they saw on those many shelves, she finally made it to the store elevator with her two children in hand.

She was feeling what so many of us feel during the holiday season: overwhelming pressure to get that perfect gift for every single person on our shopping list, to go to every party, every housewarming, taste all the holiday food and treats, making sure we don't forget anyone on our card list, and the pressure of making sure we respond to everyone who sent us a card.

Finally the elevator doors opened revealing a crowd in the car. She pushed her way in and dragged her two kids and all her bags of stuff in with her .

As the doors closed she couldn't take it anymore and blurted out, "Whoever started this whole Christmas thing should be found, strung up, and shot."

From the back of the car, a quiet calm voice responded, "Don't worry, we've already crucified Him."

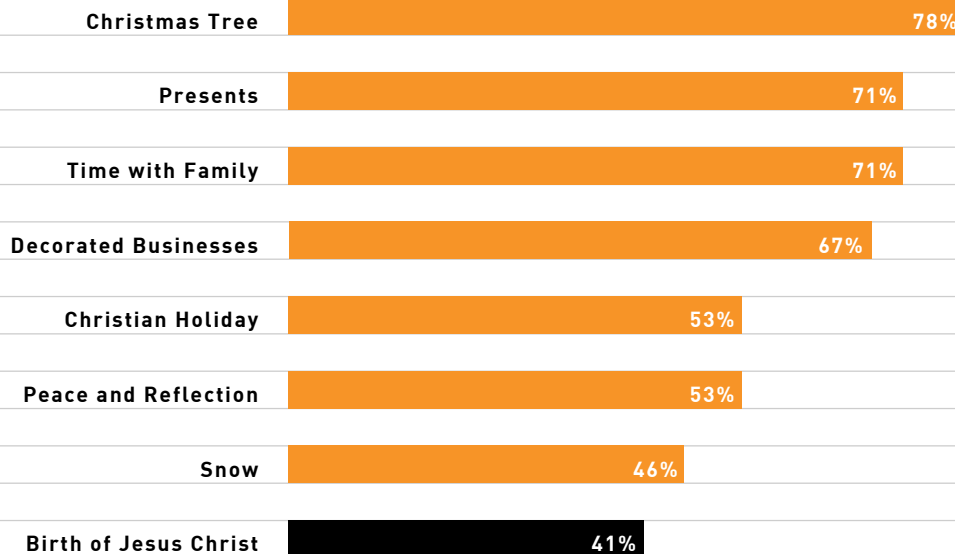
The rest of the trip down was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop.

- Author Unknown

As you go about your tasks in this time of Advent and Christmas don't forget to put Christ in the center of all your preparations and celebrations. Take time to think about the meaning of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and remember that He will come again! Just imagine how different the world would be if everyone would live their life with that in mind.

## Questionnaire

During the pre-Christmas season a questionnaire was circulated in Germany which asked: "What do you personally associate with Christmas?" Here are the answers received:



Source: <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/169294/umfrage/was-die-deutschen-mit-weihnachten-verbinden/>

# Give Something of Your Best

It was Christmas Eve, many, many years ago. Twelve-year-old Nils and his little sister Elsa could hardly wait until Father came home. Finally! “He’s coming!” Nils cried enthusiastically and ran to the door.

Father stomped the snow from his boots and came inside. He kissed Mother and handed her a small sack of wheat flour which he had traded for a small sack of potatoes and two pairs of woolen socks.

Yes, wheat flour! Everyone surrounded the table and watched as Mother mixed and kneaded the dough. Nils heated the brick oven with kindling from the forest. Meanwhile, the dough rose higher and higher in the pan.

“May we eat as much as we like?” Elsa asked. “Well, let’s save something for tomorrow,” Father replied. How glad he was to make a joyous Christmas Eve for his family.

Mother carefully pushed the pan into the hot oven. Then they all sat down in a circle to enjoy the warmth of the oven and aroma of the fresh bread.

Father fetched the old Bible out of its secret hiding place in the bedroom and read the Christmas story. “Did the shepherds not give the Lord Jesus any gifts, like the wise men did?” Nils wanted to know. “The Bible doesn’t tell us,” Father answered. “They were poor. Or what do you think?”

Nils thought about it for a bit. “I think they brought Him something they had—maybe a lamb.”—“I would have brought him a lamb—the best one,” Elsa added.

“And today,” Mother asked, “what can we give the Lord Jesus?”—“Also the best of what we have.”

“You are absolutely right, Nils,” said Father. “But I smell fresh bread. Mother, look in the oven and see if it’s done.”

Indeed, it was nicely baked. It was set on the table and admired. “It smells so good!”—“Look at the nice brown crust!”—“I can hardly wait until it has cooled off.”—So it went, back and forth. But finally, they all sat down at the table. Father thanked fervently for Jesus, the greatest Christmas present and also for the beautiful wheat bread. Then he took the bread knife in his hand. But all of a sudden he paused and listened.

“What is it?” Mother asked, concerned. “I think I heard a soft knock at the door,” Father answered.

Mother immediately grabbed the Bible and disappeared into the bedroom. It could be the secret police. Father went to the door and opened it a crack. But when

he saw the half-frozen man lying in the snow, he opened the door wide and called for Nils to come and help him.

The man shivered from the cold, but he did not think of himself. “My Greta, my Greta!” he groaned. “She is sick. I wanted to go to town and buy her something she would like, but I couldn’t go any further.”

“You’re in good hands here,” Father consoled him as he removed his jacket and boots. “Please join us at the table. We already blessed the food but we will do it again with you.”

Father said grace, took the knife and cut the bread into thick slices. The children watched as Father first gave the stranger the largest slice, and then gave everyone else a slice. They all enjoyed it, but they noticed their guest ate only small pieces of his slice. Nils looked at him in amazement and asked: “Don’t you like it?”

“Yes, yes, it tastes wonderful. But, if it’s all the same to you, I will bring it to my Greta. Father looked questioningly at Mother. She understood and nodded. “Just eat,” Father said kindly. “We will give you another piece for your child.” Now the stranger enjoyed his slice of bread. Then he gratefully took the slice that Mother had wrapped in paper, put on his jacket and went his way.

Nils and Elsa looked a bit disappointed at the bread plate. Only one heel remained of the fine loaf of bread. The parents could easily guess the burning questions that tormented them: Why did the stranger have to come right now? Why did Father give him two slices of bread, and why the thickest ones?

“Mother, get the Bible again! We want to read another Christmas verse,” Father said. He opened the Bible to Matthew 25:40 and read: “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”

“Nils, do you still remember what you said earlier: ‘We can give the Lord Jesus the best of what we have?’” Nils nodded. “Today we had a wonderful opportunity, like never before, to give the Lord Jesus some of our wheat bread—our very best. Remember, we did not just do this for the man and his sick Greta, but for the Lord Jesus Himself.”

Then he cut the heel of bread in two pieces—one for Nils and one for Elsa.

N. B.



# Grandma's Favorite Christmas Present

Christmas was fast approaching. Ursula and her brothers and sisters were eagerly looking forward to the holiday. They wondered what they would get for Christmas, but they also wanted to bring joy to their parents and grandmother with some small gifts.

The closer Christmas came, the clearer it became to Ursula, the oldest child, that they would have to give their grandmother a very special gift.

After having played school with her brothers and sister for some time, Ursula, as the teacher, found her grand-

mother's glasses on a nearby table and put them on in order to look more important. And then it happened. The glasses fell to the floor, and one of the lenses broke.

Suspicion fell upon Ursula, but she denied ever wearing the glasses. She later confessed her guilt to God, but her conscience did not rest easy. Her guilt lay like a stone upon her heart.

Ursula was alone with her grandmother on the day before Christmas Eve when she suddenly realized that it was now or never. She had to tell her

grandmother everything and ask for her forgiveness. Reluctantly the words came out of her mouth: "Grandma, I broke your glasses. I lied to you when I said that I didn't do it. Please forgive me!"

For a few minutes, the room was quiet. Then, Ursula's grandmother put her hand on Ursula's head and said, "That you told me the truth is worth more to me than a pair of glasses, and it is the best Christmas present that you could give me! I forgive you." Ursula's heart became light, and she could now truly look forward to Christmas.



# DEDICATION OF THE NEW HOUSE OF WORSHIP CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

*“ . . . that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, ‘My name shall be there,’ that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place.”*  
1 Kings 8:29

With thanksgiving and in awe of what the Lord has done, the congregation of the Church of God in Chilliwack dedicated the new House of Worship to the Lord during our special services from September 2-4, 2016. What a joy it was to be in God’s presence along with many dear brothers and sisters in Christ, some of whom had traveled far to experience God’s blessings. With a special joy we welcomed our guest speaker, Pastor Elke of Neustädt, Mexico and the guest choir from Edmonton, AB, who ministered in song to the glory of God and edified our faith. We thank everyone who prayed for these special services. It was precious to experience the joy and unity among God’s people. We are also grateful for the visitors from our city who attended these services.

For many years we prayed faithfully for guidance in building a new house of worship for the Lord. The old building, which was constructed in 1954, had served its purpose. After much planning, waiting, and overcoming a number of obstacles, we stepped out in faith to build a new house of worship on the same property as the old building.

Many volunteers sacrificially helped along. We are so grateful for the over 12,000 volunteer hours contributed by both the local congregation as well as volunteers from our sister congregations. It was very encouraging to welcome volunteers from out of town during the construction period. Over and over again we were assured that God’s family was holding us up in prayer, petitioning the Lord for His blessing and protection. It is with grateful hearts that we also thank all who contributed financially to this project. We often stood in awe of how the Lord placed it on His childrens’ hearts to joyfully support the Kingdom of God.

Through the proclamation of God’s Word we were reminded that this house of God is a place where our souls are satisfied, where we praise God and where He dwells in His glory and power. We were challenged to be a radiant church living out God’s vision for His church, having a forgiving attitude like Christ and being steadfast in our first love to the Lord. We were blessed through the Holy Spirit and God’s Word, and a number of souls sought help from the Lord.

Our city mayor, who addressed the congregation in the main dedication service, encouraged us to continue to share the love of Christ in a hurting world that needs Jesus and to honor our Lord by serving our community.

With the physical building now completed, we are mindful that we need to focus our hearts and work on the spiritual building. While it is the Lord alone who builds His church, Jesus gave us the Great Commission to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” May He give us grace and boldness to live out the vision He has placed on our hearts: loving like Jesus, living like Jesus, and serving like Jesus. It is our heartfelt desire that this physical building which we joyfully dedicated to the Lord be a holy place, a place where God’s presence dwells and where people encounter Him in a personal way. Further, our prayer is that it would be a place of hope and healing, where many will experience Jesus as their personal Savior, and grow in the knowledge and likeness of Christ. Please continue to pray for us.

In Christ,  
Pastor Gerry Krebs



*Christ is building His own temple,  
building it with living stones;  
Follow Him as our example,  
for the church is His alone.*

*Labor till the work is finished  
and each stone is set in place,  
When the building is completed,  
we shall enter heaven's gates.*



*Jesus is the one foundation,  
And we are the living stones.  
Jesus is the firm foundation  
of the church which is His own!*

*L. Besler*



# Kazakhstan

*“And the man asked him, saying, ‘What are you seeking?’ So he said, ‘I am seeking my brothers.’”  
Genesis 37:15-16*

It is now 26 years that we have had a relationship with our fellow pastors and believers of the Church of God in Canada.

We are very grateful to God for this fellowship and would like to briefly describe how this association came about.

In the 1990’s, Mikhail Gorbachev was President of the former USSR and introduced various reforms, which brought about many positive developments concerning the Christian faith. These policies had a beneficial impact on us in Kazakhstan. Thanks to these reforms, the door was opened to allow access for missionaries to visit, and many preachers and representatives of various faiths came into our country. We had more religious freedom and access to Christian literature, which now could be introduced without restrictions.

But even with all these positive developments, we felt we wanted something more. We wanted to have fellowship with believers from the Church of God family abroad. Through decades of separation we lacked the possibility to learn of these brothers and sisters. But how could we connect with them?

As I thought about it, I had an idea and decided to write a letter to the believers in Canada. The instrument God used was a Russian leaflet titled “Voice of Truth.” Later we learned that the short stories and articles published in this leaflet had been compiled and translated

into Russian by Bro. Alfred Tuviks of Canada. Some of these publications were brought to our Bro. Adolf Ziert by believers from Germany and later came to us in Karaganda. On the back of the leaflet was the address of the publisher: “Voice of Truth,” Publisher: Church of God, Canada. Address: 705 Concordia Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2K 4J8 Canada. R. Roesler, Pastor.

We sent a letter to this address, which included the following: “Kazakhstan is currently being visited by various preachers from different denominations, but the brothers of the Church of God are silent. But we would gladly see and hear them.” Br. Roesler told us later that he forwarded this letter to the brothers of the German-Canadian Mission.

After some time, a telegram from Br. H. D. Nimz came with an invitation to a telephone conversation. Br. Jakob Scharton, who was the elder of the church at that time, asked me to speak with Brother Nimz. Even today I remember how excited I was as I was traveling to the telephone location. I can not recall the complete conversation today, but Bro. Nimz mentioned that brothers from the mission gave him the mandate to get the necessary information for entry from the authorities. The manner in which the brother spoke gave me an inner respect and a positive outlook.

We were very pleased when we received this message. At that time, we were still living behind the “Iron Cur-



tain,” as we used to say. To have a visitor from Canada was something extraordinary for us. But at that time it was not so simple for us in Karaganda to obtain permission. So we asked Bro. Artur Reimann from Zelinograd (now Astana) for help. Bro. Artur had a good relationship with the authorized representative for religious affairs in Astana. The latter agreed to help and initiated everything. So it came that the Lord directed the hearts of the authorities in Zelinograd and a visa was granted for Bros. H. D. Nimz and Heinrich Semenjuk to enter Kazakhstan.

The first camp meetings with the brothers from Canada remain firmly in our memory. In their messages, they chose specific scriptures or a theme from the Bible and built the sermon around it, making their messages clear and easy to understand. It also made it easier to remember what was said. The first message, by Bro. Nimz, was “I seek my brethren.” That moved our hearts very much.

The Bros. H. D. Nimz and H. Semenjuk were the first to visit us in 1991. It has now been 26 years that two brothers visit us every year. Some of the brothers have made this journey several times; Bro. Nimz was on mission trips eight times. During this time, we were given cassettes with messages and songs, as well as other literature. In recent years, brothers from Germany have also come. As far as the opportunity allowed, we tried to

combine these visits with annual camp-meetings which take place in Astana.

Twenty six years of fellowship—this is a long period of time. During this time, there were various challenges that arose. We are very thankful to God, that in all these years, this warm relationship with the brothers has continued and been a blessing for the congregation in Kazakhstan.

We are also sincerely thankful for every brother that has visited us, especially for the sacrificial love, that they and their families demonstrated toward us. At this point, we would also like to express our gratitude for supporting the Russian “Gospel Trumpet.”

We do not know how the conditions and possibilities in our country will evolve. Only the Lord knows this. But let us remain sincere and keep an intimate bond with our brothers and sisters in the faith. We pray that God would bless all believers in Canada. I leave you with the message in 1 Corinthians 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

H. Reinick, Karaganda

# What Is Your Life?

“For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” (James 4:14)

When in the life of man  
 Years go quickly by,  
 And the future beholds,  
 Mankind’s questioning eye;  
 There remains a bridge,  
 Seen through a misty fog;  
 It leads us over yonder.  
 Its name is “Trust in God!”

Yes, whom do you trust and in what do you put your faith as year after year passes by? How many, when they go from one year into the next, trust in their good health, their good business, their fortune. These are all frail, unreliable props. For what is your life? It is a vapor which is visible only for a short time and then disappears. Yes, every day teaches us that human life quickly flies like the smoke rising from a chimney.

Dear reader, I would like to ask you whether you reckon with the almighty, merciful God and His holy will in view of the future and the brevity and uncertainty of life? How do the years fly by so fast? Why does the Word of God remind us of time’s flight? “Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!” (James 5:9). God calls to mankind: “Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!” (Amos 4:12). Are you ready to meet Him? Most people are by no means prepared to do so. And yet every day many people are called from time into eternity. Sometimes it is the young and sometimes the old; sometimes it is the healthy, sometimes the sick.

A family was expecting a number of visitors. The man went out one morning to shoot partridges for the guests. A short time before, at the request of his wife, he had gone to the doctor to be examined. After a thorough investigation, the doctor gave him the following report: “You are perfectly healthy, especially your heart. You could become very old.” But this report proved deceptive. For

after the man had shot his partridges, he suddenly fell to the ground. The friend who accompanied him brought him home as fast as he could. All attempts to revive him were futile. The doctor who had been called realized that a heart attack quickly ended his life. And this, despite being told shortly before that his heart was perfectly healthy. Yes, what is your life?

Not only the Bible tells us this, but also the signs of the times. Yes, the Judge is at the door. What a grave day, which is imminent for all unsaved men, when man comes before the judge to receive his eternal judgment!

But what a mercy that He, the righteous Judge, Jesus Christ, still stands as a Savior before the door of the heart and wants to enter! He says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock” (Revelation 3:20). He wants to come in, forgive you and give you peace and eternal life. His precious blood, which He shed on the cross for the lost, makes everyone pure from all sin, if we come to Him with a penitent heart. But we must come now, on the day of salvation, and in faith call on and embrace Him as Savior.

Millions of people are so blinded that they deny God’s existence. Yet God is still there, and He is near to comfort all who seek salvation and peace. He is near to carry all those who throw themselves confidently into His mighty arms. He is there to guide all His children with a faithful Father’s hand through this troubled world, even though the difficulties and dangers in the world rise like mountains. He is there, my friend, to mercifully accept you as well. He wants to blot out all your sins and give you true peace and eternal life. Yes, Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and save the lost. Do not delay your salvation any longer!

And if you have already become the Savior’s own, let this short earthly life, which is but a vapor, be fully consecrated to Him. Lay yourself on the altar of God with all that you have and are, so that He can sanctify you through and through. Follow Him, serve Him, and work for Him until He returns or calls you into His eternal kingdom!

# Your King is Coming to You

“The Lord is coming!” This joyful message was a frequent greeting among the first Christians. Is there anything more joyful than the coming of a beloved person? Whoever loves our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will, like the first Christians, joyfully take notice when someone calls, “The Lord is coming!”

Let us hear it as a joyful call; let us rejoice and be thankful of the certain hope that the day of His return is getting closer. Why should we not rejoice when we know that we will see Him as He is? We will be allowed to partake of all the blessings of His Father’s house, as He has clearly promised to prepare dwellings for us there as well.

Can we not see the signs of the future? Do they not coincide with Jesus’ last words when He told us what would happen before His return? (See Luke 21.) “Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near” (v. 28).

Yes, we should rejoice when the Lord comes, for He will come as Victor over all His enemies. When all attempts to displace Christ have collapsed, then the Lord will stand as Victor. No hand will rise against Him again; no mouth will mock Him then. All power and honor will belong to Him, and all who loved Him will rule with Him in eternity. Is that not enough reason to rejoice? Lift up your heads and rejoice in anticipation of the coming victory!

The Lord will then also fulfill all that was proclaimed by the mouths of the apostles and prophets. The wealthy of this world will fall. All authority and power, all glory and honor will belong to God for ever and for always.

The certainty of the fulfillment of all these truths should be an encouragement for us to be more diligent and joyful in our work. The hours are quickly passing; midnight is coming. Should we rest? No—blessed is the servant whom the master finds awake! Should we hesitate, because the enemy, knowing that he does not have much more time, is working and raging and destroying with increased intensity? Should we be pessimists and only see gloom? No—this certainty, “The Lord is coming!” should destroy all pessimism. Onward to joyful work!

We will not please the Lord at His return if we are sitting in our rooms, sorrow-stricken and sighing over the sad state of the times. No, we will please Him if we do the work He entrusted to us. Whoever strives to be of pure heart when the Lord comes; whoever works with all their might at saving lost souls—he will please the Lord. That is the fruit the Lord is seeking when He comes. Therefore, get up and “work out your own salvation” and the salvation of the world! Do not say the work is useless and in vain. We cannot always be certain where the sown seeds of truth will fall and take root. Sow them anyway. Testify of your Lord. Do not worry about the result; leave that to the Lord, but work with all your might. And truly, if the Lord’s final victory is certain, then taking joy in the Lord’s work is perfectly justified.

The Lord has hidden the day of His return from us. No mathematical equation can determine when it will come. The Bible tells us that the Lord’s Day will come like a thief in the night. Therefore, be prepared and work faithfully for Him. Be a witness for Jesus through your faith, your walk, and your zeal, and rejoice that the Lord is coming again.

## Experiences with God

*“Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that your hand would be with me” (1 Chronicles 4:10).*

This was my desire many years ago, and this continues to be my desire 25 years later. I want to thank the Lord for the blessings that He has so richly given me. I want to thank God for making it possible for the brothers from Canada to have visited us over the past 25 years.

As a young 16-year old, I vividly remember the first visit from Brother Nimz. For me it was a miracle and great victory for my faith. It was at the time when relations between the East and West were still very strained. For the brothers this tension led to considerable risks and challenges. The faith displayed by them had a positive impact on me.

But even more so, I was moved by the sermons the brothers brought and the personal experiences with God that they shared. At that time we did not know how our brothers and sisters on the other side of the globe were doing or how they lived. Now we were able to see them with our own eyes and hear them with our own ears. My heart was filled with great joy as I heard the words that testified of God’s grace. That is how we got to know our brothers and came to accept the good news. With great joy and a deep longing we prayed that the Lord might grant us yet another time of fellowship with the brothers, a fellowship that had been a blessing for myself and many of our brothers and sisters. The personal experiences that the brothers shared helped

me to respond correctly to similar situations in my own life—sermons about the dangers of careless living when times of prosperity came when we no longer had to suffer hunger. Or wrong use of the Internet and modern technology. All of these experiences helped me to choose a healthy attitude in life. It also helped me to stay close to Jesus and to pray for my brothers and sisters in Christ.

The last visit from Brother Nimz was especially important for me. Ahead of time I noticed how intensely the brothers and sisters prayed for God’s blessing and the health of the brother. We were aware of the fact that Bro. Nimz was no longer young. Therefore, we were even more excited that the brother was coming to our Anniversary Camp Meeting, as he was the one who had initially started the meetings.

In this year Bro. Johann Strack from Gifhorn, Germany also came. This brother brought sermons in Russian and also translated the German sermons into Russian.

Now I can once again spend a year reflecting on the meetings with the brethren and joyfully anticipate the upcoming camp meetings.

The work which various brothers accomplished here in past years did not remain fruitless. Many brothers and sisters remember these visits with joy and gratitude. I hope that we can continue to stay connected in this way.

Wolodja Gozuljak,  
Karaganda, Kazakhstan

---

*“I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).*

I thank God that I can walk the path I am on because He made me His child. When I look back at my life, this was not always the case.

I grew up in my parent’s home where God was not mentioned. My mother was sick for years and died when I was 13. I was away from home in my teenage years, and I cannot recount one good thing from that time. But the Lord mercifully looked down on me and

sent me a dear wife. She was a tool in God’s hands, and I gave my life to the Lord at age 26. Unfortunately, however, it took several years before I fully grasped it.

We had a good marriage, and God granted us four daughters. We sometimes talked about which of us would leave earth first, and how it would be for the one left behind. It has now been 20 years that I have been the one left behind. I can only say that God’s grace is incredible. Although three of our loved ones have gone to their eternal home during this time, I can



still testify that when God gives us a burden, He helps us to carry it. The blessings of God are still greater than everything else; our daily blessings are proof of God's presence. I will continue to walk the path of life in His presence and among beloved brothers and sisters in the faith.

Therefore I can say with the psalmist: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23:6).

Werner Kaspar,  
Edmonton (CA)

---

## Letter from the Publications Committee

Dear reader,

With the December issue you are holding the last edition of the *Foundation of Faith* for this year in your hands. With grateful hearts we can look back at the past year; God has again enabled us to send out the *Foundation of Faith* twelve times. A wide range of topics were covered: from doctrinal topics to articles of encouragement, articles for children, young people, and seniors. Each issue was placed in your hands with much prayer, in the hope that you would be blessed through it.

At this point we would like to thank you for your prayers and financial gifts. Many readers carry the financial cost of sending the ordered publications, while other readers are classified as "mission," which means they receive the publication free of charge. We are thankful that there are willing brothers and sisters who give generously to support the work of the Lord in this way.

In addition to printed publications, we find that in the last few years technology has been a great tool to spread reading material. The *Foundation of Faith*, as well as other e-books from the Church of God can be read online or downloaded and saved to read offline. In the past year alone the downloading of e-books has increased by approximately 40%. Our younger brothers and sisters are more inclined to use the new methods of reading and we are pleased to offer this option to them. It reminds me of the words of the Apostle Paul: "Only that in every way, . . . Christ is preached" (Philippians 1:18).

At the end of the year we can look back, but also ahead. The year before us offers new opportunities, to do something for the Lord. As the committee for the *Foundation of Faith* we are already thinking about the content of the first months of the new year. It remains

our aim to proclaim Jesus Christ and His teachings and thereby illuminate the way to an eternity in glory.

Would you be interested in helping us? In addition to prayers and financial support there are further possibilities to be involved in distribution of the *Foundation of Faith*. This can be achieved in several different ways. A sister told me that when she visits the doctor she always "forgets" a copy of the *Foundation of Faith* in the waiting room. The *Foundation of Faith* can also be passed along through personal contacts. There is also the possibility of ordering the *Foundation of Faith* for someone for a few months or a year on a trial basis. Do you perhaps have someone in your circle of friends or relatives who would be interested in receiving this publication? You could support this trial with your prayers and perhaps also financially. I am convinced that God will bless this outreach effort.

Before you lay the *Foundation of Faith* aside and forget about this outreach effort, why not do it right now? That way you will take part in completing the mission of spreading God's Word.

The *Foundation of Faith* also appears in German under the name "Evangeliums Posaune." You can also use the address below to order the German publication if that is what you prefer.

We would like to wish all our readers God's richest blessings for the New Year. We want to move ahead with courage and serve the Lord with joy as long as we still have "today."

Harry Semenuk

Christian Unity Press  
5195 Exchange Drive  
Flint, MI 48507-2941  
USA



### Pastor Erich Henschel

*“For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”*

*2 Corinthians 5:1*

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to take His faithful servant Erich Henschel into His eternal heavenly home on August 22, 2016 at the age of 88.

Brother Henschel was born in West Prussia on June 11, 1928 to his parents Friedrich and Ottilie Henschel. He was the oldest of four surviving brothers and sisters. In 1944, while attending high school away from home, his mother died very suddenly due to complications resulting from an operation. In the same year, when he was only 15 years old, he was drafted into the army as a “Luftwaffenhelfer” (Air Force Assistant). In March 1945 his leg was injured by a bullet and the same day he was taken into Soviet captivity, where he endured four very difficult years.

Our gracious God protected Erich through all the dangers of war and captivity. This was certainly an answer to the earnest prayers of his parents, for their son had not prepared his heart for eternity. When he came home from the war, his father spoke to him about his soul and told him that he needed to get right with God. The Spirit of God convicted Erich and he repented of his sins and accepted Jesus as his Savior in repentance and faith. Thanks to the grace of God, through faith, he experienced forgiveness of sin, and his heart was filled with God’s peace.

During special services in Oldenburg in 1951, brother Henschel met a young girl, Rita Hübner. He felt that she was the one that should become his wife, so in 1953 they were married in Wetaskiwin, AB, Canada, where they had both immigrated. God blessed their marriage with four children: Cornelia, Karin, Holger, and Peter.

In 1971 Bro. Henschel felt God nudging him to participate in the Bible School that was taking place in Edmonton. Following this calling, he gave up his job and went to Bible School for 3 years. Since then, he, together with his wife, devoted their time to full-time ministry. Their first pastorate was at the church of God in Wetaskiwin (from 1972), and after that they served for 16 years in the Church of God in Toronto, ON (from 1981). During their time in Toronto a new house of worship was built. Brother Henschel also went to foreign countries to preach the Word of God.

In 1997, Brother and Sister Henschel moved to Chilliwack, BC, in order to enjoy their retirement. During his retirement he was always ready to serve and help in the local congregation where needed.

In the year 2008, Bro. Henschel turned 80, and his health began to decline. In the next few years health concerns increased and his strength decreased more and more. But God gave his loving wife the health and strength to care for him at home right until the end. This made his suffering significantly more bearable. Even the doctors and nurses that came into the house noticed how peaceful and happy he was. Bro. Henschel



cherished his personal communion with God and always took time for prayer and Bible reading. He often spoke of the blessed time he had with God and how His presence had been so near to him.

The funeral for Bro. Henschel took place in the newly dedicated church building in Chilliwack, BC on September the 6, 2016. A number of pastors attended the funeral. The verse of scripture cited above was the service's theme. Bro. Henschel joyfully anticipated going to his eternal home. Now he can see what he believed here on earth. Our departed brother often prayed: "Lord, help us to always be ready to meet you." We want to live in such a way that we will see him in glory.

Bro. Henschel leaves behind his wife Rita, his children with their spouses, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, two sisters with their spouses, a brother-in-law and nieces and nephews. The congregation in Chilliwack and many brothers and sisters in various congregations share in the grief of the bereaved family. May the God of all comfort be near to all who mourn.

Gerald Krebs



## The Passing of Another Year

Like the finite things around us  
So the years must come and go.  
Oh, the speed of change astounds us;  
Time is fleeting, never slow.  
Anxious, rushing restlessly,  
Flowing to eternity.

Fleeting breath, a flower that's fading,  
Recognize that life is such.  
Strong or weak, the body's aging,  
And it will return to dust.  
Let's be wise in all we do,  
Remembering we are mortal too.

As seasons change, they're never lasting;  
Day by day we're keeping track.  
Our life is but a vapor passing;  
The One Who gave it takes it back;  
And even if there is delay,  
Things of earth will pass away.

How vain the earthly things that please us,  
Since they will pass and cannot stay.  
Give your heart and life to Jesus;  
Heavenly things won't pass away.  
Through Jesus Christ you can be free,  
And live with Him eternally.