

Foundation of Faith

One Nail, One Flat Tire, One Gospel

Saving Souls—Our Profession

Serving God as a Family

Co-laborers with God

**In the Service
Of the Most High**

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FOUNDATION OF FAITH

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Editorial

Dear Reader!

What is my aspiration? And what is yours? Children often say: “When I grow up, I want to be . . .”

Have you ever noticed that the world around us tends to use superlatives a lot? “This is the greatest, the richest . . . he is highly respected!” Sports are all about being the fastest, the strongest, the best . . . and then we learn that this pursuit of fame and glory is so often deceptive. Instead of glory and honor, shame follows, sometimes even punishment and contempt.

Now for us—what should our aspirations and thoughts be? We read: “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2). Yes, Christ, the Son of God, is above, at the right hand of the Father. And when He was on earth, what did He show His disciples then, and us today, and what did He Himself live out?

Matthew 20:26–28 says, “But whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your servant. . . . just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Just as Jesus, the Almighty Son of God, humbled Himself and served throughout His life, we too should serve out of love, help our brothers and sisters, and show a lost world the way to their salvation! Yes, serving the Savior satisfies the heart!

*The service of Jesus true pleasure affords,
In Him there is joy without an alloy;
'Tis Heaven to trust Him and rest on His words;
It pays to serve Jesus each day.
It pays to serve Jesus, it pays every day,
It pays every step of the way,
Though the pathway to glory
may sometimes be drear,
You'll be happy each step of the way.*

May God help us to be true servants of the Lord!

H. D. Nimz

One Nail, One Flat Tire, One Gospel

*“Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.”
(Acts 16: 14)*

It was the end of July 2019, and my wife and I were travelling home to Winnipeg, Manitoba from Calgary, Alberta on Highway 1 in Canada. We had been blessed to spend a number of weeks with our family and friends in Western Canada. It has been our practice to always pray for a safe journey when travelling, given the many road accidents that occur daily. We had also committed this trip into the Lord’s hands.

We planned to travel with our car from Calgary to Regina, Saskatchewan to stay in a hotel for one night and then continue home the next day to Winnipeg. This would break up the 14-hour journey into two more manageable drives. We were only a few hours from our first destination when the totally unexpected happened. My dashboard alerted me that one of my tires was losing air. We were on a major highway, and as the tire pressure continued to drop, we knew we had to stop soon. It seemed like we were in the middle of nowhere, yet not far ahead we spotted a gas station. We slowed down and drove to the gas station and stopped. I went outside to hear the one tire hissing, and soon it was totally flat. Later, at an auto shop, they showed us the large five-centimeter nail that had flattened our tire. Thank God we had just enough time to reach this gas station without any harm occurring!

As we pondered what to do next, a camper van arrived at the gas station. After the camper had been refueled, it pulled over next to us. A friendly, middle-aged man got out and looked at our flat tire. His name was Lee, and he offered to help us. He got out my spare tire and tools to change the flat. Lee let us know that he was travelling out west for work, while we explained that we were heading east to our home in Winnipeg. Lee was very proficient at changing tires, and soon the new tire was in place and our flat tire was

in the trunk. God had sent us a Good Samaritan who was a blessing in time of need!

While Lee was changing our tire, his girlfriend Carol appeared and spoke to us. She was very friendly and kind as well. Lee began to work on his camper while we continued talking to her. She explained how she had met Lee and that they were both travelling out west to see where work and life would take them. As she began to share her life’s journey, I realized that she was seeking truth. She described investigating spiritual pathways that appeared to lead into darkness and offered no hope. I began to share with her that Jesus was the light of the world and that through Him we could step out of darkness into the light of God. From my own life, I shared that Jesus could change our hearts and set us free from sin and bondage (see John 3).

I could tell that Carol was longing for the way of light and the peace that only Jesus could offer. She mentioned some of the books she was reading, and I offered her a copy of the Gospel of John from the Gideons, which I always try to have with me in the car. I asked her to read it prayerfully and study the wonderful life of Jesus, who wished to walk with her in a new life of light and truth. She was very thankful for this, and I could sense God opening her heart to His Word.

Lee returned and said it was time to depart. After saying our goodbyes, they headed off on their journey west, and we were able to continue our journey home. As we drove eastward, we were left wondering about this encounter. In some 40 years of driving, we cannot remember ever having a flat tire while driving. Why now? How did this large nail flatten our tire just then? Why did this couple just happen to be travelling by in need of gas and were willing to help us? As we pondered this, it became evident that God wanted us to witness to this searching soul and her friend, and He



knew that a flat tire would bring us together to share the Gospel with them.

One day, the apostle Paul was led to a prayer meeting by a river in Philippi where God opened Lydia's heart to understand the Gospel, and she believed and became a Christian. Our prayer is that Carol and Lee's hearts will also be open to God's Spirit and that they too will walk in His light. Let us all be open to sharing

God's Word with others lost in darkness. Carry a Gospel or New Testament and a copy of our *Foundation of Faith* magazine with you and ask God to guide you to seeking hearts. You never know who God will put in your path in His perfect way and timing.

Harry Klinger
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Only a Tract

Our God likes using small things to do great ones. One example can be found in the life of Hudson Taylor, who would go on to found the China Inland Mission. The story is short: his mother once put a tract on the table; he read it and ended up fully committing his life to Jesus.

Another story is told of a scuba diver in Sydney, Australia, who was visited by a friend. Entering the living room, the guest's attention turned to a large oyster shell prominently displayed on the mantel of the fireplace. In it was a folded piece of wrinkled paper. Asked about the significance of the shell and the paper, the diver told his friend the following story:

"One day, while I was diving among some wrecks just off the coast, a strange sight caught my attention. There, on a rock, was this oyster shell with a piece of paper sticking out of it. To my surprise, words were still visible on the paper. I held it up to my goggles to get a better view, and found that it was a Gospel tract!

"I wondered how it could have gotten there—at the bottom of the ocean, sitting in an oyster shell, perched up on a rock—basically on display waiting for me to find it. Then the thought flashed through my mind that God had sent it as a message to my soul, and there, in the ocean's depths, I paused to read it through."

The diver went on to tell his friend how the paper contained the story of the cross of Christ, where Jesus the Son of God died for guilty sinners like you and me. It told of the full and free salvation available to all who will repent and turn to God. He related how his heart was affected by the Lord's message of salvation coming to him in such a strange and unexpected way. Right there, far below the ocean's surface, he confessed his sin to a holy God and trusted Jesus Christ who died for him and rose again.

Dear Reader, do not underestimate the service you do by distributing tracts. Sow good seed! ■

A Task for You

Generally, a physically healthy and mentally adept person feels the need to work. Why? Because there is a certain satisfaction in a job well done, and through it, we secure our livelihood. In Ecclesiastes 9:10, we find wise advice on how we should carry out our work: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with all your might.” A well-known proverb also says: “Work well begun is already half done.” A talented and capable businessman, who became unemployed due to the dissolution of the company he worked for, expressed: “Unemployment is one of the most toxic situations we can encounter.”

If we have the ability and opportunity to work every day, what is our attitude towards our work? Shouldn't all our complaints about unsatisfactory conditions at our workplace cease? It seems that there is more negativity today than ever before regarding our places of employment. Oh, that at least we as God's people would be on guard against Satan's schemes and learn to be thankful for every job we are able to do with God's help!

However, besides fulfilling earthly duties, there is also a heavenly calling. We find it in Isaiah 49:3: “You *are* My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” This was the task assigned to Isaiah, but even today, the Lord demands the same from you and me, dear Friend.

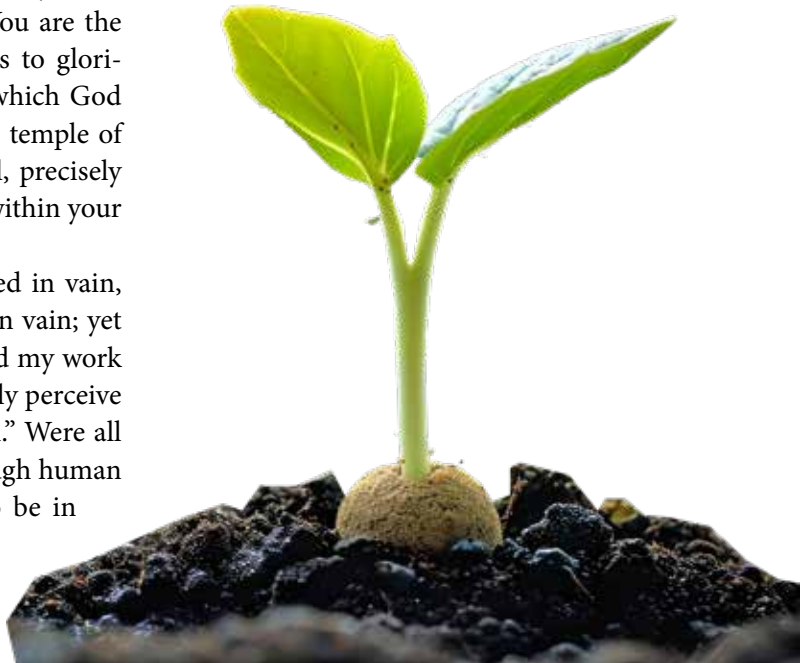
“You *are*” is just as certain and personal for you today as it was for the prophet back then. You are the instrument through which God still wants to glorify Himself today. You are the vessel into which God wants to place His rich treasure. You are a temple of God in which God's glory desires to dwell, precisely in the place where you are today, whether within your family or in the midst of business life.

In verse 4, Isaiah replies: “I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; yet surely my just reward *is* with the LORD, and my work with my God.” In these words, we can clearly perceive Isaiah's humanness: “I have labored in vain.” Were all his efforts and struggles for nothing? Through human eyes, the prophet's entire work seemed to be in vain. Yes, it seemed to him as if all the years, months, and days he had worked for his God had been lost, without benefit and gain—in vain.

Is it the same for you, dear child of God, when you look back on the time since you have been in the Lord's service? All the effort, all the sweat, all the tears, all the prayers, all the sacrifices—do they seem to you like seeds scattered to the wind? Perhaps no one knows what it has cost you: sleepless nights, watching, and praying. And suddenly it may seem to you as if you have labored in vain and spent your strength for nothing and to no avail. In such moments of inner discouragement, remember: It is not my concern, but God's. The task was given to me by my heavenly Master; He takes on the responsibility.

The cause is yours, Lord Jesus Christ. And because it is Your cause, it cannot fail!

Servants of God, if you find yourselves in such a situation, never lose courage! Even if only one single soul is the fruit of many years of hard work, it is worth the effort to win that soul for Christ. Some seeds must first be soaked in water before they are planted into the earth. Similarly, the spiritual seed we sow often needs to be bathed in the water of tears. “Those who sow in tears shall reap with joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*” (Psalm 126:5–6). ■





The Sunday School Teacher's Weapon

One of the greatest encouragements Sunday School teachers can have is the assurance that they are using God-given means to communicate His plan and will to their students.

Sunday School teachers have the promise that they can trust in an unchanging God and that the message they bring to the children will not be without effect. If they are unsuccessful in focusing the children's attention on the lesson and moving their hearts, it is not because of the lesson itself but due to other factors.

God stands by His revealed Word as the Savior of immortal souls. He promises that everyone who accepts His Word will be cleansed from all sin. This is where the strength of the Sunday School teacher lies. As long as he or she brings the simple truths of Scripture to the children understandably and sensitively, not neglecting earnest prayer, success will not fail to materialize. God will abundantly pour out His promised blessing.

John Bunyan, who was completely alienated from God, was not reached by a church or a preacher but by a few simple, uneducated women. They spoke vividly of the rebirth they had experienced, much as Jesus had once explained it to the ruler of the Jews. Despite the

simplicity of their words, such power emanated from them that Bunyan was deeply moved, and his heart was shaken by the truth. The simple words of these women, who possessed no great knowledge, followed him like a shadow wherever he went.

"I left the group," he said, "but their words wouldn't let me go. My thoughts were so caught up in the kingdom of God that I couldn't get away from it, despite all the pleasures I indulged in."

What a great example of divine revelation! John Bunyan was led into the presence of ordinary women, and his attention was drawn to their simple words. He heard only a few minutes of God's greatness and miraculous saving power, and yet this was enough to turn a sinful man into a man of God whose spiritual legacy continues to impact us to this day.

Do our Sunday School teachers take this to heart? Do they understand that they have been given the privilege to lead others to the joy of salvation? Do they need any more encouragement to truly apply the Word of God once they are convinced of its tremendous power? Therefore, let us boldly testify of the glorious name of Jesus wherever the opportunity presents itself. This is the weapon with which we can extinguish all the fiery darts of the evil one! ■

Why Am I Here?

In the midst of everyday life, be it at work when you are earning your daily bread, or when you are enjoying the pleasures of life, the question may suddenly arise in your soul: “Why am I here?”

This is certainly an important question. It is also important to find the right answer to it. Different people will answer it in different ways. Many probably don’t know or don’t even want to know why they are here. Such life is meaningless, drab, and to be pitied. As humans, our reason for living is not primarily to work hard every day, and after a life of toil and worry, for 70 or 80 years, then to die. Nor is our reason for living just to have a good time or to enjoy the pleasures of this world.

When someone becomes ill, disabled through sickness or suffering infirmity, the question becomes even more acute. The agonizing soul may ask: “Why am I here?” Such people sometimes feel they no longer have a purpose on earth. They think they cannot have a fulfilling life; indeed, some think they are only a burden for others.

There are some who believe that possessions or enjoyment is the true purpose of life. Many see work and the fulfillment of one’s obligations and duties as the greatest goal in life. There are those who believe that they are on earth for the sake of family, friends, or other people. These and other reasons may give life purpose, but they cannot satisfy the soul. As humans, we were created in the image of God. True satisfaction and bliss for the soul is to recognize and experience God. To have our soul conformed to the image of God is our goal. Being alienated from God is torture for the soul.

The answer to the question “Why am I here?” can be found in the Bible: “For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14:7–8). So, living for the Lord is the highest purpose of life, and this is what satisfies the soul. Living for the Lord and serving Him provides the solution to all the unresolved questions of life. This applies to all people. It is for the young person who, in the prime of life, is seeking satisfaction in the vain pleasures of the

world, which do not satisfy. It is for those in mid-life who may be sighing under the burden of everyday life. Only one thing can really satisfy: to know that one is living for the Lord. It is also for the elderly, for those who are suffering, and for those who are ill. To know that “whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s” gives comfort to us all.

Why are you here? To live for the Lord and to belong to the Lord, so that you can live with Him and also die in Him: this is the true purpose of life. Until now, you may have been living for other purposes. Give your soul the correct answer to the question and its search for life’s ultimate goal. Make a new start and leave behind the old. Give yourself completely and unreservedly to the Lord, your God. He will give your life a new course. He Himself will then be the goal of your life and give life its true meaning.

Why was Jesus, our role model, here in this world? He did not live for Himself nor have a meaningless death. He lived and died for our sake. His life consisted of self-denial and self-sacrifice. He did the will of His Father in heaven. His obedience even to the point of death on the cross crowned His life with perfection. Let this inspire us to have the same devotion. Looking back on His life, Jesus could say: “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4). That was His purpose and mission in life. Our purpose and mission in life is to live for the Lord and to glorify Him on earth. Can there be a higher goal?

Dear Reader, whoever you are, you too are called to this purpose. You too should live for the Lord. You have a place in God’s plan. Fulfill your calling; live for the Lord. Don’t try to do it in your own strength, but come to Jesus, the Lord, in prayer. Let Him redeem you and give you a new heart. Without Jesus, and without this salvation, your life remains self-centered. Do not deprive your soul of this answer when it quietly asks you, “Why am I here?” Let this be your resolve and the resolve of your soul: “From today on, I want to live for the Lord!” Dear Friend, it is rewarding!

O. Sommerfeld

Saving Souls—our Profession

If we want to share the gospel with someone and spark their interest, we must do so with serious thought. The secret lies in genuinely putting ourselves in their shoes. This will require effort and even sacrifice of our own comfort. Especially when working in the Lord's vineyard and trying to lead someone to Jesus, we must pursue them and empathize with them. However, this is not always easy. Not everyone is likable. A certain preacher's experience illustrates this:

The preacher invited Mrs. B to the services. "Yes, I will be coming to church now—I've wanted to come for a long time," she said. "I've been waiting for my husband. You know, he's actually a good person, but he doesn't care much about church services. He often tells me that I should go and perhaps he will come later. Many times, I wanted to come, but then I thought, 'If I wait a little longer, he'll surely come with me.'"

The preacher told her that the best thing that she could do was to commit herself to God without delay. He explained that as a child of God, she would certainly have more influence on her husband than without God.

As the preacher was leaving, he said, "Please, greet your husband for me and tell him I'm sorry I missed him at home. I hope to speak with him soon."

Some time later, he visited Mrs. B. again. "I had to promise my husband to tell you something," she said, embarrassed. "He said that if you wanted to speak with him, you would have to meet him where he's at right now."

"And where is that?" was his question.

"Oh, perhaps you should wait a few days. He can then be reached more easily. You see, today he is working at the very top of the new church tower."

That was enough. The preacher decided to visit Mr. B. that very afternoon. In front of the church, a magnificent building with a high and pointed tower, he learned that the person he was looking for was indeed working at the very top.

"You can't go up there. You would have to climb up a series of ladders. Perhaps we can call him down," suggested the construction supervisor.

But the preacher felt called to go where Mr. B. was. So he climbed up ladder after ladder until he found a very surprised man about 60 meters above street level. He remained with him for a short time in serious conversation. Then the preacher climbed down and continued with his other visits.

The following Sunday, Mr. B. was in the service. And much later, he became known as an exemplary child of God. His friends were amazed at this change in his life. He always explained it by saying, "The preacher who climbed 60 meters up those ladders to reach me could have found me any other time. He truly must care a lot about my soul's salvation."

But saving souls should not only be the profession of preachers. No, it must concern every one of us! We do not want to appear before God's judgment seat empty-handed some day! ■



Which Class Do You Belong To?

It is said that stagecoaches in Texas once had first, second, and third classes. The fare depended on the class the passenger wanted to use. One passenger, who came from a foreign country and wanted to use the stagecoach for the first time, was surprised at the division into three classes, as everyone was sitting in the same carriage, all in a jumble.

The puzzle of class division was solved when a steep mountain road had to be negotiated. The first-class passengers were allowed to remain seated, the second-class passengers had to get off and could walk alongside, but the third-class passengers had to push.

Someone who told me this said that there are also first-class members in the Christian community who allow themselves to be served and do not take on any burden or obligation. There are also second-class church members who do not cause any hardship but are just followers. And finally, there are third-class members who are always accustomed to lending a hand, who are expected to make sacrifices of time, energy, and money, who “help push the cart up the hill.” These third-class church members are the most valuable. Blessed is a church that has many such members in its ranks!

You could call these members of the “third class” Epaphroditus-people. Epaphroditus was a member of the Christian community in Philippi. When this church heard that the apostle Paul was a prisoner in Rome for Jesus’ sake, they saw it as their duty to send the apostle a gift of love to ease his difficult fate as a prisoner.

Epaphroditus was prepared to take on the journey to Rome. This was no small feat in those days. He had to endure a perilous sea voyage and much hardship. Coming from the provinces, he found completely alien conditions in the cosmopolitan city of Rome. He was not afraid to be associated with a prisoner of the state. In addition, he became deathly ill in Rome, so that the apostle Paul sent him back immediately after his recovery because the church in Philippi, which had heard of his illness, was worried about him. Paul gave him a greeting for the church and wrote to them: “Receive him [Epaphroditus] therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem” (Philippians 2:29).

Yes, such brothers and sisters must be cherished! Such “third-class” fellow travelers are “first-class” church members in the best sense of the word. Couldn’t our missionaries in particular be counted in this class? They are emissaries. They give up their comfort. They take on hardship and privation. They dare to do something for Jesus. Some risk their lives. Others return home with broken strength and then lead a quiet life among us. They should therefore not be forgotten. After all, they pushed the cart for us when things were going uphill. They fulfilled the mission Jesus gave His church in our place. This also applies to many Kingdom workers at home. “Hold such [people] in esteem.”

Which class do you belong to? How do the other members of your local church see and experience you? How does the Lord, as the head of the church, see you? ■

“Lord, Send Me!”

For more than a hundred years, Norway was a land of revivals. These began in the last years of the eighteenth century. At that time, the spiritual state of the country was anything but encouraging. Many said that there could be no revival. Apostasy was rampant. Norway was spiritually withered like the bones in the book of Ezekiel. Christians everywhere were asking: “Can these bones live?” Rationalism had taken over.

Many preachers accepted it. They ridiculed the holiness of God and the fact that a sinner needs reconciliation. They taught that being born again meant “self-improvement through self-knowledge and diligence.” Their main theme at the time was “social improvement.” The Norwegian clergy were given to partying, card playing, and worldliness. The members of the congregation indulged in even worse sins.

Make me a prisoner in words and thoughts!

In this spiritual wasteland, God laid His hand on a man. He was an ordinary farmer, and his name was Hans Nielsen Hauge. Through him, God worked great spiritual changes throughout Norway.

On a bright day in April 1796, Hauge was plowing a field on his father’s estate. As he walked along the furrows, he began to sing a chorale, the second verse of which goes something like this: “Strengthen my inner being so that I may experience the power of the Spirit! Make me a prisoner in word and thought!”

That’s as far as he got. His heart overflowed with adoration and praise. He went home immediately. He climbed into the hayloft and spent some time in prayer

and communion with the Lord. God’s still voice asked him: “Whom shall I send to invite to My great supper?” Hauge replied: “Send me!”

From that time he became burdened for all. He felt compelled with all his might to speak to people about the salvation of their souls. At that time, it was unheard of in Scandinavia for a layman to preach, but he traveled all over the country and called men, women, and children to come to God.


The flame of God

In the first few years, he traveled 10,000 km on foot. He preached in hundreds of farmhouses. At night, he studied his Bible. During the day, he traveled or helped the farmers in the fields. This gave him the opportunity to talk to them about eternal things and invite them to the evening meetings.

Soon, the clergy began to show their resistance. Hauge was pursued by dogs, by the police, and sometimes driven out of the villages with a whip. Nothing could frighten him. His voice filled the land. One of his favorite verses was: “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD!” (Jeremiah 22: 29).

Hans Nielsen Hauge, the flame of God, was thrown into prison multiple times. His imprisonment took a great toll on his health, and led to his premature death just before his 53rd birthday. But his life initiated a fire of revival that later gripped the country. It was the beginning of a new era and a newfound Christianity throughout the land.

A. Gesswein



I Would Love to Have Peace!

Otto Funke (1836-1910) grew up in a Christian home in Germany, and at his mother's urging began to study theology in Halle. But it was in Tübingen that he experienced his life-defining encounter with Jesus. Professor Johann Tobias Beck (1804-1878) became God's instrument. At their very first meeting, Beck asked Otto what he was looking to learn in his lectures.

"I am looking for the truth," Otto said. Beck replied: "Then you are looking for something great. If you really want to find the truth, then you must not only strive to possess the truth but want the truth to take complete possession of your heart and will. That is why our Lord Jesus Christ says: 'If anyone wills to do His will . . .' You know how that verse continues, don't you? 'He shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own *authority*'" (John 7:17).

Otto was so moved that he couldn't answer. Beck laid his hand on his head in a fatherly manner and said: "May God give you the strength to really want to!"

That same afternoon, Otto went for a walk with Beck to the famous Wurmlinger Chapel. For Otto, this walk was the path to a new life. He wrote about it himself:

"Beck asked me why I hadn't stayed in Halle. I replied that the denominational disputes had repulsed me so much and completely confused my heart. He sighed deeply and was silent for a long time. Then he said: 'In the kingdom of God there is peace every-

where. The quarrels arise because people have no confidence in the victory of the truth. People try to help and support truth along. The apostles offered the truth but did not argue about it. The gospel addresses the inner spirit and the conscience. There it confirms itself if you give it space. Don't worry about the world and its noise! Leave all church doctrines where they are and become a quiet, humble student of the Word of God!'

"I felt obliged to mention, for honesty's sake, that there was much in the Scriptures that caused me great doubt. Beck responded calmly, as if this was nothing special:

"Dear Otto, have you ever questioned your doubts? Do so seriously! Put a big question mark after every question mark that your critical mind raises! First of all, leave what you cannot yet understand or bear alone. Even the Lord's apostles could not bear everything at first. Stick to what you understand and what has taken hold of you. Enough will come that will appear to you clearly and distinctly as divine truth. Hold on to it, work with it, and live it out to the best of your ability in everyday life. Put aside for later what seems offensive or strange to you. Do not reject it in proud defiance, but also do not torture yourself to believe something that you cannot believe at the moment. Submit only to what you have recognized as truth in simple-minded obedience. Obedience, my young friend, is the most important thing. When the Word of God works in you, the doubts disappear by themselves, just as the old, dry leaves fall from the oaks while the sap remains in the trunk.'

“I was filled with hope and strength. I immediately felt that the man was right. It was all so simple and understandable. Nothing seemed artificial or contrived. And yet there was spirit and truth in everything. I realized that this impressive man had achieved everything he was solely by submitting to the divine Word.

“After a long pause, I said: ‘Professor, I would love to have peace!’ With that, I had revealed my whole heart.

“Beck stopped, looked deep into my eyes, and said with solemn seriousness: ‘You will find peace. But finding peace does not mean having peace for the flesh. Anyone who wants that does not honestly want peace. In this world, there is no peace of heart without

constant self-denial and daily struggle.’ And then this old man of God showed me the cross of Jesus in a way I had never seen before. He spoke of the One who died for my sins, who did everything so that I could have peace.”

When Otto Funke returned home from this walk, he locked the door to his study, sank to his knees, and talked to God for a long, long time. During this conversation, it became increasingly clear to him that God was close to him and had heard his call for peace. This was the quiet beginning of what Otto later tried to pass on to people in his many speeches and writings: The peace that the world cannot give but also cannot take away (see John 14:27). ■

What a Tract Did for China

We often ask ourselves, “What can I do to help spread the kingdom of Christ?” Many of us are too young or unable to go abroad as a missionary, and it seems like we can’t really help. But there are many ways and opportunities to work for God and our fellow man that we often overlook.

An impressive example of this can be found in the life story of a girl from the mountains of Virginia. She worked as a maid in a house with three rooms. She had only gone to school for three months in her life. Her monthly wage was four dollars. From this she gave two dollars to her family, one dollar to her church, and one dollar to foreign mission work. She earned her clothes by working extra hours, often late into the night.

At the age of fourteen, she gave her heart to God. Shortly after her conversion, she found a tract entitled “China’s Call for the Gospel.” In it, she read about the great shortage of gospel workers to bring the bread of life to the people of China. Deeply moved by this, she prayed for ten years that God would send her to China as a missionary.

During this time, Dr. Len Broughton came to the house where the girl worked and was of-

fered the use of her room for the night. There he found her Bible, in which almost every verse was marked. Above the verse “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” was written, “Oh, if I could only go!” Curious, he inquired about the girl. In a conversation, she told him that she had come to the conclusion that she had made a mistake about her life’s calling. For ten years she had prayed: “Lord, send me to China!” but now she prayed: “Lord, make me willing to be a missionary for you in the kitchen.”

Dr. Broughton immediately made arrangements for her education, and later she was sent as a missionary to China, where she worked for the Lord.

Have you ever thought about what a great blessing a small tract can bring? If this girl had not read the tract, she might never have become aware of the plight and needs of China. Through the influence of that little tract, many souls were saved. Are you doing all you can to spread sound, wholesome gospel literature in your country and abroad? Many people who are converted today have received the light of the gospel by reading good literature. A tract can be the means of saving someone from their sins, who in turn can be used by God to lead many souls to Him. ■

Co-laborers with God

“For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:9–11)

A brother in Christ once told a story of when he was very ill and had to have more than one surgery. After many days in the hospital, he expressed his heartfelt gratefulness to the caregivers and thanked them for all they had done for him. Their simple and profound answer spoke to my heart: “That’s why we’re here!”

Why am I here? Why did God place us, you and me, in this world at this period in history? The answer is simple, yet not easy: to glorify and exalt God through everything we do and speak. How can this be done? By becoming “fellow workers” or co-laborers with Him.

God, the Almighty One, created everything by Himself through Christ Jesus. By His Word and commands, all things came into being. Yet, the Lord desires to have us earthly mortals as His co-laborers to advance His kingdom on earth. This is the highest honor and a great responsibility. We are asked to be good stewards over all God has given us. Everyone should take the Lord’s assignments seriously.

Willingness to serve

In Philippians 2:12–13, we read: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do.” I think we can easily see that without the new birth in Christ, nothing of eternal value will result from our lives. Once we have repented of our sins and received life in Christ, we are then called to an intimate relationship with God and to work under the direction of the Holy Spirit to accomplish His will.

To be led by God in all matters is the most blessed life we can imagine. Am I willing to say “yes” to whatever God is asking of me? I think it is important

to pray that the Lord gives us willing hearts and much grace to do His will every day.

Becoming humble servants of Christ

The Apostle Paul often refers to himself as “a servant of Jesus Christ.” The core meaning of “servant” is slave or bondservant. This is one who yields all rights of his own and commits himself exclusively to the will of his master. So, as servants of Christ, we have put aside earthly pursuits and ambitions to voluntarily offer our time, talents, and gifts to Christ, the King. Without any reservations, we become devoted “to want and do” what pleases our Lord.

The more I humble myself before my Lord, the more grace He gives to carry out His desires. As I consecrate everything to Him, He then gives strength to obey Him and fill me with His love.

As servants of Christ, we are not driven by pretension, self-importance, egotism, or vainglory. We have forsaken those things to stay in agreement with the Lord in advancing His cause—the kingdom of God.

Serving with patience

As part of our service to the Lord, it is necessary that the fruits of the Spirit, especially patience, are developed within us. Hebrews 10:36 says, “For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.”

The virtue of patience is often tested as we move forward with our service to the Lord and for His work.

We should “wait on the Lord” with prayer and fasting. We must also remember that there are seasons to plant seeds and to reap a harvest. James wrote in chapter 5:7, “Therefore be patient, brethren, until the



coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.”

We should not be discouraged when our work for the Lord has not yet produced the fruit we expected. The ultimate harvest and rewards will come. In faith, we can already see how Christ gives His patient servants the joy of a great reward.

Serving in faithfulness

In our faithless society with so many broken promises, it is refreshing when God’s children stay focused on being fellow workers with God. When we keep our promises to God and others, when our “yes” or “no” mean something, and when we are dependable in words and deeds, the Lord works through us and blesses those around us. He has called us to be the salt and light of the earth. He wants us to become vessels, filled with His love and glory, to encourage the faint-hearted, and to pray for the sick, the lost, and the backslidden. He calls us to be the hands and feet of Jesus. In today’s spiritual darkness and despair, pain and suffering, the Lord expects us to lend our hands and resources to bring peace, healing, and hope.

Our hands and feet are not merely physical appendages but powerful instruments of compassion and kindness that can bring transformation into the lives of those we encounter.

Without a doubt, if the church is united and resolved to become “fellow workers” with God, and if we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in whatever ministry capacity we are in, the Lord will bless our work for Him. Let’s ask the Holy Spirit to give us a fresh filling and baptize us anew with God’s love and then allow His love to flow to others. We have this wonderful promise from our Lord in John 7:38, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

I pray for this with all my heart, that it will always be a reality in my life. As we receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit and continue to faithfully abide in Him, His name will be glorified and our joy multiplied. We are reminded in Ephesians 2:10, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

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A Good Friend

School started again after the summer holidays. This morning, the teacher, Ms. Schmidt, introduced a new classmate and his companion to the children in the third grade: “Children, this is Simon and Inge. As you can see, Simon uses a wheelchair to get around. He is very much looking forward to learning and playing with you.

“You should know something important about Simon: He has a disease called ‘brittle bone disease.’ This means that his bones can break very easily, much more easily than most people’s. You don’t need to worry; we are all here to make sure he is comfortable and safe. Please just be careful when playing or running near Simon. Try to be gentle and avoid collisions. If you have any questions about his illness, please feel free to ask me, Inge, or Simon himself. Remember that Simon loves to play as much as you do. We may have to be a little creative at times to keep everyone safe, but that should not stop us from having fun together. I’m sure you will all take very good care of Simon and

welcome him warmly into our class. Together we can create a friendly and supportive environment where everyone feels comfortable.”

It was very quiet in the classroom at first, but soon, lessons returned to normal. During recess, the children came up to Simon and introduced themselves. They quickly noticed that he liked to laugh and be cheerful. After Nicholas had spoken to Simon briefly, he remembered that Jesus was always kind to the sick and that he helped them. So, Nicholas thought: “If I can do something for Simon, I’d like to help too.”

During the next lesson, Nicholas noticed that Simon’s pencil case had fallen, and his pencils were scattered around. He got up and helped Inge collect the pencils. During the next recess, Simon thanked Nicholas for his help and said: “Math is easy for me. If you need help with it or want to study together, we can meet at my house.” Nicholas was happy because math was not his strong point. Was God giving him the opportunity for a good friendship here?

Friends for Life

The Bible tells us about a strong friendship between two people. Do you already know who I'm talking about? It's David and Jonathan.

These two people came from very different backgrounds: David was a shepherd boy, and Jonathan was a prince, yet they shared a special friendship.



It is said of David that he was chosen by God to become the next king. He was a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13: 14).

King Saul, Jonathan's father, whom God appointed as the first king of Israel, was also once God-fearing, but unfortunately, he became disobedient to God.

He realized that God was with David and no longer with him. Saul was overcome with fear: Would David eventually become king?

Jonathan must have noticed the change in his father's life. Perhaps he also thought that David, with his love for God, would be a much better king for the people of Israel and that he could lead them better. But didn't Jonathan have a right to become king later? Yet he sided with David because he knew that God had chosen David as king. He did not begrudge David the royal throne.



Jonathan tried to change his father's mind about David but to no avail. Saul wanted to get rid of David. So, David had to flee. The two friends wept as they said goodbye to each other. That's how much they loved each other.

Do you also have such a good friend with whom you can discuss everything, with whom you enjoy

spending time, praying together, and reading the Bible? Such a friend is certainly worth a lot. But ask yourself if you are also a good friend. Or are there qualities in you that make someone else not want to be your friend? Is there perhaps jealousy, as there was with Saul? Or are you often unfriendly and irritable so that people don't like being with you? Or does everything always have to go your way at play, and you don't let others have a say? Ask the Lord Jesus to help you to be a good friend. He wants to help you with this.



Written by
Helene Rotfuss und Anja Mantek

"Love . . .
does not behave rudely,
does not seek its own,
is not provoked,
thinks no evil"
1 Corinthians 13: 5



Serving God **ACROSS GENERATIONS**

Recently, we felt it would be helpful for our youth to consider some of the blessings that exist when Christians of different age groups serve God together. In Titus 2: 1–8, Paul describes some of the responsibilities that different age demographics have toward one another, particularly those of older women toward younger women. He writes in verses 3–5 to teach “the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, *to be* discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” In light of this Bible text, we asked our youth in Hamilton to answer the following questions, and we trust their thoughts will be an inspiration to others to fulfill their duties to one another in Christ.

What expectations do youth have of the seniors within the local church?

- That seniors be grounded in their faith and set a good example.
- That seniors be willing to give good advice in a loving and understanding manner.
- That seniors be friendly and approachable, open to being asked questions.

YOUTH PAGES

"The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."

Titus 2:3-5

What expectations might seniors have of the youth within the local church?

- That the youth sing along and participate in the church.
- That the youth help modernize the services through technology and help run the livestream, sound, and social media.
- That the youth bring fresh perspectives and bring young people to church.
- That youth are open to learning.
- That youth are willing to do acts of service for seniors and others in the congregation, like visiting them.

Why do Christian youth and seniors need each other? Or, specifically, how can they be a help to one another?

- They can learn from each other.
- Seniors can mentor the youth.
- Youth can inspire and encourage the seniors with a friendly smile and handshake.
- Youth are the next generation and can help spread the Word online.

Do you think there are benefits to having intergenerational worship services where all ages worship together? If so, what are the benefits?

- Yes, it's important to learn God's Word no matter what age you are.
- Yes, having different age groups provides a variety of perspectives and topics and adds to the conversation when congregants of all ages participate.
- Yes, it demonstrates that all ages are welcome, and families have the opportunity to worship God together.

As these responses indicate, Christians of different age groups need each other to carry out the work that God has called them to. The body of Christ is made up of members who differ greatly in callings, gifts, ages, and life experiences. As youth, you can learn from the life experiences of those who have walked with Christ longer than you have. Their practiced faith and trust in God can serve as a guide and inspiration. You have also been given the opportunity to be a source of encouragement and joy to those who are older. One way you can do this is by faithfully helping along in the local church. No matter your age, you can be a blessing to others in the church family, and others can be a blessing to you if you allow them.

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Serving God as a Family

| *“But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24: 15)*

Joshua’s famous words, “But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD,” confirm that he and his family decided to follow God. This shows their conviction and dedication. Joshua had just asked the people of Israel to choose whom they would serve. For him and his house (his family), there was no doubt. The answer was unequivocal, and he didn’t hesitate to proclaim this before everyone.

In the entrance of some homes, you can find Joshua’s words displayed on a wall plaque. Just as he did, people do not hesitate to declare which worldview governs their house.

Joshua had a close relationship with God and used the word “serve” to describe it. We can’t “serve” our way into heaven. All efforts, sacrifices, dedication, and even countless good deeds cannot earn us salvation. It’s not works that save us, but only the grace of God. Serving God and others confirms our relationship with God.

The word “serve,” translated from Hebrew, the original language of the Old Testament, includes the idea of being a bond servant. We enslave (submit) ourselves to the Lord, following His commands, His will, and His guidance. We live for Him. Joshua made it clear: the Lord (Jehovah in Hebrew) is God, and we serve Him. We are ready, at all times, to do His will. The New Testament calls this following Jesus or walking in His footsteps (1 Peter 2:21). We serve the One who paid a great price for us.

“Serving” stands in contrast to the general worldview and is not very popular. But the Bible emphasizes that true greatness is in serving God and others. Serving God gives our lives purpose and meaning.

This servant attitude should be evident in family life. Joshua 24:15 should not just be displayed as wall decor but become reality in our hearts and families. I was privileged to grow up in a Christian home. My parents didn’t need to remind us of Joshua’s words because they lived them. As children, we saw it in their actions and daily decisions. It wasn’t debatable; they simply served God and others.

This “servant heart” was especially evident in church life. God and His church were always the focus. Everything was about God’s kingdom. This is what we read in Matthew 6:33: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” Whether it was attending church, participating, financially supporting the church, hosting guests, maintaining and cleaning the church building, or other tasks, we served. We also cared for the elderly, hosted the youth, visited the sick, and gave people rides to church. Serving meant being involved and having a sense of duty. As children, we were “recruited” and were expected to participate.

Serving might vary in different situations, but the core meaning of the word “serve” remains unchanged.

The family is the place where we learn to serve. We help each other. This relationship brings a sense of belonging. Belonging brings obligation. The best way to teach children to serve is by example. Children copy their parents’ behavior. A good example is the best teacher. There is a big difference between children seeing their parents serve willingly or seeing them look for ways and excuses to avoid serving. Our attitude is more obvious than we realize. Serving is not defined as parents serving their children, as is often the case.



Otherwise, children will grow up with a sense of entitlement. It's wonderful to see families serving together. A father said, "We serve one another, and together we serve the Lord."

In addition to church life, serving the Lord needs to be part of everyday life. In all facets, from managing money to behavior in the workplace or in traffic, we are to serve the Lord. This includes marriage and family and all relationships. Colossians 3:18–22 refers to family life and addresses wives, husbands, children, fathers, and servants. Then, verses 23 and 24 summarize: "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ."

Reflecting on Joshua's decision makes us realize how important it is to serve the Lord. This can lead to a faith-building family discussion on how to serve the Lord together. When situations or questions arise, they can be addressed with this mindset. It makes life easier, and the whole family benefits.

It's rewarding and a blessing to be in the service of the King. There is no better life. It not only benefits our

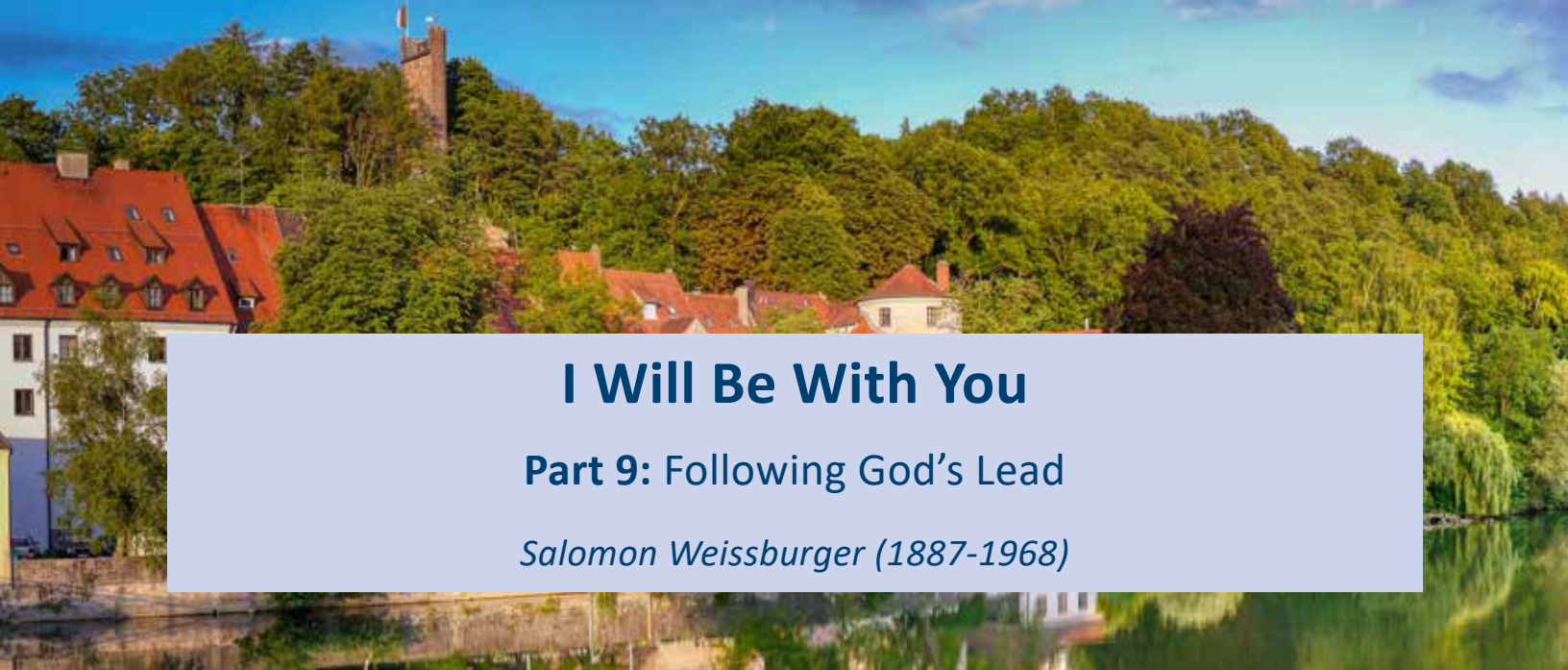
life on earth but also guarantees us a blessed future—eternal life.

Joshua led Israel across the Jordan into Canaan. About 30 to 40 years had passed since they arrived. Joshua was old and nearing the end of his life. He gathered the people once more. He talked about the past and God's wonderful leading in their ancestors' and their own lives. He urged them to make the right choice to serve the Lord faithfully and to remove the foreign gods among them. He challenged the people: "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell."

We all must decide whom we will serve. Whom are we serving? Whom do we want to serve? What does serving look like? Like Joshua, join in saying: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the *Lord*."

"Serve the LORD with gladness" (Psalm 100:2).

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Wetaskiwin, AB*



I Will Be With You

Part 9: Following God's Lead

Salomon Weissburger (1887-1968)

When it became clear that World War I would not be resolved as quickly as expected, many prisoners tried to make themselves more comfortable. I did so as well. We rented a room and went about making it homey; the lice were less of a problem there too.

One day, we received orders to travel another 70 kilometers (43.5 mi) into the foothills of the Urals. I had a close acquaintance with connections to the police. He told me not to go, intending to talk to the police on my behalf. Now, I had a choice to make. Should I stay, or should I go? Staying would have been better for me, but because I wanted to remain consecrated to the Lord, I decided to let Him take the lead. It took several weeks of prayer before I got the clear impression that I was supposed to go with the others.

On December 24, 1917, we set out on this journey, with some of us on foot and others in sleds. We arrived the next afternoon, at around 3 p.m., when it was already getting dark in that region. The next day, near noon, an acquaintance came to me and asked if I would accompany him to a neighboring village that was around 7 kilometers (4 mi) away. I agreed to go with him, having heard that there were Russian believers in this village.


By the time we arrived, it was dark. We were invited into the house of someone who spoke German, and when he asked what we were there for, I said, "I am looking for children of God." In response, I was invited to stay, and we then had a discussion about the truth. It

lasted until midnight. The head of this household was the preacher of a German-speaking congregation. He accepted the full truth and became someone we could rely on. He invited me to stay in his home, and others soon converted too. This brother was Johann Hübner, who later moved to Essen, Germany, where he was of great help to me in the congregation. After the death of Brother Borbe, who had taken over from me as pastor in Essen, Brother Johann Hübner served as the pastor to the congregation there.

Through Brother Hübner, I connected with Brother Oskar Zeitner during the time we were prisoners in Russia. He, too, served as a preacher and made a full commitment to biblical truth. Brother Zeitner spoke Russian well and helped out by translating for me; this led to the formation of a Russian-speaking congregation, for which he translated around 30 songs from our hymnal. Brother Oskar Zeitner later moved to Germany and established the local church in Gronau.

In the beginning, when I had to decide whether to stay in the village where we had already established a home, I could not yet see what the Lord was planning. However, because the Lord helped me to recognize His leading, a great blessing resulted. A major factor was that services could not be held in German in the first village. Although I was unaware of this at the time, God did know, and He led me where the Gospel could be better served.

It is always good to follow God's lead. However, God can only lead us if we have let go of everything



*“Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will declare what He has done for my soul.”*

(Psalm 66: 16)

else and totally surrendered ourselves to Him. If we instead pursue our own desires or benefit, God cannot lead us. From an earthly perspective, it would have been better to stay, but God’s will was for me to go. Brother H. M. Riggle once wrote that the way of the Lord is usually the more difficult one; I can say that I have experienced this for myself as well.

God’s plans for us were made before our birth (see Psalm 139:16, Romans 8:28–30, and Ephesians 1:4). If we allow ourselves to be still before God, if we completely surrender our own nature, plans, and work to Him, and if we are totally consecrated to the Lord, we will be able to understand Him and His leading. By contrast, if we get too caught up in our own perspective, the path we take may ultimately turn out to have been chosen based on our human standpoint rather than God’s divine one.

When we are under pressure—such as during war, sickness, or other hard times in which our choices are limited—it is easy to bow to God’s will. The more options we have, the more it costs us to recognize and obey God’s will. His ways always require us to take the cross upon ourselves. The ways of God require us to be willing to deny ourselves, to make sacrifices, and to practice love (see Philippians 1:9–11 and 2:5–8 as well as Hebrews 11:24–26).

God leading through a dream

Looking back, my time as a prisoner, from ages 28 to 30, was a blessing for me. Apart from the two brothers and pastors that I was able to help grow in their

knowledge of the truth, many a soul came to the Lord during that time, including an older Russian pastor. In this way, this time became a great blessing for me and others. When I was finally able to return home, it was not easy for me to leave the sisters and brothers in Russia and the ministry there.

However, returning home was easier said than done as all train routes were blocked and only the waterways were open. Some people tried to go by boat, but I intended to wait several more weeks and then travel home with the brothers and sisters and their families. One night, though, I had a dream in which I was standing in a big room with several people building a barge. A man came up to me and said, “Some of us have built a boat and want to take the river home. Everything is ready, but we are missing one person. Come with us!”

I do not generally set much store in dreams. In this case, however, an acquaintance came to me the next day and said the exact words I had heard in my dream. Astonished, I prayed about it, spoke to the brothers and sisters, and decided to go with them.

After many hardships, I finally arrived at home. Later, I learned that we were the last ones to make it out. The sisters and brothers that remained had to go through much suffering and pain in the additional two years they were forced to stay. Many died. The Lord led me out through this dream. In 1919, I was back in Essen, serving the congregation there and the German ministry in general. Thanks be to the Lord for His wonderful leading! ■

Pentecost in Herford

The first time we celebrated Pentecost was at a restaurant in Kirchlengern in 1949, and this year we were able to celebrate the 75th Pentecost Conference of the Herford Church of God, together with many visitors, on the church's own premises on Zimmerstrasse in Herford, Germany.

The theme of this year's conference was: "God's Love Poured into Your Heart."

Many contributions by the orchestra, choir, and especially the sermons by Brother Ron Taron from Steinbach, Manitoba, brought this theme to life.

In the opening sermon, Brother Taron began with the very key word from John 3:16: "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."

This "whoever" or "all" includes *you* personally. Through the gift of His only Son, God loves you and me to the greatest possible extent. He was given to die for our sins. God gives unconditionally because He loves us. He did not ask whether we are worth it. In John 3:18, it is written: "He who believes in Him is not condemned." Who is able to grasp this love of God? What do we do with this love of God? What are we prepared to do in return? Does this sacrifice of the Son of God move us? Why are we often only prepared to offer God so little of our lives? Christians often hold on to things that do not please God—examine yourself in the light of this love.

In the second service on Saturday, Brother Taron explored the definition of love using 1 Corinthians 13, the chapter of sanctification in practice. God's love is the source of love; this alone is the correct definition of love. Verses 1–3 list good gifts such as the tongues of angels, prophecy, knowledge of all mysteries, and even faith in the highest degree—all very impressive for us as human beings, but the Word of God says, "If I have all these gifts but do not have love, I am nothing." It is merely big talk, seeking attention. It will all pass away with nothing changed. Such are deceived and nothing is truly done for God.

The smallest and most untalented work—yet carried out with love—that's where God is. That is practical sanctification. So, what is this love like? Verse 4 and

onwards list the characteristics of love. Love loves without being reciprocated, it is patient, it gives time and opportunities. It is friendly and benevolent, gentle, and kind. It does not envy—also a very clear sign of practical sanctification. Can I really rejoice when someone is preferred over me? A central question is always: What can I give out of love, not what can I receive? Yes, and this love does not rejoice in injustice; it draws attention to wrong ways. Correcting mistakes, rectifying errors, that makes love glad! Love offers forgiveness, reconciliation, and support, and God's love leaves no bitterness behind. He waits and He loves; indeed, His love never ends, and He will help you too.

On the second day of the Pentecost conference, Brother Taron dealt with the question: How does God's love enter the heart of a person?

Through faith, we attain peace with God and gain access to grace. The one who is cleansed from sin and reciprocates God's love, will receive the love of God abundantly. Yes, it requires a complete surrender to the will of God in order to be sanctified—God wants 100%.

We read in Romans 5:5: "The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit." God willingly and freely gives the Holy Spirit and His love to those who ask for it. Why do so many people push this gift aside? There simply is no closer relationship with God than melting into God's love and will. In such an experience, there is no room for bitterness and hatred. Everything is cleansed and sanctified by God. In Luke 11:13, we read: "How much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him." Therefore, ask God and let your heart be flooded with this love. Live the most beautiful life there is—experience Pentecost!

During the second service on Sunday, God's incredible offer was the focus of the message: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37–38).

The love of God, poured out through the Holy Spirit, is not just for you personally—it continues to flow





outward and will be there for others. It will show itself and take effect. Is this a characteristic of your life?

The final service on Sunday focused on the rich congregation Laodicea in Asia Minor, a city characterized by prosperity with a textile industry and banking. The congregation's members were well-to-do, yet God had to say: "neither cold nor hot." Lukewarm love arouses disgust in God. We too are faced with the question: Is the love in me hot, fed by the constant supply of energy from the living source of God, or has it already cooled down; it simply creeps in slowly. We still think we are rich, but there is nothing left—our condition is poor, blind, and naked. God advises us to buy gold, real gold from His source. Here, too, God's infinite love for us is revealed. He also loves those who have become lukewarm and makes a glorious offer to come to Him with our lukewarmness. He desires and will help, you too. The Bible speaks of *today* as the day of salvation—we are not guaranteed any other future opportunity.

The end of such a conference is always reached so quickly, and the last service is often something very special. In his message, Brother Taron drew on 1 Cor-

inthians 13 again and highlighted important points while summarizing the subject of love. In art, love as a motif is portrayed in very different ways. We too see the face of love, as it says in verse 12, only "in a mirror, dimly." When you consider that mirrors in antiquity were not comparable to our mirrors today, the meaning becomes clear. A reflection back then was blurred and indistinct. Nevertheless, the love of God is so glorious! It will be even more glorious when we can actually look into the face of love without the shadow of the mirror. For us, God's love is the image of His Son on the cross. It is not a beautiful figure, but rather despised and full of suffering, but it is an image full of infinite love. What does this love demand of us? God wants us to love Him back with all of our heart and be willing to consecrate everything to Him. His commandments are not difficult! Give your life back to God and let yourself be filled with love and the Holy Spirit. Then you will fulfill the purpose and meaning of your life—glorifying God in everything you are and do! Refuel again and again in the stream of living water, in the source of love, and remain faithful, because He is faithful and keeps His words. Test your love for Him—He desires a "yes" from us. ■



“Oh, Lord!”

During vacations, six-year-old Esther spent almost more time with her grandparents than at home. Her parents could leave her there for weeks without worrying. They knew she was in good hands. Grandma was devout, almost fanatical in her faith. She strictly adhered to morning and evening devotions, went to church every Sunday, diligently read religious magazines, and often peppered her conversations with Bible verses. But that didn't stop her from brusquely turning away beggars at the front door, nor from gossiping with her neighbors and passing judgment on people who weren't present to defend themselves. Her acquaintances knew this and all more or less feared her sharp tongue.

Esther was still too young to recognize the contradiction between her grandmother's words and her behavior. She loved her grandparents and always enjoyed being with them. Her grandmother, for her part, was proud of her only daughter's beautiful and intelligent child and was convinced that she would learn many things from her that she would not learn in her rather free-spirited parental home.

The old woman had gotten into the habit of an unusual way of speaking. Instead of saying “Oh, God!” thoughtlessly like many others, she said “Oh, Lord!” Perhaps this was not thoughtless but rather the beginning of a prayerful sigh. She also used this expression when she was alone and something was bothering or worrying her. Then you would often hear “Oh, Lord!” Her friends and acquaintances had gotten used to it, and Esther also knew this expression well enough.

It was a beautiful summer evening. The grandparents always ate early in the evening in such glorious weather so that they could go for a little walk with their granddaughter afterwards. But, of course, the devotion after the meal was not to be neglected. When Esther sat at the table, Grandma always read the Bible passage herself, as she found that her husband read too quickly and too monotonously for the child. She usually asked the girl a few questions afterwards to make sure she had listened properly and understood everything.

That evening's devotion was the end of the Sermon on the Mount, the 7th chapter of Matthew's Gospel. Esther paid close attention because she knew how hap-

py her grandmother always was when she could precisely repeat a verse afterwards.

When the woman had put down her glasses, she looked at the child and said, “Look, Esther, this is a sermon that the dear Savior preached. Do you remember anything about it now?”—The little girl nodded seriously: “Yes, the Savior said that not all people who say ‘Oh, Lord’ will go to heaven.”

Everything was quiet for a while. Grandpa looked out of the window. A barely noticeable smile played around the corners of his mouth. But Esther looked eagerly over at Grandma to see if she was satisfied with her answer. Grandma’s face, however, was serious and impenetrable. She looked down at the open Bible. And that was the end of the test for today.

After the prayer of thanksgiving, Grandma got up and started clearing the table. She told her husband that he should go for a walk alone with their granddaughter tonight as she wanted to do the dishes. As he often did, he offered to help her so that she could finish faster. But she waved him off: “I can do it on my own.” He then realized that she didn’t want any company. So he got ready for the evening walk with his granddaughter.

Esther also sensed that Grandma’s mood was not very cheerful, but she didn’t dare say anything. Only when they were a few steps away from the house did she ask: “Why doesn’t Grandma want to come with us today?”—Grandpa explained that she had other things to do after washing up.

The two of them walked on in silence for a while. But Esther couldn’t let go of the thought of Grandma. She brought up the subject again: “Maybe she’s tired too, isn’t she, Grandpa?”—“That could be,” he replied. And again they continued on their way in silence for a while.

Grandpa tried to distract Esther by drawing her attention to this and that. But suddenly she was back to her thoughts about Grandma. “Grandpa, or may-

be she’s sad?”—“Who, Grandma? Why would she be sad?” asked the grandfather with mock astonishment.

“You know, I thought—maybe because the Savior said that not all people who say ‘Oh, Lord’ go to heaven.”—Now the old man tried to explain the mistake to her. “You know, it doesn’t mean exactly what you said. The Bible says that not everyone who says ‘Lord, Lord’ will go to heaven.”

“Oh, I see,” Esther said cheerfully after a moment’s thought, “then that doesn’t affect Grandma at all, because she never says ‘Lord, Lord,’ but only ‘Oh, Lord.’” With that, the child was reassured and soon forgot

about Grandma and the Savior’s serious words.

Grandma, however, was not so quick to forget. After she had washed the dishes, she picked up the Bible again.

*With these words, Jesus
put His finger on a
sore spot in her life!
And she did not resist.*

She re-read the entire 7th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew and lingered for a long time on verse 22. With these words, Jesus put His finger on a sore spot in her life! And she did not resist. She remained silent and let the Spirit of God speak to her. Then she knelt down and for the first time really prayed from the heart for forgiveness of her sins of the tongue and for deliverance from them.

Later, when Esther was lying in her bed, Grandma came to pray with her as she did every evening. Then the child remembered the unfortunate saying. She wanted to comfort Grandma somehow: “You know, Grandma,” she began, “I didn’t get the saying quite right today. The Savior didn’t preach that not all people who say ‘Oh, Lord!’ go to heaven, but those who say ‘Lord, Lord.’ And you never say that. Grandma, aren’t you glad it doesn’t have anything to do with you?”

Grandma smiled, then became very serious again and explained: “Yes, darling, it actually does have a lot to do with me. Because it is quite certain that not everyone who says ‘Oh, Lord!’ will go to heaven, but only those who truly do the will of the Father in heaven!” ■

Working for the Lord

*The things you do for God will be a blessing.
He'll give success; O praise His name with song.
Perform both great and small, His name confessing,
And live your life with joy and not with stressing.
The Lord will guide and help you all day long.
Be diligent; life is not meaningless.
The good work that you do, the Lord will bless.*

*There is no thing too small for God to notice;
He helps you, ever standing at your side.
He'll give you strength and clarity to focus
Your earnest effort's terminating locus.
He'll give you joy, for Jesus is your guide.
You will rejoice when all is said and done,
For God will bless the work you have begun.*

*He will encourage you in your endeavor,
Although your toil seems wearisome and hard.
A cold and bitter storm won't last forever,
No force on earth from God's strong hand can sever.
What's done in love He will not disregard,
Even helping a small child in deed or word.
God counts this service as done for the Lord.*

*If God is for you, He will never leave you.
In toil and struggles, He will give you strength.
If in your service you will ever be true,
Much more than you can imagine He will do,
Giving joy in sorrow, strength to go the length.
And whatever you have done for the Lord,
He will reward according to His Word.*

*It's joy and bliss to live within His favor,
To talk and walk and journey with the Lord,
Trusting the promises of Christ the Savior.
Though all else fails, His grace will never waver.
His burden's light when we trust in His Word.
Rejoice! Be strong in faith until the end.
Such joy and peace the world can't comprehend.*