



Foundation of Faith

Lead by Example

Be the Guidepost

You Were A Role Model

Reports: Winnipeg and Wetaskiwin

Spiritual Role Models

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Editorial

Role models. We all know them: people whose influence can shape our behavior, and even the future course of our life, for better or for worse.

Why do some people have such a strong impact on us? In some cases, we value and respect them; in others, we fear being considered inferior by them; but either way, we give them influence over our actions and decisions. For many young people, this process ends up creating an often-overwhelming force of peer pressure.

Thinking back to my childhood, I remember once visiting a friend who was older than me, who seemed far more experienced in the ways of the world. While we were together that evening, he unexpectedly produced a box of playing cards—a forbidden fruit with many negative and sinful associations. I knew well that my parents would not allow me to play cards, but what was I to do? After all, I did not want to look weak or cowardly. My heart pounding, I played along for a while before finding the courage to speak out against it. I was around ten years old, but this was a lesson I learned for life. Even if we initially fail such tests, they can later help us identify negative role models and protect ourselves against their influence.

By contrast, the other side of the coin—having people in our lives to be a good example—is something wonderful, both in natural terms and especially in spiritual ones. The Bible is full of such role models, and I thank God for sending good spiritual role models my way as well. Their lives practically overflow with shared blessings!

Our own lives will also have a certain impact on others, whether through our faithfulness, honesty, and reliability, through our prayer and service to God, or in one of many other areas. Whether for good or for ill, we affect others.

In reference to one set of positive role models, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe” (1 Thessalonians 1: 6–7).

Let us, too, be role models for believers—and for everyone else as well. May our lives be so devoted to God that He can substitute His great strength for our weakness and thereby glorify Himself!

R. Taron

Lead by Example



As Christians, we know that our Lord Jesus should be our standard for how we live. I am grateful that we have the four Gospels that allow us to read about Him. I'm also thankful that we have the writings of Paul and other believers who describe the life and character of Christ and explain His teachings in practical ways that we can apply.

As blessed as we are to have these writings, wouldn't it be nice to have a physical Christ-like role model whom we could see? Someone we could observe and imitate? For example, Paul tells the Corinthians, "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul invited the Corinthians not only to observe His conduct, but to imitate him, for in doing so, they would be reflecting the teachings and conduct of Christ.

I find it interesting that it was Paul who wrote these words, and not Peter or John. Peter and John had the opportunity to learn directly from Jesus during His earthly ministry. They lived together with Him for

more than three years. They saw how He ministered, prayed, performed miracles, dealt with people, and dealt with difficult situations. Paul, however, likely never met Jesus until after His death and resurrection. Yet, it is Paul who invites his readers to imitate his Christ-like example. If we accept and apply the teachings of Christ and the apostles, should we not also be able to say the same thing to those who observe us: imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ? Christ wants us to display His teachings through our example. This applies to every sphere of our lives.

It applies to our private sphere, namely at home around our family. Christian parents are called to train up their children in the ways of Christ and His kingdom (Proverbs 22:6). Children and youth won't just listen to what their parents say, they will carefully examine their conduct to see that it matches their words. How many young people have left the church because of the divide they witnessed between what their parents professed to believe and how they actually lived?

Many Christians have families where certain loved ones are not yet serving the Lord. Peter encourages his readers that by consistently and faithfully living out the teachings of Christ, the possibility exists for them to draw their loved one to Christ through their example. He writes in 1 Peter 3:1–2, “Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the Word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear.” We must consistently imitate Christ, so that others can imitate our Christ-like example.

This also applies to our public spheres. Though Canada is seen as being a Christian country, I have not always felt welcome in public schools or places of work. I remember the mocking and ridicule I received as a young Christian working in the oilfield in Alberta. Once my colleagues found out that I was a Christian, they tried their utmost to make me feel uncomfortable and unwelcome at the workplace. However, as time went on and they saw that I was firm in my convictions and consistent in my conduct, they began to respect my beliefs. They even started asking me questions about my faith, which gave me an opportunity to share Jesus with them. Scripture says in 1 Peter 2:11–12, “Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.” This also applies to students at school. Even young Christians are called to reflect Christ in all they do. Though Timothy was a younger believer, Paul writes to him in 1 Timothy 4:12, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

Another area of the public sphere where we are called to lead by example is in the church. It is easy for us as Christians to let our guard down around like-minded brothers and sisters in Christ. We, however, ought not to forget that they too look to our conduct, attitudes and words as examples of what it means to live like Jesus. Paul often reminded his Christian readers that they should be careful not to become a stumbling block to other Christians. They should consider the spiritual needs of other believers and place their needs before their own (1 Corinthians 10:24).

They should also consider the areas that other Christians may be struggling in and avoid certain things as to not be a hindrance to them (1 Corinthians 8:7–13). Let us remember that no man is an island. The way we live will influence others within the body of Christ (Romans 14:7).

It’s also worth mentioning that Christ’s body is larger than the local church. When we as Christians faithfully and consistently live out the teachings of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, we become an encouragement to other believers who observe our lives. This will also demonstrate to Christ that we are ready for greater responsibilities within His work (Luke 16:10–11). I’m reminded of Daniel and his friends, who did their best in their youth to keep the commandments of God. Their faithfulness was rewarded with greater responsibilities within Babylon. Or consider Stephen and Philip, whose faithful service led to them being chosen as part of the seven who cared for the needs of the widows (Acts 6:1–6). Stephen went on to do “great wonders and signs among the people” for he was “full of faith and power” (Acts 6:8). Philip became a great evangelist in Samaria, “and the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did” (Acts 8:6).

Not everyone who calls themselves a child of God is worth imitating. As a matter of fact, Jesus had very serious words for the religious leaders of His time. He says of them in Matthew 23:1–3, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.” The scribes and the Pharisees were very religious in that they knew God’s Word and were quick to judge others who broke God’s law as they understood it, but they did not lead by example in living it out themselves. Christ desires that all His followers apply His teachings and allow His Gospel to transform their lives from the inside out. He also wants us to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that we have the power to keep His commandments every day of our lives, no matter where we are. By living this kind of life, we will be able to say as Paul said, “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

David Knelsen
Hamilton, Ontario

God Needs Determined, Steadfast Christians

God needs determined, steadfast Christians at all times. Perhaps you know someone who could be described as a determined Christian. Is the person you are thinking of unreasonable, stubborn, difficult to get along with? If they were, you might say that God has no use for people like that. I agree. But please keep in mind what the original meaning of the word “steadfast” is. To be steadfast means to be certain of one’s resolve and firm and clear in one’s goal. It means to be unyielding and resolute.

A steadfast, determined Christian bases his or her convictions on the Word of God. In the joyful testimony of the saving grace and sustaining power of our Lord, they do not falter, but hold fast to their convictions, no matter what others think, say, or do.

The apostle Paul was certainly a Christian who was decisive and steadfast, who was determined to keep his eyes on the goal set before him. He did not allow himself to be influenced by the arguments of others. Although he was in prison and abandoned by most of his Christian friends, he remained steadfast. He wrote to young Timothy: “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by

the Holy Spirit who dwells in us” (2 Timothy 1:8–14). Not only was Paul firmly convinced to hold fast to the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ, but he also taught others to be equally convinced and to act as he did.

In the Old Testament, we find many examples of godly steadfastness. Noah spent many years building the ark while people mocked his steadfastness. But God honored his faith by saving him and his family from the flood.

Joseph became a symbol of godly perseverance as a result of his victory over sin in Egypt. Even when he was thrown into prison for taking a stand against immorality, Joseph remained faithful to God.

Daniel prayed to God even though he was a prisoner in a foreign land. Because of his faith, he was thrown into a lions’ den. It was no accident that the hungry lions refused to eat Daniel. God acted to preserve His faithful servant.

There are numerous illustrations in the Word of God that show how those who remain faithful to Him receive His blessings and rewards. It is worthwhile to remain steadfast and immovable, whatever the cost.

Acts 6 and 7 recounts the story of Stephen. As a truly devoted Christian, he was active in the first Christian community. His actions brought him much criticism and he was brought before the council. Despite his tribulation, those looking at him “saw his face as the face of an angel” (Acts 6:15). He was stoned to death, but he did not weaken, and even prayed for his murderers with his last breath.

Dr. John Scudder, a missionary doctor in India, had been a successful physician in New York City. “Visiting professionally a Christian lady, he found in her room a tract or little book entitled ‘The Conversion of the World, or the Claims of Six Hundred Millions.’ He borrowed it, read it and re-read it, until it entered the very depths of his soul. It was like a lightning flash from heaven. He heard the call, ‘Come over

and help us!’ Falling on his knees, he cried, ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ Silently, but emphatically, something said to him, ‘Go and preach the Gospel to the heathen.’”¹ He went home and told his wife, a committed Christian, about his plan.

“‘Where thou goest I will go,’ was the language of her marriage vow. She discovers that his mind is made up—that to say no will send a permanent pang of disappointment into his soul. Hard as the struggle is, she makes up her mind on the same principle that he made up his. Much prayer is offered, and many natural tears shed; and then, from love to Christ and a sense of duty, she decides for the life of a missionary. That purpose never gave way. It never even faltered. She calmly went about the needful preparations for this new and important change of life.”¹

Then he went to his father, who “was a lawyer of repute, a gentleman of the old school.”¹

His father who thought his idea was nonsense, “had disinherited his son, did not want to have anything more to do with him, but his heart yearned over the son in India, so his mother solved the question. He never wrote a letter to the son, but whenever a letter came, the mother would sit down not far from the old gentleman and read the letter aloud to herself so that he would get the message.”²

Years later, the two men were reconciled. More importantly, nine of Dr. John Scudder’s children became missionaries in India, and his grandchildren and subsequent generations later worked there as well.

Could anyone deny that it is rewarding to be a determined, steadfast Christian? Let us stand firm with the Lord. Being a Christian is the highest calling we have. Let us live every day wholly as steadfast Christians for Christ! This is the only way to truly impact the world. ■

¹Thirty-Six Years Missionary in India, Harper & Brothers, 1870.

²The Medical Missionary, January 1914.



Be the Guidepost—Leading Others to Jesus

Guideposts to Christ—like Andrew—are needed in our time!

The young Andrew was the first whom Jesus called to follow Him. What do we know about this disciple? He does not seem to have been an exceptionally gifted or influential man. The Gospels say little about him. Andrew was probably an average person like you and me. Most likely, the church in our day also consists mainly of average people, of unassuming natures who do not have outstanding talents or exceptional education. That is why it is quite appropriate to take a closer look at this young man, Andrew, who filled an especially prominent place in the kingdom of God.

When people refer to him, they usually say, “Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter.” Peter achieved fame. He was honored and became a recognized missionary. Andrew stood in the shadow of his great brother. Peter played first fiddle; Andrew accompanied him timidly. It is not easy to take a subordinate position, always following where others lead, doing the small tasks while others organize—and then reaping the praise afterwards. That takes grace.

Others may have overlooked Andrew, but Jesus looked deeper. In this quiet man, he discovered a burning desire for spiritual things and a strong interest in the promised kingdom of God. Jesus knew that it had cost Andrew a great deal to listen to the young prophet, John the Baptist, personally at the Jordan. It was certainly a big decision for Andrew when he and his friend John made the long journey from their home village of Bethsaida to Bethabara on the Jordan. The fiery messages of John the Baptist penetrated his heart so deeply that he held closely to him. But when the One appeared of whom his master said, “Behold, this

is the Lamb of God,” he knew to whom he should be faithful to from then on. When Jesus later called him away from his fishing nets with the promise of making him a fisher of men, his longing to seek God was satisfied and his life was set on the right course. Jesus knew what moved Andrew. He saw deeper.

After his first encounter with Jesus, Andrew immediately felt called to a task. “He first found his own brother Simon” and introduced him to the Messiah, is how John reports it. Each time we read about Andrew in this book, he stands before us like a friendly guidepost, showing others the way to Jesus. He is not only the first disciple, but also the first to lead someone to the Savior.

In this personal witnessing ministry, for which Andrew became our role model, the method of this disciple should also be an inspiration to us. He starts at home. That is where it is often most difficult to speak a word about the Savior: with unrepentant parents or children, with the mocking uncle or the critical aunt, with the self-righteous grandfather or the easygoing cousin—that is where one must begin. Whoever fails there cannot expect success beyond the home. Our life and confession at home is the foundation on which fruitful gospel work among our coworkers, amid public acquaintances, and among strangers is built. Andrew “first found his own brother Simon” (John 1: 40–42).

If it weren’t for Andrew, we probably wouldn’t have a spirit-filled sermon at Pentecost. Peter later surpassed the one who led him to Jesus. In this way, many an unnamed soul has become the catalyst for the conversion of a future leader in the kingdom of God. Are



we also concerned to seek out new “Simon Peters” in our circle and show them their place in the kingdom of God?

Another time, we meet Andrew on a sun-drenched hill in Judea, where hundreds have gathered to listen to Jesus’ incomparable messages. The shadows are growing longer, and hunger is setting in. How did Andrew know that the boy had something to eat with him? I like to imagine that he had befriended the little boy during the long day. Andrew must have been someone whom both young and old trusted. Perhaps he struck up a conversation with the boy, asking him where he was from and whether his mother had allowed him to come. Maybe Andrew also asked him if he would like to get to know the great prophet better? In any case, he soon knew about the loaves and fishes that the boy’s mother had probably given him as provisions for the journey. Andrew brings the boy to Jesus: “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish” (John 6: 8–9). Jesus took the boy’s meager supplies and created a miracle.

Is this not the purpose of our work with children in our families and Sunday schools? Is it not to lead the little ones, with their undeveloped talents and dormant abilities, to Jesus so that he may create beautiful and useful fruit from these promising seeds?

In John 12: 20–22, we get to know Andrew’s gentle guidance once again. Some foreigners have come who wish to speak with the Master. Why does Philip turn to Andrew in this matter? Perhaps he was already experienced in introducing people at that time, so that this task was simply left to him. Andrew could be trusted with anyone. He always proved himself to

be an interested and helpful friend. He would certainly have been an excellent guidance counselor in the church.

How does Andrew behave toward these Greeks? He could have tried to protect Jesus from these annoying visitors, as the disciples did when the mothers brought their children. Perhaps he could have put the men off until a more convenient time. Wasn’t prudence also appropriate? After all, one could never know what secret goals these foreigners were pursuing. Then Andrew would have been guilty of the “sin of silence.” How often do we remain silent out of sheer caution? How often are we shy when we should speak freely about what God inspires us to say? Andrew led the Greeks to Jesus. He wanted the strangers to hear something from the Master. Isn’t that the purpose of all missionary work?

Andrew, just an average person? In truth, he was indispensable in the work of God’s kingdom. What could a preacher accomplish without “Andrews” in the congregation? How successful would evangelistic meetings be if the “Andrew guideposts” did not lead anyone to them?

Much veiled boldness lies in this “Andrew ministry.” These people are not mentioned when the work and its leaders are honored. Yet the success of every undertaking and the fruitfulness of all church work depends on them. We cannot leave all the work to the preacher and then blame him for the meager harvest. Each of us can be an Andrew, a quiet guidepost to Christ. Those who have experienced the Master as Andrew did will also hear the promise: “I will make you fishers of men.” ■

Joseph, the Overcomer

Joseph's life contains important lessons that are not only applicable and instructive for young people, but for all people of our time. Joseph was an overcomer, and the Lord expects the same of us. We see this clearly when we read the many promises given to an overcomer in Revelation 2 and 3.

The first thing that strikes us about Joseph is his attitude towards sin. Even as a boy, he must have had a connection with the Lord that his brothers did not have, for as he worked with them, his abhorrence of sin was evident. Genesis 37:2 reads: "And Joseph brought a bad report of [his brothers] to his father." Instead of keeping quiet about their sin so as not to arouse their hostility towards him, he preferred to stand up for his convictions.

If we love righteousness and hate unrighteousness, God has His blessing in store for us. God is holy, and His attitude towards sin never changes. The more we get to know Him, the more we will share His attitude. Two things show us how God blessed Joseph's life. First, Scripture says several times that God was with Joseph (Genesis 39). Then, the dreams the Lord gave him with their two meanings must have had a lasting influence on him—even during the dark years that lay ahead.

If we love righteousness and hate unrighteousness, we will also be exposed to the hatred of the lawless. Joseph was hated because of his good conduct. The beautiful coat was merely an excuse to show hatred. Anyone who detests sin and raises his voice against it inevitably ignites an argument.

Next, we see what trials and temptations an overcomer has to struggle with. Nowhere in Scripture do we read that a true follower of the Lord will escape temptation. Paul tells us: "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). Peter says that God has a purpose in allowing temptations and persecutions to come our way: "that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

Joseph's trials and temptations were not long in coming either, nor did they lose their intensity over time. We read how his brothers hated him, how their hatred escalated into violence, almost to the point of murder. Joseph may have acted unwisely by telling them his meaningful dreams, for since then their hatred towards him had intensified. But he had done them no harm.

Another trial soon followed. His brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites (Genesis 39:1). He became a slave. Now he was not only separated from people he loved, but he was also robbed of his freedom. A foreign country, foreign people, a foreign language—a place with the complete absence of the knowledge of God. Joseph now found himself in this environment. But "the LORD was with him." What a glimmer of hope in these dark hours.

Then we see how Joseph was tested in prosperity. Prosperity can be a blessing, but it also brings dangers with it. Because of his good and faithful conduct, God blessed Joseph in Potiphar's house. If Joseph had to be a slave, then he wanted to be a good one. He could not change his circumstances, but he wanted to use them for God's glory. What a big step towards victory. First favor, then promotion, then he was given a position of responsibility, and soon Joseph came into contact with the highest circles of society. As is the case today, prosperity and advancement can open the door to unexpected and overwhelming temptation.

His master's wife tempted Joseph to immorality through deception. We need to understand this situation correctly, as we often put ourselves in unnecessary danger, and then fall into temptation. But this happened while Joseph was going about his regular duties, through no fault of his own. But although Joseph was repeatedly enticed, he overcame the temptations. When the temptress grabbed his coat, he left it in her hands and fled.

That was not the end of Joseph's temptations. Because Potiphar's wife did not succeed in seducing him, she turned the story around and had Joseph sent to



prison. Joseph was counted among the transgressors. He was now in prison for the sake of righteousness. Perhaps he asked himself: “Is it even worth standing up for what is right?” He could not see what lay ahead of him. If it had been possible, it would certainly have made his stay in prison easier. But the future looked dark. As far as he knew, though he had escaped with his life, it was only to spend it in prison. But again we read: “But the LORD was with Joseph.” Instead of becoming embittered, Joseph grew inwardly. During this time, he was being shown certain lessons, and he became a blessing to others.

Finally, we want to consider the honor of being an overcomer. This path of overcoming is of great importance. It is preceded by great adversity, just as the darkest hour comes just before dawn, when all hope seems to fade. Many overcomers have had this wonderful experience in the presence of the Lord—after the darkest hour of suffering and temptation. Their crown has come directly after the cross.

Let us take a look at the extent of Joseph’s rise in stature—from the prison cell to the vice president’s chair. God did something wonderful here and used simple means. Joseph’s two dreams were part of the reason he got into all this trouble, and now God again used two dreams of Pharaoh to get Joseph out of prison.

Joseph was the right man for this new, responsible position. In prison and with Potiphar, he had learned the duties of administration well. He rivaled the aristocrats. In his new position, Joseph became a blessing for everyone in Egypt and for his own father’s household. But this sudden rise meant not only responsibility but also great honor. His position came very close to that of Pharaoh’s himself.

This reminds us of an even greater honor that awaits all overcomers. It is described to us in Revelation 3:21: “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” ■

How Do I find Favor Before God and Man?

Blessed is the one whom God has gifted with a sunny disposition. It will help them get through life more easily than those who do not have this gift. They quickly win the hearts of those around them. In this regard, external beauty is not as important as character. We should make sure that our actions and words are considerate of the well-being of others. It is love that wins hearts. A person is truly beautiful when their life brings joy and happiness to others.

What qualities should we have in order to serve others in the best way? All our own efforts will be of no use if our lives are not a reflection of our Lord and Savior. Only in Him can we find all the good qualities. His holy life attracted people.

First, there is kindness. Jesus always tried to help everyone. He had compassion for all, whether they were poor, rich, lame, blind, deaf, or mute. He was never too busy or too tired; indeed, He forgot about Himself in order to help others. However, He was not friendly and helpful in order to make Himself popular with people, as is often the case with humans, but His helpfulness and friendliness came from a deep compassion for a lost humanity. The kindness Jesus showed to humanity can never be repaid. All we can do is to wholeheartedly follow in His footsteps.

Closely related to kindness is the admirable attitude of being a friend to everyone. Jesus was a friend to all who approached Him. Not only that, in laying down His life, He was also a friend to those who did not understand Him, who hated and persecuted Him. Although Jesus had a small circle of close friends, His heart of love beat for all people. That is why we can never become like Him if we limit our friendships to only a few and exclude others just because we don't like them. Jesus' task was to have His heart of friendship open to everyone. Do we follow Him in this?

One quality that everyone appreciates is selflessness. Wasn't our Lord and Master a perfect example? Can we detect even a spark of selfishness in Him? How about us? Isn't selfishness often the number one thing in our lives? What does everything we are willing to sacrifice mean in comparison to the sacrifice made by the Savior? Let us make it our goal to be selfless in all things.

There were two friends who both claimed to be followers of Christ. One had a habit of putting himself first at every opportunity, while the other was content and happy to stay in the background. Which of the two was most like Jesus?



If we display the right kind of humility, we will always think of the welfare of others first. However, this must be practiced at home so it can be applied wherever we come into contact with others. Jesus thought of the welfare of others first. He should be our role model.

Let us now consider the opposite character traits that will not win us friends, but rather have the opposite effect.

First, there is unfriendliness. We say things that hurt those around us. We are cold and dismissive. We believe that no one is as good, wise, intelligent, beautiful, or capable as we are. We withdraw from our surroundings, become sullen, etc. Does this serve our fellow human beings?

Others are deeply mired in selfishness, which leads many precious souls to eternal ruin. Selfishness can never be satisfied. It holds its victim in an iron grip.

Grumbling, complaining, accusing, and condemning other people are evils that earn us the enmity of our fellow human beings and leave us without mercy.

Dear Friend, we cannot fix any of this on our own. But there is someone who can help us, someone who is strong enough to heal all our faults and infirmities. It is He whose heart burned with compassion and said, “Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden”

(Matthew 11:28). It is only God’s grace that can help, transform, and reshape us so we can be a blessing on this earth.

We often hear people complain that they are not able to lead a better life because of their innate flaws. Who do they want to blame? The Creator? Don’t we all have a free will? We know from experience that people become what they strive to be. All too often we hear expressions such as: “I don’t care.” “I can’t change it.” As long as we harbor such thoughts in our minds, things will certainly not get better.

We should let go of everything that holds us back rather than moving us forward. Take courage and start a new life with God’s help. God is ready to extend His saving Hand to us. Shouldn’t we take it? What a wonderful life we could lead if we had Him by our side as Friend, Savior, and Helper. Read the words that the Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, left us in Galatians 5:22–26.

God wants to free us from our bad habits. When our hearts turn to Him in true repentance, He takes everything away and gives us the strength to be faithful from one day to the next, until our time on earth is finished.

Adeline Babel





Hachiko—An Example of Loyalty

In a few days, Laura will start school. She is excited, but also a little nervous. She wonders: Will the other children be nice? Will the teacher be friendly? Will the lessons be difficult? She talks about it with her parents over dinner.

Mr. Werner gently places his hand on his daughter's shoulder and looks at her lovingly. "I understand your concerns, Laura. It's perfectly normal for you to think about all this. But do you know what the most important thing is? That you remain faithful to Jesus—no matter what happens. Listen to His Word, be kind to your classmates, respectful to your teacher, and faithful in everything you do. Jesus will help you and bless you."

Then her father tells her an interesting story:

"In Japan, in the big city of Tokyo, there once lived a dog named Hachiko. He was an Akita with golden fur. These special dogs have soft, thick fur, often in shades of white, brown, or gold. They are large and strong, but also patient, intelligent, loyal, and courageous.

His owner, Professor Ueno, loved him very much. Every morning, Hachiko accompanied his master to the train station. The professor boarded the train,

went to work, and in the evening, Hachiko faithfully waited for his return.

But one day, the professor did not come back—he had died. But Hachiko did not understand this. Every day, he went to the station and waited. One day, one week, one month, one year . . . for ten years! The people of Tokyo admired his loyalty and gave him food to eat. But Hachiko had only one goal: he wanted to remain loyal to his master. Eventually, he grew old and tired and fell asleep at the station forever. Today, a statue in Tokyo commemorates him."

Then Mr. Werner asks, "What can we learn from Hachiko?"

Laura thinks for a moment. "That loyalty is very important?"

Her father nods. "Exactly! Just as Hachiko waited for his master, we should remain loyal to Jesus. Even if we cannot see Him, we can trust Him. He is always with us and helps us. If you stay close to Jesus, you are safe and secure."

Laura thinks about it. Then she smiles: "I want to be faithful, Dad—always and everywhere. And I want to go to school with Jesus, too."

Helene Rotfuss

At Your Word

Jesus had spoken to the people from Simon Peter's boat. After he had finished his speech, he said to Simon, "Go out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch" (Luke 5:4). What was that all about? Simon and some others had been fishing all night and caught nothing. All night long! And now they were supposed to try again during the day? Wasn't that illogical? Wouldn't the question "Why?" be obvious here? But we don't read that. Simon said to Jesus, "at Your word I will let down the net." So, Simon and his companions went out onto the lake again and made another attempt. And what was the result? They caught so many fish that the net broke, and another boat had to come to their aid. What a wonderful experience for Simon and his companions! We don't know how the story would have ended if Simon had asked "why" instead of simply acting on Jesus' word.

The question "Why?" may be useful in many situations: In chemistry class at school, we ask why certain reactions occur; in math class, we look for proof and ask "Why?"; we sometimes ask ourselves why someone acts in a certain way . . .

But what about everyday family life? Isn't this question sometimes annoying? The Bible says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1). It's not always neces-

sary to ask for a long explanation when your parents assign you a task. There doesn't always have to be a long discussion when they don't allow you to do something. Just trust that they mean well and want only the best for you. Refrain from asking "why?" and do as your parents wish, thereby fulfilling the Lord's commandment. Try it sometime. Who knows, maybe Jesus has a special blessing in store for you.

Anja Mantek

"Master, we have toiled
all night and caught
nothing; nevertheless
at Your word I will let
down the net."
Luke 5:5



Youth Connect

MANITOBA: THE STORY SO FAR



At the beginning of 2024, we at the Winnipeg Church of God found ourselves in a situation that many churches were facing. Coming out of the COVID years, we quickly realized that a lot of the events and programs that had been routine over the last decades were not working anymore. The years of disrupted church life had impacted nearly every aspect of our ministries. So, when we began discussing our annual May fest, the leadership team approached it with a sense of apprehension. I believe we all knew God was putting on our hearts that something needed to change, but what that change would look like needed to be worked out. In the middle of the discussion one of the youth leaders brought the

idea up that maybe the May fest could be repurposed into a youth focused event. Pastor Kehler quickly noted that in the past, the Winnipeg fest had always been a “Jugendtreffen”—a meeting of youth. And suddenly the ideas started pouring out. What if we brought the idea of “Jugendtreffen” at the May fest into the present and made it work for the young people today? I could visibly see the spark of excitement go from person to person, catching even the ones that initially had a more dejected perspective of the year ahead. We could see that God was pointing us in an obvious direction. Focus on the youth. And so, the May fest became the May Conference, and Saturday was dedicated to Youth Connect.

The idea behind Youth Connect was to simply connect young believers with one another. Our Winnipeg youth is a bit unique in that a large part of our youth have other home churches, yet they attend our Friday evening youth meetings. This is in large part due to connections made in ministries and relationships formed outside of church. One of the comments we occasionally heard from young people coming to our youth meetings was that they were looking for in-person connections with other believers. Not just virtual interactions, but something personal. And this idea was the driving force behind Youth Connect. We wanted to invite young believers from all over the city and province, to come

and fellowship. To see what the body of Christ looks like outside of their own four walls. To realize that we have a wider community of believers that are all unified in Christ. We hoped the event would inspire young believers to apply what they experienced in their own lives. To get involved in their own churches and deepen their relationship with Christ and his church. This quickly expanded to extending an invitation to the Churches of God in Canada. The thought was presented that this new generation of young people no longer had that connection within the Church of God that a lot of older people had. So if we don't actively foster connection between churches, what will keep it together in a generation or two?

And so the preparations started. Pastor John Reimer from Mexico was the guest speaker in 2024. For the Youth Connect he was asked to preach on the theme "Walking the Jesus Way," with the underlying question being, "how do we contend for our faith in to-

day's society?" It was amazing to see a little over 80 young people from all over the province worshipping and praising God, listening to the sermons, asking questions at the Pastor's Roundtable, and participating in the activities that day and the rest of the weekend. It was such a blessing to see what God had done, and we couldn't wait to see how the next year would turn out.

This year God expanded the Youth Connect to something we did not expect. About 90 young people from all over Canada attended. They came from Vernon, Edmonton, Hamilton, Toronto, Steinbach, Winnipeg, and a couple even from Mexico and Paraguay. Pastor David Knelsen from Hamilton was the guest speaker this year, speaking on the topic "Back to the Basics." The day was supposed to encourage everyone to go back to the foundation of your faith when life gets too busy, too stressful and too overwhelming. This year breakout rooms were added to the day's events, where

the presenters talked about their own experiences with God. The topics that were available to the youth were: witnessing for Christ, the balance between tradition and your relationship with God, the call to be a missionary, and dealing with temptation and trauma. Outside of Saturday, outings were planned on Sunday evening and Monday to again allow everyone to connect, fellowship, and see a little bit more of our city.

The feedback from the young people has been such a great confirmation that God is blessing the Youth Connect event. Some mentioned they are for sure coming back next year. One person commented that they did not really have much of a community where they lived, and it was an encouraging weekend to be reminded that there is a wider community of believers for them to connect to.

Our hope and prayer is that God will continue to use Youth Connect to ignite a passion for Christ among young believers. Revival often begins in the hearts of the youth, who carry a contagious zeal that inspires communities. Recent statistics show that today's youth is so much more open to Christ than the generations before them. So, we pray that God uses this weekend in the future to connect young people to Him and to each other. We pray that it allows them to form strong bonds and networks of encouragement, support and prayer for the battles they will be facing.

*Jessica Buller
Winnipeg, Manitoba*





You Were a Role Model

There's a good chance you will identify with my experience. The desire to be a role model for others is deeply rooted in the heart of a Christian. This longing is the evidence of genuine faith that seeks to touch and positively influence others through personal example. When we reflect on the topic of being a role model, our thoughts inevitably turn to those who have been one for us—through their attitude, their decisions, and their lives. They enriched our lives and left a lasting impression. One could fill an entire book with their stories—but three examples shall suffice.

1. My father, who lived out his priorities

My first example takes me back to early childhood—that era when wages were still paid in cash weekly.

Every Friday evening, my father would come home with a brown envelope containing both bills and coins. Once dinner was over and the table cleared, he would take his time opening the envelope, take out his earnings, and begin to divide the money conscientiously.

What is engraved indelibly on my heart was the fact that the first portion he calculated was the tithe for the Lord. He placed it in a separate envelope—designated for the offering on the coming Sunday. We children soon understood: this was about genuine priorities. First things came first. Then our mother received the housekeeping budget, funds were set aside to pay bills, and part of the money was saved—to be taken to the bank in the next days. Years later, when I started my first job, I copied my father. In our marriage, we also

lived by this principle, so our children grew up with the same routine. I suspect they, too, will pass this principle on to their children.

I am deeply grateful to my father for this simple example yet powerful influence. It is etched on my soul. And it aligns with a biblical principle that Jesus himself taught:

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

2. A brother with conviction

A second experience occurred many years ago during a special church conference. During the breaks, attendees took the opportunity to get some fresh air or chat with others. I joined a small group of brothers. As it sometimes happens in such circles, the conversation soon veered off—and eventually, someone mentioned a person who wasn't present. Such conversations rarely take a good turn: one said this, another said that . . .

But then the unexpected happened. One brother said firmly, “I've made a decision not to talk about other people.” That one sentence hit us like a lightning bolt. Suddenly, there was silence. The conversation ceased; the group dissolved. Everyone went their own way—convicted by their conscience.

I can't speak for the others, but I was deeply embarrassed—and at the same time, greatly impressed. Why had we let the conversation go in that direction? We all knew it wasn't right. Even today, decades later, I still remember that moment. Through his attitude, and his courage to get us back on track, that brother became a role model to me.

The words of the Apostle Paul are timely here: “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8, NIV).

3. A hidden gift with great impact

The third example took place during our early years as a young couple in church ministry in Steinbach, Man-

itoba. The service proceeded as usual: congregational hymn with offering, Scripture reading and prayer, choir song, sermon, closing hymn. Afterward, the brothers counted the offering together with the treasurer in an adjacent room.

Suddenly, the door opened, and one of the brothers motioned for me to come in. On the table lay the offering plate and its contents. One of the brothers picked up an inconspicuous one-dollar bill. As it was unfolded a larger sum of money was revealed—a fifty and a hundred-dollar bill.

Someone had intentionally hidden the larger gift—wrapped in a modest, one-dollar bill. This unidentified giver became a role model for me. What moved him to conceal his gift so discreetly? What would we have done? Might we have laid the greater contribution openly on top and wrapped the one-dollar bill inside? I hope not—and yet: the temptation to be noticed is real.

But this donor lived out a biblical principle emphasized by Jesus:

“Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward” (Matthew 6:2).

Conclusion: role models shape us—often inadvertently

Over the years, I have met many people whose lives became an example to me—men and women, young and old. I could say to each one: “You were a role model for me.” Maybe you were one of them. Perhaps you aren't even aware of it. And yet—through your life, through your leading by example, you helped me on my spiritual journey. Your prayer was answered. You were a blessing. I can't tell you in person—but I want to express it with humility and gratitude:

“God bless you for your faithful and exemplary life. You were a role model—and a blessing. Your example encouraged me in my walk with the Lord.”

*Harry Semenjuk
Wetaskiwin, Alberta*



I Will Be With You

Part 21: Traveling, Expanding in Argentina

by Salomon Weissburger (1887-1968)

Brother Kästner and I were once taking a train to Joinville for a camp meeting. About 30 kilometers (19 mi) before Joinville, the train car in which we were sitting derailed and slid along on the railway ties for about 80 meters. The track ran along a river, from which it was separated by a slope eight to ten meters deep. Thankfully, the Lord kept us from coming to any harm. Time and again, we experienced God's gracious protection during our travels. He spread His wings over us, shielding my body and maintaining a profound peace in my soul. Glory and honor be to God for His gift of full salvation; it always gives me renewed courage to testify of the Lord and His grace.

When we traveled to Argentina, we often had to stay in Cruz Alta until we could continue on to Santa Rosa by train, via a branch line. Sometimes, we stopped at a hotel for a few hours to rest, but most of the time, we just sat in the train station awaiting departure the following morning. The wait was windy and cold. Once we arrived in Santa Rosa, the elder Brother Zielke often picked us up in his horse-drawn carriage and took us to his house. This family was always very loving and hospitable, although they were poor and their house was very simple. Brother Zielke also drove us long distances with his horse-drawn carriage, for instance to Brother and Sister Makus in the jungle or to Guarany;

these trips often took the whole day. May God reward what these sisters and brothers and their families did for us. I have not forgotten it. Brother Zielke lived to see his 80th birthday, dying several years ago.

One especially vivid memory for me is of a camp meeting in Guarany in the state of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, where Brother David Meier and his wife had been serving for several years. There were people from other religious communities attending the camp meeting as well, and I was later invited to their church to proclaim the Word of God to them.

It fills me with deep regret that the meetings in Guarany, Candeia, and Tparendi had to be discontinued because the families gradually moved away. May God repay the labor and sacrifices they made in His service.

Brother Joseph Krebs, too, served in Guarany for nine months after Brother and Sister Meier moved to Argentina. From Guarany, it was about 40 kilometers (25 mi) to the Uruguay River, which forms the border between Argentina and Brazil. This distance was traversed in two stretches: first by horse-drawn carriage, riding about 20 kilometers (12 mi) to the next town, and then by bus to Porto Luzena. However, the road was so bad that the journey took a few hours, and sometimes we had to get out and push. Brother Meier once said that this was the worst road in the world.



A new congregation in Crespo

I would also like to discuss the origins of the Spanish-language mission in Crespo, Entre Ríos, Argentina. Brother Lautenschläger had been living in Crespo with his wife, who was Spanish (that is, she was Argentinian but not Indigenous); he exercised such a good influence that she, her brothers, and several Spanish locals were converted. A Spanish-language congregation formed, and I preached there several times through an interpreter. Eventually, it turned out that one of the Spanish brothers had a gift for preaching. This group later moved from Crespo to Leandro N. Alem, in the province of Misiones, where they now have their own chapel and hold their services in Spanish.

The preacher there, Brother Floreal Lopes, also serves as the head of the Spanish mission in Argentina. I grew to love the Spanish sisters and brothers. God's grace certainly changes people! It connects us to even those who are very different from us, from other nations and languages, nonetheless binding us together more closely than to our unconverted relatives. It is the miracle of the blood of Christ! We can only imagine how much better yet it will be in Heaven, where all the redeemed, from all peoples and nations, are united in wonderful, divine love! Thankfully, a glimmer of this can already be seen on Earth, as our Lord prayed, "that they all may be one, as You,

Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:21).

When I first got to know the work in Argentina, it was still in its infancy. The church services were hosted by the Radke family, who lived about 10 kilometers (6 mi) from Leandro N. Alem. When we served in that area, we often stayed with the Radkes, forming a particularly warm relationship with them and their children.

Construction of the chapel in Leandro N. Alem

At that time, there was some talk of building a chapel on the Radke property. However, I suggested building the church in the city center of Leandro N. Alem, reasoning that this would be better than their rural location in the long run. The brothers and sisters followed this advice, and it has since been confirmed to have been guided by God. May all glory for this be to the Lord!

In my life, I have experienced over and over again that it is good to be guided by the Holy Spirit, both in my personal life and in service to the Lord. This remains true even when we are spiritually older and more experienced. It is good to be guided more by God than by one's own mind, and if you do not wait for God's guidance, it is easy to make a mistake. ■

They Couldn't Kill Us!

Editor's note: During a visit in 2024 to a retired missionary to Guatemala who is now in his nineties, he related the following remarkable experience, which was one among many while sharing the gospel in a pioneering mission field in that country.

I don't remember how it was that we were invited to go for a service in El Pedregal (The Stony Place), a village a number of miles beyond San Manuel Chaparron. It could have resulted because of some believers in Chaparron. It could have been through the family of "Samuel," or the influence of the Martinez family. I just don't remember.

At any rate, 6 or 7 of us were on our way there in a Land Rover. Only two of the fellows knew the route to take so I relied on their directions. Some stretches were completely without markings of any kind to indicate where the road was. At one place, we had to cross an old volcanic lava run which was so rough that we could barely crawl along. Finally we got to the house where we were to have the service that night. There was a lot of tension in the air about us being there. When a person lives in these surroundings, he is able to sense the tension.

The day ended, darkness came, and it was time to start the service. Now I think it would have been better, perhaps, to have had the service in the early evening, before dark. But then some people would not have been able to come because of their work in the fields, chores, etc. During the service, our apprehension increased when rocks started crashing through the clay tile roof. We knew that the message was "We don't want you here."

But this wasn't the first time for such actions, and we trusted the Lord as we did our best to preach the Gospel to those in need, at every opportunity that arose. We finished the service and got ready to leave. The man of the house, who had invited us, said that he was afraid that some of the men of the village would try to harm us on our way out, and that he would go with us for a distance. We answered that if he did that, he would then have to come back by himself and would be in grave danger. We said that we would trust the Lord to protect us, and we would go by ourselves.

Almost as soon as we started, I remember telling those traveling with me, "If you will tell me ahead of each turn which way to go, I will drive as fast as I can and try to get out of here." We hadn't gone too far when I thought that the fellows had not told me to turn. Then I realized that the road was completely blocked off with cut trees woven together. I pulled up close to the trees and stopped. Two men in the back of the Land Rover jumped out, ran up to the trees and began pulling the biggest ones out. I soon felt that I could get through the remaining trees, tooted the horn for them to get back in, and we started on. Not too much further on was a second roadblock. I knew that if the perpetrators had taken the time to build a second one, they were desperate, so I didn't stop, but plowed on through the woven trees and limbs. In the light of the headlights, I could see a third roadblock ahead and I began to be afraid.

I remembered that the old lava run was not too far beyond this third roadblock. I also knew that these men were desperate and determined to get us. I remembered experiences at other roadblocks and the attempts to kill us. I began to pray, and I'm sure that everyone else in the Land Rover was also praying.

All of a sudden, a tropical burst of heavy rain started. It was really raining hard. Then I began to wonder how we would get through some mud holes I remembered were ahead of us. I wasn't about to stop, so I kept going, through the branches again. This third roadblock was not nearly as heavy and thick as the first two had been. Either they ran out of trees or out of time. I went bouncing across the lava run, too fast for comfort, but we weren't looking for comfort! We came to the mud holes and made it through them.

Then we all realized that we had probably passed through the danger, and we breathed a sigh of relief and prayed, thanking the Lord for protecting us again. For 15 years I thought that we had been delivered by that heavy rain, that the men hadn't been able to do whatever they planned because of the downpour. Then Heber Martinez told me of his experience.

Heber was visiting in that general area some 10 years after our visit that night. He came to one house,



visited with the man, told him about the Lord Jesus and salvation. As he got ready to leave, he said that he wanted to pray and to leave a tract with the man. The man said that he couldn't read, but that his little boy could, and he would read to him. Then Heber, said, without knowing why, "You need to give your heart to the Lord, ask Him to forgive you your sins, because He will forgive you, and protect you from your enemies." The man answered, "Yes, I know that is right, because one time I saw God protect some believers when I and some others intended to kill them."

Heber was interested, and the man told him the following story. About 10 years before, he said, one night some believers had come to the village of El Pedregal for a church service. He and a number of others were convinced that these believers were from the devil and were not a good thing for the people of his village. During the service he and his friends had made three roadblocks of trees. When the missionaries were leaving after the service, and came to the first roadblock, they all lifted their rifles to shoot at the Jeep (as he called it). But suddenly they all got so weak that

they couldn't pull the triggers. They went running up to the second roadblock and again lifted their rifles. One man said, "Come on fellows. We can do it. We've done this before. Be strong and pull the triggers." Once again, they got so weak that they couldn't pull the triggers.

Now they were more angry than ever, and went running to the third roadblock, both blaming and encouraging each other. When the "Jeep" came near this time, they got so weak that not one of them could even lift his rifle to his shoulder! "So," he said, "I know that God protects the believers." Heber felt goose bumps, and said, "Yes, I know, because I was with that group that night. I was one of the ones who got out and ran to pull away the trees and branches. Yes, God protected us!" Not too long afterward, that man, too, accepted Christ as his Savior.

"The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them" (Psalm 34:7).

*Paul Reiff
Overland Park, Kansas*

100 Years of the Church of God in Wetaskiwin— A Milestone of God's Grace

“Your faithfulness *endures* to all generations.” (Psalm 119:90)



Congregation in Wetaskiwin – 1930

I had the privilege of taking part in the special anniversary celebration in Wetaskiwin. This report reflects the impressions of several participants, along with my own personal experiences.

When we look back on an entire century, as a congregation, we are filled with deep gratitude toward God. He has led us this far in His faithfulness and grace.

The 100th anniversary of the church in Wetaskiwin became a celebration of worship, joy, and remembrance. At the same time, it was a great encouragement to us and to the generations to come. It was a day in which God's goodness, and the power of His gospel were tangibly felt among His children.

God's faithfulness through all generations

From the humble beginnings among German immigrants to the present day, God's faithfulness has been a thread woven through the church's history. Many attendees felt it a great privilege to be part of this legacy and to witness how God has carried His church through every high and low. Despite challenges and hardships, the Lord has continually added people to the congregation, preserved them, and carried them

through every situation.

Many were especially touched by the realization that it is not about great names, but that every individual who serves the Lord is valued and used by Him. The church has been—and continues to be—built up through God's work in and through people who are willing to serve. Often, this happens behind the scenes, always trusting in God's guidance and blessing.

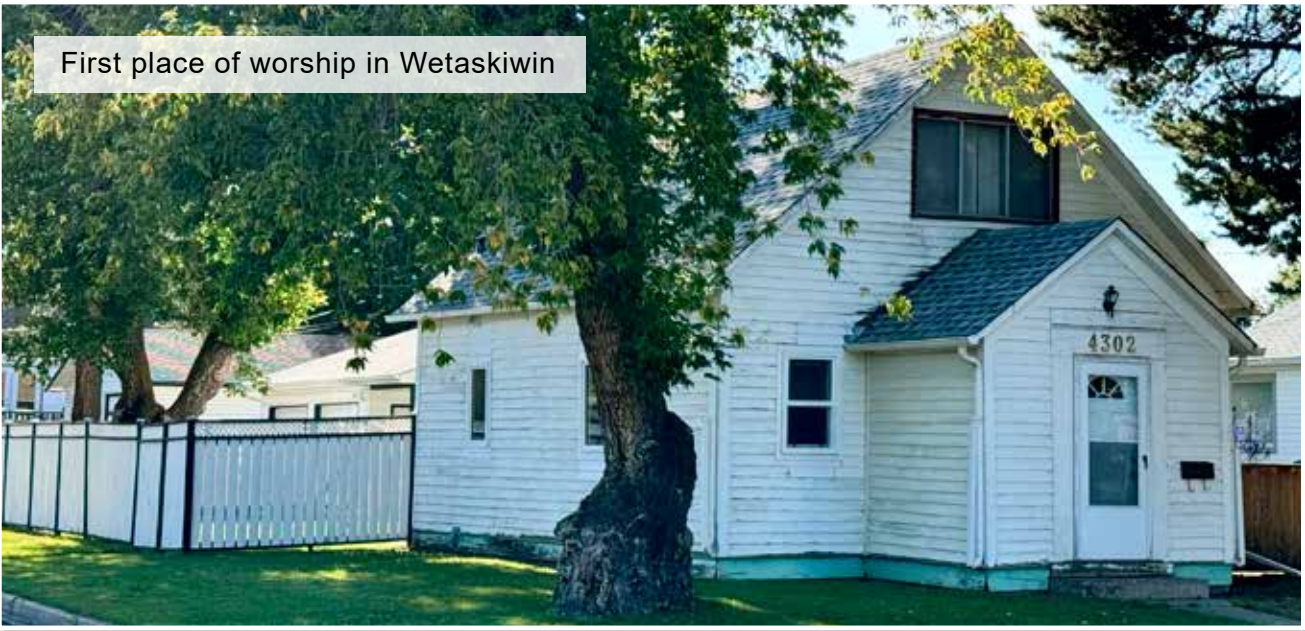
It also became clear how God, throughout these decades, has blessed and used many families to further His work.

The importance of fellowship and spiritual home

Many shared a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation for the church, not merely as a place of gathering, but as a spiritual home. The church building is far more than just a structure: it is a place where the Word of God is proclaimed, where praise and prayer have their place, and where community is lived out.

The atmosphere during the anniversary celebration was marked by joy, mutual service, and heartfelt fellowship. The teamwork in the kitchen, the singing together, and the many conversations clearly showed

First place of worship in Wetaskiwin



how important it is to preserve places of connection and faith—especially in a time when this can no longer be taken for granted.

Living Faith and Spiritual Continuity

During the two worship services, brothers who had served in the congregation shared their experiences. In the afternoon, a detailed report was given with many photographic testimonies from past decades. It was powerfully demonstrated how faith has been passed down through generations.

Many families have been part of the congregation for decades, and it was touching to see how children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren still stand firm in faith today and are active in the church.

The Wetaskiwin church has been—and still is—a place in which holding fast to biblical truth and living according to the attitude of Christ shape church life. The clear proclamation of the gospel and the emphasis on holy living have given many people guidance and stability.

The many preachers who began their service here, as well as the wide variety of ministries—from children's and youth work to prayer meetings and Vacation Bible School—all bear witness to how God is building and sustaining His church.

Songs like "Little Is Much When God Is in It" perfectly capture the spirit: even the smallest act of faithfulness is valuable in building the kingdom of God. Repeatedly, people gave thanks that the congrega- ►



Living pastors that have served in Wetaskiwin (From L–R) Art and Edith Lange, Ron and Bettina Taron, Harry and Doreen Semenjuk, Waldemar Makus, and Kurt Pudel

tion warmly and with encouragement supported the work of God's messengers.

Music and the Testimony of Song

One special aspect of the anniversary celebration was the music. The songs that were sung recalled past times while emphasizing how essential singing together is to the identity of the people of God.

The messages of the songs—often sung out of deep personal experience—strengthened and encouraged those present. They testified to victory and preservation through the blood of Jesus and to the hope that unites us as a church.

The music was not just a beautiful setting, but a living testimony to God's work in the hearts of His children. It touched hearts and emotions while also encouraging and strengthening the spirit.

The collaboration between the choirs from Wetaskiwin and Edmonton impressively showed the loving cooperation between these sister congregations.

Looking ahead—hope and mission

The anniversary was not only a look back, but also a faithful look ahead. The congregants were reminded that the church is built on Jesus Christ, the cornerstone.

It is both a calling and a privilege to hold firmly to biblical teaching, to love and forgive one another, and to live out God's truth—in the church community and in our families.



The hope for what God will yet do remains alive: "The best is yet to come—eternal joy awaits us!"

And so, our prayer remains that God will continue to bless His church in Wetaskiwin, add new people, and enliven it by His Spirit.

May the testimony of the past 100 years encourage many to serve the Lord faithfully, so that many generations to come may also experience that, God's "faithfulness *endures* to all generations."

"Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good; blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!" (Psalm 34: 8).

Hermann Vogt



Experiencing Christian Love—Lasting Impressions

I didn't have grandparents of my own during my childhood, a painful loss that was not uncommon because of World War II. However, God brought other older people into my life who showered me with warmth and kindness through their affection—impressions that remain in my heart to this day.

One of them was an elderly brother from the congregation who had heart disease. Although he himself was terminally ill and weak, he took time for me. We sat under the sunlit vine arbor in the courtyard and enjoyed the pleasant breeze. I sat at his feet, listened to his stories, and felt safe and secure. He patiently explained his illness to me and showed me the pressure marks on his swollen feet. I didn't understand, but he didn't hold it against me. What remained was the feeling of being accepted and loved.

Another role model was an elderly woman without children of her own who devoted her life to Christian love. When they were younger, she and her husband had opened their home to single students. In her old

age, she lived with one of those students and his family—they considered her part of their family! Her petite, wrinkled face radiated warmth and strength. Even in her old age, she cooked and darned socks for the large family, caring for the children with loving strictness, including me. I can still remember some of her stories to this day. When I was around her, I never felt unneeded—instead, I felt seen and valued.

These faithful people lived according to what the Bible teaches: “Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days” (Ecclesiastes 11:1). They probably didn't know it, but they became instruments of God's love for me: quietly, naturally, unobtrusively, deeply moving. Not through words, but through their very being. Even more than forty years later, I found comfort in these memories during dark times.

True love operates in secret—and leaves traces that linger.

*Helene Rotfuss
Pforzheim, Germany*



Sow the Good Seed

*Say brother, what kind of seed are you sowing?
What kind of plants would you like to see growing?
Let your life be a blessing, all of the time;
Proclaim the truth, and share God's message sublime*

*Say sister, are you praising God with your tongue?
Has an intimate walk with Jesus begun?
Have you consecrated your life to the Lord,
Encouraging souls to seek help in the Word?*

*Consider the debt that was canceled by God
When we were redeemed from the way that was broad.
We want to love, honor, and always praise Him
For Christ saved our souls and forgave all our sin.*

*Continue to scatter the good seed abroad;
Stand fast for the truth and be loyal to God.
Wherever you are upon land or on sea
Proclaim the good news, for the truth set you free.*

*So many are sowing and scattering seeds;
Is the result good fruit or is it but weeds?
The Judgment Day's coming and how can you stand
If you appear empty, no fruit in your hand?*

*A person who truly is serving the Lord
Will never speak falsely, but only true words.
Is drink from a fountain both bitter and sweet?
Can people sow tares and then harvest good wheat?*

*Now those who are saved by the grace of the Lord
Will speak of salvation and trust in God's Word;
By God's Holy Spirit united as one
They praise God, the Father, through Jesus the Son.*

*Their words are not idle, but pleasing to Him;
Avoiding false doctrine, they flee from all sin.
They speak words of wisdom, they honor the Lord;
They have attained freedom through Christ and His Word.*

W. Lohmann