

Gerald K. Reitz passed into the presence of Jesus on the day of my 42nd wedding anniversary.

There are people whose lives have impact or influence from “center stage” in life – a place where all can see. Some “influencers” do so to be seen; others eschew notoriety, but are recognized all the same. It takes very little to be noticed for obvious talents.

Then there are those whose lives have impact or influence “from behind the curtain”. Few, if any, see or know about the influence affected, save for those influenced personally. These influencers purposely avoid the stage, preferring to quietly, yet determinedly, make a difference that only God can see. I have found that these people are not only “influencers” themselves; they often “influence the other influencers”.

Gerald K. Reitz. Business associates called him “Jerry”. Those who loved and knew him called him “Jeff”.

Jeff was an “influencer of influencers”.

That is, there were people of influence whose influence was *maximized* because Jeff was behind them, urging them on in their calling and pushing them toward likeness to and love for the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. I know this because I am one on whom Jeff’s life made a huge impact. As a pastor and an international worker, over 40 years, Jeff followed me with his life and prayers with the promise that whatever was needed to make my ministry better, he wanted to be a part of it. He made this promise to me on June 21st, 1980, my wedding day, the day on which – exactly 42 years later – he then passed into the presence of Jesus.

I am forever grateful for his godly and friendly influence in my life. Rest in the arms of Jesus, my friend. We look forward to a reunion when the greatest Influencer of all returns to take His rightful place as King of kings and Lord of lords – on center stage for all to see.

Rev. Dr. David King
Executive Director

“Frontier Laborers for Christ”

(a mission enterprise in the Golden Triangle of northern Thailand)

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians

"I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me."

Jeff Reitz embodied this verse in my life. Jeff invested in my life in significant ways by entering my lost world and providing me an example of Christ to follow. He not only taught me the scriptures, but he gave me access to his life. I watched him as an elder in my church. I was regularly in his home watching him as a husband and father.

He hired me in the summers so I could pay the tuition at bible college and so I watched him as a businessman and boss. He not only invested in me to follow my call as a pastor, but when I left home for Toccoa Falls Bible College, he continued investing in my family including my mother, grandmother, aunts, uncles, and cousins. All of them received spiritual direction and Christ's love from Jeff.

He invested in me as a spiritual father and showed me a path to imitate as I follow Christ and seek to lead the pastors under my care as a District Superintendent in the C&MA. I thank the Lord for Jeff's investment in my life at every level.

Rev David Lane.
Superintendent Central District C&MA

September, 1972 Jerry (Jeff) hired an 18-year-old kid, he never met. I was told many, many years later by Jerry himself, that 3 months after I was hired, he nearly fired me. 32 years later, in April 2004, Priscilla and I had breakfast with Jerry and Nan to share we would be leaving Detroit Automatic to accept a full time Christian vocation. He was somewhat shocked and wanted me to stay to finish integration of a new computer system.

On a scale of 1 to 10, my confidence level was about a negative 2 when I was hired. I owe much of my maturity to Jerry who coached, trained, taught, encouraged and led by example. He was far more than my "boss". He hated

that term. I left Detroit Automatic well prepared for the mission field. He gave me a major second chance early on when I “broke” one of his cardinal rules. His generosity and integrity have influenced forever the way I view life.

I think it’s safe to tell this now. One year, I noticed in calculating my bonus that a major mistake had clearly been made in my favor. I first brought it to the attention of the accountant. He identified how it happened but without giving me any details. I felt compelled to not cash the check immediately and talked to Jerry about it. “No problem, he said, “Cash the check and I will adjust next year’s bonus” which he never did.

He taught me you can be a Christian and do very well in business. He taught me how to respect and treat “the competition”. For the last 17 years, I had breakfast with Jerry, nearly every time I came back into town. (I live in Nashville). He not only talked a good faith, he walked very tall good faith. I will miss those 2-hour breakfasts at Bob Evans.

Lee Harrison.
Mobile Mission Ministry



In the brief time I knew Jerry (Jeff) he had an uncanny way of knowing what to say that could only be attributed to the hand of God.

On a morning of parental frustration having to have to wear the hat of a firm parent, I was having guilt for being too hard.

Jerry came in that day with his normal smile and cheery disposition. He started telling me about how parenting is hard, but that is our job.

He told me to always err on the side of doing what is best for them. He reminded me that I am not a friend, but a mother.

Jerry did not know I was having this worry, and guilt. I hadn't mentioned to him my morning issues. He just felt the need to share what God had laid on his heart.

What a moment of seeing God going before me.

This was such a regular occurrence with his visits that I looked forward to hearing him speak soundly to the silent voice in my heart.

I thank God he put Jerry in my path, and for the insight and leadership he shared with me that have, and will continue to impact my future.

Vanessa Holmes

You might think that God blessed Jeff Reitz because he was good. But I believe that God blessed Jeff Reitz because Jeff Reitz blessed others.

In my first-grade year, the Reitz family began attending the Wyandotte C&MA. Lynn Reitz was in my grade and our friendship brought me into the Reitz family. Our two families were different. My dad was a factory worker. Mr. Reitz owned his own business. My dad did not attend church. Mr. Reitz was a teacher and elder in the church. We were a family of two children. Mr. and Mrs. Reitz had five children.

They invited me on family vacation, where Grandma Smalley cooked on a wood stove and where we water skied on a lake with snapping turtles. I rode the Blue Streak, my first roller coaster ride, with Mr. Reitz. At my wedding, Mr. Reitz paid for the rental of three hundred chairs, because he saw the need, not because I asked. Again, he demonstrated his fatherly concern for me.

On May 29th, Memorial Day, of this year, my 88-year-old mother fell and broke her hip. From his hospice bed, he sent her \$100 for any expense she may need to cover. From my perspective, God places the lonely in families.

As I think about how God would view Jeff Reitz, I am reminded of Psalm 92:14,15 In old age they will still bear fruit; healthy and green they will remain to proclaim, "The LORD is upright; He is my Rock, and in Him there is no unrighteousness."

Following the Leader...

Cathy Buiten

Jeff was my mentor, my adult Sunday School teacher and I liked to think of him as my "big brother". I've known him through the church for 50 years and he's always given me good advice- knowingly and sometimes unknowingly.

He "knew my story" and never judged me. Friends who visited our church for the first time would ask, "who was the man who greeted me so warmly and made me feel welcomed?"

One of Jeff's many ministries in the church was serving long-term as an elder. Often, he would remind me of when I was healed from a very a painful condition in 1977 after being anointed and prayed for. He was there at the hospital. As many others, I've been the recipient of Jeff's kindness, generosity and wisdom. I will never forget you dear brother! Your light will shine on.

Judy Glendening
