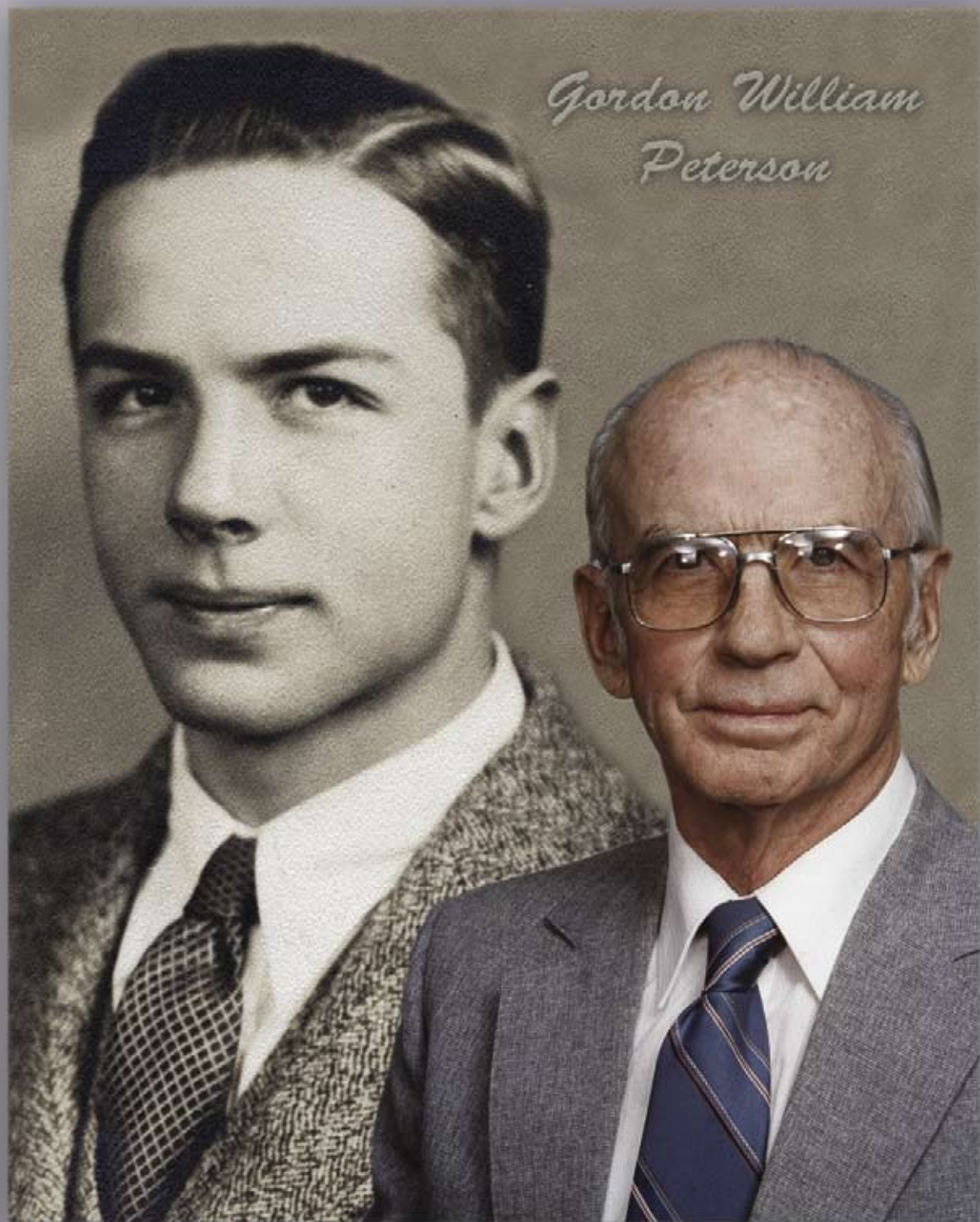


*Gordon William
Peterson*



Gordon's Life Story

Gordon W. Peterson led a life saturated with honesty, integrity and respect. He was many things in his life – a hard worker, an innovator and a great father. From his humble beginnings as a farmer's son to his active retirement, Gordon was devoted to the institutions of responsibility, respect and religion, which allowed him to live life to its utmost potential. His life and his work are an inspiration to all.



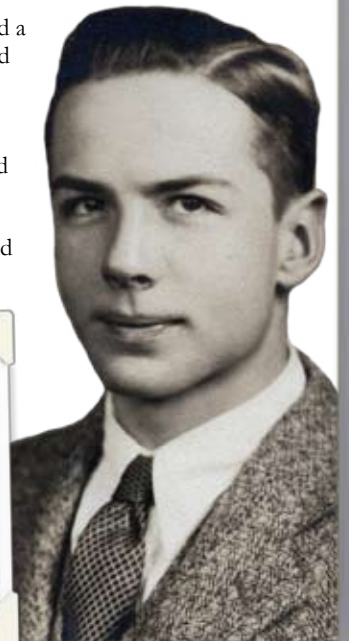
1916 was a year full of excitement on all fronts. In science, Albert Einstein had just completed his theory of relativity, and in entertainment, Charlie Chaplin signed a contract for an unprecedented \$10,000 per week. The political scene, too, was dynamic as World War I raged through the cities of Europe. Amidst all of these events that came to define the era, William and Lila (Martin) Peterson of Nunica, Michigan, welcomed the birth of their son, Gordon William, on April 17, 1916. He was the second of six children.



Gordon grew up in the small farming community of Nunica, Michigan, on their family farm, which is a registered "Centennial Farm" in Michigan. His father operated the farm mostly as dairy, but also had some cash crops in the fields. Along with his siblings, Gordon learned how to work hard by pitching in on the farm. His parents raised the children with Christian values and they attended a Baptist church in town. Growing up during the Great Depression helped Gordon value family over material possessions, and he maintained his commitment to them throughout his life. With money scarce, he couldn't just go out and buy something he wanted, so he used his ingenuity and made them himself. As a young boy, Gordon learned to play the violin-U and later the mouth organ. He always had a song in his heart and loved to sing all the time, particularly old hymns with his family. Gordon was a graduate of Coopersville High School.

From 1938 to 1942, Gordon owned and operated a full service Shell Gas Station in downtown Grand Haven. He then went to work at Continental Motors (now Teledyne Technologies) in Muskegon, which manufactured airplane engines. His job was quite technical and required very precise and intricate work on the engine pistons. During World War II, his job was instrumental in the war efforts, which kept Gordon out of the service. Throughout his career, Gordon judged himself by his hard work and dedication, which were demonstrated in his work at Continental for 32 years.

In the late 1930s, Gordon married his first wife and they had three sons together, Gilmer (Gil) born in 1941, Eric in 1944, and Morris (Morrie) in 1945. Unfortunately, their marriage ended, however, Gordon continued to raise his three sons on his own. He soon met Minnie Honholt, a shy





gal who lived in his neighborhood. After some cajoling by her mother, Effie, the couple began dating and was married in 1948. In 1951, their family grew to include twin daughters, Linda and Glenda, who completed the Peterson household. Gordon always stayed close to his roots and took great pride in raising his children on his family farm. Like his parents, he and Minnie also instilled in their children Christian values and attended the First Reformed Church in Spring Lake, which is now Christ Community Church of Spring Lake. Gordon was very active in this congregation as a Sunday school teacher and Consistory member. When visiting Holland he attended the Third Reformed Church of Holland.

Gordon had learned early in life that material possessions matter little and that family comes first. He kept his 1937 John Deere farm tractor running for 30 years and taught his children to hunt and fish to put food on the table. However, in 1958, Gordon made a huge investment in a 14-foot Aero Craft boat with a wide beam, which was large enough to fit his family of seven. Although in Gordon's mind this was a lot of money, he was tired of not catching any fish off the shore. Shortly after buying the boat, he learned from someone that Canada had some of the best fishing spots and so, from that time on, Gordon took his entire family there every year to fish. Although Gordon's life was happy, it was also marked by great sorrow. In the early 1970s, his beloved wife Minnie was diagnosed with cancer and she spent over two years in the hospital in Grand Rapids. Gordon faithfully visited Minnie every day, traveling great distances back and forth, and stood vigilantly by her side. He even retired in 1974, in order to care for her, though she died two weeks later. They had shared 26 years of marriage.

Most people think of retirement as slowing down and taking things easy – not for Gordon. He saw it as a time to switch gears and pursue his second life's work as a volunteer-missionary with Wycliffe Bible Translators. Wycliffe was impressed with Gordon's work with his son, who was a full-time pilot and aircraft mechanic with Wycliffe in the Philippines, and they asked Gordon to take on building projects for housing and staff units in California and later Dallas. For 20 years, Gordon dedicated himself to this job and frugally lived off his meager retirement funds, never asking for a penny from Wycliffe and also sacrificially giving to missions. In addition, Gordon also served as a missionary with the Bill Glass Prison Ministries for over 20 years, traveling throughout the country. His strong belief was a hallmark of his life.



Already a man in his 80s, Gordon wasn't done telling others of the reality of God. He wrote a book called "Awesome Truth That Makes Sense", which illustrated some of the most miraculous events in the Bible and facts people don't really think about. For instance, how could a million Israelites wander the desert for 40 years and survive with out God.

Gordon Peterson was not someone consumed by the material gains

in life, but by the satisfaction of putting this ministry first and doing the best job he could with whatever task was at hand. Although he will be deeply missed, his legacy leaves his loved ones with wonderful memories and a strong foundation to live by.

Gordon William Peterson, age 89, of Holland, MI, formerly of Spring Lake, MI, died at Oakcrest Manor in Holland, MI. He was preceded in death by his wife, Minnie Peterson. His family includes his children: Gilmer (Gil) and Elayne Peterson of Sacramento, CA, Eric and Carol Peterson of Waxhaw, NC, Morrie and Barb Peterson of Holland, MI, Linda Peterson and Al Bacharach of Pompano Beach, FL, Glenda and Rich Geno of Westland, MI; seven grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren; sister, Wilma Tiles, of West Olive, MI; brother, Glenn and Mary Lou Peterson of Eastmanville, MI; sister-in-law, Etta Peterson of Nunica, MI; many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Services will be at 1 p.m. on Friday, October 7, at the Third Reformed Church of Holland, with the Rev. William Unzicker officiating. Burial will be in Spring Lake Cemetery. Visiting will be from 2-4 and 7-9 p.m. on Thursday, October 6, at the Northwood Chapel, Dykstra Life Story Funeral Home, 295 Douglas Ave., Holland, MI. Please visit Gordon's personal memory

page at www.lifestorynet.com where you may share a memory, order flowers or make a memorial contribution to either Wycliffe Bible Translators, P.O. Box 628200, Orlando, FL 32862-8200; Bill Glass Champions for Life (Prison Ministry's), P.O. Box 761101, Dallas, TX 75376-1101, or Third Reformed Mission Memorial Fund.

