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Square One World Media presents this book in honour of
George and Helen Schroeder

*in appreciation for growing the HIStory Endowment Project,
so that "by telling their story, we can tell HIS."*

George and Helen Schroeder bequeathed their estate to Square One World Media before the HIStory Endowment Project was created.

Thank you to George and Helen's family for allowing their story to become the sample HIStory Book for the project.

November 2018



George and Helen Schroeder believed that we were created to be in relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and that sharing the hope of the Gospel is the most meaningful work God gives us to do.

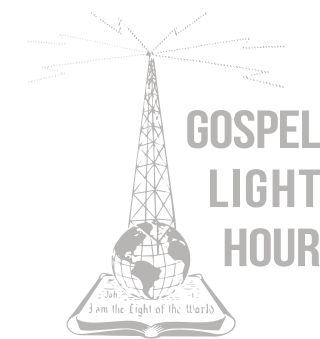
They appreciated the mission of Square One World Media to share the Gospel through creative, quality and accessible media resources.

They wanted to leave a lasting legacy by ensuring that Square One World Media has consistent funding to share the Gospel for years to come.

They chose to support the ministry of Square One World Media through a legacy gift to the HIStory Endowment Project by bequest.



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**Square One World Media:
Carrying the Legacy of the Past into the Future**

*“Your faithfulness endures to all generations;
you have established the earth, and it stands fast.”
Psalm 119:90*

In 1947, Gospel Light Hour began when a group of Bible College students in Winnipeg obeyed the call to use radio to advance the Kingdom of God. Throughout the decades, programs, and name changes – from Gospel Light Hour to Mennonite Brethren Communications to Family Life Network and now Square One World Media – the goal has remained the same: to produce Christ-centred media that proclaims the light of the Gospel to all generations.

For over 70 years, God has led godly men and women to pray for, support, and work at the ministry.

And God’s faithfulness has been evident! Millions of people around the world have heard the Gospel message, and thousands have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Only God knows the full impact.

Square One continues to have a great team of men and women – board members, staff, and partners around the world – with a heart to serve God. They are committed to carrying the legacy of the past into the future: that of spreading the light of the Gospel into the world through media.

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Above: George as a small boy, with his younger sister Mary, in the yard of their childhood home in St. François Xavier, Manitoba.

George and Helen Schroeder: Born to serve the Lord

On June 12, 1929, Sara Doerksen Schroeder was hosting the Ladies Missionary Fellowship in her home in St. François Xavier, MB. Before the meeting was over, she excused herself to give birth to a son. Immediately, the new arrival was nicknamed, “The Little Missionary” in honour of the meeting he had interrupted. The moniker stuck as, full-grown, George Schroeder attained a final height of five feet, one inch. And he did, in fact, become a missionary.

George loved Jesus. He loved people. And he loved to talk. All of these combined to make him an evangelist at heart. His zeal to preach the Gospel was matched by a rich voice and love of singing.

His sister Mary recalls being sent out with George to fill the wood box when they were children. George would start out well enough. But after the first armful, he would stand on the wood pile and sing at the top of his lungs while Mary finished carrying the wood. There was no question in George’s mind that he was destined to command an audience.

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Above: Helen, a young woman from Damascus, Ohio, was a skilled tennis player.

As George grew up, he dreamed of a wife with two important attributes: she would share his love of music, preferably as an accompanist. And she would not be any taller than he.

While working in London, Ontario in the summer of 1953, George was asked to sing a solo. He asked Helen Steer, a Quaker from Damascus, Ohio, to accompany him. Helen was a young woman of short stature and great musical ability. She agreed to accompany him for his solo. And not long after, she agreed to the greater invitation to accompany him for life. George was fond of saying he had his personal “road to Damascus experience” in August, 1954 when he traveled to Ohio to marry Helen.

The newlyweds attended schools in Winnipeg, Hillsboro and Fresno. George had disliked school as a child and had eventually dropped out. But with Helen’s encouragement, they both became teachers and George completed a doctorate in theology. While George received the degree, he knew that the accomplishment belonged to both of them since he would never have completed it without Helen’s passion for learning and expertise in English grammar.

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Right: George liked to say he had a personal “road to Damascus” experience when he travelled to Ohio to marry Helen in August, 1954.



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Above: George and Helen went to Nigeria in 1963 with MCC's "Teachers Abroad Program" (TAP). They fell in love with the country and returned to serve as missionaries at the Ilorin Theological Seminary for almost 30 years.

The couple went to Nigeria in 1963 for a three-year term with MCC's "Teachers Abroad Program" (TAP). There they became familiar with the Ilorin Theological Seminary sponsored by the Evangelical Missionary Church. They returned to the Seminary in Ilorin in 1968 where Helen taught English while George taught Bible and Evangelism. They also traveled extensively as itinerant evangelists, recorded hymns for use in broadcasts, preached and sang on secular radio and television, and led the college choir.

In 1969, George was infected with hepatitis. Several years later, Helen was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. In spite of this, the couple served actively as missionaries in Nigeria for almost 30 years.

Almost by accident, Helen became known for her film ministry. It began when she returned to Nigeria after a furlough in 1977 with a collection of Christian films. Her library grew to include 100s of films which she lent out to Nigerian evangelists. As they were returned, she recorded how many viewers had seen the film, and how many of them had made a decision for Christ.

In the November, 1981 issue of *Emphasis Magazine*, George wrote about the success of Helen's film ministry: "When you visit a secondary school in Nigeria and simply bring a message from the Bible, only the Christian students will come to hear you. But if you take along a movie projector and show a Christian film, every last Moslim and pagan will come to the meeting where they will be under the influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."¹

¹ George Schroeder, "God Uses a Missionary with Multiple Sclerosis," *Emphasis*, Vol. 13 No. 11, (The Missionary Church, Kitchener, ON), November, 1981.

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Above: Helen and George doing laundry together in Nigeria. It was not unusual for the power to go off for several hours while they were half-way through their task.

Following page: It was a common sight on campus for George to be surrounded with groups of children who called him, “Follow, Follow”. The name came from the chorus, “Follow, follow / I will follow Jesus...”

Even though George and Helen did not have any children of their own, they loved children and they considered their students to be part of their family. It was a common sight on the campus for George to be surrounded by groups of children who called him “Follow, Follow”. The name came from the chorus, “Follow, follow / I will follow Jesus...” Many of his students called him “Uncle Hallelujah!” And still others called him “Baba Iwe” which means “Father of Children” in Hausa.

George remembered other people’s names as well. It was important to him to keep in touch, especially with those who had given their lives to Christ. A number of their former Nigerian students now reside in Winnipeg, including Pastor Deborah Olukoju of the Emmanuel Fellowship Church.²

George and Helen’s time in Nigeria came to an end in 1994. Rather than enjoy a well-earned rest in Winnipeg, the Schroeders looked for the next assignment God had for them. An American man they had assisted in Nigeria during a time of political upheaval now offered them a house to live in and a job in Florida. While other Canadian snowbirds of their age shopped, golfed and relaxed in the sun, the Schroeders worked in a prison ministry where they lived out their passion to see people reconciled with God and with each other.

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Following page: George and Helen on their 40th anniversary in August, 1994. The photo is taken on the farm in St. François Xavier, Manitoba, where George grew up.

George was almost 70 years old when he visited his parents' home village of Petershagen in Ukraine, now known by the Ukrainian name of Kutuzovka. He discovered that the M.B. Church building there had been converted into a sheep shed during the Soviet era. George was instrumental in getting permission to reopen it. In 1999, the church where his grandfather had preached and where his parents had married was rededicated. George returned several times to preach there and was gratified to see that the church was well-attended and growing.

In 2000, the Schroeders moved to Steinbach, Manitoba, their final home on this earth. They became involved in a small church in nearby Morden and saw it grow from five families to over 100 people.

When *Youth For Christ* opened a skateboard park across the street from their condo in Steinbach, George went out in the mornings and swept up the cigarette butts to help the other condo residents be supportive of the ministry they saw happening out their front windows. He was also known for the words he formed out of wire, usually the word "Jesus", so he would have a conversation opener when he gave his creations to strangers.

Of all the places George and Helen lived, studied, and ministered, Nigeria was the place they loved the best. In 2001, George was pleased to return to Nigeria, the land of his heart, to be part of evangelistic meetings where over 4,000 people gave their lives to Jesus.

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Following page: One of the last pictures of George and Helen together. Before she passed away on October 15, 2007, Helen designated that donations in her honour should go to Family Life Network (FLN). To support Helen's choice, George set up the "Helen Schroeder Memorial Fund".

When George and Helen married on August 20, 1954, he warned her that "they would likely end up as missionaries in a jungle somewhere." Helen chose to join him in ministry, wherever that might take them. Of the two, George was the outspoken man of God; a modern-day John the Baptist who overflowed with zeal and never hesitated to act. Helen was a quiet and supportive woman who submitted her will to God in order that George might succeed. She found solace in the Bible and often smiled gently when George spoke, regardless of what she thought. They brought out the best in each other and, together, they impacted many people.

Upon her death on October 15, 2007, George discovered that Helen had designated donations to Family Life Network (FLN). George supported Helen's choice and set up the "Helen Schroeder Memorial Fund". In thanking the many people who sent donations to FLN in Helen's honour, George wrote, "Helen Schroeder's keyboard no longer plays 'Beethoven's Sonata', but may that grand piano up yonder ring forth, 'Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was Slain'. Helen Schroeder. What a life so beautifully lived."³

³ Dr. George Schroeder, "Born to serve the Lord," an undated thank you letter written after Helen's death in 2007.

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Above: When George passed away on September 8, 2010, he left their entire estate to FLN in Helen's honour. Pictured here in December 2010, George's sister Mary and her husband Bob (at left) join financial advisor Michael Fournier in presenting George and Helen's bequest to Claude Pratte (right), then FLN's Executive Director.

Whether he was preaching at evangelistic meetings in Nigeria or Florida, going door-to-door in Ukraine, pastoring a small flock in southern Manitoba, or speaking with strangers in a Winnipeg coffee shop, George's passion was for the Lord, and his zeal to evangelize remained strong. At the end of an extraordinary lifetime of "serving the Lord in his generation"⁴, George lay dying in a hospital bed and confessed to his sister that he was no longer reaching lost souls for Christ. "You cannot witness anymore," Mary encouraged him, "but you can still pray." George passed away on September 8, 2010. In Helen's honour, he left their entire estate to Family Life Network so that the Gospel would continue to be preached and people would continue to commit their lives to Christ.

George's family was pleased that the Schroeder Estate was bequeathed to FLN. "We don't know of a better way to impact the kingdom than through FLN. We know the money will be well used."

George and Helen Schroeder: a fascinating couple whose dedication to growing the Kingdom of God will continue long into the future because of the choices they made, not only in life, but also in death.

⁴ The epitaph on George's headstone

*Based on a December, 2010 interview with
Mary and Bob Loewen (George's sister and brother-in-law)*