



Ebook

# The Upside Down Schoolhouse

Sample Edition

TOP Collaborative Press



# Dedicated

To the Glory and Kingdom of God and the  
decades of disciples who have come  
before us and the decades of

**Focused | Global | Servants**

to come. . .



# Who's the Author?

God! He authors each of our stories. He created each of us and our unique creativity. As our theme for this 2021-2022 school year states, we are, Created to Create. So God is always the right answer, and yes He created the creator of this book, but who really authored it?

This book is a publication of Tidings of Peace Collaborative Press, an initiative of Tidings of Peace Christian School in York, PA. We are staff, students, and friends with a passion to see God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We believe the world has been taken by a celebrity culture and unfortunately also the church. We don't wish for any of our productions to add to that culture, but rather to point the glory where it belongs, toward God. For this reason, we've committed to publish individually anonymously and simply as a collaborative group. We have shared the

work of writing, editing, designing, and publishing. We pray your relationship with Jesus will be greatly enhanced because of the journey on which you are about to embark.

May the lamb who was slain receive all the Glory! May this volume be a mighty tool to be used by God to fill the earth with, Focused, Global, Servants!

With Tidings of Peace,

**Austin Shenk**

*Head of School*

# Collaborators

## **Writing** |



John Langel and Austin Shenk

**Editing** | Regina King, Mary Lois  
Shenk

**Design** | Gwen Frey & Austin  
Shenk



# Table of Contents

## Decades of Disciples

### **Part 1 | The Starting of a Church | 1954-84**

Chapter 1 | Sowing in Tears | p. 13

Chapter 2 | Sprouting | p. 25

To Be Continued. . .

Chapter 3 | Growing Pains

### **Part 2 | The Next Level | 80s**

### **Part 3 | Christian Education | 90s**

### **Part 4 | The Increase | 00s**

### **Part 5 | Reaping in Joy | 10s**

### **Part 6 | Till All Know | 20s and beyond**

# Introduction

Have you ever wondered what God's will is for your life? Have you ever asked God to just make it so plain and clear that you couldn't miss it, like write a message in the sky or put a BIG sign on a full billboard, "Hey John, this is what I want you to do!!!"

I was having dinner with very good friends of mine, Lyndon and Sharon Risser and their family on a Sunday afternoon. Lyndon asked me if I had any plans for Tuesday night? I asked what was up? What's going on? He mentioned a banquet - and I immediately interrupted him and asked if there was FREE food? Lyndon said yes - it was the annual Tidings of Peace Christian School of York fundraising event. I shared, I'm all in - because for some of us -it IS all about the food. So the next day I went to work painting a house in Harrisburg, in anticipation of attending the TOP Banquet the following evening. This was Tuesday

October 20, 2020 and the ill effects of COVID-19 still were waging throughout the United States and especially in Pennsylvania. As I walked in the building that night I could sense the tension and uneasiness filling the air. There were people wearing face masks and people NOT wearing face masks. They were anticipating a crowd of around 250 and when it was all said and done there were barely over 100 people. I had the blessing of meeting a delightful older couple by the name of Ed and Martha Zook. Ed is a professional painter and has been painting for over 50 years. We shared different stories and experiences about unique jobs with which God has blessed us. It was a delightful evening as we ate our dinner and watched and listened to the teachers and students performing their songs and skits and memory verses. That was until Mr. Austin Shenk came up front and shared the rest of the story -about the history of Tidings of Peace Christian School and their

renovation of an abandoned school building. Austin shared about the vision of the school AND the need for painters. I looked at Ed Zook and he looked at me and we both started laughing. God sometimes has such a sense of humor. Here I wondered what my life is about and where God wanted me to go and do? I surely got an answer that night that has brought so much joy and love and peace into my life. God has given me friendships and relationships that have encouraged my soul and blessed my heart, which has truly enriched my life. Yes, just look where this friendship with Austin Shenk has taken me. . . to write this book and get a vision for a plan for EVERY city in the world over 20,000 people to have a kingdom school-training & equipping the next generation of leaders in the kingdom of God.

You are about to go on a journey that is an incredible love story. This story started in the heart and mind of our Creator and won't be completed till He

returns. This amazing, awesome, architect gave us the ability to be part of His plan. He created us to create. The only thing that any human being really wants, needs and desires, is to be loved and appreciated. What is the most fulfilling and satisfying experience you have ever had in your life?

We are all flawed human beings in a twisted, wicked, perverted world. We will never get it right, all the time, everyday. Yet when we do get it right, let us take some time to celebrate what God is doing. Yes, we want to be about our Father's business, and don't want to be about the world's busyness. Remember in this go-go, microwave, instant-gratification rat race, even if you win the race, you are still a rat.

It has been said, there is nothing more beautiful in all the world than when the local church gets it right. Yes, when God's people love each other, take care of the widows and orphans, pray for their enemies, have compassion on those who

persecute you, visit the prisoners, feed and clothe the homeless, and actively engage, in authentic life-transforming, disciple making. It is our whole-hearted desire to bring honor and glory in all that we say and do, to Him who is worthy. So it is, with this vision and purpose to encourage and equip, Focused, Global, Servants, that we present to you this story of one small upside down schoolhouse.

# Chapter 1

## Sowing in Tears

Have you ever given any thought to what it would take to start a church? To build something of eternal value that was never there before? Of all the organizations that get started everyday anywhere around the world, the greatest and most impactful is a local church. Just take a few minutes to ponder and think about ALL the different aspects of what is required to start a local church. Yes, it is very similar to starting a new business, some of the processes look and feel the same. There is the endless hoping, and ceaseless dreaming, and never-ending planning. There is the vision-casting, recurring recruitment for any and all positions, and finding the perfect, location, location, location. We are of the mindset that the key element in this whole process is timing. Yes, it is all about the timing. Timing is everything. Today is the day of

salvation (2 Cor. 6:2) and let's be like the men of Issachar who were men who understood the times they lived in. (1 Chron. 12:32)

Sometimes it's an empty building or a vacant lot. And what about parking lots? Usually there is a need for some money, large or small, obtained from a financial institution or the generosity of some volunteer or contributor. There can be endless meetings to share about differences and talk in depth of goals, values, and culture. Now in the business world, 90% of startup businesses fail in the first year and of the 10% that make it past the first year milestone 50% of those close their doors by the end of year 5. Here is part of the story of Tidings of Peace Church and Christian School that has been going for over 68 years.

God in his infinite wisdom, mercy, and grace, has chosen to use people to showcase His honor and glory throughout world history. It is amazing what God uses



to bring about His kingdom and establish His rule and reign in people's lives. In setting the stage for the starting of a brand new work and mission in York, PA, God was alive and active in several people's lives and experiences.

The year was 1949 and the Mennonite church in Manchester, PA, was in the process of reopening their doors for the community. Enter the stage, front and center, our two young couples: Martin and Barbara Hauck and Leroy and Blanche Hertzler. It is incredible how God planted seeds of love and compassion on their journey of faith and obedience that lead them both to York, PA. While Martin was a young boy growing up in the Welsh mountains of Pennsylvania, his father passed away. His mother was overwhelmed with grief and raising a family all by herself. Life was very difficult for the extremely poor Hauck household. Yet there was much help and assistance from their African American neighbors. This

demonstration of selfless love made a very deep impression on young Martin's heart and mind that He never forgot. Later on, Martin often shared that He felt the need and desire to give something back to the African American community. God had put a love and respect in this young boy's life that would later change the course of church history. There was another young couple, Leroy and Blanche Hertzler who got married in 1950. Leroy was 24 years old, Blanche was 21. Leroy was raised in Mechanicsburg, PA and his father Henry was a deacon at Churchtown Mennonite Church. Henry managed a feed and seed store. Leroy always wanted to become a farmer, and got a deferment from the draft. It was this love of farming that took Leroy and Blanche to Mt. Wolf and they became tenant dairy farmers for J.D. Baker farm. It was here that God brought these two young couples together as neighbors in Mt. Wolf and attendees at Manchester Mennonite Church.

In the year 1952, in the section of York City surrounding Frey's Avenue, between King and Princess Streets, many people were in need of hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God saw the need, and implanted a burden for this mostly African American neighborhood in the hearts of Martin and Barbara. This felt to Martin like God's way for him to give back to those that had helped his family. They were ready to say "yes" to God, and began sowing seeds of truth in the fertile soil of the hearts of the people there. As the work was too great for the two of them alone, Martin and Barbara contacted Leroy and Blanche and asked them to help visit among the homes and share the gospel. During 1952 and 1953, the Haucks and Hertzlers spent Saturday afternoons visiting and conducting Bible studies in the private homes along this street.

In 1953, groups from other parts of York and Lancaster Counties were involved with cottage meetings. During the summer,

street meetings were held. At Christmas, the groups went caroling on the Avenue. The seeds being sown began to take root and grow in the lives of various individuals. Two families that were especially responsive were Gilbert and Lilly Givens and Percy and Daisy Banks. Lilly was among the first to be converted to Christ.

On February 22, 1954, the Haucks and the Hertzlers met with Bishop Richard Danner at the Givens' home. They discussed the responsiveness of the neighborhood and decided to begin Sunday School classes in the afternoons at different homes in the area.

At 2:00 p.m. on February 28, 1954, the very first class was held in the Givens' home. Richard Danner taught the adults and Barbara Hauck, known by the children as Mis' Martha, taught the children. Five adults and fifteen children from the neighborhood attended this first meeting. There were a total of twenty-six people present. In addition to these Sunday School

classes, an instruction class was started on Tuesday evenings. The first was held on Tuesday, March 2, 1954.

On May 12, 1954, Martin Hauck and Leroy Hertzler went to the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Mission Board meeting at Salunga. The Mission Board decided to support the work on Frey's Avenue. Martin Hauck was appointed Superintendent of the work and Leroy Hertzler was appointed Secretary-Treasurer. A small building was rented from Hazel Anthony. Time was spent cleaning and repairing the building. Finally, benches were installed. The second floor was divided with a curtain to use for two Sunday School classrooms for the children.

At 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 6, 1954, the first service was held at Princess Street Mennonite Mission. Forty-three people attended this service. On the second Sunday, June 13, 1954, Gilbert and Lilly Givens were received into church fellowship. Arthur Nelson and Isabel Carroll

were baptized and also received as members. The first Sunday evening service was held on June 20, 1954.

The first Summer Bible School was held from June 14-25, 1954. The average attendance was sixty-two. With the attendance being so high, there was a lack of space in the mission. Some classes were taught in private homes on Frey's Avenue.

On October 24, 1954, Sunday School classes began in the morning. This marked the beginning of Sunday morning worship at the Princess Street Mennonite Mission. Both the Hauck and Hertzler families left the Manchester Church to attend the regular services at the York Mission.

Some other activities of these early years included evangelistic tent meetings, street meetings, and cottage meetings. Various people responded to the Gospel message and gave their lives to Christ. There are two stories of very young children

whose lives were dramatically altered because of the Princess Street Mission.

First, there was a little four year old girl by the name of Anna Reyes. Anna lived in the house across the street from Hazel Anthony. In 1954, she began attending worship and Sunday school classes there. She was the only one from her family that was interested. In 1959, her family moved several blocks away and lost contact with the mission.

Years later when Anna's 16 year old son, Bobby, was riding the city bus, he met Jay Bigelow, the driver. Bobby shared with Jay about his mother. Jay gave Bobby his number. Bobby gave Jay's number to his mother. Anna reached out to Jay, and he led her to the Lord! He invited her to his church. When she arrived, Anna learned that, although it was now named Tidings of Peace, it was the same church she had attended 36 years before!

Anna was baptized and joined the church. Health challenges resulted in her

spending most of the rest of her life wheelchair bound, living in a nursing home. A special time of her life was when she and her mother lived in the same nursing home and were able to attend church together. Her mother has now gone on, but Anna faithfully attends when health allows. She prays daily for the salvation of her son.

The other young child was a 6 year old African American boy named Michael Johnson. He saw these people canvassing the neighborhood and sharing about the love of Jesus. As a little boy he wanted to know more about the love of God and His plan for his life. One day while Martin was sharing the love of Jesus with some of the people, he had a very engaging conversation with Micheal's mom about what Princess Street Mission was doing in the neighborhood. Michael's mom asked Martin many questions. At the end of the conversation Michael's mom turned to her six year old son, Michael, and asked him



what he wanted to do. Michael looked up at his mother and said that he would love the opportunity to go to church and learn about Jesus and the love of God. This settled the issue for Michael's mom. She gave her permission for him to get involved with the mission. From that day forward Micheal made the choice of getting involved with this local group from the mission, even without any other older siblings or parent involvement. He was blessed by the positive, healthy, loving relationships he developed with the people at the mission.

Micheal continued to grow in wisdom and favor with God and man. His faith grew throughout his high school education. He then went to York College and graduated in 1968. God took him on lots of interesting adventures, including being a Social Worker at Chester Prison in PA for over thirty years. Today Micheal's faith is real and authentic and continues to grow with his daily devotions.

By 1959, attendance had grown so large that a larger building was needed. In May, the Mission board purchased an old Teamster's Union Building at 318 E. Poplar St. Other churches in York County gave financial aid to pay off the debt and the work was now able to be self-supporting. The building was in run-down condition, and much work needed to be done, but God provided willing helpers and the first service in the new building was held on August 30, 1959. The mission now became known as Tidings of Peace Mennonite Mission.

# Chapter 2

## Sprouting

With the ministry growing, more laborers were needed and more people responded to God's call to service. Among them were Paul and Joanne Landis. They wanted to follow God's call on their lives to get involved in a city mission where evangelism was taken seriously.

God had been laying the burden of discipleship on their hearts since before they were married. Paul volunteered for two years in New York City. He had a heart-felt desire to work with different and diverse cultures. Joanne went to Millersville University to prepare for being a High School Industrial Arts teacher. While dating, Joanne traveled to New York City to visit Paul and together they would dream about God's purpose and vision for their lives.

They got married in June of 1964. Paul completed his volunteer service in

September. God allowed them to visit a lot of Spanish speaking and African American churches in New York City in those first three months of marriage. They then moved to Dover, PA where Joanne got a teaching job at Dover High School.

In their search for such a church, God led them to Tidings of Peace. They both wanted to be involved in a church who ministered to all people groups. They felt that Tidings of Peace was the only Mennonite church that met those requirements in close proximity to Dover. This was truly a blessing to both of them. After becoming actively involved and faithfully teaching Sunday School and Bible School classes, helping with youth activities, and transporting people to and from church, God unveiled an even greater plan for Paul and Joanne. On July 23, 1967, Paul became the first pastor to be ordained for Tidings of Peace.

At the age of twenty-four, it was a bit frightening for Joanne to realize that

she was suddenly a pastor's wife. Her chosen career of teaching high school full-time eventually reduced to a part-time position as she spent more time with God's calling on their lives at Tidings of Peace.

As more people were added to the church, more opportunities for ministry became available. Young children from the city were able to enjoy two weeks of country life with a Christian family through the Fresh Air Program. Older children were able to go to Camp Hebron for a week in the summer. Mending, sewing, cooking, and craft classes were held for the women and girls. There were also winter retreats at Camp Hebron, summer picnics at the Hertzler farm, and children's clubs for various ages. A storytime for the children was held after school on Wednesdays. All of these ministries provided opportunities to sow seeds of truth in the lives of others.

Another couple instrumental in the life of Tidings of Peace during this time was Harold and Bonnie Metzler. He was an

anesthesiologist at York Hospital. Harold shared the lot with Paul Landis, and was a dynamic witness to the people of York.

In the summer of 1970, a Crusade was held on the 300 block of E. Poplar St. Harold participated in this and on Saturday evening he testified openly of his desire to meet his Master, Jesus Christ, and of his assurance that he was ready to go, should it be that very night. The following evening, following a relaxing visit with family in Lancaster County, Harold did indeed meet his Maker. He was killed instantly, along with his four-year-old son, Kent, when they were hit head-on by an oncoming vehicle while crossing the old Columbia bridge. Harold's life and testimony left a profound impact on the lives of many.

Joyce Dombach also made a lasting impression on the lives of people in York. In 1965 she moved onto the 300 block of E. Poplar St. with Grace Keepert Haile. These two young women were the first Tidings of Peace workers to live in the city. Joyce

opened a day-care center which she operated for twelve years. God showed Joyce that His power was able to keep and protect her. She was able to live in peace knowing this was where God had called her to be. Tidings of Peace was Grace's first exposure to city life and people from a different background than her own. It was a good experience for her, challenging in many ways, and an excellent preparation for future mission and church activities which took her half-way around the world. Grace left the mission in 1966, but Joyce remained in the city until 1976.

Jean Sarvis Pichiya, as well as some other young women, also lived with Joyce at various times. She lived in York from 1968-1976 and remembers the unrest and racial tensions that were rampant during the late sixties. She faced many challenges in attempting to bring Christ to needy individuals. Elvin Shertzer also remembers the racial tensions that were rampant in

American society, but his experience was that at Tidings of Peace everyone interacted with ease and comfort as one human race.

In 1976 Paul got a sudden job transfer and they moved to New Jersey. This began a challenging year for the missions committee as they searched for a new pastor and questioned whether or not the church should be closed.



# We want your input

If you know parts of this story that we didn't include, if there are parts that are poorly written or need improvement, we'd love to hear from you.

Please let us know at:

**[TidingsofPeace.org/Press](https://TidingsofPeace.org/Press)**