# The Biography of BRO. ALFRED PETERSON

BY SIS. LUCILLE PETERSON

Originally Published by Faith Publishing House 1989

Digitally Published by
THE GOSPEL TRUTH
www.churchofgodeveninglight.com



Bro. Alfred and Sis. Beulah Peterson

# The Biography of Bro. Alfred Peterson

Alfred Peterson was born in Centerville, Iowa, November 9, 1909. His father was killed in a mining accident when he was two years old, and his mother died a year later. He had a brother and sister, and his grandmother took them to raise, but Alfred was put in an orphanage. He was adopted at the age of six by a railroad man to act as a spy on his wife while he was away for long periods of time. When he came back home he would ask Alfred if anyone was there while he was gone. Alfred would say, "Some men were here."

One time the man's wife took a trip, only intending to be gone a short time, so she locked Alfred in the basement. The bridge was washed out and she was unable to return as she had planned. After three days Alfred found a window where he could see the neighbor in the yard and got her attention. She got the authorities and they got him out.

Finally, his adopted father found his wife was not true to him. He divorced her and Alfred was given to a neighbor to raise. He would stay with one neighbor as long as he was needed and then go on to another. Many times he had no place to sleep except in the barn on the hay where the horses were kept. The dogs would lay at his feet and keep him warm at night. In one place a big dog became his real companion. The neighbor put Alfred to work

plowing or cultivating the corn. Alfred got sleepy one afternoon and swerved a little and plowed up some of the corn. The neighbor began whipping Alfred. Immediately that big dog knocked the farmer down and he began calling for help. Alfred ran and got a man to come to the rescue. He told the farmer, "You should not have whipped him, but let him take a nap."

When Alfred was seventeen he had earned enough money to buy a Model-T Ford. He and another boy decided they wanted to become cowboys and go West. They got as far as Missouri where they saw a sign, "STRAWBERRY PICKERS WANTED." They stopped and got a job. As they picked strawberries, Alfred noticed a girl in a white dress that looked like it was made out of a feed sack with a hole cut out for the neck and two holes cut out for the arms. He began throwing strawberries at her and she would throw rocks back at him. By night Alfred had pretty well stained her dress with strawberries.

The girl was Beulah Gardner. She stood looking at his Model-T Ford, so Alfred asked her if she would like to take a ride in it. That led to their courtship of one week. Then they were married.

They then began going farther West until they landed in San Francisco, California. Alfred didn't like the jobs he got working on the wharf, so it wasn't long until they returned to Iowa where their first son was born.

Later they moved back to Missouri where Alfred got work. It was in those days of depression when a man was fortunate to get any kind of a job and the wages were low. There at Rich Hill, the rest of his children were born. There were seven children altogether, four sons and three daughters. Three of his daughters and one son were very retarded. A rumor got started that the mother and father were raised in an orphanage and they did not

know they were brother and sister until after they were married. That was not so, for they had never met until they met at the strawberry patch. So that was not the cause of their children being retarded.

Beulah was a praying mother. One day she was so hungry for some meat. She prayed and told the Lord about it. Later that day the dog brought a groundhog up to the house and laid it near the porch. She cleaned that groundhog and made some homemade noodles to go with it, thanking the Lord for giving her some meat and answering prayer.

One day Alfred went to the mailbox and his neighbor was there also getting mail. He said, "Mr. Peterson, our church is having a revival meeting tonight and we would like for you to come and bring your family." He said, "Do you love your wife?" Alfred said, "Of course I do." He was just about getting ready to tell the old man off when he said, "You know you are taking your family to hell, not taking them to church, drinking and gambling like you do." Alfred had not been to church for over 20 years.

He went out to milk that evening, and couldn't get a drop of milk. He heard a Voice and went to the barn door, but there was no one there. Everything became dark around him. He fell to the ground and thought he must be having a heart attack or was dying. He said, "Lord, if I'm dying, I'm not ready. Please have mercy on me a sinner." The Lord saved him right there and he got up and milked the cow.

When he returned to the house his wife asked him, "What took you so long to milk?" "I got saved out there in the barn." She was so happy he got saved for she had been praying for him for over 20 years. They all went to church that night and his neighbor no longer knew him as that bad sinner. He never wanted another

cigarette nor any gambling and began to live a holy life. He began providing for his family and began to take an interest in his yard and house.

He had only been earning \$1.50 per hour on his job. One day a man stopped in front of the house and asked him if he could run a caterpillar. Alfred told him he was willing to learn. He told Alfred he would pay him \$5.00 per hour to clear off the bottom land, and he could work as many hours a day as he liked. Alfred began the job and would work as many as seventeen hours a day, sleeping only a few hours. It wasn't long until he was prospering financially.

When he went home from work he would sit down, take his Bible in his hands and say, "O Lord, I wish I could read your Word, but I don't know how to read." Finally, one night as he held the Bible, the Lord said, "Open the Book." He opened it to James 1:5 and the words were short and he could make them out until he came to the word "wisdom." He called his wife to come and help him. Night after night he would keep trying to read and it wasn't long until he could read anywhere in the Bible. He memorized many Scriptures and in Sunday school he could quote several verses by memory. Soon he learned about being baptized, but the church where they were going believed in sprinkling. He told the preacher that the Bible taught immersion. Then he asked about communion and feet washing. The preacher said, "Oh, that was nailed to the cross when Jesus died." Alfred told him it spoke of Timothy's grandmother washing the saints' feet and that was after Christ died. Alfred could not accept what that church taught and soon they expelled him from their church.

Alfred's family started going to another church and he saw they were very worldly and wore jewelry and the women wore

pants. He questioned the preacher and was told, "We can't make everybody do as we want." Alfred wasn't satisfied with their doctrine. He still longed to find the right church.

One day while he was at the laundromat he asked a lady if she knew of any place where they taught the Truth. She told him they were having a camp meeting in the country at Neosho, Missouri. He decided he would take his family and go to the camp meeting.

The Peterson family arrived on the grounds at Monark Springs as the congregation was singing. The singing sounded so heavenly to Alfred that he just stood in the back and listened. The Lord said to Alfred, "These are your brothers and sisters." When the services were over the dinner bell rang and his family went out to the dining hall to eat, but Alfred wanted to talk to some of the ministers. Three ministers came to him: Bro. Stover, Bro. Samons, and Bro. Carver. He told them of the churches and how he could not accept their doctrines. Bro. Stover patted him on the back and said, "Now brother, leave those things behind and keep going on for the Lord." They assured him he was right in not accepting false doctrines. The family was all so glad to be in the Church of God.

When Alfred met the saints at Monark he had a long white beard. He noticed that hardly any of the men had beards. One little boy said, "Daddy, why don't you wear a beard." Another little boy asked his father the same question. Alfred began to wonder why he was wearing his beard anyhow. One night he had a dream that he was near a river and he got in the water to swim across to the other side. He said the water was filled with all kinds of bugs and snakes and crocodiles. They got into his beard and were pulling him down. There was a light shining brightly on the other side of the river and he swam to the shore. He awoke feeling quite exhausted.

He said, "Lord, if I am offending anyone with my beard, I'll get rid of it." He soon shaved his beard.

Beulah Peterson took a lingering illness. The Petersons had been married over 54 years. Alfred could hardly stand to see his wife suffering so badly and thought if he would send her to the hospital maybe they could help her. However, she did not get better. They operated on her and fed her intravenously; she lay in the hospital for one month. She died Easter morning of 1987.

The Peterson home was broken up. Two of the girls were taken by others of the family, and only Johnny and Cecil were left with their father. Alfred thought he couldn't stand to live at the old home place any longer.

Cecil could not stand to stay in the kitchen where he had helped his mother so much. They decided to sell out and move to Shawnee, Oklahoma, to The Golden Rule Home. The house and all their furnishings were sold at an auction. The proceeds were given to The Golden Rule Home with the request that Bro. Charles Smith would care for them the rest of their lives.

Alfred had no desire to live, and he and the two boys took a room at the Home. During the day they spent much time in the living room of the Home and would listen to Lucille Trimble play the piano. Alfred said she was so much like his first wife and even wore her hair in the same style.

One day he came to my room, that of Lucille Trimble's, and talked a long time telling me of his many years of happiness with his wife. He told me how lonely he was now, and before he left he asked me if I had ever thought of marriage again. I assured him that I was not interested in marriage. I had been married twice and had lost both husbands. I wasn't thinking of marriage again. Alfred

started bringing me flowers and a box of chocolates and a beautiful plant. He asked me to marry him. I began to reason with myself. "Why couldn't I marry a man whom I respected and felt love in my heart for? I could take life easy in the Home, or should I when Alfred was a lonely man and his children needed a mother?" I really could not think of any good reason why we shouldn't be married. We decided we would be married September 21, 1987. We were married in Bro. Smith's office with Bro. Richard Scott and Sis. Janyce Porter as witnesses. It was the first wedding ever performed in The Golden Rule Home.

I found Alfred to be a very kind and loving husband. It was so nice to be in a Christian home. Soon we bought a brand new apartment in the row of apartments across the driveway from the Home. We got Sharon to come home, so that made five of us.

We bought a lot of used furniture and appliances to start our housekeeping. The Home folks and residents gave us a big shower. We had a happy Christian home with worship every morning and night. The children were very obedient and were so willing to help in so many ways. Sharon never had to be asked to help with the dishes, and as soon as a meal was finished she would start right in on them. Sharon could clean the refrigerator and stove so neatly and saved me so many steps. She had a habit of talking so much. She would tell the same thing over and over. She imagined she had been a missionary, as that is what she would have liked to have been. Her father couldn't hear all she was saying, but it worried him to hear her talking what he called insane talk. After a year of being with Sharon's and Johnny's behavior, Alfred said, "We are too old to put up with this. It is too hard on us at our ages. We should find a state institution where they can be cared for." I would always talk him out of sending them somewhere else and tell him

that Sharon's good offset the bad, and that I could endure her constant talking.

We were able to make a trip to the Oregon Camp Meeting in 1988 by plane. It was the Peterson's first time to fly and they all enjoyed it so much. They thought Oregon was such a beautiful place. The scenery was so pretty with all those Evergreen forests and the fruit and berries. They got to visit the Hutchinson ranch at Mill City, which was an outstanding old homestead. Kenny had lived there since he was a young boy. There was a lot of timber there. The deer and elk would come right up in their yard, close to the house. The house was located back in the hills where their private one-way road led to it, and Kenny had to maintain that road so it was passable. We would like to have stayed there on the place since the Hutchinson's had moved into the town of Salem. We all enjoyed our stay in Oregon for about 12 days.

In 1989, soon after the first of the year, Alfred took spells of feeling very bad, and by May he was not well much of the time. We had to make our reservations by plane a month in advance to get a good rate, so we bought our tickets a month ahead of time. Bro. Jerry Quave told me he didn't think Alfred was able to make the trip. I told Alfred that Jerry said he didn't think we should keep those reservations, but he said he felt he would be able to go. We made our trip in June as planned and Alfred felt bad most of the way. After we arrived at the camp meeting, Alfred was in bed most of the time. He would have the ministers pray for him and he would get a touch and feel better. Alfred prayed about it much and asked the Lord why he didn't get healed. He said the Lord told him He would be with him all the way, but he might have to suffer until He called him home.

After five days, Alfred begged to come back home. He told me that if I didn't take him soon he would have to be taken in a box. Since our tickets couldn't be used until the 22nd of the month, we would have to get a letter from a doctor stating that he should go home, or we would be charged a penalty. We took him to an emergency hospital where the doctor said he would have to take a thorough examination and also an X-ray. After a few hours of examinations, the doctor sat down and told Alfred, "I guess you know you are a very sick man, for you have lost 60% of your blood and unless you take some blood transfusions, you are not going to make it. You have a growth in your rectum and in your prostate gland and it is causing you to cough." Alfred told him he didn't want any medical aid, so the doctor wrote us a letter stating that we should all go home immediately.

We went back to the campground where Bro. Lawrence Taylor took us to the airport and we got the next plane out for Oklahoma. Alfred endured the trip home but never felt good for days. He desired so much to go to the Monark Springs Camp Meeting as this would be the 20th year since he met the saints. We called for Bro. Ostis Wilson to come and pray for him. He anointed and prayed for him and sang a very encouraging song. He told of how one man was healed, then his little boy came bringing him his boots to put on. The father said, "Lord, I can't disappoint this little fellow." Right away Alfred got up and was healed. He dressed and said he planned to go to Monark the next day. He went to town and got some groceries and filled the car with gas. The next morning about four o'clock we left for Monark. He drove for seven hours before we got there due to getting on the wrong road and going so much farther. We arrived at eleven o'clock and Alfred didn't feel any bad effects. He and the boys had to sleep in a tent with two fans to keep them cool. Sharon and I stayed with the elderly sisters.

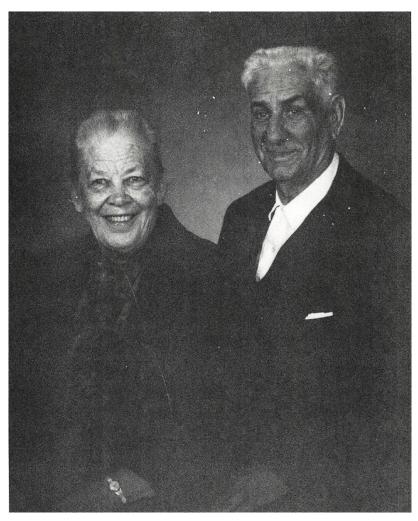
Monday morning Alfred was able to give his testimony of having found the true Church of God after 20 years. It began to get warmer in the tent and by one o'clock Alfred wanted to come home. He got Jim Hightower to bring him in his pickup, and Esther Hightower brought the rest of us home in our station wagon.

Alfred was sick most of the time until August 8 and could not sleep at night and became very weary. He had a stroke that night and we could not handle him as he became unconscious. We moved him into a room at The Golden Rule Home. He lived just one week in a coma condition.

His funeral was held at the Church of God and he was buried at the Bethell cemetery about two miles down the road from where we live.

Since then Sharon and Johnny have been placed in the Choctaw Living Center which is for retarded children. They are with the same type of children and they are very happy there. There are lots of activities going on and they keep occupied. Only Cecil remains at home with me. He works at The Golden Rule Home as a volunteer helper. We miss Alfred, but we feel we could not wish him back.

—Lucille Peterson



Bro. Alfred and Sis. Lucille Peterson