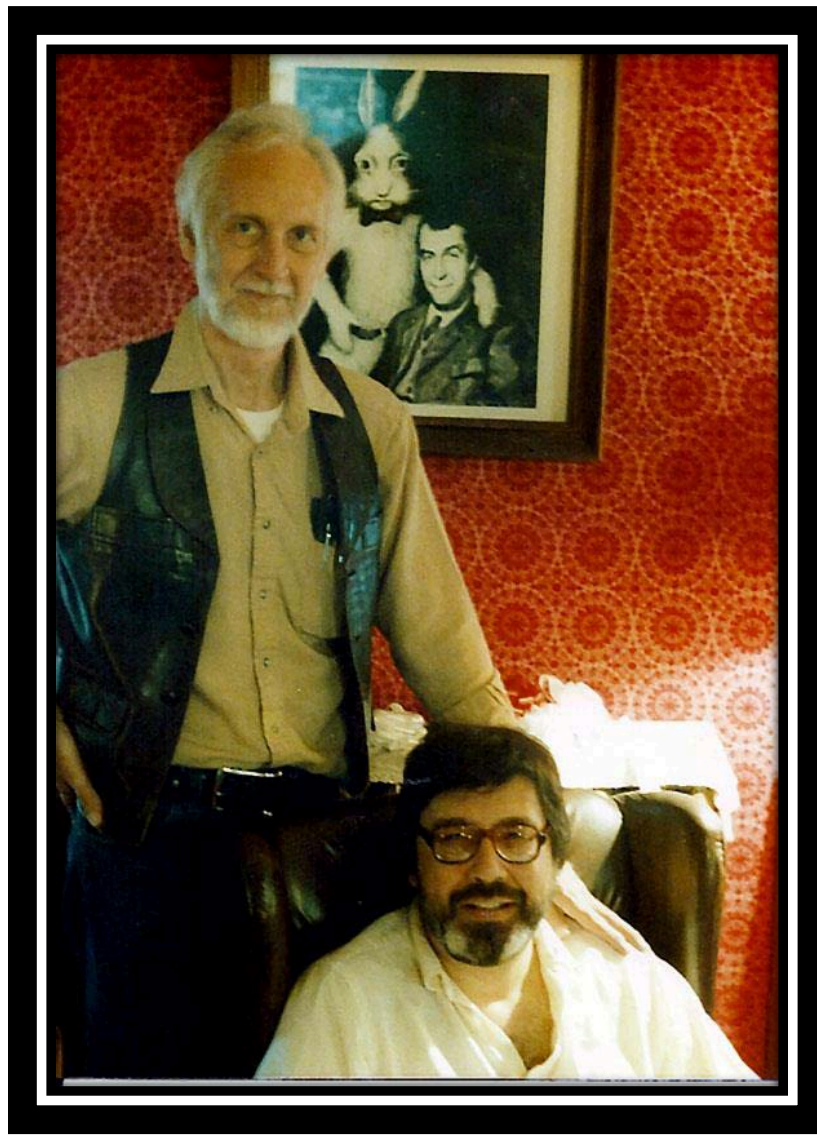


Jerry Lee Reichert

August 14, 1932 to August 6, 2016



God blessed Jerry Lee Reichert.

God blessed Jerry with his beloved wife Faith.

God blessed Jerry with his son Erik and his daughter Tracey.

And for the past 30 years I've been blessed to be Tracey's husband.

Who was Jerry Reichert to me?

Well, I can say with certainty that Jerry was an optimistic man.

Jerry lived his long good life with HOPE, TRUST, and FAITH.

HIS HOPE? That all will be well for those he cared for and loved.

HIS TRUST? That annoying problems can be resolved by applying his God given creative talents, by applying his brain power, and, if necessary, by application of his duct tape.

HIS FAITH? That he is loved by his creator, his redeemer, and his sustainer, as manifested through the presence and the promise of Jesus.

It also helped him that his wife of 50 years was a woman whose heart was filled with hope and trust in Jesus. She personified her name: Faith.

During the past three years Jerry's short-term memory continued to fade away; fade away to where he could not remember what he had experienced just 30 minutes earlier.

But as much as that perplexed him, he continued to remain optimistic that his condition would improve.

He reminded his doctors, his care givers, his son and his daughter, that he was, once upon a time, an All-American high school athlete.

And he reminded us how he was also an athlete who at the young age of 18 suffered a stroke. Two weeks before he was to begin college.

A stroke that at age 18 hospitalized him and required brain surgery.

But months later, that stroke did not prevent him from then becoming a track & field scholarship athlete for the University of Arkansas.

And that stroke did not prevent him from being an Air Force ROTC Cadet.

And did not prevent him from then graduating from the University of Arkansas and then go on to serve his country as a United States Air Force commissioned officer.

What Jerry also never forgot was his home town, away down in Springfield, Missouri, where during the past three years he yearned to return.

Whenever I asked Jerry what made him yearn to return to his home town, he would sigh and say this to me:

"There's twelve family graves down yonder in Springfield that need to be cared for.

I'm going home to see to it that those family graves are properly maintained. So as soon as I can get better, I'm then going home to Springfield."

During his final three years with us and his family of care givers, home was where his nostalgic heart was.

His home was not some "real estate." To Jerry, home was moments of being with his loving family members.

Jerry was parented by his mother, Gertrude, and by Gertrude's father: Jerry's grandfather Noah.

His grandfather Noah owned the huge home in which Jerry was brought up; a home often occupied by more than a dozen of Jerry's beloved relatives, including his uncles, aunts and cousins.

Back then, as far back as 80 years ago, Christian families were often perceived as being led and provided for by "the head of the household," or "the father of the family."

And as Christians they would read in their Bible's Old Testament and New Testament how God is often described as being God the Father.

Fifty years ago, on the night my father died at age 45, I telephoned my Lutheran pastor and asked him a question that went like this:

"Pastor, we both know my father was one whale of a sinner who often quarreled with God. But to me, he was also a kind and gentle man.

So now tonight, on this night when he died trying to protect the lives of others, where is my father now?"

I was seeking my pastor's assurance that my father was indeed in Heaven.

And he astonished me when he said, "There's not a lot I can honestly tell you, Paul. Given who we are, we all see through a glass darkly."

Then, after pausing, he comforted me by saying this:

"But what I CAN tell you is your father is now where he has long yearned to be. He is now forever free from suffering his flesh and bones, and now, thanks to God and Jesus, your father is now at one with his Heavenly Father. Both are finally at one together, forever."

My father often punished me. But he also often made sacrifices for me.

And always AFTER he had punished me for getting into trouble?

He would always forgive me for my tendency to refuse to do his will.

Despite my defiant nature, I, as my father's "number-one son," always yearned to be at one with him.

As when as a child, when we together sang "Yes Jesus Loves Me" in perfect unison, and then as when as a young adult, we together in our church choir sang hymns in perfect harmony.

When Jerry came into my life ten years after my father died, Jerry became my perfect second father.

Jerry's only "will" for me was that I love and cherish his daughter Tracey, she who then became and remains Jerry's great gift to me.

Jerry's flesh and bones now rest here in this casket, in his church, but Jerry's spirit shall remain in my heart as being a most kind caring optimistic generous and gentle man, whose prayers are now fulfilled.

Thanks be to God and the presence and promise of Jesus, Jerry's wish and yearnings to be finally at one with his Heavenly Father, are now FOREVER fulfilled.

Some may ask why I optimistically trust this is true.

Folks? If we cannot trust Jesus' presence and promise, then whom among us can we faithfully trust?

Jerry trusted Jesus.

And now? Jerry now continues to be blessed with God's abundant love; and as we now witness here today, the love of friends and relatives and family.

Amen.