



# SEEDS OF THE KINGDOM

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## Seed Sower Award

*The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field. Matthew 13:24  
And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Hebrews 10:24*

In this series, we intend to highlight the work of those who are currently busy introducing the seeds of righteousness, peace, and joy into this sin-filled earth, with the hopes that at least a few lives will receive the Word and be eternally changed. The purpose in turning the spotlight on these works is not to glorify those men and women who are actively advancing the kingdom of God, but rather to stimulate YOU, the reader, into doing YOUR part in YOUR corner. Neither is the purpose meant to be that of asking the readers to donate financially or personally participate in these projects, although that is certainly an option in some cases. Take these ideas, tweak them to fit your situation, and begin to plant the kingdom of God in your environs. The inclusion of any person or church in these articles is not an endorsement by *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* of every doctrine and practice that the spotlighted individuals or churches may represent in other areas of their life. As well, the spotlighted person/group may not endorse all aspects of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*.

*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Mt. 25:34-40*

Often we find that in the hustle and bustle of our lives, we do not have time for interruptions, especially by people who are hard to relate to. Many of us are uncomfortable around the mentally retarded, or those who are different.

This issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* features a schoolroom designed to bring out these children's full potential, and the women who have dedicated themselves to improving their special needs students' lives. They teach the children in one of Hillside School's several classrooms. All the students in the school can spend recess together, which gives the mainstream students and the special needs children a time to mingle and interact.

This school term, 2010-2011, there are 10 students in the special classroom and three teachers. Since there are several teachers to a relatively small class of students, each child receives the individualized attention that he/she needs. Many special needs students need constant one-on-one tutoring, which mothers who are working with other children and running a household find very difficult to give them. The Hillside teachers have the advantage of a focused classroom dedicated only to educating these children.

We believe the heart of God is close to these special needs people and those who care for them. Families who are blessed with these children often reap great benefits in various areas. A special needs sibling builds patience, longsuffering, and unconditional love in his siblings' lives.

The following are the answers to a questionnaire given to three of the teachers at the Hillside school: Verna Martin, Eva Zimmerman, and Elva Hoover.

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**The Heartbeat of the Remnant:** How many years has it been since this classroom was opened, and what inspired it?

**Verna:** Hillside Special Ed held their first classes in September 1983. It was inspired by a young man named Enos Hoover. He had several preschool special needs children.

During the year of 1978, he found other families who also were interested in having a school for their children.

They gathered information, held meetings, and were encouraged to press on. With much

perseverance, they got started in September 1979 at Farmersville Mennonite, then moved to Union Grove Mennonite, until it found a permanent place at Hillside Mennonite School. With the helping hand of our Almighty God, the school continues.

**THR:** What would you say gave you this heart to serve the special needs children in the community?

**Verna:** Having siblings with hearing impairment and seeing how other people took time for them and the joy it gave my siblings.

**Eva:** I had special needs siblings and I believe God has put a tender spot in my heart for these people. My parents also babysat a lot for special needs children. As a child, I greatly enjoyed interacting with them. I feel that also had a bearing on my love for special needs children.

**Elva:** Teaching is a calling. While teaching, I realized I loved working with the learning difficulties of a challenging child.

**THR:** In what positive way has working with and ministering to these children affected you the most?

**Verna:** To accept the things I can't change.

**Eva:** It has given me confidence to use the gifts God has given to reach out to others.

**Elva:** Getting these children to work at their highest potential brings great satisfaction. Suddenly you don't see them as different, but for who they are and how God created and meant for them to be.

**THR:** What has been an instance of progress that you have seen in an individual student?

**Eva:** Shall I pick one student out of the many who have worked so hard and fought so bravely for every step forward? In this work, great strides cannot have more importance than tiny steps.

**THR:** What are some of the greatest challenges?

**Verna:** The greatest challenge is knowing ... did they understand? Would they if they could? Did they just not feel like it? Or simply didn't feel well?

**Eva:** The greatest challenge for me is to put aside "the cares of this world" and simply enjoy these special ones for who they are instead of trying to force them into molds of my making.

**Elva:** My greatest challenge is presenting the same concept in new and interesting ways until it is mastered. Most books move too fast.

## The Special Teacher

"Now say it over again with me: 'Two plus two is four.'" We'll say it over a thousand times, then say it even more. Day after day I teach this lad, who is so very slow. I teach him how to tie his shoes and where the buttons go. I told, 'You cannot teach this child; it is a waste of time. I'll leave him locked inside, not knowing how to cope? I can I leave him locked inside, though it is hard and slow. I want to help him all I can, though it is hard and slow. 'Fellow, let's get started. We have a ways to go.' The first thing I must do, to teach this little lad, is to come math and reading; he'll learn to write and spell. I'll come to laugh and live in tune, in many things do well. I'll be glad and so will I, for he has learned at last. I'll work and earn a living, though some may call him dumb. I'll try to know, or even care, how far this boy has come. Why do you do it? There's no reward." But see? The little child I look upon, I'm really seeing me. The Master Teacher, looking down in love on me; I'll walk through dark valleys and set my spirit free. I'll take each one of us—the deaf, the lame, the blind; I'll take, patiently, to live more lovingly and kind. I'll be just enough for us our pain and hurt to see, I'll be off over there, just where would our lives be?  
—Author unknown

**THR:** What is a common need that you have seen in special needs children?

**Verna:** Acceptance.

**Eva:** There is no difference from my needs to their needs, from their needs to other children's needs—human needs are the same in everyone.

**Elva:** Everyone needs love, understanding, and to feel needed.

**THR:** How would you encourage others to get involved?

**Elva:** Volunteering or respite care [Babysitting for parents of special needs children] would be a great way to get involved.

**THR:** Many people are not comfortable around special needs children and adults because they are not sure how to respond to them. Do you have any practical tips on how to relate to special needs people?

**Verna:** A simple handshake, a smile. They love when people take time to talk to them. Give a positive comment.

**Elva:** Get down on their level without talking down to them.

**THR:** What are some of the spiritual rewards for service of this kind?

**Eva:** Am I doing some great and noble service in which I'll reap rewards? I'm only doing what God has given me a heart to do. I'm doing what I want to do—there is no sacrifice on my part. These special people who in their own unique ways teach love, forgiveness, acceptance, and courage are reward enough. ~



**It's just a common-looking schoolhouse. But the kingdom of God—love—extends itself within those walls!**