

Beulah Derstine, Wife of Charismatic Preacher Gerald Derstine, Dies

Beulah Derstine, wife of charismatic preacher Gerald Derstine, died over the weekend, daughter Joanne Derstine says.

“SO blessed and privileged to have been given so many years with my precious mom! Thanks for the outpouring of love and support for our family,” Joanne Derstine posted to Facebook.

Gerald Derstine, a former Mennonite pastor, founded his ministry in 1953.

In 1955, after witnessing supernatural events such as exuberance in the Spirit, being slain in the Spirit, speaking in tongues and other charismatic manifestations during a revival in his Strawberry Lake Mennonite Church in Ogema, Derstine was removed from the Mennonite church, *Charisma* magazine previously reported.

“They thought we’d gone crazy, or that it had to be a work of the devil,” Gerald said. “But there were too many confirmations that it was from God.”

He, Beulah and their four children traveled in evangelistic ministry throughout the world. In 1965, Derstine founded Strawberry Lake Christian Retreat in Minnesota where the revival had taken place. In 1968, he established Christian Retreat on 110 acres in Bradenton, Florida, envisioning a Christian community where year-round conferences could be held, according to the Christian Retreat website.

“She ministered side-by-side with Dad as they established mission outposts around the world—in Haiti, Philippines, Israel, Romania and many other nations,” Joanne Derstine said.

“With only an 8th-grade education, she homeschooled us when overseas. And when we traveled, she tucked into her shoe a slip of paper on which was written Psalm 91.

“Always on the front seat when her husband was preaching, she was still taking notes and nodding after hearing his messages hundreds of times,” her daughter continued. “Up until last summer, she was still washing and folding sheets at Strawberry Lake Christian Retreat. No task was beneath her. During their marriage, she did everything for Dad—polished his shoes, ironed his shirts, cooked his meals and didn’t think twice about washing the car and mowing the lawn. In the past year, as Alzheimer’s took its toll, Gerald, the love of her life, did everything for her—learning how to push buttons on the microwave, run the coffee pot, do the laundry, dress his wife and comb her hair. Their roles reversed as he tenderly cared for his bride of nearly 67 years.”

Today, the ministry has a local church, Christian Retreat Family Church pastored by Phil Derstine; a TV program named *Reality TV*; a series of “extreme” evangelistic ministries such as its racetrack ministry—with a car that races for Jesus; the 10-week Institute of Ministry; missions work around the world; and a mobile semitrailer ministry to truck drivers.

“When I think of my mom, the most common picture in my mind is of her with an open Bible in her lap,” Joanne Derstine said. “And if I could pass along anything to my own children and grandchildren, it would be her simple, rock-solid faith that made her prayers—and her example—so powerfully effective. Her legacy will live on for generations.”