

# Florence May Toevs Bartsch

May 14, 1923 - April 1, 2005

Florence May Toevs Bartsch, 81, went to meet her Lord on April 1, 2005 in her residence at Schowalter Villa in Hesston, Kansas. Her family ushered her into God's presence as they were singing hymns of the faith immediately prior to her departure.

Florence May was born on May 14, 1923, in Aberdeen, Idaho, the third daughter of Herman J. Toevs and Suzanne (Susie) I. Neuman Toevs. Life was not easy for Florence. She never knew her father, for he died when she was just eleven months old. As she grew up during the Depression years, Florence learned to work hard. She and her sisters, Elda and Dorothy spent many back-breaking hours hunched over burlap bags picking potatoes.

A very serious-minded girl, Florence had a rich spiritual heritage – her grandfather was a pastor. One night when she was about eleven years old she made a commitment to trust in Jesus Christ as her Savior and Lord. Her life has always been guided by her commitment to follow Jesus and to serve Him. Later on in her life she and her husband John became charter members of Newton Bible Church.

By the early 1940's Elda had married a Newton, Kansas farmer, and Dorothy was attending nurse's training there. Susie and her daughter Florence joined them. Florence and her sisters and mother attended First Mennonite Church in Newton, and it was there that she first met [John Bartsch](#). Since they both worked with the young people, John frequently called committee meetings so he could spend time with Florence. His persistence paid off and they were married on October 15, 1943, seven months after John had begun his military service during World War II. To this union were born six children: John Theodore, Jr., [James Timothy](#), Carol Ann, Gregory Dean, Gary Douglas, and Marilyn Sue on October 8, 1959.

After the war years, the couple made their home in Newton, where John worked as an accountant at Newton Finance and Investment Company, and Florence invested her time and energy into rearing their six children. A consummate homemaker, Florence wielded a profound spiritual impact on her children, playing a significant role in leading each one to follow Jesus Christ even as she did all her life. Not content to influence only her own children to follow God, she frequently served as a spiritual counselor and mentor to younger women and girls with whom God provided contact.

Having spent their early years in Newton, the family subsequently moved to Hutchinson, Kansas, to Monrovia, California, and to Lincoln, Nebraska. After John's retirement from Back to the Bible Broadcast in Lincoln, John and Florence moved to Hickory Homes in Hesston, Kansas in 1991. The three sisters were back together again!

About a year after [John's death](#) Florence moved to Schowalter Villa in 2001, where she has remained ever since. She enjoyed playing games with her sisters and crocheting afghans for her children as health permitted. Continuing to be alert to the spiritual needs of others, she persisted in talking to different residents and staff workers about their relationship with Jesus

Christ. Her whole life has been devoted to prayer, to diligent study of God's Word, and to looking after the spiritual welfare of others.

Florence was preceded in death by her father Herman, her mother Susie, her step-father, Herman Schmidt, and her husband, John. She is survived by her two sisters, Elda Andres and Dorothy Miller, both of Hesston, Kansas; by her four sons – John, Jr. and his wife Sharon of Salem, Oregon; Jim and his wife Esther of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas; Greg and his wife Joy of Lincoln, Nebraska; Gary of Newton, Kansas; and by her two daughters – Carol and her husband Vernon Steiner of Lincoln, Nebraska; and Marilyn and her husband Lawyer Ward of Kansas City, Missouri. She is also survived by thirteen grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. Though she will be sorely missed by family and friends, they look forward one day to a grand reunion with her in the heavenly city of [New Jerusalem](#).

After this memorial service, a brief burial service will be held at Greenwood Cemetery. The family invite you to return here to Newton Bible Church for a light lunch. We thank the ladies of Newton Bible Church for their kind hospitality.

See also the [Obituary of John T. Bartsch, Sr.](#)

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