

# The Couple Who Keeps Giving And Getting

BY LOU ANN GOOD

LEBANON — "If you want to get ahead yourself, help others," Victor Zeigler of Richland declares.

He and his wife, Grace, ought to know: Their conversation bubbles over with stories that prove their philosophy.

"We may not always make money, but we make many friends," Victor stresses.

But anyone who knows the Zeiglers also know they've made some money. In 35 years they've owned 16 farms. They don't accumulate them; instead, they help others get started at farming.

Where did the Zeiglers derive their giving philosophy? Partially from heredity and as the result of a hard time when they lost almost everything. "My dad and grandfather would give the shirt off their back," Victor recalls, but it wasn't until the Zeiglers lost almost everything they had before they became generous givers.

In 1952 Grace and Victor married. They farmed four years with Victor's dad before buying the home farm. They had six good years in farming and then disaster struck. Brucellosis invaded their herd when a cow was purchased from unscrupulous seller. Victor recalls, "I lost 78 cows from the disease. At the same time Grace was hospitalized for a month and almost died of complications from a hysterectomy."

It was a time that Victor vowed to become less concerned about increasing his own wealth and more concerned in helping mis-

sions. "I'll never forget," Victor said, "one night before I left the hospital, Grace took my hand and said, 'Let's pray and live.'"

That night Victor flipped open his Bible to the book of Job. He read that Job's wife advised him to curse God and die after adversity hurt him. In the end Job ended up with much more than he had started with. Victor contrasted his wife's advice to Job's wife. Victor decided things should end up better for them since his wife had such a great attitude.

And things did get better. Much better. Grace recovered after a second operation. And, suprisingly, the Zeiglers found a way to keep on farming. Although Victor was resigned to getting a lunch kettle and finding a job, he went to see his banker.

The banker admonished, "You had six great years in farming and you were going great guns—you can't quit now."

Victor admitted he desired to stay in farming, but the disease had totally wiped out his finances.

The banker admitted he could not loan him 100%, but he challenged Victor: "If you knew you lost your watch in one field, would you go to the opposite field to find it?"

"Of course not," Victor answered.

"Then," the banker said, "Go back into farming—you know how to be successful in that field."

Victor humbled himself, went to his dad and got him to sign a loan for \$18,000; the bank lent him the remaining amount.



The Zeiglers' farm is always open to entertaining others. Over the years, they have provided a home for six foster children, eleven senior citizens, and nine refugees of the fifteen overseas families that they sponsored. Here, Grace and Victor are surrounded with several of their grandchildren.

Things took off after that. By 1975, the Zeiglers owned 600 cows and farmed 1,000 acres.

The Zeiglers started purchasing additional farms to help young couples realize their dream to farm

Their concern for others is not always appreciated by society. Victor recalls when they purchased a farmhouse to be used as a halfway house, the neighborhood balked. One neighbor complained,

carrying for others. Over the years, the Zeiglers have provided a home for six foster children, 11 senior citizens, and nine refugees of the 15 overseas families that they sponsored.

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the land. "It's better to give things away than get them," the couple state.

Besides helping farmers get a head start, the Zeiglers have dedicated themselves not only to financially supporting many non-profit organizations but also giving their time. For many years they were involved in a prison ministry and a halfway house.

"I moved from Philadelphia to get away from that trash and now you're bringing it into my back yard."

Victor answered, "The only dif-

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ference between Philadelphia and here is 60 miles and 20 years. We're giving time and money to help offenders before they become hard-core criminals."

Grace, who was raised in a foster home, knows the importance of

for a debt they had written off years before.

Another time, Victor, who was financing some property for Teen Challenge, encouraged his associates to believe for a specified

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Grace keeps as busy as her husband! She always has many projects which she oversees, but she's never too busy to spend some time with her grandchildren.



Grace and Victor Zeigler discuss their farming history with Lynn, one of their five children, all of whom are now married and have families of their own.

## Homestead Notes