



# Quilts of Influence

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For many, Brother Andrew is a household hero name. God used his adventure-seeking personality to help strengthen the believing church behind the Iron Curtain of communism. He experienced incredible miracles sneaking Bibles and gospel tracts into countries where hundreds of believers had to share a few Bibles. His life left ripples into eternity.

As my son and I have been reading about his life, I have been struck by the colorful and diverse group of people who influenced and shaped Brother Andrew. A stunning quilt of influence shaped this young man who shaped the course of redemptive history in Europe.

The Whetstras. Uncle and Mother Hoppy. Karl de Graff's prayer group. Though their names are not well known, their influence in the kingdom of God through their influence on Brother Andrew is unmistakable.

The Whetstras loved a wild and rebellious young boy who was a constant nuisance through his teenage years into faith and beyond. They gave him their brand new car in a time when a car was a rare and prized possession. Uncle and Mother Hoppy took in Andrew when he was a brand new believer waiting for a spot in a ministry training program. They modeled care for the forgotten and the unseen. They fed his body as well as his soul. Karl de Graff faithfully prayed for Andrew, knowing through the prompting of the Holy Spirit his needs before he himself did. He offered to teach Andrew how to drive long before Andrew knew he would need a car to deliver Bibles or was offered the car from the Whetstras.

While these moments of care, hospitality, and training might seem small and even seemingly insignificant by themselves, God sewed them together into the most beautiful quilt of influence to shape Brother Andrew and the lives of believers struggling under communist regimes.

As believers, we each have our own quilt of influence. We each have a beautiful patchwork of people and moments that God has used to shape and train us into who we are and are still becoming today. Conversations around a table, moments of people modeling the life of faith, offers of housing, food, and encouragement. God uses these small and often largely unconscious moments to do huge things in hearts and minds.

At the same time, God invites us to invite others into our lives' little and big moments. By faithfully loving our neighbors and/or children, inviting people into our hearts, and opening up our bank accounts and homes (when and where appropriate in these strange times), we might be able to become to others what the Whetstras, Uncle and Mother Hoppy, and Karl de Graff were to Brother Andrew.

In the book of 1 Peter, the Apostle Peter uses the word *poikilos*, an interesting word meaning many-colored or variegated. In 1 Peter 1:6, Peter speaks of the many-colored trials that have been experienced through in the diversity of the body of believers. Later in in the same letter, Peter uses the same colorful language to speak about the beautiful diversity of gifts and experiences given to the body of Christ.

*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace (1 Peter 4:10).*

A quilt of all one color and stitch would be terribly boring. Our many-faceted, multi-colored God splinters His beauty into the lives of His children through many-colored threads of many different lives and gifts.

May we trace the varied patterns and pieces of our own quilts of influence and may we eagerly invest in the lives of others, thereby becoming minor or major patches in their quilts of influence.

After all, you never know when the next Brother Andrew or Corrie ten Boom is sitting in your class, eating at your table, or watching your life.