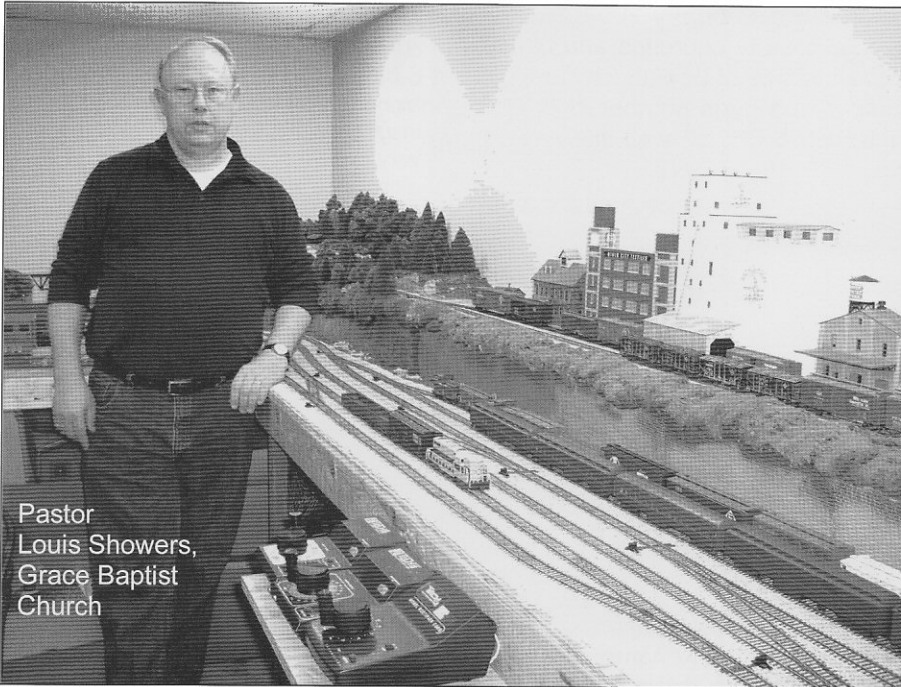


Railroading with the Gospel at a Pastor's Open House

Trains have been part of Pastor Louis Showers' life almost from the beginning. The Erie Railroad and its' trains ran



past his childhood home in New York. He used to love to listen to them as they passed through at night - the sound of the wheels on the tracks and the slight vibration one often felt living so close to the rails. On the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad, Louis' first grade class took a 15-mile trip from Kennedy to Jamestown, NY, to experience passenger travel before it totally died out. In third grade his father took a Church further East in New York, and the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad was still present. It was a frustration to his parents at times to have to wait for the trains to pass, but Louis enjoyed every passing (pun intended) minute of them.

Louis' interest in trains was in his genes as his great grandfather, the first "Louis Showers", worked as a fireman and an engineer on the steam locomotives for the old BR&P. His father would go down

to the tracks in the afternoon and wait for his grandfather to come up the line. He would blow the whistle as he passed by. His grandfather's RR watch was given to his father, who recently passed it into Louis' happy possession.

One of the first toys Louis remembers receiving at Christmas was a toy train that you pushed along the floor. His favorite toy during Kindergarten recess was a wooden train set. That same year he received an HO train set for Christmas, however it was too fragile for such young hands. Louis was given a used Marx O Gauge Train, and then graduated to Lionel the Christmas he was in 6th Grade. From 7th Grade on he had a subscription to a model train magazine and regularly checked out model railroad books from the Library dreaming of the day when he would have the room and the money to build his dream layout.

Trains were put on hold until college and seminary were completed. While waiting upon the Lord to lead him to his first Church, Louis decided to change to HO Scale model trains. Tiring of the "toy-ish" look of the O Gauge trains and with a limited budget, Louis could buy much more in HO. In his first three pastorates he had basements of various sizes in which to put up layouts, but never much in the line of scenery. These were times of learning how to improve cars, lay and ballast track, and build realistic buildings. Louis' last church gave him a basement room so small that he converted for a time to N scale. However, he held on to building his dream HO layout.

Many months before moving to Indiana, God suddenly impressed upon Louis, "wouldn't you like a nice sized basement to put up your trains?" This was not something that was rooted solely in a personal desire, but he sensed that it was going to be part of God's future program for his life. He had no clue as to when and how God was going to do this until He was called to pastor in Southwest Indiana. This involved the first-time purchase of a home, and Pastor & Mrs. Showers decided they had to have a basement. Yes, it would be a great place for a train layout, but most importantly, it is the best place to go in the event of a tornado. They were almost to the point of giving up looking when the realtor suggested one additional house. Louis had serious questions about its' size, but as they entered the house they discovered a large add-on living room. The basement under this living room was the room that God had told Louis about a year and a half earlier. With some work it would be the perfect room for that "dream" layout! The rest of the house would meet their needs and the price was right. Though it took two years to convert the basement into a hobby room, Louis now has a HO layout that measures 18' long and 12' wide, with a double main line, and one secondary line making up about 200' of track. Not surprisingly, the railroad he models is the Erie Lackawanna in the time period between 1960-1976.