



Church of God Historian

Historical Society of the Church of God

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INTO ALL THE WORLD

A Century of Church of God Missions



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This issue of *The Historian* focuses on the Church of God's first efforts in cross cultural ministry. We cannot, of course, tell every story of every country and culture. So within the limitations of available space, here are a few stories about our first efforts in taking the Gospel outside of our own community.

To begin, here is a Time Line from *Into All The World*, by Lester A. Crose, Cheryl Johnson Barton, and Donald D. Johnson:

- 1891 Mexico
- 1892 England
- 1893 Ireland, Scotland, Wales
- 1895 Scandinavia
- 1896 India
- 1901 Cuba, Germany
- 1902 Russia
- 1905 Bermuda
- 1906 Trinidad
- 1907 Jamaica, Hungary, Egypt, Switzerland
- 1908 Japan
- 1909 Bahamas, China
- 1910 Panama
- 1912 Kenya, Barbados, Lebanon
- 1914 Denmark
- 1915 British Guiana
- 1917 Africa, Australia
- 1918 East Bengal (Bangladesh)
- 1920 Tobago
- 1923 Brazil
- 1927 Argentina
- 1930 Holland
- 1932 Cayman Islands, St. Kitts
- 1933 Philippines, Grenada
- 1934 Antigua
- 1936 Korea
- 1937 Curacao
- 1939 Costa Rica
- 1946 Greece
- 1954 Guatemala
- 1955 Guam
- 1957 Nevis
- 1958 Peru
- 1959 Tanzania
- 1960 San Blas Islands
- 1966 Nicaragua, Puerto Rico
- 1968 Haiti
- 1969 Hong Kong
- 1970 Uruguay
- 1972 Honduras, El Salvador
- 1974 Paraguay, Bolivia
- 1975 Thailand
- 1976 Taiwan
- 1979 Venezuela, Colombia, Singapore
- 1982 Spain
- 1983 Dominican Republic, Nepal
- 1984 Zaire
- 1985 Rwanda
- 1986 Zambia, Ecuador
- 1992 Chile, Zimbabwe
- 1994 Mozambique
- 1995 Malawi, New Zealand
- 1997 Cote d'Ivoire
- 1998 Angola, Cambodia
- 2003 Nicaragua

Church of God Historian

**Newsletter of the Historical
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The Historical Society of the Church of God (Anderson) exists to encourage the collection and preservation of artifacts and documents relating to the history of the Church of God; to encourage historical research and the writing of Church of God history; and to provide a forum for like-minded people interested in participating in and furthering the study of Church of God history.

Membership is open to all who are interested in what the Society desires to accomplish. Membership dues are \$20 per year (\$15 for students.)

Checks should be made out to Historical Society of the Church of God and sent to Box 702, Anderson IN 46015.

President: Dr. Gary Agee
Vice President: Dale Stultz
Sec'y/Treasurer: Sadie Evans
Interim Editor: John Aukerman

Children of Promise 25th Anniversary

By Jean Johnson

In June 2017, Children of Promise will celebrate 25 years of ministry for children overseas. Children of Promise's purpose is unique within the Church of God. Children are the future leaders of the Church and the communities of the world. Many of them are being denied a promising future because of poverty, lack of education, and disease. Children of Promise is committed to providing assistance in these areas, to introducing each child to Christ, and to providing spiritual nurture.



Very early in my childhood, the National and Foreign Women's Missionary Society of the Church of God provided me the opportunity to sponsor a girl at the Shelter Children's Home in India. The Missionary Board sent Sidney and me as missionaries to India in 1955. The first person I wanted to see was the girl I had helped to support. Eventually, Sidney and I took her to nurses training in a Mission Hospital. That was an important day in my life. We served at the Shelter and in India from 1955 until 1973.

After serving and living in Thailand from 1973-87, Sidney served as Asia Administrator until January 1992. On our last administrative visit to Asia, we visited the church in Singapore. During the farewell service, we stood in a circle as Ng prayed for us, "O God give Sidney and Jean an even wider ministry than they have ever had." I questioned her if she realized what she had prayed. She said yes and that she believed that God wasn't through with us yet in His service.

During that last administrative visit, we asked the leaders of the church in Asia, "How can we help you?" Their immediate response was, "Help our children." We had discussed with each other what God would have us do after retirement. I had often shared with Sidney that I felt the burden and vision from God to begin a children's sponsorship ministry for the Church

sponsorship ministry for the Church of God. We also knew that for a ministry of this nature to be effective, it would be necessary to have the approval of the church.

That was when Sidney approached Doris Dale, CEO for Women of the Church of God, about our dream. She was receptive to the idea but pointed out that WCG was not directly involved in overseas ministries. Therefore, the Missionary Board and WCG should jointly sponsor it. Norm Patton, President of the Missionary Board, agreed. After working long hours with a committee for several months, Children of Promise was launched at Anderson Camp Meeting in June 1992.

From a humble beginning with four existing children's programs with 174 children, 25 years later Children of Promise serves some 4,500 children in 28 countries. For more information, visit the Children of Promise website, <http://www.echildrenofpromise.org/>.

Getting the Word Out

On Monday, February 27, Society vice president Dale Stultz addressed some 50 members of the Madison County (Indiana) Historical Society. He talked about the early days of the Church of God in Anderson and showed our 2016 movie, "Roots."



Dale had ten DVD copies of the movie with him, along with five copies of each of our books, *Old Main* and *The Gospel Trumpet Years*. He made these books and DVDs available for a donation of any amount. All ten books and all ten DVDs were taken, and attendees donated over \$320 to the Society!

Dale is available to speak at other gatherings. He will also send you either book and/or the "Roots" movie for a donation to the Society. Call him at 765-621-3161.

**Membership Dues are
payable in July each year.**

Paraguay

By Norberto Kurrle, Excerpted from his 2002 Master's Thesis

Besides the Catholic Church, which for centuries had dominated religious life in South America, there were few other religious groups active in Paraguay. In good biblical and missionary language, "the field was ripe for harvest and the workers were few." This was the setting and social situation in which the Church of God began in Paraguay.

The widespread mentality of the German immigrants was one of hard work and continuous betterment of lifestyle. The work ethic was very similar to that of their ancestors in Germany who after two World Wars sought to rapidly recover from destruction and poverty.

In 1974 the Church in Argentina decided to purchase a piece of property in Paraguay and seriously began to plan for some tangible work there. In July 1975 Waldemar and Emmi Oberman, pastors in Jardin America, Argentina were designated to establish the first Church of God in Paraguay. A committee was formed composed of Arturo Schulz, Waldemar Oberman and Martin Kurrle who would be responsible for finding a lot on which to build the first chapel. An ample lot located on an elevation was found two blocks from the main town artery. A plot of 150 by 300 feet was bought in the region of Obligado, a thriving rural town, 30 miles from Encarnacion, a port city on the banks of the Parana River, just across from Posadas, Argentina. The Obermans were chosen to begin this work, and they moved into a rented house in July 1975, and the next month the first official service took place in the home of Luis and Lydia Franz.

In November 1975, Martin Kurrle

(pastor of the Church of God in Alem, Misiones, Argentina) and Huldreich Markwart (also from the Alem congregation) were chosen to organize a revival service to give the work in Paraguay a "jump start." The revival took place for five consecutive nights in the "Armonia" public hall in Obligado.

The Waldemars began to disciple and mentor those who became interested in the gospel and at the same time oversaw the construction of an all purpose building that would serve as a meeting place and a parsonage. Although the future was promising, the Obermans, due to illness and some relational difficulties, decided to return to Argentina toward the end of 1976.

The little church was moving forward, but now it faced its first leadership crisis. With the Obermans' return, a new leader from the Argentinian church was sought. The national ministerial assembly in Argentina began asking their fifteen pastors if there was someone sensing God's call to fill the void in Paraguay.



Martin and Tabitha Kurrle had been pastors in Alem, the headquarters of the Church of God in Argentina, for over six years and felt that a change for their ministry would be good.

After praying and reasoning over the matter, the Kurrles accepted the call to go to Obligado, Paraguay with their sons Norberto (age 5) and Marcos (age 3). On March 11, 1977, three pickup trucks took the Kurrle family to Obligado.

Argentina

By Norberto Kurrle, excerpted from his 2002 Master's Thesis

The Church of God in Argentina, like the Church of God in Brazil, was planted within the decade of the 1920s. The establishment was among German immigrants who came to farm the land and escape the terrors of the great war. For fifty years Germans comprised the majority of the Church of God in Argentina, but as the church slowly grew, the people began to look about them to minister to the Argentinians, and not only focus on their own kind.

A vital part of their ministry was visitation; they would go from house to house, village to village to minister to people in their homes. It was not uncommon to travel 30 miles on a horse or by buggy to visit one family. For some families, living far into the woods and isolated from the urban centers, these visits meant the only religious service they would have in a year.

Annual Meeting

The Third Annual Retreat of the Historical Society of the Church of God will be June 10-12, 2017 at Timber Rick Woods in Anderson.

Our Vice President, Dale Stultz, owns Timber Rick and is pleased to offer the facility for our use free of charge.

If you want to camp, please call Dale ahead of time at 765-621-3161 and let him know. You may arrive any time on Friday (June 9) or Saturday (June 10).

Festivities will begin on Saturday at 5:30 p.m. with a Campfire, Wiener Roast, and Heritage Hymn Sing. Our speaker on Sunday will be Dr. Merle Strege, former Historian of the Church of God.

Brazil

By Norberto Kurrle, excerpted from his 2002 Master's Thesis

During the turbulent years of World War I and the continuous lack of stability in Germany and Western Russia, throngs of people began to immigrate to South America, settling in Southern Brazil and Northern Argentina.



Adolph Weidman and his family were lured by the possibility of going to Brazil to farm the land and find a place where freedom and stability reigned. After a meeting to discuss the prospective of this new venture, eighteen families decided to move to Brazil. The departure was set for November 11, 1922 on the ship named "Crefeld."

After three weeks at sea the 18 families (92 people altogether) arrived in Rio de Janeiro and continued their trip through Santos, then on land through various towns and finally arrived in Hansa Armonia on Dec 18, 1922. Weidman remembers the first night upon arrival. "We resigned to rest on a cold hard floor, only thinking that we had nothing to

offer our children at Christmas. Some of our wives were crying when the realization of the new situation registered. This would be a Christmas without toys, a Christmas tree, or a special meal. It is hard to explain the thoughts that crossed our minds and hearts; only God knows." That Sunday they went to a local church where the message was from I Peter 5:7. Weidman remembers how they were encouraged, released of their burden for the future, and strengthened during that humble first service.

Most of the 18 families had head and embraced the teaching of the Church of God back in German-Russia. During Easter of 1923 the settlers met for the first official Church of God service. Meetings were held in various homes until December 14th of 1924, when the first chapel was inaugurated. These families became the pioneers of the Church of God movement in South America, a land that they embraced as their own. Most of them would remain in their adopted land for the rest of their lives.

Japan

By Bernard S. Barton

It is the custom of Japanese returning from a trip to bring *omiyage* (souvenirs) to family and friends back home. Lots of effort and money are spent on this important task. But no one could have imagined the lasting and ever expanding impact of the *omiyage*. Rev. Ukichi Yajima brought back when he returned to Japan in 1908 from a year spent in America.



Having resigned his pastorate at the Japanese Presbyterian Church in Hilo, Hawaii in 1907, Yajima

went to California to seek medical treatment for a hearing problem. Then, while returning late one night on the last train from Oakland to San Francisco, Yajima picked up a discarded newspaper. The words Yajima read there resounded with the truth he himself believed about the nature of God's church. That paper was The Gospel Trumpet.

Rev. Yajima wrote to the editorial offices of the paper and was put in touch with churches in the area, where he found out more about this young, dynamic reformation movement. At this time he met J.D. Hatch who was later to be one of the first American missionaries sent to Japan by the Church of God.

In January 1908 he traveled to Indiana to visit the Trumpet offices and also spent time at the New York Mission Home where he learned more of the truth concerning God's church and also experienced what he described as "real repentance and salvation." He felt God's call to bring this message to the Japanese, so on March 10, 1908 he set out from San Francisco on his journey to return home with the best *omiyage* imaginable.

On April 5th, just one week after landing in Yokohama, he held his first gathering where he preached about "Justification by Faith." During the months of April and May he traveled to Tokyo where he met with relatives and friends, holding small meetings while continuing to expound the truth of justification by faith and speaking of his concerns about the state of God's church. In June, he established his new home at 404 Oimachi in Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo, declaring the beginning of the Church of God Reformation Movement in Japan. The work of the movement had begun at the hands of a native son in yet another new land across the ocean, even before the formation of the church's Missionary Committee in 1909.

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Two months later, Yajima published the first edition of *The Pure Gospel* (*Jun Fukuin*). The first run was only three thousand copies but it was the beginning of Yajima's efforts to spread even further the reformation message through the printed word.

Along with copies Yajima sent back to the U.S. to A.L. Byers, E.E. Byrum, John Crose and William A. Hunnex (soon to be sent as the first Church of God missionary to China), he sent a letter stating, "We are such unworthy vessels to carry out this great task of making known the true Gospel, and yet we believe this is God's will for us." It would still be almost a year before the first Church of God missionaries from the United States arrived.

Germany

By Kurt Pudel, excerpted from his book *William Ebel*

Wilhelm Christian Ebel was born on February 12, 1863, in Hanan, Germany. As a young man he loved adventure and travel. At the age of 21, he traveled to South America, a year later to England, and then to the United States where he settled in California in 1885. On March 20, 1892, Ebel accepted the Lord as his personal Savior.



After a period of time he traveled to Los Angeles, and on that very day met D. S. Warner, who was evangelizing in the area, and heard him preach the message of the Church of God. He remarked, "I was one in spirit with the brother...never before had I experienced such a thing, like two drops of water becoming one."

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For some time the Trumpet Company had been seeking a German-speaking, consecrated Christian to come and set type for the production of Christian literature in the German language. In early February 1893, Ebel accepted the call to join the Trumpet Company.

After spending four days learning to set English type, Ebel began setting German type, and within days German tracts were being printed and mailed. At the time the Trumpet family consisted of approximately 20 persons who gave freely of their time and talents; they received no wages for their work.

On January 1, 1895, the *Evangeliums Posaune*, the long awaited German version of the *Gospel Trumpet*, made its debut with a printing of 8,000 copies. It was not simply a translation of the Trumpet, but rather a unique periodical in and of itself. Fred Hahn of Milwaukee, Wisconsin was the first editor of *Evangeliums Posaune*.

On the first page of the first issue of EP was a 13-stanza poem, "The Trumpet's First Sounds," written by Ebel. His first German testimony appeared in the March issue.

For a number of years calls had come from Europe, specifically Germany, requesting pastors. Undoubtedly, the EP as well as other German literature printed and distributed by the Trumpet greatly impacted the people of Germany and Eastern Europe and placed in them the desire to hear more of the

Gospel.

God led Georg Vielguth to answer the call. After 13 days spent sailing across the ocean, Vielguth arrived in Hamburg, Germany on February 21, 1901, to begin his work.

It was a major undertaking for the fledgling German work in the USA to reach out to its former homeland by sending workers to share the good news of the gospel in the message of the Church of God.

In the fall, Vielguth wrote about his work in Germany. The Church of God literature, he reported, had been invaluable in helping him spread the message of the gospel truths.

In Hamburg, a small congregation of about 20 people had formed. His work in Westphalia resulted in spiritual growth in several villages and towns, and he requested that others, grounded in the truth, come to Europe to work for the Lord.



Eastern Europe

By Walter Froese

As early as 1896 a letter to *Evangeliums Posaune* from Riga, Russia, requested information about the Church of God. In 1901 Georg Vielguth, a recent immigrant from Germany to the United States and a new convert, made a trip to Europe and helped organize a Church of God congregation in Riga.

In 1903 Karl and Augusta Arbeiter and in 1907 Otto and Gertrude Doebert went to Europe and long-term missionary-evangelists. In 1909, William Ebel and his wife Anna followed and settled in Riga to pastor and help publish a Latvian and Russian "Gospel Trumpet."

China

By Lester A. Crose, excerpted
from his 1981 book
Passport for a Reformation

An interesting story surrounds the life of a young man named William J. Hunnex, a Britisher who lived in London in the year 1880. He attended a missionary rally in Albert Hall where he heard a young woman speak who had been serving in China as a missionary with the China Inland Mission.

They fell in love, were married, and both went out to China with this same Board, which had been founded by James Hudson Taylor in 1866. They had two sons, William A. and Charles E., who grew up in China. In 1900 the Boxer Rebellion broke out against all foreigners. Many hundreds of missionaries were killed, but the Hunnexes were spared.

During 1904 the parents sent William and Charles to America for higher education. Soon after their arrival both came into contact with the [Church of God] movement, but in different places.

By 1905 both young men were at Moundsville working in the Gospel Trumpet office, and they generated considerable enthusiasm regarding missionary work in China. Both of them wanted to be missionaries to China.

Having grown up there, they knew the language and the culture. William A. Hunnex married Gloria Hale, sister-in-law of Mabel Hale, from Kansas, and they sailed for China in 1909 to begin a work in Chinkiang, some 150 miles up the Yangtze River from Shanghai. Charles waited another year before he was ready to go.

Individual saints in America had been giving to a "China Fund"

sponsored by the *Gospel Trumpet*. A missionary home was erected on one acre of land purchased just outside Chinkiang. It provided living quarters for missionaries, a chapel, classrooms, and later a small orphanage.

The main street in Chinkiang soon had a rented hall where services were conducted. Charles Hunnex was appointed by the Missionary Board in 1910 as a missionary to China, but was advised by the Board to wait until some rioting calmed down before departing from America.

Pina Waters was also sent to do general missionary work with the Hunnexes. Charles soon opened a new work in Yangchow from which emerged Chinese leadership. In 1912 a revolution changed the monarch into a republic, which gave hope for more freedom. Tracts and a paper in Chinese gave evidence of a strong literature emphasis.

Hong Kong

By Lester A. Crose, excerpted
from his 1981 book
Passport for a Reformation

Even though originally the Missionary Board did not desire to add to the scores of evangelical missions working among the Chinese, Ethel Willard was sent in 1969 as a missionary to serve the Junk Bay Medical Relief Council as a private secretary while studying the Chinese language.

After her first term she became secretary-treasurer and later business manager. She cast a spiritual influence through several opportunities in that British colony. In 1971 Dr. Peter K. and Lovena Jenkins officially came under appointment of the Missionary Board.

President's Pen

By Gary Agee

Church of God Reformation Movement pioneers fueled in part by a conviction that Christ would soon return carried the message of the gospel with a sense of urgency. In the first decades of the life of Movement leaders crossed demographic boundaries and national borders in order to preach a radical message inviting their hearers to experience the fullness of God. The historical record shows that these early "flying messengers" promoting holiness and unity gained a ready hearing among European and Asian Immigrants, African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans.

Some heard the message in churches and camp meetings while others were enlightened through reading the Gospel Trumpet. It would be historically inaccurate, however, to suggest that the Reformation message of holiness and unity was completely novel to these diverse groups. Already some individuals within these communities viewed themselves as allies of the basic teaching of early Church of God evangelists. In fact the experience of segregation suffered by these new and diverse adherents to the Reformation would subsequently be a catalyst for the fuller development of these doctrinal charisms.

The Reformation Movement was born in what is today the Midwestern United States. For this reason large numbers of persons of color would not have been encountered before the "flying messengers" ventured into the South, the West, or into the large urban centers of the North. Over time, however, the Evening Light Saints would engage diverse people groups who did not always share the same cultural experiences and assumptions as the early evangelists. For a Movement trumpeting the evils of sectarianism these cross cultural encounters brought to the surface apparent inconsistencies in the Movement's preaching

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on unity and holiness. In part because Church of God leaders in the main showed an unwillingness to radically oppose society's racial and ethnic segregation.

Native Americans

One need only to look to D.S. Warner's journal to find the Movement founder's earliest encounter with Native Americans. In an entry dated February 12, 1875, he and Sarah Keller Warner his wife visited a Omaha tribal camp on the Blue River in the Nebraska Territory. But Warner did not attempt to evangelize the group, perhaps because only a few of them could converse in English. This first encounter, however, reveals the heart of Warner. Though he did in his journal communicate a paternalism and ethnocentrism so often present in period missional accounts he did nonetheless express a deep concern for the individuals he met. He hoped that the "kind providence of God" would over time "elevate this poor distressed people to a higher plane of intellectual, moral and religious enjoyment." He also noted the manner in which the women were treated. In his mind they were little more than servants to the men. Such a custom was "wrong" and "cruel" he wrote.

Benjamin Elliott

J.W. Byers began ministering to Spanish speakers in the last decades of the nineteenth century. His center of ministry was California. Others like the dedicated Benjamin Elliott soon took up the work. Elliott relates his missionary activities in the Baja California region of Mexico in his book "Experiences in the Gospel Work in Lower California, Mexico" in 1906. This same book reveals the best and at times the least appealing impulses of these early pioneer evangelists. For example, Elliott showed real dedication and courage as he trav-

elled from village to village sharing the Reformation message. At times he was the object of ridicule and threat; still he trusted God and pressed forward. On the other hand, traces of the paternalism of missionaries surface in this account. In one case he met a young woman who he imagined might be a very suitable partner in the gospel ministry. As he sought the Lord he seems to have received the notion that God intended to keep the nations from intermarrying.

Though typical in the era, such thinking today seems contrary to a more developed view of Unity and Holiness.

Encountering African Americans

Much of the historiography of the Movement's encounter between early Reformation pioneers and African Americans who would join the campaign begins with the remarkable ministry of Jane Williams who carried out her evangelistic work near Charleston, South Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia. But little is made of Warner's encounters with African Americans recorded in his journal decades earlier.

In June 1873, Warner began a meeting at Upper Sandusky, Ohio. Here members of his second wife's family were organized into a new fellowship, the Elderships of the Churches of God in North America meeting at this same locale. Among the saints who were received into the fellowship were two African American sisters whose last name was Stanley. One of these women Warner baptized on June 21. The fact that these two saints were considered fellow members of this newly established church makes the congregation from its inception an integrated fellowship. Subsequently, opposition arose to the establishment of this church.

African Americans pushed Movement leaders to reconsider the message of holiness and unity with respect Jim Crow America. For example in a query published in the Gospel Trumpet in October, 5, 1893, Rev. Jane Williams one of the first African Americans to associate with the Movement questioned the legitimacy of using the term "colored" as a descriptor to identify the saints. The question suggests that African Americans were hearing the holiness and unity message somewhat differently than white church pioneers. In other words, unity lived in holiness was not merely achieved by addressing church unity or sectism dividing denominations. Rather, these pioneers believed the Reformation message could also address the injustice of racial prejudice. Interestingly, over time it seems that unity as promoted by the Church of God took on this more robust meaning.

The Concilio

The story of how the Church of God Reformation took root among Latinos in this county is detailed in the late Rev. Earnest R. Lopez's book "Celebrate the Journey: Hispanics in the Church of God." According to Lopez the work that would in 1954 result in the first meeting of the Church of God Concilio was birthed in San Antonio, Texas. In 1906 the German speaking Robert L. Ball on his way to the train station lost his bearings. By chance he passed the home of Mariano Trafolla, who sat reading his Bible on the front porch. Trafolla who knew a little German was able to direct Ball to the train station. But instead of Ball heading immediately heading off to catch his train he and Trafolla spent the better part of an afternoon together discussing the things of God. In the end Brother Trafolla directed Ball to the train station. Ball gave his new acquaintance a copy of the Gospel Trumpet. That chance meeting in San Antonio proved providential. Trafolla would establish the first Hispanic Church of God in the country fifteen years after meeting Ball. Trafolla also founded a church in Somerset, Texas. He would eventually establish a campground just south of San Antonio. Trafolla and his family have proved effective leaders in the spread of the message of unity and holiness in the Latino community in recent years.

Third Annual Retreat of the Historical Society of the Church of God

June 10-12, 2017

Timber Rick Woods, Anderson, Indiana

Saturday, June 10

Arrive any time Friday or Saturday

4:30 Registration and Check In

5:30 Campfire, Wiener Roast, Heritage Hymn Sing

Sunday, June 11

Breakfast, Worship in a Local Church, and Lunch on your own

2:00 Registration

2:45 Dr. Merle Strege

3:45 Break

4:00 Annual Business Meeting of the Historical Society

6:00 Banquet

7:15 Dr. Merle Strege on his book *The Desk as Altar*

8:30 Dismiss

Monday, June 12

Return Home

There is no charge for attending and participating in this meeting of the Historical Society. The facility is being made available for the Society's use, free of charge. However, if you plan to share in either of the two meals (Saturday Wiener Roast and/or Sunday Banquet) there is a suggested donation to cover the cost of the food. Please use the enclosed registration form: mail it in, with your donation, so that it reaches us by June 3.