



Church of God Historian

Historical Society of the Church of God

Volume 13 Number 1 Fall 2012



Reverend Melissa Berry (with her leader dog) dedicates the grave site of Mary Cole at Anderson Memorial Park Cemetery on June 23, 2012, the date of the Annual Meeting of the Historical Society of the Church of God (Anderson). Memorial Park graciously provided the tent for the occasion, which was very hot and dry. *For more photos of the Bus Tour, see pages 4-5.*

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*Newsletter of the Historical
Society of the Church of God
(Anderson)*

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Church of God Historian is managed by the Executive Committee of the Society. Merle D. Strege, President, Dale E. Stultz, Vice-President, Sadie B. Evans, Secretary-Treasurer, D.E. Welch, Publisher and Managing Editor.

The Historical Society

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 vitally interested in what the Society desires to accomplish. Membership dues are \$15 per year (\$10 for students.) Checks should be made out to *Historical Society of the Church of God* and sent to Box 702, Anderson IN 46015.

Website:

www.choghistoricalsociety.org

FOR THE RECORD BOOK

The excitement of holding a record that no one else can hold is quite rare and thrilling. Mine goes down in Church of God history as having preached the last sermon in the enormous wooden tabernacle.

The occasion came about like this. The impressive wooden structure had housed the mass meetings of the annual International Convention of the Church of God in Anderson for many years. However, [in 1960 after the south wing collapsed in a heavy late Spring snowfall] it was condemned and had to be torn down. Anderson College was given the privilege of salvaging the wide boards used to construct the pew-like benches used for the meetings.

Chase Stiers, the maintenance foreman for the College, directed me to round up as many students as I could to disassemble the seats because of the building demolition. And so armed with crowbars and



hammers, a dozen or more students and I arrived after morning classes to face the job at hand.

However, I first sat my team on the front bench and told them before beginning our work, I was going to preach to them. They looked at me kind of funny, but I climbed up to the high pulpit, proceeded to exhort them for a few minutes and then declared, "There! I have preached the last sermon that will ever be preached in this tabernacle." And, to this day, I still hold that record.

— Robert J. Hazen

Note: As a result of that late Spring snowfall, no Camp Meeting was held in 1960—which was also a record. As far as we can tell, it was the only time Camp Meeting was ever NOT held.



Causes are Rarely Simple

When considering historical causes and their effects we often fall prey to the notion that events have simple explanations. This is particularly true if the researcher is driven by ideological factors or biases. Events are often anything but simply explained, and sometimes the best explanation is not readily apparent.

For example, the Anderson University Chorale is a widely traveled and just as widely admired ensemble featured in telecasts of the university's annual "Candles and Carols" Christmas program. The Chorale seems to be an organization founded in a deep appreciation for the church's faith and music. But there were other, more pedestrian factors that led to the founding of one of AU's best known programs.

The founder of the Chorale was Robert Nicholson, a man whose journey to the Church of God and Anderson College follows a familiar path. He was born in Pepin, Wisconsin in 1923, the only child of Arthur and Ethel Nicholson.

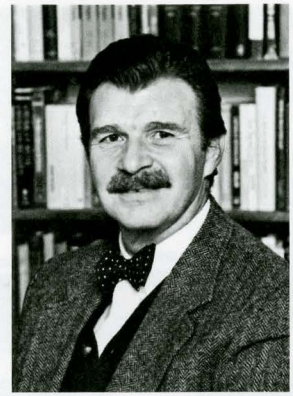
As a young man Arthur Nicholson was employed as a telegrapher by the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad, and it was while he worked at the station in Savanna, Illinois that he came across a copy of *The Gospel Trumpet* laying on a bench. Intrigued by the paper's message, he wrote the publisher and asked for the

name of the nearest Church of God congregation. Word came back of a church in Clinton, Iowa, and young Arthur began attending worship. There he met and married Ethel Weeden in 1913.

A few years later Robert was born and the family moved north to Minnesota, eventually settling in a modest house in Newport, about ten miles down the Mississippi River from St. Paul. In 1903 Scandinavian-Americans had founded a Church of God congregation in the neighboring village of St. Paul Park, and the Nicholsons soon were active members of the congregation of some 60 to 70 souls.

"Bob" Nicholson, as he was known to the people of the St. Paul Park church, grew through adolescence under three exceptional pastors who were Anderson College alumni—William, Fleenor, Max Gaulke, and Clair Schultz. The persistence of loyal AC alumni paid off, and Bob enrolled at Anderson College in 1940. Anderson College and Park Place church opened Bob Nicholson's eyes to a far wider world and church than he had known back in Minnesota. Nicholson sang in the college chorus and added his rich bass voice to the Park Place church choir as well.

His talent led him to private study in voice as well as courses in beginning harmony. The large majority of AC professors taught out of a strong sense of vocation to the ministry and to the college in particular, and their sense of calling impressed Nicholson. Nevertheless, he graduated from college with no clear vocational direction.



His interest in teaching had shifted upward, from high school to college, but graduate school was not on the horizon.

While serving as an associate pastor in Hickory, North Carolina he received a letter from Russell Olt, Anderson College Dean. The two men had conversed about college teaching while Nicholson was a student; Olt wanted to know if the new alumnus was serious. Professor Henry Clausen was scheduled to retire the following June, and Olt sought a successor.

But Clausen taught music, a field in which Nicholson possessed gifts and interest but no real preparation. Olt proposed that Nicholson start work on a master's degree as soon as possible and plan to begin teaching the following autumn. With Lackey's encouragement, Nicholson accepted the offer and in January began coursework at New York University. The following August the Nicholsons returned to Anderson. Bob was 21. Here is where the story gets interesting and causation not so simple.

Russell Olt had assigned Nicholson a full load, and more than a full load, of courses in music. But President John Morrison also had designs on Bob Nicholson's time. At the time

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Top Left (clockwise): 1. Historical Society members gather at Cabin for Bus Tour; 2. Dale Stultz, driver of bus; 3. Melissa Berry, her mother, leader dog, and Dr. Bill Ellis; 4. Some members gather at the Noah and Isabel Byrum grave sites at Anderson Memorial Park Cemetery; 5. Dale Stultz instructs tour group.



A HOLY REMNANT?

'Remnant theology' was commonly accepted in the Holiness Movement. It was their way of explaining the disappointing and less-than-wholesale response of the church-going public or the society to the holiness gospel. The gospel was for all, for the 'whosoever,' but it was never generally assumed that every one, or even the majority, would respond and 'turn to Christ' to take up holiness of life. Satan, the ruler of this present world, was powerful and his grip was exceedingly difficult to break. In the end, therefore, only a faithful 'remnant' would be 'saved.'

The general appeal (as with all other doctrines) was to the Bible. It is evident throughout the Scriptures, so it was argued, that God's 'true' people will never be more than a remnant. Not only would God's people be only a remnant, they would be "a very small remnant" according to the prophets (Isaiah 9:2). God himself had promised he would "gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them" (Jer. 23:3). Again, "I will surely gather the remnant of Israel (Mic. 2:12). Or, "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved" (Rom.9:27). Or, "there will be a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:4).

D.S. Warner firmly believed not only that a "holy remnant" would be saved, but that "remnant" was the restored church of evening time. In other words, it consisted of all who made the

journey from 'Babylon' to 'Zion.' He writes of this extensively in *The Gospel Trumpet*, January 1892. The following quotation is only a small sample.

To us is committed the ministry of the everlasting gospel, which is to gather the elect remnant out of the confused religions of earth. A holy remnant washed in the blood of the Lamb and clothed in fine linen, clean and white. Even the bride, the Lamb's wife. The prophecy is conspicuous and even blind guides see it.

Warner, who had experienced very little response to his 'come-out' gospel, was comforted by the realization that Biblical prophecy spoke only of a 'remnant' (a "piece of an ear" or a "leg" or two, such as a lion might leave behind, according to Amos 3:12). But that remnant was "holy," "fruitful," "persecuted," "pure," "harmonious and uniform," and "triumphant."

But, in the Final Hour they will not be "very small," as Isaiah 9:2 states, for God will miraculously "multiply them." In the last hour of the evening light, multitudes who were "in the valley of decision" would turn to God—and thus "the little ones" are multiplied into great multitudes.

But in spite of what Warner himself had to say on the subject, the 'church of God reformation movement' in general seems to have held to the notion that those who were 'fully saved' and gathered together as the Lamb's Bride in the End Times would be only a small remnant. They were "the faithful few" of

whom song-writer Barney Warren wrote. It was generally expected that the great bulk of humankind would be 'lost.'

(This has been reproduced with some editorial changes from *The Gospel Trumpet Years*, 2011: 190f.)

A Comment

Warner, so it seems, assumed that "great multitudes" of the residents of 'Sect Babylon' were lingering in the "valley of decision." But in the imminent Parousia, he believed God would miraculously call them out to be a part of the Bride of Christ, thus giving them a 'last chance' to escape an eternity in Hell. Was this the result of 'last-moment' repentance or the deep conviction that God could surely do much better than a "piece of the ear" or "a leg?"

In any event, Warner himself evidences some ambivalence about 'remnant theology.' To believe on the one hand that the Gospel is for the 'whosoever' and on the other that God has an Elect—and a very small one at that—is to believe that God chooses the few whom he will save. This created a tension for Warner he could solve only by recourse to his belief in a final act of God in which not loaves but true believers were miraculously multiplied.

Remnant theology' as our forebears understood it, however, depended on the prior belief that the Prophets were wrong in thinking they were speaking of Israel's future as a nation, rather than about 'us.' All prophecy about Israel's future is, in this view, about 'us' and 'our' future. Really?

— DE Welch

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This quilt of many names was sent to Dale Stultz by Gerald Frederic, the youngest son of F.G. and Birdie Smith. It was a Christmas gift from the Akron congregation of the Church of God in 1934. The names of all 'members' of the congregation are embroidered on it. It has been 'stored' away for 78 years.



of Nicholson's appointment Anderson College was among the Church of God agencies beset by the accusations of Muncie pastor Earl Slacum. He charged the college and other Anderson-based agencies with abandoning the standard of holiness: women were said to be wearing makeup and church leaders were accused of attending movies, among other sins.

Slacum was also troubled by what he regarded as a creeping bureaucracy in the church; organization was said to be strangling the life out of a movement that was to be led by the Holy Spirit rather than "man-rule." Slacum's charges were having an effect. Church people were losing confidence in the college and the agencies.

In the face of this problem John Morrison decided to act. Whatever Bob Nicholson's teaching load, Morrison commissioned him to start a *touring* choir. Morrison envisioned college students singing before congregations of the Church of God, fresh-faced and clean-cut evidence of the college's orthodoxy and enthusiasm for the church. Morrison got what he wanted. The Anderson College Chorale was born—not only out of a concern for singing, but also, perhaps even primarily, motivated by the need for good public relations. *In history, things are rarely simple.*

—Merle D. Strege
Historian of the Church of God

A FORGOTTEN VOICE FROM OUR PAST....

Pueblo, Colo.
Nov. 6, 1927.

Mr. D. W. Patterson,
Anderson, Ind.

Dear old Pal:

I am writing to ask of you a personal favor. In my travels and meanderings I have run out from under all copies of my printed works, and I would like to get as complete a set of them as is possible at the present time.

To make it easier for you I am enclosing a list of my book, as near as I can remember them, with spaces for the information I would like to have. If you will fill in the information and return the sheet to me, I shall consider it a great favor.

Please give my regards to Freddie Smith and to any others who might like to know that I am still alive and still kicking around. At present I am living rather quietly so far as public activity is concerned, but living right and living in peace. Best of all, I am for once in life living in domestic tranquility. I am working hard as ever and am gaining a reasonable degree of success. My present work is that of a field engineer and special service man for a chain store company.

With personal regards and best wishes to you and all my old team mates, I am

Yours very truly,

Dr. Seasley
417 7th 10th St.

PLEASE NOTE

We are sorry to report that our Secretary-Treasurer, Sadie Evans, is still on the 'invalid list.' Continue to remember her. In the meantime, the rest of us are doing the best we can. We appreciate your support. Wayne and Tommie Warner filled in for Sadie at the Warren Cabin during this past North American Convention. We have nothing but praise for their commitment and competence. Oh yes...dues are due! Your help is crucial!