

Church of God Historian

Historical Society of the Church of God (Anderson IN) Vol 3 No 1 Fall 2002

HERITAGE HYMNWRITER CHARLES W. NAYLOR TO BE HONORED



Heritage hymnwriter, Charles W. Naylor will be honored at Anderson Campmeeting Monday afternoon, June 16, 2003. Many persons who have been blessed by the great outpouring of his hymns and heritage songs will gather at his gravesite in Maplewood Cemetery for the dedication of a new monument which will mark his grave. Some of his enduring songs will be sung, tributes will be made, and the Church he served will

honor this long neglected saint.

Naylor was a co-worker and friend of D.S. Warner, joining the Trumpet Family at Grand Junction, Michigan when he was in his early twenties. He was an early "comeouter," completely dedicated to the Reformation Movement, willing to serve the Trumpet community in the most humble of its enterprises, whether as pastor, evangelist, essayist, author, or in the flood of heritage music which flowed from his pen.

In 1909, he suffered the first of two major accidents when he was pinned to the ground by a falling tent pole. The second tragedy came from a truck accident while working on Trumpet Company grounds in Anderson which left him a bed ridden invalid for forty one years. Yet he was steadfast in his determination to exercise the uncommon writing gifts God had given him.

Often A.L. Byers, Dale Oldham, Barney Warren, and others could be seen walking down from the Trumpet Company to try out one of his new songs. More than one hundred and fifty of our heritage texts came from his pen.

During my high school days I walked into his room every day to deliver his newspaper there in the front bedroom where he lay. He was as white as chalk, with a green eyeshade protecting him from the light pouring into his room. Often on the floor was a *New York Times*, several books from

the public library, and standing by his bed his ever present Edison transcribing machine with its wax cylinders. Close by and available was a Magnavox short wave radio with which he could access world news from the BBC.

Naylor was not bound to the four corners of his room, but was constantly reaching out to understand what was going on in the world beyond. Even though I was a teenager, he seemed glad to see me, never talking down to my level of understanding. I enjoyed his friendship. Once a year my father, who was pastor at Park Place Church, had him carried over on his cot to the platform to deliver the morning sermon.

Naylor was both an intellectual and brave enough to speak his mind. Before his death he wrote a small booklet which spoke of the strengths and some of the problem issues facing the Church he loved. We were not ready to listen then and were preoccupied with more immediate things. So when he died little notice was taken. In 1950 a few gathered in an obscure place in Maplewood Cemetery and laid him to rest. Very little was made of his passing.

So a half century later when we come on June 16 to where he lies we will honor him as he deserves to be honored. Few of our sermons will be remembered. But there are many thousands in this country and around the world whose hearts will be strangely warmed as this mighty invalid's songs carry us onward and upward in our journey of faith. "Blessed by our Lord is the death of His Saints."

— Robert. H. Reardon



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Newsletter of the Historical
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(Anderson)

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Church of God Historian is managed by the Executive Committee of the Society: Merle Strege, President; David Markle, Vice-President; Douglas Welch, Secretary-Treasurer; and Wilfred Jordan, Editor.

The Historical Society . . .

The Historical Society of the Church of God (Anderson) exists: to encourage within the Church of God (Anderson) interest in Church of God history; to help facilitate the collection and preservation of Church of God books, historical documents (letters, diaries, journals, minutes, reports) and photographs; to assist members whenever and where ever possible with historical research and writing; and to provide for those concerned with Church of God history and heritage association with others of like mind.

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). The Society's "year" runs from Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting (held at the Annual Convention of the Church of God in North America in Anderson, Indiana in the month of June). Checks should be mailed to:

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From the Editor

The Staff of *The Church of God Historian* is always open to new approaches and ideas for this newsletter, which serves the Church of God (Anderson). Gertrude Stein said, "*The soothing thing about history is that it does not repeat itself.*" It is our hope that each issue of the *Historian* will be informative, inspiring, pertinent, and fresh to the readers.

In the next issue of the *Historian* we will include an article about the old cemetery existing adjacent to the Warner Press building. An interesting history surrounds this small cemetery and its story must be introduced to the wider church for posterity. Not too many Convention visitors are even aware of the cemetery's existence.

In the Winter issue of the *Church of God Historian* the names of persons known to be buried in the Gospel Trumpet Company Cemetery will be given, along with the date of burial—if known. Please let it be known if you are aware of anyone buried at the site. The date of death and/or burial should be included, if known.

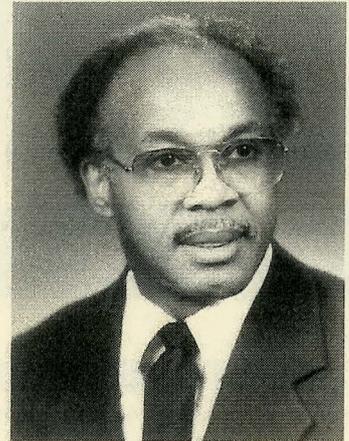
On a different note, but still speaking of death and burial, here is an epitaph on a tombstone in Cleveland, Ohio:

*Hark all ye who passing by,
As you are, so once was I;
As I am, so you shall be,
So prepare to follow me.*

A passerby responded humorously:

*To follow you, I won't consent,
For I don't know which way you went.*

In this issue we are featuring an article by our brother, Ernie Lopez, the Historian of the National *Concilio* of the Hispanic Church of God. Bro. Lopez is a member of the Historical Society of the Church of God (Anderson) and lives in Texas. We are sure you will find his historical reflections interesting and helpful. We believe this information to be important for the Church of God.



We also believe that you will enjoy reflections from Robert Reardon on the life and ministry of Charles W. Naylor, one of the great songwriters of the Church of God. Many of us have been touched and blessed by his hymns and heritage songs. It is to be regretted that they are not as widely used in the Church of God as they once were.

One of my favorite Naylor hymns was a collaborative effort, with D. Otis Teasley providing the hymn tune.

I Am the Lord's

*Whether I live or die
Whether I wake or sleep,
Whether upon the land,
Or on the stormy deep;
When 'tis serene and calm
Or when the wild winds blow
I shall not be afraid—
I am the Lord's I know.*

*Nothing shall separate
From His unbounded love,
Neither in depths below
Nor in the heights above;
And in the years to come
He will abide with me;
I am the Lord's I know,
For all eternity.*

With Dr. Reardon, we honor Bro. Naylor and thank God for his faithfulness and perseverance.

—Wilfred Jordan

THE RUSSELL BYRUM HERESY "TRIAL"

By Merle D. Strege, President

Late last Spring Archivist Douglas Welch invited me into his office to show me some materials that had recently come into the Archives' possession. They had been discovered in the Warner Press Building while it was being remodeled into Church of God Ministries.

Among the materials was a manila envelope packed with a little more than seventy sheets of paper. It was not the number but the contents of those sheets that is of extraordinary significance, for the envelope contained the notes, minutes, correspondence, and other primary materials pertinent to the famous Russell Byrum heresy trial, June 18-19, 1929.



Russell R. Byrum

Robert Reardon offered a brief sketch of the trial in his *Early Morning Light*, as did John Smith in *The Quest For Holiness and Unity*. Now a much fuller account waits to be developed on the basis of the information contained in this file. Space will not permit such an account here, but a few salient points can be made.

1. The presence of the Editor of the Gospel Trumpet Company, F.G. Smith, can clearly be discerned looming behind the entire proceedings. The formal charges against Byrum were specified in a letter to Anderson College President John Morrison signed by R.L. Berry and Mrs. F.G. Smith. Berry was a close associate of

Smith's and succeeded Byrum as the Managing Editor of the *Gospel Trumpet* when Byrum joined the college faculty full-time. Both he and Mrs. Smith were also college trustees. It seems undeniable that Smith knew of their intentions. Moreover, the Editor himself became something of an issue as the hearing unfolded. Witnesses were repeatedly asked whether they were intimidated by the Editor, and more than one said that the company's Editorial division opposed the college. W. Burgess McCreary testified that a year earlier close sympathy with the school had almost resulted in his being "removed from publication." Testimony suggests that Smith and senior editorial leadership had taken a strong position against the college already by 1928.

2. The controversy did not suddenly erupt in the Spring of 1929, nor was it strictly limited to Byrum's teaching. It was the focal point, to be sure, but the orthodoxy of Anderson College was also under some question. As much as a year before Byrum's trial a meeting was held in which "responsible officials" of the College gave assurances that "the teaching of the school was and would be held in strict conformity to the teaching of the reformation." In addition to this meeting, "private councils" discussed "the principle of what the teaching of the [college] should be." One can only imagine the participants in these "councils," but the inference certainly seems warranted that college officials were among them. Not only Russell Byrum but Anderson College also was under the scrutiny of people who were opposed to its program.

3. In the mind of R.L. Berry at stake in this affair were issues far broader than the question of Byrum's orthodoxy. Berry saw the controversy in terms of the relationship between the church and its agencies. In his view, the fact that the church owned agencies such as the Gospel Trumpet Company and Anderson College

required them to follow a "principle of conservatism" intended to keep them in line theologically. Moreover, because the class-room was secluded from public view, the college, thought Berry, needed to be even more conservative than the publishing house in hewing to the accepted doctrinal practices and standards of the church. Faculty members were free to develop new ideas, but they must try them in the public court of the church before exposing such novelties to young minds. Berry believed there would be no peace in the church until these matters were resolved. In an open church forum ministers were free to advocate "whatever we please, but in our institutions we have no such liberty." Either that principle of conservatism was accepted by all concerned, or there was trouble ahead.

In their statement to the General Ministerial Assembly the ministers who sat in judgment of Russell R. Byrum not only exonerated him (not one of the five formal charges was sustained), but they took pains to interpret the entire affair as resting solely on a misunderstanding. According to their statement, Byrum had convinced them that his teaching did not essentially differ from that generally held in the movement. In other words, they gave the controversy the narrowest possible meaning, narrower than those whose opposition to the college also implicated it in the affair, and far narrower than the perspective taken by R.L. Berry. Thus the issues he raised and the problem he saw remained unresolved.

A few days later, Russell Byrum resigned his faculty appointment. However, in Berry's mind matters between the church and its agencies, specifically Anderson College, were far from settled. Five more challenging years would unfold before a settlement was achieved, and even

Jottings

From the Archives

Douglas E. Welch

Personal Diaries

Recently, in search of information requested by a researcher, I had occasion to turn to the personal diaries of Noah H. Byrum. What utterly fascinating reading it was. They cover the years 1888-1898.

The diaries begin Jan. 1, 1888 and end Dec. 31, 1898—a full 11 years to the day. Byrum had joined the Gospel Trumpet Company in the summer of 1886, when he was not yet 16 years of age. When he was 17 he began keeping his daily diary and was only 27 when he discontinued writing.

By 1898 he had a growing family and the work of the Company had mushroomed almost beyond control. As Secretary-Treasurer, he was hard pressed to keep up with his work and, like most others of the Family, worked very long days, six days a week.

So I think we can forgive him for not continuing on with his journaling—even though we today are the poorer for it. As a young person, he was very much at the grassroots of the movement and his insights and descriptions give us a field of vision unparalleled in any other of our early writings.

Byrum deals in considerable detail with the day to day operations of the Company. He writes a great deal about the Trumpet Family, the daily work, and the excursions of the several young people who had joined the Family (some of whom did not remain permanently).

Some of his diary entries are very personal indeed—particularly after Isabel (Belle) Coston joined the Family. Or when elder brother Enoch flayed him for his youthfulness and love of fun (Noah does not actually say this—I'm reading between the lines here), wounding him painfully and sending him into a deep depression for many days. It makes for very

poignant reading—and causes one to feel a bit like an eavesdropper to boot.

His first diary entry, Sun. Jan. 1, 1888 is quite nonchalant: *"Today is New Years and there is deep snow on the ground. The wind is blowing hard. Ma, Willie, Fowler and Rev. Devor are here. We were all intending to go to Bro. Smith's to meeting, but they did not come after us, so we stayed at home all day and ate candy."* Sounds like a fun day—and they probably didn't have to worry about gaining weight either.

His entry for Tue. Jan. 3 is very interesting. *"I went to school this morning. [Some days he stayed home to run the press.] It was the first day after a vacation of three weeks. There were about 70 scholars there. I had good lessons and did not get punished any . . ."* This was apparently a public school "downtown. He and six other boys did get in trouble the next day for going to an off-limits play-ground and were made to stay in at recess for a whole week.

On Wed. Jan. 4, he writes that upon his return from school he discovered that Enoch had already built a fire in the boiler. (I get the impression that this was Noah's job.) But Enoch had "forgotten to put the steam cap on," so Noah took care of that and then oiled the engine. (Perhaps Enoch was not the mechanical one of the family.) He then "commenced to print." He concludes, "We did not get done until about 8 o'clock."

It seems that even at this point Noah was doing the book keeping for the Company. That is no small responsibility for a 17-year old—and one who was still attending school at that. If he wasn't "writing letters," he was doing book keeping, or "washing type," or "cleaning the press," or "splitting wood and kindling," or "setting type," or "proof reading galleys," or "setting up forms," or "going to meeting." And on some occasions—perhaps often—he got up very early to tend to chores before going to school. One morning, he got up at 3:30 a.m. to build a fire in the boiler for printing later that morning. We can imagine that happened often as well.

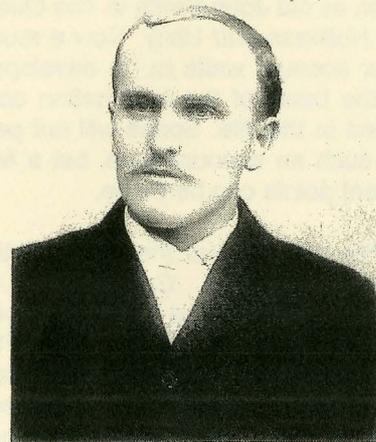
But not all was peace and harmony by any means. On one occasion he

and "James" confronted Sis. Fisher for talking about them in public. (Mind you, this was a 17-year old.) But it all ended happily, for they "forgave each other and prayed for each other."

One of the things that has rather surprised me about these diaries is that relatively little is said about D.S. Warner, apart from statements like, "Bro. Warner preached at meeting." Or, "Bro. Warner is holding meetings at the Smith's." Perhaps it is because Bro. Warner was so seldom there.

Byrum does, however, write at some length about Warner's final brief illness and death and his funeral and burial. On Sat. Dec. 14 (Warner died on Thu. Dec. 12) he writes: *"We telegraphed to Dr. Cronan and son from Bangor to come down and hold a post mortem examination on Br. Warner's body, so as Frankie could draw a pension. His heart was larger than natural size and had grown into his lungs. The Dr. said he did not see how he lived as long as he did."* (So he may not have died of "lung trouble" after all.)

The last entry in the diaries is on Sat. Dec. 31, 1898. He writes in part: *"How many things have happened during the year that is past. So many changes have taken place. Such a queer feeling comes over me as I review them. I am still with the Gospel Trumpet Pub. Co. and am acting as the Secretary-Treasurer . . . Eleven years ago tomorrow I wrote for the first time in a diary and from that day until this I have never missed one time. Other things are now crowding it out so I will lay it aside."* Great pity, that!



Noah H. Byrum, c.1900

The Church of God Hispanic Ministry in the United States and the Formation of the National *Concilio*

A Perspective from Ernest R. Lopez

Introduction

The journey of our Hispanic Ministry has followed the common route of: responding to a need; trial and error; financial and leadership shortages; lack of recognition by the Church at large; persevering by faith; and much prayer. Today, that persevering faith has been rewarded, the prayers have been answered, and the future of our Hispanic Ministry is most promising.

Today, our rapid growth rate challenges our resources and the Hispanic mission field in this country threatens soon to be the dominant culture. The recognition factor has shifted from lack of recognition by the Church at large of our Hispanic Ministry to a lack of recognition by our new converts and new pastors to the history and teachings of the Church of God at large. This is where my ministry as Historian comes in—a ministry that really is full time.

Beginnings of Hispanic Ministry

B.F. Elliott was the first Church of God missionary to Spanish-speaking people. But his ministry was outside of the United States in the area of Baja, California, not actually considered "Home Missions" ministry. For this reason, it is not recognized by the Hispanic *Concilio* leadership of the United States.

It all began in Texas through the efforts of a Mexican Hispanic in San Antonio. In a Nov. 7, 1929 *Gospel Trumpet*, Bro. Mariano F. Tafolla wrote an article entitled "My Own People." He states, "In the year 1906 I got my first glimpse of the Evening Light, and the glorious visions of the Bride of the Lamb and the unity of God's people have been a constant inspiration to me in carrying the eternal Gospel to my people . . ." (p.10). (Former Church of God Historian, John W.V. Smith, in his book,

A Brief History of the Church of God Reformation Movement, dated this encounter to 1908, a date I had also accepted before finding the 1929 GT article.)*

It appears that the year 1906 was when an "L. Ball," a German Church of God brother, introduced Bro. Tafolla to the Church of God. I have learned this from the oft-repeated story told by Sis. Annie Tafolla, Bro. Tafolla's daughter, an outstanding leader in the Church of God Hispanic ministry in her own right. In this account, Sis. Annie states that this German brother from Buda, Texas, just south of Austin, happened to walk by the front gate of the Tafolla home at 2014 Buena Vista St., looking for the railroad station, which was only about four blocks east of the Tafolla home. Bro. Ball saw Bro. Tafolla sitting on the front porch, reading his Bible, and felt free to ask him for directions. Bro. Tafolla, always generous in helping others, walked to the gate, pointing in the direction of the station with his Bible. (Bro. Tafolla is pictured below in 1921, perhaps at Anderson Campmeeting.)



Bro. Ball also "witnessed" to Bro. Tafolla. Each spoke to the other in his own language, Bro. Ball in German, Bro. Tafolla in Spanish with some mixture of English. Somehow, "through God's Spirit," they communicated. Shortly thereafter, Bro. Ball read from a *Gospel Trumpet*, then offered it to Bro. Tafolla, who, at first, refused it.

Eventually, however, he was persuaded to accept it and thereafter read as much Church of God literature as possible. He then affiliated with the Church of God. Following their brief encounter, the two brethren continued to visit each other at the Tafolla home and became friends. Bro. Ball even invited Bro. Tafolla to preach to his farm workers in Buda, marking that little community as one of the earliest locations where Bro. Tafolla preached with Church of God ties. In time, he became recognized and financially supported by "Anderson."

In 1921, Bro. Tafolla established the very first Hispanic Church of God in the United States at 129 Angela St. in San Antonio, Texas. I have often passed by the old site of that first church where I attended as a little boy. The present church is now known as the Prospect Hill Church of God, located not far from the Angela Street site. It was my privilege to pastor this church for 31 years.

It was also in 1921 that Bro. Tafolla held the first of 30 consecutive camp meetings by the Medina River just south of San Antonio. I can still visualize those week-long camp meetings vividly. Bro. A.T. Maciel would drive a flat-bed truck with side boards into the little community of Somerset every morning during the summer months to pick up kids. I was one of the kids who climbed up the side boards to be hauled north five miles to the camp meeting site.

What great times those were! People sleeping in tents at night, food cooked outside, classes for the kids under the Pecan trees, baptisms by Bro. Tafolla in the river, and services at night in a temporary wall-less wooden tabernacle with light furnished by dangling light bulbs. Those "saved" in the services entered into the San Antonio congregation.

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Today, too little is known about this great visionary pioneer in the Church of God and in our Hispanic ministry as well. It is with humble pride that I claim Bro. Tafolla as my first Church of God pastor. He visited in our home many times and we were all welcome in his home as well. Today our Hispanic ministry is a continuation of his vision.

Origin of the National Concilio

At the beginning of 1954, there were six church in the Hispanic Ministry, but the potential was great. On August 1, 1954, Bro. Tafolla passed away and a great era came to an end. On February 1, 1954, the Hispanic leadership was organized into what came to be called "the *Concilio*" (Council). To this day, the *Concilio* continues to exist, consisting of those who give leadership to the Hispanic Movement.

It is ironic, but true, that for the first sixteen years of its existence (1954-1969) the *Concilio's* leadership was Anglo, with Rev. Lloyd Butler, Pastor of the Highland Park Church of God, and Home Missions "Field Representative" serving as its first President. The vision of a *Concilio*, then, was not Hispanic. Recognizing the uniqueness of the Hispanic Ministry, the idea of "getting Hispanics together" gathered momentum, until it was finally realized with the first *Concilio* being held in San Antonio in the first Hispanic church.

At its birth, the *Concilio's* Hispanic body was practically 100% Mexican. The first non-Mexican leaders were Cubans who arrived shortly after Fidel Castro's Revolution in Cuba. The basic intent of the gathering together was for the Hispanic Church of God community to fellowship, worship, encourage each other, and plan for the future.

This, I believe, was led by the Holy Spirit. The timing was right and it has born much fruit since its inception. But we must not forget how much the Church and the Hispanic *Concilio* owe today to those Anglo brothers and sisters who had the vision and who supported that vision. These include: Lloyd and Jean Butler; George and Marie Geiwitz; Albert and Irene Bentley; Paul and Virginia Chappell;

Warren and Devie Kinion; Keith and Gloria Plank; Maurice and Dondeena Caldwell; Lyell and Una Janes; Evelyn Janes Anderson; and Bro. B.O. Bertleson, who worked hard in Los Angeles.

In the late 1960s, young Hispanic leadership was developing and becoming very vocal. In November of 1970, at the Central Park Church in Houston, Texas, the leadership torch was passed from the Anglos to the Hispanics. Again, a new era began. Rev. Ernie Lopez, recently graduated from the Anderson Seminary was selected to serve as the first Hispanic President, inaugurating the new era of Hispanic leadership of the *Concilio*. And so it is today.

The transition had a good spirit about it and I believe the Anglo leaders realized this day was inevitable. Today, serving as our national Hispanic Historian, it would be remiss of me not to give special recognition to Rev. Albert Bentley, also my former pastor, for his outstanding service as Secretary of the *Concilio* and keeping all of its Minutes, which he has so generously handed on to me. These records have been invaluable in our knowledge of our early history. Without those Minutes, which he recorded with great accuracy, I would have to function on some "foggy" memories as our source of knowledge. (In addition, Warren Kinion, Mary Tafolla, wife of the late Mariano Tafolla Jr., and her daughter, Mary Carsen Bernal, generously donated important papers and other literature from our past. The Church and the *Concilio* are also in their debt. This has made many of my historical discoveries possible.)

The Hispanic Church

The flavor of the Hispanic Church fits well with most of the conservative tendencies of the Church of God. It is strongly worship centered, in the expectation that God can will perform miracles for his church. It is strong in prayer and is eschatologically oriented, looking for the glorious day of the return of Christ and their just rewards as promised in the Scriptures.

On occasion, those who are "Spirit filled" fudge close to the line of Pentecostalism, but I have not seen them cross it. The Hispanic Church is *coritos* (choruses) dominated and for many years has had an abundance of

them from which to select. So the lack of a hymnal is not a problem.

A practice I hope we never neglect is prayer petitions and personal testimonies. We need always to pray for the needs of brothers and sisters and to hear from them. The preaching is simple, emotional, but not exegetically oriented due to a lack of theological preparation by too many of our pastors. Often too much is found in the Scriptures that may not actually be there—but his is not unique to the Hispanic ministry. What is important is that souls are being saved.

The strongest bond among Hispanics and Hispanic churches is the Spanish language. It is the "glue" that transcends our geographical, cultural, and ethnic differences.

Conclusion

With all the demographic changes coming into play in this country, I suggest that the reference "minority ministry" will soon be inaccurate when applied to the Hispanic ministry. I prefer the use of "co-ministry," or possibly "extended ministries" of the Church.

Another question that has not received due attention, even by Hispanics, is: "What do Hispanics have to offer the Church of God?" I would respond as follows: (1) we bring to the Church the second most common language used in this country; (2) we bring to the Church the largest "home mission field" in this country; (3) we bring a "door" to the largest population in the Western Hemisphere; and (4) we represent the second oldest culture in this country.

Today, we are growing and are positioning ourselves to be a powerful leaven in the Church at large. This Church needs to be aware of what is going on in its midst.



Antonio and Ruby Maciel



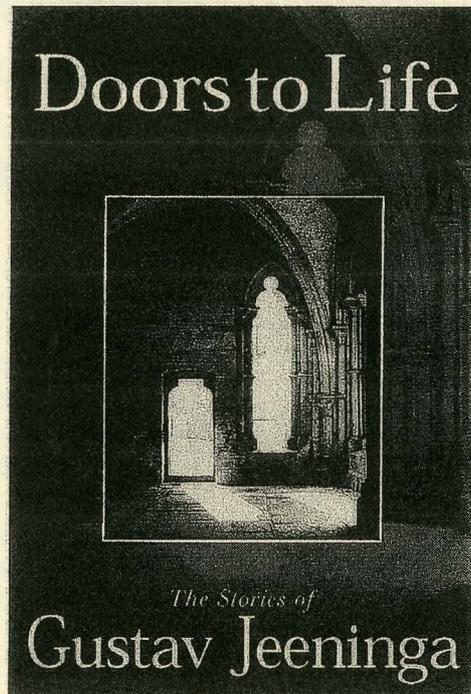
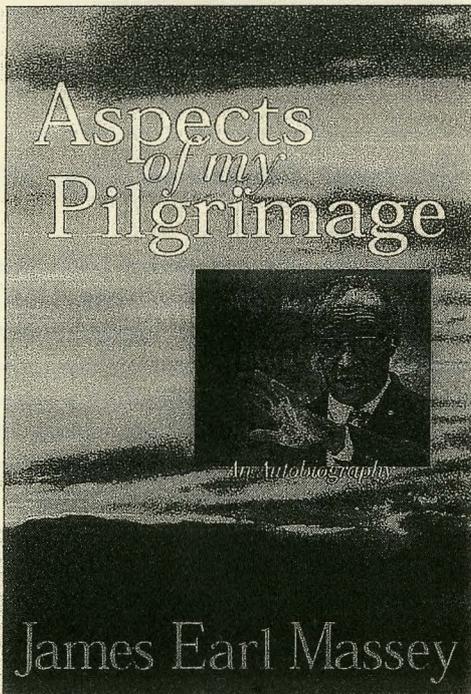
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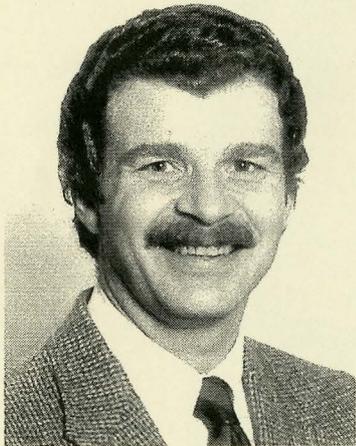
then it would not be to the liking of Berry or those who shared his opinions.

The recovery of the Bryum trial papers is a very important find. They help us see that the trouble brewing in 1928-29 was not focused entirely on Russell Byrum and his theological views. One can only speculate as to other materials awaiting discovery and how their contents might similarly alter our understanding of the history of the Church of God.

The recovery of the Byrum trial papers is itself an object lesson that should cause us to re-double our efforts to uncover and preserve documents that shed light on our past. That story deserves to be told as faithfully as possible.

— Merle D. Strege

Church of God Historian



Home of the Gospel Trumpet Co. 1906-1911

Many Church of God adherents are not aware that when the Gospel Trumpet Company moved from Moundsville, West Virginia, to Anderson in 1906, they leased a former storage company building for five years in downtown Anderson. It was located on the corner of Central and 9th Street. The Gospel Trumpet Family Home was built in 1906 across the river in what was known as Park Place. The Company purchased 40 acres of land and began to build the Home and other buildings. In 1911, the new Gospel Trumpet Company building was complete. One source located in Church of God Archives incorrectly states that the downtown location was on 8th Street. This is almost correct, but, like some other information we have, not quite.

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