

Spring 2014

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- Articles about camp meetings around the world
- Reader Responses
- Pictures from around the world

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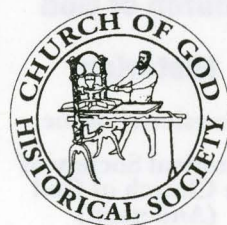
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Newsletter of the
Historical Society of
the Church of God
(Anderson)

The Church of God Historian



"A Gathering of Believers" *by David Neidert, editor*

June 1974 was the first time I attended an International Convention of the Church of God or camp meeting. I did not grow up attending this gathering of the saints. My camp meeting experience was Berlin Center in NE Ohio, which our family attended occasionally. That 1974 event introduced me to what the Church of God has considered essential to its life as Doug Welch writes, "It's a part of the Church of God DNA" (page 7).

The contributions to this newsletter capture what I personally began to encounter as the years progressed and I had more opportunities to attend the camp meeting turned convention. This "highlight of the church year" was an "engine of growth and center of learning" (page 7). For many it became the "spiritual apex of their year" (page 2) filled with tradition, music, and teaching

central to the Church of God. But maybe just as important, it was a time of "family reunion," as Henry Fraley observed. Family and friends who they had not seen for a year or more, but also those in the family of God--our brothers and sisters in Christ from the far reaches of the globe.

What I trust this issue reflects is that gathering together as the church has always been critical to the Church of God as it

tury, the gathering of the saints has been essential as a way to see how the church can come together for worship, fellowship, teaching, and its business in order to operate effectively for kingdom work. Visually seeing and being together provides encouragement, support, renewal, and refreshment for what God invited us individually and collectively to be as the Church of God (Anderson).

This is also a special



was in the Book of Acts. While no doubt much expanded since the First Cen-

Historian for me as I have been in the camp meetings

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Church of God Historian

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

Vol 14 No 3
Spring 2014

This newsletter is published three times a year: Fall; Winter; and Spring. It is published by the Society on behalf of its members. Printed in Anderson, Indiana.

The Historical Society Purpose

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 concerning 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.

Camp Meeting: Mexico *By Rev. Juan Antonio Gonzalez Garcia*

If there is something that can describe the center of the mission and activities of the Church of God in Mexico, those would certainly be the camp meetings that are celebrated every year.

Camp meetings have been main events for gathering and worship for the people of the church. At these events people learn and discuss the Word of God, events in which the vision and the mission of the Church of God is renewed by the Holy Spirit. Words such as 'unity' and 'family' obtain a new and distinctive meaning for people attending these events and it is difficult to describe the excitement

and anticipation that fills the heart of those attendees year by year.

boost the spiritual life of the participants and their respective congregations. Nevertheless, Church of God's camp meetings have been celebrated in many large cities and small towns all over Mexico and one of the main places to celebrate those has been on the grounds of the Bible Institute, "La Buena Tierra" located in Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico.

There are different camp meetings celebrated by the Church of God in Mexico. There are those called "convenciones" (Conventions) which are general assemblies that gather people from all ages and places.



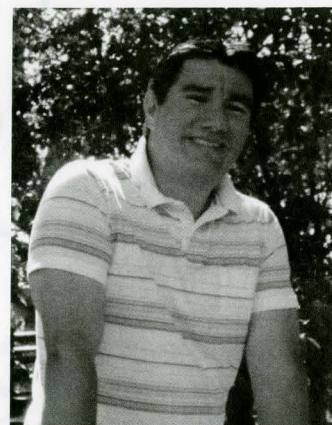
and anticipation that fills the heart of those attendees year by year.

Camp meetings are a way of life for many of the ministers and church goers in Mexico. These are the spiritual apex of their year and gladly they plan ahead of time for the next event.

Camp meetings have been a traditional way to

Traditionally these events have provided great opportunities for evangelism and revival; a calling to the altar through the lyrics of the beloved Church of God hymns as well as live contemporary music is still very present in these events.

The first convention was celebrated on January 1-3 of 1953 in San Anto-



nio de las Alazanas, Coahuila having Sabino Moreno, Cuauhtemoc de León, Refugio Zamora, Antonio T. Maciel, Amelia Valdez and Gregorio Castañeda as preachers.

Camp meetings provide a great opportunity to rediscover the Word of God. Daniel S. Warner's calling to "go back to the Bible" is still echoing through the preaching and teaching of such events.

Camp meetings called "campamentos" can be described as the church youth conventions. These events deal with blessings and challenges of their own. As in many other countries of the world, cultural, economic and social differences are noticeable in these events, overall, when dealing with youth and young adults. Bringing together teenagers coming from churches in

Continued Page 3

Camp Meeting: Mexico continued from page two

small country towns and those living in Mexico City, the capital city of Mexico with nearly thirty million people, is not considered a small challenge. It is with the help of the Holy Spirit that the attendees can relate to one another, able to understand their place in the church and their place in the world, able to care and love one another and willing to share deep links of friendship and fellowship that are nurtured through the years.

Camp meetings in Mexico have the great opportunity and challenge of incorporating means and forms by which the different generations of Christian believers can experience God. If there is a practical purpose and use in keeping a record of history it is to learn from previous generations, both from their mistakes and their achievements. The Church of God's leaders, while planning these events, need to ask themselves a few questions, "How should we celebrate God's salvation without compromising the message of the Bible? What should be the proper balance between traditional forms of worship and forms that can be attractive for a new generation of believers?"

As we hold a grip of the history and tradition of the Church of God, we must be brave and trustful that God still has great moments of spiritual growth ahead of us. The Church of God

members still need to be reminded of the great plan and mission that God has for his church today. Camp meetings may not look like they used to; the forms, methods and the use of new technological gadgets may render the events a little different, but may the presence of God be known there and may the camp meetings be filled with true love and true Christian fellowship.

Let us be faithful to God and his church as we continue preparing and attending Church of God camp meetings, meetings in which the salvation and the glory of our God and Savior continue touching the lives of its attendees.

Rev. Juan Antonio Gonzalez Garcia works for Wesley Chapel in Jackson, MS as a young adult and outreach minister. He recently translated the book *"In the Shadow of Aldersgate"* by Daniel L. Burnett into Spanish.

Juan was the pastor of the Nazarreo Church of God in Saltillo, Mexico and translated this editor's book into Spanish as well.

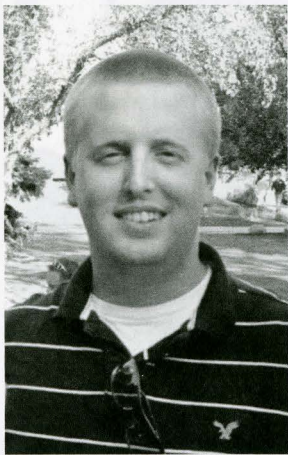


This service is at the La Buena Tierra Church of God in Saltillo, Mexico (photo taken 2008).

Forward with Loyalty to Truth: A Look at the International Youth Convention *by Matthew Preston*

Thousands of young people and their youth leaders will attend the Church of God's 49th International Youth Convention in early July 2014.

"InTUNE" has been selected as the theme, with particular emphasis on living "InTUNE" in the areas of purpose, purity, power, and people.¹ This biennial convention is an extremely significant ministry in the Church of God as it is estimated that over 31,000 people have attended IYC since 2002.² IYC is by no means a recent development as this year's convention marks the 90th anniversary of the first Church of God youth convention.



Matthew Preston is a recent graduate of the Anderson University School of Theology (MTS Thesis '14). Preston will be pursuing a PhD at Boston University.

The history of IYC begins with the Board of Sunday Schools and Religious Education, which was founded in 1923. Its constitution lists international conventions as one of the ways for the Board "to represent the religious education of the work of the Church of God."³ The youth convention was held annually in conjunction with the Church of God's June camp meeting from 1924 to 1929. One day of the camp meeting was designated as the Young People's Convention Day, which featured a time of worship through prayer, singing, and preaching. The 1929 report of the Committee on Research and Counsel of the Young People's Convention stated that the youth convention was being overshadowed by the international camp meeting and suggested that it be separated from the camp meeting.⁴ Several reasons were offered as justification for the change, including that many young people in high school and college were not able to attend in June.⁵ The motion to separate from the main camp meeting passed unanimously, and it was de-

termined that young people would have fewer conflicts if the convention was held during late August.⁶ With this decision the 7th International Youth Convention convened in South Bend, Indiana from August 28-31, 1930.⁷ The International Youth Convention was held biennially after the separation from the international camp meeting and has convened in several locations throughout the United States and Canada since 1930.

There are several interesting stories found in the history of the International Youth Convention. One of the most interesting stories took place in 1928. At this time the optimism and prosperity of the Roaring Twenties had not yet been displaced by the devastation of the Stock Market Crash and the Great Depression. The theme of the 5th International Youth Convention, which assembled on June 18th, was "Forward with Loyalty to Truth."⁸ The address given by B.F. Timmons in the early afternoon titled "What Is My Responsibility As a Christian in Racial Relationships and International Relationships?" is

particularly interesting.⁹ This address, in conjunction with A.F. Gray's address, "provoked [the youth convention] to serious consideration of our duties on these matters and gave impetus to the unanimous adoption of three resolutions."¹⁰ In fact, Timmons had urged those in attendance to draft a resolution that could be sent to Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg.¹¹ Four resolutions, which dealt with denominational unity, prohibition, racial prejudice, and war, were included in the July 12, 1928 issue of the *Gospel Trumpet*. The General Ministerial Assembly's resolutions on war and prohibition were also printed in this issue.

There are important differences between the resolutions of the General Ministerial Assembly and the International Youth Convention.¹² However, what is more revealing is the resolution adopted during the youth convention on racial prejudice.¹³

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International Youth Convention Continued from page four

The resolutions on racial prejudice and war can be linked directly to Timmons' address. Timmons used the first part of Acts 17:26 from the King James Version as his text, which reads "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."

Timmons contends that "science is coming very largely to support the Christian view in the matter of racial differences. Our last recent investigations in biological science...lead us to conclude that after all we are not so sure that races are superior in any sense to each other."¹⁴ He asserts that "all these facts show to us that we cannot assign the Negro race as a whole to an inferior position in America."¹⁵

These views, as well as those expressed in the resolutions, are quite progressive for their time and provide insight on what some individuals involved in Church of God youth work viewed as important in the 1920s. This brief history demonstrates that the International Youth Convention has played an important role in instilling values and educating future Christian leaders since the 1920s. May the Church of God continue to guide its youth forward with loyalty to truth.

¹ "IYC 2014-Nashville," Church of God Ministries, accessed May 3, 2014, <http://iy2014.org/?q=node/13>.

² "History of IYC," Church of God

Ministries, accessed May 3, 2014, <http://iy2014.org/?q=node/12>.

³ "Constitution of the Board of Sunday Schools and Religious Education of the Church of God", Article II, Minutes of the General Ministerial Assembly, June 23, 1923.

⁴ Members of the committee include Amy K. Lopez, John H. Kane, Russell Olt, and L. Helen Percy.

⁵ L. Helen Percy, "Sixth International Young People's Convention," *Young People's Friend*, July 28, 1929, 2.

⁶ Percy, "Sixth International Young People's Convention," *Young People's Friend*, July 28, 1929, 5.

⁷ Services for young people continued to be offered at camp meeting after the youth convention separated from camp meeting.

⁸ Speakers for the 1928 convention include R.C. Caudill, B.F. Timmons, A.F. Gray, M.R. Desgalier, W.F. Monk, and J.T. Wilson.

⁹ This address was reprinted in its entirety in the August 12, 1928 issue of *Young People's Friend*.

¹⁰ "The 1928 International Young People's Convention," *Young People's Friend*, July 29, 1928, 3.

¹¹ B.F. Timmons, "What Is My Responsibility As A Christian in Racial Relationships and International Relationships?" *Young People's Friend*, August 12, 1928, 8.

¹² For example, the General Ministerial Assembly offers support to governments and leagues that "are organized to propagate the principles of peace, which have for their aim the outlawry of war." Whereas the International Youth Convention notes its opposition to aggressive warfare and military training in public schools and colleges and its support of the United States government to work with other nations toward resolving international disputes peacefully, of the efforts of Secretary of State Kellogg in making the renunciation of war a stipulation for entering into treaties with other world powers, and of churches contributing

toward "the creation of a strong universal moral consciousness opposed to war."

¹³ The resolution asserts that racial prejudice is "contrary to the Spirit and teachings of Christ, thwarts perfect international understanding, and prevents effective missionary work." As a result the convention resolved to "declare itself against racial discrimination...and approves any effective means of breaking down racial barriers." Cf. "The 1928 International Young People's Convention," *Young People's Friend*, July 29, 1928, 3.

¹⁴ Timmons, *Young People's Friend*, August 12, 1928, 2.

¹⁵ Ibid.

A Reader Shares

I commend the staff of the *Historian* for the current strategy of focused issues. It helps us get a panoramic view of a particular aspect of the Church's Ministry. The current issue of highlighting Women in Ministry is a good example. (Winter 2014)

I notice that the Spring issue will trace the impact that Campmeetings have had on the Movement. They were certainly effective Evangelistic instruments, but, perhaps just as importantly, served as Family Reunions. I am a product of many a Campmeeting experience.

In that issue, please consider featuring the Campmeeting in Kentucky. Perhaps Comargo, started by Rev W. F. Chappel, is one of the most enduring ones in the CHOG. Probably a young Dale Oldham led the singing several times.

Thanks, Merle, for extraordinary contributions to the Ministry of the Church.

Henry Fraley
Lexington, Ky.

WHEN CAMPMEETINGS WERE 'IN' *by Dr. Doug Welch*

When my lot fell with the Church of God in April, 1949 (at Trout Creek, Summerland, British Columbia) campmeetings were still the 'in' thing in the Church of God. In the first week of August, the Provincial Campmeeting was held in Vernon, B.C. and everyone who

could take time off work or take their annual vacation ('holidays' we called them) did so. Even the young people of the Church attended. I was only eighteen then and off to what

promised to be a 'spiritual feast'—at least to hear the elders tell it.

And so it proved to be. Vernon, which was situated at the north end of the Okanagan Valley, had only one Church of God congregation: originally German, but more recently adding English to its schedule of services. The building itself was much too small and could not serve as a gathering place for the scores (scores not hundreds) of 'saints' who peopled the several small congregations in British Columbia—including a few German congregations.

I vividly recall two things about that campmeeting. It was early August, the hottest, driest time of the year, and the heat was searing; and the meetings were held in a large tent which had been pitched in the shade of some large old trees on the grounds of the adjacent Junior High School (adjacent to the 'crackerbox' church building in which meals

were served in a cramped, but cool basement by volunteers from the congregation—and visitors who spent most or all of the week at campmeeting were lodged in the homes of the local 'saints'). You found new friends everywhere you turned.

My first campmeeting in the Church of God, then, was bilingual. The pastor of the church was Lawrence Gehring, himself bilingual. Day-time services were usually in German and night services and the main service on Sunday were in English. If my memory serves me correctly, E.E. Wolfram was the evangelist that year. The following year Pastor Gehring had moved on and Rudolph Jeske (also bilingual) had replaced him. The campmeeting evangelist was E.A. Mauch, who, like Bro. Wolfram, was from the United States (as most of Canadian campmeeting evangelists were).

I tell this story because it illustrates the fact that in the first half of the twentieth century (and beyond) the Church of God and campmeetings in Canada seemed to belong together. As a student at Alberta Bible Institute I soon 'graduated' to the Western Canadian Campmeeting, considered by many to be the highlight of the Church year, but it proved in many ways to be Vernon writ large.

In the beginning, Provincial campmeetings were special times for the early 'saints.' Ontario, which ap-



peared to be an 'extension' of Michigan and the northeast United States, was, of course, the earliest venue of such gatherings. The rise and fall of these events can be traced in Beverly C. Anderson's thesis, *A History of the Church of God in Ontario: 1882-1955* (catalogued at Anderson University). The campmeetings there were rather hit-and miss and moved frequently.

The first, managed by G.T. Clayton, was held in 1889 out in the country near Welland. These were very small gatherings which ceased altogether in 1913, due to the loss of campgrounds in Welland and the 'anti-cleansing' and 'tongues' controversies which erupted there about the turn of the century. Church of God adherents also gradually filtered away, whole families moving at times to take advantage of free homestead land in Western Canada (or to join the Gospel Trumpet Company in Grand Junction or Moundville). By 1927, so Anderson reports (p.93f), only about a hundred 'saints' could be counted in the entire Province.

Continued from page six

This changed, however, from 1927 onward and eventually new camp grounds, controlled by a board of governors, were obtained in the city of London, Ontario. Campmeetings were a part of Church of God DNA. One naturally gave rise to the other. Present camp grounds near Thamesford, managed by the General Assembly of the Church of God in Eastern Canada, are now the location of an annual campmeeting. In Western Canada (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia), almost from the beginning, campmeetings were the 'in' thing. At first, they were provincial, then regional—and all were advertised in *The Gospel Trumpet* (or *Evangeliums Pausane*, which was sensible, given the fact that many of the gatherings were either German or bilingual—or even multilingual, as they were in some cases). In 1908, a campmeeting was held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. An appeal was made for the services of "a German minister" (GT May 28, 1908). Bilingual translators were much in demand.

By 1916, however, a Western Canada Campmeeting had appeared on the sce-

ne. Provincial campmeetings were eventually phased out. In the 1930s, a tabernacle was built in Ferintosh, Alberta and, after a couple of years, dismantled and moved to Camrose (the new home of Alberta Bible Institute). That was the tabernacle I knew and loved. Eventually it was moved to another location in Camrose, then that property was sold, and the campmeeting convened in rented facilities until the establishment of Deer Valley Meadows, now the home of the annual Western Canadian Campmeeting.

In those early years, campmeetings were both engines of growth and centers of learning. They pro-

vided unprecedented opportunities for 'fellowship' and 'networking'—opportunities which perhaps could benefit us now. But, it seems, we have become so sophisticated and technologically aware that such things as campmeetings are now passe. What used to be done by campmeetings, most believe, is much more easily and satisfactorily done by local congregations focusing on individuals and who almost totally devote scarcer resources in much more affluent times to their own betterment and appeal.

However, I wonder what the fact that we now have fewer congregations and adherents in Canada than we had in 1960 may have to say

about this? Something, undoubtedly. To be sure, times have changed quite radically, but perhaps we have changed even more radically—and not necessarily for the best in every way. What was once 'in' is now being phased out by those who are convinced the past has nothing at all to say to us and all communication and learning should be individual and electronic. Campmeetings had their flaws and weaknesses, of course, but one wonders if the Church of God in Canada can be really healthy without them.



On Habitation and Pilgrimage *by Dr. Merle D. Strege, Historian*

As far back as I can recall, the general camp-meeting of the Church of God has convened in June, and so it will again this year. Of course, the number of people who refer to the annual event as “camp-meeting” is declining. A marker of one’s attitude toward the event was the name by which one referred to it; the event was “camp-meeting for Church of God folk who looked forward to it while those less favorably disposed called it “the convention.” Until this year, people who liked camp-meeting called it “Anderson Camp-meeting.” In 2014 that is not possible, unless anachronistically, and the change of location has caused considerable consternation among some of the saints. A little historical perspective may be useful.

First, it is a matter of history that the general camp-meeting moved frequently. That should not be a surprise among a people who habitually call themselves a movement. The general camp-meeting relocated almost as often as the publishing “house,” and in its first quarter-century the Gospel Trumpet Publishing Company moved no fewer than eight times. Of course, in those days the publishing house was the movement’s “center,” so to speak; it made sense that the general camp-meeting would be held nearby. Once the company settled down in Anderson, the growth in number and size of national offices perpetuated that practice. So did the existence of the old “roundhouse” (now Byrum Hall on the AU campus), then the wooden tabernacle, and lastly Warner Auditorium. It’s not difficult to believe that some of the people behind the construction of the last of those structures wanted to tie camp-meeting to Anderson and so insisted on building a 7,500 seat auditorium to be used once annually.

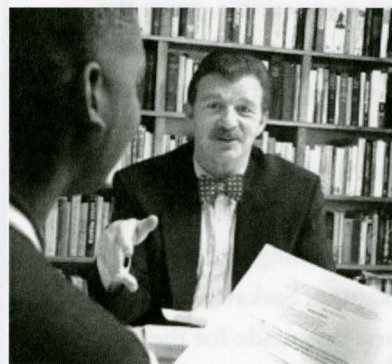
In some ways, the idea of a traveling convention fits the ethos of the Church of God. Before “camp-meeting” became the North American Convention it was, officially, the International Convention of the Church of God. The term “camp-meeting” hearkened back to a day when people lived for a week in tents or other temporary quarters. This summer, the electric and water hook-ups among the maple trees at the east edge of the AU campus bear mute witness to that long-standing tradition. “Camp-meeting” suggests movement, transience, a people on the move. Change the name to “Convention,” and we get a different picture. Demolish the central structure associated with camp-meeting, and a traveling convention becomes plausible. Mind you, Warner Auditorium was not demolished to make room for a convention outside Anderson. This year’s move to Oklahoma City is better seen as the demolition’s unintended consequence.

So far I’ve been describing recent developments within the Church of God. My favorite sociologist, Robert Wuthnow, provides a wider perspective through some observations he makes of shifts in American spirituality. In a study titled *After Heaven*, Wuthnow distinguishes two basic spiritualities in America.¹ He refers to these by several related terms; I’ll use two – “habitation” and “pilgrimage.” The former spirituality is especially tied to place; the latter to “the journey.” To borrow from the Old Testament, it’s the difference between a temple, which is the focal point for sacred space, and a tabernacle, which is portable and thus travels with people “on pilgrimage.” Avoiding hard and fast distinctions, Wuthnow nevertheless connects habitation with an older spirituality and pilgrimage with

newer forms. And that suggests different attitudes among generations. People my age and older tend to habitation; my current and many former students tend toward pilgrimage. It’s not surprising that people my age are not in sympathy with the Oklahoma City site while many of my former students are. Now in their early forties, they have grown up in an American culture in which change is the norm and the experience of the moment is primary.

None of what I have written here should be taken as justification for the relocation of this year’s Church of God convention. On the contrary, I have simply attempted to identify and explain some of the circumstances which have contributed to the move. That’s what historians attempt to do – write narratives that provide the most plausible explanation of how we have come to be the people who we are now are.

¹ Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since 1950*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), cf. pp. 3-11.



Dr. Merle D. Strege is Professor of Historical Theology at Anderson University. He holds the post of Historian of the Church of God and serves as president of the Church of God Historical Society.

CAMP MEETING: SHILLONG, INDIA *By Rev. Fargo Kharkongor*

In Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, a small state in North-east India, in the month of April every year, believers in the Church of God (Ecclesia) would come from the villages and towns to gather together for five days, for business meetings and worship. This Assembly is a big and important annual gathering of the Ecclesia which began in 1941, after our forefathers moved away from the group under the leadership Rev. J J M Nichols-Roy, and continues till today.

The Assembly would begin on Wednesday and goes until Sunday, the grand and closing day of the gathering. The number of people who would come to this Assembly would be about 2000-3500.

After the Church began its mission outside its state borders in the 1980s, believers from the states of Manipur and Assam and even from outside the country, Nepal, would come to this annual Assembly.

For meeting the needs of this gathering the local Churches would contribute financially according to their ability but the major contribution would come from the host church. Accommodation and food are provided by the host Church. Since the beginning we used to have guest speakers from the Church of God in USA, former West Germany and from Ker-

ala, India. Choirs from the local churches would add more beauty to this annual gathering. The congregational singing is acappella till today. One would hear regularly the Church of God hymns and gospel songs in this gathering like *The Church Jubilee*, *Back to the Blessed Old Bible*, *I Am A Child of God*, *Joy Unspeakable*, *I shall see Him* and many more.

The day sessions during Wednesday and Thursday are allotted for the annual business meetings of the different departments of the Assembly. In the night there is a public worship service. On Friday during the day time we have Bible Study and an Ordinance service (Feet washing and Lord's Supper). Women are allotted time to have their worship service. Friday night is a time for evangelistic service. Saturday, as well as the day time is arranged to have children services followed by a Sunday School Prize Distribution service conducted by the Board of Christian Education. In the afternoon time is allotted for the Youth to have their worship service and the Saturday night ends with an evangelistic service.

Sunday is the grand and closing day of the annual Assembly. Besides the delegates attending from the first day, one still a large number of the saints from the villages and towns, who could not travel to the Assembly at the start would come for this final day. The believers, young and old would beautifully dress them-



selves up on this day. Christians from other Church bodies too would come on this final day. There are three evangelistic services on Sunday. The Ecclesia is well-known and praised by many outside its fold for its beautiful congregational singing and when the sanctuary is full inside and out one would feel as if the singing is going to bring the roof down. Some have testified that they were drawn to the Church of God after hearing and listening to its powerful hymns sung during the Assembly.

The annual Assembly has been a great blessing to the life and ministry of the Ecclesia since its beginning. Precious souls got saved during this gathering. Many renewed their relationship with the Lord. Since the delegates are staying together in the school facility of the Church this has helped in furthering and strengthening the relationship and friendship among the believers.

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Camp Meeting: West Middlesex by David Neidert

Stultz and Welch call it the “largest continuous annual Church of God camp meeting in existence today.”¹ This is an important insight not always remembered when considering camp meetings in our heritage.

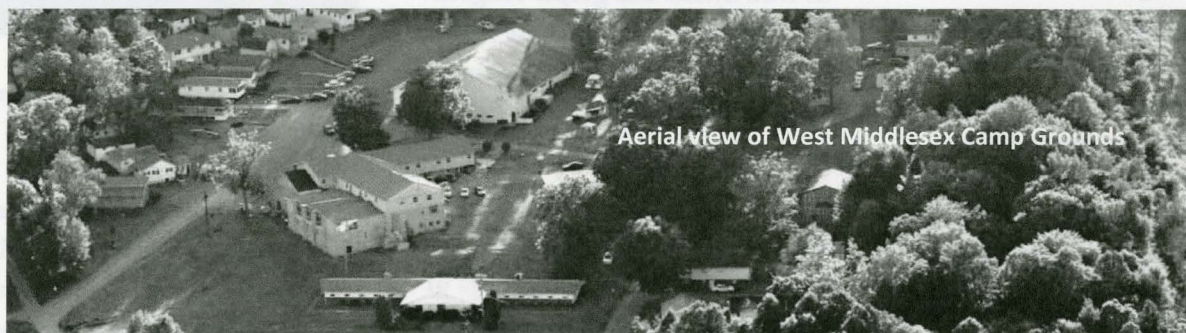
Yet it is a significant feature to herald when discussing the topic.

The West Middlesex Camp Meeting (NACOG) is held annually in Western Pennsylvania on what is known as “Zion’s Hill.”² The National Association, earlier incorporated independently in 1916 as “The Western Pennsylvania Industrial Camp Ground,” began affiliation with the Church of God reformation movement in 1917.³ From its beginning and headquarters in West Middlesex, the National Association has birthed significant ministries such as The NACOG Women of the Church of God, The NACOG Men of the Church of God, and many other educational and leadership programs.⁴

Two longstanding educational and leadership programs should receive

special note. The National Inspirational Youth Convention was established in 1940. Thousands of youth have participated in this convention over the years. Additionally, the In-Service Training Institute (established

116 years ago. But they would not be totally surprised in how the Holy Spirit has blessed what they gave as an offering of their lives.



Aerial view of West Middlesex Camp Grounds

¹ Dale E. Stultz and Douglas E. Welch. *The Gospel Trumpet Years: 1881 to 1961*

in 1957) has provided biblical and leadership development for many church leaders.

Today, from its headquarters, the National Association operates a Ministry Retreat Center and coordinates an association of 420 churches.⁵ The Association will be celebrating its centennial in August 2016. Rev. Dr. Cheryl Sanders is serving as chair for the Centennial Historical Team, also known as “Children of the Pioneers.”⁶

The “Brothers and Sisters of Love” might be astonished at the growth of their work started nearly

(Anderson: Historical Society of the Church of God (Anderson)), 2011, 135.

² “The National Association of the Church of God was officially organized in 1916, having existed as early as 1906 as the “Brothers and Sisters of Love”. The Brothers and Sisters of Love became a Pennsylvania corporation under the name of The Western Pennsylvania Industrial Camp Ground in 1916.” The information on these two website for the National Association are important to read related to its history and its programming. www.nacog.com/history and www.nacog.connectingmembers.com (Accessed June 17, 2014).

³ Ibid.

⁴ A PowerPoint slide presentation at this link is detailed and a valuable visual for the ministries of NACOG. <http://nacog.connectingmembers.com/site/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=VUfnEp21Yak%3d&tabid=138&mid=522>

⁵ www.nacog.com/history and www.nacog.connectingmembers.com (Accessed June 17, 2014).



CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
“Hitherto has the Lord Helped us” 1 Samuel 7:12

Continued from page nine



One could also see the joy and enthusiasm in the young and old to serve one another and to welcome their beloved brothers and sisters in the faith to their homes. During this Assembly one could see in action this familiar song of the Church of God, **The Bond of Perfectness**,

"O brethren, how this perfect love, Unites us all in Jesus!

One heart, and soul, and mind we prove, The union heaven gave us."

The Ecclesia will be celebrating its Platinum Jubilee (75th Year Anniversary) on April 2015 in Shillong. This will begin a year long celebration. Preparation is going on for this upcoming grand celebration. Guest speakers from the Church of God (USA) will be a part of this grand occasion. Prayers are needed for God's leading

and blessing during this celebration.

(Written by Rev. Fargo M. A. Kharkongor, pastor in the Church of God (Ecclesia) Meghalaya, India; the author's photo with his wife Audrey and son Habor). **This photo was taken at the Mawlai Church of God, Shillong, India during a service in 2009.**

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described throughout, except for Canada (maybe there will be time to visit it as well). I can attest that they all have one thing in common: they are a gathering of believers focused on hearing and learning a word from the Lord through powerful preaching and worshipping our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

No newsletter of this size can capture every camp meeting around the world. I received a number of requests to feature them in this issue. While that was not possible, it is my hope the reader finds a reflection of their local experience in the descriptions of the church universal. It is also my hope that the reader will obtain a copy of the Stultz and

Welch book (*The Gospel Trumpet Years*) that features a good chapter on camp meetings (you may order it through the Historical Society). This work provides a more exhaustive history of the Church of God experience.

As my friend Juan Gonzalez Garcia writes, "Camp meetings may not look like they used to; the forms, methods and the use of technological gadgets may ren-

der the events a little different, but may the presence of God be known there and may the camp meetings be filled with true love and true Christian fellowship." And to Juan's insight I would say, *Amen*, let it be so.



The Historical Society of the Church of God

Send Correspondence to:

Historical Society of the Church of God
P.O. Box 702
Anderson, Indiana 46015

Email Correspondence to:

Dr. Merle Strege
Historical Society President
mdstrege@anderson.edu

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Membership to the Society is open to all who are vitally interested in what the Society desires to accomplish as stated in its purpose. Membership dues are \$15 per year (\$10 for students.) Checks should be made payable to: The Historical Society of the Church of God and sent to the Society's address listed under correspondence.



www.choghistoricalsociety.org

Expanding Readership....help us help the Society. The long term viability of the *Historian* counts on increased readership. Help us tell the story by sharing the newsletter with friends, relatives, your church and others.

Comments on the Winter Issue

We are thankful for several responses to our *Historian* Winter Issue. (Vol. 14, No. 2)

Rev. Dr. Susie Stanley wrote, "Seeing Rev. Pauline Maxwell's picture on the front of the last "Church of God Historian" brought back warm memories. I first met "Aunt Pollie" at Camp Sychar Holiness Camp in Ohio in the mid-sixties. I was a teenager and, if I remember correctly, my friends and I were able to attend the camp meeting free for the week if we worked in the kitchen and dining room. I remember discussions about sainthood and wondering if we as teens could qualify as saints. I'm still ponder-

ing what it means to be a saint! I think Rev. Maxwell was still affiliated with the Free Methodists at this time. Her pulpit presence was commanding yet she also enjoyed the songs we made up about "Aunt Pollie."

I was privileged to grow up with female models in ministry like Rev. Maxwell."

Rev Mandy Stanley Miller also wrote, "What a blessing to see the face of Rev. Pauline Maxwell on the cover of the Winter 2014 edition. I cannot remember when we met, but throughout my college and seminary years Aunt Polly would

regularly send me notes of encouragement and financial help for my studies. I appreciated the prayers and words of one not related by blood, but by the Spirit. Her witness still inspires me as I continue in ministry and pastoring. Thanks to Aunt Polly and the others who have encouraged women to hear and respond to God's call with courage and conviction."