

PART TEN
JULIUS EWALD KARL
How did Julius & Yvonne Get Together?
Our Journey toward each other
The Church of God-Anderson Connection
by Yvonne

24 November 1967 – 24 November 2017 our “would-be” Golden Anniversary
Julius Ewald Karl wed to Carol Yvonne Karl
We only made it to 31.

This date in history I, Yvonne, pledged to love, honor, and obey till death do us part. Yes, “obey” was in our vows, but I must admit Julius never brought it up even once during our entire 31 years of marriage. That in itself is amazing since we both had lived independently for a few years and were quite set in our ways. I was 27 and he was on his way to 37.

I (Yvonne) am writing this almost 50 years after our wedding date and have spent time reading through some notes about my husband’s life and the WW2 journey of his family. Sadly, we only had 31 years and two months together before His Heavenly Father received him into his eternal home. I have not had a desire to marry again and am fond of quoting the Apostle Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 7:39—*A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but only if he loves the Lord. But in my opinion it would be better for her to stay single, and I think I am giving you counsel from God’s Spirit when I say this.*

How in the world did a gal from West Virginia come to meet and marry a guy from Germany?

Thomas Edison said: "Coincidences are God's way of remaining anonymous." The roads Julius and I traveled to get to Anderson might appear to many to be coincidences, but I believe there was an unseen hand setting our GPS. Let me share how it happened.

THE ROAD JULIUS TRAVELED

Julius was born to German parents in a German colony in Poland in 1931. His **Church of God** (Anderson) roots were already deep. As older, single youth, his parents and their siblings had heard about some services being conducted by **Church of God** ministers from the United States and dared to go investigate. Their lives were forever changed. Soon thereafter, his parents married and a **Church of God** congregation was established in their village with his dad as the pastor. Four children later, the war came and his dad was drafted into the army and the family never saw him again. Times were difficult. Schools were closed. Christians were killed including some members of his family. Julius and his mother and siblings were taken as prisoners for a time and eventually escaped. His mother’s faith never weakened.

Two days before Christmas in 1953, his family immigrated to Canada. Julius was 22. The first thing on their minds was to establish a **Church of God** (Gemeinde Gottes) in German for all the German immigrants—and there were many. They moved from Toronto to Hamilton the next year, and Julius with a friend took on this project, supervised the building process, worked

full time jobs, and pastored the church in Hamilton, Ontario. The war had consumed his dating years.

After seven years, Julius felt he needed more education. In 1961, he packed his belongings and traveled to Portland, Oregon where he enrolled in Warner Pacific, a **Church of God** College. Because he had only completed fifth grade in Germany, he first had to pass tests to get his Graduate Education Degree (GED). His freshman classes proved very difficult—primarily because his English language skills were deficient. He related how he wrote between the lines in his textbooks, translating them from English to German. As a result of this, one of his professors encouraged him to drop out of college and work as a cabinetmaker—a skill he had learned as an apprentice in Germany.

Julius took that as a challenge, not defeat, and in 1963 he transferred to Anderson College (now University) with the encouragement of Dr. Irene Caldwell. Not only was she one of his professors at WPC, but that very summer she was moving across country to teach Christian Education at the **Church of God** College and Seminary in Indiana. She had invested time in getting to know him and saw his potential. In Anderson, he quickly made many friends and found much encouragement from other faculty and staff. Also, there were invitations extended to him to preach in various congregations in Indiana and then in other states. His popularity as an evangelist was due to his interesting exposition of Scriptures but one can't discount his German accent and winsome personality. During the summers he also did various construction and renovation projects to boost his savings to help pay for his college expenses.

Julius did well at AC and completed his bachelor's degree in history and bible. Then, although it was not in his original plan, immediately after college graduation he began working toward a Master of Divinity degree at Anderson School of Theology. This required three years of study but he enjoyed life in Anderson, was up to the task, and felt it would better prepare him go into a pastorate in the USA. To finance this program, he worked summers making furniture for a The Samuels Furniture Company in Indianapolis.

Once he was in the USA and enrolled in college, he also had a dilemma as there was a plethora of eligible Christian girls. What to do?
(To be continued...)

THE ROAD YVONNE TRAVELED

My parents were born in West Virginia into families that were nominally Christian. When they married, my mother was 17 and a quiet Methodist and my dad at 21 was a fiery Christian Baptist evangelist who also worked as custodian at Nitro High School where mother was a senior. Mother graduated from high school four months later with excellent grades. Dad's Father had taken him out of school in 5th grade when his mother died as he was needed to help with the work at home. Mother's high school teachers were quite disappointed in her when she didn't go to college. Dad's poor grammar might have been an embarrassment to many had he not lived where he did since he had lots of company in that region. He spent quality time with Rev. A. L. Baldrige who was a holiness-preaching Christian Baptist pastor. He ordained dad and also performed their marriage ceremony at Mother's parents' home.

At first, Dad was going out preaching in the hills and valleys of West Virginia, but soon they heard about a new church in their hometown that was gaining in popularity and filling up with the young people. They visited the Nitro **Church of God** and immediately loved it. By the time I was born three years later, they called it home. The Church of God did not have formal membership but they gave an invitation for those who agreed with their theology to “take a stand” for the **Church of God**, and my parents “took a stand.”

When I was four years old in 1944, my parents drove to Anderson Camp Meeting for the first time. I assume my parents slept in a bed, but my aunt age 12 and I age 4, slept on straw ticks on the floor. It was my first and last experience sleeping on straw, but my heart’s delight was the open tabernacle with benches and a sawdust floor. I had been in tent meetings but never one this large. I was familiar with joyful singing and shouting in country churches but the voices of hundreds of people singing flooded my memory and made me want to stay. Even at that young age, I somehow knew these were “my” people too.

My parents served as youth leaders under Pastor Harvey Burchett at the Nitro **Church of God**. When he moved to pastor the **Church of God** in Toledo, his daughter Joyce stayed with our family to complete her senior year in high school. Upon graduation, she moved to Toledo with her parents and soon married the young man who had been pursuing her: Richard Humphreys.

About that time, Dad began accepting more invitations to preach in some of the small country churches – Baptist, Nazarene, Pilgrim Holiness, Christian Baptist and **Church of God**. Also over the next few years did some interim assignments as a pastor in small Churches of God.

Throughout my teen years, I attended the **Church of God** youth camp at Camp Caesar as well as many youth conventions. My senior year of high school, Pastor Haynie took a group of us to the International Convention in Philadelphia. After graduation from high school and throughout my college years and my first three years of teaching at my Alma Mater, I continued to attend Nitro **Church of God** under the pastorates of Mark Haynie and Harold Goodpaster.

In 1964, I left West Virginia to go to graduate school in Michigan. There I attended Pennway **Church of God** in Lansing under Pastor Robert Hazen. Soon thereafter, with a master’s degree in hand, I was hired to teach at Anderson College in Indiana after an interview and a unanimous invitation came from the committee: Nilah Meier (Youngman), Nancy Osborn, Dean Robert Nicholson, and Dr. Robert Reardon. They needed to fill the position because Nilah was going on sabbatical. She was the influential member of the group. I shall forever be indebted to her.

How did I get the interview in the first place? Does anything happen by chance? Clayton Allison, a friend from the Nitro **Church of God** was studying at Gulf Coast Bible College in Houston, Texas. One night he called to tell me that a professor was leaving and he thought I should apply for that position. Texas? No way. But I couldn’t shake it and decided to write to Anderson and see if they were hiring. To my surprise, Dean Nicholson called me to say that in fact I definitely had the qualifications they were looking for and invited me to come for an interview. We set it up for the following Saturday, May 14, 1966. I shared it with a few people

but told them, “It will be a good experience, but don’t worry! I don’t expect to be hired, but even if they offer me the job, I intended to stay in public school teaching.”

The Friday after my interview, the phone rang. It was Dean Nicholson and he was offering me the job. My head was screaming say “No!” but my mouth was saying, “Yes! I’ll come.” Several days passed and I kept thinking of ways to get out of it, but my heart was ruling so I began to make arrangements to resign my current teaching job.

School was out. My few pieces of furniture were picked up by a designated person from the college and taken there to storage until I arrived in September. At Pastor Hazen’s recommendation, the churches of Michigan had hired me to represent the protestant churches for the summer as minister to the migrants who came to northern lower Michigan to work in harvesting the crops. I spent two weeks of this migrant ministry in Alpena and six weeks in Sutton’s Bay, north of Traverse City, working with a Catholic priest. We went out to the farms, held evening services with the teenagers and brought the young children by bus to the school during the day for vacation bible school activities. At the end of my summer assignment, I reported for duty at Anderson College, September 1966.

AND WHO IS STILL IN ANDERSON, INDIANA?

Julius!

By then Julius had completed Year One of three years in the master’s of divinity program. We met soon after I arrived. The college had also hired him to teach German part-time. Julius proposed two months after we met and we became engaged a month later. Finally two weeks before Thanksgiving, 24 November 1967, after being engaged for ten months, we decided to stop stalling and get married.

November 24, 1967, the day after Thanksgiving, we were married in my home church, Nitro **Church of God**, with my former pastor, Harold Goodpaster, officiating.

THE CHURCH OF GOD (ANDERSON) CONNECTION

From the day I arrived at AC, in addition to Dr. Irene Caldwell, Pastors Hillary Rice and Al Donaldson whom I had known in West Virginia, stopped by often to see how I was doing and encourage me. Then there was Dr. E. E. Wolfram who had been the evangelist for the **Church of God** Camp Meeting in West Virginia when I was 16. Even then I was more courageous than I realized for I invited him and his wife to dinner one evening and they accepted. I was so nervous! But after that, they sent me an Anderson College athletic jacket. Oh, I did wear that with pride. I applied to Anderson College and they gave me an honorary scholarship—but that wouldn’t pay for college, so I took the West Virginia Board of Legislature Scholarship and completed a Bachelor’s degree at West Virginia State. All in God’s timing because Julius wasn’t in Anderson yet!

There’s so much more to tell. I could write volumes about the many people who inspired and encouraged me, but the main purpose of my writing this memory is to express my gratitude for our **Church of God** roots. That trail definitely led to the place of our meeting. Even though we were from different continents, different languages, different cultures, and different ages we were in perfect agreement when it came to theology and church doctrine.

After teaching two years, we resigned from Anderson College and went to Indiana University in Bloomington to do a doctoral program. After teaching a while, we both knew Julius' call was preaching and pastoring and never looked back. He gave up two offers to teach at prestigious universities when we went to Edmonton, Alberta at the invitation of Dr. Sumrau in 1975. We spent the summer in a interim pastorate re-opening a **Church of God** that had closed not long before. Julius had become an American citizen in 1973 so he did not pursue the necessary visas to remain in Canada. We came back to the USA and accepted the invitation to pastor at Riverside Park Church of God in Livonia Michigan. After four years there, he pastored New Life Community Church in Westland, Michigan for the next 18 years until his death in January 1999. They had purchased five acres of land, and Pastor Lee Jordan had drawn the plans for a new church facility. Julius' believed until the end that he would be healed.

He never quit loving his **Church of God** heritage. The glue that held us together was rising in the morning and falling to our knees to thank the Lord together for the day, reading and studying the Bible together daily, and falling on our knees together before bedtime. I am immensely grateful for our church background that helped us have that commitment in common.

"Till death do us part" came after 31 years and 2 months of marriage ending Julius' nearly 14-year fight with non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. I have chosen to focus on the positive and spend the rest of my life giving praise to God for His mercy and grace.

Thank You Heavenly Father for bringing Julius and me through 31 years of marriage "to have and to hold, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health" till death parted us in this life. Thank You for Your grace that was greater than all of our problems and for faith in You that held us together till the end. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Note:

I'm guessing a lot of you also met your spouse at church or through church activities and could write pages of unfathomable events that brought you to a place so you could meet. Trace your steps back. Give thanks to God for what He did for you. I do believe God gives us choices when it comes to marriage as well as most decisions in life. I had prayed not to make a mistake in the choice of a mate, and I believe God honored that prayer. Once that choice was made, it was firm. Love is a commitment—the giving of oneself to another just as Jesus gave Himself for us.



Nitro WV Church of God in 1946. Some are still in Nitro; Yvonne is first little girl from the left in the front row. Harvey Burchett was our pastor.



Gemeinde Gottes – German Church of God in Pinino, c.1930 Julius' parents are in the middle row, 4th and 5th from the right. His sister Erna is one of the children in the front row.



Above: JEK First pastorate in North Edmonton Church of God, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada – Summer 1975

