

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

November 24, 1967: I promised 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 explain 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 Lutheran 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, working and supervising the building process all the while working full time jobs. He then served as pastor for the church.

After seven years, Julius felt he needed more education. In 1962, 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, some 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 her and 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.

The war had consumed his dating years, but 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?

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 after marriage with excellent grades. Dad's Father had taken him out of school in fifth 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 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**. Over the next few years, he also 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 annual youth conventions. My senior year of high school, Pastor Mark Haynie took a group of us to the International Convention in Philadelphia. After graduation from high school, 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), Dr. 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 intend 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.

When school was out, my few pieces of furniture were shipped from my apartment in Michigan and picked up by a designated person from the college and taken to storage until I arrived in September.

My Pastor in Lansing (Hazen) had recommended me to the Gideons of Michigan who hired me to represent the protestant churches for the summer as minister to the Mexican 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. From the day I arrived at AC, Pastors Hillary Rice and Al Donaldson whom I had known in West Virginia, stopped by my office 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 had 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.

AND WHO WAS IN ANDERSON, INDIANA, when I arrived?

Julius!

By then, Julius had completed Year One of the three year Master of Divinity program. We met soon after I arrived. The college had also hired him to teach German part-time, and our offices were conveniently across the hall from each other in Old Main. Julius proposed on Thanksgiving two months after we met, and we became engaged a month later, on Christmas Eve. Finally, after being engaged for ten months, we got married the day after Thanksgiving, November 24, 1967. We were married in my home church in West Virginia, Nitro **Church of God**, with my former pastor, Harold Goodpaster, officiating.

The next summer, Julius completed his Master of Divinity degree and we resigned our teaching positions at Anderson College and went to Indiana University in Bloomington to do a doctoral program.

With degree in hand, 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. Semrau in 1975. We spent the summer in an 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 architectural plans for a new church facility. Julius' believed until the end that he would be healed.

THE CHURCH OF GOD (ANDERSON) CONNECTION CONTINUES

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—and that provided stability throughout our marriage.

Julius 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 lifegiving 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.

Epilogue

My first book was published in January 1992. Julius had encouraged me to write it and wrote the Foreword: (Yes, at the last minute he was about to get cold feet and opt out of the marriage. Many, many times later he thanked me for my response to him on this evening before our marriage.)

“In the afternoon before our wedding on November 23, 1967, both of us sitting in the car, Yvonne said to me, “If you feel it’s a mistake for us to get married, you will have to call it off; I won’t! I am convinced it is no mistake.” Almost 25 years have passed since that afternoon. God has helped me to see His will and plan for both me and Yvonne. Our marriage was no mistake! At first, both of us saw marriage, though unconsciously, through the eyes of years of humanistic education. We, and probably more so I, thought we knew how marriage ought to work. It didn’t work for us until God opened especially my eyes to His plan in the Bible. God is the inventor of marriage, not man! The Bible is the Operating Manual, not the opinions of our culture! Most of all, I did not know how to be a husband; I had to be taught by the Lord and Scripture!

Since then everything changed. We began to develop each other. My view of women in general, and of a wife in particular, was brought in line with the Word of God. First, I saw the gifts God had bestowed upon Yvonne, and then I recognized His call on her life. Among many other things, she is called to preach and to pastor, side-by-side with me or independently of me, as the Lord chooses. In the following pages she tells her story and shares her convictions with the scriptural foundation upon which they are based. Read it! God will speak to you because He has a plan for you, too!

It is my sincere prayer that you serve as a Handmaid in the Reign of Almighty God. Remember, regardless how our age defines happiness, true happiness is being in the will and purpose of God (Acts 17:28). Precisely that is what is meant by *Handmaids in the Reign of Almighty God*.

-J.E. Karl, Ph.D.

