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CAPTURING THE 200TH - DOCUMENTING A DOCUMENTARY

Written by Jacob Clagg

Introduction

As I write this, on my desk sit two books which were both written for the express purpose of capturing the history of the CGGC denomination as it moved toward its centennial celebration in 1925. Namely, C. H. Forney's unbelievably large tome, written on the history of the Churches of God in 1913, and S. G. Yahn's smaller book, written and published for the 1925 celebration. These two books helped cement the historical mythology of the denomination, validating and in some ways cultivating Winebrenner as the reformer who never wavered in his mission, even unto his last words. Those two books helped shape the way we think about the history of the churches of God. Even with all of our primary sources that the Archives have to offer, these two books still cast long shadows over those first 100 years.

As I write this, the New Year approaches when we can proudly proclaim the denomination has entered

into its 200th year of life. In anticipation of that fact, we have commissioned a film documentary to be created. At approximately an hour in length, we hope this documentary will represent a similar kind of validation and cultivation of these 200 years as Forney and Yahn's books did. Surely, an hour of film can't compare to more than 1000 pages of comprehensive text, but it is a medium for today, one which captures in some ways less, and in some ways more, what thinkers and historians of the CGGC believe and understand about our history. We think film, images, voiced interviews, and audio will help capture both the truth of history, and the experience of the story tellers too.

In the same way that Forney, Yahn, and other CGGC historians have captured our early history, we hope to capture facts which resonate emotionally and spiritually, and perhaps most importantly of all, inspire us to work diligently to build the next 100 years of the CGGC.



Homeplace Creative



Meg Adams
Chief Executive Officer



Kyle Adams
Chief Operating Officer



Dave De Rurange
Storytelling Consultant

Meet the Team

For this article we've interviewed the documentarians a few times and spoke with them at length about their craft. We've also been on the ground with them while they've interviewed people and walked with them through their production. So, without further ado, let's meet the team.

Homeplace Creative is the team producing this documentary. They are an Ohio based team consisting of husband-and-wife Kyle and Meg Adams, along with Dave De Rurange. You can read all about them on their website: homeplacecreativeco.com, but we thought we'd share some highlights.

Kyle and Meg Adams both have years of experience in news media. Kyle was a meteorologist and

a reporter in Lima, Ohio and Meg was also a news reporter who transitioned into academia, getting her Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Writing from Bowling Green State University. In combination with her



Forney and Yahn's Texts

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Kyle Adams Guides an Interview Subject

work at Homeplace, Meg continues to teach at the University of Findlay as a professor of communication.

Homeplace Creative started from both Kyle and Meg's love of telling compelling stories. Homeplace sits in the middle ground of marketing and storytelling as they try to capture the human quality inherent in every story. If for instance, they are delivering a commercial for a local restaurant about cheese curds, the team makes sure to capture what the staff think about the product, why it's important on the menu, all with a cheeky wink to the fact that cheese curds are a silly food. On the other hand, if they are producing a promo for a non-profit organization that helps tutor kids, they'll interview the founder, capture the emotional story about what provoked the founder to start the organization, while showing the good work the organization is doing in the present. The team believes that "every story has a face" (a human person) at the center and their documentary style focuses on people, which we felt was quite fitting for our denomination.

Meg said that, "we market our business and the way that we tell stories for our clients is always based around a personal or a narrative of a person."

In their past work as reporters, the power of personal human stories inspired them. Now they want to tell stories in a way that helps people and that isn't guided by the constraints of the non-stop news cycle. From these desires, Homeplace Creative was born.

It was this quintessential human spark that drew us to Homeplace Creative, and it's what's behind their name. Meg described Homeplace as a term that came up during her Ph.D work. "It's a term you'll see frequently in Appalachian literature," Meg said. "Which is not necessarily a geographical place, but it's a place where people can come back in their heart to home, to who they are. And we believe stories help you do that."

That Homeplace was relatively local, knew about our history, and was already connected to our denomination through the University made us feel confident about our choice. Likewise, it was clear in speaking with Kyle and Meg that their Christian values aligned with ours, and that truly sealed the deal.

The Process of Discovery

As subscribers and supporters of the Archives Museum, you might be interested to learn how a documentary like this is made. So, let's walk through some of the conceptual steps and chart a course through the mountains of work that needs to be done.

One misconception people tend to have about writing is that 'thoughts precede words'. Sometimes that's true. Sometimes we think about what we want to say, and then we say it. But just as often (and I'd reckon more often) we begin to speak with half formed thoughts at best, and we work out our thoughts through spoken or written words. In saying them, we begin to believe them and understand our beliefs. Very often, we begin speaking or writing with only the topic in mind, and perhaps some

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intuitive feelings surrounding the topic. This act of discovering what we believe, and why we believe it, is the gift of speech and writing, and it very much resembles the documentary creation process.

into the next century was at the foundation of the idea. Not history for its own sake but history that serves the denomination's future. And yet, not a fabricated, convenient history either.

These are the ideas that the General Conference Planning Committee of the CGGC began thinking about in July of 2023. This committee is made up of both senior Ad Council leadership (President, Vice President, and Secretary) along with CGGC staff like Executive Director Lance Finley among others.

The General Conference Planning Committee put together a rough outline of which events were most important, which parts of our history ought to be included or celebrated, and they sketched out the major themes that would be representative of our past and future.

There are numerous reasons why creating a documentary is often a discovery. In this case, it's primarily because film making experts aren't experts in our history, at least, they weren't when they started. By definition they had to learn it and discover it.

It was clear from the start that, unlike Forney's massive tome, much of our history would need truncated or altogether left aside for the purpose of an hour-long documentary. The goal was and remains to be summative but precise and deep when necessary to cover the most significant events and themes.

Furthermore, the process of documenting history requires sources, and we are fortunate that some of our best sources are alive and can speak. So, the expert film makers are also expert interviewers, and in the process of interviewing people, new information and new connections arise between topics that weren't considered in the planning stages.

First, we began by trying to break down our 200-year history into recognizable chunks, and we found that 40-year periods provided a surprisingly clear and consistent method for demarcating our history. Yet, because our goal wasn't to merely retell the past, a purely chronological structure didn't seem warranted. Instead, we used that chronology as a guiding tool for Homeplace, and we subsequently began to try and map core historical themes onto that chronology.

For these reasons, and more, a good documentary unveils itself during the process of constructing it. The story is found as much as it is dictated. Likewise, items of note, like books, letters, pictures, and other artifacts may be dug up during the research process and change or alter preconceptions.

One thing we also quickly realized is that the foundations of our history are, as mentioned previously, remarkably well mapped out thanks to prior historians. People like Forney, Yahn, Kern, and many more have comprehensively covered the first 100 years of our denomination. It's the second 100 years that is less definitive.

This particular documentary process began with a clear recognition of the importance of the moment, namely, the 200th anniversary of the denomination. The desire to capture that history while launching

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Mercifully, we have many primary sources who are alive and who can speak directly to that history as eyewitnesses, and who bring to bear much expertise and credibility.

Some themes rose to the surface immediately, themes like Preaching to the Destitute, New Measures, and Mentorship/Discipleship. These were all present from the very foundation of the denomination, continue to be crucial now, and will be necessary for the future. Themes like Education and Social Action were emphasized when we looked closely at our history. Winebrenner saw the church as instrumental for the transformation of society, and he was right to see it that way. Through education, and social engagement the CGGC has always tried to have a kingdom impact.

From that list of themes, the Committee began writing down the names of CGGC history experts, and people who Homeplace could interview, and who would represent all parts of the CGGC. This was challenging. The scope of the documentary necessitated no more than 10 interviews, and we need people who knew various parts of our 200-year history, including people who were visionary and future looking as well.

If you're a supporter of the Archives, you know as well as we do that there are many, many people in the CGGC who could speak well about our history. Choosing only 10 was difficult and at times sad. The choices we made were judicious, to say the least, and included some last-minute changes to ensure we had the voices necessary (and within budget) to speak well of our diverse history.

Interview Subjects:

- **Ed Rosenberry**
- **Dale Brougher**
- **Victor Johnson**
- **Don Dennison**
- **Kim Shifler**
- **Victor Glover**
- **Rob Guy**

- **Brandon Kelly**
- **Victor Montalvo**

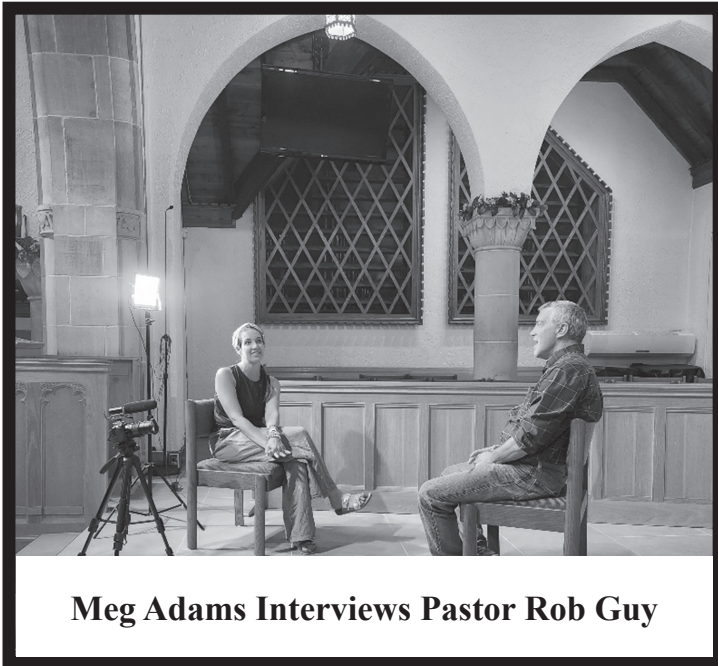
There are, unfortunately, still many people who we'd love to have as part of the script. For instance, we had too few of our international voices. With 2023 being the 125th Celebration of our Bangladesh Mission, this would be an excellent time to speak to more of our influential leaders in Bangladesh, as well as India, Haiti, and so many other international fields where faithful CGGC brothers and sisters are doing God's work. Both the translation process of those interviews and getting quality footage of people from international countries became insurmountable barriers for this project given the budget we had set.

With themes highlighted and interview subjects picked, the main thrust of the Committee's work was done. We had already given Homeplace a small list of sources, including some books, articles, and online repositories that they could look at to start their own research. For instance, Richard Kern's *John Winebrenner: 19th Century Reformer*, a biography of the CGGC's founder was among the lists.



It was apparent in our early meetings with Homeplace that they were quite taken with Winebrenner as a dynamic figure who was both spiritually intimidating and socially dangerous. A caustic figure, Winebrenner's penchant for controversies makes him an interesting person to read about quite naturally.

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Meg Adams Interviews Pastor Rob Guy

One of the first questions Homeplace asked the Planning Committee was “What kind of reaction do you want audiences to have?”

It’s an interesting question and for some, perhaps, a strange one. Many people with a passing interest in history feel that the telling of history is a mere reporting of facts. But those who read primary sources or who read the works of historians know that while history has facts, history presenters almost always have a perspective and a motive. Ever so rarely is the motive limited to a mere reporting of facts, and even more rare exists a presenter with an entirely neutral perspective.

So, when asked about the reaction we want our audiences to have, Homeplace is asking us about the way we wanted the film to present the information. As you might have guessed at this point, the response of the Planning Committee was “Appreciative”, and “Inspired”. The goal of the documentary, if it could be said in as little as two words, was precisely this. Appreciate our history, be inspired toward the future.

With that question answered, it was Homeplace’s time to start researching CGGC history in earnest and making trips across the country to interview subjects.

Finding the Story

I personally witnessed some of the interviews that Homeplace conducted and one piece that was fascinating for me was to see Meg ask questions with nothing in her hands to take notes. She is fully focused and present with the person she’s interviewing. Of course, the cameras are rolling, and special audio tools are picking up every detail of the interview, but it stresses the point. Homeplace doesn’t arrive with pages of prewritten questions aimed at driving the interview in a singular direction. Instead, they come, ask broad questions, and home in on important details, digging for the gold hidden underneath. And they don’t always get what they expect. As I mentioned, that’s the discovery part!

It’s a process and an art form, one which Kyle and Meg reflected on when I last spoke with them. “That’s my favorite part of the job,” Meg said. “You have to be willing to let them kind of talk through their thoughts and their feelings and then



Dale Brouger, Ph.D., Former Professor of Religion at University of Findlay

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there always comes a point in the interview where you can tell people have finally gotten comfortable with you.”

It’s at that point where the interview subjects start to really say what matters to them. Sometimes that means interviews go very long, and sometimes that means lots of stuff is left on the cutting room floor, but it means Homeplace takes the time and effort to treat their subjects like people in conversation, who have genuine beliefs and thoughts, and through mutual understanding, draw out what’s important to them. That goes a long way to describing the difference between an interview and an interrogation.

It also perfectly illustrates why documentaries are so difficult to make. Each interview changes the conception of the overarching narrative, sometimes slightly, sometimes massively, and it means subsequent interviews will also be conducted differently in light of that. It’s an authentic way to deal with data. Each piece of data (each interview) shapes the story, and that shaping compounds, moves, shakes itself out in the final product.

Likewise, it means that once 8 or 9 of these interviews are done, there are more than a dozen hours of audio interviews that have to be worked through.

For Kyle and Meg, that’s listening to each interview again and again. They listen closely to the parts of each that scream importance and resonance with the themes. Kyle and Meg then do something that is very difficult for writers to do... they cut out and delete the stuff that isn’t important.

Well, not literally. Literally, they keep all of the interviews whole as video and audio files, which will be given to the Archive Museum as a gift. But for the sake of the documentary, those interviews need cut down, a lot. Remember, more than 10 hours of interviews need chopped down into about an hour. On average, at least 90% of every interview is cut out.

This process of scouring audio, clipping it out, and stitching it together is similar to a process called

“coding” in academic research, where researchers use guiding themes to look for keywords or phrases in interviews. It’s a way of quantifying and qualifying an interview into data, and the process is incredibly time consuming. As mentioned above, each piece of data has a tendency, once found, to exert pressure on the rest of the data. To use a metaphor, if you’re searching for silver in a pile of rocks, and you suddenly find gold, you’re not looking for silver anymore, you’re looking for gold.

In that same way, the documentary process requires researchers to scrape through the interviews time and again, as each new pass brings to surface new information, or old information seen fresh in a different context.

At some point though, the scraping has to stop. Maybe because of time and budget constraints, maybe because the story starts to come together naturally as the clips and sound bites align to tell a coherent narrative. Either way, the documentarian has to come to terms with leaving some things on the cutting room floor, even some brilliant things.

Once the story starts to find coherence, then the documentary team brings a very rough, audio only draft to the General Conference Planning Committee. It’s listened to, reviewed, and discussed, first between the Committee members, and then with Homeplace, who takes notes, listens to feedback, and negotiates the realities of the content they have to work with. Our first story board meeting made the Committee realize that some voices were missing from the interview cast. To rectify that, another interview was suggested. Again, a discovery, but this time a difficult one, and one that required Homeplace to travel all the way to San Diego, California to get another interview, and then begin the process of finding quotes and themes again.

The Role of the Documentarian

Another interesting point to consider about a docu-

mentary like this is the role of the documentarian as an author. In most films or books, the author's role is quite central to the construction of the narrative. But for *Homeplace*, the story is constructed entirely of quotes, and so there isn't a place for the audience to hear the voices of Kyle and Meg. Instead, their choices during the interviews, during the quote sorting process, and during the arrangement of quotes and clips are the marks of their authorship.

When speaking about how they saw their role, Meg said that, "I see my primary role as listening to weave together a narrative that makes sense for a broad audience." And that tracks with what we've described, doesn't it? The work of taking hours and hours of interviews and stories and distilling it into a single coherent narrative is a little like weaving threads together into a quilt. "When editing a film for a broad audience, you want to make sure that what was communicated in the conversation is communicated in the edits. This process translates to a lot of calculated editing to ensure to visuals work in tandem with the interview edits to communicate context and the depth of the story," Meg said.



**Pastor Ed Rosenberry,
Former CGGC Executive Director**



**Pastor Victor Glover,
Southeast Region Director**

Speaking about their interview with Pastor Ed Rosenberry, Meg said, "Ed Rosenberry gave us an in-depth understanding of Winebrenner's life, values, and impact. Subsequently, we listened for glimpses of Winebrenner and his legacy in every interview afterwards. We were pleasantly surprised at how clear the connections were to us as filmmakers. Often, you have to dig a little for these connections to appear in conversations. We believe that's a testament to the church and how well your values have been communicated and lived out over time."

On the one hand, being limited to quotes lessens *Homeplace's* authorial impact, and on the other, it obfuscates it, allowing the impact they have to go undetected by uncritical audiences. How a camera rests on a subject's face during a pause, or which quotes are ordered in which way, or how certain themes are grouped together can dramatically shape implicit and explicit messages of the film. And still, that is what we are trusting *Homeplace* to do. The Archives motto is "history in your hands", and here we extend our history into the hands of *Homeplace*, asking them to collaboratively tell (and in some ways build) our story.

It might be a scary thing for us, but trust me when I say, it's been deeply meaningful for them.

The Film Impacts the Filmmakers

In speaking with Kyle and Meg, it's clear that they have been profoundly impacted making this documentary. They are speaking to brilliant pastors and servants of the Lord, and as Christians themselves, it's challenging to hear missionaries talk about living life on the edge of comfortability for the Lord, and to do it with such passion and reverence for God.

Kyle described how he's personally been moved by the content of the documentary, saying that, "I have almost like a cheat code, right? I'm getting to talk to these people who seemingly have it figured out... These people, they're so bold. I don't understand it because I'm not like that. And deep down, I would like to be more like that."

Meg likewise spoke about how quotes from the interview subjects float around in her mind while she's struggling with difficult people. Like how one subject told her that "we're not called to fix people, we're called to love them." And in this



**Pastor Victor Montalvo,
Global Reach Latino Ministries Director**

divisive time in our culture, loving people above fixing them is hard for Meg (and hard for all of us.) In these ways, Homeplace really values the work they're doing here on a personal and spiritual level that we believe will bear fruit in the final documentary.

It's difficult to not be impacted by motivational and godly people when you meet them, even as an interviewer (maybe especially so). Kyle flew out to San Diego to speak with Pastor Victor Montalvo at our San Diego Church of God about both the local and global mission work he's leading. "Talking to Victor about his missionary work in Mexico while physically being present to see the US-Mexico border made the issue feel more prevalent and real to a Midwesterner like me," Kyle said. "I felt the weight of the issue and the timely importance of his work so strongly. Also, experiencing a church service as the only non-Spanish speaking person gave me a good sense of the culture and atmosphere they are working to create."

An Interview with Kyle and Meg from Homeplace Creative:

What about this project provoked your interest?

Meg: Obviously, for me, being of Christian faith, knowing a bit about John Winebrenner as a professor at UF, but not a lot, it really intrigued me. The idea of looking back to discern how we move forward is always of interest to me. That was the most interesting aspect for me. We really want to take the time to capture our history so that we can inform our conversations moving forward.

As we've been doing these interviews, it's been moving me to think about Winebrenner, and some of the pastors after Winebrenner who were dealing with these social issues, or just life issues that come up for us now. It's so interesting how prevalent the conversations you've been having as a denomina-



**Pastor Brandon Kelly,
CGGC Mobilizing Coordinator**

tion. As the conversations have continued, there are just new iterations of those questions.

Kyle: I've always been interested in how people interpret Jesus's teachings. I'm drawn to people like Winebrenner. I really admire the fact that the whole idea of the church wasn't about him, or anything of this world, but all about Jesus and that personal relationship with Jesus. [Winebrenner] was a person who led by action, and I really admired that. As I've talked to the people, I've realized that the people I've interviewed are a little like that too.

Can you both describe your philosophy of story telling and how that relates to this documentary?

Meg: Our philosophy is that people's stories matter. There is this human element of connection in what we do. We like to allow stories to emerge through honest conversations and I think that's a little different than how other people approach documentary story telling. We're not going to walk into an interview with pre-meditated questions. Of course, we know what we're looking for and the goal of the documentary, but we really want to allow people to share their life stories.

That's what we've done in all of our work. As

we're now in the interview stage, you start out and people are a little wary of you, but then you talk for a half hour or 20 minutes and they get into it, and you start to see the layers of people's spirits be revealed through their stories. And that's what I love. That really gets us to the heart of what people are talking about.

Our hope is that we can bring those conversations to the screen through a larger story. We're bringing all of these vantage points to help people see a broader narrative or picture. This is how we've always approached story telling.

It's always a humbling process when someone shares a part of themselves. I see it as a really precious gift. I always want to tell people that. People sit down and give you their time and their stories. It's one of the most precious things we can give to each other.

Kyle: I'll add that, the most fun part for me, as I think about other work I've done in the past, is to go into a story without pretense. To just get people comfortable and to open up, and to find out why they do what they do. Connecting that "why" to the bigger picture of the Churches of God, and that 200-year history.

Then we can see how it all fits together. I really



Meg Adams, Ph.D., Interviews Don Dennison

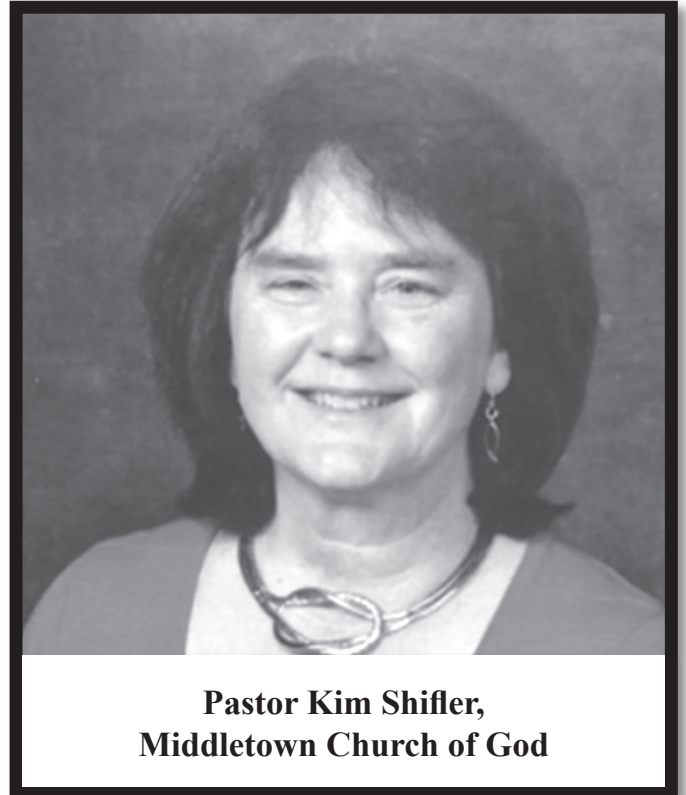
enjoy figuring out how these people tick, and why they've dedicated their whole lives to this. The only way you can get to this is to go in without any pretense. You don't want to guide them but get to an authentic why, or as close as you can.

Do you really not use pre-made questions?! I'm feeling a little embarrassed about my premade questions.

Meg: When we interview, I am listening. I have to be so present in that interview. A lot of times, people will take the conversations in a place where I didn't expect it to go. It's so much more compelling of a story when they are leading. I'm just guiding. I have to be fully present and listening in order to guide them there.

When I have had a list, a set list of questions, and it's just not a natural ebb and flow. They give you more shallow surface level answers. That's my experience as a journalist and an interviewer.

This isn't scientific by any means, but it's tried and true. The best question you can ask somebody



**Pastor Kim Shifler,
Middletown Church of God**

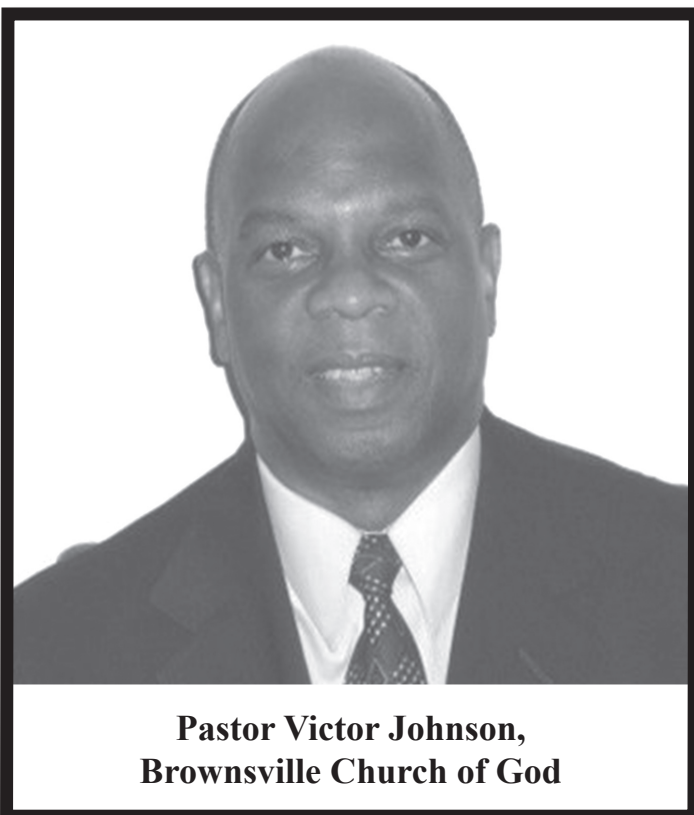
comes at the end of the interview, "do you have anything you want to add". Now they are comfortable, and the interview is over, so they let their guard down. We've learned to apply that earlier so they can give us more of that kind of content.

When you turn the camera off, then they tell you what they really wanted to say but they didn't say it while the camera was on. That's another good point.

For me, the goal is that [the interviewee] forgets the camera is there. You're so into the conversation, listening so closely, fully present, not distracted that you can get to the real story.

What have you learned in this project that has been exciting?

Meg: I'll say that, through the interviews and learning about Winebrenner, and I've been really impacted. I find myself thinking back about some of these stories, and about not losing relationships with people. One of these stories that keeps coming up is how Winebrenner got into a tiff with his



**Pastor Victor Johnson,
Brownsville Church of God**

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son-in-law, and not letting slave owners get kicked out of the church. He really wanted to see lives changed, and he obviously really disagreed with the slave owners, but he wanted to stay in conversations with those people. You can see how much he cared.

We're in a very contentious president election, and I'm thinking, what would John Winebrenner do? He wouldn't cut that person off.

Victor Johnson, he has a class called multi-ethnic conversations. He had this meeting in his church where people can share stories and talk from multiple perspectives. I've always felt that church could be a place where we have discussions that are had with people that we love who share the same values that we do. But I've often felt the opposite way at church. I've been scared to have those conversations because church didn't feel like a safe place to talk. It's exciting to see it happening in the CGGC.

Kyle: Kim Shifler really spoke well about her

theme, that if we put one foot in front of the other, God will do the rest. That's really hard for me. I'm a Christian but man is that tough. When I hear other people talk about that, but then go on to talk about all they've done in their life. I realized, "man, I don't think I'd be able to do that." But it's just really inspiring to me because I'm such a planner... to be that kind of person. To just trust God to lead me to the next step.

Meg: That's also a theme with Winebrenner's life.

Kyle: I just can't imagine getting locked out and going down to the river!

How do you anticipate this project will grow or stretch Homeplace Creative as team/company?

Kyle: I think it gives us a chance to really show what we can do. We've talked about this before. There are all kinds of videos all over the internet. Some are 30 seconds long, or a minute long. But having the opportunity to tell a story that is 45 minutes, or an hour long, really shows what we can do.

As you know, synthesis isn't easy. This is what sets good writers and bad writers apart. I hope we can show that we're doing that in this documentary.

Meg: Being able to take what looks like fragmented stories and pieces of history and putting them in conversations with one another in a way that inspires the denomination to serve God as their called.

Part of that, so much of who we are, how we serve God, and understand ourselves as Christians has to do with the past. Obviously, the Bible is our guiding book, but I really hope that we are able to thread together these stories that we've heard into one large narrative that is celebrating but is pressing pause for a little bit to consider where you've been and where you're going. I hope that carries people well into the future.

What kind of things have you dug up that's been



Rare Bible from the Archives

personally meaningful to you?

Meg: I think for me personally, one of the things that I've been really thinking about in my own research and work in general is how storytelling helps us communicate with people who are different than us. I'll give you a specific example. When we talked to Victor Johnson about his multi-ethnic conversations and his church, he had such great insight about this. He said, "You know, Megan, we're not called to fix people. We're called to love them."

And I find myself hearing his voice in my head. Oftentimes when I myself struggle with loving people, as we all do, my personal first reaction is always to fix it, you know, to fix or try to fix the person or judge the person.

And I do think also just learning about John Weinbrenner, I've also keep reminding myself, you know, there's a time to love people and there's what he did in standing up as an abolitionist and sort of being somewhat countercultural. And I think that's something that also has sat with me for a long time. Considering the cultural moment that we are in right now, history repeats itself. So those are the things that have sat with me, and I've just been grateful to think about them.

What kind of audience are you thinking about when you're making decisions about what goes in and what gets cut?

Kyle: I don't know if it's necessarily a group of people that I have in mind, but I do know that people's attention spans are not very long and I'm always thinking about hooks. [For example] I have a lot from X Person. He fits in with this theme here, but I could really fit him in close to the beginning of the documentary because he's really interesting to me. So, I'm assuming he's going to be interesting to other people. I'm kind of being subjective, right? Based on what I think is interesting and what isn't interesting. But I have a pretty good idea. I've been doing this for like 15 years.



Meg: Yeah, one of the things that we were trained to do, and I don't know if this is positive or negative, I'm still on the fence. But when you have to produce so many stories and there is not an option. The news is going to be on at 5 p.m. Your story has to be done and on the air at 5 p.m., which means you have to be ruthless and you can't overthink the cuts that you're going to make. I can't speak for Kyle, but I think doing that day in and day out for several years really taught me I have that internal editor, if you will, that's like, don't overthink it. Just... boom, it's got to go.

Kyle: When you're interviewing somebody in person, it's almost like an out-of-body experience because you're sitting there listening to this person talk about a lifetime of stories and they're getting emotional about it and they're so devoted and bought in to what they're saying. It's hard to describe. It's a really great feeling that it gives you to be a part of that. And then when you go back and watch it, you remember how you felt when you were talking to them in that moment. And there's always specific sound bites when you can just tell, "oh man, I remember how that made me feel." Or "I just felt so warm. Man, that was just so emotional." And those are the types of places that I build around.

The Finish Line and Beyond

As we've stated, much work remains until we reach the finish line. Homeplace is putting together the first major draft of the documentary as I type, and we're frequently in contact with them as they ask questions about what choices are appropriate. They check in often to ensure historical figures are properly understood, that they have the context

right, and that the core message of the film isn't muddled by extraneous details. It's exciting and we can't wait to have our first watch.

Currently, Homeplace is gathering supplemental material for the film. Supplemental material might be pictures, video (often called b-roll), audio clips, historical documents that can be edited into the film like letters, and other memorabilia. Some of this material might need filmed or digitized.

Soon, the team will spend time at the Archives Museum finding additional materials they need to help fill out the story. I'm personally excited to walk them through the collection and show them the hidden gems in our Archive.

The final cut of the film is to be delivered a few months before Triennial Conference which runs from July 15th -17th 2025, which should be time enough for the Conference office to create clips for a trailer and repurpose the film in other promotional ways for Triennial.

Triennial Conference will be in Harrisburg, PA at the **Best Western Harrisburg Premier, The Central Hotel and Conference Center, 800 E Park Dr, Harrisburg, PA 17111**. As you well know, Harrisburg is the right place for the 200th celebration as it was upon the banks of the Susquehanna River that the denomination was essentially born.

The official debut of the film is set for Tuesday, July 15th, during the evening Celebration at Conference, and while the rest of conference is primarily for delegates, extra people will be invited for the first viewing beyond the regular conference delegates. So, if you're in town, and want to come, we welcome you! Stay tuned for the cost of tickets to the first showing, which will be small and nominal in order to help us have an accurate head count.

On the other hand, you might not be in town, in which case, fret not! The Planning Committee has many ideas beyond the debut for how the video will be distributed. First and foremost, a copy,



along with all interview footage will be made available to the Archives. Likewise, the film will be made digitally available after the debut at no cost.

The film will be licensed with Creative Commons, meaning anyone who is interested in using the film for their own projects, whether they be educational, historical, or creative in nature, can do so free of cost.

The Planning Committee sees this documentary as a gift, and that part of the utility of the will be for history and polity classes, church membership classes, small groups, "book" studies, etc. In the same way that Kern's books on Winebrenner and the University of Findlay have become quintessential reading for the history of the CGGC, we hope that this film will serve a similar purpose for all who are interested in learning more about the denomination, whether they be seminary students, church members, elders, or lay people.

Likewise, because the CGGC's institutions are deeply connected to specific geographical areas, we hope to see the film used, at least in snippets, for the purpose of general education in places like Har-

risburg and Findlay. Because of this, we are tentatively aiming to work with the Hancock Historical Museum to show the film, and we'd love for parts of the film to be practically useful for general audiences who are looking to learn more about history in their own neighborhoods where the Churches of God has made an impact.

At the end of this project, we hope people in our "tribe" and outside of it are encouraged to dig deeper into the CGGC's historical roots. We don't see this film as the definitive history, but an overview, if a well told one.

Beyond history, as we've alluded to, it's important that our eyes are set forward on what the future of God's Kingdom will look like, and the part that the CGGC has to play in helping build it. Now, as ever, it's our goal to have more churches worshipping the Lord, more disciples of Christ growing in their faith, and more Christians living out the truth of the gospel in their communities.

We've mentioned multiple times that the documentary is exploratory, and truthfully, the process of creating this documentary has helped us, even those of us intimately familiar with the CGGC's history, to explore what we value about our history, and what we want the future to look like.

As members of the Archives Museum, we're confident you'll support us in both endeavors, preserving history, and looking toward the future.

Without the Archives Museum (and your support), a project like this wouldn't be possible. The wealth of resources, made available in a centralized location, neatly organized, wonderfully kept and maintained, has been instrumental in turning the dream of this documentary into a reality.

Thank you,
Jacob Clagg

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CGGC Archives Museum
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Make checks payable to: Churches of God General Conference.

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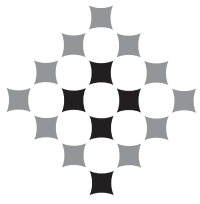
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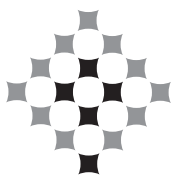
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 our legacy!**

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