**John Kiesz**

**By Richard C Nickels**

**John Kiesz** (1903-1996), one of the most remarkable ministers of the Church of God, Seventh Day, greatly influenced the Church of God, Seventh Day, in the twentieth century. The grandson of Philip Kiesz, Sr., John grew up in a German Sabbath-keeping Church of God near Eureka, South Dakota. In 1898, a minister named Halbesleben accepted the Sabbath, and as a result, a number of Seventh Day Adventist churches became independent Churches of God. John's uncle Christ Kiesz was converted with a large group of younger people in 1910. It was not until 1923 that the Germans came into contact with the Church of God General Conference at Stanberry, Missouri. John Kiesz was converted in 1924.

About 1925, John Kiesz became contributing editor of the German *Bible Advocate*. He met his wife-to-be, Katherine, at a camp meeting near Eureka in 1927. They were married in 1929. After graduation from Arizona Teacher's College, they began to travel and sing gospel songs. Their unique style of singing brought them to over forty states and several Canadian provinces. In 1931, John first came to Stanberry, where he served for two years as editor of *The Bible Advocate*.

In 1934, the Kieszes went into full-time evangelistic work. During the 1940's, Kiesz worked closely with Herbert Armstrong. The Kieszes lost their first two children, but their two younger daughters, Pearl and Martha, assisted them in evangelistic meetings by singing, from 1940 to 1956. From 1959 to 1963, Elder Kiesz was a professor at Midwest Bible College in Stanberry, continuing evangelistic activity in the summer months. For several years, John Kiesz pastored a church in St. Louis, Missouri. The Kieszes traveled widely, building up many churches around the country. Gaining funds from the sale of a record album of their gospel songs, the Kieszes conducted a missionary trip to many foreign countries in 1971. For many years, the Kieszes lived in Canon City, Colorado. Even in his later years, Elder John Kiesz was an excellent speaker, and very knowledgeable of the Scriptures. His faithful wife of sixty-four years, Katherine, died in 1993.