

"My life is richer for having known them"

A Tribute to Two Living Saints

TERRIL D. LITRELL



The year 1934 saw the launching of a highly successful evangelistic effort on the part of the Kiesz's.

WHY wait until persons have passed from this life before we pay them special tribute for the good they have done to make this world a better place in which to live? Why not "give them their roses while they live"? It is my philosophy to do just that.

I give honor to two people who have a special place in my heart—Elder and Mrs. John Kiesz, who off and on for over 40 years have lived at Stanberry, Mo.

Elder and Sister Kiesz first came

to Stanberry in the fall of 1931, where Elder Kiesz served as the editor of *The Bible Advocate*, official magazine of the Church of God (7th Day). After two years of service in Stan-

berry the Kieszes returned to the Dakotas for evangelistic work.

Elder Kiesz was born in South Dakota and met his wife-to-be for the first time at a camp meeting near Eureka, S. Dak., in 1927. She had come from Canada. In 1929 they were married. They were both educated at Arizona State Teacher's College, and during that time they began to travel and sing gospel songs.

In the spring of 1934 "The Singing Evangelists" went into full-time evangelistic work. Over the years they developed a unique style of singing, and were in demand in over forty states and several provinces of Canada.

Their long career of evangelism has presented the Kieszes as singers and preachers in tents, school houses, cottages, street meetings, roadside meetings, jails, penitentiaries, missions, and well-established churches.



Elder and Sister John Kiesz in the early years of their marriage.

In April, 1934, the Kieszes started from Eureka, S. Dak. in a Model A coupe, pulling a two-wheel trailer with a small tent which they would pitch along the road when night came. They carried their dishes, food, bedding, and other personal belongings with them.

The income from evangelistic work in those days was meager. If the Lord would keep the preacher humble, the people would keep him poor.

Regardless of hardships, the Kieszes were happy; they felt that their needs were supplied. They had each other and a small son, Harley, whom they loved dearly. In the fall of 1934 that little ray of sunshine was snuffed out; little Harley passed away at age 1½ from a ruptured appendix. He was buried at Galena, Kan., while the Kieszes were engaged in an evangelistic effort in that area.

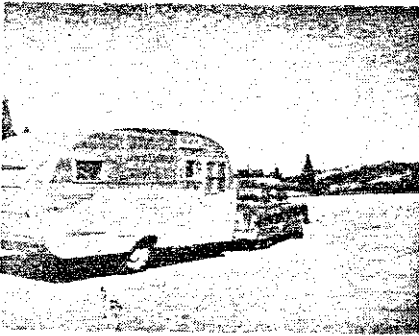
Saddened by the experience of losing their first child, the Kieszes nevertheless took courage and continued to travel on as good soldiers of the cross.

In 1937 the Kieszes laid to rest their second child, Sarah, while engaged in an evangelistic meeting in the state of Washington.

From 1940 to 1956 the Kieszes' two younger children, Pearl and Martha, assisted them in their evangelistic services by singing.

From 1959 to 1963 Elder Kiesz served as a professor at Midwest Bible College, and continued his evangelistic work during the summer months.

The latter part of the 60's found the Kieszes faithfully engaged in evangelistic work during the summer their "home on wheels," helping to establish new churches, and staying



The Kiesz' home on wheels.

with them until a pastor could be assigned to the area.

For many years the Kieszes had longed to do foreign missionary work, but funds were not available for this much-needed field.

In 1970 Elder and Sister Kiesz had a vision and the faith to believe that this vision could become a reality. They would make a record album of a collection of songs that they had sung through the years in their traveling ministry. They believed that the people to whom they had ministered would want this album in memory of their work. They were correct. People from far and near wrote to the Kieszes for their album. The records sold like "hot cakes," and within a year the Kieszes had raised enough money to make a missionary journey to Africa, Israel, Greece, Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Holland, and England. Since the Kieszes speak five languages, there was no language barrier in most places where they went.

Since arriving back in the states in September, 1971, the Kieszes have traveled to various churches showing color slides of their missionary trip.

They hope to return to the foreign mission field again as soon as the necessary funds have been raised. The Kieszes have plans for concentrating their efforts in Africa for a while.

Katherine and John Kiesz are fantastic people. Though not young any more, they are still just as zealous as ever. Much of their work is strenuous, tiresome, and dangerous. The love for the Saviour constrains them to keep working as they do. Their lives have been of profound simplicity and untarnished love.

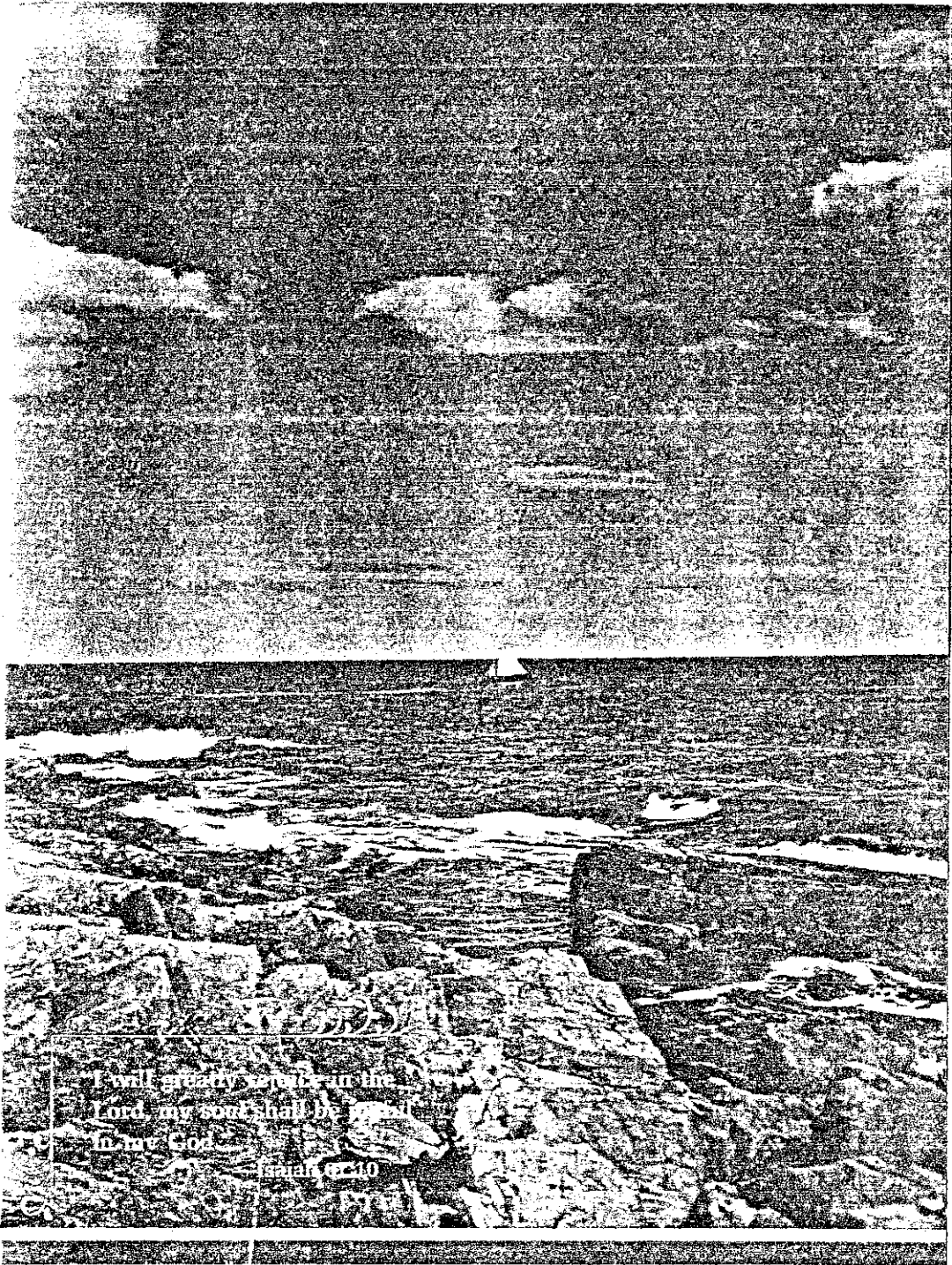
When talking of their life together as traveling evangelists in America and as missionaries abroad, tears will often flow down Sister Kiesz' face.

My life has been made much richer from having known these two people; therefore, I give them the honor, praise, and respect that they so heartily deserve.

May our Heavenly Father bless and protect you, Elder and Sister Kiesz. Keep on singing. We love you!



Elder and Sister Kiesz carrying part of their luggage leaving for abroad.



Church of God (7th Day)

Phone 783-2313

Stanberry, Missouri