



John D. Nichols Passes Away

CLEVELAND, Tenn. -- Rev. John D. Nichols, former assistant general overseer of the Church of God and founder of Care Ministries, died in the early morning hours of March 13, 2009, surrounded by his family that included his wife of 57 years, Norene.

John D. Nichols

Rev. John D. Nichols, worked in partnership with COG World Missions to develop children's ministry and disaster relief around the world. World Missions celebrates his life of service and ministry.

Nichols' life of ministry spanned nearly six decades and included a wide variety of appointments and elected positions. He was first known for his fiery brand of evangelical preaching which placed his early ministry in the spotlight. At the General Assembly of 1986, John Nichols was elected to the International Executive Committee of the Church of God as general secretary-treasurer. In successive years he would be elevated on the Committee, reaching the position of second assistant general overseer until tenure limitations in 1994.

It was in 1994 that the ministerial career of John Nichols took a defining turn. Upon leaving the Executive Committee he accepted the directorship of the Department of Benevolence, which at the time consisted primarily of the oversight of three children's homes in the United States. Under Nichols' 12 year tenure at the post, he greatly expanded the benevolence ministry of the Church

of God. In 2000 the Church of God Division of Care was begun which today includes such departments and ministries as Ministerial Care, Chaplains Commission, Helping Hands Ministry, Ministry to Israel, Widows Ministry Center, Smoky Mountain Children's Home, Heart of Florida Youth Ranch, New River Ranch and the North and South Carolina Homes for Children.

"The Benevolence ministry of the Church of God has suffered a tremendous loss," stated Dr. Donnie Smith, current director of Care Ministries. "John Nichols was the father of the expansion of Care Ministries. He has been a model for each of us in demonstrated care and compassion for the hurting and oppressed." Smith referenced a turning point for the benevolence ministry when a \$5 million offering was received at a general assembly which made possible the establishment of 35 orphanages around the world.

Another highlight of Nichols' legacy in Care Ministries was the establishment of Operation Compassion, a relief agency that has grown from one pickup truck in the mid-1990s to an organization that has shipped over \$1 billion worth of goods and supplies across the country and around the world. Since its inception, Operation Compassion has been on the scene of every major disaster and has spawned other independent agencies which work closely with Operation Compassion in relief situations.

A partnership cultivated by Nichols with the Lazarus Foundation of Bristol, Tennessee, has been a key element in the success of Church of God benevolent ministries. In 2006 Nichols accepted the invitation to become Executive Director of the Lazarus Foundation where over the last two years he helped establish and finance multiple benevolent projects both in and outside the Church of God.

Over the course of his life, John Nichols' primary passion was for the salvation of lost souls. According to statistics on file at the Church of God Department of Business and Records, his ministry is credited with 8,836 sermons preached, 334 people baptized in water, 28 churches organized, 6,861 baptized in the Spirit and 9,938 converted or restored. In addition he served as chairman and liaison of the Lee University Board of Directors, chairman of the West Coast Bible College and Northwest Bible College boards of directors, and chairman of the World Missions and Evangelism boards. He was the recipient of the Litt. D. degree from Lee University and was honored with placement in the prestigious Hall of Prophets at the Church of God Theological Seminary.

Church of God General Overseer Dr. Raymond Culpepper said "I have known John D. Nichols most of my life and have always known him to be a man of boundless Christian energy and a commitment to the cause of Christ. In all of these years I have never known Dr. Nichols to hit a life plateau. He has taken every appointment as a challenge to his faith and has excelled every place he has served. John Nichols leaves more than a mark—he leaves a leadership legacy for all

of us to follow.”

"Dr. John D. Nichols has been a close personal friend since 1965 when we worked in the Dakotas together. He was a man of integrity and vision. His powerful preaching and compassionate care have impacted millions," says General Director of World Missions, Douglas LeRoy.

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