

ARTHUR MEIER: TEACHER AND MISSIONARY
An Oral History

Interviewer: Michael Borgwardt
Senior Church History Project, 1994

Art Meier is referred to as both teacher and missionary in the title of this videotaped oral history. The dual title is intentional. It is the opinion of the interviewer that the contributions of our teachers are sometimes overlooked as we chart the influence of pastors on the history of our synod. Art Meier's contribution to our mission efforts among the Apaches is a prime example of the great blessings that the Lord of the Church has given to us through those in the teaching ministry.

Those familiar with the recent history of WELS Apache Missions could not think of the school at East Fork on the upper reservation without immediately considering Art Meier's pivotal role in its development. Nelson Zimmermann, a former member of Mr. Meier's faculty who is presently teaching at another of our mission schools in Bylas, Arizona, has made this observation:

In most of the missions here in Apacheland the Lord has seen fit to send a single missionary who became the driving force and the defining influence in the development of that particular mission. If you mention Peridot you think Rosin; San Carlos-- Uplegger; Whiteriver-- Guenther; and Bylas-- Hadler... Mr. Meier's legacy is the "big" mission at East Fork.

That his name stands beside these other remarkable missionaries should be reason enough to ask him to record some of his recollections of his work and advice for fellow church workers. Perhaps such an undertaking is especially appropriate at the present time-- only one year after the 100th anniversary of the beginning of Apache missions. Mr. Meier's experience with Apache missions began as the field was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. This affords him a unique perspective on the great changes that have occurred on this mission fields in the second period of its history.

While the subjects discussed in this interview may be familiar to us, Mr. Meier describes the work and the people of this mission as only an insider could describe them. If these insights and observations help us to understand the unique difficulties and rewards of cross-cultural work, as I believe they can, we stand to benefit from the recollections of this missionary.

This interview of Art Meier was conducted in the living room of his Phoenix home on Monday, February 28, 1994.

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