

The Journal

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John 8:32

May 31, 2006

Family ministry decides to begin keeping the Sabbath

The writer is founder and director of the Association for Christian Development (www.godward.org) and pastor of the Virtual Church. He is also a director emeritus of the Bible Sabbath Association (Biblesabbath.org). Mr. Westby lives with his wife, JoAn, in the Seattle area.

By Kenneth Westby

UBURN, Wash.—I had the pleasure of meeting Pastor Doug Howard, his wife, Elaine, and several of their seven children this past December. My daughter Kari and her husband, Lance Stafford, are neighbors of the Howards, who live a quarter mile away down a country road in a farming community about 15 miles north of Spokane, Wash.

Kari and Lance were surprised to discover that the Howards celebrated the Sabbath and invited JoAn and me to meet them for a Sabbath meal one Friday night.

We arrived from our home in the Seattle area in time for a delightful evening of food and fellowship capped off with a family musical presentation of Sabbath-evening songs they had written and put to music.

I found the testimony of the Howards' religious and spiritual journey moving and inspiring, and I want to share it with the readers of *THE JOURNAL*.

Not all roads lead to Rome, nor does Bible study lead every student to embrace the same doctrines. Everyone approaches Scripture with a bias, whether acknowledged or not.

We get our biases from what we were taught, from our family's understanding of what the Bible is about,

from others, from tradition, from the media and from popular culture.

If one has been conditioned to believe Sunday is the Christian day of worship, one can rationalize that belief's lack of biblical evidence by deferring to tradition, religion experts and the smart Catholic and Protestant theologians who centuries ago accepted as fact that the Sabbath had been changed from Saturday to Sunday.

It wouldn't occur to the average person to challenge almost 2,000 years of Christian tradition.

In spite of a majority bias toward a Sunday "Sabbath," every year many Christian folk discover that the biblical Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, Saturday. Each of these new Sabbatharians has a story to tell of his journey from Sunday to Saturday.

I always enjoy hearing these stories, believing as I do that the Sabbath is one of those important gateway doctrines that lead to a deeper understanding of the Kingdom of God.

This is certainly the case with the fascinating journey of Pastor Doug Howard and family. It brings to mind John Bunyan's classic 17th-century novel *Pilgrim's Progress*, the adventures of a young man named Christian navigating the difficulties of life on his journey to the Celestial City.

It was an allegory to inspire Christians to continue moving Godward throughout life. The true story of Pastor Doug Howard's spiritual journey likewise inspires.

Doug Howard, now 55, was reared in the Baptist tradition. His parents were known as "Bible people."

In fact, his parents told Doug that

See PASTOR, page 4



GENERAL CONFERENCE OF ELDERS—Richard Pinelli of the Cincinnati, Ohio, area (left) and Mark Mickelson of Spokane Wash., visit at a reception for delegates at this year's general conference of elders of the United Church of God. Mr. Pinelli is one of two new members of the church's governing council of elders. See the article about the conference beginning on this page. See more photos from the conference on page 5. [Courtesy photo]

Delegates name 2 council members at United Church of God's general conference of elders

The writer, who lives in Big Sandy, Texas, serves as an elder of the United Church of God.

By Ellis Stewart

CINCINNATI, Ohio—"Service and Leadership" was the theme that led the general conference of elders of the United Church of God May 6-8 at the Holiday Inn Eastgate in Cincinnati.

Three hundred seventy elders and their wives attended the 12th such conference, counting the founding one in 1995.

The main item of business was the election of officers who sit on the 12-man council of elders.

The delegates voted to keep incumbents Bob Dick of Portland, Ore., and

Richard Thompson of Eustis, Fla., and elected new council members Bill Eddington of Melbourne, Australia, and Richard Pinelli of Cincinnati.

Not returning to the council are Tony Wasilkoff of Toronto, Ont., Canada, and Mario Seiglie of Anaheim, Calif.

Limited space

This year's gathering began with the conference delegates and their families attending a Sabbath service in the hotel's main hall, with Mr. Wasilkoff and Jim Franks, a council member who lives in the Cincinnati area, sharing the speaker's podium and Ed Smith, also of the local area, conducting the song service.

The Sabbath service was different

this year in that, because of limited space, no local church members had been invited to attend.

On Saturday evening a "chairman's reception" with hors d'oeuvres and other refreshments was followed by a question-and-answer session conducted by the operations managers (Tom Kirkpatrick, financial services; Mr. Franks, ministerial services; and Peter Eddington, media and communication services) and other UCG officials.

Sunday happenings

Shortly after 9 a.m. Sunday the chairman of the council, Mr. Dick, called the meeting to order.

The official business of the conference, including the voting, took place

See CONFEREES, page 5

Conference convenes in Atlanta to study 'one God'

The writer, coordinator of the Virginia Sabbath Assembly, is author of numerous articles and manages a Web site (www.creatorgod.org) devoted to the study of the nature of God. He lives in Charlottesville, Va., with his wife, Kristie, and four children. Write Mr. Sjoldal at sjoldal@juno.com.

By Jonathan Sjoldal

MORROW, Ga.—In what has become an annual tradition, Ken Westby of Auburn, Wash., again invited brethren from all over the country to gather to study the nature of our God.

The fifth annual One God Seminars took place in the Atlanta, Ga., area Friday, Saturday and Sunday, May 19-21.

"Is there any doctrine more important than the knowledge of God?" asks Mr. Westby in a printed promotion of the seminars.

Mr. Westby founded and operates the Association for Christian Development (www.godward.org), a Church of God ministry based near Seattle.

"The zenith of knowledge," Mr. Westby continued, "is to understand and know the one who planned the cosmos; to know the one who creat-

ed us in his image and to discover his unique plan for us. We will never 'arrive' at a complete understanding, but there is no more noble use of our time, energy, and material than the pursuit of knowing God."

Most of the speakers in this year's seminars made the case from the Bible that God the Father is the only true God and that Jesus the Christ is the Son of God but not God.

Those who believe in "one God"—that Jesus is not God—are sometimes referred to as unitarians or unitary monotheists.

Christians of the Church of God tradition who believe God is a family of two beings are generally referred to as binitarians and sometimes ditheists or bitheists.

Believers in the traditional Christian view, that God is three "persons" in one Godhead, are Trinitarians.

After each presentation the speaker answered questions from the audience, and lively discussion frequently ensued.

Mr. Westby emphasizes that the annual seminars are held in the spirit of brotherhood, and that the goal is to maintain an air of collegiality and

See CONFERENCE, page 6

Journal's Web site adds COG memorial pages

FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich.—*THE JOURNAL'S* Web site has a new section that memorializes Church of God members who are no longer with us.

Webmaster Alan Ruth of Farmington Hills said the new pages at www.thejournal.org list more than 850 names and include Web pages dedicated to the memory of Dean Blackwell, Buck and Pearl Hammer, David Jon Hill, Jack Hines, Herman Hoeh, Lon Lacey, Ernest Martin, Stanley Rader, Jim Rector, E.B. Vance, Gerald Waterhouse, Linda Hardy White and many others.

"Most of the motivation for adding the section," Mr. Ruth said, "was that there's been not only many deaths recently in the Church of God but I've had friends in the Church of God die recently and also family members."

He noted that his father died May 20 and Church of God friends Richard Nichols of Gillette, Wyo., and Jim Rector of Texarkana, Texas, also died recently.

Mr. Ruth invites *JOURNAL* readers to send him information about Church of God family members and friends who have passed on. Write him at alan@thejournal.org and mention the deceased's name and date of death and include, if desired, an obituary and, optionally, a photo.

- 2 Readers react to Brian Knowles' resignation as *JOURNAL* columnist
- 3 Kathleen McCann says the laps of Gideon's army were not a luxury
- 3 Wesley White asks you whether you find it difficult to work within a group
- 20 Young Church of God members take top academic honors in Big Sandy

Announce your site for Feast 2006

For the 10th year *THE JOURNAL* is publishing a monthly listing of sites and dates of Feast of Tabernacles observances.

Members of Church of God and other Sabbatarian Christian fellowships will meet at several hundred Feast sites this year. Now is the time to send in your Feast contact, location and date information.

When submitting information, writers should state the dates (on the Gregorian calendar) on which their observance (including the Last Great Day) will fall in 2006. Otherwise *THE JOURNAL* will assume each observance will begin the evening of Friday, Oct. 6, and run through Saturday, Oct. 14.

Send to info@thejournal.org or P.O. Box 1020, Big Sandy, Texas 75755, U.S.A.

For more information see the second installment of this year's listing on page 18 of this issue.

Congregation defends Sabbath in newspaper ad

BIG SANDY, Texas—The Church of God Big Sandy recently paid for an advertisement in *The Big Sandy & Hawkins Journal* (the local weekly newspaper for this East Texas town of 1,200 people) to correct misinformation about the Sabbath.

Although many congregations place ads in newspapers, this situation was a little different in that Big Sandy was once the principal Feast of Tabernacles site for the Radio Church of God (which later became the Worldwide Church of God) and is the former home of Ambassador University.

Dave Havar, pastor of the congregation, told *THE JOURNAL* the congregation's ad was the idea of Reg Killingley, a member of the congregation.

"Although the ad was submitted without a personal byline, Reg Killingley deserves the credit for it," Mr. Havar said. "He came up with the idea, he wrote the text, and he contacted the newspaper."

Mr. Havar also mentioned that Mr. Killingley sought suggestions from other members of the congregation before submitting it to the newspaper.

"Because Reg suggested that the name of the con-

See DUELING, page 5

Church of God youths take top school honors

By John Warren

BIG SANDY, Texas—End-of-school-year activities often give school districts an opportunity to focus on the academic achievements of their students.

One such event was the annual Academic Banquet for Big Sandy High that took place May 9 in the building owned by the Church of God Big Sandy, where the school honored many students including Church of God youths.

A highlight of the evening was the naming of Church of God members as the valedictorian and salutatorian of the graduating class of 2006.

Jessica Killingley, daughter of Reg and Carol Killingley of Big Sandy, is the new valedictorian, and the salutatorian's honor went to Matt Fisher, son of David and Laurie Fisher of Pritchett.

Miss Killingley and Mr. Fisher attend with the Church of God Big Sandy.

Part of the honor of having the top grade-point averages over their high-school careers was the chance for the two scholars to address their classmates and the audience at commencement ceremonies on Friday evening, May 26.

Miss Killingley, who gave the invocation, received top honors in Advanced Placement (AP) U.S. history, anatomy and physiology and AP calculus.

She was president of the National Honor Society, was on the A-B honor roll, placed third in University Interscholastic League (UIL) district-level "ready writing," was student-council vice president and was named distinguished graduate.

Miss Killingley was awarded multiple scholarships to various institutions of higher learning.

Mr. Fisher, vice president of the National Honor Society, received awards in history, math models and economics and placed fifth in district UIL academic competition in persuasive speaking.

Mr. Fisher was listed as a distinguished graduate, was on the A-B honor roll and also won scholarships.

In the footsteps

Following in the footsteps of her older sister is Jennifer Killingley. Jennifer, a sophomore, was presented the top award for world history.

She was a cast member of the annual one-act play, was inducted into the



AWARDS—From left: Meagan Overton, Jessica Killingley and Matt Fisher. [Photo by Reg Killingley]

National Honor Society and was named to the A-B honor roll.

Two younger brothers of Mr. Fisher received academic honors. Mark Fisher, a junior, was presented the career-preparation award and is a member of the National Honor Society.

Younger brother Jordan, a freshman, took home the biology award and was named to the A honor roll.

Other outstanding seniors

Two more Church of God members were members of the senior class and found themselves in the academic spotlight.

Meagan Overton of Hawkins received the Food Science award, was a member of the National Honor Society, was listed as a distinguished graduate and garnered multiple scholarships.

Miss Overton is the daughter of Mac Overton of Gilmer and Melodee Overton of Hawkins.

Mr. Overton is editor of *The Gilmer*

Mirror, the weekly county-seat newspaper, and attends various Church of God congregations. Mrs. Overton attends the Church of God Big Sandy and serves on the faculty at Big Sandy High School.

Michael Case of Pritchett is the son of Eric and Nancy Case. Mr. Case, along with earning a perfect-attendance award, was on the A-B honor roll and was an honor graduate. Mr. Case also received a scholarship.

The list goes on

One outstanding student at each grade level is chosen to receive the Wildcat Award. The Wildcat (the school mascot) Award goes to a student whom the school chooses for his character as well as being a good student.

Mr. Case's sister, Cassie, a freshman, won the Wildcat award as well as a listing on the A-B honor roll. The Case family attends the local congregation of the United Church of God.

Another member of the UCG, Wynn Worthen, a freshman, son of Perry and Nancy Worthen of Big Sandy, was honored for making the A honor roll.

Wynn's cousin, Christine Wilson, also of Big Sandy, who attends with the Church of God Big Sandy, was not part of the high-school banquet but joined Wynn and his parents at the banquet along with her parents, Michael and Sarah Wilson, and her grandmother, Helen Worthen.

Miss Wilson, an eighth-grader, would be named later as earning the highest grade-point average in her class and had the honor of delivering the valedictory address at the eighth-grade-graduation ceremony on May 25.

Miss Wilson received awards for having the highest grades in science, algebra, English and social studies.

Sarah Wilson, Christine's mother, is a member of Big Sandy Independent School District's board of trustees.

Notes and quotes

Paul Zapf dies

LAWRENCEVILLE, Ga.—Paul Joseph Zapf, 63, died Feb. 5 of an apparent heart attack.

Mr. Zapf, a former elder of the Worldwide Church of God and the Associated Churches of God, was born in Festus, Mo., June 8, 1942. When he was 15 he and his family began attending services of the Radio Church of God, including festivals near Big Sandy, Texas.

When Mr. Zapf came to Ambassador College, Pasadena, Calif., in 1958 at age 16, he was the youngest student to have entered AC.

The WCG's Web site noted that Mr. Zapf is credited with beginning the selling of concession-stand items by students during the annual Rose Parade to help pay for student activities including field trips.

He is survived by five children, Aletha Zapf Buckley, Katrina Zapf-McMillan, Elizabeth Triplett, Derek Zapf and Carita Zapf; six grandchildren; his former wife, Patsy McHale; and a sister, Sarah Sneider.

Assemblies will distribute biblestudy.org info

FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich.—A soon-to-be-released study CD about the book of Acts distributed by the Assemblies of God, based in Springfield, Mo., the world's largest Pentecostal denomination, will contain several Bible-study materials from biblestudy.org, reports Web-site founder and Church of God member Alan Ruth.

The denomination's National Youth Ministries E-mailed the Web site in March requesting permission to include some of its Web pages related to the apostle Paul on a CD it was compiling.

Biblestudy.org had just added a section dedicated to Paul's life and ministry, Mr. Ruth said. It's at www.biblestudy.org/apostleapaul/main.html.

Assemblies officials wrote they were "excited about the depth of information" the site contained regarding Paul and that this information was the best they had been able to find, Mr. Ruth reported.

Referrals to visit Biblestudy.org will be included on the CDs.

Biblestudy.org attracts 2.1 million visitors a year and since its 1995 debut has averaged a 250 percent yearly increase in the volume of study materials requested by the public.

Dwight Armstrong hymns shift to public domain

GLENDORA, Calif.—Worldwide Church of God officials announced June 26 that they have placed all hymns composed by Dwight Armstrong for which it owns the copyright into the public domain.

Effective immediately, any person or group that wishes to copy or use these hymns may do so without receiving permission from the church, according to an

announcement on the WCG's Web site, www.wcg.org.

"Time has proven that numerous persons wish to use these hymns in praise and worship, and the church wishes to facilitate such use," said Joseph Tkach Jr., church president and chairman.

The WCG announcement noted that the hymns it has released are only those by Mr. Armstrong for which the church holds the copyright.

"No other hymns or materials of any kind are being placed into the public domain, and the responsibility is on the user to ascertain whether the work it wishes to use is one of the released hymns," the announcement said.

Thejournal.org statistics

FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich.—THE JOURNAL's webmaster, Alan Ruth, has released statistics about this newspaper's Web site (www.thejournal.org) for the period January to June 2006.

Mr. Ruth noted that during that time:

■ The site attracted 175,922 actual visitors.

■ A total of 944,327 site articles and study materials (page views) were requested by visitors.

■ The site is running 66 percent above the same period last year in terms of number of visitors attracted.

■ The site is 63 percent above the same period last year in terms of number of pages (articles) viewed.

Thejournal.org, based on this year's averages, is projected to attract more than 353,000 visitors and have 1.9 million of its pages viewed.

If these projections hold true, the site in 2006 will be at least 53 percent above 2005 visitor totals and at least 39 percent above 2005 page-view totals.

Old Global

SYDNEY, Australia—Literature of the old Global Church of God based in the United States "must be some of the best that the various COGs ever produced," said Craig White.

Mr. White has posted much of it at www.friendsofsabbath.org.

It includes booklets, magazines and the church's doctrinal statement.

Labor Day get-together

BIG SANDY, Texas—The Church of God Big Sandy plans a family-oriented social event for the Labor Day holiday, Monday, Sept. 4.

It will take place in the building owned by the Church of God Big Sandy, on Highway 80 just west of town, from 4 to 9 p.m.

The activities will feature food, indoor and outdoor family games (including a rock-climbing wall for the kids) and bands (including Mountain Thunder and Highway 80) playing family-friendly music.

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