

The Journal

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John 8:32

Sept. 30, 2006

Philly columnist contrasts New York Times with GN

By Dixon Cartwright
writer for *The Evening Bulletin*, a five-day-a-week newspaper in Philadelphia, Pa., devoted an article Sept. 27 to criticism of *The New York Times* and suggestions that readers would be better off reading articles by Melvin Rhodes.

Mr. Rhodes, an elder in the United Church of God who lives in East Lansing, Mich., and a former columnist for *THE JOURNAL*, writes about current events and history, among other subjects, in the UCG's flagship publication, *The Good News*.

Some of his writing caught the eye of *Bulletin* writer Herb Denenberg, whom the Philadelphia newspaper describes as a consumer advocate.

A surprising development in recent years, Mr. Denenberg wrote, is the "decline and fall of *The New York Times*," which he noted has historically been considered one of the great newspapers in the country.

Indeed, historians have called it America's newspaper of record and referred to it affectionately as "the gray lady" for its dignified appearance and style.

But now, Mr. Denenberg writes, the *Times*, which has published since 1851, is a "joke."

Commenting from a politically conservative perspective, Mr. Denenberg said some people nowadays view the *Times* as "a treacherous and treasonous enemy of the U.S. for disclosing vital national security secrets to our enemy" in its coverage of the war in Iraq.

Mr. Denenberg characterized the *Times* as anti-American, anti-Republican, anti-Israel and anti-Semitic.

But he was heartened when he hap-

pened across an article by the UCG's Mr. Rhodes in *The Good News*, which has published only since 1995.

As he perused the *GN* dated September-October of this year, his eye fell on "Radical Islam: An Arc of Extremism That Threatens the Globe."



Melvin Rhodes

"What struck me," Mr. Denenberg wrote, "is that this magazine delivers more value, more insight and more honest reporting than *The New York Times*, which is quite expensive, and especially considering it is

so loaded with biased journalism that you can hardly believe a syllable of it."

Not only that, he said, *The Good News* is free for the asking.

Mr. Denenberg said *The Good News*, in reporting on the "extremism" Mr. Rhodes referred to in his article ("arc of extremism" is a quote from British Prime Minister Tony Blair), gets a lot of things right that the *Times* botches. For example:

■ The *GN* calls "terrorist organizations" by their "right names," he said, whereas the *Times* "is reluctant to call genocidal murderers dedicated to blowing up babies, mothers and other innocents by their right name."

■ The *GN* sees the situation in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Israel and elsewhere "as part of one worldwide conflict."

■ The *GN* recognizes that many

See PHILADELPHIA, page 6



COUSINS AT THE FEAST—Bret Dobson (right), son of Joe and Pat Dobson of Olathe, Kan., and Trey Cartwright, son of Dixon and Linda Cartwright of Big Sandy, Texas, dine out during the Feast of Tabernacles in Tulsa, Okla., in 1986. Bret, who was 10 at the time, and Trey, who was 6, are cousins. For photos and reports from Feast observances in 2006, see the next issue of *THE JOURNAL*. See an article on this page about submitting your Feast reports and photos. [Photo by Dixon Cartwright]

The Journal invites readers' Feast reports

THE JOURNAL invites readers to send in reports of their 2006 Feast of Tabernacles observances.

Members of Churches of God and other Sabbatarian fellowships met at several hundred Feast sites in 2006, with most observances beginning the evening of Oct. 6.

You still have time to get your report into next month's issue of *THE JOURNAL*. Mail your information to Festival Reports, *THE JOURNAL*, P.O. Box 1020, Big Sandy, Texas 75755, U.S.A. Or E-mail it to info@thejournal.org. Or you can fax it to (903) 636-9097.

Photographs as prints or E-mail attachments are also welcomed. Please mention the dates of your observance and the name of the church fellowship or affiliation, if any, or other sponsors of the site.

Feast reporting will begin in the next issue and run for three issues.

Evangelist leaves one Church of God, then marks a member of another Church of God

By Dixon Cartwright
A member of one Church of God has "marked" a member of another Church of God.

The unusual action, which in most COG groups amounts to a step more drastic than the act of "disfellowshipping" an errant member, came after a split from the Living Church of God, based in Charlotte, N.C.

Seventy-six-year-old Sydney J. Hull of Johannesburg South Africa, marked Robert Thiel of Arroyo Grande, Calif., because, said Mr. Hull, "my sheep have been affected by this man's efforts."

Mr. Hull, a pastor and evangelist-ranked elder who says he was ordained as a member of the Worldwide Church of God 35 years ago,

recently left the Living Church of God, presided over by Roderick C. Meredith, and joined the Restored Church of God, pastored by David Pack of Wadsworth, Ohio.

In a "letter to brethren" dated Sept. 27, Mr. Hull said he left the LCG over differences of "doctrine."

He summarized the doctrinal differences as "altering the scriptural structure of government, setting dates for Christ's return, permitting marriage outside the church, use of cosmetics, inappropriate dress, Sabbath wear and hair too long for men and too short for women, denying Mr. [Herbert] Armstrong's role as the prophesied Elijah, and so much more, as seen in the list of 60 changes found on RCG's [the Restored Church of God's] website."

Before marking Dr. Thiel, Mr. Hull stated that the lay member of the LCG from Southern California errs by having his own private Web site dedicated to Church of God matters.

"Among other attacks, this site lists a host of invented reasons why one should not go with RCG," Mr. Hull said. "The shallow reader will be taken in, but those with common sense will see the utter falsehood of this man's misinformed confusion."

Mr. Hull wrote that the LCG "plainly teaches a false gospel," and the RCG "is the only organization that preaches the true gospel to the world" and is better equipped, with "far more material to do God's Work than any other group."

See LCG OFFICIAL, page 6

Adventures in Thailand include measles and a military coup

The following is a report from a 24-year-old Church of God member who traveled to the International Leadership Training Center, operated by Legacy Institute in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Miss Seelig serves there with the aid of a scholarship from the Church of God Cincinnati and the Church of God Big Sandy.

By Stacey Seelig
CHIANG MAI, Thailand—**Thursday, Sept. 7:** *Sa bai dee*. I think I said something about thinking August was going to be eventful the last time I wrote. I must be a prophet, because eventful is putting it mildly.

Many of you already know that I was very ill. For the rest of you, this is still news. So I will apologize here for taking so long to write last month's E-mail, and also for the length that this one will be, but you will soon find out why.



Stacey Seelig

Brian and Stephanie left for their anniversary trip to Bai on Friday the 4th and I was left to take care of Noah and Isaak.

Also, James (the fourth teacher) was constantly getting "kidnapped" by a widow and her 9-year-old son whose house James was looking at for his parents, so I was also holding down the fort at the school most of the time.

The students are really not difficult, but they do need to ask me when they want to leave the compound or need help with homework. They were keeping a close eye on me because they considered my watching the children as "mommy training." They were quite amused.

As luck would have it, while the parents were away Noah came down with the scarlet fever that Isaak had had. Let's just say that didn't make my job easier. It was a true test of how far I could stretch.

So now I was being nurse and nanny, running the school compound and teaching (I have a Sunday art class now). Boy, was I glad when Brian and Stephanie returned Sunday evening.

Did I mention that the boys liked

See FIRST A FEVER, page 15

New site aims at discipling

ALLEGAN, Mich.—Pam Dewey, a Church of God member who lives with her husband, George, in Allegan, has set up a Web site, www.find-god.org, "aimed particularly at evangelizing and discipling the un-churched."

Mrs. Dewey's newest Internet effort, which she works on at the request of Jeff Osborn, pastor of the Terre Haute (Ind.) Church of God, is one of several that she operates.

One is <http://youall.com>, which includes articles from various writers on the "basics of salvation" and may turn into a set of booklets at some point.

Still another is www.isitso.org, a site about the "wild world of religion." It includes information not only about Church of God groups but other churches and religions as well.

A future site will follow the theme of "Times of Refreshing." That will feature "over 40 interlinked articles on Sabbath and holy days, which I hope to have done and up and running by the end of November," Mrs. Dewey said.



Pam Dewey

Church invites neighbors over for Labor Day

By Reg Killingley
BIG SANDY, Texas—An estimated 250-300 people of all ages—Church of God members and local residents who are not Church of God members—marked the official end of summer by attending a Labor Day picnic sponsored by the Church of God Big Sandy Sept. 4.

The congregation had advertised the event as an afternoon of free family fun in the local news media as well as by distributing flyers in the area.

The activities kicked off at 4 p.m. with several outdoor games including basketball, volleyball and horseshoes.

For the children there were archery, face painting, a rock-climbing wall and two bouncing castles.

Play continued throughout the event. Even a light sprinkle during the late afternoon and early evening did nothing to dampen spirits.

The food—hot dogs and all the fixin's, as well as cakes for dessert—was served starting at 6 p.m.

Music by local groups Mountain Thunder, Highway 80 and Crossroads began a short while later, providing

See FRIENDS TAKE A BREAK, page 15

Take an affectionate, critical look at '70s AC

The writer is a longtime Church of God member and editor of the weekly Gilmer Mirror.

By Mac Overton

GILMER, Texas—I remember Greg Doudna, the writer, as a young man of almost boundless energy and superior intellect.

Mr. Doudna is the author of the newly revised *Showdown at Big Sandy: Youthful Creativity Confronts Bureaucratic Inertia at an Unconventional Bible College in East Texas*, available at The Scrollery (scrollery.com), Bellingham, Wash.

Greg came to Ambassador College, Big Sandy, as many (most?) of us did: with an enthusiastic desire to learn more about how to live "God's way" and then use the knowledge and skills about living we learned there to help the church and the world at large.

Greg came from a Quaker background and, after several years in the Worldwide Church of God, eventually returned to that tradition. He was a friend of mine in college, although probably not as close a friend as he should have been, as I realize after reading this book.

The exception tests the rule

First, a brief detour:

As I read of his experiences in the church and at Ambassador, I realize that except for the grace of God there go I.

I had the blessing to be hired by *The Worldwide News* after my first semester at AC (spring 1974) and was accepted into managing editor John Robinson's inner circle. The

circle included people who continue to be guiding factors in the greater Church of God after the many splits from the WCG that began in earnest in the early 1990s: Scott Ashley, Ellis Stewart, Scott Moss, Dixon Cartwright, later Linda Moll (now Linda Moll Smith) and Janey George (now Janey Milligan).

John, who died in January 2006 after a bout with prostate cancer, was loyal to the teachings of the church but was also loyal to his employees.

He was that rare leader, not only in the WCG but in the world in general, who recognized that loyalty is a two-way street. He went to battle for his staff. (Being college students, we occasionally violated trivial rules.)

John was solidly enough entrenched in those days that even the most fatuous church or college administrators were not eager to challenge him as they routinely challenged others.

One tactic: If they couldn't directly challenge someone, then they would

attack his staff to prove they had stronger power within the organization than the targeted one did.

John bailed this old country boy out of situations that would not even have caused a blip on the radar screen at

almost any other college or university (or church, for that matter).

One such situation was when I failed to show adoration for a certain attorney and financial officer who was everybody's favorite future evangelist. Those were strange days, friends and brethren.

"The Press," the printing-department building on campus, provided a place where we could express our justifiable frustrations and legitimate questions in a supportive, nonthreatening atmosphere.

I wonder what might have happened to Greg Doudna if he had found such a patron. Such men as John are few and far between. I have tried to emulate him with my own coworkers as far as I have been able.

Complex study

Greg's book chronicles the three years (1972-1975) he spent at or near Big Sandy and how he repeatedly

wrote complex study papers to amplify or explain WCG doctrines.

It explains that his writings were sent through what he believed were the proper channels, and then disappeared into what was the black hole of church intelligentsia at the time.

(Some might say that "church intelligentsia," like "military intelligence," is an oxymoron. Those who read Mr. Doudna's book will understand this statement even more thoroughly.)

The volume is an updated version of one he published in 1989 that did not enjoy wide circulation. Greg was inspired to update it after the 30-year reunion of the Ambassador Big Sandy Class of 1976 in Colorado in August of this year. His conversations with Linda Moll Smith, a member of that class, and perhaps others inspired this 526-page revised version.

Lots of notes

Greg writes his book in a highly readable style. I received my review

copy on a Monday and found it difficult to put down. It was my main reading in the evenings after work, and I finished it on the Friday night after receiving it on a Monday.

There are few such large books (it's a trade paperback, essentially the same size as a hardcover) that grip me enough to read them through so quickly.

Greg was an obsessive note-taker, and, unlike many of the rest of us, retains his college notebooks to the present day.

Artifacts from a past life

In addition to recounting personal experiences and observations, he reprints or summarizes major papers he did as a student during his years at AC.

These include:

■ "Evidences for the 7,000-Year Plan," in which "I showed through charts and graphs that the return of Christ must be very near."

■ "The Bible and Interracial Marriage," in which "I showed that there is not the slightest biblical justification for forbidding interracial marriage among Christians, and cited examples such as Moses marrying a black woman to prove it."

■ "The United States in Prophecy," in which "I set about to conclusively prove that the United States is Ephraim and Britain is Manasseh, not vice versa."

■ "Meat Offered to Idols: Did Paul Permit What James Forbade?," in which "I attempted to reconcile apparently conflicting statements in the New Testament concerning this burning issue."

■ "The Servant and the Woman," in which "I likened the course of the church to a lovely lass being taken across the desert by a dashing Arab sheikh."

■ Probably the one that rankled church leadership the most was his paper on tithing, "in which I showed that tithing is supposed to go to the poor and homeless, not church leaders."

"I wrote these papers as an idealistic 19- to 21-year-old Ambassador College student," Greg states. "That is a past era for me now. These papers are like artifacts from an archeological stratum of a past life."

I read these words with sadness, because, with his analytical ability and gift of being able to make the complex simple, he would have been such an asset to the church in those days or one of the branches of the church today.

The autobiographical volume recounts Greg's upbringing in the Quaker tradition, then his learning about

See **FULL OF IDEALISM**, page 15



Photo by Scott Ashley
Greg Doudna

Greg chronicles the three years he spent at Big Sandy and how he wrote complex study papers to explain WCG doctrines.

Notes and quotes

New Web site

SIOUX FALLS, S.D.—Steve Collins announces he has a new Web site. Mr. Collins' writings include books and articles about the lost tribes of Israel.

The site "has a variety of my articles and presentations available for free downloading and also has links for obtaining copies of my books," Mr. Collins said.

See www.stevenmcollins.com.

In his own words

ASHLAND, Mo.—Church of God member Ewin Barnett has posted on a Web site short excerpts of recordings of statements made by WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong on a variety of topics.

"Some want to tell us what Armstrong taught, often in an effort to persuade us how wrong he was then and how right they are now," Mr. Barnett said. "We no longer have to settle for what his critics would want us to believe. We can hear Armstrong himself."

The audio clips include statements from the church leader, who died in 1986, about "setting dates," the "true church," the "place of safety" and the identity of the "end-time Elijah."

Download the sound bites, recorded for devices that will play MP3 files, at www.chrusos.com/soundbites.

LCG and UCG visit

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—Leaders of the Living Church of God, based in Charlotte, and the United Church of God, based in Milford, Ohio, met with each other here recently.

UCG president Clyde Kilough and Jim Franks of the UCG's ministerial-services department, visited the LCG's headquarters.

According to a statement by the LCG's director of church administration, Doug Winnail: "They toured the office facility and met our headquarters staff. It was a cordial visit and provided us with an opportunity to communicate about mutual concerns facing the Church of God."

A statement from the UCG described the event as a follow-up to a longstanding LCG invitation to visit and talk with church leaders:

"They had a tour of the offices and met the staff. They then sat with Dr. [Roderick] Meredith, Dr. Winnail, Mr. [Richard] Ames and Mr. [Dibar] Apartian for an open discussion on a variety of issues facing the Church of God."

Mr. Kilough has issued a similar invitation to LCG leaders to visit the UCG's Ohio offices.

No merger in sight

ARROYO GRANDE, Calif.—Some Church of God observers are speculating about a possible merger of the UCG and LCG in view of news reports about the recent meeting between leaders of the two ministries. (See the news item immediately preceding this one.)

However, Robert Thiel, an LCG member who operates a

popular Church of God Web site (cogwriter.org), reports that Roderick Meredith, the Living Church of God's presiding evangelist, stated to him that the LCG is not interested in any kind of merger with the UCG.

"He stated UCG and LCG have different works, differing governments, and differing focuses," Dr. Thiel reported.

Teen and Young Adult Retreat

OVERLAND PARK, Kan.—The 11th annual Teen and Young Adult Retreat for Church of God members is coming up in January, reports Paula Frazee.

"We are happy to announce that we have contracted to have the youth retreat at the Holiday Inn in Overland Park," Mrs. Frazee said.

It all begins at 3 p.m. Friday, Jan. 12. The event will include camping, meals, Sabbath services, blocks of free time, swimming, arts and crafts and "the traditional pizza party and dance."

Participants need to apply by Dec. 10. Contact Mrs. Frazee at pjcrim@aol.com or (816) 461-3252.

Temples of Jerusalem

BEAVERTON, Ore.—David Sielaff, director of Associates for Scriptural Knowledge (ASK), announces a major article that gives his understanding of the tomb of David. Find the article at www.askelm.com/temple/t061001.htm.

ASK continues the work of the late Ernest L. Martin, a former evangelist in the Worldwide Church of God who in 1995 began research into the location of the "Jerusalem temples," Mr. Sielaff said.

The information includes research by George Wesley Buchanan of Washington, D.C., and Gary Arvidson of Kings Mountain, N.C.

Free newsletter

COLUMBUS, Ga.—Is gambling acceptable behavior for Christians?

The Church of God of Columbus has an article in its E-magazine, *Truth and Understanding*, that addresses that issue. "Gambling can become an addiction just as drug or alcohol use," said editor Glenn Williams.

Churches don't help the situation, Mr. Williams said, when they sponsor activities such as bingo and raffles.

To receive the newsletter by E-mail, sign up for it at www.cogcg.org.

ABC seminars in December

MILFORD, Ohio—The United Church of God announced seminars for Continuing Education credit during the church's annual Winter Family Weekend in Louisville, Ky., Dec. 24-26.

Faculty members from the church's Ambassador Bible Center will conduct the classes.

For more information, visit www.ucg.org.

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