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Volunteer teachers dedicated to success of Legacy ministry

Volunteer teachers at the school run by Legacy Institute in Thailand recently answered questions asked them by many people. The questioners were curious about what it's like for Westerners to take up residence in Thailand and instruct eager young students in Bible subjects and other topics.

The institute, founded several years ago by Texans Leon and Gloria Sexton, publishes an E-mailed newsletter that ran interviews of the three young teachers.

The rest of this article is based on the interviews.

Serious thought

The Church of God Big Sandy, pastored by Dave Havir, sponsored Nathan Kimmons' trip to Thailand and Legacy Institute.

Besides teaching classes, on the Sabbath Mr. Kimmons delivers sermons and conducts Bible studies.

Q: Why did you volunteer to be a teacher at Legacy's school?

A: The Church of God Big Sandy mentioned they would like to sponsor me to go [to Thailand] during the Feast of Tabernacles 2006. At the time I honestly had no interest. I was pretty wrapped up in my own life with college, girlfriend, work, etc. I thought there was no way I would drop everything and leave the States for a whole year.

I always kept it in the back of my

mind, though, and about a year later I started to consider it again.

I talked with some of the previous teachers and people who were affiliated with Legacy, did some research and thinking and asked for a lot of guidance through prayer.

Ultimately I just decided that, if I wanted to do something like this, this would probably be the best time to do it. The timing was right. The support was there. I figured the only regret I would have is if I didn't go. So far I think I was right!"

Q: Where do you come from and what is your field of training?

A: I am from Mississippi. I just graduated from Mississippi State University in May of 2008 with a bachelor's of business administration. My major was marketing. I have also worked several jobs in the service industry while in college."

Q: What classes do you teach?
A: I am currently teaching Reading 2, Writing 2, Discussion 2, public speaking, leadership, Bible 3 (Life and Times of Jesus Christ) and choir and coteaching soccer/athletics.

Q: Which is your most fun class?
See VOLUNTEERS FACE, page 22



Nathan Kimmons



MICHIGAN MEETING—Bob Williams (left) of Carsonville, Mich., Karen Tollefson of Crosswell, Mich., and Leonard Sowders of Warren, Mich., attend the seminar sponsored by Art Mokarow of Montgomery, Texas, who was in the Detroit area for the seminars and also for a meeting of the board of the new Association for Biblical Research. See the article below based on an interview with Mr. Mokarow and Ron Moseley of North Little Rock, Ark. Both men are active in the ABR, which was founded in 2007 by father and son Al and Tom Carozzo, both of Southern California. For more photos from the Detroit-area meeting, see this page and page 21. [JOURNAL photo]

New Bible-research association clarifies goals, purposes, targeted audience and name change

By Dixon Cartwright
BIRMINGHAM, Mich.—Art Mokarow, an 80-year-old former Worldwide Church of God minister who in recent years retired from successful businesses and began publishing books, said the new Association for Biblical Research he and friends have started is something new and different.

It's new and different, he said, in the sense that it is not a ministry that wants to convince people that a particular set of conservative-Christian doctrines is the only path to God and Truth.

Mr. Mokarow was in this upscale Detroit suburb for the latest in his series of seminars in several American cities.

He also used the occasion to tell attendees, about 75 of them, about the Association for Biblical Research (ABR), which his friends Al and Tom Carozzo, both of Southern California, began in October 2007.

As things have worked out, Mr. Mokarow is becoming more active in the association leadership.

With him in Michigan were two other members of the ABR's board, Lennox Abrigo of Germantown, Md., and Ron Moseley of North

Little Rock, Ark.

Mr. Mokarow and Dr. Moseley spoke during the seminar on Sunday, Aug. 22, 2008, about law, grace and the Jewish roots and worldview of the New Testament.

On the evening of Aug. 21 in Mr. Mokarow's suite at the Townsend Hotel, this writer for THE JOURNAL talked with the two men about the ABR.

Name change

The last time this newspaper reported on the organization, its name was the Associates for Restored Truth. (See "Symposium Presents Mix of Views About Law, Grace," THE JOURNAL, Feb. 29, 2008.)

But Mr. Mokarow later asked his
See OLD FRIENDS, page 21



Art Mokarow

Author requests help with his study of the WCG offshoots

Mr. Barrett is researching for his Ph.D. on the schisms in the Churches of God since the death of Herbert W. Armstrong.

By David V. Barrett
LONDON, England—Several years ago I began work on my Ph.D. at the London School of Economics, part of the University of London.

My doctoral thesis (which Americans usually call a dissertation) is a study of what happened in the Worldwide Church of God after the death of Herbert W. Armstrong: the changes in doctrine, the first splits into Philadelphia, Global and United, and the subsequent history of many further churches being founded.

I wrote a couple of pieces for THE JOURNAL, in 1997 and 2003, met several senior former WCG people in Britain and had correspondence with a number of leaders of churches and teaching ministries.

I also wrote a long chapter in my book *The New Believers* (Cassell, 2001) about the changes in the WCG, and I contributed several entries on the WCG and the largest

offshoot churches to a four-volume *Religions of the World* encyclopedia.

For various reasons, including major surgery, bereavement, the retirement of my doctoral supervisor and lack of funding, I had to stop work on my thesis for more than three years. I'm now returning to work on it and have to complete it within the next 12 months.

To do so I shall need your help.

25 minutes of questions

I've written a questionnaire for former lay members and ministers of the WCG and have put it online at www.quest.thenewbelievers.com. It should take about 25 minutes to complete. I've kept it as straightforward as possible; earlier drafts were much longer and more complicated.

I'm particularly trying to find out things like this:

■ What it felt like for members and ministers to discover that their own church was abandoning its teachings.

■ What it was like to leave the WCG after years of loyal membership.

■ Why people left when they did. What was the trigger?

■ Why members initially went to the PCG, GCG or UCG.

■ Why many members later moved on from these to other churches.

■ How members of COGs that had separated from the WCG earlier, such as Raymond Cole's Church of

See YOU CAN HELP, page 23



David V. Barrett

CEM moving away from Tyler Church of God

By Dixon Cartwright
TYLER, Texas—Christian Educational Ministries (CEM) and the Tyler Church of God (TCG) have altered their relationship after the 13 years of existence of both organizations.

Ronald L. Dart of Whitehouse, Texas (who with his wife, Allie, founded CEM as their personal ministry in November 1995), resigned Aug. 18, 2008, as a member of the TCG's Theology Committee, sometimes known as the Pulpit Committee.

On Sept. 6 Larry Watkins of Big Sandy, CEM's business manager, resigned from the same committee.

Also on Sept. 6 John Reedy, a Tyler businessman and the unpaid pastor of the congregation, resigned as pastor and from the committee.

The two men from CEM, Mr. Dart and Mr. Watkins, had an informal agreement with the TCG that allowed them to deliver sermons to the congregation.

For years the agreement was viewed as a favorable arrangement for both parties.

CEM, which Mr. Dart did not found as a church, had the Tyler Church of God as its main location for

See TCG MEMBERS AND CEM PERSONNEL, page 6

- 3 Ellis Stewart and Dave Havir kick off our prophecy series, along with Gary Arvidson's essay on page 4.
- 3 Dennis Diehl notes the same sound can have profoundly different effects
- 8 Alan Knight points to shamanism's point of entry into proto-Christianity
- 24 Don Billingsley gets married!

Longtime COG elder Raymond McNair dies

TEMECULA, Calif.—Longtime Church of God member and former Worldwide

Church of God evangelist Raymond F. McNair died Oct. 11, 2008.

Mr. McNair, 78, in recent years reportedly battled prostate cancer.

He was founder and president of the Church of God 21st Century (www.cog21.org), headquartered in the San Diego, Calif., area.

Mr. McNair's survivors include his wife, Eve. Write Mrs. McNair at P.O. Box 893909, Temecula, Calif. 92589, U.S.A.



Raymond and Eve McNair

Book compares preachers of 'New Truth' to insects

The writer is a longtime Church of God member, a frequent JOURNAL contributor and editor of The Gilmer Mirror.

By Mac Overton

GILMER, Texas—Is the minister you listen to on the radio or TV or maybe even in person a wacko or, worse, a loonytoon? Is there any way to tell for sure?

Longtime Church of God member Pam Dewey of Allegan, Mich., and longtime COG evangelist Ron Dart of Whitehouse, Texas, say there is a way.

The two have published a booklet, *Doctrinal Self-Defense: ANT Control in the Information Age*, that addresses the issue.

ANT, by the way, doesn't just refer to six-legged bugs. It stands for "Amazing New Truth," which the authors say is chief among the characteristics of many Church of God and other preachers presenting something "New."

Here is a summary of Mr. Dart's and Mrs. Dewey's advice:

■ You have a right not to listen.

See IS IT AMAZING, page 8

COG member donates lit to SDA school

SYDNEY, Australia—Craig White, a member of the United Church of God, has donated boxloads of Church of God-related printed materials totaling hundreds of items to a college in the Australian state of New South Wales.

The recipient of the church literature, all produced by the Worldwide Church of God from the 1960s through the 1980s, is Avondale College, affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Most of the materials were magazines and booklets Mr. White had acquired from church members who could no longer store the items. They included copies of the magazines *The Plain Truth*, *The Good News* and *Tomorrow's World*.

"Generally, old literature is recy-

pled to members that would like it," Mr. White said.

"But, as there were no takers for this large collection, I approached Avondale College, which snapped it up very quickly.

"This was a relief to me as such precious literature must be preserved at all costs, and they will do a good job at that."

The collection will become a permanent archive, Mr. White said, and, besides the items published by the WCG, include material produced by the United Church of

God, Living Church of God, Global Church of God, Church of God International, Christian Biblical Church of God and the late Richard Nickels of Gillette, Wyo., a UCG member who founded and operated the Giving & Sharing ministry.

"This will be of great benefit for future research by us and others," Mr. White said.

To find out more about the collection, visit www.avondale.com.au and <http://bonza.unilinc.edu.au>. Mr. White's Web sites include www.originofnations.org, www.friendsofsabbath.org (which includes scanned copies of rare Ambassador College papers and theses) and www.hwalibrary.org.



Craig White

Don Billingsley announces marriage

Church of God member many of the brethren will remember from way back has announced he was married Sept. 21, 2008.

THE JOURNAL wrote Alton "Don" Billingsley, founder of the California-based Church of God Faithful Flock, to ask him if the rumors it was hearing that Mr. Billingsley had wed were true.

He, in turn, E-mailed a response to this newspaper in early October.

"The rumor" is "correct," he said. "The former Peggy Pollard and I were married Sunday, Sept. 21, at 1 p.m. It was a Church wedding, with relatives on both sides in attendance."

The new Mrs. Billingsley has been a Church of God member for 42 years. The bride and groom have known each other for about 12 years.

"Peggy is 71 years of age, and I am 82," he continued. "She has three living children from her first husband, of 42 years. She found him dead of a heart attack in the backyard. Interesting that he was from Oklahoma, as am I."

Peggy remarried a few years later, with that marriage lasting 10 years.

Her second husband "died from an accident while riding his motorcycle on the interstate," Mr. Billingsley said.

"He was also 82 years of age."

The groom describes his bride as "a fabulous woman with character and wisdom and love for the people of God.

"Needless to say, she has removed the loneliness and void I have been experiencing since my beloved Madeline's death almost a year ago" on Oct. 29, 2007. (See *THE JOURNAL*, October 2007, pages 22 and 24.)

The Billingsleys have Web sites at <http://bodyofchristonline.us>, <http://cog-ff.com> and <http://www.ezekielwatchman.org>.

They receive mail and phone calls at P.O. Box 8819, Modesto, Calif. 95357, U.S.A., and (209) 772-0737.



Don and Peggy Billingsley

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Notes and quotes

COG book list

SYDNEY, Australia—Craig White announces that one of his Web sites lists "published books on theology, history and related subjects by Church of God members and former members."

The list, which begins with writer A. Alfieri and ends with R. Wlodyga, has articles on topics such as the lost tribes, the annual feast days, the "essential teachings" of Herbert Armstrong, the last days, the "wild world of religion," and suicide and martyrdom among ancient Jews and Christians.

Some listings feature clickable links to Web sites; others do not. All are generally available if not through the site then through booksellers such as Amazon.com or directly from various ministries.

To access the list go to www.tinyurl.com/3vuzvk. To contact Mr. White write History Research Projects, G.P.O. Box 864, Sydney, N.S.W. 2001, Australia, or originofnations@iprimus.com.au.

Living head, recovering from stroke, appoints acting head

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—Roderick C. Meredith, a longtime Church of God member and, since 1998, presiding evangelist of the Living Church of God, suffered a stroke



Roderick Meredith

Sept. 19, 2008, and several days later appointed an assistant as active chief executive of the church.

Dr. Meredith, in an E-mailed announcement, said he had had a "mild stroke" and expected to be up and around in a few weeks. Meanwhile he was feeling "unbalanced" and his "left leg felt wobbly."

On Sept. 23 he announced the appointment of Richard Ames of the Charlotte area to stand in for him as acting chief executive for the duration of his recovery.

Both men are familiar faces to viewers of the church's telecast, *The World Ahead*.

Dr. Meredith asked that, in lieu of flowers, well-wishers "use any extra money to increase your offerings for the Work of Christ."

Write Dr. Meredith at P.O. Box 3810, Charlotte, N.C. 28227, U.S.A., or through a Web-based E-mail form at www.lcg.org/contact.shtml. Phone the LCG at (704) 844-1970.

Legacy director recovering

CHIANG MAI, Thailand—Leon Sexton, who moved from Texas to Thailand a few years ago to operate the Legacy Institute ministry, which includes a leader-training school, is recovering from a stroke he experienced in September 2008.

As of this writing (early Octo-

ber) Mr. Sexton had spent several weeks in a Chiang Mai hospital but is expected to fully recover. Write Mr. Sexton in care of Herb Vierra at accmos@verizon.net.

Smoking ban leads to new Church of God

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands—News services including www.DutchNews.nl reported a while back that a new church has sprung up in the Netherlands in reaction to the Dutch government's ban of smoking in taverns that took effect July 1, 2008.

Several dozen bars have joined the movement, claim the reports. Thanks to the principle of freedom of religion, founders of the new church, called the One and Universal Smokers Church of God, say smoking is allowed in the bars because of their status as congregations of the church adhering to doctrines that include a belief in the "trinity of smoke, fire and ash."

Church founder Michiel Eijsbouts said bar owners who try to join the church simply to be able to legally smoke are not allowed to join the church.

The One and Universal Smokers COG takes smoking seriously, he is said to have said.

"It has ritual aspects; it is something you experience, and we follow our faith very strictly," he told the *Telegraaf* newspaper.

JOURNAL writer awarded

GILMER, Texas—Mac Overton, frequent contributor of book reviews and other articles to *THE JOURNAL*, was presented on Oct. 7, 2008, with the Bronze Cross for Meritorious Service by the Texas Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV).

A longtime Church of God member and editor of the twice-weekly county newspaper *The Gilmer Mirror*, Mr. Overton was honored for his work in publicizing the local branch, known as the Upshur County Patriots, and other SCV activities.

Mr. Overton, who recently delivered a speech to SCV members about newspapers and journalists during the Civil War (which Mr. Overton likes to call the War of Northern Aggression),



COG MEMBER HONORED—Mac Overton (center) accepts an award from the Texas division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Making the presentation are (left) Mark Vogl of the Upshur County Patriots (local branch of the SCV) and Frank Crisp, the SCV's Northeast Texas Brigade commander. [Photo by Butch Ragland]

said his selection as a recipient of the award was a complete surprise. "You could have knocked me over with a feather," he told *THE JOURNAL*.

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