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Did an angelic couple visit a Texas hospital in 1981?

By Dixon Cartwright
BIG SANDY, Texas—Could a mysterious man and woman dressed in white who visited a Houston hospital in 1981 have been angels?

A Big Sandy church member thinks so.

Ellen Edelbach, who lives here with her husband, Loren Edelbach, was a resident at the time of Maple Grove, Minn.

She was walking back to a family waiting room at Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston, Texas, on March 16, 1981, when she saw a man and woman, both dressed entirely in white, apparently waiting for her.

Four days earlier, on March 12, Mrs. Edelbach's 19-year-old son, Tim McIver, was critically injured in an automobile accident that also injured Tim's friend Mike Machin.

Both young men were patients in this hospital, but Tim was hooked up to life support, and his doctors had declared him brain-dead.

Mrs. Edelbach had been pondering how and when to make a decision that could involve pulling the plug on the technology that was keeping her son's body alive as he lay comatose in the hospital's intensive-care unit.

Gifted and tall

Tim, who was born to Mrs. Edelbach and her first husband in Dallas in 1961, was a gifted 6-foot-7-inch bas-

ketball player who at the time of the accident was being courted by universities that wanted him to play on their teams.

Until recently, even though he attended Sabbath services, he had played basketball on Friday nights.

That changed, however, at the time of his recent baptism when he made the decision no longer to play on the Sabbath.

Tim was active in basketball and other sports in Dallas. When he graduated from high school in Osseo, Minn., he had moved to Dallas, staying there two months before deciding to move to Houston because friends lived there. For the time being, he had put his college plans on hold.

"When we all lived in Minnesota, Tim decided he was going to play on Friday nights, and even the local newspaper ran a headline that said 'McIver Plays Friday Night,'" Mrs. Edelbach remembers.

"He knew it wasn't the right thing to do, and he ended up being baptized while he was in Houston in December, then he died in March."

On the night of the accident Tim See **THE TWO FIGURES**, page 5



Tim McIver



SPRING FEAST IN KINGSTON—Elder George Ramocan of the Jamaican branch of the Church of God International points heavenward during Days of Unleavened Bread services in Kingston. Almost 400 people attended at two locations on the island. Continuing its tradition of steady growth, the CGI baptized six people just before this year's Passover. See the related article beginning on this page. [Photo by Christine Bell]

It's never too late for colorful Feast reports

It's been a while since the 2008 Feast of Tabernacles, but reports from last year's observances are still coming in. It would be a shame not to read them simply because it's been at least six months since the last autumnal festival.

In this issue John Dickerson reports on his Feast with the Church of God San Antonio, which featured the feeding and clothing of 50 homeless people. Mr. Dickerson says it was his best Feast ever.

John Sash describes his unusual festival in this issue as well.

Mr. Sash doesn't use the words "best Feast ever" to talk about his experience on the Rogue River in Oregon. But it was surely his most memorable Feast ever. He nearly died in the Rogue's white water and, against the odds, was rescued by a band of merry white-water adventurers.

You won't want to miss this issue's reports.

The Worldwide Church of God has a new name so people will not confuse it with 'Armstrongism'

By Dixon Cartwright
The Worldwide Church of God announced that its long-anticipated name change is official as of April 3, 2009. The old WCG is the new Grace Communion International (GCI).

However, GCI is also still the WCG. The church is retaining all rights to the old name, which any of its affiliated congregations and ministries worldwide are still free to use.

But GCI "better reflects who we are and what we teach," said a press release at the church's Web site.

The church, which Herbert W. Armstrong founded in 1927 or 1934, was first the Radio Church of God and became, in 1968, the Worldwide Church of God, based in Pasadena, Calif.

"After all factors and criteria were

considered, the Church Board and its Advisory Council of Elders settled on the name 'Grace Communion International,'" states a release at the Web site.

Church leaders "believe the new name better describes what the church has become and will serve it more effectively in the future."

In 2005 a church publication, *WCG Today*, quoted Pastor General Joseph Tkach Jr. as stating that the old name, WCG, needed to be changed because the "unchurched," upon hearing it, "equate us with groups that have followed the tenets of Armstrongism."

In a letter to GCI members dated April 16, 2009, Mr. Tkach said the board and council had recommended "GCI" at a meeting on Dec. 20, 2005.

However, according to news re-

ports at the time, the actual recommendation was for a variation of the new name.

This newspaper reported that the moniker the church almost adopted was Grace International Communion, or GIC (see "GIC Is Out but New Name Is Still in the Works at WCG," *THE JOURNAL*, Feb. 28, 2006).

In 2005 and 2006 the church put "GIC" "on hold" because "feedback from members and pastors" indicated they didn't like it.

WCG/GCI groups typically have their own local names. For example, the congregation in Wheeling, Ill., is Heartland Christian Fellowship.

Based in Glendora, Calif., since April 2006, GCI has a new Internet address, graceci.org.

PCG buys Swans in Flight

By Dixon Cartwright
BIG SANDY, Texas—The Philadelphia Church of God's pastor general, Gerald Flurry of Edmond, Okla., announced in April 2009 his church has bought the famous bronze swan sculpture that graces the former campus of Ambassador University near Big Sandy.

According to a PCG press release, Mr. Flurry on April 8 inspected *Swans in Flight*, sculpted by Sir David Wynne in 1968, preparatory to its relocation to Oklahoma and the campus of the PCG's Herbert W. Armstrong College.



Gerald Flurry with swan sculpture in Big Sandy April 8

In 2001, a year after the Worldwide Church of God sold the Big Sandy campus of Ambassador University to the owner of the Hobby Lobby chain of arts-and-crafts stores, the new proprietor transferred ownership of the campus to the Oak Brook, Ill., ministry of Bill Gothard.

For sale since 2002

Mr. Gothard's ministry, the Institute in Basic Life Principles (IBLP), leases the grounds to the International ALERT Academy, a Christian training and service organization that teaches young men emergency skills. ALERT stands for Air

Land Emergency Resource Team.

The IBLP put the sculpture up for sale in 2002 for \$300,000.

The PCG reported it contacted the IBLP in 2008 about purchasing the work of art.

Shane Granger, marketing director for the PCG, told *THE JOURNAL* the purchase price "will remain undisclosed by both parties per the sales contract."

The sculpture, Mr. Granger said, "will be moved to Oklahoma this summer for repairs and refinishing before being installed in its new home, a reflecting pool in front of Armstrong Auditorium, sometime in the fall."

Mr. Granger said each swan "will have to be disassembled and moved separately, then refinished and finally reassembled on site. We expect the process to take four to six weeks."

Pastor General Flurry decided to personally inspect the swans before sealing the deal.

After he personally examined the sculpture in Big Sandy, he announced that the bronze work was in good condition and is as beautiful as any sculpture of its kind in the world.

More swans in flight

A slightly older version of *Swans in Flight* that also dates from 1968 stands poised near the civic center in Newcastle upon Tyne, England.

A Web site maintained by the City of Newcastle (newcastle.gov.uk) See **SWANS IN FLIGHT**, page 23

Don't lose your contacts

By Dixon Cartwright
BIG SANDY, Texas—Wesley White announced that the Web site of his Dynamic Christian Ministries (DCM) features contact information for independent Sabbath-keeping churches throughout the United States.

"From time to time we receive questions about churches in certain cities," Mr. White said. "People plan to travel and would like a place to fellowship and worship. Or someone will have a relative in a certain city who has been away from church and needs to start attending again."

Mr. White thinks it's a good idea to visit other churches and fellowships.

"It's not going to kill a visitor to fellowship with a group that has a little different liturgy or song service," he said. "We need to make new friends, and this could be an opportunity to learn new things."

See the list at dynamicchristianministries.org, or write Mr. White at P.O. Box 1062, Big Sandy, Texas 75755, U.S.A.



Wesley White

CGI speakers talk about symbols, simplicity, power

By Glenford Smith

KINGSTON, Jamaica—A total of 331 and 323 persons on the first and last days of Unleavened Bread, respectively, April 9 and 15, 2009, attended the Church of God International's feast-day services in Kingston, Jamaica. Meanwhile about 50 people attended services at another location, in western Jamaica.

Continuing its steady growth pattern, the CGI had baptized six people only days before the Passover itself.

During the season, the Jamaican CGI also accepted into formal membership a former Worldwide Church of God member, Raphael Bramwell. After leaving the WCG for doctrinal reasons, Mr. Bramwell visited the CGI

and decided it was the best place to fellowship and practice the true faith.

The Passover season followed a record-breaking series of public lectures that saw a high attendance of

See **JAMAICANS**, page 3



Ian Boyne

Notes and quotes

Robert Bertuzzi dies

MERRITT ISLAND, Fla.—Longtime elder of the Worldwide Church of God Robert Bertuzzi died April 10, 2009, at age 74 after an extended illness.

Survivors include Mr. Bertuzzi's wife, Coco; grown children Michel and Erin; and grandson Robby.

Mr. Bertuzzi served full time in the field ministry from 1964 until his retirement in 1996. The Bertuzzis had been married 47 years.

Mrs. Bertuzzi receives mail at 2107 Hidden Grove Ln., Apt. 36A, Merritt Island, Fla. 32953, U.S.A.

CCG Grand Junction Feast

CLIFTON, Colo.—Again in 2009 the Feast of Tabernacles sponsored by the Christian Church of God of Grand Junction will take place in the Grand Valley of western Colorado, this year at the Wine Country Inn in Palisade.

Palisade is a small farming community just east of Grand Junction that has easy highway access; air service from four major hubs, Phoenix, Houston, Denver and Salt Lake; and daily rail access from east and west.

"Most attendees will stay in the same facility where services will be held, providing greater opportunity for relaxed fellowship," said Richard Traver.

Daily services will begin the evening of Oct. 2, 2009, and will feature a variety of speakers representing several congregations.

"Additional interactive Bible studies in past years have proved to be well received, interesting and informative," Mr. Traver said. "This year should be no exception."

For more information contact the CCG at www.ccofgod.org.

A Feast of a different kind

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.—LifeResource Ministries announces what founder Bill Jacobs is calling a different kind of Feast of Tabernacles observance for 2009.

"Are you tired of attending a festival where people focus more on fun than on God, more on duty than on worship?" he rhetorically asks.

"At LifeResource Ministries our festivals are not about joining an organization or any person but about your relationship and daily walk with Jesus Christ.

"If you attend with us you will return home rejuvenated and enriched with spiritual skills and knowledge for the task of the lived Christian life.

"If you are interested in this kind of festival, be sure to see the details on our Web site."

It's at liferesource.org. Or write LifeResource at P.O. Box 66540, Albuquerque, N.M. 87193, U.S.A.

Feasts in San Diego and elsewhere

SAN DIEGO, Calif.—The Church of the Eternal God in the United States and the Church of God a Christian Fellowship in Canada are laying plans for their Feast site in San Diego Oct. 2-9, 2009, announced Norbert Link.

For lodging information call the Woodfin Hotel San Diego, (888) 433-2150. For more information from the U.S.-based CEG, see eternalgod.org.

The two CEG groups' U.K. affiliate, the Global Church of God, will keep the Feast for the 10th time at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire. See globalchurchofgod.co.uk/feasts.

Addresses for the CEG-affiliated U.S., Canadian and U.K. ministries are as follows:

■ Church of the Eternal God, P.O. Box 270519, San Diego, Calif. 92198, U.S.A.

■ Church of God a Christian Fellowship, Box 1480, Summerland, B.C. V0H 1Z0, Canada.

■ Global Church of God, P.O. Box 2111, Derby DE1 1ZR, England.

See also eternalgod.org.

Passover papers

PALM BAY, Fla.—Bible researcher Paul R. Finch announces that his book *The Passover Papers*, which he wrote in 1998, is in print again.

The book "is a good old-fashioned Bible study that explores in depth the many-faceted problems of the timing factors involved in determining the correct date and time of the Passover sacrifice, the Wednesday-crucifixion theory, the Saturday-resurrection theory, the meaning of various Hebrew names involved, how the Bible originally counted days and much more," Mr. Finch said.

The Passover Papers is available for \$15.16 at CenturyOne Books (centuryone.com).

Mr. Finch also wrote *Last Call?* and *Beyond Acts*.

Write the author at pfinch1@cfl.rr.com, or phone him at (321) 722-3365.

Carl Franklin's writings

SYDNEY, Australia—Craig White announces that research papers by Carl Franklin of Dunedin, Fla., on the nature of God and Christology are up on one of Mr. White's Web sites.

"Carl has given me the go-ahead to provide a home for them on the Friends of the Sabbath site," Mr. White said.

See friendsofsabbath.org/new_page_2.htm.

New Bible first from COG translator

By Darlene Warren

Fred Coulter, head of the Christian Biblical Church of God, based in Hollister, Calif., and president of York Publishing Co., also of Hollister, has published a new version of an old book, the Bible.

The Holy Bible in Its Original Order: A New English Translation is available from Century One Books, a mail-order company owned by Bob Ellsworth of Pasadena, a friend and former WCG ministerial assistant to Mr. Coulter.

THE JOURNAL spoke with Mr. Ellsworth by phone to find out what the new Bible is all about.

From the beginning it was not so

The translation of both Testaments is Mr. Coulter's. The order of the individual books is based on the work of

another longtime Church of God member, Ernest Martin, who died in 2002.

The new Bible does not follow the usual order of the King James Version. In the KJV, for example, the first book of the Old Testament is Genesis and the last is Malachi. In Mr. Coulter's volume the first book is still Genesis, but the last is 2 Chronicles.

The different arrangement reflects what Mr. Coulter believes is the "inspired order" of the Bible.

The arrangement is different for the New Testament as well.

"In the 4th century the Catholic Church wanted to promote Rome," Mr. Ellsworth explained, "so they changed the sequence of the books of the Bible, placing the book of Romans after Acts."

In the new Bible the four Gospels are followed by Acts and then James, rather than Acts and then Romans.

Publishing and more

Another COG member, Philip Neal of Collinsville, Miss., who helped edit the translation and its helps, including commentaries and maps, comments

in an essay in the front of the volume:

"While no translation is flawless, this translation far surpasses the standards of many recent English translations and has indeed fulfilled the requirements for a *faithful* translation."

Orders keep coming

Mr. Ellsworth reported that the first printing of 7,000 copies of the Bible is almost sold out, and 10,000 more are on order.

"A couple of weeks ago a Christian Science lady from Boston, in her 80s, ordered the Bible," he said, "because she had been looking 25 years for a Bible that was the way it was before the Catholics started fiddlin' with it, as she put it."

"I think something your readers need to know is this is the first complete Bible translation to emerge from the Ambassador College-Church of God arena."

Mr. Coulter credits the late Ernest Martin, Ph.D., Bible scholar, historian, educator and elder of the Worldwide Church of God, who began his study See **NEW INSPIRED-ORDER**, page 23



Fred Coulter

Big Sandy church launches new site

By Dixon Cartwright

BIG SANDY, Texas—The Church of God Big Sandy launched a new Web site Sunday, March 1, 2009. It's at churchofgodbigandy.com.

Dave Havir, pastor of the congregation, thanked Anthony Kimmons of Brookhaven, Miss., for agreeing to become the congregation's new "Web servant."

"The congregation is pleased with the work on the new Web site by Anthony Kimmons," Mr. Havir said. "Anthony does not want to be called a webmaster, but rather he prefers to be called the Web servant."

Two new articles each week

The new site provides live streaming video and audio of the weekly church service of the East Texas congregation.

But it also has text features that are updated each weekend.

"Our plan is to have two new articles on the Web site for each weekend," Mr. Havir said. "The articles are posted by Friday evening."

Weekly commentary

On the home page is a link to a section called "Among Friends." By clicking the prominent icon, a visitor can read a weekly commentary the

pastor writes every week.

Also on the home page is a connection to "Edifying the Body."

Another prominent icon for this section is also visible so visitors can read a weekly article by various members of the congregation.

"If a person wants to read some of the previously posted articles, they

should choose the publication icon and find the articles there," Mr. Havir said.

Handy index

Here is an index of articles on the "Among Friends" section of the site. Mr.



Anthony Kimmons

Havir wrote these articles:

■ Feb. 28, "Miracle on the Hudson."

■ March 7, "Overview of *Failing Forward*."

■ March 14, "Are You a Failure?"

■ March 21, "Failure Is an Inside Job."

■ March 28, "Are You Held Hostage by the Past?"

■ April 4, "In Remembrance of Me."

■ April 11, "The Power of the Empty Tomb."

■ April 18, "A Little Leaven."

■ April 25, "Knowledge Puffs Up."

■ May 2, "The Lord Knows Those Who Are His."

Articles by other members

Here is an index of articles posted at the "Edifying the Body" section:

■ March 14, "Overwhelmed With Love," by Jeanine Case.

■ March 21, "Jesus and the Temple in Jerusalem," by Bernie Monsalvo.

■ March 28, "Overcoming a Root of Bitterness," by David Maas.

■ April 4, "The Power of Forgiveness," by Michele Mischnick.

■ April 11, "The Angel of Goliath," by Stan West.

■ April 18, "Jesus and 'Believing Thomas,'" by Mr. Monsalvo.

■ April 25, "What's on Your Menu?," by Reg Killingley.

■ May 2, "Lessons From Job," by Melodee Overton.

"Whether you want to watch a live church service or you want to read a weekly article, we invite you to visit our Web site each weekend," Mr. Havir said.

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