

# The Journal

## News of the Churches of God

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## Angels can be helpful, but they don't like to socialize

The writer is a 66-year-old electrician, gardener, deer hunter and veteran of the U.S. Navy. Mr. Lewis was a WCG member from 1976 until 1995, then attended the UCG with his wife, Alana, until she died in 2004.

By Jerry Lewis

**H**ARRELLS, N.C.—I read *THE JOURNAL's* article about Ellen Edelbach's encounter with angels at a hospital in Houston, Texas, when her son was dying. (See "Did an Angelic Couple Visit a Texas Hospital in 1981?" issue No. 134, *THE JOURNAL*.) An angel saved my life about 25 years ago. Here is how it happened.

I was living in New Castle, Del., at the time. I had a large backyard. I always planted a garden.

### Runaway tiller

I was using a Troy-Bilt rear-tine tiller, the largest the Troy-Bilt company made. I was backing up near a fence. I let go of the reverse lever, but the tiller kept coming, jamming me into the fence.

My right hand struck a sharp fence barb, cutting a deep gash about three inches long. The handlebar jammed the barb through the back of my hand.

The tiller was still coming. I reached down with my left hand and pulled the sparkplug wire free, killing the engine. But I was completely trapped.

I was in great pain. I tried to push

the fence-railing pipe so I could free my hand. I couldn't move it enough.

I called out. There was no one around. None of the neighbors seemed to be home.

### Serious trouble

By that time my blood was fast pooling on the ground. I was in serious trouble if I couldn't free myself and stop the bleeding.

I asked God to give me enough strength in my left arm to move the railing to get my hand free so I could stop the bleeding with my shirt. Nothing. I tried again to free my hand. I couldn't.

There was more blood, and the pool was growing, and I knew without help I would bleed to death.

My last prayer was: "Lord, if it is not my appointed time, I know Your time is not my time, and my time is not Your time, but my time is running out, so please help me."

### A helping hand

I looked down at the pool of blood. When I looked up, a man was a few feet away from me and coming toward me.

I was dressed in blue work clothes with a baseball cap on. He was dressed *exactly* the same, except his clothes were new.

His eyes were a greenish blue, more green than blue. They seemed to

See **MYSTERY MAN**, page 22



**FEAST REPORT 2009**—Deacon Paul O'Connor and Janielle Smith sing a duet during this year's Feast of Tabernacles observance sponsored by the Church of God International in Ocho Rios, Jamaica. See the Ocho Rios report on page 4, along with other articles describing *JOURNAL* readers' festival observances. [Photo by Christine Bell]

## Feast reports invited, begin in this issue

The first installment of Feast of Tabernacles reports for 2009 begins on page 4 of this issue.

*THE JOURNAL* continues to invite Feastgoers to send in reports (up to 300 words) on the brethren and their Feast activities. Reports will continue for probably three more issues.

Mail your articles to Festival Reports, *THE JOURNAL*, P.O. Box 1020, Big Sandy, Texas 75755, U.S.A. Or E-mail the information to [info@thejournal.org](mailto:info@thejournal.org). Or fax it to (903) 636-9097. Photographs as prints or E-mail attachments are also welcomed.

Please mention the beginning date of your observance and the name of the church fellowship or affiliation, if any, or other sponsor of the site.

Include your full name, city of residence and contact information.

## COG member jumps into Lake Superior to rescue drowning man, receives federal lifesaving award

By Dixon Cartwright

**D**ESTIN, Fla.—A 20-year-old Church of God member, in Florida for the 2009 Feast of Tabernacles, described for *THE JOURNAL* his harrowing experience that ended happily last year when he saved the life of a drowning man.

Scott Sherrod of Gobles, Mich., was at a Feast of Tabernacles site sponsored by the Church of God Big Sandy Oct. 28 when he talked to this writer about the day he impulsively jumped into Lake Superior. He was attempting to rescue a swimmer who was in way over his head.

### Setting up camp

It was Aug. 18, 2008. Mr. Sherrod was camping with his mother and

other family members on the south shore of Lake Superior at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore near Munising, Mich.

"We were setting up camp the first day," he said, "when the camp host drove by in his truck and yelled that he was looking for a strong swimmer."

Mr. Sherrod and his stepfather, Gary Healy, ran to the bluff overlooking the huge lake, "and we saw two guys out there in the water struggling."

The endangered man, 300 yards from shore, was 52-year-old Bruce Brown of Traverse City, Mich. The other man, doing his best to save him from drowning, was Michael Teranes, 37, of Grosse Point Park, Mich.

A few minutes later Mr. Teranes, a prelaw student, was dejectedly swimming alone back to shore. He had been able to bring Mr. Brown out about halfway to the shoreline. But he had freed him from the rip current, thus preventing him from drifting out any farther.

By the time Mr. Sherrod, a junior at Western Michigan University, and his stepfather made it to water's edge, Mr. Teranes was apologizing to a woman and a little girl, the drowning man's wife and daughter.

"He was saying he was sorry he couldn't save him," Mr. Sherrod said. "He explained that the drowning man was just struggling too much and he could not save him."

See **THOUGHT**, page 6

## COGs aren't God's church, UCM founder declares

By Dixon Cartwright

**B**IG SANDY, Texas—Ray Wooten, a familiar name to many longtime Church of God members, made several startling statements in an interview here the Sabbath of March 15, 2009.

For example, he declared that none of the COGs are God's church. Furthermore, he says, they're no more God's church than are Methodists, Baptists and Catholics.

He said something else that could startle Church of God members: He doesn't believe the Sabbath Commandment is the Test Commandment.

Not only that, Mr. Wooten thinks he's located the Ark of the Covenant.

Mr. Wooten, here with his wife, Peggy, for a special Sabbath March 15, 2009, during the annual Women's Conference sponsored by the Church of God Big Sandy, enlarged on these themes during a conversation with this writer after Sabbath services.

### Since 1995

Mr. Wooten, at age 75, has, with his wife, operated United Christian Ministries since 1995, first in Alabama and now in Roanoke, Ind.

He's no stranger to controversy, having helped found the United Church of God in 1995 and left that organization because he believed it quickly departed from the founding principles he thought it was advocat-

ing in favor of more of a centralized, controlled ministry than he was comfortable with.

A native of Huntsville, Ala., and former singer of gospel music for more than 20 years with several quartets, Mr. Wooten raised four children while working in customer relations in insurance, manufacturing and, finally, a credit bureau.

He became a member of the Worldwide Church of God in 1968 and attended Ambassador College in '68 and '69.

### Good-humor man

Mr. Wooten observes the situation the Churches of God find themselves in with an overlay of humor and irony.

He mentions that just about any church or ministry you can think of nowadays is shrinking in its numbers and apparent effectiveness, from the WCG to its splits and even his own effort since the mid-1990s, United Christian Ministries.

But he tries not to let shrinking numbers and people's current indifference to the Bible and religion bother him.

"No. 1," he said, "I've had to realize what my role is in life and in the lives of other people. I believe I have a God-given responsibility and talent to teach God's way of life. I do not have the ability or the desire or commission to enforce God's way of life on anybody."

See **RAY WOOTEN**, page 23

## CG7 Denver president takes temporary leave

By Alan Knight

**D**ENVER, Colo.—Whaid Rose, 48-year-old president of the Church of God (Seventh Day) headquartered in Denver, is on a leave of absence to pursue medical treatment.



Whaid Rose

A recent issue of the CG7's *Bible Advocate* magazine announced that Mr. Rose will undergo treatment for "vision impairment" and at the same time undertake unspecified writing projects.

The announcement stressed the temporary nature of Mr. Rose's leave and the expectation he will return to his post.

In recent years informed sources within the church have indicated Mr. Rose has been losing his eyesight and that his condition is considered serious.

*THE JOURNAL* has published interviews with Mr. Rose, including one in February 1998 headlined "CG7 President Comments on Sabbath, Feast, Sardis."

## CG7 Meridian elder in talks with CME Church

By Dixon Cartwright

**A** longtime Sabbatarian Christian recently began a dialogue with a bishop in the traditionally Sunday-observing Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church.

Tom Roberts of Weiser, Idaho, is a former member of the Worldwide Church of God and current member of the General Council of Churches of God Seventh Day, the CG7 group based in Meridian, Idaho.

Dr. Roberts, who until recently was employed as the Meridian CG7's lead theologian and ministry director, is still a committed Sabbath keeper and elder of CG7 Meridian (not to be confused with the larger CG7 headquartered in Denver, Colo.).

In an interview with *THE JOURNAL* Dr. Roberts, who earned his doctorate in theology from Hellenic University, Athens, Greece, talked about his latest

See **LIAISONS ARE HELPFUL**, page 6

# Former AC students reunite in Houston



Photos by John Dickerson and Dixon Cartwright

## '60s and '70s AC students meet

**AC FRIENDS REUNION**—Former students and employees of Ambassador College, Big Sandy, and a few spouses and grown children attend a two-part reunion at restaurants in Houston, Texas, June 6 and Sept. 26, 2009. All live in Texas unless otherwise noted. The annual reunion began in 2002 with participants Russell Bettis, Phillip Arnold, Everett Oakley and the late Gilbert Woody and Berlin Guillory, joined by the late Eddie C. Holdren in 2004. Dr. Arnold and Mr. Dickerson organized this year's get-togethers.

**Photo 1:** Beverly Thomas Emick. **Photo 2:** John Dickerson (left) and Ken Mason. **Photo 3:** Tom Williams of Huntsville, Ala. (left), Linda Isom Cartwright and Russell Bettis. Mr. Bettis and his wife, Kim, maintain residences in Iowa and Kuala Lumpur,

Malaysia. **Photo 4:** Ron and Lynn Lohr. **Photo 5:** Phillip Arnold and Bettie Kirkpatrick Morey. **Photo 6:** Everett Oakley, who was a 1-W worker in Big Sandy in the '60s. **Photo 7:** Jennifer Aguirre, daughter of Ken and Sharon Carrington Mason. **Photo 8:** Myra Anderson and her husband, John Lester. **Photo 9:** Phyllis Houghtaling Wilson. **Photo 10:** Jane Moughon, wife of Farrell Moughon. **Photo 11:** Kim Bettis, wife of Russell Bettis. **Photo 12:** Cathy Dickerson, wife of John Dickerson, and Keith Aguirre, husband of Jennifer and son-in-law of Ken and Sharon Mason. **Photo 13:** Sharon Carrington Mason. **Photo 14:** Wes Henderson, fiancé of Beverly Thomas Emick, demonstrates for Dixon Cartwright (left) and the other attendees how to convert a towel into something that looks like a plucked chicken. **Photo 15:** Farrell Moughon.



## Notes and quotes

### UCG credentials elder

GLADEWATER, Texas—The United Church of God has credentialed Joe Dobson of Olathe, Kan., as an elder, announced Ken Treybig, pastor of the United Church of God East Texas, which meets in Big Sandy.

Mr. Treybig wrote in an E-mail to members of his Texas congregation that Mr. Dobson "was credentialed as an elder in United back in May" of 2009, but "for some reason" the announcement of his credentialing "slipped through the cracks."

Mr. Dobson, an employee of the State of Kansas as an ombudsman for nursing-home residents, was a pastor in the Worldwide Church of God for more than 30 years, until the mid-1990s.

As of this writing, the UCG's headquarters apparently still has not mentioned Mr. Dobson's credentialing in its publications or on its Web site ([ucg.org](http://ucg.org)).

The new UCG elder lives with his wife, Pat, in Olathe, a Kansas City suburb.

### COG group changes name

TYLER, Texas—The Tyler Church of God has announced a name change. It is now the Tyler Sabbath Fellowship.

Gary Woodring, a member of group's board, also announced that the fellowship will formally dedicate its new building in early 2010.

### Winter Family Weekend

WEST CHESTER, Ohio—Organizer Jim O'Brien provided THE JOURNAL with a schedule of events for the annual Winter Family Weekend in Lexington, Ky., set for the last week in December. It will be sponsored by the Church of God Cincinnati and Church of God Lexington.

From Dec. 23 through 27, 2009, attendees can participate

in adult and youth seminars, Sabbath classes, a homeschool meeting, karaoke, games including basketball, volleyball and bingo, a kids' carnival, and breakfasts and other meals.

Sermon and seminar speakers will include Ronald Dart, Pam Dewey, Dave Havir,

Bill Jacobs, Mike James and Guy Swenson.

The entry fee will be \$10 per person, with a \$40 maximum fee per family.

For more information see [cogcincinnati.org/tournament](http://cogcincinnati.org/tournament), or E-mail Mr. O'Brien at [jimobri@gmail.com](mailto:jimobri@gmail.com).

Or write Church of God Cincinnati, P.O. Box 1811, West Chester, Ohio 45071, U.S.A.

### New Edmond church

EDMOND, Okla.—The Churches of God have increased by at least one group in the past few months. The new Faithful Church of God in Laodicea operates out of Edmond, the same city that headquarters Gerald Flurry's Philadelphia Church of God.

The new FCGL is made up mostly of members who were part of Mr. Flurry's group, as well as former members of the Church of God's Faithful (CGF).

FCGL pastor Frank Borg says his group is dedicated to helping the CGF rise above its Laodiceanism.

"We are committed to do what we can to help the Laodicean CGF, its membership and the rest of the scattered virgins in the 300-plus splinter groups to repent and change . . . as we sound the alarm to announce the soon-coming Day of the Lord," he wrote.

The FCGL's official beliefs include the identification of RCG/WCG/GCI founder Herbert Armstrong as the "end-time Elijah."

For more information see [fcogl.org](http://fcogl.org), which features writings of Mr. Borg as well as Alfred Cachia, Daniel Frendo, Steve Jordan, Peter Moss and Keith Taylor.

Or write the FCGL at P.O. Box 31135, Edmond, Okla. 73003, U.S.A., or [info@menofsign.org](mailto:info@menofsign.org).

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# UCM founder sang with many groups

Continued from page 23  
 inally included the Delmore Brothers, Red Foley and Grandpa Jones. My brother J.O. and I replaced Red Foley and Grandpa Jones when these guys came back home to Alabama from Nashville to live and retire. We sang with them."  
 He also sang with the Tidesmen Quartet and with Wally Fowler, who was a member of the original Oakridge Boys and the leader of the Oakridge Quartet.  
 "I feel probably that God put it on us not to be involved in the world of music because He knew that gospel music was basically show business," Mr. Wooten said.

"But there's nothing wrong with the songs, other than—  
 "Well, I even changed a word this morning [when singing at a memorial service for Jack Lehman, a member of the Church of God Big Sandy] from 'Jesus' to 'Savior': 'when I see my Savior' instead of 'when I see my Jesus.'  
 "Changing a few words around in a song can make it just fine.  
 "Music should be for blessing and helping people. It's not something you should commercialize, any more than you should commercialize the preaching of the gospel.  
 "That's why we at UCM don't sell anything we have, by the way."  
 United Christian Ministries is in the

process of expanding through public-access television.  
 "If that works, okay, then we may try to go on stations that you have to pay for. But right now we're considering that, and I don't know if it's going to work."  
 He and his supporters are also re-vamping UCM's Web site, at [www.4ucm.org](http://www.4ucm.org).  
 For information about *The Christian Beacon*, a quarterly publication, write Mr. Wooten at [raywooten@aol.com](mailto:raywooten@aol.com), or phone (888) 985-9066.  
 Write United Christian Ministries at P.O. Box 608, Roanoke, Ind. 46783, U.S.A., or [ucmfamily@aol.com](mailto:ucmfamily@aol.com).

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