

# The Journal

## News of the Churches of God

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- 5 Ken Westby offers tips and techniques for dealing with splits
- 6 Alan Knight asks who is the prophesied false-prophet beast
- 8 Tony Bosserman proposes his model for understanding prophecy
- 12 William Neely thinks we should observe Days of Leavened Bread

## Visiting hobo expresses milk of angelic kindness

The writer is a member of the Tulsa (Okla.) Church of God.

By Aletha Dennis

**B**IXBY, Okla.—I have had several encounters with angels during my lifetime. The first one I remember occurred when I was about 5 years old. My mother used the occasion to teach us a valuable lesson.

Before I describe the incident, I have to describe the physical setting. Our house was on the northwest corner of the main intersection of a small village in upstate New York.



Aletha Dennis

The kitchen window faced east, as was the case with the open side of the back porch, while the kitchen door onto the porch faced north.

There were about six steps on the porch and another six or seven steps about 20 feet from the porch down to the road. The windows in the living room faced east and south, so we could see the entire intersection.

This was in the 1950s when milk was still delivered to residences. Our milk was usually delivered right outside our kitchen door first thing in the morning by a farmer.

### Out of milk

This particular morning there was no milk. I believe Mother had received a call giving her a reason, but I can't remember those details. I do remember we were out of milk and Mother needed it for my younger brother.

There was a small store in the village, but he needed the raw whole milk, not the pasteurized store milk.

### Early-morning visitor

As my mother was standing near the sink by the kitchen window getting ready to cook breakfast for us, a hobo came to the back door. I remember thinking he did not have enough clothes for the cold fall weather and he looked pretty dirty. He asked for work.

Mother said she didn't have anything for him to do but invited him in for a hot breakfast. My brother and I were surprised. He was a stranger. We didn't know him. He looked "different." I think we were a little afraid of him.

We were told to sit down and eat. I recall watching the man. He had kind eyes and spoke softly to us. He seemed to know all the things we liked to do.

His clothes and dirty appearance didn't seem to matter anymore as we spoke and ate. He asked if we had any

See **WHEN MOM**, page 9



Big Sandy building

**THE UCG IN BIG SANDY**—Until the recent split, the United Church of God's Big Sandy congregation had averaged about 190 people per Sabbath service, not counting feast days. After the split, most church members who had been meeting in the building (shown here on Jan. 19, 2011) are meeting elsewhere because of their decision to leave the UCG and join the new Church of God a Worldwide Association. Local UCG members had decided almost unanimously in 2008 to transfer the deed to the building from the Big Sandy congregation to the UCG's headquarters. Thus the majority of the Big Sandy brethren, because they're no longer affiliated with the UCG, are meeting for the foreseeable future in rented halls in the area. See a related article on page 4. [JOURNAL photo by Dixon Cartwright]

## Feast reports feature Tkach interview

**T**he Feast of Tabernacles reports in this issue from readers of *THE JOURNAL* are unusual in that they feature an interview with Joseph Tkach, pastor general of Grace Communion International (formerly the Worldwide Church of God).

*JOURNAL* correspondent David Moffitt filed from Australia a seven-site report that includes excerpts of his conversation with Mr. Tkach after a service of GCI's annual festival. (The dates of GCI's festival this year overlapped the traditional Feast dates.) The subject of the interview: law and grace.

Reports this year also include Glenford Smith describing a CGI observance in Jamaica, John Sash running the Rogue River rapids again and Beverlie Ramocan-Woodland filing news of an observance near Washington, D.C.

The reports start on page 32.

## The Church of God a Worldwide Association's board chairman gives reasons for the new group

By Dixon Cartwright

**A**lthough representatives of the Church of God a Worldwide Association (CGWA) twice refused a request from this writer for *THE JOURNAL* to attend its organizational conference on Jan. 9-11, 2011, *THE JOURNAL* was able to gain some insights into the new organization through other means.

*THE JOURNAL* heard some preliminary discussion directly from Mike Hanisko, recently named chairman of the CGWA's board, in a recording of a Q&A he conducted in Wisconsin on Dec. 25, 2010.

The session was recorded and posted on the new Beloit, Wis., congregation's Web site.

In the 70-minute presentation Mr.

Hanisko followed a prepared agenda. Although he spent the time discussing selected topics, he answered questions from the group that mostly comprised former members of the United Church of God. Following are excerpts.

### Church hall

"Is this hall okay?" Mr. Hanisko asked his audience. "We had 33 here today. We had 49 chairs set up today."

Mr. Hanisko said he anticipated "other people joining the group from various parts of Wisconsin."

### Perceived reasons

Mr. Hanisko discussed the three reasons some people claim are why some UCG ministers left and formed the CGWA.

■ "For a while the issues were characterized as, because we didn't move [the UCG headquarters] to Texas, people were unhappy about that. And that's why people are upset."

■ "Then it kind of changed. It became more, well, there were those who were on the council or in administration, and they are no longer there so they are unhappy."

■ "Most recently the comments were made that we disagreed with the government structure and format and wanted to change the governance, the government of the United Church of God. And that was claimed to be the issue."

Mr. Hanisko then stated what he says he believes are the two actual

See **NEW CGWA CHAIRMAN**, page 31

## A UCG founder remembers Indy behind the scenes

By Dixon Cartwright

**B**IG SANDY, Texas—Long-time Church of God member and elder Ray Wooten of Roanoke, Ind., was in Indianapolis, Ind., in the spring of 1995 when elders and other former WCG members met to organize the United Church of God an International Association.

Mr. Wooten, for the first time, has agreed to an interview for publication to talk about his memories and perspectives on the beginnings of the United Church of God.

The interview happened Dec. 16, 2010, with Mr. Wooten speaking by phone from Indiana.

### Who's right?

**THE JOURNAL:** Is there a Church of God that you could point to that's doing things right?

**Ray Wooten:** A Church of God group that is doing things right?

**THE JOURNAL:** You point out problems with United and the way it started and the way it continued to evolve and even the way it is today. Who, to your way of thinking, would be clinging to the ideal?

**Mr. Wooten:** Not any group of

people is doing that that I know about. I would say, if I had to choose somebody that was closest to that that had groups in the church, it would be CGI [the Church of God International, based in Tyler, Texas].

They're not totally that way. They have a nice person who's responsible for all of it [CGI president Charles Groce], and they don't have a full-time ministry that's under their church administration.

That's where the big problems come in. It's when the groups form a church-administration department. That lets them control the ministers and control everything about everything. That's what I call governing or having dominion over people's faith: when you won't let them have freedom to believe anything other than what you tell them.

You know, the apostle Paul basically worked with house churches. I've been to a number of places where there used to be churches, such as Corinth, the church mail route in Turkey. I have seen the ruins of Roman churches and Diana's temple and even temples to the Roman emperors.

But I've seen nothing that was identified as a Church of God or a Christian church. So I think they kept them small.

I agree that we should not avoid assembling ourselves together. We should be assembling. But I also

See **SERVANT**, page 28



Ray Wooten

## New church says no to reporter for The Journal

By Dave Havir

**B**IG SANDY, Texas—Organizers of the founding conference of the new Church of God a Worldwide Association (CGWA) told a reporter for *THE JOURNAL* he was not welcome to attend the conference.

Editor and publisher Dixon Cartwright of Big Sandy attempted twice to register for the conference and was told twice by E-mail he would not be allowed entrance to the meetings, which took place in the Galt House Hotel in Louisville, Ky., Jan. 9-11, 2011.

Mr. Cartwright had attempted to register through elders Ken Treybig and Todd Carey.

Mr. Treybig, until recently pastor of the United Church of God's Big Sandy congregation, responded to the first request from Mr. Cartwright:

"Yes, the planning team for the conference has written that members are welcome to attend. However, I checked to get the intent behind that and was told the attendance policy guidelines state that it is open to members who intend to be part of the new organization. You're welcome to write to Todd Carey if you'd like to ask for special permission, but based on that

See **JOURNAL REPORTER**, page 32

## UCG goes forward with two thirds of its elders

**M**ILFORD, Ohio—The United Church of God an International Association (UCG) has scheduled a conference of "elders in good standing" for Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, 2011, at a Holiday Inn in nearby Cincinnati.

According to church president Dennis Luker speaking in a Q&A he conducted in Dallas, Texas, on Jan. 15, most employed and unemployed ministers remain with the UCG after the recent split.

He reportedly said that, of 492 elders worldwide, 62 percent, or about 307, stayed with the UCG.

In the United States, 60, or about half the employed elders, left.

In the United States overall, 68 percent of the 381 ministers, or 259 men, remain with the UCG.

Melvin Rhodes, chairman of the UCG's council of elders, on Jan. 19 invited *JOURNAL* publisher Dixon Cartwright to attend the Cincinnati conference.



Dennis Luker

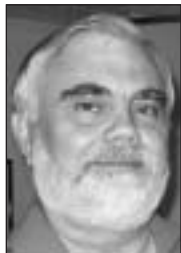
## Columns and commentary

# What's the difference in the warring sides?

The writer is publisher of THE JOURNAL.

By Dixon Cartwright

**B**IG SANDY, Texas—The other day while Linda and I were driving somewhere she suggested to me that *THE JOURNAL* might want to run an article explaining the difference in the two perspectives held by people in the recent UCG wars.



Dixon Cartwright

Although this newspaper has offered its opinion that COG splits invariably center on the question of who's in charge, Linda's suggestion struck me as a great idea.

Yes, United Church of God leaders for years jockeyed for position on the 12-man council of elders. And each of the two factions believed it should run the church.

But what, in a nutshell, are the two

philosophical positions that the two sides have wished to impose on the brethren to promote and enforce the greater good?

### The two trees?

That's easy. From day one in the UCG, beginning well before its putative startup in the spring of 1995 in Indianapolis, Ind., the two sides have moved in two relatively distinct directions.

Two philosophies, in constant danger of colliding with each other, animate the two paths.

One direction leads away from the role and influence and memory of Herbert Armstrong. The other leads back toward Mr. Armstrong.

This is a simplification to be sure. But I think it's a helpful one.

### Constituents have opinions

Complicating the situation for leaders on both sides is that their constituents out in the boondocks have strong opinions of their own about the spirit and power of Mr. Armstrong.

Even leaders who are of a tem-

perament to wish Mr. Armstrong's spirit in man a restful sleep and to get on with their lives don't always feel free to openly express their preferences in that regard.

Mr. Armstrong has become a litmus test, even an avatar, if that's the right word, as in the personification of, in this case, an obligatory worldview. Even those who might prefer to move on do so carefully, perhaps in the hope that no one will notice.

### Hooked on a memory

Ray Wooten—whose opinion piece begins on page 5 of this issue and whose views are also documented in a news article beginning on page 1—may disagree with some of what I'm saying here.

That's because Mr. Wooten, one of the founders of the UCG in '95, thinks just about everybody at the helm of the UCG (as well as the UCG's latest split) is hopelessly hung up on the memory of Mr. Armstrong and scarcely dares to do anything without his ethereal imprimatur.

Mr. Wooten doesn't see much dif-

See **JUST WHAT**, page 6



"Yes, I know you don't see me very often, but your sermons are so inspiring they last me a long time."

## Ephesians 4 can serve as a handy smoke screen

The writer, a former member of the Worldwide Church of God, is proprietor of the "Otagosh: Raking Through the Ashes of Christendom" blog ([otagosh.blogspot.com](http://otagosh.blogspot.com)). The following is adapted by permission from one of Mr. Rumney's recent posts.

By Gavin Rumney

**A**UCKLAND, New Zealand—Even as I write this, a cabal of ministers who recently departed from a minor American denomination are organizing themselves into a schismatic body.



Gavin Rumney

They're making a lot of Ephesians 4 as the charter for their new organization's structure. Here's the relevant passage:

"As for his gifts, to some he gave to be apostles, to others prophets, or even evangelists, or pastors and teachers. So he prepared those who belong to him for the ministry, in order to build up the Body of Christ, until we are all united in the same faith and knowledge of the Son of God."

At first blush it sounds good, but—But the writer of Ephesians wasn't writing into a vacuum. He had particular issues in mind. For example, he would have had a specific understanding of the role of an apostle and an evangelist.

### Historically distinct

You can be sure that the pouting pastors have a quite different understanding, conditioned by their own distinctive doctrines and history. The embarrassing truth is that an apostle isn't a jet-setting tithing farmer, and ordination as an evangelist isn't the equivalent of elevation to Britain's House of Lords.

Slapping these verses onto the current situation is a bit like prescribing aspirin for someone who's been electrocuted and is still twitching.

Then there's the unavoidable fact that these geezers aren't claiming to have an apostle or a prophet in their midst. They do have a dead apostle of living memory, but he's not a lot of

practical use, other than as a pretext.

Nor do these confused clergy seem to grasp the fact that Ephesians is a less-than-100-percent-proof source for proof texts. Internal evidence strongly indicates that it was written by someone other than Paul. It isn't regarded as one of his genuine letters.

### Hierarchical justification

So why the ballyhoo over Ephesians 4? Because it can be used to justify hierarchy.

Now, let's think: no apostles, no prophets, the prospect of a couple of retreaded evangelists from the previous administration (all title, no power): What does that leave them with?

Pastors and teachers. And the practice in these circles is to conflate the two into one.

What about garden-variety lay members. Well, what have they got to do with anything? Ephesians 4 doesn't even mention them, right?

(In fact, the book of Ephesians is addressed to them: "to the saints in Ephesus, to you who share Christian faith." It's right there in 1:1. Lay engagement and empowerment are assumed throughout, or the writer—who wasn't Paul but may have been a protégé—would have simply written directly to the pastor.)

### Unhandling accountability

Now, my dear Watson, the game is afoot! It would appear that the point of the exercise is to create a comfortable sinecure for a bunch of disgruntled ministers who couldn't handle being accountable to a governing structure that they themselves elected.

Decapitate the denominational officers and you have a two-level hierarchy: them and us, dumb sheep and pastors.

As they themselves say: "We encourage one another to follow the Ephesians 4 template for the pastor, members and congregation."

Any provision for checks and balances, for restraints on pastoral authority? None that leap out at you. The new body appears to be a loose association of loose cannons.

At the congregational level it's just pray-and-pay members with limited rights (or none at all) and under-qualified pastors who hold unaccountable authority. The potential for abuse is enormous.

# What's with UCG and COG Worldwide?

The writer pastors the Church of God Big Sandy and is a regular columnist for THE JOURNAL.

By Dave Havir

**B**IG SANDY, Texas—Many of my friends have asked me for my observations about what is happening between the United Church of God an International Association (UCG) and the Church of God a Worldwide Association (CGWA, or COG Worldwide).

I thought I would share some actual questions I have received over the past six weeks.

### History has an influence

**Q:** I have heard that you support the present council of UCG more than the clergymen who left UCG. Is that true?

**A:** Yes, that is true.

**Q:** Didn't you and the Church of God Big Sandy have difficulties with the UCG back in 1998? How does that affect your perspective about the two church organizations?

**A:** Yes, we did.

But it might help you to know that the individuals who were the main instigators who led to the UCG leaving our congregation back in 1998 are presently in the COG Worldwide.

### Their side of the story

**Q:** Can you tell me the reasons a large number of ministers left the UCG and formed the COG Worldwide?

**A:** If you read the article in this newspaper on page 1 (titled "The Church of God a Worldwide Association's Board Chairman Gives Reasons for the New Group"), you will hear the opinion of board chairman Mike Hanisko about the two main reasons.

**Q:** Did Mr. Hanisko mention doctrine as one of the reasons?

**A:** No. I appreciate Mike's honesty when he said doctrine was not one of the two primary reasons. For the record, I'll mention he later made some comments about doctrine, but doctrine was not one of his main two reasons.

### A different opinion

**Q:** What do you believe is the underlying reason for a large number of ministers leaving the UCG and forming the COG Worldwide?

**A:** I recently heard a good analogy. A friend of mine said that there was not just one reason for the United States Civil War.

Some people fought for honorable reasons, like defending their property, eliminating slavery and supporting states' rights.

Yet others fought for greed: power and money.

Although some people may seem to have honorable reasons to form a church to compete with the UCG, there are certainly people who are motivated by power and money.

Therefore, if the shoe fits, wear it.

**Q:** Isn't it possible that the present leaders in the UCG are just as interested in usurping power as the organizers of the COG Worldwide?

**A:** Not really. The present UCG leaders do not need to usurp power because they are already the designated leaders.

**Q:** Someone told me that one third of the clergymen left the UCG, and this person likened them to the one third of the angels who rebelled. Is that true?

**A:** I have heard that 38 percent of the elders left the UCG. But I would be careful to avoid making any comparisons with the rebellious angels.

### Changing doctrine?

**Q:** Do you believe the UCG may be changing doctrine such as the Sabbath?

**A:** I have heard people say, "The UCG is changing the Sabbath, just like Joseph Tkach Sr. [former pastor general of the Worldwide Church of



Remember, this motive does not apply to everyone. If the shoe fits, wear it.

### Not whitewashing the UCG

**Q:** Do you think that the present council of elders deserves any blame in the current situation?

**A:** I'm sure it does.

Let me quote from an E-mail by Randy Schreiber (a UCG pastor in Arizona) titled "Why I am Not Resigning From United Church of God" that was dated Dec. 23, 2010.

He said: "First, let me state that my reason for staying is not because I think the COE and Administration has no faults. (Apologies to my bosses!)"

He later said: "I do not believe the current COE & Administration to be the evil people they are made out to be. In my opinion they have made errors in judgment at times, could have handled certain situations better, reacted more appropriately, been more sensitive, etc. (Again, apologies to my bosses.)"

### A new lens

**Q:** Do you think some of the present leaders in the UCG have a different view toward your congregation now from what they had in 1998?

**A:** Probably. I suspect Roy Holladay views things differently. I'm sure that he believed what he was told about our congregation. I mention Roy because he was the man sent to pastor the UCG congregation that formed in 1998 when they left us.

However, it is my perspective that the same clergymen who were the main instigators in the UCG leaving our congregation in 1998 played politics to remove Roy as president in 2005.

That may have influenced him to see things a little differently.

### Discussed before resignations

**Q:** Did the organizers of the COG Worldwide make plans while they were still receiving a salary from the UCG?

**A:** Yes. That was true about some at this time.

For the record, I heard that this was also true about some of the same organizers back in 1995—when some were making preliminary plans for the startup of the UCG while they were still receiving a salary from the WCG.

See **HOW CAN A COG justify**, page 30

*People might be tempted to leave a church organization that has been branded as allegedly changing doctrine.*

God] did in 1995."

However, I believe that sincere people are merely repeating inaccurate hyperbole they have heard.

**Q:** Do you think some people in the COG Worldwide deliberately put lies into the information pipeline to steal members from the UCG?

**A:** Yes, I do.

Think about it. If a person is going to leave a church organization and wants to take as many people with him as he can, can he afford to openly say he wants to start a church to have more power?

Many people won't fall for that idea. But people might be tempted to leave a church organization that has been branded as allegedly changing doctrine.

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## Columns and commentary

# Splits happen, even to one true churches

The writer, a longtime Church of God member and elder, is founder of the Association for Christian Development and host of its weekly Virtual Church Sabbath service. He provides a free E-mail newsletter, Keeping Watch. Write [acd@Godward.org](mailto:acd@Godward.org) to subscribe.

By Ken Westby

**S**EATTLE, Wash.—Splits happen. There've been many and there'll be many more. They occur in all denominations and, for that matter, in just about any human organization. I experienced a big one firsthand.



Ken Westby

They called me "the devil" back in 1974. Well, maybe not the devil or the Satan, but a bad hombre under devilish influence.

I was accused of being used by the Prince of Darkness to attack "the church," to cause a split.

Heavy stuff. I was innocent of the charge and wasn't pushing for a split, but what does that matter?

### Ask and you shall bomb out

Who were the "they" to whom I refer? "They" were the human heads of God's One True Church (OTC). They were the most important humans on earth, spiritually speaking. More heavy stuff.

What was the crime that prompted my firing and energetic denunciation?

Simply this: I questioned church practices, ethics and doctrine and then suggested reforms. I was not alone because 35 other ministers were of the same opinion, and they too were fired.

It all seems a lifetime ago.

Since I seemed to be a leader, the devil label was pinned on me and great calamity ensued: The human heads of the OTC (One True Church) warned the confused and wavering brethren that this might be the end-time sign of Satan launching his attack to destroy the church. Hold fast. Don't listen to the evil dissidents. Do what we tell you. While you're at it, send money.

The OTC survived the 1974 faux attack and could continue to ignore or hide its problems—at least until the next crisis.

Problems ignored stay problems, and future crises are guaranteed to come. Come they did until finally the OTC broke into many pieces, with a few sharp and nasty ones still thinking themselves the OTC to this day.

The breakup proved therapeutic and liberating for many. But the departed individual Christian was now left standing alone before God and responsible to discover His will, without the false comfort of hiding behind the OTC, its correct dogma and its ministers who knew God's will and administered God's authority.

Once you're out of a high-commitment sect or church organization, suddenly it's just you and God. That can be scary at first but can prove to be the best thing that ever happened to pro-

mote individual growth and Christian maturity. I think most find this to be their story.

### High drama

In the months leading up to, and for many months following, a church split, emotions move in hyperdrive, E-mails and phone calls shoot into the ether like antiaircraft flak, bad motives are generously attributed (rightly or wrongly), lists of sympathizers and enemies develop, leaders emerge, fence-sitters are pushed, and preparations get legal and irreversible.

The high drama distorts facts, but that's called the fog of war. Meanwhile a lot of church members minding their own business wonder what the commotion is about.

It seems to be a ministers' brawl. Preachers who lecture on how to live harmoniously apparently need more mirror time. One side has one story while the opposite side tells another.

Good luck on finding out the real scoop. Sometimes it takes a decade or two before the pieces come together to give the real picture of why it all happened.

### Strange fruit

Big church splits, firings and purges produce strange phenomena. One day the church has loyal, faithful employees, effective and good-hearted ministers; the next day these same individuals are evil plotters, disloyal dissenters, snakes, inciters to rebellion (which, you must remember, is akin to witchcraft), attackers of the OTC and the

See **HERE ARE TIPS**, page 27



THE CHOICES ARE GETTING SLIMMER!

## How symbolic is the UCG's Chile Sabbath imperative?

The writer attends the Church of God Big Sandy and formerly pastored several churches in Latin America.

By Reginald Killingley

**B**IG SANDY, Texas—After reading the Jan. 4, 2011, council-of-elders (COE) ruling regarding the Chilean child-care business that became the cause célèbre and convenient catalyst in the sorry saga of the scission that has sundered the United Church of God, I had two reactions.

■ One: Why now? From other accounts, the business has been around for years. In fact, it long existed during former UCG regional director Leon Walker's and former UCG Chile church pastor Saul Langarica's tenures.

Were they negligent? Simply unaware? How odd that only now does it seem to have registered on their radar screen of righteousness.

■ Two: The owners have known about and kept the Sabbath for decades. What did they not understand about the Sabbath that this decree reveals to them?

### Sabbatarian symbol

Is the COE suggesting that all this time the Chileans didn't know they shouldn't work or run a business on the Sabbath?

The COE statement indicates that the Chileans asked the COE to render a judgment. Was this an unprompted request, or did someone suggest that it would be wise for them to do so? Why didn't they ask for such a judgment years ago?

As a comedian would say, timing is everything.

If the business modus vivendi had existed for years without creating a ruckus, and the owners observed the Sabbath for years without commotion, then the only conclusion one can draw is that some supposed vio-

lation of the Sabbath was seized to be used as a convenient pretext for those who dissented from the COE.

It became a symbol that could be trotted out to prove that the dastardly Laodicean liberals of the COE were watering down the faith once delivered. What next?

Regrettably, but perhaps realistically, the COE has now felt forced to address the charge posthaste for fear of losing greater market share. They ran scared, so they ran their adjudicatory statement.

### Inevitable continuum

As factions become fractions, perhaps folks should take a moment to consider that any time human beings form any sort of association, of virtually any size, sooner or later they will discover that a continuum of viewpoints develops within the constraints established by the group. There will be people on the far right and far left, middle right and middle left, and even some in the middle.

If members of the group are willing to accept this diversity of opinion, the organization can thrive. If not, it will be lucky to survive. More than likely another split will come.

### Be brave

My advice to the COE: Stand for something positive and embrace diversity.

Whatever you do, don't cower in a defensive mode for fear of losing more members—and their money.

The CGWA (Church of God a Worldwide Association) will soon enough experience its own inter-necine strife—and schisms.

## United began in 1995 with a wrong turn

The writer was a founder of the United Church of God an International Association in April and May of 1995. He is founder of United Christian Ministries, based in Indiana. See THE JOURNAL's article reporting on a recent interview with Mr. Wooten beginning on page 1.

By Ray Wooten

**R**OANOKE, Ind.—Dear Brethren in the United Church of God: I have been reading about the difficulties that you are currently experiencing in the United Church of God.



Ray Wooten

These problems have grieved me greatly because I have known many of you for decades, and I know you must have agonized over the confusion and the lack of love and concern that many of your "leaders" have shown for the brethren. Peg and I pray for you regularly.

The ministers involved in the setting up of UCG-AIA [which is currently usually abbreviated UCGIA or simply UCG] were sincere in their belief of there being a human government over the spiritual organism, which is the church.

While sincere, they, I believe, were sincerely wrong. God has not given a man or a group of men dominion—governmental authority—over another person's faith. This fundamental principle cannot be compromised.

### UCG's beginnings in 1995

I feel I can and should address some of these issues with you at this time because I was one of the founding ministers of the UCG at its inception in 1995 and one of the original members of the board of directors.

So I have a perspective that most of you, including the elders, do not have.

Since I have been freed from the prison chains of hierarchical religionists for more than 15 years, I believe I can discuss the situation without prejudice.

As an illustration, if a married couple is experiencing difficulties, someone outside the situation can sometimes see things a little more clearly.

For example, a marriage counselor can advise a couple with observations such as: "Your children are disrespectful to you because you undermine each other to them."

Or "You are having financial difficulties because you do not budget as a team."

The UCG is having difficulties because the governmental structure was set up incorrectly from the beginning.

### Acceptable governance

I know many ministers tell you that the UCG system is the correct one for God's people. Others will tell you that a church governmental system must be even more authoritarian than the one currently in place in the UCG.

Some leaders have even stated that church government is the only doctrine the Roman Catholic Church has right.

But don't believe them. The only system of government that is acceptable in the Church of God is where Christ is its head.

But the true Church of God is not the corporations that call themselves the Church of God. The true Church of God is the spiritual organism that consists only of those in whom the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, abides actively.

### Analogy of the body

That organism is the Body of Christ. It is one body regardless of whether its members are part of a corporate church or not. The term *Body of Christ* makes a comparison with the human body. The normal human body has one head.

"And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills

all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23).

One human body has one head consisting of many members, many body parts. Similarly, the Church of God—the Body of Christ—has one head and many body parts, many members.

No human is the head. We are the body parts, and each part is driven by the head. There is no intermediary part between the head and other body parts. All of the members have direct access to Christ the head.

### Helpers of joy

The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 1:24: "Not that we have dominion [rulership, lordship, governing power] over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith you stand."

Habakkuk 2:4: "... The just shall live by his faith" (i.e., a person's own faith, not someone else's faith).

If Paul did not have dominion over others' faith, certainly no one today has such dominion.

Most Sabbath-keeping organizations claim Christ as their head, but this is not true. Any time a church corporation presumes to be the intermediary between you and the Father, that presumption is not of Christ.

Any time a church corporation says it speaks with "duly constituted authority" from God, that saying is not of Christ.

Any time a church organization claims it can keep you out of God's Kingdom through the disfellowshipping process, that claim is not of Christ.

Too many of God's people are governed by church corporations, and this is wrong. God's people should be only served by church corporations.

I hope you won't mind my giving you a brief history lesson that you probably have not heard. It would be helpful to recount what happened in the forming of the UCG almost 16 years ago.

### Coming up with a plan

In the spring of 1995 in Indianapolis See **MOST MINISTERS**, page 7

# Brethren describe their Feast adventures

Following are Feast of Tabernacles reports readers have sent to *THE JOURNAL*. This is the second installment of articles about the 2010 festival. See the final reports in the next issue of *THE JOURNAL*.

## LOVE AND WARMTH

**BALTIMORE, Md.**—The Destiny of Hope Ministries, in partnership with the Church of God International, is pleased to report another wonderful Feast of Tabernacles in Baltimore.

Brethren from Ohio, Texas, New York, Connecticut, Georgia, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Canada, Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica and areas surrounding the state of Maryland were in attendance.

A total of 65 attended. Forty-five to 47 gathered on the high holy days and the weekly Sabbath, while a steady 35-37 gathered on non-holy days.

The testimonies that came forth expressed the enrichment of the Word of God as presented by the speakers, including Pastor George Ramocan, Pastor Mike James, Elder Louis Williams, Brother Ray Hall, Pastor Stanley DeVeaux and Deacon Gary Haerich.

Special-music renditions and piano selections were some of the highlights of the Feast. This year a *real group* of eight Feast singers rehearsed and made two wonderful renditions.

Pastor R. F. Woodland had announced that on the Last Great Day there would be a prayer session for those who were sick in body and going through financial crises or family challenges.

Many signed the prayer sheet during the week and came forth in large numbers on the Last Great Day as Pastor Woodland and other elders anointed with oil and prayed. It was a moving experience for everyone.

There was the Nutrition Seminar with Dr. Ingrid Espinet, who presented an opportunity to "ask the doctor." Her sessions were life-changing for many as well as educational. Brethren left inspired to change their diet and take better care of themselves physically.

The Seniors' Luncheon was also a delight. The food was superb and the music great. Beverlie Woodland recited a poem, "Not Growing Old."

The Feast photographer, Jemal

Countess of New York, generously served in service unto God. Such immeasurable charity for the people of God!

People are still talking about their experience of the love and warmth displayed among the brethren as they interacted and fellowshiped. Many have expressed their desire to attend in 2011.

Pastor Woodland, Beverlie and the brethren of the Baltimore Church look

sons Point. Today Church of God Feast sites are in many places around Australia.

## GTAEA Feast

In contrast to last year, when I was stopped from attending the Garner Ted Armstrong Educational Association (GTAEA) Feast at Nelson Bay by Chris Waterman, who said to me, "You're not going to try to get in," and who then told me it was a "private"



**BALTIMORE FEAST**—Brethren observing the Feast of Tabernacles at a site sponsored by Destiny of Hope Ministries and the Church of God International pose for a photo in Baltimore, Md. See the related Feast report beginning on this page. See more reports and photos on pages 10 and 11. [Photo by Jemal Countess]

forward to the 2011 Feast of Tabernacles. *Beverlie Ramocan-Woodland, Baltimore, Md.*

## NEWS FROM SEVEN FEAST SITES INCLUDING AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH TKACH

**CALOUNDRA, Australia**—This year several groups again met for the Feast of Tabernacles at beautiful Caloundra, with its sandy beaches on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

For those with good eyesight or binoculars and patience, migrating whales could be seen swimming along the coast.

This was the 50th Feast of Tabernacles since Garner Ted Armstrong flew to Sydney with Gerald Waterhouse and Frank Longuskie on Nov. 12, 1959, to open the Australian office of the Radio Church of God (RCG) in North Sydney.

The RCG's first Feast of Tabernacles in Australia was in 1960 near the Sydney Harbor Bridge, in the Australian Institute of Builders hall at Mil-

meeting, all the meetings at Caloundra this year had an open-door policy.

Nearly all the Feast meetings started at 10 a.m. each day. A number of us crossed paths while attending the various meetings.

## CESA Feast

Christian Educational Services Australia (CESA), affiliated with Christian Educational Ministries in the United States, is run by John and Wendy O'Donnell.

Their meetings were in the Shearwater Resort at the northern end of Kings Beach, Caloundra. They are the Australian branch of the group started in the United States by Ronald Dart, who we have heard was unable to participate at the Feast this time due to a serious injury he sustained earlier in the year.

Some of his books were on display and could be purchased at the hall.

There were talks by Alan Dean, Rex Lehmann, Norm Watson, John

See **FEAST REPORTER**, page 10

## Notes and quotes

### Dibar Apartian dies

**MATTHEWS, N.C.**—Dibar Apartian, a longtime WCG evangelist and more recently an evangelist-rank minister in the Living Church of God (LCG), died Dec. 8, 2010.



Dibar Apartian

Mr. Apartian, 94, began teaching French at Ambassador College in Pasadena, Calif., in 1955. He was born of Armenian parents in Turkey in 1916.

Roderick Meredith, president of the LCG, called Mr. Apartian a "mighty oak" who "will be greatly missed." Survivors include Mr. Apartian's wife, Shirley.

### AC-reunion invitation

**LINCOLN, Ark.**—John Dickerson, who attended AC Big Sandy in the 1960s, asks any former Big Sandy students who are interested in attending a "Saturday-night reunion dinner party" in June 2011 in Dallas, Texas, to contact him.

Mr. Dickerson is at txndwnunder@yahoo.com and (479) 479-422-7464.

### 10,000 questions

**FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich.**—"In 2010 God blessed BibleStudy.org with its best year in its 15-year history," reported webmaster and site owner Alan Ruth.

The site attracted 5,185,156 "actual visitors," Mr. Ruth said, an increase of 30 percent above the previous year.

"The visitors requested 11,540,657 pages of Bible-based study materials, an incredible 31 percent above the previous year and the largest raw jump in study materials viewed—more than 2.7 million—ever."

Also in 2010 the site received its 10,000th Bible question from a site visitor.

BibleStudy.org's Q&A service began in September 2002 and is staffed by several writers Mr. Ruth refers to as E-mail evangelists.

"Their dedication to serving God by answering sometimes difficult and heartrending personal questions makes the service possible."

BibleStudy.org's popularity in terms of visitors has increased an impressive 428 percent compared with 2004 totals, he said.

"God has used the less than \$2,000 donated for the year to do some great things."

E-mail evangelists who regularly field questions are Rick and Eileen Beltz, Charlotte Grantham, Arnold Mendez Sr., Al and Debra Murrey, Eric Snow, Mike Summers, Les Turvey, Tommy West, Margaret Vidal and Clay Willis.

The site's five most-read

answers for 2010 were replies to the following questions:

- How and where did the apostle Paul die?
- Does the Bible approve of smoking marijuana?
- When was Satan thrown out of heaven?
- What does "Thou shalt not kill" in the Ten Commandments mean?
- What is the meaning of "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," the words Jesus cried out on the cross?

### One God Conference

**SEATTLE, Wash.**—The ACD's 2011 One God Conference will happen in Pasadena, Calif., announced Ken Westby, founder of the conference's sponsor, the Association for Christian Development.

"These sessions will explore the most important and critical knowledge on earth: the knowledge of God and His Son," he said.

Mr. Westby and other Christian "unitarians"—many of them in the Churches of God—believe Jesus is not God, not part of the Godhead, even though He was and is the sinless, crucified and resurrected Son of God who had no human father.

The conference is set for the last weekend in May 2011.

### Speech-club reunion

**DAYTON, Ohio**—Former members of the Dayton Spokesman and Graduate speech clubs are invited to a reunion planned for April 2011, announced Steven and Patty Wyke.

"This will be a ladies' night and a fun-filled evening for everyone," Mr. Wyke said.

Anyone willing to help with the planning of the reunion is invited to contact the Wykes at stevenpattywyke@peoplepc.com, (937) 371-8444 or P.O. Box 96, Covington, Ohio 45318, U.S.A.

Mr. Wyke is an outreach chaplain who serves assisted-living and nursing-home facilities in his area.

### Latter-day Dr. Hoeh

A new Web site featuring Herman Hoeh is up and running at hermanhoeh.info.

The site differs from others that feature Dr. Hoeh by providing audio recordings of the long-time Radio/Worldwide Church of God evangelist speaking to audiences after the death of RCG/WCG founder Herbert Armstrong and after the major splits that affected the WCG and related churches beginning in 1995.

"The sermons offer a unique insight into what was going on in the WCG at a historic time, although much of what is said is couched in diplomatic terms," the site's webmaster informed *THE JOURNAL*.

Topics Dr. Hoeh touch on in the recordings include the origins of the New Covenant in Genesis; the voluntary nature of the New Covenant; whether God and/or the Father is Yahweh; tithing; the two goats; and sin and the nature of mankind.

# Journal reporter says CGWA 'paranoid'

Continued from page 1

additional information I could not approve your attendance as a member of the press and just an interested COG member."

Mr. Cartwright wrote to Mr. Carey and learned that he would be allowed to attend the Sabbath service the day before the conference but not the conference. Mr. Cartwright decided not to drive to Kentucky from Texas to attend a Sabbath service.

Ironically, the Galt House Hotel, site of the conference, was where the United Church of God in March 1998 ejected Mr. Cartwright and another *JOURNAL* reporter, Bill Stough, from one of its meetings at that year's general conference. (See "Two *JOURNAL* Writers Removed," *THE JOURNAL*, March 30, 1998.)

"The only other time I can think of when I, as a reporter for *THE JOURNAL*, was not allowed in a meeting," Mr.

Cartwright said, "was for the Feast in Florida in 2000 when Robert Roenspies said I would not be welcome to attend a Feast service with his group.

"In my opinion, when a group acts in this instance, it has something to hide. This is a silly and certainly paranoid way to start a church."

Clyde Kilough is president of the CGWA. Mike Hanisko is chairman of the board.

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