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JOHN 8:32

Aug. 31, 2004

Council hears of 'urgent' need for communication

MILFORD, Ohio—The president of the United Church of God urged members of the 12-man council of elders to do something about the church's apparent inability to effectively communicate with its members.

Roy Holladay of Cincinnati and council member Aaron Dean of Gladewater, Texas, expressed concern during a meeting Aug. 29 about the bad press the church has endured during and after recent crises (which as reported in this newspaper have involved terminations, defrockings, disfellowshippings and resignations of pastors and other UCG members).

The two men suggested to the council that the church communicate with people inside the church and elsewhere by releasing information directly to "outside" publications such as *THE JOURNAL*.

Don Henson, elder from Pittsburgh, Pa., and council reporter, reported that the two men suggested that such releases would help widely and quickly disseminate the church's views on "certain controversial matters."

Another council member, Mario Seigle of Anaheim, Calif., further suggested the council appoint an official spokesman to represent the UCG to outside publications.

But council members Joel Meeker of St. Louis, Mo., and Jim Franks of Houston, Texas, "warned against legitimizing any source that is divisive and harmful to the Church," reported Mr. Henson.

The discussion continued, with Mr. Holladay insisting the church must find a way to "constructively" use such sources for "hot-button" issues to help the church explain its position.

Mr. Henson reported that later in the meeting Mr. Holladay said the need is "urgent" for the UCG to find ways—perhaps by hiring a professional consultant—to do something about the UCG's communication challenges.

Council member Richard Thompson of Buford, Ga., suggested that perhaps a section in the church's newspaper for members, *United News*, could explain on a regular basis topics that are elsewhere routinely distorted and misrepresented.

Council member Les McCullough of Big Sandy, Texas, said sensitive news releases to sources both inside and outside the UCG need to be professionally prepared.

Mr. Thompson said a professional preparer of press releases would have to be someone who thoroughly understands the church's beliefs, values and nuances.

Council member Victor Kubik of Lafayette, Ind., said such releases would need to report on situations quickly, otherwise observers may think the church is delaying releasing information to give it time to "get our story straight."

In three days of meetings the council also discussed doctrinal questions arising among UCG members, including queries about the "nature of Jesus"; interracial marriage; *porneia*; sacred names; evangelism; the Jewish calendar, specifically questions about the timing of the wave sheaf and its effect on the timing of Pentecost; the beginning of the Sabbath in far-northern and far-southern latitudes; whether the church should sell (rather than give away) some church literature; conflict resolution; and the process of amending the constitution and bylaws.



HAPPY FEAST—In this undated photograph, Worldwide Church of God founder Herbert W. Armstrong addresses Feast of Tabernacles observers at the WCG's Squaw Valley, Calif., site. Thousands of Church of God members around the world are making plans to keep the Feast, usually by traveling to locations to observe it with friends and fellow church members. See *THE JOURNAL*'s last listing of Feast sites for 2004 on page 5 of this issue. [Photo by Warren Watson, courtesy Reg Killingley]

This issue concludes FOT listings

For the eighth year *THE JOURNAL* has published a monthly listing of sites and dates of Feast of Tabernacles observances.

Members of Church of God and other Sabbatarian Christian fellowships will meet at several hundred Feast sites this year.

This issue includes the last updated monthly listing before this year's Feast of Tabernacles.

Church of God members will meet in hundreds of sites around the world for the eight-day festival, which for most observers will begin the evening of Wednesday, Sept. 29.

In the four issues after the Feast, *THE JOURNAL* plans to print festival reports sent in by readers. See next month's issue for more information on submitting your report.

See the Feast-site listing on page 5 of this issue, and have a wonderful Feast of Tabernacles 2004.

Organizers of controversial evangelism conference say they seek to rejuvenate sleepy congregations

By Bill Stough

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.—"It was like walking into a room full of light," gushed an attendee at the Conference on Evangelism that took place July 31 and Aug. 1 in the Holiday Inn at the airport in Indianapolis.

Another said, "It was like walking among a room alive with the Holy Spirit."

Most in attendance similarly described the atmosphere as more exciting and even warmer and friendlier than a Feast of Tabernacles observance.

One hundred forty-five people came from 25 U.S. states and Canada.

Most were laypeople, but among the crowd was a Worldwide Church of God elder, six United Church of God elders and other ordained men from smaller Churches of God.

The sponsors and presenters of the conference, Guy Swenson of Plainfield, Ind., and Bill Jacobs of Albuquerque, N.M., who were UCG elders until a few weeks before the meetings, had decided to go forward with the event in spite of opposition from the UCG. Because of their church's opposition, both men resigned from the UCG.

A letter, dated July 23, written by UCG president Roy Holladay of Cincinnati, Ohio, and council chair-

man Clyde Kilough of Sacramento, Calif., explained that it is not acceptable to the UCG administration for elders to act on their own in the matter of deciding how to evangelize.

All must speak with the same voice, wrote the UCG officials, and the church has been working on its own report on evangelism (see "UCG Reports to Members on Its Evangelism Efforts," *THE JOURNAL*, July 31).

"Still, as in any organized group, if the boss says 'no, don't do this,' then you don't do it," wrote Mr. Kilough and Mr. Holladay.

Mr. Swenson and Mr. Jacobs decided it was best to resign from the UCG. See **MINDS**, page 6

Movie night in Thailand features *The King and I*

In this issue *THE JOURNAL* publishes the latest report from Mandi Steele, a 22-year-old recent college graduate from Stockton, Mo., helping out at the International Leadership Training Center, operated by Legacy Institute in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Miss Steele is serving there with the aid of a grant from the Church of God Big Sandy, which beginning last year has helped provide teachers to Legacy, a ministry founded and operated by Leon and Gloria Sexton, who moved to Thailand a few years ago from the Dallas, Texas, area. (See also "Legacy Staff and Students Learn Each Other's Language," *THE JOURNAL*, July 31.)

Here are excerpts from notes Miss Steele sent to the COG Big Sandy.

Learning to speak

By Mandi Steele

CHIANG MAI, Thailand—**Sunday, Aug. 1:** The last two weeks have been really busy as we all moved into the regular semester schedule.

However, we still made time for a field trip on July 30. The teachers decided that we want to try to take one field trip a month, so our first trip was to the zoo in Chiang Mai. Everyone

had a good time, but, after a couple of hours walking around in Thailand's hot sun and humidity, everyone was definitely ready for lunch.

We had a picnic lunch at a nearby park where the students also played a little volleyball and sang to the guitar we brought along. Thankfully, we were blessed with good weather. I think everyone, including the teachers, was just happy to get a day off school.

After the Sabbath on July 31, everyone went to Leon and Gloria Sexton's house for a movie night. We watched the musical *The King and I*, which turned out to be pretty interesting for everyone. Since most of the students don't speak good English yet, they could still enjoy listening to the songs, and the ones who do speak more English thought the movie was really funny, especially Hollywood's portrayal of Thailand.

It turns out the few words that are spoken in Thai during the movie are spoken so badly the students who speak Thai couldn't even make out what the actors were saying.

When it rains

Tuesday, Aug. 10: As I write this article, it is once again pouring out. See **CAN YOU EXPLAIN**, page 8

East Texas woman takes gifts to children

By Dave Havir

LONGVIEW, TEXAS—Dianne Webb of Longview, Texas, recently took 160 gift bags to families in Florida who were affected by Hurricane Charley as part of a continuing effort of her nonprofit organization, Comfort Express, to help the children of tragedies.

Over the years Mrs. Webb, a member of a Church of God home fellowship, had watched families deal with tragedies like forest fires and hurricanes, so she developed a special interest in the children of those tragedies.

"I imagined my 2-year-old grandchild and wondered what it would be like for the children to lose their homes and their belongings," Mrs. Webb said.

In 2003 she decided to do something about it. She created Comfort Express, a not-for-profit organization she designed to ease the fears of displaced children. Her organization was featured on the front page of *The Longview News-Journal* of Dec. 1 under the headline "Fast Healing Power: Local Woman Hopes Charity Will Help Soothe Children After Disasters."

Besides the newspaper coverage, Mrs. Webb has appeared on two occasions on newscasts of KLTU, a Tyler television station.

"The television station interviewed me in December. See **CHURCH MEMBER'S RELIEF**, page 8

Raymond C. Dick dies

TYLER, Texas—Raymond C. Dick, 81, a Church of God member and a writer of doctrinal essays for *THE JOURNAL*, died in a Tyler hospice Aug. 28. Mr. Dick had learned only a few weeks ago that he had cancer of the abdomen that had spread to his liver.

Mr. Dick, while a member of the Worldwide Church of God, manned the church's office in Jerusalem in the 1970s. He was responsible for the WCG's arrangement with the nation of Israel and Hebrew University that resulted in the church's and Ambassador College's participation in archaeological excavations in the 1960s and '70s at the southern wall of the Temple Mount.

Mr. Dick, a 1962 AC graduate, also worked for the college as a mailing- and personnel-department manager on the Pasadena, Calif., and Big Sandy, Texas, campuses and as a planner for the WCG's Feast of Tabernacles observances.

His most recent essay for *THE JOURNAL* appeared in the July 31 issue. At the time of his death he was working on another article for this newspaper.

Mr. Dick is survived by his wife, Norma; sons Robert Dick of Vancouver, Wash., Ronald Dick of Lexington, Ky., and Randal Dick of Sunland, Calif.; a sister, Sarah Dorothy Weins of Caldwell, Idaho; and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Dick receives mail at P.O. Box 484, Hawkins, Texas 75765, U.S.A.



R.C. Dick

SoCal group inexpensively preaches the Word

MENIFEE, Calif.—A Web site designed by a Church of God member expressly for evangelism has been experiencing rapid growth, announced its creator.

AbundantLiving.org was founded by David Liesenfelt of Lake Elsinore, Calif., pastor of the Orange County Fellowship of God of Irvine, Calif. Mr. Liesenfelt said he built the site to teach about the “abundant life that can be found through the teachings of Jesus Christ to those outside of our traditional fellowships and tradition.”

A church as a resource

Mr. Liesenfelt called the congregation a “resource” for “those who want to learn about and experience the abundant life Jesus came to bring. Many struggle with the meaning of life or how to truly be happy and content. The teachings of Jesus Christ and those found throughout the Bible shed light on the laws and the principles of living which will bring about lasting success and peace in your life. God wants you to live an abundant life.”

Members of the fellowship receive regular E-mail notifications of new articles and audio messages as they are posted on AbundantLiving.org.

“No cost, no obligation, just valuable, life-changing teachings provided free of charge,” said Bill Lussenheide of Menifee, a member of the group.

The graphics on the Web site were designed by Mr. Lussenheide’s wife, Terri. Mr. Lussenheide helps with promotion of the site.

“I have used the Internet to attract and retain new subscribers to the site,” he said. “By primarily sharing the site with Internet user groups, chat rooms and E-mail groups, over 50,000 non-Church of God individuals of all walks of life have been exposed to our teachings about Jesus.”

1,000 people on the list

Of the contacts, almost 1,000 people have signed up as E-mail subscribers for the Orange County group’s articles and online sermons.

“All of this has been done just since December of 2003,” Mr. Lussenheide

said, “and done on a spare-time basis.”

Responses have come in from 25 countries including Russia, China, India, Africa and several Islamic nations. According to E-mails sent to the group, many of these were the first contact these people had had with “Christian teaching.”

Recently a Southern California Christian radio station, KBRT, 740 AM, Costa Mesa, aired nine half-hour programs featuring Mr. Liesenfelt and Scott Scharpen of Mission Viejo, Calif.

‘Dollar Bill’ Lussenheide

“We use multiple outlets to promote the site and in fact may soon even rubber-stamp dollar bills with our Web address too,” Mr. Lussenheide said. “That would be one flyer that no one would ever throw away.”

Mr. Lussenheide said he recently checked with the U.S. government to verify that stamping a message onto paper currency is legal.

“There really isn’t much excuse for not evangelizing the gospel,” he said. “We have achieved remarkable results with just four people involved on a part-time basis and a budget of just \$15 a month.”

The Orange County Fellowship of God meets at 2025 Alton Pkwy. in Irvine each Saturday morning at 10:30.



Bill Lussenheide



David Liesenfelt

COG Big Sandy returns two trustees to board

By John Warren

BIG SANDY, Texas—At its monthly meeting in July the Church of God Big Sandy’s board of trustees learned the results of the congregation’s annual election. The two-part process began in April when members of the congregation formed a committee to schedule the nomination procedure and final election.

The trustees appointed Bernie Monsalvo chairman of the committee. Dave Havir, as church pastor, is an ad-hoc member of the committee. Other committee members were Melodee Overton of Hawkins, Wayne Weese of Big Sandy and Sharon Wilson of Tyler.

Two positions open

The annual election was for two positions on the board held by Wynn



Don Mischnick

Skelton of White Oak and Don Mischnick of Hawkins. The two incumbents were joined on the final ballot by Ron Feaker and Ron Avey, both of Big Sandy.

Mr. Monsalvo reported to the board that Mr. Mischnick and Mr. Skelton were reelected to new three-year terms.

Reorganized officers

“The whole election process went very smoothly,” commented Mr. Havir. “It is nice that the congregation has many qualified people who are willing to serve on the board.”

In the first board meeting after the



Wynn Skelton

election, Karl Wilson of Tyler, board president, opened the floor for reorganization of officers.

The trustees nominated Mr. Skelton for president, Mr. Wilson as vice president, Mr. Mischnick as treasurer and Don Walls of Gladewater as secretary.

All were elected with a 6-0 vote with one (the person being voted on) abstaining.

Each officer serves a one-year term. Tat Tomes and John Warren, both of Big Sandy, are also members of the seven-person board.

Notes and quotes

Nina Rogers dies

TYLER, Texas—Nina Rogers, former registrar for Ambassador University for several years until it closed in 1997, died Aug. 31 after a two-year battle with cancer.



Nina Rogers

At the time of her death, Ms. Rogers was registrar at the University of Texas at Tyler. She is survived by her father, Vernon Rogers of Big Sandy, and a sister, JoAnn Rogers of Big Sandy.

Feast in Wisconsin

HELENVILLE, Wis.—Hal and Scarlet Geiger announce a Feast of Tabernacles observance at their farm (Sept. 29 through Oct. 7).

The event is open to everyone and will include daily services and studies as well as communal brunches and evening meals, the Geigers announced. Campfire gatherings, “hymn-alongs” and additional service and recreational activities are planned.

Contact the Geigers at (262) 593-5637 or halgeiger@hotmail for more information.

The lion and the lamb

SYDNEY, Australia—If you’ve always hankered for your own expertly carved Ambassador or WCG seal, the one with Isaiah 11:6 and the lion and the lamb, a replica is available, announced Craig White.

It will not be exactly like the real McCoy, but it will say “Church of God.” Mr. White knows a COG minister who is contracting with a craftsman to produce it.

For more information write Mr. White at surfer11@iprimus.com.au.

Two ordinations

LITTLE ROCK, Ark.—The Church of God of Central Arkansas recently ordained two men as elders, reported Theda Horton. Ron Bridges and Lee Davis were ordained July 17.

“Their faithful and dedicated service to God and His family is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated by this congregation,” she said.

Not your ordinary club

HEDLEY, Texas—You’re invited to join the Church of God Fellowship Club, announced founder and club manager John Dickson.

Joining the club is a major undertaking and entails moving to the Hedley area, 80 miles southeast of Amarillo.

Mr. Dickson’s club is designed for Church of God people who want to drop out of the rat race and embrace a “homestead lifestyle” in rural Texas.

Mr. Dickson is not selling prop-

erty or houses but does provide information to help new club members find places to live. COG members with certain skills and trades are especially encouraged to join.

The “private social club” is not a church and “not the place of safety,” he said. It is, however, meant to help bring scattered Church of God members back together.

“There are currently 10 to 12 families of former WCG members within the 60-mile radius who are split, attending small, different groups and not speaking any longer,” Mr. Dickson said. “We want to try and change that before the tribulation starts.”

A sampling of club rules:

■ No dominating, causing of division or promoting of false doctrines.

■ Following parliamentary procedure at monthly club meetings is mandatory.

■ Information about club members is strictly confidential. Mr. Dickson won’t even announce how many people belong to the club.

■ Males must have short hair, and modest dress is in order for everyone.

■ There is no fee to join the club, and there are no dues.

For more information contact Mr. Dickson at P.O. Box 206, Hedley, Texas 79237, U.S.A., or jedco@arn.net. If you must phone Mr. Dickson, be sure to call (806) 856-5251 before 8 p.m. central time because he goes to bed early.

Spirit and truth

JACKSON, Tenn.—*Spirit & Truth* magazine will present a concert by the “contemporary/rock worship band Saul 2 Paul” at 6 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 2, during the Feast of Tabernacles.

“We are also trying to get a speaker from Birth Choice Crisis Pregnancy Center to speak at the event on abstinence,” announced organizer Raina Shults.

Bill Shults, founder of Hungry Hearts Ministries, will also speak.

“The purpose of this event is to outreach to the youth of the Jackson-area community



Raina (left) and Kara Shults

through the power of worship,” Miss Shults, 16, said. Raina and her 15-year-old sister Kyra are editors of *Spirit & Truth*.

For more information on the concert, visit Raina’s Web site, www.freeconcert.bravehost.com. For more about *Spirit & Truth*, see http://spirit_and_truth.1.tripod.com. Or phone Raina at (731) 668-8477.

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