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Sam Bacchiocchi, advocate for Sabbath observance, dies

By Dixon Cartwright
 A dedicated, educated and articulate advocate for observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, Samuele Bacchiocchi, died Dec. 20, 2008, of cancer at his home in Berrien Springs, Mich., at the age of 70.

Dr. Bacchiocchi, a Seventh-day Adventist and retired theology professor at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, was known by Church of God members and other Sabbatarians for his teachings and scholarship, including several books, on the shift from Sabbath observance toward Sunday worship in most of Christianity.

A statement from the Bacchiocchi family noted that "during the early Sabbath hours of Dec. 20, Sam passed away" while "surrounded by his faithful wife of nearly 47 years" and their three children.

The next day was the Bacchiocchi's wedding anniversary.

In the shadow of the Vatican

Samuele Bacchiocchi was born Jan. 29, 1938, in Rome, Italy, only a few yards from the Vatican.

The oldest of five siblings, Sam grew up in a religious household headed by his father, Gino, and mother, Evelina.

A year before Sam was born, his father, who worked as a mason and had only a third-grade education, acquired a Bible from a Waldensian acquaintance.

The elder Mr. Bacchiocchi studied that Bible and thereby became convinced of the appropriateness of worshipping on the Sabbath.

The family began, on its own, keeping the Sabbath, leading to Sam's young friends and even his teachers ridiculing him as *il judeo*, or the Jew.

Sam grew into a hardworking adolescent. To pay for his schooling he took up colporting, the selling of religious books. Often Catholic priests would chase him out of town.

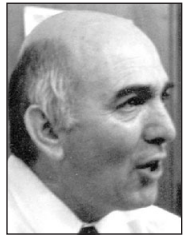
He earned enough money for his sister and him to attend the Seventh-day Adventist academy in Florence, Italy.

In 1960, at the age of 22, Sam earned his bachelor's degree from Newbold College in Binfield, England, and then traveled to Andrews University in Michigan to work on two master's degrees, one in church history and another in divinity.

Mission to Ethiopia

On Dec. 21, 1961, he and Anna Gandin, also from Italy, married on campus.

See FROM 'IN TRANSITION,' page 8



Samuele Bacchiocchi



CHURCH OF GOD (SEVENTH DAY) HISTORY—Robert Coulter of Denver, Colo., a former president of the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day), based in Denver and formerly based in Stanberry, Mo., gestures during a meal during his visit with the Church of God Big Sandy Nov. 22, 2008. See the lead article on this page. See more photos on pages 24, 25 and 26. [JOURNAL photo]

The Journal invites readers' Feast reports

THE JOURNAL invites readers to send in reports of their 2008 Feast of Tabernacles observances.

Members of the Churches of God and other Sabbatarian fellowships met at several hundred Feast sites in 2008, with most observances beginning the evening of Oct. 13.

You still have time to get your report into the next issue of THE JOURNAL. Mail your information to Festival Reports, P.O. Box 1020, Big Sandy, Texas 75755, U.S.A. Or E-mail it to info@thejournal.org. Or you can fax it to (903) 636-9097.

Photographs as prints or medium- to high-resolution E-mail attachments are also welcomed.

Please mention the dates of your observance and the name of the church fellowship or affiliation, if any, or other sponsors of the site.

The reports begin on page 4 of this issue of THE JOURNAL.

Former CG7 president gives his understanding of history of Church of God and Mr. Armstrong

By Dixon Cartwright
BIG SANDY, Texas—A longtime member of the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day), the parent organization of Herbert W. Armstrong's Radio Church of God and Worldwide Church of God, traced the Churches of God's history from the Great Disappointment of 1843.

In two sermons and a Q&A session Nov. 22, 2008, at Sabbath services of the Church of God Big Sandy (CGBS), Robert Coulter, 78-year-old past president of the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day) and former district coordinator, author and pastor, talked about the Church of God movement as he sees it.

He said the Churches of God began

with William Miller's failed prophecies in the 1840s in upstate New York when Jesus didn't return when Mr. Miller said He would.

Exchange of speakers

Mr. Coulter was here as part of the CGBS's speaker-exchange program, which has featured preachers from the Church of God International, Tyler Church of God and other groups, with CGBS speakers reciprocating by traveling to other congregations in several states.

Mr. Coulter is a semiretired executive of the CG7 whose headquarters is in Denver, Colo., the same organization that Mr. Armstrong associated with in the 1930s when it was based in Stanberry, Mo.

"While you might not have been a member of my church, the Church of God (Seventh Day), we all have common roots," Mr. Coulter told the churchgoers Nov. 22, "and I think it's important for us to know something about the origin of our church."

It's important, he said, because "there has been over the years a lot of distorted concepts and ideas about the origin of our particular movement. I hope to share some facts with you today that will help you to get a better focus on exactly who we have been for the last 150 years."

CG7's sesquicentennial

Although Mr. Armstrong began the Radio Church of God in Oregon in

See CHURCHES OF GOD, page 24

Armstrong College busy making a splash in Oklahoma and Israel

EDMOND, Okla.—Under the auspices of his church's Armstrong International Cultural Foundation (AICF), Gerald Flurry, pastor general of the Philadelphia Church of God (PCG), broke ground back in January 2008, on the AICF's performing-arts center in Oklahoma.

The \$15 million 800-seat concert hall, Armstrong Auditorium, modeled after the Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena, Calif., will eventually, perhaps by late 2009, serve as the location for Sabbath services for the PCG's headquarters congregation and provide a venue for the church's performing-arts series.

The AICF's series so far, currently based in the John Amos Field House at 2501 W. Simmons Rd. on the campus of Herbert W. Armstrong College (HWAC) in Edmond, Okla., has spotlighted some widely known performers.

They include The 5 Browns (young members of the same family playing classical music, sometimes simultaneously, on five pianos); classical-guitar duo Angel Romero and Eliot Fisk; and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

HWAC and the PCG made international news recently when six students from the four-year college helped out for a few months on an

archaeological dig in Jerusalem that located a tunnel that dates from the time of King David.

The students—Jeremy Cocomise, from Illinois; Brent Nagtegaal, Australia; Brandon Nice, Indiana; John Rambo, Oklahoma; Edwin Trebels, the Netherlands; and Victor Vejil, Texas—dug alongside archaeologist Eilat Mazar of the Hebrew University.

As reported on the Web site of *The Daily Oklahoman* (newsok.com), President Stephen Flurry of HWAC said he hopes the find at the dig leads to the discovery of King David's palace.

That would "verify the accuracy of the Scriptures," he was quoted as saying. "Certainly the



BREAKING NEW GROUND—Gerald Flurry breaks ground using a golden shovel to kick off the construction of Armstrong Auditorium Jan. 26, 2008. [Philadelphia Church of God photo]

historical significance is what we are most interested in."

For news of the arts series, the dig and Herbert W. Armstrong College, see the PCG's Web sites, which include armstrongconcerts.org, hwacollege.org and pcog.org.

Reviewer loves new book but doesn't entirely agree

The writer is pastor of the Virtual Church and director of the Association for Christian Development (www.godward.org and 2303 W. Commodore Way, Suite 206, Seattle, Wash. 98199, U.S.A.).

By Kenneth Westby

SEATTLE, Wash.—James D. Tabor's latest book, *Restoring Abrahamic Faith* (180 pages, Genesis 2000 Press) is the story of God's great plan, His divine project for the salvation of mankind.



See JAMES TABOR CALLS FOR A RETURN, page 9

The story begins in earnest with the calling of Abraham. Yahweh began by choosing a man to pioneer the path toward eternal fellowship with Him.

Abraham's journey Godward was to become the example for all seeking to know God. Through Abraham's progeny, Yahweh would bring forth a nation.

FLDS member tells how she and her kids escaped

Mr. Barrett is author of *The New Believers: Sects, 'Cults' and Alternative Religions*, published in 2001 by Cassell & Co. Lately he is researching for his Ph.D. on the schisms in the Churches of God since the death of Herbert W. Armstrong.

By David V. Barrett

LONDON, England—One night 18-year-old Carolyn was awakened by her father and told she was to marry 50-year-old Merrill Jessop, a man she had never met. Two days later she became his fourth wife. Over the next 15 years she bore him eight children, and he took several more wives.

Carolyn tells her story in *Escape*, a 400-page hardback from Broadway Books, widely available in bookstores and for \$17 at Amazon.com.

Although she was unhappy about it, for Carolyn this arrangement seemed normal. She was born and raised in Colorado City, Ariz., just south of the Utah state line, in the Fundamental Church of God.

See FOR DECADES, page 10



David Barrett

Churches of God trace origins to 1840s Millerite movement

Continued from page 1

either 1934 or 1927, depending on the specific events you think constituted the start of the church, the CG7 has been around for a century and a half.

"As a matter of fact, the CG7 is 150 years old this year, 2008," Mr. Coulter said. "It was begun in southwestern Michigan by Gilbert Cranmer, who was born in 1814 and died in 1903."

Mr. Cranmer began as a Methodist minister at age 17, then affiliated with other groups, including one called the Christian Connection, when he traveled as an itinerant preacher in New York, Illinois, Maine and Michigan and the Canadian province of Ontario.

Mr. Cranmer became a "Millerite Adventist [believer in a literal Second Coming] in 1843," Mr. Coulter said.

William Miller was a Calvinist Baptist and former deist from Low Hampton, N.Y., who through his study of Scripture became convinced not only that Jesus would literally return to earth but that He would arrive in the fall of 1843.

As a result of Mr. Miller's powerful preaching, tens of thousands of Americans in the U.S. Northeast became convinced that the return of Christ was imminent.

Movement in disarray

Mr. Miller and his followers didn't yet know the day or the hour of Jesus' coming, but they believed God would soon reveal the exact date so people could be prepared for it.

"When the spring of 1843 came, Jesus of course didn't come," Mr. Coulter said, "so they said maybe it would be in the fall of 1843. And of course in the fall He didn't come. As a result, the Adventist movement was in disarray."

Today the word *Adventist* brings to mind for most people the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But in those days the first Adventists were not keepers of the seventh day. Like Mr. Miller, they attended church on Sunday.

When 1843 came and went with Jesus a no-show, a Millerite Adventist by the name of Samuel Snow came up with the theory that Mr. Miller had made a mistake in his calculations. Mr. Snow said Mr. Miller had not taken into consideration that there was no year 0 between B.C. and A.D. Therefore, on second thought, surely Jesus would return in 1844.

More specifically, Jesus would return on Tishri 10 (which Mr. Armstrong would many years later point out is the Day of Atonement) in the fall of 1844.

The date on the Gregorian calendar was Oct. 22, 1844.

"In addition to returning to the earth," explained Mr. Coulter, "Jesus was going to destroy the wicked. He was going to resurrect the righteous and take those who were righteous who were dwelling on the earth back to heaven for the thousand years."

"William Miller was premillennial in his belief in a period when postmillennialism was the general rule of the Christian church."

Where do we begin?

Premillennialists believe the Second Coming begins the Millennium. Postmillennialists believe the opposite: The 1,000 years of peace will precede the return of Jesus to earth.

The Great Disappointment—that is, Jesus' failure to return on Oct. 22, 1844—affected Mr. Miller in ways that eventually led to the founding of several religious movements: Sunday Adventists and Sabbatarian Adventists, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the original congregations that have come to be known collectively as the Church of God (Seventh Day).

In 1852 Mr. Cranmer and an associate, Joseph Bates, became Sabbath keepers after reading about Sabbath observance in an article somebody had written for a Millerite newspaper in 1843 called *The Midnight Cry*.

Mr. Bates was friends with James and Ellen White, who were originally Sunday observers but also converted to observance of the weekly seventh day.

"Remember, William Miller's Adventist movement was Sunday keeping," Mr. Coulter said. "William Miller was a Baptist. He was never a Sabbath keeper, and only a minute part of the Millerite Adventist movement ever became Sabbath keepers."

Just what do you mean whole law?

In those days some of the Adventists would talk about the need to observe the "whole law" of God.

"When you read about the observance of the whole law," Mr. Coulter said, "it's a byword for Sabbath-keeping, because, unlike today, the Protestant community of believers generally taught the observance of the Ten Commandments except for the Fourth commandment."

they still had a certain legalism in their practice. They didn't understand the terms of the New Covenant as well as we do."

Covenant includes God's laws

Mr. Coulter believes that understanding the New Covenant doesn't mean Christians should "abandon the law of God," but rather to understand that God's laws are a continuous part of the New Covenant.



MEAL IN BIG SANDY—Church members attend a meal during Robert Coulter's visit in the building owned by the Church of God Big Sandy. **Photo 1:** Anthony Kimmons of Brookhaven, Miss. (left), and Dave Havir, pastor of the Church of God Big Sandy, Colo. **Photo 2:** Ida Coulter of Denver, Colo., Robert Coulter's wife (left), and Michele Mischnick of Big Sandy, Colo. **Photos 3 and 4:** Jon and Toni Coffee of Sulphur Springs, Texas. Mr. Coffee serves as president of the board of the Tyler Church of God. [Photos by Dixon Cartwright]

(Seventh Day) from the age of 7 onward," he said. "My father was converted when I was 7 years old, and, without being taught by anyone, he began to keep the Sabbath."

When Robert Coulter was a teenager he came across a book by Andrew Dugger and Clarence Dodd called *The History of the True Church*.

"Dugger was a guest in our home a couple of nights when I was a child," he said. "I knew C.O. Dodd and his family. His daughter is about the same age as me. We grew up as teenagers in the church together."

Mr. Dugger's and Mr. Dodd's book was later published as *The History of the True Religion*, copyrighted in 1936.

"Dodd, by the way," said Mr. Coulter, "did disavow any interest in this book at a later period, recognizing it was based

Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and stumbled onto a copy of the perpetual Hebrew calendar."

Whenever they felt like it

Also, the 19th-century Church of God members observed communion, or Passover, "whenever they felt like it," not just on an annual day as established by the Hebrew calendar.

Further, the church in the 19th century did not for many years call itself the Church of God. Various congregations had various names.

"So the truth is that the Church of God had its birth in the United States in 1858 without European or other influence older than the religious movements of the 19th century. In other words, our pioneers were not influenced by what had gone on through the ages to the 19th century."

"Our movement began out of religious movements that had their founding in the 19th century starting with William Miller's Advent movement."

The early Church of God—the brethren of the 1800s—didn't have a statement of belief, he said, and individual congregations differed with other congregations on their specific practices.

"They had opinions, but not statements. They had no statements on

Christology. They had no statement on the frequency of communion and how it ought to be taken. They had no statement on baptism. They didn't even have a direct statement on Sabbath-keeping."

Therefore early Church of God (that is, 19th-century Church of God) doctrine evolved from "personal Bible study and from the influence of others who had studied the Bible and been led by the Holy Spirit to adopt positions that went beyond William Miller's understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr. Coulter concluded this part of his presentation: "We are a 19th-century creation. We cannot trace our history back to apostolic times."

Three became one

Mr. Coulter said the church developed from a union of three regional 19th-century churches:

■ Gilbert Cranmer's group, founded in 1858 in Michigan, which became known two years later as the Church of Christ.

■ The Church of Jesus Christ of Marion, Iowa, founded June 10, 1860, by Merritt E. Cornell, who like Mr. Cranmer was a Millerite Adventist but a Sunday keeper until Joseph Bates convinced him to keep the Sabbath in 1852.

Some in this loose affiliation of groups called themselves the Church of the Firstborn and some the Church of Jesus Christ.

"They were Adventists, Sabbath-keeping," Mr. Coulter said, "and believed in the conditional immortality and the resurrection of the righteous at the advent of Christ."

■ A church in Daviess County, in northwestern Missouri, that learned of the Marion, Iowa, group in 1866. The Missouri group was founded in 1858 by two men who were evangelists associated with James and Ellen White's still-unorganized Adventist Sabbath-keeping movement.

However, when Mrs. White began having certain visions, the groups in northwestern Missouri became disillusioned with her, and about half of those brethren severed their association with the Whites. One of those leaders was a man named A.C. Long, and those Christians became the General Conference of the Church of God.

Mr. Coulter said he finds interesting the differences in the organizational policies of the SDAs and the Churches of Gods at that time.

The SDAs were organized by the Whites so their affiliation could own property.

"But when our conference was organized it was a grassroots effort. It originated in Iowa and Missouri. We had state conferences. Each passed a resolution earlier in the year that they needed to organize a general conference."

See MR. ARMSTRONG, page 25

The founders' greatest gift to today's Church of God membership, Mr. Coulter said, was 'that they left us a church with an open creed.'

Sabbath-keeping, conditional immortality, the unconscious state of the dead and the reestablishment of the state of Israel."

The Church of God founders "did not claim to be prophets, nor apostles or anyone special. In fact, they just said, like James said of Elijah, that we're men of like passions as he."

But the founders' greatest gift to today's COG membership, Mr. Coulter said, was "that they left us a church with an open creed."

Open creed?

Mr. Coulter explained what he was talking about when he said "open creed."

It means that "our church is a work in progress and has been since its founding, even unto today. We can study and, as God's Spirit leads us into a deeper, better understanding of certain principles and doctrines, can make a change without imputing the integrity or honesty of our founders. And we have done so . . ."

"I think that's what it means when Peter says grow in the grace of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: to be a work in progress in spiritual development toward the goal of the high mark of the calling of God."

As an example of growing while unfettered by a closed creed, Mr. Coulter said today's CG7 understands "grace in a way that our founders didn't understand."

"Even though they proclaimed that we were saved by grace in Christ alone,

over the years as a result of its reporting. Mr. Coulter defined the term as referring to a person who believes Jesus existed as a spirit being before His conception in Mary but was a creation of God the Father at some distant time toward past eternity.

When Mr. Armstrong was preaching under credentials of the CG7, the church was, by Mr. Coulter's definition, Arian. It believed God the Father created the Word as He had created the angels at some indefinite time in the past, perhaps before He created the universe.

The created Word united with the embryo in Mary's womb and became Jesus.

A form of binitarianism

The current CG7, at least the CG7 denomination headquartered in Denver, has not officially believed in Arianism so defined for many years, said Mr. Coulter.

Rather, CG7 Denver believes in a form of what he acknowledged could be called binitarianism, although not exactly the binitarianism believed and taught by Mr. Armstrong.

For example, Mr. Armstrong never referred to the Holy Spirit with the personal pronouns *He*, *Him* and *His*. But Mr. Coulter said he believes it is proper to do so, even though at the same time he believes the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son rather than a third member of the Godhead.

"Our dogma has evolved and will

Mr. Armstrong looked upon Andrew N. Dugger as a mentor

Continued from page 24

Principles rather than doctrines

The doctrines of the Churches of God have evolved into the present assortment of beliefs, said Mr. Coulter.

"The first issue of *Hope of Israel* [magazine] was published on Aug. 10, 1863, and in that first issue the doctrinal positions of the church were stated.

"This would be the doctrinal position of the Church of Christ in Michigan. Up to this time the church in Iowa did not know about the Michigan church, and the Missouri church hadn't yet fully developed into a church."

The doctrines in those days were what Mr. Coulter calls "principles."

"They said we will maintain these Bible principles. They didn't call them doctrines. One of the reasons they wanted to stay away from doctrines was because of the sad experience with the Whites."

The Michigan group set the tone for the whole church, he said.

In Michigan Mr. Cranmer "came to understand God to be unitarian in nature. In other words, Jesus was not God, the Holy Spirit was not God, but God the Father alone is God."

Character bested doctrine

In the Michigan church's practice, the Bible was the supreme authority, and "character" was valued more than doctrine.

The earliest of the churches that would become known as Churches of God adopted the Church of God name in Iowa in 1866.

"It changed its name from the Church of Jesus Christ," Mr. Coulter said. The Missouri brethren started out as the Sabatarian Adventist Church but changed their name to Church of God in 1875.

Concerning what Mr. Coulter calls Arianism, the belief that Jesus preexisted Mary but hasn't always existed, he said that "if you're not careful when you become anti-Trinitarian you actually devalue the position of Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. Some of our pioneers devalued the identity of Christ and some of the work of the Holy Spirit.

"It's unfortunate but it's true, and you can't deny the skeletons that are in your closet, and we have a few skeletons in our history."

Some were terrible

Mr. Coulter said that "another segment" of the churches became what church historians would call "adoptionists."

Some of the churches believed Jesus had no preexistence but was "the natural son of Mary and Joseph and that God in some point in time adopted Him as the Son of God."

That view is known as "adoptionism," and "that's a terrible heresy," Mr. Coulter said.

By the beginning of the 20th century "the church pretty much had adopted the Arian view, although unofficially. Our Christology was really bad."

The first official statement of doctrine concerning the nature of Jesus came in 1949 when what is presently the Denver conference adopted the Arian view, Mr. Coulter said.

Unusual mix

Mr. Coulter said Church of God members need not be concerned that their church is not the oldest church on the face of the earth.

"Antiquity does not make a church legitimate.

"Think about it. There are churches who are much, much older than we that we probably consider much less legitimate than ourselves."

What makes Christians legitimate, he said, "is our faith. It's who we are, what we believe and how we live. That's what gives us legitimacy with the Lord.

"Thank God, I think we have a unique mix of theology. We're not solely His church, but we're a part of His church on a worldwide basis."

CG7 nonjudgmental

Concerning other Christians—that is, Christians who don't keep the Sabbath—Mr. Coulter said the CG7 is nonjudgmental.

"Only God knows the hearts of men and women. Of course I'm committed to Sabbath-keeping and so on, but I don't make a judgment on Sabbath alone. I

know too many people who have a godly heart who began before they became Sabbath keepers.

"It could be that their conversion experience in a first-day church was only the beginning of their spiritual journey."

Mr. Armstrong and the CG7

Mr. Coulter talked extensively about Worldwide Church of God founder Herbert W. Armstrong and Mr. Armstrong's relationship with the CG7.

He referred to Mr. Armstrong's statements that, although he was ordained in the CG7, he was not a member of the CG7.

"It is kind of unusual to claim to be a minister of the church in which you are not a member," Mr. Coulter said.

Mr. Coulter proceeded to mention points of what he considered evidence

come a member of our church you become a member of the conference. You do not join [only] a state conference. You do not join the general conference directly."

Even a person who was considered to be an "isolated member" would still technically have to be an official member of some local congregation, Mr. Coulter said.

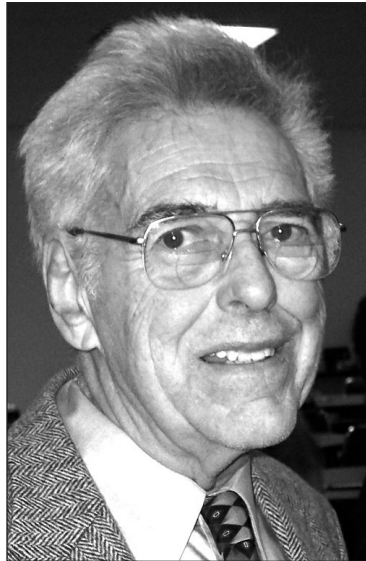
"When Mr. Armstrong received a ministerial license from the Oregon State Conference, he was receiving it by the authority of the general conference, because the Oregon State Conference, even though it was incorporated locally, was actually authorized and operated under the auspices of the conference whose headquarters at the time was Stanberry, Mo.

"So either he was ignorant of that or

'It is kind of unusual to claim to be a minister of the church in which you are not a member,' Mr. Coulter said.

that Mr. Armstrong was indeed a member of the CG7.

In Mr. Armstrong's autobiography, he noted, Mr. Armstrong wrote that he was ordained to the ministry in the CG7 by the authority of the Oregon State Conference.



MR. COULTER'S VISIT—In Big Sandy for Robert Coulter's two sermons and Q&A are Pete Peden (above left), Roy Geddes (above right) and Vance Stinson (below right). All are from the Tyler, Texas, area. Mr. Stinson is an administrator, writer and editor at Church of God International headquarters. [Photos by Dixon Cartwright]

In that same book Mr. Armstrong reproduces a picture of the second certificate of his ministerial license.

Nothing but the truth

"Now he makes this statement," Mr. Coulter said of Mr. Armstrong: "I was ordained by, and under the authority of, the Oregon Conference of the Church of God, separately incorporated; not by the Stanberry, Mo., headquarters."

"As far as that goes," continued Mr. Coulter, "that's true, but it doesn't tell the whole truth."

In his autobiography Mr. Armstrong wrote: "I had never joined the church whose headquarters were at Stanberry, Mo."

Mr. Coulter sees two possibilities to explain puzzling statements by Mr. Armstrong about his CG7 membership or lack of it.

■ "Mr. Armstrong showed a pretty serious lack of understanding of our polity, of our organizational policies of the Church of God (Seventh Day). He did not seem to understand. It might be that he didn't realize that the Oregon State Conference operated under the auspices of the Stanberry."

■ "The other possibility is that he didn't want to admit being a member of a church that he came to hold in contempt."

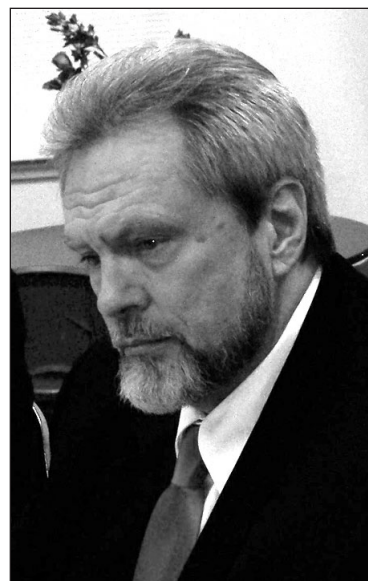
Mr. Coulter emphasized that he believes Mr. Armstrong held the CG7 "in a certain derision or contempt . . . He certainly was not willing to admit to having had much of a relationship to it."

Sometime between Mr. Armstrong's conversion in 1927 and his baptism, "he would have had to accept membership in a congregation of the Church of God (Seventh Day) because when you be-

did not want to admit it. That's the only explanation I have for that."

Severed all ties?

Although Mr. Armstrong "gives the impression" in his autobiography that by 1933 he had severed all ties with the



CG7, "here is something that I don't think is revealed," Mr. Coulter began.

He said Mr. Armstrong was a close associate of Andrew N. Dugger and that Mr. Armstrong looked upon Mr. Dugger as a mentor.

In 1933 Mr. Dugger "led a rebellion in the Church of God (Seventh Day)" after failing to gain office during a conference of August 1933. "On Nov. 4, 1933, Andrew Dugger and several colleagues organized a separate conference at Salem, W.Va., to compete with the conference at Stanberry, Mo., which was the original one organized in 1884."

Mr. Dugger and friends tried to create the illusion that the new Salem headquarters was the legitimate successor to the original organizers of the CG7, Mr. Coulter said.

"As evidence, [Mr. Dugger] used the name General Conference of the Church of God, and he issued a volume of the magazine that carried the same volume and number as the magazine that was published in Stanberry, Mo."

Set apart

The new Salem conference could boast of several "unique features" that set it apart from the Stanberry conference, Mr. Coulter said, "and this is where Herbert Armstrong comes into play here."

■ Salem organized around a structure that Mr. Dugger called "Bible or scriptural organization." This terminology referred to a board of 12 men whose objective was to oversee the spiritual life of the church.

■ The Salem-based folks elected a

board of seven men to conduct the business of the church.

■ They identified 70 elders, ministers or evangelists "who would go out to carry out the gospel endeavors of the Church of God (Seventh Day)."

■ They stated that the church's world headquarters was to be in Jerusalem.

■ They decided to "appropriate apostolic succession for its authority to govern in this manner and to function as it was supposed to function."

The 12, 70 and 7

"Now, on Nov. 4, which was a Sabbath, 1933, a group of men, members, gathered in Salem, W.Va., and they had prayer and so on, and they wrote 140 names of different ministers and prominent laypeople in the church, both in the United States and places abroad. There were names from Mexico, Norway and other countries which were placed in a box."

The gathered members entreated God and drew names for the board of 12 and the board of 70. Among the 70 was the name of Mr. Armstrong.

Then they voted on who would serve on the board of seven.

The Salem conference sent to the 70 men a form letter for each man—including Mr. Armstrong—to fill out and return.

The form letter read in part:

"Dear Brethren: I am anxious to begin the ministry which has fallen to me by lot in the body and am determined by the help of the Lord to live and to teach the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus as found in the holy Scriptures, and as outlined in the constitution of the Church of God with world headquarters in Jerusalem, Palestine. Will you please record my acceptance and have a credential issued to me according to my ministry in the Body."

Mr. Armstrong returned his copy undated to 1142 Hall St., Salem, W.Va., marked to the attention of the office of the "Salem church."

The significance of all this, said Mr. Coulter, is that the Salem conference offered Mr. Armstrong a credential and Mr. Armstrong accepted it, "which means that they considered him to be a member of the church. Notice the words 'Church of God with headquarters in Jerusalem, Palestine.'"

Clean and unclean

Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Coulter continued, did not receive his credential immediately because "there were some ministers in the Salem organization who needed to have him clarify his position on the clean and unclean foods."

When Mr. Armstrong replied that he believed in abstaining from unclean meats for health reasons but not because he believed eating unclean meats was a sin, the conference issued his credential.

Mr. Coulter gave a summary of several reports Mr. Armstrong sent to conference officials:

■ He sent a report dated March 23, 1936, describing the completion of six weeks of meetings at the Eldridge School House 12 miles east of Eugene, Ore.

■ He reported he was broadcasting on a radio station out of Eugene.

■ He sent word of a successful tent meeting at an unnamed location.

■ He reported in September 1936 broadcasting on radio regularly and making plans to hold a campaign on the Pacific coast of Oregon.

■ He reported March 22, 1937, that he had expanded his radio work by adding three stations, which now covered the entire Willamette Valley.

■ His report dated July 12, 1937, indicated that he was holding an evangelistic campaign in Eugene.

Cease and desist

Between receiving his ministerial credentials in November 1933 and the spring of 1937, Mr. Armstrong began to advocate the observance of "the annual Hebrew festivals," Mr. Coulter said.

Since the CG7 had never taught the need to observe the festivals, church leaders decided to convene a conference in Detroit, Mich., May 5-10, 1937, to discuss them.

"They invited [Mr. Armstrong] to come to that meeting and explain his position on the observance of the annual Hebrew festivals."

Mr. Armstrong didn't attend, but he did send a long article to be read at the conference to explain his position.

Mr. Coulter's childhood pastor and mentor, the late Kenneth H. Freeman, was the man the ministerial body of the conference selected to read Mr. Armstrong's statement.

"It was probably quite a lengthy document, from what I understand," Mr. Coulter said. "Elder Freeman told me he read the document and after he got through reading it some of the other ministers accused him of supporting Elder Armstrong's position . . . He read it with such feeling."

Mr. Freeman responded that he was not supporting Mr. Armstrong's position. Rather, he was trying simply to do a good job of reading the statement.

The ministers at the conference discussed Mr. Armstrong's statement and decided to "ask Herbert Armstrong to cease and desist from teaching in the future the observance of the Hebrew festivals."

However, Mr. Armstrong continued to teach that Christians should keep the feast days.

"So the ministerial council then revoked his credentials in the spring of 1938, and that ended his relationship with the Church of God (Seventh Day)."

Active minister

Mr. Coulter concluded that Mr. Armstrong was an active minister of the Salem branch of the CG7 from 1933 to 1938.

The Stanberry office was the successor to the 1884 organization, the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day), and a few years later, in 1949, Salem acknowledged that fact when it reunited with Stanberry.

"There was quite a bit of enmity and dissension between Stanberry and Salem for a time," Mr. Coulter said. "It's not a bright, happy time. In fact, I think it's a blight on our history. Nevertheless it occurred."

Mr. Coulter noted that the Salem conference, during its time of separation from Stanberry, made up an official seal that stated around its edge: "Church of God (Seventh Day), Organized 33 A.D., Jerusalem, Palestine, Reorganized 1933, Salem, W.Va., U.S.A."

Mr. Coulter sees that wording as a misleading attempt to authenticate the notion that an unbroken line of apostolic succession existed between the 1st century and the CG7 of the 20th.

They've got questions

The following are excerpts of Mr. Coulter's Q&A session, which occurred mostly after the main part of the Sabbath service in Big Sandy on Nov. 22, 2008. The questions came from several members of the audience.

Q: After the breakup of the Worldwide Church of God in the 1990s, did the CG7 based in Denver notice any increase in attendance.

A: That was kind of an interesting experience. We had a lot of visitors from Worldwide, and there were several who stayed and they integrated into the church, took membership and are still active. But I would say the majority of those who came looking did not stay

See MR. ARMSTRONG, page 26

Mr. Armstrong an active member of the Salem branch 1933-38

Continued from page 25

with the church. I think part of it was the fact that we're not authoritarian as the Worldwide was. It's a different culture, and we value individuals, and we value opinions.

We may not always agree, but as long as a person isn't disagreeable we tolerate differences of opinion.

[For example] we don't officially keep the festivals, but there are members in our church who do keep the festivals, and some might even advocate British-Israelism.

Ministerial pay

Q: In the CG7 were credentialed ministers paid? Or did they have their own jobs apart from the church?

A: No, being a member of the 70 [credentialed elders] did not guarantee employment. Some of the men were employed as evangelists and were being paid, but it did not guarantee employment.

As it appeared to me, he [Mr. Armstrong] was probably receiving funds enough to support himself from his own efforts. But the fact that he sent those reports and they were published in the paper would show allegiance to the church.

Church eras

Q: What about the seven churches of Revelation 2-3 and Mr. Armstrong's teaching that they represented seven church eras?

A: Let me say that the Church of God (Seventh Day) never taught the seven eras. There were some men who taught the seven eras. Dugger and Dodd's book sort of appeals to the seven church eras, and I know Herbert Armstrong appealed to the seven church eras quite strongly.

Let me make an observation here. When Herbert Armstrong left the Church of God (Seventh Day), his doctrinal position, his representation of the teachings of the Church of God (Seventh Day), were frozen in time to that point.

[For example] there was a point in time when some ministers in the Church of God (Seventh Day) taught that we were begotten but not born again, and that was primary, a big thing, with Herbert Armstrong at one point . . .

But that was a temporary thing [in the CG7]. It was like going through a phase. The church finally said, no, our conversion is a completed work. When Jesus said you must be born again, He facilitates the spiritual rebirth of the convert, and it's a completed work. We continued then to strive for sanctification, a life-long process.

Anyway, we abandoned that position years and years ago, but Herbert Armstrong froze that position at the time of his departure from the church, because essentially in the early and mid-'30s that was being taught in some quarters in the Church of God (Seventh Day).

The feast days

Q: Why didn't the CG7 believe it was necessary to keep the holy days?

A: Just in a nutshell—I don't want to get into a Bible study—we teach and believe that they were all shadows of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the reality of which they were the shadows, and his salvific work on the cross of Calvary made further observance unnecessary.

British-Israelism

Q: Was there any place for British-Israelism in the CG7?

A: In my lifetime I've known a couple of ministers who believed it but didn't teach it. It was a personal conviction of theirs.

It would have been impossible for our church to have adopted the British-Israel doctrine without renouncing our position on the reestablishment of the state of Israel. I don't believe that you can teach the reestablishment of the state of Israel and then British-Israelism as a parallel. I don't believe that the two doctrines blended together very well, as I understand them.

Q: So Mr. Armstrong got British-Israel from other sources?

A: Yes, he did not get it from the Church of God (Seventh Day).

Liturgical calendar

Q: You mentioned the position on the holy days. What is on your liturgical calendar, as Christmas and Easter are on many churches' calendars?

A: We don't observe what we consider to be the religious observances that have a pagan origin such as Christmas and Easter and Halloween. We teach for their avoidance. But we've never taught against the observance of birthdays because we don't see that they are of a religious nature.

Really, the only observance other than the seventh-day Sabbath we observe universally throughout the church is the communion service on the beginning of the 14th day of Nissan according to the Hebrew calendar, which we think approximates the date of Jesus' arrest and, of course, the following day the crucifixion, death and so on.

Otherwise we don't have a church calendar.

G.G. Rupert

Q: Could you comment on G.G. Rupert and whether he had an affiliation with the Church of God.

A: [G.G. Rupert] supported the festivals, I believe. But you're talking about a period [the late 1800s and early 1900s] when the church's paper was not what it became. At that time it was a forum. It had selected articles and published original material such as Rupert's, not necessarily because it endorsed them but for their interest's point of view.

I can't determine if Rupert was an official member of the church or not, but he was published in one or more of our papers, maybe even before it became *The Bible Advocate*, in 1900 or 1901 or something like that. It was called *Hope of Israel* and *The Sabbath Advocate*. It had a whole series of names.

There were those who published for the festivals or the observance of the recognition of British-Israel, but those were not the positions of the church.

Q: I have a copy of a paper by G.G. Rupert called *The Yellow Peril* that showed how Orientals were going to come in and attack Israel. My understanding of the book was that Rupert advocated that the U.S. and British Commonwealth were descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel.

A: Very possible.

Q: When did G.G. Rupert write?

A: It would have been prior to 1914, when Andrew Dugger became editor of *The Bible Advocate* and president of the general conference in 1914.

Andrew N. Dugger was sort of a

reformer, an innovative guy. He began to exercise some of his positions to perform some of the reforms, and one of the reforms was to limit *The Bible Advocate* to teaching the doctrinal positions of the church.

It had been a forum from its inception up to that point.

For example, one of the paper's predecessors during the days of Jacob Brinkerhoff's editorship might carry a study of a particular subject and take a position on it, then somebody would read that and send in an article that would challenge that position and it would be published in a subsequent issue.

But, in regards to the nature of Christ, sometimes the discussion got too hot so he would call a moratorium on it. It might last for six months or a year, then another series of articles would begin to appear.

The downfall of a church

Q: What elements contributed to the downfall of the Worldwide Church of God?

A: I just don't know what all has happened [in the WCG].

The Sardis era

Q: What interaction did the CG7 have with Herbert and Garner Ted Armstrong officially? Did you ever meet with them throughout the years?

A: No. It was our understanding that Herbert Armstrong did not welcome an invitation to meet together.

For example, John Kiesz had actually held some evangelistic services with Herbert Armstrong, apparently in Ore-

gon and one time after Herbert Armstrong moved to Pasadena. John Kiesz went by to say hello to his old friend, and Mr. Armstrong refused to see him.

So we never felt we had much of an opportunity.

Garner Ted was a little different. After he was put out of the Worldwide, we had him as a guest speaker on three different occasions, two in the local Denver congregation. And we had a general conference at Glorieta, N.M., in July of 1979, and he was invited to speak on a Sabbath afternoon. He was there and spoke and was well received.

in the Trinity and heading toward doing away with the Sabbath. Could you set the record straight?

A: I would answer this way: We're committed to Sabbath observance, and there is no effort or action pending before the ministerial body or the church as a whole to give up Sabbath observance.

As far as the Holy Spirit: We are not Trinitarian. There is no effort to become Trinitarian.

But we have developed our study of Christology, of the nature of Christ, and we have refined our position, and I think

we've come to the correct position: that Jesus Christ is God the Son, who shares the nature, the attributes and the names of God with the Father, which makes Him fully God.

In coming to that conclusion we have learned to appreciate the role of the Holy Spirit to a much greater degree than we did when the church was Arian.

When I grew up in the church, it was Arian. It taught the preexistence of Christ, but Christ was not God. I remember the first time I read the phrase "God the Son" and it made me mad. This was 50 years ago, and I didn't immediately get involved in a study.

Arianism tends to degrade the position of Christ, and it also tends to reflect

on the work of the nature of the Holy Spirit, so I think some of us have come to the position of recognizing that the Holy Spirit is more than just a blind force. I think we're willing to assign personality to it.

Not that the Holy Spirit shares the position of Jesus Christ in the Godhead as an equal partner with the Father and Son as God, but we recognize that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, with both the Father and Son.

But we are not Trinitarian, and we're not on the road to becoming Trinitarian, as far as I can determine.

Challenges to doctrine

Q: Can you give an overview of how the CG7 handles challenges to existing doctrine?

A: Our ministerial body determines our doctrines, and it's a laborious process. It takes time.

But, generally speaking, and there are a few exceptions, we bring the membership along with the decisions of the ministry because we don't switch positions instantly. We do it collectively in a ministerial council.

Of course, we have ministers who are theologians more than others, and we draw on the best of our talent to develop studies and presentations.

The ministerial body met in October [2008] at Gull Lake, Mich., between Battle Creek and Kalamazoo, because we're 150 years old this year, and that was the birthplace, especially more or less around Kalamazoo, where Gilbert Cranmer first began his evangelistic work.

Our principal study [in 2008] was on the New Covenant, not from the stand-

point of investigating whether we should keep the Sabbath or not but just to understand the nature of the New Covenant to a greater degree.

We're committed to the position that the Decalogue is a part of the New Covenant.

Little ones mean a lot

Q: What about young people? Are you able to retain them as members, and do you have any kind of college for them to go to, or do you have people growing up and just leaving?

A: Unfortunately, it's both. We have a lot of young people who grow up in the church who are committed to the doctrines and the worship and retain their active role in the church, and we have some that we can't hold. It's a mixed bag.

We do not necessarily have a college that we can direct that is operated by the Church of God, but we do have a ministerial-training program that is beginning to produce candidates to the ministry in numbers. It's growing because we need quite a few additional ministers. We do not have enough to take care of our congregations.

Brothers and sisters

Q: Does your CG7 conference recognize us as full-fledged brothers and sisters in Christ?

A: Yes. Our position is we're a part of God's church but we're not the total sum and substance.

CG7 schools

Q: Weren't you about to say something more about your colleges?

A: We operated a college, Midwest Bible College, in Stanberry for several years. It just wasn't feasible to continue to operate that school.

We tried to operate a similar effort there in Denver, Colo., for a brief period, and it proved to be unfeasible.

Presently our ministerial-training effort is online, and we have regional classrooms out in the field.

Carnal warfare

Q: What about carnal warfare? Didn't the CG7 actually put a guy out of the church because he joined up and became a captain in the Civil War? Does the CG7 have an official position on military service?

A: Our position is pacifism. The church from its inception has been pacifist, and the incident you speak about was at the outbreak of the Civil War [in 1861].

There was this young man in a position to be drafted. When the conscription in the Civil War was not absolutely essential, you could buy your way out for a couple of hundred dollars, and this young man made no effort to do that.

The church was pacifist, so they dis-fellowshipped him on the basis of his going into the Union army.

Mr. Dugger goes to Washington

Q: Did President Woodrow Wilson meet with Andrew Dugger?

A: I can't cite any evidence that he met with Woodrow Wilson, but I know he went to Washington to try to get the church classified as a pacifist church. Whether he met with the president or not, that might be a stretch. I don't know.

Q: Was he successful in getting the church classified as pacifist?

A: Yeah, I think he was. Of course you know in World War I pacifism was not looked on with very much grace.

The Korean War took me, and I took the position of a pacifist. I refused induction. I refused to take the oath or the step forward, so they let me go home.

But several months later they called me up. Dad posted bond for me. I was never incarcerated, and in the meantime the U.S. Supreme Court made a decision that all draftees were entitled to look at their draft-board files.

That started the whole procedure over again for me, and then I got too old for the draft.

Christians and the military

Q: Am I to understand that you are saying that a Christian should not serve in the military?

A: No. Our position is not to actively engage on the firing line.

See DID A.N. DUGGER, page 27



SPECIAL SABBATH SERVICE—Attending Sabbath services Nov. 22, 2008, with the Church of God Big Sandy to hear presentations by Robert Coulter, former president of the Church of God (Seventh Day) based in Denver, are Charles Groce of Tyler, Texas (left), president of the Church of God International, and Linda and Dixon Cartwright of Big Sandy, publishers of *THE JOURNAL*. [Photos by Dixon Cartwright and Charles Groce]

He was somewhat apologetic for his dad's attitude and [his dad's] referring to the Church of God as the Sardis church and so on.

I want to tell you the references to the Sardis church were a joke. I mean we never took that seriously.

The Tkaches

Q: What contact through the years did you have with Joseph Tkach Sr. and Joseph Tkach Jr.?

A: Well, I don't know. I was out of the office. I left the conference office by choice in 1987, and my successor was Calvin Burrell, who's now editor of *The Bible Advocate*.

I know that [Mr. Burrell] had some

'I want to tell you the references to the Sardis church were a joke. I mean we never took that seriously.'

contact with Joseph Tkach Sr. It must have been limited to correspondence or telephone conversations or something.

But, so far as Joseph Tkach Jr. is concerned, he and several of his closest colleagues attended general-conference sessions. They attended our ministerial council, our council meetings, when the ministerial body met on different occasions and so on.

There was never really any effort made for any kind of a unity movement. It was more of an effort to receive and give information and so on. I had an opportunity to visit with him personally on an occasion or two, and it was while they were still making a decision on what to do with the New Covenant.

They had apparently not come to the conclusion that they ultimately had come to. It was evident to me they were leaning in the direction to forsake the observance of the Sabbath and various things.

And I said to Joseph Tkach: If you keep going in the direction you are, you're not going to be keeping the Sabbath. He said no, no, we will retain the Sabbath.

Well, a few months after that it became apparent they weren't going to teach the observance of the Sabbath anymore.

He was much more available [than was Mr. Armstrong] and made an effort to come, and I think some of our ministers unofficially visited with him in Pasadena. It was more of an inquiry, an informational-type relationship, never an effort to create some kind of organizational unity.

Bringing in the Trinity?

Q: The CG7 is accused of bringing

Did A.N. Dugger talk with President Wilson about pacifism?

Continued from page 26

Q: Then why was Cornelius given full membership in the Church of God? [Acts 10].

A: Well, I can tell you why. Obviously he was a godly man, and the Lord makes that known, even though he was in the Roman military.

Q: But I can tell you exactly why. It's because he was accepted by God for his standards.

CG7 membership stats

Q: How large is the CG7 membership in the United States and worldwide?

A: I think our membership in the U.S. and Canada is close to 12,000 to 15,000. Worldwide it's 400,000 to 500,000.

We have a much larger membership outside the United States. For example, there's probably a membership of 40,000 in Nigeria.

What about World War II?

Q: In World War II what would have happened to us if we had refused to go to war?

A: I personally was a pacifist in connection with the Korean War. I pass no judgment on those who were in World War I or World War II or the Korean War, and in fact I have some young friends who died in Korea.

It's a matter of personal conviction as far as I'm concerned, and we do not dis-fellowship somebody who goes into service.

Cultures and voting

Q: Why do you think you have more members outside the United States, and what is your position on voting?

A: Churchwide, we encourage our members to participate in political affairs.

Concerning the membership outside the United States, I think part of it is the culture. I have observed that we live in compartments here.

We may not know our neighbors because we live so compartmentalized. We get in our car, drive to work, we're not rubbing elbows with other people, and so on.

But in third-world countries, where the church thrives, the members are interacting with other neighbors and peo-

ple in the neighborhoods and so on.

Every conference is autonomous. We look on them as sister churches. Our objective is to help them organize an autonomous conference.

Some are subsidized. In some third-world countries it's virtually impossible for them to generate enough income to become self-supporting, to carry on a meaningful work in a 21st-century world with maybe an 18th- or 19th-century economy.

Stick 'em up

Q: What do you think about churches that have changed to praise worship, where they hold up their hands?

A: I personally favor a more traditional service. We sing a mix of chorus-

Growth and persecution

Q: Is there a correlation between church growth and persecution of the church?

A: You know, I'm not sure that I can answer that. I have visited lots of third-world countries where it was difficult for the church to operate, even in rather hostile if not impossible circumstances.

But let me tell you the people in third-world countries are just as interested in getting hold of money, influence and power as the people are here. You've got the same devil working all over the world.

Q: The same human nature.

A: Yeah, that's the whole point. Human nature dictates the same thing.

[Several weeks after the Q&A in Big

1948, it was representative of the whole house of Israel, not just Judah and Benjamin.

Second resurrection?

Q: What is the CG7's teaching regarding people who did not have the opportunity for salvation in this life? In other words, what happens to those who because of their geographical location or their death as a young child never heard the name of Jesus and therefore had no chance to repent and be baptized?

A: The church historically has never taught the idea that people were resurrected and given another chance.

Q: Not another chance but their first chance.

A: Yes, well, our answer is that God,

Q: What about carnal warfare? Didn't the CG7 actually put a guy out of the church because he joined up and became a captain in the Civil War?

and hymns and so on. Somebody might raise their hands out of a personal moment of conviction or something.

Local boards

Q: Are CG7 congregations in this country autonomous? Are they governed by local boards?

A: Our church has local boards of trustees. Some churches like to call them the board of elders, but basically they're elected. They're not really what I would say constitutes a board of elders.

We encourage local congregations to incorporate, to hold their property locally, and so on. But when they become a part of the general conference they are asked to and are expected to share some of the tithe.

Offerings are kind of freewill, but a percentage of the tithe is encouraged to go to the general conference. Presently it's 15 percent of the tithe receipt that goes to the conference.

The local congregations are obligated to support the doctrinal beliefs. We just recently revised our doctrinal beliefs. We went from 27 to 12 beliefs, the core doctrines of the church.

Sandy *THE JOURNAL* followed up by telephone with two more topics for Mr. Coulter to comment on.]

British-Israel and Israel

Q: Why do you say in your sermons and in the question-and-answer session that the CG7 doctrine concerning the reestablishment of the state of Israel is incompatible with British-Israelism?

A: Well, the church had from the very beginning believed and taught the regathering of Israel, but it did so on the basis that Israel was scattered but was not lost; that is, so far as its identity is concerned.

So in that sense it would have been incompatible to try to indicate the lost tribes. The church never believed that Israel had lost its identity but just simply had been scattered. So Israelites always knew who they were, and I think there's evidence that they knew.

After all, where did Ephraim and Manasseh lose their identity? At what time in history that did happen?

We just never bought into the concept that any part of Israel lost its identity. So for us, when Israel became a state in

who knows the heart of every man, need not resurrect them and give them the opportunity to make a decision.

It is not necessary for God to resurrect people to see how they're going to choose. He knows the hearts of men, and He's a righteous, just God who will judge righteously and so we don't teach that.

Q: So what happens to people who died in infancy or never heard the words "Jesus Christ" in their lifetimes?

A: We teach that the righteous will be resurrected at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who are saints at His coming would also be translated with them and given immortality.

And essentially the remainder, those who are not resurrected in the first resurrection, are not resurrected until the end of the 1,000 years. Only the resurrected saints and the living who have been translated with them to immortality occupy the earth during the 1,000 years.

Q: So what happens to people who are resurrected after the 1,000 years?

A: Well, God will raise them and pass judgment on them, and they would be judged, in a sense, and annihilated.

Q: But those people didn't have a

chance even to know that they had sinned and therefore needed to repent of their sins.

A: I'm suggesting that God knows if a person has lived his whole life in a careless manner and hasn't responded to the gospel.

Q: But the question is about those who haven't responded to the gospel because they were not aware of the gospel.

A: See, I have a feeling, and I think the church at large has the conviction, that God has never—there has never been an age when God did not have a witness in the world, and you know we'll just have to leave it up to God's righteousness to make a just decision of who has heard and who hasn't.

In Israel's day God told Israel to totally destroy the wicked nations around them. Now, that sounds pretty drastic and so on.

So in His wisdom and justice and righteousness He can make that kind of decision, and it is a righteous, just way of judging, and I don't think that God needs to resurrect people to see which way they're going to go, what their decision's going to be based on our idea of whether or not they've had a chance.

I don't see anyplace in the Scriptures that would justify a resurrection to give people an opportunity to decide. The church just doesn't find a text that justifies the concept that men and women or whoever have to be resurrected for God to make a decision.

I think to think otherwise tends to impinge on the sovereignty of God. You know, there are people who teach universal salvation and so on, but they don't have a leg to stand on from the Scripture.

There have been ministers over the years who've toyed with and found that [teaching of an additional resurrection] appealing. But it never found its way into the theology of the church.

We'll just have to leave this up to God's righteousness to make a just decision.

Contact information

Write the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day) at P.O. Box 33677, Denver, Colo. 80233, U.S.A., or offices@cog7.org. To subscribe to *The Bible Advocate* writebap.orders@cog7.org or call (303) 452-7973.

Starting a one true church can be like a quest for a kosher pig

Continued from page 3

on the first day of the week. If it is supported by a governmental decree (as in same-sex marriage) then God will have to change also and recognize the substituted first day in place of the seventh.

But, just as the pig cannot be made into a lamb, the first day cannot be made into the seventh.

Graven image

■ Here's the third example: People want to divide a portion of the called-out people (the *ekklesia* of God) and form them into a congregation belonging to a religious party symbolized by its corporate seal.

The seal is a representation (graven image, Exodus 20:4) of an authority to whom people have made themselves subject in religious matters.

The new congregation will pledge its allegiance to and obey party headquarters (Romans 6:16). People have always preferred to be ruled by humans rather than by God (1 Samuel 8:6-7).

The new religious-party congregation will have appointed and hired elders subordinate to the organization's earthly headquarters and their doctrinal committee.

These people will sit in place of biblical (church) elders, who answer to a heavenly headquarters and have no superior between themselves and God's written Word.

You cannot hire a biblical elder, because he already has a boss (Christ), and there is no record in the New Testament of the church hiring elders. Christ's servants can only be support-

able to God. This is how it goes: ■ We will at times call our denomination "the church" and never by what it really is: a division or religious party.

■ The division that has been torn out and separated itself from the church (by requiring its elders to answer to an earthly headquarters) will gather on the seventh day of the week, the same as the church of Jesus Christ.

■ The division will have congregations and appoint elders, similar (on the surface) to a congregation of the church that belongs to Jesus Christ.

■ The division will claim its doc-

People can call their party 'the church' just as the man can call his pig 'a lamb,' but changing a name does not change what something is.

trine is based on the Bible (even though the Bible teaches against division), just like each individual member of the church of Jesus Christ has his personal doctrine based on what he perceives the Bible says (Philippians 2:12).

Further, Galatians 5:20-21 states that forming one of these divisions will prevent a person from entering the Kingdom.

A person would be wise to check the Greek dictionary's meaning of the words *dissensions* and *factious* (NIV) listed in Galatians 5:20.

■ All congregations that belong to religious parties will be subject to their earthly party headquarters and their commands (Romans 6:16).

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A person would be wise to check the Greek dictionary's meaning of the words *dissensions* and *factious* (NIV) listed in Galatians 5:20.

■ All congregations that belong to religious parties will be subject to their earthly party headquarters and their commands (Romans 6:16).

This is similar to all the congregations of the church of Jesus Christ, individually and separately (Revelation 2-3), answering to their head (Christ), who at this time is in heaven.

The headquarters of any organization, by definition, is where its head is located.

The best of intentions

I realize what I write here will be unsettling to people who have (with the purest of intentions) spent a large portion of their lives serving these institutions of division, but pure intentions don't always make our behavior

acceptable in God's sight.

With pure intentions Paul went around persecuting and killing Christians.

People seem to scurry back and forth these days, searching from one religious party to another, looking for the "true church."

This behavior makes this writer think of a person on a quest for a kosher pig.

Just as the man could not make his pig into a lamb, a religious-party division cannot be made into a part of the church belonging to Jesus Christ.

People can call their party "the church" just as the man can call his pig "a lamb," but changing a name

does not change what something is.

Shakespeare brought this point out many years ago when he noted that a rose by any other name would smell just as sweet.

Should we have a party?

It appears most people swallow this deception (that a religious party is a part of the church belonging to Jesus Christ) hook, line and fishing boat.

Israel thought it needed to worship God through the image of the golden calf (Exodus 32) because Moses was absent and had gone up to the mountain of God.

Today various religious parties have convinced people they should worship God through the party system, symbolized by their corporate seals (modern-day golden calves).

Why? It is because Christ, like Moses, is absent and has gone up to the Father's throne (Acts 7:55-56).

Want to bet?

If people would only look to a heavenly headquarters and Christ, they would reap the fruit (Galatians 5:22).

Instead, people look for approval from an earthly headquarters, religious-party leaders and doctrinal committees, thereby reaping that fruit.

People may not want to notice and admit to the differences between a congregation belonging to a religious party and a congregation of the church belonging to Jesus Christ, but this writer is willing to bet some of his favorite Passover matzos it won't go unnoticed by our Lord on judgment day.