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• Tom Middlemiss (left) and Rev. Mark Ellis from the World Wide Church of God.

CHURCH OF GOD CONVENTION SUCCESSFUL

Organisers of the annual convention for members of the World Wide Church of God have been thoroughly impressed by their first visit to Ulladulla.

Over 1200 members of the church throughout N.S.W., Victoria and the A.C.T. spent two weeks in the Milton-Ulladulla district to observe the commandments concerning the Feast of the Tabernacles in the Old and New Testament of the Bible.

The group used the two week festival as part of their annual holidays and this was the first visit for many to this district.

Church services were held each morning at Ulladulla's Civic Centre from 10am until 12 noon and then the visitors had free time to explore the many sights on offer.

It was estimated by the Tourism Promotions Officer for Shoalhaven City Council, Mr. Tom Phillips, that the organisation would spend \$500,000 on the two week visit in a much needed boost to the local economy.

Everend Mark Ellis told "The Times" that there were seven Conventions held throughout Australia over the same period and 6,000 people would have attended.

There was 90 sites world-wide with an overall attendance figure of 131,000.

Rev. Ellis said that it was the first time that many of the group had visited Ulladulla and that they were more than impressed.

"Most people had pre-conceived ideas that Ulladulla was just a one horse town, but that quickly changed" he said.

"The facilities in the district were more than enough to satisfy all age groups in our church," Rev. Ellis said.

Rev. Ellis said that the younger people had been looked after at places such as Funland and the many beaches and lakes, while many of the following took the time to venture into the bush and visit places such as Yadboro and Pigeon House.

"The weather could not have been better for our first visit to your beautiful town," he said.

On a sadder note, Mr. Tom Middlemiss, an elder in the church, said that he had recorded only four complaints regarding the visit and they were

to do with accommodation.

"These were partly due to mix ups in rental contracts but we hope to have them worked out before we leave," he added.

The World Wide Church Of God will be again having its festival about the same time next year and after receiving such favourable reviews from the majority of church members, Ulladulla might be favoured as the likely location.

Mr. Middlemiss warned that in other coastal towns the church had been the target for "high inflation" during their second visit.

"You can imagine that this does not go down well with our members and after such occurrences, we move on to another spot," he said.

When asked by a reporter from "The Times" what the basic differences were in their religion as opposed to more conventional Christian religions, Rev. Ellis explained.

"We consider ourselves to be one of

the oldest religions in that we did not evolve from Catholicism like the Protestants.

We respect the Sabbath (Saturday) and as you can see by our festival named the Feast of the Tabernacles, we have similar guidelines to Judaism.

Smoking is not tolerated in our church but members are allowed to drink in moderation," he said.

Modertion would be the underlying doctrine in the World Wide Church of God as it tries to promote understanding between diverse cultures and ntions and strives to improve the quality of life wherever possible.

