

Lecturer on lost 10 tribes tours Australian cities

The writer is a founding member of the Sydney United Church of God, a member of the History Research Projects organizational committee and a solicitor with the Australian government. He wrote this article on behalf of the committee, which includes Karen Allen, Michael and Helen Baran, Peter and Vivienne Ellis, Chris and Margaret Waterman, Kevin Watson and Craig White.

By Murray Allatt

SYDNEY, Australia--For the second year running, History Research Projects (HRP), publisher of Origins of Nations magazine, with the cooperation of the United Church of God in Australia, has sponsored a lecture series dealing with the identity of prophetic Israel and related topics.

Last year Rick Sherrod of Stephenville, Texas, a researcher and lecturer on modern Israel in prophecy, toured Australia and New Zealand under the sponsorship of HRP, presenting lectures in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland.

This year the series was continued with UCG pastor and Journal columnist Melvin Rhodes of Dewitt, Mich., and another UCG member, who asked that his name not be used in this article, making presentations.

The lectures were again devised to build bridges between the many Church of God groups and advertised to the general public as an evangelizing opportunity.

The topics presented by Mr. Rhodes included "Daniel 7: An Overview of World History," "The Multitude of Nations: The Free World's First Line of Defense," "Decolonization and Its Consequences" and "European Unity: Past and Present."

The anonymous lecturer spoke on Israel up to the captivity, the migrations of Israel to Northwest Europe, the promises to the patriarchs and "Jacob's trouble."

Attendance at the most popular sessions were 145 in Brisbane, 125 in Sydney, 120 in Melbourne and 53 in Auckland.

At the Sydney lectures members of at least eight Church of God groups were present. The other sites reported similar attendance patterns with Church of God members expressing happiness with the opportunity to meet with old friends and with members of other Church of God groups and individuals.

An elder of the Global Church of God, Rob Barnett, acted as a master of ceremonies for one of the four sessions in the Sydney conference. Those attending included members of the Worldwide Church of God and people completely new to this kind of information.

Free literature from the United Church of God and other groups was available for participants.

Although History Research Projects and the independent organizing committee raised the lion's share of the funds to cover expenses, the organizers expressed gratitude to the congregations pastored by Mr. Rhodes in Ann Arbor and Lansing, Mich., for footing the bill for Mr. Rhodes' airfare to Australia.

The organizers also thanked the council of elders for the United Church of God, an International Association, for allowing Mr. Rhodes to speak and for the Australian national council of the UCG and the New Zealand board for their support.

Back home in Michigan, Mr. Rhodes said July 29 that from his view his trip to Australia was a great success.

"The lectures were mostly well attended, with many new people at each one," he said. "There is a great deal of interest in the subject of the modern identity of Israel. Even the secular magazine Tasmania Life has been running a series on our Israelite roots."

Mr. Rhodes said the Australian brethren are "warm and friendly." He expressed the sentiment that Church of God brethren in Australia and elsewhere "must do everything we can to maintain the links, both spiritual and physical, that bind us."

The HRP's Origins of Nations magazine is available at GPO Box 864, Sydney 2001, Australia.