

# The Journal

## News of the Churches of God

Issue No. 85 (Vol. VIII, No. 2)

JOHN 8:32

Feb. 29, 2004

## Church sells portion of former college grounds

By Bill Stough

LEONEDELL, Mo.—The Worldwide Church of God announced Feb. 11 the sale of the “east campus” property of the former Ambassador College in Pasadena, Calif.

The campus on the east part of the church-owned grounds lies east of the spur off the Interstate 710 freeway, which dissects the former campus.

Thirteen acres is involved in the sale, but only about 11 acres is available to the new owner for development. The remaining two acres consists primarily of city streets.

The property sold to Sares-Regis Group, a developer of housing headquartered in Irvine, Calif. According to a WCG press release of Feb. 11, the property sold “for an undisclosed sum.”

In an effort to determine the sale price, *THE JOURNAL* contacted the Los Angeles County assessor’s office, which referred this writer to Sharon Gonterman, registrar-recorder for the county.

Ms. Gonterman reported that she subsequently discovered that forms had been filed that prevented her office from recording the amount of the sale.

Some Pasadena business interests estimate the sale price at between \$20 million and \$45 million, with \$40 million more likely to be correct.

### Gold Line

The recent opening of the Gold Line railroad extension of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority at the edge of the property is widely predicted to enhance its value.

The Gold Line is a light-rail com-

muter system that travels from Pasadena to Los Angeles and is part of the MTA’s rail network that crisscrosses the county.

A Gold Line station sits at the edge of the east-campus property.

### Unit sale unsuccessful

For years the WCG has tried to sell its 46-acre property as a whole. Originally, a firm known as Legacy Partners intended to develop the campus by building 1,900 housing units, mainly condominiums.

The Legacy plan was fought by the West Pasadena Residents’ Association and a group called Save South Orange Grove. Both are neighborhood leagues of Pasadena residents who opposed the plan because they said it would congest the neighborhood, create too much traffic and harm the environment.

Reportedly because of the opposition, the City of Pasadena never approved the plan, and Legacy pulled out.

The WCG later hired Shea Homes as a development consultant and planned to develop the property itself. The number of housing units was scaled back to 1,435 units.

Opposition to that plan also mounted, and Shea resigned as consultant.

From that point Bernie Schnippert of Pasadena, WCG treasurer, has pursued development of the campus without an outside partner.

The WCG may still pursue developing the campus itself but could also sell the 33-acre west campus to another group. The church could find a developer similar to Sares-Regis, or it could sell the campus to someone

See **CHURCH SELLS**, page 39



**SONS OF THE SOUTH**—A group made up of members of the Living Church of God plays bluegrass music at a concert Feb. 28 in the building owned by the Church of God Big Sandy (Texas) to raise money to build and operate a museum in Big Sandy. Members of the Sons of the South are (from left) Seth Forrestier on mandolin, Deric Forrestier on guitar, Jason Forrestier on bass and Ben McCarty on banjo. All live in the Big Sandy area. See related photos on page 40. [Photo by Mac Overton]

## Church of God minister recounts his history as WCG and AC pioneer and the dark days of 1979

By Bill Stough

INDEPENDENCE, Mo.—The pastor of the Pasadena (Calif.) Church of God and founder of Guardian Ministries vividly recalls his last day as a member of the Worldwide Church of God in 1979. He also recalls other experiences including how he came to be featured in an article in *Time* magazine.

*THE JOURNAL* interviewed David Antion on a visit he made to the independent Church of God Kansas City on Nov. 15 and asked him about his part in the tumultuous events in the WCG of the late '70s.

Dr. Antion, nowadays a marriage-and-family therapist and counselor

besides carrying out his pastoral duties, was a pastor in the WCG “field ministry” from 1959 to 1969.

He was an ordained “evangelist” in the WCG beginning in 1966.

At various times he was a member of the church’s board of trustees, vice president for publishing, deputy chancellor of the Pasadena campus of Ambassador College, a college-faculty member, vice president for church administration and director of college relations. The latter responsibility involved being the public-relations interface between the community and Ambassador College.

On his visit to Missouri he described for *JOURNAL* readers the aston-

ishing story of how he and others became persona non grata in the WCG and, while he was still a member in good standing, how he came to be featured in an article in *Time* magazine. He also related other experiences, including how he came to terms with what happened to him.

The following is the interview.

### 17-year-old convert

**Q:** How did you become a member of the Worldwide Church of God?

**A:** I started listening to Mr. Armstrong [Herbert W. Armstrong, founder of the Radio/Worldwide Church of God and Ambassador College] when I

See **DAVID ANTION**, page 38

## Legacy Institute school term winds down, reports Amie

*THE JOURNAL* here publishes the latest report from Amie Hufton of Hawkins, Texas, on her experiences as a Church of God missionary and teacher in Thailand under the auspices of Legacy Institute, a ministry operated by Church of God members Leon and Gloria Sexton.

See also her reports in the Nov. 28, Dec. 31 and Jan. 31 issues of *THE JOURNAL*.

By Amie Hufton

CHIANG MAI, Thailand—**Wednesday, Jan. 7:** We are back in the swing of things here at Legacy Institute. The students and teachers enjoyed the two-week break, and everyone returned ready to hit the books and focus for the last five weeks of school. Five students will graduate in February, and, since it is the first graduation, we plan to make it special.

I miss America, but every day I am so thankful to be here. These students have really embedded themselves in my heart. Take care. I hope you are all staying warm. It’s a lovely 70 degrees here.

### Bodies adapt

**Wednesday, Jan. 14:** Thirty-nine days left until graduation. We are

starting to wind up our classes and really prioritize what we are teaching so we can get the students ready for finals.

The weather here has been so great. We wake up to a cool 70 degrees F., and the hottest it gets is 80 degrees. Somehow we are still walking around in sweatshirts and pants, though. It’s interesting how quickly your body adapts to different circumstances.

We will have another bonfire next weekend, hopefully. The students enjoy it; they sit around playing guitar and singing. The other teachers and I try to implement some church activities, to include the small children of the two families that attend here.

I am not sure if it is the culture or just the tradition, but once church is over here everyone scatters. We hope we can bribe them to stick around a little longer with some sweet snacks.

I will get boxes ready for the refugees in the coming two weeks. I still have to locate a secondhand store for clothing. I will get other supplies from a big buy-in-bulk store where Legacy gets its household groceries. I hope we can provide soap, candles, toothbrushes, tooth-

See **LEGACY**, page 11

## Tour to set out in search of Noah’s ark

By John Warren

BIG SANDY, Texas—*THE JOURNAL* in January sat down with three people who plan to lead a Bible-related tour of Greece and Turkey that may include a visit to what some people believe is the resting place of Noah’s ark.

Marvin and Renetta Wilson of Celina, Texas, Sabatarian Christians who founded and operate the Biblical Archaeology Foundation, brought Dr. Micha Ashkenazi to Big Sandy for an interview on Jan. 21.

Dr. Ashkenazi, 67, is a native and resident of Jerusalem who operates Bible Oriented Tours and will serve, along with the Wilsons, as a guide on the tour, planned for June.

Dr. Ashkenazi’s credentials include a Ph.D. in Jewish-Christian studies in the School of Bible Theology at San Jacinto, Calif., and intensive studies in biblical archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

In 1992 Dr. Ashkenazi won the Jerusalem Guide of the Year award from the Israeli government as recognition for the many years he served as the official tour guide for the Ministry of Tourism and Defense. He has organized and led many tours of Israel, Greece and Turkey.

“My purpose in coming here or whatever I’m doing

See **TOUR TO TURKEY**, page 14

- 3 Ian Boyne says when Nehemiah speaks the churches should listen
- 8 Ken Westby paints a word picture of two scenes etched in his memory
- 10 Rod McQueen previews his new book, *Showdown in Jerusalem*
- 14 Archie Faul explains what we’re to keep ‘in remembrance’ of Jesus

## Should your family see *The Passion*?

Church of God members have firm opinions about Mel Gibson’s new movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, whether they’ve seen it or not.

*THE JOURNAL* in this issue devotes a fair amount of space to those opinions in the form of four guest movie reviews and one regularly scheduled column.

Brenda Ross has seen it and loves it. Warren Zehrung warns that church members shouldn’t even think about viewing it. Scott Ashley carefully lists its pros and cons, as well as its “neutral” aspects, and declares that the pros carry the day. James Tabor similarly lists pros and cons but arrives at a different conclusion.

And columnist Dave Havir dispassionately devotes his monthly space to the subject.

See pages 6 and 7 for the guest reviews and page 3 for Mr. Havir’s column.





### Church members make the news

**MUSEUM AND CHAMBER**—Two community functions involving COG members and non-COG members took place in the Church of God Big Sandy's building in February. **Left photo:** Josh Presley of Pritchett, Texas, a member of the United Church of God, sings at a benefit concert for the Big Sandy Museum Association Feb. 28. **Above photo:** The Big Sandy Chamber of Commerce honors several Church of God members at its annual awards banquet on Feb. 24. **From left:** Guest speaker Bryan Hughes of Mineola, Texas, state representative from District 5,

poses with three church members who garnered awards that night. They are Linda Avey of Big Sandy, a member of the COG Big Sandy, teacher of the year; James Jackson of Big Sandy, a member of the Worldwide Church of God, senior citizen of the year; and Lee Stolley of Pritchett, who attends the UCG and the COG Big Sandy, man of the year. Not pictured is Jesse Allen of Big Sandy, a member of the WCG, fireman of the year. See also the related photo on page 1 of this issue. [Photos by Seria Dassing, courtesy of *The Big Sandy & Hawkins Journal*]

## Book recalls Parthia, forgotten superpower

By Mac Overton

GILMER, Texas—The third volume in Steven Collins' four-book history of ancient Israel and the identities of the 10 lost tribes came off the press in January, but too late to include with the review of the first two volumes in the series in the January issue.

The latest in the series, *Parthia: The Forgotten Ancient Superpower and Its Role in Biblical History*, is heavily devoted to Parthia, with Mr. Collins making a case that the ancient empire was populated and governed by descendants of many members of the 10 lost tribes of Israel.

He maintains they grew to power after the collapse of the Assyrian empire, which took them captive and removed them from Palestine about 721 B.C.

Though this theory may have been stated before, I've studied quite a bit about the lost tribes, and it was only from Mr. Collins' original book, *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel . . . Found!* that the significance of Parthia became

evident to me.

Many histories, including encyclopedias, make no distinction between ancient Persia and Parthia.

But, as Mr. Collins shows, the Parthians and Persians were different ethnic groups. The confusion arose largely because the Parthian empire, which rivaled Rome as an ancient power in the first centuries after Christ, and Persia covered much of the same geographic territory.

In fact, the Parthians gained control over the ancient Persians and successfully ruled them for centuries, until a successful Persian revolt a few centuries after Christ. After the Persian revolt, the Parthians migrated into Europe, Mr. Collins states, as did other peoples descended from the lost tribes.

Another reason the identity of Parthia was lost, Mr. Collins says, is that historians would have to admit that "lost" Israel continued to exist in a different form and that the Bible was true.

Among evidence Mr. Collins uses to bolster his contentions is the similarity of Israelite tribes' and clans' names to leading Parthia tribes'. He also cites ancient historians to show that the Parthians were related to the Scythians, which most British-Israel theorists accept as being Israelite.

Mr. Collins says that events in the

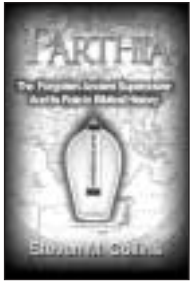
life of Christ become more understandable if one recognizes that Parthians were Israelites. For example, the Magi were an elite Parthian group that helped choose Parthia's emperors. They would have known of the prophecies of a Messiah and sent the delegation that paid homage to the infant Jesus.

Also, Parthia's rulers would have been of the line of David and therefore distant cousins of Jesus, Mr. Collins says.

Indeed, he cites ancient sources that say that the ruler of Parthia was so angered by the crucifixion of Jesus that he would have sent an army against Jerusalem but hesitated because of the possibility of starting a major war with Rome. Parthia and Rome were at peace at the time.

Those interested in British-Israel theories, or those who believe the traditional Church of God doctrine that the lost tribes live on among the peoples of extreme Northwest Europe and their descendants around the world, will find this volume a welcome addition to their libraries.

Order from Bible Blessings, P.O. Box 1778, Royal Oak, Mich. 48068, U.S.A. See also [www.bibleblessings.net](http://www.bibleblessings.net), or write Mr. Collins at [scollins@ll.net](mailto:scollins@ll.net) or P.O. Box 88735, Sioux Falls, S.D. 57109, U.S.A.



## Notes and quotes

### Booklet and the Feast

HALIFAX, N.S., Canada—The Church of God Halifax is giving away the booklet *When I Die, What Happens Next?*, by Garner Ted Armstrong, announced Alex Nicholson.

Mr. Nicholson also told of plans for a Feast of Tabernacles site sponsored by the Intercontinental Church of God, Tyler, Texas, here for 2004. For a free copy of the booklet or for information about Feast plans, phone Mr. Nicholson at (902) 446-3790, or write him at [churchofgodhalifax@hotmail.com](mailto:churchofgodhalifax@hotmail.com).

### The cloud, not the crowd

SILVER SPRING, Md.—Barri Armitage plans to release her second CD, *Follow the Cloud*, in time for the spring feast days.

Mrs. Armitage has poetically adapted scriptures and set them to Israeli folk melodies. Songs on the CD include "He Carries Us Gently," "Turn and Be Healed," "No Greater Love," "That They May Be One" and "Follow the Cloud."

Her earlier 16-song CD, *Think on These Things*, is still available and includes "Healed by His Stripes," "Bought with a Price" and "Under the Shadow of His Wings."

For information visit [www.dovesongs.com](http://www.dovesongs.com), or write 13904 N. Gate Dr., Silver Spring, Md. 20906, U.S.A.

### Zeal needs knowledge

WIXOM, Mich.—Is Jesus the promised Messiah of the Old Testament's prophecies? Is Christianity derived from ancient pagan mystery religions? Is the New Testament historically reliable? Is Jesus God according to the New Testament?

For answers to these questions read Eric Snow's new book, *A Zeal For God Not According to Knowledge*.

Find it at Amazon.com or iUniverse.com. Or order directly from Mr. Snow (\$40 for softcover, \$50 for hardcover) at 20 Oak Hollow, Suite 260, Southfield, Mich. 48034, U.S.A.

For more information see [www.lionofjudah1.org/book.html](http://www.lionofjudah1.org/book.html).

### One God Seminars

AUBURN, Wash.—Kenneth Westby of the Association for Christian Development, based



Mr. and Mrs. Sean Finnegan

here, has announced two more presenters to be part of the lineup for his One God Seminars, scheduled for the Washington, D.C., area the weekend of May 14-16.

Sean Finnegan of Morrow, Ga., and Charles Hunting of Sarasota, Fla., will present the view of unitary monotheists, joining several others including Anthony Buzzard of Fayetteville, Ga., Gary Fakhoury of Nassawadox, Va., Paul Haney of Watertown, Conn., Art Mocarow of Montgomery, Texas, Jonathan

Sjoldal of Culpeper, Va., and Mr. Westby.

Also on the agenda, David Antion of Pasadena, Calif., will impart the contrarian—binitarian—point of view. The traditional doctrine on the nature of God of the Worldwide Church of God and most groups descended from it is binitarianism, or the belief that God is a family of two supreme beings.

Write the ACD for a reservation package at P.O. Box 4748, Federal Way, Wash. 98063, U.S.A., or [westby@godward.org](mailto:westby@godward.org).

See also the ACD's advertisement on page 19 of this issue of *THE JOURNAL*.

### Special Sabbath

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.—The Greater Phoenix Church of God sponsored a special Sabbath meeting at Orange Tree Golf Resort Feb. 21, with 108 in attendance, including David and Molly Antion of Guardian Ministries, Pasadena, Calif., announced minister Bob Simpson.

Dr. Antion, the guest speaker, delivered a sermon, "What Is Worship?," and presented a seminar called "Including Individuals and Groups Emphasizing the Similarities Instead of Differences, Without Compromising Your Beliefs and Principles."

John Vonderhaar emceed; Betty Cookman played piano.

Ashlee and Morgan Shortridge and J.D. Vonderhaar presented piano solos. Tonya Vonderhaar sang, as did father-and-daughter duo Harry and Sarah Gunderson. Organizers were Ron and Donna Kearney.

### Jackson Feast

JACKSON, Tenn.—The Jackson Church of God has plans for a Feast observance at Jackson for 2004 beginning the evening of Sept. 29, announced Bill Shults of Hungry Hearts Ministries.

"This is going to be one really fantastic time in the Lord," he said. "Keep us in mind."

For more information call (731) 668-8477, or write P.O. Box 3741, Jackson, Tenn. 38303, U.S.A.

### Feast with the Ashcrafts

RED SPRINGS, Texas—Jerry and Mickey Ashcraft announce they have a place for Feast of Tabernacles observers to camp out for the 2004 observance.

The Ashcrafts own The Lions RV Park, with 18 campsites for rent, with full hookups for recreational vehicles or tents, two bathhouses and a cabin. The facility is within a few miles of several Feast of Tabernacles observances, including several in the Big Sandy area, eight miles away.

For information call Mr. or Mrs. Ashcraft at (903) 858-2367, write them at [jl830@aol.com](mailto:jl830@aol.com), or visit [www.lindale-tx.net/lionsrv/](http://www.lindale-tx.net/lionsrv/).

"It's a perfect spot on a beautiful private lake for Feast of Tabernacles camping in the East Texas piney woods," said Mrs. Ashcraft.

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