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JOHN 8:32

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Major snowstorm fails to ice dual family weekends

By Dave Havir

LEXINGTON, Ky.—More than 1,500 people braved a major snowstorm to attend two separate but simultaneous winter family activities in Kentucky Dec. 22-26.

From Wednesday evening through Friday both activities—sponsored by two Church of God organizations—scheduled basketball, volleyball and other recreational events. Both groups also sponsored dances. The Sabbath was filled with educational seminars in both locations.

For seven years there had been an annual Winter Family Weekend organized by Jim O'Brien of West Chester, Ohio, and the United Church of God, his employer from 1995 until the spring of 2004.

After Mr. O'Brien was let go from the UCG last spring (see "Church HQ Suspends Pastor From Speaking" and "Church Lets Elder Go When He Disregards Its Gag Order," *THE JOURNAL*, April 30 and May 31, 2004), both he and the UCG decided to continue with their own versions of the activities during the winter public-school and college break.

Mr. O'Brien and the two congregations he still pastors (the Church of God Cincinnati and the Church of God Lexington) advertised their event as the eighth annual Winter Family Weekend, because for the past seven years Mr. O'Brien and his congregations' boards of trustees negotiated and signed the contracts with the recreational facilities and motel.

The UCG also advertised its event as the eighth annual Winter Family Weekend, because for the previous seven years Mr. O'Brien was an employee of the UCG organization.

Further, the UCG over the years had provided seminar speakers from its full-time ministry.

The activity took place in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area from 1997 to 2001 but moved to Lexington beginning in 2002.

This year Mr. O'Brien again organized his activity in Lexington, while United moved its activity to Louisville, Ky. (60 miles to the west).

Mr. O'Brien reported that 350 people attended his 2004 Winter Family Weekend, while the UCG reported that 1,240 people attended its 2004 Winter Family Weekend. Mark Winner of the Louisville area coordinated the event for the UCG.

Treacherous travel

Because of the icy snowstorm that dumped 6 to 12 inches of flakes along the Ohio River, many of the people who attended both events had difficulty in traveling.

For fliers, schedules were disrupted. For drivers, many roads were slippery, and other roads were closed.

As people arrived, many shared stories of inconvenience.

The weather also influenced a large number of people to change their plans and not attend the events.

Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Winner each reported that 300 people had canceled their plans to attend because of the weather.

Seminars in Lexington

One of the traditional activities at the event has been the seminar schedule, which encourages parents and teenagers to choose topics that interest them.

See **TWO WINTER**, page 5



WEDDED BLISS—Philip and Joyce Knight of Curryville, Mo., attend the annual Family Fellowship Weekend sponsored by the Church of God Big Sandy Jan. 1. Mr. Knight married the former Joyce Kinkle Oct. 30, 2004, in Louisburg, Mo., after meeting his bride-to-be through a Sabbath Singles Connection advertisement in *THE JOURNAL*. Performing the ceremony for the Knights was John Ritenbaugh of Fort Mill, S.C., founder of the Church of the Great God. See the article about the weekend on this page and related photos on page 24. [*JOURNAL* photo]

Wayne Cole announces retirement, gives advice based on his experiences in life and the church

By Dixon Cartwright

BIG SANDY, Texas—Wayne Cole, known specifically to thousands of present and past Worldwide Church of God members as C. Wayne Cole, in a sermon here Jan. 22 listed lessons he has learned in his 50-year Church of God ministry.

The address was officially Mr. Cole's farewell sermon, although the 75-year-old former Worldwide Church of God evangelist did not rule out the occasional religious discourse or other speaking engagement.

He did say, however, that he wanted to quit while he was ahead: end his formal ministry while he could still competently speak and expound Scripture.

Mr. Cole's preaching over the past

10 years has consisted of sermons delivered before the members of the Church of God Big Sandy but also at numerous other geographically wide-ranging venues.

In the beginning

Mr. Cole was active in speaking and other ministerial responsibilities beginning with his graduation from Ambassador College, Pasadena, Calif., in 1954. His duties continued in various but uninterrupted forms for 25 years, until his sudden and unexpected exit under a cloud when WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong relieved him of his church responsibilities in 1979.

Mr. Cole's last assignment under Mr. Armstrong was to assist the WCG pastor general as chairman and presi-

dent of all church operations everywhere in the world.

As reported in several articles over the years in *THE JOURNAL* recounting the history of the WCG especially in the 1970s, Mr. Armstrong suddenly fired Mr. Cole not long after officials of the State of California assumed legal control of the church through the office of the California attorney general.

Mr. Cole, while carrying out what he said were Mr. Armstrong's specific directives to cooperate with the state in its search for what it said were instances of financial malfeasance in the church, suddenly found himself out of a job, disfellowshipped and banished from church property.

In Mr. Cole's place Mr. Armstrong See **EVANGELIST**, page 4

Teacher gives update on earthquake, Thai army day

In this issue *THE JOURNAL* publishes reports from Jessica Wilson of Tyler, Texas, a 21-year-old student at the University of Chicago. Miss Wilson helps out at the International Leadership Training Center, operated by Legacy Institute in Chiang Mai, Thailand, serving there with the aid of a scholarship from the Church of God Big Sandy. See also "Congregation Decides to Send More Teachers," *THE JOURNAL*, May 31, 2004.

By Jessica Wilson

CHIANG MAI, Thailand—**Friday, Jan. 7:** First of all, thanks for all of the concern for my well-being after the recent disaster. Legacy is in northern Thailand, which has been completely unaffected by the disaster. I felt the earthquake a tiny, tiny bit, but other than that I wouldn't have known anything major had happened if so many people hadn't E-mailed me and called my house!

Despite its diminutive appearance on the world map, Thailand is a good-sized country. Phuket is far away from Chiang Mai. I did go to Phuket and some islands in the area over the Thanksgiving break, but I had to take two 12-hour bus rides to

get there. I appreciate the E-mails and the phone calls to my parents and am happy to report that everyone here is doing just fine.

Last week the other teachers and I went to Laos to get our visas renewed. We had a fun trip.

First we went to Vientiane, the capital of Laos. We saw lots of sights there and ate some great food.

James Hostetter and I went to a traditional Lao dancing show, which was a lot of fun too.

Next we headed to Luang Prabang. We didn't stay there long. We got there in the evening and left early the next morning. But we did have time to visit the night market and eat some yummy Laotian food there, all you could eat for 5,000 kip, which is about 50 cents.

The next morning we took off on a boat trip up the Mekong River. The trip lasted two days total, and the scenery was gorgeous. After the first

See **TEACHER**, page 5



Jessica Wilson

New tutorials online for Jewish-calendar scholars

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa—Frank Nelte has added a directory to his Web site called "Jewish Calendar Tutorials."

"While I have done all the necessary calculations for you in the various tutorials, I believe that these tutorials should enable the majority of the people in the various Churches of God to grasp exactly how the Jewish calendar for every year is determined. It should also enable you to easily work out for yourself the exact Jewish-calendar dates for any other year of your own choice."

The new directory also features several subdirectories, one of which gives the exact text of the letter from the department of agriculture in Israel regarding the barley harvest in the Holy Land.

"Another subdirectory gives the exact text of Mr. Kenneth Herrmann's 1969 calendar letter," Mr. Nelte said. The Web site's address is www.franknelte.net. Write Mr. Nelte at tungsten@acenet.co.za.



Frank Nelte

Congregation sponsors annual family fellowship

For photos of the Church of God Big Sandy's Family Fellowship Weekend, see pages 1 and 24.

By John Warren

BIG SANDY, Texas—The Church of God Big Sandy had its annual Family Fellowship Weekend Jan. 1-2 with a morning seminar, a music-filled church service, a variety show and an evening of square dancing. The congregation also provided a brunch and dinner on Saturday and another brunch on Sunday.

Dave Havir, pastor of the congregation, explained why this activity was delayed a week from its normal yearly schedule.

"Normally we have this annual activity over Dec. 25," Mr. Havir said. "But we delayed our activity this winter so we as a congregation could support the Winter Family Tournament in Lexington, Ky." (sponsored by the Cincinnati North and Lexington congregations, which are pastored by Jim O'Brien of West Chester, Ohio).

This year's activity began with a brunch at 10 a.m.

See **BIG SANDY'S**, page 5

- 3 Brian Knowles writes about his friend Dean Wilson after his passing
- 6 Fred Coulter opines about a magical notion of ministry as government
- 7 Sandra-Mae Robinson weighs in on the sacred-name discussion
- 8 The brethren file final reports of their 2004 Feasts of Tabernacles

A warm day in January



TEXAS FAMILY WEEKEND—Members of several Church of God fellowships meet together for activities the weekend of Jan. 1 in the building owned by the Church of God Big Sandy. **Photo 1:** Al and Ruth Mischnick of North Little Rock, Ark. (*left*); Don and Emily Walls of Gladewater, Texas; and Dionisio Velasco of Gladewater. **Photo 2:**

David Daniels (*left*) of Tulsa, Okla., and Trey Cartwright of Nacogdoches, Texas. **Photo 3:** Jeana Anderson of Russellville, Ark. **Photo 4:** Ken Barton of Tulsa. **Photo 5:** Wynn Skelton of White Oak, Texas. **Photo 6:** Steve Andreas of Carrollton, Texas. See the article and related photo on page 1. [Photos by Dixon Cartwright]

Ohio boy heads for peaceful summer camp

TROY, Ohio—Gregory Joseph, 11-year-old son of Brian and Angela Joseph, who attends the Dayton, Ohio, congregation of the United Church of God, has received a scholarship to attend the Children's International Summer Village (CISV) at Springfield, Mass.

The CISV is an organization that began 50 years ago with the dream of founder Doris Allen to help children live and work together in peace and friendship.

The CISV is an international camp at Springfield attended by 11-year-olds from 12 nations.

Gregory is one of four children chosen to represent the United States



Gregory Joseph

at the summer village in July. He will have the opportunity to spend four weeks with children from 12 countries. Emphasis at the camp will be on encouraging creative expression and close

relationships among children.

"Each day the children come to realize that the differences between them are less important than the likenesses that bind them together," said Angela Joseph, Gregory's mother.

"Aiming to stimulate the development of intercultural respect and international understanding, CISV also seeks to prepare individuals for effective leadership roles in creating peaceful societies."

Gregory says he is excited at the prospect of attending the summer village camp, meeting new friends from around the world and being an example of how "God's way" works in his life.

Notes and quotes

Spring minifeast

TYLER, Texas—Christian Educational Ministries (CEM) invites everyone to its "Mini-Feast" April 22-24 in Destin, Fla.

Ronald L. Dart, founder of CEM, will speak at Seascape Resort Conference Center, including during the Passover service on April 22, Sabbath services for the Night to Be Much Observed on April 23 and the first day of Unleavened Bread April 24.

For more information call Gary or Shirley George at (850) 837-0485 or CEM at (903) 509-2999.

19th anniversary

SYDNEY, Australia—Craig White notes that the anniversary of Worldwide Church of God founder Herbert W. Armstrong's death this year marked precisely 19 years on both the Gregorian and Hillel calendars.

Mr. Armstrong died Jan. 16, 1986, which was also Shebat 6 on the Jewish calendar. Not surprisingly, since the latter is based on 19-year lunar-solar time cycles, the anniversary this year also fell on Jan. 16 and Shebat 6.

Amicable split

HARTFORD, Wis.—Don Wales announced that members of the congregation known until recently as the Church of God Berean Fellowship have decided to "move in two separate directions" in an effort to "better and more effectively serve God and facilitate the efforts of individual members to utilize their God-given talents and abilities."

Members made the decision at a special meeting Nov. 27.

Members who desired to "move in a different direction," he said, will reorganize to focus on "local outreach" and "in-home Bible studies."

The new group will take with it the name Berean Fellowship.

Other members, he said, chose to remain a part of the original group and have chosen the name Congregational Fellowship of God a Cooperative Network of Believers.

They will continue in their current efforts, including Internet broadcasting of interactive Sabbath services and monthly Friday-night services with guest speakers.

"The two groups plan to work in cooperation with each other in sponsoring special events and activities," Mr. Wales said.

Advertising your 2005 Feast

HARTFORD, Wis.—The Internet Church of God has launched a new festival directory service to help members with their Feast of Tabernacles planning and to help Feast-site planners promote their sites, announced Don Wales.

"We offer free listings for Feast sites across the country and around the world, regardless of affiliation," Mr. Wales said. "Send your information to us and we will build and host your Feast

Web page, or just send an announcement and a link to your own Web site. Either way, we want to let people know what you have to offer and help them to find your Feast site."

Read all about it at www.feastgoer.org.

Keep the Feast in Los Osos

SAN DIEGO, Calif.—The Church of the Eternal God is busy making plans for Feast 2005.

"We have an agreement with the Sea Pines Golf Resort in Los Osos, Calif., to keep the Feast [of Tabernacles] in their facilities again this year," announced Edwin Pope.

If you plan to attend with the CEG, write Mr. Pope at jedwin-pope@comcast.net or CEG, P.O. Box 270519, San Diego, Calif. 92198, U.S.A.

Knoxville church's invitation

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—The 7th Day Church of God of Knoxville announces Sabbath services and Friday-night Bible studies every week at its location at 6714-G Central Ave. Pike. For information write Mark or Mary Carr at church@7thdaychurchof-god.com or P.O. Box 70635, Knoxville, Tenn. 37938, U.S.A.

Jubilee year

LOVELAND, Colo.—Word of Truth Ministry has a new booklet available, *The Jubilee Year*. It's free of charge and it explains all the Bible's instructions about the jubilee year, announced David R. Kenders. It also gives instruction about the sabbatical and third year of tithing.

"This is a must read for the believer who wants to fully obey all of Yahweh's biblical instructions," Mr. Kenders said.

Request the booklet by writing drkenders@myexcel.com or 7411 WCR, 24H, Loveland, Colo. 80538, U.S.A. Or call Mr. Kenders at (970) 667-9203.

Just like the FOT

HOT SPRINGS, Ark.—The Sabbath Day Church of God invites everyone to an old-fashioned observance of the Days of Unleavened Bread, similar to spring feasts in the 1950s when participants would travel to another area and set up temporary residence for a week.

Organizer Fred Porter announced that speakers will include Alfred Harrell of Cabot, Ark., Ian Hufton of Hawkins, Texas, Tom Justus of Springdale, Ark., and Herb Morrow of Hope, Ark.

The festival dates, April 22-30, will follow the traditional Jewish calendar. Activities will take place in the congregation's building at 2998 Park Ave. in Hot Springs.

Mr. Porter is looking for additional speakers but requests no "organizational" or "controversial" messages.

For more information visit www.sdco.org or call (501) 760-2013, or write Mr. Porter at fporter@sdco.org.

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