

The Journal

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John 8:32

June 30, 2006

God, using the feast days, sews the fabric of history

TYLER, Texas—The feast days serve as markers that hint at God's intervention in human history, says Ron Dart, founder of Christian Educational Ministries.

When God performs certain significant acts over the years, those miraculous events correspond with the Passover—or Pentecost or maybe the Feast of Tabernacles or one of the other feast days enumerated in Leviticus 23.

A student of history can discern a thread linking up these God-affected events. So Mr. Dart's new book, about the timelessness of the feast days, is titled *The Thread: God's Appointments With History*.

In the book Mr. Dart, voice of the *Born to Win* broadcast on radio stations in this and other countries, questions members of the standard Christian denominations on their observance of Christmas and Easter.

"This book challenges their observance while leading you to a deeper, more satisfying understanding that the greatest of the holy days of the Bible are about Christ," he said.

"The feasts we find in the Bible are transcendent and from the very beginning were pointed not so much at Israel's history but at the much-overlooked work and ministry of Jesus Christ in history."

During a sermon in Big Sandy, Texas, recently, Mr. Dart mentioned he had set out to write a book last year called *The Lonely God*.

"I began to realize as I wrote it," he said, "that what I was doing was, I suppose, creating my legacy that I want to leave with the Church of God whenever I finally, one of these days, pass from the scene."

He completed the first book, which is now in print. And, as part of his legacy, he decided to write a second book, *The Thread*.

"As far as I'm aware, it is the first in-depth book-length examination of the holy days of anyone in the Church of God tradition that I know about," he said.

Mr. Dart has also been working on a series for his radio program about the "Christian holidays," Christmas and Easter.

In other words, he elaborated, the series is "all about the holy days."

Mr. Dart said if you had told him five years ago he would be writing two books within seven months "I would have laughed in your face."

But there's more. It looks as if he might be headed toward the completion of three books within a year.

"I have now started on a third book," he said. Its working title is *The Law and the Covenants*.

"The nature of God, the Sabbath and the holy days and the law and the covenants are the things that people sometimes like to get hold of and beat us over the head with," he said, "and I felt like we needed a better defense than we've had in some time."

The Thread (as well as *The Lonely God*) is available from Wasteland Press, Shelbyville, Ky., and at Amazon.com and other outlets.

Visit CEM at www.borntowin.net. Write Mr. Dart at P.O. Box 560, Whitehouse, Texas 75791, U.S.A.



THE FEAST 19 YEARS AGO—Three-year-old Jamie Cartwright of Big Sandy, Texas, attends the Worldwide Church of God's Feast of Tabernacles observance in Vail, Colo., in October 1987. (Jamie in 2006 is Mrs. Rob Payne of Tyler, Texas.) Tens of thousands of Church of God members of many stripes will attend the festival this year, with many of the observances beginning Oct. 6. See page 5 for a listing of 164 Feast sites for 2006. If you are sponsoring a Feast location, see information elsewhere on this page for sending *THE JOURNAL* information about your observance. [Photo by Dixon Cartwright]

King of Thailand, a leader by righteous example, invites Church of God members to his celebration

Former Texas residents Leon and Gloria Sexton founded Legacy Institute, an independent Church of God ministry in South and Southeast Asia, in 1999. Legacy operates a school, Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center, for people from the poor hill tribes of the region. Legacy also supports Church of God evangelistic efforts in the area. The Sextons live in Chiang Mai. Donations to Legacy are tax-deductible in the United States and can be sent to Legacy Institute, P.O. Box 7, Dundee, Ohio 44624, U.S.A.

The Sextons have known the king and queen of Thailand for more than 25 years.

By Leon Sexton

BANGKOK, Thailand—My wife, Gloria, and I attended the June 9 ceremonies marking the 60th anniversary of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's accession to the throne of the Kingdom of Thailand.

The ceremony took place in Ananta Samakom Throne Hall, at the Royal Plaza in Bangkok. The dress was formal, so I wore a white tie and tails and Gloria wore a long Thai-style formal dress.

King Bhumibol is the longest-reigning monarch in the world. In recent centuries only two have reigned longer than 60 years: Queen Victoria of England and Emperor Hirohito of Japan.

Kings, queens, princes, emirs and sultans from all over the world came to Bangkok to honor the king. The guest list included Emperor Akihito of Japan, Sultan Bolkiah of Brunei, King Abdullah of Jordan, King Carl Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden, Queen Sophia of Spain, Prince Albert of

Monaco, Prince Andrew of Britain and many more.

More than 25 monarchies or their royal representatives gathered for the festivities in the palace and throne hall in Bangkok June 9-14. Gloria and I had been invited by the king to attend the event.

On that day we joined government officials, royal guards, military brass and the elite of Thailand, dressed in full dress uniforms of many colors with decorations and medals, at the throne hall. We sat inside.

From our seats we could see what was happening outside on monitors the palace had set up.

We witnessed a spectacle unprecedented in Thailand's history.

See **KING'S GODLY CHARACTER**, page 6

Big Sandy camp for kids explores God's universe

By John Warren

BIG SANDY, Texas—Organizers of Youth Camp 2006 at the Church of God Big Sandy broadened their horizons to include all of creation in this year's focus for the four-day event.

The theme, "Exploring God's Universe," was evident throughout the church building, with elaborate decorations including colorful depictions of planets suspended from the ceiling.

The camp ran June 19-22 from 5:45 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. each day and was coordinated by Sharon Wilson of Tyler, Carol Bald of Gladewater, Reesa Bearse of Hawkins and Angela Dunnam of Pritchett. All four ladies had children in the camp.

When asked who came up with the theme, Mrs. Wilson explained: "It was a joint effort with the four coordinators, and we usually brainstorm and also get ideas from the Internet or local Christian stores and, of course, our own children."

A world of help

The campers ranged in age from 4 to 12 and were divided into three age-groups, with each having counselors and at least one assistant.

Because of the number of campers in level one, the counselors divided that level into two groups.

One counselor for level one was Bonnie Reed of Big Sandy, assisted by her daughter Savannah.

Jeanie Roden of Hawkins was the other counselor, assisted by Della Worden of Big Sandy.

Karen Weese of Big Sandy was the counselor for level two, assisted by Christine Wilson of Big Sandy. The level-three counselor was Sharon Burgin, assisted by her daughter Candice Self, both of Big Sandy.

The classes taught this year included team-building, archery, music, crafts, astronomy, orienteering and other astronomy-related classes.

The instructors were John and Reesa Bearse, Karl Wilson of Tyler, Jim Bald of Gladewater, Laura Moody of Hawkins, Doyle Welborn of Big Sandy, Ron and Linda Avey of Big Sandy, and Mike and Karin Danapas of Tyler.

Snacks and refreshments were served each evening to the campers by kitchen volunteers coordinated by Jean Shipman of Pritchett.

Mrs. Wilson noted: "It was wonderful."
See **BIG SANDY'S YOUTH**, page 6

Martyrdom book still available at special price

HELENVILLE, Wis.—Tom Geiger reports that *JOURNAL* readers are still ordering his book *Martyrdom in Milwaukee* as a result of an article in this newspaper in February.

However, the February article inaccurately stated that a special discount is available only through postal mail. In fact, the discount is available no matter how *JOURNAL* readers order the book.

The 58-year-old Living Church of God member writes about the tragic events of March 12, 2005, when eight fellow LCG members died in a hail of gunfire during a Sabbath service. (See several articles in the March 31, 2005, issue of *THE JOURNAL*.)

Write Mr. Geiger at thomasmgeiger@gmail.com or order through www.martyrdominmilwaukee.com. Or contact him at W1988 Bente Rd., Helenville, Wis. 53137 U.S.A., or (262) 593-2135. Mention that you read *THE JOURNAL* or are a Church of God member. The price is \$12 a copy plus \$3 shipping per order for up to four copies. For more than four, shipping is free.



Church of God preacher writes *Let My People Go*

LONE OAK, Texas—Church of God member Bob Ross, who with his wife, Linda, for several years has operated a ministry that has included a food bank and radio and television broadcasts (see "Couple Sponsors Food Bank; Hubby Does Radio," *THE JOURNAL*, Sept. 30, 2004), has shifted his focus to writing. Although the Rosses still operate the food bank, he no longer regularly broadcasts, instead investing his time and money in his new book, *Let My People Go*.

Mr. Ross based his book on his experiences and perspective on the Bible, specifically in regard to proper Christian living and prophecy. He believes that many people do not understand "true Christianity."

"Modern mainstream Christianity is the product of an evolution that began about 2,000 years ago," he said. "True Christianity never changes."

Mr. Ross said he hopes his book will help people improve their perspective on life.

"True Christianity changes men instead of men changing true Christianity," he said.

Rather than the listed \$14.95 per copy, he will send copies to *JOURNAL* readers for \$6. Write P.O. Box 41, Lone Oak, Texas 75453, U.S.A., or call (800) 735-1822.

Consider SVA as an educational possibility

The writer is publisher of Servants' News, a nondenominational Sabbatarian publication he founded in 1995. He taught at Spring Vale Academy in 2003-04 and later founded the Port Austin (Mich.) Bible Campus to help young Sabbatarians make the transition to adult life. Write Mr. Edwards at nedwards@portAustin.net.

By Norman Edwards

OWOSO, Mich.—During the past 12 years I have heard success stories among the children of Sabbatarians, but I have also heard too many stories like these:

■ “My children always attended our services as teens, even though they were not excited by them. But when they went to college they just quit attending. When I hinted that I would continue to support only churchgoing children, they made it clear that they would rather work their own way through college than have me control that part of their life.”

■ “My son attends services with us but prefers his high-school friends to his church friends. Some of them are involved in smoking, drinking, sex and drugs. My son feels these are good people, though, and has begun to follow in their ways.”

■ “My daughter believes in the Bible and actively participates in our services. However, she has a boyfriend whom she is serious about marrying but who has little Bible background. She tells me she cannot marry someone who believes like us because she does not know anyone who believes

like us whom she would consider marrying. I cannot refute her.”

■ “I knew my son did not like our church service but was shocked when he said he was done attending and that if I tried to make him go he would simply move in with a friend. I was

usually prefer to live with abusive parents, even over other adults who have always been nice to them.

Parenting is important

Between the ages of 6 and 12, children generally still hold their parents

‘My teenagers are good kids, but they see our church, the Bible and God as largely irrelevant to the world they live in. I don’t know what to do to help them.’

surprised to find that law enforcement in my state will do nothing to help me keep a 17-year-old at home.”

■ “My daughter is good at sports, music, drama and other school activities that take place on the Sabbath. She feels that developing her talents while she is young is preparing her for a life of service to God, and that participating in these activities on the Sabbath is neither ‘working’ nor ‘doing [her] own pleasure’ (Isaiah 58:13).”

■ “My teenagers are good kids, but they see our church, the Bible and God as largely irrelevant to the world they live in. I don’t know what to do to help them.”

You’re no longer their everything

These are just some of the many situations Sabbatarian parents face in raising their young people.

Anyone with wisdom will recognize that children and parents are not all the same. Some parents can set an excellent Christian example at home, inspiring their young people to desire to be like them. Others may have unchristian, uncooperative or absent spouses, which makes setting a good example difficult.

For the first five or six years of life parents are nearly everything to their children. At that age children will still

as their biggest influence but begin learning and accepting some value from others.

Beyond these years some teens decide to make up their own minds concerning what they believe. Sometimes they stay close to their parents’ teaching, and sometimes they will depart far from it, often coming back to it again later.

During the teen years, especially for teens who learn a lot from others, it is good for these young people to be surrounded by others who are soundly rooted in the Bible.

Teens are good at finding parents’ faults. However, when they see that there are other Bible believers who do not have those faults—and who have other good qualities—they are much more likely to think seriously about God and His ways.

It cannot be overemphasized how much difference there is between one young person and the next.

One may be irresponsible and depart from the Bible and his parents’ teaching just to have fun.

Another may be responsible with her own conduct, though she may be judgmental, considering herself a better Christian than her parents. She may want to go her own way because she

See **SPRING VALE**, page 19



Norman Edwards

Notes and quotes

Richard Nickels dies

GILLETTE, Wyo.—Richard Nickels, 58, founder of the popular Giving & Sharing ministry and nonprofit bookstore, died peacefully June 4 with his wife, Shirley, at his side. Mr. Nickels had been diagnosed with adrenal cancer in March.



Richard Nickels

Mr. Nickels was baptized in 1969 and was employed by the Worldwide Church of God from 1971 to 1973 in festival-site construction and church administration.

At the time of his death he worked for a coal-mining company as an accountant and computer consultant.

He wrote numerous articles and books after starting Giving & Sharing in 1978, including a history of the Sabbatarian Churches of God.

He served as president of the 63-year-old Bible Sabbath Association from 1996 to 1999 and 2004 to 2006.

Besides his wife he is survived by daughters Barbara Parada of Houston, Texas, Rachel Nickels of Everett, Wash., and Amanda Byrd of Eugene, Ore.

Write Mrs. Nickels at 3316 Alberta Dr., Gillette, Wyo. 82718, U.S.A.

Rob Elliott dies

ORLANDO, Fla.—Robert Elliott, 62, founder and pastor of God’s Church Worldwide (GCW), based in Sorrento, Fla., died



Rob Elliott

June 21 after a long battle with cancer. Mr. Elliott is survived by his wife, Micki, and daughters Shawna and Tanya.

Mr. Elliott, a 1972 graduate of Ambassador College, Bricket Wood, England, was a native of Northern Ireland who served in the Worldwide Church of God as an elder in Canada and the United States.

He founded the GCW in 1995. Mrs. Elliott receives mail at P.O. Box 544, Sorrento, Fla. 32776, U.S.A.

Port Austin Bible Campus Feast

PORT AUSTIN, Mich.—Norman Edwards announces that he expects an attendance increase at the Feast of Tabernacles observance on the Port Austin Bible Campus this year. The dates are Oct. 6-14, but Feastgoers who observe various dates for the Feast are welcome on the campus too.

The theme this year will be “Be Doers of the Word.” “We will talk about how Sabbatarian Christians, both old

and young, can apply this command today,” Mr. Edwards said. The campus kitchen will provide three meals a day, of mostly campus-grown organic food.

Mr. Edwards also announced that “Port Austin Bible Campus has no ties with others keeping the Feast in the area: Port Austin Bible Center, Carolyn Smith-Kizer or the Philadelphia Church Port Austin, a small independent group unrelated to Gerald Flurry’s Philadelphia Church of God.”

Contact Mr. Edwards at pabc@portAustin.net or P.O. Box 474, Port Austin, Mich. 48467, U.S.A. Phone him at (989) 738-7700.

Legacy tour

CHIANG MAI, Thailand—Leon and Gloria Sexton, founders and operators of Legacy Institute, a Church of God ministry based in Thailand, announced their plans for a speaking tour of parts of the United States.

Following are the applicable dates, sponsoring group, city and contact name, phone number and E-mail address for each of the five stops on the tour:

Aug. 5: Central Texas Church of God, Waco, Texas, Ben Mauldin, (254) 982-4223, benmauldin@aol.com. **Aug. 12:** Church of God Terre Haute, Terre Haute, Ind., Jeff Osborn, (888) 526-5710, jmosborn@tds.net. **Aug. 18:** Legacy Institute Update 2006 Potluck, Dallas, Texas, Jim and Becky Shrode, (214) 415-0307, bshrode@hotmail.com. **Aug. 19:** Tyler (Texas) Church of God, Linda Benton, (903) 509-2999. **Aug. 26:** Believers in Christ Church of God, Redwood City, Calif., Jeff Henderson, (800) 384-0998, jchmb@aol.com.

See the article on page 1 of this issue about Mr. and Mrs. Sexton’s recent visit with the king and queen of Thailand.

Labor Day rest

BIG SANDY, Texas—The Church of God Big Sandy invites everybody to a picnic and other family-oriented activities on Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 4, from 4 to 9 p.m.

The event will include a free meal at 6 p.m. consisting of a hotdog barbecue. Beginning at 7 o’clock three music groups will play and sing.

The COG Big Sandy is on Highway 80 just west of the city limits. For more information visit www.bigsandychurch.org or call (800) 946-5545.

Feast at Keystone

WOODSTOCK, Ill.—Truth on the Web Ministries invites you to its Feast site near Tulsa, Okla., at Keystone State Park, beginning the evening of Oct. 8.

“This park makes for close-knit fellowship,” said organizer Brian Hoeck. “All are welcome.”

Activities will include a group picnic, Mr. Hoeck said. Visit www.truthontheweb.org, or write Mr. Hoeck at brian@truthontheweb.org or 511 Meadow Ave., Woodstock, Ill. 60098, U.S.A., or phone him at (815) 337-0102.

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