

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter July 2001

Dear Brethren:

As another month has quickly sped by, we take this opportunity again to greet you as our beloved brothers and sisters of the common faith, and express our continuing love and appreciation for each one of you. Every day that you remain steadfast in your calling—with absolute confidence in the foundation of Christ's revelation—brings you one step closer to realizing that ultimate goal of eternal salvation. We pray continually for your faith to be strengthened in these trying times—that you may fulfill that incredible work which God is completing within the lives of His priceless children.

With the completion of Pentecost, we automatically begin to look forward to the fall Holy Day season, knowing that it will be upon us before long. It is therefore not too early for confirming our plans to obey God's command to appear before Him in the place which He shall choose. Obedience requires preparation, and God is pleased when we prove His holy convocations are our first priority. The admonition is not to allow our heavy trials to become excuses, but to exert all the more effort to make those occasions our first love. "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24–25).

Explanation

Because we are living in the time during which many demon activities are prognosticated and the fact we are told that even of those called many will be taken over at will, it seems to be an endless need to correct lying accusations for the benefit of those called and who really do love the truth of God. For that very reason we created a separate department in our monthly *Announcement Letter* to explain such issues. This month we are faced with another disturbing blast from a man who should know, and indeed does know, how viciously he has twisted and perverted information—rumor information, at that. The

reason for such behavior is not apparent. Regardless, we are going to treat the matter in the way which we feel God requires that we handle it. For us to do any less would make us just as guilty as he. Herein exists a cardinal spiritual principle which differentiates between those who are truly called and those who only hypocritically feign conversion. All hypocrites face a very uncertain future. But those who will to live positive and assured lives can with confidence await the return of Christ. This is the confidence mentioned by the Apostle John. He wrote: "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:24–28). What a privilege for all those who possess that kind of faith and trust. And the day of His Second Coming is very near. But please do not allow your genuine faith to trick you. Are you able to read, where necessary, the intent of those who would unscrupulously take advantage of your simplicity and kindness in Christ?

There are many Biblical indications that hundreds, maybe even thousands or millions, will make that tragic mistake. We have a very deep concern for any who will mysteriously and unwittingly make such a mistake. The thoroughly converted and thinking children of God will not be deceived. Because they are thinking and do consistently use the approved "yardstick" (1 John 4:1–3). That yardstick is the revealed truth—the truth which the called of God have come to love and respect so deeply. Make no mistake about it, what one believes and practices does make a very significant difference. Just because men appear to be living acceptably, even though in defiance against God, their present conditions do not reflect what is really deceptively hidden in their hearts and minds—that which is to be revealed in the future. Hence, the troubling warning given by Christ—the warning of a time when some will be deeply traumatized. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. These are people who though having been given the "right" and opportunity to qualify for life everlasting failed to make the right decisions at appropriate times. What a sobering realization at that moment of judgment!

Now, brethren, is the time for those called and who possess the requisite fear and respect for God to undergo an acceptable evaluation of the self. Today we can do something about our deficiencies. However, if a need exists, and we with courage and appropriate fear do not take remedial action now, tomorrow will be too late. Action today is imperative. But only action which is considered appropriate, and efficiently carried out. By routine application of the test the called are given (1 John 4:1–3) they will become expert in the defense of that way of life.

Mount Pocono Feast Site

In the early years of the '60s many decisions had been made at Pasadena which affected a considerable number of the ministers. I was among that number—being sent to the New York City area to replace Mr. Carlton Smith as District Superintendent of that Northeastern district.

When I arrived in that area I learned that preliminary work was already being done on a recommendation to construct a feast site in the Northeastern area of the state of Pennsylvania—Mt. Pocono to be specific. Very quickly the pressures which I had previously borne were rearranged. Added to the mix of responsibilities borne by a District Superintendent I was now confronted with the duties of a contractor. The work was very interesting; but it necessitated an assistant who could handle much of the District Superintendent's work. Time simply did not allow me to perform effectively all the responsibilities with which I was faced. Mr. Bob Spence was approved as an assistant. In those early years he took care of nearly all of the District Superintendent's responsibilities while I was spending long hours working on the newly acquired feast site. The work was slow and tedious. We had to move mountains of rock making preparations for the construction of needed buildings and paving acres of area needed for parking the hundreds of cars of those who would be attending the feast. I was working with a very limited crew. But, the church was greatly blessed in that most of those were hardworking and enthusiastically worked extra hours—at times all night—to ensure the completion of the project on time for the 1965 Feast of Tabernacles.

One of the ways by which the work was given the necessary push was by using volunteer work crews on Sundays and other days when they were available. These men were organized into work crews and given specific responsibilities for the times they presented themselves at the site. A tremendous amount of work was accomplished by the crews. They cannot be extolled too highly. I, personally, would be the last individual to take any credit from them. They so willingly and enthusiastically rendered a gigantic service for the benefit of the whole church. God would surely look with disfavor on anyone who manifested, or even now manifests, such contempt, disrespect, and ingratitude. I can find only emotion of heart and mind to praise them. God will surely reward them greatly.

Mount Pocono: First of Many

Though a limited site—Big Sandy, Texas—had been under construction for some time, the Mount Pocono site was the first of a battery of sites to be built in the United States. Based on conversions which were occurring in the USA we could project into the future a building program of unimaginable proportions. Such an endeavor was not feasible. Yet,

tragically, at least to my personal knowledge, no one was addressing this matter in a constructive way. What happened to the feast site building program was a matter of "inattention" and a lot of wishful thinking. It died either of simple glut, a program too ambitious for the allotted income, numerical growth too great for the church to handle, or more likely a combination of a number of the factors mentioned above. Only God can sort it all out and give meaning to the revealed causes. In the meantime all who were involved need to face reality seeking God's forgiveness and the courage to proceed with faith and conviction.

With the above background information let us come to a clear understanding of just what happened. Why the slanderous comment mentioned at the beginning of this "Explanation"?

The Background

As indicated earlier, I was not privy to any of the original discussions which had transpired. I became aware of projected plans only at the time I was transferred into the New York area. Trying to acquaint myself with what was already in motion was both imperative and demanding.

After familiarizing myself with the city, locating a place for the family to live, becoming acquainted with the membership of the area, structuring the visiting program, developing temporary operational programs, handling a myriad other pressures which seem to come out of nowhere, I was ready to concentrate my attention on the development of the feast site. Living in North Jersey, just across the George Washington Bridge from Manhattan Island—a part of New York City—the commute to Northeast Pennsylvania was reduced, but still appreciable when required daily, or even weekly. This regimen continued for the better part of two years. It did not really change until we were finally moved from North Jersey to Mount Pocono, Pennsylvania.

It was during this period of time that the need for further help was made obvious. The solution seemed to be found in organizing volunteer groups from the local churches in my area. These groups were formed in areas as diverse as Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Washington, D.C., Stamford, Connecticut, as well as all the churches in the metropolitan area of New York City. Their help was both timely and invaluable. The site could never have been completed in time for the 1965 Feast without their help. That says it all.

Last Minute Work

Enormous pressure existed on the work force from the beginning of the development. Yet, even that pressure grew as the days between the present and the upcoming feast passed one by one. The men worked extra long hours, sometimes all night. As requested, I am sure they were praying with great faith and conviction. I cannot help but wonder why some people cannot find it in their hearts to manifest gratitude and appreciation instead of hateful criticism. Is it because they disagree with God, believing themselves to be more capable than He to make necessary choices, and even decisions, from time to time?

Noah, Abraham, the prophets, Moses, Christ, the Twelve Apostles, the Apostle Paul, and others have all experienced this type of criticism. Why should it be any different with those chosen today? Such critics are not going to be taught because they believe they are right. Apparently they will not believe and accept the decisions of Christ at the time of the final judgment. There is going to be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This does not sound like an attitude of acceptance. Let us all remember that even the most righteous will only scarcely make it into the Kingdom of God. That fact does not leave much room even for the most courageous to criticize others. Rather, we should spend our allotted time learning and refining our character. We were given the power to accomplish those objectives. But to assume ministerial and/or judgmental responsibility can, and probably will, be very destructive.

Urgent Last-Minute Work

Regardless of the project, there are always those things which cannot be done until the last minute. Plan and execute to the best of one's ability it is still doubtful if those conditions will ever change. The Pocono crew certainly tried. I do not know of any other group who put forth a more heroic effort. Yet, with all that effort they fell short of their ultimate objective. Despite the growing pressure, never once did we consider violating the Sabbath or one of God's annual Holy Days—we were in the time of the fall Holy Days. We counted on God and hard work to see us through. I never once asked any volunteers to break the Sabbath. God has never failed anyone who puts his absolute trust in Him. In fact the record is so absolute that Satan, in desperation, will use any ruse to accuse falsely. Nearly 2000 years ago a servant of Christ warned us of what to watch. He wrote:

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers

of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing (1 Peter 3:10–17).

Please take the time to read and comprehend this explanation because the world seems to be filled with self-appointed men who are teaching every concept imaginable with the exception of that which they first received at the time of their call. I will make the facts known; but, I will refuse to become involved in any form of argument or debate. Such behavior is strictly forbidden by God.

The Storm

The Mount Pocono feast site was near enough to completion that it could be used for the 1965 fall convention—even though that first year we had to use a tent as an auditorium.

Preparations for the tent setup were progressing acceptably. But, in the distant skies it became obvious some kind of storm was brewing. However, in that part of the country—Eastern Pennsylvania—tornadoes are uncommon. Consequently, few if any of the work personnel manifested a concern. Workers had gone to their rooms and were making preparations for attending the opening service. Many of the called children of God—members of the church—were arriving in the small community of Mt. Pocono. At the same time the sky was becoming more threatening hourly. By the appointed hour the winds had increased and there was a real threat of torrential rain—a rain which had been troubling, even if not disruptive, much of that afternoon.

Since the time for the beginning of the opening service was fast approaching the flood of members was intensifying. The opening service commenced with the accompaniment of intense winds and a real downpour of rain. Shortly it became an all-consuming duty for a number of the lead men to stabilize the tent poles. The rain was coming down in torrents. Water was everywhere. The service continued regardless of the turbulent weather. In fact, the weather seemed to add to the intensity and meaning of the occasion. Only during the next day did we learn that a tornado had touched down in Harrisburg and followed a path which led it directly through the feast site.

At the time of the closing of that evening's service the area surrounding the tent had become a lake. The construction crew had no option except to construct a number of "catwalks" which were then positioned so that attendees could be safely conducted out of the tent. The ox was in the ditch. There was no acceptable alternative. The members had to be gotten out of the tent so they could make their way back to their rented accommodations for the night.

What did the storm prove? At the very least God's church was made aware of the wrath and hatefulness of Satan and his cohorts. On the other hand for those who are truly converted and are not looking for scapegoats a far more objective reason would probably have been the test which they experienced. Instead of looking for someone else to blame they would have been looking inside of themselves. A constructive orientation is so much easier and more rewarding.

Attitude of Accuser

Most of you may never read the writings of the self-appointed individual who has attempted to second-guess and critique the works of other men. In his own perverted mind he assumes himself to be the ultimate authority. What a contrast to that belief which members of the Church of God, The Eternal hold to be true—the belief that God revealed the truth to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. We do not resent being accused for that which we know came from God. It is these presumptive men who advocated and "demanded" that we accept and embrace false concepts. They failed to remain true and faithful to that which they had heard and on the basis of which they had been baptized. Why should any of us give credence to that which they are espousing—that which is contrary to the message conveyed by God's end-time servant? Virtually from the beginning of this remnant group we have been thundering out the necessity to remain faithful to that which Mr. Armstrong taught. Our message has not and will not change. If we cannot believe that message taught by him how can we accept anything they are proclaiming? Almost from the beginning of this remnant group—immediately following the apostasy—we wrote and otherwise proclaimed the authenticity of that which Mr. Armstrong had taught for 40 years. It certainly would have made no sense to accept any twisting of the truth offered by anyone else. Our faith and confidence remain unchallenged. Mr. Armstrong taught from a premise of divine revelation. Others are teaching from a faulty foundation—a foundation constructed from their own technical research and presumed understanding. Under such conditions how is a true and genuine comprehension of God's Word possible? Just take a look at the maze of conflicting concepts now offered up in the name of truth. What are the fruits? A religious landscape which is more tangled, vitriolic, and confusing than that experienced politically. Can men do anything right? It certainly seems they cannot.

Reflecting back upon the case at hand, one must come to the conclusion that the basis for the comment is prejudice. His only substantiation was what he had heard. Is that an acceptable foundation for any comment? Only if the mind is already perverted and wants to believe what is being stated. I trust, brethren, that the basis for our belief is much more solid. Here again is profound evidence that the source of the thought is not human. It is of the spirit world.

Orientation of the Converted

We live in a world which is saturated with writings, books, telecasts, broadcasts, newspapers, magazines, and other forms of propaganda. Add to that list the language of the street and gutter.

What is a person to believe?

It is obvious to any thinking individual that men are going to listen to broadcasts, telecasts; they are going to read books, magazines, and other forms of writings; and who could stop them from engaging in general conversation with family, friends, and neighbors? Most of the time such conversation, listening, and reading are simple pastimes. In general, it does not seem likely that all men are not going to be called into account for that which they have heard and/or believed. On the other hand there are concepts which we believe, especially those which we convey to others, for which we are going to be held accountable. Jesus made our accountability quite clear when He said, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36–37). From the tenor of what Christ said—remember He is our Judge—it will pay handsome dividends to watch carefully what we say at all times.

What amazes me is how carefully the presumptive antagonists avoid certain texts. To illustrate, allow me to ask: When is the last time you heard anyone strongly explain and apply Jude 8–11? Most dare not touch that text for in so doing they would be condemning themselves. What is usually observable is this: Antagonists pick on simple texts and then interpret those texts on the basis of their own beliefs. What is breaking the Sabbath in the sight of God? The critical usually have little regard for what God thinks. They are mesmerized only with that which they think. Interestingly, this orientation is the principle means of discerning those truly called. The called respond with fear and respect. The brazen, uncalled, manifest little, if any, respect for authority—the Bible, God, or anything else. They respect only their own convictions and thinking. What a tragedy. They limit the pathways to gigantic sources of knowledge. They become restricted and narrow in their thinking. Is it any wonder they become known as bigots? They have sealed themselves off

from a world of information—information which is very valuable providing they have been trained to differentiate between the good and the bad. There is every reason to believe that God wanted His children to know all things and to possess the ability to discern between that which is true versus that which is evil. It may not be a pleasant way to acquire fundamental knowledge; but it certainly is a most practical way. The Apostle Paul called it experience when writing to the church members living in the area of Rome (Romans 5:1–5). Is there anything that can acceptably replace experience? What a character-builder our Father is.

What Should We Learn?

First, let us learn that falsely accusing others reaps no benefits for the individual himself or any other party. On the other hand to guard our tongues and minds offers unbelievable advantage. And to recognize and accept responsibility is an imperative.

In general I wish no individual ill. My hope and prayer is that all men will come to recognize themselves for what they really are and that they will repent and turn to God with true hearts and minds. Such is my prayer.

Deaths

Mr. Burt Bouwer: We were saddened to hear of the death of Mr. Burt Bouwer, of South Africa. Burt died suddenly of a massive heart attack Sabbath morning, June 30. Our sympathies are extended to his family.

Mrs. Emily Silva: Also, we received word of the death of Mrs. Emily Silva on the morning of July 3, after a long struggle with cancer. We convey our sincere sympathies to her family.

Feast of Tabernacles

We are now in the countdown prior to the Feast for 2001. To have a successful and rewarding Feast it is necessary to call upon God unitedly for such an occasion. By seeking the help of God, we can eliminate the active and disruptive presence of Satan and his demons. As a vicious adversary he can and will cause much trouble unless we earnestly seek the help of God. The fruits borne will reveal how diligent and effective our prayers were in this countdown time. We count on you.

We are beginning work on the scheduling of emcees and those who give opening and closing prayers during the Feast of Tabernacles. In order that we may complete the preparation of the schedules, we must know as soon as possible if any will be attending a different Feast site than usual. Thank you for your cooperation in this time of preparation.

Excess Second Tithe

This is just a yearly reminder of the need for second tithe to cover administrative and facility costs for the Feast. We want to reserve adequate for an enjoyable and meaningful Feast. At the same time, we all must remember, to keep the Feast requires the rental of halls, transportation, aid to those who are deserving, etc. If we all contribute, the burden for each is relatively small. A huge thanks to those whose hearts and minds are willing. May God richly and abundantly bless you in all ways.

Second Tithe Requests

Please be reminded the deadline for second tithe requests for the Feast of Tabernacles is August 15. Any who need assistance should notify us in ample time.

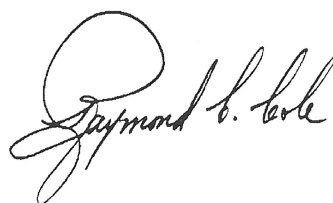
Trip Schedule

July 21	Baltimore, Maryland	J.W.B.
August 18	Austin, Texas	J.W.B.

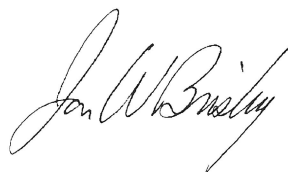
Tape Schedule

Tape Schedule	Mailed	Played	Title/Tape #
WSE-JB 22-29-13E	06-06-01	07-07-01	Fund. of Belief (The Holy Days and the N.T. Church)
WSE-RC 96-2	06-06-01	07-14-01	Purpose for the Continuing Body of Christ #2
WSE-RC 96-3	06-20-01	07-21-01	Purpose for the Continuing Body of Christ #3
WSE-JB 22-30-14A	06-20-01	07-28-01	Fund. of Belief (Clean and Unclean Foods O.T.)
WSE-RC 96-4	07-05-01	08-04-01	Purpose for the Continuing Body of Christ #4

In Christ's service,



Raymond C. Cole



Jon W. Brisby