

Church of God, The Eternal

P. O. Box 775
Eugene, Oregon 97440
www.cogeternal.org

The late Raymond C. Cole
Founding Pastor
Jon W. Brisby
Pastor, Director

Offices in:
United States
Philippines
Switzerland

Announcement Letter August 2002

Dear Brethren:

It is a real pleasure to have this opportunity to greet God's faithful once again through this month's personal letter to the brethren. This edition is being composed during a visit to the United Kingdom while spending time with our scattered brethren in England and Scotland. From spending time in a beautiful land across the Atlantic Ocean comes thoughts of the nature of our wide dispersion as a congregation, and yet what a blessing it is God has granted us to know one another and share the same precious Truth He revealed in this age. To all of you back in the United States and in your respective places wherever God has placed you on this globe, greetings and love this month from the ministry as well as your dear brethren in Great Britain.

Now that August is upon us, it is only a few short weeks until many of us will be together at the Feast of Tabernacles, keeping that commanded assembly before God in one of the places where He has specially placed His name. To obey God and receive His promised blessings, much planning is required of each of us to prepare for that time of holy convocation. At this juncture, we should all be well into making our final arrangements. What a privilege it will be to see many of you at one of those designated places. And for those who do not have the physical health or stamina for the required journey, your absence will surely be noticed, and you will be missed greatly.

Spiritual Principal—Second Tithe Use

A critical part of planning to keep the Feast of Tabernacles properly is the year-long requirement of saving Second Tithe. If the Feast is to be kept by God's people today—as we know is absolutely true—then so is the tithing law. The only means God provided to keep His Feasts was through accumulation of the special tithe for that very purpose (Deuteronomy 14:22–26). The Feast was never commanded to be kept by setting aside an offering—a discretionary amount of our own choosing—but by a tithe, a full tenth of our increase over the preceding year.

If we have been blessed to have well more than enough to pay our way for an enjoyable Feast for our families, then the excess is still considered the tithe, and properly turned over to the church for use in helping those in need to also attend and enjoy the festival. Years ago within our parent body, an administrative practice called the "tithe of the tithe" was used to fund the cost of festival meeting facilities and assistance to needy brethren. All brethren were required to send in one tenth of their saved Second Tithe for this particular use. However, since the formation of Church of God, The Eternal, we have made no such mandates, but leave it instead to each individual to make these decisions of how much—if any—can be afforded to help for these needs. We have been blessed each year by the generosity of many brethren who have willingly provided their excess tithe, without the need for coercion, inspection, or mandates. We will continue to trust God in faith and make no effort to intrude into your private decisions on these matters. We will simply proclaim the spiritual principles involved which we know bring blessings to the faithful, but then leave it completely to each individual to apply them before God.

Another important aspect is the manner in which we use that tithe during the Feast. God has given us liberal discretion to have a joyful and memorable occasion which pictures the glorious coming of God's Kingdom. "And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul [desires], for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household" (Deuteronomy 14:26). Yet it is important to note there is still an overriding restriction in force for proper use of this Second Tithe. It is a tithe to be used for keeping the Feast, and not for any other purpose. We should not use the tithe during the fall season for anything except that which helps us truly picture the coming Millennial reign of Jesus Christ by attending and observing His Feasts (Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles). Notice that the category of items listed by God in verse 26 are not durable goods whose main purpose is for something other than Feast observance. Can we honestly say that our purchases with the tithe are truly for keeping and enjoying the Feast? That is something which can only be determined by each individual. If we purchase something like home stereo equipment—for instance—and even use it for the very first time at the Feast, is this truly something we can say in good conscience was for the express enjoyment of God's Feast, or were we actually seeking to find an opportunity to use excess tithe for something secular we wanted anyway? We must examine our own hearts—not the hearts of any other individual—and make these choices before God. He is weighing and evaluating our decisions.

We also should make a special comment about purchasing gifts for others with the Second Tithe. It is very appropriate if one chooses to purchase gifts for other brethren at the Feast, but some guidelines should be kept in mind. God loves a giving heart, and sharing our blessings to help others at the Feast to enjoy their experience more, and to express our heartfelt love and regard for others, is an excellent principle. "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord

Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). With that in mind, we should also be very careful not to allow this very appropriate expression of love to begin to mirror the world's pagan practices. In a number of congregations of former members of our parent body, it is reported that gift-giving has started to look like a counterfeit of Christmas, even now including church-wide drawings for formal gift exchanges! None of the giving we have done in this body to date (to our knowledge) has crossed such a line, but we should be cognizant of appropriate limits for the future, lest we inadvertently find ourselves also moving year by year into a dangerous orientation.

In decades past—when the church was greatly blessed—"feast gifts" were primarily given within families, and especially as a way for the Feast to be made memorable for our children. As stated above, we should feel free to give to other brethren and share our blessings at the Feast, so proper giving is certainly not limited within families. But we need to make one point very clear. The concept of gift-giving in this body should never get to the point that any member is ever made to feel he/she is obligated to buy gifts for others. We have heard from more than one needy member in recent years who became worried, not just about having enough Second Tithe to attend and keep the Feast, but enough tithe to give gifts as well! If one has only enough tithe to keep the Feast, there should be no obligation—either stated or implied—that gift-giving is required. It certainly is not. There is no command of God that giving formal gifts is a requirement, and we should be careful that our man-made traditions do not move in the direction of adding such a mandatory obligation. Please do not hesitate to continue the kind of personal giving you have done in the past. It is not suggested we have crossed such a line in our orientation to date. But if we are all aware of the potential problems that can arise, we can avoid making the mistakes other groups have made and creating a Christmas counterfeit inadvertently.

With these simple principles in mind, we can all be prepared to have the kind of joyous festival occasion God desires for us. What a marvelous opportunity to know God's truth and be privileged to apply these laws in the keeping of His Holy Days.

Office

We would like to let everyone know that our main e-mail address here at the office has changed to: cogeternal@cogeternal.org. We will continue to receive e-mail through the qwest.net address for a while, but plan eventually to phase out that account altogether.

Also, with our new account the ministry and each of the staff members in the office will have unique departmental e-mail addresses. Please feel free to use these to direct your mail more specifically, if desired, or else e-mails sent to the main account will continue to be forwarded to the proper department. The new mailboxes/departments are as follows:

Jon Brisby: jonbrisby@cogeternal.org Ministry, administration.

Connie Silvers: csilvers@cogeternal.org

Administrative assistant, office coordination, scheduling, Sabbath announcements, Feast preparations.

Garner Kirby: hgarnerk@cogeternal.org

Accounting, tithes, budget.

Timothy Sherwood: tsherwood@cogeternal.org

Website maintenance, recording/mastering, current events, emcee coordinator.

Angela Silvers: angela@cogeternal.org

Receptionist, tape duplication, mailings (tapes, letters, requests), change of addresses/phone numbers/e-mail addresses, anointed cloths.

Holy Days

Feast of Trumpets: Sabbath, September 7

Atonement: Monday, September 16

Feast of Tabernacles: September 21—September 27

Last Great Day: September 28

Feast of Tabernacles, Townsend, TN—Slide Program

There will be a slide program for the Feast in Townsend, Tennessee, Monday, September 23, at 7:00 P.M. This year the slide program Mr. and Mrs. Turlington are preparing is titled, "Following the Footsteps of Jesus." The slides show a pictorial timeline of Jesus' activities and travels. Archaeological digs have uncovered places and structures that date back to the time of Jesus. These discoveries are linked to Biblical references. Surprising facts related to the timeline of the calling of the Twelve Apostles are found in the following scriptures:

John 1:35–51

Matthew 9:9–13

Matthew 4:18–22

Mark 2:13–17

Mark 1:16–20

Mark 3:13–19

Luke 5:1–11

Luke 6:12–15

Luke 5:27–32

Did you catch how long the Twelve knew Him before they followed Him? Did you catch how long it was before Jesus chose the Twelve?

Returning Used Cassette Tapes

Those driving to the Feast may bring cassette tapes that are no longer being used. We will once again transport them back to Eugene from the Feast sites. In Townsend, Tennessee, Mr. Bill McCammon will oversee collecting and boxing tapes for shipment. Duplication of Feast sermon tapes requires an enormous number of new cassettes and these returned tapes help to offset the cost.

Trip Schedule

September 7 (Trumpets) Modesto, California

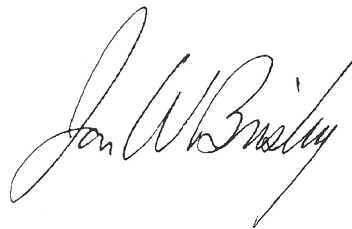
September 17–24 (Feast of Tabernacles) Townsend, Tennessee

September 25–28 (Feast of Tabernacles) Newport, Oregon

Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JB 22-47-17D	07-25-02	08-24-02	Fund. of Belief: Offices in God's Kingdom
WSE-JB 22-48-17E	08-08-02	08-31-02	Fund. of Belief: The Significance of Faith
Holy Day Tapes	07-11-02	09-07-02	Trumpets—2 Tapes (A.M., P.M.)
WSP-RC 11-1	08-08-02	09-14-02	Fear, a Powerful Force
Feast of Tabernacles	—	09-21-02	—
Last Great Day	—	09-28-02	—
WSE-JB 22-49-18A	08-22-02	10-05-02	Fund. of Belief: The Name of God's Church
WSP-RC 11-2	08-22-02	10-12-02	Fear, a Powerful Force

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby