

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 September 2002

Dear Brethren:

Our very warm greetings to all of you, brethren, wherever God may have placed you for His purpose upon this earth. It is always an honor and a privilege to have this chance to address the children of God who love His Truth and have proven their desire to put Him first in their lives. It is never easy to be so scattered, and in many cases isolated from others who share our beliefs. How much that fellowship with those of like mind is a blessing and inspiration when we have such opportunity to assemble together. And how difficult it can be when we do not have the regular chance to meet with those who also love that faith once delivered in these last days.

Here we are now in the very midst of the fall Holy Day season, when we again have the opportunity to fulfill God's command (not a suggestion) to assemble before Him in those places where He has placed His name. By the time you all receive this letter, we will have observed the Feast of Trumpets, and will be very near the Day of Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles. What a glorious opportunity it is to be among those God has called to understand the incredible plan of salvation pictured in these seasonal festivals, and to have the chance to come into the very presence of that Great God, in the designated places He has determined to appear. May we never take for granted this gift, or the sacred nature of these solemn commands. For those of you who do not have the physical strength or means to be at one of those designated places this year, you will still be in our thoughts and prayers, and we will beseech God to give you the constitution necessary to hold firm in that way of life, even while you endure the trial of isolation. For those of you who do have the capacity to be in one of those designated places—even if it might require incredible faith to step out and put God before the pulls of these physical lives—we pray that God will grant you the will to obey, and appear with us to observe these most holy occasions. There is no greater obligation of those called than to submit to the summons of the Creator God and meet Him where He has commanded us to be. And what an inspiration it is for all who do attend with the right orientation of mind and heart. May you all avail yourselves of the miraculous interventions of our Heavenly Father, through the practice of real faith in these treacherous

times. The keeping of these fall Feast days is one way to demonstrate that we truly love God more than anything else in this world. It will be an honor to be with many of you in just a few short days.

Opening and Closing Prayers

Many of the baptized men in this remnant body have been called upon for years to offer an opening or closing prayer at either a weekly Sabbath service or a Holy Day assembly. This has been a tradition in God's church from the very earliest time of Mr. Armstrong's work. With the coming of the Feast of Tabernacles in just a few days—when we will have twelve services in an eight-day period—it makes sense to rehearse some of the basic guidelines for giving these prayers, for the benefit of all those who will be serving, both for the veteran as well as for those who are newer to this responsibility.

First, the opening prayer—following the hymn service—is when we ask God to bless our convocation and to be with us to inspire and guide both the ministry and the laity to fulfill His will. It is the moment we dedicate the service as a solemn offering to our Creator, and ask Him to be within our midst. At the end of the service—following the final hymn—we offer the closing prayer to conclude the solemn assembly.

In general, and per Mr. Raymond Cole's written directions in years past, congregational prayers should be short and to the point. The opening prayer is longer than the closing one. It is also important for the men called on for this duty to recognize they are not offering a personal prayer in front of the congregation (as indicated by using the word "I"). It is a prayer on behalf of the entire congregation, therefore it should always be confined to the expression of "we" and "us." In the same way Jesus Christ taught the disciples to pray by including specific broad elements, so our congregational prayers should include certain key elements which still provide much latitude for individual expression. The general content of the opening prayer should include acknowledgment of God as our Creator and the One who called us into this way of life, thanksgiving to Him, and a request to bless our assembly with His presence and inspiration. The closing prayer should also include thanksgiving, as well as the request to dismiss our assembly and to provide protection and blessings for His people. If it is the closing prayer for a morning Holy Day service, that prayer should also include a request for God to bless our noon meal.

The most important thing to remember is to be sincere. One does not have to be a great speaker to offer a sincere prayer. However, in many cases it is a good idea to think about the assigned prayer in advance and ask God for wisdom in offering a prayer on behalf of the congregation. There are also several potential traps that should be absolutely avoided. An opening or closing prayer is never to be used as an opportunity to deliver a message to

the congregation. Instruction to the church is given by the ministry in the sermon portion of the service. Just as our song leaders are instructed to avoid making any comments about the sermon before the closing hymn, so too, lay members offering congregational prayers should make sure their offerings do not inadvertently turn into sermonettes, or stray in any other way from the guidelines enunciated above. With these simple principles in mind, those called upon for this duty should feel comfortable in fulfilling this important function in our solemn services, regardless of natural public speaking ability. A sincere heart is the most important requirement of all.

Feast of Tabernacles

As most members know, I will be splitting my time between the Townsend and Newport Feast sites. During the Feast several men will carry out administrative duties in my absence. In Townsend, Mr. John Byrd will be in charge of the spiritual needs of the congregation—counseling, anointing, etc. Mr. Bill McCammon will be in charge of the physical operations of the Feast. In Newport, Mr. Leon Whitaker will be in charge of the spiritual needs and Mr. Delmer Marsh will be in charge of the physical operations. Please be assured these men are very willing to help and serve you in any way during the Feast. Feel free to contact them should a need arise.

Tape Department

In an effort to save shipping costs for those who return their tapes by mail, it is suggested that before returning the tapes, look on the side of the tapes for marks. If there are two marks (or more) on the tape, it has been used and erased at least two times. For a good quality recording a tape cannot be reused more than two times. When these tapes come back to the office they are discarded. So, if you receive any tapes that have two marks, there is no need to return them. Either discard them or keep them for your personal use. Hopefully this will save you money in the return of tapes. Also, reusable tapes (those without two marks) may be brought to the Feast sites for transport back to Eugene.

Holy Days

Atonement: Monday, September 16
Feast of Tabernacles: September 21–27
Last Great Day: September 28

Trip Schedule

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

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

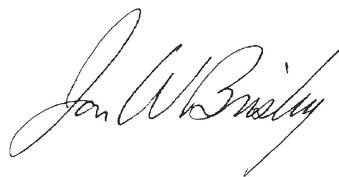
December 9–24 Luzon, Mindanao, Philippines

Tape Schedule

| Tape # | Mailed | Played | Title |
|----------------------|----------|---|--|
| Holy Day Tapes | 07-11-02 | 09-07-02 | Trumpets—2 Tapes (A.M., P.M.) (Trumpets 2002 A.M. service— Fund. of Belief: Christ's Return and the Kingdom of God) |
| WSP-RC 11-1 | 08-08-02 | 09-14-02 | Fear, a Powerful Force #1 |
| 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: What Is the Church? |
| WSP-RC 11-2 | 08-22-02 | 10-12-02 | Fear, a Powerful Force #2 |
| WSE-JB 22-50-18B | 09-05-02 | 10-19-02 | Fund. of Belief: The Church's Mission |
| WSE-JB 22-51-19A | 09-05-02 | 10-26-02 | Fund. of Belief: Eternal Life Through the Resurrection |
| WSE-JB 22-52-19B | 10-10-02 | 11-02-02 | Fund. of Belief: The Order of the Resurrections |
| WSE-JB 22-53-20A* | 07-11-02 | (Played for Trumpets A.M. service—09-07-02) | |
| WSE-JB 22-54-20B | 10-10-02 | 11-09-02 | Fund. of Belief: God's Kingdom on Earth |

* The tape labeled "Trumpets 2002 A.M." is also Fundamental of Belief #20A. That tape was mailed out on 7-11-02 in time for Trumpets and won't be sent out again unless specifically requested.

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby