

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter November 2002

Dear Brethren:

It is an honor and pleasure to greet the children of God once again in this November issue of the *Announcement Letter*. No matter where you may be reading this around the globe, your brethren and servants in Eugene, Oregon, send you our love and deep respect for your steadfast devotion to God's true way of life in these difficult times. May you continue to maintain your spiritual focus, no matter what serious trials you may presently be experiencing. Please know that although it is lonely for many of God's faithful, you are truly not alone. Though dispersed widely, we are a harmonious, unified Body, and the very Holy Spirit of God binds us together as a cohesive entity through the very mind of Jesus Christ. May you all take great comfort in the promises of God, and the veracity of His will to encourage you and keep you. It requires perseverance and vision to keep our eyes focused on that spiritual plan being unfolded. God's Kingdom will come. An incredible reformation in God's last day church will be accomplished before the arrival of Jesus Christ as King. We must simply be patient in these dark times to renew our confidence in that plan of God, and keep ourselves diligent in our Christian responsibilities.

By the time you read this letter, mid-term elections in the United States for Congressional leaders, state governors, and a host of local ballot initiatives will have taken place. All of these activities are part of man's attempt to bring about a utopian society according to their own human wisdom. Having rejected God's law as the basis for societal regulation, humanity is seeking solutions instead through their own defective reasoning. Every election cycle we hear the promises of politicians who offer their solutions to crime, poverty, economic difficulty, national security, and every societal ill. They seek to raise the hopes of the masses to believe that they are the ones with the solutions to our problems. Yet year after year, we see only the fruits of deeper and deeper depravity, as the moral principles of the true God are rejected wholesale, and God has withdrawn His divine protection more and more as a result. In the end, the people of God recognize that the solution to man's ills

rests not in the hands of any political party or ideology—who are all instruments of the god of this world—but in the soon-coming Kingdom of a Ruler who will finally take control and show humanity how legitimately to obtain their hopes and dreams. May that new divine government come very soon and liberate this world from the curses of their deceived ways.

Questions From Our Young People

During Camp Tejas this past July—the summer camp for teenagers sponsored by some of our brethren in Texas—many young people submitted very good Biblical questions to the ministry. Since these topics are probably beneficial for many of God's people in general, we want to provide space in this and upcoming *Announcement Letters* to provide short answers to some of these thoughtful questions. For this month's issue, we want to answer:

What is a good response to "What is your religion?" when someone asks?

This question from others is always something that can catch us off guard and cause us to stumble in thinking. There is no single correct reply, but it is definitely good to have an answer ready which you will be comfortable in giving when you are put on the spot. In most cases, you will hear this question when someone finds out you are keeping the Sabbath instead of Sunday, that you take off from school or work to keep God's Holy Days, or maybe that you do not participate in worldly holidays. Often, people are just curious, and do not really want a long, detailed explanation. Many are just trying to find out what major religious denomination you may be part of which they might have heard about. With that in mind, one acceptable answer is to start by saying, "I belong to a small Church of God group." If they ask for more details, be prepared to provide more information, one question at a time.

We should never be ashamed of our beliefs, and should always be ready to give an answer (I Peter 3:15). At the same time, we must also use wisdom and avoid proselytizing to those God has not yet called, since they cannot understand His Truth at this time. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matthew 7:6). Christ was not calling others bad names, but simply showing that most people in the world have been blinded to the Truth for now, and will not have their chance for salvation until a time in the future. Therefore, the best thing to do is start with a simple answer, and if someone really wants to know more, answer each question openly, but resist going into more detail than the person really cares to hear. If someone asks more, you might say, "We keep the Sabbath rather than Sunday, and believe the Holy Days God commanded in the Old Testament are required for us today." If someone asks you if you are Jewish, you might reply, "No, we are Christian, and Christ said if we love Him we must keep His commandments. That is what we are doing." If someone wants to know more about your church's origin, you might say,

"We are a small remnant of the Worldwide Church of God, founded years ago by Herbert Armstrong."

In some rare cases, you might run into someone in the future who really wants to know a lot more. We should always keep in mind that God may actually be using us to help in His calling of someone new. So if someone genuinely seems to be interested in what you believe, be willing to answer, or else refer them to your parents, another family member, or to the ministry if they truly want to know more. If you can tell someone only wants to find out more about your beliefs so they can ridicule you, never feel obligated to answer such prying questions. You can always assert that your religious beliefs are personal, and you need not defend them to anyone. With all these potential situations in mind, it is necessary for us all to ask God for the wisdom to know what to say in different circumstances. He will always help and guide us if we sincerely ask Him.

Prayer Request

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Birth

Mr-s. John McNeil III: A daughter, Ashley Marie, was born to John and Charisse Monday, November 4. She weighed seven pounds, three and one-half ounces and was twenty and one-half inches long. Parents and baby are doing fine.

Trip Schedule

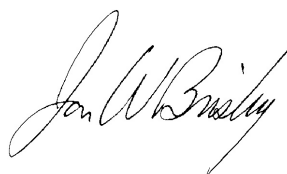
December 9–24 Luzon, Mindanao, Philippines; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JB 22-54-20B	10-10-02	11-09-02	Fund. of Belief: God's Kingdom on Earth
WSP-RC 8-1	10-24-02	11-16-02	What Is Obedience From the Heart?
WSE-JB 39	10-24-02	11-23-02	Are We Spiritually Awake?
WSE-JB 46	10-24-02	Not Scheduled*	What Made Herbert W. Armstrong's Message Unique?
WSP-RC 8-2	11-07-02	11-30-02	What Is Obedience From the Heart?
WSE-JB 47-1	11-07-02	12-07-02	Fear of God or Man, Which?
WSE-RC 57-1	11-21-02	12-14-02	The Body Is One

* Tape # WSE-JB 46, *What Made Herbert W. Armstrong's Message Unique?*, was given in all areas by Mr. Brisby on his scheduled trips in 2002, Eugene brethren being the last to hear the sermon. Since it now has been given in all areas we are not putting it on the regular mailing schedule, but are sending it out for any who would like to review it.

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby