

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter January 2003

Dear Brethren:

To all of God's faithful children of this remnant fellowship, we send you our greetings and warm expressions of love. It is a real pleasure to have the chance to address the people of God on a monthly basis in this letter, and to keep in personal contact with those who have continued to stand strong to preserve God's Truth in their lives. May we never take for granted your devotion to God's revealed Way of Life, or discount the determination required to hold fast in these difficult times. Many of you are dealing with serious trials of one kind or another. It would be so easy to turn from God's commands under such pressure and seek an "easier" way. But the determination of so many of you to put God first—no matter what—is an inspiration to this entire body. Please, never discount the value of your own personal faithfulness. It is a monumental offering—as sweet incense at the throne of God—every time His people use their free choice to crucify the self and put on instead the mind of Christ through obedience.

Even a very small remnant is a powerful tool in the hands of our God, and we are incredibly encouraged by the response of more and more of God's lost sheep to recapture the faith once delivered. It is so very rewarding to be an instrument in God's hand for the critical work of spiritual recovery, and Church of God, The Eternal, though very small, continues to be a beacon to point the way for those who are seeking the foundation of our calling in this age. It is God who has always done the calling, and it is He who is also heading the effort to recover spiritual Israel out of apostasy. We know one day Jesus Christ will begin a major effort to bring His wayward people out of doctrinal error. In the meantime, it is so gratifying to see more—if only a handful at this time—begin to find their doctrinal footing and come to recognize the true source of spiritual confidence. It is now requiring an increased effort to keep pace with needed service to those God is sending. But He has blessed us with the capacity and resources to respond to every need so far. We are simply thrilled to have the chance to serve all who love those original teachings Jesus Christ revealed through the original ministry of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, and how exciting it is to find more and more

who share a real love for the Truth. We depend wholly on God's blessings to be able to continue this work of service. We would not be able to continue if not for His merciful blessings and open doors.

Many difficult days lay ahead for those who will be faithful. But for the present time, it seems as if God is pouring out a double portion of mercy and blessings upon this group in so many ways. May we never take these benefits for granted or begin to feel that we are worthy of or due His kind benevolence. We live and thrive only as long as God grants us His grace. May we use these blessings God is pouring out upon this remnant body in renewed focus on service to the scattered sheep. There is much work yet to be done. What God has in mind for the immediate future we simply do not know. We must continue to depend upon Him to light our path—step by step—and be content to follow as He leads us through the unknown of tomorrow. If we remain focused on the Rock of our salvation—Jesus Christ, and all that He represents—we can step forward into that darkness with absolute confidence, depending upon His promises to protect, keep, and guide us.

Philippines Trip Report

Once again, we were blessed with a very rewarding and profitable trip to visit God's faithful congregations in the Philippine Islands in the month of December. It is always so encouraging to spend time with our ministers and brethren there who have weathered so many spiritual storms in past years. We had a wonderful Sabbath meeting of well over sixty in Sulamay, Mindanao, on December 14, as many traveled a great distance to be together for the occasion. It seemed almost like a Feast of Tabernacles assembly and the enthusiasm and warmth were very inspiring. We were also able to visit the scattered brethren of Luzon with a series of small Bible studies throughout the week, and then gather for the final Sabbath of December 21 with a small group in Cabanatuan City. We express great thanks for the devotion of the ministry—Mr. Corsino Canta, Mr. Mario Roque, Mr. Eduardo Cambil—and to the lead men there who have helped provide such a stable foundation for God's faithful. There is no doubt we are all of one mind through God's Holy Spirit, and how awesome it is to maintain such unity among brethren from opposite sides of the world. It is a testament to God's miraculous power and nothing less.

We were also blessed to make contact with a significant group of God's people in Malaysia on this trip. We had a very warm and cordial meeting with a group of some twenty-five family members outside of Kuala Lumpur who have been devoted members of God's church for many years. It was a thrill to meet so many in person who had been known only through correspondence until that time. If it is God's will, we hope we may have the opportunity to serve them in the future. There are more and more who are coming to value

the concept of divine revelation of Truth, and the first works of God's church in this age. This trip only helped confirm there are many of God's legitimate children out there searching for a sure foundation. With God's help we intend to be there to assist those whom He sends.

Trip Schedule

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| February 22 | Phoenix, Arizona |
| March 22 | Boston, Massachusetts |
| March 29 | Knoxville, Tennessee |

Church Office Closing Policy

For those who may be newer to our fellowship and curious about why we close our church office in Eugene on specific worldly holidays, this explanation should help clarify that policy. From the inception of this group, Mr. Raymond Cole recognized that spouses and close family members of our office employees are usually given off major holidays by their worldly employers. Since free days for working families come at a premium, Mr. Cole valued the opportunity for our employees to join their families in having time off together. The pagan holiday means nothing to us, even as the Apostle Paul clarified meat offered to idols did not defile good food (1 Corinthians 7:1–8). Likewise, a day which God created is not defiled just because deceived human beings use it for a wrong purpose. In addition, without time off, in some cases our staff might miss seeing certain unconverted family members who may only come into town during the holidays. We were always taught it is not wrong to take advantage of the opportunity to see out-of-town family during those seasons, as long as they recognize we have no intention of joining in the pagan celebration.

For these reasons, we have always closed the office on more innocuous days like Memorial Day and the Fourth of July, as well as certain pagan days like New Years Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. In 2002 we actually did something a little different. Because July 4 fell on a Thursday, the staff preferred to make it a four-day weekend by having Friday off as well. Therefore, we exchanged the day we would normally have been off on Thanksgiving for an extra holiday in July. That is why we were open on Thanksgiving Day this year, but still closed on Christmas and New Years as usual. Again, the pagan customs do not defile our consciences as true Christians, and our membership has always understood this. However, if some of our newer members were ever to have weak consciences on this issue, rather than allow our liberty to become a stumbling-block (1 Corinthians 7:9), like the Apostle Paul's example we would sooner change our policy to keep

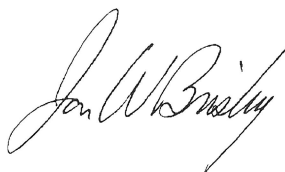
the church office open on these days. But barring this consideration, we plan to continue our longstanding office closing policy.

Tape Schedule

| Tape # | Mailed | Played | Title |
|--------------|----------|----------|--|
| WSE-RC 57-3* | 01-02-03 | 01-11-03 | The Body Is One #3 |
| WSE-JB 47-4 | 12-19-02 | 01-18-03 | Fear of God or Man, Which? #4 |
| WSE-RC 57-4* | 12-19-02 | 01-25-03 | The Body Is One #4 |
| WSE-RC 57-5 | 01-02-03 | 02-01-03 | The Body Is One #5 |
| WSE-JB 47-5 | 01-16-03 | 02-08-03 | Fear of God or Man, Which? #5 |
| WSE-RC 65-1 | 01-16-03 | 02-15-03 | Prophetic Events Preceding the Return of Jesus Christ #1 |

* The tape WSE-RC 57-4 was inadvertently mailed out in the December 19 mailing instead of WSE-RC 57-3. Tape WSE-RC 57-3 was mailed in the January 2 mailing and we are hoping it reaches everyone in time for its scheduled play date of January 11. We are sorry for the mixup and hope that everyone's tape arrives in time to play according to the schedule.

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby