

# Church of God, The Eternal

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## Announcement Letter February 2003

Dear Brethren:

It is a pleasure to address the devoted members of God's last-day church in this issue of the *Announcement Letter*. Greetings to every one of you who have continued to remain faithful to God's revelation of Truth in these difficult times. As this letter is read by individuals peppered about the vast globe, we are reminded again of the awesome will of God to preserve a faithful remnant, in spite of Satan's attempts to destroy that divine work. Though we are very few in number at this time, Jesus Christ is faithful to perform the will of His Father, and a promise was made that the gates of hell would never prevail against that end-time Church (Matthew 16:18). In that we can have absolute confidence.

It is an honor to serve those who have been singled out by God and given that glorious opportunity to know His will and plan of salvation. But among the thousands who were initially called in this age, how many of them have continued to value that calling? Most have been devastated by the apostasy we experienced beginning almost thirty years ago and have since become discouraged and hateful toward that original revelation. But still, for us, how very fulfilling is that gift of knowledge, for those who have not been dissuaded by the failures of men. It is still that Way which we were initially taught through God's end-time servant that provides the means to put troubling current events into proper perspective. Though many of you are going through difficult—and in some cases, harrowing experiences—is there any price that can be placed upon the plan of salvation we know God is working even now to fulfill? Is there any trial so hard that you would be willing to trade your knowledge of the Truth to escape it? It is the very hope in that glorious Second Coming of Jesus Christ which provides focus to endure anything God may allow us to experience for the time being. All of these physical cares—whether they be health, financial, family, or any other trials—are only very small things compared to the future glory awaiting those who can see beyond the veil.

That is why it is so critical for God's people to have vision. "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he" (Proverbs 29:18). Those who have remained faithful for many years—in spite of all the chaos of past decades—or even

those who may have only recently discovered that repository of truth, are counted among those who have been able to set aside the smoke of human emotion and see through to the clear and remaining manifestation of Jesus Christ, the very Word of God. May your faithful example be an ever-growing beacon for so many of our beloved brethren who are yet out there floundering in the mist.

God is now sending more and more of His lost sheep to find that oasis of Truth, and it is the solidarity and unity of this body that makes us prepared to receive them. Dear brethren, please recognize that Satan hates it whenever those lost ones begin to find their way. He is always active, but will be even more so as time rockets toward the end. Stand fast and let your light shine as a glorious manifestation of the Holy Spirit. If we can each maintain that focus to sacrifice and serve one another with the very mind of Jesus Christ, there is no limit to what God may choose to accomplish in the future through such a faithful remnant. May we all remain absolutely steadfast, waiting patiently for the perfect will of God to be made manifest.

## **Questions From Our Young People**

Continuing the section we began a few months ago to address specific questions submitted to the ministry by our young people, the following topic should be of interest:

### **Why is the prayer always given by a man and why is the minister always of male gender?**

The best way to answer this is to look at God's direct instruction as inspired through the Apostle Paul.

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34–35).

Notice also Paul's instruction to the young evangelist, Timothy, in how to teach Christian women to behave. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:11–12).

These are the clear words of God and must be taken at face value. But does this then mean God thinks less of women than men? Are women of lesser importance in His plan for

salvation? Not at all! The problem comes because we are easily tainted by this world's false concepts about equality of the sexes. But remember, this is Satan's world, and you can bet whatever you see praised in our human societies today is not according to God's will.

Women are very highly esteemed in God's eyes. Those who obey Him faithfully today will receive power and great glory in God's Royal Family government. Men and women have equal access to salvation and to those future royal offices God is offering.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, *there is neither male nor female*: for ye are *all one in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3:26–28) [emphasis mine].

So women are never to be treated as "lesser" than a man. But we must come to accept that in God's perfect plan, He made us male and female for a reason. And it is God—not man—who ordained structure in the relationship between a man and woman. It is God who placed the husband in authority over the wife, and commanded wives to honor and obey their husbands. The problem in this world is not that very structure God gave, but human beings' abuse of those relationships. Husbands abuse the authority God gave them so wives become resentful. Or else many women simply resist being under authority and seek to be "free." But the simple truth is, God made daughters subject to their fathers until they marry—with his permission—and then they become subject to their husbands. In this modern world, this seems outdated and oppressive, but it would not be so if fathers and husbands would fulfill their duties according to God's laws.

God made those relationships to picture the relationships within the very God Family. God the Father is over the Son, Jesus Christ. And all who are given salvation will be added to that same Family, and assume a role under the Father and the Son. Therefore, He created our human family relationships (especially that between men and women) to picture the way things work in the God Family. If we do not like the way God set authority between husband and wife, we are really saying we do not like the way the God Family is structured. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (Ephesians 5:23–24).

So what does this have to do with women speaking in church? God made that same picture of the authority in the Divine Family to be reflected also in the Church. Christ is the Head of that Church, and that Church is preparing to be a beautiful Bride. This means that both men as well as women who are part of the Church, are part of the Bride—the woman!

And submitting to the structure God ordained for the Church tests whether men and women *alike* are willing to be submissive to Christ, as the Husband.

This topic of Church government is a very extensive subject, and has been addressed in many articles and *Monthly Letters* in the past. But for this synoptic explanation, we will simply emphasize that God chose the human male to represent Jesus Christ, and the human female to represent the Church. When men love their wives, sacrifice for them, and treat them with kindness and respect, then those men picture the loving leadership of our High Priest, Jesus Christ. And when wives submit themselves to their husbands—in the Lord—they also picture the role of the Church under Christ's authority. It is a beautiful picture that brings great happiness to both men and women when God's laws are obeyed. The heartache and sorrow comes when human beings refuse to obey God and want it their own selfish way.

So God's clear command is that women not be ministers (teachers), and instead are quiet in any formal church service. This is why they also do not offer an opening or closing prayer. The fact God made this a duty of the converted men does not mean women are lesser in any way. It simply pictures the role of Jesus Christ as Head over His Church.

But one point of clarification: Many will note that in the small bi-weekly Bible studies we conduct in member homes here in Eugene, we do allow women to ask questions. Mr. Raymond Cole always conducted those small Bible studies with enough informality to allow everyone the opportunity to participate and learn. This is very different than a formal service on a Sabbath or Holy Day. We do not treat those small group studies as a "church service," even though we do ask in prayer for God to bless the meetings. This is still the way we conduct our Bible studies today, and that is not a violation of this important spiritual principle God ordained. If we were to have very large Bible study meetings like we did years ago in our parent organization, we would certainly use the same protocol we do for an official church service. If anyone has any further questions on these principles, we would be very happy to address them in more detail.

## **Holy Days**

Passover . . . . . Tuesday, April 15

Night to be Much Observed . . . . . Wednesday, April 16

First Holy Day—Days of Unleavened Bread . . . . . Thursday, April 17

Second Holy Day—Days of Unleavened Bread . . . . Wednesday, April 23



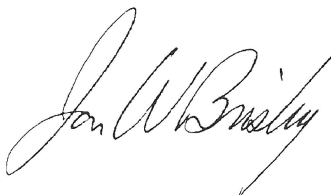
## Trip Schedule

February 22	Phoenix, Arizona
March 22	Providence, Rhode Island
March 29	Knoxville, Tennessee

## Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed	Played	Title
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
WSE-JB 47-6	01-30-03	02-22-03	Fear of God or Man, Which? #6
WSE-RC 65-2	01-30-03	03-01-03	Prophetic Events Preceding the Return of Jesus Christ #2
WSE-JB 47-7	02-13-03	03-08-03	Fear of God or Man, Which? #7
WSE-RC 66	02-13-03	03-15-03	Satan's Kingdom, and the Purposeful Creation of Man

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby