

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter April 2003

Dear Brethren:

During this new Passover season, we send greetings once again to all of God's remnant people—wherever you may be scattered about the globe—with prayers that you may continue to be blessed and comforted through God's Holy Spirit. May we all relish the significance of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread which are upon us, and take comfort in God's plan pictured in these marvelous observances.

With all that is transpiring in the world at this time—including new wars and pestilence causing global uncertainty—what a blessing it is to understand the fabric of God's overall master plan, which allows us to put these troubling events into proper perspective. The faithful of God need not be troubled by distressing events of these last days. If we have our eyes focused on God's purpose and work in our lives, we can have absolute confidence no matter what may be going on around us. But that confidence requires faith, and real faith requires our diligence to put on more of the mind of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. May we all take advantage of this year's Passover season with renewed spiritual focus to prepare for the trials which certainly lay before us.

Passover Service Protocol

With the number of new brethren that will be keeping the Passover with us this year, and because it is always good for all of us to be reminded occasionally, it makes sense to enunciate certain protocols for a proper Passover service. All too many of our former brethren in other groups gradually have begun to water down the solemnity of the Passover, and we need to be sure this orientation never takes root within this remnant body.

An authorized place to participate in the Passover service is designated in each area by the ministry, as they are directed as representatives of Jesus Christ. This is one of the applications of ministerial authority confirmed by Matthew 16:19, as Christ promises to

appear in those places appointed by His legitimate agents. Jesus Christ will not appear in those places not specifically authorized. Therefore, in each area where several baptized members are located, arrangements have been made for a designated place of convocation.

But what about those who are too scattered to be able to meet with anyone else? In those cases, the ministry has authorized members to partake of the Passover in their own homes. That is why the Passover service cassette tape is provided for many of our scattered members. Knowing the geographical location of our isolated members, that ministerial approval is usually implied without having to be formally authorized. However, the fact we send a Passover service tape to *all* of our members should never be construed to mean each member is free to stay at home to keep the Passover if he/she so desires. Those who live within reasonable reach of a designated place are expected to keep the Passover in that place. For those individuals, it is not approved to stay at home and use the tape to conduct a private service. The ministry has not approved this, and God will not honor it. One who does so might just as well skip the Passover altogether. We have never given specific rules for determining how far away one must live from a designated place to be excused from traveling. That all depends upon distance, health, and other factors. But we should each be most concerned about how *God* views our situations, and make sure we are doing everything within our power to obey His command to convoke. This applies not only to the Passover service, but to all of God's commanded assemblies. God knows whether—even with some requirement of personal sacrifice—we are capable of being at a designated place. This ministry will not judge that decision for you, but God is certainly judging every one of us. We will never pull the wool over the eyes of the One who knows our every thought. If we are actually capable of arranging to be in a designated place, but opt to stay at home for our own convenience, God will not accept our offering. If one is too ill at the time to attend the Passover service, God has provided for a second Passover opportunity in the second month (Numbers 9:10–13). One who becomes too ill or incapacitated to attend the first designated Passover service should never opt to do his/her own service at home. They should wait to partake of the second Passover in the place designated by the ministry. With that principle in mind, we should all be very resolute in making these critical decisions.

Next, the Passover service is the most solemn occasion of the year. As we were taught from the beginning, this particular service is the one annual occasion when personal conversation and fellowship is not appropriate. Brethren should arrive at the meeting place at least a few minutes beforehand, take their seats quietly—meditating on the significance of Christ's sacrifice—and avoid conversation with others. This is not being rude or unfriendly. Passover is a solemn and sobering occasion. Its focus is on our individual covenant with Jesus Christ. The Night to Be Much Observed and First Day of Unleavened Bread are times to participate in enthusiastic fellowship. Given we will have a number of new brethren with us this year—as well as old friends who we may only see during Holy Day seasons—the tendency naturally might be to introduce ourselves to new people and reconnect with old friends. But the Passover service is not the appropriate place for this. By making

this point clear to all, it should help to alleviate any possible feeling of obligation to meet and greet others upon entering the meeting place. Let us save that exuberance for the feast night to follow.

As the beloved of God, and those conscientiously holding firm to the faith once delivered in these difficult times, may you each have a glorious and rewarding Spring Holy Day season.

Blessings of Brethren

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Holy Days

Passover service. April 15
Night to be Much Observed April 16
First Holy Day—Days of Unleavened Bread April 17
Last Holy Day—Days of Unleavened Bread April 23

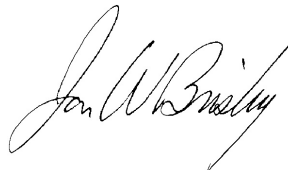
Trip Schedule

April 23, 26	Spring Hill, Florida
May 31	Penrith, England
June 7, 9	Lausanne, Switzerland; Grenoble, France
June 14	Tasmania, Australia

Tape Schedule

<u>Tape #</u>	<u>Mailed</u>	<u>Played</u>	<u>Title</u>
WSP-RC 9-2	03-13-03	04-05-03	Known From the Foundation of the World—Whom? #2
WSE-JB 47-8	03-13-03	04-12-03	Fear of God or Man, Which? #8
WSP-RC 9-3	03-27-03	04-19-03	Known From the Foundation of the World—Whom? #3
WSE-JB 47-9	03-27-03	04-26-03	Fear of God or Man, Which? #9
WSE-RC 16-1	04-10-03	05-03-03	Doubt: Frailty of the Human Mind #1
WSE-RC 16-2	04-10-03	05-10-03	Doubt: Frailty of the Human Mind #2
WSE-JB 47-10	04-24-03	05-17-03	Fear of God or Man, Which? #10

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby