

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter June 2003

Greetings Brethren!

By the time most of you read this letter, Pentecost will be upon us once again, and for some of you, already completed. What a marvelous opportunity it is to keep this glorious Holy Day which God has purposed to represent our inclusion in the firstfruits harvest of His Family. And what a pleasure it is to address all of you who are pictured in the meaning of Pentecost—those who have been given access to the Holy Spirit—and set apart to put on the very mind of Jesus Christ. To all of you we send our deep love and respect, with prayers for your strength and edification during this inspiring season.

Pentecost was the day on which the New Testament Church was founded in A.D. 31. It was the first day in the history of man that God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell within and become part of the human mind; made possible by the successful completion of Jesus Christ's mission to qualify as our great High Priest and heavenly Intercessor. What a priceless gift to understand the gospel message detailing God's master-plan, including the opportunity to become spiritually begotten with the mind of God through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Is there anything that could be more thrilling than to realize how incredible it is to be selected out of all human beings on earth—foreordained from the foundation of the world—to be called to receive this gift? May we never take for granted that calling or underestimate the value of the personal relationship with God we have been blessed to receive.

Is not the very meaning of Pentecost sufficient to elicit great joy and inspiration within the people of God? And yet how many of those called in this age do not seem satisfied with the things God has revealed to His Church. Even as ancient Israel was not satisfied with God's miraculous gift to them of heavenly food in the wilderness—manna—but became quickly tired of it, so too, much of spiritual Israel of the last days has become dissatisfied with the spiritual food God revealed to us, in a never-ending lust for "new truth." God

certainly promised that the faithful would grow in knowledge, but how twisted that entire concept has become in the minds of so many former brethren. We all recognize the change from Monday to Sunday was a manifestation of man's insistence on perverting God's ways according to human wisdom. But another example is the rampant preoccupation with figuring out when Jesus Christ will return to earth. An increasing number of former ministers have embraced the idea that Christ will return on the Day of Pentecost. More and more articles with this assertion seem to be amassing from various groups who were once part of our parent organization. Incredible effort is spent on explaining why it only makes sense and must be true that Christ will return on Pentecost, rather than the Feast of Trumpets. Rather than teaching "meat in due season" about the Holy Spirit, they embroil their members in a fascination with prophetic speculation, which is nothing short of human vanity.

By whose authority did anyone ever conclude Christ must return on Pentecost, let alone Trumpets? Yes, the Feast of Trumpets pictures the triumphant return of Christ to make war and take possession of His Kingdom, and the Feast of Pentecost represents the harvest of the firstfruits in the first resurrection, but how did we ever decide God became duty-bound to make His Son return on one of those days for the master plan to be cohesive? In the final analysis, it may well be that God purposes to ordain Christ to return on one of these Holy Days. But will we arrogantly insist God must do it the way a human being has it "figured out," else He is guilty of confusion? Whether they know it or not, those insisting God must fulfill future prophecy—whichever prophecies we are talking about—in a specific way, are putting themselves on the level of God.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8–9).

Oh, if we could only come to accept that statement as fact and stop trying to force God's will according to the very limited knowledge He has given to us for reason. If God so chooses, Christ could return on December 25 and it would be a perfect fulfillment of His plan. Who are we to ascribe any limits to God? There may be no greater arrogance than to assume to interpret spiritual things on the basis of insufficient human knowledge. How absurd!

God said specifically human beings would *not know* when Christ is returning. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36). That return will be sudden, surprising, and take every human being off-guard. "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2). But human beings rationalize they may not know which specific year, but they think they can know the specific *day of the year* when He will return.

How about accepting the simplicity of God's statement, and stop trying to squeeze out more than God intends for us to know? If God has ordained that no human beings—even of a faithful remnant—will be able to guess when Christ is returning, that is exactly what He meant! So why do they insist on this addictive preoccupation with future events? Is it because God's church *needs* this information to gain salvation?

God said, "Now the just shall live by faith . . ." (Hebrews 10:38). If anyone—minister or lay person—actually discovered the secret of Christ's imminent return, what need would we have of faith? And what need would we have to *watch*? "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matthew 24:42). If one knows exactly when He will arrive, there is no need to be watching in advance. We would need only "set our alarm" for the time of appearing, and go about our sleepy existence until that very moment. The only reason we must *watch* at all times—be ready at a moment's notice—is because we *will not know in any way* how to predict the time of His Second Coming. He will come unexpectedly! That is what it means to come as a thief in the night. It does not mean that once He *arrives*, He will then be moving about secretly as a thief in the night. It is His *coming* that will be as an unpredicted thief, not His work afterwards. When Christ comes *suddenly* and *without warning*—like a thief—it will then become visible immediately to all human beings. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27).

There are men—once ministers of God's true church—now absolutely mesmerized with prophetic fulfillment, and teaching their congregations to crave this empty and vain diet, rather than feeding them the spiritual food—the true manna—God *did* give for our growth and edification. While others are leading God's misguided children in the ways of spiritual slumber, the faithful ministry will be focusing a legitimate remnant on those things which are absolutely critical for salvation. That foundation is the knowledge of God's revealed doctrines—the faith once delivered—the Truth which we must possess and cling to if we want to receive a reward in the day of Christ's appearing.

The Feast of Pentecost is a time of joy and jubilant celebration. Let us always remember to focus on the value of those priceless things God has revealed, and eschew the lustful desire to have those things He does not intend for us. Will we be satisfied with the Truth we have been given by divine revelation? That Truth is growing more and more in its depth of meaning with every passing year, for those who value and appreciate it. May you all be filled with the Holy Spirit and relish with every passing day this pearl of great price.

Feast of Tabernacles

In order that we may begin preparation of schedules for the Feast we need to know as soon as possible if any will be attending at a different Feast site than they have in the past. We must soon begin work on the scheduling of emcees and those who give opening and closing prayers.

Part of our preliminary work involves the music program for the two Feast sites. Any member who has attended one of our Holy Day convocations in the past is eligible to participate in the Fall Festival music program. Any who qualify and are interested this year should notify Mr. Richard Meyn at the church office concerning the Newport, Oregon, site and Mr. George King concerning the Townsend, Tennessee, site before the end of June. Richard and George are already working on this year's performance material. They would like to welcome anyone who would like to participate at either Feast site.

Trip Schedule

July 12	Stephenville, Texas
August 2	Baltimore, Maryland
August 9	Chicago, Illinois

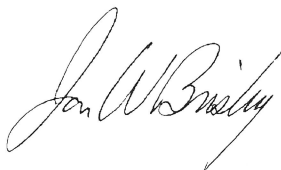
Birth

We would like to congratulate Mr-s. Andrew Roeber on the birth of their daughter, Ariel. She was born May 21 and weighed 6 pounds, 4 ounces and was 20 inches long. Mother (Keena) and baby Ariel are doing very well.

Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-RC 79-2	05-08-03	06-07-03	Who Will the Overcomers Be? #2
WSE-JB 22-55-21A	05-22-03	06-14-03	Fund. of Belief: Why a Monday Pentecost?
WSE-JB 22-56-21B	05-22-03	06-21-03	Fund. of Belief: How/Why Pentecost Changed.
WSP-RC 20-1	06-05-03	06-28-03	How Does Your Conscience Guide You? #1
WSE-JB 22-57-21C	06-05-03	07-05-03	Results of the Pentecost Change
WSP-RC 20-2	06-19-03	07-12-03	How Does Your Conscience Guide You? #2

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby