

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter November 2003

Dear Brethren:

Greetings to all of you in this first issue since the 2003 Feast of Tabernacles. From all of us here in the church office and the Eugene, Oregon congregation, we express our love and appreciation for every one of you, and hope that your fall Holy Day season was rich and rewarding. What a blessing it is year by year to have the privilege to keep those holy convocations according to God's instructions. When we do so with the right orientation toward the Truth and toward one another, how inspiring it truly is. Having been strengthened by our bonds of fellowship and that meat in due season, we should now be spiritually renewed to press forward to continue this long trek of overcoming in our lives. And for those who were legitimately unable to attend one of those appointed places of convocation, know that you are still greatly loved and cherished by all of your brethren. We are family, and God's Spirit binds us together in a way that is unmatched even by blood relations. May you all now walk forward optimistically into the coming months, sure in your minds about the course God has laid for us, and confident in hope of the rich reward awaiting at the coming of Jesus Christ.

We are thankful indeed for the peace and protection God provided for us in all of our festival sites this year around the world. Every site reported a marvelous occasion as you will see later in this letter. Although it is easy to take such blessings for granted, given the nature of this increasingly evil world, every year into the future God allows us to meet in peace and safety is a genuine miracle. The day is coming when that likely will not be the case. We need to be prepared for the time when it might take incredible faith to be in one of those appointed places; when the environment around us is anything but peaceful. Are we cultivating now the faith necessary to be able to *continue* obeying these simple commands, for a time to come when we may feel intense threats physically by doing so? Dear brethren, it is very likely the most prevalent tests to come will not involve the requirement to do something new that you have never done before, but to *keep* doing what you have been doing, however under greater and greater pressure from the outside world. That is why God defines our mission as the need to endure unto the end (Matthew 24:13). It is endurance—continuing to persist on the path you have been traveling without fainting—that is the hallmark of a true Christian. We must first identify that faith once delivered—Christ's revealed doctrine from the beginning—and then persevere to hold fast to that Way with dogged determination.

Is there any circumstance that might cause you to change from what you have been keeping till now? How many have boldly claimed they would *never* depart from the Truth, only to do so under the influence of trials they were not really prepared to meet? It is one thing to claim to be strong spiritually and feel impervious to deception, but it is quite another to possess legitimate fortitude to stand fast under changing pressures from around us. We never know from where the next challenge will come. Perhaps it will be from converted family members you never thought would falter. What if they do? Will your faith be shaken? Maybe it will be from a trusted friend who begins to absorb subtle corruptions of doctrine. Do you know that truth in conviction before God, or is your concept of Truth actually dependent upon the views of others in your "inner circle"? The day is coming when all of us will be tried individually to the limit to see what we each truly believe about God and salvation. We may not even recognize to what extent our current faith is tied to the approval of someone else. But if that is the case, sooner or later, God will allow or intentionally intervene to put that "crutch" to the test. If we are not individually committed to that path to salvation with full assurance apart from anyone else but Jesus Christ, such a fatal flaw in our spiritual armor will be exploited and exposed. As Mr. Raymond Cole repeated so often over many years, God is going to try us until He is sure we *know*, and we *know* that we know!

What a blessing it is to have had so many new brethren added to our fellowship in the last year, and to welcome so many to our festival celebrations. God is indeed continuing to work with His priceless sheep and gather them from out of confusion. But how sad is it to think about the ones—few as they may be—who were not with us this year at the Feast because they gave themselves over to a different spirit. Or how heart-rending to consider one or two who showed up at the Feast this year as in past years, except this time with a different spirit, seeking to contend with those doctrines they previously claimed they would have died for. Thank God He gave us protection from such subtle influence and from Satan's attempt to destroy, but how much we grieve for those we love who have done the very thing they said they never would. May God grant them to learn the lessons yet, and return to the foundation of that true Faith once again.

How many of us will continue to hold fast in coming months and years, steeling ourselves in those doctrines of light and resisting all subtleties of Satan to deceive? These are the times of significance in God's church. Please do not underestimate the importance of the trials you may be experiencing right now. It is usually the seemingly "small" things that can threaten us the most—those things we do not give credence to as an avenue for Satan. Yet he is looking for any opening we provide to entice us to second-guess or become offended. Not one of us needs be deceived by such attacks. But brethren, never underestimate the power God has allowed that adversary to wield. That demonic activity continues to increase all around us. The signs are there for those who have eyes to see. If we are truly focused on Jesus Christ as the Founder and Sustainer of His Church—and everything that very concept entails—we will be prepared to pass every test that lies ahead.

May we all be here together in unity and harmony to partake of another year's priceless Holy Day celebrations, or as long as God wills to bless us to do so before the appearing of His glorified Son.

Feast Reports

Kanderstag, Switzerland: Mr. Jean Aviolat reports that the weather was beautiful the entire time except for occasional fog. There were 35 brethren present including children. The visiting English-speaking brethren, including the Bouwer family from South Africa, had a wonderful Feast and were not hampered by the language barrier. They were all quite impressed by the beauty of the Swiss Alps as they were able to hike amidst the lovely scenery. The Feast atmosphere was very wonderful.

Don Carlos, Mindanao, Philippines: There were 101 in attendance at the beginning of the Feast. Mr. Mario Roque reported that number had grown to 110 by the last day. Although it rained every afternoon, the Feast was full of joy, enthusiasm, fellowship, and wonderful cooperation. There were two baptisms, the blessing of 11 children, and a wedding ceremony—our congratulations to Mr-s. Rogelio Camposano. All the Filipino brethren there send their love and heartfelt thanks to all the brethren for their help, prayers, and support.

Cauayan City, Isabella, Philippines: Mr. Corsino Canta reported that 18 participated in the Feast at Cauayan City. They rejoiced and were well pleased with their blessings of unity and love. They very much feel a part of the whole and look forward to the time when all can be together. Mr. Canta sends love on behalf of the brethren.

Townsend, Tennessee: 106 brethren gathered in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee to keep the twenty-first Feast at the Townsend site. With light rain on some days, but more sunshine and warm temperatures overall, the brethren were blessed with an ideal setting to glorify God. The Rocky Branch Community Center—although dated from its use as a school in past decades—has provided a quiet and serene meeting facility in the old gymnasium for a number of years. The addition of a significant number of new members this year from around the U.S. and Canada added a special electricity and enthusiasm. There were numerous social gatherings throughout the festival, including an evening potluck and Appalachian square dance. Our appreciation goes to the elders, deacons, and brethren who all worked together to facilitate such a successful occasion under God's inspiration.

Newport, Oregon: There was a little rain here and there throughout the Feast in the coastal town of Newport, but that did not dampen the enthusiasm of the 100 members, four of which were newly baptized this year. The spiritual food revitalized everyone, and the excitement and joy of the new members attending for the first time was infectious for all in attendance. There were many opportunities to socialize—such as deep sea fishing, cookie decorating for the children, a fish fry, bowling, and a potluck barbecue. Unity and love

during all the fellowship was very apparent. It was a wonderful and meaningful time for everyone.

Suna–Migori, Kenya: We have been working with a man in Kenya for the past two years, Mr. Isaya Owak, who was a prominent member of the Worldwide Church of God from the time church congregations were first organized in Kenya in the early 1980s. He and about thirty brethren have been receiving our sermon tapes and literature and regularly meeting on Sabbaths as a congregation of Church of God, The Eternal. They held a Feast of Tabernacles in Migori in a rented hall, and listened to the same sermons (prerecorded) as did all of the brethren in the U.S. and Australia. There were a total of 47 brethren, not counting children, who attended, and Mr. Owak reports that they felt it was the best Feast they had ever kept. The brethren were very happy to receive the sermon messages and learned a lot. We have scheduled our first ministerial visit to Kenya in 2004, following Pentecost, and look forward very much to meeting these who have committed to holding fast to the faith once delivered in that region of the world.

St. Helens, the East Coast of Tasmanina, Australia: Mr. Matthew Crane provided the following report: This year for the Feast of Tabernacles in Australia, all the brethren were keeping our very first Feast with the Church of God, The Eternal. The location for God's Feast was truly a great blessing as we enjoyed very favorable weather conditions. It was very evident to us all that our Heavenly Father had chosen the location to celebrate and keep His Feast of Tabernacles. All the brethren enjoyed the fellowship together as the family of God, with complete unity and harmony and in oneness of mind. The spiritual strong meat given to all the brethren throughout the Feast from the video sermons was very inspiring and uplifting. We are all truly very delighted to be with the Faith Once Delivered. This was our discussion in many hours of our fellowship together in complete oneness of mind. Each day we held services in a very large home. We were very uplifted with special music given to us all by Mr. John Mafri. After most of the services, we all traveled and shared together a meal at a restaurant near the Feast site. This truly was our best Feast ever.

Birth

Mr-s. Roy Pell: A healthy baby girl was born Sunday, November 2, to Roy and Zabrina. Savannah Jayde weighed 7 pounds, 4 ounces and was 20 inches long. She presently has her days and nights mixed up but mother and baby are doing fine.

Old Hymnals

Since completing our new hymnals, we are left with many boxes of the older blue hymnals done in 1993. Until we decide what we should do with them, we would like to make them available to anyone who would like a copy. If you are interested, please let us know.

Feast of Tabernacles 2004

The Feast of Tabernacles next year is September 30 through October 6, with the Last Great Day immediately following on Thursday, October 7. Since Mr. Brisby and his family will not fly home from the Feast of Tabernacles until the following Sunday, he wanted to advise those going to the Feast in Tennessee next year that there will be a weekly Sabbath service after the Feast in Knoxville on October 9. This information may be of help to anyone already making plans for next year.

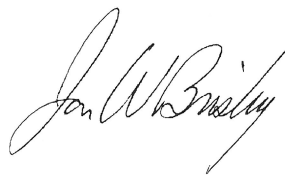
Trip Schedule

December 27	Don Carlos, Philippines
January 3	Burnie, Tasmania, Australia

Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-RC 21-1	09-11-03	11-01-03	The Significance of the Feast of Trumpets #1
WSE-RC 21-2	09-25-03	11-08-03	The Significance of the Feast of Trumpets #2
WSE-JB 55-3	09-25-03	11-15-03	Peace of Mind, Do You Have It? #3
WSE-RC 21-3	10-08-03	11-22-03	The Significance of the Feast of Trumpets #3
WSE-JB 55-4	10-08-03	11-29-03	Peace of Mind, Do You Have It? #4
WSP-RC 6-1	11-13-03	12-06-03	How Good Is Our Hearing? #1
WSE-JB 58-1	11-13-03	12-13-03	Signs and Wonders—What Must We Know? #1

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby