

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter February 2004

Dear Brethren:

With all of our very warm thoughts for God's dear children, we send this letter with hopes you continue to be the recipients of God's wonderful blessings. The trials of this life are always there for God's people, but what physical difficulty can ever tarnish the great benefit of understanding real spiritual truth, and possessing the hope of the coming Kingdom of God? No matter what challenges some of us may be facing in the flesh, who is more blessed in this world than those who have been called by God into a close personal relationship with the Creator? We are all most blessed indeed, and it is always an honor to address those faithful of God in this monthly *Announcement Letter*.

Time continues to speed by day after day. In many ways things seem to be much the same, but for those having their eyes truly open, how dramatically our world is literally changing around us. The international political climate continues to offer increasing turmoil and uncertainty for the future, while natural disasters (like the recent earthquake in Iran), threats to the food supply (mad cow disease, bird flu, etc.), and the continuing slide in societal morality all remind us that we are certainly in the last days. But whenever we begin to think things cannot go on like this much longer, it seems they somehow do anyway. Is there any wonder then why it might be easy for us to become complacent, in spite of the downward thrust of our decaying world? After all, have not people proclaimed gloom and doom in many past decades, based upon current events of the time? But the world has never yet come to an end. Therefore it is very easy to assume that even the worst of today's events are likewise just another bump in the road which the world will eventually be able to absorb and move beyond. Yet this is the very syndrome of spiritual slumber God was addressing through Peter when He warned against such ill-advised complacency.

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation (2 Peter 3:3–4).

The more other people point to Bible prophecies and predict coming gloom and doom for the current generation, the more that generation becomes numbed and nonplused, seeing the failure of repeated predictions as a sign it will never really happen. The more the little boy cries wolf, or Chicken Little asserts the sky is falling, the more people turn a deaf ear and begin to scoff at the notion anything is truly "that bad" in the world. Yet we know that one day these dramatic things *will* fall suddenly upon this earth, even as God has promised. Just keep in mind that the people of Noah's time also scoffed at dire predictions of their impending doom. As things got worse and worse without immediate retribution, the more they began to think they were invincible and free to pursue their despicable course unchecked. But as their reign of perversion finally did come to an end, so will the one of this modern world likewise:

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Matthew 24:37–39).

Therefore, brethren, we do not seek to predict the timing of these events and jump the gun in assigning specific fulfillments of those things God has not revealed. But neither will we become pacified by the passage of time and allow ourselves to be lulled into spiritual slumber. The world continues its downward spiral. We are now witnesses to the progression of events that were certainly prophesied to occur in the last days. With the help of God, may we all continue our vigilance to watch these events unfold and maintain our focus on preparing ourselves for the unavoidably sudden climax that is looming on the horizon. We need not be afraid of that future—or taken off-guard by its arrival—if we are redeeming the time and applying ourselves in the right ways spiritually.

Philippines/Australia Trip Update

We are pleased to report God blessed us with another very successful ministerial trip to visit our brethren in the Philippine Islands and Australia in late December/early January. After arriving in Manila late on December 22, Mr. David Brandenburg and I traveled to Cabanatuan City to meet for a Bible study and fellowship day with Mr. Corsino Canta and brethren on December 24, including scattered brethren that came together from many different parts of Luzon. On the following day, Mr. and Mrs. Canta accompanied us back to Manila, and then we all flew on to Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao, to meet with the large and growing congregation being served by Mr. Mario Roque. It was a pleasure to spend time with both old friends as well as meeting new brethren who are adding much to that fellowship. The Sabbath on December 27 in Don Carlos was a beautiful day, and

approximately 80 brethren came together from all over that very large island to participate in a morning service, noon potluck meal, and afternoon Bible study.

From there we traveled back to Manila and then to Singapore on December 28, changing planes to take us on to Sydney, Australia. It was wonderful to spend a couple of days with the few brethren that live there in the Sydney area, and have the chance to get to know them better and experience their very warm hospitality. On January 1 we flew to Melbourne and then on to Burnie, Tasmania, where the majority of our brethren in Australia currently live. The fellowship was very inspiring, and we had another wonderful Sabbath at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Algie Crane, including a Sabbath service and afternoon Bible study. The enthusiasm of all the brethren was very warming, and we enjoyed continued fellowship with planned outings together, visiting some very beautiful areas of the Tasmanian interior during the remainder of our stay.

The long flights to and from the United States were very blessed all along the way, and we thank God again for His merciful protection on this most recent excursion to support and encourage God's scattered brethren on the other side of the world. The only real inconvenience was difficulty getting home to Eugene, Oregon, from San Francisco, California, because of unusual ice and snow in the Willamette Valley. But even though this created an extra day's delay, the eventual return home was still without serious problem, and a great blessing over all.

Holy Days

Passover	Sunday evening, April 4
Night to be Much Observed	Monday evening, April 5
First Holy Day of Unleavened Bread	Tuesday, April 6
Last Holy Day of Unleavened Bread	Monday, April 12

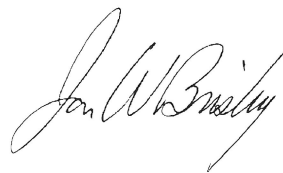
Trip Schedule

February 14	Spring Hill, Florida
March 13	Penrith, Cumbria, United Kingdom
April 3, 4, 5, 6	Knoxville, Tennessee
April 10, 12	Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota

Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSP-RC 4-2	12-24-03	01-17-04	Satisfaction: What Is the Premise? #2
WSE-JB 58-4	12-24-03	01-24-04	Signs and Wonders—What Must We Know? #4
WSE-JB 58-5	01-08-04	01-31-04	Signs and Wonders—What Must We Know? #5
WSP-RC 4-3	01-08-04	02-07-04	Satisfaction: What Is the Premise? #3
HFT-RC 9-30-77	01-22-04	02-14-04	Marriage According to the Laws of God #1
WSE-JB 58-6	01-22-04	02-21-04	Signs and Wonders—What Must We Know? #6
HFT-RC 10-01-77	02-05-04	02-28-04	Marriage According to the Laws of God #2
WSE-JB 58-7	02-05-04	03-06-04	Signs and Wonders—What Must We Know? #7
WSE-JB 61	02-19-04	03-13-04	Pre-Passover 2004
HFT-RC 10-04-77	02-19-04	03-20-04	Marriage According to the Laws of God #3

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby