

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter March 2004

Dear Brethren:

This will be the last chance to address the beloved members of this scattered remnant in a monthly mailing before the arrival of Passover this year. It is therefore with great appreciation and prayers for your spiritual renewal that we greet you and express our great love for those continuing to hold fast to the faith once delivered. May God grant you all the continuity to stand fast and defend God's Truth in your lives, no matter what the future may hold. There is no greater responsibility for those who have been called out of this world and given the opportunity to qualify for glory in the coming Kingdom of God.

Spiritual Principle

The cassette tape to be used for the Passover service—which most of you will receive—includes a sermonette describing the significance of the emblems Jesus Christ instituted as part of that solemn annual service. But it is imperative that we prepare ourselves well in advance to partake of that Passover acceptably. If we have not reflected upon the true meaning of Christ's sacrifice long before we arrive at the service, we can in no way hope to have our personal offering accepted by God.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep (1 Corinthians 11:26–30).

To avoid eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ unworthily, we must not only understand but *accept* the meaning of those emblems. The Passover is an annual

reminder of our personal covenant with God. That covenant is based upon acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and sole means of attaining salvation. It requires that we accept who and what Christ is in totality. He is the Word made flesh—the perfect embodiment of the Truth. Anyone who thinks the Church of God did not receive knowledge of *The Truth* from the beginning—including all of those doctrines we were first taught by divine revelation—is saying he does not believe we ever received Christ. Jesus Christ and Truth are one and the same. If you and I ever received Christ, we necessarily received The Truth. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Therefore, all of our beloved former brethren planning to participate in a Passover service this year but refusing to accept that Jesus Christ founded His Church upon the bedrock of doctrinal Truth from the beginning, will be putting that Savior to an open shame. I know those are hard words, but we cannot in good conscience offer words of conciliation toward behavior and practices God despises. We can only pray that God will bring these cherished children back out of apostasy so that they can finally partake of the Passover correctly.

But even for those of us who are part of this remnant fellowship and profess belief in the faith once delivered, are we sure we truly accept Jesus Christ in His totality? Are we sure we will be honored by God in our keeping of the Passover this year? It is not enough just to attend the solemn service in one of those God-approved places, as certified by His legitimate ministry. Any one of us could be at the right place and still partake of those emblems of Christ unworthily. Do we really accept the meaning of the body and blood of Jesus Christ?

The blood of Christ was shed for the remission of our sins. How can we honor Christ by partaking of His blood at Passover if we do not know what our sins are? And how can we recognize our personal sins if we do not understand what sin is to begin with? Most of those with any history in God's church will claim they know what sin is, immediately quoting 1 John 3:4, "... for sin is the transgression of the law." So recognizing sin requires that one also recognize the law. But how can any of us know of what we must repent if we do not acknowledge first the law which has been transgressed? Then where does that leave those who claim we cannot really know which doctrines are true today? Those who shift doctrinal belief with every new trend—under the guise of growing in grace and knowledge—are only announcing they have no idea who Christ really is, what is His law, and what constitutes the infraction of His law. When Jesus asserted to Pontius Pilate that everyone who is of the Truth "hearest my voice," how did Pilate reply? "Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? . . ." (John 18:38). Likewise, whenever someone holding fast to the original doctrines of God's Church asserts boldly that he *knows* what that Truth is, and *knows* that he knows, the majority of former church members scoff in the very same way and say, "What is truth?" But even if we profess to believe in the original doctrines, are we sure we really do? There have been ones in our midst, off and on over many past years, who have paid lip service to the concept

of unchanging doctrine, only to preserve some pet concept in mind which undermines that very foundation. Our self-examination in preparation for Passover had better include serious soul-searching to determine if we really do accept the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth which God gave His Body in these last days. Jesus Christ is not a smorgasbord of doctrines from which we can take or leave as we choose. It matters not if we accept ninety-nine percent of the original doctrines. If we refuse to accept the entire body of teaching that represents the true Christ, we are rejecting Him still. Those who truly believe God revealed Himself to us through the original teachings of a last-day apostle—and prove it by accepting the entire foundation—can have full confidence in partaking of the wine at Passover this year.

The unleavened bread of which we will partake represents the broken body of Christ—the torture He endured in His physical flesh so that we might have access to *physical healing* when we are sick or injured. God's revealed Truth tells us this divine promise of healing is *not* a function of the doctors of this world. God does not heal through modern medicine! I am afraid that all too many of God's people have yet been seduced into believing this lie of Satan. It is diabolical. And it is precisely the lie that replaced the real truth in the 1970s when the doctrine of divine healing was perverted by our parent organization. Brethren, let me make this very clear. When we seek man's medical system for anything outside the bounds of that which Herbert Armstrong defined from the beginning (please review those original articles again to understand the difference), we are committing sin! When we submit to internal surgeries and take their drugs and potions, we are participating in an idolatrous worship system based upon sorcery. Christ is not in that system, so please do not think that God will in any way bless us when we decide to bow at that pagan altar. It matters not that many doctors also profess belief in God's healing and even encourage prayer. They do not know the true God. The god they worship is an imposter. Although they do not know it, they worship the god of this world, Satan the Devil. Will any of us do the same along with them? The healing God promised is not through the "skill" of man's doctors. What God promised was *divine* healing, with no other professional required. God Himself is our Physician and Healer. If we do not accept that premise, we cannot partake of the unleavened bread of Passover in good conscience.

This is not to say that one who may not have the faith currently to truly trust God for that healing is ineligible to partake of Passover. We all fall far short of perfect faith. We are all weak in the flesh and need God's loving mercy every day. There have been many over the years who have had to learn the significance of God as Healer the hard way, by paying the price in being seduced to seek Satan's counterfeit first. Many have known and accepted that it is not right, but have simply not had requisite faith to act upon their convictions and trust God implicitly for a time. If one admits that weakness, he can still keep the Passover acceptably. While he will surely pay a price for that lack of faith as long as it

persists—which is sin—he is far better off than the one who does so seeking to justify it as "God's will." At least the one who pushes the panic button and defaults to man's system in weakness can still acknowledge that sin and ask God's forgiveness. But the one who seeks Satan's medical system for refuge and then claims it is the tool of God's healing is in greater danger by far. Such act is the same as slapping Jesus Christ in the face. Such an individual will never be able to present an acceptable sacrifice at Passover until such diabolical heresy is purged. If ones of our beloved are entrapped in Satan's medical clutches through weakness, let us not cast any stones of judgment. No one who has not faced a very serious or even life-threatening illness can be sure he would have the faith to trust God implicitly. Perhaps so, but perhaps not. Many of these trials are being allowed by God, even now, to allow us to see where we stand in our quotient of faith. It is for our learning. We all have a very long way to go. But for those who have been so tested and been found wanting in faith for the present time, let there be no doubt it is sin, and it needs to be purged. Let none who may be receiving such medical treatments make any representations—implied or otherwise—to others in this body that it is "God's will." Personal weaknesses which are acknowledged and abhorred will be met with outgoing love, mercy, and long-suffering from this ministry. Much time will be offered for faith to be built. But anyone seeking to justify those counterfeit therapies as being of God is speaking heresy, and such will not be allowed to exist within the sheepfold, lest it endanger the entire flock. When we partake of the unleavened morsel at Passover, will we be able to do so in good conscience, truly accepting the faith once delivered about the body of Christ?

All of these principles are bound up in the emblems of Passover. Every year that passes brings us that much closer to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The time we have now is for reflection on the significance of the sacrifice of that one and only Christ, and then getting to the hard work of overcoming our shortcomings, as compared with His perfect example. Every one of you has the opportunity to have a rewarding and glorious Holy Day season. Every one of you has the opportunity to renew successfully your vows in the solemn Passover service. May you all be blessed richly and rewarded in the keeping of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread this year.

Death

Mrs. Catherine Dean of White Settlement, Texas, died Thursday, February 26, of age-related causes. She was a long-time member and will be greatly missed by all who knew her. We express our heartfelt sympathy to her family and friends.

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

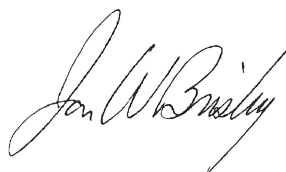
Trip Schedule

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
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
WSE-RC 17-1	03-04-04	03-27-04	The Tongue—an Awesome Responsibility #1
WSE-JB 58-8	03-04-04	04-03-04	Signs and Wonders—What Must We Know? #8
WSE-RC 17-2	03-18-04	04-10-04	The Tongue—an Awesome Responsibility #2
WSE-JB 58-9	03-18-04	04-17-04	Signs and Wonders—What Must We Know? #9

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby