

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter April 2004

Dear Brethren:

By the time you receive this letter, we already will have kept the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread another year, according to the command of God and original Church tradition. What a joy it is to know that true way of life, and to share it with all of you—those God has preserved like grains of salt—scattered about the face of this earth. From all of your devoted servants here in Oregon, we send our love, expressions of heartfelt appreciation, and our prayers for your blessing in God's care. May we continue to cherish those spiritual truths together which bring such value into our lives.

The path of a true Christian in this evil world is nothing less than daunting. Those who choose to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ are inviting a life which demands fighting upstream against a never-ending current of secular humanism, getting stronger against us with each passing year. When we are each plagued with a carnal mind which agrees by nature with the things of this world, it is extremely hard to maintain necessary spiritual focus without becoming weary at some point. Is there any wonder God's people have always had the tendency to let down over time and begin to water down sacred doctrines? It is a very natural process which has been repeated over and over again, from the history of the ancient Israelites, the records of the first-century church, and even our own experiences in God's end-time church. That is why God's admonition against letting down is so important to all of us. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

It is for this reason that God designed His commands to require that we repeat the details of His master plan for salvation on an annual basis through keeping of the Holy Days. And commissioned shepherds of God's flock are required to give meat in due season, to repeat the significance of those priceless truths so we do not forget. Those shepherds are required to admonish us all as a body to hold fast to the revelation of Jesus Christ, because there is an incessant current working to erode that foundation at any given time. It requires

diligence and perseverance just to maintain our current position, let alone make spiritual progress.

Therefore, the faithful ministry will be alert and active in serving the Church of God, taking seriously the requirements of that charge.

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Timothy 4:2–4).

It is normal to hear every once in a while that certain individuals receiving tapes and literature from Church of God, The Eternal find those messages hard to take. Whether it is the strength of the sermons or letters defending the faith once delivered, or periodic admonitions against watering down specific doctrines, it is always likely that someone out there somewhere will receive it as hard, overbearing, and lacking in love. But does that not again confirm the very tendency God said is always there within human beings, the desire to hear only "smooth things" (Isaiah 30:10)? And did not Jesus Christ—being perfect in love—receive the very same reaction when He attempted to preach the Truth? What was the reaction of the people after He expounded His role as the only means for human salvation?

These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? . . . From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him (John 6:59–60, 66).

Dear brethren, is it not also true that anyone today who is truly speaking in the name and by the authority of that very same Christ will also be thought to be hard? If it were not so, could you really be confident it was of Christ? It is the ministers of this world—along with all too many of our own former teachers—who have embraced the concept of preaching "smooth things" to make people feel good about themselves.

By comparison, this small remnant body has gained a reputation for "hammering" principles of personal overcoming, the kind of messages that cause each one of us—ministry and laity alike—to look down deep within ourselves and confront the painful things that need to be addressed. Those consuming themselves instead with either doing a "work" to the world, interpreting prophecy, doing "good works" in their community, or some combination of all of these, are typically using these activities to avoid the critical work of rooting out bad habits—personal sins. In the business world there is a label used to define an employee who always stays busy as a beaver, but never seems to accomplish the critical purpose of his/her

position. It is called "majoring in minors"—consuming time with activities that may be acceptable, but to the exclusion of the most vital priorities of the job.

There is no harder task than working to purge out sin from our hearts and minds. If God's ministers truly are being inspired by the Holy Spirit, you should see their focus on preparing the church for coming persecutions and trials. They will be admonishing God's children to awake from spiritual slumber and set about the task necessary for their own good—for spiritual survival. But at the same time, that admonition will be done with an outpouring of love and true deference for the people. Even as we already read in 2 Timothy 4:2, that exhortation—and even reproof and rebuke—must be done in longsuffering and patience. It is the very way Christ takes care of His own beloved children.

Brethren, as Mr. Raymond Cole used to express very often, there is no greater honor that could be bestowed upon you than to acknowledge that you are the very called of God. That in itself makes you of immeasurable value. This ministry recognizes your awesome position in God's plan and is reminded daily of the requirement to serve each one of you as future royal Sons in the Family of God. It is with that overriding fabric in mind that we will continue to feed you in these difficult times with the knowledge, exhortation, and even sometimes reproof that is needed to help you fulfill your glorious training toward that royal qualification.

You are each highly appreciated and valued, and it is with great desire for your good that we seek to arm you with necessary tools to wage this spiritual warfare and to succeed. Those who have turned their eyes from the true Christ—or become temporarily weary in well doing—may criticize those efforts as austere and unfeeling. But for those who can see all of these things in proper perspective, we only hope our deep love, respect, and appreciation shines through most of all. We are your humble servants, and we hope there is nothing we would not do to help you in your times of need, within the plan and purpose of the living God.

Prayer Request

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Holy Day

Pentecost

Monday, May 31

Updated Hymnal CDs and Tapes

As a result of technical issues, the songleading compact discs and tapes sent out with the new hymnal before the Feast last year are full of errors. Now, thanks to the purchase of new hardware and software, Mr. Timothy Sherwood has nearly completed a set of much improved CDs and tapes intended to replace the old defective ones. As before, the new recordings will be mailed to lead men in each area, and to anyone requesting them. After receiving the new recordings please discard the old tapes and the CDs with the black and white labels.

Second Passover

Anyone needing to partake of the second month Passover, please be advised that it is May 5, to be observed the previous evening, May 4, after sunset. Please contact the ministry as soon as possible to verify that you qualify.

Camp Tejas for Teens

Registration forms will be coming out in the next couple of weeks for Camp Tejas 2004. The purpose of the camp is to provide a special opportunity for teenage children in the church to participate in positive, structured, and wholesome activities with their peers, founded on our spiritual beliefs. This all takes a great deal of time and expense. Although Church of God, The Eternal is not the sponsor of this program, we are certainly eager to assist in promoting this service to our families with young people. If anyone would like to give a donation to help out, it would be greatly appreciated. This year the camp will run July 8 through July 18 and will be held in the San Antonio/Austin area. Housing is right on the lake, so be sure to bring your swimsuit. There will be a variety of exciting group activities and fun, fun, fun events throughout the week. You may contact the sponsors, Mrs. Jackie Wakefield (254) 965-7882 or Mr. Dave Brandenburg (602) 482-2999 for more information or registration forms.

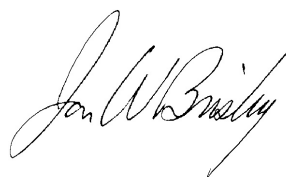
Trip Schedule

May 29, 31	Lausanne, Switzerland
June 5	Suna, Kenya

Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed	Played	Title
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
WSE-RC 17-3	04-01-04	04-24-04	The Tongue—an Awesome Responsibility #3
WSE-JB 58-10	04-01-04	05-01-04	Signs and Wonders—What Must We Know? #10
WSE-JB 58-11	04-15-04	05-08-04	Signs and Wonders—What Must We Know? #11
WSE-RC 17-4	04-15-04	05-15-04	The Tongue—an Awesome Responsibility #4

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby