

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter November 2004

Dear Brethren:

In this first issue since the completion of God's fall festivals, we take this time to express our love and appreciation for each one of you, and thank you for helping make those holy observances so successful by your manifestation of faith and willing personal sacrifice. God's people of this remnant body truly had wonderful and inspiring experiences in sites around the world, and we are thankful to God for His incredible mercy and benevolence toward us.

Now that these final commanded celebrations are completed for the year, we must all turn our attention toward the next annual cycle in God's calendar. While the religious new year begins in the spring with Nisan 1, God's fiscal (economic) year always runs from fall Feast to fall Feast. Therefore, we have all just entered into the beginning of a new economic year. God requires that we each know which year of the seven-year cycle we are in. Of course, that is determined by the year of baptism of the individual member (or that of a wife's converted husband). Since there are specific requirements in the third, sixth, and seventh years, it is imperative we each know where we are in that cycle. Not to know will result in failure to obey critical commands of God.

But there is one financial responsibility we all bear together this year, no matter how our seven-year cycles may differ. That is the requirement to save second tithe in preparation for keeping God's Feast of Tabernacles next year. Every year, once we return from the Feast, any new increase (that being subject to tithe) immediately begins funding next year's festival observances. It is the ingenious system God ordained to make sure His children would be able to keep His command to appear before Him (Deuteronomy 14:22–26).

We probably do not really appreciate the full significance of the command for saving second tithe. Since second tithe provides the means to fulfill God's command to keep annual Sabbaths, it is a critical link in maintaining our favor with God. God's Sabbaths (including annual Holy Days) are the sign between God and His people (Exodus 31:13). Without

keeping those Sabbaths properly, we have no relationship with Him. And without saving second tithe, it would be impossible for most to obey. Therefore, second tithe facilitates our ongoing relationship with God.

This point also helps debunk the erroneous claim by many former members of God's church who now say tithing is done away for New Testament Christians. Some say tithing is done away altogether, while some others claim it applies only to farmers who have crops in the field. But in either case, they are both claiming most of us do not have to tithe. Yet is it not amazing how many of these same ones still believe we must keep the Holy Days, including the Feast of Tabernacles? But how are we to keep the Feasts if we do not save second tithe? Second tithe is the very means God established to make Feast keeping possible! So second tithe and Feasts are bound inexorably. Furthermore, there can be no continuing application of the second tithe if the other tithes are not also in force. The first, second, and third tithes all stand or fall together. Tithing is either still in force or it is not. And it is the significance of keeping God's Feasts through second tithe that actually helps confirm the entire tithing law for us today!

With that in mind, are we truly focused in fulfilling that tithing command properly this year? Some have made serious mistakes in past years, allowing financial difficulties to cause them to rob from God. In some ways, it may be harder to obey the second tithe command than the one for first tithe. In most cases, we each pay our first tithe to the church as we go throughout the year. Once that money is out of our hands, we cannot get it back, even if weakness hits us later. But with second tithe, we are each required to accumulate it *all year long*, keeping that growing fund as a personal custodian. Since it is still in our physical possession, it is still there as a temptation to use wrongly if we get into financial trouble. For some who live from paycheck to paycheck, they may not be used to having any savings much at all. Therefore, to have this growing fund of second tithe in their possession may be a very serious test. But God knew that, and designed the second tithe command to force us to learn to use financial discipline. One who learns to save second tithe faithfully and never misappropriate it, is one who is building character which will show in other areas of life as well.

One who fails either to save second tithe, or preserve the tithe fund dutifully all year, is showing a serious lack of faith and self-control. Likewise, if we are flippant with those funds—not being prudent to keep them in a safe place (bank account, travelers checks, personal safe, etc.)—God may consider us defective stewards if they are stolen. It is not the unpardonable sin if we have failed in years past, but it is a sin that must be repented of and overcome, else that individual will never receive salvation. The best way to be sure we can have that sin of theft or mishandling Almighty God's tithe forgiven is to make sure we start this new fiscal year tithing correctly. When God sees true repentance by faithful obedience

this coming year, all past failures can be wiped away spiritually, as if they never happened. What a relief from guilt that can be, and what a blessing it certainly will be.

With these principles in mind, it is appropriate here to reconfirm the administrative policy of the church concerning approval of second tithe assistance to members. As most of you are aware, all excess second tithe (that left over once we return home from the fall Feasts) should be sent to the church. That excess tithe is then used to help those in the coming year who do not have sufficient tithe to cover their Feast expenses. It is also used to pay for all of the facilities and equipment provided by the church for making those convocations possible. Excess second tithe should never be held or "rolled over" for the next year by any individual without specific ministerial approval. This has been a long-standing principle taught from the early days of God's church in this age.

That being said, what criteria is used by the ministry in approving second tithe assistance to members? To begin with, assistance will be given to those new members who are just learning about God's laws, and have not had time to save tithes to keep the Feast. Assistance will also be given to those who have had very limited income during the past year, whose second tithe (faithfully accumulated) is not enough to pay for the family's projected Feast expenses. We are very happy to share God's blessings with those who have done what is required of them, but may be suffering from temporary financial difficulty.

What about those who knew the command but failed to either save the tithe, or preserve the tithe? In that case, it would really be a wrong principle for the church to "bail out" that individual and pay his/her way to the Feast. Should the church try to "remove" or dilute a God-imposed penalty for disobedience? Would God consider that the ministry had acted as a good steward of the second tithe account if we did so? Probably not. While there may always be certain extenuating circumstances that might cause some individual consideration in making these decisions, everyone should understand that the church does not intend to reward those who steal from God. Yes, misappropriating second tithe is just as much theft as failing to pay first or third tithe. One who does that will learn a valuable lesson by being forced to miss the Feast that year.

Understanding these guidelines, may we all be resolute today—through the entirety of this new fiscal year—to save and safeguard that second tithe fund. God is watching and evaluating. May you all reap the great blessings of Feast keeping through obedience to these commands.

Prayer Requests

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Marriage

It is our pleasure to announce the marriage of Miss Donna Bisson of Albion, Rhode Island, to Mr. Robert Burke, formerly of Kent, Washington. They were married October 2 in Newport, Oregon, during the Feast of Tabernacles. We wish them rich and abundant blessings as they start their life together.

Feast of Tabernacles Reports

Don Carlos, Bukidnon, Mindanao, Philippines: Mr. Mario Roque reported that they had a total of 121 people keeping God's Feast. Mr. Corsino Canta with eight others from the Luzon area traveled nearly 1,000 kilometers to combine Feast sites this year. They baptized three brethren and blessed eight children. They enjoyed joyous fellowship and many activities with fine weather throughout the Feast. They feel very blessed and grateful and extend their love and regards to all the brethren.

Townsend, Tennessee: There were 112 present for the Feast in Townsend. The weather was warm and beautiful, and there was a true feeling of unity and closeness. There were many activities and much time spent socializing in warm gatherings and meals shared. There were two brethren baptized and one child blessed. It was a very meaningful Feast for everyone.

Newport, Oregon: The weather was lovely and warm in Newport for the entire Feast, with only one night of rain and then a beautiful day following. All 105 brethren present enjoyed many activities and much socializing. The warmth and unity was evident everywhere, highlighted by the addition of new members.

Kandersteg, Switzerland: There were 25 people, including children, present for the Feast in Kandersteg. The weather was beautiful, sunny and unusually mild. The closeness and warm fellowship was very uplifting and strengthening. Their hearts and thoughts are with all the brethren, and they express affection for all with sincere prayers.

Isibania, Kenya, East Africa: Mr. Isaya Owak sent this letter: Greetings from East Africa and a hope that all are fine and back home from the Feast of Tabernacles and that the Feast was a great and good lesson for the people of the Most High. Here in East Africa, Church of God, The Eternal kept the Feast at Isibania Border Point Hotel with an attendance of 48 adults and 20 children. We experienced God's blessings that come from leaving home (present world) and being with God (millennium) where He has placed His name to meet with brethren from other areas. For some it was their first time to attend the Feast. It was a time to get away from the world (Egypt) to learn from God. We had morning services and evening services followed by Bible study after supper. On Friday we had counseling for baptism which took place on Sunday morning. We had to travel back to Suna 23 kilometers where we could get more water and 13 people were baptized. On the Last Great Day, nine children were blessed. Before we departed I asked the people, how do we plan to support the church here in East Africa? First before anything, our characters and our lives must be the primary way of supporting the church and then other ways will follow. We learned many things during those eight days and God protected His people from any sickness. The topics covered were:

Why Are We Here?

How to Give to God

Doctrinal Departure

Warning for Breaking the Sabbath

Second Coming of Christ

The World Ahead

Persecution and Martyrdom for Whom?

Church of God, The Eternal, Who Are We?

What Should We Do Till Christ Comes?

How Do Christians Come to the Knowledge of the Truth?

How Do We Deal With Lust?

Do We Really Believe?

Divorce and Remarriage

Millennial Rule of Christ

Marriage According to God's Plan

How to Overcome Worldliness

When it reached the time to depart back to our places it was very sad because people were leaving their new friends whom they will meet again next year. The members wish to thank you all and we are praying for you every day so that God may continue blessing you both physically and spiritually. We are wishing for you God's protection and we ask you to pray for us at this time. We have a very bad drought without much food. Our government is now begging overseas for support. Also we have an outbreak of measles and typhoid. May the Almighty Father bless you all in His Son's name. Your servant and brother in Christ, Isaya Owak.

Tasmania, Australia: The small group of seven in Tasmania, Australia, had a wonderful Feast. They were able to hear and see the pretaped messages prepared in advance and enjoyed a warm, peaceful and positive Feast. They send their love and regards to their brothers and sisters in the faith.

Blyde River Canyon, South Africa: As most know by now, our usual report from South Africa comes from Mrs. Lydia Bouwer and her children. But this year they were granted visas to come to the Feast in Newport, Oregon. They could not have enjoyed their Feast in Newport any more than the brethren enjoyed having them there. We do have two new families in South Africa, Mr-s. Louis Nel and their children and Mr-s. André van der Bank. Mr. Nel said they kept the Feast on the edge of the world's third largest canyon. He said unlike the Grand Canyon in America, this canyon is a rich, lush green. They had a wonderful Feast and very much enjoyed hearing the pretaped messages and are thankful they can go back over them so as not to miss a single thing. Their unanimous verdict: What a Feast—spiritually and physically! They send their love and regards to all of the brethren.

Trip Schedule

December 18	Don Carlos, Mindanao, Philippines
December 25	Burnie, Tasmania, Australia

Office

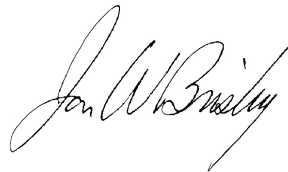
We regret to inform you that the Newport Feast Tape Request List was lost. We know many of you signed the list to receive the Feast tapes so we apologetically ask you to please, once again, let us know if you would like to receive them. This only applies to those who attended the Newport Feast site. We are sorry for any inconvenience this causes. We try our best, but occasionally a mishap occurs. You can call the office at (541) 344-8880 or email

Angela Silvers at angela@cogeternal.org and we will add your name to the "new" tape request list. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Tape Schedule

<u>Tape #</u>	<u>Mailed</u>	<u>Played</u>	<u>Title</u>
WSE-RC 62-4	09-24-04	11-06-04	Do We Really Believe? #4
WSE-JB 22-68-22H	09-24-04	11-13-04	Fundamentals of Belief: Church Government
WSP-RC 18-1	10-28-04	11-20-04	Do You Know God's Will? #1
WSP-RC 18-2	10-28-04	11-27-04	Do You Know God's Will? #2
WSE-JB 22-69-22I	11-11-04	12-04-04	Fundamentals of Belief: Church Government
WSP-RC 18-3	11-11-04	12-11-04	Do You Know God's Will? #3

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby