

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter January 2006

Dear Brethren:

Greetings and very warm regards to all of you receiving this letter, wherever you may be around the world. Your friends and devoted servants here in the Eugene church office express our love and appreciation for every one of you, knowing that God has called you to be part of His Firstfruits, and that makes you very special among all human beings alive on this earth.

The more we get to know each other personally, the easier it is to begin to take each other for granted. It is another sad characteristic of human nature that familiarity breeds contempt. As we have pointed out in many sermons over the years, it requires continual effort on our parts as members of the Body of Christ to make sure we do not allow ourselves to give in to this natural weakness. Satan will seek to divide brethren by playing upon this proclivity.

Many of you who are geographically isolated and unable to meet with others of like mind for weekly and annual Sabbaths probably think it would be the closest thing to heaven on earth to be able to assemble with others every week. It is very true that this is a valuable blessing indeed. Much encouragement can come from such regular contact. Yet those who have such a blessing realize there are also many challenges that go with regular fellowship. Each one of us is weak and working to put on more of the mind of Jesus Christ, day by day. God has called members into His church who are at all different levels of spiritual growth. At any given time in God's church there are many who have a long way to go to live up to those necessary spiritual principles. Evidence of our own spiritual deficiencies will become better known the closer we become to others. So the opportunity for mistakes to be made and offenses to surface automatically increases as our personal fellowship increases.

The key for each of us is never to give in to the temptation to seek isolation from our brethren. Yes, physical circumstances—finances, employment, family—may dictate the need to be isolated. If that is the situation in which God has placed us, we must accept that and

make the best of it. But for those of us who do have other brethren nearby, that is really a wonderful opportunity to be able to fulfill the will of God through service. Walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ requires being a servant—sacrificing the self in order to help others. And there is no better way to serve God's dear children than to be longsuffering and merciful concerning their weaknesses. The one who gets "fed-up" with dealing with the problems manifested by weak brothers and sisters and seeks to move off somewhere to "get some peace," is really saying he is not willing to be a servant, but seeks to make the self more comfortable. That certainly might eliminate the burden of dealing with challenging personal situations, but it will not provide nearly as much opportunity for personal growth.

Real growth comes when we are forced to stretch and *apply* the principles to which we subscribe intellectually. We can study diligently about being longsuffering and patient, but until given the chance to *use* those fruits, it is really just a mental exercise. What better way to stretch our spiritual muscles than to actually *manifest* longsuffering and patience in the face of a brother's weakness? Yes, it may be more comfortable to avoid the problems of human interaction by becoming a hermit, but the hermit never learns to manifest many of the fruits of God's Spirit—love, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance (Galatians 5:22–23).

We are all training to be future servants in the God Family. A major part of our preparation for filling those premier offices is learning to be real servants today. So if you are chaffing under the weight of burdens that result from brothers and sisters of the faith who are struggling with their own problems, please do not view that as something to try and escape, but instead an opportunity for greater service. Even just by showing patience to give time for spiritual growth, you will be providing a valuable service to that dear one of God, and amassing more treasure in heaven for your own future (Matthew 6:19–21).

With that principle in mind, it is certain that every one of you is very dear in our sight. God has commissioned this ministry to serve those whom He has called out of this world. He has called many into His true church who have been weighted with very serious personal problems. Some of our members today are actually ones who became outcasts from other groups because they required too much attention. All too many ministers view the perfect church member as one who contributes lots of money in tithes and offerings, but has very few problems with which to burden the ministry—low maintenance. Any member who has need of significant counseling and support, or seems to be at the center of frequent controversy—high maintenance—is ripe for being disfellowshipped. After all, it is far easier to cut someone off than to bear his burdens and continue to work with him in patience.

But this ministry understands the need to be available to help those dear ones of God, no matter how weak they may be at the time, or how much attention they may require. How

can we be the true representatives of Jesus Christ if we are not willing to care for and succor the weak and downtrodden, as did Christ Himself? God helping us, we never intend to view any of you as a bother, or seek to dismiss you and your problems. Our very own salvation is at stake if we fail to care for those in need.

We appreciate the kind consideration many of you have expressed in not wanting to be "too much trouble." Yes, it is true, it is often challenging to keep up with the varied requirements of physical and spiritual service to this scattered remnant. The travel, phone calls, e-mails, letters, administrative work—not to mention the inspired speaking and writing preparation time—certainly takes much effort and coordination. But not one of you should ever feel reticent to contact us because you are afraid we are "too busy." God helping us, this ministry will never be too busy to serve you in a very personal way. It is an imperative part of our mission to provide personal support for the children of God. If we stay busy accomplishing all manner of other things, but fail to help you individually, we can never consider it a success. Your needs will always be treated as important, and we never intend to grow tired of serving—ministering—to you.

USA Feast of Tabernacles Sites

As many of you know, we are still looking for a suitable meeting hall for the Townsend, Tennessee, Feast site for 2006. Because of scheduling conflicts resulting from the way God's Holy Days fall this coming year, the hall we have rented for the past several years will not be available to us. Unfortunately, there are very few options in the area of meeting halls large enough to accommodate a group our size. Mr. Bill McCammon is pursuing every possible option at this time, and we are confident God will provide an answer to tell us where He has chosen for us to gather. Your continuing prayers on this issue will be very appreciated.

With that in mind, we would also like to request consideration of some of our USA brethren in choosing to attend the Feast in Newport, Oregon, rather than Townsend, Tennessee. Already, because of the significant growth in members in the eastern part of the country, our attendance at the Tennessee Feast site has almost doubled in the past five years, while attendance in Oregon has remained about the same. This means we have more capacity to accommodate brethren in the Newport area (including plenty of housing and meeting hall space), and it would certainly help relieve some of the strain on resources at the Tennessee site. Until we secure a meeting hall in Tennessee, we cannot estimate how many brethren we can actually accommodate there. The more brethren planning to come to Townsend, the more difficulty we will have in finding a hall large enough to meet our needs.

If any of you have the flexibility to be able to attend at either site, it could be a real help to the church if you might consider choosing Newport in 2006. We have never had a serious problem in past years in proportional attendance, and have therefore never needed to assign brethren to a specific site. Since 1983—the first year we had two sites in the U.S.—there has always been a reasonable balance in attendance, even while allowing brethren to choose freely where they wanted to attend. We definitely do not want to take away that benefit if there is any way to avoid it. It is a real blessing for brethren to be able to move from one site to the other as they so choose from year to year. Therefore, if there are any who might be willing to volunteer to help us by attending in Newport, we would certainly prefer that solution as a means of equalizing our attendance between the two sites.

Office

When returning tapes to the church office, we would like to ask that you send them to our physical address: 1471 Pearl St., Eugene, OR, 97401, instead of our post office box: P.O. Box 775. Sending the tapes to our Pearl Street address will help us in processing them more quickly. We appreciate your returning the tapes when you are finished using them and we thank you in advance for sending them to our street address.

Also, as a reminder, in an effort to save shipping costs for those who return their tapes by mail, it is suggested that before returning the tapes, look on the side of the tapes for marks. If there are two marks (or more) on the tape, it has been used and erased at least two times. For a good quality recording, a tape cannot be reused more than two times. When these tapes come back to the office they are discarded. So, if you receive any tapes that have two marks, there is no need to return them. Either discard them or keep them for your personal use. Hopefully this will save you money in the return of tapes. Also, reusable tapes (those without two marks) may be saved and brought to the Feast sites each fall instead of mailing them back. As always, you are welcome to keep any tapes we send you.

Trip Schedule

February 11 Knoxville, Tennessee

March 11 Trichardtsdal, South Africa

March 18 Suna-Migori, Kenya

Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JB 80-1	12-08-05	12-31-05	A Survey of the Book of Job #1:
WSE-RC 25-3	12-08-05	01-07-06	Exploitation of Social Issues/Godly Work Ethic #3
WSE-RC 25-4	12-22-05	01-14-06	Exploitation of Social Issues/Godly Work Ethic #4
WSE-RC 25-5	12-22-05	01-21-06	Exploitation of Social Issues/Godly Work Ethic #5
WSE-JB 80-2	01-05-06	01-28-06	A Survey of the Book of Job #2
WSE-JB 80-3	01-05-06	02-04-06	A Survey of the Book of Job #3
WSE-RC 88-1	01-19-06	02-11-06	Refinement or Rejection #1
WSE-JB 80-4	01-19-06	02-18-06	A Survey of the Book of Job #4 Satan's Relationship With God

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby