

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter January 2007

Dear Brethren:

We send you, as dear friends, our expressions of sincere love and respect, with prayers that you continue to prosper and thrive in all that is most important in this life. It is always an honor to address you as the called ones of God in this tumultuous age, and to continue to do this work to support and encourage you toward your hope of incredible glory.

It was a real blessing to complete another trip to Australia in late December to visit our scattered brethren in that part of the world, and to enjoy the fellowship and oneness of mind with those God has preserved in that region. Once again, we were blessed with smooth travel there and back, nice weather, and too many blessings to count. May we never take for granted the beneficence of our loving Father who has made it possible to support our far-flung membership through these ministerial visits. May we always remember to thank Him and continually to renew our attentions to the work of service to the sheep of His flock.

During this last trip, we had the opportunity to share some sightseeing outings with our Australian brethren and to visit some of their natural scenic areas, both on the mainland and in Tasmania. The beauty of God's wonderful creation is manifested around the globe, and Australia has some stunning natural treasures to be sure. What is interesting is the context in which human beings interpret these natural wonders. In Australia, much emphasis is laid upon the history of the aboriginal natives and their "authority" as custodians of the land, which they erroneously believe goes back over fifty thousand years. There was virtually no place you could go without finding a monument or marker highlighting the mythological beliefs of native peoples about rock formations, trees, animals, and supernatural forces. The Australians of European decent are now ashamed of their own history of settlement, consider themselves to be interlopers, and have turned to revere and idolize the pagan practices of the primitive predecessors of the land. It is identical to the philosophical movement we have witnessed in the United States involving the American Indian. Rather than acknowledge that it is God who gave us this land as part of His promise to Abraham and his offspring, American Israelites are ashamed that they now possess the land, and have

become mesmerized with Indian culture, religion, and all manner of pagan practices. Both in Australia and in the United States, great emphasis is laid upon the historic superstitions of the native peoples, and a kind of awe is reserved for their ideas and philosophies.

Yet when you analyze these specific customs according to God's Word, it is easy to see exactly how we should interpret them.

For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be inquired of by you. And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone (Ezekiel 20:31–32).

What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it (Habakkuk 2:18–19).

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? (Galatians 4:8–9).

So the deceived heathen peoples of the world—who have not yet been given the privilege of knowing the One True God—worship inanimate objects of nature, and they are counted as foolish by the real Creator. Yet the very people who were blessed with real understanding—Israel—have abandoned it in favor of this very same foolishness, calling the superstitions and myths of the indigenous natives the "hidden wisdom."

It may be easy for us to recognize the fallacy in these principles when it relates to worship of mountains, rocks, trees and animals, but we need to keep in mind that idolatry is very subtle, and God's children have polluted themselves time and time again by serving that which "are no gods." The manifestation of all false gods begins in the human mind, and we are all wired by nature to elevate and exalt things that are not worthy of worship. Anything we put in place of obedience to the whole law of God is an idol. When there is any part of our lives in which we are allowing compromise to God's commands, an idol exists there, just as surely as if we were bowing down to a tree or rock formation. So when we witness the foolishness of these superstitious practices of the heathen, rather than scoffing at their

deception, we should ask reflectively, where do I harbor similar false gods within my own life? Those of us who take this point seriously can avoid falling into the very traps that have plagued Israel for thousands of years.

Death

We were saddened to hear of the death of longtime member, Mrs. Jeanette McCammon, of Maryville, Tennessee, on December 17. Mrs. McCammon was 78 years of age and had been suffering with declining health for several years. Her husband, Bill, and she served the brethren in the Southeast for many years and she will be missed greatly by all who knew her. We offer our sincere condolences to Bill, their children, and extended family.

Trip Schedule

February 17 Idaho Falls, Idaho

March 17 Suni-Migori, Kenya

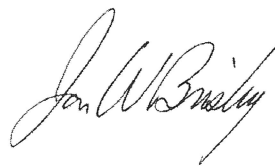
Archived Monthly Letter

Enclosed in this mailing you will find, not only the new *Monthly Letter* from Mr. Jean Aviolat, but also an archived letter from Mr. Raymond Cole, originally written May 1994, addressing some common misconceptions about Church of God, The Eternal. As mentioned in last October's *Announcement Letter*, we are planning to re-release some of Mr. Cole's letters periodically at certain times in the future. This is one of those times. We hope all of you will be enriched by these historical writings which never become outdated.

Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed	Played	Title
HFT-RC 83-7-10	11-30-06	12-30-06	The Place of Safety
WSE-RWL 4	12-14-06	01-06-07	The Black Dog of Depression
WSE-JB 80-22	12-14-06	01-13-07	A Survey of the Book of Job #22 Job's Final Reply to Zophar
WSE-JB 80-23	12-28-06	01-20-07	A Survey of the Book of Job #23 The Final Speech of Eliphaz
WSI-JB 88	12-28-06	01-27-07	If You Ever Plan to Marry
HFT RC 86-6-1	01-11-07	02-03-07	What Is a Witness? #1
HFT RC 86-7-2	01-11-07	02-10-07	What Is a Witness? #2
WSE-JB 80-24	01-25-07	02-17-07	A Survey of the Book of Job #23 Job's Last Reply to Eliphaz

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby