

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter February 2007

Dear Brethren:

Another month has come and gone, and with that passage of time is the opportunity to address you again in this mailing, expressing our love and regard for all of you who are continuing to keep faith with that way of life revealed to us in this age. We pray for your continued strength to face the challenges of your lives, both physical and spiritual, and to manifest the determination to keep fighting to put on more of the mind of Jesus Christ. Sometimes it seems we are overwhelmed and may even move backwards, but do not be discouraged. The real test is to get back in the fight and be willing to struggle to regain that lost ground. God is looking for that tenacity in each one of us to persevere. Those who will ultimately succeed are those who love God's way so much they refuse to allow any setback to defeat them. With the power of God's Holy Spirit at our disposal, there is no reason for our failure.

Spiritual Principle—Holy Day Attendance

Even though it is only the beginning of February, it is not too soon to be making plans for keeping the upcoming Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. Passover is early this year—on the evening of April 1—and will arrive very rapidly. With every other preparation God requires of us for this upcoming season, it is also beneficial to remind ourselves that God commands our appearance before Him.

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles (Deuteronomy 16:16).

So this upcoming Feast of Unleavened Bread is one of those "command performances." Yes, it is true today that we are so few and so scattered about the face of the

earth, that there is not sufficient means to provide congregations and ministers in all areas where we have brethren. Some then, either because of distance, health limitations, or finances, are truly not able to make a long journey to be at one of those designated places where God promises to place His name. If such is actually the case, God understands that and does not hold the individual guilty of sin. But for the rest of us who do—with proper foresight and planning—have the capacity to be there, God expects us to show honor to Him by appearing. It is not a suggestion, but a command.

But the passage we just read in Deuteronomy 16 commands only "males" to appear before Him. Does this mean it is not as important for female members of the Church to attend, and that they are held to a lesser standard? Some may have heard this concept in times past, that God prefers all family members to attend the Feasts, but if it requires too much sacrifice, at least make sure that the male head of household attends on behalf of the family. Is this a proper interpretation? The answer is found by understanding the importance of the command given to those physical Israelites of old, and perceiving what is its counterpart—spiritually—for the New Testament Church today.

Why did God command only males to appear at the Feasts? In the physical administration for ancient Israel, God emphasized the accounting of tithes, offerings, and duties of families who held property within each tribal estate within the Promised Land. They were a physical people, and He dealt with them on the physical plane to emphasize cardinal principles. God was their King, and required the periodic payment of taxes (tithes), tribute (offerings), as well as ceremonial deference through personal appearance at the King's court. History shows this same precedence in the ritual behavior within many human kingdoms. The ancient kings of Europe (as well as the Far East) also required tribute from the noble landowners of the kingdom, and insisted that they appear personally when called, to show honor and loyalty to their sovereign ruler. Very often, such "command performances" involved travel for the noble's whole family, who would appear for a grand feast sponsored by the king. But minimally, that head of household—the legal owner of the land and controller of the wealth—was required to represent the family in such formal appearances, and to offer gifts of honor, and to pay required taxes when due.

In the same way, God commands that those male heads-of-house appear, and that "they shall not appear before the LORD empty" (Deuteronomy 16:16). It was through the males that God assigned ownership and responsibility for the family estates in Israel. Property and wealth passed from father to son as legal heirs, and it was those males whom God held accountable to pay tithes, give offerings, and show respect to the king by personal appearance. The males were the authority figures within the kingdom. But does this literal guideline apply in exactly the same way today for members of the Church of God—spiritual Israel? No it does not.

Why? Begin by answering the question, who are the "spiritual nobles and landowners" of the Church? Who are the ones God is holding responsible for obedience? Only male members of the Church? Well, who is it that God has offered to become Kings and Priests in His coming Kingdom? Only human male members of the Church today? Of course not! In that Kingdom, there will be neither male nor female (Luke 2:35–36), even as the Apostle Paul said within the Church today there is no such distinction which makes members—whether male, female, Jew, Gentile, bond, or free—lesser than any other members (Galatians 3:28). Yes, males are still required uniquely to be assigned any speaking duties within the Church, but both male and female are equal potential inheritors of the promises of eternal life.

If the command to ancient Israel for ceremonial appearance applied to the *inheritors* of the time, who are the equivalent inheritors within the Church today? Just the males? Of course not! If the female members of the Church—the Body of Christ—expect *just as equally* to inherit eternal life and to become Kings and Priests, then they are counted with *equal obligation* today to perform the rituals of honor and deference to their King, from whom they seek favor to receive great riches.

Anyone who believes that baptized members who are female have less obligation than their male counterparts to attend, do not really count those women as potential inheritors. ". . . For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48). The baptized women in God's Church have been begotten of the Holy Spirit as much as the men, and they are offered just as great positions in the coming Kingdom. As potential heirs, they are therefore equally obligated to obey the commands required of heirs, and to appear when and where the King commands.

Birth

Miss Elizabeth Wakefield would like to announce the birth of her son, Jackson Kelly, who was born Sabbath, January 20, at 7:15 in the evening. He weighed seven pounds, eight ounces and was nineteen inches long. Mother and baby are doing fine.

Deaths

We are saddened to announce the death of Mrs. Jane Atieno Anyumba of Suni-Migori, Kenya. She was the mother of Mr. Zablone Anyumba, a lead man under Mr. Isaya Owak. Her husband preceded her in death by a week. We extend our prayers and sincere condolences to Mr-s. Zablone Anyumba and their extended family and friends.

Also, Mrs. Evelyn Marsh of Veneta, Oregon, died Sabbath morning, February 3, of age-related causes. She was 76 years of age and had been a member of the church since its beginning. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. We express our heartfelt sympathy to her husband, Delmer, and her family and friends.

Camp Tejas for Teens

Plans are well underway for this year's Camp Tejas. 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, it would be greatly appreciated. This year the camp will run July 12 through July 23 and will be held in the Lake Tahoe, California area. If you would like to send your teen to camp or sponsor a teen, you may contact the sponsors, Mrs. Jackie Wakefield (254) 965-7882 or Mr. Dave Brandenburg (602) 482-2999, for more information. Also, all teens going to camp need to contact Mrs. Wakefield with their flight arrival and departure times so she can coordinate ground transportation to and from camp. Registration packets with more information will be mailed out at the end of February or the first part of March.

Office

We could use your help, brethren, in making sure our records are up-to-date. In our busy daily lives we move, or get new email addresses, cell phone numbers, area codes, etc., and sometimes we forget to pass the information on to the office. This can create a lag in receiving the monthly letters or CDs, etc. We have enclosed a form with this month's letter to make it easy for you to send us any information that we should have in our files. If you think you have sent us information but are not sure, please take the time to send it to us again. We would rather confirm that we have it, instead of wishing that we did. Thank you for your help.

Trip Schedule

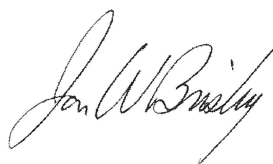
February 17 Idaho Falls, Idaho

March 17 Suni-Migori, Kenya

Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed	Played	Title
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 #24 Job's Last Reply to Eliphaz
HGD RC 86-8-3	01-25-07	02-24-07	The Testimony of God's Witnesses
WSE-JB 80-25	02-08-07	03-03-07	A Survey of the Book of Job #25 Bildad's Last Speech
WST RWL-6	02-08-07	03-10-07	Pre-Passover Examination 2007

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby