

Church of God, The Eternal

P. O. Box 775
Eugene, Oregon 97440
www.cogeternal.org

The late Raymond C. Cole
Founding Pastor
Jon W. Brisby
Pastor, Director

Offices in: United States
Philippines
Switzerland
Kenya

Announcement Letter December 2007

Dear Brethren:

It is a pleasure to address you all again in this new monthly mailing, and although we are so far removed from most of you geographically, we love you as the beloved of God, and continue to keep you all in our thoughts and prayers. We hope this letter finds you in good spirits in spite of the physical and spiritual trials you are facing in this world. Above all, we have much to be thankful for because of God's calling and preservation in His faith once delivered. May you continue to persevere and fight through all obstacles which threaten. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

Spiritual Principle—Jubilee and Seven-Year Cycle

Most of you received the sermon material on the Jubilee and seven-year cycle this year at the Feast of Tabernacles, or since then by audio recording in the mail. Interestingly, the examination of that material has been eye-opening for the ministry as well as for the laity. A particular very good question has been asked by some members as a result of our expounding upon Leviticus 25.

If Mr. Armstrong taught us to observe the land sabbath every seven years according to the time we were baptized into the Body of Christ, does this not mean that we should also be observing the land sabbath of the Jubilee year once we have been baptized for fifty years in God's Church? This is a question that does not seem to have been addressed by either Mr. Armstrong or Mr. Cole in years past, probably because the church, until recently, has not been old enough to have very many members facing their fifty-year anniversary. But right now we have quite a few members on the very cusp of this distinction, so it needs to be answered.

In review, the land sabbath is the seventh year of a seven-year cycle. During that year, we are to rest our land and forego planting a garden or cultivating our property for produce. (We have always been taught to track our seven-year cycle, not only to know what year to

rest our land, but also to know when our third tithe year falls, as well as the sixth year and its special obligation.) But Leviticus 25:10–11 shows plainly that the fiftieth year of Jubilee is also a land sabbath year, when no planting or commercial harvesting is to be performed. The forty-ninth year is a land sabbath year (in the regular cycle of sevens), but so, too, is the fiftieth year! Israel was commanded to rest the land two years in a row at this time, both in the forty-ninth and in the fiftieth. As highlighted in the sermon series, Mr. Armstrong also accepted the Jews' assertion that the Jubilee year is an intercalary year, meaning it is a special—extra—year inserted between two normal cycles of years.

What does this mean for those of us in the New Testament era of the Church? If Mr. Armstrong confirmed that the normal seventh year land sabbath applies to all of us, we can find no basis to say the special Jubilee land sabbath does not equally apply. We have searched for some basis to conclude it is an exception and does not apply, but can find no rationalization that will suffice. If that is true, how does that affect our personal calculations of years and our obligations before God?

First, it means that once those of you who have been in the church a very long time have kept your seventh land sabbath year (the forty-ninth year), it is followed by your Jubilee year—the fiftieth—which is *also* a land sabbath year. You will have two land sabbath years in a row.

Second, since this Jubilee year is intercalary—or inserted as an extra year between two seven-year cycles—it means the first year of the next seven-year cycle begins *one year later* than usual! The Jubilee year (year fifty) is *not* the first year of the next seven-year cycle. Year *fifty-one* becomes the first year of your next seven-year cycle, meaning everything in the future becomes postponed by one year. This means your next third tithe year is actually one year later than in past cycles. Rather than it being your fifty-second year, it will be your fifty-third year (still the third year of the new seven-year cycle).

There are not very many, but there are a few who have been in the church long enough to have seen a Jubilee year already come and go. Because we were not thinking of this obligation at the time, we did not advise you about that second land sabbath, or of the affect upon your following seven-year cycle. This means that some few of you are actually off in your calculation of third tithe year and land sabbath year by one at this time. The special *Seven-Year Cycle of Years* report we designed to give you this information for the future did not consider the Jubilee year in the equation. Therefore, those reports for years fifty and beyond are not accurate, and we need to revise them. We will be working to make this programming adjustment as soon as possible to allow us to provide new accurate reports.

If you have been baptized less than fifty years to date, you are not directly affected by this issue. But we have quite a number of members who will soon be reaching that milestone, so we wanted to get you this information right away so you can plan.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the church office. We realize this is a somewhat complex counting issue, and we will be very happy to help any of you who need personal assistance in understanding and having the correct counting of years. Thank you to those members who asked the logical question after hearing those sermons, which led to this further amplification of those principles confirmed to us by Mr. Armstrong.

Office

From time to time it becomes necessary to restructure certain areas of responsibility in the church office in order to handle the tithes in a responsible manner. Organization is imperative to maximize accomplishments and keep personnel as limited as possible. In this case, we are restructuring the CD/tape mailing procedure. Presently, we are sending out two sermons at a time once every two weeks. Because of recent changes in post office regulations, we have found that it would be much more cost effective for us to send the sermons out three at a time every three weeks. The new three-sermon mailings will begin in December. We will continue to give the assigned dates for the sermons in the *Announcement Letter* each month. We are confident this new system of mailing the sermons will not cause difficulties for anyone and will result in a considerable reduction of cost. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the church office for clarification.

New Moon

The new moon, Tebeth (tenth month), will begin on the evening of December 9. The new moon day is December 10.

Trip Schedule

December 22	Sydney, Australia
December 29	Somerset, Tasmania, Australia

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JB 80-39	11-15-07	12-08-07	A Survey of the Book of Job #39 God Addresses Job #2
WSE-JB 98	11-15-07	12-15-07	Are Any English Bible Translations Holy?
WSP-JB 90	11-29-07	12-22-07	Warning Against Complacency
WSP-RC 12-1	11-29-07	12-29-07	God Has One Mind; Not Divided #1
WSE-JB 80-40	12-20-07	01-05-08	A Survey of the Book of Job #40 God Addresses Job #3
WSE-JB 80-41	12-20-07	01-12-08	A Survey of the Book of Job #41 God Addresses Job #4
WSP-RC 12-2	12-20-07	01-19-08	God Has One Mind; Not Divided #2

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby