

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter August 2008

Dear Brethren:

It is a sincere pleasure to greet, with this new monthly mailing, all of you who have an affinity with this remnant body and the work we are doing to preserve the truth of God in these last days. You are all very much loved and appreciated for your example to hold to the original teachings which God gave through Mr. Herbert Armstrong. May God grant you the tenacity to overcome every obstacle which rises up in your path and fight through to defend those divine precepts in your daily living. Never underestimate the significance of your own personal faithfulness. It does not require very many who are truly living God's Truth to be an incredible beacon in this dark world. Your role in this remnant body is key. Never doubt that for a minute, no matter how isolated you may feel physically because of geographic distances.

We are happy to report that our move to a new office facility here in Eugene, Oregon went very well, and we are thrilled with the favor which God has shown to us through every step of this project. The search for a larger facility to enhance our ability to serve better our far-flung members around the world began over three years ago. We looked at many facilities and found a number of them which had great possibilities. But in every case we were quickly thwarted from making any progress to negotiate terms which would be suitable. We were not discouraged because that was simply a sign God was not leading us in that direction, and presenting a locked door is one of the classic ways He communicates His will to us. So we kept searching, confident He would show us the right option at the right time.

About a year ago, the real estate broker who has helped us so much, Mr. Allen Ruggles (who also helped Mr. Raymond Cole find the office which the church rented for the past ten years), took us to see a particular suite in an industrial complex which had become available. He knew it was too small for our needs, but wanted to show it to us because the building structure and amenities seemed to him to be what we were seeking. He really just wanted to confirm he was right about understanding what we liked and did not like. Yes,

that available suite was much too small for our needs, but he was also correct that the building overall was very attractive to us. He mentioned that the United States government occupied a large suite at the south end of the building, and it was too bad that facility was not available, but since they were in the early portion of a seven-year lease, it was very unlikely to become vacant. We commented offhandedly that if it ever did become available by some strange occurrence, we would be very interested. Because that was so very unlikely, we put it out of our minds and moved on to seek other options. But then just a few weeks later, Allen called and said, "You won't believe what happened. The federal government just notified the building owner that they are consolidating their Eugene operation into another facility in another town, and are planning to terminate their lease within a few months." What a surprise! This was the first miracle which set us on the road to securing the new home we are enjoying now.

After walking through the space last summer, we knew it would be a terrific fit for the church operations, if some modifications could be made internally. To provide the total square footage we would need overall, we asked for a second floor mezzanine level to be built in the central third of the suite, providing accommodations for our audio/video processing facilities, as well as the library for Mr. Raymond Cole's book collection. We also needed major renovations in one-third of the suite to turn a partitioned office space into a church meeting hall. This was a major request, but the building owner, Mr. Peter Windeler, went out of his way to be cooperative and to explore possibilities. He immediately secured the services of an architect and a structural engineer to evaluate the feasibility of our requests, and he paid for those services out of his own pocket. Over the course of ensuing weeks, we received positive feedback from these commissioned studies. Everything we wanted was possible.

By September of 2007, God had opened up no other options that seemed reasonable to us. Peter Windeler's building was the only viable lead we had, and we were then only nine months away from the end of our five-year lease on the Pearl Street office (the second five-year lease on that facility since first moving into it in the summer of 1998). If there was any hope of being able to move such a large operation somewhere else—anywhere else—by June 30, 2008, we would have to act quickly, one way or another. Peter was bending over backwards to accommodate us. He was very reasonable in negotiating the cost of a long-term lease—should we choose to enter into a contract with him—as well as the shared expenses for the one-time renovation project. After much prayer and beseeching God to show us truly His will, we committed to a preliminary letter of intent with Peter, just before the Feast of Tabernacles. This was not a final binding agreement, but confirmed our sincerity in wanting to do business with him, if all aspects of our requirements were met. With that, Peter commissioned the architect to draw up full plans for the project.

The next hurdle was confirming when the US government would vacate the premises so that we could begin the suite renovation. They reserved the right to stay until March 21, 2008, to provide time to prepare their own new office space before moving. Given that it was likely to take a full three months to complete our renovation project, there would be little time to spare in finishing by the end of June. Everyone knew there were many risks, and many opportunities for that timeline to fail. We also had to receive approvals from the City of Eugene, to prove that we met all of their bureaucratic requirements.

The first obstacle was getting approval for a church operation to occupy a facility zoned for light industrial use. (Most of the other tenants in the building have only minimal office space supporting larger warehouse distribution operations. The federal government was unique, in that they were strictly a clerical office facility, but the government has special allowance to use any facility they want to, whether they meet the technical zoning requirements or not. We did not have such preferential treatment, and were required to meet the full legal occupancy standards for "intended use.") Normally, a church would not qualify for that. But in our written proposal to the city, we emphasized the unique nature of our operation. The primary purpose of our use of the building would be to mass produce literature, audio, and video programs for distribution to a worldwide membership. We also wanted an audio/video production studio for producing new recorded programs, which would just happen to include space for a small "studio audience" as part of the weekly program. Our written proposal to the city was honest. They understood that we intended to use the facility for church services. But we hoped the fact that our services were not open to the public or advertized for drop-in attendance would make our use distinguished from the run-of-the-mill church. Unlike most churches which serve only a local membership with all kinds of public outreach programs, our facility is primarily a central worldwide headquarters for a scattered, decentralized membership, supporting them mainly through products distributed by mail and over the internet. The city did have an approved industrial category called "audio/video production facility." We had to attend a special meeting in December with city officials to present our proposal and to answer their questions. We knew if God did not want us to proceed with the project, this would be a likely way for Him to "pull the plug." The other parties involved with us were worried, because they knew how rigid the City of Eugene had always been with their standards. There are many reasonable business proposals which have been denied or seriously hindered by the bureaucratic local officials. We were pleased, therefore, when the city contacted us with full approval of our plan, giving us much more confidence that God was truly blessing this endeavor. With that hurdle out of the way, we cemented our relationship with Peter Windeler on December 30, 2007, by signing a seven-year lease, with the option to renew for two additional five-year periods beyond that.

Although the federal government decided they would like to stay beyond March 21, Peter told them they had to get out because work crews were scheduled to start demolition

and renovation immediately. We would need every bit of that time to meet our deadline of June 30. Most of the work was completed by an experienced three-man crew, including Peter himself who acted as foreman. We have never seen a more unusual circumstance than a wealthy commercial property owner rolling up his sleeves to lead the construction crew on such a major project (it is most unusual to begin with for such a man to even have the universal building skills that he possesses). But Peter had an incredible sense of integrity and loyalty, and it became his personal mission to bring this project through on time for us. Over the next three months, he, his wife, Patti, and the construction team worked tirelessly to drive the project forward, and they did an absolutely amazing job. Peter is not one to settle for any shortcuts, and he has proven his determination to do all with the utmost quality. But he also worked zealously to save as much money as possible for the church, conserving building materials and getting the most out of every working hour. His own personal time was not even part of the project cost. He donated more than three-months worth of twelve-hour work days to the project. (As of this writing, Peter is still single-handedly doing all of the final little things himself—along with church staff helpers—to tie up loose ends within the interior which need to be completed.) Throughout the building phase, Peter coordinated with the specialty subcontractors (electrical, heating and air conditioning, fire sprinklers, etc.) to keep the project on schedule. That was no easy feat given the proclivity for many subcontractors to fail to meet time commitments. Yet in spite of many setbacks along the way, the project stayed on course overall.

We had hoped to finish enough work to be able to receive approval from the city building inspector to begin moving in a week before the end of June. That would have made it much more convenient to transition gradually from the old office to the new one. That was not to be. In spite of the work team's best efforts to complete things as quickly as possible, it required every bit of the last week of June to be ready for inspections. There were even some unforeseen complications which caused some very late nights in order to stay on track.

Beside the need to be out of our old office completely by the end of the day on Monday, June 30, there was another reason June 30 was significant. That was also the last day of the year on which the church could file with the county tax assessor to receive a waiver of property taxes for the next twelve-month period (non-profit organizations like ours are eligible for a waiver of taxes on property leases or purchases if specific requirements are met). If we missed this deadline, it would cost the church approximately an additional \$10,000 before we could file for the same waiver again next year. But to qualify, we had to have the city inspector's signed approval to occupy the premises, and we had to be paying to occupy the space as of June 30.

It was legal for us to begin moving office furniture into the new space ahead of time, as long as we did not have office staff members there "working" at their normal duties. So

we scheduled moving day to be Sunday, June 29. We had an incredible turnout of volunteers from the local Eugene and Vancouver church congregations, and over the course of one long day, we moved completely out of the old Pearl Street office. We could not move all of the furniture and equipment into its final place, because those areas of the building still not completed had to be kept open. As of Monday morning, we still did not have city approvals to work in the new office (the church staff was given the day off), but we had met our goal of being out of the old office completely.

The city inspector was called and arrived on site at 2:00 PM on that same day, June 30. Although he found some things that needed to be done before final approval, he gave a conditional approval which allowed us to legally move into the new space. With that signature, we had what we needed to file our paperwork with the county office by the close of that same business day and preserve our tax exempt status for the next year. The office staff was also able to start work on Tuesday morning, July 1, to begin getting set up again to provide all of you with those critical services you depend upon from the church.

You are receiving a detailed account of all these events so that you can share with us the awe and appreciation for all that God did to bless this project from beginning to end. There is no doubt in our minds that God was walking before us and fighting every battle for us. We were praying for it to be easier. We were asking that God give us a new office facility as early as three years ago. To those prayers He simply said, "No." It is as if He insisted upon us fulfilling our commitment to that previous five-year lease right down to the very last day of it. No matter what we did, we could not get out of there any earlier than June 30. Yet He orchestrated events so masterfully that we were able to vacate the old office at the very last moment and then occupy the new office the very next day, July 1—but not a single moment earlier. How amazing.

We now have the kind of facility to do our work which will allow us the strategic space and configuration to support you well into the future with new as well as existing services you depend upon. We do not know what God has in store for us. We make no ill-advised prophecies. But we have confidence that God is indeed leading and inspiring, and we are excited to feel His hand motivating and guiding. We are patient to wait for His direction, but eager to respond when He makes His will known to us all along the way.

Thank you to all of you who have been beseeching God for His help with this project. Your prayers were answered absolutely to the fullest.

Update

Mr. Algie Crane of Somerset, Tasmania, writes to say thank you to all of the brethren for their prayers concerning the head injury he received as the result of an automobile accident. He was taken to the hospital, but he is home again and feeling much better. He knows that without God's intervention, he would not be alive today. He says that above all, we should thank our great, loving, and merciful God, who does answer prayers for those who put their trust in Him.

New Moon

The new moon, Ellul (sixth month), will begin on the evening of August 31. The new moon day is September 1.

Camp Tejas

We would like to express a special thank you to Mr. David Brandenburg, Mrs. Jackie Wakefield, and their volunteer assistants, Miss Rebecca Engel, Mr. John Louis Nel, Mrs. Kollina Nalder, and Mr. Justin Nalder, for their personal sacrifice and willingness to make Camp Tejas a success again this year. We would also like to thank the church ladies for their contributions of baked goods. From all accounts, the teens had a wonderful eleven-day summer camp experience, made possible by much hard work from the organizing staff.

It is to those volunteer church members who have sacrificed so much that we all owe a debt of gratitude. We must never take for granted that there will be another camp opportunity next year. It is all according to the willingness of Mr. David Brandenburg and Mrs. Jackie Wakefield as the sponsors, organizers, and driving force behind the project. The church will certainly continue to support them as the principals as long as they choose to continue that volunteer service.

Feast of Tabernacles Family Night Socials

This year a special family night potluck social will be organized in both the Townsend, Tennessee, festival site, as well as the Newport, Oregon, site. In Tennessee it will be held on Thursday evening, October 16, at the Highland Manor Motel meeting facility (more details to follow on location). The evening will include some volunteer musical performances, as last year.

In Oregon, the potluck will be held on Sunday evening, October 19, in the same Newport Elks Lodge where we meet for all church services. Anyone who is interested in participating in the fun night should contact Mr. Robert Lebleu who is coordinating all performances for this special evening. He can be reached at (541) 689-2912, or by e-mail at robertlebleu@hotmail.com.

Tennessee Motel Tax Exemption

In past years, brethren arriving in Townsend, Tennessee, for the Feast of Tabernacles could use one of our tax exempt forms to give to the motels where they had reservations in order to be exempt from the Tennessee sales tax on their accommodations. But the Tennessee Department of Revenue has made changes, and now the forms and rental fee must be submitted by the church only. If anyone would like to take advantage of the tax exemption on their accommodations, they will now need to send in the payment for the accommodations to Mr. Richard Litz, who will deposit the money in the church account in Tennessee and then write a check for the amount you sent, along with an exempt form, to send to the motel/house vendor. If you have any questions, you may call Mr. Litz at (865) 984-0649.

Excess Second Tithe

This is another reminder of the need for second tithe to cover administrative and facility costs for the Feast. We want to reserve adequate for an enjoyable and meaningful Feast. At the same time, we all must remember, to keep the Feast requires the rental of halls, transportation, aid to those who are deserving, etc. If we all contribute, the burden for each is relatively small. A huge thanks to those whose hearts and minds are willing. May God richly and abundantly bless you in all ways.

Second Tithe Requests

Please be reminded that requests for second tithe assistance for the Feast of Tabernacles need to be in by September 1. Any who need assistance should notify us in ample time.

Trip Schedule

September 20, 30

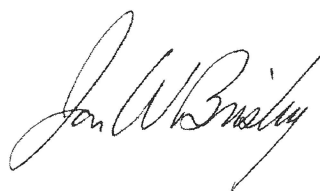
JWB

Stephenville, Texas

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
CL2 42 (RC)	07-03-08	07-26-08	Principles of Christian Living: Longsuffering #2
WSE-JB 22-96-24I	07-03-08	08-02-08	Fund. of Belief: Divine Revelation Prophets and Divine Revelation #2
CL2 43 (RC)	07-24-08	08-09-08	Principles of Christian Living: Longsuffering #3
WSE-JB 22-97-24J	07-24-08	08-16-08	Fund. of Belief: Divine Revelation Prophets and Divine Revelation #3
CL2 44 (RC)	07-24-08	08-23-08	Principles of Christian Living: Longsuffering #4
CL2 45 (RC)	08-14-08	08-30-08	Principles of Christian Living: Longsuffering #5
WSE-JB 22-98-24K	08-14-08	09-06-08	Fund. of Belief: Divine Revelation Divine Revelation Through False Prophets and Donkeys
CL2 46 (RC)	08-14-08	09-13-08	Principles of Christian Living: Longsuffering #6

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby