

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter December 2008

Dear Brethren:

Very warm greetings to all of you in this new month, no matter where you live around the globe. We are thankful for God's continuing love, protection, and prosperity in this work of service to the Church, and eagerly report that He continues to bless and sustain us in every way. We pray likewise that you are having your daily needs satisfied, as He has promised (Psalm 37:25). Although many of you are being challenged in many aspects of life, whether physical, spiritual, financial, or with family, you have God's promises of help when you are putting Him first in all things. That is the kind of assurance that can give us all hope and strong solidarity to face whatever awaits us in these tumultuous last days.

The latest major election here at home is now past, and we have a new President-elect in the United States, awaiting to take office in January. What do these events portend for our future? Many seek to speculate and to draw conclusions about whether this result is good, bad, or indifferent. There is no doubt that we can see a number of Biblical prophecies concerning the last days continue to take shape, but we will continue to caution you against jumping to ill-advised conclusions about specific times, events, etc. We are still *watching* as God commanded (Matthew 24:42), not drawing conclusions prematurely. But how should we be thinking about this recent election? Are you sure your orientation is a good one?

The reason that the true people of God were taught never to vote in elections is that we believe God is the One who sets up and takes down all government leaders (Daniel 2:21). Some of our former brethren have now adopted the idea that the way God does this in "democratic" countries today is to use our personal votes as His means to accomplish that will. This idea simply does not hold water. If all the members of the church vote in conscience for the most "conservative" candidate available, but the "liberal" candidate prevails, how has our voting been used by God to put His selected man in office? The whole premise is contradictory to our premise of God's decisive intervention. The only way our votes could play a part in God's will is if He led us in advance by the Holy Spirit to vote for

the candidate of His choice—the one He had predetermined to ascend to that office. But God said specifically that His will includes setting up *the basest of men* in those offices before Christ's Second Coming (Daniel 4:17). Therefore, in order for you or me to be able to "vote" in accordance with God's will, we would often have to support the worst of the candidates, from God's perspective. For any of you who have struggled with this issue of voting, are you really willing to vote for the vilest individual, if that is whom God has decided to promote? For example, will you vote for an individual who justifies the murder of the unborn as a "choice"? That was God's choice this time. Would it have been yours? You see, the whole idea of voting is totally contradictory to a belief that God is in control of the decision. We cannot have it both ways. We either believe God does indeed supernaturally manipulate circumstances so that the individual of His choice ascends to that office, or else we believe that our "votes of personal conscience" actually matter in the outcome. Which is it? What if two or more candidates were equally distasteful, and different members of God's church each voted in conscience, some for one and some for the other? Is God inspiring some of His people to vote for the candidate of His choice, but others to vote for the "wrong" one? If you "vote your conscience," but the other candidate prevails, what must that mean? It would mean you actually voted against God's anointed! Are you really willing to put yourself in that position? Unless any of you are claiming that God has sent you a personal vision or a dream of His specific will for the future, casting a vote in any election is actually a presumptuous and disrespectful act. God needs none of us to make sure His definitive will is accomplished.

But even though we did not vote, how do you react to the outcome of this election? Are you troubled? Disappointed? Depressed? Despondent? If so, why would that be? God's appointed man won the election! God gave him the victory as part of His perfect plan in these last days. If we truly believe that, why would we be troubled? We are only troubled if we had hopes of making this world better right now, based upon the ascendancy of individuals to office who would *mitigate* the slow degradation of our worldly societies. But God has made it plain that this world will only get worse and worse—not better. That is for certain, because God has confirmed it (2 Timothy 3:13). If God says we will only see things get worse and worse, and that is part of His glorious plan, why are we fighting it in mind? We all inherently want our lives now to be good, and better in the future—not worse. But that is the carnal orientation exerting itself. The Kingdom of God we all claim to love cannot come until the sins of this world come to the full. So praying and hoping for things in this world to get better (or even just to stay the same) is actually praying against the coming of Jesus Christ! Can we see that? Yes, it is far easier to accept that premise intellectually than to feel it down in our hearts. That is true for all of us. But it is true nonetheless that if we are wholeheartedly in support of the perfect will of God, we are not hoping and pining for things in this Babylonian world to prosper still. So we all have something to celebrate. The next duly-appointed national leader by God's choice has been revealed. His plan is right on schedule. Regardless of the particular character of that leader, we all should be thankful.

Office

The cutoff date for 2008 tithes will be December 31, 2008. Please keep this in mind for those contributions you wish to have included in your 2008 statement. Remember, checks and money orders must be dated and envelopes postmarked in 2008.

New Moon

The new moon, Tebeth (tenth month), will begin on the evening of December 27. The new moon day is December 28.

Deaths

We were very saddened to hear of the death of Mrs. Rosalia Ortiguero, of Bacag, Pangasinan, Philippines. Mr. Corsino Canta reported that she died at home at the age of 89. Mrs. Ortiguero was the widow of Mr. Pedro Ortiguero, the first Filipino minister ordained in the Radio Church of God under Mr. Armstrong to raise up churches in the Philippine Islands in the 1960s. Mr. and Mrs. Ortiguero had joined Church of God, The Eternal in the mid-1990s, with Pedro dying in October 1997. Mrs. Ortiguero was faithful to her convictions in the faith once delivered to the end, and her death marks the end of an important generation in the history of God's work in these last days. Our expression of condolences go out to her entire family in light of this significant loss.

We also are saddened to announce the death of Mrs. Harriet Sturgeon of Columbia, Maryland. She was ninety-one years of age at the time of her death, which was age-related. She was a devoted long-time member of the church, and she will be missed by all. We offer our sincere condolences to her family and friends.

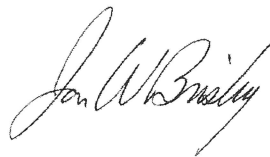
Trip Schedule

December 6	JWB	Don Carlos, Mindanao, Philippines
January 24	JWB	Mansfield, Massachusetts
January 31	JWB	Stephenville, Texas

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
CL2 57 (RC)	11-13-08	11-29-08	Principles of Christian Living: Goodness #1
WSE-JB 109	11-13-08	12-06-08	How to Avoid the Post-feast Blues
CL2 58 (RC)	11-13-08	12-13-08	Principles of Christian Living: Goodness #2
CL2 59 (RC)	12-04-08	12-20-08	Principles of Christian Living: Goodness #3
WSE-JB 22-103-24P	12-04-08	12-27-08	Fund. of Belief: Divine Revelation The Character of the Revelator
CL2 60 (RC)	12-04-08	01-03-09	Principles of Christian Living: Goodness #4
WSE-JB 110	12-24-08	01-10-09	Diet Beyond the Basics #1
CL2 61 (RC)	12-24-08	01-17-09	Principles of Christian Living: Goodness #5

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby