

Announcement Letter December 2009

Dear Brethren:

Very sincere greetings to all of you, those beloved spiritual children who are holding to that faith which God delivered to His Church in these last days.

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of our beloved friend and Elder, Mr. Leon Whitaker, who was taken from us on Friday, November 20, after an illness lasting over the past few months. From the time that Leon first told us of his early symptoms in August, and then after the progressive loss of function caused by an aggressive brain tumor, we had hoped and prayed that God might heal him fully. We know now that this was not what God had in mind, and it was instead His purpose to allow Leon to rest from the burdens of this physical life and to wait peacefully in sleep until his appointed resurrection.

We offer his family our most sincere condolences, as well as to all of you who knew Leon well—even for very many years in God's church—and who feel this loss very personally.

It is times like these that our faith in a purposeful God can be so very comforting. Selfishly, we wanted Leon to remain here and to continue to be the strong and devoted friend he had been for so long. We counted on him, and we even took him for granted because he was so steady and so reliable. He had always been so healthy, and he was only in his early sixties so we naturally expected him still to "be here." Yet God's will does not operate upon the expectations of human beings. He has not given us the ability to see the future or to predict the specifics of His plans for any one of us. We live only day by day, and we must act with urgency, because no matter how young or how old, today could be the last one that our perfect Creator has willed for us to continue in the flesh. We simply do not know how much time we each have remaining. But we do know and believe that God's will is perfect, even when we do not understand it or our natural minds do not want it to be that way. He always knows better than we do. Having confidence in that very fact is the source of incredible comfort in times like this, when we grieve for the loss of one so dearly beloved.

We must be very happy for Leon, because he has now finished his course and his future is set, according to God's perfect judgment of love. He is now free from the cares of this life and the struggles of the flesh. But the rest of us trudge onward because it is God's will for us to continue to grow and to master these lives—the responsibilities we have been entrusted with for our own little seasons.

What does that mean then for us? Leon was more than just a stalwart member of the church. He was an important minister who assisted in the nurturing and encouraging of the brethren as a Local Elder. His leadership in our Vancouver, Washington, congregation was of immense value, and his work as an assistant to help with writing and speaking on Sabbaths and Holy Days was such a blessing. But God knows what He is doing, and so it means we have to carry forward and make the best of things, even though we will always miss him incredibly. Thankfully, we have the capacity to fill that void and make sure the people of God receive the attention and support they need, but Leon is leaving very "large shoes" for us to fill. Without an ordained elder in Vancouver, those brethren will now have to rely more upon me for personal counseling and support. That is a duty willingly and gladly accepted, but oh, how much will be missed the work of such a trusted and reliable assistant.

No other immediate plans are being made or anticipated. The workload will be absorbed, and we will carry forward. Until God shows a definite path He wants us to follow, no precipitous actions will be taken just to fill a position in a knee-jerk reaction. Patience and trust in God will pay off, and He will show us exactly what He wants us to do to take care of the future needs of this little flock. Have no fear of that, and temper your grief for Leon's death with the knowledge that there truly is a glorious spiritual master plan being worked out here. All of these things, even the painful ones, are for a valuable purpose. Leon understood that and put himself willingly into the hands of that God. If we can learn to do the same, we need not fear anything that our futures may hold.

Trip Schedule

Mr. Brisby:

December 19 Philippines
 January 23 Maryville, Tennessee
 January 30 Port St. Lucie, Florida

Mr. Richard Litz:

January 30 Port St. Lucie, Florida
 February 6 Stephenville, Texas
 February 13 Phoenix, Arizona
 February 20 Little Rock, Arkansas

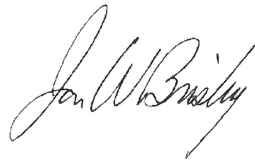
New Moon

The new moon, Tebeth (ninth month), will begin on the evening of December 17. The new moon day is December 18.

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
CL2-80	11-05-09	11-28-09	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #12
WSE-JB 118-5	11-05-09	12-05-09	The Truth About Tithing #5
CL2-81	11-25-09	12-12-09	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #13
WSE-JB 118-6	11-25-09	12-19-09	The Truth About Tithing #6
CL2-82	11-25-09	12-26-09	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #14
CL2-83	12-17-09	01-02-10	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #15
WSE-JB 118-7	12-17-09	01-09-10	The Truth About Tithing #7
CL2-84	12-17-09	01-16-10	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #16

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby