

## Announcement Letter February 2010

Dear Brethren:

Very warm and personal greetings to you all, with prayers that you continue to remain firmly grounded in the Truth which we all received as a wonderful gift from God in this age.

One evidence that we are growing ever closer to the return of Jesus Christ is the progressive escalation of demonic activity. Not only do we see it in the world at large, but more significantly in the lives of God's own people. Satan is incredibly active in attacking every single one of us and pulling out the stops to exploit our individual weaknesses. Do you feel that pressure? Do you recognize how that enemy is seeking to weaken you personally? Many of you do, and being aware of his devices has helped you to respond with God's power and to buttress your own spiritual defenses. It is not that we always make the correct decisions immediately. Sometimes we are caught off guard at first and find ourselves tempted into wrong behaviors or responses. When that happens, if we truly love God and the faith once delivered, we stop, assess the truth of our situation, acknowledge the wrong turn and then make things right. Sometimes those tests are very private, and no one else knows about those mistakes except for God. Other times our mistakes are more public, and the process of correcting an error might require apologies to others besides God. And herein lies the big test.

Often, our pride can become a major obstacle in doing what we need to do to make things right, even when we know the truth down deep inside. How many in past years have stumbled and been swept out of the church because they simply refused to stop and acknowledge a wrong turn. Rather than fix it early on, they insist upon holding to that wrong course out of pride, because to admit a mistake is just too humiliating. All too many of our beloved friends and family members have become ensnared by such circumstances. Therefore, when we see examples of those who are willing to swallow their pride and make those apologies, what an inspiring example it has been to all.

Recently, one of our beloved brothers and valued elders in Kenya, Mr. Isaya Owak, has experienced such a challenge. It is not our intent to publicize specific mistakes more than absolutely necessary. It is always better to cover the weaknesses of our brethren—not expose—whenever possible. The only reason anything is being mentioned here at all is that

certain statements were recently written and sent to some of you by Mr. Owak in the heat of personal distress, and that means it is not fully a private matter anymore. The good news is that Mr. Owak has since expressed sincere regret for those communications, and has written to those affected to tell them so.

The pressures in many of these disadvantaged countries are numerous. And because poverty is so rampant, an entire *industry* of charity schemes has made it a very difficult environment in which the true church must operate. The churches of this world pour money into these countries as a part of their "Christian works," and the people are therefore conditioned to see the *harvesting* of such charity funds as a means of support and income. Isaya Owak has proved over time that he really does love God's Truth. I am confident of that. But that does not mean the pressures of these daily critical physical circumstances for the people do not present strong temptations.

To combat this insidious orientation and to make sure we in no way were allowing Church of God, The Eternal to fall into the worldly pattern of these satanic charity works, some difficult administrative decisions were made a couple of years ago. After providing initial funding from God's tithes to build an infrastructure for the church in Kenya and to help them get grounded in the Truth, further funding was suspended because it became very evident that many were attaching themselves to our fellowship only because of *the money* we were sending. People were treating us just like these other churches of the world. They would profess to believe what we were teaching, as long as there was some financial advantage. But sure enough, when the money was stopped, the allegiance of many dried up overnight. How many truly care anything about the faith once delivered? Very few. But there would have been absolutely no way to test that reality short of withholding the funding. It was our only means to find out who really cared about the doctrine enough to stay, even without financial support. If the faithful of God scattered about the rest of the world are *very few* in number, and very few even live where they can meet with others of like mind, why would it make sense that there were dozens and even hundreds of Kenyans at this particular time who were truly convinced of God's Truth? Why so many in one African country, dwarfing the membership across the rest of the world? It might have been so, had that been what God had chosen to do, but the lie of that devotion was proven when regular money support was terminated. All of a sudden, most of these "devoted members" defected and joined other splinter groups, most of them now keeping perverted doctrines. So much for a *major movement* in Kenya. No, it appears that—like is true in the rest of the world for now—the number of truly sincere and devoted in Kenya are few indeed.

The circumstances which prompted these decisions two years ago involved some serious mistakes on the part of Mr. Owak. But unlike most, he has held on. He has apologized for his part. He has continued to struggle to hold to the faith. Having a brand

new baby, not to mention the seeming weight of the world upon him, he reacted emotionally and sent an e-mail message to some of you which he now sincerely regrets. Of course we accept his apology. We will embrace anyone who truly demonstrates a fervent desire to love what we love, and to practice what God has commanded us to do. Which ones of us do not need forgiveness? Which ones of us have not made mistakes? All too few are willing to swallow their pride and admit those mistakes. When one of our beloved brethren does so, we should be overjoyed and eager to embrace him.

How many others are out there right now whom we love dearly, but who are separated from the body because they have let pride get in the way of making things right? It does not matter what the mistake was. It matters not how serious the issue may have been. Once the dust settles, if there is a new understanding now and sincere acceptance of the real truth of the matter, we will open the doors wide and make their reconciliation just as easy as possible.

Mr. Isaya Owak has given us a wonderful example of that very orientation. He has proven that enduring short-term discomfort to admit a fault and make things right is the proof of one who really loves God's Truth. How many others out there whom we love could take the same path and make their lives so much better. Why continue with the present guilt—knowing down deep inside that you misjudged a situation and made a mistake—but are refusing to make it right out of pride? We all make mistakes. We all need the mercy and loving forgiveness of God (and sometimes our brethren). That manifest love is a proof of the true Church of God.

May we each step out boldly and courageously to acknowledge our mistakes, and then set about to make things right. For those who are willing to do so, what an absolute release. What a lifting. What freedom from the burdens of guilt. And what an incredible inspiration for the entire Body—the Church.

## **Death**

Mr. Joel Betzler of Robbinsdale, Minnesota, had been confined to a wheelchair for about 17 years due to an accident and had been suffering under the care of the medical profession in a residence for the physically handicapped. God's perfect will and mercy has taken place to relieve Joel of his many years of suffering. He died peacefully during an afternoon nap on Monday, January 11, 2010. He was 48 years of age. His family shunned him when he came into God's Church back in the 1980s. He will now rest in sleep until his appointed resurrection.

## Wedding

Mr. Jesse Daniel LeBleu and Miss Angela Dawn Nalder were married January 3, in Oahu, Hawaii. The ceremony was performed on the beach on a beautiful day in what many consider paradise. It was a private ceremony with the couple's immediate family attending. We convey our congratulations and best wishes as they begin their life together.

## New Moon

The new moon, Adar (eleventh month), will begin on the evening of February 14. The new moon day is February 15.

## Holy Days

Lead men should be making appropriate preparations for these days:

Passover (evening)	Sunday, March 28
Night to Be Much Observed	Monday, March 29
1st Holy Day—Days of Unleavened Bread	Tuesday, March 30
2nd Holy Day—Days of Unleavened Bread	Monday, April 5

## Trip Schedule

### Mr. Brisby:

March 13 ..... Gordon's Bay, South Africa

### Mr. Richard Litz:

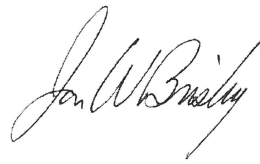
February 13 ..... Phoenix, Arizona  
February 20 ..... Little Rock, Arkansas



## Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
CL2-85	01-07-10	01-30-10	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #17
CL2-86	01-07-10	02-06-10	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #18
CL2-87	01-28-10	02-13-10	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #19
WSE-JB 118-9	01-28-10	02-20-10	The Truth About Tithing #9
WSE-JB 124	01-28-10	02-27-10	Pre-Passover Exam: Common Misconceptions About Passover
CL2-88	02-18-10	03-06-10	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #20
CL2-89	02-18-10	03-13-10	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #21

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby