

Announcement Letter March 2010

Dear Brethren:

To the beloved of God holding fast to the true teachings of Jesus Christ in scattered places around the globe, your devoted servants greet you with warmth and very sincere appreciation. Here we are at the very threshold of a new year in God's calendar, and the arrival of Passover and the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread coming at the end of this very month. How quickly time progresses.

How quickly time progresses indeed. We are also marking the thirty-fifth anniversary of the formation of Church of God, The Eternal as an organized fellowship, which began in February 1975. How many things have changed in this world during that time, and how many things have changed within God's church as well. We have seen the world decline progressively and push ever closer to the brink of terrifying events prophesied before the end of the age. During those same years we have also witnessed the majority of God's people abandon the foundation of His Truth and become subverted by the deceptive concepts of Satan. That once great church from the early twentieth century is now splintered and scattered, with God's beloved sheep either groping in confused darkness, or lost from sight altogether. Indeed, how many things have changed in the last thirty-five years since we first became an organized body under the leadership of Mr. Raymond Cole. Who could have ever imagined, in 1975, everything that would transpire and what we would live to see unfold before our very eyes.

For all of the radical change we have witnessed around us, what has not changed is the doctrinal beliefs and orientation of this little group called Church of God, The Eternal. Through thirty-five years we have held firmly to a bedrock foundation of teachings and administrative practices which have not wavered. Oh yes, we have certainly endured many changes within this little group, but those changes never related to *the teachings* defended by the leadership of this remnant body. In fact, it is the *defense* of those cardinal principles upon which we were founded which has, at times, generated upheaval and change. What were those resultant changes? The defection of particular ministers and lay members—initially who claimed agreement with our tenets for a time—whose personal trials forced them ultimately to choose between *the doctrine* and their own deep-seated, "pet" concepts.

We have seen many come and go over those past thirty-five years. Some came to loathe our doctrine and admit it outwardly. Others claimed to revere the doctrine but took exception with the men at the organizational helm, later proving by their *actions* that they really did not agree with our doctrine as claimed. In many of those cases, because of the relative influence of the individuals involved, it would have been very easy to capitulate and give them what they wanted. Had we only been willing to "bend a little" on certain principles, key individuals would have remained with us and carried forward, happily in unison. But because Raymond Cole refused to allow doctrine to be a bargaining chip, and because the continuing leadership in this body since his death in 2001 has held firm as well, we have been accused by those who vehemently advocated compromise.

Most groups do indeed change over time, because crises involving personalities and circumstances form like powerful hurricanes, applying pressure upon the status quo "in the moment." And under such intense pressures, human wisdom dictates that we *bend to the wind* like a supple palm tree, or otherwise risk being uprooted and destroyed through arrogant inflexibility. Church of God, The Eternal has been like a rigid oak upon the seashore, facing the brutal assaults of many storms. There is a reason why oaks are not found along most tropical coasts. Their makeup is inherently incompatible with the environment. Only trees which *bend and flex* under frequent and violent storms can survive for any length of time. So inflexible oaks are doomed to extinction in such a natural realm.

Many times our enemies have consigned this little group to extinction because either Raymond Cole or his successor refused to compromise cardinal principles of our doctrine. On many occasions, a particular *crisis of the moment* dictated that we should flex, even just a little bit, to avert the immediate danger. After all, that is what *savvy* organizations do. That is what all of the other groups that have formed out of our parent organization have done during their comparatively brief histories. Compared to us they are all young and tender, but they are much more adaptable than we are, because they have proven that their doctrines can and will change as the need arises, "for their survival." But here we are, like an old and grizzled, out-of-place oak tree, exposed upon the tropical seashore, vulnerable to impending destruction because of our inflexible trunk and root structure. Surely we cannot survive for long. Oh, maybe for a few seasons, but sooner or later, our end must come, because we are foolishly out of our league among such a forest of palms—those savvy, astute, and flexible organizations.

Yes, here we are, thirty-five years later, still holding firm against all odds, and increasingly becoming a noticeable icon for no other reason than that we are still alive! To most we may still be just an iconic curiosity. To those who really hate us—especially the ones who once walked with us but who have since departed because of personal reasons—we are a constant reminder of what they abandoned. They consigned us to

destruction, because they were the wise ones and we were the foolish, yet here we are, still enduring as much as ever before in our history. As long as we continue to thrive, small but enduring, we will continue to be a plague upon their conscience. They know better. They have compromised. We have not. The fruits of their choices have become very compelling in past years as a testament, while our survival and flourishing in such a hostile environment is making many more stop and ask, "I wonder if that little group might actually have something?"

What is certain is that our survival all of these years is nothing short of a miracle. Many vicious storms in years past should have broken us. And no inherent wisdom on the part of our human leaders has been our salvation, but only the divine intervention of God to shield and protect us. A small, weatherbeaten, defiant oak still stands upon the seashore by the grace of God. We are still very much in His hands, and will thrive only as He continues to favor us. As long as we hold fast to the tenets delivered to the true Church of God in these last days by Jesus Christ—our Rock and foundation—we will preserve His favor to keep us. We have not changed them in all of these years, and that is easily provable by anyone who cares to evaluate honestly. God helping us, we will continue to hold fast against the mighty gales to come, depending upon divine protection to save us from destruction. We are convinced of that Truth. God helping us, we will not change. That has been our history. It is a milestone worth noting.

May all of you enter this Passover season with joy and deep appreciation for the blessing of this way of life, and the opportunity once again to renew our vows to God within the fellowship of a small but resilient body that truly loves what God gave to us by divine revelation in this age.

New Moon

The new moon, Nisan (first month), will begin on the evening of March 15. The new moon day is March 16.

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

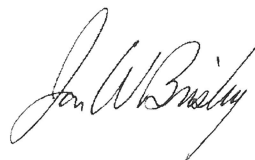
Mr. Brisby:

March 13 Gordon's Bay, South Africa
April 3 Mansfield, Massachusetts
April 5 Providence, Rhode Island

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
CL2-87	02-18-10	03-06-10	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #20
CL2-88	02-18-10	03-13-10	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #21
WSE-JB 118-10	02-18-10	03-20-10	The Truth About Tithing #10
Holy Day Sermons	02-22-10	—	Passover/Unleavened Bread
CL2-89	03-11-10	03-27-10	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #22
WSE-JB 118-11	03-11-10	04-03-10	The Truth About Tithing #11
WSE-JB 118-12	03-11-10	04-10-10	The Truth About Tithing #12
CL2-90	04-01-10	04-17-10	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #23

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby