

Announcement Letter June 2010

Dear Brethren:

We hope and pray that all of you enjoyed a very fulfilling celebration of Pentecost, and that you continue steadfast in your devotion to God's true revelation in this age, looking forward with anticipation to the soon-coming return of Jesus Christ. Each one of you remains a very dear and precious instrument in God's plan, and your faithfulness today is a quiet witness that one day will be recognized as a fulfillment of His prophesy never to allow the light of that faith to be extinguished in this generation. May you never doubt the importance of your role, or the value of your example to others within and without this remnant body.

One of the regular dilemmas faced by the ministry is selecting the most appropriate material to give to you in sermons and letters. Wherever the true ministry of Jesus Christ resides, they will be taking that responsibility very seriously, cognizant of the necessity to feed the sheep of God. But how can we be sure we are feeding them properly? For the church to thrive, those precious members need enough food, and the right food. Given that God is holding those ministers very accountable, how can we be sure to fulfill His will in this regard? To err in providing too little spiritual food, or even worse, defective food, would not only decimate the church, but put those very ministers in danger for their own salvation. It is a serious consideration indeed. It is one that your servants in this body certainly take very seriously.

One of the key distinctions of this group over many others is our focus upon the need for self-mastery and overcoming. There are many fellowships coming out of our parent organization that seem content to justify spiritual coasting. In essence, they feed their congregants with a diet of spiritual junk food. It tastes great, it fills the belly, but it does not truly nourish. It certainly does not prepare them for the reality of our future. It is a message that tells the people they are basically OK the way they are, as long as they remain loyal to an organization. Or perhaps it is a message packed with emotional appeal, to entertain and to titillate the senses. Maybe it encourages a sense of well-being by emphasizing how special they are to be called. Perhaps it is a message guaranteeing security in a place of safety, which always seems to make people feel satisfied. Often, it involves focus upon detailed speculations about future prophecy, and people love to think they know how and when events will unfold. But what is not so common is a persistent diet of instruction emphasizing the necessity and methodology for crucifying the natural nature and putting on more of Christ's perfect character.

Those kinds of sermons are not well received by a membership basically craving to be told they are OK as they are, and viewing Sabbath services as an opportunity to be entertained for a couple hours through pep talks and friendly socialization.

So Church of God, The Eternal has been rather distinct by comparison. Whether it was the meaty instruction of Mr. Raymond Cole for our first twenty-five years, or the continuing focus by your current servants today, our consistent mantra has been the need to fight—not give in to—the dictates of our carnal minds, and to engage in a marathon of perpetual spiritual warfare.

That approach sometimes solicits complaints that our messages are too negative. Why can we not hear more about hope, encouragement, and happy things? Why must every sermon leave us feeling that we are failing—burdened with more guilt about our sins? Is it too much to ask that every once in a while we might get a message which inspires without making us feel inadequate?

Many times, this kind of feedback is offered to us in jest by individuals who truly love strong sermons but also like bantering with us in fun. That is always appreciated by us as well, and we encourage all of you to feel comfortable in relaxing around us as your devoted friends. But beyond the jesting, please do not assume we do not likewise think seriously about those very same questions. What if it is God's will for us to "lighten up" a little? What if it might be true we are losing the ability to inspire effectively because our messages are not mixed with enough "feel good" elements? These are important questions that deserve reflection and serious consideration. And if any of you have harbored such feelings more seriously down deep, that is nothing for which to be ashamed.

We have indeed reflected upon these questions, but time and time again, it seems God is compelling us to continue providing the kind of instruction which is necessary to prepare us for hard times ahead. There is so much that is needed, and so few opportunities to address key doctrinal points. We simply do not seem to have the "luxury" of wasting any sermon or letter opportunity with "fluff." We are indeed in a spiritual war zone. How would it be right for us to imply otherwise to the beloved children of God? The key messages of God to the ministry and laity of the last days is clear: The ministry is not to spare in warning and exhorting Israel in obedience.

Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins (Isaiah 58:1).

And God's faithful remnant must ever be on guard against falling into the very trap of thinking which is prophesied to snare many in the last days:

That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, *speak unto us smooth things*, prophecy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us (Isaiah 30:9–11) [emphasis mine].

We simply cannot—in good conscience—give you *smooth things*, when your very lives are at stake day by day. It is one of Satan's great deceptions to convince God's children that there is really no urgency; all things continue as they are. Tomorrow will be like today, and we still have "time." But the day is coming when there will be no more time. For each one of us, our "time is up" when either we die, or when Jesus Christ returns, whichever comes first. Any one of us could die today, or tomorrow. When God chooses to take one of our beloved unexpectedly, it gives us pause for the moment. But how often we let that pass and then fall back into complacency. But a sense of urgency is a blessing to the people of God, and those who find value in that will be so much better off in the long run.

This does not mean that our communications with you should be void of inspiration and encouragement. Hopefully, that is not how most of you feel. The knowledge of the real truth of God should always be encouraging, even if difficult. Real hope lies in knowing the right path, and having confidence that treading that path will lead to glorious peace and total euphoria in the Kingdom of God. The path is a difficult one, but how would we be doing any of you any favors by suggesting an easier one which will not lead you to the correct destination? We hate it if it seems always that we are pointing toward the steepest, most tortuous trail, and admonishing you to tackle it. But we are sincerely trying at the same time to expound the wonders and glorious satisfaction which awaits over the crest, at the top of that mountain. It is indeed worth whatever pain and sacrifices may be required today to achieve that glorious end.

Perhaps we fail sufficiently to emphasize the positive aspects of this difficult journey. Maybe if we did a better job of reminding you of all of the good of God's way, it would make the bitter pill of the overcoming process more bearable. We have certainly tried to put all that we proclaim in the context of its benefits for your blessings and peace of mind, both in this life and the next. But to any extent we have failed to convey that encouragement sufficiently, we certainly apologize, and we will continue to focus upon helping you see *the real hope* of the future which God has in store. But please understand that such encouragement can never be offered in the wrapping of *fluff* which so many other ministers seem happy to feed to a gluttonous laity. Our conscience will not allow us to feed you such tripe. And God would utterly reject us as His spokesmen if we turned under pressure to encourage you towards spiritual slumber. May God keep you all in His loving care, alert, watchful, and industrious in preparation for that glorious wedding Feast to come.

Thank You

Mrs. Julia Shaw of Marion, South Carolina, would like to thank all of the brethren for the wonderful outpouring of love, prayers and support she has received. She is also very grateful for the money sent to help her get reestablished after her devastating house fire, and she would like to thank each of you for your help.

Scheduling Emcees, Opening and Closing Prayers

We are beginning preparation of printed schedules for the Feast of Tabernacles, so we need to know as soon as possible if any will be attending at a different Feast site than usual. We must soon begin work on the scheduling of emcees and those who give opening and closing prayers. We thank you in advance for your help.

Part of our preliminary work involves the music program for the two Feast sites. Any member who has attended one of our Holy Day convocations in the past is eligible to participate in the fall Festival music program. Mr. Richard Meyn and Mr. Timothy Sherwood will be mailing this year's performance material within the next couple of weeks to individuals involved. They would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in participating at either Feast site.

New Moon

The new moon, Tammuz (fourth month), will begin on the evening of June 12. The new moon day is June 13.

Trip Schedule

Mr. Brisby:

June 19 Elkhart, Indiana
June 26 Toronto, Ontario, Canada

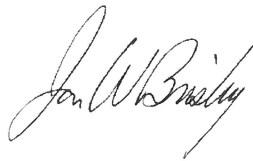
Mr. Richard Litz:

July 3 Vancouver, Washington
July 10, 17 Eugene, Oregon
July 24 Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JB 118-15	05-13-10	05-29-10	The Truth About Tithing #15
HFT-2003-6-1	05-13-10	06-05-10	Basics of Child Rearing #1
HFT-2003-7-2	05-13-10	06-12-10	Basics of Child Rearing #2
WSE-JB 126	06-03-10	06-19-10	What Do We Know About the New Moons?
WSP-JB 125-1	06-03-10	06-26-10	Spiritual Murder and Manslaughter, Part One
WSP-JB 125-2	06-03-10	07-03-10	Spiritual Murder and Manslaughter, Part Two
WSE-JB 22-111-25A	06-24-10	07-10-10	Fund. of Belief #25: Marriage and Divorce: Introduction
WSE-RC 15	06-24-10	07-17-10	The Hope of Tomorrow

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby