

Announcement Letter August 2010

Dear Brethren:

What a pleasure it is to greet the dear children of God again this month and to confirm our heartfelt appreciation for every single one of you. We regard you, not because we think you are perfect people, and not because you offer us some form of political "clout" by your choice to affiliate with this little remnant, but because you are the beloved children God has called out and preserved at this critical time in history to defend His Truth in your lives.

Many other groups may exist *in reality* as instruments of their leaders' selfish pursuits, whether for monetary profit, personal influence, or to fulfill some spirit of competition with other groups who likewise formed out of our parent organization. Although some might also believe the same thing about us, the truth is we are here because we love *the doctrine* God delivered to the last-day Church through divine revelation. It was defense of that doctrine which caused this group originally to form in 1975 under Mr. Raymond Cole, and it is that very same purpose which has sustained us for the last thirty-five years. It still is today. We are not here to make a living off of religion. We are not here to make some big political splash. We are not here to use the office of the ministry for some personal "power trip." We are here because we love what God gave to the whole Church in the twentieth century under Mr. Herbert Armstrong as a pearl of great price, and we simply do not intend to give it up. Because that is true, we are thereby disposed to regard *all of you* with real warmth and affection because *you, too*, have shown that you love that very same Truth. We are determined to serve you and to sacrifice for you because you love what we love. And we believe strongly that the day will come soon when Jesus Christ will confirm that our collective defense of that original doctrine was indeed an honor to His name.

Spiritual Principle: Blessing of the Children Service

Each year, when we gather at the Feast for the final service on the Last Great Day, by tradition we perform a special service called the *Blessing of the Children*. It is based upon the example of Jesus Christ, who laid hands upon little children to ask a special blessing upon them.

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much

displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them (Mark 10:13–16).

Through God's inspiration of Mr. Armstrong, we were taught that the blessing of little children by the laying on of hands was something that the true Church should continue to perform, even as Christ set the example. Over many years, it is easy to begin taking for granted such traditions, so before we gather together again to keep the fall Feasts in just a couple of months, it makes sense to be reminded of the real meaning of this very important ordinance.

Jesus Christ highlighted little children to symbolize the orientation required for any of us to enter into His Kingdom and to receive eternal salvation. That does not mean little children have "good character" we should emulate. They are all born with rebellious, carnal, selfish natures, and that *contrary bent* becomes manifested very quickly in all little infants. So that is not what Christ is talking about. But what little children have that adults do not is a teachable attitude. When corrected in love, a little child will respond positively, unlike most stiff-necked adults. This is the element which is required in any of us who truly desire to inherit God's Kingdom.

Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swear to give unto your fathers . . . Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it (Deuteronomy 1:35, 39).

But what are the specific reasons for Christ offering a *personalized blessing* upon an infant through the laying on of hands? In general, it relates to God's promise to give special benefits to those who show legitimate fear to God and seek to obey His commandments:

Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes That your days may be multiplied, *and the days of your children*, in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth (Deuteronomy 11:18, 21) [emphasis mine].

The converted of God who seek to honor Him are promised specific blessings for their obedience, including special protection for their children. Especially because we live in an evil world, there are many dangers confronting innocent little children. Even very dutiful parents may not be able to protect their children from every threat. Whereas the world is subject to time and chance, the called of God are offered special guidance and intervention to protect them and their families. It is a wonderful comfort to know that our children are promised divine—special—protection not offered to everyone in the world. The service for laying hands on those new little ones is an exercise to confirm this very special blessing of God.

But brethren, be very careful how you think about this special blessing given by means of the laying on of hands by the ministry in Christ's name. All too many over the years seem to treat this blessing like a "lucky charm"—some pagan talisman. It is as if some members have come to view this blessing as an unconditional "get out of jail free card," guaranteeing to keep their children wrapped in a special blanket of safety, no matter what. But that is not true! God's promises of special protection are *always* conditional upon obedience. No one ever gets an *unconditional* blessing. It is not like having a magic amulet you hang around your neck to give protection to the wearer. Such idea is pagan to the core. God's blessings are dependent upon continuity in keeping the Commandments. Our little children, who are especially vulnerable and too young to be held responsible for their own actions, are still blessed *only as their parents* (or other legal guardians, like grandparents, etc.) show faithfulness to God. The children of the world, though likewise vulnerable and innocent, do not enjoy special protection. And neither do families "in the church" who *behave* like the peoples of the world!

It is amazing how often certain adults who were themselves raised in the church—but who have since left the church and become part of the world—still attach special meaning to having their own children blessed on the Last Great Day. Why is that? They do not want to obey God's laws anymore. But somehow they still believe their children will be truly "blessed" if they participate in that ritual. That is a classic example of treating the special blessing as a pagan lucky charm. And such will never be acceptable. God will not annul His laws of cause and effect for those who break His laws with impunity:

. . . for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments (Exodus 20:5–6).

There is no exception to this rule for your children, just because they had a minister lay hands upon them. If you want to be sure of God's promise for continual protection for your children, then be committed to living according to His law.

Otherwise, not only will you forfeit His promise of blessing for yourself, but for your children as well.

Even if parents are faithful to honor God and to please Him, how long will their children continue under a special blessing? Only until they become old enough to be held accountable themselves for what they have been taught. Another common fallacy is to believe a child who grew up in the church and who was blessed as an infant will retain "special protection" all of his life, no matter what he chooses to do. Again, not so. There is no doubt the children of the faithful are always special in God's sight, and He certainly will not forget them, even if they choose to go into the world as young adults. But the fact they are still special does not mean God is going to make them immune to the penalties of sin. After achieving the age of accountability, a child no longer needs "extra special" blessings of protection beyond that which is offered to all of God's people. They become subject to the very same conditions which God placed upon all Israel. So young people need to recognize too that they cannot depend upon that childhood blessing to exempt them from the fruits of their own choices, once they are on their own.

If we understand the real wisdom of God's principles, we can be certain to appreciate the reason for this special service we call the Blessing of the Children, and also be certain not to misconstrue its proper application.

Birth

Mr-s. Johan Stewart of South Africa are happy to announce the arrival of Tiana Avril. She was born Friday morning, July 15, weighing almost 8 pounds, and was 20 inches long. Mother (Sharon) and baby Tiana are doing fine.

Camp Tejas

We would like to express a special thank you to Mr. David Brandenburg and his volunteer assistants, Mr-s. Richard Litz, Mr. Duane Garland, Mr. Justin Nalder, Miss Olivia Vacca, and Miss Carissa McAbee, for their personal sacrifice to make Camp Tejas a success again this year. From all accounts, the teens had a wonderful ten-day summer camp experience, made possible by much hard work of the organizing staff. We would also like to thank Mrs. Jackie Wakefield who although she was not able to participate this year, was one of the founding architects of Camp Tejas, without which the program might never have been formed.

It is good to remind everyone again that this project has never been an official church program, but has certainly been supported and encouraged by the ministry. It is to

those volunteer church members who have sacrificed so much that we all owe a debt of gratitude. We must never take for granted that there will be another camp opportunity next year. It is all according to the willingness of those devoted volunteers to continue making that extraordinary sacrifice. Mr. David Brandenburg has been a sponsor, organizer, and driving force behind the project for nine years now, and the church will certainly continue to support him as the principal as long as he chooses to continue that volunteer service.

Camp Tejas would like to thank all those that so graciously supported the efforts of this year's camp. Without the support of so many who contributed in different ways, from all of the pre-camp preparation, to loaning camp equipment, to cooking food, to providing transportation and the post-camp cleanup, the success of an extended event like this would not have been possible.

This is the ninth year of Camp Tejas and our sixth location. However, it was our first year at the location of Camp Lane in Oregon and we wanted to take a moment to show our appreciation to those who helped make this another great year.

Holy Days

Feast of Trumpets	Thursday, September 9
Atonement	Sabbath, September 18
Feast of Tabernacles	September 23–29
Last Great Day	September 30

Trip Schedule

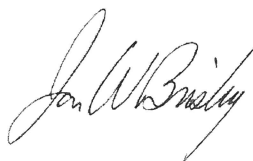
Mr. Brisby:

September 4	Baltimore, Maryland
September 9	Stephenville, Texas
September 11	Stephenville, Texas

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-RC 32-1	07-15-10	07-31-10	Do We Create Peace or Strife? #1
WSE-RC 32-2	07-15-10	08-07-10	Do We Create Peace or Strife? #2
WSE-RC 32-3	07-15-10	08-14-10	Do We Create Peace or Strife? #3
WSE-JB 127	08-05-10	08-21-10	Lessons From the Life of Samson
WSE-RL 11	08-05-10	08-28-10	I Dreamed a Dream
WSE-JB 22-111-25C	08-05-10	09-04-10	Fund. of Belief #25: Marriage and Divorce: The New Covenant Marriage
Feast of Trumpets	08-02-10	09-09-10	Holy Day Sermons
WSE-RC 45	08-26-10	09-11-10	Can We Endure?
Atonement	08-02-10	09-18-10	Holy Day Sermon

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby