

## Announcement Letter July 2011

Dear Brethren:

Your servants here at the church office in Eugene greet you with sincere expressions of love and respect, and we pray that you are holding firm through your difficulties and manifesting real hope and anticipation for the glorious future awaiting us at the return of Jesus Christ. We are blessed to have the opportunity to devote ourselves to your personal service. What greater or more rewarding calling could we have than to assist the very children of the Creator God in their walk toward qualification for eternal life? God willing, we will be granted the blessing to continue that work and to produce new material, inspired by God, which will help you in your calling day by day. You are worth every effort, and we are delighted to have this particular role as your devoted helpers.

Pentecost is now past, which means we immediately turn our attention to the next Holy Days in the offing this year. Is it not amazing how much our thinking—as the called of God—differs from others in this world around us? Many of them naturally think in terms of man-made holidays, birthdays, etc., in planning their times of celebration. When one holiday passes, they look forward to the next. We do the same thing, but our excitement centers on God's commanded observances rather than those created by human beings. Some people in the world are especially geared to holiday celebrations, while others are more nonchalant. Have you ever known people who always seem to be decorating for the next event, whatever that may be? As soon as one is past, they begin preparing for the next. They seem to live from holiday to holiday, birthday to birthday, anniversary to anniversary, memorial to memorial. And yet most of those things they celebrate are temporal and meaningless in the big picture.

How blessed are we to have been called by the living God to understand His royal plan for human salvation, and to have the chance to learn more about and to celebrate that plan of hope each year through these commanded observances. If we are spiritually oriented in mind, then we are indeed thinking daily, "Thy kingdom come." And part of that mental focus includes structuring our hope and anticipation around each Holy Day yet ahead of us.

So, for the children of God, the passing of Pentecost automatically causes us to look and plan for the next Holy Days on God's calendar. Given that the Feast of Trumpets, Day of

Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles all fall very near together, we typically think of them as a matched set. And that is certainly fitting since they each represent future events in God's plan which will all be fulfilled in close succession. The Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day are usually the most prominent in our thinking because we are required by God literally to *pick up and travel* to one of only *a very few* designated places in the whole world to observe all eight days of that Feast. It is not to be kept at home, or even in your "home area." The requirement for abiding in temporary dwellings is unique in the command for Tabernacles (Leviticus 23), from which it derives its very name, "Feast of Booths." There is no such command for the spring Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is why we have many more designated places approved for the keeping of that early Feast. But not so with Tabernacles, and that is by the inspiration of God through His chosen servant more than seventy years ago.

The question for you and me—here now in July—is how are we planning to fulfill that command to appear before God for the fall Feast? Our celebrations are not like the world's, where we might just put up a few decorations around the house to prepare. We literally have to make travel plans and work out details for a long trip (in most cases). Some people are naturally adventuresome and enjoy a chance to travel for almost any cause. Others, by nature, are *homebodies*, having no inclination at all to travel, and in fact might never leave their home state or province if they could avoid it. Perhaps for these God's command to keep the Feast is especially challenging.

The church is full of individuals who have overcome their natural inclinations in order to put God first. You may know many of these, as we do, who came into the church years ago and had to make major changes in their lives. Some stepped out against fear and the unknown to get a driver's license and begin to drive for the first time just to be able to attend local Sabbath services. Others had to risk losing a good job in order to take off many days for the Feast of Tabernacles. Many of God's people may never have traveled to such faraway places in their lives had it not been a command of God. To do so put them much outside of their natural comfort zone. It was an act of faith to do so!

What about you and me today? Are we called of God in 2011 as determined and zealous to obey God as those early converts in the twentieth century? Or have we become infected with the malaise and softness which exemplifies the spoiled peoples of our modern Western cultures? Many today do not really know anything about hardship because they have lived relatively easy lives. We complain about things which our forefathers would have considered trivial. In the "old days," going to the Feast might have required several days in an old car—with no air-conditioning and questionable mechanical reliability—perhaps sleeping in the car to save money, and then camping in a tent during the whole Feast. How many of us today would be willing to do that to fulfill

God's command? Based upon the kinds of excuses which can be heard from some in the church today, you might think they were making the ultimate sacrifice to get on an airplane for a few hours journey, and then to "endure" living in a small room away from home for eight to ten days. Even though we have indoor plumbing, air-conditioning, and many true luxuries which our ancestors would never have contemplated, we act like we are making such a huge sacrifice.

Either that, or we lament how difficult it is to get away from our responsibilities back home. Today, if we are afraid to travel, we are more inclined to *nurture that fear* and use it as an excuse, unlike the early members of the church who *overcame their fear* and confronted the great unknown in order to put God first. What farmer in those days—called by God in the early twentieth century—would refuse to travel to the Feast because he could not leave his livestock? Certainly not a truly converted one. Yet how many today make excuses of all manner of trivial things (as God sees it) to justify staying home? Your jobs are not more important than God's Feast. Your pets or commercial livestock are not more important than God's Feast. Even attending a funeral is not more important than God's Feast. Jesus Christ said, ". . . let the dead bury their dead" (Matthew 8:22).

Even your responsibilities to care for others are not more important than God's Feast. This is July. If you have serious obligations which seem to be a roadblock to your attendance, what are you doing about it? Do you have to care for an elderly parent or family member? Make arrangements *now* for their care while you are away at the Feast. Sitting back and waiting for God to drop a miracle in your lap is not sufficient. It is your responsibility to *pull out all stops* to make sure you are there. And if you truly have a major impediment which threatens that attendance, then you need to be urgent to address it, and to address it now. Those who sit on their hands and wait till the last minute, and then use some physical obligation as an excuse to stay home will never be accepted by God. Please do not misunderstand. There are certainly cases which justify missing the Feast. We have certain members (especially among the elderly) who truly have become so weak and incapacitated (either physically or mentally) that they reasonably cannot travel. God knows those circumstances and does not hold them guilty of disrespect toward Him. But there are all too many who have made excuses which God does not honor. You need to be sure you are not in that category.

None of us is the judge of that in anyone else's life. We will not do it. That is between you and God. Only you can know for sure whether you have a "legitimate excuse" to miss attendance of God's Feast or not. But keep this in mind. If you have knowingly made commitments according to your free choice which make it difficult to attend the Feast, they will never suffice as an excuse. If you adopt a pet which needs

undivided attention, do not use that as an excuse to miss the Feast. Those who are putting God first prove it by rearranging all else around His commands. Those who enter into restrictive business ventures or take on other obligations which threaten Feast-keeping have simply not made God their first priority. And if you are already in such restrictive circumstances when you are called into the church, then God wants you to work *fervently* to cut loose that anchor.

That may not be easy at all. But again, by comparison to those who offer excuses, how refreshing is the history of those many brethren in past decades who *pulled out every stop* to make it possible to keep the Feast. Are we too weak and insipid today to make similar sacrifices? Is such determination and resolve a thing of the past? Or will we become a bastion of real fortitude in this dark world to prove that we too—like those early members of the church—love God's Truth enough to fight to keep it fully? Our knowledge of God's master plan through the Holy Days is so much more valuable than man-made worldly holidays. May we demonstrate our love and respect for those precious and holy occasions by making *thoughtful and aggressive preparation* for their observance. If we do so, we can always count on God being there to walk before us and to fight our battles for us.

## **New Moon**

The new moon, Tammuz (fourth month), will begin on the evening of Sabbath, July 2. The new moon day is Sunday, July 3.

The new moon, Ab (fifth month), will begin on the evening of Sunday, July 31. The new moon day is Monday, August 1.

## **Camp Tejas**

This year Camp Tejas for the teenagers is July 7–18 in Walton, Oregon, and we are asking you to keep it in your prayers so that it may be an enjoyable, successful and safe experience for everyone involved.

## **Excess Second Tithe**

This is a reminder of the yearly need for second tithe to cover administrative and facility costs for the Feast. We want to reserve adequate for an enjoyable and meaningful Feast. At the same time, we all must remember, to keep the Feast requires the rental of halls, transportation, aid to those who are deserving, etc. If we all contribute, the burden

for each is relatively small. A huge thanks to those whose hearts and minds are willing. May God richly and abundantly bless you in all ways.

### **Second Tithe Requests**

Please be reminded that requests for second-tithe assistance for the Feast of Tabernacles need to be in by September 1. Any who need assistance should notify us in ample time.

### **Trip Schedules**

#### **Mr. Jon Brisby:**

July 30 ..... Carlisle, England

August 6 ..... Cleveland, Ohio

#### **Mr. Richard Litz:**

July 2 ..... Vancouver, Washington

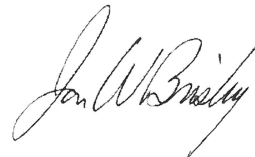
July 9, 16 ..... Eugene, Oregon

July 23 ..... Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota

## Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JB 22-130-25-F3	06-09-11	06-25-11	Fund. of Belief #25: Marriage and Divorce: What Makes a Marriage? #3
CL 1-24	06-09-11	07-02-11	Resolve All Difficulties (#6)
WSE-JB 22-131-25-F4	06-09-11	07-09-11	Fund. of Belief #25: Marriage and Divorce: What Makes a Marriage? #4
CL 1-25	06-30-11	07-16-11	Resolve All Difficulties (#7)
CL 1-26	06-30-11	07-23-11	Resolve All Difficulties (#8)
WSE-JB 22-132-25-G1	06-30-11	07-30-11	Fund. of Belief #25: Marriage and Divorce: The Responsibilities of Marriage #1
CL 1-27	07-21-11	08-06-11	Resolve All Difficulties (#9)
CL 1-28	07-21-11	08-13-11	Resolve All Difficulties (#10)

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby