

Announcement Letter August 2011

Dear Brethren:

Greetings friends, with warmth and sincere gratitude to all members of this scattered—yet unified—remnant flock worldwide. Wherever you live, and whatever your trials and difficulties of life, so many of you have continued to show your perseverance to fight for God's Truth against great odds, and that example continues to be an important light in this very dark world. Thank you for that.

We are small and vulnerable, yet we have enjoyed incredible peace of late, even as the world catapults ever closer to the very brink of oblivion. There is no doubt that we live in very dangerous and treacherous times. According to God's will, this world might yet rock along for some time, or else it might go over the cliff suddenly at any moment. We simply do not know. But we do know that all of the signs God gave for the last days are very much in play, including wars and threats of wars, natural disasters, curses from man's arrogance, and the proliferation of false religions, especially that coming out of the very true Church of God. And yet, as events in this world become more difficult, this little remnant body has continued by God's grace to be miraculously protected and blessed. That fact should not cause us to relax and to sit back contentedly, but instead to redouble our efforts to *redeem the time* (Ephesians 5:16). There is still much work for each of us to be prepared for the severe trials that await the people of God before the return of Jesus Christ. Dear friends, please use that precious time wisely to put on more of the faith which will be required to survive.

Camp Tejas Report

By all accounts, the summer camp program for our youth ages thirteen to nineteen held outside of Eugene, Oregon, was another success this past month. It marked the tenth consecutive year that devoted church member volunteers sacrificed much time and energy to make Camp Tejas possible. For the past ten years, our youth have had this special opportunity to participate in a program for their enjoyment which conforms to the godly principles which our families hold dear. How unique is such an opportunity in this world today?

The goal of the original creators of Camp Tejas was to provide the chance for our scattered members' youth to experience enrichment with other teens, in a setting which shows

off the benefits of having fun within the bounds of God's laws. The idea was simple: provide a wholesome venue to allow them to strengthen bonds of friendship with others their ages who share family religion in common, as a contrast to their friends and influences of the world. It would appear that is exactly what has been achieved. The fruits have been consistently good, and that is a testament to the wisdom of the fundamental program design and its execution. We all owe a debt of gratitude to David Brandenburg, Richard and Julia Litz, and all of the assistants who contributed to make the camp experience possible this year. And even though she has not been able to participate personally the past two years, we also want to thank Jackie Wakefield for her original ideas and continuing influence which still permeates the Camp Tejas experience.

Here are a couple of very personal observations: With the ten-year anniversary of this program, it made me think back to the summer of 2002 when Camp Tejas was first held at the home of Jackie Wakefield in Stephenville, Texas. That year there were only eight teens who were able to participate, but the experience was very positive. Parents appreciated the chance for their teens to experience a positive program of fun that proved God's laws are not all about "saying no."

Satan's world is very much against our children. Especially in this day and age, the temptations are very great—even overpowering—and the very *best efforts* of converted parents to raise their children to value God's way of life can be neutralized easily by the allure of popular hedonism. Except for God's special protection and guidance, none of us would stand a chance in giving our children a fighting hope to resist these devastating pulls.

I also reflect upon "the fallout" of my own peers who were raised in the church with me and came to maturity in the early 1980s. In spite of the money being invested by the Worldwide Church of God in youth programs to encourage teens to find value in God's way of life, among my peers the result was abysmal. Perhaps it is because the apostate parent church of the 1970s was seeking so blatantly to compromise with the world that those youths saw the utter hypocrisy of it all. How many of my friends from that era retained any respect for God's laws? I cannot say—having long since lost touch with them all—but I do know that most of them ran headlong into the world at first opportunity, having received no true example of the value of our parents' beliefs. There was nothing to make them even stop and think twice. The ministers were hypocrites, the parents were waffling spiritually, and so the children had very few examples of integrity, if any. In that environment, they could throw millions of dollars at youth programs (as was done with the YOU—Youth Opportunities United), and it still did not achieve a thing except to make the world look more attractive.

Contrast that with the results of Camp Tejas (again, from my personal musings). In 2002, eight teenagers participated in that inaugural program. Where are those eight young people today, ten years later? Seven of those eight are still active and productive participants in the church, six of them being devoted, baptized members themselves! Please do not misunderstand. I am not saying that if you send your teens to Camp Tejas there is a 90% chance they will stay with the church as adults. No way. But I am saying I believe strongly that for parents who have done a decent job of teaching the Truth by example in their own homes (which many of these families were doing, unlike our parent organization of my day in the 1970s), the odds are considerably better. The added opportunity for those youths to build bonds with other families sharing those values in a fun and productive environment certainly seems to help parents "make the case" for their children to consider God's way as more than just a burdensome, restrictive lifestyle.

There is no guarantee that a child given every advantage will choose to follow God in the short run. They are all free moral agents, and some will choose to go into the world no matter how well they have been taught. God is their perfect, loving Father, and He knows exactly the best way and the timing for working with them for their ultimate good. Some simply need a good dose of the penalties of sin before they can come to value the alternative. If your child is one of those, as hurtful as it is right now, never forget that God has not forsaken them, and He loves your child more than you ever will. Many of our newest members are former children of the Worldwide Church of God who are only now coming to find their way back to God's Truth after decades in the world. That journey was painful but effective in helping them come to love God's laws today.

But setting that issue aside—the timing of God's work with each one—it is my honest belief that a *strong parental example* to live God's way *in wisdom*, matched with *positive opportunities* for our children (like attendance at the Feast of Tabernacles, and special volunteer programs like Camp Tejas), can help strongly to augment the work of parents to instill positive values in their children. I am just thrilled to see that a pretty high percentage of our youth seem to be choosing to make this way of life their own.

One final note: With all of the above in mind, let me say this. In spite of very strong pulls on his personal time, Mr. David Brandenburg has expressed willingness to sponsor and organize Camp Tejas again in 2012, God willing. I cannot emphasize to all of you what a time-consuming, monumental enterprise this is each year, or the extent of the sacrifices required by many (including church sponsorship) to provide this special benefit to your families. Yet, in many cases it almost seems as though our members are quite nonchalant about planning and preparing for their teens to participate. We have gone out of our way to help many attend, but sometimes that effort seems to be unappreciated. The organizers seem to have to "chase" families to get commitments and

follow-through, as if it is not that important to them. With so many very negative influences of this world in your childrens' lives all year long, why would you not value and urgently prepare to make this program possible for your family when it is offered? It is a totally voluntary program, and you may have very good reasons why it does not fit for your family. As parents, that is your God-given responsibility to determine, and we will back you wholeheartedly if that is the choice you make. But if you happen to be among those who *value* Camp Tejas for your family, then how about showing *early, determined, and consistent* support for those volunteer servants who are putting themselves out for your benefit? It might make all the difference in the world whether Camp Tejas will be available for the next generation of our young people coming along.

Deaths

It saddens us to announce the death of Mr. Cesar Esquinas of Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao, Philippines. He died July 2 from severe complications of high blood pressure. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife, children, extended family and friends.

We are saddened by the death of Mrs. Suzanne Salmon of Tamines, Belgium. She died July 23 from cancer of the esophagus. Mrs. Salmon was seventy-eight years of age and a longtime member of the church in Europe. Her husband preceded her in death. She will be missed by all.

New Moon

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

The new moon, Ellul (sixth month), will begin on the evening of Tuesday, August 30. The new moon day is Wednesday, August 31.

Trip Schedule

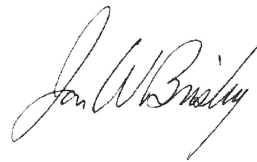
Mr. Jon Brisby:

August 6 Cleveland, Ohio

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
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)
WSE-JB-132	07-21-11	08-20-11	Maturity and Self-restraint
WSE-RWL-12	08-11-11	08-27-11	The Music Made Me Do It
WSE-JB 22-133-25-G2	08-11-11	09-03-11	Fund. of Belief #25: Marriage and Divorce: The Responsibilities of Marriage #2
WSE-RC-27-1	08-11-11	09-10-11	Resolve to Live the Faith: #1 Introduction
Holy Day Sermons	09-01-11	—	Trumpets/Atonement
WSE-RC-27-2	09-01-11	09-17-11	Resolve to Live the Faith: #2 How to Do the Will of God
WSE-JB 22-134-25-G3	09-01-11	09-24-11	Fund. of Belief #25: Marriage and Divorce: The Responsibilities of Marriage #3

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby