

## Announcement Letter September 2011

Dear Brethren:

Since this is the last monthly mailing many of you may receive before the Feast begins (because the October issue will be mailed right before Atonement), we want to take this opportunity to greet you and to wish all of you a very inspiring and profitable Holy Day season. Celebrating in God's presence in these particular hallowed Feasts is often the highlight of the year for God's people. These Feasts represent the future fulfilment of God's promise to save this world from destruction and to offer real hope for human salvation. There is no better time for us to pray, "Thy kingdom come," and no better way to prove we mean it than by sacrificing to be in designated places for these holy convocations.

With that in mind, here are some things to consider to help make your Feast experience this year most rewarding. Remember that the best way to *get* the most *from* the Feast is to *give* the most *at* the Feast. To give in a major way never requires a major "job" which is seen by others. Yes, one way to serve may be to volunteer to perform specific tasks which are needful for the physical assemblies, like hall set-up, maintenance, and cleaning. Many of you will also be serving by participating in special music programs, acting as emcees, offering opening or closing prayers, or helping with other needs which may arise. All of you who are making significant sacrifices in those areas are highly appreciated. Without you, it would be impossible to provide the proper environment for our meetings before God and enjoyment of the brethren. But these are somewhat limited functions that do not require participation of every single attendee. Yet *all* who attend the Feast should indeed be able to serve if they have the desire to do so. How might that be possible?

There are many ways we can each serve which may not be readily apparent to others, but which are crucial for a good Feast experience for all. Most importantly, being a positive example among others is a monumental way to serve! That kind of service never involves ostentation. Seeking to be "seen" to serve is not real service to others anyway, but merely "self" service. We want to be sure God views what we are doing as genuine service.

Working hard to stay close to God during the Feast and to harness your carnal natures is the number one activity you can tackle which will help serve your brethren. It is hard

work all year long, and it is still hard work at the Feast too—maybe even harder. Satan hates God's Feast and would love the chance to ruin those occasions. But your strong efforts to defeat negativity in all forms is a wonderful antidote. When that negative, divisive, selfish thought enters your mind (and *it will*, because you are all human), be prepared for it and crush it from the outset. Let your example be one of *real thankfulness, joy* and *peace*, and if those attributes are genuine, it will come through and be sensed by others. Your joy can then be contagious, and you might be surprised at how many others you may serve very significantly simply by letting your positive light shine.

There are other very subtle—yet important—ways for every one of you to serve at the Feast. Be willing to give of your time, perhaps just to listen to someone who desires fellowship and time to communicate with others of like mind. So many of us are scattered and alone much of the year. For many the Feast is the one time they have to fellowship. Do not miss the chance to participate positively in that fellowship. For some who are older or sick, it may take much of your strength just to attend services each day. But some of you possess the physical strength to do more. Do not hide away in your house or hotel room. Go out of your way to meet those you do not yet know, and to make yourself available for fellowship. Are you shy? Are you easily left out because you get overlooked? Step out and ask to be included. And if you are not so shy, be on the lookout for those who may get left out. It takes effort on the part of both. That kind of effort is real service, and something God will highly honor.

There are other means by which you can serve in very subtle but meaningful ways. How about taking time out to *think*, and to do everything in your power not to offend others? With so many of us in close proximity for eight days, there will be many opportunities for mistakes to be made. Besides showing mercy and compassion to others when such issues arise, how about also being proactive to avoid allowing yourself to create an offense?

How will you dress when you come to church services each day? Regardless of whether it is a High Day or not, all twelve services during the Feast are offerings before the King of Heaven, and He will be in our presence at every one of them. What you choose to wear at each one of these services will make a statement about your own orientation to God's appearance. If you dress correctly, no attention should be drawn to you at all, given you will have chosen clothes which are appropriate for your sex and appropriate for the formal occasion, and you will blend easily with the majority who will be dressed in like manner. If instead you appear in attire which does not meet the standards of *the faith once delivered* (which has been well documented in sermons and letters for all), you will be making a provocation of yourself. In that case, you will be forcing your brethren to exercise their Christian forbearance *for you*, which they of course should do, even as Christ shows us much mercy and longsuffering. But if your goal is to

serve others truly, then do not force others to *forbear* you like *a weak member*, because you are misbehaving as do *the weak*! Serve your brethren by avoiding controversy. Men, wear a collared shirt, suit jacket and a tie to every service. Ladies, dress as *a true woman*, and *dress modestly*. Here is the rule of thumb: If you have to ask yourself the question, "I wonder if this outfit is acceptable," it probably is not. And if you really want to serve, pick something that is *clearly acceptable*.

Parents, if you have difficulty keeping your little children quiet during services, please remove them so they do not disrupt the service and make it difficult for all others to hear the messages and the special music, or to affect the final audio recordings. Training of little ones takes time, and some of you do not have cooperative mates to help you do so according to God's instructions. That is a common reality in this world today. In that case you will be necessarily challenged. But be willing to serve by working overtime to help avoid as much disturbance as possible. Much as the world today says otherwise, misbehaving of children is not something God thinks is OK. If misbehavior continues on a chronic basis, it is a sign of a lack of proper child-rearing, whatever the reason. If your family is not conditioned to sitting quietly in a two-hour service, you may have problems. You are welcomed and encouraged to be there with your dear little ones, because those children are priceless to God and to all of us. But just remember that you have an opportunity to serve others by going out of your way to help *preserve the peace* during each service, as much as you possibly can.

These are just a few examples of the myriad opportunities we each may have to serve others at the Feast this year. If you go to the Feast with that as a goal, and if you are diligent to look for ways to help others, and if you harness yourself to avoid becoming a provocation, you will not only find that God will favor you highly, but also that you will have the most rewarding *personal* Feast experience ever.

### **Spiritual Principle—Eating out on the Sabbath**

Generally, it is not appropriate to eat out—go to restaurants—on the Sabbath Day. God gave us the preparation day (Friday) to do all that we need to do to have our meals ready for the weekly Sabbath. Mr. Armstrong used the command to Israel concerning manna as proof of this principle (Exodus 16:22–26). Twice as much manna was gathered on Friday so that none would be gathered on the Sabbath. We are therefore to use that preparation day to do all that we can in advance.

The exception is when we are away from home and not in our normal circumstances, and without the same opportunity to prepare as we would do otherwise. This would include being at the Feast of Tabernacles, for instance. We were always taught that when away from home on a trip, it is not wrong to eat out. Some have worried

that by doing so we are forcing someone else to break the Sabbath by serving us. But Mr. Raymond Cole confirmed from his many years in God's church "in the old days"—as well as by his consistent practice while at the Feast in this remnant body—that Mr. Armstrong did not interpret it that way. One article to substantiate this is from the May 1962, *Good News*, entitled, "What Can I Do on the Sabbath?" It confirms what Mr. Armstrong taught to the church in all those early years. In the Millennium, when everyone is keeping the Sabbaths, it will certainly be different than it is today. But we count Mr. Armstrong's instruction on this point as part of *the faith once delivered*.

Other groups (and individuals) have attempted to assert that it is *never* appropriate to eat out under any circumstances on a Sabbath. But the people of the world today who are running restaurants are not keeping the Sabbath under any circumstances, whether we enter their establishments or not. So in those special circumstances, neither Mr. Armstrong nor Mr. Cole had a problem with eating out, but they absolutely never did so at home, or when they had the easy means to "prepare." That is still the principle we have preserved in our fellowship to this day.

Now we have had some sincere members who happen to have a crisis of conscience about this—even during the Feast—and have chosen to prepare all of their own food in advance for those festival Sabbaths. That is very fine. We should always follow our conscience in a case like that. But for any of you who may fall into this category, just be very careful not to try and insinuate your conscience onto others, especially when such feelings are not consistent with what we were taught by God's ministry. To do so would be to attempt to proclaim a contrary doctrine in our midst. Please do not allow that to happen, even inadvertently.

## **Death**

We are saddened to report that Mr. Tom Pon, the husband of Mrs. Evelyn Pon, of Baltimore, Maryland, died Monday, August 8. He was in his late 80s. Mr. Pon was never a member of God's church, but his favor toward us was an incredible blessing for many years. As an unconverted mate, not only did Mr. Pon support his wife to be able to keep God's laws herself, but he opened his home and allowed Church of God, The Eternal to meet there each Sabbath and on every Holy Day for more than thirty years. He also graciously invited the ministry to stay with them on annual visits over all those years, and he counted Mr. Raymond Cole as a personal friend. Through his benevolence, our Baltimore congregation was very blessed. We believe he is truly an example of one sanctified by a believing mate (1 Corinthians 7:14), and we will always remember him very fondly. We offer Mrs. Pon and her whole family our very sincere condolences.



## **Holy Days**

Feast of Trumpets .....	Thursday, September 29
Atonement .....	Sabbath, October 8
Feast of Tabernacles .....	October 13–19
Last Great Day .....	October 20

## **New Moon**

The new moon, Tishri (seventh month), will begin on the evening of Wednesday, September 28. The new moon day is Thursday, September 29 (Feast of Trumpets).

## **Feast of Tabernacles Group Photos**

Every few years we plan a group photo for each of our US Feast sites (which can be purchased later at cost by members). This year the group photo date in Townsend, Tennessee, is Tuesday, October 18. The photo date in Yachats, Oregon, will be Sunday, October 16. Please plan to be present for these photo sessions. More information on time and location will be given at each Feast site.

## **Yachats, Oregon, Feast Site**

Yachats is a village that values natural resources. In January, the Yachats City Council adopted a general policy of requesting that users of the Yachats Commons (the building in which we meet for services) refrain from the use of water contained in plastic bottles, which creates a waste management problem for their community. In consideration of their request, we are asking that you oblige them while you are in the building by using either your own personal refillable water bottles, or by using the water machine we have set up in the registration area. We appreciate the use of the Yachats Commons during the Feast of Tabernacles, and hope that everyone will be willing to make concession while in the building.

## Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
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
WSE-RC-27-3	09-01-11	10-01-11	Resolve to Live the Faith: #3 Create an Atmosphere of Love #1
Atonement Sermon	—	10-08-11	—
FOT Sermons	—	10-15-11	—
WSE-JB 22-135-25-G4	09-22-11	10-22-11	Fund. of Belief #25: Marriage and Divorce: The Responsibilities of Marriage #4

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby