

Announcement Letter February 2012

Dear Brethren:

From your ministerial and church office support staff in Eugene, Oregon, we greet you all with renewed expressions of love and appreciation, praying that you are enduring every trial with optimism, and manifesting continuity in that precious way of life which binds us together so firmly.

We are now in full-swing preparation for the upcoming Holy Day season, as well as implementation of our projects for calendar year 2012. We are always working, not only to maintain the current level of services we have been providing to our scattered brethren and congregations around the world, but also looking for opportunities for improvements wherever they may be found. With a very limited staff, we cannot take on everything we would like to do—including every one of your valuable suggestions—but we certainly seek to listen to your feedback and respond to enrich the level of services provided whenever that is possible. Above all, we work very hard never to forget that you are the priceless children of God, and that means you deserve the utmost respect and devotion. As long as God continues to bless, we are committed to sustaining those services to help you in your spiritual walk.

Future Ordination

As most of you are aware, this remnant body is served at this time in North America by only one paid (full-time) minister—yours truly—and three subordinate helpers who are unpaid—Mr. John Byrd, Mr. Richard Litz, and Mr. Robert Litz. These men have been a real blessing as assistants to me, most importantly because they all share a mutual love of the faith once delivered, and have helped foster an example of real unity by their sincere and unwavering support. There has been no greater blessing than having a leadership team who sincerely agrees with the mission for which this remnant body stands and continues to defend.

Since the death of Mr. Leon Whitaker in late 2009, we have been serving you with one fewer ordained elder than in previous years. When we lost Mr. Whitaker, it was my strong feeling that we should not rush to ordain another man, just to fill that particular vacancy. In the interim, we have been able to cover all responsibilities adequately, and that is due in part to a rallying of the ministerial team remaining to fill the gap. For that service we are all most thankful.

But the time has come finally for us to begin preparation for grooming new individuals to assist in our service to the church. If all things were to continue just as they are, we could perhaps function with the current team we have today. But that would be very short sighted indeed. The reality is, not one of my three ministerial assistants today is under the age of seventy. None of us knows what the immediate future will bring, but should time go on for any reasonable number of years at all, it is very likely that one or more of our current ministerial team will be taken out of the way, or else become disabled and unable to bear the load they do presently. We would be foolish to assume otherwise. It was certainly unexpected to lose Mr. Whitaker in his early sixties, even as it was unexpected to lose Mr. Raymond Cole at the age of seventy-four in 2001. Prudence suggests that we should begin looking to the future. But I have been very cautious not to allow my own human reasoning to spur me to some unwise act. This is God's Church, and He is the One who is directing, not only the necessary actions, but *the timing* of those actions to preserve this remnant as He so wills. God now seems to be inspiring me in that particular direction at this particular time, which is the reason for this writing to all of you.

I would like to announce my intention to ordain Mr. David Brandenburg to the office of ministerial elder. After fasting and praying fervently for God's will, I have become convinced after many months that this is the course of His choosing, not mine. Also, in seeking input from each of the existing elders in North America, they are in unanimous agreement that Mr. Brandenburg is the "obvious choice" for this assignment. Mr. Brandenburg has the "resume" required for this responsibility like no other in the church that I know of today. He has already proven his love for God's truth in very many ways over the years, and he has poured himself out to serve this church as a consistent habit of practice, personally.

In case there is any thought among any of you reading this letter that I have simply picked my "personal friend" for this assignment, let me make this very clear. David Brandenburg is indeed my personal friend. I willingly admit that there is no one else in the entire church I feel personally closer to than to him. Does that fact then speak of bias in my decision concerning ordinations? You must be the judge. But please understand, the only reason David ever became such a close personal friend and confidant to me is because of his bona fide fruits *to practice and defend* the truth which I also love. I did not pick him as a friend *in spite of* the Truth, but *because of* the Truth. Both in the business world of my past as well as in church administration over the last ten years since Mr. Cole has been gone, I have been forced to deal with certain subordinates who pay lip-service to the ideas of organizational agreement, support and fidelity, but who in reality would just as soon cut your throat if their own self interest would get in the way. Spare me from such shallow self-seekers! Thankfully, that is exactly what God has done—spared me—and I am incredibly blessed at this time to have an assembly of "lieutenants" who I believe sincerely love what I also love and am committed to defend to the death. In my experience, David Brandenburg is

a "proven quantity"—many times over—and I therefore feel comfortable that even should something happen to me, his devotion to this remnant church—which Mr. Raymond Cole first fought to establish and to preserve—would continue undaunted. It is my very strong opinion that David Brandenburg is not one paying lip service to "the party line" for the sake of personal advancement. Anyone who serves in any visible way will receive such "snide" insinuations of motive, sooner or later. But again, God says we will know them by their fruits. Even as Raymond Cole selected me because he felt I had a sincere love of that Truth—with or without him being around personally—so I have that same conviction about the character of David Brandenburg, whom I have come to count as a dear friend because of that very orientation. Yes, I make no apologies for selecting someone to serve you whom I believe will also "cover my back." After all, it is my mission to serve each of you and defend each of you to the full. Therefore, I need helpers who share that same conviction, and who will support me in that mission no matter what we will face in the future. So you better believe I want someone I can count on personally. But the reason is not selfish on my part. I need to be able to count on my helpers to hold the line no matter how fierce the spiritual battles become. Many have failed in years past. Mr. Cole had many ordained men under him who showed in time that their selfish interests superceded their commitment to the revealed Truth when they were put to the test. That is still a test which any one of us might yet fail, if we do not work daily to grow close to God. So there is no guarantee that any minister will not one day stumble and fall. The history is one of massive compromise. I can only tell you that I sincerely believe this action is God's will, and a key step in helping fortify us for the needs of the future.

It is my intention to handle this grooming and ultimate ordination very similar to the way Mr. Raymond Cole did it when I was selected for the same job back in 1996. If you will recall (or care to go back and read the *Announcement Letters* from that period of time), you will see that Mr. Cole did not ordain me right away, but gave me writing and speaking assignments for several months in advance of ordination. This was likewise the way Mr. Herbert Armstrong originally handled those first ministerial ordinations way back in 1952. Mr. Cole was assigned "ministerial duties" in 1950–51 to serve the Oregon churches, long before being officially ordained. The key is that even without the official ordination, Mr. Cole operated under the direct delegation of Mr. Armstrong for all that he did. So Mr. Cole used this same historical example in grooming me before my own ordination in 1997, and I likewise intend to use the same process to prepare Mr. Brandenburg for his ordination.

The intent of this "grooming period" will be to allow Mr. Brandenburg to slowly gain experience in speaking and writing, and for many of you to become accustomed to dealing with him in this new capacity. Mr. Cole told me in 1996 that each minister must earn the respect of the people, based upon his love of the brethren, willingness to serve them, and above all, his devotion to the faith once delivered. He told me that although he felt very strongly that I was the correct individual for the job, if the people would not accept me, it

would be pointless for him to try to force me upon them. How could I ever have become a viable helper to Mr. Cole if I could not gain the trust of the people? If Mr. Cole continued to be forced to carry every burden himself—because I was a weak assistant—then my role as a "helper" would be nullified. He was very optimistic that I would indeed be able to earn the respect of the people in that capacity. Mr. Cole told me, "If you are willing to serve them, they will respond." And that is exactly what the church did overall. So that is exactly the program I intend to use in introducing Mr. Brandenburg to all of you in this new capacity.

The church is likely to need new—and younger—men to assist with future services to this dynamic and growing remnant body. This is the first major step intended to begin that process. I have made no decisions as to how long this training period will last before final ordination. In the interim, Mr. Brandenburg will not have authority to anoint or to baptize (authorities which come only with full ordination), but he will be authorized by God—through my official delegatory powers from this day forward—to preach and to write, and to counsel personally with those of you who seek him in that capacity.

If any of you have any questions whatsoever, please do not hesitate to communicate with me. I do indeed want to hear from you. Your honest feedback is truly appreciated and valued. I am very optimistic that as God has continued to bless us as a remnant body—with inspiration, protection, and preservation for all of these years—so too will He guide and direct us to make the correct choices for the good of the church for as long as He wills us to do this work in this age.

New Moon

The new moon, Adar (twelfth month), will begin on the evening of February 23. The new moon day is February 24.

Holy Days

Lead men should be making appropriate preparations for these days:

Passover (evening)	Thursday, April 5
Night to Be Much Observed	Friday, April 6
1st Holy Day—Days of Unleavened Bread	Sabbath, April 7
2nd Holy Day—Days of Unleavened Bread	Friday, April 13

Trip Schedule

Mr. Richard Litz:

February 11 Little Rock, Arkansas

February 18 Phoenix, Arizona

February 25 Stephenville, Texas

Mr. Brisby:

March 3 Cape Town, South Africa

March 10 Suna-Migori, Kenya

FOT Group Photos

Many have been asking about the group photographs taken at the Feast last year. We have received the photos, and have sent out requested copies to everyone who signed the list at the Feast. If you did not receive one and thought you should have, your name probably was not on the list, but you can order them by calling the church office. The cost for the Oregon photo is \$8.00, and the cost of the Tennessee photo is \$7.00. These charges cover the cost of printing.

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JB 22-140-25-H3	01-19-12	02-11-12	Fund. of Belief #25: Marriage and Divorce: Problems in Marriage #3
WSE-RC 27-14	01-19-12	02-18-12	Resolve to Live the Faith: #14 What Happens When People Lose Faith?
WSE-JB 22-141-25-I1	02-09-12	02-25-12	Fund. of Belief #25: Marriage and Divorce: Technicalities of Divorce #1
WSE-RC 27-15	02-09-12	03-03-12	Resolve to Live the Faith: #15 Stay Close to God
WSE-RC 23-1	02-09-12	03-10-12	Hope: Its Purpose, Potential and Power #1
WSE-JB 136	03-01-12	03-17-12	Pre-Passover Exam: Are You Honest?

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby