

## Announcement Letter July 2013

Dear Brethren:

We pray that you receive this letter with encouragement, optimism, and with the active blessings of your loving Creator God. It is our ongoing privilege to greet you every month through these letters and to confirm our love and respect for those who are holding firm to God's revealed truths. Those of us who have been given the chance to serve God's scattered people are blessed with the most fulfilling work of all. Unlike the work we must all do in this world to "make ends meet," what a joy it is to be able to apply our energies to providing spiritual food and inspirational support for the very called of God. Thank you for the chance to know you as dear friends, to share this way of life with you, and to labor in your service.

You have chosen—according to your own personal convictions—to associate with this little remnant body. You have not done so because we have attempted in any way to coerce you, to manage you, or to hold you against your will. It has always been our very strong conviction that *free moral agency* is paramount for each of you. Faith is essential to please God, and there is no such thing as faith when our actions are not based upon *sincere* personal choices. It is wonderful to have many brethren as part of our physical assembly, but what good is a large "head count" if the participants are there against their will or contrary to their true convictions?

It was never the goal or the intent of Mr. Raymond Cole to "build a large church." His premise from the beginning was to stand firm to defend *the faith once delivered* and then to serve those who willingly shared a love for those same truths, no matter how few that might be. He believed sincerely that this was *God's work*, not his own. He also stood in respectful fear of taking any action that did not have God's full approval and backing. He never presumed the authority to do a "great work," but focused instead upon serving the sheep God sent to him. He stated repeatedly that he loved that way which had been revealed to him through Mr. Armstrong's ministry, and if no other human being shared that love, he would still be willing to keep it alone. That was not idle posturing. He was serious about it, and the specific decisions he made and the actions he took over twenty-five years in serving this remnant before he died proves it. Many men will say publicly what sounds good and altruistic. But Raymond Cole backed up his rhetoric in every way over a very long time.

A key part of his premise was the conviction that faith cannot exist without the *free choice* to accept the Truth and to embrace it personally. That is a foundational principle which this ministry has continued to emphasize since Mr. Cole's death in 2001, and God helping us, we will continue to do so. It is a principle which makes the *administrative philosophy* of this group very different than many other groups who came out of our parent organization. Former

attempts by the ministry to create a *perfect church*, no matter how well-meaning, were nonetheless destined to fail. And they did fail. You can never legislate faith. Ministers certainly do all kinds of things to preserve their followings, including ruling with fear and bombastic threats. But any ministry that truly cares about the spiritual well-being of a flock will never embrace such practices. Some people can be cowed into submission, but that does not prepare them in any way to qualify for entry into God's Kingdom.

Some who have left our fellowship will try to assert that we have indeed departed from Mr. Cole's administrative philosophy and are being autocratic in our decisions. You must each be the judge of that. What the record really shows is that we refuse to let anyone hijack this group for their own selfish ends. Sometimes aggressive actions are required by a faithful ministry to protect the sheepfold from insidious attack. If that is not true, why the condemnation by Jesus Christ in John 10 of *hirelings* who run in the face of danger, instead of engaging predatory wolves? Why Paul's admonition to Timothy to rebuke strongly at times? Why Paul's own strong words in writing to the churches when they were allowing abominations in their midst? There has to be some means to know the difference. Any minister who refuses ever to take a bold stand will fall into "the hireling ditch" sooner or later, and likewise, any minister who loves to throw his weight around (hunting butterflies with an elephant gun) will fall into the other ditch, sooner or later. It takes real wisdom to know the difference and to match proper *ministerial medicine* with the actual disease. The "Aspirin Doctor" is one who says—no matter what the clinical diagnosis: "Take two aspirin and call me in the morning." He is a "one trick pony" who fails to discern the differences in circumstances and to apply the correct, measured response.

Mr. Cole did indeed take aggressive action in certain cases while leading this remnant body from 1975 to 2001, so anyone who claims otherwise is either ignorant, or intentionally deceptive. In other cases he took a very soft and conciliatory approach, if that was the wisest recourse. Interesting that some in the church during those years were accusing Mr. Cole of being an overbearing autocrat, while at the very same time another contingent was accusing him of being a spineless weakling. Which was it? It was neither. It is simply that an aggrieved party who considers himself the "standard of truth and wisdom" will vilify anyone who does not agree with him. Mr. Cole certainly took a lot of abuse from such characters over the years on both sides. But as Jesus Christ replied when accused Himself:

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children (Luke 7:33–35).

Yes indeed, wisdom is borne out in time by *the fruits* (the children, or offspring of a way of thinking), regardless of any accusations made in the short term.

So those who would claim that this ministry today is trampling upon the rights of its members are no different than the ones who accused Mr. Cole of the same during his tenure as Pastor. The reality is that we continue to admonish you to take responsibility for your own salvation! We cannot get you into the Kingdom, and we are not foolish enough to try to do your work for you. It would never succeed. We truly are not seeking to build a "large" physical group by *corralling* as many "warm bodies" as possible to fill seats, or to keep them by uttering threats. By all means, follow your conscience before God! You will be judged based upon the presence or absence of real faith in your life. We can teach you the Truth, but we cannot chase you down the street with it against your will. We cannot force you to value that which you simply do not love.

What we *can do* is to continue to proclaim publicly those doctrines we sincerely believe to be true, and to do so with as much force and conviction as God gives us power to express. After that, it is up to each one of you—and every new one whom God may yet send—to either find value in those principles and then to *make them your own*—or not. What we will do is make sure that this physical body is administered in such a way as to protect our means to deliver that message to you in the future. Anyone who thinks he can hijack it from our hands will indeed get an aggressive rebuff. Just be very careful that you learn to discern the difference between how an organized body is wisely administered against such threats, vs. how a ministry deals with the individual, priceless children of God. Mr. Cole showed us that distinction under many different circumstances. He was not an "Aspirin Doctor." Neither are we.

## **New Moon**

The new moon, Ab (fifth month), will begin on the evening of Sunday, July 7. The new moon day is Monday, July 8.

The new moon, Ellul (sixth month), will begin on the evening of Tuesday, August 6. The new moon day is Wednesday, August 7.

## **Birth**

Mr-s. John McNeil, of Damascus, Oregon, would like to announce the arrival of their fourth child and second son, Javen Brewer-Cooper, who was born Monday, June 24. He weighed nine pounds, six ounces, and was twenty-one inches long. All are doing well.

## **Camp Tejas**

This year Camp Tejas for the teenagers is being held July 11–21 in Maryville, Tennessee, 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 August 15. Any who need assistance should notify us in ample time.

## **New Church Internet Server**

We are currently in test mode for the new church server. Its purpose is to provide an easy way for you, the brethren, to download sermons, Bible studies, articles, letters, transcripts, etc., over the Internet—all the things we currently have no room to provide on the church website. We emphasize "test" mode because the archive and its interface are by no means comprehensive and complete, as yet. It is a work in progress. If you are interested in having access to the server, please contact the church office and we will send you the credentials and instructions you will need. Please note that we are open to constructive feedback. If you have suggestions, or if you detect any errors that need to be corrected, please contact Mr. Timothy Sherwood by phone or e-mail ([tsherwood@cogeternal.org](mailto:tsherwood@cogeternal.org)) at the church office.

**Trip Schedule**

**Mr. Jon Brisby**

July 13 ..... Camp Tejas/Maryville, Tennessee

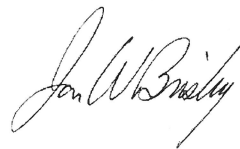
**Mr. David Brandenburg**

July 13, 20 ..... Camp Tejas/Maryville, Tennessee

**Recorded Sermon Schedule**

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JB 138-16	06-20-13	07-06-13	The Family Handbook #16
CL-2 105	06-20-13	07-13-13	Faith #14
WSE-JB 138-17	06-20-13	07-20-13	The Family Handbook #17
CL-2 106	07-11-13	07-27-13	Faith #15
CL-2 107	07-11-13	08-03-13	Faith #16
WSE-JB 138-18	07-11-13	08-10-13	The Family Handbook #18
CL-2 108	08-01-13	08-17-13	Faith #17

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby