

Announcement Letter August 2013

Dear Brethren:

It is a sincere privilege to be able to write to all of you this month and to confirm that God continues to bless this little remnant group in so many ways. In spite of dangers in the world and storm clouds upon the horizons for our nations, we have enjoyed much peace and special protection for the work we are doing to serve the scattered sheep of God. It is with those thoughts in mind that we greet you again and express our deep and abiding appreciation for every one of you who is holding to the real faith of Jesus Christ in these increasingly difficult times.

Who would have thought (in the 1970s or previously) that the church eventually would look as it does today, in 2013, or that the world even would have lasted this long? Who could have imagined that our parent organization, having been the great champion of Sabbath and Holy Day observance in much of the twentieth century, would have abandoned those precepts altogether? Where once the Worldwide Church of God sponsored Feast of Tabernacles convocations in cities around the world, drawing thousands upon thousands into communities to worship for an eight-day Feast, how has that landscape changed? Today there are many fewer by comparison who are gathering to keep this Feast, even when we add up all of those expected to attend one or more sponsored assemblies by the splinter groups that are out there.

For us as a remnant body, this will be our thirty-ninth Feast of Tabernacles since 1974 apart from our parent institution. It is amazing that we are still here, given how relatively small and vulnerable we have always been. So many other groups have formed in decades past, endured for a time, but then eventually disappeared. Yet God has sustained us through many threats, and in fact we are stronger in numbers and financial position than at any time previously. That could all change overnight if God were to remove His special protection. But in the meantime, what a blessing to be able to continue to do this work, proclaiming and reinforcing *the faith once delivered* among those whom God continues to send to us.

We are now anticipating another very successful Feast of Tabernacles, just a few short weeks away. We pray that your preparations are all completed by now so that you can take part in that glorious blessing to appear in God's presence at His appointed places around the world. Is there anything more important than that appointment? Below is a reprint of a spiritual principle written for the July 2010 *Announcement Letter*, addressing the importance of Feast attendance. Hopefully, this reminder will be helpful and encouraging in your efforts to show true honor and respect for the Creator God who has called us into a close personal relationship with Him and His dear Son.

Spiritual Principle: Feast Attendance (reprinted from July 2010)

By the time you receive this letter, the Feast of Tabernacles will be less than [six weeks] away. Hopefully, you have already made your plans and preparations to be sure to be in one of those designated places to appear before God as commanded. If not, hopefully it is very high on your priority list to accomplish right away. For many, it gets harder each year to fulfill these commands, whether because of age, economic considerations, family pressures, or other concerns of this life. But the Feasts of God are *the sign* between Him and His people (Ezekiel 20:20). Particularly, the Feast of Tabernacles is a *command performance* which requires travel to one of those very few designated places, and it is unacceptable to attempt to "keep" this Feast at home.

What are those things which may be tempting you to stay at home this year? Some of you definitely have legitimate cause, especially if you are very weak physically, and simply unable to make such a long journey. In that case, God certainly understands and will not count your absence as a sin. But please understand, even if you fall into this narrow category, you will not be having "your own" Feast site at home. No one can create their own designated place for the Feast (Deuteronomy 12:11). The Feast is only where God chooses, and those are His very special places for holy convocation of brethren who leave their homes and come together into God's special presence. With all of the other annual Holy Days, this ministry *has indeed* appointed many more places—including many of your own homes—to be designated places. But not so with the Feast of Tabernacles. If you have a legitimate reason for not being there, God knows it and will not hold you responsible. But never think that you can then have your own Feast apart. Resign yourself either to be at God's Feast, or to miss God's Feast, one or the other. And if you cannot attend the real Feast, then you also need to understand that you have no authority to use God's second tithe at home either.

Some in times past have thought innocently that if they could not attend the Feast, at least they could try to make it "Feast-like" at home during those Holy Days. Some, knowing that God says we cannot keep the Feast "at home," have even moved into a nearby hotel, just to make it "more special." They use their second tithe for special meals, etc., to try at least to capture the "Feast spirit," even if separated from their brethren who are at the real Feast site. Dear friends, if you are one who has had any of these ideas, please understand that they are wrong concepts. God is very plain about the use of His (not *our*) second tithe:

Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand: But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt

rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto (Deuteronomy 12:17–18).

If you cannot attend God's designated Feast, then all second tithe belonging to God should be treated as "excess," and paid to God for the benefit of those who *can* attend the true Feast site. Is this perhaps shocking to some? It is the truth as verifiable in the Bible, and it is a confirmed part of the faith once delivered to the last-day church.

We do indeed attempt to provide sermon messages for those we are *more sure* have legitimate reason to be absent from the Feast. At least while alone, hopefully they can receive that recorded "meat in due season." But again, be very careful not to think that by receiving these sermons you have been given authorization for "your own" little Feast site. That is not the case. If you truly cannot make it to the Feast, you cannot make it. But then resign yourself to the fact you will NOT be keeping the Feast. You can avoid "violating" the High Sabbaths by not working. But it will still not be fulfilling God's command to come before Him. You will be dearly missed. Your brethren will be thinking of you and praying for you, and you will ever be much loved. Just please avoid falling into the trap of thinking that you will have a Feast at home. It will not be so.

With that concept in mind, what about those who may be tempted to believe they have "good reason" to miss the Feast, but perhaps do not? Are you sure God agrees? If you are one who is currently in a state of limbo, debating whether you can or cannot, will or will not, attend the Feast this year, consider seriously what God wants you to do. Forget human reasoning. Although difficult, God expects you to overcome *every obstacle possible* to obey His command. It is not our purpose to pass judgment in your particular case. That is always between God and the individual. But please do not try to play games with God. He knows our minds and hearts perfectly. Be very careful that you are not allowing a personal *idol* to prevent your attendance. An idol is *anything* that we put ahead of God and His laws:

Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and

hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That *none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.* And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And *whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple* (Luke 14:16–27) [emphasis mine].

Brethren, what are those "crosses" which God has given you to bear, but which He intends for you to manage without making them into idols? Is your reason for considering missing the Feast really legitimate to Him? If so, stay home in confidence, knowing He will not hold you guilty. But for all of the rest of us, hopefully we will *pull out all the stops* to make sure we will not become those who let unconverted mates, children, pets, jobs, *manageable* illness, or especially *fear*, to keep us from fulfilling the command to convoke before Him. What are you afraid of? Put God first. Step out in confidence. That is what faith is all about. And that is what separates the true people of God from those whom He will reject. There is absolutely no reason to be rejected, if we simply resolve to put Him first, and then step out to do it!

May your Feast preparations be profitable, and with God's help may we relish the upcoming opportunity to celebrate again that marvelous arrival of God's Kingdom under Jesus Christ, the King.

Camp Tejas Report

This year's camp was held in Maryville, TN, in the midst of the Smoky Mountains. This was the seventh state and eighth location for Camp Tejas over the last twelve years. Our goal has been to continually look for enjoyable outdoor adventure areas across the United States. Although there was quite a bit of rain prior to our arrival, the weather did not impact any of this year's camp activities, and we were blessed with wonderful opportunities to enjoy the outdoors.

Mr-s. Richard Litz graciously provided their home as the base of operations for this year's camp, and we also were able to take a three-day, two-night road trip which was well-planned by Ms. Mary Anderson. Activities included a stop at Charit Creek Lodge and horseback riding near the Twin Arches in the Big South Fork area. We also enjoyed a train ride from Stearns, KY, through the Daniel Boone National Forest that included a tour of the Blue Heron Coal Mining Camp and the local museum. But it was always nice to return to Mrs. Litz's home cooking!

Other activities included a day trip to Dollywood in Pigeon Forge to enjoy the roller coasters and water park, dinner at the Dixie Stampede which provided an historical flashback to the Civil War era and gave a couple of our teens the opportunity to ride wooden stick horses! We also enjoyed a day of water skiing, tubing, and using the slide of the double-decker pontoon boat captained by Mr. Jon Brisby himself.

As always, camp was made possible only by the dedicated service of a group of volunteers that graciously provided their time and support. Mr. David Brandenburg would like to thank Richard and Julia Litz for all the preparatory work and the cooking of meals that really made the camp feel like home; also Ms. Mary Anderson for the planning and coordination of many of the events and activities; as well as the camp staff that included Miss Michelle Bourget, Mr. Thomas Brisby and Miss Carissa McAbee. The support of Mr. Ryan Armstong, Miss Liana McAbee, Miss Melissa McAbee, Mr. Steve O'Neill, and Mrs. Deborah Bussiere was also greatly appreciated, as was the efforts of the local brethren for joining in two fabulous potlucks!

Overall, it was a wonderful opportunity for the teens to enjoy time together and to create some great lifetime memories. We are already looking forward to next year's camp, and hope that we will be able to return to this area once again to enjoy many more activities.

New Moon

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

The new moon, Tishri (seventh month), will begin on the evening of Wednesday, September 4. The new moon day is Thursday, September 5 (Feast of Trumpets).

Birth

Mr-s. Ronnie Broyles, of Oxnard, California, would like to announce the arrival of their daughter, Victoria Marie, who was born Sunday, July 28. She weighed six pounds, eight ounces, and was born four weeks prematurely. Victoria has a spinal deformity, and they are asking for your prayers that the deformity might close completely.

US Feast Site Addresses

In Yachats, OR, the Feast will be held at the Yachats Commons, located at 441 Hwy 101 N.

In Townsend, TN, the Feast will be held at The Barn, Event Center of the Smokies, 7264 East Lamar Alexander Pkwy.

If you need further information, please call the church office at (541) 344-8880.

Trip Schedule

Mr. Jon Brisby

September 5 (Trumpets) Phoenix, Arizona
September 7 Gardnerville, Nevada
September 14 (Atonement) Eugene, Oregon
September 15–21 (FOT) Yachats, Oregon
September 22–26 (FOT) Townsend, Tennessee

Mr. David Brandenburg

September 18–26 Hermanus, South Africa

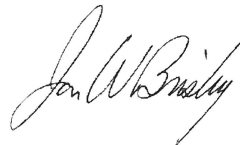
Holy Days

Feast of Trumpets Thursday, September 5
Atonement Sabbath, September 14
Feast of Tabernacles September 18 (evening service)–September 25
Last Great Day September 26

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
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
CL-2 109	08-01-13	08-24-13	Faith #18
WSE-JB 138-19	08-01-13	08-31-13	The Family Handbook #19
Holy Day Mailing	08-01-13	—	Trumpets/Atonement
Holy Day Mailing	08-15-13	—	FOT/LGD
CL-2 110	08-22-13	09-07-13	Faith #19
Atonement Sermon	—	09-14-13	—

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby