

## Announcement Letter November 2013

Dear Brethren:

As always, those who have responded to God's calling and have oriented their lives around His commands, plan much of their activities around the Holy Days. Since it takes special effort to attend the Feast of Tabernacles—in some cases even Herculean effort and personal sacrifice—returning home after fulfilling this major obligation is very rewarding. At the same time, that period right after the Feast also can spawn feelings of "let down" which we call the *post-Feast blues*. In spite of that very natural feeling, we pray that you are coping well since your return home and that you have experienced a "net lift" overall from your efforts to put God first. How blessed we are to understand the revealed Truth of a Creator God who loves us and who has promised to provide for all of our needs. How amazing to think about the purpose for our existence and that glorious future which awaits those who can grasp this *spiritual vision* and persevere to the end. In this last full month of autumn (in the Northern Hemisphere), we greet you as beloved brethren and express once again our deep appreciation for your examples of faith and continuity. There is no greater honor than to serve those whom God has called out of this world, those who have shown a determined love for the plan and purpose of that perfect Creator. Serving at your side and fighting through every obstacle of these lives is a privilege and an honor. Thank you for the inspiration of your choices, and the quiet example you are setting whenever you subjugate the self and show honor instead to a higher Power.

As you will see in the following Feast reports from our different areas around the world, God did indeed bless another year for us with the ability to fulfill His command to convoke before Him and to do so with joy, inspiration, and with general peace overall. As we watch conditions in the world steadily decline, we cannot help but wonder how much longer we may be afforded the privilege to keep those Feasts with the level of serenity and special blessings which we have enjoyed for so long. One day, it simply will not be the same anymore, and anyone who intends to put God first truly may have to endure harrowing circumstances to be at any such Feast convocation.

Would you still make the trip, even if you felt—humanly—that you were walking into the lion's den by heading for His designated place? Would you trust God for protection, even if He chose *not to protect* some of us fully, but might allow some to suffer as martyrs in this world? Would your faith be weakened if things did not go "perfectly" with regard to the

Feast observance? What would it take to make you question if you were in the right place, doing the right thing in God's eyes? If you have the notion that any "truly legitimate" assembly of God's people *always* will be "problem free," you are primed to be taken advantage of by our spiritual enemies, sooner or later. Such an orientation comes under the heading of *seeking physical signs* as the basis of our confidence.

Mr. Raymond Cole used to admonish us continually to "get our feet down" spiritually. Are your feet down? What did he mean by that? Are you certain that you know the truth of God, and have confidence that it was *revealed* through a chosen servant of the last days? Are you certain about where you believe that faith is being preserved today? Do you *know it*, and *know that you know it*? Are you sure? Or is your faith dependent upon seeing physical signs along the way that might make you "rethink" your past conclusions if things do not transpire in a particular way?

Case in point: We were all very saddened by the sudden death of a dear brother of the faith, Mr. Jacob Knott, at the end of the Last Great Day at the Townsend, Tennessee, Feast site this year. (We are including that official announcement later in this letter.) Even though Jacob suffered from seizures much of his life, and he and his family knew there was a strong possibility that a major episode could kill him at any time, we are never fully prepared for such to occur, especially for one who was so young. Jacob began to feel the symptoms of one of those seizures coming on toward the end of the afternoon Holy Day service and went out to sit in the car to relax and wait for the episode to pass. This was his common practice when these events would occur in public. As soon as the service was over, the family found Jacob dead already in the car. We were confident he was truly dead, but given the political climate of this world today, the family chose to call EMS (Emergency Medical System) so that police and medical responders could become assured that it was indeed a natural death. That is exactly what was determined, but in the interim, you can imagine the damper put upon final fellowship of the brethren at the scene, with all of the emergency vehicles and activities on site.

Trying to think about it later, two responses are possible for God's people: First, if you think God would *never allow* such an event to occur if we were *truly* receiving His favor for what we teach and stand for, then perhaps this was an "omen" that Church of God, The Eternal is not really a faithful remnant after all. Anyone already disposed to think that way will relish such a sad event to substantiate their own conclusions. But the second possible response is the one taken by those who "have their feet down" solidly in the faith.

The reality is, the brethren had just heard sermons admonishing them to be urgent in spiritual overcoming, because any one of us could be taken away at any moment. What better way to punctuate that reality than for God to choose to take Jacob in the way that He did? What is true is that the Feast was completed in full without interruption, even through

the very last service on the Last Great Day. We had fully completed our worship services. The only thing interrupted was the chance to say goodbyes to a number of you before departing home because we were giving special aid and support to Jacob's family.

Since Jacob had been living with his brother in Tennessee for the past year, his parents had not seen him in many months. It was only because they had traveled to the Feast that they were able to spend quality time with Jacob before it was God's will to take him. Had they not made a priority of being at the Feast, they would have missed that. Had Jacob died at any other time or place, the family would not have been together, and there would not have been so many brethren still in the area to be of comfort. Because of the specific timing, not only did God make it possible to have the graveside service in less than three days, but many more brethren were able to attend, because they had not yet departed for home (since a weekly Sabbath followed so closely after the end of the Last Great Day). Many brethren were able to delay their departures long enough to attend the funeral and provide support to Jacob's family. In that regard, the timing could not have been better. The only way one would think otherwise is if his heart was set on the physical things of this world and not on the hope of the coming Kingdom of God.

I heard one church member comment, "This was truly Jacob's last great day." That is well said indeed. How is it not a blessing, if we are looking at things from God's perspective? Jacob achieved a real milestone at this past Feast. He had been baptized several years, but fearful of serving by giving an opening or closing prayer at church services. This was the year when Jacob overcame that fear and gave his debut prayer publically on behalf of the entire congregation. He did a great job. And although we miss him very much, because we truly believe in the plan and purpose of a loving Creator for all of those called today, we cherish the hope of the Kingdom of God under the rule of Jesus Christ even more at times like these.

Dear brethren, if you are convinced of the faith once delivered, and sure of our obligations and responsibilities spiritually in serving a loving Father, then nothing which we may experience between now and the end of our time on this earth should ever shake our confidence. Stand firm and relish your calling and your opportunity for glory in God's Kingdom. Let nothing distract you from that goal. And when God's will becomes known in specific areas, even when they are painful and heartrending physically, take heart and remember the vision of the plan being carried out. May you always have *your feet down* firm unto the end.

### **New Church Internet Server**

Many of you have expressed interest in having access to the new church internet server, the purpose of which 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. In order to access the server, please contact the church office and we will send you the credentials and instructions you will need. Please note that the archive and its interface are by no means comprehensive and complete. 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) at the church office.

## **Death**

We are saddened to report that Mr. Jacob Knott of Maryville, TN, died of a seizure near the end of the Last Great Day, September 26. Jacob was thirty-four years of age. Our love and prayers go out to Jim and Reta Knott, his parents, and Kevin Knott, his brother, and family.

## **New Moon**

The new moon, Tebeth (tenth month), will begin on the evening of Tuesday, December 3. The new moon day is Wednesday, December 4.

## **Feast Reports**

**Kandersteg, Switzerland:** The European brethren were blessed with very inspiring and enriching spiritual food given through both Mr. Jean Aviolat and Mr. Jon Brisby. Mr. Aviolat enjoyed resting during the three Sabbaths as they listened to recorded sermons by Mr. Brisby from the 2006 Feast of Tabernacles. Everyone is very thankful to Mrs. Christine Sherwood who translated them into French for this very occasion. The congregation was also blessed and inspired with beautiful special music performed by the little group's talented musicians. The hymn singing was enhanced by a new expanded hymnal; all appreciated the new hymns translated and adapted by Mrs. Nathalie Lécluse with the help of her family.

They were very rewarded with beautiful weather from the second day until the seventh day, allowing everyone to admire the gorgeous scenery of the mountains all around (some covered with snow) and to choose among various outdoor activities: walking, hiking, bike riding, bobsleds, and paragliding. The social afternoon was composed of songs and games with the participation of everyone, which portrayed the unity of the congregation (a total of twenty-one members this year). It ended with the traditional fondue dinner and billiards. There was one baptism on the second day of the Feast. They remember all the brethren in their prayers and send them their love.



**Hermanus, South Africa:** All in all an outstanding time was had by everyone at Hermanus, South Africa. We all arrived safely by Wednesday, despite John Louis Nel having a collision with a few guinea fowl en route, with one smashing his windscreen. Mr. David Brandenburg and Miss Michelle Bourget were well recovered after their long flight, and the Feast began on a high note. We really appreciate the sacrifices both made to come and spend the Feast with us. For the first few days it was very windy, rainy and cold, with Friday being a maximum of 9°C (48°F), but it soon cleared up and we had some pleasant sunny, but cool days. Great fellowship was enjoyed by all, and there was a wonderful spirit of unity, with many shared meals, and evenings of games galore! There was some wine tasting, quad biking (four wheelers), hikes up the mountain, walks along the cliff paths at the seaside and a visit to the hot springs at nearby Caledon. The main purpose for the Feast is, of course, the spiritual food, and we were all greatly blessed, inspired and encouraged. The pre-recorded sermon series about the framework and structure of God's true Church, by Mr. Brisby, the one sermon by Mr. Richard Litz, as well as the live sermons which Mr. Brandenburg delivered, were challenging and uplifting. We were also blessed to be able to share the Sabbath following the Feast together, with a bonus sermon by Mr. Brandenburg. Here at Hermanus, we truly had an outstanding Feast!

**Don Carlos, Bukidnon, Philippines:** Greetings from all of us here in the Philippines. We are glad to report our joyous celebration of God's Feast of Tabernacles here in Don Carlos, Bukidnon. All were thankful for the "manna" given to us every day. We had an attendance of one hundred three. Four were baptized after the morning service of September 21. We had very fine weather throughout the Feast. We used karaoke here as a social, as well as a cultural experience, which made brethren—young and old—happy through folk and ballroom dancing, sing-a-longs, and perhaps the best social night ever. Our best regards to all the brethren, and we hope all had a happy Feast of Tabernacles.

**Launceston, Tasmania, Australia:** Greetings from Tassie. Just a short message saying how blessed we all were to be able to attend God's Feast of Tabernacles. We all really enjoyed the time together. The messages with the subject of Framework/Framing were very inspiring and showed us how much work we have left to overcome in the time given to us. As we are all members of His flesh, the Body of Christ (Church), we are called to serve others. We are thankful to God for your service and support to us all in holding on to the Faith Once Delivered. It is a sure challenge with certain difficulties that we all face at one time or another. It is a true saying that we will all be tried by fire. It was a joy to be with our other brethren at this year's Feast. We had seven adults attending and three children.

**Suna-Migori, Kenya:** The Feast was very pleasant and peaceful every day, and God blessed us with rain so that we had enough water for all the people to use. It was a nice Feast. Brethren traveled from their groups to Migori. We were one hundred twenty adults and fifty children, who came to meet with God where He put His name. As usual, we kept

the Feast at our church-owned facility. We baptized nine people and blessed seven children. May God bless those who send their tithe to help us keep the Feast here in Kenya. We pray that God may continue to bless you all.

**Townsend, Tennessee:** The 2013 Feast in Townsend, Tennessee, for our group of one hundred forty-one, was held again in the lovely new location—The Barn Event Center of the Smokies. This beautiful hall provided us with the opportunity to have on-site meals between each double service and for the Family Night. Everyone enjoyed the extra fellowship time and a more relaxed atmosphere on the Holy Days, and it was especially nice being able to have two catered meals on the first and Last Great Day of the Feast. The weather was perfect with only one rainy day, and we were all inside for the Holy Day service anyway. The Family Night was a hit, with music, dancing, and games for the children, and even an appearance by our local hillbilly couple Henry and Liza. Two new members were baptized and added to our church family, and all went to their homes saying, "What a great spiritual and physical Feast."

**Yachats, Oregon:** In Yachats, there were seventy brethren present on the beautiful Oregon coast. We were blessed with good weather at the beginning and end of the Feast, with a few days of wind and rain in between. The temperatures were mild. The whole atmosphere was relaxing with lots of sight-seeing, time spent on the beach, close fellowship and unity throughout the Feast. As always, we very much enjoyed the potluck/family night with its skits and singing. Our catered prime rib meal on the Last Great Day could not have been any better with its homemade bread, dressings and organic vegetables. It was delicious! We appreciate learning more through Mr. Brisby's sermons about the framework of the Church, which helps shore up our foundational beliefs. It was a very warm, peaceful, positive and inspiring time.

## Trip Schedule

### Mr. Jon Brisby

November 9 ..... Sydney, Australia  
November 16 ..... Somerset, Tasmania, Australia  
December 14 ..... Don Carlos, Mindanao, Philippines  
December 21 ..... Cabanatuan City, Luzon, Philippines

**Mr. David Brandenburg**

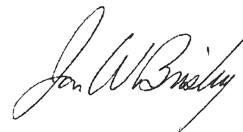
December 14 ..... Don Carlos, Mindanao, Philippines

December 21 ..... Cabanatuan City, Luzon, Philippines

**Recorded Sermon Schedule**

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JB 138-22	09-12-13	10-26-13	The Family Handbook #22
CL-2 113	10-17-13	11-02-13	Faith #22
CL-2 114	10-17-13	11-09-13	Faith #23
CL-2 115	10-17-13	11-16-13	Faith #24
WSE-JB 138-23	11-07-13	11-23-13	The Family Handbook #23
CL-2 116	11-07-13	11-30-13	Faith #25
WSE-JB 149-1	11-07-13	12-07-13	Prophecy Revisited #1: Past Purposes
WSE-JB 149-2	11-27-13	12-14-13	Prophecy Revisited #2 Fruits of Past Orientation

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby