

Announcement Letter July 2014

Dear Brethren:

Special greetings to our scattered friends who have demonstrated such a love for God's revealed way of life. It is an honor to write to you as brethren of the common faith and to express our continuing love and commitment to you all. No matter where you live around the globe, and no matter how isolated you may be (or may feel), you are a critical part of this remnant body, and part of God's very fulfillment of His promise that the gates of hell would never prevail against His Church (Matthew 16:18). Please never underestimate your role in that last-day assembly. Every single one who is committed today to the faith once delivered is not only rare, but highly significant in God's plan. Thank you for your part in the fabric of God's work at this time among men, and may you endure all the way to the very end of your time, as ordained by a perfect Creator and Architect.

Now that Pentecost is past, it is easy to think that we can relax our spiritual focus. After all, we do not have to worry about any additional Holy Days in this particular month, or even in the next month, or even in most of the month after that. We can instead "get back" to our important personal responsibilities. But, of course, as God designed the times and the seasons, we typically need much of that interval between the spring and fall to prepare for the next round of holy convocations. Since the older we get, the faster time seems to pass, how easy is it for those Holy Days to "sneak up on us" before we know it?

Spiritual Principle: Planning and Execution

Some of us by nature are zealous planners. We love to structure our time and schedules to make everything predictable, leaving no small detail of the future unresolved. That is not necessarily a spiritual fruit, since many carnal people in the world have that same proclivity. But discipline and planning are certainly required of God's people in order to fulfill our spiritual obligations of worship, so that is a very good trait, if we keep it in balance. Just remember that often a little bit of room should be left for unexpected contingencies. Flexibility is a real asset in being able to respond to unforeseen challenges as they appear, and still to be able to achieve our long-range goals.

But many others do not drive themselves that way by nature, instead suffering from a tendency toward procrastination and the avoidance of any real planning. In the extreme, this is seen in the individual who may have great ambitions and personal goals to do certain things or to accomplish specific objectives, but who for one reason or another never seems to "make it happen." Symptoms of this syndrome can be found in the use of phrases like, "One day, I plan to . . .," or, "As soon as I can, I intend to" You can fill in the blank with whatever the goal may be. In many cases, human beings aspire to achieve specific personal goals but simply never accomplish them because they fail 1) to plan properly, or 2) to follow through executing the plan. How many times have we wished to do this or that, but never made it a reality? If our goals are unrealistic to begin with, then we will hardly be able to achieve them. But even if we select a viable goal, the *follow-through* is vital in order to bring it to pass.

The principle applies in any area of life, but in this context we want to apply it to our spiritual obligations in showing honor to God. God said that true love is not a pretense, but an act of obedience: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Failure to obey—regardless of how many flowery expressions of devotion are uttered—is still an act of indifference (or even hatred) toward God. In keeping with that, God gave us specific obligations as true Christians, including our appearance at designated places during the year to show honor to Him:

Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. . . . And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God (Ezekiel 20:12, 20).

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be *holy convocations*, even these are my feasts (Leviticus 23:2) [emphasis mine].

But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes (Deuteronomy 12:5–8).

God has made these Sabbaths a key *sign* to separate us from the world. He also made those same Sabbaths *holy convocations*, requiring us to assemble *away from our own homes* at places that He chooses. To fulfill that requirement each year takes planning and resolve to *follow through* and make it a reality. Those who do so are showing real love for God. Those who do not appear (barring a legitimate reason for absence, like health—God knows) are not showing real love for God. It is that simple.

This means that even if you are one who often has trouble making a real plan and following through with it in other areas of life, it is imperative that you *break this habit* and learn to plan for attending God's Feasts, especially the Feast of Tabernacles.

But it is only July. We have plenty of time, right? Wrong! This is precisely the time we should all be confirming plans to be at one of those designated places for *the full eight days* of the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day. Waiting until the last moment and then scrambling in a panic is not wise planning. Or, failing to attend because "it just did not work out this year" is also no excuse. We, as your devoted ministry and brethren, will give you every benefit of the doubt. We will not pass judgment upon you. But then again, neither are we your judges. God is the Righteous Judge who knows the intents of every mind and heart. He will know if we each have made the *maximum effort* to obey the command . . . or not. He will determine if we each are showing real love for Him and His dear Son, Jesus Christ.

Therefore, if you truly cannot attend for a legitimate reason, God will know and He will excuse you. In either case, you should be able to go forward in confidence, without guilt or worry. But if uneasy feelings persist, in spite of how well you have "explained" to your brethren your planned (or unexpected) absence, perhaps you need to take a closer look at your personal priorities. Making God truly first in your life—followed by the use of diligent planning and follow-through—is the key to exercising Christian discipline. Yes, the way God has designed this system of worship does indeed put us in potentially "stressful" circumstances. How much easier Christianity would be without these kinds of obligations. But knowing that we are training to be magistrates in the God Family, it makes perfect sense that *annual Feast-keeping* is an ingenious way for God to create in us the kind of character that is required for salvation. And when we come to understand that God's Feasts are truly a blessing, not a curse, how happy are we when we succeed in fulfilling those commands.

May God grant every one of you the wisdom and the blessings necessary to be able to share in that hallowed assembly in one of those designated places three months from now.

Changes to the Music Program

We would like to keep all of you up to date on administrative activities in the home office here in Eugene. While most of our departments continue as usual in fulfilling your service needs, one major change is being implemented immediately and concerns our music program. We are pleased to announce that Mr. Timothy Sherwood is assuming full responsibility as Music Director for Church of God, The Eternal. This means that he is tasked with overseeing all aspects of the music we prepare and perform for weekly Sabbaths and Holy Days.

Mr. Richard Meyn is still a valued employee and will continue many of the duties he has performed over many years, including piano accompaniment for hymns and special music pieces, as well as music arranging and help with instrumental performances. We still have plenty of work to keep Mr. Meyn busy. But from this time forward, the overall planning and scheduling of music to be performed—both locally in Eugene and at each US Feast site—as well as local choir direction, will become Mr. Sherwood's responsibility.

This change actually increases our total investment in the music program, because Mr. Meyn will still be devoting the same number of hours to our service, but now we will be adding the extra hours of Mr. Sherwood's time. The music that we offer to God during those holy convocations is a very important part of our worship. With a small, scattered group—such as we are—organizing a successful program is challenging at best. We are confident that this new investment will be a very positive move.

Mr. Sherwood is still likewise responsible for our audio/video processing services and website administration, but will be working fewer hours in that department to make these new duties in the music department feasible. What allows us to make this change is the addition of Mr. Terry Shimon to our staff, as he has become proficient in many of those technical duties over the last year and is now ready to take on more responsibility. With Mr. Shimon's development, we finally have more than just one person trained to do these critical functions for the church. Increased cross-training has been a long-time goal, and even with a very small staff, we have made very good strides in accomplishing that in the office overall. We are finally able to use more of Mr. Sherwood's talents and gifts on the music side of things, and that should be a real blessing to us all.

This change means that Timothy is now in charge of the development of Feast of Tabernacles music programs in both Yachats, Oregon, as well as Townsend, Tennessee. Mr. Sherwood will be attending the Feast this fall in Yachats, so he will be running that program personally throughout. In Townsend, Mr. Kevin Sisney will continue to work under Mr. Sherwood (as in past years) to direct the program on site, even though Mr. Sherwood is

responsible for the overall preparations leading up to the Feast. He is already hard at work preparing the music for this upcoming Feast, and those of you who are participating as vocalists or instrumentalists will soon be receiving the material you need to begin your own preparations.

If anyone has questions about the effects of this organizational change in the church office, please feel free to ask us.

Death

We are saddened to announce the death of Mr. Dewey Keohohina of Ewa Beach, Hawaii, on Friday, June 27, of stroke-related complications. Dewey was ninety-one years of age at the time of his death and was a much-loved, long-time member. He will be greatly missed. We offer our condolences to his wife, Ruth, and his many children and extended family.

New Moon

The new moon, Ab (fifth month), begins Sunday, July 27. The new moon day is Monday, July 28.

Trip Schedule

Mr. Jon Brisby

July 12..... Maryville, Tennessee
July 19..... Mansfield, Massachusetts

Mr. Dave Brandenburg

July 12, 19..... Maryville, Tennessee

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JB 149-12	06-05-14	07-05-14	Prophecy Revisited #12 The Hallmark of the Beast
WSE-JB 149-13	06-26-14	07-12-14	Prophecy Revisited #13 The Man of Sin #1
WSE-RC 59-31	06-26-14	07-19-14	Despair or Glory, Which? #31 Habakkuk Chapter 3 #1
WSE-JB 149-14	06-26-14	07-26-14	Prophecy Revisited #14 The Man of Sin #2?
WSE-RC 59-32	07-17-14	08-02-14	Despair or Glory, Which? #32 Habakkuk Chapter 3 #2
WSE-JB 149-15	07-17-14	08-09-14	Prophecy Revisited #15 The Man of Sin #3?
WSE-RC 59-33	07-17-14	08-16-14	Despair or Glory, Which? #33 Habakkuk Chapter 3 #3

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby