

Announcement Letter June 2015

Dear Brethren:

As soon as Pentecost is past, it is our habit to look forward immediately to the fall Holy Day season, especially because of the special preparations required to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. No other annual Feast requires as much energy and planning as does this specific Feast. And given that this particular festival pictures the *end result* of our entire spiritual calling and endeavor, it seems to have been part of God's *strategic intent* to require our necessary focus each year.

Remember that God's Sabbaths (the *annual Sabbaths* as well as the weekly Sabbath) are *the sign* between God and His people (Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12, 20). And to properly observe those Sabbaths and to remain under the grace of *God's sign*, we must each devote our energies year by year to making provision for that Feast. Passover and Unleavened Bread require a unique set of preparations. Pentecost has become a mark of distinction among God's church at-large because very few will even keep the proper day anymore. And then the fall Feasts have the special distinction of requiring perhaps the most in *physical planning* because of the need to travel away from home for eight consecutive days, taking ourselves "offline" from the daily cares of our lives "back home." For many, that is an extremely difficult test, perhaps the greatest of all.

There are many who would never have traveled far from home in their lives if not for the requirement of keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. For those who like travel it is not so much a test, but for many others, the whole idea of leaving home and spending time in a "foreign place" is a real burden, let alone doing so for a minimum of eight days. And even if it was not so difficult in years past, age-related weaknesses make every future year more of a challenge to break free from that comfortable home routine.

Then there is the monetary aspect of Feast-keeping which is a real test for many of God's people. How is it possible to fund such an "extravagant trip" to be away from home for so long, when some of God's called can barely afford to pay their bills from week to week? Of course, that is why God gave the tithing command, more particularly the command for second tithe, which is the fund saved *all year long* to make that excursion possible. Saving second tithe faithfully *all year long, every single year*, is a type of our requirement to prepare ourselves *spiritually* for the return of Jesus Christ. It requires *continual focus* and a resolution to set aside every care which would otherwise derail us from making that Kingdom our first priority. The parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25) gives a warning about wasting our time and failing to prepare for the Bridegroom's sudden

arrival. Many have good intentions but never follow through and actually *do the work required* to be ready for the "big event." They know it is coming. They believe it is important. But somehow the cares of this world always seem to take precedence over their *literal investment* in that invisible, long-range goal. The same is true of many who fail to prepare correctly to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. It is not that they do not agree that the Feast should be kept. It is not that they do not desire to be there. But there is often a *que sera, sera* approach to it—whatever will be, will be. How many times have we heard members of God's church say, "I want to be at the Feast this year, if it is God's will for me to be there." They seem to forget that *it IS God's will* for them to be there, and God is watching to see *how urgent* they are *to make sure* they are there, as a testament to their *real love* for Him above all else. The parable of the wedding feast was also another warning of Jesus Christ for those who receive the invitation as honored guests, but who make excuses for not being able to attend (Matthew 22). And financial planning is very often *the great obstacle* that derails some with otherwise good intentions.

Have you been saving your tithe faithfully this year so far? Have you set it aside and refused to "dip into it" for other uses? Have you calculated out what you expect to have on hand and how you can maximize that tithe to cover your expenses in order to fulfill God's command to appear before Him for eight days? Or are you one that has failed to prepare—or to sacrifice, physically—to make sure you will have what you need? Are you one who has embraced a different doctrine about tithing to justify *not* saving?

This principle highlights one of the greatest weaknesses in the reinterpretation of the tithing law by God's ministry going back more than forty years. The ministry began to say that those living on government pensions are not required to tithe because those incomes are "gifts" from the government. You can choose to follow that line of reasoning if you will, but the truth is, that money you receive in pensions is most often "new money" that has never before been tithed. You use those monthly checks to pay your living expenses, do you not? So how is it really any different than those who "work" for wages and use the proceeds to pay for their own living expenses? And if your source of income is not really "increase" in God's eyes, then how are you able to fund that command performance to appear before God at a place He has chosen for you to make your offerings? It is all well and good to come up with clever rationalizations to exempt ourselves from a law, but it is quite another to face honestly the ramifications of that interpretation in reality. Again, attending that Feast is part of *the sign* between God and His people. Will you really be comfortable with a human rationalization that severely inhibits your ability to keep the Feast? Does that really seem like what God wants? Oh yes, many are challenged to make ends meet on a very small income. But that has always been the case for many of God's called, whether they are working for wages or receiving government pensions. Why are some with very little income required to trust God in faith

for His salvation, but others are allowed to avoid that test through argumentation about the definition of "increase"? Looking honestly at *the fruits* of that kind of thinking and rationalization should tell the tale.

So these are just a few examples of the kinds of tests that have challenged God's people during the entire time that God has been doing a work with His last-day church. There truly is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

Do you have a plan *for being sure* of your attendance at one of those *few appointed places* where God will appear? Or are you "kicking the can down the road" and just hoping that "something will happen" to make it possible? If we are among those who will be part of the first resurrection at Christ's return, it will not be because "something worked out" to let us be there. It will be because we each *worked diligently* at our spiritual calling, and knowing that God offered it to us and He *wants us there*, we have *pulled out all stops* so that we *will be there!* The same is true for attendance at the Feast of Tabernacles. Those who leave it to chance or "vague hope" will probably miss it. And not appearing when truly there was a way—given enough *faith over fear* and commitment to put God *first*, not second or third—is the best recipe for failing to continue under *the one sign* that God recorded as that which sets His faithful people apart.

Will you be there this year? Now is the time for aggressive planning. Time will move rapidly. You are the beloved children of God. Because of that priceless calling, you are most special indeed. What a glorious gift to know what you know and to have the opportunity to convoke before the One True God and to show respect and honor for Him in keeping that Feast. The rest of the world is in ignorance. We are not.

We are honored to be your devoted servants and to provide encouragement to you in your spiritual walks. You are worthy of our unwavering respect and appreciation, and we are blessed to have the chance to do this work in your particular service. May God bless each one of you in coming months, and we hope to share the joy of another humble triumph for each one of us in appearing together in one of those festival convocations to share that enriching fellowship.

New Moon

The new moon, Tammuz (fourth month), begins Wednesday, June 17. The new moon day is Thursday, June 18.

Death

Our beloved eldest member of the church, Mrs. Lorinda (Lindy) LeBleu of Eugene, OR, died May 18 at the age of 101. Lindy was active up until she suffered a fall about a week before her death. She was baptized August 9, 1937, which means she attended seventy-eight Monday Pentecost Feasts and seldom missed a Sabbath service or local Bible study. It was her personal diary that allowed Mr. Raymond Cole to prove to others that the Radio Church of God was truly keeping a Monday Pentecost all the way back as early as 1936. Lindy was a vigilant advocate of healthy eating and maintaining an active lifestyle, to which she attributed her own long life. She will be deeply missed by all of us who knew her. Her death to us is like the end of an era. We offer our condolences to her son, Robert, and to her large, extended family.

Births

Mr-s. Jérémie Litzler of Tournon-sur-Rhône, France:

Léyla Rose and Alyssia Grace were born on May 16, at home. Jérémie and Aurélie knew that the only acceptable way to give birth to the babies was to do it as God designed it. They only learned about the twins existence at week thirty-two. From that moment, they searched diligently for a midwife who could deliver the twins at home. In fact, no midwife in France is allowed to deliver twins at home. But, God blessed the parents with a midwife who flew from Florida, USA. The birth was an incredible challenge for Aurélie. In fact, Léyla was "stuck" for the first four hours of the pushing stage. But, God helped Aurélie and the eldest and a half hour later Léyla was born. Alyssia followed nine minutes later. They weighed 3.2 kg. (7 lbs.) and 2.5 kg. (5 lbs, 6 oz.) respectively. The mother and twins are all well.

Jérémie and Aurélie are very thankful for God's unconditional love and for all the prayers of the brethren. It was a real help to them.

Church File Server

A reminder for those who use the church off-site file server to download media: We ask that you refrain from streaming it directly from the server but rather that you actually download it first to your own desktop and then listen to it from there. The reason is that we have only the two generic accounts available, and if both are being used, anyone else trying to log in must wait until one of them becomes available. It is a matter

of tying up the server for the five minutes it takes to download a message as opposed to the sixty to ninety minutes it takes to listen to one while logged in. Thank you for your cooperation.

Camp Tejas

Camp Tejas begins on June 25 in Maryville, Tennessee, and we ask that you keep it in your prayers so that it may be an enjoyable, successful experience for everyone involved, and that all have safe travel to, from, and during their time at camp.

Trip Schedule

Mr. Jon Brisby

June 27. (Camp Tejas) Maryville, Tennessee

July 4. Appleby-in-Westmoorland, Cumbria, England

Mr. David Brandenburg

June 27. (Camp Tejas) Maryville, Tennessee

July 4. (Camp Tejas) Maryville, Tennessee

Recorded Sermon Schedule

| Sermon # | Mailed | Played | Title |
|---------------|----------|----------|--|
| WSE-JB 138-30 | 05-07-15 | 05-30-15 | The Family Handbook #30 Child Rearing #2 |
| WSE-RC 59-56 | 05-07-15 | 06-06-15 | Despair or Glory, Which? #56 Habakkuk Chapter 3 #26 |
| WSE-RC 59-57 | 05-28-15 | 06-13-15 | Despair or Glory, Which? #57 Habakkuk Chapter 3 #27 |
| WSE-JB 165 | 05-28-15 | 06-20-15 | Reconfirming Our Additional Beliefs |
| WSE-RC 59-58 | 05-28-15 | 06-27-15 | Despair or Glory, Which? #58 Habakkuk Chapter 3 #28 |
| WSE-RC 59-59 | 06-18-15 | 07-04-15 | Despair or Glory, Which? #59 Habakkuk Chapter 3 #29 |
| WSE-JB 138-31 | 06-18-15 | 07-11-15 | The Family Handbook #31 Child Rearing #3 |
| WSE-RC 59-60 | 06-18-15 | 07-18-15 | Despair or Glory, Which? #60 Habakkuk Chapter 3 #30 |

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby