

Announcement Letter August 2015

A sincere and special greeting to God's scattered brethren around this globe, with heartfelt prayers for your physical, as well as your spiritual, well-being. We pray fervently for your health and welfare as you traverse your own difficult paths in this challenging time upon the earth. No matter whether you are one who desires regular contact with your servants in the Eugene home church office and stays in touch with us, or whether you are one that we do not hear from much during the year, you are all much loved and appreciated for your spiritual and material support which makes it possible for us to continue this important work for all.

Given that this is the last full calendar month before the month in which we will be keeping the fall Holy Days, it is a good idea to include a rehearsal of the best strategy for assuring a positive Feast experience for all this year. As a very scattered remnant, many of you do not have the opportunity for true Christian fellowship during the year as would be the ideal if we had more numerous local congregations. So preparing to travel to attend the Feast of Tabernacles comes with great expectations for all of us. It is a true blessing that God has created this particular Feast season as a focal point of the year, and He does indeed desire for us to be enthusiastic about the event.

But please keep in mind that there are also a number of pitfalls associated with preparing for and attending the Feast. That is because we are each surrounded by enemies who would love to discourage us from attending, or else to ruin our experience and cause us to turn bitter or despondent regarding God's master plan. For some of us, the greatest trial of all is just getting to the Feast site, physically, and if that is achieved, the actual keeping of the Feast is a joy and a blessing. For others, physical travel and the "showing up" may not be as difficult, but having a positive experience once at the Feast may be the great trial. Therefore, try to remember that we will each have to be on guard *at all times* to avoid falling potentially into one of those many traps which can rob us of our joy. God wants you to be rewarded and fulfilled. There is nothing that should prevent that if we are diligent.

We have already written to you about the need to *plan physically* so that you can appear in one of those places where God will place His name—a place where He likewise will appear and accept your personal sacrifices as promised. Hopefully you all have made those arrangements by now, since time is quickly passing and the Feast is merely weeks away. But what about the mental and spiritual side of the equation?

Above all, please remember that the secret to having a truly rewarding Feast experience—and to receive God's special favor—is in making ourselves *a living sacrifice* during that festival gathering. Yes, it is the one time of year when the greatest numbers of our brethren are able to gather together and to enjoy that kind of fellowship, and therefore it is the *very best opportunity* you will have all year to practice the Christian tenet of service. Are you thinking about ways to serve others once you are at the Feast? Are you formulating a strategy *right now* for going out of your way to be a blessing to others, rather than just treating the occasion as a personal vacation and time for self?

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13:34–35).

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently (1 Peter 1:22).

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us (1 John 4:11–12).

What are some practical ways to make this principle *real* in your experience, and not just an empty platitude?

First, above all, have a plan to "do no harm." Search yourself (even as you do before the Passover season) and identify what weaknesses of yours *might possibly surface* at the Feast to cause difficulties. The number one way we can each serve others is to be sure not to bring our "personal baggage" to the Feast and permit Satan to use us as an instrument to sow seeds of discord. If you acknowledge the possibility of that (and we are all vulnerable as human beings), you can be *proactive* in preventing that enemy from using you to harm God's church. As Mr. Cole always admonished us, we must "grab ourselves by the nape of the neck and say, 'Bud, *you're not going to do that!*'" Those who assume they are impervious to such manipulation are the ones most at risk for being a pawn of our enemy. The key—the ounce of prevention—is fervent prayer, fasting, and meditation before the Holy Days to be sure we are at our *spiritual best* when we arrive at the Feast. Satan will not be able to manipulate those who sincerely are on guard, and who are introspective about their own weaknesses. Even if you do nothing else for others at the Feast, if you at least do not create or allow yourself to become part of a problem, you will be giving a very valuable service indeed.

Especially be cognizant in order to avoid judging others based upon the world's false definition of "love." How many times over the years have we heard certain ones claim, "There's not enough love in this church." Mr. Raymond Cole addressed that very dangerous and nefarious principle *many times* in years past because it seemed to surface frequently. It would take an entire article or sermon to do the topic justice, but in short, recognize that the churches of this world think they know what love is, and they do not! The basis of *real love* is respect for God's laws, both in honoring God as well as honoring fellow man (Romans 13:10). Anyone who is passing judgment upon others by accusing them of "not loving enough," is really saying, "I am not being served enough." It is very selfish, even if they do not realize it. Please do not fall into that trap! Mr. Cole used to say, if there is not enough love, then *you* should *love more*! You surely will not find "God's love" in a Protestant or Catholic assembly. If they do not honor God's laws (like the seventh-day Sabbath and Holy Days), their's is a false love inspired by man's enemy. That applies to any remnant of our parent church who likewise has embraced *false doctrines* which God hates. You cannot cover hate for God's revealed doctrines by slathering "human love" upon it in personal fellowship. That will never work. There are many who will be "keeping a Feast" in places around the world, but because they have embraced doctrines which God despises, God will not appear to accept their sacrifices (Isaiah 1:11–15; Amos 5:21–23). So where is the real Truth being preserved and defended? Find it and be there! And if, among those brethren who are also there, you do not feel they are yet perfectly fulfilling God's requirement to love one another, how about making yourself an agent to show how to do it? We all lack the perfect love Jesus Christ showed to us. No doubt we all need to love more. How about some mercy for the weak, rather than judgment? Where will you invest your energies to practice your "love"?

On the *active* side of the service equation, your best strategy for helping others will depend upon your physical capabilities. For some of our elderly or physically disabled, just being *present* at the Feast will be a huge accomplishment, and there may not be any "excess available energy" to spend in entertaining others. It may be all they can do just to muster the energy to attend daily church services (if that much) and then to rest and recuperate to make it through the whole Feast. But others of us who *do have* the physical blessing of health can do more.

Will you go out of your way to meet and to get to know brethren who are strangers to you now? Are there certain attendees at the Feast each year that you recognize by sight, but with whom you have never spent any time? Why is that? What will you do *this year* to prevent that from continuing? Are you perhaps shy, and is it difficult to make new friends? If so, that is normal for many. But recognize that this is "normal" for *carnal human beings*. And giving in to feelings of shyness is itself an act of *self service*, not service to others. Will you commit to moving outside of your personal comfort zone

and seek to get to know others? If you have the capability, will you initiate invitations for fellowship? Will you especially keep your eye out for those who seem themselves to be shy and uncomfortable and go out of your way to "bring them into the fold"? There are always new brethren, or brethren who may not be "new" but who feel impediments to fellowship. Unless enough of us are willing to watch out for them and to include them, they may remain in the shadows and wind up being alone for much of the Feast. That would be a tragedy, and one that can be avoided. You may have brethren turn down your request for fellowship, and for many different reasons. So what? Do not let that prevent you from asking! What do you have to lose? When our focus truly is upon the welfare of others—rather than ourselves—we will be willing to "take risks." And when enough of us do that, it is amazing how much the entire Feast experience can be enriched for the entire body.

These are just a few reminders to help us begin to prepare truly for the upcoming Feasts. We each have a glorious opportunity to use the gifts God has given to us to be of service to others. If we are certain to focus on the care and tending of others, there will be no room for turning inward and becoming selfishly oriented.

May God grant us the capacity and *the willingness* to apply these principles so that when the Feast is over, we can appraise accurately and confidently that the true light of Jesus Christ has surely shined once again in a small but very bright way.

New Moon

The new moon, Ellul (sixth month), begins Sabbath, August 15. The new moon day is Sunday, August 16.

Birth

Mr-s. Justin Nalder would like to announce the birth of their second child, Emmitt Richard. He was born Sabbath morning, July 25, weighing nine pounds, two ounces. Olivia and Emmitt are doing fine.

Feast of Tabernacles

Please take note that the weekly Sabbath services on September 26 will be held in Townsend, TN, and in Yachats, OR, since the Feast of Tabernacles will begin the next evening, Sunday, September 27. Please make your plans and reservations accordingly.

Holy Days

Feast of Trumpets. Monday, September 14
Atonement. Wednesday, September 23
Feast of Tabernacles. September 27 (evening service)–October 4
Last Great Day. October 5

Trip Schedule

Mr. Jon Brisby

September 12. Phoenix, AZ
September 14 (Trumpets). Modesto, CA
September 23 (Atonement). Eugene, OR
September 26–30 (FOT). Yachats, OR
October 1–5 (FOT). Townsend, TN

Mr. David Brandenburg

September 26–30 (FOT). Townsend, TN
October 1–5 (FOT). Yachats, OR

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
CL2-132	07-09-15	07-25-15	Meekness #1
WSE-JB 138-32	07-09-15	08-01-15	The Family Handbook #32 Child Rearing #4
CL2-133	07-09-15	08-08-15	Meekness #2
CL2-134	07-30-15	08-15-15	Meekness #3
WSE-JB 168	07-30-15	08-22-15	Blessings and Curses
CL2-135	07-30-15	08-29-15	Meekness #4
WSE-JB 138-33	08-20-15	09-05-15	The Family Handbook #33 Child Rearing #5
CL2-136	08-20-15	09-12-15	Meekness #5

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby