

## Announcement Letter August 2016

Dear Brethren:

A special greeting this month to the few but much beloved brethren of this little flock who are holding firm to that revealed way of life which we all share in common. We say it very often, but it is nonetheless very sincere when we express our love and appreciation for every one of you who have been a vital part of this remnant church and who still care about that future we have been called to receive.

On more than one occasion we have heard someone express a sense of *unworthiness* to be part of the church because of the perception that our "real members" are all very strong in faith and in practice of God's doctrines. These are individuals who likewise share a belief in those same teachings we first received through Mr. Herbert Armstrong—and that were preserved by Mr. Raymond Cole—but they see themselves as "unworthy" to be actual "members" of the church because of the many residual failings in their own lives. But this concept is not accurate at all!

First, our official membership is composed of individuals who are *all* struggling against sin, and who are *all* finding it very hard to build better spiritual character while living in this evil world and having to resist the pulls of their own carnal minds. Not one of them is "worthy" in any way, or has accomplished all that God requires of us. It is a *daily battle* to continue resisting sin and working to overcome these monumental pressures which are against us. And it is very common for these "members" to have times when they are more weak and suffer spiritual setbacks. If any of you have the impression that the "true members" are ones who have their "spiritual acts together" totally, you are very much mistaken. Yes, we have a number of members who have shown some very impressive faith and continuity in living disciplined lives. That is an incredible inspiration. And maybe it is very sad to admit that such individuals are the exceptional case, rather than the norm, but that would nevertheless be the truth of the matter. The fact is, more of our membership includes ones who are still struggling desperately to come out of sins of all kinds. God has called the weak and the base of this world, and though they know and understand what is required of them, they are still failing often to live up to that perfect standard of our High Priest, Jesus Christ.

This is not an attempt to say that because most are far less than perfect that we do not need to worry about having to really learn faith and personal discipline. Far from it! The second point is that we must *never* attempt to "lower the bar" of expectation, and must always strive for the mastery of self. When we see examples of ones in the church who have

demonstrated unusual faith or personal self-discipline, rather than to allow that to discourage us about our own current state, turn it around and use that positive example as *an incentive* to achieve a similar result. Reject all suggestions in your mind (especially from that deceitful spiritual enemy) trying to get you to feel inferior and to give up. If you were called to this way of life (and the majority of those reading this certainly were), then you were called by God *to succeed*, not to fail. And just because your sins are many and you feel so weak from persistent failures, you *can* overcome, because God has offered you a clear path to success! Yes, you may have to become willing to do things you have never done before. But this is your *very best opportunity* to qualify to be part of His glorious Family at the return of Jesus Christ. Regardless of how weak you may be, and how many times you have failed to do what you know is right, you are still an important part of the Church of God, and you are beloved members as long as you will keep fighting. Never forget how Jesus Christ defined His own ministry:

And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:31–32).

The true "members" of this fellowship are ones who are sick, spiritually, and—learning to be pliant in the hands of their merciful Physician—working to become well. So just because you are sick does not mean you do not belong. Quite the contrary, this is the place where God has placed the sick under a longterm treatment plan to become well, and to inherit eternal life.

## **New Ministerial Addition**

I would like to announce that Mr. Robert Burke, of Boxford, MA, has been selected to train for ministerial duties to help support the brethren of Church of God, The Eternal in North America.

As you are aware, we have only a small number of ordained men to carry on the responsibilities required to serve this little remnant fellowship, and most recently one of those key men, Mr. John Byrd, has died. Wisdom dictates that we continue to identify and to develop servants for the future, given that we simply do not know how long time will go on or what challenges we may yet face in the future. If things were always to stay exactly as they are right now, we could surely continue to provide the service and support required for all of you in the way that we have been operating to date. However, we all understand that things never stay the same. Not only do we see the potential need for more shepherds to care for the new sheep God may yet continue to send to us in the future, your current servants are

not getting any younger, but older, year by year. Your current Director is now twenty years older than when he was first selected by Mr. Raymond Cole to be his assistant in the ministry. And two out of three of that "new" Director's current ministerial assistants in the USA are over the age of seventy-five. How many years into the future will it be before that current team of four face serious limitations of ability? With God's special help, we all hope to be strong and viable for a long time yet, but again, real wisdom never dismisses the reality of our physical circumstances. It is for these reasons that God seems to have been inspiring us to make a priority now of grooming new servants to begin helping us to share that load of responsibility for the edification of His church.

With this in mind, Bob Burke was selected after very serious consideration, including much fasting and prayer, as the most qualified individual we have available to begin to train in this role. Bob has been a baptized member of the Church for twenty years, and he has proven by the choices in his personal life and his longtime service as a lead man in our Boston congregation that he truly loves God's revealed Way of Life. He is not one who seeks to insert his own "spin" upon God's Truth, or to use his role in the church for self-aggrandizement. He has a quiet, calming personality, but exudes a sense of stability and seriousness in all that he does. It is for all of these reasons that he has become the personal and special friend of your current Pastor since he first began to attend with Church of God, The Eternal back in the mid-1990s. The proper criteria for selecting ministers within God's Church will never be personalized preference, but when that personalized affinity has been cultivated because of a consistent pattern of love and respect for God's Truth, how can such personal rapport be something bad? We need more men serving you who share real unity in what we stand for in the service of Jesus Christ, and in the way we are conducting the administration of this ministry. Bob Burke gets it, and without the need to be prodded.

We will have much more to offer in introducing Mr. Burke to you in the near future. For now, we simply wanted to make this initial announcement to all of you. The plan is to have Bob give two sermonettes at the Feast of Tabernacles in Townsend, TN, in October, and to have him write a *Monthly Letter* during 2017 as well. He will also have a chance to begin to interface with all of you in this new capacity to allow him, and you, to become comfortable with his new role. If all goes well, the plan would be to lay hands upon Bob with ordination in 2017, perhaps at next year's fall Feast. We will wait and seek God's direction for all of this along the way.

At this point, please note that your Pastor is still the only paid, "full-time," minister being supported by the church in North America. All of our ministerial assistants (and now including Bob Burke as well) continue to work and to support their families through God's blessings to them apart from your tithes and offerings. This is the way that still works best for the time being, and as long as things continue as they are now, the way that seems to

make the most sense. If any of you have any questions concerning our future planning, please feel free to ask. In the meantime, I hope you will join in supporting Bob in this new role and, most of all, in praying that God will continue to bless us with the future leaders we need to defend the faith once delivered.

## **Camp Tejas**

This year Camp Tejas returned to the location of Camp Lane in the Oregon coastal range between Eugene and Florence. It is a very mild, green and lush environment, and perfect for the fifteenth year of our teen summer event. The Camp sits on approximately fifteen acres surrounded by very tall trees with large grassy areas that are ideal for activities. We were able to take possession of the camp site only after 3 p.m. on Friday. However, it was most refreshing to have so many individuals pull together to assist in getting everyone settled quickly, putting away all the food and prepping for dinner and the upcoming Sabbath.

As with most events, the spirit of cooperation and volunteerism started way before this year's Camp started, with those planning the meals, locating and ordering the good food, preparing some meals in advance, and preparing the schedule of events. Others supplied transportation, contributed for the craft projects, taught classes and kept our supply of fire wood stocked throughout for some great camp fires!

We had thirteen campers this year, two camp cooks, and the assistance of five full or part-time staff. Our activities included a trampoline park, miniature golf, an onsite Capoeira class, running a sports course at Fern Ridge reservoir (where the teens had the opportunity to practice their yacht-building skills using cardboard and a roll of tape). And what is time spent in Oregon without going to the coast! We enjoyed hikes along the dunes, kayaking, visiting the Hatfield Marine Science Center, and a little shopping in Newport. The campers had an opportunity to learn some wilderness skills, how to make quiche and a great alternate ice cream recipe that was ready in minutes! There was a wonderful hike in the Three Sisters Wilderness area where we were able to see the Upper and Lower Proxy waterfalls, followed up with a swim at Belknap Hot Springs pool.

Overall, we were blessed with beautiful weather and another wonderful time. When it came time to depart, very early in the morning for some, we very much appreciated all the volunteers and assistants who helped close and clean up for us. I would like to give a shout out to all those who helped make this year's camp a success once again: Donald Smythe and Reta Knott for being our camp cooks, Justin Nalder, Michelle Bourget, John McNeil and Duane Garland, our staff, and I also appreciated one of the ladies who so graciously sewed a tear in my walking shorts! Thank you to Timothy Sherwood and Charisse McNeil for

helping with our singing and craft classes, respectively. The assistance before and after by Connie Silvers, Kim Brisby, and Elizabeth Garland was also very much appreciated. We are already planning for the next two years, God-willing, likewise to be in the Northwest. Tune in soon for more details!

**New Moon**

The new moon, Ab (fifth month), begins Thursday evening, August 4. The new moon day is Friday, August 5.

The new moon, Ellul (sixth month), begins Sabbath, September 3. The new moon day is Sunday, September 4.

**Feast of Tabernacles**

Please take note that the weekly Sabbath services on October 15 will be held in Townsend, TN, and in Yachats, OR, since the Feast of Tabernacles will begin the next evening, Sunday, October 16. Please make your plans and reservations accordingly.

**Trip Schedule**

**Mr. Jon Brisby**

September 3. .... Stephenville, Texas

## Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JB 184-3	07-14-16	07-30-16	What Is the Spirit in Man? #3
WSE-RC 39-19	07-14-16	08-06-16	Confrontations and Responses of Jesus Christ #19
WSE-JB 184-4	07-14-16	08-13-16	What Is the Spirit in Man? #4
WSE-JB 186	08-04-16	08-20-16	"Not I," Said the Teenager
WSE-JB 187	08-04-16	08-27-16	Did Jesus Come to Condemn?
WSE-RC 39-20	08-04-16	09-03-16	Confrontations and Responses of Jesus Christ #20
WSE-RC 39-21	08-25-16	09-10-16	Confrontations and Responses of Jesus Christ #21
WSE-RC 39-22	08-25-16	09-17-16	Confrontations and Responses of Jesus Christ #22

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby