

Announcement Letter December 2016

Dear Brethren:

It is a special privilege to write to you this month and to reaffirm our love and respect for all of you still soldiering through the trials and difficulties of these physical lives and maintaining your focus upon those spiritual things that offer real hope. It is never easy, and the ongoing struggle can be very wearing upon us, but the reward for your sacrifices will be more than worth it. Thank you again for your collective example to stand for the real Truth of God. That example is very encouraging and inspiring.

I am sad to announce the death of Mr. David Brandenburg, who went to sleep early Monday morning, November 7, 2016. David did not choose to publicize the serious health issue he was coping with in the weeks leading to the fall Holy Day season, and those of us who were aware to some extent tried very hard to honor his personal wishes.

In short, it was a very aggressive cancer that only began to affect his normal function and quality of life this past summer. Yes, he was dealing with a local skin lesion for over a year prior to that time (which he suspected might be malignant), but he was very confident to place himself in God's hands from the beginning, and he never wavered from that position. Even when he began to have symptoms in other areas of his body in late summer, it did not slow him down from his normal routine or from seeking to fulfill his personal commitments. When he flew to Eugene, Oregon, in mid-September to prerecord two sermons for our Feast of Tabernacles, he said, privately, that he was operating at about eighty percent, but even so he was still able to maintain a full schedule, including his exercise routine. But by the time he left his home again in Phoenix, Arizona, to begin his journey to Australia for the Feast of Tabernacles in October, he commented that he was only at about sixty percent. It was while he was traveling to meet with the brethren in central California for Atonement that he experienced the first debilitating symptoms. He would not be able to make the long journey to Australia after all, but he was still determined to be at God's Feast of Tabernacles. The brethren in California helped transport him to Yachats, Oregon, where he attended every service and social event during the eight-day Feast. His symptoms were progressing very rapidly by this time, and so it was only two short weeks after the Last Great Day that he drew his last breath.

David's death is a big loss to the church, mostly because of the incredible personal service he has given to us for so many years, which we will now miss. Not only did he serve as an ordained minister for the last five years in particular, he served several decades as a loyal laymember who offered friendship, comfort, and inspiration to many. His willingness to volunteer to lead the youth summer camp for fifteen years (in spite of having less time to spare than most) is a classic example of his personal priorities to put God's people first. That was only one of the more public legacies of his service. There were so many more that were not publicized, as he quietly reached out to individual members of the church around the world to cultivate friendships and to share encouragement. For all of these reasons, we will all now feel a very empty space.

On the other hand, David's death is an incredible blessing, most of all because he has finished his own course in God's plan and no longer has to toil in this evil world. He had confidence in the promises of God for the future, so in what way can his death be a bad thing if God has judged him faithful? David left us a very fine example in defending the true doctrines of Jesus Christ through his own personal choices in life. Under tremendous pressures—in a number of separate, critical moments over many years' time—David was one who cut through all of the nonsense of certain declared enemies of the church (as well as those who were just too weak to resist the attacks of Satan), and he "called a spade a spade." He never bought in to the false wisdom of scholars, or to the emotional arguments of those attempting to pull him into offense or apostasy. He was kind and empathetic, but at the very same time, he did not countenance stupid, emotional arguments, or individuals who attempted to justify compromise or weakness. He manifested common sense in his own personal choices, demonstrating that as a member of God's Church he really did believe what he professed. God's Truth was real to him, and he took those laws into consideration in the choices he made, both in public and in private.

The last great blessing he gave to us all was his example to *believe in* and to *stand by* God as His Saviour, not Satan and his counterfeit medical system. Very likely David could have "saved himself" by going to the god of Ekron, as most do (even in God's church) when faced with a life-threatening illness. If any of you are thinking that he was foolish for not just "having that small lesion dealt with early on," then you are missing the whole point of what it is we are doing here. Sooner or later we will each face one or more physical challenges that test whether we really have confidence in God, or whether our faith is really still in other things (whether medical science or in medicinal herbs). David dealt with all of those temptations, and in the end, rejected them, placing himself in God's hands. The world will call him foolish. But he had real confidence in the resurrection, and that is where he placed all of his hope. For that reason, David left us an incredible legacy, if we are capable of seeing it.

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints (Psalm 116:15)

If we truly believe that, then we have been given another real blessing to witness another of God's called ones actually "put his money where his mouth is," even unto death. That is the kind of faith we are each going to have to be willing to manifest, if we ever expect to have a reward when Jesus Christ returns to this earth. David Brandenburg will be greatly missed, but David did us an incredible service while he was here, and that legacy is truly something to be appreciated.

Enclosed with this mailing is the December *Monthly Letter*, written by Mr. Eduardo Cambil, one of our ordained ministers in the Philippines. Ed is a younger brother of Mr. Mario Roque, and has been his assistant and a very faithful and loyal servant to our Philippine brethren for many years. Ed got to know Mr. Raymond Cole personally during the four years that Mr. Cole traveled to the Philippines for this group in the early 1990s, and I have known Ed and his family now for almost twenty years. He is quiet and unassuming in nature, but strong in belief of the Truth, and he is a very dear friend. This is Ed's first time writing to all of you, but I hope to include more letters from him in the future.

New Moon

The new moon, Tebeth (tenth month), begins Thursday evening, December 29. The new moon day is Friday, December 30.

Trip Schedule

Mr. Jon Brisby

December 17..... Don Carlos, Mindanao, Philippines

December 24..... Nashville, Tennessee

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-RC 39-28	11-24-16	12-10-16	Confrontations and Responses of Jesus Christ #28
WSE-22-154-26D	11-24-16	12-17-16	Fund. of Belief #26: Worldly Holidays: Calendars #2
WSP-JWB 189	11-24-16	12-24-16	What Commandment Am I Breaking?
WSE-RC 39-29	12-15-16	12-31-16	Confrontations and Responses of Jesus Christ #29
WSE-JWB 191	12-15-16	01-07-17	A Celebration of Death
WSE-RC 39-30	12-15-16	01-14-17	Confrontations and Responses of Jesus Christ #30

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby