

Announcement Letter August 2018

Dear Brethren:

Special greetings to all of our brethren and most valuable supporters of this little remnant fellowship. In every place where God has placed you and preserved you, we express once again our heartfelt thanks for allowing us to serve you as members of the Church of God. Thank you for the regular feedback that we receive which lets us know that the work we are doing to provide letters, sermons, articles, Bible studies, and organized places to worship before God are valued and appreciated. Your contacts help us stay connected and to respond better to the needs of our members. May we never forget that the very purpose of this organized assembly is to support and to aid spiritually the children whom God has called in this age. You are all worth our respect, and our sincere devotion.

Given that God's annual Holy Days are all "early" this year on the secular calendar, it means that the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles is only about six weeks away. Does that surprise you? Hopefully, you have already made many of your arrangements for travel and housing, to be sure that you will be able to present your commanded offerings before God in one of those appointed places.

It is also not too early to remind everyone about some basic protocols when we gather together at the Feast. Going into the Holy Day season with thoughtful preparation will make all the difference in our service to God, and in our own satisfaction from the experience. Below is a reprint of comments made from the September 2014 *Announcement Letter*, which hopefully will be an aid to you.

Spiritual Principle: Feast Protocol

Because we all have such great expectations for our "Feast experience," there is also the opportunity for disappointments, if we are not wisely grounded, and if we have not prepared fully and completely. Below is a summary of basic points to help you prepare in mind, as well as physically, to have the kind of Feast experience that God desires for His children. (These points are summarized from a sermon recorded September 22, 2012.)

- 1) Remember what is the first—most important—reason we attend the Feast: to obey and to honor God who will appear in our midst (Exodus 23:15–22; 40:32–38).
- 2) Do not arrive at the Feast with lofty expectations of others. Come instead to be their servant, no matter what (Matthew 23:11–12; 1 Peter 3:8–11).

If you are coming with a chip on your shoulder, waiting to see if others will do what you think they should do, you are certain to become offended (Romans 12:9–17).

Specific ways to serve others? a. If someone makes a mistake of weakness, cover it, do not amplify it! b. Be on the lookout for opportunities to help others with specific needs. There is nothing more fulfilling. c. Make yourself available for fellowship, even just to talk to one who might be lonely. Are you watching out for those who may get left out and seeking to include them?

- 3) Make a point to spend time with and get to know several who are not well known to you. Have a plan, or it will not happen. Also, avoid cliques! (Philippians 2:1–5)

Are you shy and waiting to be "invited"? If you are focused on serving others, you must go out of your way to *be where the people are!* Besides just the daily church services, attend the group functions offered, when possible.

- 4) Do not forsake your prayer, study, and meditation! Satan will attempt to attack. You need to be on guard to be at your very best, spiritually.
- 5) Observe the laws of moderation. All too many go overboard on food, drink, and lack of sleep (Philippians 4:5; Romans 13:13–14).

Remember that you are ambassadors for Christ in this community. Do not let people in the world believe we are undisciplined revelers (Ephesians 5:17–18; Romans 14:16–19).

If we each are very careful to follow this strategy for use of our time at the Feast, we can indeed have a most fulfilling experience, and likewise show all of those around us that we are not like the world. May your actions and personal choices show beyond words that you really do yearn for the Kingdom of God upon this earth.

Opening and Closing Prayers

Many of the baptized men in this remnant body have been called upon for years to offer an opening or closing prayer at either a weekly Sabbath service or a Holy Day assembly. This has been a tradition in God's church from the very earliest time of Mr. Armstrong's work. From time to time, it makes sense to rehearse some of the basic guidelines for giving these prayers, for the benefit of all those who will be serving, both for the veteran as well as for many who are newer to this responsibility in our fellowship.

First, the opening prayer—following the hymn service—is when we ask God to bless our convocation and to be with us to inspire and guide both the ministry and the laity to fulfill His will. It is the moment we dedicate the service as a solemn offering to our Creator, and ask Him to be within our midst. At the end of the service—following the final hymn—we offer the closing prayer to conclude the solemn assembly and ask for God to dismiss us.

In general, and per Mr. Raymond Cole's written directions in years past, congregational prayers should be short and to the point. The opening prayer is typically longer than the closing one. How short is "short"? A good length prayer is succinct enough to conclude within one to one-and-one-half minutes. (This has been determined by paying attention to *actual prayers* over the last year and identifying common denominators of the most effective ones.) Going longer than one-and-one-half minutes begins to undermine the effectiveness of the prayer, often making it seem rambling and inefficient, or appearing to be a "sermonette." Better to be very short than a bit too long. It is also important for the men called on for this duty to recognize they are not offering a personal prayer in front of the congregation as indicated by using the word "I". It is a prayer on behalf of the entire congregation, therefore it should always be confined to the expression of "we" and "us." Never ever, ever, use the word "I" in one of these prayers. It is not a time for you to express your personal thoughts of humility, remorse, or to make a public confession. Anyone who does so has hijacked the prayer of the people.

In the same way Jesus Christ taught the disciples to pray by including specific broad elements, so our congregational prayers should include certain key elements which still provide much latitude for individual expression. The general content of the opening prayer should include acknowledgment of God as our Creator and the One who called us into this way of life, thanksgiving to Him, and a request to bless our assembly with His presence and inspiration. The closing prayer should also include thanksgiving, as well as the request to dismiss our assembly and to provide protection and blessings for His people. If it is the closing prayer for a morning Holy Day service (or one with a meal to follow), that prayer should also include a request for God to bless our meal.

The most important thing to remember is to be sincere. One does not have to be a great speaker to offer a sincere prayer. However, in many cases it is a good idea to think about the assigned prayer in advance and ask God for wisdom in offering a prayer on behalf of the congregation. There are also several potential traps that should be avoided absolutely. An opening or closing prayer is *never* to be used as an opportunity to deliver a message to the congregation. Instruction to the church is given by *the ministry* in the sermon portion of the service. Just as our songleaders are instructed to avoid making any comments about the sermon before the closing hymn, so too, laymembers offering congregational prayers should make sure their offerings do not inadvertently turn into sermonettes, or stray in any other way from the guidelines enunciated above. With these simple principles in mind, those called upon for this duty should feel comfortable in fulfilling this important function in our solemn services, regardless of natural public speaking ability. A sincere heart is the most important requirement of all.

Death

Mr. Jonas Cullwick and his wife, Leias, of Port Vila, Republic of Vanuatu, were members of Worldwide Church of God from the 1980s, and have been members with us for about ten years. They have attended several Feasts with the Australian brethren. Jonas died suddenly of a heart attack early Saturday, June 9. We offer our sincere condolences to Leias and her family.

Prayer Request

[Omitted for confidentiality]

New Moon

The new moon, Ellul (sixth month), begins Saturday evening, August 11. The new moon day is Sunday, August 12.

Feast of Tabernacles

In Yachats, OR, the Feast will be held at the Yachats Commons, located at 441 Hwy 101 N.

In Townsend, TN, the Feast will be held at The Barn Event Center of the Smokies, 7264 East Lamar Alexander Pkwy.

If you need further information, please call the church office at (541) 344-8880.

Please take note that the weekly Sabbath services on September 22 will be held in Townsend, TN, and in Yachats, OR, since the Feast of Tabernacles will begin the next evening, Sunday, September 23. Please make your plans and reservations accordingly.

Holy Days

Feast of Trumpets	September 10
Atonement	September 19
Feast of Tabernacles	September 23 (evening service)–30
Last Great Day	October 1

Trip Schedule

Mr. Jon Brisby

September 1	Bridgeport, CA
September 8, 10 (Trumpets)	Stephenville, TX
September 19 (Atonement)	Maryville, TN
September 22	Townsend, TN
September 23–26 (FOT)	Townsend, TN
September 27–October 1 (FOT)	Yachats, OR

Mr. Robert Burke

September 22	Yachats, OR
September 23–October 1 (FOT)	Yachats, OR

Mr. Richard Litz

September 22 Townsend, TN
September 23–October 1 (FOT) Townsend, TN

Mr. Robert Litz

September 22 Townsend, TN
September 23–October 1 (FOT) Townsend, TN

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JWB 217-1	07-05-18	08-04-18	Paradigm Shifts #1
WSE-RC D-5	07-26-18	08-11-18	Divine Revelation #5
WSE-JWB 217-2	07-26-18	08-18-18	Paradigm Shifts #2
WSE-RC D-6	07-26-18	08-25-18	Divine Revelation #6
WSE-RC D-7	08-16-18	09-01-18	Divine Revelation #7
WSE-RC D-8	08-16-18	09-08-18	Divine Revelation #8
WSE-JWB 219	08-16-18	09-15-18	Will Neutrality Save You?

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby