

## Announcement Letter July 2020

Dear Brethren:

Since the June issue of this *Letter* was drafted, we have witnessed the emergence of a brand new national crisis in the USA, adding to the massive coronavirus pandemic response which is still playing out. In late May we all witnessed the explosion of racial tensions resulting from the death of a black man in police custody in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which was captured on a video recording for all to see. This single event has triggered, not just a regionalized backlash—as has been more typical of past instances of minority mistreatment at the hands of police—but a national and even international tidal wave of unrest and lawlessness in many of our cities. The ripple effect from this new crisis is still unfolding, creating an environment of hatred and distrust, not only of the institutions of law enforcement specifically, but of all civil government order in general.

What we have really seen is evidence of the *severe fragility* of our orderly institutions in this world, demonstrating how quickly and completely all sense of normalcy can be shredded in what has proven to be very *volatile times*. For any of us who may have thought that we were still "some time" away from the days when all law and order *might break down*, these unfolding events should be a wake-up call. As with past instances of civil unrest, this crisis might likewise "blow over." Then again, maybe it will not. Time will tell, and we are *watching*, refusing to draw ill-advised conclusions in advance.

But this ministry has been telling you for years that calamitous events can occur—as if overnight—and *likely will occur* at some point to forever change our political and social foundations. Revolution is in the air, and there are political groups today founded upon the very principle of *radical change*, determined to tear down the existing institutions and replace them with ones of their own making. They are seeking the overthrow of the existing norms we have all grown up with and looking for an excuse to bring it all down. Even if it does not happen yet, we should all be able to see *the writing on the wall*. It is only a matter of time before this entire world will be thrust into chaos, because that is what Jesus Christ revealed would occur (Matthew 24). Perhaps we are seeing more clearly just *a few of the predicates* being employed by our spiritual enemy to bring that about. No matter what threats emerge upon the horizon, if you are one who is drawing closer to God, day by day, then you need not be troubled or plagued by fear. The faithful have been promised protection from many of these last-day evils. If we are truly taking care of our spiritual obligations before God *in private*, He will surely bless each of us outwardly, in public. May we be among those

few who will be capable of manifesting true peace of mind, even in the midst of very troublous times.

## **Feast of Tabernacles Site Updates**

We have recently had direct conversations with the managers of both facilities in the USA where our group has kept the Feast for many years. This includes the Barn Convention Center in Townsend, Tennessee, as well as the Yachats Commons in Yachats, Oregon. In light of state government restrictions affecting group meetings in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, the result of those conversations includes both good news and bad news.

For good news, in Tennessee, the owner of the Barn Convention Center has assured us that we have a "green light" to proceed with our annual meeting plans as usual. The Barn was shut down initially for two months, but has since reopened and has been hosting a number of private events, including weddings with as many as 150 attendees. Short of any new development, there is no expectation of a problem with our normal Feast gathering, including the meals that we cater on the high Sabbaths. So if you are already planning to attend the Feast in Tennessee, you should have confidence in confirming your full reservations without worry.

In Oregon it is a different scenario. While most of the counties in Oregon are being "reopened" to business on a fairly rapid schedule, Lincoln County (where Yachats is located) has had a surge in virus cases that has prevented the state governor from approving larger meetings. The meeting facility we use, the Yachats Commons, is managed by the city of Yachats, and the manager we spoke with tells us it is doubtful that they will permit our meeting in October to proceed as planned, unless things *change dramatically* in coming weeks. Even if a group of our size were permitted to use the hall, our attendees would be subject to many of the "safety protocols" being mandated, like face masks and social distancing, both while inside as well as outside of the hall. With that in mind, we still have not cancelled our meeting in Yachats for the Feast as of this date, but we intend to make a final decision no later than the first of August. At this point, we estimate an 80% chance of moving our Oregon Feast site to a different location.

At this moment, we are searching for other potential meeting venues within Oregon counties that are not under severe restrictions. We would still like to keep our Feast site on the Oregon coast, but unless we are able to find an ideal venue, our back-up plan is to hold the Feast at our own meeting hall here in Eugene, Oregon. Eugene is located in Lane County, and Lane is one that has had little impact from the virus so far and is operating with increasing freedom. On top of that, since we lease our own office and meeting facility here,

we are not at the whim of any "facility manager" telling us that we cannot use the space, or dictating what we must do while using the space.

In summary, what this means is that we are still *very committed* to having a Feast site in Oregon. If you already have airline reservations to fly into Portland or Eugene, that need not change. The real issue is your housing accommodation while at the Feast. If you already have a reservation in Yachats, please do not cancel it yet, just in case things do change in the next thirty days and we still decide to hold the Feast there. But you should check the provisions of your housing reservation to see if you can get a full refund of any deposit. Our goal is to eliminate all of this uncertainty by August 1, so that you can make final arrangements with confidence. But we ask for your patience, since we are now living in very uncertain times.

Here is one special request: If we do opt to hold the Feast here in Eugene, our meeting hall is much smaller than the Yachats Commons, so space would be an issue. With our preliminary head count of the ones of you who have already told us of your plans to be in Oregon, as well as the ones of you who "usually" attend in Oregon, we could certainly fit that many people in our meeting hall, but it would be "tight." If any of you have not already booked tickets for Oregon, and you might consider attending in Tennessee instead, that would be one way of helping. We always prefer for each of our members to have full freedom to attend the Feast site of their choice, and that has never been a real issue until this year. If you want to come to Oregon, we still really want you to be able to do so. But if it does not matter that much to you one way or another, opting for Tennessee this year could be a "win-win" for all of us.

We suggest that you not make any "rash" decisions at this juncture. Please feel free to contact us here at the home office in Eugene, and we will be happy to assist you in planning for the Feast. And most of all, we commit to communicating as soon as possible about the final location of the Oregon Feast site so that you can move forward with confidence. We appreciate your help in working with us, and most of all, we ask that you all pray that God will guide us to the final decision that He will bless. God is the One who will choose where He intends to place His name and appear in order to commune with His people. We have absolute confidence in that.

## **New Moon**

The new moon, Ab (fifth month), begins Tuesday evening, July 21. The new moon day is Wednesday, July 22.

## **Death**

We are saddened to announce the death of Mr. Giovanni Mafriaci, affectionately known as John, of Sydney, Australia, who died the morning of Friday, June 19, from non-covid-related pneumonia. He was 74 years of age. John will be remembered for his enthusiastic love for God's Truth and his warm, caring hospitality. He will be missed by all who have been encouraged by him to "Be strong and courageous. Stand firm all the way to the end."

## **Scheduling Emcees, Opening and Closing Prayers**

We are beginning preparation of printed schedules for the Feast of Tabernacles, so we need to know as soon as possible if any will be attending at a different Feast site than usual. We must soon begin work on the scheduling of emcees and those who give opening and closing prayers. We thank you in advance for your help.

## **Trip Schedule**

### **Mr. Jon Brisby**

July 11..... Parma, Ohio

## Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JWB 240	06-04-20	06-27-20	Zeal Without Wisdom
WSE-RC 92-6	06-04-20	07-04-20	What Is Essential for Eternal Life? #6
WSE-RC 92-7	06-25-20	07-11-20	What Is Essential for Eternal Life? #7
WSE-JWB 225-26	06-25-20	07-18-20	Just What Do You Mean—Faith Once Delivered? #26
WSE-RC 92-8	06-25-20	07-25-20	What Is Essential for Eternal Life? #8
WSE-JWB 225-27	07-16-20	08-01-20	Just What Do You Mean—Faith Once Delivered? #27
WSE-RC 92-9	07-16-20	08-08-20	What Is Essential for Eternal Life? #9
WSE-RC 92-10	07-16-20	08-16-20	What Is Essential for Eternal Life? #10

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby