

## Announcement Letter January 2021

Dear Brethren:

The world counts this month as the beginning of a new year, and because of our saturation in this physical realm by birth, we are all inclined to think the same way. Apart from that, and by God's special calling, we understand that the *real New Year* is tied to the spring season, and because we are all fighting to come out of this world, we keep striving to calibrate our thinking according to God's Way, rather than to man's way. But it is an ongoing struggle in our minds, is it not?

To those of you who are in that spiritual fight and who love the promise of that coming Kingdom of God, we—your devoted servants in this little remnant group—greet you with our sincere love and appreciation. We do not value you because we think you are all spiritually perfect. None of us is that, or even close. We are all carnal human beings struggling against this world and fighting to be transformed into people of real faith and good fruits. When we fail on some level, the sincere ones are aggrieved and smitten in conscience. If you are fighting guilt because of your own failings, join the club. But if you really know who you are in God's Plan, then please never give in to the doubts or to the weaknesses, and never conclude in your mind that you are hopeless. You are not! And if you will stay in the fight and keep asking for God's divine intervention to help you, you will be able to prevail and to stand in that day of Judgment, to be accepted by grace into the very Family of God. That is the hope that makes all of us *real family* today, no matter how scattered we may be geographically at this time.

World events continue to be very volatile. Many changes may affect us in the coming year, even much more than they did in 2020. Only time will tell, because God is not choosing to give us special, prophetic gifts to be able to see specifics in advance. So we walk in faith, day by day, and trust God to guide us to be where He wants us to be, and to do what He wants us to do. If nothing else, He is working with us through *circumstances*, and even though that is more trying for us than if He sent a special message through an angel, a vision, or a dream, it is still a viable tool that God has often used in dealing with His children. Therefore, we will not discount it or complain.

A number of other splinter groups—which still share significant elements of our faith—seem to demand that God provide their leaders with the gift of prophetic insight. These leaders seem to crave such special gifts out of personal vanity, and their church members also seem to crave it for them as a means of comforting them against dangerous

unknowns. Where is faith? Quite absent. We have always refused to play that game. Hopefully, you are not ones who are going to the "prophecies" about 2021 and beyond being made by these other sources, thinking that they are offering you something of value in some way. Remember what Jesus said about the blind leading the blind (Matthew 15:14). Please do not lust for advanced understanding that is not God's will for us to have. If you are content to have the knowledge that we already possess, and if you are willing to wait patiently for God's true direction, you will be among the few who indeed will be led through perilous times, while those self-proclaimed "prophets" will fall into a ditch. Time is going to bear out every one of these circumstances. And those who are faithfully striving to put on the true Jesus Christ will have nothing to fear.

In the meantime, we each fight our individual battles of life, struggling to maintain our spiritual orientations in response to all that transpires. We face health trials, economic woes, family pressures, and burdens of mind from loneliness, doubts, and worry of tribulation. If you will recognize your own trials in light of God's work to develop in you *real spiritual character*, then you will have a basis for peace of mind, no matter how difficult may be the physical or mental struggles that you are enduring. But if your only thought for "a happy ending" is for God to *remove all weights and burdens*, then you are likely forgetting that *the very purpose of this life is to develop godly character*, not to have a fairytale life in the flesh. If your idea of success is similar to that of the ancient Israelites—achieving physical abundance in a land flowing with milk and honey, including enrichment through every physical benefit of temporal family life (like marriage, children, etc.)—then you are not tuned toward producing spiritual character as your primary goal. Ancient Israel had no capacity to develop spiritual character since they were not offered the Holy Spirit, so it is understandable that they viewed everything through the lens of physical blessings and curses. But we are different (or should be), and therefore, as members of spiritual Israel—God's true Church—we are supposed to have a very different set of priorities. Do we?

Besides asking God to relieve physical burdens, are we asking for God to help us learn spiritual lessons, and to put on more of the very mind and thinking of Jesus Christ? If we do indeed ask for that, are we serious about it, or is it just a platitude that we utter because we know that we "should"? Are we gaining our greatest satisfaction from the sensation of growing closer to God and beginning more *to love what He loves and to hate what He hates*? Or does our true feeling of success or failure still hinge upon how much of our physical wish list we are receiving? If we will honestly appraise ourselves according to this yardstick, we may find that we gain a whole new awareness, and also satisfaction from our experiences, good and bad. The world cannot even begin to do this, but we can, because of God's special calling and because of His love and devotion to each and every one of us. No matter what we experience right now in this world, in every way that truly matters, how blessed are we!

## **New Moon**

The new moon, Shebat (eleventh month), begins Wednesday evening, January 13. The new moon day is Thursday, January 14.

## **Death**

We are saddened to announce the death of Mrs. Carolyn Fowler, of Stephenville, TX, on Sunday evening, December 20. She was just short of fifty-four years of age, and endured many months of a wasting disease with escalating pain before finally going peacefully to rest.

Carolyn and her siblings were raised by grandparents in the Worldwide Church of God, and her family joined Church of God, The Eternal when Carolyn was a very young teenager living in Tom Bean, TX. She was always a very hard worker, loved to play basketball, and became known for her kindness and desire to help others. Her greatest strength was not her intelligence, her education, or her accomplishment by any of this world's standards. She was a humble woman who took responsibility for herself and her family, truly believed the things she had chosen to embrace in God's Way of Life, made no excuses for her failures, and always set for us an example of sincere belief in the Truth. Perhaps her greatest legacy will be her determination not to try to "save herself" physically from the condition that killed her. It was very likely cancer, but since she never went to a doctor for a diagnosis, that was never clinically determined.

Why would God have allowed one like Carolyn to die at such a young age, and why allow her to endure such a difficult end? Maybe we should ask instead, why are we sad, when Carolyn did exactly what she wanted to do, and did it her way? Her way happened to be what she believed *in faith* was God's Way. From her we received an example of strength and endurance—never to doubt God's promises. And because she hoped most of all for a place in God's Kingdom, she was not grasping for extra blessings in the flesh. Carolyn has finished her course and is now resting, awaiting the return of Jesus Christ. The rest of us have been blessed by a miracle indeed. Not a miracle of fleshly healing and extension of physical life in this world, but the miracle of what is possible—even by a humble and disadvantaged farm girl—when motivated and strengthened by the Holy Spirit. In her personal example, we have all been part of that miracle.

We offer our sincere condolences to Carolyn's daughter, Danielle, and to all who were close to her. We also extend a sincere thank you to all of those brethren who helped care for Carolyn to some degree or another so that she could stay in her own home until the end. Your examples of sacrifice are significant. A very special thank you to Miss Kelly

Armstrong, who volunteered to leave her family in Rhode Island and to act as Carolyn's primary caregiver for the last eight months of her life. We are all blessed by that example, and we will never forget it.

**Trip Schedule**

**Mr. Jon Brisby**

January 16 ..... George, South Africa  
 February 20 ..... Columbia, South Carolina  
 February 27 ..... Maryville, Tennessee

**Recorded Sermon Schedule**

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE- JWB 248	12-03-20	12-26-20	In Case You Are Ever Wrong
WSP-RC 11-1	12-03-20	01-02-21	Fear, a Powerful Force! #1
WSE-JWB 249	12-03-20	01-09-21	The Role of Conscience
WSE-JWB 225-32	12-24-20	01-16-21	Just What Do You Mean—Faith Once Delivered? #32
WSP-RC 11-2	12-24-20	01-23-21	Fear, a Powerful Force! #2
WSE-JWB 225-33	12-24-20	01-30-21	Just What Do You Mean—Faith Once Delivered? #33
WSE-RC 26-1	01-14-21	02-06-21	The Technicalities of Divorce and Remarriage #1
WSE-JWB 225-34	01-14-21	02-13-21	Just What Do You Mean—Faith Once Delivered? #34

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby