

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter May 2000

Dear Brethren:

Greetings to all of you once again from your brethren in Eugene. The local brethren, the office staff, as well as we and our families think often of our beloved friends scattered about the United States, Canada, Europe, Africa, and the Philippines. We pray that you have all enjoyed a very rewarding and inspiring Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. Those occasions offer an incredible opportunity for blessings and spiritual fortification.

Spiritual Principle

One of the marvelous commands ordained in God's infinite wisdom for the economic security of the needy—widows and orphans—is that which we commonly call the third tithe. Unlike the first tithe, which is commanded to support the work of the ministry, or the second tithe, which is set aside for attending obligatory convocations, the third tithe is specifically commanded for the assistance of helpless dependents who are plunged into economic peril through the loss of a family breadwinner. The specific provisions can be found in the book of Deuteronomy:

At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest (Deuteronomy 14:28–29).

We also find very specific criteria to be used by the ministry in determining eligibility of each of these recipients:

Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews [grandchildren], let them learn first to show piety at home, and to

requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God . . . But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work . . . If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed (1 Timothy 5:3–4, 8–10, 16).

So it is incumbent upon the Body of Christ to provide assistance to those who have both the legitimate need and qualification by age and character—those who through the absence of a responsible family member to provide support, are considered *widows indeed*.

To faithfully discharge our ministerial obligation to care for these widows and orphans, wisdom and judgment must be carefully applied to assure those—and only those God intends—are being helped absolutely. It is a serious responsibility. Furthermore, it is also important that we be cognizant of possible changes in needs among those who are already being helped. Often it is difficult for this ministry to be sure we are personally aware at any given time of a new need, or a change in need. Therefore, we depend very much upon the help of our lead men in each geographic area to keep us informed if any potential recipient needs to be evaluated, or if the level of assistance for one of our current recipients needs to be reassessed. God has consistently blessed us with sufficient third tithe contributions to discharge this important responsibility. The obedience of God's faithful flock in tithing is being manifested in our ability to serve the needs of our widows. We need only be made aware and we are eager to apply these Biblical principles as God intended.

God also revealed a definite principle in providing temporary assistance to those who experience a catastrophic loss or unexpected set-back. "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely *lend him* sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth" (Deuteronomy 15:7–8) [emphasis ours]. Notice this is not the same assistance given to *widows indeed*. It is also not intended for one who is not fulfilling his own responsibility to work and to save. This category of assistance is classified as a loan with the expectation of being repaid once the individual has recovered financially. According to this principle, the church has willingly assisted many families with temporary loans over the years when a legitimate need has arisen. Even though we have experienced certain instances, in times past, where such loans have later been disavowed, forcing us to

write them off as bad debt, we will not allow such character failures in a few to alter our commitment to provide merciful assistance when asked. We can assure you God will not allow those with legitimate needs and a right orientation to go hungry. Our willingness to provide temporary assistance to some has never put our third tithe fund in jeopardy for the widow recipients. God is continuing to bless us all through the faithfulness of those who respect God's laws and obediently tithe.

God helping us, we will continue to administer this critical responsibility with the compassion and prudence granted us by Jesus Christ through the gift of His Holy Spirit.

Festival Report

We have heard from most formalized church areas where Passover, Night To Be Much Observed, and the Days of Unleavened Bread were observed, including a marvelous growth area in the United Kingdom. The Spirit was high, the joy, fellowship and personal satisfaction were visible. God's people found great enjoyment in faithful obedience to their God and in the privilege of a few hours of warm spiritual fellowship.

We have had another opportunity to not only live the meaning of Passover and Unleavened Bread but to assure our God of our intent to remain faithful regardless of the cost. As the ministers of Jesus Christ let us take this opportunity to thank you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for your willingness, cooperation, and manifestation of faithfulness. It was our pleasure to serve you in whatever manner possible.

With this great beginning, let us hope our resolve grows stronger and more benevolent in the months ahead. As each Holyday comes we will have opportunity to reconfirm our understanding of God's ways and briefly relive the meaning of each one. What a marvelous God and Father we have. Was ever a people so blessed?

Second Passover

Anyone needing to partake of the second month Passover, please be advised that it is May 19, to be observed the previous evening, May 18, after sunset. If instructions are needed, please contact the church office as soon as possible.

Holyday

Pentecost: Monday, June 12

Trip Schedule

May 13	Austin	J.W.B.
May 20	Baltimore	R.C.C.
June 10, 17	Switzerland	R.C.C.
July 1	United Kingdom	J.W.B.

Tape Department

In an effort to save shipping costs for those who return their tapes by mail, it is suggested that before returning the tapes, look on the side of the tapes for marks. If there are three marks on the tape it has been used and erased three times. For a good quality recording a tape cannot be reused more than three times. When these tapes come back to the office they are discarded. So, if you receive any tapes that have three marks, there is no need to return them. Either discard them or keep them for your personal use. Hopefully this will save you money in the return of tapes.

Also, please be advised that almost inevitably when a person moves, has a new address, or is new on the tape cassette mailing list, there will be a period of time before the tapes start arriving in a consistent, scheduled manner. We try hard to rectify any problems concerning new addresses, but it seems when dealing with a bulk mailing situation, only time will smooth out some of the wrinkles. Please be patient, but don't hesitate to let us know when problems arise.

Tape Schedule

<u>Tape Series</u>	<u>Mailed</u>	<u>Played</u>	<u>Title/Tape #</u>
WSE-JB 17-7-4	04-12-00	05-13-00	Fund. of Belief #4: The Authority of the Holy Scriptures.
WSE-RC 90-27	04-12-00	05-20-00	An Analysis of Jude #27
WSE-RC 92-11	04-27-00	05-27-00	What Is Essential for Eternal Life? #11
WSE-JB 17-8-5	04-27-00	06-03-00	Fund. of Belief #5: The Origin of Satan.

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby



Raymond C. Cole