

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter June 2004

Dear Brethren:

With prayers for your blessing and protection in God's loving care, we greet you once again as the children of promise in the Creator's glorious master plan.

That special calling is something that can so easily become shrouded from view as we work to survive day by day in this world. It is so easy to get caught up in the mundane necessities of life, that the true spiritual treasures can fade from our attention. It takes continual prodding of these minds through the Holy Spirit to remind us of the value of our special callings in God's design. Israel always seems to forget and take these priceless gifts for granted. But if we can be sure to meditate on that special gift each day and express heartfelt thankfulness to God, no matter what immediate trials may be present, we can still have real peace, contentment, and assurance of the future.

Your ministers in Christ's name are working diligently to maintain proper focus to be your humble servants, knowing how important you are in God's work in this very age. You are the very ones known by name before the foundation of the world, whom God purposed to call and train for Kingship and Priesthood in His Family. That process of training and self-mastery is very difficult for every one of us, but the reward that awaits makes any temporary sacrifice well worth it. We therefore remain committed to your service, to the end that you may fulfill God's purpose for your lives, and reap the reward of eternal salvation in that day of revealing. May God help us never to forget who you are, or take you for granted in any way.

Spiritual Principle

With the addition of more new members in scattered places around the world over recent years, it seems appropriate to rehearse again the guidelines and protocols for Sabbath meetings in local areas. There are several areas that once had very few, but have since grown

as God has added to this remnant body. It behooves us, therefore, to spell out the requirements for an acceptable Sabbath service before God.

In those areas large enough for us to have appointed lead men, services should follow the same formal format used in the Eugene, Oregon congregation and known to all of you who have attended one of our Feast of Tabernacles sites in years past. That format includes:

- Beginning the service exactly on time, according to a published schedule. For large assemblies, it is wise to give a notice five minutes before the start, to provide time for everyone to be seated and ready for a solemn beginning. In congregations with an accompanist, playing music beginning five minutes beforehand is an excellent way to accomplish this.
- Beginning the service with the congregation singing three hymns—not two. Many who did not have contact with God's church before the mid-1970s may not know that the early standard was always three opening hymns, and was only later reduced to two during the years of apostasy. These hymns should *never* be selected at the last minute, but should always be prepared well in advance by the lead man or emcee.
- The opening prayer, offered by a baptized male member of the church only. Please see specific guidelines for these prayers, last detailed in the September 2002 *Announcement Letter*. Lead men should always select the men to offer prayers in advance, and notify them of their assignments before the service begins. (In Europe, by tradition, two additional hymns are then sung by the congregation.)
- Announcements pertinent to the congregation, given by the emcee or lead man. These announcements should be well-planned in advance, and ready to be delivered in a professional manner. Note: This is the only time for announcements during the entire service. "Last minute" announcements are *never* to be inserted at the end of the service before the closing prayer. If an additional announcement is required, it must wait until the final "amen" is said. Emcees should also be sure to refer to individuals from the pulpit by their sir names, never informally by their given names alone.
- On the first day of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, an offering is always to be taken (Deuteronomy 16:16). The lead man should provide a large envelope into which each member's individual offering envelope is inserted (being sealed and mailed as a single package thereafter). On these three occasions, an additional musical piece—offertory music—should be provided during this collection, preceding the regular special music.

- Special music. Special music must always be appropriate as a sacred offering before God. It should not be omitted, and it should never include any type of modern, folk, new age, or "casual" music, no matter how placid it may be. Classical pieces are the standard, but are not automatically acceptable just because they are deemed "classical." All music must meet God's standard for composition. Each piece must be evaluated individually. No composer's body of work in this world is *comprehensively* acceptable. If there is any doubt about whether a particular selection would be appropriate, it probably is not. Using previously compiled recordings from Feasts and Sabbath services (available from the church office) is always a safe alternative. Selections from the Cantatas composed specifically for the Holy Days (owned by Church of God, The Eternal and also available from the church office) are especially good choices for those annual occasions.
- The sermon, given only by a man authorized to teach, by delegated authority of the Pastor. For those without a local minister, the assigned prerecorded sermon should be used, as listed in each monthly issue of this *Announcement Letter*. Periodic adjustments may be required by the lead man, but for the most part, the published schedule should be used to provide our entire fellowship that consistency. (If enough ministers are available in an area so that two are prepared to speak, a sermonette is given immediately after the special music, followed by another congregational hymn before the main sermon.)
- Final congregational hymn, announced without commentary *of any kind* regarding the sermon just completed.
- Closing prayer.

One symptom of the overall decay in God's church over the last thirty years has been seen in the growing laxity concerning Sabbath services in many splinter groups. From many who have joined us from other fellowships, we have heard of the propensity to weaken major elements of the holy convocation. Examples include services not starting on time, majority of brethren improperly dressed according to required standards (please see the March 2003 issue of *Announcement Letter* for guidelines), various forms of modern "Christian" music being utilized, inappropriate fellowship topics among members, and a general lack of solemnity for coming into the presence of God. These things will naturally occur among human beings over time if we are not diligent to maintain continuity and discipline as a congregation.

Although it takes time and energy to prepare properly for God's Sabbaths, it is a duty we cannot take lightly. Lead men in our major areas are key to assuring the formality required to set a good example. We expect them to set the example for the congregation, and

assure these standards are met each and every week. The laity also has a critical role in making these convocations the offering that God requires. When everyone is aware of these standards and works to keep them in mind, we can be sure to honor God in a way that demonstrates our fear and respect for His glorious office.

Prayer Request

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Birth

Mr-s. John McNeil are happy to announce the arrival of Hannah Jolene. She arrived Friday morning, May 21, at 4:26 a.m. She weighed 6 pounds, 7 ounces and was 19 inches long. Mother (Charisse) and baby Hannah are doing fine.

Cookbook

As you may remember, in November of 2001 we announced the beginning of a cookbook based on wholesome, nutritious food. With much work done by several ladies, it has been growing steadily and now it is nearing completion. So that we may have it done by Feast time, we are going to set a June 15 deadline for recipes being sent in. We want to thank everyone who contributed.

Feast of Tabernacles

In order that we may begin preparation of schedules for the Feast, 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.

Part of our preliminary work involves the music program for the two Feast sites. Any who plan to participate in the music program this year should notify Mr. Richard Meyn at the church office concerning the Newport, Oregon, site and Mr. George King concerning the Townsend, Tennessee, site before the end of June. Richard and George are already working on this year's performance material. They would like to welcome anyone who would like to participate at either Feast site.

Trip Schedule

July 10 Burnet, Texas
July 17 Mansfield, Massachusetts

Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-RC 5	05-13-04	06-05-04	Judgments: When and by Whom?
WSE-JB 22-61-22A	05-13-04	06-12-04	Fund. of Belief: Church Government and Administration
WSP-RC 15	05-27-04	06-19-04	Hearing
WSE-JB 22-62-22B	05-27-04	06-26-04	Fund. of Belief: Church Government and Administration
WSE-JB 22-63-22C	06-10-04	07-03-04	Fund. of Belief: Church Government and Administration
WSE-RC 36-1	06-10-04	07-10-04	What Does It Mean to Walk in the Spirit? #1
WSE-RC 36-2	06-24-04	07-17-04	What Does It Mean to Walk in the Spirit? #2

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby