

## Announcement Letter February 2014

Dear Brethren:

Special greetings to you, dear friends and brethren, from your devoted servants in the "home office" of the church here in Eugene, Oregon. We reaffirm our devotion to you as the called of God and renew our commitment to feed and to nurture this scattered little flock around the globe. May we never forget that you are the focus of our work. Our importance is merely a reflection of your importance, and without each of you in God's plan, our efforts would be worthless. To the extent that God has preserved faithful children in this world who still love that divinely revealed Truth, then we, as your servants, have enduring purpose—to instruct, to inspire, and to help you in your spiritual aspirations. Without you, we are extraneous.

Did you notice the use of the term, "home office" above? Why not refer to it as "headquarters," which certainly seems to be the better word to describe our physical operation here in Eugene? Given that this truly is the *central hub* from which all of the administrative operations of Church of God, The Eternal emanates, it certainly would make sense to do so. At times, one or more of us probably does use the term, "headquarters," but not very often. Why not? It is just one more example of a *cultural signature* which has developed over time within this little group as a result of our historical experiences in the parent church. To many of you, what happened over forty years ago is today "ancient history," but it nonetheless has a real and enduring impact upon our thinking and actions.

At the height of the Worldwide Church of God's infamous use of heavy-handed administrative intrusions into the lives of its members, one of the favorite catchall words used to refer to the supreme church hierarchy was "Headquarters." This word was universally understood to mean the authority structure administered from Pasadena, California, including the various ranks of ministers leading all the way up to Mr. Herbert Armstrong. Laymembers as well as ministers used the word unsparingly. The best weapon one could use to squash dissent, instill fear, or to push forward a desired program was to claim authority "from Headquarters." Proof that one had a "good attitude" in the church was to "support Headquarters" in word and in deed.

It is not that top-down government in the church is wrong. Quite the contrary! But the fact is, the word "Headquarters" inadvertently became synonymous—in the minds of

many in the church—with the *faulty administrative practices* of that church leadership. Therefore, using this otherwise innocent word after 1974 among our scattered sheep—many of whom were still harboring emotional resentments against the ministry—was a sure way to cause some of them to flinch, involuntarily. Therefore, many simply resisted using that word to describe the Eugene office as a way to avoid creating an unintended perception in the minds of new contacts and sensitive members. Even if that level of "sensitivity" has lessened in great measure over the last forty years, for many of us (including yours truly), it is still an ingrained habit to resist using that word to refer to our Eugene operation.

It is similar, in that regard, to the practice of Raymond Cole to sit before the Eugene congregation to preach (behind a desk) on the weekly Sabbaths, rather than to stand behind a podium. It was not wrong in any way for him to stand. Technically, it made no difference, and in fact, it is much easier to project the voice from a standing position. But it became a *local tradition*, allowing Mr. Cole to remind himself and everyone else of the way this little group formed originally. For months prior to 1975—before he became confident of what God wanted him to do, and refusing to ascribe to himself authority he had not been given—he consented only to conduct *informal Bible studies* among the brethren who sought his help. Even on the Sabbath day he refused to stand before them, because—in his mind—it implied an authority to "lead a group." Months later he became confident that God did indeed authorize him to lead *those whom God had sent to him personally*, and he certainly did so. But even years later, though he would stand behind a podium in other geographic areas where he met with the brethren, especially at the Feast of Tabernacles services, not so in Eugene, Oregon. Until he died in 2001, he continued to give sermons in Eugene while seated behind that desk. He did not instruct any of his assistant ministers to do the same. In fact, he encouraged them to speak from behind the podium. But because of his *unique role* as the servant through whom God initially gathered and preserved that scattered remnant, he chose to perpetuate that particular tradition for himself. It could not be meaningful for anyone else to try and duplicate it. It was his alone, and that action for twenty-five years became a silent reminder to us all of the origin of this remnant fellowship. It is another *cultural signature* unique to Church of God, The Eternal.

So these are just two examples of interesting little traditions reflected within this small group over the decades. The actions themselves are not special, let alone holy, but the backstories certainly provide *a window* through which to view our orientations of mind and our deep motivations for all that we are doing today. With that in mind, your devoted servants from the *Eugene home office* confirm sincere love for each of you, with thanksgiving and prayers for your blessing and ultimate spiritual success.

**New Moon**

The new moon, Adar II (thirteenth month), will begin on the evening of Sunday, March 2. The new moon day is Monday, March 3.

The new moon, Nisan (first month), will begin on the evening of Monday, March 31. The new moon day is Tuesday, April 1.

**Holy Days**

Lead men should be making appropriate preparations for these days:

Passover (evening)	Sunday, April 13
Night to Be Much Observed	Monday, April 14
1st Holy Day—Days of Unleavened Bread	Tuesday, April 15
2nd Holy Day—Days of Unleavened Bread	Monday, April 21

**Trip Schedule**

**Mr. Jon Brisby**

March 8.....	Cape Town, South Africa
March 15.....	Suna-Migori, Kenya

**Mr. Richard Litz**

February 22.....	Perryville, Arkansas
March 1.....	Stephenville, Texas

## Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
CL-2 121	01-09-14	02-01-14	Faith #30
CL-2 122	01-09-14	02-08-14	Faith #31
WSE-JB 149-5	01-30-14	02-15-14	Prophecy Revisited #5 How Should We Watch?
CL-2 123	01-30-14	02-22-14	Faith #32
WSE-JB 149-6	01-30-14	03-01-14	Prophecy Revisited #6 Matthew 24 for Today #1
CL-2 124	02-20-14	03-08-14	Faith #33
WSE-DFB 1	02-20-14	03-15-14	Pre-Passover Exam: Sleeping With the Enemy

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby