

## Announcement Letter July 2015

Dear Brethren:

A very special greeting to every one of you who regularly receives this monthly mailing, with our renewed expressions of love and solidarity in that way of life we believe will lead to salvation. Your continuity, month after month and year after year, is testament in itself of the value of those principles that we accepted as the revelation of Jesus Christ. Thank you for your own personal choice to embrace that path, and may our individual devotion also assure a collective unity as we worship together in the same Spirit.

It is increasingly difficult to practice obedience to God's commandments in a world descending more and more into gross idolatry. The future will likely require even greater determination to hold fast than anything we have yet experienced in this last-day era. In other words, practicing true Christianity is not for the faint of heart. But likewise, God has no intention of giving offices of such great power and glory in His Kingdom to anyone who lacks purposeful zeal and temerity to seize the opportunity. He is not looking for casual acolytes, but true believers.

There are a number of scattered individuals out there today who *see* the Truth, but still have not really acted upon it. The majority of this world is deceived so that they cannot even begin to understand or to appreciate God's way of life. That category is not the one we are speaking of. We are talking about "the called." Among these *very few* who are even offered a chance to "see it," a goodly portion of them have never let that revelation become anything more than just a hobby.

How many have we known in years past who recognize the Truth as valuable when they hear it, but who are imminently challenged ever to begin putting it into practice? There is recognition and awareness, but no "gumption" to do anything about it. Jesus Christ spoke of this phenomenon among some of the called:

Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me

excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come (Luke 14:16–20).

And so it is today. The truth about who God is and what He is doing to bring salvation to mankind is compelling to them on a philosophical level, but not really on a practical level. They enjoy being able to rebut the deceived concepts of the world and to avoid becoming entangled in all manner of false notions and superstitions, but it has never really translated into a way of life—to actually *practice* those principles, as in keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days. That is because the price appears to be too high at the time.

It is very much like an individual in a crippled airplane which is slowly losing altitude. There is no way to save the plane so the crew is abandoning ship in parachutes. The aggressive ones act with purpose and jump. But some who are more timid keep resisting the leap. Why? They look around and *know* that there is *no hope* to save the plane. They *know* the only way to avoid death is to leap away and to trust the parachute harness to provide a soft landing. But even so, the prospect of making that leap into midair is just too daunting. The rational mind knows it is foolish to remain on a self-destructing airship, but fear freezes them into inaction. Their feet are still, momentarily, on something "firm," so they linger and linger and resist any bold action. Eventually, it is too late to jump because there is not sufficient altitude for a chute to deploy safely. So ironically, the individual may still be alive for a few more minutes, but is already "dead" because he did not act in time.

Even some who receive our monthly mailings and recorded sermons, and agree with what this little remnant teaches, are still sitting on the sidelines spiritually. They understand that this world is going downhill and will end in destruction. But nonetheless the prospect of making that bold leap to embrace Christ's calling is still too scary. Example: "Making provision to attend the Feast of Tabernacles is just out of the question for me right now. I believe I need to do it. I want to be there. Maybe one day, but for now, it is just not possible." What is the problem? Lack of money? What about saving second tithe as God commands? Afraid to offend family members? Afraid of losing a job for taking time off from work? Worry about long-distance travel or stepping out into the unknown? Whatever it is, the "reasons" are just excuses to remain onboard a self-destructing airship. And time is running out:

And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none *of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper* (Luke 14:22–24) [emphasis mine].

Fear is no excuse, for whatever reason.

But *the fearful*, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, *shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*: which is the second death (Revelation 21:8) [emphasis mine].

Maybe next year? Perhaps the year after that? Time is running out. The point of no return is drawing nearer. How long will you wait before you leap? What are you waiting for?

## **New Moon**

The new moon, Ab (fifth month), begins Thursday, July 16. The new moon day is Friday, July 17.

## **Deaths**

Mrs. Virginia (Ginnie) Koman of Port St. Lucie, Florida, died May 7, of age-related causes. Ginnie and her husband, Earle (who preceded her in death last year), were longtime members of our parent church, and very early members of Church of God, The Eternal. They had been married sixty-eight years, were prominent members in our fellowship, knew Mr. Raymond Cole from years ago, and were dear friends to many of us. Ginnie had begun a gradual decline since Earle's death, but she was seriously incapacitated for only a period of about forty-eight hours before her death, which is a real blessing. We offer our sincere condolences to her daughter, son, and grandchildren.

Mr. Corsino Canta, our minister in the Luzon area of the Philippines, died peacefully Thursday, June 25, of age-related illness. He had suffered from several strokes over recent years that had left him quite debilitated. He was the first one to contact Mr. Raymond Cole in a meaningful way back in 1993, which prompted Mr. Cole's first visit to the Philippines on behalf of this remnant group in 1994. Mr. Cole ordained Mr. Canta as a minister for Church of God, The Eternal on December 19, 1995, and he served the brethren faithfully in coordination with Mr. Mario Roque for all of those years. He is sorely missed by the brethren in the Philippines as well as all of those ministers from the USA who visited there over the last twenty years to whom he was a dear and special friend. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife, Rosita, to his extended family, and to all of our brethren in the Philippine churches.

Mrs. Hazel Meadows of Beckley, West Virginia, died Sunday, June 28, of age-related causes. Hazel was 82 years of age at the time of her death, and a longtime member of the church. She had been suffering from ill health for many years, but often made it to the Feast despite many obstacles. Her husband, Howard, preceded her in death. She was a beloved sister in the faith, and we will greatly miss her. We offer our condolences to her children, grandchildren, and extended family.

## **Camp Tejas Report by Mr. David Brandenburg**

This year's camp was once again held in the Maryville, TN, area. Although the weather prior to our arrival was quite warm and humid, it became very comfortable and accommodating for our entire time while in the Great Smoky Mountains. How about that?! There were times when the weather would clear up just prior to our arrival at a scheduled activity and deteriorate as we were departing, and it certainly was quite evident that we were blessed to have favorable weather.

Most of the twelve campers arrived from five states around the US and from Australia and got settled in Wednesday through Thursday. On Friday, we drove to Norris Lake and enjoyed a day out on the water—tubing, swimming, jumping off a large ledge and going down the slide of one of our pontoon boats. Later in the day a brief rainstorm blew in, and for a few moments here and there we were heading into the wind as we motored along the winding river. Although we had the Bimini top erected and some were taking refuge under a large inner tube, for those short moments of time, it felt like needle pricks as the warm rain pelted our faces. But like most summer storms, it quickly blew over and we finished our excursion on calm waters.

We had a wonderful Sabbath with Mr-s. Jon Brisby present and a full house for services followed by a potluck and the traditional question and answer session for the teens. Sunday included harvesting some of the chickens, a class where the teens learned how to make their own natural soap and bug spray, followed up by a variety of staged team activities for "Survivor." Monday we had an informative talk from the camp chef on a variety of ways to cook eggs, and then we headed toward Gatlinburg to enjoy a couple of rounds of Frisbee golf and a fun nine-station zip line course. On Tuesday we drove up to Newfound Gap and hiked up to the observation tower on Clingmans Dome, the highest point in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (6,643 feet), and then continued on over the mountain to tour the Oconaluftee Indian Village. Wednesday we departed with a trailer full of bikes to enjoy the one-lane road through scenic Cade's Cove. The entire route is about eleven miles long, and had more "ups" in it than what Mr. Litz remembered. This year's trip was highlighted by the sighting of a mama black bear

with her two cubs out in a nearby field. After the ride, we returned to learn more from our chef about how to make healthy variations of sauces and what to do to avoid "Mr. Sal Monella"!

Thursday the teens learned how to make breakfast from scratch, which included harvesting the eggs, grinding the flour, picking the herbs for making sausage, and making biscuits and jam . . . and by that time, it was almost lunchtime! They learned how to select and husk the corn and harvest potatoes and onions as well. Friday we drove to Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg for some shopping, a little bit of laser tag and a tour of the old Antiques Shop.

We had another enjoyable Sabbath with all the teens singing a hymn followed by a couple of teens performing an instrumental piece for special music. After sunset, we were invited over to enjoy a large volley of fireworks at the next door neighbor's home. Sunday took us into preparations to depart, including doing a community service project for the neighbor and on into our traditional Jeopardy game and closing ceremonies.

As you can see, we were very busy the entire time. To help keep us healthy our volunteer Master Chef, Mr. Charles Armstrong, made all our food without any form of refined sugar. Yes, that is difficult in our day and age, but the result for the teens and staff served us well in getting through the full schedule and launching us right back into work and school. Mr. Armstrong's willingness to volunteer again and come early this year provided a strong foundation for another successful camp.

In fact, the number of cooperative individuals that helped "pay it forward" for our youth this year was *impressive*. It takes a lot of effort to make any activity happen, especially an ongoing twelve-day event like this camp. One individual mentioned that he and his wife hoped that their sacrifice to drive over to services and allow me to interview them in front of the teens was worth it, to which I responded: "If you never plant any seeds, you will never reap anything. You came and planted today; YOU made a difference! Now we will leave it in Someone else's hands." They were visionary and saw the value; they were responsive and came out of their comfort zone; they made the effort and the sacrifice. So many did that this year, which made the load much lighter and easier to bear. I would like to give a "shout out" of appreciation to all those who assisted with their prayers and time, especially those who served as staff, and to their spouses and families who also picked up some of the burden while their loved ones were away.

Our appreciation goes out to all those who did preparatory work and volunteered their time, from the support of the local congregation—the enjoyable potlucks and the running of errands—to Mrs. Deborah Bussiere, Mr. Geoff McAbee, and this year's staff

which included Mr. Duane Garland, Ms. Carissa McAbee, Mr. Justin Nalder, Ms. Michelle Bourget and Mr. Tom Brisby, with the assistance of Mrs. Allendra Bourget, Mrs. Kim Brisby and Mr-s. Don Brisby. Lastly, to our gracious hosts, Mr-s. Richard Litz, who allowed us to invade their space and extended such wonderful patience and hospitality toward us during this camp in making it most enjoyable.

It really was a team effort, and that *spirit of cooperation* made it such a successful camp. For any of you involved with larger groups of individuals, you know that such a spirit does not just happen by accident, it truly is a special manifestation of those working to apply God's Holy Spirit in their lives. What a pleasure it was to work with all of you this year, thank you very much!

## **Excess Second Tithe**

This is a reminder of the yearly need for second tithe to cover administrative and facility costs for the Feast. We want to reserve adequate for an enjoyable and meaningful Feast. At the same time, we all must remember, to keep the Feast requires the rental of halls, transportation, aid to those who are deserving, etc. If we all contribute, the burden for each is relatively small. A huge thanks to those whose hearts and minds are willing. May God richly and abundantly bless you in all ways.

## **Second Tithe Requests**

Please be reminded that requests for second-tithe assistance for the Feast of Tabernacles need to be in by August 15. Any who need assistance should notify us in ample time.

## **Feast of Tabernacles**

Please take note that the weekly Sabbath services on September 26 will be held in Townsend, TN, and in Yachats, OR, since the Feast of Tabernacles will begin the next evening, Sunday, September 27. Please make your plans and reservations accordingly.

## Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-RC 59-59	06-18-15	07-04-15	Despair or Glory, Which? #59 Habakkuk Chapter 3 #29
WSE-JB 138-31	06-18-15	07-11-15	The Family Handbook #31 Child Rearing #3
WSE-RC 59-60	06-18-15	07-18-15	Despair or Glory, Which? #60 Habakkuk Chapter 3 #30
CL2-132	07-09-15	07-25-15	Meekness #1
WSE-JB 138-32	07-09-15	08-01-15	The Family Handbook #32 Child Rearing #4
CL2-133	07-09-15	08-08-15	Meekness #2
CL2-134	07-30-15	08-15-15	Meekness #3

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby