

Box 111, Eugene, 9/13/39

Dear Brethren, of Eugene Church:

For over a year we have looked forward to the FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES, as our Camp Meeting time -- the BIBLE time for Camp Meeting.

Now that we are within two weeks of that time, we must decide at once what we are going to do.

If ever there was a time when we NEED to come together in this meeting, it is now! The war has started in Europe. Probably the last world war, to be ended by the return of Christ! If so, the time of great tribulation is now right upon us -- persecution because we are Sabbath-keepers and do not have the Mark of the Beast -- a time when some of us must face martyrdom -- followed by the terrible plagues of the Day of the Lord!

Of this very time, when the final world war has started, following the drought and invasion of grasshoppers, bugs and insects, God solemnly warns us, thru Joel, "Sanctify ye a fast, call a SOLEMN ASSEMBLY, gather ... into the HOUSE OF THE LORD your God, and CRY unto the Lord." (Joel 1:14). Also, "Blow the trumpet in Zion (alarm of war, in the Church), sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders ... let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, 'SPARE THY PEOPLE, O LORD!'" (2:15-16).

Surely this war breaking out just before the Feast of Tabernacles makes it DOUBLY IMPORTANT that we drop everything else at this time, and gather ourselves together for this eight-day festival. The instruction, Fenton translation, is: "On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after the reaping of the produce of your land, you shall enjoy the feast of the EVER-LIVING for seven days, from the first day after the Sabbath (annual Sabbath), until the eighth day after the Sabbath. You shall then take for yourselves on the first day handfuls of the finest fruits from the trees, with the palm, and boughs of the bushes, and willow, and enjoy yourselves before the EVER-LIVING GOD for seven days. Thus you shall feast in this Feast to the EVER-LIVING seven days every year. It shall be a perpetual institution for your descendants. You shall hold the festival in the seventh month; living in tents for seven days. All the natives of Israel shall live in tents, so that your posterity may know that the sons of Israel dwelt in tents when I brought you out from the land of Egypt. I am your EVER-LIVING GOD." (Lev. 23:39-43).

The Authorized version translates it "BOOTHES," while Fenton has "tents." The idea seems to be a temporary dwelling-place, whether made of canvas or of wood. To live in canvas cloth tents at this time of year in our climate would be very difficult for many, and surely a cabin, such as the auto cabins along the highway, would fit the intended meaning just as well and be much more convenient for most of us. But regardless of this, one thing seems CLEAR -- this is NOT to be a meeting where the brethren just come to the church building for perhaps one afternoon service, and one or two night services thru the week. Certainly that would NOT BE KEEPING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. Notice, the perpetual command, FOREVER, says: "Thus shall ye feast in this Feast to the EVER-LIVING several days every year ... living in tents (booths or cabins) for seven days." Plainly it means to DROP OUR REGULAR WORK AND CARES, dwelling together in this special way seven days out of the year -- eight days counting the first annual Sabbath.

This must be what Jesus had in mind when He WARNED us, for this very time, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with ... CARES of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." (Luke 21:34).

Now our question is this: CAN we undertake, and hold a successful FEAST OF TABERNACLES, the way the Bible says? WILL we do it? What about being tied down at home with the CARES of the chores, etc. If these cares are going to come first, and you are so overcharged with them we cannot all come together, and remain together, dwelling as the Bible says, the entire seven days THROUGH, including morning, afternoon, and night meetings, then it is just impossible for us to have a successful FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES. Now HOW you brethren can manage to have your stock taken care of, I do not know.

Loma and I have been getting some real rest -- but so far only just a beginning of what I must have to get back into the work full strength. The truth is I do not feel strong enough to undertake the responsibility of this very serious meeting, UNLESS THERE WILL BE ENOUGH OF OUR BRETHREN ATTENDING IN THE WAY THE BIBLE SAYS, being present at the day-time as well as night meetings every day, to make it a success. At this time of year, we cannot hope to get very many to come from a distance. The Feast of Tabernacles is not intended to be an evangelistic effort -- outsiders are not to be invited -- just God's own people in the Church. So the backbone of the attendance MUST BE SUPPLIED BY OUR BRETHREN

OF EUGENE CHURCH. Therefore the success or failure of this Festival depends upon whether the majority, at least, of our local membership will just brush aside every hindering weak excuse, find SOME way to be relieved of our regular cares and duties, drop everything, and CAMP HERE TOGETHER AT EUGENE FOR THE ENTIRE PERIOD.

Since God commands us to do this, I'm sure we can all find it true that WHEN THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY. I don't know how you can manage it, of course, but if we take it to the Lord in prayer, and have a WILL to do as the Bible says, I'm sure the Lord will open the way, somehow, for each one of you, so that you CAN be free to attend for the entire Festival period.

I have been in constant correspondence with Brother John Kiosz, who is in South Dakota. He wants very much to be with us for this Festival, and is trying to arrange to be here, but is not yet sure he can. He wants us all to PRAY, EARNESTLY, that God will make it possible for him to be with us. Will you remember to do this -- right now? Col. Wright of Vancouver, B.C., had expected to be with us for at least two days, speaking two nights, but since Canada has declared war, and he is a high officer in the army, he may now be unable to come. We must trust the Lord for whatever outside ministerial help we have, if any. But if WE can all be here together, I know the meeting will be a big spiritual success, anyway. THE LORD WILL BE WITH US! It can be the most wonderful meeting, from a spiritual standpoint, any of us ever attended.

In view of all the Scriptures, some telling us to DWELL, or live, in tents or booths or cabins -- others telling us at this time to call a solemn assembly, meeting in THE HOUSE OF THE LORD, it seems the way to do as the Bible says is for us to come and live in cabins or tents near the Church, holding our meetings, or assemblies, in the HOUSE of the Lord, our church building. We should have morning, afternoon, and evening services. We must have special young people's meetings, and plans for the children.

But the question now, is whether there will be enough of us who will manage to come and remain here thru the Festival, to be worth going ahead with it at all. We have looked forward to it a long time. It is DOUBLY necessary now that war has started. We never NEEDED it so badly as now. We are all in dire spiritual need. Perhaps our salvation depends upon it!

If we go ahead with it, I must send out a general letter to our brethren at Portland, Vancouver, Jefferson, and other points, and to a number of our most interested radio listeners, urging them to come. I'm sure several of our newer members at Portland and Vancouver will come, if we can hold it. We need to come together with them, get acquainted, and learn to know one another.

So I can know whether to go ahead with the plans, and send out this letter, I am going to ask each of you to let me know, by return mail, whether you will try to plan to come, and be in regular attendance thru the Festival, from the first holy-day, Thursday, September 28th, on thru the last holy-day, Thursday, October 5th.

Will you please fill out the slip below, tear off, and return it to me ON THE FIRST MAIL AFTER YOU RECEIVE THIS? If we all decide we want to go ahead, and enough will come so we can, I must send this other letter out AT ONCE.

Loma and I both send lots of love, and hope to see you again soon.

Your brother and pastor,

Herbert Armstrong

Do you expect to be able to camp, or stay in a cabin, near the Church for the entire Festival? _____. How many in family will come? _____. If not, how many of the meetings do you think your family will be able to attend? Morning meetings _____. Afternoon meetings _____. Evening meetings _____.

Name: _____