

Church of God, The Eternal

P. O. Box 775
Eugene, Oregon 97440
www.cogeternal.org

Raymond C. Cole
Director
Jon W. Brisby
Asst. Director

Offices in:
Philippines
Switzerland

September 2001

Dear Brethren:

Greetings from your brothers and sisters in faith here in Mindanao, Philippines. It takes several days for preparing this letter to you. I wish I could convey good news from this country. But to be honest, it is very much easier to write here the real news, which is contrary to my intent. In our daily newspapers, radios, and on television, what we can read, hear, and see, is all bad news. Murder, ambush, rape, drug addictions, drug trafficking, extortion, kidnaping and all kinds of crimes, are published every day by the media. Very recently, one of the worst kidnap gangs here in Mindanao, the Abbu Sayyaf, struck again, and still have in their hands several kidnap victims taken from Palawan resort three months ago, including three Americans. On August 2, these bandits abducted 30 residents in Lamitan, Basilan. Of the 30 hostages, 10 were beheaded, 15 were freed, three escaped, and two others remain missing. While criminal activities are uncontrolled by authorities, much more natural disasters often visit this country. The eruptions of Mayon Volcano and Mt. Pinatubo, and typhoons and floods in different places, have killed hundreds and displaced thousands of people, spreading sickness and disease.

I know you are aware that this bad news is not only in our country. When we glance to the world news, we have the same problems. Why all these calamities, miseries, and problems of man? Why is the worldwide news so bad? Has God allowed all this suffering? If so, why has He let it go on for almost 6,000 years now? Who is to blame? Did God create this world for man to suffer?

"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was *very good*" (Genesis 1:31) [emphasis ours]. All of the creation, including man, was *very good*. But man, though created for good, was incomplete. Even though the rest of the creation was very good, God intended for man to keep it and beautify it, "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (v. 28).

But Adam and Eve rejected God and His knowledge and went their own way. When they rejected the tree of life, God pronounced a sentence on mankind. Even considering the

errors found in post-1974 writings of our parent organization, Mr. Armstrong did sum up this sentence beautifully in his 1985 book, *Mystery of the Ages*:

God said [to Adam and Eve], in effect: "You have made the decision for yourself and the world that shall spring from you. You have rejected me as the basic source of knowledge—you have rejected power from me through my Spirit to live the righteous way—you have rebelled against my command and my government—you have chosen the 'GETTING,' 'TAKING' way of Satan. Therefore I sentence you and the world you shall beget to 6,000 years of being *cut off* from access to me and my Spirit—except for the exceeding FEW I shall specially call. And that FEW shall be called for special service preparatory for the kingdom of God. They shall be required to do what you have failed to do—reject, resist and overcome Satan and his WAYS, and follow the ways of my spiritual LAW.

Go, therefore, Adam, and all your progeny that shall form the world, produce your own fund of knowledge. Decide for yourself what is good and what is evil. Produce your own educational systems and means of disseminating knowledge, as your god Satan shall mislead you. Form your own concepts of what is god, your own religions, your own governments, your own life-styles and forms of society and civilization. In all this Satan will deceive your world with his attitude of SELF-centeredness—with vanity, lust and greed, jealousy and envy, competition and strife and violence and wars, rebellion against me and my law of LOVE.

After the world of your descendants has written the lesson in 6,000 years of human suffering, anguish, frustration, defeat and death—after the world that shall spring from you shall have been brought to confess the utter hopelessness of the way of life you have chosen—I will supernaturally intervene. By supernatural divine power I shall then take over the government of the whole world. With reeducation, I will produce a happy world of PEACE. And on repentance, I shall then offer eternal salvation to all. After a thousand years of that happy world to come, I will resurrect from death to mortal life all who have died uncalled during this present 6,000 years. Their judgement shall then come. And on repentance and faith, eternal life shall be offered them" (pp. 99–100, First Edition, 1985).

Notice that last paragraph especially. By supernatural intervention of God—by His divine power—God shall take over the government of the whole world. That is the only good news that we can read everyday—but not in any newspaper, but in the Word of God, the Holy Bible.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

That day will signify the beginning of God's timely intervention. And the tree of life, finally, will once again be freely accessible.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour my spirit (Joel 2:28–29).

For 1,000 years, Jesus Christ's millennial rule will be set up on this earth. And at the end of that 1,000 years, all who have ever lived, never having access to the Spirit of God, will be resurrected to physical life. That includes all those who died during time of war. That includes all the premature deaths due to accident and disease. They will be given free access to God's Spirit. All will have the potential finally to be born into the God Family, which is the reason we were created in the first place.

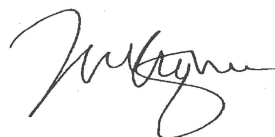
His plan includes every human being who has ever lived. That is not to say every human being will be born into God's Family. Some will reject God and will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13–15). The most important point however is this: All will be given a chance to be in His Family.

When Jesus Christ returns to bring salvation to this world, He will do just that: *Save this world*. This was the very good news that our Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed for three and one-half years in His ministry when He came in the flesh.

This is the only good news that your brothers and sisters here in the Philippines, together with all of you, are anticipating and looking forward to. Keeping the Feast of Trumpets the 18th day of this month pictures that very important day—the coming of the King of Kings, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will rule the whole world with love.

Happy Feast of Trumpets!

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mario Roque', written in a cursive style.

Mario Roque