

# Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brethren:

Greetings from Luzon, Philippines.

Let me take this opportunity to thank everybody for prayers on my behalf several months ago when in a serious illness I requested prayer for God's intervention. Indeed our merciful Lord intervened, and here I am writing to you again the *Monthly Letter* for September 2008.

In my ordeal, I had colon and rectal trouble. For a month or more I had serious constipation with suspected colon cancer and enlarged hemorrhoids. A diabetic for more than thirty-five years, my blood sugar was considerably high, affecting my left eye which is now totally blind. With my right eye no longer seeing objects ten meters away, and without knowing what really was happening inside my body, anything could have happened.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank a brother of our common faith (I need not mention his name here), who not only prayed for me, but also had extended a helping hand through the Internet, which gave me initial relief in those times of trial. I believe, as well as he, that it was all God's will and purpose that we met and have come to know each other through our e-mails. We both gave our Lord the honor and glory for He indeed "had made all things work together for good" demonstrating in us that if one member suffers all the body suffers. By God's great mercy I am now fine, and ask you to join me in thanking and praising God—I am back to my normal activities.

## **A Lesson I Learned**

My encounter with the new-found friend in Canada, who suggested a way to get rid of my constipation and gave me some tips on cleansing diets and dietary practices, led me to meditate on how my body system works the way God designed it.

Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness,' . . . So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him . . . the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 1:26–27; 2:7).

I was meditating on the way God created man—imagining God molding a piece of clay and after fashioning a human body, breathing on it, and it becoming alive as the first man on earth. I mused at the atheist mental orientation toward such a simplistic concept; no wonder he cannot grasp in his mind the presence of an all-knowing Creator God. He chooses rather to believe on the human theory of evolution instead of the biblical revelation of an omnipotent and omniscient God.

I was thinking of how God designed the human body out of the dust of the earth. The intricacies of the human body with all of its systems and functions has inspired me to delve into how He designed that clay replica so pliantly in His divine hand. How all-knowing and powerful is the Divine Designer that molded the dust atoms into cells to form tissues, and tissues to organs, and the different organs to form the different systems in the body! The design had to be so perfect that when it was finished—with all its awesome potential to become a perfect material human being—it took Him just a split second to breathe into his nostrils the breath of life—and the living being was the man, a living soul!

The body systems and functions of the first man were exactly the pattern of the body systems and functions of each man living on earth today. This is the great lesson I learned in this time of trial. The central nervous system, the functions of the circulatory system, the respiratory system, the digestive system and all of the other systems in the body unite together in perfect harmony. Any malfunction in the body systems and organs for that matter, affects every other part of the body, resulting in deficiencies and failures to provide or contribute to the wellness and health of the whole body. God has provided the body with a self-defense mechanism to protect itself from any micro-invaders in the biotic environment. By way of example: the saliva from the salivary glands, the perspiration on our skin, the tears that exude from our eyes upon irritation, are all defense mechanisms of the body against infectious microorganisms that we come into contact with daily in our environment. The intricate structure of the respiratory tract, how it is lined with mucous membrane and provided with fine hairy villi that move upwards to filter the air we inhale into our lungs, is another example of a defense mechanism that God provided for the human body.

The most minute detail that the all-knowing God has planned and actualized in the human body is such a great and awesome wonder, that a majority of humans fail to appreciate it and to give Him the honor and glory. Taking these aspects for granted, the majority fail to notice that their lifestyle, their habits and practices are no longer keeping the body in

balance, as God has intended it. They satisfy their fleshly appetites, eat their favorite foods, or even alter parts of their bodies at will, disregarding God's law on proper nutrition, sanitation, hygiene, and spiritual cleanliness of the body: the temple of the Holy Spirit—for His ultimate purpose to create man in His own image and likeness.

## **The Spiritual Body of Christ**

Did our Lord have a body even before He was born flesh and dwelt among us? Evidently, because when He said, "let us make man in our own image and likeness" he patterned the human body after His own.

Man in his material form and design is an exact replica of the spiritual body of Christ. As the *Logos* in the beginning, He spoke with Moses in Old Testament times as the God of Israel (*YAWEH*). Moses desired to see that spiritual body in His grandeur and glory, which God refused, but permitted Moses to see just His back parts. (Please read the account in Exodus 33:17–23.) So the God of the Hebrews has body parts just like the human body He created in His own image. When the *Logos* became flesh and dwelt among us, He assumed the exact nature and body of man. He was willing to obey His Father and emptied Himself of the "glory He had with the Father" from the beginning and took the form of a servant (man) much lower than the angels. His human body was made of the same substance as that of Adam and all other human beings. It was a body that did not return to dust as all other human beings return to dust at death because He was resurrected before that body decomposed. After His resurrection, He showed His body to prove that it was the same body which died and was resurrected; now as a spirit being that could appear at will and vanish at will. The first man, Adam, was of the earth, fleshly. Jesus, the second Adam, was of the spirit, a quickening spirit.

This glorious body is what God planned to be the goal of man when He created him in His own likeness, in His own image. He created him male and female to share His divine nature—the awesome human potential, that great and precious promise (2 Peter 1:4–11).

Having this in mind, our material body is worth caring for. We are very much responsible to our Maker for what we do with our bodies. The right kind and amount of food is of extreme importance. The right amount of work and bodily activities are part of the divine statutes and ordinances. That is why He gave us the food laws and the Sabbath.

If "Christ dwells" in this "temple of clay," it is the assurance that one is in the faith, unless he is a reprobate. When we examine our bodies and come to know that the Spirit of God dwells in us, the more we become aware of the need of taking good care of them, for

to neglect or indulge them in vices brings self destruction. It cannot be overly stated here that the wellness and health of one's material body is of absolute concern to its Designer and Maker being part and parcel of that great body, the Body of Christ, the Church.

### **The Church As the Body of Christ**

By analogy, the Church is the Body of which Christ is the head. It was born in Jerusalem on the day called Pentecost with the breath of life from the Holy Spirit of God. With initial members of at least 120 individuals, it was one body united and knitted together in love and wisdom from above and had all things in common—being the called-out ones from this world. How this birth came to pass is briefly described in the second chapter of the Book of Acts.

"When the day of Pentecost was fully come," at about the third hour in the morning the "called-out ones" were assembled with one accord, and were all filled with the Holy Spirit of God. A phenomenon that never happened before among humans had taken place. A body with many members had been born—the Church whose head is Christ. Like the human body, this one body with many members has to grow with wellness and health just as the human body should. If one member gets sick, it affects the whole body. All the members have to help one another edify the whole body without reservation. (Please read 1 Corinthians 12:14–27.)

As the human body is provided with all the system mechanisms to function for health and well-being, the Church is provided with "some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers" for the edification and wellness of the body. How does it get sick and ineffective?

The Church is a unified whole, "one body . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4–5). Division and schism make it sick and ineffective. (Please read 1 Corinthians 12:10–13.)

### **The Pentecost Controversy**

The ongoing controversy of a Sunday/Monday Pentecost is an indication of a struggle between God's true people, the called-out ones, and those who assume God's calling and presume possession of God's Holy Spirit and truth. Thus the admonition of Jude, ". . . contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" is timely and in keeping with the truth until the visible appearance of our Lord on this earth. The controversy continues



to divide the true church, the Lord's body, whose members are supposed to be one; as He earnestly prayed to His Father before leaving this world. The controversy has made the church sick and ineffective.

The faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is supposed to be present among all His people today, should be manifested by every believer, and they should not be at variance one with another. At this end time, when Christ is about to come again on earth for our redemption, should He find His Body divided into different churches of different faiths and beliefs? No wonder He expressed a pessimistic anticipation of His Coming in Luke 18:8: "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Certainly, He is coming to judge, to find the fulfillment of His prayer: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me*" (John 17:20–21) [emphasis mine]. It is a clear indication of His desire and purpose to save the whole world as indicated in the phrase, "that the world may believe." The day of Pentecost symbolizes the Holy Spirit which is the seal of unity among God's people. The controversy between Sunday and Monday Pentecost-keepers is no different than the Sabbath controversy between the Sunday and Saturday-keepers. Just as the seventh day was changed to the first day, Sunday, as the day of worship after the Apostolic era of the Church, Monday Pentecost was changed to Sunday Pentecost for the same reason. Since that time, division in the Church has occurred. Now, unlike before, each group cannot fellowship with one another. Each group assumes to have the Spirit of God, each one presuming to have the truth while denying others their claim of power of the same Spirit. For if they recognize this power to be existing among each group, they should be able to extend their hands of fellowship one to another. But the fact is that they disdain and look down on one another. Since all of these groups observe the same day, Sunday Pentecost, yet do not agree with one another, unity is not manifested. The symbol of unity in the Spirit among the Sunday Pentecost and Sunday-keepers, is indeed negligible. The apostasy that occurred after the first century and also the changes that occurred in 1974 were proof that the Sunday Pentecost and the Sunday Sabbath were not the legitimate cohesive elements for unity among the churches. Is the truth and the Spirit of God present where unity and oneness is unattainable? Is this a sign of health and wellness in the body among believers?

### **Some Indications of a Monday Pentecost**

Apparently, the first century Church and the end-time church until 1974 kept Pentecost on Monday. The manifestation of unity and power in the spirit was clearly demonstrated within those years. The birth of the New Testament Church at Pentecost, which was highlighted by a marvelous event of speaking in tongues, was in no way a demonstration of confusion or division, but of unity and speaking the same thing. Even

though every individual was speaking in a different language, and onlookers had mistakenly thought them to be drunk, they were of one spirit and "continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread . . . did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:42–46).

But, how do we suppose Pentecost was a Monday and not a Sunday?

It is a fact that these called-out ones had learned and followed the steps of their Master and Lord. They observed the Passover with the Lord on a definite day and time as it was commanded in Leviticus 23. In the case of Pentecost, they counted seven Sabbaths to figure out the day to keep: "seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number [count] fifty days" (Leviticus 23:15). A complete count of fifty or else there is no need of counting if Pentecost occurred on that selfsame Sunday, the fiftieth day.

So the Apostles followed the instruction to count fifty after the seventh Sabbath: a complete count up to the evening of that selfsame Sunday and then Pentecost begins to dawn and will "fully come" in the morning of Monday (Acts 2:1–2).

On that selfsame Sunday morning, (the "morrow after the seventh Sabbath," the fiftieth day) Pentecost could not have yet "fully come" (as specified in Acts 2:1) by the third hour of the day (verse 15). That expression: "when the day of Pentecost was fully come," could have been at least noon or in the afternoon if the selfsame day after the seventh Sabbath (which is Sunday) is the day referred to.

So the count of fifty has to be essentially complete. The writer of Acts was definite to mention that the "day of Pentecost was fully come" which started at Sunday (sunset), so that point in time at the third hour of Monday morning fits the expression: "when the day of Pentecost was fully come."

Just as Jesus and His disciples observed the Passover "when the hour was come" (Luke 22:14), His followers followed His example observing the definite time as required by God to observe His feasts.

Obviously, those that followed the first Church in Jerusalem kept Monday Pentecost until it was later changed to Sunday by the apostate church. In the same manner the Church of God from 1937 to 1974 observed Pentecost on Monday, throughout a period of thirty-seven years until it was changed to Sunday, not by way of revelation but through uninspired human scholarship. Those long years of Monday Pentecost observance were a period of significantly great blessings upon the Church, and the fruits of the spirit (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, etc.) were open demonstrations of unity and oneness.

## Could a Monday Pentecost Unite the Church of God?

Certainly, it is the Holy Spirit of God that makes the people of God one. Pentecost symbolizes the Spirit of God. As the bread and wine at Passover symbolize the one body of Christ which individual members of the true Church partake of to be one with Him and He in them, Pentecost also should be the reality of the Holy Spirit binding in love all the people of God into one body—the Church.

But why do all of these churches, each claiming to be the true Church, each observing the same Sunday Pentecost, not come together as one body? Is it because the observance of Pentecost on a wrong day does not reflect the uniting Spirit of God? Could a Monday Pentecost bring God's people together again as before?

Monday Pentecost, *per se*, could not bring the church back to unity. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to attain that purpose for which our Lord prayed before He suffered. We need to humble ourselves, come to recognize His will, and be in line with His purpose and do the will of His Father. What is the will of the Father we are referring to here? In Matthew 7:21–23:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the *will* of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity (emphasis mine throughout).

Few realize that those to whom Christ is referring here are prophets, preachers, and teachers; in other words, they are church leaders and group heads, as already cited: "who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

And what is the *will* of the Father that Christ referred to that they should have done to enter into the kingdom of heaven? Again, very few of these church leaders could identify and pinpoint this *will* of the Father. Everybody presumes that all are doing the will of God. What is His will as specified in Ephesians 1:9?

Having made known unto us the mystery of his *will*, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might *gather together in one all things* in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.

So the will of the Father is to gather in one all things, "... and gave him to be the head over *all things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22–23).

Are all these leaders and heads of churches doing anything to promote unity in the Church, the body of Christ? Do any ministries in this world have anything to do with edifying the Church? The ministry is for:

. . . the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive (Ephesians 4:12–16).

### **The Unfulfilled Prayer**

A material body that is sick needs our common prayer for God's intervention. When parts of the body are not functioning as God intended them at creation, they continue to affect the central nervous system. Fasting and cleansing diet, detoxification, antioxidants and other natural remedies for physical rejuvenation are not sufficient to bring back the body to its shape, wellness and health. We need not consult nor resort to the services of expert agents of the god of Ekron, but trust in the Divine Healer, our God who promised to be our absolute Healer.

In the same manner, the body of Christ—the Church—needs the Divine Healer, our God, to intervene before the coming of His Son. We need to trust in God's revealed truth rather than on modern scholarship; to have wisdom from above rather than knowledge here below; to have the faith of Jesus Christ rather than our own individual beliefs. We need not faint, but pray incessantly to the true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not to the human judge which did not fear God nor regard man (Luke 18:1–8) and so fulfill among ourselves, our Lord's prayer, as cited:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me* (John 17:20–21).

This prayer of Christ is not yet fulfilled today. Everyone who is led by a religious leader clings to his own beliefs and doctrines. Rather than finding a way to fulfill Christ's prayer just before He suffered, each leader carries his followers farther and farther away from where the church began as one body. Instead of admonishing their followers to pray ardently without ceasing for the unity of the body of Christ—the Church—they clamor for more "modern and advanced" interpretations of Scriptures—who "hold the truth in unrighteousness." Instead of putting the sheep together in one fold, each one wanted to have more in his own individual barn.

The body of Christ—the Church—needs no "medical specialist," neither modern herbal nor pharmaceutical medicine—but divine healing. Your and my incessant prayers of faith are needed, not the continuous controversy on who has the truth. Jesus Christ is TRUTH. Again, His solemn warning: "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

Shall He find *the* faith among us, brethren? How does His will—to *gather together in one all things* (the Church) *in Christ*—become fulfilled? Will that be "the great work" to be done before the close of the age? Will the prophesied great tribulation bring it to pass? Will the "two witnesses" accomplish it? Let us not speculate. Let us have faith in the Lord that He will surely bring to pass His plan and purpose to gather together all His people from whatever group they belong; wherever they may be in this world. Let's learn a lesson from the parable, "always to pray and not to faint." Let us open our eyes from deception by looking at the grassroots of Pentecost-keeping where the true Church of God began. The statement of our Lord in Matthew 7:21–23 does not apply to those who are called, but to those who are deceived to follow an apostate group. There is yet time to come out and search for the foundation of the Church whose cornerstone is Christ.

Brethren, we can do our parts in bringing to pass the will of our Father which is in heaven. We pray for the unity of the Church, the body of Christ, and have faith in the Righteous Judge who will bring to pass His will, soon if we faint not. May He come soon!

Solemnly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Corsino C. Canta". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Corsino C. Canta

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon W. Brisby". The script is cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Jon W. Brisby