

December 2013

Dear Brethren:

Last month we began to address recent public comments made by one of the last remaining Evangelists alive from the old days of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), Mr. Roderick Meredith. It is sad that he chose to denigrate Mr. Raymond Cole in his September-October newsletter, seeking to distort the true history of the 1974 doctrinal changes and to impugn Mr. Cole's personal motives during those volatile years. Rather than repeat much of last month's content, we will provide a very brief summary before proceeding quickly into the next important points.

Recall briefly, we established that Roderick Meredith—as well as Raymond Cole—disagreed with the doctrinal changes of 1974 (especially the *perverted redefining* of adultery in May 1974). But each man responded very differently thereafter. Raymond Cole held firm to his convictions in spite of the personal consequences, while Roderick Meredith found a way to appease his conscience and to save his corporate church office. We also demonstrated that Mr. Herbert Armstrong acknowledged in the final months before his death (in June 1985), that Pentecost and the marriage doctrine were both part of the "basic teachings" of the Church which had come under attack by liberal scholars in the early 1970s. He stated specifically that these men had no regard for the *revealed Truth* of God, but relished only their own human scholarship. Although Mr. Armstrong did not go as far as to advocate a return to those original doctrines, his final written words to the church certainly confirm his conviction *in hindsight* that what happened in the early 1970s was not of God, but rather of God's enemies. Mr. Meredith decided to "go along" with the changes of 1974, because he counted them only "minor changes"—little nuances—hardly worth defending.

### Raymond Cole's Motives

This month we want to address Mr. Meredith's condemnation of Raymond Cole in presuming to pass judgment upon Mr. Cole's personal motives. Here is what he said in his recent member newsletter which we have been citing:

Again, dear brethren, try to see the "Big Picture," in all of this and not be "picky" and always looking for the "loose brick" or some excuse to fall away or to do your own thing. Those occasional men—especially men—who are always anxious to "be important" and "start their own church" will *always* be out there looking for an excuse to find some followers and make themselves feel important. God will **judge them** for dividing and confusing His Church

and *weakening* the effect of the Work, and for putting "stumbling blocks" before the brethren whom they confuse or take away from the Church that *is really doing His Work!* (Roderick Meredith; *September–October 2013 Newsletter*)[emphasis is the author's]

Was this truly Raymond Cole's motivation for resisting the change to a Sunday Pentecost and the redefining of adultery in 1974? Was he merely seeking to "be important," and only using the change in doctrine as an excuse to start his own church? Those are very strong words. Mr. Meredith seems very confident in presuming God's eternal damnation upon Raymond Cole in the Judgment. But do the facts support this condemnation?

Firstly, if someone is seeking to entice large numbers of WCG members to defect and to follow him, why would he select doctrines which are *very unpopular* to many of those members, like the original teaching about divorce and remarriage? Most were overjoyed when the doctrine was changed to permit getting a new wife or husband by a whim. Raymond Cole held firmly to call that action *adultery*. How attractive is such a doctrine going to be if you are trying to woo these same people into following you? Not very. If Raymond Cole's true "hidden motive" was to gain a personal following, he sure picked a *loser set of doctrines* to undergird his work. It just does not add up. By contrast, Raymond Cole said repeatedly over the years, if he were the only one left who loved those original teachings received through Mr. Herbert Armstrong, he would gladly stand alone to defend them. That position does not sound like one who is trying to gain a big following.

Sadly, such accusations are reminiscent of the critique applied to Raymond Cole during the late 1970s by Mr. Armstrong himself. It was 1978 when he and his son, Garner Ted Armstrong, had their final falling out, and the son went out of the WCG to start a rival work to spite his father. The following year (1979), accusations by some of these defectors about misappropriation of funds in the WCG resulted in a lawsuit by the State of California and the seizing of church assets. Herbert Armstrong fled the state while a fierce legal battle ensued over the next two years. In the wake of his distress as a grieving father and this very serious threat to his whole life's work, Mr. Herbert Armstrong addressed the entire church in an attempt to contain the damage being inflicted in the aftermath of his son's defection. The problem is, in doing so, he chose to sweep Raymond Cole into the very same category as his son, listing him among the rebels who had sought selfish, personal rewards at the expense of the church. From the September 25, 1978 *Co-Worker Letter*, Mr. Armstrong wrote:

Brethren, GOD HAS ONLY ONE CHURCH, just as in King David's day He had only ONE NATION ISRAEL. In His ONE CHURCH ONLY, Jesus Christ works with the Holy Spirit!

He has not called SEVERAL INDIVIDUAL, each working in his own way, to GIVE His Message to the world—and it's the WHOLE world—Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, besides the U.S., Britain and British peoples.

"For . . . the body is ONE, and hath many members, and all the members of that ONE body, being many, are ONE BODY, so also is Christ. . . . That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another (outgoing concern—love) . . . . And GOD hath set some in the church, first apostles (I Cor. 12) . . . ."

"There is no Apostle in Garner Ted's "church;" there is no real church!

Again: "that there be no division among you" as Garner Ted caused division, getting rid of, by demoting, shanghaiing away or nullifying those who did not follow HIM instead of God's Apostle—"but that ye be perfectly JOINED TOGETHER in the same mind and in the same judgment." Ted was of DIFFERENT judgment—never agreed with Christ's Apostle.

God forbids and condemns going off separately, one being of Paul, one of Apollos, one of Cephas—one of Garner Ted, one of Raymond Cole, one of Ernest Martin, one of Ken Westby.

Was it fair or accurate for Mr. Armstrong to lump Raymond Cole in with the likes of his rebellious son? Raymond Cole was one of those whom Garner Ted hated and sought to marginalize when he would not go along with the scheme to change doctrines in the early 1970s! The following summer, almost a year after Mr. Armstrong's 1978 defensive statements, here is what he declared further to the church in another *Co-Worker Letter*:

Brethren, we've got to FACE IT! God's Church—and Ambassador College—had been shockingly derailed—SECULARIZED! The whole WORK had become the work of MAN! My son Garner Ted had taken to himself authority never given to him. He took advantage of the fact I was in other parts of the world, carrying Christ's Gospel Message into other countries, to assume authority to CHANGE DOCTRINES, and to CHANGE POLICIES. I had denied him BOTH! Much of it was done SECRETLY! Top-ranking ministers were warned of being fired if they told me what was going on.

Many of the basic BIBLE TRUTHS God had revealed to me as the very FOUNDATIONAL BELIEF OF THIS CHURCH were BEING CHANGED! It was no longer GOD'S College or GOD'S Church! It was becoming precisely what my son is now trying to build—"GARNER TED ARMSTRONG'S

CHURCH"! He was surrounded by a small group of secular self-professed "intellectuals" (*Co-Worker Letter*, July 24, 1979).

Raymond Cole was never part of Garner Ted's "small group of self-professed 'intellectuals.'" Instead, he was one who *opposed* that very *secularization*, *changed policies*, and *changed doctrines* which Mr. Armstrong later condemned!

### **Raymond Cole Defends His Intentions**

It is now time to allow Raymond Cole to address for himself the accusations published in 1978-1979—the same ones being propagated today by Roderick Meredith. From his November 1978 *Monthly Letter*, Raymond Cole wrote to Church of God, The Eternal members, firstly confirming the reality of God's divine revelation of Truth and the history of apostasy by ancient Israel and the first-century church. Secondly, he addresses Mr. Armstrong's contention that there is only ever "one" physical body within which we *must always remain, under any circumstance*. Here are some key excerpts:

By the early A.D. 50's, the mystery of iniquity was already at work in the first-century Church of God. And by the time the ministry of the original apostles had concluded, the vast majority of the people had turned to perversion and corruption of the Word which had been given to them. Only a very few remained faithful to the truth.

According to the rationale accepted by most Church of God members today, the true servants of God should not have allowed themselves to be expelled from the Church. They should have changed, along with doctrine, and cooperated with the dictates of "the powers that be" within the Church. Is there any way to justify this concept? Brethren, now is the time to think soberly and seriously.

There is one physical body. But above all, if that body departs from the truth, those who love and respect the Truth of God should not compromise their beliefs and let their convictions be eroded or destroyed by remaining in the physical Church. God expects us to be faithful to the truth which He has given us. . . .

Several Plain Truth and Good News articles were written, over the years, concerning this major departure from the truth in the last days. They were clear, concise, and to the point. No one could mistake their intent. If the people whom God chose cannot accept the contents of those articles because



they were written prior to 1972, how can they possibly accept what is written by the same authors after 1972? Even if those writers were ignorant of the truth at that time, does not that fact alone tell us that we should be cautious in accepting them now? Why? Because if they were ignorant of the truth, they should not have been dogmatically teaching what they really did not understand. No one is entitled to preach the truths of God until he is called, chosen, and commissioned by God. And God does not send one who is ignorant of the truth. If they were the chosen servants of God, they were given the truth. If they had the truth, they have no right to change it. In no way can they be right prior to 1972 and after 1972. Such an approach makes mockery out of honesty, integrity, and common sense, as well as God's profound Truth. .

..

The truth had been taught—in the last days—to the ONE AND ONLY TRUE CHURCH OF GOD. Then, at some subsequent time, because false ministers did not really LOVE the truth or possess faith in that way of life, they introduced heresies—erroneous concepts developed under the auspices of "scholarship." They instituted change—change of doctrine. Change from the revealed way of faith to concepts more acceptable to the world.

What was the result?

The many (majority) of the Church—and remember, there is only one true Church—followed those pernicious ways. They blindly accepted whatever explanations were given. Why? How was it possible to deceive the vast majority of the church members? Peter said: ". . . by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (verse 2). The actual rejection of truth by the majority became possible because of the weight, support, and influence of personality. Someone well known—someone who possessed the authority and control—supplied the necessary influence, impetus, and direction. And, Peter makes it abundantly clear that the departure was from truth—from the very way which all were initially taught—not from a church body, by whatever definition we may give to it. . . .

John says: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (III John 9–10).

As the called and chosen apostle of Christ, John refused to change the doctrine which had been given to him—the truth which he taught from the beginning (I John 2:19–24). He remained the apostle of God because he was faithful to the commission—the preaching of the unchangeable truth which Christ had taught him. However, as history reveals, the vast majority of the people turned to the philosophy of the world. These soon became the dominant influence in the Church. As a result, the faithful servants of God were put out. Now, let us ask: Were the true servants of God in John's day still in the physical body? Or were they the ones cast out? If they were the ones cast out of the physical body, as John said, then under such circumstances it is not wise to remain in the physical body. For if it were, then John and the others in that day who were cast out of the Church were not the true children of God. The Bible clearly reveals that the true Christians were cast out of the Church—out of the physical body. But, those cast out certainly remained a part of the spiritual body of Christ.

What really counts is the truth. And what is the truth? Jesus said: "I am the truth and the life." He was the physical manifestation of the very Word of God. And that Word is spirit. It was manifested by obedience in the life of Christ, as it must be manifested in the lives of all called and chosen of Him.

Can truth change? We are told that Jesus Christ—the physical manifestation of the truth—is the same yesterday, today, and forever. There is not even a hint of change in Him. And since He is the truth, truth cannot change. It is that priceless truth—around which all pivots—that forms the basis for required evaluations and judgment (II Thess. 3:14–15). The basis for judging and determining who is faithful is not any man or any organization. It is the absolute, unalterable TRUTH of God. That truth never changes. Is it any wonder such knowledge becomes the basis for faith, confidence, assurance, and conviction—conviction of such a magnitude that a true Christian would die before he would change his belief?

John continued as God's servant because he was faithful to the truth he had been taught. This is made plain in all three of his later writings—First, Second, and Third John.

Because John remained faithful to the truth, he found himself outside the very physical body which once taught the truth and which, at one time, bore the divine commission of God. . . .

The physical Church remains the physical Church—the very church which once taught the truth. At some given time, the true and faithful members of the Body of Jesus Christ will be put out of the physical body or forced out by circumstances—circumstances of mind and heart—or by the ultimate edict of God.

We are not another church. We are a part of the estranged children of God because of conditions and circumstances—conditions and circumstances not of our choosing. Therefore, any attempt to mislead people into believing we are a separate church is done either deliberately or out of ignorance. In either case, this is an incorrect conclusion. For, one should get the facts before he speaks. Each of us is accountable for the words which proceed from his lips [end of quotation].

Had Herbert Armstrong lived long enough to see the final corruption of the Worldwide Church of God doctrines at the hands of his successor in the early 1990s, what would he have said about there being only "one church" body, physically? If he, like the Apostle John, had lost physical control of the organization and been "put out" by a new "Pastor General," would he have argued that there is *never* a case where faithful members of the Body of Christ are forced outside the physical church in order to remain faithful to God? Roderick Meredith certainly claims that he was forced to do just that in the 1990s, even though the Worldwide Church of God *continued as a physical entity* after his exit. So he certainly would not concur that Mr. Armstrong's statements in 1979 about "one body" applied to him in 1992. And if that is true, neither did it apply necessarily to Raymond Cole in 1974.

The problem is not that either Herbert Armstrong or Roderick Meredith disagreed with the concept of holding firm to the Truth in the face of unauthorized changes, but only in *how to recognize it* when such corruption *actually takes place as prophesied!* In hindsight, again, it was *Raymond Cole* who recognized it for what it was in the 1970s, all claims of "personal disloyalty to God's apostle" notwithstanding. It is very likely that Diotrephes—who was already in *physical control of the church* after the first-century apostasy—made the very same claim about John being disloyal to "church government." Claiming that the true people of God will *never* have to find themselves outside the *physical* parent church (if it were indeed the true Church) is naive at best. Today, we know better. Roderick Meredith knows better too. The difference is, Raymond Cole understood the principle twenty years before Mr. Meredith finally came to it.

## Who Authorized the 1974 Changes?

Next, we address the portion of Mr. Armstrong's statement in 1979 claiming that he did not know about most of the changes:

My son Garner Ted had taken to himself authority never given to him. He took advantage of the fact I was in other parts of the world, carrying Christ's Gospel Message into other countries, to assume authority to CHANGE DOCTRINES, and to CHANGE POLICIES. I had denied him BOTH! Much of it was done SECRETLY! (*Co-Worker Letter*, July 24, 1979)

What did Raymond Cole have to say about that claim? Again, from his November 1978 *Monthly Letter*:

### Changes by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's Approval

The September 25, 1978, letter—as well as other letters, correspondence, and publications—led the unsuspecting member to believe Mr. Armstrong did not know the changes were taking place during 1973–74.

Perhaps there were changes instituted which were unauthorized by him. Knowing the circumstances which prevailed in Pasadena and the attitude manifested toward him by many ministers, I would have little trouble accepting that possibility. Yet, the clear and unmistakable intent of his explanation is to infer that the doctrinal changes did not receive his approval.

As indicated earlier, I spent some time in Pasadena during the time of doctrinal unrest. Special Doctrinal Committee meetings were set up for the purpose of reviewing all questioned or "personally objectionable" doctrine. Several meetings were held for the very purpose of airing differences and feelings, as well as making a pretext at Biblical review.

The subject of Pentecost was chosen to open the review of doctrine, because of many questionable and technical difficulties. The review was completed, and the air of change pervaded through much of the ministry. However, I was not shaken at all—for Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong had told me, personally, that he knew God had revealed the truth to him and that nothing was going to change that fact. Also, as a matter of complete substantiation, he told the members of the church at a Pasadena Bible Study that God had revealed these truths to him—and that if he permitted any change, the church would cease being the church and would come to an end.

With those words ringing in my ears, even though I knew what pressure and influence would be brought to bear upon him, I relaxed in confidence. I knew there was no way to change the doctrine.

Can you imagine my complete surprise, when Mr. Armstrong wired back—from Japan—his approval for a change of Pentecost, from Monday to Sunday? At first, I simply could not believe that such approval had come from him. I accepted the fact—not the change, but his approval of the change—only after I saw and read the letter signed by him.

Now, the floodgates for change were wide open. Those who had no love or respect for the Truth were free to begin a mass effort to change all questioned and despised doctrine. The next major tenet to be attacked was that concerning divorce and remarriage. Circumstances allowed for a more expedient change of that battered doctrine than its advocates had hoped for. Surreptitiously, the groundwork was laid and effort expended to dramatize this change at the May '74 Conference. Most of the ministry was aware of the guarded decision which was to be announced. I was one of those who knew only of the plans. Despite the Pentecost change, I knew the dissidents from within could not get a change of the divorce-and-remarriage doctrine past Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. After all, had he not just completed a lengthy book on the subject?

But to my surprise, he willfully and enthusiastically endorsed the change on the opening day of the 1974 Conference. I was literally numb from shock! What had happened to the Church of God?

Other changes received Mr. Herbert Armstrong's endorsement. One was the concept of make-up. Another was birthdays. How many others, I am not sure. But, from the "secret" practices of the ministers, it would appear that approval had been given for a change in the doctrine of healing [end of quotation].

The truth is, dear friends, even though we have shown evidence that Mr. Armstrong later regretted approving many of these changes—criticizing *the very premise* of that whole doctrinal review instigated by his liberal son starting in 1972—he *did indeed* approve them, and he likewise treated Raymond Cole as a traitor at the time because he would not, in good conscience, "submit to the apostle's authority" and embrace those perversions. Roderick Meredith *did* embrace the changes, even against his own conscience, and thereby retained the favor of his *human* superior.

## **Guilt By Association?**

The next issue Mr. Cole addresses is the attempt to lump him into the same category with Garner Ted Armstrong and the other ministers who had rebelled and separated during the 1970s. Were they all the same? Hardly! We already have shown that Garner Ted Armstrong wanted to liberalize the church. What about Ernest Martin? He was the one previously cited by Mr. Armstrong as having an inferiority complex, seeking personal credibility through attaining a PhD in a worldly university. He likewise sought to water down the doctrine, arguing for a Sunday Pentecost long before—ten years before—most other WCG ministers ever did. Here are excerpts from his resignation letter to Mr. Armstrong, dated January 24, 1974:

Believe me, doubts are rife! Credibility is at an all time low! People all over the United States are questioning whether the church really wants to grow in grace and knowledge. And among the important questions which continually comes to the fore is that of Pentecost. . . .

However my Pentecost paper that was written to you back in 1961 was reproduced at Ted's [Garner Ted Armstrong's] request and circulated to all those who participated in the meetings. After having read the paper, many now acknowledge that the real evidence shows that Sunday is truly the biblical Pentecost. I understand that nothing was presented by anyone that seriously challenged the conclusions of my 1961 paper. The central facts for a Sunday Pentecost remain crystal clear and this has to be admitted by all. . . . However, the moderato[r] of the conference at the conclusion of the four meetings [Doctrinal Committee meetings], finally decided that nothing could be done about the question of Pentecost and that there was no need to have a full and open forum with you concerning it. . . .

. . . Pentecost is on a Sunday'. Yet, the Worldwide Church of God has Pentecost on a Monday.

Changes are necessary! But even the changing of one wrong doctrine is far short of the mark in reaching the fulness of the teachings of Christ. As you are aware, the church has taught that it "hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." This belief has given many people the conviction that the church hardly needs any changing at all in most doctrines. However, there are numerous teachings that desperately need alteration to bring them into conformity with the true doctrines of Christ. . . .



Really, it is not fair to you for us to remain in the Worldwide Church of God when we feel responsible to teach the doctrines of the Bible which are not accepted by you or the church. This is a very regretful decision to make but our conscience allows us no alternative (Ernest L. Martin, PhD, January 24, 1974).

Poor "Doctor" Martin. Had he only waited less than *three more weeks*, he would have seen Herbert Armstrong finally approve the very change to a Sunday Pentecost that he had advocated for a dozen years, announced church-wide in the February 11, 1974 *Co-Worker Letter*. Dr. Martin went on to start his own church, and then to repudiate keeping of the Sabbath and Holy Days altogether, including a Sunday Pentecost! What did he have in common with Raymond Cole? Nothing!

How about the one other name in that *rogues' gallery* of rebels, Mr. Ken Westby? Mr. Westby was credited with leading a rebellion in February, 1974 (just after the Pentecost change announcement), primarily arguing that the church should be decentralized, allowing tithes and offerings to remain in local congregations, rather than being sent to a "centralized headquarters." He and his followers (approximately thirty ministers) defected to start their own confederation, using an aggressive program to peel members away from the WCG. They funneled very personal and defamatory material to the press, revealing secrets of Garner Ted Armstrong's sinful exploits, and denigrating Mr. Herbert Armstrong in appalling ways. How staunch was Mr. Westby in defending the concept of divine truth through a chosen servant? Not at all. He obviously adopted a totally different doctrine about church government. And for years since, he has championed a totally different doctrine about the nature of God, repudiating the teaching that Jesus Christ was indeed "God" from the beginning with the Father. What did Ken Westby have in common with Raymond Cole? Nothing!

Where was Raymond Cole during these tumultuous months of early 1974? He was still on sabbatic leave at Mr. Armstrong's direction, and living in Coquille, Oregon, since mid-1973. He was still very much a member of the WCG. He was quietly attending Sabbath and Holy Day services at WCG assemblies in Oregon, and coming back to Pasadena for scheduled meetings, including the early Doctrinal Committee meetings. Having already told Mr. Armstrong of his strong opposition to any doctrinal changes, Mr. Armstrong has sent him out on that sabbatic leave. He remained as a minister of the Worldwide Church of God until very late in 1974, when Mr. Armstrong chose to revoke his ministerial credentials and put him out of the church. Mr. Cole had stayed, even after the initial doctrinal changes of 1974 because Mr. Armstrong continued to *keep the door open* to the possibility of returning to a Monday Pentecost, if sufficient technical evidence could be submitted by Mr. Cole. Raymond Cole spent those many months in sabbatic seclusion, not fomenting rebellion, but working on those technical papers to submit to Mr. Armstrong to substantiate the former

doctrines! Those technical papers are historic documents in our library today! They also became the basis of the fundamental articles published by Church of God, The Eternal beginning in 1975, and are still available on our website today. Mr. Cole never made derogatory statements about Mr. Armstrong, either in public or in private, but always showed respect for the man through whom he had learned the Truth of God. That was true until his dying day in 2001.

How does that personal history in any way resemble the actions of Ernest Martin, Ken Westby, or Garner Ted Armstrong?

Here is how Raymond Cole addressed it in his own words, again from his November 1978 *Monthly Letter*. Even from the grave, his words still resonate:

### Ridicule by Association

Perhaps the oldest form of ridicule is guilt by association. If one wants to make an individual or group look bad, simply list him or the group along with those whose actions are obvious and disapproved.

The real issue is doctrine. By Mr. Herbert Armstrong's own admission, the Worldwide Church of God should return to its original teachings ["Get Back on Track"]. Therefore, as a group, we cannot be ridiculed and impugned for remaining faithful to the original doctrine. Those ministers who have ridiculed us for our doctrinal stand are now embarrassed. So, they now resort to character assassination. But if character defects are the criterion we should use to substantiate men or organizations, by all means the last place we should look for an example is Pasadena. Those who say we are holding this posture because we want a following, or want to be important, or want to be the head of a church, are imputing motives. They do not know the mind and heart. We all have faults, brethren, but there is a vast difference between character defects which lead to blatant sin and doctrinal changes, as opposed to personal faults and shortcomings which do not. Let us be honest and look at the doctrinal issue, because this is the real and only issue.

What will be said here has nothing to do with lifestyles, character defects, or any personality quirks. It is strictly limited to doctrine, convictions, and beliefs.

Mr. Armstrong's September 25, 1978, letter lists me (including the estranged brethren) in a list of defectors from the Worldwide Church of God. He writes: ". . . God forbids and condemns going off separately, one being of Paul, one of Apollos, one of Cephas—one of Garner Ted, one of Raymond Cole, one of Ernest Martin, one of Ken Westby."

The immediate impression is that all these groups left the church for the same reasons. That impression is absolutely false. All the others listed wanted doctrine changed. In fact, they were the forerunners for the actual changes made within the Worldwide Church of God. If the doctrines finally adopted by the Worldwide Church of God were truly the "new enlightenment"—the revealed Truth of God—these men received the revelation before the Worldwide Church of God did. Was God confused? He must have sent the new revelation to the wrong people.

On the other hand, we believe God gave the truth initially to the Church—and it could not have been the true Church unless there were a called, end-time servant to whom the truth was given and who was commissioned to proclaim that way of life. Therefore, the instructions of the Bible—hold fast that which we were taught—had to apply to us. We are holding to that revealed truth.

May I ask why that difference was not noted? Regardless of the plain instructions of the Bible to hold fast to that truth, should we forsake God in order to be loyal to a man or a physical church?

Next, the impression is left, with all who blindly read the contents of that letter, that we deliberately left the Church in order to pull a following after ourselves. Nothing is farther from the truth! We were forced out of the Church. We were told to compromise beliefs, preaching the strange heresy the Church had adopted, or be terminated from employment and from the Church. Relative to this demand, the Bible was explicit. Hold fast to the truth. This we did.

Finally, the impression is left that we created or established a separate church. This impression is deliberately created! From the beginning, we have never regarded ourselves as a separate church. Being put out of the Church, either literally or by circumstance, we became estranged brethren because of our belief of the truth—truth which Mr. Armstrong, by his desire to return to it, admits was the Truth of God.

If Jesus Christ were the embodiment of the Word of God—the truth—and He could not change, how can we be wrong to hold fast to the truth initially given to God's servant of the last days? For, the only way the Worldwide Church of God could have been the true Church is by having received the unchangeable Word—Jesus Christ, the Truth and the way of life! By our continuing in that way, we continued in the body of Christ, the body of Truth. If this is not true, then not one single person called of God prior to the doctrinal changes was in the body of Christ—the true Church.

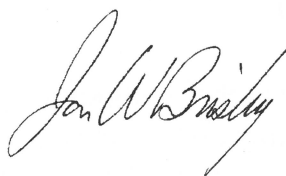
We do not mind being condemned for what we believe. But to falsely accuse by association is certainly NOT of God. Is it not time, for those who presently claim to be the servants of God, to be honest? Let them admit the fact we are still doing precisely what we were taught—taught by that very servant himself [end of quotation].

These words resonate, even today, as a direct rebuttal to the conclusions of Roderick Meredith about Raymond Cole's personal motives. And guess what? Unlike all of those other men who departed from the WCG, Raymond Cole *never changed his devotion to those original doctrines*. You can disagree with him for doing so, but the point is, his positions were *proven* not to be some "short-term" excuse to separate and to start his own church. He proved he was serious about his convictions by defending those *very same doctrines* until his dying day, twenty-seven years after 1974. By comparison, Ernest Martin, Ken Westby, Garner Ted Armstrong, and all the rest quickly abandoned their "doctrinal positions" of 1974 and continued to repudiate more and more of those original teachings with the passing of every year.

Our purpose in publishing these historical statements from the 1970s is truly not to denigrate any individual, but instead, as Mr. Cole did, to defend his actions against those who would impute evil motives. The history is there in writing. Since Mr. Roderick Meredith was present during all of these events, the fact that he is intent today upon twisting that history to denigrate the character of Raymond Cole is exceedingly reprehensible. *He* may not still possess the written evidence of the truth of these matters in his own personal files, but we certainly do. That is part of the material you are receiving now.

What about the other recent statements by Mr. Meredith, claiming that the proof that Raymond Cole was wrong is that his work was not blessed, mostly split up, and disappeared into oblivion? In the next issue that I write to you, we will examine and contrast the "work" of Raymond Cole with that of Roderick Meredith. What did each man claim to try to achieve? What did each man *actually achieve* according to his own standards of performance? The results may be startling.

With love and determination in the true Faith,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jon W. Brisby". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Jon W. Brisby