

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter
December 1988

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Dear Brethren:

For this month I want to give an excerpt from a significant publication, "The Don Bell Reports" from Florida. Though found in "The Don Bell Reports," the actual quote comes from a famed historian, Otto Scott. You should find the quote revealing, interesting, and frightening.

"The final stage in all revolutions is an assault against the Executive. . . . In France in the 1790s. . . . it was only three years after the Estates General was first convened, until the time of the guillotine. . . . The Russian example is closer in terms of time. . . . From the time the Czar abdicated until the October coup d'etat was about eight months. . . . (In Germany) Hitler was made Chancellor on January 30, 1933. A month later, on February 28, 1933, he was granted life and death power over everyone in Germany. His Terror started, therefore, in four weeks. . . . Now the revolution has reached Congress. Congressional demagogues coordinate their arguments with the radical Left in the media, in universities and with 'social activist' groups. In the space of a single year this chorus pushed our Government into making an enemy of South Africa. . . . When we combine a looming industrial crisis with a financial crisis, we anticipate the worst situation in history. . . . We have seen the rise of regulatory agencies that combine the three functions of Government that the Founding Fathers sought to keep forever separate. . . . We have seen the appearance of Executive Orders that have the force of law. . . . Some of these authorize the Executive, in the event of a crisis, to take control of every individual and institution in the land. These Orders authorize the Executive to define the Emergency" (from a lecture by Otto Scott, quoted in "Don Bell Reports," July 3, 1987).

Biblical Principle

Due to the lengthy explanation of I Timothy 3 under "Decisions," no concept will be addressed this month.

Articles

The article "Babylonianism—Historical and Prophetic," Biblically oriented, is now completed. It will be mailed out in January 1989. We trust you will enjoy it. Being loaded with texts, much Bible study is required.

Prayer Requests

[Omitted for confidentiality]

General Requests

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Blessings of Brethren

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Deaths

Anne Burns' grandson-in-law: Due to the mercy of God and your compassionate prayers, Phil lived to see the birth of his daughter and even her first steps. The family thanks you all for the abundance of prayers.

May we request that you continue to remember both Anne and her widowed granddaughter.

Trips

December 10, 1988, Sabbath:	Raymond C. Cole, Tampa, Florida
December 17, 1988, Sabbath:	Raymond C. Cole, San Antonio, Texas
	John Mitchell, Vancouver, British Columbia
January 7, 1989, Sabbath:	George Leeman, Baltimore, Maryland
January 14, 1989, Sabbath:	George Leeman, Tampa, Florida
January 21, 1989, Sabbath:	George Leeman, South Carolina
	Raymond C. Cole, Sacramento, California
January 28, 1989, Sabbath:	Bryce G. Clark, Nashville, Tennessee
February 4, 1989, Sabbath:	Bryce G. Clark, Austin, Texas

Office

Books will be kept open for the first week of January 1989. Tithes and offerings received through the sixth (6th) may be receipted for 1988 if you specifically request us to do so. We understand the dilemma of mails. However, to repeat: You must specifically request us to do

this for you. Indicate your wish at the time you make your final (1988) submission to us. Any moneys received after January 6, 1989, will be receipted for 1989.

The January mailing will, as usual, come a little late due to holding the books open until after the sixth (6th).

Tape Schedule

Tape #	Mailed on:	For:	Title:
WSE-RC 37-	11/10	11/26	What is the natural body? #23
WSE-BC 122-	11/10	12/03	Great men of the O.T. #1
WSE-RC 37-	11/23	12/10	What is the natural body? #24
WSE-BC 122-	11/23	12/17	Great men of the O.T. #2
WSE-RC 37-	12/09	12/24	What is the natural body? #25
WSE-BC 122-	12/09	12/31	Great men of the O.T. #3
1989:			
WSE-RC 37-	12/14	1/06	What is the natural body? #26
WSP-JM 5	12/14	1/13	Healing
WSE-RC 37-	1/05	1/20	What is the natural body? #27
WSE-BC 122-	1/05	1/27	Great men of the O.T. #4

Please note that there have been some amendments to the tape schedule printed last month; some of the tapes had been previously sent out.

Note: Since December mails are notoriously slow, we need to know when and in what condition you receive this month's mailings. Armed with this information, we will be able to better serve you in future years. Please keep track of mail receipts for the entire month; then, give us a report in January 1989.

Recent Letters

Many letters contain special thanks from the Feast of Tabernacle card recipients. This act of kindness has come to mean so much to those who, for a variety of reasons, cannot personally attend the Feast. Those thanks go to you, our very dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

Decisions:

The meaning of I Timothy 3:2, 12

On occasion it is necessary to make judgments within the body of Christ to maintain required peace, order, and oneness. This principle was applied by the apostles on an infrequent basis in the early history of the church of God. As was the policy of the apostles, we will let the Bible explain—there is always sufficient historical or spiritual examples to make the matter clear.

Because of certain situations which have arisen in the faithful body today, comparable to those experienced by the Apostle Paul in Asia Minor and which were troubling to the young evangelist Timothy, the ministry has had to address those problems and come to a collective decision.

The problem: Can, or should, one "divorced and remarried" be used in areas of responsibility in the church? If so, how?

First, the context of verses 2 and 12 makes it clear Paul is talking about divorce and remarriage—situations where a determination of the legitimacy of the second marriage is an impossibility. The only other possible explanation is that Paul is addressing the existence of polygamy in the church. One thing is certain: Whatever the basic requirements were for the "diaconate"—ministry and active servants—they were different from those other members in the same body. If there had been no divorce and remarriage cases in the church over which the Apostle Paul had charge, why did he specify this requirement for the ministry and fellow laborers? Those who find it difficult to accept the presence of one divorced and remarried individual—we do not mean a random or open application here—are faced with the necessity of admitting the presence of polygamists in the church of God in the days of the apostles. But, there is another problem. In the days of the apostles, the Greeks did not practice polygamy. Let the weight of evidence fall on an authority of New Testament Greek and the history of Greek peoples of that time. We read: "Even though we may find numerous traces of polygamy and polyandry in the Gk myths, monogamy predominated in the Gk world in the historical period. Morality within marriage was strict. The Homeric hero had one wife, who was faithful and inviolable, a good manager of the home and mother. Gk marriage was monogamous" (*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Colin Brown, general editor; Vol. 2, p. 575). Let us also note a comment by Adam Clarke. "The apostle's meaning appears to be this: that he should not be a man who has *divorced* his wife and married another nor one that has two wives at a time" (Adam Clarke *Commentary*, Vol. VI, p. 595).

Let us carefully note one other quote: "'husband of one wife.' Confuting the celibacy of Rome's priesthood. Though the Jews practiced polygamy, yet, as he is writing about a Gentile church, *and as polygamy was never allowed among laymen, the ancient interpretation that the prohibition is against polygamy in a candidate-bishop is incorrect.* It must mean that, though laymen might lawfully marry again, candidates for the episcopate or presbytery were better to be married only *once*" (*Critical and Experimental Commentary*, Vol. VI, p. 487; emphasis ours).

The big question, Why?

Let us continue to quote from above: "As in ch. x, 9, 'wife of one man' implies a woman married but once, so, 'husband of one wife' must mean the same. The feeling among the Gentiles, as well as Jews (cf. Anna, Luke ii, 36, 37), against a second marriage would, for expediency and conciliation in matters indifferent, not involving compromise of principle, account for Paul's prohibition as to one so prominent as a bishop or a deacon. Hence the stress laid in the context on *the repute* in which the candidate for orders is held among those over whom he is to preside (Titus 1:6)."

From the above quote, not even considering the Biblical proscription, it is highly unlikely that the Apostle Paul was addressing the problem of polygamy. The other alternative is divorce and remarriage. His dilemma was the same as the ministry faces today. We cannot read hearts and minds. Judgment is yet to come. The appointed Judge, Jesus Christ, will read both hearts and minds.

Though some divorced and remarried people were in the church in apostolic times, they could not assume any leadership roles or responsibilities. This makes sense. Since it is the duty of the minister to preach forcefully the whole of God's Law and Way of life, it would appear to be a double standard to have one involved in a questionable (no judgment yet made) situation teaching the absolute authority of the laws of God and frowning on divorce and remarriage. In like manner, others of the diaconate—who must wholeheartedly support the

ministry—acting in individual roles cannot be involved in questionable situations. The clear inference is this: All other duties and activities of the church are open to any admitted to the fold. The Apostle Paul had such situations. We have them. Except as God specifically specifies, these members must not be prejudged, discriminated against, or shunned. Just like all of us, they still have to face their Judge, Jesus Christ.

Summary: For those allowed to attend services, they can be active in the church with the exception of those areas proscribed by God. They cannot bear individualized, specific responsibility—as in the diaconate, the ministry, or areas we once called deacon. The word for deacon merely means servant. That is why we use the term servant.

Comments

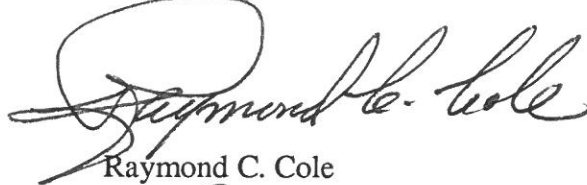
From the office staff, a very special thanks for all those tape returns. That act alone has effected a huge savings for the church. Again, many thanks.

As you will note in the early part of this *Letter* a new category has been added—"Decisions." Though not frequently used, occasionally the ministry must, on the basis of apostolic example, make certain decisions to maintain harmony in the body. This responsibility must be used wisely and only on the basis of clear Biblical example.

Again, let us express our pleasure in being allowed by God to serve the faithful and willing servants of His. We count it a great blessing. That joy is found in serving whom God sends—the few or many. It is in accord with His will. Our God is alive and very active in the fulfillment of His work. We must always respect His wishes. There are so many who want to take things into their own hands. What is wrong with patiently waiting for God Himself to take an active hand—giving us specific instructions and direction? Has He not always fulfilled His purpose by specific and tangible intervention? Why should humans attempt to second-guess God?

We will wait for Him! In the meantime, let us all be prepared.

Much love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Raymond C. Cole".

Raymond C. Cole

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bryce G. Clark".

Bryce G. Clark