

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter
May 1991

Dear Brethren:

Spiritual Principle: Divorce and separation decisions

What must be understood, from the beginning, is that the conduct and orientation of one's life is a matter of faith. As faith matures, the recipient makes changes in his own life. He grows from weakness to strength. Man's critical tendency manifests itself in condemning others, usually in areas in which he has no problem. Such an attitude, in the sight of God, is worthy of greater condemnation than the weakness manifested in one deficient in faith. By way of example, let us consider the matter of divine healing. Many people who do not have perfect faith to trust God for healing will bitterly condemn others who do not live up to their expectations regarding divorce and remarriage. God calls this hypocrisy—a double standard. Let it be understood that the ministry is under no obligation to make decisions in hidden areas of hearts and minds. What we do not know cannot be used as a basis for any decision. As long as the parties involved manifest a teachable, good attitude we are willing to work with them, knowing that the ultimate decision will be made by Christ at the appointed time.

We do not make decisions for people (II Cor. 1:24). The members themselves are obligated to hear the Truth and to act on it according to their faith. The only examples of active intervention on the part of the ministry involve cases of blatant sin. Blatant sin is that which is known, about which there is no doubt. It is sin which adversely affects the congregation—not in the sense of unknown quantity, but an act which is reprehensible in the sight of the members in general. For instance, a member who insists on taking the name of God in vain, or one who is contentious and divisive.

Blatant sin is not allowed in the church for many reasons. It is a willful sin. It causes division. It gives the impression to weak ones in the faith that such practices are acceptable, even though known to be evil, wrong. Blatant sin is *known* sin. There is no doubt involved. On the other hand, what God has not revealed cannot be used as a basis of judgment. Such cases must await the revelation of all facts—a circumstance which will occur at the time appointed for the judgment under the responsibility of Jesus Christ.

What responsibility does the ministry have regarding divorce and remarriage cases, or cases involving separation? The ministry will instruct on the basis of what God has revealed in

His Word. But, a true and faithful minister will not make a judgment on the basis of what he does not know. God has not given men the ability to read hearts and minds. No human being has such powers of judgment. What must be understood is this: Careless and indifferent judgment on the part of anyone who does not have all the facts requisite to the case must pay the same price regarding any judgment involved in his own life (Matt. 7:1-5). Can any man afford such "luxury"?

If there are no absolute answers to the complex conditions which usually prevail in these cases, the ministry will not make a decision but will require those involved to make their own decisions. We will accept their decisions on the basis of the fact that *all* must face the judgment-seat of Christ at His return. All self-deception, if any is involved, will then be made apparent. Such deception does not exclusively involve divorce and remarriage cases only.

There are cases where no questions are involved. Any children who grew up under parents who were, or are, members of the body of Christ must surely be informed of the conditions of marriage. Any such couples marrying cannot use any of the avenues provided by God for a reevaluation of their cases—such as the exception issue. If we have been taught the seriousness of marriage, the duty of proper selection of a lifetime mate is ours prior to marriage.

Please be informed. When we allow members to make their own decisions regarding their marriage status, we are not putting an infallible stamp of approval on a continuing relationship or any subsequent remarriage. We are saying we do not know.

What troubles us most is this: Why do so many want to fret themselves about the seventh command to the total exclusion of the other nine? What if the ministry became involved in judgments involving all the laws, statutes, and judgments of God—a burden which even ancient Israel could not tolerate? Judgment belongs to God and Christ, and to them alone. It is the duty of the ministry to rule the church for the purpose of creating peace and accord. Judgment is not ours. Our chief duty is the responsibility of powerfully preaching the truth. Please keep your attention fixed upon that duty. If we fail in that duty, we are worthy of castigation. But, please do not blame us for that which we are not allowed to perform.

Articles

Work is progressing on the Bible Study Guide. We have had some delays, however, due to the work load on Mr. Cole and being unable to schedule editing sessions. Please pray that this problem can be resolved soon.

New Interest

Letters from scattered areas continue to trickle in. These contacts are new and represent an interest that, while cautious, is nevertheless very real with a good potential. Please pray that God will stir the hearts and minds of those who are truly seeking the Truth.

Prayer Requests

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Blessings of Brethren

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Trips

May 18, 20	Robert Sloneker, Sacramento
May 18, 20, 25	Raymond Cole, Switzerland/France
June 8	Bryce Clark, Pittsburgh
June 15	Bryce Clark, Dallas
June 15	Raymond Cole, Rochester
June 22	Raymond Cole, W. Palm Beach/Florida

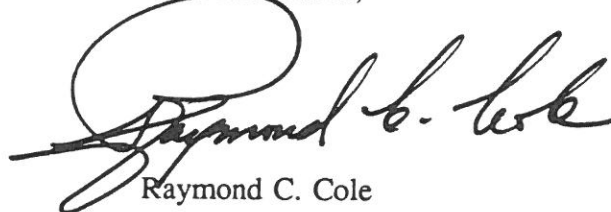
Tape Schedule

Tape series:	Mailed:	For:	Title/tape #:
WSE-GL 9	4/03	5/4	What is your relationship with God? #2
WSE-RC 51	4/17	5/11	How to keep the Sabbath, #8
WSE-BC 122	4/17	5/18	Great men of the Bible #38
WSE-BC 131	5/1	5/25	Is there such a thing as a perfect church?
WSE-RS 10	5/1	6/1	"Let us"
WSE-GL 9	5/1	6/8	What is your relationship with God? #3
WSE-BC 132	5/1	6/15	What to look for in a mate
WSE-RS 11	5/15	6/22	The enslavement of sin
WSE-RC 51	5/15	6/29	How to keep the Sabbath, #9

Comments

Winter rates on the Oregon coast generally commence on the first of October. Since the Feast comes early this year some motel and other rental units are thinking about charging our people the summer rates. You may want to check into this matter. Some, in order to keep their customers, are planning to extend the winter rates to our members. Please let us know if you have any problems.

With much love,



Raymond C. Cole



Bryce Clark