

# Church of God, The Eternal

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## Announcement Letter January 1992

Dear Brethren:

In pagan parlance we are commencing a new year. What will this new year bring for us individually, and collectively? Who could have guessed the direction of events occurring in 1991? I suspect we will be equally surprised at the conclusion of 1992.

**Spiritual Principle:** "Strive to enter in at the strait gate" (Luke 13:24).

The only people who can legitimately strive to fulfill the above command are those called and empowered with the Holy Spirit. Though there are ways galore devised by men, one way, and one way only, is the one created by God. It is a way totally hidden until revealed by God to those destined to receive it. Any and all efforts to understand by all who abide in deception are in vain. Unfortunately there are some who, because of insufficient love for the priceless gift given to them, or due to weaknesses of mind and/or heart—resolve—are unable to endure the trials of flesh and mind. These turn from the truth given to them. However, that does not mean they turned away from religion. On the contrary, they pursue relentlessly ways devised from the imaginations of their own minds. And these ways seem absolutely correct and unequivocal in their own eyes. Therefore, their conviction, belief, and zeal cannot and do not indicate genuine truth only. Pagans are notoriously adamant and consistent in the worship of their gods.

Our present intent is not to explain or understand the *who* but the *how* of the above command—"strive to enter in at the strait gate." For those called, what does that expression imply and how can they best apply it to their daily endeavors?

### What is a Gate

Typology is common in the Bible. Principally, all the physical creation typifies elements of the spiritual (Rom. 1:20). Since spiritual things cannot be seen, they must be understood from the premise of the physical and then accepted on the basis of faith.

Physically, the term gate literally means exactly what we understand it to be. See its usage: ". . . he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple . . .", ". . . they watched the gates day and night to kill him. . ." and ". . . they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city . . ." (Acts 3:10; 9:24; 12:10). Can there be any doubt about the meaning in these texts? The term gate means an opening, or sometimes the device which can close the opening, found in some enclosure which otherwise would be difficult to get over or through. A gate is a passageway by which entrance can be gained.

### What does the word "strait" mean?

It comes from the Greek word *stenos*. Used only three times in the New Testament—in Matt. 7:13, 14, and Luke 13:24. The two usages in Matthew are related to the same expression we found in Luke. However, there are a number of cognate usages which will help considerably. In the following texts we find some constructive usages. Romans 8:23 ". . . even we ourselves *groan* within ourselves . . ." Romans 8:26 ". . . the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with *groanings* . . ." II Corinthians 5:2 "For in this we *groan*, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." II Corinthians 5:4 ". . . we that are in this tabernacle do *groan*, being burdened . . ." II Corinthians 4:8 "We are troubled on every side, yet not *distressed*; we are perplexed, but not in despair . . ." Romans 8:35 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or *distress*, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" II Corinthians 6:4 "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in *distresses* . . ." II Corinthians 12:10 "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in *distresses* for Christ's sake . . ."

In a couple of texts the word is used in a negative sense. Note firstly Hebrews 13:17 "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with *grief*, for that is unprofitable for you." Secondly, James 5:9 "*Grudge* not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door."

As employed Biblically, the word means "restrictive" either by circumstance or personal will. It means "narrow" either mentally or physically. In the case of one called and obedient he restricts his mental and emotional powers. He will not allow himself the *freedom* to manifest the traits and characteristics of the flesh. In this circumstance, the Christian joyfully accepts narrow, difficult, and troubling experiences with joy and grateful appreciation for their spiritual intent.

Who or what is that door, way—the gate? There is one only (John 10:1–2). Christ is that door. He had but one mind, one spirit. His concepts and ways are singular—one spirit (mind). And He is the only means to gain access to the Father in whom is everlasting life (Eph. 2:18, Heb. 10:19–20, and John 17:1–3). By appropriating the name of Christ many are attempting to bypass the door and gain access unlawfully (Matt. 24:5; 7:21–23, John 10:1).

Access is not easy. Those called must *strive*. Living the truth, the way of life, is a daily endeavor. A number of cognate usages of the Greek word *stenos* will make this matter abundantly clear. "But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much *contention*" (I Thess. 2:2). "*Fight* the good *fight* of faith, lay hold of eternal life, whereunto thou art called . . ." (I Tim. 6:12). "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the *race* that is set before us . . ." (Heb. 12:1). ". . . every man that *striveth* for the mastery is temperate in all things . . ." (I Cor. 9:25). ". . . I also labour, *striving* according to his working, which worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1:29). And finally, "Epaphras . . . saluteth you, always *labouring fervently* for you in prayers . . ." (Col. 4:12).

To keep a reign on our own minds is no easy task. To keep our minds in total captivity to Christ is an act of implicit faith and a daily responsibility. Men's minds can conceive of hundreds of ways to justify any departure from that one way which only God can reveal and deliver to us. The fight is a daily fight. Through difficulties we can grow indifferent. Due to emotions we can question our premise, our past actions, our former beliefs, all that we ever stood for in more glorious days and under better circumstances. Yet, we have never really proven our faith and confidence until it is sorely and bitterly tried.

Striving to enter the way of truth is the essence of that battle of faith through which we all will have opportunity to inherit the Kingdom of God. Those called have that opportunity. The real fear is that some will take their eyes off that ultimate objective, being led by emotion, hurt, or some other form of contention.

Can you endure, striving legitimately to maintain your initial faith? The day of revelation is coming! Any move of whatever nature is a manifestation of error. In truth there is not even a shadow (hint) of turning. Christ our perfect example met His final test successfully. Luke recorded this test in Luke 22:44 saying, "And being in an *agony* he prayed more earnestly . . ." How diligently we must pray!

## Prayer Requests

[Omitted for confidentiality]

## Births

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Cooper are grandparents for the first time. A grandson, named Dean Anthony Kloepfel, was born November 1, 1991.

## Deaths

Mrs. Mable Brandenburg was laid to rest November 30, 1991 after a prolonged illness. We extend our condolences to her sons.

We apologize for failing to announce the death of Mr. Lee Dean who expired just before the Feast. He died after a long illness. His death announcement was overlooked due to the fact we did not publish an October *Announcement Letter*.

This same situation occurred in 1990 at the time Mr. Bob Donovan died. His death occurred just before the Feast of Tabernacles and since there was no October *Announcement Letter*, his death was overlooked. We do apologize for these omissions.

## Comments

Some have requested information regarding the condition of members who have been included on the prayer list at one time or another. We generally inform you of any deaths that have occurred and any change in the condition of the parties who have requested prayer if we hear anything back. If we do not inform you further, then we have not heard and can assume the person is improved or well.

## Office

We have reason to believe that our tape return mailbox at the office, Box 862 Bethel Dr., is being regularly pilfered and tapes being stolen. For that reason we are changing the location and box number to: P.O. Box 1530, Eugene OR 97440. Please do not send cash in any tape return envelope. We believe some cash and probably some checks have been stolen along with the tapes. This is the reason we do not recommend sending cash or checks in the tape return envelopes. Some may wish to examine their canceled checks to see that all have been returned, as stolen checks are generally discarded by thieves. Box 1530 is to be used for tape returns only.

## Trips

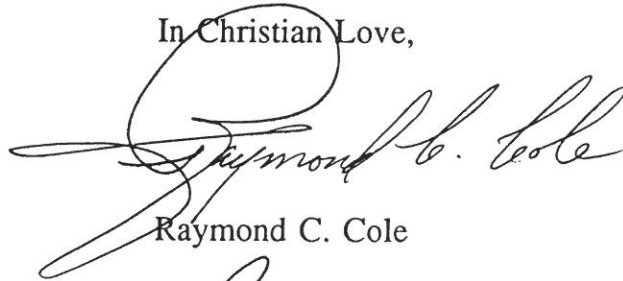
January 18	Raymond Cole	Sacramento
January 18	Bryce Clark	Rochester
January 25	Bryce Clark	Amarillo
February 8	Raymond Cole	Hawaii
February 15	Raymond Cole	Hawaii
February 15	Bryce Clark	Vancouver BC
February 22	Raymond Cole	So. California

## Tape Schedule

Tape Series	Mailed	For	Title/tape #
WSE-RC 54-10	12/11	1/11	What is the Purpose of Authority? #10
WSP-BC 13-1	12/11	1/18	The Miracles of Christ #1
Principles of Christian Living*			
CL 2-134	12/23	1/25	Meekness #3
WSE-BC 138-3	12/23	2/1	Paul's Epistles #3
WSE-BC 138-4	1/8	2/8	Paul's Epistles #4
CL 2-135	1/8	2/15	Meekness #4
WSE-BC 138-5	1/22	2/22	Paul's Epistles #5
CL 2-136	1/22	2/29	Meekness #5
WSE-BC 138-6	2/5	3/7	Paul's Epistles #6
CL 2-137	2/5	3/14	Meekness #6
WSE-BC 138-7	2/19	3/21	Paul's Epistles #7
CL 2-138	2/19	3/28	Humility #1

\*Currently being given at Eugene Sabbath Services.

In Christian Love,



Raymond C. Cole



Bryce G. Clark