

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter July 1992

Dear Brethren:

Weather continues to baffle people around the world. Unusual conditions have been experienced by many people in different parts of the globe. By the time this year is over, considering the political situation here in the U.S.A. as well as other parts of the world along with the weather changes themselves, some prophetic factors relevant to the last days could begin to emerge. We must be ever watchful without attempting to read personalized concepts into what we are seeing. For the most part, we are told: When you see these things come to pass, then shall you know.

Spiritual Principle: "Church Government"

Every time a defection occurs within the church body a renewed de-emphasis is touted regarding church government. The argumentative deceptions are galore. None, however, will stand the test of honesty, integrity, or reasonableness from a physical and/or technical perspective let alone considering the spiritual. Is it possible for all of us to divest our minds of preconceived ideas and allow the simplicity of Biblical statements to enter our thinking?

The questions addressed by Jesus Christ do not relate to the necessity of government—in all of its ramifications as well as applications—but to the key areas of *how* that government should be exercised. Let us take an unbiased historically panoramic view of government as established by God.

Government simply stated is order. Since God is the epitome of order, He is the epitome of government. And anyone possessing the Spirit of God will not, indeed, cannot, speak of God as disorganized and chaotic in orientation. However, what we will learn is that God, because of the rebelliousness of man, allowed certain physical orientations that will not continue to exist once Christ returns to this earth. Let us understand.

God by virtue of being the Creator is the absolute authority. No one challenges that concept. The problems arise when considering *who* bears the assigned responsibility here on earth and what the way—singular—of life delivered and to be proclaimed really is.

God, being the absolute authority, can grant powers to whomsoever He pleases. How did He distribute power and responsibility? In some cases understanding the reasons is also essential.

At the time of creation, God gave mankind authority over the entire physical creation (Gen. 1:26). As a result of sin, the woman became subservient to the man in the planned family arrangement (Gen. 3:16). In all probability this subserviency was enhanced as a result of the woman's rebellion against God (Gen. 3:17). Note the implied responsibility imposed upon Adam. Conditionally, as a result of Adam's sin—failure—that which was to be totally subservient to him became his nemesis (Gen. 3:17–19).

From the beginning, it is plain to see that the authority and responsibility over the physical creation which God had given to man was beginning to erode. In this same vein, we should be aware of the greater deterioration of this direct relationship between God and man. Since man could not implicitly obey God, his ultimate authority, man was placed under the control of other men (Gen. 9:5–6). At the same time, there was a further erosion of man's ultimate authority. The beasts created to be subservient initially would now manifest rebellion against their created restraints.

The above reveals the relationships regarding both responsibility, authority, and subserviency. The consequence of sin forced upon mankind a different orientation than would have prevailed had he been obedient to the authority of God. Now we must see what happened on a national level.

In the process of time, God, as He had promised to all the Patriarchs, created a nation which was to honor Him in faithful obedience. A nation to live His way of life as an example to all peoples who lived on the earth (Gen. 46:1–3, Deut. 4:1–10). Obedience was an impossibility (Deut. 5:29; 32:20). Israel revolted, rebelling against God and His way of life. One of the ultimate sins was their rejection of God as King, choosing rather to emulate the nations around them. They wanted a human king to represent them. God allowed them to establish a monarchy—holding the people responsible for required subjugation to their chosen ruler (I Samuel 8).

From the beginning of their chosen form of government, God told them what men would do to men. They insisted on self-government. Now today, many, many generations later, all too many men are recoiling against their own chosen form of government. Of course, they have a plethora of explanations. However, the fabric remains the same. The changes in style, perversions of concepts, and new orientations in no way mitigate the duty of obedience or the consequence of their choice. Men are forced to rule men. And in the long history of this consequential responsibility surely men are beginning to learn that men cannot rule men. It is in the light of this unsavory curse that Jesus Christ initiated a way which would correct the problem which men brought upon themselves—both individually,

at the time of creation and many years later—at the time of choosing a human form of government.

As a curse, God requires men to rule men. It is in this area of responsibility that the proving process required for the chosen of God to ultimately assume the high level of spiritual rulership is conducted. In essence, if we cannot learn to be ruled here and now we cannot gain rulership in the kingdom of God. Men were created to rule. But men must learn the art of rulership first. That is one of the grand principles which Jesus Christ came to teach (Matt. 20:20–28). Until the curse—punishment—of our initial sins is lifted we are yet under the control of other human beings—even in the body of Christ.

Was Christ's body well coordinated; or, was it a diseased and malfunctioning physical life? He was the epitome of perfection. His body was not schizophrenic or diseased. He lived in perfect health. Each member of His body functioned in perfect harmony with every other member. There was no schism in His body. In like manner, the perpetuation of His body is in the assemblage of human beings called to become a part of that viable entity. If Christ's body was perfect and completely harmonious in His own life, is it possible to conceive that His body today is fragmented and members justifiably opposed to each other doctrinally, governmentally, socially, and in any other way? Of course not!

What, then, is the organizational structure of His body today? First, however, until that curse is lifted, we, even though called, are obliged to be obedient to the civil powers appointed by God (Rom. 13:1–5, Titus 3:1, I Pet 2:12–15). One qualification is added for those called. They must first obey God (Acts 4:19; 5:29, Ex. 1:17, Dan. 3:14–18). Within the body itself order prevails. And that order is precisely as ordained of God Himself (I Cor. 12:11–14, 18–28, Eph. 4:11). There is one body only, but many members. How is it possible for the members to interact with one another? Have you ever seen a body with all its appendages directly attached to the head? Would seem pretty bizarre, would it not? Body parts, for the most part, have only an indirect contact with one another. Yet, in this indirect relationship all members do have a contact with and influence upon every other member of the body. When it is not diseased or mechanically impaired, the body is a smoothly functioning mechanism, capable of doing many things. When impaired it is reduced in its effectiveness—proportionate to the nature of the impairment.

For that body of Christ to function correctly, He did put order within it (I Tim. 3:1–13, I Pet. 5:2, Heb. 13:7, 17) How? See I Pet. 5:3 and II Cor. 1:24. That order extends to the ministry (I Cor. 12:28, Eph. 4:11).

Finally, be assured a body cannot function effectively without order—organization. Rebellion against order, authority, is a manifestation of the premise from which such concepts come (Rom. 8:7, Luke 4:5–7). The scope of it is a terrible manifestation of the times in which we live (Jude 8–11, II Pet. 2:10–11).

Equally important is the necessity of understanding what that government is. It must never be used for personal advantage; only employed for a benevolent and kind service to the chosen of God. Having no organization, or authority, is anarchy—a form of rebellion. No man is devoid of responsibility. Let us all use that authority in accordance with the principles of truth and mercy.

Blessings of Brethren

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Deaths

We were saddened to hear of the death of Mrs. Ida DeKinder of the Vancouver, B.C. area who died in May. She was an elderly lady in her 80's.

Trips

July 11	Raymond Cole	Knoxville
July 18	B.G. Clark	Sacramento
August 15	Raymond Cole	Vancouver, BC
August 22	Raymond Cole	Youngstown
August 29	Raymond Cole	Amarillo

Office

Those in outlying areas which do not have lead men, or who are unable to attend services, may request the Sabbath service outline tape announced in the June *Announcement Letter*. Please direct your requests to the office and tapes will be mailed upon completion.

Holy day offering envelopes are available for those groups who take up the holy day offering locally. Please make your requests to the office.

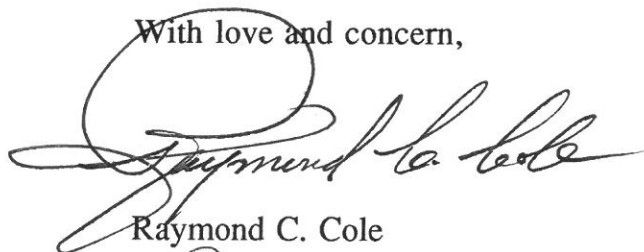
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Tape Schedule

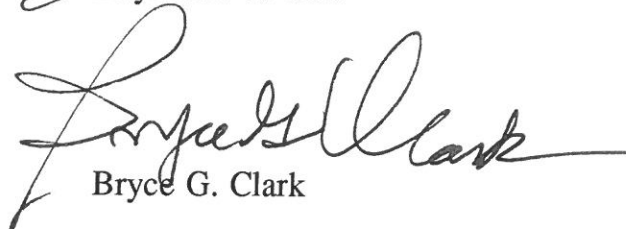
Tape Series	Mailed	For	Title/tape #
WSE-BC 138-14	5/27	7/4	Paul's Epistles #14
CL 2-145*	5/27	7/11	Humility #8
WSE-BC 138-15	6/10	7/18	Paul's Epistles #15
CL 2-146*	6/10	7/25	Humility #9
WSE-BC 138-16	6/24	8/1	Paul's Epistles #16
CL 2-147*	6/24	8/8	Humility #10
WSE-BC 138-17	7/8	8/15	Paul's Epistles #17
CL 2-148*	7/8	8/22	Humility #11

*Principles of Christian Living series currently being given at Eugene Sabbath Services.

With love and concern,



Raymond C. Cole



Bryce G. Clark