

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter March 1993

Dear Brethren,

A new year according to God's reckoning is fast approaching. With its advent comes the beginning of the annual holydays. It is now time for us to begin the necessary soul-searching by which appropriate preparation for partaking of Passover can occur. May God guide us in that endeavor.

Spiritual Principle: Organization of Commanded Meetings

Prophecies foretell of a general apostasy in the last days. Further, we are clearly informed that the number of those who are really converted and genuine in their endeavors is few, indeed. Considering these two factors, are we left with the understanding that each person called of God should act on that which *he* thinks is right? Should there be no organization of any type? If meetings do occur should there be no centralized authority? Is disorganization and personalized orientation pleasing to God? In these chaotic times what is acceptable to God?

First, it is imperative to take note of a specific command of God. In Hebrews 10:25, those who will hear and honor the commands of God are specifically instructed to avoid the natural tendency to forget the duty of regular meeting with those of the common faith. With whom? Where? What duties are incumbent upon the attendees?

Where? The instructions of the unchanging God are precise and unalterable. We must meet at appointed places only (Ex. 25:22; 29:42-45). In the Old Testament period the specific location was the Tabernacle. We can more fully understand by reviewing instructions relevant to the eating of the sin offering. This offering typified Jesus Christ—that One whom we must, in type, feed upon for our spiritual sustenance. The sin

offering had to be eaten in the holy place only (Lev. 6:26). Christ is our sin offering (II Cor. 5:21). Are we not obligated to partake of Christ in the appointed places as determined in the manner approved by God?

In contrast we are equally specifically told: Do not look about and make our own individual decisions (Deut. 12:4–5, 13–14). If it is a colossal sin to individualize, is not the only alternative some type of structured meeting in a place approved by God?

The times of such meetings are determined by God. Within a calendar year are found all the designated meeting times—those approved of God. Annually these designated times are called holydays. But, in a comparable manner, the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, is designated as a special time of appointment also (Lev. 23:1–3). The Hebrew word used in verse 2, for feast, is *moh-gehd*. It means appointment. What is the first designated appointment in Leviticus 23? The weekly Sabbath.

The command of God to preach the Word is as valid now as it has ever been (II Tim. 4:1–4). Yet, due to the prophesied apostasy, we are forced to take a different approach to the basic duty to preach. We are able to use the convenience of a present-day miracle—the cassette tape. These tapes are our means of extending that responsibility to include all who desire to remain faithful to their call.

To make those tapes effective and to accomplish what we cannot perform personally, we have established local groups where sufficient members are present. These groups should conduct the meetings in the organized manner which would exist if a minister were personally in attendance. To fulfill the enlarged responsibilities help is required. Such help is authorized by God (I Tim. 3:2–13). They are assistants to the ministers. Note carefully the many ways in which they can be of service (I Cor. 12:3–14, 18, 24).

There are several examples of ministerial judgment—judgment required in order to facilitate required service to the people. Remember the example of Moses and his father-in-law Jethro? (Ex. 18) There is the example of special need in the early days of the apostles (Acts 6:1–4). These chosen servants operated under the authority of the ministry. Finally, remember the decision made by the Apostle Paul regarding the usage of anointed cloths to accommodate his time and the pressures incumbent upon him? (Acts 19:11–12)

Why does God require convocations? A. As a time and opportunity to preach the word given to them (I Cor. 15:1–3; 11:23). B. To maintain order and purpose among the called (I Cor. 14:1–40). All services, as we have seen, are under ministerial authority. C. To facilitate the ministerial responsibility to feed and guide the flock (Acts 20:28, I Tim. 3:5, Heb. 13:7, 17).

In outline form what should a service be like? In general it should be conducted just like the service would be if a minister were present. The exception is this: Based on Biblical information, the lead men can and should give instruction, advice, and help based on local needs just before the taped sermon commences or just after it is completed. With that one exception the program should be as follows:

A. Singing required:

1. Col. 3:15–16

B. Public prayer:

1. Example of Solomon standing before the people: I Kings 8:54
2. Christ spoke of the Temple as the House of Prayer: Luke 19:46
3. Examples of the apostles: Acts 2:41–42; 16:13
4. Should be short and be completely objective: Luke 20:47
5. Purpose is to seek God's guidance and direction: Phil. 4:6
6. Congregational duty: Deut. 27:1–26
7. Our basic individual prayer should be private: Matt. 6:5–6

C. Sermon:

1. Given on the basis of God's command: II Tim. 4:2–4
2. No person may assume that responsibility: Heb. 5:4
3. Others may speak: Under ministerial approval and when abiding in the concepts of the "faith once delivered": I Cor. 14:37, I Tim. 3:5–7, Titus 1:7–9

D. Fellowship:

1. What: I Cor. 1:9
2. Purpose: Ex. 25:22
3. What to avoid: Eph. 5:14, 11, II John 9–10
4. Proof of our fellowship: I John 1:3–7

Size of the congregation is immaterial (Matt. 18:20). As Jesus Christ said, if only a "few" He would be there in Spirit.

Remember the ultimate duty of each of us is to insure that the body remains one in mind and purpose (I Cor. 12). We are required to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:4). Anything less indicates a wrong spirit.

By tradition we have received the order of the service as indicated above. Let us honor the Spirit which prevailed for so many years in the body of Christ, prior to the tragic apostasy.

New Interest

We are in receipt of correspondence from several foreign countries. Interest in those countries appears to be increasing. It may be necessary to make some overseas trips in the near future. Please pray that this interest will be genuine and lasting.

Blessings of Brethren

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Deaths

Mr. William Riley, of Austin, Texas recently died. We express our condolences to his family and widow.

Mrs. Robert Witmeyer (Ann), of Bend, Oregon died on January 12 of this year. We wish to extend our sympathy to her husband and family.

Trips

March 20	R.C. Cole	Canada
March 27	R.C. Cole	Baltimore
April 3-6	R.C. Cole	Amarillo
April 10, 12	R.C. Cole	Rochester

Feasts: Holydays

Though hinted at in earlier writings, the ministry wants to reemphasize the need to locally collect the Holy Day offering in those areas where meetings are approved. In this

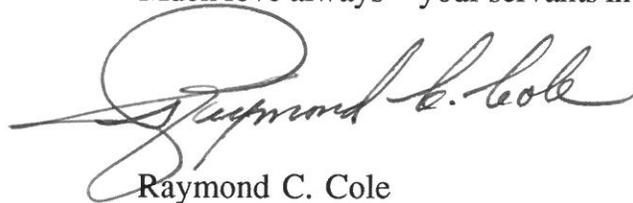
way we are more fully complying to the command of God, to bring our offering before Him on those specific days. The leader in each approved area should take care of this responsibility.

Tape Schedule

Tape Series	Mailed	For	Title/tape #
WSE-BC 138-28	01/13	03/06	Paul's Epistles #28
WSE-RC 56-8	01/13	03/13	What's in it for the Youth? #8
WSE-BC 138-29	01/27	03/20	Paul's Epistles #29
WSE-RC 56-9	01/27	03/27	What's in it for the Youth? #9
WSE-BC 138-30	02/10	04/03	Paul's Epistles #30
WSE-RC 56-10	02/10	04/10	What's in it for the Youth? #10
WSE-BC 138-31	02/24	04/17	Paul's Epistles #31
*CL2-156	02/24	04/24	Humility #19

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

Much love always—your servants in Christ,



Raymond C. Cole



Bryce G. Clark