

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter July 1993

Dear Brethren,

Summer has finally arrived. This comment is a mere statement of fact; it is not a critical assessment or contempt for past weather conditions. All things considered, men, as evil as they are, have been magnificently blessed. What if we all got what we really deserve? If we can take last day events in stride we can endure with greater aplomb. Terrible, dark, and foreboding days lie just ahead. Let us thoroughly enjoy now every blessing God grants us—beginning with love and respect for one another.

Spiritual Principle: On Whom or What Do We Blame Our Problems?

The world is a very perverse, tragic, place. Every evil and hurtful circumstance possible exists. Internationally, wrath and hatefulness—in the name of religion, politics, race, society, and circumstance—prevail. Nation accuses nation. Race accuses race. One religion accuses other religions. And, of course, if one has a particular bent in politics, all the problems experienced come because the other "party" is in power. Has anyone ever taken the time to uncover the real source of human tragedy?

If God is as good and benevolent as revealed in the Bible, and human relationships with Him are as complete and marvelous as most assume, why are those who claim to be special in His sight experiencing so many adversities and difficulties? Why do some Christians live in fear? Why do they experience contentions and strife with those who claim to be experiencing the same wonderful relationship with God? Does any of it make sense?

What Is Man?

Unless we understand what man is and have the courage to face ourselves for what we are, we cannot even remotely understand the tragedies and difficulties of today. Being

truly called helps our understanding only if we truthfully and honestly admit what we are. That step is the most difficult which will ever be undertaken by any mortal. Succinctly, what is the real makeup—nature—of man?

Man is opposed to everything which is godly and right. He does not have a natural capacity to please or agree with God (Rom. 8:7). He is weak—weak in will and purpose (Matt. 26:41). He has a heart and mind which are incredibly deceptive and beyond his ability to comprehend or control (Jer. 17:9). Even at his very best, he cannot completely please God (Rom. 8:8). At all times he is motivated by a self-serving and carnal orientation (James 4:5).

Despite this natural base orientation, man could, and sometimes does, act in accord with the letter intent of God's law. Generally, though, he acts in defiance against the intent and purpose of the law—even physically. He is a rebel. He thinks he finds satisfaction in pursuing the way of independence and self-assertiveness.

Letter Obedience or Rebellion—Which?

Even physically, God offered to His chosen, Israel, great blessings if they obeyed in the letter (compare Rom. 7:6, II Cor. 3:6, and Rom. 4:15). Those blessings were manifold, involving every area of man's physical existence (Deut. 28:1–14). This is a principle which the Apostle Paul addressed when referring to the Gentiles in Rome (Rom. 2:14–15, 26–27). Through aggressive pursuit of morality and decency these people to whom Paul made reference had become a law unto themselves. Self-control. Self-discipline. To them there was something in life of greater and higher value than catering to the self.

Ultimately all actions and pursuits of man are in keeping with the plan and purpose of God (Jer. 17:10). Therefore, not only are there blessings for letter obedience, there are curses for rebellion and disobedience (Deut. 28:15, 45–47). As there are blessings for the pursuit of right; there are also curses—consequences—for rebellion. (We are not here addressing the natural consequences even of letter obedience.) What are the fleshly consequences?

Consequences of a Fleshly Orientation

By the natural law of flesh we are subject to self (Rom. 6:6). Our minds and hearts dictate to us. We judge and evaluate all things and circumstances by how they emotionally strike us. The center of such concern is the self. Never is the natural self objective in its

orientation. We firmly believe our circumstances and problems stem from the actions, failures, unconcern of others. The natural rationale allows us to protect the self by holding others accountable. Therefore, our consequential experiences—ill-health, wrath, other curses, frustrations, and doubts—are not our problems. They were caused by some other person.

The readily observable manifestation of this self-protecting orientation is commonly referred to as self-righteousness. By such pampering of self we may avoid the stinging indictment that our problems result only from our own weaknesses. We seldom, if ever, can legitimately point a finger at another human being. If called of God, the chosen can through the help of God and His Holy Spirit, maintain a positive attitude in faith, confidence, and assurance. However, for those pursuing the course of self-righteousness a candid admission of personal responsibility is not acceptable. Great effort is expended to massage the Word of God to make it conform to the natural expectations of those so physically oriented (II Cor. 2:17).

Remember, God does not punish us for the weaknesses, or failures, of others. We, always, are the recipients of our own natural behavior—mental orientation or physical action (Jer. 32:19).

Ability to Face and Admit Personal Weakness Comes from Spirit Only

By the gift of God's Holy Spirit we are freed from that ugly, hateful, and self-protecting law (Rom. 8:1–5). For the spiritual mind resists the prompting and influence of the physical (Gal 5:17). Being empowered with the mind of the Spirit we can properly evaluate ourselves (I Cor. 11:27–32). With that new mind the chosen can comprehend the basic cause of their difficulties—the cause which lies within the heart and nature of man himself, not the relationship with others. With that Spirit we can be victorious in the war of mind—a war which we must win (II Cor. 10:3–5). The mysterious secrets of our own minds and hearts will be revealed to us by God (Psa. 44:20–21). Others, therefore, may be only the catalysts by which our weaknesses are made known to us. With a changed heart, by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, we can correctly evaluate our lives and circumstances. It is then, and then only, that we can concur with God where we are told: "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:27–28).

God creates or allows all situations and circumstances. These come with purpose. How we react to or accept them is most telling to God. By such circumstances we are

judged. Accept all that occurs in your lives. God has allowed them for a purpose. To blame or hold accountable anyone else is a common tendency of all human beings to justify the self and substantiate one's own self-righteousness.

Prayer Requests

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Deaths

Mr. Marion Cox: Mr. Cox, age 84, died on June 3. Though he was not a member he did occasionally attend services in Eugene and was well disposed toward the church. We extend our condolences to his wife, Lydia.

Office

The deadline for ordering the new church hymnals has been extended until July 20. This is because some did not receive the *Announcement Letter* last month until after the June 15 deadline. If you are interested please let us know immediately.

Trips

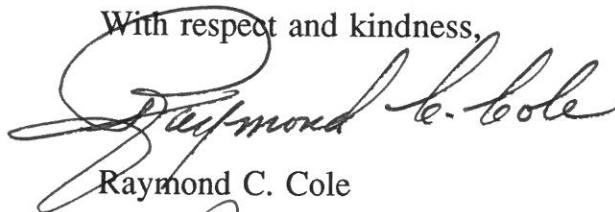
July 3	R.C. Cole	Florida
July 10	R.C. Cole	Baltimore
August 14	R.C. Cole	Hawaii
August 21	R.C. Cole	So. California

Tape Schedule

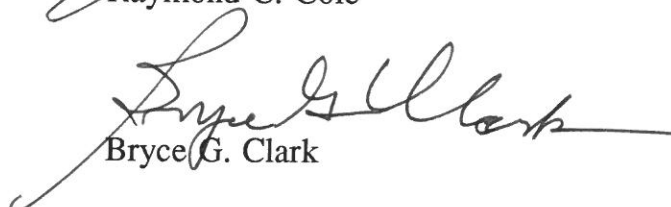
Tape Series	Mailed	For	Title/tape #
*CL 2-161	05/05	07/03	Humility #24
WSE-BC 138-37	05/19	07/10	Paul's Epistles #37
*CL 2-162	05/19	07/17	Humility #25
WSE-BC 138-38	06/02	07/24	Paul's Epistles #38
*CL 2-163	06/02	07/31	Humility #26
WSE-BC 138-39	06/16	08/07	Paul's Epistles #39
*CL 2-164	06/16	08/14	Humility #27
WSE-BC 138-40	06/30	08/21	Paul's Epistles #40
*CL 2-165	06/30	08/28	Humility #28

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

With respect and kindness,



Raymond C. Cole



Bryce G. Clark