

# Church of God, The Eternal

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## Announcement Letter December 1995

Dear Brethren,

The dead of winter is approaching. In 1995 we were privileged to rehearse God's plan of salvation for mankind. We have often wondered about the significance of the annual time between the conclusion of the Feasts in a given year and the repetition to commence in the following year. There must be meaning. God's ways are always replete with significance. Until we understand, we shall gloriously anticipate the commencement of the commanded festival life for the calendar year of 1996. What will happen next year—1996? If we are sensitive at all, we cannot help but be greatly concerned.

### **Spiritual Principle/Current Event: Why Today's Exaggerated Concern with Mental Health?**

Small and sometimes insignificant, though consistent, changes are scarcely ever noticed by the populace. Until the change, degradation, and deprecation become observable little will be done to stem the relentless tide. The world populace is living in dramatic and increasingly evil times, yet few are aware because their attention has been diverted through sports, entertainment, and other "more exciting" or perhaps troubling pressures—such as health, family, etc.

For a number of years much media attention has been given to the matter of "mental health." Until recently, each First Lady was the head of some type of organization which dealt with mental health. How many paid much attention to the matter? Few, indeed! What is wrong with anyone having a serious concern for the health of a sizeable mass of people? Nothing, of course. But, do you suppose that the image portrayed by the media could be a cover for something much more sinister than the image implied?

We are called an evil and adulterous generation. Are there many who could specifically define the meaning of that concept? To define anything one must first have a yardstick by which to evaluate. The standard used will appreciably affect the conclusion.

Indeed, we are a degraded generation. But, for most, the definition will be colored by personal concepts religiously accepted. The actual basis of what is employed today as the yardstick of evaluation is the fabric of concepts borrowed from ancient times—from Babylon, the East (Isa. 2:6–8).

Since our subject is mental health, let us seek an explanation of that concept from God's Word. In this issue of the *Announcement Letter* that Biblical base will be addressed. Manifestations of its last day appearance will be covered in the next letter.

Just what is real mental health? Since man's archenemy is Satan, the god of this world, we must be judicious and careful about where we get our information. As we shall ultimately see, there is good reason to be suspicious of any information derived from human sources. The term "mental" simply means that which is of the mind. Therefore, mental health means health of the mind (Mark 5:15). How does God define soundness of the mind?

In II Timothy we read: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7). Men by nature do not possess sound minds. Such soundness comes through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32). And it is by that Spirit we are promised to have the mind of Christ (Ph'p. 2:5). His mind is the epitome of soundness.

Regarding the concept of sound-mindedness, Paul used the basic Greek word, *sophron*. It is used only once, in II Timothy 1:7. There are a number of cognates, however. Since cognates of that word are used in several other texts, let us ascertain from those texts the meaning of "mental health." Such determination is essential. Peter warns: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore *sober*, and watch unto prayer" (I Pet. 4:7). Soundness of mind is manifested in watchfulness, self-control, and dedication to purpose. Compare with Paul's usage of the word "*soberly*" in Titus 2:12. As the servants of Christ we must manifest such a mental orientation even in this present evil world. Seemingly the need of sound-mindedness is urgent for youth. Both young women, "to be *discreet*," and men, "*sober-minded*," are admonished in Titus 2:5–6. Since this is a universal warning for the people of God, it surely must indicate mental bankruptcy pervades civilization today. Interestingly, those who are most "concerned" with the mental orientation of the day deem the natural manifestations of the carnal (unsound) mind to be true enlightenment. Obviously, the conceptions of men do not agree with the revelation of God. In this disparity exists all the trauma and turmoil prognosticated and prevailing in our time. The subject of mental

soundness is but one facet of the total concept. But, it is a significant facet. In it is the underpinning of all human activities of our time.

Succinctly we have seen God's definition of sound-mindedness. Are there Biblical indications of a wrong mind? Indeed!

1. Arrogance and conceit of mind: In Romans 12:3 Paul wrote, "For I say . . . to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think *soberly*, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Are not arrogance and selfishness synonymous with elitist's objectives today? We shall see affirmation of that concept in the second part of this subject. The point here is to note: A sound mind is found in self-deprecation, not self-aggrandizement.

2. Feminism and its manifestations today: To Titus, Paul wrote: "That they [aged women] may teach the young women to be *sober*, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be *discreet*, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:4-5). Does this text sound like the summary of the attitude of women today? Indeed, it does not! And, of course, there is another side to the story. But, has finger-pointing ever achieved any constructive thing? The error of one, or a group, does not justify the rebellion of another. Please compare to I Timothy 2:9, 15 (8-15). In both verses the Greek word *sophrosunee*—a cognate of the basic word—is used.

Sound-mindedness is manifested only in mental orientation dictated by subserviency to the will and way of God. The natural mind is a mind of rebellion. Why, then, should so many today be emphasizing the need to be "one's true self"? To be free, uninhibited by scruples, to live the dictates of the natural mind? As we shall see, there is an explanation.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16) Sin is the natural way of man. That is, that way which seems right and acceptable to men—any and all human beings. Obedience to God—as servants—is freedom resulting in life everlasting. Adherence to the ways of the natural mind is bondage resulting in death. At specified times, men have a choice. They can choose servitude to God; or, they can choose to obey the dictates of the flesh. Both ways have their rewards.

The natural way of evil man is darkness. But, the way of "right" is a path of light. Solomon wrote: ". . . [T]he path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble" (Prov. 4:18-19). The world and its practitioners all gloriously and effusively speak of "light" and "enlightenment." Are their ways and actions those of true and genuine light? We shall see.

How do those who dwell in darkness react to those who are called of God? Though there are many manifestations of vitriolic hatred uttered and manifested by natural man against those called, let us limit our consideration to those direct and hateful manifestations which are mentally abusive and inflammatory. The Apostle Paul was accused of being a lunatic. He said: "For whether we be beside ourselves [mentally unbalanced], it is to God: or whether we be sober [mentally sound], it is for your cause" (II Cor. 5:13). Festus accused Paul of madness—mental imbalance (Acts 26:24–25). Due to strong occultic and paganistic tendencies of the Athenians, Paul was mentally insulted—being accused of ranting and raving (Acts 17:18–21). The prophets of old were likewise ill-treated. One example is found in II Kings 9:11–12. Elisha was ridiculed—accused of being mentally deranged by a servant of Jehu, king of Israel. Many times Christ was accused. A noteworthy example is found in Mark 3:20–22. Christ's very own relatives, kin, accused Him of being unsound. The Scribes were even more insulting. They accused Him of possessing a demon—even going as far as to declare that He was manipulated by Satan himself, due to the magnitude of the miracles and works which He performed. Notice God's description of conditions in these last days (Hos. 9:7–10). The context of Hosea is best understood from the *Living Bible*.

Hate for the ways of God will be abundantly manifested in these last days. Remember, God said, when they manifest this contentious and hateful spirit it is not against the human beings involved. The hate and contempt is for God and His perfect way of life—hate and contempt which proceeds from the mind of Satan and those who rebelled at the same time he did. The period of this hate and vehemence is called darkness. It is the period of "great darkness" which mentally traumatized Abraham (Gen. 15:12). It will result from the curse which was pronounced against Israel because of their rebellion (Deut. 28:28–29). Yet, most interestingly, the very people involved will call this darkness light. And they will accuse those who pursue the way of light of walking in darkness (Isa. 5:20). Isaiah chapter five is a collection of many of Israel's sins of the last days. It is a very strong indictment against those who practice darkness and then call themselves the people of "light." When one's objectives and purposes are evil, the mind of that person exists in absolute darkness (Matt. 6:23). And, here one must remember that the kingdoms of the last days are full of darkness (Rev. 16:10–11, Jer. 51:7).

Christ equated light with mental stability, purpose, character (Luke 11:35–36). And, the only person who can come to the true light is one who recognizes himself for what he is carnally (John 3:18–21). By this recognition man for the first time is able to come to the source of genuine light—truth—and thereby avoid walking in the natural way of fleshly darkness (John 1:4–5; 8:12; 12:35–36). Further, the source of darkness is the "evil one." Perhaps a better translation for the last part of verse nineteen would be "because their deeds were of the evil one."

A call of God is a call to come out of darkness into the light (Col. 1:13, Acts 26:18). From the point of one's call, usually growing progressively severe, persecution and ridicule

commence (Eph. 6:12). A separation between the elements of light and darkness is imperative (II Cor. 6:14-18). The ultimate of that hatefulness was manifested in the death of Christ—His martyrdom (Luke 22:53).

Remembering the above Scriptural information, the material of this section of the *Announcement Letter* to be written next month will take on significant and troubling dimensions. Indeed, we must watch so that these traumatic days do not come upon us unawares. We must be prepared. Sorry that we could not give the whole picture in one issue. But our own page limitations force the use of sequenced letters on occasion. We are sure you will understand. Next time the physical, daily occurring, events will be given to you.

### **Prayer Requests**

[Omitted for confidentiality]

### **Office**

Miss Carmela Dovci was recently employed to complement the office staff as the work load was too great for the present number of personnel. Carmela moved to the area one year ago from the Cleveland, Ohio area.

The cut-off date for 1995 tithes and offerings will be January 5, 1996. All contributions coming in between December 31, 1995 and January 5, 1996 should be dated within the 1995 year if you wish them to be included with 1995 tithes.

A new area code just recently went into effect for most of Oregon (not Portland). The new number is 541. The old number 503 will be usable until June. After that only 541 will be authorized. Until June both numbers can be used, but please make the change now to your records.

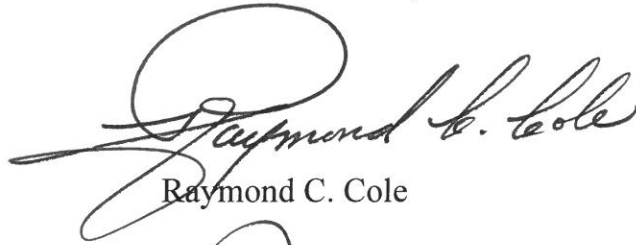
### **Trip Schedule**

December 9, 16	Philippines	R.C.C.
January 13, 20, 27	Hawaii	R.C.C.

## Tape Schedule

Tape Series	Mailed	For	Title/tape #
WSE-RC 59-28	09/20	<b>12/02</b>	Despair or Glory, Which? #28
WSE-BC 147-18	10/03	<b>12/09</b>	Mighty Acts and Miracles of God #18 (Samuel-3)
WSE-RC 59-29	10/03	<b>12/16</b>	Despair or Glory, Which? #29
WSE-BC 147-19	10/25	<b>12/23</b>	Mighty Acts and Miracles of God #19 (Samuel-4)
WSE-RC 59-30	10/25	<b>12/30</b>	Despair or Glory, Which? #30
WSE-BC 147-20	11/08	<b>01/06</b>	Mighty Acts and Miracles of God #20 (David-1)
WSE-RC 59-31	11/08	<b>01/13</b>	Despair or Glory, Which? #31
WSE-BC 147-21	11/22	<b>01/20</b>	Mighty Acts and Miracles of God #21 (David-2)
WSE-RC 59-32	11/22	<b>01/27</b>	Despair or Glory, Which? #32

In Christ's service,



Raymond C. Cole



Bryce G. Clark