

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter September 1996

Dear Brethren:

In a matter of days God's people will be gathering together for the convocation of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Great High Day. It is a time of spiritual rejuvenation, a time to be saturated with the Word of God, a time to enjoy the companionship of those of like-mind, as well as a time to celebrate a successful year—a year of blessings, growth, and manifestations of God's benevolence. May your celebration be a rewarding one. Safety and health as you travel to the appointed place, warm and rewarding days throughout the observance of the Feast, and multiple and inspirational memories of another Feast observed in accord with the spiritual principles which have become a part of our thinking by long and purposeful relationship with our Father in heaven.

Let us remember to pray daily for one another and the success of the Feast, throughout its observance.

Spiritual Principle: Ordinations

Normally this part of the *Announcement Letter* is reserved for a spiritual principle and its manifestations in the current affairs of mankind. This time, however, that part of the letter will be replaced with something much more essential to this time.

Many of you have commented about the need, Mr. Clark and I have occasionally discussed that same need, and now we have decided to put the process in motion. Help is needed in the effective conduct of that responsibility with which we have been charged. To effectively handle that charge certain adjustments need to be considered and employed if God wills them. One thing we know for sure, even though ministers (servants of God) we must not begin to assume that whatever occurs to our minds is necessarily of God. Our thoughts must always be tried. We now feel confident that God wills the assignment of other men to specific duties. Specific men have been counselled, some general announcements made, now comes the time to confirm and thereby make known the intents and purposes of the ministry.

The Need

By circumstance, the need of assistance to carry the ever increasing burden of a responsibility given was made obvious. Moses was informed in a unique manner (Ex. 18:13–26). The apostles early in the ministry of the New Testament were made aware of that need (Acts 6:1–2). And a very significant need was apparent in the days of the Apostle Paul (Titus 1:5). However, before assignment, those considered must first be tested, proven. That test will come to anyone chosen for responsibility. Moses was sorely and severely tested. On one occasion when God was disgusted with the behavior of Israel, He offered to him that which had been offered, earlier, unconditionally, to Abraham (Deut. 9:14, Num. 14:6–45). Moses called to the attention of God the earlier promises and begged God to forgive Israel, His own chosen people. Even under such perverse conditions no man has a right to violate the purposes of God. I, too, was subjected to comparable trials and tests in the early seventies. I refused to be induced by any offers advanced. I wanted only to do that which God had purposed. For that reason, I told God, I will do only that which He wills and shows by physical circumstance. To my surprise God sent the people. I never attempted to induce anyone to depart from the church and to become a part of what the people felt I should do. For that reason I feel most confident in that which we are doing today. Likewise, other ministers were tested. We have had a number attempt to become a part of that which God is doing. For personal and exalted reasons of their own minds, all but one failed. Mr. Clark has remained faithful to his call and commission. The others have all attempted to create opposing and competitive works. Their judgment will come.

Calibre of Men Chosen

The requirements imposed by God, by which servants were chosen, were precise and severe (Ex. 18:21, 25). Those same guidelines were valid and required in the days of the apostles (Acts 6:3–4). From an unchanging and perfect Father we would expect no alteration or change of those rules. They were required in the days of the Apostle Paul, and also to any and all who are called of God down to the present (Titus 1:6–11, I Tim. 3:2–13).

Those called to serve must first be willing servants. They must conduct their lives in a manner which indicates purpose and determination to fulfill the will of God. How they rule their own homes is a classic indice. How they conduct their own affairs, both in the world and with their own spiritual brothers and sisters, is also indicative. And how they rule their own minds and hearts is also an imperative indication.

Appointments Given by God

Ordinations seem to be singular in nature. There is no indication that one is specifically ordained to some well-defined office. The scope of one's service seems to be determined by God—and God only (compare I Tim. 3:1, I Cor. 12:18, 28, Eph. 4:11). Remember the examples of Stephen and Phillip? Though ordained by the apostles to fulfill a specific need in the early church, God used them far beyond those original needs. Only God can set the chosen in the body in the manner that is pleasing to Him. That there is a distinction in service, however, is obvious. Compare I Timothy 3 verses 2 and 8. How the categories should be designated is a puzzle both to Mr. Clark and me. Some of the ordinations which we eventually purpose are to the work of *episkopee* and others to that which is called in the Greek *diakonos*—meaning those who serve. In fact, as we have previously seen, all, regardless of the level of responsibility is a part of the *diakonos*. See the following tests, under the words minister, servant, deacon—Matt. 20:26, Rom. 16:1, I Cor. 3:5, 6, Eph. 3:7, Phil. 1:1, Col. 1:23, I Thess. 3:2, I Tim. 3:8, 12. Any man or woman, officially appointed to serve the church in a specific manner—regardless of station, is a part of the *diakonos*. Those men chosen for service are limited only by their own education, individual talents, and personal aspirations. The work, responsibility, will be determined by God. Even so, as we have seen in a number of the examples mentioned above, the ministry can, and should, ordain them with specific responsibilities in mind. How God wills to use them in the future is strictly His business. He sets and establishes according to His purpose.

Your Part

Candidates for ordination must meet strict qualifications. They must be generally accepted by both those within the body and those who are outside (I Tim. 3:7). Those within the body do have moral and spiritual duty (I Cor. 1:11; 5:1). On the same basis as that employed in determination of membership right, the people do have an obligation to indicate defects which would make service questionable—on the part of anyone under consideration. If a man is not acceptable in the sight of the people he is required to serve how can he fulfill his call and assignment? The door is wide open for anyone to inform us if there exists any glaring defects—always, of course, in the spirit of meekness, honesty, and love.

Choices Made

Over the years Mr. Clark and I have carefully observed the attitude and service of specific men. Some have long fulfilled the duties required for specific recognition and honor—ordination. Others, because of the latent potential—abilities to speak, write, counsel,

etc.—are to be given opportunities to prove themselves. They will be tested as required by the instructions of the Bible (I Tim. 3:10, Titus 1:7–11).

This fall, at the Feast of Tabernacles—in Townsend, Tennessee—Mr. Clark will ordain Mr. Bill McCammon. An ordination long overdue. At the same time, Mr. Bud Kidwell will be ordained. Elaboration of ordination and duties will be given by Mr. Clark at the time of that ordination.

Others to be ordained—at a later date, perhaps by Passover/Unleavened Bread or Trumpets of 1997—will be Mr. Gary Arnebeck, Mr. Frank Sheffold, and to that responsibility called in the Greek, the *episkopee*, Mr. Jon Brisby and Mr. David Carter. As a part of their testing and proving, both Messrs. Brisby and Carter will be giving sermonettes this year. Mr. Jon Brisby will speak at the Feast in Townsend and Mr. David Carter will speak here in Newport. Each will be delivering four sermonettes. Your schedules will indicate the times.

The very fact these men are under consideration speaks much concerning their character, their orientation in life, and the manner in which they have conducted their duties and obligations. They are deserving of the love, respect, and honor which God requires. Please remember them in your prayers—daily. They will need your help.

Mr. Delmer Marsh, Mr. John Byrd, and Mr. Dewey Keohohina are already ordained. Their offices of responsibility continue. They, too, deserve our respect, honor, and cooperation. All have done commendably well in the discharge of duties assumed.

Office

Although every effort is made to maintain continuity throughout the year, it seems impossible to perfectly fulfill all responsibilities—especially before the Feast. Regretfully, because of these many demands, there will be no *Widow Letter* this month. Our many apologies to those who normally receive it. It will continue as usual next month.

Special Announcement

Observing the Day of Atonement poses unique problems in many different ways. Employers sometimes do not understand employee requests for time off. Families, on some occasions, do not comprehend the requirement for fasting. Then, again, there is the more individualized test for those who are taking specific medications or are on absolute diets which "cannot be altered or changed." Jesus gave the answer. He never took responsibility for another person's life. He said simply: "According to your faith be it unto you."

God commanded us to fast on Atonement. He gave no exceptions. The command is absolute. Those with absolute faith and confidence in God will have no problem. They will simply obey God.

Caution: Do not deceive yourself. Know what your level of faith is. What do you trust? In what do you have confidence? Atonement is not the time to test your faith. It is a day on which to live it. Each one of us must make that decision—individually. Please! Please! Know your level of faith. Admit where you stand, then act on *that* faith.

Trip Schedule

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|------------------------|--------------|--------|
| September 7 | Vancouver | R.C.C. |
| September 14 | Austin | R.C.C. |
| Sept 28–Oct. 5 (Feast) | Townsend, TN | B.G.C. |

Tape Schedule

| Tape Series | Mailed | For | Title/tape # |
|---------------|--------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| WSE-RC 59-46 | 07/17 | 09/07 | Despair or Glory, Which? #46 |
| HTP-1996 | 08/21 | 09/14 | Feast of Trumpets, AM & PM |
| WSE-BC 149-9 | 07/17 | 09/21 | The Teachings of Christ #9 |
| HAT-1996 | 08/21 | 09/23 | Day of Atonement |
| WSE-RC 59-47 | 07/31 | 10/12 | Despair or Glory, Which? #47 |
| WSE-BC 147-29 | 07/31 | 10/19 | Mighty Acts & Miracles of God #29 |
| WSE-RC 59-48 | 08/14 | 10/26 | Despair or Glory, Which? #48 |

In Christ's service,



Raymond C. Cole

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