

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter June 2001

Dear Brethren:

Warm and personal greetings to each one of you, from your devoted servants and friends in Eugene, Oregon. Although it would be such a blessing to be able to see and speak to each one of you more often during the year, we are very happy for the opportunity to write to you every month and maintain that contact which is so crucial in these last days. You are all very dear to us. We pray continually for your well being, and do not intend ever to take your faithfulness and loyalty for granted.

In the enclosed *Monthly Letter* for June, 2001, you will find a synoptic analysis of the controversial topic of church government. As you are aware, we recently ordained Mr. Leon Whitaker to the office of Elder, for expanded responsibilities in the northern Oregon/Washington region. Because we are planning additional ordinations in the near future—likely during the Feast of Tabernacles this year—we felt it appropriate to address a number of fundamental principles to help answer questions and eliminate any potential confusion in the minds of our members. Why might there be confusion?

If you will compare this month's *Monthly Letter* with certain articles written under the church's name from 1976, including one entitled, *How Should God's Church Be Governed?*, you will find some marked differences. Why is this? This particular article, and a number of others, were written by certain other men twenty-five years ago, who came with us for a time—some longer, some shorter—but all manifesting strong personal feelings about church government because of their own bad experiences in our parent organization. At that time, these ministers were drifting without an anchor—just like most of the laity—and Mr. Raymond Cole did his very best to help guide them to get their feet down spiritually, in the wake of the turmoil and chaos of apostasy.

Most of these men would have preferred to have a democratic ministry, with authority shared equally in a board format. One of the largest current splinter groups set up this very form of government in the mid 1990s, electing a ministerial "president" for a limited term, but vesting ultimate authority in the board. Why would they set up such a

system? It is because they viewed "top-down government" as the great evil that precipitated the downfall of our parent body. This was also the very orientation of most of the ministers who came initially to assist Mr. Cole.

Not willing to reject any of them, but wanting to give time for each to deal with his emotional baggage from the past, Mr. Cole tolerated certain expressions from these men about government, even though they did not reflect his own personal views at all. You see, at the time, he was not trying to focus on asserting his own authority, even though there is no doubt now that God certainly placed him in that office. But the goal was to help the troubled sheep come to recognize the importance of divine revelation, and the sanctity of the original doctrines. If many had a hang-up about government, he was willing to abide that, with the one provision that he would never allow anyone to change those doctrines which came directly from Jesus Christ through His chosen servant of the last days. That was one area that was not negotiable, and an example of his use of that overriding authority to stay the course. In other areas, Mr. Cole was very willing to de-emphasize his own authority for the sake of the current state of mind of the people, and these other ministers as well.

Was this wrong to do? Perhaps he should have driven home the unmistakable principles of church government without regard to the weaknesses of these ministers. But did not the Apostle Paul show there are times to avoid certain meaty principles, when the people are not yet ready to bear them?

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? (1 Corinthians 3:1–3).

In like manner, Mr. Cole sought not to destroy some over an issue they were too emotionally affected by at the time.

But in time, it became very evident that the sleeping nemesis that was still destroying many along the way was their false concept about government, because they could never get past those emotional scars of the past. The most recent departure more than two years ago was centered on this very issue. Those who had quietly attached themselves to the idea of democracy in the ministry are those who did not stay with us. But the majority who did stay, did so primarily because they never had a doubt about the fruits of the servant God has used all these years to preserve His Truth, or the authority that is vested in him to serve the remnant flock. Rejection of government and authority is a symptom of the wrong spirit prophesied to permeate the last day church (2 Peter 2:10, Jude 8). It is never the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

The result now—twenty-five years later—is that the majority of government haters are gone, and this remnant body is finally ready to receive the meat that is needed to see us through the final trials awaiting us before the return of Christ. We have known for a long time that certain articles written by these earlier men in 1976 portray concepts that do not reflect the true essence of our original teaching. These will need to be edited as time permits. We apologize for this need, but ask you to evaluate all in the context of the times and circumstances that have prevailed over the last quarter century. In the meantime, this month's *Monthly Letter* should eliminate any confusion about the real principles of Godly structure and organization.

Lest anyone should become alarmed that we are now instituting a new form of aggressive top-down government, nothing is farther from the truth. We are continuing with the exact orientation and principles of structure that has guided Mr. Cole all these years. That authority has never been used to take advantage of the sheep. Rather, for years you have seen the very fulfillment of Christ's commands for the benevolent use of that authority in dealing with each of God's priceless sheep. God helping us, we will continue with exactly the same orientation. If we were to change to begin using that authority to serve the self, or to take advantage of God's people, we would absolutely remove our own names from the Book of Life. We want to be there in that Kingdom with all of you. We are fearful of the misuse of that which God has given. We intend to use that God-given responsibility to sacrifice ourselves for your sakes, even unto death.

Music Program

Part of our preliminary work involves the music program for the two Feast sites. Any who plan to participate in the music program this year should notify Mr. Richard Meyn at the church office before the end of June. He is already working on this year's performance material. Richard greatly appreciates everyone's participation and effort at both Feast sites.

Scheduling Emcees, Opening and Closing Prayers

In order that we may begin preparation of schedules for the Feast we need to know as soon as possible if any will be attending at a different Feast site than usual. We must soon begin work on the scheduling of emcees and those who give opening and closing prayers.

Birth

Mr-s. Sam Dunnivant: Their son, Nehemiah Jonathan, was born May 10, weighing eight pounds, eight ounces. Mother and son are doing fine.

Trip Schedule

July 21
August 18

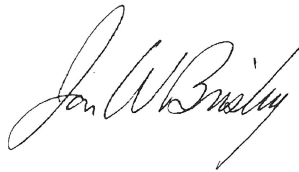
Baltimore
Austin

J.W.B.
J.W.B.

Tape Schedule

Tape Schedule	Mailed	Played	Title/Tape #
WSE-RC 93-12	05-09-01	06-09-01	The Continuing Body of Christ #12
WSE-RC 93-13	05-09-01	06-16-01	The Continuing Body of Christ#13
WSE-JB 22-28-13D	05-23-01	06-23-01	Fund. of Belief (The Holy Days and the New Covenant)
WSE-RC 96-1	05-23-01	06-30-01	Purpose for the Continuing Body
WSE-JB 22-29-13E	06-06-01	07-07-01	Fund. of Belief (The Holy Days and the N. T. Church)

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby



Raymond C. Cole