

## Announcement Letter December 2013

Dear Brethren:

We relish the opportunity to write to you again at the beginning of this new month. Given all of the work that we do to serve this scattered remnant body on a regular basis, the routine of writing, editing, and distributing these letters makes it seem that the months are speeding by incredibly fast. Hardly do we seem to have mailed to you one set of letters than it is time again to prepare next month's material. But that is very "positive pressure," not negative. Yes, we feel the weight of those deadlines, but all of us who serve you on this home office team feel the satisfaction of contributing to something that is so much more than "just a job." We have the special privilege of applying our weekly energies to helping the beloved children of God in their spiritual development and preparation for the Kingdom of God. What could be more rewarding? So we greet you again and express our heartfelt appreciation for each one of you, and pray that you are remaining steadfast in that way of life which leads to eternal salvation. How blessed are we to know the Truth and to be called to a glorious and fulfilling future. Thank you again for your loving support of this work of service on your behalf.

Routinely, we hear feedback about the recorded sermons which we send out to all of those individuals who request CDs by mail (or likewise are made available online through our Internet website). We are very thankful for those who express appreciation for those sermons. Your positive feedback is very much appreciated and certainly makes us feel confident that we are truly providing material which God is inspiring for the edification of His Church. The point of that sermon program is not to advance the personal celebrity status of any man, but to provide the spiritual meat that God's people need truly in these last days to pass the tests which are ever before us.

It is not about the men speaking. If we are whom we claim to be, we are simply spokesmen for Jesus Christ, *the One* who is truly inspiring and providing the information He wants us all to have to be successful in our callings. If instead it is about the spokesmen, the human instruments, then something is definitely wrong. Each one of you must draw your own conclusion about whether we are speaking His words or speaking from our own carnal minds. We certainly have many detractors who will gladly explain how wrong we are in what we preach. But so said they as well about Jesus Christ and His preaching. The fact of having some *laud* the messages while others *vilify* them gives you *no basis* for proper evaluation. You must have a standard upon which to make *your own decision*. Are you hearing the voice of the True Shepherd through our sermons? Jesus Christ said, "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they

know his voice" (John 10:4). Hopefully, if you are continuing to participate in the work of this little remnant, it is because you believe you are truly hearing the voice of your High Priest, even though it is coming through "the foolishness" of our preaching (1 Corinthians 1:21). Even as it was always the purpose of Raymond Cole to serve those whom God sends to us—those who believe they are truly receiving the divinely-inspired Word of God through this ministry—so it remains our ongoing mission today. We are not trying to insert ourselves into the lives of those who do not value our efforts. If you think we are participating in a divine service, we are very eager to serve you. If you decide otherwise, we most definitely do not want to be "a burden" to you. As always, it is your very personal choice. We assume that the majority of you who receive this letter each month are ones who believe there is divine benefit for association with this little group. Therefore, our comments presume that each one of you values the things that we value and count it as salvational to the people of God.

With that in mind, every once in a while we hear feedback about our sermons which is not necessarily flattering. One recent statement (not from an official member, but one who has been listening to some of our sermons) went something like this: "Why do you and Raymond Cole have to yell so much?" That sentiment comes up every so often. What is it about our approach to giving sermons which makes some think we are "yelling"? It is honestly intriguing, not meant to be a criticism toward anyone who feels that way.

If you listen to the early sermons of Raymond Cole from the 1970s, there is no doubt that he is much more "bombastic" in his speaking style than he became later on. Certainly, age played a factor in that as he grew weaker physically in his final years. Yet there is no doubt that he could definitely *add emphasis* to certain words or statements, even to the very end, and he certainly did so. For some who prefer to hear a professor's droning lecturing style instead, this may be foreign at first. Compared to the very aggressive style of Mr. Herbert Armstrong, Raymond Cole did not even hold a candle. Some would say that Mr. Cole was too much the "technical professor" in style—boring. It is amazing how two different people can hear the very same sermon and receive it totally differently, depending upon the "natural filters" we use to evaluate.

What must be understood is that public speaking is not *equivalent and interchangeable* with private conversation. One would never (appropriately) speak one-on-one as he would to a large group. Men who insist upon speaking only in a "personal, conversational tone" to large groups are usually not very effective speakers. In person, Raymond Cole spoke in a quiet, humble manner, and had a way of putting people very much at ease with his smile and his sincere personal interest. From the pulpit it was very different. It is too bad that many of you never had the privilege of meeting Mr. Cole in person because it is difficult to relay adequately this principle if you did not have that personal experience. But those who did know him personally should be able to confirm it.

Recognize that it is right and proper for the true servants of God to preach in a bold fashion. This actually was something that made Jesus Christ stand out from other orators of His day. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:28–29). Two factors likely applied here: Firstly, Jesus must have been speaking strongly—in physical speaking style. And secondly, *the content* of His message must have been highly provocative. We know that was certainly the case, given the strong reactions His sermons elicited.

I wonder how many of us would have truly responded positively to sermons of Jesus Christ in person? It is very easy to assume He would speak with our "preferred" delivery style. Be very careful in making that assumption. Some responded favorably to Christ, but many took offense:

And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And *they were offended at him* (Mark 6:2–3) [emphasis mine].

It was a classic case of trying to *ridicule the content of the message* by "humanizing" the messenger. He was certainly *in the flesh*, yet we all agree that the message was divine.

The same was true of those human servants who would speak in the name and by the authority of that very same Christ, even though they were not, themselves, the Christ. How was Stephen received?

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy [Spirit]: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things, *they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth* (Acts 7:51–54) [emphasis mine].

It might be of interest for you to know that, often, it really is not the amplitude of physical speaking voice which actually "offends" some who hear Raymond Cole's (or even "yours truly's") sermons, but the *message* of those sermons. In one case, after receiving "negative feedback" from one party about the minister "yelling," we did a technical analysis

of the audio recording of that particular sermon and found that the actual "decibel level" was very low overall. Interesting. Very likely, it was not truly *the volume of the voice* that was offensive, but *the content of the message* which made particular individuals "squirm" in conscience. What some may hear as a firm but civil pronouncement of a spiritual principle can be received by others as a "screaming in the head!" It is a fascinating dichotomy.

Hopefully, most of you will be able to recognize that we are not "yelling at you." We are indeed *speaking forcefully* to impart concepts and spiritual lessons which may be life and death to us all. Wherever you find a faithful remnant today, if it is truly being inspired by that same Jesus Christ, you should be hearing a *firm and unapologetic message*, spoken with authority. Many men are out there who try to add legitimacy to their messages by speaking loudly, so that itself certainly is not a proof. But if you think a "good minister" will always use a "lullaby delivery," you might want to rethink that conclusion in light of what the Bible demonstrates. Dear brethren, we are in a fight for our very lives. That is not an overdramatization. And if any of you thinks that it is, then it may be that you are being much too cavalier about the threat posed by our spiritual enemies. Weigh it very carefully.

Speaking of "lullabies," although we have not chosen to emphasize it in the past, we know that many over the years have commented that they like to use the recorded sermons to "put them to sleep" at night. (If we do so much yelling, how is it that our sermons act as such good lullabies?) Mr. Raymond Cole mentioned years ago in private that he was concerned about this practice and did not recommend it to God's people. Some have the idea that they can "absorb" spiritual principles "subconsciously" in their sleep. Mr. Cole was very suspicious of that whole premise. It is very much a worldly, "new age" concept. God does not teach us "subconsciously," but through the *attentive and alert—conscious—mind*. Where did any contrary philosophy originate? You certainly will not find it in the Bible. It is Satan who looks to influence our minds through "back doors." God does not work that way. Mr. Cole felt that the only proper way to use recorded sermons was in a state of active attention. The potential risk otherwise is that if you can absorb *good things* when you do not have a *sentry* guarding your *mind's door*, what is there to keep the enemy from using that "unguarded open door" to plant evil seeds at the very same time? Maybe this concern will not turn out to be valid in the end. But in case any of you are interested to know what Raymond Cole thought about the practice, consider yourselves "enlightened."

Thank you again for the chance to communicate with you through these letters each month, and may God continue to keep you and to bless you in every way that will lead to your spiritual success. The stakes are very high, but God is faithful and has promised to provide for every need. May you manifest the light of His Spirit more and more in the time that we have left. You are all most precious to God, and likewise to your devoted human servants.

## **New Moon**

The new moon, Shebat (eleventh month), will begin on the evening of Wednesday, January 1. The new moon day is Thursday, January 2.

The new moon, Adar I (twelfth month), will begin on the evening of Friday, January 31. The new moon day is Sabbath, February 1.

## **Trip Schedule**

### **Mr. Jon Brisby**

December 14 ..... Don Carlos, Mindanao, Philippines  
December 21 ..... Cabanatuan City, Luzon, Philippines  
January 25 ..... Lakeland, Florida

### **Mr. David Brandenburg**

December 14 ..... Don Carlos, Mindanao, Philippines  
December 21 ..... Cabanatuan City, Luzon, Philippines

## Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
CL-2 116	11-07-13	11-30-13	Faith #25
WSE-JB 149-1	11-07-13	12-07-13	Prophecy Revisited #1: Past Purposes
WSE-JB 149-2	11-27-13	12-14-13	Prophecy Revisited #2 Fruits of Past Orientation
CL-2 117	11-27-13	12-21-13	Faith #26
CL-2 118	11-27-13	12-28-13	Faith #27
WSE-JB 149-3	12-19-13	01-04-14	Prophecy Revisited #3 The Spirit of Prophecy
WSE-JB 149-4	12-19-13	01-11-14	Prophecy Revisited #4 Why Must We Watch?
CL-2 119	12-19-13	01-18-14	Faith #28

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby