

Church of God, The Eternal

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What Does It Mean to Deny Christ?

February 1991

Dear Brethren:

A pleasant and heartfelt greeting to you all once again. How fast time seems to fly by. Here we are at *Monthly Letter* time again. A crucial subject—your salvation is dependent upon a proper understanding and acceptance of it—will be explained.

This subject will require two *Monthly Letters* to explain fully. The division is logical. First, the physical life of Christ as He lived it in His own fleshly body. Second, Christ as He is living His life in the Body He promised to build—the Church—and against which the gates of hell will not prevail.

Due to the approaching end-times, it is felt necessary to cover exhaustively this profound and urgent subject—mentioned so significantly in the Bible.

Even from a generalized perspective, is it not safe to assume that the Western world is basically Christianized? Does not the average church-goer "know" Christ? How can it be stated that many have rejected and subsequently denied Christ? Yet a casual review of the Scriptures makes it most clear that a denial will take place in these last days. Is that denial merely a refusal to accept the name or the historicity of that personage? No, indeed! There is much more to the matter.

It is imperative to understand that Jesus Christ, though standing in the presence of the people in His own day, was not accepted by the masses. Believing that Jesus is the Christ is the initial step of conversion. Such belief requires a call and a masterful operation of God's Holy Spirit working upon the natural mind. Few, indeed, accepted Jesus Christ as the Christ in His own day. In the concluding hours of His physical life, Christ was taunted with the "questionable" verity of who He really was. Luke records: ". . . the people stood beholding. And the rulers, also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God" (Luke 23:35).

To know the true Christ is imperative. To believe the Christ is absolutely mandatory. How? How is it possible to come to know a personage who was not known or accepted even in

His own day? The answer lies in the revelation of one of the greatest mysteries of all time. It is a mystery which, once revealed, must be honored in faithfulness and obedience. To understand we must begin at the beginning—the time of His own physical existence here on this earth.

The Christ of Two Thousand Years Ago

Historians have taken note of a mysterious Being who lived approximately 2000 years ago. The Bible—God's sacred Scriptures—speaks of a Being who was called the Christ. The Christ of the Scriptures is fundamentally different from the one accepted by most human beings today. Yet, when any intelligent effort is made to compare these two Christs on the basis of belief and practice, we are left with one conclusion. The question still remains. Who was—is—the Christ of the Bible?

It is not possible to know the true Christ of our own day without comprehending the Christ of His own day. Can the Christ of 2000 years ago be known today?

In Matthew 1:1, 16–18, and 21–23, God's true witness Matthew makes a number of statements about this historical figure. First, that his, Matthew's, writings are a history of Christ who is within the lineage of Abraham and David. Second, that Christ appeared, in a generation, according to a time determined by God. Third, that He was born miraculously—having been begotten by the Holy Spirit—but born physically because His mother was Mary. Fourth, that His birth was prophetically indicated many years earlier. Finally, that He would be the Savior of mankind. To accept such claims stretched the credulity of physical minds to the impossible. To accept such a Being required as great a miracle as His birth.

Further, the Bible, of which Matthew's writings are only a part, asserts that this Christ was destined to die for the salvation of mankind (Rom. 5:6–8). It is absolutely imperative to recognize that such salvation does not come from the acceptance of just any "Christ," but can come only by knowing and accepting the one and only true Christ. The significance of this statement will be made clear a little later.

Let us understand just a few other facts regarding the physical birth of Christ. Both secular and Biblical history show that Christ was born of the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14; Rev. 5:5). In Romans 9:5, we are informed that His national, racial, lineage is of larger scope. Here we are told that according to the flesh He was born of the nation of Israel. Indeed, He is that Seed which was promised to come from the blessings promised to Abraham. Israel is that nation which God promised to come of the seed of Abraham (Gen. 46:1–3).

A Being called Christ was born approximately 2000 years ago. Bible prophecies and a record of the actual event itself both substantiate it. Secular history records the fact. There is

little problem for any man to accept these facts. However, accepting Him as a human being born at a given time in the course of history is a far cry from accepting what He is—parentage, purposes, and mission.

How was the historical Christ accepted, regarded, in His own day? As a mere mortal born of woman, there seemed to be no problem. All the people accepted that fact. But His awesome claims of superior relationships and responsibilities resulted in rejection and ultimate death at the hands of the powerful minority. Despite the miraculous nature of such acceptance, a few did believe. In Samaria there were some who believed. John records:

And many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world (John 4:41–42).

In John 6, verses 53 through 69, because of the rigidity of the doctrine of Christ, many who had been following Him turned away. Based on this natural response, Jesus Christ turned to His own disciples, asking them, "Will ye also go away?" The response of Peter was: ". . . we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." It was most obvious that no one short of a call to understand the supernatural implications of what Christ was saying (teaching) could accept and believe Him. Yet, this is exactly what Christ expected and knew would happen to a select few (verse 64).

To the thinking mind, the causes of doubt and rejection are plainly obvious. All things physical, natural, get in the way. John addresses this matter in chapter 7, verses 26 and 27, and chapter 10, verses 24 through 26. We read:

. . . Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we [residents of Jerusalem, verse 25] know [on the basis of what?] this man whence he is [did they?]: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

The people had formed their own opinions emotionally on the basis of historical, religious, and other convictions. Regardless of the depth of those convictions, they were wrong. Therefore, the convictions of individuals or groups do not make the concepts valid. Only one thing validates conviction. We will discuss that principle later. Further, John, in chapter 10:24–26, elaborates on the above concept. He writes: "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." The problem was not the language of Christ. It was the ability of the carnal mind to believe. Continuing, notice what Christ said: "Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." Telling the natural, carnal, mind does not constitute belief or knowing. Such belief and conviction (knowing) cannot come to the natural mind short

of conversion—a change of mind which follows a miraculous call from God. This very principle was made clear to the converted mind when Jesus said, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." What had Christ earlier stated? John recorded His statement in John 6:36. He said: "But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not." Physical sight did not constitute belief, or knowing. Also, short of a specific call from God, mortal man cannot know Christ, or believe Him. But such deficiency does not impede mortal man's forming his own conceptions and beliefs. Men simply create their own belief structure and claim equal right even with those who are the truly called and chosen.

Seeing Christ in His own physical body did not aid those of His own generation. They did not know Him. Neither did they believe the message which he taught. They rejected His claims and therefore refused to accept His teachings. Regardless, He was still the Christ and His message was valid. Even today, the ultimate test may be what we fear most. Do we fear Christ and His Truth, or do we fear the exposing of our convictions and beliefs (John 9:22)?

Christ Returns to Former Glory

In the great plan of God, Christ had to come to this earth to die for purpose (Rev. 13:8). He was slain from the foundation of the world. The schedule of time was determined by God. According to the schedule, Christ appeared as a human being to fulfill that purpose. Paul states: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time [margin: according to the time] Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6). Among others, there were two basic purposes. First, He came to preach the Gospel (Titus 1:3). Second, He came to die for humankind (John 12:23–27). And the time of that death was scheduled (John 13:1; 17:1; 1 Tim. 2:5–6). Just as the time of death was determined, so was the time of the resurrection (Acts 2:23–24).

All responsibilities having been completed, fulfilled, according to the will of the Father, what was in the future for Christ? From the book of John we learn that this question was of utmost urgency to the twelve disciples. In the traumatic hours following Christ's final Passover service with the Twelve, He revealed His future. He said:

As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is eternal life, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was (John 17:2–5).

Two fundamental things surface in the pronouncement of Christ. First, He was to resume His position in the Divinity (Rom. 1:10, called "Godhead" in this verse). Second, that it is

absolutely essential to come to know both God and His Son in order to inherit salvation. Obviously, there must be some provision by which the Father allows human beings to come to know Him and His Son.

Who are They? Are we sure that the claims of human beings about knowing the Father and His Son are correct, accurate? How can anyone know that he knows? Yet some must have known Him. For there are those whom God calls faithful in the last days. And there are those who will deny Him in the last days. How can anyone deny that which he does not know? The very fact that some deny Him is a revelation that they did know Him. The big question? How does a human being come to know Him? And of equal significance is the question, How can we deny unless we know who and what He is?

Spiritual Things Are Invisible

Christ is our example in all things. How can we ever understand what it means to deny Him in our day unless we comprehend what occurred in His own life? We are told, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8). Continuing, Paul said to the Romans (those called of God), ". . . ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you . . ." (Rom. 8:9). Is there any doubt about whether or not Christ had the Spirit of God? We are told He possessed that power without measure (John 3:34). According to the intents and purposes of the above texts, Christ was not of the flesh but of the Spirit. Yet, further, doubtlessly He was visible to the people with whom He came in contact. Being born of the flesh, He could be seen and handled (1 John 1:1). Equally obvious, however, was the fact the people who saw Him did not know who He was. They saw Him only as the son of Mary, a carpenter whom they saw day after day. To those who lived in His day He was no different from any other baby who had been born and had grown up in that community. What they did not realize, or could not accept, is the fact that the personage they saw was a manifestation of that which is invisible to man (John 1:1, 14). Spiritual things are invisible (2 Cor. 4:18). Here Paul says:

While we look not at the things which are seen [physical] but at the things [spiritual] which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal [relating to time as opposed to eternity; to earthly life; to secular concerns]; but the things which are not seen are eternal [the spiritual world].

Christ was a manifestation of that spiritual world. He was visible in the flesh; but He was not of that world. To accept that world—the world of unseen power and purpose—requires far more than mere man can provide for himself. It requires a gift from God. Compare Hebrews 11:1 with Galatians 5:22.

Christ was born of the flesh. He took on the substance and nature of man for purpose. Yet by His resurrection from the grave, He again assumed the domain of the spiritual. This transition serves as a model for men who are called. Paul explains:

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh [His human existence], yet now henceforth know we him no more [i.e., after the flesh]. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [of the Spirit]: old things [things of the flesh] are passed away; behold, all things are become new [spiritual] (2 Cor. 5:16–17).

A major transition, to say the least. Yet no man has ever seen this transition take place. Only one called of God can take cognizance of such a change. It is a change from the flesh (orientation) to the Spirit (orientation). Both the person and the transition are unknown to anyone of this world.

Deception Now Possible

If impersonation is possible because the real person is not known, what is the potential for deception where the personality is not known along with the fact that even the substance cannot be seen? Spiritual things are not seen. Further, along with the invisibility of such an operation which God has undertaken, there is another spirit who makes it a practice to lie and deceive—the perfect recipe for hypocrisy, lying, and all forms of dishonesty. Has such deception and abuse occurred? Indeed!

Almost before Christ ascended back to heaven, men began to practice all forms of deception. They appropriated the name of Christ and perverted everything that Christ came to teach and make mandatory for the inheritance of everlasting life. Deception and perversion are inherent traits of human nature (Mark 7:22; Rom. 3:11–13). What is really important, to understand this subject of deception, is this: The deception mentioned in the Bible principally refers to an act which happens to those who were called and enlightened. Though deception can in a general sense refer to anyone, the deception to which Christ refers is that mental orientation which perverts the thinking of those called to know and understand. Indeed, Satan is the deceiver of the whole world (Rev. 12:9). In order to accomplish his objective of human deception, he employs a host of vassals who are willing to subscribe to the natural traits of human beings. These are men who profess to be ministers of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 11:13–15).

The only reason deception can and has become a major religious problem in the world is the fact Christ is both invisible and unknown to mankind naturally. He must be revealed. Since He is unknown, men, according to their tendency to deceive, can create any Christ they so will

and then by circumstance challenge anyone else to disprove "their" Christ. And when men have used the unknown to advocate hypocrisy, their own conceptions, and any other form of error, nothing is of any greater concern to them than the possibility of a revelation of the error involved—the very reason for hate, anger, and invective which will be manifested at the time of the return of Christ. It is the exposé which troubles them.

In this letter we are dealing with a denial of the one and only true Christ. How severe is that problem in these last days?

Many Christs in the Last Days

In the unbelieving world—regardless of claims—there is no real problem. The vast majority of the world is doing exactly what God allowed the physical Gentiles to do who existed in the days of ancient Israel. They created their own gods and the doctrines which seemed right to them (Deut. 4:19). Our concern is for those who were called and to whom God gave the Truth. In fact, this was the basis for the profound prophecy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 24. In these last days, we are informed, many Christs would surface (Matt. 24:4–5). That is, the people who once understood would turn from that one body of truth (for Christ is but one body and He is the Truth) and would create divergent and antagonistic groups whereby they could substantiate their own contentious spirits. Referring to conditions of the last days, John was inspired to write: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (2 John 7). Jesus said basically the same thing: "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:11). False prophets, yes; but we need to remember that Christ said they would appropriate the name of Christ (Matt. 24:4–5). Both in the days of Christ and the time of the apostles, as well as in the last days, these "false Christs" would surface within the body of believers. Some would pull members away to sustain themselves, making merchandise of them, while others would work nefariously within the remnant of believers (2 Pet. 2:1–21).

Before one can deny the true Christ, it is imperative to find Him. With a world full of false Christs, our duty is made quite complex and difficult. But, there is a way by which we can know. We will come to that understanding later.

Knowing the True Christ Is Imperative

Almost from the day of Christ's ascension a host of false Christs began to appear. These were not visible Christs. They were the conceptual creations of men whom the Bible calls false prophets or ministers. Since no false Christ can give life everlasting, it is essential that those

called of God must know the true Christ. Why? The Apostle John makes the point quite clear. He says: ". . . that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:2–3). Out of a host of Christs, only one is the true Christ. Yet, everlasting life is equated with knowing that one and only true Christ. There obviously must be some way by which human beings can come to know and trust that one true Christ.

Paul, when writing to the Philippians, had this to say about knowing the true Christ:
. . . At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Ph'p. 2:10–11).

How can anyone properly bow to Jesus and confess that He is Lord unless such an individual knows the one and only true Christ among the many which exist at any given time in human history? Indeed, it is imperative the called come to know the true Christ. How?

Knowing Is Possible Only by Revelation

When the true Christ was here in His own flesh body He addressed this problem. He said to His disciples:

. . . Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 16:13–17).

The people in general were aware that someone of significant capacity and purpose existed in their community; but, they did not allow themselves to think that He might be the true Christ. Only the chosen disciples of Christ Himself admitted the fact that He was that Christ which was to come. How did they know? By revelation. At another location and time Christ again spoke of this matter. He stated:

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him (Matt. 11:25–27).

Knowing both the Father and His Son Jesus Christ comes by revelation. And by revelation only. Plainly, then, salvation—equated with knowing the Father and the Son—comes only by miraculous revelation. Once knowing Them, it becomes possible to faithfully retain that knowledge, or because of the natural proclivities of human minds to reject or deny. Those who have never known can do neither. They remain among the masses pursuing the natural inclinations of their own minds. Precisely who does know remains, to some extent, a mystery known only by God. Note the following conditions which prevailed in the days of Jesus Christ. In John 8:19, Christ said: ". . . Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." Seeing Him personally did not constitute knowing Him. He was standing right there addressing them. Real knowing is more comprehensive than a visible recognition. Continuing, in John 8:55, Christ said: "Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying." Christ in a most emphatic manner said that the Jews of His day did not know either God the Father or His Son Jesus Christ.

Yet, Christ had the following to say: ". . . If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth" (John 9:41). Apparently they did comprehend—know. Why did Christ make this statement? In John 15:22, He said: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." To some extent, at least, they must have heard the message and were held accountable. They did say that they saw and understood. For once a human being makes a spiritual response, he is to some degree responsible. Christ said: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." How careful we must be both about our words and responses. When we commit ourselves, we are held accountable. How can those called retain the knowledge of Christ and God the Father?

Luke makes this orientation plain. When instructing the future apostles, Christ said, following His interrogation of the disciples about whom they, as well as the people, thought He was:

. . . If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. . . . For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels (Luke 9:23–26).

In order to know and accept Christ, the called must deny the self. In other words, one must reject the physical and accept the spiritual. The chosen are the ones who know Christ and the Father. They, and they only, are the ones who will hear the words of God. How do they hear the words of God?

In Galatians 1:12 the Apostle Paul emphatically stated that he received the truth by revelation only. He said: "For I neither received it [the gospel, truth, which he preached] of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Responsible men, chosen by God, receive the truth directly from God. They, then, are commissioned to proclaim that truth to the people. From among the masses, God calls His servants through the voices of His commissioned ministers (Rom. 10:14–15). God's plan has never been abridged. His chosen ministers are required to make Christ known. They make known what God had made known to them. And uniquely, even those called through the preaching of the commissioned ministry come to know Christ and God the Father through a direct revelation. Speaking of the called in general, Paul had this to say about revelation: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Eph. 1:9–10).

What Is Christ?

Revelation is necessary. That is an incontrovertible fact. But what is that revelation? What was the manifestation of this Christ who came in the flesh approximately 2000 years ago?

Who and what that Christ was/is are curious questions which have troubled human minds since the day of the true Christ's original appearance. Christ continuously pried into the minds of the people of His day. In Matthew 22:41–46 much revealing information is found. We read:

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

Men see from a physical perspective only. To the carnal mind, Christ was only the son of David. Yet, there was a much more significant aspect of His life which human beings could understand only by the indwelling presence of the Spirit, by a divine revelation. As stated earlier, the people of His day saw the physical being who lived and worked among them. They had no doubt of His existence. But, it is apparent they did not know who He really was. What is Christ?

The Apostle John was inspired of the Holy Spirit to clarify this matter. He said: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Christ is God. He dwelt with God the Father, from the beginning. As God, from the beginning, Christ

personified the Word in the flesh. That is, He was a living, animated manifestation of the Word. Note verse 14 of this same chapter. We read: "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Christ was the physical manifestation of the Word of God—the very Truth itself. To emulate Christ as He lived and acted in His own day is to live and practice the Truth. Walking in His steps is in essence living and obeying the Truth.

In His physical life Christ was the manifestation of the Father. This is very important in that salvation is coming to know both the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Note John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Christ, then, was a living manifestation of the Father. He is man's only means of coming to the Father. Further, Christ plainly told the people living in His own physical day, ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). To know the Father is essential to have salvation; and the only avenue by which we can come to know the Father is through Christ. It seems quite imperative that we come to know who Christ is. It should be self-evident that there was only one Christ—and still is. Yet, it seems that from the days of Christ's departure from this earth the servants of God found it necessary to emphasize that there is but one Christ. To the Galatians the Apostle Paul explained it this way: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). But, to the Corinthians he explained thusly:

For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him (1 Cor. 8:5–6).

There was one Christ only in His day. There has been only one Christ—one body—since that day. More about that later.

There are many Christs of this world—creations of men's minds and hearts. Just how important is it to come to know that one and only true Christ? He said, "I am the way." None of the false Christs have a claim on that Way of life. They are merely deceiving those who elect to listen. Regarding access to that Way the Apostle Paul wrote: "The Holy [Spirit] this signifying, that the way [Christ] into the holiest [spiritual domain] of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle [the flesh] was yet standing" (Heb. 9:8). To put it simply, opportunity to make the transition from flesh to spirit was not available until Christ had come and made that transition possible by way of what occurred in His life. Because of what He had accomplished He became the Way of life. That is, He made life possible for all mankind. In effecting that transition possibility, Christ destroyed the way of the flesh and opened up the way

of the Spirit. As we noted earlier, the called no longer know Christ after the flesh; rather He is known after the Spirit. For this reason, those truly called of God, in the ministry, do not preach Christ of the flesh. On the contrary, they "preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:23). The flesh can never glory in the presence of God (verse 29). We can never inherit everlasting life by our own endeavors. We must crucify the self. Only by Christ living in us will we ever succeed. We must come to know Him to have that possibility.

With so many Christs available in the world, spiritual fornication and/or adultery are not only possible, but most likely. The circumstances, as well as consequences, of wrong choices are made plain by Paul. He said:

And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power [from the physical to the spiritual]. Know ye [the called] not that your bodies [physical bodies called to become a part of the temple in which will reside the Holy Spirit] are the members [individually] of Christ [one church]? shall I then take the members [the called] of Christ [the one body], and make [approving their becoming a part of] them the members [in a spiritual relationship with] of an harlot [an illicit woman]? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined [in a spiritual relationship] to an harlot is one body [a comparable human physical relationship but immorality personified]? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh [there is but one physical, flesh body which represents the body of Christ]. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit [in the flesh but of the Spirit]. Flee fornication [have no relationship with any body—physical—other than the one to which the called are espoused]. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body [outside]; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body [personalized injury even though such individuals feel they have made wise decisions]. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy [Spirit] which is in you [how can the Spirit which is one be divisive and contentious?], which ye have of God, and ye are not your own [the unchanging God does not allow us to make our own decisions about where we want to be—if truly we have been by the will of God placed in the one and only body]? For ye are bought with a price [we belong to Him, not to ourselves]: therefore glorify God in your body [the one and only physical entity approved of Him], and in your spirit [mind and attitude of submission and obedience], which are God's [He even provides the spiritual orientation which is necessary] (1 Cor. 6:14–20).

Christ is One. His Body is one. This unchanging Christ (Heb. 13:8) promised to build a church. That church was to be the continuation of His own physical body. In the second issue of this letter, we will see how the circumstances and conditions which related to His own physical life apply to that church which He built.

In conclusion, may we take this opportunity to convey all our love and thoughts of kindness once again? We do remember you in our daily prayers and earnestly request that you continue to remember us in your urgent and meaningful prayers.

With much love and affection,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'R' and 'C'.

Raymond C. Cole