

# Church of God, The Eternal

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## Manifestations of the Mind of God—Part I

December 1992

Greetings Brethren:

By the mind are purposes, orientations, beliefs, and feelings made known. Further, by actions of one's daily life are those beliefs, purposes, orientations, and feelings made manifest. Yet, there is one aspect of this scenario which is most problematic and troubling. If the carnal mind is enmity against God and is not responsive to spiritual things, indeed, cannot be, and all men by virtue of physical birth are possessors of that carnal mind, how can natural man ever manifest the spiritual mind of God? And since man is deceptive in mind and heart, how is it possible to know the mind of the flesh and the mind of God and to differentiate between the two?

Christ came with both the mind and power of God. He was aggressively denied and resisted by mankind. The prophets of old, as well as the called apostles and servants of God following the days of Christ, were likewise spurned and rejected. In all cases, they obviously manifested the mind and heart of God—the spiritual mind—yet they were not recognized and accepted for what they really were. Those who resist and challenge the mind of God generally feel they are living the spiritual way of life. Is it possible to know the difference and to be faithful to that way which does truly manifest the mind of God?

### **Carnal Man Must Be Called**

The natural man of flesh cannot manifest a spiritual orientation. He can manifest no more than he is by birth. Since he is born of flesh he can live and manifest only the ways of the flesh. As a very great blessing, God has willed to call certain foreordained individuals. To these individuals who respond acceptably, a marvelous promise has been given. They are promised the receipt of the Holy Spirit—the mind of God. Once this amazing transformation has occurred, a man, flesh by birth, may begin to manifest spiritual traits and characteristics. With this transformation comes also the knowledge of spiritual things—the things of the mind of God. It is a revelation of the realm of God—the revelation of a way which is called *the* way of life. Once that call has been tendered, natural man is confronted with a major battle—a battle between the newly acquired mind of God and the old mind of the flesh which does not die arbitrarily. As long as we live in the flesh, the natural mind will assert itself consistently. The Apostle Paul explains this battle in Romans

7. For the spiritually determined it is a fight unto death—either the death of the fleshly mind or a spiritual death in the lake of fire from which there is no redemption or salvation.

With the receipt of the Holy Spirit of God, the mind of God, a change of character begins to emerge. The natural mind with all its manifold manifestations begins to diminish while at the same time the godly mind increases—manifesting thereby a continuing change of nature. That nature is called the divine nature. With this inherited power and spiritual orientation the called of God begin to manifest, in a very limited manner at the present, the glory and majesty of the spiritual. The righteousness manifested is no mere exhibition of carnal righteousness but, in reality, the manifestation of the glory and character of God.

What are the manifestations of the mind of God—the glory and character of the divine? There are seven traits which will be covered in this letter. These are manifestations which cannot be wholly duplicated by the flesh mind. They truly are exhibitions of the divine—the spiritual. All counterfeits will be revealed for what they are—the influences of the Satanic mind or the pursuit of the carnal, which invariably desires to be accepted for what it is not.

## **1. Singularity of Purpose—In Work, Life, Endeavor**

Change is indigenously human. Because of frailties, defects, and other weaknesses, the human mind must be ever subject to the necessity of revision or alteration. It is the natural man who must ever be ready to change himself in relationship to the incontrovertible and unalterable way of God. Regardless of our experiences, we must know and understand that God is right—even perfect—in His endeavors in our lives. What He specifically brings to pass, or in other cases merely allows, is always good for those with whom He works. Only in deepest trial, even adversity, is the true nature, determination and character of man manifested. The experiences of those called of God are to bring them to their knees more often, to more completely acknowledge their deficiencies, to acquire and give more significant meaning to both patience and faith, to manifest an unchanging relationship with a perfect God, and to manifest continuity in belief and practice regardless of the conditions encountered. Such conditions give broadest definition and meaning to the expression of Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. . ." (Job 13:15). God is the Creator of man as well as the raw conditions out of which are developed all adversities and trials encountered by man. There is nothing prevailing upon this planet earth except that which is specifically allowed or designed by God Himself. He is aware of even a bird which falls to the earth. How much more aware of us must He be? Human beings are potential children of His.

Job so eloquently explained what many human beings for centuries have attempted to repeat since those days of antiquity. He stated:

Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him. . . . I would know the words which he would answer me. . . . Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him (Job 23:2–14).

As we are tried through the crucible of adversity, we, too, must manifest the same confidence in the perfection and purpose of God. We must know who we are and what the purposes of God are in our lives—even to death.

The life and purpose of the Apostle Paul is likewise exemplary. Let us take note of his orientation.

I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you (Phil. 3:8–15).

When one remembers what the Apostle Paul experienced to carry out the will of God, the above expression is given an unfathomable depth of meaning. Take note of 2 Corinthians 11. Lesser men would have questioned the existence of a God, let alone wonder about His integrity and purpose. Human beings mentally fail when they use an arbitrary man-made standard by which all situations and conditions are judged.

Without doubt the singularity and unchanging nature of God's purpose, as manifested in the lives of chosen servants, is of the greatest significance. Without the mind of God human beings cannot be any part of Him. Since God is perfect, and Christ was a manifestation of that perfection—the wholeness of the way of God—those possessing the mind of God will exhibit the same faithful and unchanging purpose. Their personal lives will reflect that same uncompromising, faithful, and purposeful endeavor in all that they set their hands and minds to perform.

## **2. Oneness of Mind Within and Among Many**

Human beings, in order to justify the self, eulogize diversity of mind. Such is a virtual worshipful adoration for the natural differences of carnal minds. On the other hand, oneness of mind is a manifestation of a spiritual call, the rejection of the natural mind, and the presence of the undivided mind of Christ. How can the singularity of the mind of Christ be so diversely manifested in the lives of human beings, all of whom claim to be called and the possessors of the one mind of Christ? Logic and reason make mockery of such claims. Christ had but one mind, not many.

Human volition plays an integral part in the achievement of oneness of mind (1 Cor. 1:10). With the aid of the power of God's Holy Spirit it becomes the mental duty of the called servant to crucify the natural tendency of individualization and to conform to the revealed mind of God. Through experiences and trials, as well as the routine daily requirement of self-mastery and spiritual growth, the called must become joined together in an ever increasing manifestation of the oneness of the mind of Christ. Such a manifestation is truly the revelation of a miracle. As a spiritual orientation, such a display cannot be achieved short of the miracle working power of God. Any claims less than such oneness are at best deceptions, advanced in an arbitrary fashion to justify the self, and a display of mental human diversity—that only which is possible for natural minds.

So frequently God's demand for oneness of mind is ridiculed by those idolizing the diversity of human mind. Since God and Christ cannot be seen, the chosen servants of God are the recipients of that same ridicule. Remember the examples of Moses and the prophets. Even Christ Himself was the butt of such ridicule. He forewarned that any called of God and attempting to live by the same revelation and faith would likewise be condemned and hated. Even so, the facts do not change because of the rejection and ridicule of any mortal man. The truth is the truth and can never change. It is eternal and unchanging. Those called of God and who are faithful to that call are endeavoring to live by that same mind and will be joined together in that same mind.

Routinely and authoritatively the authors of the word of God emphasized the necessity of that oneness of mind (2 Cor. 13:11). It is the daily duty of the called of God to

measure their lives against that oneness revealed. Blind acceptance, and/or carnal orientations in relationship to concepts and beliefs is suicidal. All actions must be weighed against that which God promised to reveal in the last days. Once revealed, it becomes the duty of the called to pursue aggressively the necessity of mastering the tendency to turn to self and justify concepts of the natural mind. How can any of us put on perfection, gain comfort and assurance, become one in mind and heart, and live in requisite peace without positive and determined volition aided by the power of the mind of Christ?

As was the case with the Apostle Paul in his own day, so we, as the ministers of Christ today, hope and pray for steadfastness in one spirit and mind striving for the oneness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Oneness means just that—one in mind and heart. Division, each holding to his own conception, is a manifestation of carnality—not an evidence of the presence of God's Holy Spirit. Where the mind of Christ and God is, there, and there only, will be found the singleness promised to the faithful of these last days.

### **3. Orientation of Life**

What is our orientation in life—individually? No man exists without one—even if he is a derelict. In God the way is one, spiritually. In carnality, the ways are manifold. In the larger sense, then, each is either physically or spiritually oriented. Carnal claims are irrelevant. Spiritual claims are certified by definitive action. What is irrefutable proof that one is truly spiritual in orientation?

In this context, the prophet Isaiah gave much excellent advice and instruction. He said: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" (Isa. 26:3–4). For those who implicitly trust God, regardless of trials and troubles, the orientation is of peace and confidence. No doubt or worry exists. Confidence is pervasive. The root of such confidence is unalterable belief and a mind which remains fixed upon God and His purposes. Such confidence gives everlasting peace and strength.

What a paradox! In the last days, there are some who once knew God and obediently walked in the way of life delivered. In the spiritual sense of the concept of "departure," they turned away from God and found the remembrance of that way offensive even to the point of deliberately attempting to put the true recognition of God out of their minds (Rom. 1:28). Though they retained the name of "God" they fashioned concepts of their own, remaining religious in name only and were rejected by God and given over to a reprobate mind. Their orientation was once again carnal, this time, however, spiced with contempt, hatefulness, and an utter rejection of the way which they once advocated and practiced. Their true fate will be a startling and horrifying revelation at the appointed time.

Once called, the orientation of the faithful must remain spiritual. They must set their affection on heavenly things, not on things of this earth (Col. 3:1–2). Their continuing fruits will be the fruits of the Spirit; not the works of the flesh. And by those fruits borne, the individual can be known.

#### **4. Consistency Regardless of Environment**

We all have heard about "fair-weather Christians." When all goes well it is not hard to live according to a predetermined standard. The difficulty arises when that standard demands actions contrary to the dictates of minds and hearts. What, under better circumstances, seemed so easy now becomes a fight—a fight which all too frequently is lost by mere mortal men. Natural minds become agitated. Emotions scream for release—verbalized or manifested in other overt human actions.

The manifestation of the true spirit of conversion and righteousness is seen in an uncompromising, settled, non-abrasive manner regardless of the waves of despair, hate, contempt, or whatever the natural environment presents. The true spirit is seen in a spirit of self-control and self-discipline. Anger, resentment, and bitter verbalizations are manifestations of a carnal nature. When, and if, any one called of God manifests such traits, at that moment he is not in the least manifesting the nature and character of God—it is a situation necessitating repentance—an act of apology to God and a turning away from actions unbecoming to one professing to do the will of God.

Let us note a historical example of the character of God manifested in the environment of human belligerence (Neh. 4:4–6). The involved people knew their work and purpose. They diligently set themselves to the task at hand. Their environment and hateful circumstances with which they were confronted they left in the hands of God. They prayed about the problems at hand and then proceeded with responsibility in faith and confidence. God needs no assistance from human beings in carrying out His duties. The people were called upon to build the wall around Jerusalem. Taking care of those who attempt to impede the called from performing God-given responsibility belongs to God alone. In typical fashion, those called of God to perform a work today must focus their attention upon that responsibility—not on the waves of hatefulness manifested by the enemies of that purpose. The called lose their perspective only when emotions rage and demands of the flesh and carnal mind are given attention instead of the spiritual decrees of God. Real character and purpose are manifested only when the nature and character of the individual remains benevolent, kind, purposeful—yet resolute regardless of the prevailing environment.

How do the conditions of the above example apply to us—both of those within the body as well as those outside of the body? The Apostle Peter was inspired to give special instruction relevant to this trial. We are instructed: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having

compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Pet. 3:8–9). We are called to manifest a nature and orientation considerably different to that one with which we are naturally born. Regardless of the nature of the trials, or from whom they may come, we, as the called, are not at liberty to manifest the natural emotional tendencies of the flesh. The mind of God is assured, knowledgeable, confident. It is a controlled mind. It does not react in any erratic manner.

## **5. Carriage and Manner of Life**

Cockiness and irascibility are not of God. But confidence and a demeanor of certainty, assurance, and positiveness are. With perfect knowledge and unlimited power why should doubt efface the character and orientation of God? That mind is the mind with which Christ was endowed during His earthly time. However, when prevailing in the lives of human beings, including Christ, that same mind recognizes the natural limitations of physical bodies and the authoritative responsibilities given to each one. According to Paul the all-inclusive power and ability of the mind of God is carefully parceled out when bequeathed to men. No man can employ the full powers and abilities of God. Even so, the general orientation, regardless of the specific duties assigned, is the same. The carriage of one endowed with that mind is one of assurance, confidence, faith. It is oriented to the things of the spirit (Rom. 8:5). Conversely, it abhors the things of the flesh.

Being of the Spirit, it wallows not in doubt or uncertainty (James 1:8; 4:8). It is manifested in a walk of faith, tempered with all compassion, mercy, kindness—genuine sensitivity to the needs, hurts, and general feelings of others. It is a mind which loved the whole world. A mind which was willing to give up a Son in order to redeem created man.

It is a resolute and determined mind—a mind which cannot be evil—affected by the arguments and clever deceits of wrongly inspired men. It is a mind which manifests unwavering faith and direction at all times—regardless of the pressures (2 Cor. 11:3). Since there is not even a hint of change in the mind of God (James 1:17), surely it will manifest that same characteristic in the lives of all who are truly endowed with it—those to whom the way of life has been revealed.

Even in physical areas of our tangible lives that mind will be manifested. That same confidence and assurance gives direction and definition to our lives (Luke 12:29). There is no place for worry, frustration, doubt, unhealthy concern, or the exhibition of any of the weaknesses of flesh. The big question: Just how much of the mind of God do we really possess? It is the duty of each one to daily evaluate himself.

## **6. Contempt, Disgust for the Immoral, Loose, and Debauched Ways of Humankind—Society as a Whole**

The common human tendency is to adapt to one's surroundings. Since the natural tendency of man is toward degeneration and dissipation, it is not long before the majority will be practicing, and accepting as normal, the deviate inclinations of flesh. Worse yet is the powerful desire on the part of even those who reject such immoral behavior to conform to one's surroundings though not actively practicing those deviate tendencies—the live and let live philosophy. In minor ways there is some merit to the concept. Yet, we must remember that the called possess the mind of God. How does the mind of God react to such filth and vileness? Are there any examples of God's behavior in such circumstances? Indeed there are!

Let us take a look at one example of God's reaction to the abominable lifestyle of man. In a classic type of marriage—youth growing to young adulthood, preparation for marriage, and finally the marriage itself—God evaluates the attitude and orientation of ancient Israel (Ezek. 23:1–21). Israel had lived very impure, abominable, lives. Yet, in time God had cleaned them up and entered into a marriage relationship. Tragically, a beginning lifestyle often prevails even into marriage. Promises are meaningless unless there is both character and a will to perform. Israel lacked both. Therefore, it was not long before she was committing every sort of sordid spiritual adultery. The consequences were manifested in a plethora of evils and then finally captivity. When brutalized, it was not long before Israel cried out for deliverance. God heard and answered her request. Being flesh, she soon forgot the blessing of liberty and quickly fell into a habit of perversion and vileness. The result was an enhancement of the evils and ills prognosticated for rebellion against God. Even those Israel courted and hoped to gain by sacrifice turned against her, abusing her in every conceivable manner.

Encompassed in the spiritual significance of adultery and harlotry is every vile and abominable practice generated by men and pursued by all—both physically and spiritually. How man views sins and/or wrongs is immaterial. Generally what man calls acceptable is utterly immoral and debauched in the eyes of God. If, therefore, the called of God do, indeed, have the mind of God, they in like manner will abhor and recoil at the stench of prevailing perversion and filth. And this revulsion is manifest toward every practice of men—religiously, politically, socially, economically, and others.

Though most of the called of God are not called upon to publicly express their abhorrence and contempt for the practices of mankind, nonetheless, their hearts and minds are strongly affected—manifesting strong feelings about such practices. If one loves the ways of the world he cannot really love the truth of God. In like manner, if one strongly loves the ways of God—the truth—he cannot help but have strong feelings of revulsion toward the practices of vile men.

## 7. Soundness of Mind and Heart

In many ways the Bible portrays man as being unstable and perverse. He is not consistent—even in error. In fact, most men bow before the concept of "situation ethics." That is, he wants the freedom to change at any given moment. Such "freedom," he thinks, maximizes his personal advantage—regardless of the situation.

Conversely, real truth constrains. By it men are bound and held captive to principle, honesty, integrity. Such character is outside of the realm of possibility for unconverted man. However, those called of God—having received the Holy Spirit—are empowered to live sound, consistent, lives. They, as did Christ, can live unchanging, purposeful, lives.

In this respect, the life of Solomon can be quite exemplary. Let us note the instructions God gave him regarding a specific work delivered to him—the building of the House of God (1 Chron. 28:9–10):

And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong and do it.

The way of life had been delivered to Solomon. Now the ability to remain sound in faith and purpose was being emphasized. The roots of perversion are the subtle thoughts of mind which Solomon had to watch. He was under the constraint of remaining consistent in that which had been delivered to him.

Soundness of mind and heart is seen in consistency, unalterable purpose, and a love for principle. Erratic orientation and emotional outburst are antithetical to the nature and character of God. His is a resolute and purposeful mind. People who are existing in a state of constant change and revision are not manifesting any part of the mind of God. Such is a manifestation of the mind of the flesh.

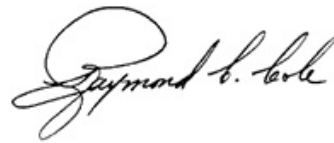
The first seven of the fourteen basic traits and characteristics of the mind of God have been addressed. The remaining seven points will be covered in the February 1993 *Monthly Letter*. At this juncture, let us stress the need to think seriously about that which has been given. Too often, as human beings, we fail in various tests because we have not given sufficient thought to the matters with which we are confronted. In other words, if we have not established resolutely what we do know and believe, we are prey to doubt and agitation. And what we do know cannot change in the future because of some traumatic onslaught.

For the hope of salvation, have faith and *know*. Do not waver or evidence any form of doubt. Such behavior does not proceed from the perfect mind of God.

All our love and thoughts of kindness once again. You are ever in our prayers. May God richly bless and protect you all as you more perfectly yield yourselves into the loving hands of God and His faithful Son, Jesus Christ.

You are priceless to God, Christ, and to us.

Much love always,

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