

Church of God, The Eternal

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Manifestations of the Mind of God—Part II

February 1993

Dear Brethren,

In a previous *Monthly Letter*—covering the manifestations of the mind of God—seven of those manifestations were explained. For this issue we hope to complete the subject—the remaining seven concepts. Those first seven concepts are: Singularity of Purpose—In Work, Life, Endeavor; Oneness of Mind Within and Among Many; Orientation of Life; Consistency Regardless of Environment; Carriage and Manner of Life; Contempt, Disgust for the Immoral, Loose, and Debauched Ways of Humankind—Society as a Whole; and Soundness of Mind and Heart.

8. Total Commitment

A simple cursory observation of the masses of humanity will quickly reveal the fact that few, indeed, are wholly, unequivocally, determinedly oriented to a specific objective in life. Perhaps this is warranted in physical life when we are compelled to realize and at some time admit natural man is so frequently wrong and must make adjustments in direction. However, such a concept spiritually—as it relates to the way of life delivered—is totally erroneous. God is perfect in all things. His Son Jesus Christ was the personification of that perfection in the flesh. Following the resurrection that unchanging life was to return to this earth, taking up residency in the lives of those called and in turn manifesting that same unchanging character.

Of course, men must change. They are imperfect. Spiritual growth is a vital necessity. However the degree to which God has delivered His priceless way to those called, they are under the stern obligation to remain implicitly faithful to that which was delivered. The called of God know, when called, who they are and the way delivered. They do not refuse to grow, "add thereto," but they will refuse to compromise their faith, their spiritual begettal at the time of baptism—a time when they confessed they knew Christ and were joyously receiving Him, and the unalterable way they heard. The greatest enemy of truth is the rationalistic mind of man (2 Cor. 10:4–5; Prov. 16:25, 2). Man wants to see "proof," "evidence"—a physical orientation (compare Heb. 11:1; 2 Cor. 4:18; 1 Cor. 2:14; Deut. 29:29).

Implicit and unalterable commitment to what the natural man cannot see or understand is the height of foolishness to him. He cannot grow nor appreciate total commitment as manifested by those whose faith does not waver and who would rather die than compromise that faith. The carnal who have never known—to whom the way has never been revealed—are not to be blamed. They cannot be held accountable for that which has never been revealed to them. Those who will suffer the consequence of faithlessness are those to whom the faith was once delivered but could not for many and varied "reasons" retain an originally tried and true faith. Doubts surfaced! A return to fleshly confidence is manifested in diverse ways.

A stark contrast is manifested between those who have lost faith and those who trust their call, acceptance of the truth, baptism and begetting, and growth in the truth. Total commitment, uncompromising faith, and attention to personal mastery are the hallmarks of those in whom the Holy Spirit works, those in whom the unchanging will of God is being perfected (Matt. 22:37).

How is it possible for those in whom is the unchanging will of God to vacillate, change? When any change occurs there of necessity must be a corresponding rationalization by which worldly concepts and practices *seem* to be acceptable. Such a practice is no different from that which occurs in the minds and hearts of the sincere, yet deceived, uncalled. Rationalization is the fruit, work, of the flesh. Unchanging continuity is the fruit of the Spirit. Because of the manifestation of the Spirit such an absolute conviction, total commitment to truth is possible. Acceptance of the revealed Christ—the Truth—is without reservation or doubt.

Added to the above concept, yet distinct in its own right is the next concept which manifests the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. A test which is, indeed, one of the most difficult of requirements imposed upon carnal man.

9. Recognition of Carnality—Fleshly Behavior

A real recognition of one's true self is a lot more than a mere expression of words. It manifests itself in an abhorrence for, a total distrust of, all inclinations and mental impulses—thoughts, concepts, interests—and a rejection of that which seems so right to the natural mind. An orientation of this dimension does not, indeed, cannot come from anything less than a history of intense trial and suffering which is translated into a thorough rejection of natural haughtiness, arrogance, high-mindedness, and hatefulness. Until the natural view of self is reduced or obliterated it is impossible to see what lies beyond—what realms of possibility and reality lie beyond the self. A couple of examples ought to give us at least a partial insight into this concept. Men by nature are a mixture of good and evil (Gen. 2:9; 3:4–11). Tragically, the good inherent in them became the base of most, if not all, the

conceptual deceptions with which they have become blinded to their own complete hopeless condition, frailty, and unworthiness. The first example of absolute and total helplessness is that of Job. In his own mind he had determined an acceptable orientation. He had chosen the way of "good." He was convinced of his own complete worthiness. God recognized this condition. He said, ". . . unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (Job 1:8) At this juncture, little did Job realize a fundamental weakness of character existed in him. But, Satan did. He knew that Job would negatively respond to trials and difficulties—anything which disrupted his benevolent life afforded by the kind intervention of God. God knew this weakness, also. There can be little reason other than that knowledge of God for the terrible trials which followed. The severity of the trials were made necessary because of the depth of Job's satisfaction with himself and his relationship with God. Until really tried, he had no idea of what weak and indifferent traits prevailed in the recesses of his natural mind.

For reason and by His express permission, Job was tried by God. Satan's purpose was to plague and create ill for Job. Little did he realize that by the same trials and life difficulties which Satan hoped would destroy Job, God brought about a change of orientation, refinement of character, and a real recognition of the true self. Resident in the natural life of Job were the necessary ingredients out of which and by which the required processes could bring about both the philosophical and orientation changes. The necessary additions were the Spirit of God and character building trials. In the end, the recognition of self and the real unfeigned knowledge of God was made possible (Job 42:5–6). In retrospect Job looked back over his life, evaluating word and deed, and came to the conclusion "I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not" (Job 42:3). By these trials two things had been accomplished. He truly recognized the low baseness of carnality—self; and he could really see and understand what God is. The one is contingent upon the other. Recognition of self is impossible without a genuine recognition of God.

The second example is that of David. The basic ingredients of character existed in his mind, heart, and body. Through the enormity of test and trial David's character was produced and refined. He came to grasp fully the real depth of his baseness, unworthiness, and carnality. At the same time he became aware of the glory, greatness, and character of God. As he recognized the baseness of self he was enabled to see the goodness of God. These concepts are illuminatingly expressed frequently in many chapters of the book of Psalms; but special emphasis is laid on Psalm 119. Through trial, persecution, and other difficulties David came to know both God and himself. Such recognition is possible only through the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. That recognition is far more than a mere verbalization of empty, useless, words. It is a recognition of the true nature of self—manifested in a true contempt (abhorrence) for self—mind, heart, and body.

Many years later, the Apostle Paul was inspired to express it this way: "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13). To crucify the self one must first recognize and condemn it. If we do not recognize it, we are condemned to live according to the innate, natural dictates of that flesh—mind and body. A significant manifestation of the real working of God's Spirit in our lives is a loathing hate for *all* manifestations of the carnal self. Paul beautifully explained the whole process when writing to the Ephesian church (Eph. 4:17–24). When truly converted there is a recognition of the self accompanied with a diligent effort to destroy it. At the same time there is a constructive effort manifested in the building of a new character—new man. The carnal mind cannot recognize and destroy itself. An outside influence is required. This influence is achieved by a promise given to us. The promise of the life—the mind—of Christ living in us (Phil. 2:2–8). With that mind both destruction and construction are possible. The physical characteristics of men can be recognized and destroyed. And, the life of Christ can be developed in us.

By judicious watchfulness, there need be no resurgence of the self—carnality. By remembering what we are—continually recognizing the reality of it—we can avoid the pitfall of self-deception (compare 1 Pet. 1:13 and James 1:22–25). The truly called and faithful of God recognize, and will continue to recognize, flesh for what it is. A primary manifestation of one called of God and faithful to that call is an unbiased admission of what carnality is. Few find the power or the courage to fulfill this requirement. However, the arrogantly deceived—despite a claim of being called themselves, lose no opportunity to ridicule and verbally persecute those who will to crucify the self. They have no other avenue by which to justify their own failure.

10. Speech—That Manifestation Which Removes All Doubt

The tenth manifestation of the indwelling mind of God is one which is consistently visible. To one properly attuned this visible manifestation speaks clearly of orientation and purpose. It reveals the manifold deceptions humanly generated to soften or evade altogether the duty of change. That manifestation is the vehicle with which we convey ideas, thoughts, feelings—good or bad, human contempt, ridicule, contention, strife, and hatefulness. That vehicle is speech.

By the miracle of speech man is greatly differentiated from animals and all other physical creations of God. Men are able to communicate with one another. Having this ability it does not take long for individuals to manifest which orientation predominates in their lives. What man says merely reflects what exists in hearts and minds (Prov. 23:7). It is a simple means of externally revealing that which exists internally.

Speech is an ability created by God. Though many animals and other life forms do communicate in some limited manner, only man can think, plan, and verbally communicate. As a gift of unusual power man becomes chargeable for the proper, acceptable, usage of that capability. His words can be salutary, beneficial, encouraging, and soothing, or strident, abusive, hateful, deceitful, and cutting. Societies and whole empires have both risen and fallen on the basis of language. Both the power of life and death reside in speech capability. By communication the secrets of hearts and minds are revealed. As such a power its usage must be employed wisely and discreetly. How many decisions are made on the basis of misunderstandings? How many have arrived at erroneous conclusions based on prejudice, ethnicity, hurt feelings, self-aggrandizement, and a host of other foundationless motivations? Certainly God never intended that human beings use that power for injury of others. Yet, a power of good must always have a flip side—the opposite of good. Only character manifested in the right choice reveals the proper orientation of life and purpose.

In all of God's creation, with the exception of angels and men, character building in the employment of choice is not possible. Responses are intuitive, rote, automatic—built in based on the will, design, and purpose of the Creator. Water, wind, storm all do exactly what God designed them to do (Psa. 148). Animals, birds, fish all do what God planned. What we see in the case of all these creations is a manifestation of the mind of the Creator. By set circumstances they obey and honor their Creator. Such order and obedience are visibly and gloriously manifested in the movements of the astral bodies (Psa. 19:1–6). This is a manifestation of the power of control God built into specific bodies (Gen. 1:14–18).

Unique among all of God's creation is man—a created being capable of choice. He can obey his Creator—not by intuition, but by will. Or, he can disobey by choice and pay the consequence. Out of a far-flung array of life, why did God make man alone subject to choice? Glorious indeed is faithful obedience for all of God's creatures. The glory of an obedient universe—an obedience which nearly all humanity takes for granted. Yet, by reason of a glory which excels, the physical creation is deemed as nothing. What God wanted is an obedience by choice—a manifestation of the same character He and His Son Jesus Christ manifest. Such is real glory, not a constructed glory based on specific and limited capabilities. It is a glory which can be achieved only in the reproduction of God Himself. Such beings obey by decision not rote. What glory is manifested when a power of rebellion is resisted, brought into subjugation, and a greater power of wise choice is pursued. Can that glory and satisfaction be much different from that experienced by parents who begin to see principles of good pay dividends in the lives of their children?

Why did God give men the ability to speak? Was it so they could curse God and man? To lie and deceive? To boast and malign? If there is one thing we all should have learned during the long existence of mankind here on earth, the words which proceed from the mouths of men cannot be taken at face value. Most people who find themselves in positions where they must judge the words of men find themselves tempering all they hear,

or see written, in some effort to arrive at an approximation of the real values involved. Only after long acquaintance and a consistent record of verbal integrity does anyone feel comfortable in accepting spoken words at their face value. When such integrity is manifested it is highly regarded by men.

Speech is a gift of God. It was not given for the purpose of abuse—of God or man—or for personal aggrandizement of self. It is given as a marvelous gift of communication. An ability to extol God and to express love and respect to both God and men. It is given so that as individuals we can express our abhorrence and contempt of self to God. It is impossible for a carnal orientation and a true and genuine spiritual orientation to proceed from the same well-spring of a human heart. The words which proceed from our mouths are indicative of the orientation of heart.

Since man is born with a natural, carnal orientation of heart and mind, it is impossible for him to manifest a genuine spiritual orientation. Therefore, when an individual exhibits genuine spiritual fruits it is certain some miraculous orientation has occurred in that life. He has been called and is manifesting the fruits of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Such manifestations are an absolute proof of the overriding mind of God manifested in the life of that individual.

Armed with the above knowledge, it is possible to ascertain clearly into which of three categories any individual may fall. Those three categories are the uncalled, the called of God, and those who attempt to have it both ways—live lives with one foot in the world and the other one in the truth. Before the final judgment determined by God, every man will be forced to make an ultimate decision. He will be forced to choose either the truth of God or the way of the world.

Need any of us stand in doubt about the manifestation of the mind of God? Indeed, we do not. The specifics are clearly spelled out in the word of God—the Bible. For a beginning read James 3:1–18 and Proverbs 29:11.

11. Recognition of Our Own Orientation

Many philosophical statements have been uttered or written about man's own recognition of himself. "Know thyself." "Be true to the inner-self," and many more. Short of God's personal intervention in our lives, is it really possible for any man/woman to know the self? Such knowledge is in reality a part of the marvelous revelation of God. What the philosophers throughout the history of humankind have encouraged us to know is not humanly possible. This, however, does not mean men have not, under the influence of the god of this world—Satan, rationalized the self. These rationalizations are an integral part of the colossal blindness prevailing upon minds and hearts. Concepts highly touted,

believed, and espoused, yet wrong. Very wrong! For if one uses an incorrect yardstick, how is it possible to come to an accurate conclusion? The uncalled do not possess the absolute yardstick by which to judge. They have not had revealed to them the real mind and heart of the flesh upon which their judgments are predicated. How can they legitimately judge the orientation of man?

A careful analysis of the facts involved makes it plain to the converted mind that an initial knowledge of the real self is essential before any man is in a position to evaluate himself or the yardstick by which he is judged. With conversion comes the shocking realization that a deceptive and colored concept of self is a far cry from the view of his Maker and the reality of what he is. With this realization comes, also, the knowledge that no man—aside from one called, converted, and empowered by the Holy Spirit—is rightly capable of evaluating godly orientations and purposes. That is, only one called and to whom the knowledge of God is given is in a position to correctly evaluate the presence of God, His Son Jesus Christ and/or the Holy Spirit. Therefore, for one not called to condemn and hold one in contempt who is truly called of God is, indeed, the height of foolishness and absurdity. One truly called of God, in whom exists the power of the Holy Spirit, needs no condemnation by another. He condemns himself. He knows and admits what he is. He views himself from the perspective of God. And God knows that all mankind is made of flesh and that in it dwells no good thing. The Apostle Paul said: "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Rom. 12:16). The natural mind is individualistic. It is always right in its own sight. Natural minds have an exalted opinion of themselves. They revel in the mysterious, the unusual, and that which appeals to the ego of self. Invariably natural minds will stratify from each other on the basis of preconceived notions of value—theirs and others. Each will leave an impression of superiority based on those arbitrarily drawn lines.

For the called, it is not difficult to see the manifestations of such carnality. Nor is it difficult to comprehend the miraculous change in the lives of those in whom the Holy Spirit of God works. Their fruits reveal the orientation. The called of God exist in one spirit and mind. They believe and know the same things. They are creators of peace, harmony, and accord. They are humble and recognize that any perceived differences among men are only in degree and not in intrinsic worth. They recognize the wretchings of natural human minds. Yes, indeed, the truly called of God see the self for what it is worth. Absolutely nothing! And for that reason, like Job, they have come to loathe the self. They repent before God in sackcloth and ashes. At the same time they know God for what He is. The Eternal God of glory, power, and majesty.

Only by seeing how worthless and frail man is, can one begin to see how great and majestic God is. For the called, it is not hard to see the difference. They know what they are, and admit it to God.

12. Responses Are Spiritual—Not Carnal

Are we not accustomed to giving direction to our lives on the basis of real or perceived responses of others? When encountering a wrathful man, is not judicious care warranted? When addressing a known and hateful gossip does not one who is wise exercise considerable constraint in words uttered? Indeed, we all act and react on the basis of both real and perceived knowledge. Those responses are what God defines as the works of the flesh—the fruits of carnality. Men do not study to respond according to the pulls and orientations of the flesh. Those responses come spontaneously. Even, at times, to the consternation and distress of the affected individual. We all know of times when we could not believe we behaved as we did. We are forced to recognize that the natural heart and mind vented themselves based not on a judgment orientation but rather on the basis of inherent carnality.

It is this spontaneous carnal response which the called of God must overcome. How? How is it possible for a natural man to become something which he is not by birth? Only by the promised gift and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is it possible for anyone to become that which he was not at physical birth. It is entirely possible for even natural man to manifest—by education, training, personalized will, and a desire to become conformable to some societal standard—a beneficent and kindly orientation. This orientation, however, is considerably short of what is required for the called of God. To possess the very nature and character of God, man must respond spiritually—a response which is as natural and spontaneous as that which he possesses carnally. Biblically it is referred to as having the laws and ways of God written upon the fleshly tables of the heart and inscribed into the very fabric of the mind (Heb. 8 and 10).

At the beginning of one's call, conversion is a replacement philosophy. When injured, the called one often responds carnally but makes an almost immediate mental change. As he continues to work on himself, the conversion reaction occurs more quickly, is of deeper significance, and the spiritual orientation lasts for a longer period of time. In the process of time, if the Holy Spirit is growing and maturing within us, the response should be natural and immediate. How one called of God reacts to the stimuli of life is an absolute determinant of one's orientation. A fleshly orientation will produce carnal fruits. A spiritual orientation will always produce spiritual fruits. Therefore, by the fruits borne will any individual be known. Both good and bad water cannot come from the same well. It is equally impossible for both carnal and spiritual fruits to proceed from the same individual. Our spontaneous responses tell the whole story.

13. A Spiritual Learning Capability

The mind of flesh is capable of comprehending physical knowledge. By study, experimentation, and testing, man is capable of learning many things which exist in the

physical realm. He may become brilliant, accomplished, and successful in such knowledge. Even so, he is totally illiterate in spiritual matters. These are areas of knowledge beyond the comprehension of the natural mind. He cannot know them.

Based on the above factors it is obvious the carnal mind devoid of God's Holy Spirit, regardless of effort and/or desire, cannot acquire any significant knowledge of the spiritual realm. Christ called such blindness darkness. The physical world exists, and has existed, in such blindness from the beginning of time. With a call from God the spiritual darkness is lifted; those so called can for the first time begin to comprehend spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14–16). A most significant and extremely important manifestation of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is the spiritual learning capability of that mind. An argumentative orientation is not a manifestation of a spiritual orientation. On the contrary, that is a work of the flesh—carnality—the mind of the flesh. One who rebels against revealed truths of God is not manifesting a spiritual orientation. On the other hand one who creates peace, strives for the oneness of the mind of Jesus Christ, lives a faithful and joyous life daily, manifests a conciliatory spirit toward his fellow men is uncompromising in that truth which God only can give. He manifests substantial self-control as a walking and living example of the Holy Spirit in action. He grows in the knowledge of true spiritual things; yet, he does not change or pervert that which God revealed. The truly called can tell the difference; they can judge all things—both things of the flesh and those of the Spirit. Seeing only from a physical perspective, the uncalled will argue about spiritual things. Those called of God, those who know all things, will understand the problems of those who exist in the darkness of flesh and will therefore refuse to argue or contend.

No manifestation of the Spirit is more significant than the above issue. Enlightenment generates understanding. Why contend with one who cannot see or comprehend?

14. Recognition of Station

The spiritual work occurring here on earth is the re-creation of the body of Jesus Christ. Since He possessed but one body when walking on this earth approximately two thousand years ago, the spiritual counterpart is but one body today. That body is a functional and organically constructed entity. It is not a hodgepodge of conflicting concepts and activities. Being one, there obviously is order and structure. Those truly called of God, in whom the Spirit of God is working, *recognize* stations and responsibilities (1 Cor. 12:11, 18, 28). Those who feign God's call may argue and contend. Those truly called and positioned according to the will of God *know*. The argumentative may contend with the truly called as they did with Christ. But, those who know will not stoop to the manifestations of the flesh. Is it possible that God could call servants to be a part of the re-creation of the body of Christ and leave them ignorant of their responsibility? Would not

that be a dereliction on the part of God? Truly, those called of God know who they are and what responsibilities they must bear. God is not the author of confusion. Such a condition proceeds from Satan—one who would induce any one of us to resist the will and purpose of God. Those truly called of God know who they are and they know, by fruits borne, others who compose specific parts of that recreated body. The hand recognizes the foot. The foot recognizes the hand. They both recognize the head. And the head recognizes every other member in the body. When we recognize specific members, we are automatically recognizing specific responsibilities. We should have no difficulty understanding responsibility when we recognize a hand. A hand is designed and created to perform specific duties. Trouble surfaces only when one designed to be a hand desires to become a foot. Those truly called of God and who are honest in their endeavors—fulfilling the specific will of the Father—recognize their stations and responsibilities. They exist in accord and agreement.

The ultimate is perfection in oneness—the same mind and heart. Though presently existing in the flesh, the thoroughly converted are struggling daily to manifest greater and greater accord and agreement. That accord and oneness are visibly apparent in the coalescing of the spiritual body into the perfect antitype of the physical body. In a healthy body each member knows its place and function.

Let the significance of the fourteen points covered in these two letters take deep and purposeful root. Let us never rationalize. On the contrary, is it possible for us to allow the full depth and weight of the unalterable literal meaning of these words to mightily influence and give direction to our lives? True and genuine faith and conviction allow nothing less.

With prayers and hopes of total and absolute faith we remain your servants in Christ. Let us be most careful and judicious about our words. By them we are being tried on a daily basis. There are times when we simply do not know the will of God. We need to patiently await answers from God (Lev. 24:12). Brashness of mind most assuredly will cause us to sin grievously (Num. 16:30).

Our joy and abundance of life come from faithful obedience to these things which we know (John 13:17). The fruits borne are the indication of conviction and orientation (1 John 3:3). Let us pray that none of us shall be losers at the time of Christ's return.

Much love always—your servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Raymond C. Cole