

Church of God, The Eternal

P. O. Box 775
Eugene, Oregon 97440
www.cogeternal.org

The late Raymond C. Cole
Founding Pastor
Jon W. Brisby
Pastor, Director

Offices in:
United States
Philippines
Switzerland

The Litz Family Rediscovered the Faith Once Delivered

February 2004

Dear Brethren:

Greetings to all of you from the eight of us here in Minnesota. We all had the most enjoyable Feast of Tabernacles this year. I pray that your Feast was as enjoyable as ours was in Townsend, Tennessee. It was sure good to hear the plain, unchangeable truth preached again which we first heard from Mr. Armstrong.

We are all blessed to have a loyal minister like Mr. Brisby who is determined to hold onto that truth that was once delivered. We can really appreciate that when we have been part of an apostate, changing church for so long.

Change Leads to More Change

At first we thought it was good to change some things but soon realized that change just led to more and more change so that one could hardly recognize the truth anymore. There was a time in the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) in the late 1980s when the doctrines were changing so rapidly there was a joke going around that any literature over three months old was considered dissident literature. It got so bad that I did not know from what to preach anymore. So I stuck to the Bible, but that began to be attacked by those "learned scholars" and the scriptures that were so clear when taught by Mr. Armstrong now were becoming very confusing.

One "Greek philosopher" from Pasadena who spoke on the nature of God was very confusing to me. You might say it was "all Greek to me." He, because of his great wisdom, was teaching a new understanding about the nature of God and what God was. I still have those twelve tapes, and I pulled one out just to listen to the beginning of it. I was amazed! It started out with a question the people asked the scholar: "How can we be a light to the world when your new teaching leaves most of us in darkness and confusion? God is not the author of confusion: 1 Corinthians 14:33. The Bible says to the Greek their wisdom is their folly." Then everyone

roared with laughter. From then on the study went totally into confusion, that is if you were one who was trying to hang onto the truth.

I received those twelve tapes, and I was instructed by the ministry to study them because I was on the speaking list. All those on the speaking list were encouraged to go through the tapes. What I heard on those tapes was the teaching of the Trinity. When the scholar was challenged, "Well, you are just teaching the Trinity," he insisted that it was not the Trinity, but a deeper understanding of what God was. But after four to five tapes I stopped listening because of the confusion that it was causing me. Deep confusion. He was the only man I knew that could teach the Trinity doctrine and then turn around and try to explain that it was *not* the Trinity doctrine that he was teaching. Consequently, many of God's people gave up the truth for a lie because they thought they were getting something better. But it was not better. God's people gave up the truth for a lie!

As time went on, changes kept coming until by the 1990s you could work on the seventh day of the week and keep Sunday, the first day of the week, as the Sabbath. You did not even have to change jobs anymore if you worked on Saturday. I remember one man came to me after working on the Sabbath and said that it must be OK because God did not strike him dead. I told him it was only because of God's great mercy.

Then as time continued, Sunday became the "new understanding" of the Sabbath. Next, the Holy Days went out and back came Christmas and Easter and all of the holidays. It became easier and easier as time went on to become part of the Worldwide Church of God under the disguise of growing in grace and knowledge. We were just growing in grace and knowledge they said, while they destroyed the very foundation that Mr. Armstrong had laid.

You did not even have to come out of the world in the 1990s. You could embrace the teachings of just about any church that was out there because people were told God was working in all of these churches and that you could be part of any one of them. And so the deception went on and the people began to leave in droves.

The law, the Sabbath, and the Holy Days were done away, and now all you had to do was believe in Jesus Christ and accept Him as your personal savior. Accept Christ into your heart because He did it all for you and you do not have to do anything. No works involved on our part, just believe in the name of Jesus Christ. Sorry, I just do not believe it! Because I came out of that vomit that the world had to offer many years ago, and I was not about to go back into it. When we came into God's church, we came out of that slop.

Some people even threw their old Bibles away and bought new ones because of all the "deceptive" markings from Mr. Armstrong they had written in them. It was hard to believe there were so many that were eager to give up the truth so quickly.

The Body Returns to the World's Pollutions

In the 1990s I witnessed the church raised up by Mr. Armstrong acting like a dog (an unconverted gentile) going right back to the vomit that it came out of. Hard to believe is it not? That was because they did not love the truth enough to hang on to it. Many people began to rise up teaching a different gospel just as it says in Galatians.

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:6–8) [*New King James Version* throughout].

And it is repeated in verse 9—a double curse:

As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ (Galatians 1:9–10).

So when the doctrines of divorce and remarriage and Pentecost were changed, people were happy. They were pleased, but was that pleasing to God? Notice in 2 Timothy 3 what would happen at the end time. I often applied this to the world, but now I can see that this letter was to the church and Timothy is talking about things that would happen right within the body.

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: [or stressful times will come] For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers . . . (2 Timothy 3:1–2).

Blasphemers are those who profess to know Christ but they deny Him in their own behavior. They say, "I believe in Christ" but they do not do what He tells them; they do not live like Christ. We saw that in the church.

. . . disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors [not holding to the faith that was once delivered], headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God [the church became a social club], having a form of godliness but denying its power [in other words, those that did not live their convictions, or live their religion]. And from such people turn away! [Timothy is saying come out from them or you will get defiled by them, and many did.] For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives [How do you make someone

captive—you take them into captivity to false doctrines and false teachings that make them slaves to sin again.] . . . of gullible women [or churches led by men] loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth [the truth that was once revealed]. Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses [Who are these two people? I looked them up. These were the two Egyptian magicians who tried to duplicate Moses' miracles. These two magicians resisted Moses], so do these also resist the truth [ones in the church], men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was. (2 Timothy 3:2–9).

Eventually you will see that the folly of all these ministers out there will be made known, and like Mr. Raymond Cole said, there will be some embarrassed people.

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived [this is referring to evil men and impostors right in the church]. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them [from Herbert W. Armstrong], and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:10–15).

We can see there was a great falling away in the church; all these troubles were happening right within the church.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work [this was something which was not happening in the church because of all the back-sliding and false doctrine] (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Turn back a page to 2 Timothy 1:6–7:

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear [some groups out there use fear as a motivator to obey God—it does not work], but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

How do we come to a sound mind? By going back to the faith once delivered. (Reading from an article from Church of God, The Eternal entitled, "*What Is the Faith Once Delivered?*"):

The "faith once delivered" must [1] include knowledge of man's inadequacy in relationship to God and how to overcome that inadequacy. [2] It must reveal what God is and what man is to become. [3] It must give instruction regarding what man must do to gain that purpose. That instruction is the revealed truth concerning repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, spiritual growth, enduring to the end, and personal overcoming. [4] It must reveal the basis of character, the foundational precepts of God's Law, and obedience to every word of God. These include the Sabbath, the Holy Days, the Ten Commandments, and the judgments and precepts of God. . . . Those who argue that anyone can come to an understanding of these foundational precepts through "scholarship" must answer Christ's statement, ". . . for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

God Must Reveal Truth Before Men Can Comprehend

Notice that many prophets and righteous men could not understand though they searched the Scriptures. The reason they could not understand is that it was not revealed to them. Just as we cannot understand truth unless God reveals it to us—the faith once delivered.

But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:9–10).

The truth was revealed to an end-time servant—Mr. Armstrong—but those who thought they were wiser and more educated than Mr. Armstrong changed it through their own human reasoning. All those changes led to much confusion within the apostate church. Never before have so many been bewildered and confused because they were lied to and deceived by the ministry whom they trusted. Never before have so many fallen away from the truth while at the same time giving lip service to God.

Mr. Cole said: "Search as you may, there is not one example of divinely revealed doctrine that has ever been changed to new truth. God thunders that He does not change. Once that truth is revealed to a man, that truth does not change and once you start changing it, the changing never stops. It just continues."

That is true! I saw it happen. Once you compromise, it just leads to more and more compromise. God's people were led to believe that compromise leads to unity, but instead it caused disunity and more and more division.

A true Christian is pictured in Proverbs 24:21–22: "My son, fear the LORD and the king; Do not associate with those given to change; For their calamity will rise suddenly, And who knows the ruin those two can bring?" Change brings calamity just like we have seen in God's apostate church.

May God help you, brethren, to comprehend your great calling of God so apostasy will not destroy you. Peter warned us:

You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked. (2 Peter 3:17).

The wicked are those who have changed the truth of God into a lie. That is a warning to us. Are we going to hold fast to the truth that was first delivered, or are we going to accept all the changes and fall away from that truth that was revealed to Mr. Armstrong? I am going to hold fast to what was originally taught, and I am going to make it my goal to go back and thoroughly study and find out what that revealed truth was.

Our Background in the Church

My wife, Julia, and I, as well as my twin brother, Robert, and his wife, Nancy, watched the Worldwide Church of God change doctrine after doctrine. It came to the point that if Mr. Armstrong were resurrected today and visited the church that he once raised up, he would not be able to recognize it. What would he say to those to whom he taught the truth who have since—through their own carnal reasoning—exchanged it for a lie? How tragic!

Romans 1:25: "who exchanged the truth of God for the lie [or changed the truth into a lie] and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever."

Many of God's people today worship and serve the creature God has created instead of the True God; that is, they follow men instead of God, and believe me when I say, there is one out there to suit every taste or conviction.

We finally were forced to leave that church and begin searching for where the truth was being taught. Our search for the truth led us through three different splinter groups; but we realized that they also were changing doctrine and trying to interpret the scriptures to fit their own ideas.

I had realized for a long time that the WCG was wrong to change the doctrine on divorce and remarriage. I had seen the tragic results of that change in many members of the church and even in my own daughter, who had gone through two marriages. When she asked me to perform her third wedding, I said no, and that led me to begin studying and learning why and how that doctrine had been changed. Then I was led to the Church of God, the Eternal website by Mrs. Margaret Walker. How thankful I was to find a group that had preserved the truth that was originally taught us by Mr. Armstrong.

I began to order everything that I could get my hands on. I have listened to over 800 tapes now from Mr. Raymond Cole, and it is thrilling to find a man who held fast to that revealed truth that I first began hearing as a young man in the Marine Corps stationed in Okinawa back in 1962. I got out of the Marines in 1963 and continued studying for a number of years until we attended our first service in 1965. Mr. Sherman McMichael was the minister.

My wife and I were baptized in the spring of 1969, and it was the most exciting time in our lives because we had been called into God's true church. It was not easy for us to come out of the Baptist Church and away from our families and friends, but we had the truth and we knew it beyond a shadow of a doubt. Our family thought we were crazy and that we were being brainwashed, but we had never been happier in our lives.

We had found the one and only pearl of great price, which was God's truth. ". . . when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:46). So we went and sold or gave up all our old beliefs and practices and bought into this new way of life—God's way of life.

My twin brother, Robert, and I were always very close—inseparable. People said we were still attached by our umbilical cord. When Robert learned that I had joined the WCG he was very concerned, but he did not believe I was crazy. He began to study the material but with a whole lot of resistance from his wife. He was baptized six months later. We attended our first Feast in 1969 in the Ozarks, which involved two services on the weekdays and three services on the Sabbaths. We loved it and could not get enough. We were now a part of God's one and only True Church. What a blessing!

My brother's wife, Nancy, did not attend the Feast with us that year because God had not yet called her. She was very antagonistic after we got back from the Feast, and it did not look very good for Robert. His wife was threatening divorce, and she was pregnant with their first child.

I told him what I had learned from Mr. Armstrong, that if he would keep his mouth shut and just show by example what he was learning, that she would eventually respond positively. I told him, if she does evil to you respond with good; always overcome evil with good. In other words practice 1 Peter 3:1–8, which is good advice for both mates.

Likewise you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold, or of putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered [if our conduct is bad toward our mates, the Spirit of God cannot work effectively in those mates and our prayers for them will be hindered]. Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous . . .

Because Robert was the converted mate he had to set the right example so that his conduct might eventually win over his unconverted mate, if he could portray the gentle and quiet spirit that can come only from God, as mentioned in verse 4.

So to make a long story short, he bought her a lot of flowers and took her out to eat and continued to just love her. Not returning evil for evil.

. . . not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. For "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile [especially to your mate]; Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil" (1 Peter 3:9–12).

This is why it is so important not to do evil toward our mates.

If you do not want your prayers for your mate hindered, as it says in verse 7, you must in faith not only carry out verses 8–12 but also verses 13–17.

And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the

hope that is in you, with meekness and fear [but wait to be asked—too often we preach too much and do too little]; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Nancy could not fight that kind of warfare. How can you continually persecute someone who always returns good for evil? You cannot! When you always return good for evil, God's Holy Spirit can then work to convict your mate.

Six months later she confessed to Robert that he was a better husband now than when they were first married. So through Robert's good example and unhindered prayer, because he was doing his part, she finally responded positively and God was able to call her also. Robert proved that you could overcome evil with good, and that is a truism that I have seen proven over and over again to those who have the faith to do it.

If we can only learn to keep our mouths shut sometimes and to live our convictions instead of preaching them to everyone, it is amazing the influence we can have on those around us. We can show the world that Christ has come in the flesh by just allowing Him to live His life in us.

My brother and I have learned to love God's truth in a big way because we have put it to the test by living it. There is no better way to live and be happy than to live according to God's law. The test comes when those from whom we have learned the truth are taken out of the way or when they turn aside from it and we want to continue in it. That is true conversion—if a person continues living God's laws even after those who taught you that way have turned aside from it or have been removed by death.

Many to Realize How Miserable They Have Become

Brethren, do you really love God's law? If you do, then you will live by it no matter what others may do to you; because the love of God is the fulfilling of God's law—the law that so many have watered down or just thrown away for something less. Believe me, the day is coming, brethren, when many will want it back—when they will realize how miserable their lives have become without it. Truly it is a pearl of great price. It is difficult really to appreciate the truth until it has been taken away from you. The truth of God has been taken away in these last days and replaced with lies that bring sorrow and unhappiness and much division.

When Habakkuk saw this burden this is what he said:

O Lord, how long shall I cry, and You will not hear? even cry out to You, "Violence!" And You will not save. Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention arises. Therefore the law is powerless, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore perverse judgment proceeds (Habakkuk 1:2–4).

This is also what we saw in the WCG. Many times I asked myself why all this violence in the church and why all this unrest? I mean, there were actually fistfights on the Sabbath in some areas, so that the police had to be called to establish peace! A church which was supposed to bring peace was creating violence. The violence started when the doctrines began to be changed by the ministry. The Law—God's Law—became powerless or slack because they were watering it down, not only locally, but from headquarters. Justice never went forth, for the wicked (those who were accepting change) surrounded the righteous. Therefore perverse judgment proceeded, and those who were resistant to change were turned against and persecuted by those who favored the change.

Yes, an astonishing and horrible thing happened, as it says in Jeremiah 5:30–31. "An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?"

The table of the Lord became full of vomit and filthiness so that there was no place clean because the prophet and priest had erred through the intoxicating drink of this world's religions and ways. They err in vision and they stumble in judgment.

But they also have erred through wine, and through intoxicating drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, they are swallowed up by wine, they are out of the way through intoxicating drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that no place is clean (Isaiah 28:7–8).

Consequently, those who refused to return to the vomit were forced to seek clean spiritual food elsewhere. Those who stayed literally had their spiritual clothes stripped from them. It was embarrassing to watch.

Micah prophesied this for the end time. Notice Micah 2:7–8:

You who are named the house of Jacob [those who tried to walk uprightly in the end-time church]: "Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted? Are these His doings? Do not My words do good To him who walks uprightly? "Lately My people [referring

to the evildoers or evil prophets or leaders] have risen up as an enemy—You [those evil prophets or ministers] pull off the robe with the garment [the righteous clothes] From those who trust you [those upright people], as they pass by [securely, in their royal robes or uniforms], Like men returned from war.

These good, upright warriors trusted their leaders and shepherds but the shepherds sold them out when they returned from the war by changing the rules of warfare or the revealed truth for a lie.

So because of these irresponsible shepherds, God's flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, which could only happen in the end time.

"My sheep wandered through all the mountains [or high places of church government], and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them." Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: "As I live," says the Lord God, "surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field [referring to the wolves in sheep's clothing], because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock"—therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them" (Ezekiel 34:6–10).

The false shepherds will not be able to extract an income from the flock to feather their own nests anymore, support their own nefarious schemes, or try to bring about God's Kingdom through their own human reasoning.

Our God Has Maintained a Faithful Remnant as Promised

What thrills us more than ever is to have found the remnant which has escaped in this end time, of the House of Judah that shall take root again and bear fruit upward.

Notice Isaiah 37:31–32:

And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah Shall again take root downward, And bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, And those who escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. [Do what?] "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: 'He

shall not come into this city, Nor shoot an arrow there, Nor come before it with shield, Nor build a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, By the same shall he return; And he shall not come into this city,' Says the LORD. For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant David's sake.' "

So God will again turn back the destroyer—or the enemy of God's Church in this end time—and allow a remnant which has escaped the apostasy to again take root downward and bear fruit upward. Thus many of God's people, because of the loyalty of this little remnant, will again be brought back (just as we were) to the truth that was once revealed to the end-time servant—Mr. Armstrong.

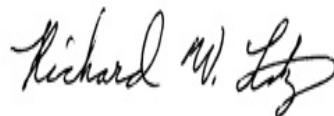
I thank God for His mercy and love in allowing this remnant to escape so we could be revived by it and be joined together with all of you.

The Litz family and those who have come with us are the most thankful on the face of the earth to have come to know where the truth is and where the faith once delivered is being preserved—in this little remnant known as the Church of God, the Eternal. Thank you for preserving it so that we could all be renewed and revived in that faith which was once delivered to us through Mr. Armstrong and be able again to take root downward into that truth and to bear fruit upward. To my knowledge, I believe this to be the only remnant that has held fast through all the deception and changes that have destroyed and scattered so many of God's people.

So I owe a great deal of thanks to the man I never knew for tenaciously holding to that truth through much heartache and sorrow—Mr. Raymond Cole. I cannot wait to thank him personally when I see him at the resurrection. I would also like to thank his wife for her loyal support even through all the persecution they suffered in order to keep preaching the truth. Thank you to all the brethren who have supported the Coles in preserving the faith once delivered. Some day soon all of God's church and indeed the whole world will come to know of your love and loyalty to God's way of life because God will make them to know whom He has loved (Revelation 3:9).

We love you all very much, brethren, and I look forward to serving you in the future.

Much love from your revived servant,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard W. Litz". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned centrally below the typed name.

Richard W. Litz