

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

A Proper Diet Is a Spiritual Responsibility

June 2004

Dear Brethren,

Greetings from our small group here in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota.

I am privileged for the first time to speak to you through this letter. I hope this letter finds you keeping yourself in good physical and spiritual condition as we continue our physical and spiritual journey away from sin's deadly power and what we are by nature.

I would like to extend my deep and sincere appreciation to all those who supported Mr. and Mrs. Cole in holding fast to the truth and faith once delivered. Mr. Herbert Armstrong taught us that expressing sincere appreciation can encourage and motivate brethren. Expressed appreciation has power. When you express your appreciation to another person, you are giving something very important.

One dictionary definition of "appreciation" is: "Sensitive, conscious, awareness." My wife and I feel that appreciation for all of you in this true remnant body. You have exercised wise judgment, delicate perception, and keen insight in realizing the worth of unchanging truth. You were concerned for the needs and problems we had (Philippians 2:4). You had sensitive awareness of those who would promote change. Thank you for guarding the truth and faith as once revealed. Our words of deep appreciation to you are found in Matthew 25:23: "Well done, good and faithful servant[s]."

Physical and Spiritual Sin

God is deeply concerned for our physical health and spiritual welfare. Physical and spiritual sin is our enemy, seeking to destroy us. It is often very deceptive; but God sees the danger to us, even if we do not. Physical and spiritual sin is mighty serious business. Its penalties are absolutely sure and terrible beyond realization.

In this letter I would like to focus on physical sin (mostly our faulty diets) and healing, because it is no light or casual matter. Most of God's people customarily have taken this matter of physical sin all too lightly, little realizing the enormity of the consequences—the consequences being premature death in this life or, as God's end-time apostle stated it, as murder on the installment plan.

Since the earliest ages, medical science has sought to cure disease by the magic of pills, potions, and poisons that actually depress the body's systems, rather than attack the real cause of the illness or ailment. Medical science has always believed that the use of chemical substances, which are in themselves harmful and destructive to human life, will prove an efficient antidote for the violation of God's natural and dietary laws. In this way, it has encouraged man to go to the limit in self-indulgence (including most of God's own people), weakening and destroying their physical systems in the expectation that by simply swallowing a few pills or submitting to an injection of serum or vaccine, one will be absolved or set free of blame from any ill effects or penalties attached to our bad living habits. Experiencing the living and dietary habits of this world has proven this not to be true. We have just as broad a variety of conceptions and beliefs in the medical profession as in the area of religion. Isaiah 59:8 says:

The way of peace [#7965 in the *Strong's Concordance*—also means health] they know not: and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes therein shall not know peace [good health].

As God's called people, we were willing to come out of the religious confusion and false doctrines of the world, as revealed to us by God's end-time servant, so we would not be partakers of its spiritual sins. But have we refused to forsake its faulty diet to escape its sicknesses, diseases, and premature deaths? Why? Because we love our faulty diets more than God and even ourselves. And because of it, many of us are suffering the same fate as those in Paul's day.

If we lack the knowledge (there is much information available to anyone desiring to learn about pure, natural, unadulterated foods) or forsake the principles of healthful living, our ignorance or disobedience does not nullify the penalty we will reap. If we sow foolishness, we will suffer the fate of a fool. If we initiate wisdom—the ability to choose right from wrong knowledge—we will reap the fate of the wise. Scripture says that, "Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted" (Psalm 107:17). It is foolishness to eat and drink in an unworthy manner. In 1 Corinthians 11:29–30 we read:

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, [forsaking the principles of a healthy diet] eateth and drinketh damnation [judgment] to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

This means that they willfully dishonor Christ's sacrifice—His broken body—by thinking they can continue to live in physical sin (forsaking the principles of a healthy diet) and still be forgiven and healed. That is not possible. If you want to be healed, you must also want to change. Verse 30 says, "For this cause [the dishonoring of Christ's sacrifice] many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep [or are dead]." They reaped what they sowed. Installment plan murder! They confessed their same physical sins, over, and over, and over; but they failed to forsake them so God would forgive and heal them.

God said in Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge . . ." Being ignorant of nature's laws, as set in motion by our Creator, does not justify our co-existence with physical sin. Breaking nutritional or physical laws of health can cause our own destruction. That is a fact, because Leviticus 17:11 says, ". . . the life of the flesh is in the blood . . ." We know now that sickness, disease and death can also be in the blood. Jesus Christ, the God of ancient Israel, knew this because in John 5:14 he said, ". . . sin no more . . ." He was giving caution and warning to this man made whole, and to us today, of the danger of physical sin.

Illness Is Not Natural

In the very early writings of Herbert W. Armstrong, he said:

Most people have come to believe today that it is NATURAL for people to be sick. THAT IS NOT TRUE! Sickness and disease is not natural, or accidental, but caused in every case by destructive habits. Sickness and disease cannot be eradicated until good habits—living according to NATURES LAWS as set in motion by the Creator—are substituted for bad ones. Bad habits of thought [false knowledge] may be a contributing cause to sickness and disease or impaired health. Insufficient exercise, lack of drinking enough pure water, lack of deep breathing of fresh air, lack of sunshine, lack of sleep, faulty elimination, often contribute to poor health. But above all WRONG FOOD is the great outstanding cause. Few people realize this (July 7, 1948, *Co-Worker Letter*).

We can sin physically as well as spiritually. We sin physically by breaking the laws God established for physical health. The penalty of this physical sinning is sickness, suffering pain, and often the first death. Jesus continually healed the sick. When He healed, He said, "go, and sin no more." He was speaking of violating the physical laws of health. Just as the repentant sinner who is converted through Christ is commanded in John 8:11 to "sin no more [to turn away from sin and quit sinning or transgressing God's spiritual law]," so if we look to God for healing, we should try to learn in what manner we have been violating God's physical health laws and correct our living! It is because men for untold generations have been living incorrectly, violating these precious health laws—and increasingly so these past four or five generations—that we are a degenerate generation today, so much so that we do not realize it!

It may not be spiritual sin to eat biblically unclean foods. Yet, if one deliberately does it out of lust of appetite, that breaks the tenth commandment and becomes sin. But in all events, wrong food injures the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It defiles the body, if not the man, and if we continue to defile our bodies God will destroy us. "If any man defile [destroy or pollute] the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Corinthians 3:17).

Many of God's people have been destroyed by Him—by His natural and dietary laws of nature. When we break mental, nutritional, and physical laws, we find that nature and God are no respecters of persons. If you put your hand on a hot stove, you get burned. If you step in front of a moving car, you get hit. It does not matter if you understand the laws or not; if you break them, you reap the painful penalties. Health is not an accident—nor is disease.

There Are Causes for Every Effect

Most of God's people are willing to change and overcome in many areas of their lives spiritually, but they do not want anyone to mess with their faulty diets. In the October, 1954, *Good News*, Mr. Armstrong wrote:

The knowledge of HOW TO LIVE should be the first interest of every person. That knowledge is divided into two phases—the physical, and the spiritual; how to be in vigorous, clear-minded, perfect health, which depends upon the physical laws of nature, and how to live in proper relationship with God and with neighbor, which depends upon the spiritual law summed up in the Ten Commandments.

Mr. Armstrong draws attention to both phases—physical and spiritual—because they are so closely connected! Our physical health has everything to do with our spiritual condition. When our health is poor, our spiritual condition goes backwards. That is why Christ put the same emphasis on putting away physical sin as He did spiritual sin. His command for both was to "sin no more" (John 5:14; 8:11). Mr. Armstrong taught that when we forsake the principles of healthful living—proper rest, proper exercise, and proper diet—we are committing physical sin. Breaking these three health laws (especially the one on diet) on a regular basis, in time only brings about our own destruction. It is merely murder on the installment plan.

In the December, 1967, *Plain Truth*, "Personal from the Editor," Mr. Armstrong wrote:

Another reason our bodies are being robbed of the alkaline minerals is the way our women cook. The other day I thought of writing an article under the headline: "How to *Hurry* Your Death!" . . .

Ask a woman WHY she does not feed her children steel-cut oats, and natural brown rice.

"Oh, that takes too much time!" she will probably answer. So she uses the quick-cooking minute-oats or minute rice—the kind that has been robbed of all the real food value and reduced to starch. She *just can't afford to take time* to give her children good health. She must HURRY—and build up in their bodies anemia, and diseases that will kill them before their time.

A MURDER is merely ending a life *before its time*. Many of you are doing that on the installment plan—doing it not only to yourselves, but also to your children.

Is Physical Sin Unimportant?

Question: How long are we going to witness this curse taking place among God's people before we will take to heart what Jesus Christ revealed to us about the principles of healthful living? How can we claim to love God and His way of life if we ignore or carelessly break God's laws because they are "only physical"?

At Passover, when we eat the broken unleavened bread, we accept Christ's beaten and broken body so that we may be healed. Can we claim to love Christ when He dies for us, yet disregard our health and continue to indulge ourselves in the sinful habits for which He was beaten and scourged? That is not taking the Passover in a worthy manner. That is "not discerning the Lord's body" properly. When we dishonor Christ's beaten body by not putting away sin because it is "only physical," we merely establish a ritual that does not please God.

Jesus Christ never broke any of God's laws—physical or spiritual—as an example for us. It was His complete sacrifice, His beaten body and His death that makes possible the forgiveness of all our sins. But that sin is not forgiven until we honor Christ's dual sacrifice by becoming aware of our sins and confessing and forsaking them before God. Then He is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9). We will not have the vehement desire to confess and forsake the sins we consider unimportant, especially when we are willing to bear the penalty ourselves. Many of the sins relating to poor health are far too enjoyable to stop or too difficult to change. The truth is, many of us like to indulge our fleshly desires to excess. How does God feel about our decision not to tackle some of these "pet sins"?

Psalm 103:2–3 says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." If we continue to indulge ourselves and fail to repent (quiet resolve to change) of prized, treasured, and cherished sins that are affecting our physical health, are not we forgetting some of God's benefits? In reference to Psalm 103:2–3, Mr. Armstrong wrote in his article, *The Plain Truth About Healing*:

God has PROMISED salvation and eternal life on the SAME conditions He PROMISED healing—obedience and faith. Jesus paid our penalty, making possible eternal life by His shed blood on the cross [stake]. He paid the penalty for physical broken law, making possible our HEALING by His stripes (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24) . . . If you can't believe the one, how can you believe the other?

If you cannot have the faith to be healed, how can you have the faith to be saved? God said, "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8).

Can we grasp the significance of what Mr. Armstrong is saying? Our faith and obedience regarding God's healing is a strong indicator of our faith and obedience as it relates to spiritual salvation. If we have less faith in Christ's beaten body than we do in His dead body, can we expect to receive all of His benefits—including the benefit of spiritual salvation? We cannot separate our faith in physical healing from our faith in spiritual salvation! They are one and the same faith because they derive from the same source. This is a great point of meditation.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves [live the truth through life's experiences]. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? [unless you are counterfeits or fakes] (2 Corinthians 13:5).

These physical bodies are tools by which we are to prove our faith. Remember, faith without works is merely professing dead faith. We must show our faith by our works in ruling the flesh, not by allowing the flesh to rule us (James 2:17–18). Do our physical actions prove that Jesus Christ is living in us or has He become dormant in us? The only way to eat and drink the Passover worthily is to honor Christ's sacrifice, by setting our wills to keep all of God's laws through obedience and faith—the same conditions by which we received the Holy Spirit at baptism.

History of Diet in the Church

Mr. Armstrong wanted every housewife to be a nutritionist. That is why he said again in his early writings, "I want, as soon as we can enlarge The PLAIN TRUTH to 16 pages or more, to have an interesting, vigorous article every month on FOOD, and on sickness, disease, and the laws of health." That did not last long! Why? Because the church developed a "no limit" philosophy toward physical sin. They were in love with their faulty diets, which were destroying their circulatory systems. Certain men had crept into the church unawares. Lies about what God had revealed about physical sin were refined by human scholarship until they resembled truth. The ministry of the Worldwide Church of God caused God's people to transgress by turning God's revealed truth about physical sin into lasciviousness or lustfulness. Because of their lusts,

they watered down physical sin and told God's people they could commit physical sin "in balance." Proverbs 1:25, 30–31 says:

But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: . . . They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

The result of this travesty is that the health and well-being of many of God's people is no better than that of the rest of the world. It is time to get back to the faith once delivered by keeping God's physical dietary laws so we will not have to suffer the penalty brought upon us through our own prior ignorance or neglect. Elbert Hubbard once said, "Disease comes only to those who have been preparing for it." Many of God's people have been doing just that. They turned away from what was originally taught. For example, in the 1960s the Church abstained from white flour, white sugar and highly processed foods. It got most of its wheat from Kansas, had its own stone grinders, and raised its own dairy and fresh produce for the three colleges. They were healthy and well; and healing was not hindered in the Church. But our history of physical sin tells us that sickness, disease, and premature death crept in. Yet, God had revealed to us through His end-time apostle how Satan had deceived the world about health with white sugar, white flour, and polyunsaturated oils.

In the December, 1967, *Plain Truth*, Mr. Armstrong warned us in his "Personal from the Editor," that eating an overabundance of carbohydrates is breaking nature's laws.

But I will tell you what happens. And YOU had better HEED! . . . They *do* supply a certain unnatural artificial energy—but they are primarily eliminated in an unnatural way, contrary to nature's laws, through the kidneys. And this process in time builds up and causes a whole string of these modern diseases of a law-breaking civilization! But SOME of it *is* carried as a toxin or poison by the blood into muscles and joints. And after so long a time, you "catch a cold" or "a fever"—so you think, not realizing that you actually ATE that cold or fever before you "caught it." . . . A cold or fever is merely a sudden violent elimination of toxins and poisons you have injected into your body by WRONG DIET, which has BROKEN GOD'S PHYSICAL LAWS.

He goes on to warn us that highly-processed foods (such as potato chips, boxed or canned soups, and most breakfast cereals—just to name a few), refined white flour, starches, sugars, fats, and polyunsaturated oils are what our gigantic food industry is giving us in a diet of foodless foods—foods which lack nutrition, foods which contain toxins and poisons that can harm us. What nation can eat to the full as we do and yet suffer from malnutrition?

Reality of the Modern Diet

Satan has deceived the world about health with white sugar and white flour which fits the junk food definition of dead, refined, "de-nutritified" and adulterated. They will give you energy but will make you fat and steal your health. For example, if white flour is rotten for you (and indeed it is, because even the bugs and rodents will not eat it) then everything made from it is rotten including: pasta and its many varieties, pizza crust, and baked goods (donuts, most breads, cookies, pies and cakes unless these things are homemade, using whole wheat flour).

The average American today consumes 160 pounds of sugar per year (50 per cent of their calorie intake). Refined white sugar is a poison to the body and the main cause of health problems. Foods that contain white sugar are candy, ice cream, baked goods and most breakfast cereals. If in doubt about what foods contain sugar, just read the ingredient labels. You will be shocked to know what most foods contain today. Besides sugar, they are loaded with preservatives and other chemicals. Please read labels before you buy. Americans can consume 3,000 calories a day and die prematurely from malnutrition by eating "de-nutritified" foods. Mr. Armstrong taught us that life begets life. We have to get to the food before the processors do. You cannot get health out of a bottle (supplements) either. It has to come from a vineyard [garden, farm] (Micah 4:4 and Zechariah 3:10). He also taught us that right and just principles of healthful living are a terror only to those who do not want to change. That is why many are sick!

The fact is, we are inviting sickness by not choosing our food carefully. We can all improve our diets by exercising more care. Whether it is possible to even find nutritious food in this polluted environment is not the issue here; nor the fact that some have congenital or hereditary diseases obviously not of their own making. The point is, what is the intent of our hearts? Do we ask God to bless a meal that should never be eaten in the first place? If we are not concerned enough about the food we eat—to try our best for quality—are we not willfully committing physical sin? This is a question that affects every one of us.

For if we sin willfully [deliberately] after that we have received the knowledge [revealed knowledge] of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice [or forgiveness] for sins (Hebrews 10:26).

Spiritual Responsibility for Physical Things

Since we are what we eat, and most sickness is caused by faulty diets, is it righteous to ask for healing without paying close attention to the food we eat? No, it is not! In fact, it falls in the category of tempting our Creator (Matthew 4:7; Luke 4:12; Deuteronomy 6:16). God warns against disobedience.

God does not purify physical sin so we can consume it upon our own lusts. Are we honoring Christ's sacrifice (His broken body) by putting away physical sin completely, or do we continually scourge Christ anew—day in and day out—thinking we can wallow around in physical sin and still be healed.

God does heal, but there are conditions. We do have our part to perform. Healing is a divine miracle. It is forgiveness of physical sin—not to be taken lightly. When we come before God to be anointed, we should realize that sin has been committed. Mr. Cole has said that a number of times in his sermons. Satan has deceived this world to either laugh at healing or treat it as a sideshow. It is neither! It is deadly serious! It is a direct intervention by our Creator to forgive our sins when we confess and forsake them. When we ask for anointing, we are actually asking the Creator of the universe to apply the horrible beating suffered by His only Son for us. Isaiah 53:5 says:

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement [punishment] for our peace [health—#7965 in the *Strong's*] was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Have we considered this fact—that Christ was beaten because of our poor health when we come to be anointed? Do we honor that sacrifice by striving with all of our might to better our health by putting away physical sin, or do we abuse that sacrifice by thinking we can wallow around in physical sin and still be healed? That is an important point for meditation.

Beloved, I wish above all things [pray that in all things] that thou mayest prosper and be in health [#5198 in the *Strong's*], even as thy soul prospereth (3 John 2).

"Hold fast the form of sound words [#5198 in the *Strong's*—same Greek word meaning to have sound health, to be well in body, wholesome], which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:13). This scripture applies to us as well—namely, to hold fast the form of sound health which was revealed to us by God's end-time apostle.

If any man teach otherwise, and consent [agree] not to wholesome words [#5198 in the *Strong's*—same Greek word meaning sound in health], even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine [the faith once delivered] which is according to godliness [or Sonship] . . . (1 Timothy 6:3).

This scripture is telling us that if any man teach, and agree not to wholesome words which we were taught (meaning sound in health, both physically and spiritually) "from such turn away" (verse 5).

God wants us to remember and hold fast to what we were taught about physical sin by proving this truth in the way that we live it. God wants us to honor the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (the scourging that He endured) by putting away physical sin (our faulty diets, inactivity, and improper rest) so that we can be forgiven of our sin, and healing will not be hindered in the Church. When we dishonor Christ's sacrifice by thinking that we can live in sin and still be healed, we make a mockery of physical sin (Proverbs 14:9) and hinder God's forgiveness and healing in our lives.

Judge the Self, Not Others

So, brethren, let us honor the sacrifice of Jesus Christ by purging physical sin and take action so as not to scourge Christ anew. In doing so, let us remember never to judge one another (Matthew 7:1), but to extend mercy, the same mercy God has extended to us for change. Remember that mercy allows a space of time between sin and repentance (your lifetime) which God grants you to learn to hate and forsake sin—to change inwardly or ultimately perish.

If God is allowing someone to experience the consequences for their neglect of the principles of healthful living, we have no right to intervene by indicting or condemning that person in the way he or she is living. We need to extend the same mercy for change and overcoming as God has extended to us, even if it takes one's entire lifetime. Let us remember that they are God's workmanship, not ours (Ephesians 2:10). In God's time He will manifest within them the proper fear, that which at one and the same time, will constrain a faulty diet and compel a healthy one. We judge only ourselves!

For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged [or rebuked by God] (1 Corinthians 11:31).

However, when we prepare food for a church potluck, what is prepared should not defile or pollute our bodies. We should not cause our brethren to dishonor Christ's sacrifice by being deceived into eating or drinking unworthily. What we choose to eat at home is between us and God, but what we bring for the brethren should be good, nutritious food. All food at a potluck should be that which would honor Christ's sacrifice and not be food that would cause God's people to sin physically.

Remember this: Salvation takes place only as we forsake spiritual sin through the continuous use of the spiritual tools—Bible study, prayer, fasting, and meditation. Healing takes place only as we forsake physical sin through continuous obedience to the principles of healthful living: proper diet, rest, and exercise. When we sin "in balance," we make a mockery of sin, and we will reap what we sow. Jesus Christ said, "sin no more."

Sicknesses and diseases that lead to death do not just happen by themselves. They are the result, in most cases, of eating harmful, "de-nutritified" food. We lock our doors against thieves, do we not? But a thief will only steal our property. Should not we lock our body against bad foods that will steal our health and life prematurely? God tells us in Deuteronomy 30:19:

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live.

God has given us supermarkets that contain a vineyard [garden, farm] of fresh produce, both fruits and vegetables. Even the best produce we can find has been polluted through man's corruption of God's laws; but even these are far better than anything coming out of a box or can. Is there any excuse for allowing our health to deteriorate due to poor dietary choices? Let us set our wills today to eat only healthy, natural foods and avoid all "de-nutritified" and overly-processed foods. It is best to consume food in its natural state by not peeling away (as with potatoes, carrots and apples) its nutrition before we consume it (just scrub it first). God blesses us for observing the laws of health. Why should we think healthy, vibrant living is impossible? Health is within our reach. It only takes some effort on our part to learn to act on what we have come to understand to be true about physical sin. As with so many others, my wife and I had begun to develop health problems; so about six years ago we began to obey God's laws of good health. Our problems cleared up quickly and we now enjoy being blessed with very good health even when sickness is prevalent around us.

Let us not allow foolishness to rule in our principles of healthful living. Let us remember the bloody scourging Jesus Christ endured on our behalf because of physical sins. Let us honor Christ's sacrifice by resolving now, with firmness of mind, to set ourselves on the right course physically—to acquire the habits that lead to active, robust living.

Your laborer, brother and servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert J. Litz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned centrally below the typed name.

Robert J. Litz