

Christian Biblical Church of God
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Fred R. Coulter
Minister

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Dear Brethren,

We have had a very *busy* month. Much of the news has already been conveyed to you in the messages we have mailed out and posted on our Web sites. Last month's highlight was the ordination of Lawrence Burchfield as an elder in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, CBCG congregation on July 11. He and his wife, Virginia, have been faithfully serving the brethren there for five years. Before any man is ordained as an elder, we first receive input from the brethren of the local area. After all, they are the ones who know if a man is qualified to be an elder, as they see his fruits of love and service firsthand. When each of the members were contacted about ordaining Lawrence, they all enthusiastically recommended him as an elder.

I asked Marlin Fannin, our elder in Cincinnati, Ohio, to fly down and assist in the ordination. Marlin and his wife, Nancy, flew down ahead of me, but Lawrence and Virginia did not know I was coming. On Friday evening, as the four of them were waiting for dinner, I surprised them. I entered the dining room from the side entrance; they did not see me until I came in and put my hand on Lawrence's shoulder. What a shock, indeed!

After I sat down with them and conversed for a while, I asked him about being ordained as an elder. After all, we do not want to ordain a man who does not want to serve as an elder. He agreed to accept the recommendation of the brethren and the ordination.

For the past four years, Marlin and his wife have traveled to Tulsa each summer. They have spent a considerable amount of time with Lawrence and his wife, and were thus able to highly recommend him as an elder. I have personally known Lawrence for five years, and have seen and heard of his dedicated love and service to the brethren. As I explained to him, being ordained an elder is not a promotion. It is a special setting aside for serving Jesus Christ, Who is the Head of the Church, and for shepherding the flock of God by helping them attain eternal life in faith, hope and love.

On the Sabbath in Tulsa, we were flabbergasted at the huge turnout of brethren. We were expecting about 30 for services at the Radisson Hotel where we were meeting, but 90 showed up! As it turned out, Don Burrows had invited brethren from the surrounding states to come to Tulsa, because of the ordination and because I would be there. All the brethren kept the secret that I was coming, and Lawrence and Virginia didn't have a clue. It turned out to be a most joyous Sabbath, not only because of the ordination, but because we were also blessed to have special music provided by the Fellowship Choir.

Many remarked that it was like a "mini-feast." Because of God's Spirit being with all of us, it was truly an inspiring Sabbath. You have already received the CDs with the sermons by Marlin, Lawrence and me, as well as the ordination ceremony. We hope to have many more ordinations in the future as God calls more people and elders to serve them.

This special occasion gives us an opportunity to examine the qualifications for an elder, who is called an *overseer*, as Paul wrote in first Timothy three. "Faithful is the saying, 'If any man aspires to *be* an overseer, he desires a good work.' Now then, it is obligatory *that* the overseer be blameless, *the* husband of one wife, vigilant, serious-minded, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching; not given to much wine, not a bully, not greedy for selfish gain; but kind, not a quarreler, not a lover of money; one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in subjection with all respect; (For if a man does not know *how* to rule his own household, how will he take care of *the* church of God?) Not a novice, lest he become conceited *and* fall into *the same* condemnation as the devil. It is mandatory that he also have a good report from those *who are* outside *the church*, lest he fall into reproach and *the* snare of the devil.... Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. And let those *who meet the qualifications* also be proved first; then let them *be appointed to serve, if they are found to be* blameless. In the same way also, *their*

wives *must* be serious-minded, not slanderers, sober *and* faithful in all things” (I Tim. 3:1-11).

There was no question that Lawrence and Virginia measure up to these biblical qualifications.

Ordination is Not a Promotion to Rulership: To be ordained as an elder and overseer is not a promotion; its purpose is not to *exalt* someone so they can rule over the brethren. Jesus made this very clear when His disciples had an argument as to who was going to be the greatest among them: “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, worshiping Him and asking a certain thing from Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you desire?’ She said to Him, ‘Grant that these my two sons may sit one at Your right hand and one at *Your left hand* in Your kingdom.’ But Jesus answered *and* said, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and to be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*?’ They said to Him, ‘We are able.’

“And He said to them, ‘You shall indeed drink of My cup, and shall be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*; but to sit at My right hand and at My left *hand* is not Mine to give, but *shall be given to those* for whom it has been prepared by My Father.’ And after hearing *this*, the ten were indignant against the two brothers” (Matt. 20:20-24).

Jesus’ answer emphatically declares two important principles for those serving the brethren: 1) There should be no politics, family pressure or favors involved in being ordained to serve the brethren; and 2) Serving the brethren is not an exalted position from which to wield authority over the flock of God. Notice: “But Jesus called them [His disciples] to *Him and* said, ‘You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship [Greek, *katakuriouros*, authoritarian top-down rulership as kings] over them, and the great ones exercise authority [Greek *kataexousios*, authoritarian rulership as pagan priests] over them. However, **it shall not be this way among you; but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant; and whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave**” (verses 25-27).

Jesus personally admonished the apostle Peter that to *love* Him is to *feed* the flock of God. Notice the apostle John’s account of Jesus’ special charge to Peter: “Therefore, when they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, *son of Jonas*, **do you love Me more than these?**’ And he said to Him, ‘**Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.**’ He said to him, ‘**Feed My lambs.**’

“He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, *son of Jonas*, **do you love Me?**’ And he said to Him, ‘**Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.**’ He said to him, ‘**Shepherd My sheep.**’

“He said to him the third time, ‘**Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?**’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things. **You know that I love You.**’ Jesus said to him, ‘**Feed My sheep**’ ” (John 21:15-17).

Every elder—regardless of the capacity in which he may serve—is to personally take these words of Jesus Christ and apply them to himself as a *direct charge* from our Lord and Savior to *love* God the Father and Jesus Christ, to *serve* the brethren and to *feed* the flock of God. All the brethren are bought and paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ—they belong to God, not to the ministry.

Unfortunately, too many of God’s people do not have elders who are dedicated to serving them in love and humility. Some are dedicated to politics and serving themselves instead. God gives a powerful warning to shepherds who do not faithfully serve the Church or obey Jesus’ command to feed the flock. God will not be mocked—He holds them accountable and judges them for their selfish, high-handed, authoritarian rule over the flock of God. Notice what Ezekiel wrote: “And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds, ‘**Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you kill the fat ones, *but* you do not feed the flock. **You have not made the weak strong, nor have you healed the sick, nor have you bound up the broken. You have not brought again those that were driven away, nor have you sought that which was lost; but YOU HAVE RULED THEM WITH FORCE AND WITH CRUELTY.** And they were scattered [as is the Church of God today] for lack of a shepherd. And they became food to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains and upon every high hill. Yea, My flock was scattered upon**

all the face of the earth, and none searched nor sought for them' ' ' ' (Ezek. 34:1-6).

Continuing: “**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 to every beast of the field 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, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock. Nor shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouth that they may not be food for them.’

“For thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his scattered sheep, so I will seek out My sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day’ ” (verses 7-12).

These scriptures absolutely demonstrate that God the Father and Jesus Christ have never appointed any religious figure, such as the Pope of Rome, to have dictatorial power over the true Church of God. In fact, the book of Acts records that the apostles were confronted in the city of Samaria by just such an individual, called in Simon Magus or Simon the magician. He was a highly exalted, pagan religious figure who “lorded over” people with magic and witchcraft. As Philip preached the gospel of the Kingdom of God with signs and healings, even Simon “believed” and was baptized—but he never repented. As we will see, his true motive was to **exalt himself** and obtain the power of the Holy Spirit in order to continue to “**lord it over**” the people of Samaria.

Luke recounts Philip’s encounter with Simon Magus. “Then Philip went down to a city of Samaria *and* proclaimed Christ to them; and the multitudes listened intently with one accord to the things spoken by Philip when they heard and saw the signs that he did, for unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many of those who had *them*; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.

“**But there was a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one.** To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘**This man is the great power of God.**’ Now they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the gospel—the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women.

“Then Simon himself also believed; and after being baptized, he steadfastly continued with Philip; and as he beheld *the* signs and great works of power *that were* being done, he was amazed.

“Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them; who, after coming down *to Samaria*, prayed for them, that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit; for as yet it had not fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:5-17).

Simon never repented, though he was baptized. The apostles knew that Philip had made a mistake in baptizing him, because they understood who he was. “Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, **he offered them money**, saying, ‘**Give this authority to me also**, so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the* Holy Spirit’ ” (verses 18-19).

Simon wanted to usurp the authority of God—*by buying the office of an apostle!*—so that he could continue to rule over the people with his own evil, authoritarian power and sorceries. “But Peter said to him, ‘May your money be destroyed with you because you thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money. You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness, and beseech God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you; for I perceive *that* you are in *the* gall of bitterness and *the* bondage of unrighteousness’ ” (verses 20-23). History records that Simon Magus never repented; moreover, he expanded his religion using the *name* of Christ, establishing himself in Rome where he was called a “god” (*McIntock and Strong’s History of Religion*).

We also learn from the account of Simon Magus that no man appoints himself to be a

minister of God, or buys God's free gift of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus told the apostles on the night of His last Passover, it is *His* prerogative to select God's servants because such a calling is based on love and service to the brethren: "You yourselves did not choose Me, but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you" (John 15:16).

How the Apostle Paul Viewed His Ministry: The apostle Paul also realized that it was God the Father and Jesus Christ Who put him into the ministry—that no man takes it to himself to be a minister. When Paul was first called, many of God's people knew that he was the one who horribly persecuted the brethren, binding them in chains, throwing them into prison, and consenting to the death of some.

Paul always remembered how he persecuted the Church, and the memory kept him humble. "**And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me, that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,** who was previously a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with *the* faith and love that *is* in Christ Jesus.

"*This is* a faithful saying, and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. But for this reason I was shown mercy in order that in me first Jesus Christ might demonstrate all long-suffering, for an example to those who would afterwards believe on Him unto eternal life" (I Tim. 1:12-16).

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul shares his thoughts concerning his apostleship, and how he compared himself to the other apostles: "For in the first place, I delivered to you what I also had received: that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried; and that He was raised the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas, *and* then to the twelve. Then He appeared to over five hundred brethren at one time, of whom the greater part are alive until now, but some have fallen sleep. Next He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and **last of all He appeared to me also, as one who was born of a miscarriage**" (I Cor. 15:3-8)

"**For I am the least of the apostles, and am not fit even to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.** But by *the* grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain; rather, I have labored more abundantly than all of them; however, *it was* not I, but the grace of God with me. Now then, whether I or they, so we preach, and so you have believed" (verses 9-11).

When Paul was in prison, he further divulged his inner feelings about himself, his apostleship and the great revelations he had received from the Lord: "For this cause I, Paul, *am* the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, if indeed you have heard of the ministry of the grace of God that was given to me for you; **how He made known to me by revelation the mystery** (even as I wrote briefly before, so that when you read *this*, you will be able to comprehend my understanding in the mystery of Christ), **which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;** that the Gentiles might be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a servant according to the gift of the grace of God, *which was* given to me through the inner working of His power. **To me, who am less than the least of all the saints,** was this grace given, that I might preach the gospel among the Gentiles—*even* the unsearchable riches of Christ; and that I might enlighten all *as to* what *is* the fellowship of the mystery that has been hidden from the ages in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:1-9).

It is evident from the New Testament that the apostles remembered the words of Christ and His charge to "FEED MY SHEEP." Peter wrote his first general epistle after being an apostle for decades, in which we find that not only did he vividly remember the experience of the transfiguration, but he also continued to teach the elders *how* to feed Jesus' flock—just as he was originally charged: "*The* elders who *are* among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder, and an *eye-witness* of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed: **FEED THE FLOCK OF GOD that is among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but with an eager attitude; not as exercising lordship over your possessions; but by being examples to the flock of God. And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, eternal crown of glory**" (I Pet. 5:1-4).

The Stealth Revolution in Government and Religion: I have completed five messages in the vital series, “The Stealth Revolution in Government and Religion in the Last Days.” As we have learned, the ultra-elite, super-rich and powerful—who actually run the world and control the reigns of government in nearly all nations—have been working towards the goals of a global banking system and world government for over 100 years. These activities all conform to the prophecies of the Bible, which foretell of a coming *world* government and monetary system. **The final economic system will be what Revelation calls the “Mark of the Beast”—without which no one will be able to buy or sell.**

An upcoming sixth message will examine the progress of the “G-20,” which is a coalition of the world’s 20 leading central banks. This organization will become fundamental in establishing a single, global banking system. In November 2008, at the peak of the banking crisis which plunged the world into deep recession, the G-20 was first revealed to the public. At that time, the United States hosted the first G-20 meeting in Washington, DC.

Since then, additional meetings have been held to work out a uniform code of operating regulations for all banks worldwide. It has been proposed that the International Monetary Fund, based in Switzerland, function as “central bank” for a global banking, financial and trading system. It has been recommended as well that a *new world currency* be created to replace the dollar in international trade.

Once this financial system becomes operational, it will profoundly affect *everyone* in *every* part of the world. Nations will begin to actually lose much of their sovereignty as they give up their right to utilize their own currencies. This will make it easier for the nations to accept the inevitable—a *world* government! Finally, the ultra-elite, super-rich and powerful will have conquered the world—without firing a single shot!

This world government will become the final “beast power” of Revelation 13. Here is what John was inspired to write: “And I stood on the sand of the sea; and I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads *the* name of blasphemy. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, and his feet like *the* feet of a bear, and his mouth like *the* mouth of a lion; and **the dragon** [Satan the devil] **gave him his power, and his throne and great authority.**

“And I saw one of his heads as *if it were* slain to death, but his deadly wound was healed; and **the whole earth was amazed and followed the beast. And they worshiped the dragon, who gave his authority to the beast.** And they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who *is* like the beast? Who has the power to make war against him?’

“And a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies was given to him; and authority was given to him to continue *for* forty-two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And he was given *power* to make war against the saints, and to overcome them; and **he was given authority over every tribe and language and nation. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.** If anyone has an ear, let him hear” (Rev. 13:1-9). As Jesus has admonished us, we need to watch and be ready at all times!

Wayne Stenhouse: As many of you know, Wayne, our office manager in Canada, has been suffering from cancer for over a year. He and his wife, Sylvia, truly appreciate all your prayers that you have continually offered up to God on their behalf. Unfortunately, Wayne recently had a stroke, which has made his condition worse. At the present time he is confined to bed at home and is extremely weak. While many have been praying for him throughout his battle with cancer, he would appreciate your continued prayers on his behalf. His condition is very grave, and it appears that his physical life is soon coming to an end. While we are all saddened by this report, we realize, as the Word of God tells us, that we will not live forever in the flesh.

God inspired King Solomon to succinctly summarize man’s life journey and work: “**To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens: a time to be born, and a time to die;** a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what *is* planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to gain, and a

time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace” (Eccl. 3:1-8).

In the final analysis, God is always watching over His saints, perfecting their spiritual lives in preparation for the return of Jesus Christ and the first resurrection to eternal life. From the beginning of the Church age until His second coming, we are all to be faithful to the end. God tells us of a special blessing for all those who die in the faith: “The righteous perish, and no one lays *it* to heart, and merciful men *are* taken away; none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds [in the grave], each one who walked in his uprightness” (Isa. 57:1-2).

In addition to a place of safety for a small remnant of the Church (as shown in Revelation 12), the “place of safety” for the majority of saints down through history until now is actually the grave. So while we are sad and grieve over circumstances such as Wayne’s, as well as others who have faced similar trials, **we always need to keep our hearts and minds on the goal of the Kingdom of God, the return of Jesus Christ and the resurrection to eternal life. Everything else is subordinate to this and will all pass away.**

Church at Home: We are still working on completing the video studio, acquiring the necessary cameras, finalizing the Church at Home logo, and developing the opening and closing for the video programs. We are making progress in all these areas. Phil Neal, our editor, has been busy condensing basic articles for visitors to Church at Home to download. We are working closely with Randy Vild, owner of Vild Productions. Randy is a very talented audio and video producer who is assisting us in developing the new Web site. I recorded his short report about Church at Home when I was in Arcadia on August 8 and included it on the accompanying CD.

God’s Bible Pathway for Children: We are nearing completion of this 106-page book for children, originally written by Jane Spring of Queensland, Australia. Don and Bonnie Burrows have added pictures, Hiedi Vogeles has transcribed the text, and Dolores and I have edited and added to it. It will be a wonderful book for children of all ages. For younger children, parents and grandparents can read the book to them—which is what Jane did with her original hand-drawn book, which she titled *The Story of Life*. When she sent it to us, Dolores said, “We need to make a book from this!”—and she is the one who came up with the new title, *God’s Bible Pathway for Children*. It is uncertain whether we can get the book to the printer before the Feast—but we are close to finishing.

Second Edition of the Bible: We are completely sold out of the First Edition lambskin Bibles. Bob Ellsworth has been doing an excellent job in selling the Bibles through direct ads in a host of major publications. When I was in Arcadia, Bob gave an update of his sales activities to the brethren, which we have also included on the CD in this mailing.

At Lithopak, in China, they are finishing up with the printing of the Second Edition of *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order*. After the printing, the signatures must be collated and folded—then it’s on to stitching, binding and gluing. Next, they will trim and gold gild the edges of the pages, and finally bind and box them for shipping. Don Junowich in China has indicated that they should be ready to ship toward the end of September.

For this printing, we have ordered 12,000. Of that number, we will have 10,000 finished in lambskin like the First Edition, and 2,000 with an elegant, vinyl leatherette cover for distribution through various Christian book dealers that Bob is working with. The dealers are excited about the Bible and anxious to sell them. As Bob progresses with sales, we should be in a financial position to pay for all future printings with proceeds from the sales of this edition.

Feast of Tabernacles: We have made commitments to the various hotels and motels concerning the estimated number of rooms we will need for the Feast of Tabernacles. However, at some Feast sites, reservations are *late* coming in—and we are fast approaching the cutoff dates for receiving reduced room rates. If you have delayed making your reservations for the Feast, please do so as soon as possible. Otherwise, all the brethren will have to pay a higher rate.

Hosts for the Feast of Tabernacles:

Goshen, Indiana: This year, Alan Bush will host the Feast. His wife, Kay, will provide the piano music for the hymns.

Virginia Beach, Virginia: Stan Timek will be our host. He is looking forward to meeting and seeing all the brethren. This is an *excellent* site.

Navarro Beach, Florida: Our elder in Florida, Glenn Daniel, will host the Feast there. In fact, Glenn is the one who located this site for us. It has been completely rebuilt from the havoc of past hurricanes—everything is new. We are thankful that he was able to establish this site for us.

Palm Springs, California: Willie Miller is our host for this year. We have exceptionally fine facilities with an excellent price. If you plan to attend here, please secure your reservations ASAP in order to retain the lower room pricing.

Hollister, California: Dave Froloff will be our host in Hollister. Last year we had a wonderful turnout and an excellent Feast. Again this year, I will be in Hollister the last four days of the Feast. However, because of a golf tournament this year, we were not able to secure any rooms at Ridgemark Golf and Country Club. Please check the original Feast letter for other hotels and motels.

Brethren, as you can see, we have been extremely busy in many areas and on numerous projects. As we witness events taking place in the world and in our lives, it is most important that our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ be maintained *daily* through prayer and study. We pray for you daily, for God's blessings and intervention in your lives. Once again, we thank you for your continued faithful support with your love and prayers, as well as through your tithes and offerings—especially in these trying financial times. May God the Father and Jesus Christ bless you with love, grace and blessings in all things.

With love, in Christ Jesus,

Fred R. Coulter
FRC

Addendum:
September 1, 2009
Dear Brethren,

After an extended battle with cancer, Wayne Stenhouse passed away at 5 a.m., August 30th, 2009. He now awaits the resurrection to glory.

Fred Coulter