

Church of God, The Eternal

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The Feast of Unleavened Bread To Be Kept Like the Feast of Tabernacles?

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Dear Brethren:

By God's reckoning, a new calendar year will soon be upon us, so it is very important that our preparation for the spring Holy Day season be underway. The physical requirements are always critical, but even more so are the preparations of our hearts and minds to fulfill that spiritual obligation before God. This means we must have the correct orientation concerning the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread if we want our sacrifices to be acceptable to Him. While there are many around the world who will be going through the motions of keeping the upcoming Feast, there will likely be very few of those called in these last days actually observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread as God requires. Why? Because the majority have not been willing to obey the simplicity of God's instructions, but have sought to modify commands to suit themselves, according to human wisdom and carnal whims. It is not enough to keep *a* feast. We must obey God's implicit commands for those holy observances if we want spiritual acceptance.

While those faithfully seeking to hold to the faith once delivered may recognize the fallacy of watering down God's instructions in keeping the Feast, some have yet fallen into a dangerous trap by seeking to *add* to the commands of God. And this is just as criminal as any other perversion:

Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from*

it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you (Deuteronomy 4:1–2) [emphasis mine].

In what way have some erred by adding to the command for keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread? By concluding that the seven-day spring Feast must be kept in the very same fashion as the fall Feast of Tabernacles to be acceptable before God. Because this question has been asked by a number of very sincere individuals in God's church who have been exposed recently to the concept of certain ones outside, it makes sense to cover the question, and to clarify the real truth concerning this important doctrine. Not one of us should enter into the upcoming Holy Day season with any doubts whatsoever. There are some who have determined their own rationale for judgment in these matters. This issue of the *Monthly Letter* is not for them. But it is for those who honestly may have been made to wonder about the history of the keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in God's Church during the last seventy years, and are honestly seeking to understand the Truth. For those, this material should be very revealing and satisfying.

The assertion that the spring Feast requires we all travel away from our homes to special designated places—with ministerial instruction during the entire seven days—is not a new one at all. In fact, the issue came up not long after the formation of this remnant body in 1975, prompting Mr. Raymond Cole to commission an article in 1979 to refute this erroneous interpretation of doctrine. That article is entitled, *Days of Unleavened Bread—How Should They Be Observed?*, and can be ordered from the church office or read online at <http://www.cogeternal.org/text/003unleavbrd.htm>. The material to be covered in this letter will repeat some of the key points of that article, but will also cover additional evidence to clarify the legitimate history of our keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Why the Confusion?

During a period of between ten and thirteen years—from 1954 to the middle 1960s—the Radio Church of God did sponsor special meeting sites and encouraged brethren to come together for all seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, in similar fashion to the Feast of Tabernacles. Because of this fact, some have since decided this was the "faith once delivered" to Mr. Armstrong by Jesus Christ concerning proper keeping of the spring Feast, and that this is what we all must do today. There are usually two primary motivations among those taking this posture. The first group simply uses this issue as a way to satiate their appetite for more change, given that adding to God's law seems to satisfy this lust as much as taking away from it. They are always seeking

to personalize church teachings and identify ways to contribute some new angle to doctrine which brings attention to themselves. The second group may be much more sincere, but they nonetheless have been lured into error. Often these sincerely deceived ones get misled by trying to resolve perplexing questions in their minds about the state of God's church today. What do we mean by this?

As an example, some have looked at the lack of miraculous healings in the church today as a sign there must be "something wrong" which has caused God to withdraw from us, even while believing we are keeping more of the truth than any other remnant body. (They overlook the likelihood we *all* have much to do in better fulfilling the clear teachings being preserved in this remnant, for God to be near at hand. We need not look for *new* ways to please God when we have our plates full working to live up to the obligations He has already clearly defined. Those seeking some new command are usually those failing to address difficult personal sins they are presently ignoring.) But in absence of this honest perspective, and with a faulty premise in mind, they ask the following question: What is *the church* doing wrong that should be fixed so I can be blessed? They scour their memories (or historical documentation) to try and identify what the church might have done differently in early years when so many more fantastic miracles seemed to be commonplace. Very quickly thereafter, this issue of proper keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread seems to surface. As the rationale goes: Perhaps if we began keeping the spring Feast like we did in the early years, we would see more of God's divine interventions in our lives like they did back then. Some who have subscribed to this school of thought have also concluded the church should be keeping the new moons each month as holy Sabbaths, even though that was never practiced in the church. But for all this zealotry in the name of growing closer to God through discovering "new" commandments, they instead become victims of Satan's subtlety to draw them into error.

What Is the Truth?

The fact is, having church services on all seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is not part of the faith once delivered. It was an administrative decision made by Mr. Herbert Armstrong for a specific number of years, and for very specific reasons (we will get to that presently). What is our proof this was not a *doctrinal* teaching of the Radio Church of God, but merely a temporary administrative ruling? Let Mr. Armstrong's own testimony answer that. From the April, 1954, *Co-Worker Letter*—instructing brethren to prepare for the coming spring Holy Day season—Mr. Armstrong states:

Of course those living near Pasadena will meet here at the college for the Passover and holyday meetings; those near Portland or Eugene, Oregon, or Tacoma, Washington, will meet with the brethren at those points. All others should try to come to the big Tabernacle in Texas.

God willing, Mrs. Armstrong and I are planning to be at the Tabernacle for the entire eight days—including the 7 days of the Festival of Unleavened Bread following the Passover. . . . *While it is not made obligatory by God that everyone remain thru the entire 8 days*, we urge all who possibly can to plan to do so [emphasis mine].

Now then, if anyone has had an *honest* question about the faith once delivered by God through Mr. Armstrong on this topic, the above quote should put that issue to rest once and for all. Although not referenced in our 1979 article on the topic, Mr. Armstrong's statement is absolutely consistent with Mr. Raymond Cole's emphatic assertion that he was taught this same thing from the earliest years—first as a laymember in the church, and later as an ordained evangelist. How gratifying it is to find clear evidence later which supports Mr. Cole's testimony and upholds his credibility as a personal witness during those pivotal years.

One former member of God's church now advocating the false concept we are addressing has attempted to use his personal experience with Mr. Raymond Cole several years ago as "evidence" we should be keeping all seven days of the spring Feast as we do the Feast of Tabernacles. He tells of traveling to an area in the U.S. where Mr. Cole was keeping the Passover and first High Day of Unleavened Bread several years ago (at which place this author was also present as a laymember of the church at that time). After the first High Day was over (a Thursday that year), many brethren were traveling home on Friday, and Mr. Cole was likewise scheduled to depart mid-Feast, after the weekly Sabbath. Mr. Cole was struck unexpectedly with an acute illness on the second day of the Feast (although he recovered sufficiently to give the sermon on the weekly Sabbath that followed). On this same second day, one of the families that departed for their long drive home ran into a severe snowstorm that stranded them overnight and made their journey very treacherous. This man's conclusion was that these events were signs from God that He was displeased with Church of God, The Eternal for our not staying and keeping every day of the spring Feast in convocation, like we do during the fall Feast. But does this hypothesis have any merit? Only if we think Mr. Armstrong was likewise cursed for the very same practice. Again, let us look at Mr. Armstrong's own example in 1952 for perspective. In the April, 1952, *Co-Worker Letter*, we find Mr. Armstrong's account of his own keeping of the spring Feast that year:

GREETINGS! Once again I'm writing you on the train. Mrs. Armstrong and I are returning to Pasadena from Gladewater, near Longview, Texas. There we met for the Passover (Lord's Supper) and first annual Holy Day of the Eternal our God in a wonderful conclave of co-workers and brethren brought into God's Truth and the Body of Christ thru this great work. . . . On the Holy Day [first day of the Feast], Thursday, there were so many written questions turned in, and others asked orally during the service, that we never did get to the sermon. . . . Toward evening many had to leave, but several stayed on, and some were still there having their questions answered, and having private conferences with us until midnight. Then just a few hours' sleep, and *we caught a 5:16 A.M. train, and here we are, traveling westward thru Big Spring, Midland, and Odessa* in the dust-swept wide open spaces of Texas as I have been writing these lines [emphasis mine].

So, on the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in 1952, Mr. Armstrong was not staying in the "appointed place" for the entire spring Feast, but was traveling home, just as Mr. Cole did by example years later. If we believe Raymond Cole was guilty of polluting the Feast, then so was Mr. Armstrong decades earlier.

What Does the Bible Say?

Even though it is obvious now that Mr. Armstrong taught it was not required by God to keep all eight days during the Passover season like we do the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall, is this supported by scripture? It certainly is. Here is the evidence—notice the command to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Exodus 12:

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever (Exodus 12:15–17).

How do we summarize the specific commands given here? First, all leavening is to be put out of our houses for seven days. Second, unleavened bread is to be eaten seven days. Third, holy convocations are to be called in the first and last days—kept as Sabbaths in which no servile work is performed. Notice there is absolutely no command that convocations are required on all seven days of the Feast. The same is true of the commands repeated in Exodus 13:6–7, and Numbers 28:17–18, 25. Leviticus 23 restates the very same requirement:

And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein (Leviticus 23:6–8).

What about those who would claim the requirement to offer an offering made by fire seven days means the church should be having convocations as "offerings" all seven days? If it is accurate to apply the temporary animal sacrifice command to the church in this way, then such must be true for *all* sacrifices of the Levitical dispensation, including the *daily* sacrifice commanded to be offered each morning and evening. If this logic holds true, then the church should be having a solemn service in the morning and evening of every single day during the year (Exodus 29:38–42, Numbers 28:3–8). But if this seems absurd, so is the forced application of a solemn service on each day during the spring Feast.

But then why do we have a solemn service on each day of the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall? Is not the command to keep the fall Feast the same as the spring Feast? The answer is an emphatic no! The command to keep the Feast of Tabernacles is very distinct indeed! Notice first the initial command which seems similar to the spring Feast:

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein (Leviticus 23:34–36).

However, notice now the difference in the command to keep the fall Feast:

And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and *ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days*: (Numbers 29:12) [emphasis mine].

Here we find a specific command to *keep a feast* seven days! In the command for the Days of Unleavened Bread is no such command to *keep a feast* seven days, only to *eat unleavened bread* seven days. But is this just striving after words? Go back to Leviticus 23 once again and notice the very detailed and unique explanation of what is required to *keep* the fall Feast seven days:

Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall *keep a feast unto the LORD seven days*: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall *rejoice before the LORD your God seven days*. And ye shall *keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days* in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall *dwell in booths seven days*; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God (Leviticus 23:39–43) [emphasis mine].

This expansion upon the command for keeping the Feast of Tabernacles makes it very distinct from the Feast of Unleavened Bread. There is no such command to dwell in temporary dwellings in a designated place for seven days in the spring. Such command is simply not there, and that is why Mr. Herbert Armstrong understood there was a distinct difference in God's requirement in properly observing the spring and fall festivals.

Now if anyone wants to argue this point and challenge us on the application of these Biblical commands, that will be nothing new. There are thousands of God's called children who have rejected the faith once delivered for their own private interpretation of scripture. But for anyone who accepts the concept that Truth comes only by divine revelation—through a servant chosen and inspired by Jesus Christ Himself to teach us sound doctrine—then there should be no argument, having now verified what Mr. Armstrong was inspired to teach us from the very beginning of God's work in these last days.

Why Services on All Seven Days?

If God did not require us to keep the seven-day spring Feast as we do the fall festival, then why did Mr. Armstrong encourage such convocations during the Days of Unleavened Bread from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s? To answer this, we must take into consideration the unique circumstances at play during those very pivotal years in God's church.

First, remember that the inaugural class of Ambassador College began in 1947 and did not graduate until 1951. During all of this time the radio broadcast was being blessed by God and producing incredible new growth. People from all over the country were responding to God's truth and seeking baptism, yet because there were so few ministers for deployment to local congregations, many people were on their own most of the year. These new church members depended upon *The World Tomorrow* radio broadcast, *The Plain Truth* magazine, and the booklets ordered from headquarters for their spiritual instruction. While Ambassador College was just starting to turn out those new graduates who would begin to fill the demand for local pastors, how would the present very limited ministry serve an exploding membership dispersed about the nation? The very first evangelist helpers were a group of seven men ordained by Mr. Armstrong in 1952 (including Mr. Raymond Cole). Since, therefore, there were not enough ministers to go out to all the people to meet this demand, it only made sense to try and bring the people to the ministers! Notice another quote from the April, 1952, *Co-Worker Letter*:

The United States is a great nation, and we live long distances apart. We cannot all meet together every Sabbath. But most of us can, and WILL, meet and feast together in these SPIRITUAL feasts which God has appointed, and where we have HIS VERY OWN INVISIBLE PRESENCE with us! . . . This is the START of the development toward providing local CHURCHES in centralized locations where the largest possible numbers of you may finally be enabled to meet together in regular church services every Sabbath. Ambassador College is rapidly training God-called, consecrated and competent ministers to be your pastors in these churches.

It goes without saying that the Feast of Tabernacles provided a grand opportunity for brethren to come together and hear concentrated instruction for eight full days in person from God's ministers. This was a bona fide command of God, and it was funded by the required second tithe. But while so many had no local congregations to attend during the rest of the year, this one fabulous Feast still left many starving for additional instruction and desperately needed guidance. In the interim, before that need could be

filled with the proliferation of new ministers into the field, it was decided to offer similar opportunities for concentrated personal instruction during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as well as during the Feast of Tabernacles. It was certainly permissible to use second tithe in an auxiliary manner for the other commanded Feasts, and what better setting than the Passover and seven-day spring Feast to offer more instruction for the growing church? Therefore, Mr. Armstrong made an administrative decision to 1) sponsor several large designated places about the country for these meetings, and 2) encourage all who could do so to come to one of these places to keep the spring festival. As we have already seen, it was never taught by Mr. Armstrong as a command of God, but was instead an administrative decision to fill a serious need of the growing church. Notice several excerpts from *Co-Worker Letters* from 1956 through 1961:

The Passover this year is on Sunday night, the 25th of March, just after sunset If prevented from attending one of the local churches for this service or meeting with brethren in Gladewater, Texas for the entire period, write immediately for directions for taking the Passover in your own home! . . . All others should try to come to the big tabernacle in Texas. God willing Mrs. Armstrong and I are planning to be at the tabernacle for the entire eight days including the seven days of the festival of Unleavened Bread following the passover. We hope to have Mr. Raymond Cole, Mr. Norman Smith and, as circumstances permit, a number of other ordained ministers at the tabernacle to be bringing messages during this period [*Co-Worker Letter*, March, 1956].

I'm sending you this special letter to give you the information you'll need for the great Passover festival and the days of Unleavened Bread that are rapidly drawing closer. I will be at the big tabernacle building near Gladewater, Texas again this year, God willing, with Mrs. Armstrong for the entire eight days. . . . It is a blessing to be able to announce that for the first time we are able to hold services during the entire eight days at Lyons, Colorado! Mr. Raymond Cole, Pastor in charge of the Churches scattered abroad will officiate at those services . . . For those of you planning to remain the entire eight days at Lyons there are tourist accommodations at Estes Park, a resort town not too distant from the site of the meetings . . . [*Co-Worker Letter*, March, 1957].

I will be at the tabernacle building near Gladewater, Texas, again this year, God willing, with Mrs. Armstrong for the entire eight days. . . . LYONS, COLORADO: Services will be conducted at Lyons for the entire nine days

for all the brethren in the states nearby who can be spared a trip of many hundreds of extra miles to the tabernacle. Mr. Raymond Cole, together with Mr. Allen Manteufel, will go to Lyons from the Headquarters Church here in Pasadena, and will be assisted by the regular Pastor of the three Churches in Lyons, Garden City and Pueblo, Mr. Carlton Smith. . . . LOCAL CHURCHES: Each local pastor will make announcements as to time and place of services. If any of you brethren live nearer to some of the below listed areas than you do to the big tabernacle, or to Lyons, Colorado, then please write immediately, by AIR MAIL, and we'll send you the information about time and place for the local Church nearest you. They are: Chicago; Milwaukee; St Louis, Mo; Houston and Corpus Christi, Texas; Tacoma, Washington; Portland, Salem and Eugene, Oregon; Fresno and San Diego, California [*Co-Worker Letter*, March, 1958].

This year, for the first time, we will be holding the full eight day's Feast at FOUR SEPARATE LOCATIONS [Gladewater, Texas; Portland, Oregon; Denver, Colorado; and New York City, New York]! . . . Others, who may be able to drive to one of our local Churches for the Passover, but find it impossible to journey to one of the already-mentioned locations for the full eight days, may write immediately for instructions regarding any given local area. The Passover and Holy Days ONLY will be observed in the following locations: Pasadena, San Diego, and Fresno, California; Corpus Christi, San Antonio and Houston, Texas; Chicago and El Paso, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Saint Louis and Springfield, Missouri; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania [*Co-Worker Letter*, March, 1959].

Full eight day services will be held in more places than ever before this year, and Passover Services will be held in newly established Churches . . . Mrs. Armstrong and I will fly from Pasadena during the middle part of the Days of Unleavened Bread and will be able to spend, God willing, the last few days with all of you brethren at the big Tabernacle near Big Sandy! Be sure to plan to stay the entire eight days! Remember, we have ample facilities on the grounds and in the surrounding area for all who would care to attend for the entire time [*Co-Worker Letter*, March, 1961]!

The excerpts above point out some very stark contrasts from the way the Feast of Tabernacles was promoted. First, phrases like, "All others should *try* to come," "those of you *planning* to remain the entire eight days," and "we have ample facilities on the grounds . . . for all who would *care* to attend for the entire time" would never be used by Mr. Armstrong if he considered such an eight-day observance a command of God.

Secondly, notice that there were an increasing number of local services being held over the years in places other than major sites, and in twelve specific cities in 1959 it is stated *only Passover and Holy Day services would be provided!* The services in these cities were conducted by ordained ministers of the church, assigned there by Mr. Armstrong. These ministers could not therefore be at one of the four locations that year where services were being conducted all eight days. Were those ministers and laymembers—keeping the Passover and High Days in these twelve cities—breaking God's law? Of course not.

But notice that *no such local services were ever* offered for the Feast of Tabernacles during those same years. No, when it came to keeping the fall festival as God commanded, *everyone* was expected to travel to one of the large designated sites and be there for the entire eight days. There were no options for local services "back home." There were no ministers of God anywhere but at one of the designated festival sites. Until 1952 there was only one site—Belknap Springs, Oregon. In 1952 that one U.S. site was moved to Seigler Springs, California. Then from 1953 through 1960, the fall festival was held exclusively in Big Sandy, Texas. In 1961, Squaw Valley, California, was added as a second site for the very first time, and then Jekyll Island, Georgia, was added as a third site in 1963. This should make it very plain that the church *never* treated the observance of the Days of Unleavened Bread in the same way as the Feast of Tabernacles, even during those very years that services were being offered on all eight days of the spring Feast.

Why Did This Practice End?

In the middle 1960s, Mr. Armstrong stopped sponsoring large eight-day gatherings for the spring festival. Why would this be? Was it a reflection of a relaxing of spiritual fervor in the church? Hardly! Remember, the reason those eight-day spring gatherings had been offered from the beginning was to feed a growing and hungry flock during a time when there were yet very few commissioned shepherds. Mr. Armstrong was trying to take advantage of every possible opportunity to provide quality training time for the people. This strategy included instructional services not only on every day during the Feasts—with two services each day, and sometimes three—but on secular days as well! Notice this example from 1961 for services scheduled in Pasadena, California, a year in which Passover fell on Thursday evening:

FRIDAY March 31: There will be morning services only in the Civic Auditorium on Friday—to permit ample time to prepare food for the Feast and the noon meal on the following double Sabbath. Although Friday is not

a Holy Day, nor one of the Days of Unleavened Bread, many who have come for the Passover the previous evening will be able to attend this service [*Co-Worker Letter*, March, 1961].

So services were even scheduled on secular days adjacent to the Feasts! The same was true with Pentecost—kept on Monday all those years. Notice how brethren were encouraged to gather in Texas to attend at least *seven* services (and perhaps nine) in a three and one-half day period in 1958:

All who are able are urged to attend the services at the Tabernacle near Gladewater, Texas. There will be services held for three days at the Tabernacle, beginning with a service Friday night the 23rd, followed by all-day meetings on the weekly Sabbath the 24th, on Sunday, the 25th, and on the Day of Pentecost, Monday, the 26th of May [*Co-Worker Letter*, May, 1958].

Not only were double and triple services being held on the weekly and annual Sabbaths, but on the Sunday that fell in between! Those who think the number of convocations scheduled around the Feasts from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s was a point of *doctrine* must not only advocate one service every day during the spring Feast, but *double and triple services* on those days, *plus* services on secular days—including the Sunday before Pentecost.

But why was this super-concentrated schedule of instruction eventually eliminated by Mr. Armstrong in the mid-1960s? Because the demographic variables had changed by that time, prompting him to make a judicious administrative adjustment. By the middle 1960s there was no longer a severe lack of trained men for deployment to local areas. There were now local congregations of the Radio Church of God all over, and more being added all the time. Those responding to God's Truth now had access to local pastors in their own regions where it was possible to attend Sabbath services every week (even if some still traveled many miles each week to their nearest congregation). Rather than having only two or three times a year when spiritual instruction could be received, it was now being provided *every week* in weekly Sabbath services, even as Mr. Armstrong had always hoped. The expansive flock was now being served by a strong network of local ministers, a network that took more than a decade to develop from its beginning with that first group of ordained helpers in 1952.

The pressing need to offer extra services during the festival times to make up for a lack of weekly instruction during the remainder of the year had now dissipated. Now,

with local services available, the added hardship to families in taking off extra days from work and straining their second tithe for more than one major journey each year became unnecessary. It was a wonderful sacrifice that God honored and blessed while it was necessary in those earlier years to put Him first. But once God provided the blessing of local congregations, such sacrifice was no longer required in order to keep Him first in priority.

Answering Rebuttals

We are also aware that certain statements were made by one or more ministers—other than Mr. Armstrong—during the 1950s which would imply God requires us to convoke on all seven days of the spring Feast. One such quote is taken from an article from *The Good News* magazine, January, 1959, entitled, *How To Observe God's Festivals*. Concerning the Days of Unleavened Bread, the author states:

The Feast is a seven day period, beginning the day *after* the Passover. Whenever possible, Christians should gather together for the Passover and the entire seven days of Unleavened Bread. The Festival of Unleavened Bread, although seven days long, has but two *annual* Holy Days or Sabbaths, occurring on the first and last days of the feast. The intervening days are not sabbaths *and ordinary work may be done on them*.

Since it would be a contradiction of Mr. Armstrong's own words previously quoted to interpret this to mean convocations are required *by God* on all seven days of the spring Feast, we must apply it in terms of the history we have already documented. The year 1959 was during the time major sites of eight-day services were being offered in the spring, so it is natural that this article would take advantage of the opportunity to encourage brethren to attend for the full time. But we certainly do not rule out the possibility that certain ministers under Mr. Armstrong might have begun to teach this over time as a requirement of God.

An example of this very thing can be found with the issue of annual Holy Day offerings. Mr. Armstrong originally took offerings only three times each year—on the first High Day of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. This is consistent with what the Bible commands (Deuteronomy 16:16–17). He later made *an administrative decision* to begin taking offerings on all seven annual Holy Days. This was never a decision originally based upon scriptural obligation, and he did not claim it as such. Mr. Raymond Cole was one of those present at the meetings

where Mr. Armstrong first discussed and then made that ruling. But in time, other men began to write about commanded offerings and interpreted it as though *the Bible* required seven offerings. They did not seem to be willing to continue explaining it as a ministerial judgment—which Mr. Armstrong was well within his authority to make—but must have felt more justified if they could make it a "thus saith the Lord." The majority of those coming into the church thereafter automatically assumed seven offerings were required by the Bible, through an explanation of interpreting "three times" as "three seasons." The convoluted explanation was not accurate, and it was not necessary anyway.

It is very likely that the same thing could have happened concerning ideas about keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread. If there were any such attempts by certain ministers to interpret Mr. Armstrong's administrative ruling concerning the seven-day spring Feast in terms of Biblical obligation, we would have to view such statements in context with all of the direct evidence to the contrary.

As time goes on and we move farther away from the beginning of God's initial revelation of Truth to His chosen servant in this age, it becomes harder and harder for human beings to restrain themselves from making amendments to Jesus Christ's doctrine. The fact that the ministry today is required continually to defend and reconfirm the original divine teachings is a testament to the pervasive and unyielding assault that continues against God's Word. And with each decade farther removed from the time of that beginning, the complexity of defense grows exponentially. At least until 2001 we had Mr. Raymond Cole with us—a personal witness of all these things from the 1940s and 1950s—with more credibility than any other. But since his death we must now continue on defending our doctrinal heritage with only the historical writings available to us from him and Mr. Armstrong. Even as it was harder and harder for each generation of ministers after the original Apostles to hold the church together, so is it true in our age. The Apostle Paul received divine revelation directly from Jesus Christ. He had the strongest line of testimony. Timothy was taught those very things from Paul, but could not claim to be a personal witness himself. You can bet that any faithful student of Timothy's found it even harder to maintain credibility after Timothy's death, being two generations removed from the original source. Is there any wonder then that God's people move so quickly into apostasy within just a few decades?


This issue concerning proper keeping of the Days of Unleavened Bread is just one small example of many subtle attempts to take God's church into enticing but deadly error, even now—thirty years since the major apostasy of 1974. Brethren, God helping me, that is not going to happen on my watch. I care not whether such insidious change is offered under the guise of taking away from or adding to the revealed Word of God.

Both will be met with the full weight of the authority of Jesus Christ to protect this remnant body from Satan's subtlety. We are not about to change. Let that be assured!

If we have a legitimate respect for the concept of God's divine inspiration of Truth to His Church—founded upon Jesus Christ—then we need not be troubled by any of those seeking to stir up strife and create doubt. With that sincere confidence, we can be assured of keeping the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread this year acceptably before God, and receive His continued blessing and protection.

May you all have a very rich and rewarding Holy Day season under the benevolent care of our loving Creator.

Yours with deep affection in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jon W. Brisby". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned centrally below the closing text.

Jon W. Brisby