

# **The Doctrine Of Pentecost - How And Why It Was Changed!**

**By Paul Royer and Bryce Clark**

In 1974 the Worldwide Church of God changed its teaching on which day to observe Pentecost-from Monday to Sunday. Pentecost is the only holy day that must be counted. The Bible instructs us to count 50 days and then keep Pentecost. In spite of what may have been stated in the past, it does not say to count 49 days and keep the 50th day. The argument that those who keep a Monday Pentecost observe the 51st day is bogus. Why? Because the count has been completed at the end of 50 days. The Day of Pentecost is not a part of that count. Scholars have bickered and argued for generations on how to count Pentecost. If scholarship was the answer, the count would be understandable for all to see, but the constant fighting over the issue dispels that notion. The sorting out of the historical and technical maze of confusion seems an impossible task. There is only one day that God appointed for Pentecost, and the proper understanding of how to count it comes by means of divine revelation. Once one is aware of the importance of divine revelation, the physical understanding is achievable and simple. Scholars have polluted the holiness of the Lord (Mal. 2:11). What does God say about this? "The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts" (v. 12).

The Truth of God is understood by means of the Holy Spirit. One must be led by the Spirit of God in order to comprehend spiritual things. Did the Holy Spirit lead the Church of God in the matter of Pentecost, or did it not? "New truth," in the form of doctrinal changes, cannot contradict previous Truth. God's Spirit is not contradictory. If the Truth about how to count Pentecost was revealed originally, then the "new truth" is false doctrine-heresy! The fact is: To deny a Monday Pentecost is to deny revelation. Is it not ironic that the first major doctrinal change made by the Worldwide Church of God involved the Holy Spirit? Pentecost is the day on which the Holy Spirit was first given to the New Testament Church. Christians are led to the Truth by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:13). Therefore, rejection of the day that God revealed to His Church is a rejection of the Spirit of God.

The Word of God is consistent and unchanging. Men are the ones who do the changing. Even the major denominations have changed their doctrines from time to time. When the Worldwide Church of God changed the observance of the Day of Pentecost to a Sunday, knowingly or unknowingly they began the long slippery slide into mainstream Christianity and have now changed so many doctrines they can no longer be considered God's Church. There is one day and one day only that the Creator made holy for Pentecost. It is paramount to know what that day is, and not to be misled by arguments upon which even scholars cannot agree.

## **What Was Originally Said**

The booklet entitled, Pagan Holidays-or God's Holydays-Which? makes this statement regarding Pentecost: "It is of very grave importance we figure the right day. This day, and this only, is made HOLY by the Eternal Creator" (p. 14). On pages 13-15, Mr. Armstrong emphasized that the New Testament Church began on Monday, June 18, AD 31. He wrote: "The New Testament Church of God was not founded on Sunday." Mr. Armstrong's view was that God had revealed the truth to him. Speaking of the Truth, in another article he wrote: "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, BUT BY THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST . . . [through] the WORD OF GOD . . ." (No, I Never Was a Jehovah Witness or a Seventh Day Adventist). On January 31, 1974, in a letter to the Church, Mr. Armstrong related how he had personally researched the matter of a Sunday Pentecost at least three times, and each

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time held to a Monday Pentecost, rejecting all the false arguments against it (p.1, par 4).

Longtime church members know that God revealed many foundational doctrines to Mr. Armstrong. These include the identity of modern Israel, the annual holy days, the Wednesday crucifixion and Saturday resurrection, and many others. Should we assume Mr. Armstrong was misled and not given an understanding of the correct day of Pentecost? Did God, for 40 years, fail to reveal this truth to Mr. Armstrong? The subsequent history of those in the Church of God who rejected a Monday Pentecost in favor of Sunday, has been fragmentation and disintegration. Should we expect anything else from the 1974 doctrinal change that was made in the Worldwide Church of God? Today, over 200 groups exist due to the fracturing that took place in the Church after the doctrinal change in 1974.

## **Sunday or Monday Pentecost in the Beginning?**

It has often been stated that Mr. Armstrong kept Pentecost on a Sunday when the Work first started. Is this true? On more than one occasion he stated: "I never kept a Sunday Pentecost as such!" He did, however, after the manner of the Jews, keep a Sivan 6 Pentecost for a short period of time. The day of the week varies somewhat with this method of reckoning, which begins the count from the first holy day during the Days of Unleavened Bread. The argument used by some today to justify a Sunday Pentecost is that since Mr. Armstrong kept a Sunday Pentecost at the beginning of the Work, it is all right to keep a Sunday now. An elderly lady who began attending with Mr. Armstrong in the 1930s has a diary. She was baptized on August 4, 1936. In her diary she records Pentecost services in Eugene, Oregon. The day was Monday, May 17, 1937. Mr. Armstrong did not remember how many years he observed a Sivan 6 Pentecost, but the diary narrows it down to a two-or-three-year period. By that time God had revealed the correct day-Monday. Letters and official records of the Salem, West Virginia Church Conference point out that in 1934 Mr. Armstrong began keeping the holy days. Three years later, in 1937, official records of the West Virginia Church of God Conference note that Mr. Armstrong's papers and articles contended that the holy days should be kept, including a Monday Pentecost. In 1938 Mr. Armstrong was asked to ". . . turn in his credentials for continuing to preach contrary to the church and resolution as passed in 1937 as to Feast Days, etc." (From the historical records of the Church of God, Seventh Day). What this tells us is that Mr. Armstrong observed a Sivan 6 Pentecost in 1934 and 1935, with a doubtful 1936. In 1934, Sivan 6 fell on a Sunday. In 1935, it fell on a Friday. And in 1936, it fell on Wednesday (see "Calendar," in The Jewish Ency). Mr. Armstrong never did keep a Sunday Pentecost as such.

The notion that Sivan 6 is the proper day to keep Pentecost because Mr. Armstrong did so for two or three years at the beginning of the Work, needs an explanation. The Bible instructs us to count from the morrow after "the Sabbath." But which Sabbath? In the Hebrew text, the definite article ha, when attached to the word Shabat (Sabbath) refers to the weekly Sabbath only. Which Sabbaths are meant cannot be determined in some passages where the definite article is used with the word Sabbath. But in every case where the text clearly refers to the weekly Sabbath, the definite article-ha-is used. Thus, we have haShabat, translated "the Sabbath" in English translations. The definite article ha is never used in any passage that clearly refers to an annual Sabbath. What this means is that the correct Sabbath from which to begin the Pentecost count is the weekly Sabbath, not the first or last annual Sabbath. Therefore, Pentecost cannot fall on Sivan 6. The Jewish custom of counting to Sivan 6 in anticipation of the Day of Pentecost is simply a justification for an unnecessary count. When Sivan 6 is observed, as the Jews do today, there is no need for a count. Pentecost always falls on this day if counted from the first high day during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

## **How does God Reveal Truth?**

The Apostle Paul made it plain that he received the truth of the gospel by means of divine revelation. He

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wrote: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12). Mr. Armstrong said the same thing, and this was the major reason he refused to change for so long. Truth did not come overnight.

He wrote in his autobiography:

As this study of the Bible continued, I was forced to come out of the fog of religious Babylon a single doctrine at a time. It was years later before I came to see the **WHOLE** picture-to understand God's **PURPOSE** being worked out here below, and why, and how, He is working it out. Like a jigsaw puzzle, the many single doctrinal parts ultimately fit together, and then, for the first time, the **WHOLE** picture burst joyfully into view . . . . I had to examine every doctrinal tree in the religious forest . . . . But finally, after years, I was able to see the whole forest of **TRUTH**, with dead doctrinal trees removed . . . The pioneer work has been done. The weeds have been removed . . . . But I myself had to check carefully and test every doctrine, one at a time (pp 280-281).

Again, should we assume the foundational truth was given in all but the proper day to observe Pentecost? If the Truth was revealed to Mr. Armstrong, should we accept another foundation-that of scholars? The fact is: When one is called to the Truth, God does not reveal error! To believe such a thing accuses God of lying. Men are the liars. The Apostle Paul tells us: ". . . let God be true, but every man a liar. . ." (Rom. 3:4). To accuse God of leaving His Church in error for nearly 40 years, and then finally revealing which day is the correct Pentecost, insults Christ and the Holy Spirit. God never reveals error to anyone. Why should we assume He did so in our day? There are many examples where the people went into error after doctrine was revealed. Significant is the fact that these apostasies generally occurred after a 40-year period-the same length of time it took for the doctrinal changes to take place in the Church of God. The end-time work of God began with a Monday Pentecost, and sadly, it ended with a Sunday Pentecost!

To find the correct day for observing Pentecost, Mr. Armstrong originally went to God. But in 1974, he went to the scholars-outsiders-who were consulted to determine the answer. A Sunday Pentecost was established on the basis of a single Hebrew word-mimahorat. The scholars themselves admitted that the English translation of it is a very "tricky expression," or that it is "unclear in its meaning." The expression has been the source of controversy for centuries. Scholars do not even agree among themselves what it means. How can we expect to find the truth from scholars when they admit they do not really know the answer? For a full explanation write for our article entitled, "The Facts About Pentecost."

The late Dr. Charles V. Dorothy wrote in his introductory letter for the 1974 Pentecost paper that was sent to the ministry: "Though the decisions on Pentecost [that is, Sunday] are obviously correct, please realize this [paper] is not intended to be divinely-inspired, one hundred percent correct 'Law of Medes and Persians which altereth not' on all technical details-we are always open to further knowledge." Here the Doctrinal Committee admitted the doctrinal change on Pentecost was not divinely inspired, and that further knowledge could be expected. When a prominent member of the Doctrinal Committee was asked, "At what point do we arrive at absolute truth from which we will never depart?"-his answer was an unbelievable "NEVER." The Bible tells us: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hos. 4:6). God's people have rejected the knowledge of God, and the consequences have been disastrous for the Church. "And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings" (Hos. 4:9).

What was the Source of the Truth we originally received about Pentecost? Paul tells us: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in

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you that believe” (1 Thess. 2:13). Those who accepted the Pentecost change in 1974 accepted the word of men-words that scholars argue over. Is this the basis of your present belief?

### The Basis for the Change

The Pentecost study paper given to the ministry, and written in 1974, gave the reason for changing Pentecost from Monday to Sunday. In it Mr. Armstrong explained: “It is the fact that one of the translators of the RSV, who is Chairman of the Revision Committee now revising the RSV, said not only that [that is, the Hebrew *mi* or *min* should never be translated ‘from’ but ‘beginning on’], but that he will strongly recommend the revision will so translate it, that caused me to CHANGE Pentecost from Monday to Sunday” (“A Simplified Note from Herbert W. Armstrong,” par 4, emphasis ours). The Hebrew expression *mimahorat* (translated in the English “from the morrow”) formed the entire basis for the conclusion to keep a Sunday Pentecost. If what the scholars say is true, then the literal meaning must be ironclad, that is, provable without question. Such a momentous change is so important that controversy over an ambiguous Hebrew expression should not be used as the basis for a change.

The Pentecost study paper quotes Dr. Moule, assistant to the late Dr. Charles Dodd, Head of the Committee on the New English Bible. Dr. Moule was contacted by the Pasadena Doctrinal Committee and asked about *mimahorat*, the English expression “from the morrow.” His answer was: “I see what you mean. The English is ambiguous . . . yes, a very tricky expression.” When asked if the Hebrew expression *mimahorat* was also tricky, he replied, “Definitely not. I would still suggest using the translation ‘beginning from’ but I would count inclusively.” Keep in mind on May 14, 1974, Mr. Armstrong wrote to the entire Church about the “new light on marriage and divorce.” He wrote: “First, we all had to bear in mind that we COULD NOT accept mere arguments advanced by others outside the Church, resorting to unclear meanings of Greek or Hebrew words using human reason to try to ‘prove’ what they wanted to prove” (p. 5, par 4, emphasis ours). How much of this took place when the Pentecost change was made?

The Doctrinal Committee went to Dr. Naor, “a famous scholar in Hebrew grammar” (p. 9, par 1), who said that “from the morrow” in Leviticus 23:15 should be counted inclusively (that is, Sunday should be “day one” in the count). He wrote: “The interpretation of the words ‘on the morrow of the Sabbath’ was a subject of controversy between the Pharisees and Sadducees [since early New Testament times] . . .” (p. 8, par 1). The Committee then went to Mordakhai Joseph, an advisor to the Plain Truth, who wrote that the English expression “from the morrow” in Leviticus 23:15 has only one understanding in Hebrew. He added: “To me as a native Israeli who has spoken Hebrew all my life, Leviticus 23:15 simply indicates ‘on Sunday until Sunday.’ I can’t see any other explanation to it even if I wanted to” (p. 10, par 1). The Pentecost study paper quotes Dr. Bergmon, a rabbi from Israel. He said: “It definitely means on Sunday, there isn’t any other way,” and added “only those who don’t know Hebrew would possibly render it as Monday” (p. 7, par 3). Dr. Herbert G. May, Chairman of the Committee for Continuing Revision of the Revised Standard Version, admitted that “from the morrow” could be confusing in English. Asked more specifically by the Doctrinal Committee about the meaning of *mimahorat*, he stated: “I don’t think here it would be ‘away from.’ It would mean a starting point . . . and ‘beginning with’ would probably be clearer” (p. 19, par 3, emphasis ours). Note the uncertainty with the words “I don’t think,” and “probably.”

The Pentecost study paper says that *min*, and its shortened form *mi* means: “from, of, by, at, in, on,” etc. (p. 1, par 3). Dr. Menahem Naor, quoted above, comments on the word *mi*. In his *Hebrew Language and Grammar, A Practical Textbook* (Jerusalem, 1949), page 83, he defines *min* as “from,” “out of.” On page 29, he uses *min* connected with a noun to mean “out of the house.” The *Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, summarizes the meaning of *min* as expressing the idea of separation, hence, “out of,” “from,” “on account of,” “off,” “on the side of,” “since,” “above,” “than,” “so that not.”

However, the problem regarding the change in the Pentecost count does not lie in the use of *mi*, since the

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count is obviously inclusive. Scholars have made this clear enough. What is really significant is what church members and ministers were not told in 1974—a fact that was completely overlooked when the Pentecost change was made. Mimahorat, translated “from the morrow,” is used in Leviticus 23:15. The change to a Sunday Pentecost was made on the basis of this word, which made the count inclusive (that is, Sunday is “day one” of the count). The Hebrew numeration rule states that *min*, when used with time, makes the count inclusive. (Hebrew and English Lexicon, by Gesenius, translated by Samuel P. Tregelles, pp. 483-484). Since it is used at the start of the count, Sunday is “day one.” But *mimahorat* is also used in verse 16 (at the end of the count), where it is translated “unto the morrow.” If the count is inclusive at the beginning, it should also be inclusive at the end. Therefore, the last day of the count—Sunday—should be included in the 50-day count. Why? The count is not complete until 50 days are fully counted. Those who observe a Sunday Pentecost are counting only 49 days, which the Jews readily admit. A complete count means that Pentecost should be observed on Monday, not Sunday! When it is called to the attention of those who observe a Sunday Pentecost that *mimahorat* is found both at the beginning and the end of the count, the answer is that it should be inclusive at the beginning of the count but could be either way at the end. The fact is: The word *mi* cannot be applied both ways. It is arbitrary to use the word *mi* in a way that suits one’s purpose. This argument completely negates the reason for the doctrinal change. If *mi* is either inclusive or exclusive, the Church could have just as well held to the exclusive method of counting and continued keeping a Monday Pentecost. There would have been no need for the change in the first place! Those who argue that *mi* can be either inclusive or exclusive at least need to be consistent in the use of *mi*.

Mr. Armstrong did not understand the technicalities of Hebrew grammar. Using the English translation, he counted “from” Sunday and Monday became “day one” of the count. He then counted 50 days and ended with Monday—the 50th day. A correct understanding of the double *mimahorat* (found at both the beginning and end of the count) also makes the Day of Pentecost fall on Monday. Going to the scholars, yet failing to see this important fact, is what caused the Church to keep the wrong day! The Church was told correctly that *min*, when used with time, is inclusive. But by overlooking the *mimahorat* at the end of the count, only 49 days are counted, and Pentecost is kept the wrong day. At least Mr. Armstrong kept the correct day without the knowledge of the Hebrew. God did lead him to this conclusion without a knowledge of Hebrew. The fact is: Scholars did not really answer the problem of the Pentecost count. Why? Because the Church either overlooked or failed to grasp the significance of the *mimahorat* at the end of the count! The Church is now in confusion and error.

## **Are Scholars the Answer?**

In 1974 church members were told in a letter from Mr. Armstrong that Ambassador College had now developed a scholarly research team, and they had gone to world-famous translators, who had actually rendered the Hebrew (Pentecost letter of February 11, 1974, pp. 3, 7, 5-6). In the same letter, Mr. Armstrong repudiated the words he had said many times on the radio. These were: “Don’t believe me—see it with your own eyes in the Bible.” He now said that setting the day for the entire Church to assemble must be set by Christ, as He reveals to His appointed leaders of His Church. Did Christ not reveal the day many years earlier? Or did Christ make some mistake in an earlier revelation? If God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), what is the need for a “new revelation”? Or was this change a departure from the Truth? One thing is certain: As far as Truth is concerned, it was the beginning of the end for the Worldwide Church of God. Today, the fruits of that doctrinal change speak for themselves.

God’s Truth cannot be understood by means of scholars. Truth must be understood by revelation—by means of the Holy Spirit. Scholarship can substantiate revelation, but it is not the basis for it. To reject revelation is to reject God, the only means by which anyone can understand the Truth. Relying on scholars for truth will eventually lead to error (Rom. 1:18-22). Man, apart from God, regardless of how intellectual he may be, cannot understand the things of God (Matt. 11:25). “But God hath revealed them unto us by his

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Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10).

Jesus made this promise:

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth . . .” (John 14:16-17). “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth . . .” (John 15:26). “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . .” (John 16:13).

Was Jesus derelict in this promise? Did He refuse to lead His Church into all Truth? Or was He negligent on the matter of Pentecost only? A prophetic warning for the “last days” is sobering. It states: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be . . . Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 3:1-2, 7). How could this prophecy be fulfilled? The answer: by relying on scholars for Truth. If Truth comes through scholarship then we should accept their views on all doctrinal matters? Has this happened in our day? Yes, indeed! The Worldwide Church of God has relied on scholars and has departed from the Truth to such an extent that it can no longer be considered the Church of God.

## Discrepancies in the Pentecost Study Paper

In the Pentecost study paper, on page 47, paragraph 2, we read: “We know that Jesus Christ observed Pentecost with the Jews (Luke 4:16); and there is no hint of different days being observed for Pentecost either then or in 31 AD (Acts 2). All the Jews were apparently observing Pentecost on the same day” (emphasis ours). Luke 4:16 is interpreted to refer to Pentecost because of the plural form of the word Sabbath. However, 11 pages earlier, paragraph four, the paper states: “These three Jewish encyclopedias make it abundantly clear that the three Jewish sects of Christ’s day [Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes] all kept Pentecost on a different day-but, remember, they all reckoned inclusively (emphasis ours). The problem in this last quote is that the Doctrinal Committee was trying to prove inclusive counting, while on page 47 it was trying to prove Christ kept it on Sunday, the same as the Sadducees. Is this not a bending of the facts to fit the need? How much, then, can we depend on “scholars.” We had been advised by Mr. Armstrong not to accept arguments from those outside the Church, or unclear meanings of Greek or Hebrew, to prove the Truth. The Jewish scholars that were contacted advised the Doctrinal Committee that we should keep Pentecost on Sunday, but they themselves keep it on Sivan 6. They base this advice to the Church on the need to count inclusively, but they themselves cannot agree on which day the count should begin. So, why should we accept their word?

The Jews have admitted the inconsistency of their method of counting by observing Pentecost on Sivan 6-when 50 days are counted inclusively beginning on Nisan 16-the first holy day during the Days of Unleavened Bread. From the time of Maimonides (12th century) Leviticus 23:15 has been interpreted to mean 49 days should be reckoned from the time of cutting the first sheaf (The Jewish Ency., art., “The 613 Commandments”). In the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1972 edition, article “Jewish Holidays,” it is admitted the Jews count 49 days, not 50. To count 50 days by the method of Jewish counting would place Pentecost on Sivan 7. So, Leviticus 23:15 has been interpreted to mean 49 days. The Bible is clear on the number of days to count. Fifty days should be completely counted before Pentecost is observed, not 49 days as do the Jews and the various offshoots from the Worldwide Church of God that still continue to observe the day.

Since the Jews argue among themselves on when to observe Pentecost, why should God’s Church go to them regarding the holy days? Should we not go to God as instructed in His Word (Isa. 28:10)? Did God inspire and lead His Church, or did He not? By changing to a Sunday Pentecost, the Church was now admitting that the churches of the world had been right all along, and that God left His Church in error for

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several decades. Jewish scholars laughed at our “ignorance” when they were asked about the Pentecost count. Would they laugh at our ignorance because we keep Passover on the 14th while they observe it on the 15th? Jewish writers admit that the 14th and 15th days of Nisan have been intermingled and that this is not the original Bible instruction. If the Jews cannot be depended upon for the correct day of the Passover, upon what can they be depended? Orthodox Jews today observe Sivan 6, but the count is from the wrong day.

In 1953 Dr. Hoeh wrote:

This Pentecost [the Pentecost that the Gentile churches changed from a Monday to a Sunday], so-called, had become corrupted with SUN WORSHIP. It always fell on Sunday, the same as the pagan Easter substituted for the Passover . . . . God’s true Church-the Church that Jesus built-has been observing the true day for Pentecost [Monday] to this day . . . . All other churches have resulted from apostasies [sic] and have accepted pagan doctrines” (“Was the New Testament Church founded on Sunday?” pp. 2-3).

For a complete picture of events surrounding this change, the interested reader should try to secure a copy of this work.

## **What Ministers Were Told**

At the Senior Ministerial Conference in Texas, in 1975, senior pastors were told that Mr. Armstrong did not come to understand the Truth by revelation. He only “dug out” such things as the Sabbath, holy days, healing, interracial marriage, hair length, tithing, divorce and remarriage, etc., physically. He just read it out of the Bible, and as a result was expected to make mistakes since he was not educated in Hebrew and Greek. He had to rely on references of various kinds. But today we have “scholars”-the Doctrinal Committee-now holding up the apostle’s hand to show him the truth and error of his ways. We were told to believe the doctrinal changes made in 1974 rather than the “error” to which we were converted. One minister said: “God made a mistake in revealing the Truth to Mr. Armstrong. He is now showing us the Truth, revealing the errors.” In effect, we were told that God was guilty of sowing bad seed for nearly 40 years. Based on that, none of us had been converted in the past, since one can be converted only to Truth. Most of the ministers failed to take seriously the warnings about departure from Truth found in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 11, 1 Timothy 4:1, 6, 16, 2 Timothy 3:1, 5, 7, and 1 John 2:18, 24, all of which apply to the “last days.”

Almost the entire ministry from around the world was assembled in Pasadena, at the Ambassador College Auditorium dedication ceremony on May 6, 1974. Garner Ted Armstrong commented on the “new truth” of Pentecost and divorce and remarriage. He laid it on the line. He said believe in a Sunday Pentecost now, or you will be put out of the Church and ministry. Ministers were told to submit papers if you will, to prove your point, but it will do no good. “Pentecost is ironclad, and you cannot prove it is on a Monday” (from the official transcript of the Ambassador College Auditorium dedication ceremony, p. 62, reel 2). All ministers knew that to submit papers contrary to the opinion held by the speaker or Doctrinal Committee would lead to ridicule and surveillance.

This quote also comes from page 62, reel 2, at the May 6, 1974, meeting:

” . . . Anybody in this room or outside of it who can answer point by point the more than 20 major proofs illustrating Pentecost is in fact on a Sunday, I now [after the decision was officially announced in February] not only invite him, but will order him to submit such a paper in writing before he says one word in private, laterally or beneath him, concerning the subject of Pentecost, or else he will be suspended from this church . . . . It has been wide open, anybody’s input has been sought on bended knee, so to speak. Give us information . . . . So, I’m saying that Pentecost is ironclad, and YOU CANNOT PROVE IT IS ON A

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MONDAY” (emphasis ours).

Church members are still waiting for the 20 major proofs that Pentecost is on a Sunday. What we heard and read were phrases, claims, assumptions, hypotheses, theories, presumptions, and “scholarly” conjectures that concluded that Pentecost was on Sunday. Not only was it unproven, but also the chief spokesman demanded we believe it or be put out of the Church. The vast majority of ministers complied. After all, their livelihoods were at stake. While it should have been difficult to believe that the Church could have been wrong for nearly 40 years, it should have been even harder to believe that God was so absent-minded He forgot to reveal which day He made holy!

Yet, at the Auditorium Dedication, Mr. Armstrong stated (p. 21, reel 1): “Now how God would let His own Church go several years [35 or more] in error may be a little difficult for some to believe. But the more important thing is your attitude.” Mr. Armstrong was right about that. It is difficult to believe God could lead anyone in error. The fact is: God does not lead into error; He leads into Truth, for God is Truth (John 14:6). Acceptance of doctrinal changes based on “attitude” rather than on Truth displays a lack of fear of God. Should we fear men more than God? Of course not! Millions who believe in Sunday as a day of worship may have tremendous attitudes, but does that prove God is leading them?

## Why Pentecost Was Changed

This article addresses two central issues: (1) How Pentecost was changed, and (2) why it was changed. What was really behind the change? We all know that whatever happens, there is a “reason” and behind that is the “real reason.” Members were led to believe the change was made as a result of the quest for Truth. The question of inclusive counting was first brought up in the early 60s but was discounted at the time. Why was it, then, considered in the middle 70s?

Although Mr. Armstrong did not feel this way, certain influential ministers at Pasadena were concerned about the Church teaching on divorce and remarriage. There were a number of reasons for this. Not only did the teaching seem patently unfair, but also the Church had been losing members. A major reason for the loss of members was the prophetic failure of 1972; but that was overlooked at the time. Many lost confidence in the Church and its teachings when the prophecies failed to occur. Income had dropped. It was believed a sizeable number of members were withholding tithes, and the reason was because of the “unjust” teaching on divorce and remarriage. It was believed more members would also withhold tithes if something was not done. The third tithe account, which was used to support “spiritual widows” (women who had separated from their mates because of the divorce and remarriage teaching), was extremely low. This was because large amounts had been spent on the purchase of jet aircraft and other personal needs of the top ministers. Third tithe was used to maintain a mountain retreat and a home in Lake Tahoe. The evangelist in charge of these funds estimated that about 40 percent went to the widows, strangers, and fatherless, while 60 percent went to the ministers at the top level. Bills had to be met, and something had to be done. Those who were agitating for the change said if these hundreds of “spiritual widows” could remarry, this would make more money available for the “Work.” Mr. Armstrong had to be convinced.

What the agitators really wanted to change was the teaching on divorce and remarriage. But it could not be changed unless some chink could be found in the impregnable armor of Church doctrine. This chink was Pentecost, because it was the doctrine that seemed to be the most obscure. After much pressure, Mr. Armstrong finally accepted the change. He had forgotten what God had revealed to him in the early years of the Work, and what blessings were meted out that made it so inspiring and successful. After the Pentecost change was made, so was the divorce and remarriage doctrine. Since that time, all the major doctrines that differentiated the Worldwide Church of God from the churches of the world have been repudiated. It all started with the Pentecost change. Those who think that apostasy in the Church began in 1995 are about 20 years too late.

## **Bethel Church of God**

The Doctrine Of Pentecost &#8211; How And Why It Was Changed!

### **God Says Hold Fast**

What are Christians admonished to do in the face of apostasy? Here is what the Apostle Paul wrote: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13). "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thess. 2:15). "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Timothy 3:14). The Apostle Jude wrote: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). And the Apostle John adds: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11). "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations" (Rev. 2:26).

Are we to assume that because these admonitions were written and addressed to the Christians at that time, they do not apply to us today? Such a notion is sheer folly! We are to look to Christ, and follow men only as they follow Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). Jesus Christ is not confused. He does not lead us into error. He has not changed. Men do the changing. Both history and the Bible record this human proclivity. Men seldom hang onto God's Truth for long. They always turn away from it. Is this what you have done? Those who think observance of the correct Day of Pentecost is not important had better think again.