

Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brethren:

One historical doctrine in God's Church which has been a lightning rod of controversy over the past fifty years is the teaching on cosmetics, or makeup. How does God view the use of cosmetics? How was this issue first raised within the church, and what was Mr. Herbert Armstrong's initial ruling? Was this ruling the result of God's inspiration or merely the opinion of a man? Furthermore, how has the makeup doctrine been used in past decades to accomplish other—more sinister—political aims within God's church? These are some of the questions we will answer in this issue of the *Monthly Letter*.

How Did the First Makeup Ruling Originate?

According to anecdotal histories by several long-time members of the church, as well as the written comments from Mr. Herbert Armstrong himself, it appears the initial ruling on cosmetics came out of necessity to keep peace within the church. In the 1950s the church was being filled with new members from all manner of former religious roots. Some came from backgrounds where makeup was allowed and encouraged, while others held strongly to conservative beliefs against the use of any cosmetics. The growing rift between these competing ideological camps made a ministerial resolution absolutely imperative. From the July, 1955, *Good News* magazine article, entitled, "Why the Church Ruled on Make-Up," Mr. Armstrong stated:

This question of lip-stick and other forms of make-up had to be settled. Some in the church felt very definitely that "make-up is wrong; it's worldly." There was in some cases an attitude of prejudice and accusation against those who wore it. But others insisted, "I can't see any harm in wearing lip-stick. I think make-up is all right."

More details of this debate are seen in the same article as Mr. Armstrong relates a story concerning Mr. Raymond Cole:

There was a current rumor that Evangelist Raymond Cole *wanted* his wife to wear make-up. I had, with some qualifications, expressed a few general principles on the subject, saying that I would make no final and definitive statement until the ministers could counsel together and make it clear and binding. . . . So I called Raymond Cole by long distance, and asked him about the rumor. He informed me he had NOT said he wanted his wife to wear make-up—but rather that he had been non-committal on the subject until the ministers at Headquarters could come together and make a definite and positive declaration. The ministers were thus forced to come together, "for to consider the matter," even as our predecessors had done (Acts 15:6). I acquainted Raymond Cole with the decision God had led us to, and he fully concurred.

What was that final decision in the mid-1950s which Raymond Cole accepted as coming from God? Let that be confirmed by a quote from Mr. Armstrong's January, 1957, *Good News* article entitled, "What The Church Ruled on Make-Up and WHY!:"

These critical explanations make it plain that painting the face has, since ancient days, been intended to *falsify* the appearance of the face—to *deceive*! Women today may not like to admit it, but there can be no purpose in applying lip-stick or any kind of paint *except* to *change* the appearance of the face—and that very act means to FALSIFY the face—to DECEIVE those who see them as to what their real appearance actually is! The very USE of lip-stick or make-up, even tho a woman denies the motive in her heart, is to change the facial appearance—and this, in turn, is to *falsify*, and to *deceive*—which is not righteous or godly, but sinful.

Therefore, from the mid-1950s and until 1974, the authoritative ruling by Mr. Armstrong was against the use of makeup. But was the basis of this decision sound, or was it merely a result of Mr. Armstrong's personal bias?

One long-time minister—who was there during the decision-making process of the 1950s—stated recently that because of the specific men Mr. Armstrong chose for the ministerial committee, he could easily predict what the final decision concerning makeup would be. How? By looking at those minister's wives! Apparently, none of them wore makeup. This would seem to indicate Mr. Armstrong already had a strong feeling about the correct outcome, and really had no intention of making it a debate for democratic resolution. A disgruntled female church member who disagreed with the final church decision wrote a letter to the ministry on January 4, 1956 stating:

The first thing I heard about any make-up after I came into the church, was that Mr. Armstrong was against lipstick; that he said he hadn't yet found anything in the Bible against it, but he would one of these days.

If it seems Mr. Armstrong was predisposed to frown upon makeup—especially lipstick—does it mean this early ministerial ruling was not really from God, but from his own personal bias? Mr. Armstrong claimed it was a divine ruling by Jesus Christ. Again, from the 1955 *Good News* article:

On most doctrines there is no need of a ruling by God's called and chosen ministers at His Headquarters Church. The Bible is itself plain on whether stealing, lying, murder, or idolatry are sin. But here was a matter on which neither the women nor the men were clear. They were divided. There was no definite "Thus saith the Eternal." There is a very definite SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE involved, *vital* to the salvation of women. Yet many women were unable to see it. God's ministers finally were forced to step in and DEFINE THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE INVOLVED. That is what we have done. There is not a doubt in our minds that we were led of God. The decision is GOD'S decision. The decision is BOUND in heaven.

Does Doctrine Come From God or Man?

Those who believe the original doctrines of the church were formulated only from the personal study of Herbert Armstrong—a man—ever since have amended and changed them to suit their own preferences, if they still keep any of them at all. This is the case with the majority of those who were once part of the Radio Church of God/Worldwide Church of God. That is why we have hundreds of daughter churches which have since sprung from the parent organization over the past thirty years. Anyone who has embraced *any* of the doctrinal changes made in 1974 and beyond—including a Sunday Pentecost, allowance of divorce and remarriage, acceptance of man's counterfeit medical system, as well as makeup and many others—has either intentionally or ignorantly determined that God was never really the Author and Sustainer of Mr. Armstrong's work in this age.

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. 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 (Galatians 1:10–12).

Just as Paul vehemently asserted he was taught his doctrine from Jesus Christ personally, so Herbert Armstrong claimed that very same authority time and time again regarding the things he proclaimed to us. And the hallmark of the true Church of God is that it *received* Truth by *divine revelation* through the proclamation of a chosen servant, inspired by Jesus Christ.

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given *me to you-ward*: How that *by revelation* he made known *unto me* the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is *now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit*; (Ephesians 3:1–5) [emphasis mine].

If the Radio Church of God were ever God's true Church, it is so because it also sprang from the proclamation of divine Truth through a chosen instrument of God, motivated and inspired by the Holy Spirit, even as Paul was used. If Herbert Armstrong were not such a commissioned servant, then we were never the Church of God, and we are all in utter darkness and deception. But and if Mr. Armstrong were such an authorized messenger of God, then what he taught us *from the beginning* was not his own concept of truth, but the miraculous revelation of Jesus Christ Himself! We cannot have it both ways. Either we were recipients of divine Truth *from the beginning*, or we were never part of God's Church at all. Which is it?

Compelling Direction Through the Spirit

We are of those who believe God was the author of this great last day work from the beginning, and He fed that Church with divine Truth from its inception through the ministry of Mr. Herbert Armstrong. Therefore, if God then inspires His chosen apostles with the Truth, does it trouble us that Mr. Armstrong had a very strong feeling about the topic of makeup, even before verifying it through personal Bible study? Not at all! This is exactly what we would expect to see in a servant being led and directed by God through miraculous means! It would actually be more suspicious if the only basis for a doctrinal teaching was a technical interpretation from personal scholarship. There are thousands of Biblical "scholars" who disagree with each other in every way. If truth comes through such scholarship, why do we have no consensus among the great minds of this world concerning the Bible? It is because God has never allowed any human being—regardless of mental ability or training—to understand Truth by his own scholarship. God will not permit it! He has reserved such knowledge for the called, given by divine means through commissioned servants.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Corinthians 1:19–21).

So Mr. Armstrong had a strong feeling about the topic of makeup, even before piecing together the Biblical evidence. This was precisely the case with the doctrine of Pentecost! We know that from the 1930s, Mr. Armstrong had a strong feeling that God would never have begun His New Testament Church on Satan's counterfeit day of worship—Sunday. Coming to realize that the Jew's reckoning of Pentecost would allow this Holy Day to fall on Sunday in given years is likely what drove Him to seek God's help concerning the proper count. He knew it could not fall on Sunday. But how did he know? He had no evidence at first, but only a strong feeling. What was the source of that feeling? For any other human being led by his own mind, its source would be carnal wisdom under Satan's influence. But such a compelling feeling in the mind of *an instrument of God* would come instead from *the Holy Spirit*! So it was also true of several early church teachings, including the knowledge of 31 A.D. for Christ's crucifixion, and the Passover on the beginning of the 14th of Nisan. God first compelled His servant with the truth (the answer), and then later allowed him to see its evidence from the Scriptures. Yes, it is true that when God first began to work with him in the 1920s to understand the Sabbath, it was through his effort to *disprove* the Sabbath from Bible study that God showed him his error. But once Mr. Armstrong yielded himself to Christ as His instrument, a number of new doctrines concerning "gray areas" came first as a compelling feeling, and were only later backed up by Scriptural support. Therefore, anyone who rejects that Mr. Armstrong was inspired and led by God will conclude these "strong feelings" were no more important than the strong feelings you and I have about different topics. But if that is true, then we have no basis for believing the Radio Church of God was ever anything more than another church of this world. But those who believe we received something special from God through Mr. Armstrong's work should take comfort in the way God worked upon his mind to show him the real Truth about many doctrines.

In the case of Pentecost, we later learned how the Hebrew enumeration rule actually supports and confirms a Monday (Please see our article entitled, "The Plain Truth About Pentecost"). Mr. Armstrong originally counted it only from the English, yet God guided him to the proper day in spite of this. Mr. Armstrong was never a Biblical scholar, yet as the man God chose and inspired, his teachings were absolutely verified later by legitimate scholarship. It is interesting Mr. Armstrong actually referred to the authority of God's ministry to assign the proper day for keeping Pentecost in the 1955 *Good News* article about makeup. He considered his authority for determining the day of Pentecost the very same authority for erasing confusion about makeup and determining what God would have us to do.

The Spiritual Principle Involved in Makeup

Mr. Armstrong admitted there is no specific scripture which condemns makeup directly. But he also compared that to the absence of a scripture prohibiting the smoking of cigarettes. Those who are looking for excuses to do what they want to do—humanly—demand a clear prohibitive command, or else feel they are justified in doing

what they want. Yet Mr. Armstrong emphasized the overriding spiritual principle, which goes to the heart of *why* we choose to do these things. From this same 1955 article Mr. Armstrong stated:

When I was first converted, I faced the question of smoking. There was no specific "Thus saith the Eternal." I asked myself WHY I smoked. I asked it in the light of the SPIRIT of God's Law—the underlying PRINCIPLE of the Law. I was *honest* with myself in my answer. Tobacco is not of itself sin—but an honest searching of my own heart made plain that the use I had been putting it to was sin. Therefore I gave it up immediately. I didn't feel that it was dirty and filthy before I gave it up. But after being weaned from it, and receiving God's Spirit, I realized very plainly how dirty and filthy the habit was!

In the same way, women who have grown up from little girls CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD and its ways in regard to make-up do not see or feel lipstick or other make-up on the face is, chemically and scientifically as well as spiritually, colored *dirt* on the face! But women who have been weaned from it—no longer conformed to this world, but TRANSFORMED in the spirit of their minds by the HOLY Spirit of God—freed from addiction to vanity and wanting to be LIKE the world and a PART of the world and well thought of BY the world—such women do, then, come to realize how dirty the habit is—how utterly foolish, following the ways of the HARLOTS!

Was this a harsh statement, to refer to harlotry in relationship to makeup? Some women certainly have reacted with offense to this comparison over the years. Yet Mr. Armstrong effectively showed in the articles on makeup that in every case where makeup is referenced, it involves either pagan harlots, or God's people prostituting themselves like pagan harlots. From "TRUTH About MAKEUP" (1964), Mr. Armstrong stated:

In every single case where painting the face is mentioned in your Bible, GOD LABELS THE WOMAN A WHORE! Is that shocking? Yes, but TRUE! Painting the face is never once mentioned in connection with a virtuous woman!

It is not the intent of this *Monthly Letter* to repeat all the technicalities of the makeup doctrine. This can be found by reading the articles referenced above. But what we have seen is that Mr. Armstrong had an uncanny ability to find the broad spiritual principles involved in each issue, even when the Bible is not specific on each topic. That is what an inspired servant of God is able to do through the Holy Spirit.

The Health Risks of Cosmetics

What was not emphasized nearly as much in the 1950s and 1960s articles is the serious threat to health posed by the use of many cosmetics. Mr. Raymond Cole often stated that even apart from the spiritual principles, the detrimental health affects of makeup should alone be enough to make its use anathema to any converted woman. Note just a few comments from a report entitled, "Neurotoxins: At Home and the Workplace"; *Report by the Committee on Science & Technology*, U.S. House of Representatives, Sept. 16, 1986. (Report 99-827):

Because of minimal regulation by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), many cosmetics often contain toxic and carcinogenic ingredients. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) found that, of all the chemicals available for use in cosmetics, 815 substances have been documented as toxic. . . . Do these harmful chemicals continue to be included in many skin and bodycare products? You bet! Why? Because of outdated laws (from the '30s), a strong trade organization: the Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association (CTFA), and lobbyists favorable to the cosmetics industry who support the status quo (big money for big companies . . . big health problems for consumers).

Around the time of this report, Senator Edward M. Kennedy also compiled statistics for a debate in Congress about FDA reform. In part he stated:

A study by the respected, nonpartisan General Accounting Office reported that more than 125 ingredients available for use in cosmetics are suspected of causing cancer. Twenty cosmetic ingredients may cause adverse effects on the nervous system, including headaches, drowsiness, and convulsions. Twenty cosmetic ingredients are suspected of causing birth defects. The GAO concluded that "cosmetics are being marketed in the United States which may pose a serious hazard to the public." In fact, for every one million cosmetic products purchased, there are more than 200 visits to the doctor to treat cosmetic-caused illnesses. A 1987 study for the Consumer Product Safety Commission found that in one year alone, cosmetic products resulted in 47,000 emergency room visits. Another study found that between 1985 and 1987, more than 151,000 cosmetic-related injuries occurred.

Next, note a recent excerpt from the article, "Make-up kit holds hidden danger of cancer," by Amelia Hill, from *The Guardian* (U.K.), April 7, 2002:

Women are being exposed to deadly diseases through the everyday use of common cosmetics bought over the counter, according to a new study. The growing list of synthetic ingredients manufacturers add to their products are turning [cosmetics] into cocktails of toxins that could cause cancer over years of sustained use. In *Drop Dead Gorgeous: Protecting Yourself From The Hidden Dangers of Cosmetics*, . . . authors Kim Erickson and Dr. Samuel S. Epstein reveal how manufacturers exploit loopholes in legislation designed to protect the public. "These synthetic ingredients are inexpensive, stable and have a long shelf-life," said Erickson. "Manufacturers love them, but although the majority of products appear safe in the short run the results from long-term use could be deadly." . . . Erickson believes the adverse effects of toxins is compounded over decades, confusing hormone receptors and slowly altering cell structure. Chemicals are transmitted into the bloodstream in a number of ways: powders have the least absorption, while oily solutions or those designed to increase moisture allow more of the chemical to be absorbed. Eye makeup can be absorbed by the highly sensitive mucous membranes. Hair sprays, perfumes and dusting powders can be inhaled, irritating the lungs. Lipstick is often chewed off and swallowed.

With these dangers involved, why would we treat our bodies with disrespect for the sake of being acceptable to this world? If we truly believe our bodies are the temple of God's Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16), why would we be any more inclined to wear harmful chemicals on our faces and bodies than we would to ingest pork or shellfish? When we are willing to look at the facts involved from both the physical as well as the spiritual side, there should be no doubt that God wants us to reject utterly this man-made custom of face-painting. (The other chemicals that men and women both use for personal care should also be highly suspect.) As time goes on, the wisdom of Mr. Armstrong's ruling becomes even more valuable to those who truly desire to obey God.

The 1974 Doctrinal Change

In October, 1974, the Worldwide Church of God officially changed its doctrine on makeup, and began to preach the allowance of cosmetics for women in the church. The basis for this change was a dispute over some of the technical references Mr. Armstrong had quoted from Isaiah 3:16. In the original articles, *Adam Clarke's Commentary*, was used as an authority to interpret this particular passage.

Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and *wanton eyes*, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: (Isaiah 3:16) [emphasis mine].

Adam Clarke (as well as other commentators) interpreted the Hebrew words for "wanton eyes" as "eye-painting." The scholars of the church doctrinal committee challenged this interpretation in 1974 and argued that Adam Clarke had based his analysis on a misprinting in the Hebrew text commonly used at that time. The misprinted Hebrew word was *shaqar*, meaning "eye paint," but the correct word from the Hebrew should be *saqar*, meaning "wanton glances." They stated all modern commentaries reject this misunderstanding based on the misprint. Therefore, based on this technicality, they justified ignoring the much more significant spiritual principle involved in the makeup doctrine, which we have already covered.

Regardless of whether eye-painting was specifically inspired in Isaiah 3:16 from the original Hebrew, the context of the passage shows that God's people—like harlots—were guilty of using their God-given attributes to pursue the ways of sin. *Saqar* means "to ogle, i.e. blink coquettishly." It involves lust, and eye makeup (as well as lipstick and rouge) was an ancient pagan practice for drawing attention to the self in a sexual manner. A number of historical writers will certify that accentuating a woman's eyes, lips, and cheeks was used by ancient peoples to imitate the appearance of aroused sexual organs. The practice was originated in the east, and capitalized upon by the Egyptians. "Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers" (Isaiah 2:6). The fact that our modern society has mainstreamed the use of makeup over the last seventy years so that it is no longer associated exclusively with prostitutes, does not change its premise in God's eyes. And the fact that liberal scholars in God's church were able to attack one technical point of Mr. Armstrong's original article did not change the more significant spiritual principle involved. Remember, God compelled Mr. Armstrong first through the Holy Spirit concerning the pagan practice of face-painting. The technical explanation of Isaiah 3:16 came later.

Makeup Only One of Many

Was makeup the only doctrine changed by a liberal ministry in the 1970s? Hardly. By the latter part of the decade, the real fruit of *many* scholarly changes was unmistakable, and the Worldwide Church of God was in serious trouble. God's church had done just like ancient Israel, seeking acceptance by the pagan world around them, and forgetting the value

of their unique calling. In spite of Mr. Armstrong's attempts to appease his son by approving many doctrinal changes he and other liberals had lobbied for, by 1978 it was clear there was still no basis for unity between them. Amidst the unrest within the body, Ambassador College had become a liberal institution, almost as worldly as any other. The college chancellor was finally disfellowshipped, Ambassador College was closed, and then it was reopened by Mr. Armstrong with a renewed commitment to spiritual principles and a renewed focus on training the future ministers of God. This ushered in a new era in the church referred to as the "Back on Track" years. In an effort to shore up the sagging church income and quell serious unrest and discouragement among the ministry and laity, Mr. Armstrong launched this conservative reformation to "recapture true values."

One of the major initiatives used in 1981 to prove God was getting His church "back on track" was a return to the original 1955 teaching on makeup. Here are some excerpts from an article by Mr. Armstrong entitled, "How Subtly Satan Used MAKE-UP to Start the Church Off the Track," that will provide a feel for the times:

FOR THREE YEARS the living Christ has been working to put His Church back on track!

God's Church, the now imminent Bride of Christ, is not going to rise to meet the returning Christ in the air with painted faces and plucked and repainted eyebrows!

I am human like all of you, and I was caught off guard and without at the time realizing it, ALLOWED this liberalism to creep stealthily into God's flock! I now repent of that and the living Christ leads me to do what He inspires me to do to correct it and get this holy Body of Christ BACK COMPLETELY ON THE TRACK. For we have not been fully back on the track even yet!

The church was being blessed and growing—up to about 1968. For 35 years God had caused it to grow at the phenomenal and unmatched rate of 30% average per year. Then, beginning in 1968, Christ the living Head of the Church, began to send me to capitals of nations all over the world. I was unable to give day-to-day management at Headquarters. Sin entered the Pasadena leadership. The Church stopped its phenomenal growth. I had to deal with sins near the top in 1971 and 1972. In the spring of 1974 a ministerial rebellion, led to a considerable extent by two top-ranking ministers at Pasadena, resulted in some 30 or more ministers leaving the Church.

He revealed HIS TRUTH to me and through me to YOU! And now He is using me as His instrument in CORRECTING a mistake, and LEADING YOU BACK ON THE TRACK!

Legitimate Reform?

For those who had a deep love of God's revealed Truth, this proclamation certainly gave hope that the church would finally reject not only the liberal changes of the 1970s, but the liberal *spirit of human scholarship* which had *led* to those changes. The problem was, a real reformation never really took place. In spite of certain overt actions which appeared conservative, the counterfeit foundation of false human wisdom was preserved. In actuality, the doctrine of makeup became a pawn in this political pretense.

Although we believe Mr. Armstrong was very sincere in wanting to lead the church back to its faithful foundation, by the early 1980s his very advanced age and a lack of ministerial supporters who truly loved the original revelation were all working against him. It even appears that in 1981, there was still a lack of recognition of the *real* cause for the initial downward spiral of the church. Notice how Mr. Armstrong diagnosed the root problem in this same 1981 article:

Satan used human reason and make-up and WOMEN to START the ball of LIBERALISM AWAY FROM GOD and TOWARD SIN to rolling in the Church beginning October 1974.

But was it really women—and the makeup doctrine—that started the church down the wrong road, spiritually? Not at all! The change in the makeup doctrine in October, 1974, was preceded by two *major* doctrinal changes in the first half of that same year. The first major doctrine to be corrupted was Pentecost in February, 1974. Three months later in May, God's sacred law concerning marriage was perverted to allow divorce and remarriage. How is it that these two monumental changes were not identified as the *real* beginning of God's disfavor toward his people? How is it that a relatively small doctrine like makeup was given such stature, in the shadow of the corruption of the Holy Day representing the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church, and an assault on marriage—the very spiritual picture of the Christ-Church relationship? By changing Pentecost from Monday to Sunday after almost forty years—on the basis of "new truth" from deceived human scholars—the church rejected Jesus Christ as the *Revelator of Truth*, and turned instead to the wisdom of the world, just as ancient Israel had done time and time again. February, 1974, is when Jesus Christ was officially rejected by the Worldwide Church of God, and God departed from its midst! Three

months later, the real target of the liberal agenda was set in motion—watering down God's marriage laws so that "bound but single" members (including ministers) could finally be free to remarry, and the third tithe fund could be relieved of the burden of many costly "spiritual widows." The result of this change—rather than truly relieving many from the "burden" of celibacy—was to destroy hundreds of families, as couples immediately began to discard their marriages in search of something "better." The leadership little realized it was driving a dagger through the heart of the church, and engaging in Satan's real work of destroying the picture of God's Family, as represented by human marriage.

How is it that these monumental travesties and abominations in God's sight were not even mentioned in the "Back on Track" years? How could makeup be elevated to the level that it was, as the villain which began the church on the path of separation from God? No one has a definitive answer to that question. We do not attempt to confirm what was really in Mr. Armstrong's mind in those final years of his life, or pretend to fathom the pressure he was under. But we do know from the fruits of that organization today, the Worldwide Church of God never did truly get "back on track." It made a pretense of "recapturing true values," but like many of the ancient kings and kingdoms of Judah, never really returned to God with their whole heart. Its eventual rejection of *all* God's Truth—and organizational disintegration in the years following Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986—is a testament to the fact that body was sick and dying, even while Mr. Armstrong was still "officially" at the helm. What we saw in the early 1990s was only the final death-throes of a diseased body, infirmed by a cancer which began to grow in the early 1970s, and was never truly excised.

A Final Reflection

In the final article Mr. Armstrong wrote on June 24, 1985—six months before his death—he seemed to understand that the makeup change was not truly the culprit. From "Recent History of the Philadelphia Era of the Worldwide Church of God," Mr. Armstrong wrote, concerning events beginning in late 1971:

A small few Ambassador graduates who had become ministers in the Church were somewhat scholarly inclined, especially one who had a specific problem. He suffered from an inferiority complex. Because some of our graduates at the time were enrolling in outside universities for higher degrees, a few came to conceive that a "scholar" was in the loftiest position of humanity. . . . He began to question some of the established doctrines of the Church of God, such as counting the day of Pentecost, divorce and remarriage, tithing and others. Soon he was entering into what he considered a scholarly research to DISprove plain biblical truths.

Although Mr. Armstrong provides many further details in this article about events in those years, and laments allowing these liberal "scholars" to destroy the church, he falls short of saying the first result of their work—the Pentecost change—should be corrected. However he does strongly criticize many aspects of the divorce and remarriage change. These facts demonstrate that by the time of his death, Mr. Armstrong had come to see that makeup was *not* the doctrine which set the church on the wrong path, but was merely a small reflection of the worldliness which crept in much earlier when the ministry forgot that God—not man—was the author of true doctrine.

A Proper Context for Makeup Today

Mr. Armstrong's original ruling on cosmetics in 1955 is as valid today for members of God's church as in any time past. Even though it was used as a political football in the 1970s, the spiritual principle still applies. Another quote from his 1964 article, "TRUTH About MAKEUP," summarizes it well:

If other nations around them had not practiced these abominations, the Israelites would never have wanted to do them. LIKEWISE, if the women of the world around you had never worn lipstick or eye makeup, not a single decent and virtuous woman would ever have wanted to wear it!

Why else would women in God's church today want to use makeup? No matter how accepted it is in this world today—and even expected in some circles—that has no bearing on how God views this abominable pagan practice. And matched together with the risk to health (even with supposedly "natural" cosmetic products), it is something that God's people should absolutely reject.

This ministry has never sought to legislate or enforce right principles in members lives, but to teach the truth and provide God's instructions for building happy, healthy lives. While he was alive, Mr. Raymond Cole never intercepted women wearing makeup at the door to the Sabbath meeting hall and turned them away. But that should not be construed as winking at sin. Raymond Cole upheld the validity of those original doctrines until his dying day. It is inappropriate for members to judge each other for personal weaknesses they have not yet overcome, and this ministry still does not intend to try to legislate faith in the lives of individual members. That kind of coercion never produces true spiritual fruit. But that should not be construed as making issues like makeup, skirt lengths, tattoos, body piercing and other "smaller" issues unimportant. They are not unimportant to God.

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the [conduct] of the wives; While they behold your chaste [conduct] coupled with *fear*. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price (1 Peter 3:1–4).

Wearing modest jewelry and working to look nice was never considered wrong in the church. In fact, Mr. Armstrong wanted members to dress up and avoid looking like they were wearing a "religious uniform" of poverty. But are we truly focused on measuring up to God's standard of proper appearance and deportment, or are we more concerned with matching the customs and fads of this world? The things highly revered in this world are hated by God. If anything, women should feel absolutely comfortable in coming to Sabbath services without makeup and questionable attire. Who within God's church would think less of them for *not* wearing makeup? When we stop to remember we are coming into the very presence of God, can we truly say we are dressing to please Him? Do we really insist on bringing a heathen image into God's church? And what about the example we are setting for the young girls? Are we teaching them by our entrenched habits to fall into the very same carnal traps, or are we setting an example they will respect in building humble, pious images for themselves when they become adults? While devoted parents in the church are rightly teaching their young daughters against makeup, are any of you undermining that teaching by your personal addiction to cosmetics? Even as Mr. Armstrong said about smoking, it requires we first step out to obey God in fear, and *then* we will later be able to see the nature of that idol for what it is—if we are truly converted. This is all a part of spiritual growth for those who are truly coming to love the ways of God more than the ways of man.

The history of makeup in God's church is an interesting one indeed. From analysis of the events that transpired over three decades, we can learn not only the value of the original church teaching on this important doctrine, but the value of God's method for inspiring chosen servants, and the key to avoiding the deception of apostasy when truth is forsaken by the majority.

May you all remain absolutely grounded in those doctrines which constitute the faith once delivered to the saints.

Your devoted servant in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jon W. Brisby". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jon W. Brisby