

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter May 2009

Dear Brethren:

Another new month has now arrived, providing another opportunity to address God's beloved children in this letter edition. We greet you with warmth and deep appreciation for your devotion to God's Truth, and pray that you are continuing to find help and inspiration as you pursue your spiritual calling. Those of us working in the headquarters office here in Eugene, Oregon, count it a great honor and privilege to be your servants. There is no more rewarding work than supporting and encouraging the very children God is preparing for great glory in the near future. May you all find strength to hold fast and to fulfill that great calling by bearing much fruit day to day, and to take hold with determination upon that reward which God is extending toward you.

Since this is the last monthly mailing you will receive before we observe Pentecost together, this issue is devoted to "meat in due season" for that auspicious Holy Day. We are now marking time amidst those days commanded in the count toward Pentecost. Leviticus 23 provides one unique count of fifty (verse 16, "number fifty days"), ending this year at the close of May 31—Pentecost then commencing at sunset Sunday evening. Deuteronomy 16 provides a very different and *distinct* count pointing to the same day. This count is not fifty, but "seven weeks" (verse 9), or forty-nine days. Forty-nine is not fifty. God is very specific. One count is fifty, but the other count is forty-nine. Both must conclude at the same point, since there is only one day of Pentecost, so those counts must begin at different starting points. There is no other way for a count of forty-nine and a count of fifty to terminate at the same point unless they begin one day apart. The fifty count of Leviticus 23 begins with Wave Sheaf Sunday (April 12), picturing Jesus Christ as the first of the firstfruits. The forty-nine count of Deuteronomy 16, therefore, begins one day later, on Monday (April 13)—picturing the first *full day* of the firstfruits harvest. This day symbolizes the Church—the *rest* of the firstfruits harvest after Christ. Christ and the Church are both pictured in the meaning of Pentecost, and God gave these two distinct counts to highlight both important aspects of that meaning.

This admittedly is a "new truth," if you will. You will not find documentation historically that Mr. Armstrong understood that the Leviticus and Deuteronomy counts were different and distinct. It was through Mr. Raymond Cole that this understanding came years later. Should this cause any of you concern that we are departing from the faith once delivered, as God revealed Truth through Mr. Armstrong? No, it should not. The revelation of God to Mr. Armstrong was that Pentecost always falls on Monday. We are holding with fierce determination to that Truth. That does not preclude us from receiving deeper understanding of truth in later years. The difference is that any "new truth" God inspires will never repudiate or undermine previous truth He has given. If new truth is legitimate, it will always augment, enrich, and add depth to that which we already have. Such is the nature of our increased understanding of the Pentecost *counts*.

Some today seek to assert that Pentecost must be kept *on* "the fiftieth day." They claim anyone counting Pentecost as we do is actually keeping "the fifty-first day." A number of former ministers of God's church assert that the word "Pentecost" means "fiftieth day." That is categorically false. "Pentecost" simply means "fifty count." Neither that word nor any other word God inspired in the Bible defines within *a name* which day of a count Pentecost must fall. The knowledge that there are *two distinct counts* is the best proof that this whole contention is erroneous. If God inspired two separate counts of different numbers of days to arrive at Pentecost, how can one particular count be sacred to the exclusion of another? According to one of God's counts, Pentecost comes after a count of fifty. According to the other inspired count, it comes after a count of forty-nine. Therefore, depending upon whether one is using an exclusive counting method or an inclusive method, Pentecost falls in one case on either day number forty-nine or fifty, and in the other case, day fifty or fifty-one. That is actually four different outcomes from counting! When done correctly, using an *exclusive* count with Leviticus 23 makes Pentecost the fiftieth day. Using an inclusive count with Leviticus 23 makes Pentecost the day following day fifty (day fifty-one as some call it). But if the distinct count of Deuteronomy 16 is used, those same two methods are likewise options: an exclusive count makes Pentecost day number forty-nine, and an inclusive count makes it day number fifty. That is four distinct ways to count, providing the option of considering Pentecost as either the forty-ninth, fiftieth, or fifty-first day.

Which one of those four methods is correct? They are all correct! They *all* lead to the *one and only* day which God hallowed and set apart as holy—Monday! Those trying to advocate a single "sacred count" are the ones who have departed from what Mr. Armstrong really emphasized. What he knew by revelation was that God did not set Pentecost upon Satan's pagan day of worship—Sunday—and that Monday was the true day to be kept. Beyond that, he always allowed room for alternative methods of counting, *as long as they resulted in the confirmation of a Monday Pentecost*.

Some try to pigeon-hole Church of God, The Eternal as believing only in an inclusive count of fifty. That is not true! Mr. Raymond Cole always confirmed the legitimacy of the *exclusive method* Mr. Armstrong used to support Monday Pentecost, which in essence is the fifty count, beginning "from, away, out of" Sunday. We still support that method. When it is done correctly, it confirms the revealed day—Monday. But when the other three variable counts are also used correctly, they *likewise* confirm the correct day! Therefore, to be accurate, anyone trying to document what this little remnant group believes should state that we believe Pentecost can be either the forty-ninth, fiftieth, or fifty-first day, depending upon one of at least four counts used. Any other postulation about our belief is categorically false. We believe there is *no sacred count*, meaning a single way to count which must be the only way to confirm Pentecost.

In his June 1943 article from *The Good News* magazine entitled, "How To Figure Pentecost," the context of Mr. Armstrong's statements make it plain that what was critical to him was that we arrive at *the right day*. At the time, he only knew of one way to count which seemed to arrive at the day he knew to be correct. He even believed in those early years that Pentecost meant "fiftieth day." But in later years when he came to understand better the technicalities, he was very willing to accept additional methods of counting, *as long as it confirmed Monday*. This history was documented by Mr. Raymond Cole in our article entitled, "Church of God, The Eternal: Who We Are."

There are also many who apply some mystical significance to actually numbering every day of the count from Unleavened Bread to Pentecost. They believe they must be cognizant of each day of the count, as if by marking them off on a calendar. This is likewise not true. This idea actually derives from the Jews who keep a Sivan 6 instead of the correct Pentecost. Why do they make a ritual out of counting the days, one by one? Because they have undermined the real purpose for counting at all! Since they do not begin their count from the weekly Sabbath which falls within the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, but instead from the first High Day of Unleavened Bread, their "Pentecost" always falls on the same date on the annual calendar, Sivan 6. This happens because the first High Day of Unleavened Bread always falls on the fifteenth day of the first month. So if you begin counting from the fifteenth of the first month, you always wind up on the same date of the year, the sixth day of the third month—Sivan 6 (according to their reckoning). Why would God command a special count to arrive at Pentecost if it was always simply the same date on the calendar each year? This is one of our circumstantial proofs that the "sabbath" from which to count is not an annual Sabbath, but a weekly Sabbath. But since the Jews disagree, they must come up with another explanation for the command to count, given there is no *need* for a count. So they manufacture an explanation which says God wants His people to take note of every day of the count along the way as a special ritual of anticipation toward

the Holy Day. Because they have rejected the truth about the proper benchmark from which to count (as well as the correct way to count), they have created a manmade tradition for justifying an otherwise "purposeless" count. How absurd.

Brethren, just be aware of these things and do not let yourselves ignorantly fall into some of these deceptions. God gave *no command* for us to perform some ritual on each day of "the sacred count" toward Pentecost. The inspired *counts* (plural) were commanded as tools to make sure we arrive at *the correct day* to worship in God's presence. Also, those counts—as God came to show us in more recent years—likewise picture both Jesus Christ *and* the Body of Christ—the Church—in their respective roles in the meaning of Pentecost. It is all part of the glorious plan for God's salvation of mankind which He has opened to our understanding. What a privilege we have been given to know the Truth.

New Moon

The new moon, Sivan (third month), will begin on the evening of May 23. The new moon day is May 24.

Birth

Mr-s. Nynganyi of Suna-Migori, Kenya would like to announce the arrival of their baby girl, Iv Ginet. We would like to congratulate them on the new addition to their family.

Death

We are saddened to announce the death of Mrs. Claudia Aquijo of Luzon, Philippines. She died March 30, at the age of 86. We offer our condolences to her only living daughter, Mrs. Lubricia Gonzales, and her friends and extended family.

Also, Mrs. Pam Miller of Leatherhead, Surrey, England, died peacefully in her sleep Wednesday evening, April 22. In her 80s, she was a longtime member of the church and will be missed by all who knew her.

Trip Schedule

May 23	JWB	Carlisle, England
May 30	JWB	Lausanne, Switzerland
June 1	JWB	Grenoble, France

Recorded Sermon Schedule

Sermon #	Mailed	Played	Title
WSE-JB 22-105-24R	04-08-09	05-02-09	Fund. of Belief: Divine Revelation Unchanging Truth
WSE-CL2 69	04-08-09	05-09-09	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #2
Holy Day Sermon	04-28-09	06-01-09	Pentecost
WSE-JB 22-106-24S	04-30-09	05-16-09	Fund. of Belief: Divine Revelation Does God Repent?
WSE-CL2 70	04-30-09	05-23-09	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #3
WSE-CL2 71	04-30-09	05-30-09	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #4
WSE-CL2 72	05-21-09	06-06-09	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #5
WSE-JB 22-107-24T	05-21-09	06-13-09	Fund. of Belief: Divine Revelation The Only Legitimate Changes
WSE-CL2 73	05-21-09	06-20-09	Christian Living Series #2 Kindness #6

In Christ's service,



Jon W. Brisby