

Q & A

(Two of the most prevalent questions from the ministry are on the subjects of "make-up" and "birthdays." In a Bible study conducted in Pasadena on June 7th, Mr. Ted Armstrong explained our approach to these two questions. Following are transcripts of the original questions and Mr. Armstrong's answers, so please overlook any imperfect phraseology.)

Q. Will you please explain the Church's view on make-up?

A. Well, my father wrote a booklet quite a few years ago and as I said in the conference, if there is some new information that ministers want to bring up about it, new studies we ought to go into, something that we ought to decide upon that is different, well then the avenues of communication are absolutely wide open.

The entire principle that was set forth back then I believe is a true principle, but the idea that not even any little bit of some kind of a base of some of the things that are available to conceal wrinkles, blotches, warts, blemishes, discolored skin, old tired leathery skin, freckles and what-not could never be used is a little silly, I think. Now if somebody wanders in and doesn't dare smile for fear the chips and flakes cracking and falling onto the ground or, you know, the lipstick that begins to kind of spread up the little wrinkles in the mouth when it gets a little moist or something like that; or using huge green eye shadow — that's an extreme, isn't it?

I think that many of the ladies in the Church are using any number of different types of cosmetics. I do not feel whatsoever that some of these pancake bases, for instance, are terribly wrong. People take exception to some of the Chorale girls in a campaign wearing make-up. One or two of them probably overdo it because of taking undue advantage of the opportunity. Anyhow, some people say, "If they do it, why can't I"? Fine, that's a nice argument. Would you believe that people have even said, "Since GTA uses it, why

can't I"? (Once in a while I have to, in fact, I have to use it almost all the time when I do television. It's a kind of a stick, and there are about 17 to 20 different shades, and depending on the degree of tan or lack of it, I have to use that stuff on my beard, whether I just shaved or not. If you notice the latest cover picture of the Good News you'll know why. I probably didn't have it on and if I did it was probably late in the day or something. Then it's real dark and kind of beardy and whiskery, so it's only to cover up a little bit of beard for the sake of appearance on camera and not for any other purpose.)

I know that a lot of people are wearing clear types of make-up, but not heavy rouge and bright red lipstick and so on. All I'll say is that certain *very moderate* products of that nature, I can't take exception to that. I don't think using these is breaking any spiritual principle that I can find in the Bible. Gaudily painting up one's face all kinds of bright colors of the rainbow is something else again. Human eyes aren't normally green from their eyelashes or eyebrows all the way to the eyeball. I've never seen a person like that in my life, and I've been in most countries in the world. If you're talking about natural human colors, and that's what I'm talking about — natural human colors of the face — well, that's one thing. Birds can have blue on their nose (mandrills too) and they're very beautiful — but humans with blue on their nose or green on their eyes just are not!

Q. Please explain why we are not supposed to observe birthdays. I was recently asked this question by a relative who is not in the Church, and I felt very bad because I couldn't come up with any really convincing arguments.

A. Well, it depends on what you mean by "observe." I observe birthdays. I observe when my son is 18 as opposed to 17. I observe my gray hair and thinning, balding dome. You take note of the passing years. But the idea of a birthday party — making it a great event to which you command or you demand under the stigma of social disgrace that people come to, and if they do not come they are not your friends anymore and will be socially ostracized — is a little silly. And if you are coming, you had better bring a gift, hadn't you? I mean, it's not only a social custom, but it's a social demand.

Well, if you want to look upon the Bible as the ultimate talmud that answers every tiny little nuance and shading of meaning and every vagary of human behavior, then you are going to be disap-

pointed. Without realizing it, many of us look at the Bible as if it were the perfect answer to everything when a lot of the time you read in the Bible about the horrible mistakes people were making back then. We need to look at the Bible as the divinely revealed Word of God containing the examples of human failings and frustrations, the examples of success as well as failures of God's own choicest men, and look upon the Bible not as what God always wanted, but the way things really were. The Bible teaches by example. It actually teaches by omission in some cases. It is eloquently silent about some things, and you learn from that. As a matter of fact, that was a part of the input on D and R. The omission of any single case involving D and R in the New Testament is eloquent.

I think there are only two birthdays mentioned in the Bible. [What about Gen. 31:1-2?] — when Joseph was in prison and the baker was hanged, and the other case of Herod and the famous dance of Salome when they beheaded John the Baptist. Now in each case you find a birthday being observed by pagans. And if you look back into it you find that paganism is where birthdays originated. But, on the other hand, look, most *everything* originated in paganism! You hardly know of anything the pagans didn't originate, including the eyeglasses many of you are looking through. It wasn't the Christians who invented them. You can carry that to an extreme, you really can. You can get to the point where you say, "This is pagan," and that pagans invented it. Well, pagans invented almost everything in this world. Even the English language is from paganism; the English language is a pagan language. There are many, many bad words in the English language that we use like "Good-by". To get real technical about it, we probably shouldn't say that — "God be with you." But that would be really silly because that isn't what "Good-by" means anymore. It just means whatever that phonetic sound means to people and we don't really disobey God in saying that at all.

Now Jesus' own birthdate is very closely guarded. You don't know exactly down to the day when he was born. (All Bible scholars know that He wasn't born on December 25 or anywhere near that. They do admit that he was born in the autumn. That is why the Bible says, "When he began to be about 30.") It's kept concealed because God did not want Jesus' birthdate to be observed. He knew the pagans would want to do it so He concealed it from them and they tried to do it anyway. So, that's rather eloquent.

This is the way I would rather explain it. I

would just say that the Church doesn't have any rules, that nobody is going to be put out of God's Church if he decides to take special note of his birthday and sends out a lot of announcements and says, "Come on over we are going to have a party. (I personally think that it is kind of silly. I mean you've got all kinds of reasons to give people presents, not the least of which is simply a Christian gesture from time to time because you respect them and love them, without having to do it under coercion or threat from social custom where you are blackballed if you don't.)

Now maybe we have had articles indicating or even stating that the observance of birthdays is a sin. But I don't exactly remember. All I can say is that we do not legislate the abolishment of birthdays; we do not ask people if they are willing to give up birthdays before we baptize them. Over a period of time, as they study the Bible, they are going to come to see the things I've just now explained; that, by example, on the only two birthdays murders occurred under the auspices of a pagan king, and that there is no example of a birthday celebration for any righteous person, for Christ Himself, for any of the disciples or the apostles. It is not set, therefore, by positive example, so we simply say — why bother?

But it does *not* say we shouldn't say, "Hey, happy birthday." I do! My son comes in and I say you're 17 today. Boy, terrific, you're growing up — and we take note of it. A passing year, I mean, ghastly, who doesn't? You know which day you were born on. So, I think it is just a matter of the wording sometimes. We certainly don't have great big pagan parties on birthdays.

Now the next question is should your child go to a birthday party when invited? Let's go into the subject a little bit. Should your child go to a birthday party? Sure, what's wrong with that? And take a gift, too, while you're at it! Sure — what's wrong with that? My Dad gives Steuben glass away to kings. Can't you give a little scented hanky to a little girl on her birthday? Now, I'm not kidding you, it's custom, right? And custom to whom custom! My Dad would not want to go — and I wouldn't want him to go and I hope the Church wouldn't want him to go — into the presence of an emperor or a king without a gift. I wouldn't want my children to go into the presence of another person at a birthday party without a gift — a child bringing a gift to another child is just as innocent as he or she can be in doing it and does it just because it is custom. It's exciting to them. It's a big happy day. They're going to have their cake and about 6 candles and blow it out and

everybody is going to sit down and eat ice cream and cake (and get all sick) and watch the kiddie programs on television and play games and just have a blast. Well, you know, it just looks like the biggest slap in the face in the world if some of our members say, "No, my kid can't go to that birthday party over there." And, I would say that I just don't see anything at all that is horribly disgraceful for a little kid to go to a birthday party.

Remember there are other *positive* things to emphasize. What you can do is make sure that you give your child presents, and that you certainly make the Feast of Tabernacles a time when you do so, and spend second tithe doing it. Now by that I don't mean a car. It seems that some people decide to give their child a present like a ten-speed bike that is going to last him about the next ten years. That's your "Feast bike," they say. And he leaves it at home. Doesn't even take it to the Feast! Find something that is used at the Feast such as clothing. That's a good idea. I think nice, new clothing for the Feast is exciting for children and certainly a very fine time to use second tithe on yourself and rejoice, and the children can get a new outfit. I certainly agree with that. Well, I don't want to beat the subject to death.

Q. In light of the recent announcements at the conference concerning marriage and divorce and third tithe, will there be more or less money available for third tithe?

A. At this point we can only estimate the effect these recent announcements will have on third tithe expenditures and income. Third Tithe expenditures could drop a slight amount the first month or so due to some few women going off the third tithe rolls when they are reunited with their husbands. However, a brief survey of our files on third tithe recipients shows that only a small percentage of the women have separated from a husband who is also in the Church. Most of the third tithe recipients' former husbands are not in the Church, many of these men having remarried; some deserted the family in the first place; some are irreconcilably against the Church and so forth. Because of this, many of these women will not be reunited to a husband they may have earlier separated from when they came into the Church. These women will be free to remarry, but it will probably only be over a period of time that this will occur. Also, many of the women are at the age when getting married will be more difficult, there are often children involved, etc. Therefore, our

projection at this time is for only a slight decrease, if any, in expenditures.

It is possible that expenditures may even continue to increase if the number of new recipients is greater than the number going off the files. Also, we don't feel there will be a dramatic drop off in third tithe contributions, though there probably will be a slight decrease due to some not paying third tithe when it is judged that by doing so it would work a great hardship on them.

Before these recent changes, our projections for third tithe income and expenditures showed that monthly expenditures would exceed monthly income by some time this summer. Because of this, we do want to control expenses wherever possible without neglecting the needs of anyone — even if this means taking money out of the operating fund to care for the needy. The recent M&D announcements haven't really changed this picture and unless or until we can see a marked change, we probably should continue to limit third tithe expenditures to only those items that are necessary in order to provide a decent standard of living for our third tithe recipients.

Q. What can be done to help a woman who receives welfare assistance but needs more than the Welfare Department gives her? If we give her help from third tithe, Welfare will reduce their assistance to her by the amount we give her.

A. What we can do depends entirely on what the local county welfare agency and the state welfare regulations will allow. Since each state has its own rules and since each county and even individual administrators have some latitude in applying these rules, what may be permissible in one area may not be in another. In some places welfare will allow their recipients to receive gifts-in-kind without reducing their allotment. Gifts-in-kind include such things as food stuffs, clothing, or payment of rent and utilities just as long as the actual money doesn't go to the woman. In some areas only a portion of the rent or utilities can be paid. In areas where this is allowed we can help the woman with third tithe by paying her landlord directly or by having a third tithe check sent to someone in her area to help her.

One thing we want to avoid is in any way doing something that could be construed as welfare fraud. Because of this we need to check out the local welfare rules and have a written statement from the welfare agency before setting up an arrangement where we or a local deacon pays a