

# IRON SHARPENS IRON

## Observing the Spring Festivals: be an example to nonmembers

By Herman L. Hoeh

Here is what everyone of us needs to know about observing God's Spring Festivals!

God wants us to be happy. He is not the stern God He is so often pictured as by people in this world. One primary way God has provided for our happiness — as well as our growth and development in the true Christian life — is through the annual festivals.

*Evangelist Herman L. Hoeh is editor of The Plain Truth.*

You can have real happiness at the coming Spring Festivals if you know what to do and how to be an example to any nonmembers of your family. There may be difficulties, it may take time, but you can achieve peace and harmony even if other members of your family do not observe these festivals.

### What is a festival?

A festival or feast is a part of time ordained by God for our physical, as well as spiritual, rejuvenation.

The first annual festival of God is the Passover (Leviticus 23:4-5). (The Sabbath, also a festival of God, is observed weekly.) The Passover is the only festival that is not a Sabbath (unless it happens to fall on the seventh day of the week). But the Passover, as well as every other annual festival, is a commanded assembly — a time of convocation.

We are, of course, to worship God the Father in spirit and truth no matter where we may be (John 4:21-24). But whenever it is possible to assemble we are commanded to do so. And most members of God's Church are able to assemble.

Only the converted members assemble for the Passover, but the whole family is to attend other annual feasts whenever possible (Deuteronomy 16:11, 14, 16). Jesus came with Joseph and Mary to the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread (Luke 2:41-42).

### How to observe the Passover

The Passover comes the day before the great Spring Festival of Unleavened Bread (Numbers 28:16-17). Since the Passover is not a Sabbath day, work may be done on it. That's why the Passover is called a day of preparation (Matthew 27:62).

The Passover is a very solemn and sacred time of the year. Jesus set us an example on the day of His death so that we might know how to keep the Passover.

Although the Passover is the day before the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it was customary among the Jews to use unleavened bread on the Passover day. That is why the Passover is called a day of unleavened bread (Luke 22:7).

No leavened product is ever to be used with the Passover service — which, in the professing Christian world, is sometimes improperly termed the "Lord's Supper" (I Corinthians 11:20). The morning after the Passover service, which is still the Passover day, is probably the most convenient time to remove any remaining leavening agents or leavened bread.

Be sure that all leaven is removed

from your premises. Don't store it in some other room. Removing leavened products that cost a few cents is just one way God has of testing you to see how much you prize obedience above money and the pleasures of this age. If you follow His will, God has promised to give you more in this life in return for what you give up in loving obedience to Him (John 10:10).

It is wise to arrange your purchases so that when the Passover comes there will be little leaven to discard. Remember, there is nothing wrong with leaven. It is merely used in the Feast of Unleavened Bread as a symbol of vanity and sin (I Corinthians 5:7-8).

A leavening agent is any substance that is used to puff up or produce fermentation, causing dough to rise. Yeast, soda and baking powder are such products. Bread, crackers, cakes, some prepared cereals and pies contain leaven and should be avoided at home and at restaurants during the festival. Beaten egg white on pies is not a leavening agent.

Homemade unleavened pies, cereals and unleavened bread are to be used instead, together with all the regular meats, milk, fruits and vegetables you normally eat, for the Festival of Unleavened Bread following the Passover.

At first it may seem strange to do without leaven in a festival, but once we come to know the mind of God and of Jesus Christ, we see the lesson of obedience it teaches. Happy are you if you do these things, Jesus said (John 13:17).

As there are many products containing leaven, be sure to examine the labels of all products on your shelves. In all probability, there will be some leavened material that somehow escapes — a good type of the hidden sins that we don't always discover immediately upon conversion. We must always throw away this forgotten leaven — a type of sin — upon discovering it.

### Festival of Unleavened Bread

Here is the great Spring Festival, midway in the first month of the sacred calendar, when the people of God are to assemble with one another wherever possible and rejoice over the wonderful new year ahead. The feast is a seven-day period, beginning the day after the Passover.

The Festival of Unleavened Bread, although seven days long, has but two annual Holy Days or Sabbaths, occurring on the first and last days of the feast. The intervening days are not annual Sabbaths and ordinary work (except for any intervening weekly Sabbath) may be done on them.

Cooking may be done on annual Sabbaths. But all other forms of ordinary business or work are not to be done. Exodus 12:16 in the Revised Authorized Version reads, "No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat — that only may be prepared by you."

Although the intervening days are not Sabbaths and work may be done on them, be sure that the usual routine does not stop you from realizing the purpose of the entire festival. It is to be a time of rejuvenating yourself spiritually and physically. The entire festival is meant to be a

special period of happiness. Spend extra time in studying and reading your Bible.

### The use of unleavened bread

In this feast, no leavened bread should be in your home for seven days and no leavened products should be eaten. Use unleavened bread instead, together with your customary meals.

Children should be trained by their parents to eat unleavened bread during these days, and also taught the meaning for so doing. This will be a wonderful experience for them. Nutritious unleavened bread can either be bought, or baked simply. Unleavened products are sold in most stores. Just ask your grocer or check the ingredient listings on packages of crackers or flatbread.

### What about relatives?

If families are divided concerning religious observances, difficulties may arise. Perhaps you are a husband or a wife whose family does not observe these annual festivals. Don't let that worry you. Never force your will on others. Don't force them to use unleavened bread against their will. This festival is a matter between you and God.

Where the entire family participates, all leaven must be removed by the beginning of the festival. If the husband of the family does not observe this festival, all leaven should

## Milestones in Church's work

**March, 1955** — Six months after the late Herbert W. Armstrong's campaigns in Great Britain, the first permanent office in London, England, is established.

**March 1, 1957** — Joseph W. Tkach is baptized in Chicago, Ill.

**March 27, 1968** — The Loma D. Armstrong Academic Center is dedicated on the Pasadena campus of Ambassador College.

**March 15, 1972** — Mr. Armstrong meets with leaders in the Japanese government, including a 40-minute meeting with Prime Minister Eisaku Sato.

**March 9, 1973** — Nagendra Singh, a judge of the World Court, plays host at a dinner at his home in Mr. Armstrong's honor. Present are ambassadors from Afghanistan and Ethiopia.

**March 18, 1975** — The Ambassador International Cultural Foundation is started to conduct cultural, humanitarian, charitable and educational activities of the Church.

**March, 1985** — During a six-day trip to Japan, Mr. Armstrong meets with Japanese government officials and representatives from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand and Israel.

**March 19 to 26, 1985** — Queen Sirikit of Thailand visits Ambassador College in Pasadena.

be removed if he does not object. But if he objects, rather than provoke arguments, it is better to reckon the house as his responsibility, and not remove the leaven.

However, a wife who does not need to bake can take all leaven from the kitchen where she works, if no objections would be raised. Allow your husband his freedom to eat leavened products if he purchases them or demands you bake them.

Sometimes it is necessary to explain this festival to your family if they do not understand. You have to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16) in explaining, however.

If opposition will likely develop, it would be better, before saying anything, to delight other members of your family with unleavened

products long before the feast so that they will not think anything strange when you first mention it. It is surprising how many people today know little or nothing about unleavened breads, but who enjoy them from the very first. Perhaps if other members of your family really enjoy it, nothing need be said about the festival and you can use unleavened bread for the entire week.

The first annual Sabbath or High Day of Unleavened Bread is the only other night convocation that is commanded after the Passover (Exodus 12:42). What could be more pleasant than beginning a festival with an enjoyable dinner with members of your family and converted friends in thanks to God? (See accompanying article on the Night to Be Much Observed.)

## Self-examination and humility must be part of foot washing

By George M. Kackos

Soon we will be gathering to observe the Passover — the solemn celebration of Jesus' sacrifice for us. Before partaking of the symbolic bread and wine, we must first wash one another's feet.

*George M. Kackos, who pastors the Grand Rapids and Muskegon, Mich., churches, is a regular contributor to The Good News.*

But why should we wash one another's feet? Before the Passover we need to consider the reason God instituted the foot-washing ceremony before the taking of bread and wine.

During biblical times, foot washing was a necessity because of open-toed sandals and dusty roads. Upon arrival, guests would be given water to wash their feet, or have them washed by a servant (Genesis 18:4, 19:2, I Samuel 25:41).

### An example for us

On the night of His final Passover, Jesus performed this simple act of service for His disciples. Afterward, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given

you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:12-15, Revised Authorized Version throughout).

Think about that. Jesus, our Creator and soon-coming King, humbled Himself to perform this lowly act of service — an act that illustrated His love and humility. It is a powerful example of the attitude we must have. Consider: Do we carelessly ignore this example?

Physically washing someone's feet on the night of the Passover doesn't indicate that you have a right foot-washing attitude. Remember that the Pharisees performed many overt acts of "righteousness," yet these acts were not pleasing to God (Matthew 23:25-26).

The same indictment can be rendered against those who wash feet, but do not wash their attitudes clean of unrighteousness. To casually overlook this required inner cleaning means to miss the lesson and real meaning of the physical, symbolic act.

Just as bread and wine symbolize the broken body and spilled blood of Jesus Christ, the physical act of foot washing symbolizes our cleansed attitudes and behavior. It marks that we have examined ourselves (I Corinthians 11:28) and, through the Spirit of God, had our minds cleansed of sin (Psalm 51:2, 10).

Speaking of the relationship be-

tween the symbolic act of foot washing and the willingness to accept Christ's sacrifice for our sins, Jesus told Peter, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me" (John 13:8).

This act was placed by God before the taking of bread and wine to remind us of the need to prepare ourselves spiritually, emotionally and mentally. We need to fully appreciate the immense magnitude of Christ's sacrifice and its meaning for us.

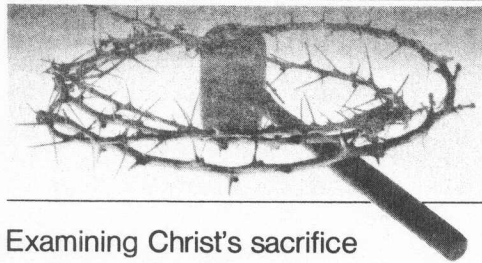
### Prepare yourself

To avoid the mistake of looking at this ceremony too casually, we must strive to develop the right foot-washing attitude before the Passover.

Are you striving to overcome the carnal attitudes of selfishness and pride? You must humble yourself and love others with the help of God's Holy Spirit.

It's essential to be close to God to be filled with these qualities (James 4:8). Spend extra time studying your Bible and praying to God to reveal your "secret faults" (Psalm 19:12).

Realize this: Before you wash someone's feet you should have examined yourself. Draw close to God. When we wash one another's feet we should reflect and reveal Jesus Christ living His life within us (Galatians 2:20, Philippians 2:5).



# FOCUS ON THE PASSOVER AND DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Examining Christ's sacrifice

## What Passover means to God

By Earl H. Williams

Have you ever wondered what goes through God's mind at Passover time?

*Earl H. Williams pastors the Brooklyn North and South and Queens, N.Y., churches.*

Passover is a meaningful and solemn occasion in God's Holy Day plan. The Passover deeply moves and sobers every truly converted Christian. Through Christ's Passover sacrifice, we may receive forgiveness of sin.

But what about God and the Passover? Have you ever thought about what the Passover means to God the Father and Jesus Christ? These are, after all, the "feasts of the Lord" (Leviticus 23:2, Revised Authorized Version throughout). The Father and the Son created them and, more importantly, are living them.

What is not written — what no one ever talks about — is the anguish God the Father felt. His pain was as great as Christ's.

In the next few moments let's ex-

perience the Passover sacrifice through the eyes and feelings of God.

### Loved from the beginning

To better understand God's love for us, we must first understand the closeness and love God the Father and Jesus Christ shared from the beginning.

Picture, if you can, two beings who lived together forever (John 1:1-2). Imagine how close they were — in perfect harmony, inseparable. Jesus said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). You can't get closer than that!

They became one by doing things together. They created and worked together building the vast universe. They experienced the full range of godly emotions together. They laughed at the many humorous facets of creation (just look at some of the animals, and you'll laugh, too). They played and sang beautiful music together. They no doubt cried together as they saw the angels and man hurt themselves through sin.

The Father and the Son shared

perfect love, without one single thought or act of selfishness. Their love, "the bond of perfection" (Colossians 3:14), solidified their oneness. They gave themselves totally to one another throughout time. We can only imagine the deep relationship this giving built, for no two humans have ever loved so truly. We can only imagine the depth behind Jesus' statement, "For the Father loves the Son" (John 5:20).

Now realize the sacrifice God made in giving up the one with whom He had shared eternity! God's love for us is greater than most of us have realized.

But when did man come into the picture? Long ago, God and the Word perhaps imagined how wonderful it would be if others could share the happiness and joy they experienced being God. So they designed a plan to reproduce themselves — and to begin by creating man.

But what if man decided to go contrary to God's way — to go the way of death? How could man be redeemed? God knew that only life could beget life, and that only God life could produce God life.

The solution was that one of them would have to die. Can you imagine God's feelings and thoughts at that moment of truth? Death was a concept that had not existed, let alone happened. And the death of a God — unthinkable! Yet now it had to be considered. For the first time in their long existence, the possibility existed that they would be separated.

Who would it be — which one of them would die? Being unselfish, perhaps they at the same time said, "Let it be me!" Then they realized someone would have to stay to guide and strengthen the other. So the Word volunteered to go, and the Father reluctantly gave His approval.

John speaks of Christ as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). Out of pure godly love for us, Christ willingly gave His life. Jesus said, "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John 10:18).

It was a sacrifice for the Father, too. For He loved Christ more than we can fathom. He knew all of the horrible things Christ would have to suffer. He understood the enormous risk Christ was taking — one sin and a God would be lost forever, and the whole plan of salvation, as it

(See PASSOVER, page 11)

## Celebrating special night of year

By Jeff E. Zhorne

How can Christians make the Night to Be Much Observed a memorable, joyful affair? Obviously this feast, picturing Israel's thankfulness and rejoicing in coming out of Egypt, and our deliverance from sin, is no paper-plate affair.

Everyone — hosts, hostesses and guests — can help produce a quality, meaningful evening that will be long remembered. And it doesn't have to involve spending large sums on new china and silverware.

Here's an illustration: John Halford, a pastor-rank minister working in Media Services in Pasadena, once gave a sermon about Ambassador quality. He mentioned brethren in some parts of Africa who live in remote areas in thatched houses with dirt floors.

How does Ambassador quality come to play in Africa? asked Mr. Halford. He explained that African brethren may not have Ambassador quality, but they do have Ambassador standards.

He described one family who always made sure their dirt floor was swept out Friday before the Sabbath began. The whole family participated in tidying up the home and making sure it was as clean and neat as possible.

Though their diet was normally limited to staple items, this family managed to serve special foods on the Sabbath.

The lesson? Though the Sabbath, Holy Days and other Festivals certainly call for bringing out the best we have, fine china and silver alone

will not display Ambassador standards.

More important are social amenities — the attractiveness and value not of real estate and personal possessions, but of a pleasant and gracious atmosphere that is both inspiring during the Night to Be Much Observed and for years afterward.

Filet mignon and cherries jubilee will not make an evening memorable if the company is not assembling in like mind, of one accord.

On this evening brethren should fellowship "in an attitude of thankfulness and rejoicing for the deliverance from sin which we as New Testament Christians experience," as mentioned in the March 27, 1981, *Pastor General's Report*.

Instead of looking critically at the condition or contents of the home to which you have been invited, or worrying that brethren will think your home, possessions and other material goods do not measure up to a certain standard, call to mind that God looks on the heart, the attitude (1 Samuel 16:7). No one expects you to do better than your genuine best.

### A good social mix

Since the Night to Be Much Observed does not include a service or Bible study, hosts and hostesses should strive to make the evening momentous through Christian fellowship.

To provide an atmosphere conducive to Christian fellowship, check to see that all guests are seated comfortably. Perhaps you could provide

hors d'oeuvres and arrange seating to best prompt conversation.

Think ahead. Will most of your guests tend not to be talkative? If so, you might invite to your home some who are more outgoing and gregarious. Try for an agreeable social mix.

Roman Borek, house manager of the Ambassador Auditorium, said: "In a family environment like the Night to Be Much Observed, you need a cross-section of people in the sense of age categories. Have some senior citizens, Mom and Dad, some teenagers, maybe some young infants.

"You can see the different groups interact with each other," Mr. Borek added. "It's a tremendous, learning environment. There is an appreciation that is cultivated and developed, as each age group learns and keeps current on the others."

"Mr. [Joseph] Tkach has emphasized the fact that the Night to Be Much Observed pictures coming out of Egypt," said Mr. Borek. "Each guest might tell how he or she learned about the Church and God's truth."

### Creative touches

Don't forget finishing touches. They go a long way to make an evening memorable. These might include creative designs of cheese sitting atop natural-grain crackers or special treats.

For my wife, Wendy, who grew up in God's Church, one high point of the Night to Be Much Observed was fudge cheese. Every year her father would buy this special cheese for his family and guests.

Nanci Petersen, from Sundre, Alta., offered these suggestions: "Our children were very involved in the plans and preparation . . .

"Our children made a mural (a collage) of the Passover and Exodus events, which we hung on the wall by the table," Mrs. Petersen said.

The evening is to be much observed by all — including the hostess. If she spends all of her time cooking, serving and coordinating she might not have time to concentrate on the significance of the evening.

This is where guests can pitch in — both before and after the meal. By lending a hand, singles or students away from home may feel they have found a new home.

Above all, strive to make the evening memorable for everyone!

## Eliminating the leaven requires wise strategy

By Gary Antion

God commands us to remove all leavening from our homes for the Days of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:15-20).

*Gary Antion, a pastor-rank minister, is an associate professor at Pasadena Ambassador College.*

How diligently we do so is an indication of how badly we want to put sin out of our lives.

### A plan of attack

So what we need is a strategy to get rid of leaven from our homes. Obviously we can't do it too soon, or we'll be keeping more than seven days of unleavened bread. But we should have a deadline.

You might, for example, begin by organizing leavened products in one area in your kitchen and use them until the final day you plan to have leaven in the house.

Involve the whole family in the de-leavening project. All the cleaning shouldn't fall on Mother's shoulders.

The ancient Israelites took great care to free their homes of leaven, even searching every corner with a lighted candle. Now in those early days it might have been rather easy, especially if you were living in a tent. You could just move your tent, or sweep it out.

But we in this modern, mechanized age have such items as toasters and microwaves and ovens and shag carpeting into which crumbs can fall.

### Helpful suggestions

You may want to attack the kitchen first to avoid bringing leaven into rooms you've already cleaned. Work on dining areas,

Check into the cookie jar that maybe you haven't used for weeks or months. Maybe you forgot to wash it when you quit using it.

Remember, too: It's not the days of unleavened beer or unleavened wine, nor is it the days of unleavened toothpaste. However, baking soda, baking powder and yeasts, agents used to make bread rise, must go.

Search cabinets, shelves, cupboards. Remember your toaster. Especially take a look at the drawers near the working area of the counters. They might have been open a bit when you were making bread or baking a cake. Take a look at butter and jelly or jam dishes. They might have bread crumbs from when you put butter or jelly on toast.

Be sure to check between the cushions, under the sofas and chairs and in the car.

Once you have done all your vacuuming, remember the vacuum-cleaner bag. This might be a good time to discuss with our families the meaning of these days. It would be easy to put sins out of our lives if we could always see them — just take the vacuum cleaner and whisk them away. But some sins are deeply imbedded, and though we struggle, we can't always get rid of them, like the crumbs in the cracks of the floorboards.

Use intelligence. You can go overboard in cleaning and be exhausted when Passover comes. You won't have studied or prayed or examined yourself. You won't be ready spiritually. We should not clean physically to the extent that we will not be prepared in a spiritual way for both God's Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. Begin preparing physically and spiritually early enough that neither area will be neglected (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

## Test Yourself

Test yourself! Here is a set of questions about information that appeared in the March issues of *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News*. See how many you can answer accurately. In parentheses after each question is the page number on which you can find the answer.

- (1) What two significant pieces of overseas territory is Britain in the process of relinquishing? (March *Plain Truth*, page 4)
- (2) What do the 10 toes on the two feet of Daniel's image imply in terms of the final resurrection of the Roman Empire? (March *Plain Truth*, page 7)
- (3) What is the key to saying helpful rather than hurtful things to others? (March *Plain Truth*, page 9)
- (4) True or false: Receiving God's Holy Spirit removes human nature from a person. (March *Good News*, page 2)
- (5) The Great Tribulation is the same event as the Day of the Lord. (March *Good News*, page 13)
- (6) What makes an object or experience a blessing? (March *Good News*, page 20)