|  |
| --- |
| HWA: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_W._Armstrong>  {{redirect|Herbert Armstrong|the poisoner|Herbert Rowse Armstrong}}  {{Multiple issues  |original research= January 2012  |primarysources= January 2012}}  {{Infobox person  | name = Herbert W. Armstrong  | image = HerbertWArmstrong.jpg  | image\_size =  | caption =  | birth\_name =  | birth\_date = {{birth date|1892|07|31}}  | birth\_place = [[Des Moines, Iowa]], [[United States|U.S.]]  | death\_date = {{death date and age|1986|01|16|1892|07|31}}  | death\_place = [[Pasadena, California]], [[United States|U.S.]]  | death\_cause = Heart conditions, Anemia  | resting\_place = [[Altadena, California]]  | resting\_place\_coordinates =  | residence = Pasadena, Tucson  | nationality =  | other\_names =  | known\_for = Radio evangelism<br>founding the Worldwide Church of God  | education = Attended North High School in Des Moines<ref name="Ch1"/>  | employer =  | occupation = Evangelist<br>author  | title = Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God (1946-1986)  | salary =  | networth =  | height =  | weight =  | term =  | predecessor =  | successor = [[Joseph W. Tkach]]  | party =  | boards =  | religion =  | spouse = {{marriage|Loma Dillon |1917|1967}}<br>Ramona Martin (1977-1984, divorced)  | partner =  | children = 4 with Loma (Beverly, Dorothy, Richard David, [[Garner Ted Armstrong|Garner Ted]])  | parents = Horace Elon Armstrong<br>Eva Wright Armstrong  | relatives = [[Dwight L. Armstrong]] (1904-1984), brother  | signature =  | website =  | footnotes =  }}  '''Herbert W. Armstrong''' (31 July 1892 - 16 January 1986) founded the [[Worldwide Church of God]] in the late 1930s, as well as [[Ambassador College]] (later Ambassador University) in 1946, and was an early pioneer of radio and tele-evangelism, originally taking to the airwaves in the 1930s from [[Eugene, Oregon]]. Armstrong preached an eclectic set of theological doctrines and teachings that he claimed came directly from the Bible.<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/truth/trans7.htm|title=Transformed by Truth|last=Tkach|first=Joseph|pages=Chapter 7: What we Believed.|accessdate=2009-02-16}}</ref> These theological doctrines and teachings have been referred to as [[Armstrongism]]. His teachings included the interpretation of biblical [[prophecy]] in light of [[British Israelism]],<ref>{{cite book|last= Armstrong|first= Herbert W.|title= The United States and Britain in Prophecy|url= http://www.cgca.net/pabco/us\_bri1.htm}}</ref> and required observance of parts of the covenant Law including [[seventh-day Sabbath]], dietary prohibitions, and the covenant law "[[Holy Days]]".  Armstrong proclaimed that behind world events during his lifespan loomed various Biblical prophecies, and that he was called by God as an '[[Apostle (Christian)|Apostle]]' and end-time '[[Elijah]]' to proclaim the Gospel of [[God]]'s [[Kingdom of God|Kingdom]] to the World<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/truth/tran12.htm|title=Transformed by Truth|last=Tkach|first=Joseph|pages=Chapter 12: Section: "Problematic Areas".|accessdate=2009-01-23}}</ref> before the [[Second Coming|return of Jesus Christ]]. He also founded the [[Ambassador International Cultural Foundation]], which promoted the arts, humanities, and humanitarian projects.<ref>Rader (1980), p. 21</ref> Through his role with the foundation, Armstrong and his advisers met with heads of governments in various nations, for which he described himself as an "ambassador without portfolio for world peace."<ref>{{cite web|url= http://ultimatechurcharchive.org/coworker%20letters/740829.TXT|accessdate= 2008-08-13|last= Armstrong|first= Herbert W.|title= Letter|date= August 29, 1974}}</ref>  ==Early life==  Herbert Armstrong was born in [[Des Moines, Iowa]], on July 31, 1892, into a [[Quaker]] family. He regularly attended the services and the Sunday school of First Friends Church in Des Moines.<ref name="Ch1">Armstrong (1967), [http://www.cgca.net/pabco/v1c1.htm Ch 1]</ref> At age 18, on the advice of an uncle, he decided to take a job in the want-ad department of a Des Moines newspaper, the ''[[Daily Capital]]''.<ref>Armstrong (1967), Ch 2, Heading "Learning Important Lessons"</ref> His early career in the print advertising industry which followed had a strong impact on his future ministry and would shape his communication style.<ref>Armstrong (1967), Ch 3, Heading "Learning Effective Ad-Writing"</ref>  On a trip back home in 1917, he met Loma Dillon, a school teacher and distant cousin from nearby Motor, Iowa.<ref>Armstrong (1967), Ch 9, Heading "I Meet Two Pretty Girls"</ref> They married on his 25th birthday, July 31, 1917, and returned to live in Chicago.<ref>Armstrong (1967), Ch 10, Heading "The Wedding Day"</ref> On May 9, 1918, they had their first child, Beverly Lucile, and on July 7, 1920, a second daughter, Dorothy Jane. In 1924, after several business setbacks, Armstrong and family moved to Eugene, Oregon where his parents lived at the time. While living in Oregon, they had two sons, Richard David (born October 13, 1928) and [[Garner Ted Armstrong|Garner Ted]] (born February 9, 1930). Armstrong continued in the advertising business despite the setbacks.<ref name="Ch15">Armstrong (1967), Ch 15</ref>  ==Beginnings of ministry==  During their stay in Oregon, his wife, Loma, became acquainted with a member of the [[Church of God (Seventh Day)]], Emma Runcorn. Emma and her husband O.J. were lay leaders in the Oregon conference of the Church of God, Seventh Day, a seventh-day-keeping Adventist group that rejected the authority of [[Ellen White]] and her teachings.  Loma became persuaded that the Bible taught [[seventh-day Sabbath|Sabbath observance on Saturday]], the seventh day, one of the beliefs of that church.<ref name="Ch15" /> Her assertion of this to her husband was met with dismay and appeared to him to be "religious fanaticism."<ref>Armstrong (1967), Ch 15, heading "Religious Controversy Enters"</ref> She challenged him to find biblical support for Sunday observance. As his business was struggling against larger competitors, Armstrong had the time to take up this challenge. He began what would become a lifelong habit of intensive, lengthy Bible study sessions. He soon felt God was inspiring this, opening his mind to truths that historical Christian churches had not found or accepted. Shortly after, as related in his autobiography, Armstrong would take up a similar study on the topic of [[evolution]] of the species after a conflict with his sister-in-law.<ref name=Ch16>Armstrong (1967), Ch 16.</ref> His studies on the Sabbath and evolution convinced him that his wife was right, and that the theory of evolution was false.  He was eventually baptized, along with his brother [[Dwight L. Armstrong]], in the summer of 1927 by Dr. Dean, the non-Sabbatarian pastor of Hinson Memorial Baptist Church in [[Portland, Oregon]].<ref name="Tkach12">Tkach (1997), [http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/truth/tran12.htm chapter 12]</ref> It is unknown, however, if he ever joined this denomination.<ref>Bruce Renehan, ''Daughter of Babylon'', [http://www.hwarmstrong.com/daughter-of-bablylon-15.htm ch.15], (Interview with John Kiesz)</ref> He would later recollect over four decades later that he believed, "On being baptized I ''knew'' God then and there gave me HIS HOLY SPIRIT!"<ref>[http://www.herbert-armstrong.org/Good%20News%201960s/Good%20News%201969%20%28Vol%20XVIII%20No%2008%29%20Aug.pdf "The Good News", August 1969, page 4]</ref> Despite his own unique teaching on [[baptism]] his own account is noteworthy for the absence of any mention of the process of [[laying on of hands]] or a special prayer in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, which were considered fundamental for membership in the [[Worldwide Church of God]] and reason for many a new converts [[rebaptism]].<ref>[http://www.isitso.org/guide/hwaord.html Pamela Starr Dewey, "Baptism and Ordination of Herbert W Armstrong"]</ref>  In 1931 Armstrong become an ordained minister of the Oregon Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day).<ref name="Tkach12"/><ref>Armstrong (1967), Ch 24, Heading "ORDAINED Christ’s Minister"</ref> The existence and history of this church became a significant factor in Armstrong's later beliefs.<ref>  {{cite book  |last= Hoeh  |first= Herman L.  |title= A True History of the True Church  |year=1959  |pages= section titled "The Gospel Goes to All the World"  |nopp= true  }}</ref><ref name=Mystery6>Armstrong, ''Mystery of the Ages'', Ch 6: Mystery of the Church.</ref>  He ultimately severed ties with them as the result of a doctrinal dispute when he began to teach a form of [[British Israelism]], which would later make up his book ''[[United States in Prophecy|The United States and Britain in Prophecy]]''.<ref name="EWTech">Nickels (1996) [http://www.giveshare.org/library/hwa/appendixa.html Appendix A -- Technical Notes]</ref> His ministerial credentials with the church were revoked in 1938.<ref name="Tkach12"/> This, Armstrong believed, indicated God was now directing him in leading a revived work into the next "church era."<ref name=Mystery6 />  ==Radio and publishing==  In October 1933, a small 100-watt radio station in Eugene, Oregon, [[KORE]], offered free time to Armstrong for a morning devotional, a 15-minute time slot shared by other local ministers.<ref>Nickels (1996)</ref> After positive responses from listeners, the station owner let Armstrong start a new program of his own. On the first Sunday in 1934, the Radio Church of God first aired.<ref name= "ET237">Boston (2002), Appendix, pg 237</ref> These broadcasts eventually became known as ''[[The World Tomorrow (1934)|The World Tomorrow]]'' of the future Worldwide Church of God.<ref name="ET238">Boston  (2002) pg 238</ref> Shortly thereafter, in February, 1934, Armstrong began the publication of ''[[The Plain Truth]]'', which started out as a church bulletin.<ref name="ET237" /> The broadcast expanded to other cities, and in 1942 began to be broadcast nationwide from [[WHO (AM)|WHO]] of Des Moines Iowa, a 50,000-watt superstation.<ref name="ET238" />  Critics point to statements in his early writings that proved to be inaccurate.<ref>[http://www.hwarmstrong.com/ar/Prophecies.html 'A Treasury of Famous Prophecies,' Ambassador Review #1, June 1976.]</ref> For example, a statement from a lead article in the February 1939 edition of ''The Plain Truth'', about a coming world war, said this:  <blockquote>''By way of brief review of previous articles, and radio messages, notice, first, that this war will involve ALL nations. It will be the first real world war. Secondly, it will center around Jerusalem....And thirdly, this war will END with the Second Coming of Christ!''<ref>{{cite journal  | last = Armstrong  | first = Herbert W  | authorlink =  | coauthors =  | title = Where and How the World War Will Start  | journal = The Plain Truth  | volume = IV  | issue = 2  | pages = 1–9  |month=February | year=1939  | url = http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.org/Plain%20Truth%201930s/Plain%20Truth%201939%20(Vol%20IV%20No%2002)%20Feb.pdf  | doi =  | id =  | accessdate = 2007-08-21 |format=PDF}}</ref></blockquote>  From his new contacts in Los Angeles, Armstrong began to realize the potential for reaching a much larger audience. He searched for a suitable location and chose Pasadena, California, as being ideal as it was a conservative residential community. During this time, Armstrong also reflected on starting a college to aid the growing church, by teaching and training young men and women. Hence, in 1946 Armstrong moved his headquarters from Eugene to Pasadena and on March 3, 1946, the Radio Church of God was officially incorporated within the state of California.<ref name="ET238" /> It quickly acquired its own printing plant and was broadcasting internationally in prime-time radio time slots. On October 8, 1947, his new college, Ambassador College opened its doors with four students.<ref name="ET238" />  ==International expansion==  During the 1950s and 1960s, the church continued to expand and the radio program was broadcast in England, Australia, the Philippines, Latin America, and Africa. In 1953, ''The World Tomorrow'' began to air on [[Radio Luxembourg (English)|Radio Luxembourg]], making it possible to hear the program throughout much of [[Europe]].<ref name="ET238" /> The beginning of the European broadcast provides the context of a booklet published in 1956 called ''[[1975 in Prophecy!]]'' In this book Armstrong put forward a controversial vision of what the world could look like by 1975 - featuring illustrations of mass burials and tidal waves destroying cities.<ref name="1975in">  {{cite book  |first= Herbert, W  |last= Armstrong  |title= 1975 in Prophecy  |pages= 10–28  |year=1956  |url= http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.org/Books%20&%20Booklets/1975%20in%20Prophecy%20(1956).pdf  |format=PDF}}</ref> Overall he thought that [[World War III]] and Christ's glorious return were at the doorstep and that world peace and utopia would follow. Armstrong believed that God had exciting plans for mankind that would see the end of such wars—though the message went far beyond an earthly utopia.<ref>  {{cite book|last= Armstrong  |first= Herbert W.  |title= The Incredible Human Potential  |pages= 29, 24–29, Headings "Incredible Human Potential Revealed", "Outer Space-Planets Now Dead"  |url=  }}</ref>  Several books and booklets focused on the key events that would signal the imminence of Christ's return, and taught of a specific end-time prophecy to be fulfilled, manifested in the form of European peacekeeping forces surrounding Jerusalem, at which time God's Church would be taken to a place of protection, or "place of safety" — possibly [[Petra]] in [[Jordan]].<ref name="Tkach12">Tkach (1997), chapter 12</ref> World War III was predicted to be triggered by a "[[United States of Europe]]" led by [[Germany]] which would destroy both the [[United States of America]] and the [[United Kingdom]].<ref>  {{cite book  |first= Herbert, W  |last= Armstrong  |title= 1975 in Prophecy  |publisher= Radio Church of God  |location = Pasadena, CA  |pages= 4–10  |year=1956 /1975%20in%20Prophecy%20(1956).pdf  |format=PDF}}</ref> From the place of safety they would continue the work and prepare to help [[Christ]] establish [[Utopia]] upon His return.  In 1952 Armstrong published ''Does God Heal Today?'' which provided the details on his doctrine on healing and his ban on doctors. Among his tenets were that only God heals and that medical science is of pagan origin and is ineffective. He believed that most illnesses were caused by faulty diet and that doctors should prescribe proper diet rather than medicine. He taught that members are not to go to doctors for healing but must trust in divine healing alone.<ref>  {{cite book  |first= Herbert, W  |last= Armstrong  |title= Does God Heal Today?  |publisher= Radio Church of God  |location = Pasadena, CA  |year=1952  }}</ref> This was his teaching despite his father's death in 1933 after 'an all-night vigil of prayer.'<ref>Armstrong, (1967),[http://www.cgca.net/pabco/v1c28.htm Ch. 28].</ref> This teaching has been the cause of much controversy as individuals influenced by such teachings came to die.<ref>John Trechak, '[http://members.tripod.com/gavinru/families.htm Modern Moloch-Human Sacrifice in the Armstrong Church]', Ambassador Report, 1977.</ref>  The book ''The United States and Britain in Prophecy'' was published in 1954. It became the most well known and requested church publication, with over six million copies distributed.<ref>Flurry (2006), pg. 3</ref> In this book, Armstrong makes the claim that the peoples of the United States, the [[British Commonwealth]] nations, and the nations of Northwestern Europe are descendants of the [[Ten Lost Tribes]] of Israel.<ref>{{cite book  |last= Armstrong  |first= Herbert W.  |title= Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?  |publisher= The Worldwide Church of God  |location = Pasadena, CA  |pages= 44  |year=1976  |url=  }}</ref> This belief, called [[British Israelism]], formed the central basis of the theology of the Worldwide Church of God.<ref>Tkach (1997), [http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/truth/trans9.htm chapter 9].</ref>  [[Franz Josef Strauss]], a major politician in post WWII Germany, became the target of the broadcasting and publishing media blitz that Armstrong unleashed upon Europe through the daily offshore [[pirate radio]] station broadcasts by his son [[Garner Ted Armstrong]], [[The Plain Truth]] and the [[Ambassador College]] campus at [[Bricket Wood]] in [[Hertfordshire]], England. Strauss was portrayed as being the coming [[Führer]] who would lead a United States of Europe into a prophetic and victorious future World War III against the US and UK at some time between 1972 and 1975. In 1971, Strauss played along with the prophetic interest shown in him as Herbert W. Armstrong recalled in a 1983 letter: "I entertained him at dinner in my home in Pasadena, and he spoke to the faculty and students of Ambassador College. I have maintained contact with him."<ref>http://www.aci.net/Kalliste/Pasadena\_memories.htm</ref> Strauss also appeared in an interview on [[The World Tomorrow (1934)|The World Tomorrow]] television program.  The volume of literature requests for material written by Armstrong continued to grow during the 1960s and 70s, and the literature was translated into several languages and distributed to a worldwide audience. They were distributed for free "as a public service." ''The Plain Truth'' magazine continued to be published and circulated, eventually reaching a monthly press run of eight million.  On April 15, 1967, Armstrong's wife, Loma, died; three and a half months before their 50th anniversary. Before she died he sent a co-worker letter that has often been criticized for its harsh tone to 'failing' members and calls for more money.<ref>[http://www.exitsupportnetwork.com/artcls/bowel.htm Mr. Armstrong, co-worker letter, March 2, 1967]</ref>  ==Worldwide Church of God==  {{main|Worldwide Church of God}}  On January 5, 1968, the Radio Church of God was renamed the Worldwide Church of God.<ref>[http://www.hwarmstrong.com/history-1968-amendment-name-wcg.htm 1968 Certificate Of Amendment Of Articles Of Incorporation Of Radio Church Of God]</ref> Shortly before, the church began to broadcast a television version of ''The World Tomorrow''.<ref name="ET238" /> The program would eventually expand to 382 US television stations, and 36 television outlets internationally, dwarfing televangelists [[Jerry Falwell]], [[Jimmy Swaggart]], [[Oral Roberts]], and [[Jim Bakker]].<ref>Flurry (2006), pg 2</ref> By this time, [[Garner Ted Armstrong]], the son of Herbert W. Armstrong, was the voice and face of the program. It was speculated that with his charisma and personality, he was the logical successor to Armstrong, but doctrinal disagreements and widespread reports of extramarital sex led to his suspension in 1972. "<ref name="Tkach12" /><ref>  {{cite news  |url= http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/latimes/access/58466467.html?FMT=ABS&type=current  |accessdate= 2008-08-13  |title= Armstrong, 93, Founder of the Worldwide Church, Dies  |last= Chandler  |first= Russell  |date=January 17, 1986  |pages= Section 1, Page 3  |work= Home edition  |publisher= Los Angeles Times  }}</ref> After initially changing his behavior he returned, but these issues resurfaced, coupled with his challenging his father's authority as Pastor General, resulting in him being permanently "disfellowshipped" (the church's term for [[excommunication]]) in 1978.<ref name="EWAuthor">  Nickels (1996), Heading "About the Author" [http://www.giveshare.org/library/hwa/index.html Heading "About the Author"]  </ref>  ===Ambassador International Cultural Foundation===  With the assistance of church accountant and adviser, [[Stanley Rader]], Armstrong created the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation in 1975. The foundation was funded by the church.<ref name="Tkach12" /> The foundation's efforts reached into several continents, providing staffing and funds to fight illiteracy, create schools for the disabled, set up mobile schools, and provide funding and staffing for several archaeological digs of biblically significant sites.<ref name="Ruins25">Flurry (2006), pg. 25</ref> These humanitarian projects led to Armstrong receiving a series of invitations to meet with prominent world heads of state and internationally recognized as Ambassador for World Peace. The list included (among others) [[Margaret Thatcher]], Emperor [[Hirohito]] of [[Japan]], King [[Hussein of Jordan]], and [[Indira Gandhi]].<ref name="Ruins25" /><ref>Rader (1980), inset photographs after pg 128</ref>  ====Honors====  Armstrong was awarded the [[Order of the Sacred Treasure]] by the Japanese government.<ref>[http://www.editions-harmattan.fr/index.asp?navig=catalogue&obj=article&no=8245 L'Harmattan web site( in French)]</ref>  Most significant contribution toward world peace. [King Albert I Watch] presented by His Majesty Leopold III of Belgium (1970).<ref>[AMBASSADOR FOUNDATION Presents Herbert W. Armstrong - Ambassador for World Peace pg. 4 (1983)</ref>  Presidential Merit Medal [presented by President Marcos in the Manila Presidential Palace in 1983].  <ref>[AMBASSADOR FOUNDATION Presents Herbert W. Armstrong - Ambassador for World Peace pg. 20 (1983)</ref>  Commander of Our Most Noble Order of the Crown of Thailand.  <ref>[AMBASSADOR FOUNDATION Presents Herbert W. Armstrong - Ambassador for World Peace pgs. 30 and 31 (1983)</ref>  ==Final years==  In 1977 Armstrong, then in his 80s, married Ramona Martin, then 38, a long-time member and church secretary who had a 15-year old son from a previous marriage.<ref>{{cite journal  | last =  | first =  | authorlink =  | coauthors =  | title=Bride in Work 15 years  | journal=The Worldwide News  | volume = V  | issue = 9  | pages = 1  | date= 25 April 1977  | url= http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.org/Worldwide%20News/WWN%201977%20(Prelim%20No%2009)%20Apr%2025.pdf  | doi =  | id =  | accessdate = 2007-08-21  |format=PDF}}</ref> The controversial marriage would last for only a few years. The Armstrongs separated in 1982 with Herbert Armstrong returning to live in Pasadena full-time, and the marriage finally ended in divorce in 1984.<ref>[http://www.hwarmstrong.com/ar/ John Trechak, Ambassador Report #20,#21,#24,#25,#26,#27,#28]</ref> During pre-trial proceedings in the divorce case, Armstrong's lawyers had sought to limit evidence of a sexual nature but his wife's attorneys said "it was crucial since the church leader alleged Mrs. Armstrong had breached an agreement of love and fidelity." <ref>[http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=7pEsAAAAIBAJ&sjid=YvsDAAAAIBAJ&dq=worldwide-church-of-god%20armstrong%20incest&pg=5909%2C4889548 Lakeland Ledger, May 12, 1984]</ref>  In his latter years, Armstrong stated that he did not know whether or not Christ would return in his lifetime but did know, based on the sequence of events in the Bible, that the Lord's return was approaching. He had long written of his belief that the primary sign to look for would be some sort of dissolving of the Eastern Bloc alliance under [[Soviet]] control, followed by those nations' subsequent incorporation into an eastern leg of a United States of Europe.<ref name="1975in" /> In August 1985, Armstrong's final work, ''Mystery of the Ages'', was published. He wrote that "time may prove this to be the most important book written in almost 1,900 years" <ref>Armstrong, Herbert. "Mystery of the Ages", 1985, p. xii</ref>- and called it a "synopsis of the Bible in the most plain and understandable language." It was more or less a compendium of theological concepts, as articulated by Armstrong, which included the notion that God deliberately coded the bible "so that it would not be understood until our modern time" <ref>Armstrong, Herbert. "Mystery of the Ages", 1985. p. 6</ref>-.  In September 1985, with his failing health widely known, Armstrong delivered his final sermon on the [[Rosh hashanah|Feast of Trumpets]] in the Ambassador Auditorium. He spent his final days confined at his home on the college campus in Pasadena, California, on South Orange Grove Boulevard.  Almost until his final days, there was uncertainty about who would succeed Armstrong in the event of his death. The church's Advisory Council of Elders, acting on a clause in church by-laws added in 1981, was to select a successor after his death,<ref>Flurry (2006), pg 34</ref> yet Armstrong reportedly worried about the ramifications if certain individuals, such as his son Garner Ted or evangelist Roderick Meredith were selected.<ref name=Flurry35>Flurry (2006), pg 35</ref><ref>Tkach(1997), Chapter 6</ref> Finally, Armstrong opted to select the next Pastor General personally.<ref name=Flurry35 /> Armstrong told the Church's Advisory Council of Elders of his decision to appoint evangelist-rank minister Joseph W. Tkach on January 7, 1986.<ref>Flurry (2006), pg. 36</ref> Tkach had worked closely with former church executive Stanley R. Rader prior to Rader's retirement from active service with the Church, and had been ordained to the ministerial rank of evangelist along with Rader and Ellis LaRavia in 1979.  Only nine days after naming Tkach as his successor, Armstrong died shortly before 6:00 a.m. on January 16, 1986, at the age of 93.<ref>Flurry (2006), pg. 16</ref> Approximately 4,000 people attended his funeral, including a number of World political figures. He was buried in [[Altadena, California|Altadena]]'s Mountain View Cemetery between Loma and his mother, Eva Wright Armstrong. Long-time church member and one of the first graduates of Ambassador College, Evangelist Herman L. Hoeh officiated at the graveside service and Tkach gave the closing prayer.  ==Theology and teachings==  {{main|Armstrongism}}  \* Worldwide Church of God (WCG) members believed that Herbert W. Armstrong was Christ's first apostle since the first century. Armstrong taught that God only works through "one man at a time" and that he was God's selected representative on earth for his time.  \* Armstrong taught a form of [[seventh-day Sabbath|Sabbatarianism]], explaining that; by creating the Sabbath (on the seventh day of creation, through resting - not work) God "HALLOWED the seventh-day of every week (Ex. 20:11)" and therefore made "future TIME holy!" The Sabbath day of rest is thus commanded for all mankind and should be kept holy from Friday sunset to sunset on Saturday <ref>Armstrong, Herbert W. ''Which Day Is The Christian Sabbath?'', Chapter 2</ref> The [[Worldwide Church of God]] conducted its worship Services during that period, accordingly, on Saturdays. Armstrong further explained that Christ is "Lord of the Sabbath" (Mt. 12:8) for it is He who 'made' it for mankind, thus it is a "blessing.. to be ENJOYED, to spiritually REFRESH, in blessed fellowship and communion with CHRIST!" <ref>Armstrong, Herbert. "Which Day Is The Christian Sabbath?", Chapter 8</ref>- He believed that the observance of Sunday as the "Lord's Day" was a papal and/or satanic corruption introduced without authority from God or the Bible.<ref>Herbert W. Armstrong, ''Where Is The True Church?'' 1984, p.24</ref>  \* Armstrong adhered to a form of [[British Israelism]] which stated that the British, American and many European peoples were descended from the so-called [[Ten Lost Tribes]] of Israel, using this belief to state that biblical references to [[Israel]], [[Jacob]], etc., were in fact prophecies relating to the modern day, with literal application to the USA, Britain, and the British Commonwealth. In the course of this teaching, he also accepted the concept of an [[Assyria and Germany in Anglo-Israelism|Assyrian-German connection]] and often made identifications of other nations in "Bible prophecy", such as Russia and China.<ref>''Plain Truth'' magazine, February 1985</ref>  \* As a result of this, Armstrong believed that a unified Europe (identified by him as a "revived Roman Empire" and as the "beast" of Revelation 13) would oppose Jesus at his [[second coming]] in the battle of [[Armageddon]]. Furthermore, he stated repeatedly that this unified Europe would have previously defeated and enslaved the American and British peoples.<ref>Herbert Armstrong, ''The United States And British Commonwealth In Prophecy'' (1972), p.217</ref> He often pointed to the European "Common Market"<ref>Herbert Armstrong, ''Plain Truth'' magazine, June 1967, p. 2</ref> or [[European Community]] as its precursor, but tended to refer to it as "a kind of United States of Europe." Splinter groups (previously members of the Worldwide Church of God) today usually identify the current [[European Union]] as the unified Europe Armstrong devoted much writing to.  \* Armstrong taught that God's purpose in creating mankind was to "reproduce Himself", and that the process of being "born again" was not instantaneous—that the believer (as a result of [[baptism]] by immersion) was only "begotten" until reborn as a spirit being at the return of Jesus.<ref>Bob Larson, ''Larson's New Book of Cults'', p. 470</ref> These "begotten" believers were referred to by him as the "firstfruits" of a divine harvest and were perceived as the "true Christians" of the current age. The (re)birth of the "begotten" was referred to as the "first [[resurrection]]." As Christ is "the FIRST born from the dead" (Col. 1:18), Armstrong concluded that many other "sons" (begotten by God's Spirit) would also be brought "to glory" (Heb. 2:10) at that "first resurrection" (Rev. 20:5). Those 'begotten' will then be instantaneously 'born anew' (John 3:3) but not again, "a second time", as "perishable" flesh and blood mortals (1 Cor. 15:53) but as "imperishable", immortal Spirit 'God' beings. He concluded that; "Until the resurrection, therefore, we cannot see, enter into or inherit the Kingdom of God. WE CANNOT BE BORN AGAIN UNTIL THE RESURRECTION!" <ref>Armstrong, Herbert. "Just What Do You Mean Born Again?" circa 1972</ref>-  \* Armstrong continually preached that Jesus Christ would return to earth to "rescue" humanity from the brink of self-annihilation, resulting in the establishment of "God's government" during a 1,000 year 'Millennium' and utopia under the rulership of Christ and his "first fruits", constituting of Armstrong's believers converted into "spirit beings" at the "first resurrection". During this period of time, those surviving the "great tribulation" would be given the chance to voluntarily accept "God's way of life." <ref>Herbert Armstrong, Mystery of the Ages, p. 344-345</ref> Christ is in heaven "until" the "times of restitution" (Acts 3:19-21) when God's government, world peace and utopian conditions shall be restored to this earth.<ref name="ArmstrongHerbert">Armstrong, Herbert. "Mystery of the Ages". Chapter 7 "Mystery of the Kingdom of God"</ref>-  \* Armstrong did not accept the concept of eternal judgment in this life. He believed that those who had died as unbelievers prior to the return of Christ existed in a state of "unconsciousness" (see [[Soul sleep]]) until a second resurrection, during which they would be offered the choice to submit to God's government.<ref>Herbert Armstrong, Mystery of the Ages, p.352</ref> As part of this tiered resurrection, the truly "wicked" who would not accept God's government and laws in any form would be judged guilty of rebellion against God and annihilated (cease to exist). This included "first fruits" that had previously rejected their "calling", therefore committing the "unpardonable sin", who would be resurrected in a third resurrection to face their judgment and "eternal death". Armstrong identified this as the "second death" mentioned in the book of [[Revelation]].<ref>p. 354</ref> This was considered the fate of all "first fruits" (baptized members) that "leave the church" - i.e. depart from Armstrong's teachings, causing members some reluctance to question church authority and teachings at risk of being considered rebellious or being excommunicated and effectively condemned to eternal death at the third resurrection.  \* In Armstrong's view, the [[scourging]] of [[Jesus]] prior to [[crucifixion]] "paid the penalty" for physical disease and sickness, allowing the option of divine healing.<ref>Herbert Armstrong, ''The Plain Truth About Healing'', p.33</ref> The crucifixion itself was considered to be the act which enabled God to allow humanity into the three-tiered resurrection scheme, as Jesus had paid the initial death penalty for breaking the Law.  \* Armstrong did not accept [[Trinitarianism]], believing it to be a doctrine of satanic authorship as part of a "counterfeit Christianity" (which he identified as the [[Roman Catholic Church]]). He believed that the [[Holy Spirit]] was part of God's essence, a power from him that suffused all creation and through which God was omnipresent and able to act at all places and at all times.  \* Because of his teachings identifying both the primacy of Sabbath and the "identity of modern Israel", Armstrong would come to accept that the Mosaic Law had not been "done away." Although he excluded certain segments he regarded as "already fulfilled", "ceremonial" or otherwise unfit, he taught adherence to the Levitical food regulations and the observance of the "Holy Days" of the Mosaic Law.<ref>Herbert W. Armstrong, ''Pagan Holidays - Or God's Holy Days - Which'', p.26</ref> The Worldwide Church of God taught seven 'Festivals of God' (Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles, Last Great Day) and regarded such to be 'worship' days including [[Sukkot]] or "Feast of Tabernacles." The latter was practiced by setting up church "conventions" in various cities worldwide to which their various congregations had to attend, leaving homes and booking into hotel-type accommodation. For many, this eight-day festival was a 'highlight' of the year.  \* As part of a larger paradigm in which common observances were often discarded, Armstrong rejected traditional holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Halloween and the celebration of birthdays, stating that all of these were of pagan origin. A similar principle extended also to the display of crosses and depictions of Jesus.  \* Armstrong placed much emphasis on faith in God for healing and taught against the medical practice, except in the case of "repair" (setting of broken bones, cleansing of wounds, etc.).<ref>Chambers, p.32</ref>. Medical intervention was consequently frowned-upon, there were consequently numerous controversial incidents involving death of members or member's children due to lack of medical attention. Armstrong spoke highly of principles of good diet (outside of the Levitical food regulations) and proper living, and members of the Worldwide Church of God as a result tended to gravitate towards whole grains, home-grown vegetables etc., although such acts were not an express tenet of faith.  \* Armstrong taught against [[fornication]], [[masturbation]], [[adultery]], [[homosexuality]] and other practices he viewed as aberrations, authoring the book ''God Speaks Out On The 'New Morality'' (later retitled [[The Missing Dimension in Sex]]) on the subject. As a result of this [[fundamentalist]] view on morality, he also taught against the use of cosmetics, long hair on men, and other matters of personal appearance.  \* Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God viewed Revelation 2, which contains seven messages to seven churches in Asia Minor at the time of its writing, to actually be descriptive of seven "church eras" in chronological order. He stated that the "Sardis" church era ended with his severance from the [[Church of God (Seventh-Day)]] and that the "Philadelphia" era officially began in October 1933. "Laodicea" would follow wherein lukewarmness would be the "dominant Church attitude at the end." His great concern was that they, "undoubtedly of the Philadelphia era", were "in serious danger of BECOMING also the Laodicean era." <ref>Armstrong, Herbert. "Good News magazine, August 1979. "Personal" p. 27</ref>- He apparently modified such era teaching from an earlier version preached by a previous Church of God, Seventh Day minister, [[G. G. Rupert]].<ref>[http://www.hwarmstrong.com/daughter-of-bablylon-13.htm Bruce Renehan, ''Daughter of Babylon'', Ch 13]</ref> This concept has assumed greater importance among current WCG splinter groups, as those that practice Armstrong's teachings tend to view the modern Worldwide Church of God (and sometimes other splinter groups) as "Laodicean" or entirely Protestant.<ref>Gerald Flurry, ''Malachi's Message'', p. 6, 1999</ref>  \* Armstrong instituted a three-tiered annual [[tithe|tithing]] process for his followers. The first tithe (10% of member's gross household income) went to the Worldwide Church of God organization, which viewed itself as the "Melchizedek priesthood" with Jesus Christ as the High Priest with the rank of Melchizedek, which priesthood superseded the Levitical priesthood, and thereby entitled to support by tithes. The second tithe (a second 10% of member's gross household income) was saved by members and used as individual support during the "Feast of Tabernacles." The third tithe (a third 10% of members gross household income), which was paid every three years per member, was used to support widows and other members in need.<ref>Chambers, p.20</ref> The church did not overtly solicit funds from outside but did accept donations from "co-workers" and commonly sent "co-worker" letters that often called for money to be sent.<ref>[http://www.quango.net/ekklesia/coworker.html Herbert W Armstrong Misc. Articles and Co-Worker Letters 1934-1986]</ref>  == Criticism and controversy ==  {{Criticism section|date=September 2011}}  Herbert Armstrong’s teachings and the church he created have been the subject of much criticism and controversy.<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.hwarmstrong.com/exit.htm|title=The Painful Truth: Books Written about Herbert W. Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God:|accessdate=2009-01-17}}</ref> Armstrong's theology and teachings are defended by his followers,<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.raisingtheruins.com/index.php|title=Raising the Ruins; The fight to revive the legacy of Herbert W. Armstrong|last=Flurry|first=Stephen|accessdate=2009-01-18}}</ref> but face criticism from ex-followers<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.hwarmstrong.com/|title=The Painful Truth: A collection of Facts, Opinions and Comments from survivors of Herbert W. Armstrong, Garner Ted Armstrong, The Worldwide Church of God and its Daughters|accessdate=2009-01-18}}</ref><ref name="exitsupportnetwork.com">{{cite web|url=http://www.exitsupportnetwork.com/|title=Exit and Support Network: Aiding those spiritually abused by Worldwide Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God and all affiliated high demand offshoots|accessdate=2009-01-18}}</ref> and the greater Christian community.<ref name="Martin">{{cite book|last=Martin|first=Walter|title=The Kingdom of the Cults|publisher=Bethany House Publishers|url=http://www.wcg.org/WN/98/98Apr/cult.htm}}</ref> Common points of criticism and controversy include:  === Theological ===  \*'''Salvation:''' Armstrong believed that repentance, faith and the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit enables true and full obedience to God's law, but stressed that keeping God's law (and repentance upon having sinned) is a requirement for salvation.<ref>{{cite book|last=Armstrong|first=Herbert|title=What do you mean... Salvation?|publisher=Ambassador College Press|location=Pasadena, California|year=1961|url=http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.org/Books%20&%20Booklets/What%20Do%20You%20Mean%20-%20Salvation%20(Prelim%201973).pdf}}</ref><ref>{{cite book|last=Armstrong|first=Herbert|title=All About Water Baptism|publisher=Ambassador College Press|location=Pasadena, California|year=1948|edition=1972|url=http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.org/Books%20&%20Booklets/All%20About%20Water%20Baptism%20(Prelim%201972).pdf}}</ref> Critics state that Armstrong taught salvation as being legalistic obedience to God's law, including such laws as Sabbath keeping, dietary laws, and other laws kept by Ancient Israelites but not typically kept by 'mainstream' Christian denominations.<ref name="Martin"/><ref>{{citation|url=http://www.watchman.org/cults/galatian.htm|title=Galatia Revisited: Salvation under the Government and the Law|last=Arnn|first=Phillip|work=Watchman Expositor|volume=6|year=1989|publisher=[[Watchman Fellowship|Watchman Fellowship ministry]]|accessdate=2012-03-28}}</ref>  \*'''The Covenants:''' Armstrong taught that the [[New Covenant]] is an 'amplification' of the [[Old Covenant]], and that certain laws (excluding temple and unenforceable ancient civil laws) from the Old Covenant are still in effect for Christians. This included laws such as literal Sabbath keeping, 'Clean and Unclean' meats and Holy Day observances.<ref>{{cite book|others=United Church of God|title=The New Covenant: Does it Abolish God's Law|year=2007|pages=94, 112, 118, 138, 142, 144, 148|url=http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/NC/NC.pdf}}</ref> He believed that the New Covenant was yet future, to be finalized as a marriage covenant between Christ and the Church and that Christians currently existed 'between' the two Covenants.<ref>{{cite journal|last=Armstrong|first=Herbert|title=The Plain Truth about the Covenants|journal=The Good News|issue=December 18, 1978|pages=1, 8.|url=http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.org/Good%20News%201970s/Good%20News%201978%20(Prelim%20No%2025)%20Dec%2018.pdf}}</ref> Critics say that Armstrong confused the two Covenants and selectively picked which aspects of the two Covenants to keep.<ref>{{cite book|last=Tkach|first=Joseph|title=Transformed by Truth|chapter=7: What we Believed: How should we handle the Old Covenant?|url=http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/truth/trans7.htm}}</ref>  \*'''Gospel of the Kingdom:''' Armstrong taught that a reason for Jesus Christ's presence on earth was to proclaim the Gospel message of a literal Kingdom of God that will be established on earth at Christ's 'second coming', and that the message of the Kingdom should be the focus of the gospel rather than the person of Christ.<ref>{{cite book|last=Armstrong|first=Herbert|title=What is the True Gospel|publisher=Ambassador College|location=Pasadena, California|year=1955|edition=1972|url=http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.org/Books%20&%20Booklets/What%20is%20the%20True%20Gospel%20(Prelim%201972).pdf}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/GK/GK.pdf|title=The Gospel of the Kingdom|coauthors=The United Church of God.|accessdate=2009-01-18}}</ref> Critics indicate that this represents a diminishment of the person and importance of Christ, through whom salvation is attained, and that this represents a flawed understanding about the nature of the Kingdom.<ref>{{cite book|last=Martin|first=Walter|title=The Kingdom of the Cults|publisher=Bethany House Publishers|url=http://www.amazon.com/dp/0764228218/bethanyhousep-20}}</ref> Armstrong taught that - the gospel "of" Christ - began to change to - a gospel "about" Christ - around twenty to thirty years after the founding of the Church in 31 A.D. He made the extraordinary claim that the gospel Christ brought (of the Kingdom) had "not been proclaimed to the world" for about 1,900 years "until the first week in 1953" when he began preaching it again on Radio Luxembourg.<ref name="ArmstrongHerbert" />-  \* '''Prophetic predictions:''' Proponents believe that Herbert Armstrong was inspired by God and had the gift to understand prophecy. They believe that many of his predictions were inspired.<ref>{{cite web|url=http://thetrumpet.com/pdf/PTSample.pdf|title=The Philadelphia Trumpet: He Was Right|accessdate=2009-01-17}}</ref> Armstrong was considered gifted with spiritual understanding also and that, through him, God was revealing the true meaning of parts of the Bible which, till his time, had remained locked or sealed (so could not be correctly understood). That desire for understanding had been with Armstrong since he was a small boy, "always wanting to know 'why?' or 'how?' That obsession for understanding was to have a great influence on founding the Plain Truth magazine and Ambassador College in later years." <ref>Armstrong, Herbert W. "Autobiography of Herbert Armstrong." Chapter 1</ref>- According to critics, Armstrong's predictions were rife with speculation and remain mostly unfulfilled.<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.hwarmstrong.com/ar/Prophecies.html|title=The Painful Truth: Ambassador Report: A Treasury of Famous Prophecies|accessdate=2009-01-17}}</ref>  \* '''[[British Israelism]]:''' Armstrong taught a form of British Israelism, which is the belief that those of Western European descent, notably England (Ephraim) and the United States (Manasseh), are direct descendants of the ancient northern Kingdom of Israel. This theory is inconsistent with the findings of modern research on the genetic history of Jews.<ref>[http://evolutsioon.ut.ee/publications/Shen2004.pdf] Shen, P. et al.: "Reconstruction of Patrilineages and Matrilineages of Samaritans and Other Israeli Populations From Y-Chromosome and Mitochondrial DNA Sequence Variation"</ref><ref>[http://bioanthropology.huji.ac.il/pdf/Nebel\_2001b.pdf] Nebel, A. et al.: "The Y Chromosome Pool of Jews as Part of the Genetic Landscape of the Middle East"</ref><ref>[http://www.pnas.org/content/97/12/6769.full.pdf] Hammer, M. et al.: "Jewish and Middle Eastern non-Jewish populations share a common pool of Y-chromosome biallelic haplotypes."</ref><ref name="New York Times">{{cite journal| title=Y Chromosome Bears Witness to Story of the Jewish Diaspora | journal=New York Times | month=May 9 | year=2000 | url=http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D02E0D71338F93AA35756C0A9669C8B63 | work=The New York Times | first=Nicholas | last=Wade | accessdate=2010-05-04}}</ref> It is [[British Israelism#Criticism|commonly criticized]] for poor standards of research,<ref>{{cite book|last=Parfitt|first=Tudor|title=The Lost Tribes of Israel: The History of a Myth|publisher=Phoenix|year=2003|pages=61}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.wcg.org/lit/prophecy/anglo/usbrit1.htm|title=The United States and Britain in Prophecy: An Analysis of the Biblical Evidence|last=Orr|first=Ralph|accessdate=2009-02-03}}</ref> and general inconsistency with archeological, anthropological and linguistic research.<ref>(Greer, 2004. p57-60){{cite book|last=Greer|first=Nick|title=The British-Israel Myth|year=2004|pages=55}}</ref><ref>{{cite book|last=Parfitt|first=Tudor|title=The Lost Tribes of Israel: The History of a Myth|publisher=Phoenix|year=2003|pages=62}}</ref><ref>{{cite book|last=Lounsbury|first=T|title=History of the English Language|year=1906|pages=1, 12–13}}</ref><ref>{{cite book|last=Greer|first=Nick|title=The British-Israel Myth|year=2004|pages=74, 83–84}}</ref>  === Personality, personal conduct, and governance ===  <ref>{{cite web|url=http://armstrongsurvivor.com/|title=I survived Armstrongism: Reminisces and Ruminations on Armstrong and WCG|accessdate=2009-01-18}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.hwarmstrong.com/index.htm|title=The Painful Truth: A collection of Facts, Opinions and Comments from Survivors of Hebert W. Armstrong, Garner Ted Armstrong, The Worldwide Church of God and its Daughters|accessdate=2009-01-18}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://livingarmstrongism.blogspot.com/2009/02/incest.html|title=Living Armstrongism: Resources on HWA's Incest|accessdate=2009-02-07}}</ref> Armstrong was often criticized for having lived in extravagant wealth in comparison to church members who paid three tithes and lived in relative poverty as a result. Personal luxuries enjoyed by Armstrong included a personal jet, the finest clothing, furniture and other conveniences.<ref>{{cite book|last=Hopkins|first=Joseph|title=The Armstrong Empire: A Look at the Worldwide Church of God Empire|pages=183}}</ref><ref>{{cite book|last=McNair|first=Marion|title=Armstrongism: Religion or Rip-Off? : An Expose of the Armstrong Modus Operandi.|chapter=1 & 4}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.hwarmstrong.com/stanley-rader-interview.htm|title=Stanley Rader with Mike Wallace|accessdate=2009-02-07}}</ref>  === Teachings inferred from the Bible ===  Armstrong taught the observance of principles that he believed could be inferred from biblical intent.<ref name="Armstrong 1, 4–5">{{cite journal|last=Armstrong|first=Herbert|date=November 16, 1981|title=How subtly Satan used MAKEUP to start the Church off the track|journal=The Worldwide News|pages=1, 4–5|url=http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/truth/trans8.htm}}</ref> Examples of these teachings include:  \* Women were not allowed to wear makeup because it was believed that this was not pleasing to God. Armstrong stated:''"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! How cleverly, without our suspecting it, did Satan influence leading ministers to derail the Church in many ways!...Now JESUS CHRIST, through His chosen apostle, is going to RULE on this question once and for all!...How did it get into our mid-and-latter 20th century society? FROM PROSTITUTES!...Women do not use makeup to PLEASE GOD today – for I can tell you ON HIS AUTHORITY it is NOT pleasing to HIM!"''<ref name="Armstrong 1, 4–5"/>  \* The use of medicine and doctors was discouraged because members were expected to place their faith in God for healing.<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.org/Books%20&%20Booklets/Plain%20Truth%20About%20Healing%20(Prelim%201979).pdf|title=The Plain Truth About Healing|last=Armstrong|first=Herbert|accessdate=2009-01-17}}</ref> Armstrong stated: ''"Here’s God’s instruction to YOU, today, if you are ill. If we are to live by every Word of God, we should obey this Scripture. God does not say call your family physician...He does not say, call the doctors and let them give medicines and drugs, and God will cause the medicines and drugs and dope to cure you.... Instead God says call GOD’S MINISTERS. And let them PRAY, anointing with oil (the type and symbol of the Holy Spirit). Then GOD PROMISES He will HEAL YOU!"''<ref>{{cite book|last=Armstrong|first=Herbert|title=Does God Heal Today?|publisher=Radio Church of God|location=Pasadena, California|year=1952|url=http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/truth/trans8.htm}}</ref> Various members suffered discomfort and even death due to reluctance to resort to medical help, yet Armstrong made use of doctors and medicine later in his life.<ref>{{cite book|last=Tkach|first=Joseph|title=Transformed by Truth|chapter=8|url=http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/truth/trans8.htm}}</ref>  \* Divorce was strongly discouraged. At times this was strictly enforced by requiring members that had previously divorced and remarried to divorce their new spouses so that they were not "living in adultery".<ref name="Armstrong 8-9">{{cite web|url=http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.org/Books%20&%20Booklets/Divorce%20and%20Remarriage%20(1953).pdf|title=Divorce and Remarriage|last=Armstrong|first=Herbert|pages=8–9|accessdate=2009-01-17}}</ref> Armstrong acknowledged that this belief caused significant hardship for many members but argued that this hardship was the consequent result of the earlier 'sin of divorce'.<ref name="Armstrong 8-9"/> This policy was changed by Armstrong at a later time. Interracial marriage was also discouraged as Armstrong emphasized requirements for Ancient Israelites (who, according to [[British Israelism]], became Western Europeans) to remain racially and religiously separate from other nations.<ref>{{cite book|last=Armstrong|first=Herbert|title=Mystery of the Ages|publisher=Dodd, Mead and Company|location=New York|year=1985|pages=149, 151, 173}}</ref>  \* As the Bible teaches that "the body is the temple of God's Spirit," Armstrong believed that it should therefore be kept in good health and presented in a manner glorifying to Christ. Members were consequently expected to conform to strict dress codes.<ref>{{cite book|last=Tkach|first=Joseph|title=Transformed by Truth|chapter=7: What we Believed: A stroll through past headlines|url=http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/truth/trans7.htm}}</ref><ref>{{cite journal|last=Armstrong|first=Herbert|title=HOW YOU DRESS FOR CHURCH -- Could it keep you out of the KINGDOM?|journal=The Worldwide News|publisher=Worldwide Church of God|location=Pasadena, California|issue=May 21st, 1979|pages=1.|url=http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.org/Worldwide%20News/WWN%201979%20(Prelim%20No%2010)%20May%2021.pdf}}</ref> Long hair and piercings were not allowed for men, whereas makeup and short hair were frowned upon for women. Members were expected to dress conservatively and modestly, and required to do so for church. Smoking was considered to be a spiritual sin<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.thetrumpet.com/index.php?q=4314.3672.0.0|title=Is Smoking Sin?|last=Leap|first=Dennis|accessdate=2009-01-18}}</ref> and was grounds for a minister to refuse baptism. Critics contend that these requirements base salvation on the 'teachings of men' rather than the grace of God or the instructions of the Bible.<ref name="Tkach">{{cite book|last=Tkach|first=Joseph|title=Transformed by Truth|chapter=7: What we Believed: What is the Church?|url=http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/truth/trans7.htm}}</ref>  \* Armstrong concluded that a third resurrection would take place, in which the incorrigibly wicked and those who had been converted (baptized members of WCG) but had 'fallen away' (left WCG) and who also had not repented in the "Great Tribulation" would be resurrected and sentenced to eternal death in the 'lake of fire.' Critics reject this interpretation.<ref>{{cite book|last=Tkach|first=Joseph|title=Transformed by Truth|chapter=7: What we Believed: What does the future hold?|url=http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/truth/trans7.htm}}</ref>  ==Bibliography==  \* Does God Exist  \* Human Nature - What Is It  \* Just What Do You Mean Born Again  \* Mystery of the Ages  \* Pagan Holidays—or God’s Holy Days—Which  \* Proof of the Bible  \* Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?  \* The Incredible Human Potential  \* The Missing Dimension in Sex  \* The Seven Laws of Success  \* The United States and Britain in Prophecy  \* The Wonderful World Tomorrow  \* What Is Faith  \* What Science Can’t Discover About the Human Mind  \* Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast  \* Why Marriage - Soon Obsolete?  \* Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong vol. 1  \* Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong vol. 2  ==See also==  \*[[Assyria-Germany connection]]  ==Notes==  {{Reflist|2}}  ==References==  \*{{cite book  |last= Armstrong  |first= Herbert W.  |title= Mystery of the Ages  |publisher= Dodd, Mead  |isbn= 978-0-396-08773-1  |year=1985  }}  \*{{cite book |last= Armstrong  |first= Herbert W.  |title= Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong Vol. 1  |publisher= Ambassador College Press  |year=1967  }}  \*{{cite book  |last= Boston  |first= Stephen W.  |title= The Essential Teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong  |publisher= Writers Club Press  |isbn= 978-0-595-21146-3  |year=2002  }}  \*{{cite book  |last= Flurry  |first= Stephen  |title= Raising the Ruins: The Fight to Revive the Legacy of Herbert W. Armstrong  |publisher = Philadelphia Church of God, Inc.  |date= October 30, 2006  |isbn= 978-0-9745507-1-8  }}  \*{{cite book  |last= Nickels  |first= Richard C. (editor)  |title= Early Writings of Herbert W. Armstrong:Public Domain Articles Written, 1928-1953 By Herbert W. Armstrong  |publisher= Giving & Sharing  |isbn= 978-1-887670-00-5  |year=1996  |url= http://www.giveshare.org/library/hwa/index.html  }}  \*{{cite book | last= Rader  |first= Stanley R.  |title= Against the Gates of Hell: The threat to religious freedom in America  |publisher= Everest House  |year= 1980  |isbn= 978-0-89696-108-1  }}  \*{{cite book  |last= Renehan  |first= Bruce  |title= The Daughter of Babylon, The True History of the Worldwide Church of God  |year=1993  |url=http://www.hwarmstrong.com/wwcg.htm  }}  \*{{cite book | last=Tkach Jr.  |first= Joseph  |title= Transformed by Truth  |url= http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/truth/  |accessdate= 2007-09-26  |publisher= Multnomah  |year= 1997  |isbn= 1-57673-181-2}}  \*Prophecies of Dystopic "Old World, New World" Transitions Told: The World Tomorrow radio broadcasts to the United Kingdom: 1965-1967; Eric Gilder and Mervyn Hagger. p.&nbsp;205-222. Univers Enciclopedic, Bucharest. ISBN 978-973-637-159-2.  ==Further reading and video resources==  ===Pro-Armstrong===  \*[http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.org ''Herbert W. Armstrong Searchable Library''] His writings before they were edited by the Philadelphia Church of God which now owns the copyrights to some of his works.  \*[http://www.hwacompendium.com Herbert W. Armstrong Compendium]  \*[http://www.theworldtomorrowbroadcast.com The World Tomorrow Broadcast]  ===Anti-Armstrong===  \*[http://www.wcg.org/lit/booklets/welcome/welcome8.htm About Our Founder, Worldwide Church of God]  \*[http://www.hwarmstrong.com''The Painful Truth. A collection of Facts, Opinions and Comments from survivors of Herbert W. Armstrong, Garner Ted Armstrong, The Worldwide Church of God and its Daughters.'']  \*{{cite book|author=Feazell, J. Michael|title=The liberation of the World Wide Church of God|publisher=Zondervan|location=Grand Rapids, Michigan, US|year=2003|isbn=0-310-23858-7}}  \*{{cite book|author=Morris, Jan | title=The Preachers|publisher=St. Martin's Press|location=New York|year=1973}}  {{s-start}}  {{succession box  |title= Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God  |before= —  |after= [[Joseph W. Tkach]]  |years= 1946–1986}}  {{s-end}}  {{Persondata  |NAME = Armstrong, Herbert W.  |ALTERNATIVE NAMES =  |SHORT DESCRIPTION = Evangelist  |DATE OF BIRTH = 1892-07-31  |PLACE OF BIRTH = Des Moines, Iowa, US  |DATE OF DEATH = 1986-01-16  |PLACE OF DEATH = Pasadena, California, US  }}  {{DEFAULTSORT:Armstrong, Herbert W.}}  [[Category:1892 births]]  [[Category:1986 deaths]]  [[Category:Apocalypticists]]  [[Category:Church of God (Armstrong)]]  [[Category:People from Des Moines, Iowa]]  [[Category:Churches of God Christians]]  [[Category:American Quakers]]  [[ilo:Herbert W. Armstrong]]  [[sv:Herbert W. Armstrong]]  [[tl:Herbert W. Armstrong]] |
| {{Wikify|date=February 2011}}  The '''United Church of God''', ''an International Association'' (UCG''IA'')<ref name="UCG Tucson">[http://tucson.ucg.org/ Website of the United Church of God], [[Tucson, Arizona]]. Accessed 12 August 2006</ref> is a religious denomination based in the United States with members in various countries around the world. It identifies itself as Christian but denies some central teachings of historic Christianity, such as the Trinity (although it accepts and teaches the full divinity and pre-existence of Jesus Christ, and rejects all forms of Arianism<ref name="">[http://www.ucg.org/booklet/god-trinity/ Is God a Trinity?]</ref>), and the supersession of Old Testament law such as keeping the seventh-day sabbath. The church was formally founded in 1995.<ref name="AboutUCG">[http://www.ucg.org/about/ About the United Church of God], from the [http://www.ucg.org UCG official website].</ref>  The UCG''IA'' calls itself "The United Church of God, ''an International Association''", with the last three words italicized<ref name="AboutUCG" /> in order to differentiate the UCG''IA'' from local congregations and denominations which also bear the name of the United Church of God.<ref name="UCG Tucson" /><ref>[http://www.ucgportland.org/ Website of the United Church of God], [[Portland, Oregon]]. Accessed 12 August 2006</ref> The United Church of God has no association with any other organization or denomination.<ref name="">[http://www.ucg.org/bible-faq/united-church-of-god-religion-denomination.htm] What religion or denomination is the United Church of God?</ref> The UCG''IA'' states the following as a commission:  <blockquote>We trace our origins to the Church that Jesus founded in the early first century. We follow the same teachings, doctrines and practices established then. Our commission is to proclaim the gospel of the coming Kingdom of God to all the world as a witness and teach all nations to observe what Christ commanded (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20).<ref name="AboutUCG" /></blockquote>  ==Background==  UCG is an offshoot of the [[Worldwide Church of God]], which was originally incorporated in the 1940s as the [[Radio Church of God]] by its founder, [[Herbert W. Armstrong]]. After Armstrong's death in 1986, the subsequent WCG leadership introduced a series of major doctrinal changes, starting in 1994, which substantially altered the fundamental beliefs and goals of the original Worldwide Church of God in the direction of historic Christian orthodoxy.<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.wcg.org/lit/aboutus/history.htm|title=Transformed by Christ: A brief history of the Worldwide Church of God|accessdate=2009-01-08}}</ref> A large segment of the membership wished to retain what they allege to be fundamental or first-century Christian teachings (known by non-adherents as [[Armstrongism]]<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.equip.org/PDF/DA190.pdf|title=Armstrongism, The Worldwide Church of God, The Church of God International|accessdate=2010-08-30}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.4truth.net/site/c.hiKXLbPNLrF/b.2904335/k.9964/Armstrongism.htm|title=Armstrongism|accessdate=2010-08-30}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.realtruth.org/articles/080104-001-religion.html?cid=RT0029|title=What is "Armstrongism"?|accessdate=2010-08-30}}</ref>) and consequently left the WCG to start their own organizations.<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.ucg.org/about/history.htm|title=Brief History of the United Church of God|accessdate=2009-07-05}}</ref> The United Church of God was established in May 1995 and is the largest of these offshoot organizations. The United Church of God does not identify itself as "Armstrongist" or as followers of the teachings of Herbert W Armstrong. Proof of doctrine is not traced to Armstrong, but, adherents assert, to the Holy Bible itself.<ref>{{cite journal|date=January 2003 |title=The Most Frequently Asked Question: What Is The Origin of United|journal=United News|publisher=United Church of God|issue=Vol.9, No.1|pages=3|url=http://www.ucg.org/un/un0301/un0301.pdf}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.ctlibrary.com/ct/1996/july15/6t826b.html|title=From the Fringe to the Fold, Part 2: The Tumultuous Year|last=Tucker|first=Ruth|accessdate=2009-01-08}}</ref>  ==Government==  The UCG''IA'' is governed by a 12-man board called the "Council of Elders" that is elected by the church's paid and lay ministries, which form the "General Conference of Elders". The General Conference meets once a year in May to perform tasks that include approving a budget, operational planning, strategic planning, electing members of the church council, and participation in seminars. The council acts as the governing body for the international association and is responsible for forming policy and doctrine for the Church. The council meets four times a year.  The international headquarters of the UCG''IA'' is referred to as the "Home Office" and is located in [[Milford, Ohio]] (a suburb of [[Cincinnati, Ohio|Cincinnati]]). This office is headed by the UCG''IA'' President, who is the church's official spokesperson and is charged with administrative responsibility over day-to-day functions, such as managing the church's paid ministry and producing literature or other publications. The president is appointed by the Council of Elders (COE) and can be removed from his appointment by the COE. The COE must remain in the confidence of the General Conference of Elders, and COE members serve on a rotating system of election wherein three of twelve men are up for re-election or replacement in any given year.  ==Ambassador Bible Center==  The Home Office also houses the ''Ambassador Bible Center'' (ABC), a nine-month program of classes in the church's Biblical theology. The ABC program is intended to give instruction in the church's teachings, and is most often taken by young adults. It is modeled from the now-closed [[Ambassador College]].<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.ucg.org/un/un0509/|title=Living the Truth: ABC Motto Is a Reminder to All|last=de Campos|first=Jorge|accessdate=2009-07-05}}</ref>  ==Mission and media==  UCG''IA'' states that: ''"The mission of the Church of God is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, make disciples in all nations and care for those disciples."'' Emphasis is consequently placed on the proclamation of "The Kingdom of God" to the general public, which is accomplished through various media, ranging from [[Twitter]] and [[Youtube]] to more traditional forms such as radio, print and television.  UCG''IA'' publishes and produces the following:  \*'''''[[The Good News (magazine)|The Good News]]''''' magazine is the flagship publication of the United Church of God. It is a free magazine and is published bi-monthly. The magazine contains articles that discuss [[Bible prophecy]], [[news|world news]] and trends, social issues, church doctrine and [[Christian]] living.  \* The '''''Beyond Today Television Program.''''' The Beyond Today program airs on WGN America and is shown on over 100 [[Public-access television]] [[cable TV]] stations and is accompanied by a multimedia website and a presence on [[Youtube]].  \*'''''Vertical Thought''''' is a quarterly publication published for [[youth]]. The publication contains articles from both church ministers and youth, and aims to strengthen the Christian faith of its youthful readership.  \*'''''The United News''''' is a newsletter which focuses on news and events within the United Church of God. The newsletter contains articles on UCG [[Mission (Christian)|mission]]s, church activities, reports on church governance, doctrinal and Christian living articles, and birth and death announcements of church members.  In addition to the above publications, the UCG has produced 33 booklets on various Biblical topics, a 12-lesson Bible study course, a monthly systematic Bible reading program with commentary, various article reprints, a national radio program, local public-access television programs, and a website. A series of presentations called the ''Kingdom of God Bible seminars'' begin in September 2011 and are held at different locations around the world.<ref name="United Church of God Live Events">{{cite web|title=United Church of God Live Events|url=http://www.ucg.org/live-events/all/}}</ref>  ==Doctrine==  The UCG follows and believes in most of the basic doctrinal principles shared by other Christian churches. However, some of its teachings differ from today's mainstream consensus in a number of key areas, including disagreements with Catholic and Protestant tenets.  Doctrinal distinctives include:  \* Belief in a non-[[Trinitarianism|Trinitarian]] view of God. Specifically, the belief that the Holy Spirit is the spirit/power of God and of Christ Jesus rather than a separate person in the Godhead. God 'the Father' and Jesus Christ are viewed as distinct 'God beings' in the 'God family'.[http://www.ucg.org/booklets/WG/isgodatrinity.htm] [http://www.ucg.org/booklets/WG/holyspirit.htm][http://www.ucg.org/about/fundamentalbeliefs.htm] [http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/WG/]  \* Belief that Christians are begotten as children in the Family of God and will at their resurrection become "spirit-born divine beings who are part of [[Elohim]], the universe-ruling family of God." [http://www.ucg.org/booklets/WG/divinenature.htm]  \* Belief that the core of Jesus Christ's message was the coming of a literal earthly Kingdom [http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/GK/][http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/JC/] and that people who are 'saved' will not go to heaven, but will live and rule eternally with Jesus Christ on earth after his second coming, and will subsequently share rulership over the entire universe as part of the 'God Family'. [http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/HL/]  \* Belief that the final destination of the unrepentant wicked is not everlasting torture, but [[Annihilationism|annihilation]] or permanent destruction. [http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/HL/foreverinhell.htm]  \* Belief in [[British Israelism]], which is the teaching that people of Western European descent, primarily the original British colonies and the United States, are direct physical descendants of the [[Ten Lost Tribes]] of the northern kingdom of ancient Israel [http://www.ucg.org/booklets/US/] -- whereas the historical Jews (and modern-day Israel) are descendants of the ancient southern kingdom of Judah.  \* Belief that the basic [[Old Testament]] law is not "done away with" and is carried over into the "New Covenant" such that certain commandments apply to Christians today, including the Ten Commandments and teachings such as clean and unclean meats, literal observance of Holy Day festivals such as eating unleavened bread during the 'Days of Unleavened Bread', and living in 'temporary habitations' during the 'Feast of Tabernacles'. These beliefs exclude civil and sacrificial temple laws, but [http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/NC/] includes the literal observance of the [[seventh-day Sabbath]] and the holy days of the so-called 'Jewish calendar' of the Old Testament,[http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/SS/] dietary restrictions,[http://www.ucg.org/booklets/CU/], and the condemnation of homosexuality.<ref>"If one accepts the Bible as inspired by God, then homosexual activity is intrinsically wrong and unacceptable in a truly Christian society" {{cite web|url=http://www.gnmagazine.org/issues/gn52/battle.htm|title=The Gay Rights Battle|last=Petty|first=Gary}}</ref>  \* Belief that today's mainstream Christian teachings resulted from doctrinal corruption under the influence of Greco-Roman philosophy which occurred early in the history of the church, so that the major Christian churches now teach various pagan ideas and practices under the guise of Christianity.<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.gnmagazine.org/wnp/wnp0708/prophecy.htm|title=Papal Authority, Protestants and Prophecy|last=Kieffer|first=Paul}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.wnponline.org/wnp/wnp0909/europe-church-papacy.htm|title=Europe and the Church, Part 12: A Period of Change for the Papacy|last=Rhodes|first=Melvin}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.gnmagazine.org/wnp/wnp0809/europe-church-horn.htm|title=Europe and the Church, Part 5: The Identity of the Little Horn|last=Rhodes|first=Melvin}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.beyondtoday.tv/booklets/CJ/counterfeit.htm|title=The Rise of a Counterfeit Christianity}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.ucg.org/bible-faq/true-church-of-god.htm|title=How can I find the true Church of God?}}</ref><ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.gnmagazine.org/issues/gn50/thehorsemen.htm|title=Visions of Judgment: The Horsemen of Revelation|last=McNeely|first=Darris}}</ref> Members believe that the doctrines and practices of the United Church of God can be traced to the original teachings of Jesus Christ and the early 'Church of God' as described in the New Testament.[http://www.gnmagazine.org/issues/gn13/changechurch\_forgottenroots.htm][http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/UC/][http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/CJ/] [http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/FB/thechurch.htm]  \* Belief that people who do not know or understand the truth of the Bible during their lifetimes will be given time to learn these teachings after the 'second resurrection' to a new physical life. After living again in the Millennial world under God's Kingdom, those who continue to reject God's Holy Spirit and way of life will be annihilated after the "Third Resurrection" along with unrepentant former believers who had turned away from God. They are destroyed in the third resurrection (the "resurrection of fire") in the Lake of Fire, along with Satan and his demons. [http://www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/AD/viewofhell.asp]  \* Belief that the ancient pagan origins of traditional Christian celebrations (especially Christmas and Easter) render them inappropriate for true Christians.[http://www.ucg.org/booklets/HH/mattertogod.htm]  ==History==  The United Church of God was founded at a conference organized in [[Indianapolis, Indiana]] in the spring of 1995 and attended by WCG and former WCG ministers concerned by the doctrinal changes introduced by the WCG.<ref>[http://www.hwarmstrong.com/ar/AR59.html "The Uniteds", ''Ambassador Report''], Issue 59, June, 1995</ref> The first president of the United Church of God was David Hulme, who left the United Church of God after he was voted out of the office of president for refusing to move Church's home office to Ohio in 1998, among other reasons.<ref>[http://www.hwarmstrong.com/ar/AR68.html "United Dethrones Hulme", ''Ambassador Report''], Issue 68, April, 1998</ref><ref>[http://www.servantsnews.com/sn9801/sn980120.htm "New Leaders & Members for the United Church of God", ''Servant's News''], January, 1998</ref><ref>[http://www.thejournal.org/articles/issue12/removal.html "Why would United's council of elders remove David Hulme from the presidency?", ''The Journal''], Issue 12, January, 1998</ref> He subsequently formed a new group called "Church of God, an International Community".<ref>[http://www.cogaic.org], [http://www.thejournal.org/archives/church-of-god-timeline-1996-to-2004.html]</ref> Following Hulme, elders selected to serve as president have been Les McCullough in 1998, Roy Holladay in 2002, Clyde Kilough in 2005 and Dennis Luker in 2010.  A decision to move the Church's home office to Texas was rescinded in 2008, causing considerable tension within and between the Council of Elders and the General Conference of Elders.<ref>{{cite web |url=http://ambassadorwatch.blogspot.com/2008/05/meeker-requiem.html |title=Ambassador Watch: Meeker Requiem}}</ref>  In 2009, two members of the Council of Elders resigned—then-president Clyde Kilough, whose resignation was effective July 28, 2009; and Richard Thompson, effective July 27, 2009. A letter sent out by the Council of Elders said that the resignations were for "personal reasons".<ref>{{cite web |url=http://ambassadorwatch.blogspot.com/2009/08/theyre-gone-but-what-does-it-mean.html |title=Ambassador Watch: They're gone - but what does it mean? |accessdate=2009-08-02}}</ref>  In 2010, earlier tensions rooted in the rescinded Texas move and governance disputes continued to mount and led to the Council of Elders requesting (and accepting) the resignation of Clyde Kilough as President of UCG. Resignations were also accepted for Jim Franks (Ministerial Services) and Larry Salyer (Media Operations). The call for Kilough's resignation was prompted by a resolution that Kilough had jointly crafted with other administrative staff, which had proposed that UCG's governance structure be reviewed. The resolution was submitted directly to the General Conference of Elders, therefore bypassing review by the Council of Elders, prompting the Council of Elders to remove Kilough and to reinstate Roy Holladay as acting President until the new President was appointed.<ref>[http://www.cogwriter.com/news/cog-news/another-ucg-shakeup/ "Another UCG Shakeup", ''Church of God News''], April 12th, 2010.</ref><ref>[http://ucgcurrentcrisis.webs.com/ "UCG Current Crisis"], April, 2010.</ref><ref>[http://shadowsofwcg.com/?p=498 "The Constant Perils of a Dis-United COG", ''Shadows of WCG Next Generation''], April 13th, 2010.</ref><ref>[http://members.ucg.org/content/updates-ucg-administration-changes "Updates on UCG Administration Changes", ''United Church of God Member's Site''], April 23rd, 2010.</ref>  Dennis Luker was appointed president on June 24, 2010.<ref>[http://www.ucg.org/un/un1007/un1007.pdf]</ref> But tensions with a group of ministers continued to build, ending with dozens of pastors and local elders resigning from UCG in December 2010.<ref>[http://realtimeunited.wordpress.com/2010/12/23/dec-23-letter-to-ministers-and-members/ ''Realtime United blog, 12/23/10'']</ref> In early 2011, those ministers met in [[Louisville, Kentucky]] to form a new group, the [[Church of God, a Worldwide Association]] with Kilough as president. The resignations were the result of increasing conflict between UCG's Council of Elders and personnel that had formerly been in administrative or council roles.  ==See also==  \*[[Herbert W. Armstrong]]  \*[[Armstrongism]]  \*[[British Israelism]]  \*[[Worldwide Church of God]]  ==References==  {{reflist|2}}  ==External links==  \*[http://www.ucg.org/ United Church of God] - official web site.  \*[http://www.ucg.org.uk/ United Church of God - British Isles]  \*[http://www.ucg.ca/ United Church of God - Canada]  \*[http://www.ucg.org.au/ United Church of God - Australia]  \*[http://www.gnmagazine.org/ The Good News Magazine Online] - Official website of the Good News Magazine.  \*[http://www.beyondtoday.tv/ Beyond Today Online] - Beyond Today Multimedia website.  \*[http://www.wnponline.org/ World News and Prophecy]  \*[http://www.verticalthought.org/ Vertical Thought]  \*[http://www.coghomeschool.org/site/cog\_archives/booklets/Fundamentals%20of%20Belief.htm Radio Church of God Fundamental Beliefs] comparable to [http://www.ucg.org/about/fundamentalbeliefs.htm/ UCG Fundamental Beliefs]  \*[http://www.ucg.org/about/history.htm/ Brief history of the United Church of God] - Official history from UCG website.  {{Sabbath-Keeping Churches}}  [[Category:Church of God (Armstrong)]]  [[Category:Religious organizations established in 1995]]  [[Category:Church of God denominations]]  [[Category:Christian denominations, unions, and movements established in the 20th century]]  [[Category:Nontrinitarian denominations]]  [[de:Vereinte Kirche Gottes]]  [[simple:United Church of God]] |
| {{Multiple issues  |original research=January 2012  |primarysources=January 2012}}  '''Grace Communion International''' ('''GCI'''), formerly the '''Worldwide Church of God''' ('''WCG'''), is an [[Evangelicalism|evangelical]] [[Christian denomination]] based in [[Glendora, California]], [[United States]].  Founded in 1934 by [[Herbert W. Armstrong]] as a [[religious broadcasting]] [[radio]] [[Christian ministry|ministry]] named '''Radio Church of God''', the Worldwide Church of God had a significant, and often controversial, influence on 20th century religious broadcasting and publishing in the United States and Europe, especially in the field of interpreting biblical [[eschatology|end-time prophecies]]. Within a few years after Armstrong's death in 1986, the succeeding church administration modified the denomination's doctrines and teachings to be compatible with mainstream [[evangelical Christianity]], while many members and ministers left and formed other churches that conformed to most, if not all, of Armstrong's teachings. In 2009, the church adopted its current name.<ref>http://www.wcg.org/namechange.htm</ref>  The GCI is a member of the [[National Association of Evangelicals]] and, as of April 2009, has 42,000 members in 900 congregations in about 90 countries.<ref name="NAE">{{cite web|url=http://www.wcg.org/lit/aboutus/media/nae.htm|title=NAE Accepts Worldwide Church of God, NAE press release, May 7, 1997|accessdate=2006-08-16}}</ref>  ==History==  ===Beginnings===  The Radio Church of God began with Herbert W. Armstrong, who in 1931 was ordained by the [[General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh-Day)|Oregon Conference of the Church of God (Seventh-Day)]], an [[Adventism|Adventist]] group, and began serving a congregation in [[Eugene, Oregon]]. On January 7, 1934, Armstrong began hosting a broadcast on a local 100-watt radio station [[KORE]] in Eugene. It was essentially a condensed church service on the air, with hymn singing featured along with Armstrong's message, and was the launching point for what would become the Radio Church of God. In 1933, the Church of God (Seventh-Day) split. Armstrong, who sided with the [[Church of God (7th day) – Salem Conference|faction centered in Salem, West Virginia]], fell out with the local congregation over various doctrinal issues, especially his espousal of [[British Israelism]].  Though his views were rejected by the local congregation, he gained a growing following of his own, chiefly through his World Tomorrow broadcasts and the ''[[The Plain Truth|Plain Truth]]'' magazine. Armstrong moved to [[Pasadena, California]]. To facilitate the work of the growing church, he incorporated it on March 3, 1946, as the ''Radio Church of God''. In 1947, [[Ambassador College]] was founded in Pasadena by the church, and the campus served as the church's headquarters.  The broadcast of ''The World Tomorrow'' went into Europe on [[Radio Luxembourg (English)|Radio Luxembourg]] on January 7, 1953. In 1956, he published the booklet ''[[1975 in Prophecy!]]'', which predicted an upcoming nuclear war and subsequent enslavement of mankind, leading to the [[Second coming|return of Jesus Christ]]. Armstrong explained that the book was written to contrast the spiritual condition of the world to the modern inventions that scientists were promising for the year 1975. Armstrong himself did not put a date to Christ's return, though some in the ministry began to teach that Christ would return in 1975.  The church grew quickly in the late 1960s and, on January 5, 1968, was renamed to ''Worldwide Church of God''.<ref>[http://www.hwarmstrong.com/history-1946-rcg-constitution.htm "1946 Articles Of Incorporation Of Radio Church Of God"]</ref><ref>[http://www.hwarmstrong.com/history-1968-amendment-name-wcg.htm "1968 Certificate Of Amendment Of Articles Of Incorporation Of Radio Church Of God"]</ref>  In 1956, Armstrong met [[Stanley Rader]] at [[Ambassador College]]. Rader stated that he was employed to sort the church's accounts, which he claimed had become disorganized. Armstrong reportedly was so impressed with Rader's work that, under his encouragement and patronage, Rader furthered his education by going to law school. Rader then graduated as valedictorian of his 1963 law school class at the University of Southern California Law School. Rader continued this relationship as special legal and financial adviser to Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God, working for them in a full-time capacity by 1969.  Armstrong's son, [[Garner Ted Armstrong]], who had been given the responsibility to host the radio and later the television version of ''The World Tomorrow'', opposed some of his father's teachings and was disfellowshipped by his father, who resumed the broadcasting duties of ''The World Tomorrow'' program. The son did not reconcile with his father before his father's death.  ===1970s===  In 1970, the first of many groups to splinter from the Worldwide Church of God were founded. Carl O'Beirn of [[Cleveland, Ohio]] led what may be the first group, the Church of God (O'Beirn), away from the Worldwide Church of God. Others followed that year, including John Kerley's Top of the Line ministry in 1978; the Restoration Church of God; the Church of God (Boise City) in [[Boise City, Oklahoma]]; Marvin Faulhaber's [[seventh-day Sabbatarian|Sabbatarian]] group also known as Church of God (Sabbatarian); and the Fountain of Life Fellowship of James and Virginia Porter.  ====Ambassador International Cultural Foundation====  During the sixties "Armstrong had sought to put into stronger action what he termed God’s 'way of give'".<ref name=RtR2324>  {{cite book|first= Stephen |last= Flurry|title= Raising the Ruins:The Fight to Revive the Legacy of Herbert W. Armstrong|pages= 23–24|publisher= Philadelphia Church of God|date= October 30, 2006|isbn= 978-0-9745507-1-8}}</ref> To Armstrong and his students, this was generally said to include "the way of character, generosity, cultural enrichment, true education: of beautifying the environment and caring for fellow man." He began undertaking humanitarian projects, selecting underprivileged pockets around the world, which eventually led to the creation of the church-run Ambassador International Cultural Foundation (AICF) in 1975. The Foundation’s efforts reached into several countries, providing staffing and funds to fight illiteracy, create schools for the disabled, set up mobile schools, and provide funding and staffing for several archaeological digs at biblically significant sites. The auditorium he built for the church hosted, at highly subsidized ticket prices, hundreds of performances by noted artists such as [[Luciano Pavarotti]], [[Vladimir Horowitz]], [[Bing Crosby]], [[Marcel Marceau]], and [[Bob Hope]].<ref>Flurry, pp. 25-26</ref>  ''Quest'' was a periodical that was published monthly by AICF from July 1977 to September 1981. It began life under the working name of ''Human Potential'' and was a project directed by Stanley Rader. It was conceived as the secular publication of AICF funded by the church. The publishers hired a professional staff unrelated to the church to create a high quality glossy publication devoted to the [[humanities]], travel and the [[arts]]. The original concept name and design of ''Human Potential'' began in the aftermath of the failed prophecies of Armstrong as outlined in ''1975 in Prophecy!'', written by Armstrong and illustrated by [[Basil Wolverton]].  It was because AICF, through its activities such as this publication, seemed to represent the exact opposite of the views and values of its ultimate sponsor that the Worldwide Church was increasingly involved in splits and divisions among its ranks. These defections created dramatic losses in income for the church which in turn undermined the sponsored activities of AICF. Due to falling funds the church began to cut back on its funding of AICF, and because the publication, which was also supported by paid commercial advertising and a subscription price, never became a profitable enterprise, its assets were eventually sold off to other interests.  ====Scandal and conflict====  As 1972 approached it became clear that the events predicted by Herbert Armstrong would not come to pass. While the [[European Union]] was an idea in the making, the nations of Europe were far from united, as the union itself was still another 20 years in the future. The Worldwide Church of God, however, experienced several scandals which some argue could be said to have brought Armstrong's second 19-year period to a close.{{Citation needed|date=September 2012}}  Garner Ted Armstrong began to lose favor with his father. Garner Ted's opinion conflicted with his father's practice of putting specific dates on end time prophecies. Herbert Armstrong was against this ambiguous date policy which Garner Ted wanted to perpetuate to gain additional members. Garner Ted also spoke of greatly expanding the church's media ministry on the model of the [[Church of Christ, Scientist]] with its widely read [[Christian Science Monitor]].  In a report in the May 15, 1972, edition of [[Time (magazine)|''Time'']] magazine, Herbert Armstrong was reported to have said that Garner Ted was "in the bonds of Satan."<ref>[http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,903502,00.html Religion: Garner Ted Armstrong, Where Are You?]</ref> The elder Armstrong did not elaborate, but it was speculated that Herbert had to come to grips publicly with Garner Ted's alleged continuing problems with [[gambling]] and [[adultery]] with Ambassador College coeds. Garner Ted Armstrong was soon relieved of his star role within the church.  While Garner Ted Armstrong was being removed, Stanley Rader had been orchestrating the church's involvement in a number of corporations which Rader established. Critics saw Rader's moves as an attempt to seize control of the church. Rader characterized his involvement as that of an adviser and claimed that his advice was opening doors for Armstrong that a strict theological role would not have allowed for. Herbert Armstrong approved of the establishment of the AICF, which Rader set up ostensibly to give the elder Armstrong a role as the "Ambassador for World Peace without portfolio".  As the church was experiencing internal crises, its external, public face was also crumbling. Church followers had anticipated the removal of church faithful to [[Petra]], Jordan, to await the prophesied [[apocalypse]].  Despite the scandals of 1972, the church continued to grow in the 1970s with Herbert Armstrong still at the helm. In 1975, Armstrong baptized Stanley Rader, who until then had been a practicing [[Jew]] in spite of his association with the church. Some{{Who|date=March 2009}} felt that, under Rader's influence, Armstrong began to de-emphasize the [[Christology|Christological]] aspects of church doctrine, instead preaching a message of peace, brotherly love, and "giving and not getting".{{Citation needed|date=March 2009}}  Others{{Who|date=March 2009}} say that this approach was to announce the coming [[Kingdom of God]] and mankind's duty to that end.  After being left a widower by the death of his wife, Loma, eleven years earlier, Armstrong married Ramona Martin, a woman nearly fifty years younger, in 1977 and moved to [[Tucson, Arizona]]. While Armstrong administered church business through Stanley Rader from his Arizona retreat, the church continued to be headquartered in Pasadena.  With Garner Ted Armstrong resuming his role within the church, the rivalry between the younger Armstrong and Stanley Rader intensified. The adultery problems that reportedly drove Garner Ted from the church before had reportedly continued unabated. In 1978, Garner Ted Armstrong was disfellowshipped a final time. Garner Ted moved to [[Tyler, Texas]], and there founded a splinter group, the [[Church of God International (USA)|Church of God International]].  ====Receivership crisis====  Garner Ted Armstrong blamed Stanley Rader for his two-time ouster from his father's church. Garner Ted and other former and discontented members of the Worldwide Church of God prompted the State of California to investigate charges of [[malfeasance]] by Rader and others involved with the AICF. By 1979, [[California Attorney General]] [[George Deukmejian]] had brought civil charges against the church, and the church was placed into an investigative financial [[receivership]] for one year.  The group of dissidents also gained the attention of [[Mike Wallace (journalist)|Mike Wallace]] who investigated the church in a report for ''[[60 Minutes]]''. Using documentary evidence obtained, Wallace brought to light lavish secret expenditures, conflict of interest insider deals, posh homes and lifestyles in the higher ranks, and the heavy involvement of Stanley Rader in financial manipulation.{{Citation needed|date=September 2009}}  Wallace invited Rader to appear on ''60 Minutes'' on April 15, 1979. Wallace showed Rader a secret tape recording in which Herbert Armstrong had alleged Rader was attempting to take over the church after Armstrong's death, reasoning that the donated tithe money might be quite a "magnet" to some evangelists. Rader abruptly ended the interview.<ref>[http://www.hwarmstrong.com/stanley-rader-interview.htm "Stanley Rader on Sixty Minutes with Mike Wallace"]</ref>  Rader, with the approval of Herbert Armstrong, was spending millions to fend off any financial audit or examination of the church's income and expenditures by litigating the issue all the way to the [[United States Supreme Court]], several times, unsuccessfully. Having lost in the courts, Rader lobbied the California legislature to force the California Attorney General to drop the charges against the church and him. Under Rader's lobbying, the [[California State Legislature]] passed legislation known as the Petris bill, signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown, which changed the applicable law of California so that the Attorney General had no authority over churches in such circumstances.{{Citation needed|date=September 2009}}  Rader and Armstrong, then, were relieved of any further concern about civil liability or any outside exposure of their own internal financial dealings as the directors of a California religious corporation. In trying to defend his fight against the investigation, Rader wrote the 1980 self-exculpatory polemic "Against the Gates of Hell: The Threat to Religious Freedom in America" arguing that his legal fight with the Attorney General was more about religious freedoms rather than about abuse of public trust or fraudulent misappropriation of tithe funds.  The church received a minor vindication of its position when, in denying a request for fees by the dissidents' attorney, Hillel Chodos, the Second Court of Appeals overturned the decision on procedural grounds and added as dicta, "We are of the opinion that the underlying action [i.e., the State-imposed receivership] and its attendant provisional remedy of receivership were from the inception constitutionally infirm and predestined to failure."<ref>  {{cite court|litigants= PEOPLE EX REL. DEUKMEJIAN v. WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD|vol= 127|reporter= CA3d|opinion= 547|pinpoint= |court= Court of Appeals of California, Second Appellate District, Division Two|date= December 9, 1981|url=http://online.ceb.com/calcases/CA3/127CA3d547.htm}}</ref>  Stanley Rader left his positions within the church in 1981. While Rader was able to legally, then politically, prevent the investigation of church finances, he could not prevent the collapse of AICF. A lawsuit had been filed against [[Steven Spielberg]] and [[George Lucas]] alleging that the pair stole the plot for ''[[Raiders of the Lost Ark]]'' from AICF. When the lawsuit went nowhere, AICF collapsed. Meanwhile, the church was eager to sever its ties from AICF, as the Foundation had been producing works which were not in keeping with church doctrine. Rader left the church leadership amicably, and reportedly received a six figure financial package upon leaving his post.{{Citation needed|date=September 2009}}  ===Armstrong's death and doctrinal changes===  {{primary sources|section|date=January 2010}}  From 1978 to 1985, Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God into its Golden Age. On January 16, 1986, Herbert Armstrong died in Pasadena, California. Shortly before his death, Armstrong named [[Joseph W. Tkach|Joseph W. Tkach Sr.]] to succeed him as leader of the church. Armstrong also specifically mentioned that he will succeed him in every office except ''apostle''.  As early as 1988, Joseph W. Tkach Sr. began to make doctrinal changes. Doctrinal revisions were made quietly and slowly at first, but then openly and radically in January 1995. They were presented as new understandings of Christmas and Easter,<ref>[http://www.wcg.org/lit/church/holidays/unity.htm A Call for Tolerance on Christmas and Easter]</ref> Babylon and the harlot,<ref>[http://www.wcg.org/lit/prophecy/babylon.htm Who Is "Babylon"?]</ref> Anglo-Israelism,<ref>[http://www.wcg.org/lit/prophecy/anglo/default.htm Anglo-Israelism and The United States and Britain in Prophecy]</ref> Saturday Sabbath,<ref>[http://www.wcg.org/lit/law/sabbath/lev23.htm Is Leviticus 23:3 a Command to Have Worship Services on the Weekly Sabbath?]</ref> and other doctrines.  In general, Tkach Sr. directed the church theology towards mainstream [[Evangelicalism|evangelical]] Christian belief. This caused much disillusionment among the membership and another rise of splinter groups. All these changes, the church admits, have organizationally brought about "catastrophic results," though they believe that it is spiritually the best thing that ever happened to them. <ref>{{cite web|title=Armstrongism|url=http://www.jashow.org/Articles/apologetics/AP0500W4.htm|work=Apologetics|publisher=Ankerberg Thological Research Institute|accessdate=1 September 2012}}</ref> During the tenure of Joseph Tkach Sr., the church's membership declined by about 50 percent. His son, Joseph Tkach Jr., succeeded him after his death in 1995.  Eventually all of Herbert Armstrong's writings were withdrawn from print by the Worldwide Church of God. In the 2004 video production ''Called To Be Free'', Greg Albrecht, former dean of WCG's Ambassador College, declared Herbert Armstrong to be both a [[false prophet]] and a [[heresy|heretic]].<ref>{{cite web|url=http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWAtvE1xiRk |title= ''Called To Be Free''}} (video, point 61:57) by Living Hope Video Ministries</ref>  On April 16, 2009, the Worldwide Church of God announced the official change of name to Grace Communion International.<ref>[http://www.wcg.org/namechange.htm Worldwide Church Of God Announces Name Change]</ref>  ==Beliefs and practices==  ===Current teachings===  After Armstrong's death, the church's new leadership began a process of theological revision. As a result, it is now considered within the [[evangelical]] mainstream as shown by its acceptance into the [[National Association of Evangelicals]]. Its doctrinal summary highlights mainstream Protestant beliefs such as the [[Trinity]], the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that faith in Him is the only way to receive salvation and the Bible is the inspired and infallible word of God.<ref>[http://www.gci.org/aboutus/beliefs Current GCI Statement of Beliefs]</ref>  ===Historical teachings under Armstrong===  {{main|Armstrongism}}  Until Armstrong's death, the Worldwide Church of God adhered to its founder's teachings. The most notable feature was Armstrong's version of [[British Israelism]], which was based on reading the account of Jacob blessing his sons ([[Book of Genesis|Genesis]] 49) as end-time prophecy. Armstrong saw in it a description of national characteristics of contemporary descendants of Jacob, and deduced that the United States, the British Commonwealth and several countries situated in northwestern Europe were actually the [[Ten Lost Tribes|Lost Tribes]] of Israel. Armstrong held that these countries played a central role in the end times that were about to begin.  Armstrong rejected the doctrine of the [[Trinity]], regarding it as a pagan concept absorbed into mainstream Christianity.<ref>[http://www.ctlibrary.com/ct/1997/june16/7t766c.html Worldwide Church of God Joins NAE - Christianity Today magazine - ChristianityTodayLibrary.com<!-- Bot generated title -->]</ref> Armstrong explained that God was not a closed [[Trinity]] but actually building a family through the Holy Spirit, which he considered God's powerful unifying essence and which guides and brings to remembrance those things which Christ taught, but is not a distinct personality like the Father and the Son. Armstrong also taught that members of the church would actually become members of the God family themselves after the resurrection. Armstrong rejected as unbiblical the traditional Christian views of [[heaven]], [[hell]], eternal punishment and salvation.<ref name="Covington">Covington, David. ''What is the Worldwide Church of God?'' Quoted at http://www.apologeticsindex.org/w01.html, accessed 03-13-2007</ref>  The church strictly observed [[Saturday Sabbath]], [[Jewish holidays|annual festivals]] described in [[Leviticus]] the twenty-third chapter and strongly advocated the [[kashrut|clean]] meats of Leviticus 11. Members were encouraged to tithe, follow a dress code during services and discouraged from marrying outside the church. Armstrong summarized his teachings in his book ''Mystery of the Ages'', published shortly before his death. Herbert W. Armstrong considers the aforementioned book to be the greatest book written since the Bible. This book was the center piece of a titanic struggle between the Philadelphia Church of God and the remnant of the Worldwide Church of God under Joseph Tkach Jr. The battle went as far as the United States Supreme Court. At that point, however, the leaders of the WCG decided to drop the case and give over not only Mystery of the Ages, but also several other works originally written by Armstrong.  Under Armstrong's leadership, the Worldwide Church of God was criticized by many to be theologically a [[cult]] with unorthodox and, to most Christians, heretical teachings.<ref>[http://www.apologeticsindex.org/w01.html Worldwide Church of God (WCG) - religious cults, sects and movements<!-- Bot generated title -->]</ref> Critics also claimed that the WCG did not proclaim [[salvation]] by grace through faith alone, but rather required works as part of salvation. The late [[Walter Ralston Martin|Walter Martin]], in his classic ''The Kingdom of the Cults,'' devoted 34 pages to the group, claiming that Armstrong borrowed freely from [[Seventh-day Adventist theology|Seventh-day Adventist]], [[Jehovah's Witnesses]] and [[Mormon]] doctrines.<ref>[http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1996/july15/6t826a.html Tucker, Ruth. "From the Fringe to the Fold, Part 1." ''Christianity Today,'' July 15, 1996.]</ref>  Though according to Armstrong all Church doctrine could be proved simply and effectively through the Bible. One did not need to 'accept on faith' any of Worldwide Church of Gods doctrinal beliefs.  ==Structure==  ===International===  Grace Communion International has a [[hierarchical]] [[polity]]. The ecclesiastical policies are determined by the Advisory Council of Elders. Members of the Advisory Council are appointed by the President. The President, who also holds the title of Pastor General, is chief executive and ecclesiastical officer of the denomination. A Doctrinal Advisory Team may report to the Advisory Council on the church's official doctrinal statements, [[epistemology]], or [[apologetics]]. The President may [[pocket veto]] doctrinal positions he determines to be [[heresy|heretical]]. However, the President is also a member of the Doctrinal Advisory Team, and so he is aware of and involved in the activities of that committee.<ref>[http://www.wcg.org/lit/church/manual/index.htm See section 7 of the Worldwide Church of God Church Administration Manual]</ref> Historically, Presidents, as chairmen of the board of directors, have appointed their own successor. This and the President's power to appoint and remove members of the Advisory Council have remained areas of concern even among those who applaud the church's doctrinal changes.  The Church maintains national offices and satellite offices in multiple countries. Pastor General Joseph Tkach, Jr. periodically travels worldwide in personal appearance campaigns to congregations in diverse intercontinental areas, such as Great Britain, Africa, and the Philippines. However, membership and tithe income originates primarily from the eastern United States.  ===Regional and local===  In the United States, denominational contact with local assemblies or local church home small group meetings, i.e., [[cell church]]es, is facilitated by district superintendents, each of which is responsible for a large number of churches in a geographical region (such as Florida or the Northeast) or in a specialized language group (such as Spanish-speaking congregations).  Local churches are led by a senior pastor, pastoral leadership team (with one person designated as a congregational pastoral leader), each of which is supervised by a district pastoral leader. Some senior pastors are responsible for a single local church, but many are responsible for working in two or more churches. Salary compensation for the paid local church pastor, if available, is determined by the local church.  Most local church groups retain the long-standing traditional policy of meeting in leased or rented facilities for meetings or services. The trend since 2000, however, has been to adopt a local church setting blending into the local milieu with headquarters retaining administrative oversight functions. As of 2005, the church established a new computer system of financial checks and balances for church budgets at the local level. Also, GCI now mandates a local Advisory Council, which includes a number of volunteer ministry leaders (some of whom are also called deacons), and often additional elders or assistant pastors.  ==Finances==  The early Worldwide Church of God used a three-tithe system, under which members were expected to give a tithe or ten percent "of their increase," usually interpreted as a family's income.  \* The first tithe, 10 percent of a member's total income, was sent to church headquarters to finance "the work", which was all operations of the church, as well as broadcasting and publishing the church's message.  \* The second tithe was saved by the individual member to fund the member's (and his family's) observance of the annual holy days, especially the 8-day-long Feast of Tabernacles. Unlike the first tithe, these funds were not sent into the church but retained by the member.  \* A third tithe was required in the third and sixth years of a personal seven-year tithing cycle, and it was also sent to headquarters. The third tithe was used to support the indigent, widows, and orphans - distribution was decided privately at the discretion of the ministry.  In contrast to many other churches' religious services, the practice of the WCG was not to pass around offering plates during weekly church services but only during holy day church services (seven days each year). These funds were considered "freewill offerings" and regarded as entirely separate from regular tithes. The church also gathered funds in the form of donations from "co-workers," those who read the church's free literature or watched the weekly TV show but did not actually attend services.  Under Joseph W. Tkach Sr., although still strongly recommended, the mandatory nature of the church's three-tithe system was abolished, and it was suggested that tithes could be calculated on net, rather than gross, income. Its income has plummeted down. Its leaders has sold off all the property. They sold off all the festival sites used by church brethren, campsites built for teenagers. They shut down the college campuses which Herbert Armstrong raised up for the work and for young people as well as sold the airplane he used to visit the brethren and world leaders. They discontinued all the books, booklets and magazines published by Armstrong. Afterwards, church income declined precipitously (membership also dropped at the same time). Today the GCI headquarters has downsized for financial survival. Facing possible bankruptcy, the church liquidated its high maintenance real estate properties, such as Ambassador College, and other auctionable inventory to pay for current headquarters expenditures.  To further economize, the church sold its properties in Pasadena and purchased an office building in Glendora, California. Formerly, the church's membership, meeting in rented halls on Saturdays such as public school buildings, dance halls, hotels and other venues, sent all tithe donations directly to the headquarters. Under the new financial reporting regime, local churches are permitted to use some funds for local purposes, such as constructing local church buildings for use by the congregations. As of 2007, 85 percent or more of all congregational donations stay in the local area, with 15 percent going to the church's headquarters in Glendora for ministerial training and support, legal services, and denominational administration.  ==Related denominations==  From the 1970s through to the 1990s several groups that adhered to Armstrong's teachings separated from the Worldwide Church of God. Due to the significant doctrinal changes which occurred in the WCG throughout the 1990s, the largest percentage of ministers and members left the WCG during this decade. This resulted in the formation of many denominations, most notably the Philadelphia Church of God (1989), [[Global Church of God]], the [[Living Church of God]] (1993, 1998), [[United Church of God]] (1995), and the Restored Church of God (1998).<ref>[http://www.wcg.org/lit/aboutus/splits.htm Worldwide Church of God Organizational Splits]</ref> The United Church of God (UCG) is the largest of these denominations.<ref>[http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1996/july15/6t826b.html''Christianity Today,'' July 15, 1996.]</ref>  \* [[Church of God International (United States)|Church of God International]] (org. 1978)  \* [[Philadelphia Church of God]] (org. 1989)  \* [[Twentieth Century Church of God]] (org. 1990)  \* [[Church of God (Philadelphia Era)]] (org. 1991)  \* [[Church of the Great God]] (1992)  \* [[Global Church of God]] (1992)  \* [[United Church of God]] (1995)  \* [[Church of God Fellowship]] (1992)  \* [[Living Church of God]] (1998)  \* [[Restored Church of God]] (1998)  \* [[Church of God, an International Community]] (1998)  \* [[Church of God, a Worldwide Association]] (2010)  ==Notes==  {{reflist}}  ==References==  \* Frank S. Mead, Samuel S. Hill, and Craig D. Atwood, ''Handbook of Denominations in the United States''. Abingdon Press, 2001. ISBN 0-687-06983-1.  \* J. Michael Feazell, ''The Liberation of the Worldwide Church of God''. Zondervan, 2003. ISBN 0-310-25011-0.  \* Gerald Flurry, ''Malachi's Message to God's Church Today''. "A thorough explanation of ''how'' and ''why'' the Worldwide Church of God rejected Herbert Armstrong's teachings, and how to hold fast to Herbert Armstrong's teachings."  \* Walter Martin, ''The Kingdom of the Cults''. Revised and Updated Edition, Bethany House, 2003. ISBN 0-7642-2821-8. See Appendix A, pp.&nbsp;471–494.  \* Larry Nichols and George Mather, ''Discovering the Plain Truth: How the Worldwide Church of God Encountered the Gospel of Grace''. InterVarsity Press, 1998. ISBN 0-8308-1969-X  \* Joseph Tkach, ''Transformed by Truth''. Multnomah Publishers, 1997. ISBN 1-57673-181-2  \* http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/relmove/nrms/philcog.html  \* {{cite book  | last = Tarling  | first = Lowell R.  | authorlink =  | title = The Edges of Seventh-day Adventism: A Study of Separatist Groups Emerging from the Seventh-day Adventist Church (1844–1980)  | publisher = Galilee Publications  | year = 1981  | location = [[Barragga Bay, New South Wales|Barragga Bay]], [[Bermagui, New South Wales|Bermagui]] South, [[New South Wales|NSW]]  | isbn = 0-9593457-0-1  | chapter = The Armstrong Churches  | pages = 41–62  }}  ==External links==  \* [http://www.gci.org/ Grace Communion International] official website  \* [http://www.gci.org/aboutus/beliefs Statement of beliefs]  \* [http://www.ultimatechurcharchive.org/html/books.html Writing of H.W. Armstrong]  \* [http://www.hwarmstrong.com/ar/index.htm Archive of the ''Ambassador Report'' publication published from 1975 through 1999]  \* [http://www.exitsupportnetwork.com Exit & Support Network]—aiding those spiritually abused by Worldwide Church of God and offshoots  \* [http://www.holdfast2allthings.org/ God's Work NOW] Holding fast to the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong  \* [http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.org/index.html Herbert W. Armstrong Searchable Library]  \* [http://www.ill-legalism.com/badnewsreligionbrrr.htm Bad News Religion: The Virus That Attacks God's Grace] by Greg Albrecht, World Publishing (2004), ISBN 0-529-11954-4  \* [http://www.thejournal.org/ Journal: News of the Churches of God ] independent non denominational monthly newspaper.  \* [http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/wohg\_009.htm Word of His Grace Ministries] Support and Biblical Backing for ex-'Armstrong' members.  \* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWAtvE1xiRk "Called to be Free"] Documenting how the doctrinal changes in WWCG occurred after Armstrong's death. From the point of view of current WWCG leadership.  {{Sabbath-Keeping Churches}}  {{DEFAULTSORT:Grace Communion International}}  [[Category:Church of God (Armstrong)]]  [[Category:Religious media]]  [[Category:Religious organizations established in 1933]]  [[Category:Church of God denominations]]  [[Category:Christian denominations, unions, and movements established in the 20th century]]  [[Category:Christianity in Los Angeles, California]]  [[de:Weltweite Kirche Gottes]]  [[fr:Grace Communion International]]  [[id:Grace Communion International]]  [[sq:Kisha e Zotit]]  [[sv:Worldwide Church of God]] |
| {{POV|date=April 2011}}  '''The Restored Church of God''' (RCG) is led by President and Pastor General [[David C. Pack]]. It is one of the churches formed after its founders began to believe that the [[Worldwide Church of God]] had begun replacing [[Armstrongism|Armstrongist]] teachings with mainstream Christian teachings. The Restored Church of God claims to retain the tenets, style, and structure of the earlier Worldwide Church of God, before the death of [[Herbert W. Armstrong]] in 1986. The RCG uses a variety of media to reach both its congregations and to reach out to the general community: sermons, magazines and other materials such as websites on the internet.  Through its websites (''www.thercg.org,'' ''www.realtruth.org,'' and ''www.worldtocome.org''), The Restored Church of God offers their teachings regarding the Christian Bible.  ==History==  The Restored Church of God was formed in May of 1999, in the midst of ongoing upheaval in the wake of a departure from established beliefs in the Worldwide Church of God, which occurred after the death of its Pastor General, Herbert W. Armstrong, in January 1986. Though all of the original beliefs of the WCG were thought to have disappeared, each has been carefully restored to its original state.  As RCG was getting underway, a tool was capitalized upon first—sermon audiotapes were prepared for distribution around the world. These sermons covered topics that helped members coming out of the WCG understand what was happening. The series of three sermons on the “30 Reasons to Follow the Truth,” including another sermon entitled “Truth,” were prepared from mid-1993 through 1994. A book There Came a Falling Away, was also prepared, which documented the extent to which the new leadership of the WCG had abandoned established doctrine.  This reorganization of the Church of God began not as an offshoot of the Worldwide Church of God, but rather as the continuation of the Church as originally founded—carrying on the original apostles’ ministry and teachings.  The first several years of The Restored Church of God’s existence were primarily preparatory to the continuation of the work Herbert W. Armstrong had started. While also supporting a growing membership, all the tools that the Church once used—free books and booklets, Bible lessons, articles, short-answer Q&As, magazines and video/audio broadcasts, with distribution programs—were put into place.  An inventory of literature was produced very quickly. Although the courts banned the reproduction of Herbert W. Armstrong’s literature, RCG implemented plans to rewrite all of the original WCG booklets, until all doctrines were once again in place. This goal was quickly realized, as booklets and articles appeared on all the teachings necessary to provide the doctrinal foundation to inform new members.  ==David C. Pack==  As Pastor General of The Restored Church of God, David C. Pack oversees the operations of the church. He attended Ambassador College, entered the Worldwide Church of God ministry in 1971 and was trained by Herbert W. Armstrong. He has established over 50 congregations, authored more than 20 books, written hundreds of booklets and articles, and appeared on The History Channel. As Editor-in-Chief of The Real Truth magazine and voice of The World to Come program, he has reached millions around the globe.  Born in 1948, Mr. Pack grew up in the American Midwest, in Lima, Ohio. Focused largely on sports and competitive swimming for 14 years, and having achieved high school all-American honors, as well as having begun training for the 1968 Olympics, Mr. Pack experienced a major turning point.  He began to listen to The World Tomorrow radio program, sponsored by the Radio Church of God, and heard Herbert W. Armstrong announce the gospel.  Declining acceptance to Dartmouth College, as well as an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy, and numerous scholarship offers, Mr. Pack chose Ambassador College at Pasadena, California, world headquarters of the Church. Upon graduation in 1971, he married Shirley Ochs (who died in 2007), a fellow Ambassador College graduate and former personal secretary to Mr. Armstrong, and entered the ministry. He served congregations in Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, New York, New Jersey and Ohio, and trained and supervised other ministers in a wider region.  Upon Mr. Armstrong’s death in January 1986, the gospel message and virtually every teaching that flows from this central doctrine was rejected by his successors. Standing on conviction, Mr. Pack left the Worldwide Church of God in 1993, educating and leading the way for thousands who would follow.  Determined not to compromise his beliefs, Mr. Pack started RCG in May 1999.  ==RCG's Products and Services==  The Church’s materials address the everyday concerns of the average man and woman without soliciting funds, proselytizing or involvement in politics. All literature and programs are offered free of charge and in the public interest. RCG is dedicated to teaching the only path (their viewpoint) to world peace—the good news beyond today’s bad news. In this regard, David C. Pack has produced or guided into production a reservoir of educational material for people of every age.  Providing plain answers to life’s greatest questions, RCG’s websites collectively carry a large and ever-expanding array of tools to guide people seeking to live God’s way of life. With over 100 books and booklets, scores of articles, a 30-lesson ''Bible Introduction Course'', 209 “Question and Answer” letters, numerous other pieces of literature and scores of videos and audio broadcasts, RCG explains the biblical teaching on a broad spectrum of subjects.  The Church’s flagship magazine ''The Real Truth'', of which Mr. Pack is Publisher and Editor-in-Chief, and ''The World to Come'' program have an audience of millions and reach every nation and territory of the world, including heads of state and other leaders in government, religion, education, industry and media.  David C. Pack has also written a 2-Volume ''Biography'', along with a booklet titled ''Here Is The Restored Church of God'', which explains more about the Church.  The following are some of RCG’s materials and services:  \* The World to Come Program: found at ''www.worldtocome.org'', and provided in weekly video and daily audio, this program explains the causes behind mankind’s greatest problems—and the only possible solutions. Like all of the Church’s materials, ''The World to Come'' takes a strictly neutral position in regard to politics, not siding with or against men’s governments or leaders.  \* Hundreds of free books and booklets, articles, lessons and magazines (also in Spanish, French, German, Dutch and Afrikaans)  \* The Real Truth: monthly flagship magazine analyzing world news in the light of Bible prophecy—the continuation of ''The Plain Truth'' magazine as produced from 1934 through the mid-1980s  \* Bible Introduction Course: 30-lessons introducing the basic doctrines and Plan of God  \* The Splinter Explanation Packet: ten books, plus sermons, for all with a Worldwide Church of God background, explaining events affecting the Church in the late-20th century  \* Ambassador Training Center: an advanced two-year institution to train future ministers and leaders  \* Feast of Tabernacles sites around the world  \* ''The Pillar'': the church’s bi-monthly magazine for members.  \* ''Ambassador Youth'': bi-monthly magazine for teenagers  \* Ambassador Youth Camp: held annually for the Church’s teenagers  \* Ministry: The Restored Church of God has full-time ministers in place around the world, and continually trains and places additional ministers, who regularly establish new congregations.  ===''The Real Truth'' Magazine===  Produced monthly, ''The Real Truth'' magazine carries articles explaining the cause of war, what’s wrong with the weather, can science eradicate pollution, the meaning of events in Europe, why earthquakes are increasing, the complete failure of science to bring the utopian world that all long for, how racial bigotry will eventually disappear, where the world economy is going, what lies ahead for the nations of the world, the value of right ethics—and the definition of true character, the real cause of the moral crisis in the West, what’s wrong with modern education, why so many seek escape and pleasure, and the definition of true success.  It explains the world’s lack of great leaders and what will replace them, and how peace will come in our time, how to build strong families—rearing happy productive children—how to end your financial worries, why new diseases are appearing and older ones are re-appearing—stronger than before—and whether the United Nations is really mankind’s ultimate answer.  It explains why there are thousands of differing—and ''disagreeing''—forms of Christianity, why religion has not solved the world’s great problems, the way of “give” vs. “get,” the law of cause and effect, the origin of human nature, principles of healthful living, and a great many other subjects. It brings plain understanding (according to their reasoning) of the insoluble problems now overwhelming mankind, and points to the lasting peace of the world to come.  ===''The Pillar'' Magazine===  Produced bimonthly for members of the RCG, ''The Pillar'' magazine helps fulfill what has been called Jesus Christ’s Second Commission—to “feed the flock of God”—offering stronger spiritual articles.  ===''The Splinter Explanation Packet''===  The Restored Church of God’s ''Splinter Explanation Packet'' (SEP) thoroughly explains who and what RCG is, and answers every conceivable question about the apostasy (defection from truth) that took place inside the Worldwide Church of God (once based in Pasadena, California, USA), including why “splinters” formed, and how The Restored Church of God is completely different. The packet contains multiple books, videos and sermons that provide an in-depth explanation of what happened in the WCG in the late 1980s and 1990s, as well as what resulted in more recent years.  ==See also==  \* [[Herbert W. Armstrong]]  \* [[Worldwide Church of God]]  ==Notes==  \* [http://www.thercg.org/releases/091119-pr.html "David C. Pack Appears on The History Channel"]  \* [http://www.thercg.org/books/hwahlipp.html ''Herbert W. Armstrong – His Life in Proper Perspective'']  ==External links==  \*[http://www.thercg.org/ Official website]  \*[http://www.realtruth.org/home.html Real Truth magazine]  \*[http://www.worldtocome.org/home.html World to Come program]  \*[http://www.thercg.org/books/tabodcp.html David C. Pack Biography]  \*[http://www.parkonepublishing.com/tbgpu.html The Bible's Greatest Prophecies Unlocked!]  {{Sabbath-Keeping Churches}}  [[Category:Church of God (Armstrong)]]  [[Category:New religious movements]]  [[Category:Religious organizations established in 1998]]  [[Category:Church of God denominations]]  [[Category:Christian denominations, unions, and movements established in the 20th century]]  [[pl:Odrodzony Kościół Boży]] |