

# THE JOURNAL

*Issue 27, 30 April 1999*

## **26 religious organizations, most with no WCG links, teach WCG-like doctrines**

**By Mac Overton**

Norm Edwards has compiled information that is sure to be of interest to amateur Church of God historians. In Vol. 4, No. 9, of his [Servants' News](#) periodical (dated December but mailed out in March), Mr. Edwards lists 26 religious groups in several categories whose teachings are similar to those of Radio/Worldwide Church of God founder Herbert W. Armstrong.

In "Was Herbert Armstrong the Only One to Teach Sabbath, Holy Days, and Clean Meats?" Mr. Edwards says the groups' combined membership is many times those Mr. Armstrong reached.

All the groups listed are Sabbatarian, and many keep the annual feast days. Most observe the laws of clean and unclean meats.

Some have other doctrines in common with Mr. Armstrong, although others hold to teachings that the old Worldwide Church of God would consider to be error.

Mr. Edwards noted that, unless his article stated otherwise, "none of them learned any of their truth from Herbert Armstrong or the Worldwide Church of God."

Mr. Edwards added that, since most groups do not adhere to the "hierarchical" structure of the WCG, they are free to keep other doctrines as they understand them from the Bible.

"In other words," Mr. Edwards said, "some members of these groups may understand more Bible truth than their organization's doctrinal statement indicates."

A copy of *Servants' News* is available from P.O. Box 220, Charlotte, Mich. 48813, U.S.A., or 75260.1603@compuserve.com or by calling (517) 543-5544. The groups listed include the following:

- The Seventh-day Adventist Church, with about 10 million adherents. The SDA movement includes dozens of splinter groups, some of which keep the feast days, reject the Trinity and hold to other teachings similar to Mr. Armstrong's.

"If only 1 percent of Seventh-day Adventists have accepted doctrines similar to your own, that would be 100,000 people who believe like you but were not taught by Herbert Armstrong," Mr. Edwards wrote.

- The True Jesus Church, with about two million members in China. It keeps a low profile, Mr. Edwards said, because it is not officially recognized. (The True Jesus Church has offices in the United States, including in Dallas, Texas, and Garden Grove, Calif.)
- The Church of God (Seventh Day) has several branches and more than 100,000 followers (CG7 president Whaid Rose has told *The Journal* that attendance may be as much as 200,000 worldwide), mostly outside the United States. One branch keeps the feast days. The CG7 groups are larger than all WCG splits combined.

- Seventh Day Baptists had about 55,000 members in 1986. A diverse group, some SDBs are similar to other Baptists, except for the worship day, while others hold doctrines similar to COG groups.
- The House of God, Holy Church of the Living God, Pillar and Ground of the Truth, House of Prayer for All People, Inc., has about 10,000 members, most of them blacks. About 130 congregations are in the United States, Canada, Jamaica and Africa. Doctrines include the feast days, foot-washing and clean meats.
- The Church of God and Saints of God has about 8,000 members. It was founded in 1896 by William Saunders Crowdy, who was born a slave. He taught the Sabbath and feast days. The church's main annual convocation is at Passover.
- Evangelical Reformed Methodists consist of 68 North American congregations that separated from other Methodists. They observe the clean-meat laws, do not use crosses and follow some other doctrines similar to COG groups.
- Scottish Sabbatarians on the Scottish island of Arran are people who kept the Sabbath and feast days in the early part of this century. Doctrines included British Israelism, clean meats, eternal destruction of the wicked and use of the name Church of God. They have since scattered or disbanded.
- The English Sabbatarians met in a building inscribed "Church of God" that dated from the 1600s.

A woman who was raised in the church knew of seven congregations in the early part of this century. She later came in contact with the WCG.

- The Dutch Sabbath Association is a group consisting of several small, mostly Sabbatarian groups that have distributed 500,000 leaflets on the Sabbath. Congregations are growing as a result.
- The Ukrainian Sabbatarians fellowship began on Pentecost in 1949 when a Ukrainian began to keep the Sabbath. Congregations grew but were persecuted by the Soviet secret police (KGB). More than 3,000 Sabbatarians live in the Transcarpathian region.
- Transylvanian Sabbatarians trace their roots to the 1500s. Keeping many "Jewish" practices such as the food laws, they have been persecuted by Sunday-keepers and sometimes by the government. A few thousand remain.
- Polish Sabbatarians include the Sabbath Day Christian Church, which has roots in the SDAs. They disavow SDA founder Ellen G. White, the Trinity and other doctrines.

About 400 members attend in 25 congregations.

- Chilean and Argentinean Sabbatarians began with some Church of God (Seventh Day) members who began to keep the feast days in the 1930s. They eventually came in contact with the WCG. Some joined, but others remained independent.
- Burmese Sabbatarians number about 17,000 in a variety of congregations. They were influenced by the WCG and SDA literature but are not connected to these organizations. (See "17,000 Burmese Attend COGs Through HWA Influence," March 31.)
- The Australian Independent Sabbatarians were founded in the 1930s by a former SDA minister. They were called the Remnant Church of God, a group that observed the feast days and was similar to other COGs. Later the group was led by a former WCG member but seems to have disbanded.

- The Independent Church of God (Seventh Day) Movement, founded by G.G. Rupert, taught keeping the feast days, abstinence from pagan days, clean and unclean meats and British Israelism.

Mr. Rupert died in 1922, and many congregations he founded joined other groups or broke up. His daughter kept his publication, The Remnant of Israel, operating until 1929.

- The Prophetic Herald Ministry was founded by Alexander Schiffner in 1933. He taught the Sabbath and British Israelism and had a radio broadcast on at least 40 stations. His ministry broke up after his death in 1973, but some followers eventually joined the WCG.
- The Little Children of Jesus was founded by John Quincy Adams, a Baptist minister, in 1921. He taught the Sabbath and feast days.
- The Church of God, Jerusalem Acres and Restoration Foundation. has no connection with other COG groups and has a Jewish flavor.
- In Jasper, Ark., an independent congregation is headed by Peter Youngs, grandson of Andrew Dugger, a prominent COG leader in the 1920s and 1930s.
- In the Australian state of Queensland, a Sunday-keeping group here converted to the Sabbath and is associated with an annual "pilgrimage" to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles and to show solidarity with Jews.

Many keep the Sabbath and feast days in homes.

The article also lists several other, smaller groups.