

## Brief Biography of Richard Nickels

- Shirley Nickels (1949- ), formerly Shirley Lorraine Whitaker, grew up in the Church of God in Asheville, North Carolina, and Eugene, Oregon. She currently serves as Office Manager for The Bible Sabbath Association from the Nickels home in Wyoming.
- Serving God's people has been a labor of love for the Nickels family. They believe that God's Truth is so precious that they must diligently share it with others. During his more than twenty years of ministry, Richard Nickels has never been monetarily compensated for his labor for the brethren. All tithes and offerings donated to Giving & Sharing (which are USA income tax deductible) are used for serving Sabbath-keepers around the world. Richard was ordained an elder the Church of God in October, 1999.
- Giving & Sharing and Richard C. Nickels: Who are We?
- Letters from correspondents often ask us: "Who are you?" and "What is 'Giving & Sharing' all about?" Here is a brief answer.
- Profile: Richard Charles Nickels
- Born: June 10, 1947 at Portland, Oregon
- Ancestry: Mainly German
- Parents: Henry Charles Nickels, Rosemary (Rosina) Schmidt
- Baptized: March, 1969
- Married: January 23, 1972 to Shirley L. Whitaker
- Children: Barbara (1975), Rachel (1979), Amanda (1984)
- Education: graduate of Linfield College, B.A. 1969 summa cum laude, major in mathematics and history
- Occupation: Revenue accountant for large coal mining company
- Church: Worldwide Church of God 1969-1975
- Church of God, The Eternal 1975-1978
- Independent 1978-1995
- Ordained an elder by Tom Justus of Church of God Sabbath Day, Springdale, Arkansas 1999
- Attend United Church of God mostly 1996-present
- **Religious Background**
- I was raised in Portland, Oregon and spent the greater part of my early life in that area. In 1960 my parents and I moved to the Oregon coast, where I began listening to the radio broadcast of "The World Tomorrow" with Herbert W. Armstrong, and his son Garner Ted Armstrong. Careful study of Biblical doctrines they presented, plus the divine intervention in my life through a traumatic experience led to my repentance and baptism in March 1969 at the age of 21. I began attending the Worldwide Church of God Sabbath services and annual Holy Day Festivals.
- In 1971, Raymond Cole, Evangelist and Director of Festival Site Construction for the Church, hired me as a special assistant. Along with doing survey work at the Wisconsin Dells and Mt. Pocono, Pennsylvania festival sites, I did research and writing for a special project of Mr. Cole's: compiling a history of the Sabbath-keeping Churches of God.
- Financial problems in the Worldwide Church of God led to the termination of Festival site construction, as well as my job. In 1972, I found myself in the Church's Big Sandy, Texas Ambassador College campus as an accounts payable clerk in the college business office. In 1973, Raymond Cole was named Regional Director of the Church's Pasadena, California church area. He hired me as his Administrative Assistant. For almost a year, I was fully involved in church administration, budgeting and planning, as well as research and writing for Mr. Cole's sermons on regional trips to churches.
- The Worldwide Church of God was at this time undergoing major internal difficulties. Factions were struggling to liberalize Church teachings on divorce, Holy Days, healing, tithing and other doctrines. As a leading proponent of conservative Church teachings, Raymond Cole became very unpopular and as a result lost his position as Regional Director, going on a year long sabbatical leave. As a consequence, I too lost my position and returned to Portland.

- The year 1974 saw a major division in the Church, as thousands left and/or were disfellowshipped for going into more liberal doctrines. Many totally gave up the faith. In an effort to stem the tide of members leaving the Church, numerous doctrines were changed, including the date of Pentecost, and teachings on divorce and remarriage, the Sabbath, tithing and healing. I did not and still do not agree with any of these doctrinal changes.
- Faced with the termination of his year's leave, Raymond Cole had to either accept these unscriptural doctrinal changes or be put out of the Church. At my urging, along with several others, he began holding public Bible Studies defending earlier Church teachings. As a result, we were excommunicated from the Worldwide Church of God, and formed a new organization, Church of God, The Eternal, in 1975. I was glad to write several major articles for this new group, including the ones on Three Times a Year, Pentecost, Marriage and Divorce, and most of the one on Tithing. Several former Worldwide ministers joined the group.
- Some of the same problems extant in the Worldwide Church of God became apparent in the new group. Doctrinal liberalization was one. This was particularly serious because the leadership publicly claimed to be "conservative," yet in certain cases acted very "liberal." Another serious problem was lack of brotherly love and concern for the membership, a problem echoed by numbers of people across the country. To my regret, in early 1978 a separation became necessary.
- **How Giving & Sharing Began**
- Giving & Sharing stems from the results of the research on church history that I did when employed by the Worldwide Church of God. The 1971 termination of my job with Festival Construction also terminated the formal writing of the History of the Church of God. But during spare time from 1972-1973, I was able to complete *A History of the Seventh Day Church of God*, Vols. I and II, as well as *Six Papers on the History of the Church of God*. As a courtesy to Mr. Cole, I included his name as co-author on the original edition, although he never wrote a sentence of the books, and never discussed with me their contents. A copy went to Mr. Cole, and a few others to Church officials.
- The books I wrote would have probably gathered dust had not they been given unsolicited publicity in 1977-1978 by the Bible Advocate, chief periodical of the Church of God (Seventh Day) Denver Group. This produced a flood of requests for copies of the books. I was contacted by several wanting multiple copies. One was Elder Ray Straub, a leader of the Church of God (Seventh Day) Denver Group.
- As a result, to prevent unauthorized use of the books and profit-making by others, I copyrighted them in my name, and arranged for their publication. Several hundred copies have been distributed, at no profit to myself.
- Since being put out of the Church of God, The Eternal, which occurred largely because of the dispute over the history books, I have continued to meet with and fellowship with other scattered believers, who like myself and family, continue to believe and practice the truths of the Bible we have the privilege of understanding. Many are former members of the Worldwide Church of God and/or Church of God, The Eternal.
- Due to numerous contacts with many Sabbath-keepers as a result of my books, I wanted to find a way of better serving fellow believers, as well as preserving cherished Biblical truths. Above all, I wanted to avoid financial gain from religious service. In my former affiliations, I had seen gross misuse of church funds. Ministers were often served more than those whom they were supposed to serve. In reviewing the world's religious scene, this factor appeared to be a common problem. Instead of "giving and receiving" (Philippians 4:15), most religious groups take, serving the hierarchy instead of the membership. Newspaper articles called to my attention that sale of religious books was reaping vast profits to publishers and bookstores. What a shame to make merchandise of the Truth!
- I purchased a set of the King James Bible on cassette tape, narrated by Alexander Scourby, from a local Christian bookstore at a "special sale" price of \$97. The normal price at that time was about \$150 for the four dozen cassette tape set. I found that if I bought four sets from the distributor, I could buy this excellent Bible study tool for only \$68! The Christian bookstore had made \$29 gross profit on this "special sale" item! This gave me the idea to start a wholesale book service to God's people so they would not have to pay exorbitant prices. I started advertising this service to those who had bought my books on church history. Thus began the Giving & Sharing bookstore service to Sabbath-keepers.

- **How Giving & Sharing Operates**

- In addition to the books on church history which continue to be of interest to Sabbath keepers, we distribute Bibles, Biblical reference books, and provide articles and books on many Bible topics: the Sabbath, Biblical Holy Days, Tithing, Laws of Health, Marriage, etc. Wholesale arrangements with major jobbers and publishers enable us to deliver almost any Bible or religious book in print at a 30% to 50% discount. Much material is given away freely.
- Thousands of dollars worth of books and articles have been distributed throughout the world, all without a bit of personal profit. Our "suggested donation" is intended to represent our "break even" cost of materials, postage and handling.
- Giving & Sharing is an activity of Sharing & Giving, Inc., a tax-exempt religious service, not a "church." Donations above the "suggested donation" are tax-deductible for United States income tax purposes. We are grateful for donations above the "suggested donation," which allow us to send more free material to those who cannot afford to send a donation. More money donated to Giving & Sharing means more WORK for us, which we are most happy to do because that is the reason for our being, to serve others with the Almighty's Truth. Giving & Sharing pays no salaries.
- In 1993, Earl Lewis assumed the responsibility of mailing books and articles. I work full time for a major coal mining company, and continue to write articles and correspond with those we serve. For a number of years, Ronald H. Stewart of Tennessee assisted Giving & Sharing in review and writing articles, as well as leadership and counsel in the over-all direction of Giving & Sharing. George Johnson of Michigan has assisted in printing our articles and books, as well as mailing articles.
- We thank the many people who have spread the word about Giving & Sharing so that we can serve more. Most of our new contacts come from word of mouth. We write Bible Study articles that we distribute periodically to those who have requested to be on our mailing list.
- Do you have a Bible question or personal problem? We will do our best to answer all queries for assistance. If we can't help you, perhaps we can refer you to someone who can. It's a tough and wicked society we live in, and sometimes it helps to have someone to write or talk about a problem.

- **Fellowship**

- Since 1978, we have not been closely affiliated with any religious organization, although we fellowship with several groups. There are many other independent Sabbath-keepers like ourselves. We observe the Sabbath at home with the family, and the Annual Holy Days with other scattered brethren, as the Eternal permits. We treasure and seek for more fellowship with others of like mind. The United Church of God is our most frequent point for fellowship. We have no Church of God in our area. A few times a year the United Church of God has services 140 miles away from us. On the Third Sabbath of each month, we sponsor a telephone Bible Study. See the G&S home page for contact information.

- **Religious Beliefs**

- These are some of our distinguishing beliefs, based on our understanding of the Truth of the Eternal: observance of the Sabbath (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset), observance of Biblical Holy Days using the calendar given to the Hebrews, non-observance of man-made holidays of pagan origin such as Christmas, Easter, New Years, Halloween, Valentine's Day, etc., abstinence from foods defined by the Bible as "unclean" and unfit for human consumption, use of natural foods and reliance upon the Almighty to heal us when we are sick or hurt, a 100% commitment of time and resources to furthering the work of the Almighty (this includes tithes and offerings, prayer and fasting, and diligent effort to help others know about the Eternal), and a firm belief in the sanctity and permanence of marriage, opposing divorce, homosexuality and other forms of sexual perversion. Our book, Biblical Doctrine, further explains our doctrinal beliefs.
- Major items we distribute are Biblical Holy Days, Biblical Law, Biblical Marriage and Family, Biblical Health and Healing, Bible Studies, and our histories on the Church of God.

## *Rich Nickels*

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**Visitation:** Visitation will start one hour prior to the service.

**Funeral Service:** 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 7, 2006 at Stevenson Funeral Home Chapel

**Second Service:** 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 11, 2006 at the Evergreen Staples Funeral Chapel in Vancouver, Washington

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Funeral services for Rich Nickels will be held 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 7, 2006 at Stevenson Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Charles Small of Grace Bible Church officiating. Visitation will start one hour prior to the service. A second service will be held at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 11, 2006 at the Evergreen Staples Funeral Chapel in Vancouver, Washington, with Pastor Steve Kieler of the Independent Church of God officiating. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service. Interment will be in the Evergreen Memorial Gardens Cemetery.

Rich Nickels, age 58, of Gillette, Wyoming died Sunday, June 4, 2006 at Campbell County Memorial Hospital of cancer.

Richard Charles Nickels was born June 10, 1947 in Portland, Oregon the son of Henry and Rosemary (Schmidt) Nickels. Mr. Nickels was raised and educated in Portland, Oregon. Upon his graduation he attended Linfield College at McMinnville, Oregon graduating at the top of his class. Rich married Shirley Lorraine Whitaker on January 23, 1972 in Junction City, Oregon. He started his career with Pacific Power and Light in 1974. In 1981 Rich and his family moved to Sheridan, Wyoming where he began work for Nerco Coal Corporation when it relocated. In 1993 Rich came to Gillette, Wyoming where he worked in accounting, most recently as a Revenue Accounting Supervisor for Rio Tinto Energy of America. He was President of the Bible Sabbath Association and he also organized "Giving and Sharing", a non-profit organization to help people obtain religious books at cost. Rich liked to write and for thirty years produced a monthly newsletter about different health tips or concerns and different Bible scriptures and stories. He also authored several books. Rich also enjoyed computers, gardening, hiking, racquetball, tennis and traveling. Rich loved playing cards and games with friends, and classical music. Above all Rich enjoyed spending time with his wife, children, mother and sisters.

Rich will be missed by his wife, Shirley of Gillette, Wyoming; 3 daughters: Barbara Nickels Parada of Houston, Texas, Rachel Lyn Nickels of Edmonds, Washington and Amanda Byrd of Eugene, Oregon; 2 sisters: Henrietta Shirk of Butte, Montana and Linda Whitesell of Everett, Washington; and 1 grandchild.

He was preceded in death by his parents and sister, Laura Prince.

Memorials and condolences may be sent in Rich's name in care of Stevenson Funeral Home 210 W. 5<sup>th</sup> St. Gillette, Wyoming 82716 or via the internet at [www.stevensonandsons.com](http://www.stevensonandsons.com)