

# History of the Seventh Day Church of God

by Richard C. Nickels

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[Table of Contents](#) | [About the Book](#) | [About the Author](#) | [Andrew N. Dugger](#) | [John Kiesz](#) | [Download Zip File of Entire Book in Text Format](#)

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"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."  
Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### SECTION

[I. Introduction - Controversial History](#)

[II. The Messenger Party](#)

[III. The "Church of God" Controversy](#)

[IV. The Question of Ellen G. White's Visions](#)

[V. The Michigan Church of God](#)

[VI. The Church of God in Marion, Iowa](#)

[VII. The Move to Stanberry](#)

[VIII. Independent Church of God Splits - 1905](#)

[IX. Andrew N. Dugger and the Church of God Surge in the 1920s](#)

[X. The Division of 1933 - Stanberry and Salem](#)

[XI. Two Groups: Stanberry and Salem, 1933-1949](#)

[XII. The Merger: 1948 - 1949](#)

[XIII. The Post Merger Period, 1949 - 1973](#)

[XIV. Analysis at 1973](#)

[XV. The "Church Depression Period," 1974-1987](#)

[XVI. The 1990s: Spiritual Abyss and Rays of Hope](#)

[FOOTNOTES](#)

[APPENDIX](#)

### **About the Book**

*History of the Seventh Day Church of God* covers the controversial history of the Sabbath-keeping Churches of God from the 1850s to the 1990s. Those who never accepted the visions of Mrs. Ellen G. White, founder of the Seventh-day Adventists, became known as the Church of God. From Michigan to Iowa to Missouri, they continued to promote the seventh day Sabbath from a loose coalition that frequently endured splits and divisions. Jacob Brinkerhoff, Andrew N. Dugger, John Kiesz, and Herbert W. Armstrong were the most famous Church of God ministers, whose writings have been preserved to this day. This book serves to preserve the history of the Church of God for future generations.

### **About the Author**

**Richard C. Nickels** (1947- ), a native of Oregon, has also lived in Texas, California, Missouri, Washington, and Wyoming. He and his wife Shirley have three children: Barbara, Rachel and Amanda. An accountant and computer consultant, Nickels currently works for a major coal

mining company in Gillette, Wyoming. He is a graduate of Linfield College (BA, 1969, *Summa Cum Laude*).

Richard Nickels became a *World Tomorrow* broadcast listener in 1961, was baptized in 1969, and was employed by the Worldwide Church of God from 1971-1973 in festival site construction and church administration. Since 1978, he has written numerous articles and books for **Giving & Sharing**, a non-profit mail order bookstore serving Sabbath-keepers around the world. These include *History of the Seventh Day Church of God*, *Six Papers on the History of the Church of God*, *Biblical Holy Days*, *Biblical Law*, *Biblical Health and Healing*, *Biblical Doctrine*, *Biblical Marriage and Family*, *Bible Studies*, *Newsletters*, and other articles.

**Andrew N. Dugger (1886 - 1975)** was the most famous Church of God leader in the twentieth century. Born in Bassett, Nebraska in 1886, Andrew N. Dugger's father, A.F. Dugger, Sr., had been an Advent Christian Minister. When commissioned by his church to do a study refuting the Sabbath, A.F. Dugger instead became convinced that the Sabbath should be observed. The result was a book he later published, called *The Bible Sabbath Defended*.

For more than thirty-five years until his death in 1910, A.F. Dugger, Sr., was a leader in the Church of God, Seventh Day. His son Andrew, a schoolteacher and farmer, was in his early 20's when his father died.

A bright light in the sky around him seemed to Dugger to be a sign from God that he should follow his father's footsteps in the ministry. A.N. Dugger immediately sold his large farm and equipment, and went to the University of Chicago, where he majored in theology and public speaking, mastering Greek, Hebrew, and German.

From time to time, Dugger returned to Bassett to visit his mother and Effie Carpenter (1895-1980), a student of his whom he wanted to marry. Although he first proposed to her when she was sixteen, it wasn't until 1925 until they were married. They shared fifty years together.

Soon after college graduation, Dugger was invited by the Executive Committee of the Church of God to move to Stanberry, Missouri, to become editor of *The Bible Advocate*, a position his father had held before being forced to retire because of ill health. In 1914, Dugger arrived in Stanberry to begin his work in the ministry. For eighteen years he was editor, also serving as President of the General Conference. As field representative, he traveled widely, holding evangelistic meetings and [public debates](#). The famous "Porter Dugger Debate," between Dugger and W. Curtis Porter, a Church of Christ minister, was later published as a book of over 230 pages. In 1919, Dugger wrote *The Bible Home Instructor*, which publicized the Seventh Day Church of God, and substantially increased its membership during the 1920's.

Two of Dugger's most adamant doctrinal positions were: a scriptural form of church organization with leaders chosen by lot rather than election, and a world headquarters in Jerusalem, Israel. After visiting Israel for only a year in 1931-32, Dugger returned to live in Sweet Home, Oregon. In 1935, A.N. Dugger and C.O. Dodd published a book, *A History of the True Church*, which

traces Sabbath-keepers from apostolic times to modern days. Dugger greatly influenced Herbert Armstrong, who was for years affiliated with the Church of God, Seventh Day, but later formed his own church, the Radio (later Worldwide) Church of God.

Dugger remained pastor at Marion, Oregon until 1953, when he and Effie settled permanently in Jerusalem, and launched the *Mt. Zion Reporter*. His aggressive leadership resulted in thousands of converts around the world. Andrew N. Dugger died in 1975 at the age of 89. Dugger's son-in-law, Gordon Fauth, continued the Jerusalem work.

**John Kiesz** (1903-1996), one of the most remarkable ministers of the Church of God, Seventh Day, greatly influenced the Church of God, Seventh Day, in the twentieth century. The grandson of Philip Kiesz, Sr., John grew up in a German Sabbath-keeping Church of God near Eureka, South Dakota. In 1898, a minister named Halbesleben accepted the Sabbath, and as a result, a number of Seventh Day Adventist churches became independent Churches of God. John's uncle Christ Kiesz was converted with a large group of younger people in 1910. It was not until 1923 that the Germans came into contact with the Church of God General Conference at Stanberry, Missouri. John Kiesz was converted in 1924.

About 1925, John Kiesz became contributing editor of the German *Bible Advocate*. He met his wife-to-be, Katherine, at a camp meeting near Eureka in 1927. They were married in 1929. After graduation from Arizona Teacher's College, they began to travel and sing gospel songs. Their unique style of singing brought them to over forty states and several Canadian provinces. In 1931, John first came to Stanberry, where he served for two years as editor of *The Bible Advocate*.

In 1934, the Kieszes went into full-time evangelistic work. During the 1940's, Kiesz worked closely with Herbert Armstrong. The Kieszes lost their first two children, but their two younger daughters, Pearl and Martha, assisted them in evangelistic meetings by singing, from 1940 to 1956. From 1959 to 1963, Elder Kiesz was a professor at Midwest Bible College in Stanberry, continuing evangelistic activity in the summer months. For several years, John Kiesz pastored a church in St. Louis, Missouri. The Kieszes traveled widely, building up many churches around the country. Gaining funds from the sale of a record album of their gospel songs, the Kieszes conducted a missionary trip to many foreign countries in 1971. For many years, the Kieszes lived in Canon City, Colorado. Even in his later years, Elder John Kiesz was an excellent speaker, and very knowledgeable of the Scriptures. His faithful wife of sixty-four years, Katherine, died in 1993.