

# EXIT AND SUPPORT NETWORK

Aiding those spiritually abused by Worldwide Church of God, Philadelphia Church of God, and all offshoots

[Home](#)

[Recovery Articles](#)

[Understanding Mind Control & Exploitation](#)

[Child Survivors](#)

[Mike's Enlightenment Page \(Info on PCG\)](#)

[Exposé on Worldwide Church of God \(GCI\)](#)

[Questioning Herbert W. Armstrong \(was he who he said he was?\)](#)

[Testimonies & Writings](#)

[Questions & Answers](#)

[Letters](#)

[Splinter Groups](#)

[Resources \(Booklist, CDs, Links, Referrals\)](#)

[What's New](#)

[Humor](#)

[About Us](#)

## Grace Communion International - New Age and Ecumenical Connections

GCI has involved themselves with the ecumenical movement and endorsed several New Age authors. Their articles and studies often use New Age terms; i.e., "transformed," "change agent," "paradigm," "hearing the voice of God," "networking," "visualization," etc. (See: [New Age Terms in the Church](#))

(NOTE: Grace Communion International was formerly known as [Worldwide Church of God founded by Herbert Armstrong](#)).

GCI church services include a potpourri of belief styles, including tongues speaking<sup>1</sup> and other emotional gestures which are prevalent in Pentecostal, Four Square Gospel, and modern Charismatic churches.

Grace Communion International has aligned themselves with New Evangelicals and have promoted New Ager Richard J. Foster from Renovaré ([known as mystical movement](#)) and Dallas Willard:

"An excellent book I can recommend to you on the subject of the spiritual disciplines and their role in the Christian life is *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster (*Worldwide News*, December 1999, "Personal from Joseph Tkach" and "The role of the law in Christian life," 1999)

"I urge every pastor to read and study Dallas Willard's book *The Spirit of the Disciplines* and Richard Foster's book *The Celebration of Discipline*." ("Leading in Spiritual Formation, A Pastor's Main Business," Dan Rogers, May 1999.)

The April 22, 1997, *The Worldwide News* first quoted Foster regarding prophecy speculations. Richard Foster is also Professor of spiritual formation at Azusa Pacific University. Richard Foster promotes New Age philosophy to churches.<sup>2</sup> GCI not only quotes from Richard Foster, but has

[Contents](#)[Email Us](#)[Search](#)

recommended and used his book *Celebration of Discipline* as a resource (i. e., "Spiritual Discipline Series," 1998, 1999, "Discovery Group Course," "Recommended Reading, Books for Biblical Studies," etc.) Mike Fezell encouraged their lay pastors to read Foster's book at pastor's conferences.<sup>3</sup> GCI encouraged members and pastors to attend Foster's Renovaré October 2000 conference in Laguna Hills, California.<sup>4</sup> Fezell quoted Richard J. Foster's letter written to those on his mailing list.<sup>5</sup>

Richard Foster was WCG's guest speaker at the International Pastor's and Elder's Conference, July 26-29, 2007, at the Hyatt Grand Champions Resort and Spa, a resort in the Palm Springs area of Southern California.<sup>6</sup> More than 800 attended the conference, including 19 Filipino WCG ministers with their wives. The conference focused on Spiritual Formation. More than 800 attended the conference, including 19 Filipino WCG ministers with their wives. The conference focused on Spiritual Formation.

For more info on Foster's teachings and activities, see the exposé article: [Richard Foster - General Teachings and Activities](#). [offsite link]

For more on Dallas Willard, including his connections and endorsements, see: [Dallas Willard - Promoting Contemplative Prayer and Mysticism Through Spiritual Formation](#). [offsite link]

Grace Communion International's involvement with the ecumenical movement (which includes interfaith unity) includes the modern Charismatic movement<sup>7</sup> and many compromising organizations, one of which is Promise Keepers. The modern Charismatic "Word-faith" movement (signs/ wonders, prophetic revelations) is gaining a foothold in many churches today. Their ministers are on a number of radio and TV stations and they bring in millions of dollars from their uninformed followers.

Books by Henri Nouwen are endorsed by GCI on their website. (For articles about Henri Nouwen and his belief in contemplative spirituality, see: [What did Henri Nouwen really believe?](#) Also read: [The Issue of Other Religious Practices as Worship in the Church](#), which shows the eastern mystical source of contemplative and centering prayer. This last article also mentions authors which GCI has spoken favorably about; i. e., Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, Henri Nouwen, Brian McLaren, and Thomas Merton. [offsite links])

GCI has endorsed Rick Warren (pastor of Saddleback Community Church in California, situated on a 120 acre campus) and his material. As CGI's membership continued to decline, they became involved in church planting (Rick Warren style).<sup>8</sup> Warren Smith critiqued *The Purpose Driven Church* in his book *Deceived on Purpose: The New Age Implications of the Purpose Driven Church*, showing that Rick Warren was mentored by Robert Schuller (tied in with New Age leaders and philosophies) and that Warren's theology is likewise pantheistic ("God is in everything"). Also see the following offsite articles: [Change Agents in the Church: Rick Warren](#) and [An Analysis of Rick Warren's "Purpose Driven" Church Growth Strategy](#).

WCG was listed on The Mission America Coalition as one of the churches endorsing the 40 days of Purpose initiative and the film *Passion of the Christ*. The 40 Days of Purpose is tied in with Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Church* (the Church Growth Movement). [Update: That 2004 webpage has since been removed, although we saved a copy of the page. They are [now listed here as a Mission America Coalition Partner](#) under their new name Grace Communion International.]

WCG's name is also on [Honor Our Heroes](#), which is an initiative of the Mission America Coalition. *The Worldwide News*, 1999, gave a report on a Mission America meeting in which WCG attended: "Dan Rogers, superintendent of ministers, and his wife, Barbara, represented the WCG Jan. 21 at Mission America's annual meeting in San Francisco." ("Mission America: Sharing Christ by the end of 2000")

GCI (WCG) in the Caribbean stated they have had conferences sponsored by Willow Creek Community Church (Bill Hybels)<sup>9</sup> They are using Willow Creek's "Promiseland" curriculum for the children in their congregation.<sup>10</sup> (Read: [Willow Creek Hegelian Dialectic & the New World Order](#) and [Protestant No More: Willow Creek Infiltrated by a Mystic Quaker Movement Called Renovaré](#) for more info on WCA. [offsite links])

Joseph Tkach, Worldwide Church of God, is listed as one of the participants in the January 27-29, 2003 Meeting of [Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.](#) (ESN retains a copy of the web document); WCG was a participant in the meeting of The National Council of Churches was represented. WCG's name was listed as part of churches / organizations which agreed to join CCT, but was withdrawn as of August 2006. Michael Morrison, Worldwide Church of God, was listed for "Participants of the 2006 Meeting of CCT-USA." CCT has been set up "to broaden and expand fellowship, unity, and witness among the diverse expressions of Christian faith today." More can be discerned about this ecumenical organization from their website.

Grace Communion International is listed as one of the churches under "[Ecumenical and Interreligious Activities](#)" (scroll down) on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops webpage.

Grace Communion International has embraced Replacement Theology and Amillennialism. The following are only a few quotes which were taken from GCI's website and literature which show this:

"The church is the extension of national Israel, or better, its replacement, elevated to a spiritual plane." ("Who Are the 144,000?" 2000, literature/Bible/Revelation) "In the New Testament, the church is known as spiritual Israel, Zion and 'the mother.' " ("Jesus and the Church in Revelation 12," literature/Bible/Revelation)

"Spiritual Israel, an analogy for the church since the New Testament..." ("Is the New Covenant Really New?" by James Henderson, *Worldwide News*, March, 2003, Africa Worldwide Church of God)

"Circumcision of the heart is needed if one is to be part of the community of spiritual Israel and a true child of Abraham." ("The Context of John 3:1-12" by Gene Nouhan, 1993)

"Lessons From the OT. ... The Church is the new *spiritual* Israel, the people of God." ("One, HOLY Church" by Phil Hopwood, June 6, 1998, Hobart, Australia) "In accepting the God of Israel, Ruth foreshadows the gentiles becoming a part of spiritual Israel, the church." ("Exploring the Word of God, Unit 2: The Historical Books, Exploring Ruth," 2002)

"As a result of his exaltation, Christ is at God's right hand, as the messianic head of a new, spiritual Israel." ("The Church Begins on Pentecost, ACTS 2:1-47," by Paul Kroll, 2001)

"Jesus is the head of a new, spiritual Israel." ("Pentecost: A Christian Festival for the 21st Century" by David Sheridan, *Northern Light*, May/June 2003)

WCG (GCI) joined the Evangelical Ministries to New Religions in 1998. EMNR is a Lausanne-covenanted organization and has, in fact, been instrumental in mainstreaming the Mormon religion as a Christian denomination. For more information, read the following offsite report: [Evangelical Ministries to New Religions](#). GCI has given their approval to the Lausanne Movement, calling it a work of God.<sup>11</sup>

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) accepted the Worldwide Church of God into full membership in 1997.<sup>12</sup> Jack Hayford, a hyper Charismatic who has involved himself in unity movements around the world with New Agers and Catholic leaders,<sup>13</sup> was instrumental in helping the Worldwide Church of God become a member of the NAE.

The website for [Worldwide Church of God \(also known as Grace Communion International\) in the UK](#) states that they are a member of the Evangelical Alliance, which is the United Kingdom's version of the stateside National Association of Evangelicals. The NAE is under the umbrella/authority of the global World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF). The WEF was originally named the Evangelical Alliance and was founded at a global gathering of missionaries in 1846. Very significantly, this meeting was held at the United Grand Lodge in London England and "dedicated to the purposes of Freemasonry." It was renamed the World Evangelical Fellowship in the U.S. in 1951; other nations, such as the UK, still retain the name Evangelical Alliance. (For more info, read: [The Evangelical Alliance/World Evangelical Fellowship \[1846\]](#))

Leading ministers from Grace Communion International originally obtained their doctorates from Fuller Theological Seminary (which no longer holds to the doctrine of inerrancy of the Bible and where most of the "church growth movement" can be traced back to) and Azusa Pacific University<sup>14</sup>

(which is known as a theologically liberal institution, Charismatic, Pentecostal, and a member of Willow Creek Association).

GCI appears to have immersed themselves in "whatever works" in religion. They mix regularly with new evangelicals and others. This has enabled them to get into countries they couldn't penetrate before.

Several groups categorized as religious "cults" are beginning to mainstream.<sup>15</sup> In November 2003 the ICC [International Church of Christ] leader stepped down and "apologized to members for his sins of arrogance, anger and insensitivity" and said ICC will develop a "new governance." The Mormon Church is even beginning to appear more and more Christian.

[Mainstreaming Mormonism](#) [offsite link]

After they finished their "study" on the role of women in the church, GCI now supports the ordaining of women as elders and pastors. (*WCG News*, "Doctrinal Team Completes Study of Scripture; Announces Policy on Women in Leadership," Jan./Feb. 2007 *Together*.)

In 2012, Greg Johnson of Standing Together Ministries in Utah (along with several Utah pastors) visited CGI headquarters to "learn about GCI's views concerning how to better interact with alternative religions."<sup>16</sup> Joseph Tkach, Jr. first met Greg Johnson at an "Evening of Friendship" held in the Salt Lake City Tabernacle on November 14, 2004, along with several other evangelicals who were calling for "a better understanding and relationship with Mormons."<sup>17</sup> The main speaker was Ravi Zacharias. Much more on Greg Johnson and the ecumenical nature of Standing Together Ministries can be found in the offsite article: [Can Two Walk Together Unless They Agree? \(Can Christians and Mormons Stand Together?\)](#).

Propaganda works through repetition. When members are exposed to the same message over and over again (in this case the "new" changes), it shuts down their cognitive powers, eliminates questioning, and has a narcotic-like effect on the central nervous system, making them an easy subject for suggestion and manipulation. Since part of their new programming is "God intervened in the Worldwide Church of God," the new changes now have meaning for them. It gives them a reason to remain in the organization. But they still have a group mentality and focus on "the church" and what "they" or "God" is accomplishing in the world. They are kept busy with conferences and traditions ([milieu control](#)), leadership training, strong discipleship methods, self-criticism, and a sense of belonging.

More than listening to the rhetoric about the new changes, it will benefit members and outsiders alike to understand how Neuro-Linguistic Programming<sup>18</sup> has been used.

While Grace Communion International continues to whitewash their history, they have given only

spurious apologies for the devastation they caused to thousands. [Read: [Called to Be Free \(Is it Truth or Only More Worldwide Church of God Propaganda?\)](#)] Since members are kept in a positive mood (common in religious cults) and being fed a steady stream of propaganda about the changes, they will never believe anything could ever have been that wrong with their "church." In their minds, they are still the "elect" that God is working with and it is still "God's church." They fluff off the misery and wrecked lives that the members and their relatives and friends suffered over the years, telling members to "take responsibility for your actions" and "that was the past; we have changed."

Those that have exited have said that they saw no real changes in the members and no changes of any worth in the organization as a whole. All they saw was cognitive dissonance and the same programmed minds. Others have told us that they have learned more about grace and their freedom in Christ in the few years they have been out than they ever did when listening to the confusing explanations by WCG leaders.

The new doctrinal changes, since 1995, have produced: (1) a massive exodus of confused members into offshoot groups; (2) many who still hold to most or all of the teachings of Herbert Armstrong and believe he had "God's restored truth"; (3) exiters who have embraced agnosticism or atheism; (4) exiters who have gone off into New Age teachings, the Word-Faith movement, or unusual belief systems; (5) multitudes of survivors (especially child survivors) who still suffer incomplete healing; (6) a lack of critical thinking skills; and (7) Grace Communion International becoming a part of the ecumenical movement and the Emerging Church.

How could this ever be considered good fruit?

By D. M. Williams

Exit & Support Network™

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**"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." ~John 3:19**

**Also read:** [OIU Newsletters](#) which covers Worldwide Church of God (CGI) and their New Age agenda.

NOTE: Worldwide Church of God [changed their name](#) in April 2009 in the United States to Grace Communion International. (Some local church areas and countries may still carry the former name or a different one.) Today they continue to embrace New Age Teachers and philosophies. Read: [Letter to Worldwide Church of God, Philippines \(On Apostasy--A Radical Proposal\)](#). This Oct. 2006 letter reached close to 350 WCG ministers, including those at

Headquarters; includes a link to a rebuttal to Mike Morrison's reply, plus a 2007 email reply from author Brian Flynn, concerning how we must be discerning of false teachings coming into the church.

**Footnotes:**

1 "We do not forbid tongues speaking." "We welcome tongues-speakers into our fellowship, as long as they do not use their gift in a contentious or offensive way." (Worldwide Church of God Articles About Speaking in Tongues, Pentecostalism, and the Word of Faith, "Does the WCG forbid tongues in church?" July 1997.) Read more about this in "[A member writes to ESN.](#)"

2 "New Age Ideas in Christianity," Cross Walk radio program. [Tape or CD available from ESN.](#))

3 "Lay pastors equipped in intensive sessions," Tom C. Hanson, *Worldwide News*, January 21, 1997.

4 Weekly update from Joe Tkach, June 15, 2000.

5 WN, April 22, 1997, p. 14.

6 December 6, 2006 weekly update by Joseph Tkach; "Coming Events – activity calendar for the WCG"; "Worldwide Church of God Caribbean," July 26, 2006.

7 Read Letters to ESN dated May 14, 2004: [WCG Sells Part of AC Campus to Radically Charismatic Church.](#)

8 *Together*, July-August 2007, "New Church Leadership Training Conference." In GCI's [Church Multiplication Ministries "General Resources" list](#), they have a link to Emerging Church's Rick Warren under "Pastor's Toolbox." They are also listed on: [Church Planting Leadership Fellowship, August 20, 2010.](#)

9 "Regional Snapshot - New look of the WCG in the Caribbean," By Patrick Fearon, 1998

10 *WCG Today*, November/December 2005. [NOTE: In Feb. 2005 *The Worldwide News* in the United States changed its name to *WCG Today*. In May 2006 it was changed to *Together*. A few years later *Together* was no longer available Their magazine is now *Christian Odyssey*.

11 History of Mission Spokane - as of 2-13-00, "What is God Doing?" / "What on Earth is God Doing?" by Gary Roberto.

12 Ted Haggard was former president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) which represents almost 50,000 churches in America. During this time, there were a number of serious concerns regarding him, including his spiritual manipulation, hypocrisy, and promoting the agenda of C. Peter Wagner. On Nov. 4, 2006 Haggard resigned as president of the NAE and was dismissed as senior pastor of the 14,000 member New Life Church in Colorado Springs, CO as a result of sexually immoral behavior. (Read: [Letter to NAE and other concerned Christians.](#))

13 "Jack Hayford (General Teachings/Activities)" by Biblical Discernment Ministries, February 1999.

[14 See this part in OIU Newsletter 6, Pt. 3.](#)

[15 "From Cult to Church: The Quest for Acceptance," audio by Dr. Ron Enroth, 1994.](#)

[16 "Standing Together visits HQ," June 22, 2012](#)

[17 "Evangelicals and Mormons Together" by David Cloud, November 21, 2004.](#)

[18 Neuro-Linguistic Programming involves subliminal messages; i.e., the act of tapping into the unconscious mind apart from the person's conscious knowledge. Read: \[Clues to Application of Mind Control\]\(#\) \(detailed letter to ESN\)](#)

[Back to Exposé on Worldwide Church of God \(GCI\)](#)

[Recovery](#) | [Mind Control](#) | [WCG Exposé](#) | [HWA](#) | [Mike's Page](#) | [Child Survivors](#) | [Testimonies](#) | [Q&A Letters](#) | [What's New](#) | [Poems](#) | [Books](#) | [CDs & Tapes](#) | [Links](#) | [Referrals](#) | [Email Us](#) | [Search](#) | [Disclaimer](#)

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