

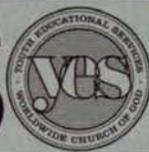
# YOUTH



LEVEL 9

# BIBLE

# LESSONS



LESSON 11



The History of God's Church—Part 3

First Meeting Hall in the U.S.

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# THE HISTORY OF GOD'S CHURCH PART 3

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**G**od's Church began on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31. It has survived through centuries of persecution. Remember, Jesus Christ said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell [the grave] shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

There would never be a time when God would not have His people on the earth. But Jesus also said that His Church would be a "little flock" (Luke 12:32). It was not to be large, but it has survived.

In our last lesson we traced the history of God's Church to the Middle Ages, in what the Bible calls the Thyatira era. In this lesson we will learn how God continued to preserve His true Church, and how the Church developed in Britain and later in America.

## **GOD'S CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

Perhaps at no other time in history was the Church of God more persecuted than in the Middle Ages—from the A.D. 400s until the A.D. 1400s. No one knows how many people were killed just because they were not members of the official state religion.

God's people lived in small villages in the mountains of southeastern Europe for much of the sixth to ninth centuries. Then persecution drove them into the heartland of Europe. Small groups of true believers lived in northern Italy, Switzerland and the south of France.

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## **ABOUT OUR COVER . . .**

God's Church came to America in 1671 when a congregation was founded in Newport, Rhode Island.

Photo by John Halford

Through the A.D. 1100s, the true Gospel was preached by men such as Peter of Bruys, Henri of Laussane and Arnold of Brescia. One of the most influential men of the true Church who began to preach the Gospel was Peter Waldo.

Members of the Church of God were sometimes known by the names of men who were their leaders. When you study Church history, you will often discover more about these people by looking up titles such as Petrobrusians, Henricians, Arnoldists and Waldenses.

Throughout the 1100s, various religious groups grew. This growth was so great that in the early A.D. 1200s, Innocent III began an attack against them. The purpose of this attack was to find those who followed any way other than the state religion.

To believe differently was considered "heresy." People who believed differently were punished by being put in prison, having their property taken and even being put to death.

These were trying times for anyone in God's Church. But God continued to preserve and protect His people. They hid in the valleys and in the mountains, waiting for a time of peace and happiness. Their ultimate goal was not this world, but the wonderful World Tomorrow.

## **THE CHANGING TIMES**

Many changes occurred in the 15th century. God was continuing to prepare the world for the Work of His Church.

In the mid 1400s, Johann Gutenberg, a German printer, invented a printing press with movable type. Information could now be spread

to a greater number of people. The world would begin to change rapidly.

For centuries the most educated class of people were the priests of the state church. Most people could not read. And only a few people had a copy of the Bible.

With the invention of printing, it would now be possible for more people to have Bibles and learn to read the Word of God. Today, millions of copies of the Bible have been taken throughout the world. In the Christian world, more copies of the Bible have been sold than any other book ever published.

Another important event of the 1400s occurred late in the century. Christopher Columbus sailed to the New World—America.

In the early 1500s, Martin Luther started the Protestant Reformation. He was followed by John Calvin in Switzerland and John Knox in Scotland. Also, King Henry VIII began the Protestant Church of England.

Persecuted Christians in Europe sought religious freedom in America in the early 1600s. The early pilgrims who settled in New Eng-

land, and the Quakers who came to Pennsylvania, paved the way for God's Church to become established in the New World.

### Do You Remember?

1. When did the New Testament Church begin? \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Which church had great influence throughout most of Europe during the Middle Ages? \_\_\_\_\_.
3. He was one of the most influential men of the true Church in the A.D. 1100s. \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What important invention made it possible for information to be spread to a greater number of people? \_\_\_\_\_.  
Who invented it? \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Which king started the Church of England? \_\_\_\_\_.

### INFLUENTIAL REFORMERS

In the mid 1300s, a man named John Wycliffe made a great impact on the Christian world. He was one of the leading scholars at



Many people were persecuted throughout the Middle Ages. Illustrated is a crusade against some who were considered heretics by the state church.

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Oxford University. Although part of the official state religion, Wycliffe saw the need to reform certain practices of that church.

One of his greatest contributions was a translation of the Bible into English. The earliest manuscripts of the Bible were in the Hebrew and Greek languages. The Bible had also been translated into Latin, which was the officially accepted version in the state church. Wycliffe's translation would allow the Bible to be understood by the common people who knew only English.

There were others who saw the need for change, such as John Huss at the University of Prague. These people also helped to prepare the way for the Protestant Reformation of the 1500s.

### THE REFORMS OF MARTIN LUTHER

Martin Luther, a Catholic scholar, became disillusioned with certain practices of the Catholic priesthood. In 1517, he nailed his objections—called the 95 Theses—to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany.

Martin Luther was later put out of the state church based in Rome. He lived in exile under the protection of German leaders. During this time, he translated the Bible into the German language. The Luther translation of the Bible is today the most popular version used in the German-speaking Protestant world.

Luther's beliefs eventually led to the establishment of the churches now called Lutheran.

John Calvin led a reform movement in Switzerland. The Protestant movement he founded became the Presbyterian and Reform churches. Presbyterianism was also established in Scotland in the mid 1500s by John Knox. The Church of England was established during the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. It is also called the Anglican church. In America it is called the Episcopal church.

After the Reformation, the Christian world was much different from what it had been. God's true Church, however, was not a part of the Protestant Reformation. God's people were

never a part of the Roman church, and they were not among those who had broken away from that church.

### THE CHURCH IN HOLLAND AND ENGLAND

Near the end of the Thyatira era, the fourth era of God's Church, a Waldensian preacher named Walter went to Holland, and later to England, preaching the Gospel. This was in the early 1300s. Walter became known as Walter the Lollard—later shortened to Walter Lollard. The name Lollard later became associated with the people of God's Church.

But not all Lollards were a part of the Church of God. The name Lollard was also applied to the followers of John Wycliffe.

The Waldenses, Lollards and some other groups of the 15th and 16th centuries were sometimes known by the name *Anabaptist*. Anabaptist means "one who is rebaptized." This came from their practice of rebaptizing adults who had been baptized as infants. This is one doctrine that we find throughout the centuries among the Church of God—the practice of baptizing only mature adults who understood the meaning of repentance.

Another name associated with the Church of God during this time is *Sabbatarians*. This comes from the fact that the Church of God observed the seventh-day Sabbath. But those who were part of God's Church called themselves the Church of God.

After the development of various Protestant groups in Europe, God's people were able to more safely establish congregations. There are records of at least 11 Sabbatarian Churches of God in England during the early part of the 1600s. Three of these were in London.

In 1611, during the reign of King James I, the Bible was translated into another English version. This is the most commonly used English translation of the Bible today. We call it the *Authorized* or the *King James Bible*.

Even though tensions were lessened because of the Protestant Reformation, God's people continued to be persecuted by others, including

the Protestants. There was also persecution of other religious groups such as French Huguenots, Quakers and Puritans. These all suffered because of their religious beliefs.

### Do You Remember?

1. Who was the scholar at Oxford who translated the Bible into the English language?  
\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Who wrote the 95 Theses? \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What did the followers of Walter become known as? \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What is one doctrine that we find in the history of God's people that led to them being called Anabaptists? \_\_\_\_\_.
5. What significant event happened in 1611?  
\_\_\_\_\_.
6. What is the name of the fourth era of God's Church? \_\_\_\_\_.

### THE CHURCH OF GOD IN AMERICA

It is difficult to place exact dates on the eras of the Church of God as they are revealed in the second and third chapters of Revelation. We do know that the apostles lived during the Ephesian era. During the time of the Ebionites, covered in a previous lesson, it was probably the Smyrna era. And in the days of the Paulicians and Bogomils, the Pergamos era. When Peter of Bruys, Peter Waldo, Walter Lollard and others preached the truth, it was the era of Thyatira.

From the mid 1500s to early 1600s, we make a transition into the next era of God's Church. Shortly before the Church of God came to America, we enter the time symbolized in the third chapter of Revelation as the Sardis era.

"And unto the angel of the church in *Sardis* write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that *thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead*" (Revelation 3:1).

In the early 1600s, one major hope seemed possible—religious freedom in the New World.

Many of those who came to the New World were seeking freedom from religious oppression in England and Europe. Not only Puritans and Quakers, but Methodists, Baptists, Anabaptists and even Catholics came to America seeking religious freedom.

The influence of the English translation of the Bible and the Protestant Reformation also helped produce a new era of religious freedom.

Among those seeking religious freedom in the New World were small groups of Sabbath keepers. In 1664, a Sabbath keeper named Stephen Mumford arrived in Rhode Island. He founded a congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1671. That's the earliest record we have of the establishment of the Church of God in America.

Several other Sabbath-keeping congregations were raised up in the colonies of the New World. They were basically along the eastern coast until after the American Revolution in 1776.

By the mid 1800s, Sabbath keepers sent missionaries throughout the world. Sabbath-keeping congregations were raised up in the Philippines, Mexico, Central and South America, India, Indonesia and China. Most of these congregations were small, but there was an attempt to preach the Gospel to the world.

In the early 1800s, various disputes arose among the Sabbath-keeping groups. Some did not want to be called Sabbatarians or follow the teachings of the Church. They decided to officially organize under a different name. In 1818, one group adopted the name Seventh-Day Baptist. However, the Sabbath keepers who did not join the Seventh-Day Baptist movement continued to use the name *Church of God*.

### THE ADVENTISTS

One belief of the Church of God is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Another word for "coming" is *advent*. Because of that belief,

some Sabbath-keeping churches began using the name *Church of God (Adventist)*.

In the 1840s, a man named William Miller had become convinced the Sabbath was God's day of worship. But in his studies of prophecy, he mistakenly thought the world was going to end in 1844. He based this on a misunderstanding of the prophecy in Daniel 8 about the 2,300 morning and evening sacrifices.

Christ did not come in 1844 and the world did not end. By this time William Miller had been joined by James and Ellen White. They still believed in the coming or advent of Jesus Christ, but they could not agree with other principles of the Church of God.

In the 1860s, the followers of William Miller and the Whites officially called themselves Seventh-Day Adventists. Ellen G. White was regarded as a prophetess of the church. In the course of time, the Seventh-Day Adventist church has become one of the largest Sabbath-keeping churches in America.

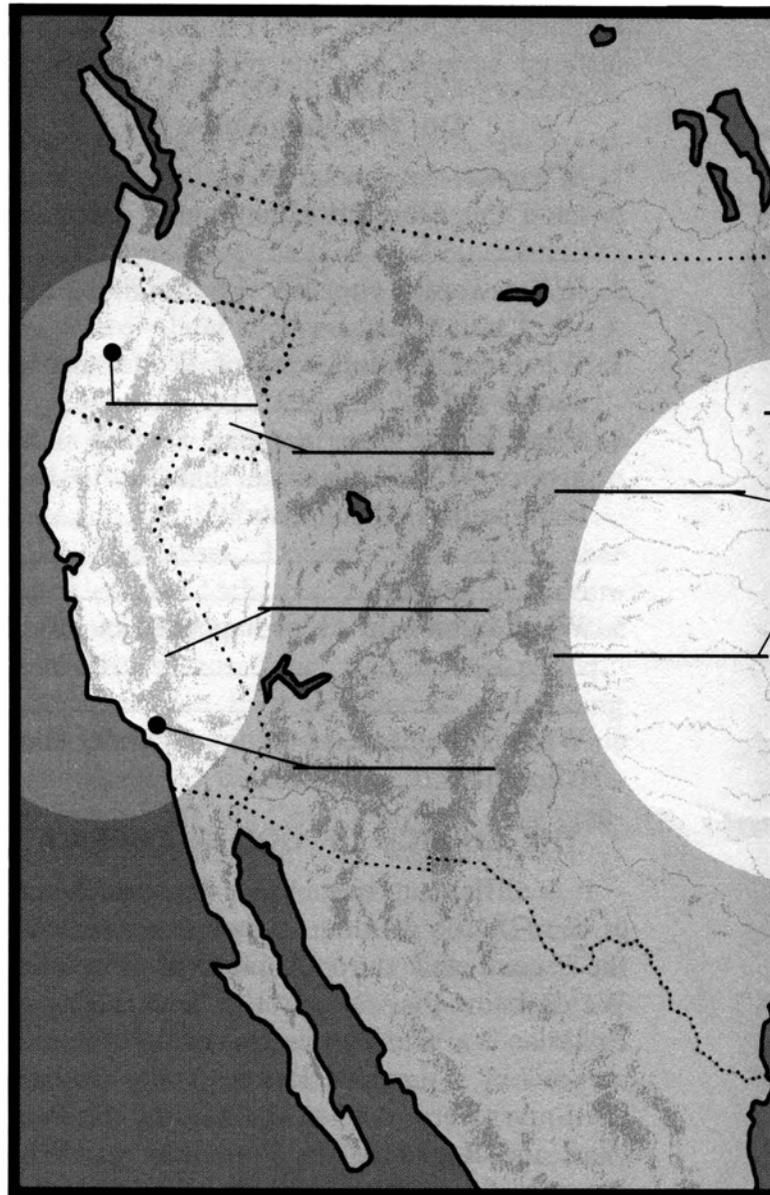
But neither the Seventh-Day Adventists nor the Seventh-Day Baptists continued in all the true teachings of God. Throughout this time the members of the true Church continued to call themselves the Church of God.

**THE CHURCH OF GOD (SEVENTH DAY)**

About the time the Seventh-Day Adventist church was established in the early 1860s, the Church of God began to publish a paper that later was called *The Bible Advocate*. It was produced at a small publishing house in Battle Creek, Michigan. The publishing operations were later moved to Marion, Iowa, and in the late 1880s to Stanberry, Missouri.

During the pioneering days of America, as peoples moved west, Sabbath-keeping congregations were raised up in Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas and on westward.

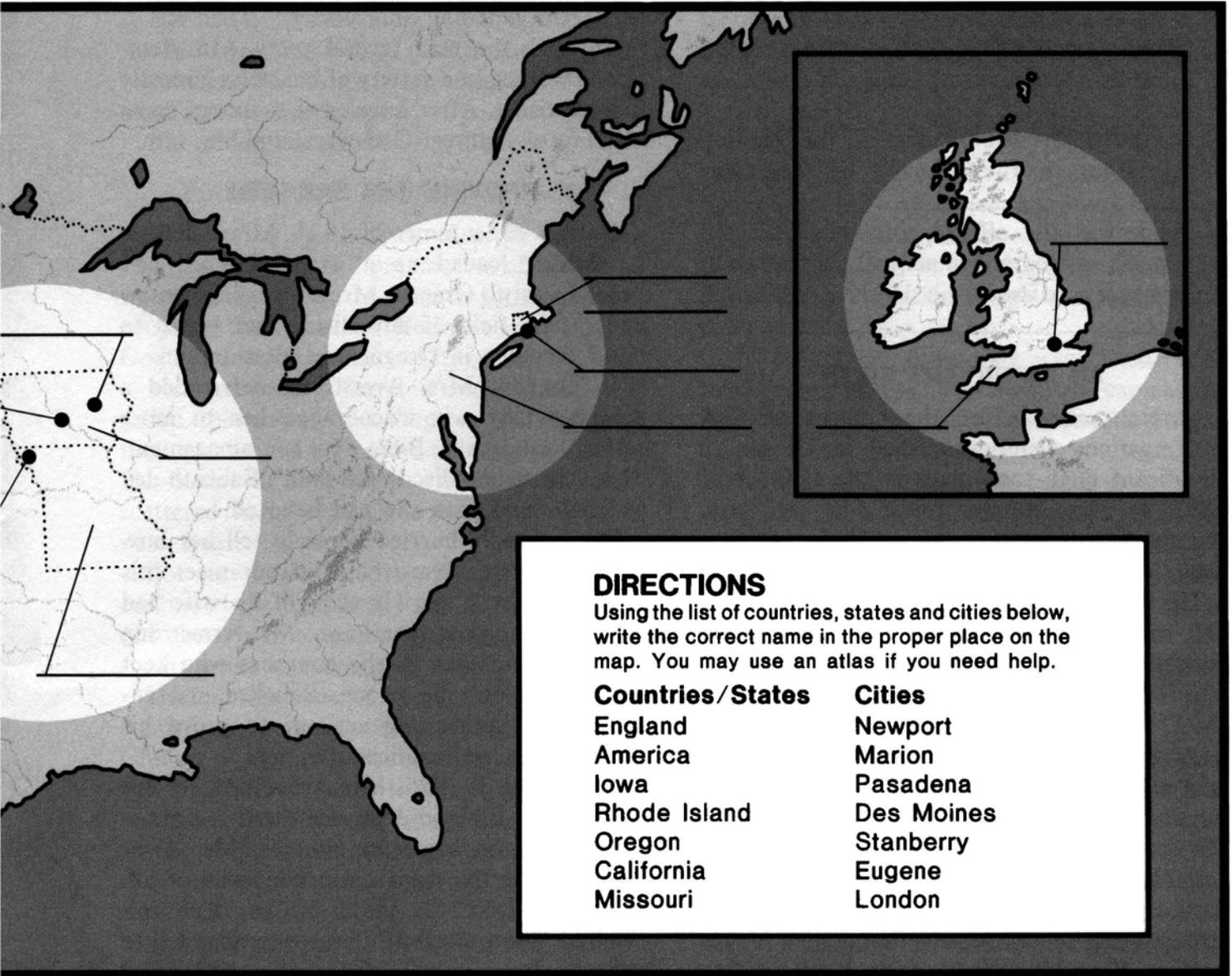
In the early 1900s, the Church of God was headquartered at Stanberry, Missouri. One of the leading ministers in the Church at this time was Andrew N. Dugger. He had become editor of the Church's paper, *The Bible Advocate*.



Andrew Dugger wanted to have an educated ministry and hoped to start a college in Stanberry. But because of World War I, the plans were set aside. Later, a school was established in Stanberry, but Dugger's plans of having a college never came about.

The 1920s were growth years for the Church of God. Congregations were established all the way to the West Coast. Sabbath-keeping congregations were also being established in other parts of the world.

# GOD'S CHURCH IN AMERICA



**DIRECTIONS**  
Using the list of countries, states and cities below, write the correct name in the proper place on the map. You may use an atlas if you need help.

Countries/States	Cities
England	Newport
America	Marion
Iowa	Pasadena
Rhode Island	Des Moines
Oregon	Stanberry
California	Eugene
Missouri	London

Map by Ken Tunell

In 1923, at a general conference of the Church of God in Stanberry, a decision was made to use a single name for the Church of God. There had been a variety of titles attached to the name of God's Church. The most commonly known name had been Church of God (Adventist).

The general conference in 1923 decided to officially adopt the name *Church of God (Seventh Day)*. Also, there was an unsuccessful attempt to unite the Church of God

(Seventh Day) with the Seventh-Day Baptists.

In 1924, an official California conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day) was organized. Then later in the 1920s, the Church of God (Seventh Day) established congregations with ministers in the state of Oregon.

## Do You Remember?

1. The first Sabbath-keeping Church in America was founded in what city and state?

2. Which era of God's Church began about the time of the settling of the New World?  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Who started the first Sabbath-keeping Church in America? \_\_\_\_\_
4. In the early 1900s, one of the leading ministers in the Church of God was \_\_\_\_\_.
5. What was the official title taken for the Church of God at the general conference at Stanberry, Missouri, in 1923? \_\_\_\_\_

### AN IMPORTANT BIRTH

Several years before the Church of God congregations were established in Oregon, a significant birth took place in the summer of 1892. In Des Moines, Iowa, Mr. and Mrs. Horace Armstrong became parents for the first time. They named their son Herbert.

Herbert Armstrong grew up with a reasonably normal childhood. He had the normal education of any young boy growing up in the late 1800s and early 1900s. His family attended the Quaker church.

At age 18, Mr. Armstrong conducted a self-analysis survey from a book he had read in the public library entitled *Choosing a Vocation*. His study showed that he would be most successful in the profession of journalism and advertising. At this time his uncle, Frank Armstrong, was a successful advertising man in Des Moines. With his uncle's advice, he decided to get a job in the advertising department of a Des Moines newspaper, the *Daily Capital*.

For many years Mr. Armstrong gained valuable experience in the field of advertising and journalism. Little did he realize that this experience would later be used by God. Mr. Armstrong's background prepared him to publish and proclaim the Gospel throughout the world for a witness before the Second Coming of Christ (Matthew 24:14).

In January of 1917, Mr. Armstrong met Loma Dillon. They were married in July of

that same year and lived happily together until Mrs. Armstrong died just a few weeks before their 50th wedding anniversary.

Through the next several years, Mr. Armstrong worked in a variety of businesses, mostly in advertising. After a series of successes came a string of failures. God was humbling him.

### PROVING THE SABBATH

During the summer of 1924, Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong loaded up a Model-T Ford and headed west to Oregon. Mr. Armstrong continued in the field of advertising and began to build accounts in Oregon and Washington.

In Oregon, Mrs. Armstrong befriended a neighbor lady who encouraged her to more actively study the Bible. To her amazement, Mrs. Armstrong discovered God's Sabbath day was not Sunday as she had believed.

She excitedly hurried home to tell her husband. But Mr. Armstrong did not meet this news with great joy. He thought his wife had gone into religious fanaticism. Mr. Armstrong then reasoned that all the churches who kept Sunday couldn't be wrong. Shocked and angered, Mr. Armstrong set out to prove his wife's newfound fanaticism wrong.

In the fall of 1926, Mr. Armstrong set out to study the Bible in depth for the first time in his life. As he began his studies, Mr. Armstrong asked the most basic questions of all. Does God exist? Is the Bible the true and inspired Word of God? These questions led to a thorough study of the theory of evolution and the inspiration of the Bible.

Weeks of study went by, then months. Mr. Armstrong, to his amazement, kept finding things he had never heard before. He searched in vain to find authority for keeping Sunday as the day of Christian worship. Instead, he proved that Saturday was the Sabbath day. He also proved the existence of God and that the Bible was His inspired Word.

God had now brought Mr. Armstrong to a point in his life where he was broken in spirit, beaten down. He said of himself, "I'm nothing

but a burned-out old hunk of junk.” He was ready to surrender his will to God. Mr. Armstrong had proved God’s existence and that the Sabbath was God’s day. And in the course of his studies, Mr. Armstrong discovered the necessity to be baptized.

But where was God’s true Church?

### FINDING THE CHURCH OF GOD

We now bring the two parts of our story together. The life and preparation of Mr. Armstrong brought him in contact with those few people of the Church of God who were keeping God’s commandments.

Mr. Armstrong found a small group who called themselves the Church of God, with their publishing house at Stanberry, Missouri. He began to fellowship with some of their scattered members in the Willamette Valley near Eugene, Oregon.

For several years, Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong continued their diligent study of the Bible and did their best to apply it in their lives. The truth came—one doctrine at a time.

During this time of study and prayer, Mr. Armstrong occasionally sent articles to the Church of God publishing house in Stanberry. Writing came naturally to Mr. Armstrong, who had spent many years in the advertising field. He wrote of the truths God was leading him to discover. Several articles were published in *The Bible Advocate*.

Mr. Armstrong didn’t consider himself much of a speaker. But in the summer of 1928, filled with enthusiasm over discovering the Sabbath covenant, he spoke to the small congregation with whom they were fellowshiping.

The brethren appreciated his efforts, his knowledge and his abilities. He was asked to speak more often.

Then came the stock market crash of 1929, and the beginning of the Great Depression. These years were hard for Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong. But Jesus Christ, the living head of His Church, was calling Mr. Armstrong into His full-time service—though

Mr. Armstrong did not realize it at that time.

By 1930, there were enough members of the Church of God in the Oregon area to organize a state conference. Other states had established their own conferences.

### MR. ARMSTRONG IS ORDAINED

Because of his work and service in the Church, in 1931 Mr. Armstrong was ordained by the Oregon conference of the Church of God. This was 1,900 years from the date Christ founded His Church through the New Testament apostles in A.D. 31.

By 1932, Mr. Armstrong was called on to help preach at public evangelistic campaigns. The campaigns began to be successful. People came to hear Mr. Armstrong night after night. Though only few in number, people were interested. Mr. Armstrong was being prepared for the Work that he would enter full-time.

A transition was now taking place in the Church of God. God was beginning to reveal truths to Mr. Armstrong from His Word. But the Sardis era was fading.

### BROADCASTING THE GOSPEL

God was now opening the way for the Gospel to be preached in all the world. A new era of the Church was beginning.

“And to the angel of the church in *Philadelphia* write; these things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, *I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name*” (Revelation 3:7-8).

The beginning of the Work God was going to do through Mr. Armstrong started in the summer of 1933. Mr. Armstrong began to hold new campaigns not far from Eugene, Oregon. At the end of those campaigns, a small Church was raised up, and the Philadelphia era of the Church of God had begun.

In the autumn of 1933, a Eugene radio

station, KORE, had been offering local ministers free air time for an early morning religious program. But the stations was having difficulty getting ministers up that early to conduct the program, even though it was free time. Mr. Armstrong consulted the radio station and was offered the time to broadcast for one week.

Mr. Armstrong's broadcasting was a success. Listeners wrote in asking for copies of the scripts. As a result, the station manager offered him the chance to purchase radio time on a regular basis. The cost of doing a program would be \$2.50 a week. It was almost Mr. Armstrong's entire salary, which was about \$3 a week.

Because of other difficulties within the Church of God (Seventh Day), Mr. Armstrong had turned down their \$3 a week salary and had stepped out on faith to trust in God.

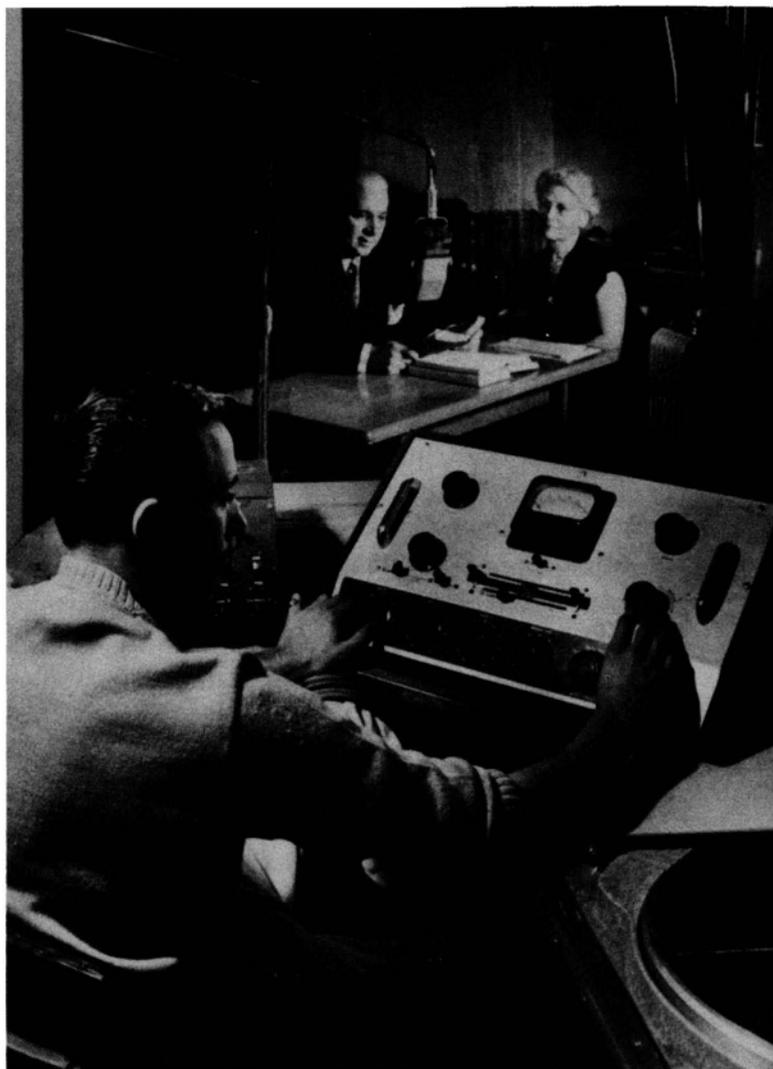
At first, Mr. Armstrong could not see any way to pay the cost of broadcasting. Later, realizing God had opened the door and he must walk through it, he stepped out in faith. Mr. Armstrong arranged to begin regular broadcasting. A new half-hour program began the first Sunday in January, 1934. With that broadcast, Jesus Christ, through Mr. Armstrong, began a Work that has continued until today.

About the same time, Mr. Armstrong set out to publish a magazine he could offer to the listeners of the program. The magazine was called the **THE PLAIN TRUTH**.

The first issue of the **THE PLAIN TRUTH** magazine was nowhere near the full-color, professional magazine it is now. Hand-stenciled and typed personally by Mr. Armstrong on a borrowed typewriter, **THE PLAIN TRUTH** rolled off an old mimeograph machine that had to be cranked by hand.

Through the painful years of World War II, **THE WORLD TOMORROW** radio program continued to grow. People listened to Mr. Armstrong's programs. Many subscribed to **THE PLAIN TRUTH**.

Mr. Armstrong also wrote a number of booklets on timely subjects to explain the truth to



those God would call. The number of stations broadcasting the program increased. **THE WORLD TOMORROW** program was heard throughout the United States and Canada.

### **A COLLEGE FOUNDED**

Mr. Armstrong discovered after holding successful campaigns that those who were called and converted needed a minister to guide them. But there was no trained ministry. The Bible shows that without a minister, the "sheep" (those called by God) would go astray.

Mr. Armstrong was inspired by God to establish a college. At the same time, Mr. Armstrong realized the need to be in a place of greater media exposure. Southern California

## THE GOSPEL GOES WORLDWIDE

In 1953, on the first Sunday in January, 19 years after it started, THE WORLD TOMORROW program began in Europe. The Gospel was beginning to go to the world. In the course of time, new stations and new methods of broadcasting and publishing were developed.

There are now offices, Church congregations and ministers of God around the world. The Church is now led by Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach, who succeeded Mr. Armstrong after the death of Mr. Armstrong in 1986. The Gospel is going to the world as a final warning message to prepare the way for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

The fascinating and exciting story of Church history shows how God has directed and guided His people throughout time to do the Work He has called them to do. For many centuries, the Work of the Church of God was to preserve the name and truth of God.

We have been given a great commission, not only to preserve the truth of God, but to publish a warning message throughout the world. That Work is now being done through the leaders God has chosen, and their supporters who make up the Worldwide Church of God.

### Do You Remember?

1. Where was the birthplace of Herbert W. Armstrong? \_\_\_\_\_.
2. What career was he involved in at the advice of his uncle? \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What caused Mr. Armstrong to study the Christian Sabbath? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. In what city was Mr. Armstrong's first radio broadcast? \_\_\_\_\_. What station? \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The Work of God continues today through the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
6. The present era of God's Church is called \_\_\_\_\_.



YES Photos

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong began preaching the Gospel using radio (left) and other modern methods. Right, the message brings response.

would provide a better place to headquarter God's Work. In 1947 Mr. Armstrong found a property that was ideally suited to the small college he envisioned.

Stepping out in faith, Mr. Armstrong made arrangements to purchase the property and began to plan Ambassador College. No college we know of started smaller. Eight faculty members were hired for the first year. Only four students enrolled. By 1952, the first graduates began to assist Mr. Armstrong in carrying the Gospel to the world.

But like so many things God does, it began small and grew steadily. With two beautiful campuses today, hundreds of students can study God's truth.

**FOUNDER: HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG (1892-1986)**

**PASTOR GENERAL: JOSEPH W. TKACH**

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**BIBLE MEMORY**

Psalm 1:1-6

## HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Write the names below in the order in which they appear in this lesson.  
Then follow the additional directions below.

James I   John Huss   Martin Luther  
Herbert Armstrong   Johann Gutenberg  
William Miller   John Wycliffe   Peter Waldo  
Christopher Columbus   Stephen Mumford  
Peter of Bruys   John Knox

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 12. _____ |

From name #10, circle letter #8. From name #11, circle letter #6. From name #1, circle letter #3. From name #2, circle letter #3. From name #3, circle letter #3. From name #12, circle letter #5. From name #11, circle letter #1.

Unscramble the circled letters and write them in the blanks provided below. Then write out the scripture. After writing the scripture, write a one-page report on the eras of the true Church you learned about in this lesson.

“ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_” ( \_\_\_\_\_ 16:18).