

HWA Defrocked

Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986) served the Church of God (Seventh Day) as a member and pastor-evangelist between 1927 and 1938. He acknowledged he was a member of the Oregon State Conference of the Church of God upon receiving his ministerial license in 1931 until 1933. He spuriously denied he was a member of the General Conference of Stanberry, Missouri. Armstrong completely omitted references to the fact that he transferred his membership to A. N. Dugger's Salem church in 1933 and received ministerial credentials from it to qualify as one of its seventy evangelists.

Armstrong mistakenly regarded the Oregon Conference as an independent organization from the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day), Stanberry, Missouri. On that erroneous assumption, he denied being a member of the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day), Stanberry. However, his relationship with the Church in Oregon also made him a member of the Stanberry Conference. When he transferred his membership and ministerial license from the Oregon Conference to the Salem Conference in 1933, he knew he was accepting ministerial credentials from the Salem Conference of the Church of God (7th Day).

In the remainder of his biography, Armstrong falsely implied that his relationship with the Church of God ended in September 1933. The final pages of Volume I of his book described the development of the Radio Church of God, leading to his founding the Worldwide Church of God."

Armstrong's failure to reveal the whole story of his relationship with the Church of God following 1933 demonstrates a lapse of integrity. Officially his ministerial career with the Church of God continued five years beyond 1933. He failed to acknowledge that he transferred his membership from Stanberry to the Salem Conference in November 1933, at the time his mentor, A. N. Dugger, organized his quasi-Bible organization in Salem, West Virginia.

While serving as an evangelist for the Salem Conference, Armstrong began to insist on the necessity of observing the annual Hebrew festivals (Leviticus 23). This idea was contrary to Salem's teaching and broke his ministerial pledge to uphold its doctrines. The Church believed the festivals were shadows of Christ's redemptive ministry and were fulfilled by Him on the cross according to the Scriptures.

Armstrong was invited to attend a meeting of Salem's clerics held in Detroit, Michigan, May 5-10, 1937, to defend his position on observing the festivals. He declined or was unable to attend the meeting, but sent a lengthy treatise to be read that supported his position.

After the reading of Armstrong's article, Salem's ministry reaffirmed the Church's traditional position that Christ had fulfilled those observances. And while they did not address Armstrong directly, they reaffirmed that the Church of God did not observe the festivals and that the apostles and church leaders did not require the observance of Moses' law according to the record of Acts 15.

Armstrong was notified of his colleagues' decision and was requested to cease teaching the necessity of observing the festivals. The Church gave him an opportunity to reconsider his position, but he refused to accept its decision. Armstrong's ministerial credentials were revoked in the spring of 1938.

Quoted from: *The Journey, A History of the Church of God (Seventh Day)*, pages 308-317
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