



# A Synoptic History of the Churches of God in the Latter Days

## **Forward:**

By Charles Monroe

You may be one of many people who wonder where those "strange" Sabbatarian denominations began. Or you might be a member of the Churches of God, seeking a few historical facts about your church. The actual work on this series began late in 1963. The original draft was prepared and used by the author as a supplement for church history classes at Maranatha College, Meridian, Idaho. Since that time, a few findings have been added.

Designed originally for Bible college students, this fast moving story is now presented for all, in order that it might give a better understanding of the great Advent movement and of the religious bodies that evolved.

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to certain elder brethren who have given eyewitness accounts of certain historical events occurring during this present century. Also appreciated are the historical documents and old church magazines with informative articles. Other sources were used in order to draw certain facts. The only information included was material that appeared to be factual and in no way "doctored" up to appear as something that it was not.

The following sources were used: HISTORY and TEACHINGS of the ADVENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH by Dr. Lee E. Baker; HANDBOOK of DENOMINATIONS by Dr. Frank Mead; THE BIBLE ADVOCATE magazine, Stanberry, Missouri; THE

ACTS magazine, Meridian, Idaho; REVIEW and HERALD magazine, Tacoma Park, Md; THE SABBATH SENTINEL magazine, Fairview, Oklahoma; THE SABBATH REPORTER magazine, Plainfield, New Jersey; THE RESTITUTION HERALD magazine, Oregon, Illinois; and various publications by the ADVENT CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS, Inc., Concord, New Hampshire. Dozens of other publications and booklets were researched and bore witness to the facts presented in the above mentioned documents and publications.

The writer expresses appreciation to certain of his fellow ministers, who encouraged him to research and print this short work for those interested in the past and present work of the Churches of God. Also appreciated were the many who read and gave valuable suggestions concerning the manuscript. We realize the material is limited and much too brief, and the author does not pretend to have excavated all information possible. We would appreciate a more exhaustive and complete history of the people of God in these latter days.

However it is with deep regret that we must confess that our hard working, truth loving, pioneering forefathers did not record the many historical events with much detail. They had set forth with a torch of truth, aflame with newly revealed truths of God, running with it, as it were,

too busy to log events while attempting to reach their generations with the Kingdom message. They were much too busy to record the history then in the making.

Yet, they have given us more than historical facts—they have passed this living, vital torch of truth to a new generation which is now going forth with it. It's a new day, with many means of spreading the message; yet the message remains undimmed. The truth marches on, as each new generation requires the re-sowing of the seed on the same ground, like a field replanted year by year.

Our harvest, with that of our forefathers, must be garnered into the Father's barns. Steal away a moment, and read their story in brief. Weep a little with them as they weep, and be there to rejoice with them in their victory!

"Oh, how unlike the complex works  
of men,

Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan!

No meretricious graces to beguile,  
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile;

From ostentation as from weakness free,

It stands like the cerulian arch we see,

Majestic in its own simplicity."

—Cowper

### **So This is the Church of God?**

There is more to the seeker for the truth than the sign CHURCH OF GOD at the front of a little white chapel or the listing of Sabbath worship service. There is much more than meets the eye. Little is known of this glorious history of this Sabbatarian movement in these latter days. Those who are new to the Churches of God, or for that matter, the stranger within our presence, will have many

honest questions to ask: What kind of a church is this? Is it Pentecostal? Where are your national headquarters? What type of church government do you have? From what Protestant denomination did you break away? Are you fundamentalist? Where was the church organized? By whom? Does the church support the modern day ecumenical movement? Why or why not? What has the Church of God contributed to the religious world? Many other questions will and do come to mind. In view of such questions, we have sought out pertinent facts and have set them forth from the limited records of the Advent movement and the Church of God, the development and nature of God's work as undertaken by the Church of God movement around the world.

### **Let Us Start with the**

#### **Local Church**

Let us first start with the local church and see how it fits into the world-wide outreach for souls. If it is a typical congregation of the Church of God it will have a rather small local membership, but a large amount of Christian love and fellowship. There may be a paid minister or a part-time minister who may be unsalaried, and more often than not in the real small groups, a faithful elder or two directs the general activities of the local church. The two main events of the week will be the Sabbath school and preaching service, which may be held in the morning and often on Saturday afternoon. The movement being rather small makes it easy for the churches in the United States and Canada to share annual campmeetings and such district meetings as an "all day fellowship" meeting. These meetings help the brethren to become acquainted with brethren from various parts of the country. Some of the local congregations are members of a particular conference or council, while others remain "independ-

ent" of all organized groups. During the last decade a new trend has developed among these non-affiliated churches. Not desiring denominational ties, yet realizing that the Scriptures enjoin voluntary cooperation, these congregations have associated in certain projects and consider themselves "free" Churches of God. With this philosophy, they are dedicated to the evangelization of their own community and the outlying districts. The local church being complete in itself, under the Headship of Christ, is therefore indigenous, self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. This indeed is a time of a new beginning, but let us consider the beginnings of the movement.

### **The Beginnings**

Prior to the last century there were many Sabbatarians in England and in Europe and many of them were called the "Church of God," or for the most part, SEVENTH DAY BAPTISTS. One group of the American Sabbatarian Baptists organized at Newport, Rhode Island, under the leadership of Stephen Mumford, in 1671. Mr. Mumford was a member of the Bell Lane Church of the 7th Day Baptists in London, England. Then in 1728, the German Seventh Day Baptist Brethren group was born, under the leadership of a Palatinate German preacher, named John Conrod Beissel. It should be mentioned here that the Seventh Day Baptist denomination and the Churches of God were never one and the same organization. It was from the Seventh Day Baptists of New England, that the great Advent movement was faced with the Sabbath truth. Apart from the Sabbatarian Baptists and Adventists, there have been a host of saints of similar faith in the old world, there hidden by God in the valley hideouts and the back country, this being decades before the birth of Sabbatarian Baptists in England.

We make no attempt however to prove an "organizational" link with these faithful down through the ages; we realize that this is not necessary as long as the people of our day embrace that same sustaining faith set forth in the Scriptures. The Churches of God continue to identify themselves with that "original" Church of God, purchased by the blood of Christ, Her Head, when He died at Calvary in Jerusalem.

The Churches of God in these latter days, also realize that our heritage is in Christ Jesus, and not in church history and religious denominationalism. This Christ-centered heritage spans almost 2,000 years of time, and with the knowledge that God has always had a people who have kept the commandments of God and have had the testimony of Jesus.

Toward the latter part of the eighteenth century there was much spiritual unrest in the nominal Protestant churches of America and Europe. In fact they were dead in formality, and certain Biblical truths were all but lost to the Christian world. Sectarian systems and creeds were more important than the truths of God.

Then it happened! A new revelation broke forth, like a breath of new life from heaven; a notable revival took place in the New England section of the United States; and as it grew in number and power, it moved forward onto the frontier, then of course east of the Mississippi River. During these early decades of the Nineteenth century, God moved by His Spirit and brought to light other new and glorious truths from the Word of Life. The motivating power of this great awakening of spiritual life and power was the rediscovery of the Biblical doctrine of the second advent (coming) of Jesus in the last days of this Gospel era.

According to Dr. Lee E. Baker, an Advent Christian minister, in his booklet on the history and teachings of his denom-

ination, "The person through which the spirit moved in this momentous revival was a self-educated man of keen intellect and oratorical powers, a patriotic and honored citizen of Hampton, New York, named William Miller. Giving up his earlier deism, he accepted the Bible as the Word of God, and became a Christian, and subsequently a Baptist minister. Through comparison of history and Biblical prediction, his faith in the prophecies concerning the second advent of Christ sent him forth on a crusade that resulted in the conversion of hundreds of infidels and skeptics and in turning thousands to a belief in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ."

As the Advent teaching spread, thousands accepted the light in dark places; and as a result they were forced out of their recognized Protestant sects. The Lord was again restoring truth to His people, and it is reported by 1858 that over eighty per cent of the "Adventist" people, as they were called, had embraced the doctrine of conditionalism (against the doctrine of immortality).

It should be pointed out here that the use of the term "Adventist" does not refer to the Seventh Day Adventist denomination. It is often a great surprise to many people to learn that even today there are several denominations of brethren, who observe Sunday and are still adventist in doctrine. In fact some of the outstanding leaders of the Advent movement were never Sabbatharians. Such men were Professor Charles F. Hudson and Elder George Storrs who were strong advocates of the Biblical truth of conditionalism. One of the main purposes for the periodical, "The World Crisis," which began in 1854, was to advocate this Biblical truth which was so vital to the restoring of God's Church. This messenger of truth was published for well over a century.

Mr. Miller began his advent ministry

at Dresden, Vermont, in 1831, and by 1843, there were no less than 5,000,000 copies of Advent papers, books, and pamphlets that had been published proclaiming the state of the dead and the second coming of the Saviour to establish His kingdom.

The leading publications of the movement were the "Midnight Cry" and "The Signs of the Times" (later "Advent Herald"); and by the year 1843, these two papers, published by Elder Joshua V. Himes, each reached 10,000 per week circulation. Elder Himes has been called the "veritable Aaron to the Moses of the Adventist movement." The glorious message of the Gospel spread fast by means of literature and the militant preaching by Adventist preachers.

In the February 22, 1860 issue of "The World Crisis," Elder Daniel T. Taylor reported there were 600 ministers in all Adventist groups. The membership in the Adventist churches in America he computed to be 54,000. Of the six hundred preachers in the year 1860, he reported fifty-seven to be Sabbatharians. Most of them were itinerant preachers; and only eighty-seven reported as settled pastors. Salaries were nonexistent or shockingly low, and the general status of the churches, most meeting in houses, schoolhouses, etc., was primitive.

Those pious folk never neglected the spreading of the truth; in fact, each year brought hundreds of new tracts and booklets, plus new publications. As brethren continued communicating the truth, new light that God was revealing filled the pathway of the Advent people. The message was so contrary to the religious thinking of the day, that it caused a great stir in the denominations and the society of that time. It was most unwelcome in the mainstream of American Protestantism. The casting out of the Advent believers created dozens of new independent Chris-

tian churches. It was never the intention of these brethren to start another movement or denomination. They sought only to recapture Bible truths lost during the dark ages, and not questioned by the Protestant revolt. Some of the congregations had more light than others, yet all were anxious to spread the revelation of the coming Lord and His Kingdom. In fact, in order to better spread and conserve the work of God, many of these independent churches joined or helped organize missionary associations.

### **The Great Disappointment**

Because of some misunderstanding of certain Biblical prophecies, some of the Millerites, as many of the Advent people were called, had a great expectation of "the cleansing of the sanctuary" (earth), which would take place at the second appearing of Christ. This great event was believed to be due to take place in a period of time between March, 1843, and the spring of 1844. When this event failed to materialize in the spring of 1844, hundreds left the movement and returned to their former denominations or were lost to the cause of Christ. It should be pointed out that the story of the ascension robes and rank fanaticism among the Advent people at this time is without historical foundation; and in fact, the history recorded by our own non-sanctuary brethren deny it. However, we must confess the error advocated by Brother Miller, and clarify things by saying that not all of the movement were followers of Miller's "sanctuary" views. Elder Miller himself confessed the error, and remained a faithful follower of Christ till his death, in 1844.

At least six different groups came out of the great disappointment of 1844, and a loose Adventist church organization was brought into being at a conference held in Albany, New York, in 1845. It was later

known as the "American Millennial Association," and even later "Evangelical Adventists," and in 1860 the leading Sunday keeping Adventist group called a conference and organized the "Advent Christian Church," at Boston, Massachusetts; and, in 1863, "Life and Advent Union" was formed at Wilbraham, Massachusetts; and during the 1860's joined the Advent Christians.

Many Adventist congregations remained independent of any religious society. It is interesting to note that many Adventist groups known as the "Churches of God" existed before this time in Great Britain and America. In fact, in 1847, many of the faithful came to America and many of those early British immigrants formed congregations known as "The Church of God in Christ Jesus." There also seems to be some relationship between them and the leader of the "Christadelphians," Dr. John Thomas, an Englishman, who came out of the Campbellite movement. A national conference was held by these Church of God brethren in 1888 at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in an attempt to unite the scattered congregations, and it met again the following year. Because of strong convictions against organized conferences and great support for congregational rights and authority, the conference ceased to function. In 1921 these Sunday-observing Adventists, descendants of this body of the Churches of God, reorganized denominational order and is known as "The Church of God, General Conference," and is commonly called the "Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith."

Among the Sabbatarian Adventists there was little, if any organization or unity of doctrine or practice until about 1860. It is most unfortunate that it must be said that a small band of Sabbathkeepers embraced the sanctuary doctrine of William Miller; and by them it was revised and offered to the Advent people. It advo-

cated that Mr. Miller was correct in teaching the 1844 cleansing of the sanctuary, but that he was mistaken on its proper location.

They revised the teaching to affirm that it was the heavenly sanctuary and not the earthly cleansing, as Miller had so ardently taught. Mr. Miller refused to accept their revised position of error. At first only a handful of Advent people accepted this "revised" Millerite doctrine. The leaders of this group were Mrs. Ellen G. White and her associates. It is interesting to note that none of the Sunday observing Adventists accepted this view.

Since there was no general conference, the doctrine was localized and the scattered Sabbatarians used many names for their congregations. Then to add to the confusion, were some strong personalities, plagued with dissension over many doctrinal questions such as: "What is the state of the dead? What is Bible Salvation?" "What about Law and Grace?" "Who will rise in the first resurrection?" "Will the Kingdom of God be here on earth or in heaven?" "Is there eternal torment for the wicked?" "What day of the week is to be observed as the Sabbath?" and other related subjects.

The Sabbatarian wing of the Advent movement itself was divided into two main camps, those who were followers of the Adventist prophetess, Mrs. Ellen Harmon White, a convert under the ministry of William Miller and a former Methodist. To many she was the gifted "Spirit of Prophecy," with her many and varied visions and writings to the saints. To the extreme right wing was the conservative, evangelical, Bible-centered camp which was content to believe the Word of God only, and to be known as the "Church of God."

In 1855, Mrs. White and her "inner circle" of ministers established their headquarters at Battle Creek, Michigan,

with the publishing concern, known as the "Review and Herald Publishing Association," and here they published regularly the "Review and Herald" magazine. The 1855 move to Battle Creek was the first manifest step by the followers of Mrs. White to form a separate movement.

### **First Schism in the Sabbatarian Church of God**

In 1860, the Battle Creek group left the Church of God in both doctrine and usage. They organized themselves out of the Church of God and took the sectarian name SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE and formed conference polity after the pattern of the Methodist system. It must be understood that we do not mean by this that the Seventh Day Adventists, by this, left any organization known as the Church of God.

This took place seventeen years after the Adventist brethren in Washington, New Hampshire, began observing the Seventh day Sabbath. It was an Adventist leader, Elder Joseph Bates, who first wrote a pamphlet on the subject, about 1846, and it received wide publicity and helped create a new interest in this Bible truth. This truth came to the Advent people from the Seventh Day Baptist brethren in New England. With the adopting of error and a sectarian name for the organization, many of the Sabbatarians refused to enter the new conference and so remained in the Church of God.

However, a large number of the churches and their ministers went along with the Whites and their conference, by changing their church name, and accepting Mrs. White as a divine prophetess sent from God. It is interesting to note that these Church of God people refused to enter into any kind of an alliance with the Seventh Day Baptists. In fact, Elder James White published a hymn book in 1855

called "Hymns For Those Who Keep the Commands of God and the Faith of Jesus"; and Elder White wrote this as the first part of his preface: "This work is prepared for the use of the Church of God scattered abroad," and it continues to say, "To the Church of God waiting for the coming and kingdom of Christ, is this book commended."

The conference held at Battle Creek in 1860 (September 28 till October 30) found their new name one of the great problems under consideration among the Church of God people. "The Review and Herald" (April 9, 1861 issue), reports secession of the brethren in Ohio and their protests to the October 1, 1860 vote "That we call ourselves Seventh-day Adventists." Thus the organization and harassment of the Seventh day Adventist General Conference continued to cause great concern to the "remnant" of the Church of God, who had remained faithful. In an attempt to hold their own, the Church of God was formally organized in 1865 in Michigan; the first conference was held in 1883, and until this time the work had been carried out strictly on local level. The general conference was then incorporated in 1899 at Gentry County, Missouri.

During the early 1860's, the Churches of God in Michigan, Missouri, and other states in the East were conducting conferences and attempted to declare the message of Christian truth. It was in 1863 that Brother Enos Eaton began publishing "The Hope of Israel" at Hartford, Michigan; and later Brother H. S. Dille became the editor. It ceased publication for about six months and resumed again, but this time at a new publication center, Marion, Iowa. A former, S. D. A. minister, Elder W. H. Brinkerhoff, became the new editor of the revived Church of God publication.

The Marion, Iowa, Church of God was one of the stronger Churches of God and stood strong against the errors of Seventh

day Adventism; and yet, it suffered greatly under the pressure from the S. D. A. denomination. Everywhere the remnant remained, there was suffering and pressure from the Adventist to accept the "more perfect way"—loyalty to the new General Conference, which according to Mrs. White was God's highest authority on earth; the visions and claims for Mrs. White and other non-Biblical doctrines that were beginning to show up in Seventh Day Adventism.

After the S. D. A. revolt and withdrawal, the doctrine and practice of the two groups eventually took different directions and the differences became very sharp. It has also been discovered that there were brethren of our faith in Parkston, South Dakota, when the first church was organized, in 1876, by migrants from Russia, of German descent. In 1908 they removed once more and this time to Lodi, California, where they reestablished their Seventh Day Church of God congregation under the leadership of Elder Henry Baumbach. The present congregation at Lodi is an example of "free" congregations which have never been a part of any conference.

As early as 1913-14 some of the ministers of the Pentecostal movement had accepted the Advent message. The history of the Assemblies of God in the Midwest relates the differences among their brethren, as Evangelist Boatwright, of Missouri, who was generally well liked and a very able speaker, taught the commandments of God and the annual observance of the Lord's Supper. Only eternity will reveal the great influence of the Churches of God beyond their own ranks.

It is also of great interest to observe from the records of the Marion Church of God, that in 1870 they adopted foot-washing and communion to be held each quarter; and the first report of an annual observance was in 1899. The S. D. A. denomination rejected the annual obser-

vance of the Memorial Supper long before this date. There is evidence that the Lord's Supper was observed annually long before 1899. All of this is an indication of how truth gradually came to front in the Church of God, in spite of the confusion created by Satan.

"The Hope" later became the "Sabbath Advocate" and was moved to Stanberry, Gentry County, Missouri, and became the "Bible Advocate." This publication became the chief voice of the Church of God scattered abroad. With the blessings of God, the Churches of God, with little organization, emerged from the schism of 1860 to continue to grow and spread the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God. The greatest progress was made during this time when the church operated under congregationalism. It is indeed sad that so few of the brethren realized the "general conference" system was unscriptural and continued to uphold its use. It was strong centralization that was to bring a great division in the Church of God movement.

### **The Schism of 1933**

The fateful year of 1933 dawned, and with it ended seventy-three years of unity. The remnant, after the schism of 1860, had established their general offices at Stanberry, and was known as "The General Conference of the Church of God." The designation "Seventh Day" appeared after the name Church of God often. In an attempt to unite the scattered members and churches, the conference had organized certain state conferences and had a weak evangelistic effort. Conflict over the "meats" and other points existed also. However, the Adventist doctrine of "the third angel's message" and their church polity was brought into the Churches of God by a former Adventist who had left the S. D. A. Conference for various reasons. Personality conflict also weakened the outreach for souls.

Elder Andrew N. Dugger, formerly of the General Conference, and one of the dominate leaders of the Church of God, withdrew from the Stanberry conference, and with him went a large number of ministers and churches. These brethren established a "new order of things" with their headquarters at Salem, West Virginia—a Seventh Day Baptist center.

This new system claimed to be the "apostolic" order. The dissenters brought about an order which denied the conference system and instead organized the Salem branch according to a "12, 70 and 7" system which they had patterned after the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, or the "Mormans."

This called for twelve apostles to succeed the original ones, and in their hands were the spiritual keys to the church; then seven Deacons were to control the business affairs of the denomination, and a council of seventy elders was to constitute an elite company of ministers. This system was no more in accord with the Scriptures than the conference system, so common to Protestant churches.

The new schism brought untold heartache to members of the Church of God, as it divided families and friends into two warring groups. With this tension, new withdrawals took place. It was from this schism that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong withdrew in 1934 and established his RADIO CHURCH OF GOD with headquarters at Ambassador College, Pasadena, California. It was also from this Salem branch that the "Names" leader, Elder C. O. Dodd, launched his movement. This movement has resulted in a dozen or more sects, but the two main groups being the Assemblies of Jahvah and the Assembly of Jaweh ("The Faith" publishers).

The leadership of both the Salem branch and the Church of God (Stanberry), considered reuniting the Church of God at a special unity meeting held in 1948 at



Fairview, Oklahoma; and the result of this meeting was the "Fairview Agreement," which called for a joint vote of delegates from both organizations at Stanberry, Missouri, in the fall of 1949. The unity vote passed, and the results were the merging of the two divisions. The new organization that was born as a result of the merger in 1949 was brought about after great compromise by both sides, yet the Stanberry remnant lost a great deal of ground it had gained. The division had hindered growth in the Church of God, and it was as if the Sardis church described in Revelation 3:1 could be describing the Church of God! It was alive, yet dead! Again, a new system of church government came into being. It was not a return to the Biblical form of polity, but a strange mixture of church government created by Merger leadership. Again the polity was advocated as a "more perfect way."

The new system thus created became known as the "General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day), and new headquarters were established at Denver, Colorado, and the former Stanberry and Salem organizations ceased to be. Instead of Twelve Apostles, there were now that many executive board members; seven departmental heads replaced the Seven Deacons; and a council for the ministry was planned to replace the theoretical "Seventy" elite. Districts were organized, overseers were appointed, and the system in a sense reflected a semi-episcopal machine. Eighty-nine years after the Adventists organized, the Church of God was now making the same mistake as it produced a centralized system of government.

### **The Merger Adds More Confusion**

However, the Merger did not unite all of the Church of God. This great disappointment brought additional division, and

it even "mothered" more independent congregations. Soon after the Merger certain ministers of the Salem branch that had merged launched a "Back to Salem" movement; and they have reestablished their organization and maintain a publishing house and headquarters at Salem, West Virginia. From this branch also came the "Seventh Day Church of God (Apostolic Council)," in Caldwell, Idaho. This group of churches advocate the "feast days" and the 12, 7 and 70 form the polity.

After returning with the Salem group, Elder Dugger once again withdrew and organized the Church of God (Jerusalem, Israel); and has since that time denied in practice both the conference system and the 12, 70 and 7. Coming also from the Church of God movement was the Church of God, Body of Christ (Mocksville, N. C.), and at the present time it is mostly a Negro denomination. The Church of God movement also influenced the "United Seventh Day Brethren," the "Association of Seventh Day Pentecostal Assemblies," and various independent groups. The "Remnant Church of God-7th Day" resulted from the withdrawal from the Denver General Conference, of certain able ministers.

### **A New Organization in the Stanberry Tradition**

Just as the former minister of the Salem branch had longed to return home to Salem as it was prior to the merger, so there were also former Stanberry brethren who also sought a return to the original church as it was known at Stanberry, Missouri. It was impossible to return to Stanberry, so instead a meeting was called at Meridian, Idaho and the results of that August, 1950 meeting was the establishment of a new conference known as the "General Council of the Bible Church of God-7th Day," which has become the

largest Church of God organization outside of the General Conference (Denver, Colorado). The 1963 Council took action to change the name from "Bible Church of God" to the "General Council of the Churches of God-7th Day.

Having withstood the schisms of 1860 and 1933, these brethren also withstood the great compromise of 1949. They opposed the heavy centralization and binding test of fellowship established by the General Conference, which was extra-Biblical in nature. They followed the traditional Stanberry form of a conference with only minor changes; and in fact they patterned their constitution on the order of the original. To these brethren, it was the best way to promote the Gospel, advocate their philosophy of church government, and to conserve the work of God disrupted by the divisions and the 1949 Merger. The Council today maintains its general offices at Meridian, Idaho, which is also the home of Maranatha College and the national camp site. The largest conference of the Church of God (7th Day), still maintains headquarters at Denver, Colorado, and their publications are still issued from the Stanberry publishing house, where their Midwest Bible College is also located.

### **Out of the Havoc Comes Victory**

In spite of the havoc that Satan has created, and brought in to discourage the people of God, there still remains the true church of God in Christ Jesus. The tragic trend following 1933 and 1949 has given the world a dozen new sects that had their beginnings in the Church of God. It is a story common to most all movements, few if any are spared. Yet, the outstanding thing is the mighty revelation of light to the people of God in these closing hours of time.

There is a secret that the Churches of God must learn well, and thanks be to God, they are learning. The first step away from the faith of Jesus in the early days of this Gospel age was the path of wrong government. The simple eldership in the local church, soon had a presiding elder and later a president—then a bishop over several congregations, and then we know the results—the apostasy.

It was church government and personalities that produced the first schism of 1860 when the Seventh Day Adventist left God's Church; it was the schism of 1933 that divided the Church of God—but this schism was given birth through personality and church government. The great confusion and the many independent churches came about because of a fear of church government. Therefore the path back to the true Church of God is via church government as taught in your Bible. Biblical church polity is more than a practice, it's a doctrine of vital truth for the restoration of the Church of the living God.

Today in the United States, there are unattached, completely autonomous, congregations of the Churches of God, that are united under Christ and free from any type of conference bondage. It is these "free" Churches of God that are seeking to recapture Biblical church order in both worship and government. These churches do not recognize themselves as "independent" churches, but interdependent congregations, voluntarily co-operating in certain projects and ministries as directed by the Holy Spirit of God. In such a venture there are no official publications, camp meetings, schools or program for that matter, and there is no need for spending God's money to maintain headquarters machinery, but to put the means directly on the field, working for the cause of souls.

The Churches of God holding this view feel a tremendous loyalty to each other and

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and also, "I am the door of the sheepfold."

Somebody has said, "How could He be the door to the sheepfold and also the shepherd without this producing a contradiction?" But it doesn't produce a contradiction, because the shepherd, after leading the sheep all day, then lies down in the doorway at night and acutally becomes the door of the sheepfold.

AND AFTER ALL OF THIS, AFTER ALL THESE BLESSINGS OF GOD, David said, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life," and the blessings don't stop there for it goes on to say, "And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Oh, beloved I love this twenty-third don't you? I love the fact that our God is concerned, One Who cares; and even though we are in this world, we are not of this world, and we have a shepherd that will walk with us and talk with us and lead us and guide us; and though He may lead us through a dark place that we cannot understand, yet beyond it all, we know there is a blessing and a victory ahead for us! He will supply all our needs in this life and we can rejoice with a positive testimony. SURELY—NOT MAYBE—SURELY, GOODNESS SHALL FOLLOW ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE! and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Finally, here is a scriptural benediction befitting our discussion: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep,.... Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen"—Hebrews 13:20,21.

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(Key to Success - from page 11)

brought Paul before the authorities. The Bible calls the disturbance he caused by

his preaching an "uproar" (see Acts 20:1).

Is there an alternative? Do we have no choices other than complacent acquiescence, which might be called "peace," and rebellion, accompanied by rock throwing and destruction? Indeed! Motion, even "commotion" called an uproar, even being cast into prison, were causes for singing and rejoicing for being worthy to suffer for the cause of Christ. But then, perhaps too many of us are parts of the "establishment" and are afraid that suggestions for change are threats to our prestige and security. Perhaps we really don't mean for anyone to put suggestions in the box!

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(Church History - from page 21)

to Christ, all because they believe the Scriptures. Their sole purpose being the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and fellowship for the saved.

Since 1950 more and more brethren are recognizing the New Testament order of Church government. If this one and vital truth would have been practiced by the Church of God during the last century, much confusion would have been avoided and the unity of the Church of God movement could have been maintained. As we recognize the authority of Christ in His Church, and bow before Him in total submission to His will, then and only then will we be able to enter into a new era of progress.

The Church of God (Sabbatarian) is in a position to fill a very large place in the spiritual life of the world. God's church has a message to give the world and Christendom that no similar group can give; let us endeavor in this generation to fill the place in which God has called us, and we can then bless the world with our message and spirit.

Finished, and yet just begun:  
'Tis the story of the Church  
Onward marching, ever such  
As at Calvary was born,

At Pentecost the Power enjoined  
 Pressing onward to the Morn,  
 Victor through the darkening night,  
 Ever in unconquered might  
 Strengthened,  
 'Til its course is run.  
 —Adapted

**\*Footnote**

The term "Free" Churches of God should not be considered as a legal designation or a denominational name for any particular group of churches. The term is used here only to denote that such churches are not members of a conference, council, or association. Therefore they are organizationally "free" under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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 (Editorial - from front cover)

On Monday, January 27, 1969 the U.S. Supreme Court correctly ruled, that the Georgia Supreme Court had erred in ruling that the local churches had a right to separate from the parent Church body. The Supreme Court's position was that Civil Courts have no right to "reach to the very core of religion" and rule on matters of church doctrine. With which, we agree; but, we nevertheless wonder what recourse is now open to these local churches to enable them to retain their church buildings which they have purchased with local tithes and offerings and to continue preaching the faith from which their leaders have departed.

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We have a total of 25 different Booklets of Bible studies available from which to choose. Each booklet (52 pages) is made up of 13 lessons. The cost per copy is 30¢. Also, if you will, please include enough extra to cover cost of postage. Thank you.

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