



SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION
ELLEN G. WHITE / SDA RESEARCH CENTRE

AVONDALE COLLEGE
P.O. Box 19
Cooranbong
N.S.W. 2265 AUSTRALIA

Telephone: (02) 4980 2138, 4980 2139
Facsimile: (02) 4980 2137
Compuserve: 74532,2122
Internet: 74532.2122@compuserve.com

15 April 1998

Mr Craig White



Dear Craig

As mentioned to you in our email message we are enclosing copies of the two documents requested as follows :

The Early Development of the Church of God (Adventists) by Gerald Christman
The History of the Marion Party by John Sabo

With Christian greetings

Yours sincerely

(Mrs) Marian de Berg
Secretary

.mdb/Encls.

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Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

The History of Marion Party

A term Paper
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Course
CHIS 570 History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

by
John Sabo
March 7, 1977

Approval _____

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Marion Party | 1 |
| Who are the Leaders? B. F. Snook and W. H. Brinkerhoff Gilbert Crenner | 3 3 7 |
| Church of God - Adventist | 9 |
| Present Status | 11 |
| Doctrinal Differences | 12 |
| Conclusion | 14 |

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Introduction

It is very important for every man and woman to look into religion as the factor which may focus their eyes upon the major aspect of spiritual life. Person may choose this church or that Cathedral or even a humble place for worship the Lord, but what is the gain of such a move?

The time has come that all of us have to take precaution in accepting any religion, view or any movement. We may ask others and ourselves if it is sufficient for one person to gather few scriptures labeling them in proper sequence according to his liking and thus claiming to have the truth. We have to keep in mind that even if these claims appear to be so, every person should take time and carefully weigh the words and evidences which they have been told! For such a small groups such as Marion Party, they lean and rely heavily upon such small arguments, which are taken out of scriptural content. They are very aggressive to force their ideas upon anyone who is willing to listen. Even if it appears on the surface that it may be so, it would be advisable for every individual to take more time in searching the scripture, examine the matter and try to find more about the matter of doctrine, opinion or the origin of the offshoot. This extra information will help the person to see the whole situation in the right perspective. It is important to find out who they are, what do they believe, why do they take such a position and why they differ from other main bodies, even though they seem to be so alike!

In order to weigh all the information properly every person should keep asking few questions like, how did the church or offshoot began? What are the main reasons of division? Who are the pioneers or founder? What are their objectives? When we keep these questions in our mind we shall find through this paper some reasons and views about Marion Party, their beginning, the cause of backsliding, who are their leaders and most of all about their growth and objectives.

In this paper my purpose is to make a brief survey about the Marion Party, their work, growth and influence in our time. Whatever material and information I had at hand, I have used it to maximum, in order to present the true picture of the offshoot. I have found another paper in the same topic which covers almost the same points as I have and we both have reached the same conclusion.

Marion Party

In what ever organization we look into, we may find particular individuals who are outstanding in their organization, business, education or denomination. Every individual is important and highly valued by the side of the people, society or church. By their faithfulness, dedication and hard work they have brought some type of improvement or glory upon their followers, who have intrusted them by responsibility!

If we turn into scripture, we may find page after page about men and women who have been called by God to act as leaders for their people but afterwards they have apostatized. Is there any lesson that we can learn from such a experiences? Let us just take one example about God's leadership in the Old Testament. Remember the story of Korah's rebellion in Numb. 16:1-3. Here we had Korah and hundred other men who totally rebelled against Aaron's leadership! They believed they could do the same work and they did not back down from their persuasion. What was the result from their stubbornness? They were all destroyed!

It is not enough to follow a leader but we have to be aware and know how to distinguish a man who is called by God to lead or if he is called by himself or because of personal anger against the leadership! We have to make a very careful evaluation of such an individuals, and before we can make a careful evaluation of other individuals we have to watch on our bias before we cast our decision for whatever side.

This will bring us to a present study of some leaders of Marion Party. To make a correct evaluation of their leadership we have to learn

something about them! Who were these men? What were the circumstances when they left the main body of Seventh-day Adventist Church? Why have they left us? Is it because of their own will or because of their own sins?

When all information is gathered and all pieces are put together, we shall receive better picture and understanding of this offshoot. Thus let us take closer look of some men who were the cause of creating Marion Party which later fused into the Church of God - Adventist.

Bro. and Sr. White and the Battle Creek Church."⁵

Raising this great opposition against brother and sister White and her gift of prophecy, brothers came in contact with them to reason and hear their objections. At the Pilot Grove, Ia, brother White arranged the appointment and was willing to hear their objections! Hearing their opposition he counseled them kindly and they accepted his counsel that they even admitted their mistakes, and they wrote their confession in the form of the apology, and I quote their apologies, Mr. B. F. Snook wrote:

I now feel that I have been led by the wicked one in my movements of late, especially in my opposition to the body. Apparent difficulties in relation to Sister White's visions have been accumulating in my mind for some time. These were magnified by the enemy until doubts resulted in unbelief and rebellion.⁶

From Mr. W. H. Brinkerhoff:

I went there (to Battle Creek) without any confidence in the testimonies of Sister White and also with doubts on our position in regard to the Sanctuary. I would now say that my feet are taken out of the miry clay and fixed upon the sure foundation of truth, the testimonies not excepted.⁷

We may rejoice that they have seen their error and thus forsaken their view and sins. It would be nice if they stayed to their first apologetic view, but they changed their mind and recanted what they had said previously, "and also gave up other points which are vital to Seventh-day Adventist doctrine."⁸

By this time they have not only opposed E. G. White and her gift but even some basic biblical doctrines. They denied the three Angel Messages, and giving a strange twist of interpretation also denying the general interpretation of two-horned beast of Revelation 13. Their view was opposed by the church and thus they took following action.

Who are the Leaders

B. F. Snook and W. H. Brinkerhoff

Mr. Snook was a "Methodist Minister"¹ and became Seventh-day Adventist since 1860, which brings us right at the time when our church had adopted our name. By May, 1865, we find him in the position of the president of Iowa Conference and only one (Snook) who "attended the General Conference of our people, held in the Battle Creek, Mich."² at the same year. By this time Mr. Snook was quite filled with the spirit of antagonism and the spirit of exaltation.

Studying the case of B. F. Snook, we find interesting record about his spiritual status when he accepted the truth. Reading the record from E. G. White, which we may find in 2T 625,626, where she writes, "His heart was not right with God; he lacked principle."³ Now what was that principle? Further we find that he was the man who loved money and accepted the help of other members who helped him in his poverty, but he despized their help and was not thankful for their liberality. Mr. Snook exalted and in turn he "became the bitterest of the very ones who had been most liberal to him."⁴

At the beginning their opposition was against the organization of Seventh-day Adventist church. But their greatest opposition was against sister E. G. White visions. By being present at the Conference, and returning back to Iowa, they (Snook and Brinkerhoff) "actively engaged in going from church to church, telling falsehoods about

Whereas, Elders Snook and Drinkerhoff, who have been acknowledged preachers among us, have now rejected the three messages of Rev. 14, saying they were fulfilled in part by the Waldenses, and deny that the two-horned beast of Rev. 13 is a symbol of the United States and deny that the signs promised by our Saviour, Mark 16:17, were to come this side of the apostolic church; therefore,

Resolved, that we, the undersigned, Seventh-day Adventist churches do here by declare that we have no confidence in those men, nor in their present work of trying to pull down and destroy those glorious truth which we believe and love. Therefore we warn our brethren everywhere to have no sympathy nor fellowship with their unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Eph. 5:11⁹

Though our brethren had tried everything to help them spiritually but all was in vain. Maybe reader may think that they were mistreated, but according to the records, I could not see anything else that could have been done.

It is interesting to note that their waverley truth was not shaken by the Spirit of Prophecy or the pressure of the church, but their unconverted mind and heart. When they came into the truth, they never had the personal experience with the Lord. Many selfish ideas should have been dropped or changed but neither of them undertook this change. Sister White said concerning brother Snook:

Had he remained humble and devoted to God, he would have been converted from Campbellistic views. But he has been preparing for his present apostacy by his erroneous views in regard to the Spirit of God. His former views were many of them erroneous, and in the way of his having correct views of all the points of present truth. He was not steadfast in the truth. He could not unite his former experience with the third angel's message for Campbellism can not be united with the work of the third angel.¹⁰

As we can see real fallback and why they had to be dropped from the books. Usually when a person is not well rooted in the Gospel, temptation may come and pull the rug under his feet which in this case

happen to both them and thus they accused the church and sister White. But truly it was their own selfishness and attitude.

We may recall that our church members were helping him financially thus pooling him out of stricken poverty. Mr. Snook was not a converted man because he was exploiting them. He was a man for money! Just to support my statement I shall bring the incident this matter. When he left the truth, after a short time he was faced with a Minister from other denomination who sought him for council on the question if "the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week or that the Ten Commandments were abolished?"¹¹ Believing that Mr. Snook had the answer, especially when he no longer identified himself with our body, was awaiting an answer with earnestness! But he was shocked when Mr. Snook said: "You take either position and you will be defeated", "Why"? and Snook replied, "Because they have the truth in the matter." Surprisedly Minister asked him, "You say they have the truth, why then did you leave them?" Mr. Snook replied, "Because there was not enough money in it."¹² This last statement may reveal real factor for falling away from the truth.

After their fall they gathered about themselves other ex-members like themselves plus ex-members from Cranmer's group and formed themselves into a Marion Party in Marion, Iowa. Thus unitedly they tried to fight Adventism but after a while Snook dropped everything and "began to preach for the Universalists, and Drinkerhoff returned to teaching and the practice of law."¹³

further and further from Seventh-day Adventist, having no intentions to win the victories which was his responsibility to do.

Leaving the church he had some success in gathering some followers, where together they purchased a "second-hand press" and decided to print a paper called the Hope of Israel, which had been printed before under the name "Church of Christ" or "church of God". This paper was published by various scattered seventh-day people who observed Sabbath but who never had any connection with Seventh-day Adventist before, or those who were, but got out of the movement because of disbelief in Spirit of Prophecy or their own personal weakness. The "Hope of Israel" paper was issued first in "August 10, 1863" from Hartford, Michigan" and it was in print till Oct. 1865 when it ceased to exist because of lack of financial support.

This paper was revived in May, 1866 at Marion, Iowa when Mr. B. F. Snook and Mr. W. H. Brinkerhoff left the church and joined together they organized themselves called "Marion Party." *← see file call to*

Gilbert Cranmer

Eight years before the fall of Mr. Snook and Mr. Brinkerhoff will bring us to 1845 when Mr. Cranmer had apostatized, because of refusal from the brethren in letting him have a license for preaching. In his apostasy he preached against the Spirit of Prophecy and her work. He claimed that he had no license because he did not believe in sister White and her visions and thus brother White and other leading brothers were not letting him have license for Ministry. What was the real reason for not letting him have a preaching licence? Let us see what sister White had to say about him. This happened when brother and sister White were at Otsego, Michigan on Dec. 19, and 20, 1857.

After coming out of the vision Sister White related some of the things which had been shown to her. She spoke to the brother, and said, "I was not told your name". He said, "My name is Cranmer."

She then said, "The Lord showed me that you have ability to teach the truth, but there are two points on which you have victories to gain, and when you have gained those victories, it will be an evidence to you that the Lord will go forth with you in teaching the truth. The first is to be a victory over the use of tobacco. You speak against its use, and talk as though you discarded it, but at the same time you are secretly using the weed. When you get strength from the Lord to wholly cease using it, that will be an evidence that He will aid you in the ministry.

The second point is, you fear your family. You do all of your praying in the barn, because you have not the courage to read the Scriptures and pray before your family. When you get strength to take up that cross with the other, you will have a two fold evidence that the Lord will aid you in preaching the truth.¹⁴

Brother Cranmer had rejected this counsel and thus he departed

Church of God - Adventist

Marion Party existed in a loosely form for a while, and the main power of keeping them together was Cramer's second hand printint machine. When the Snook and Brinkerhoff came they gave a new name later, for their paper called "Sabbath Advocate" and again changed it into "Bible Advocate" which is still in existance.

In the Census Statement of 1936, they still exist and are known as "the church of God - Adventist" and other group which is the later split called "The Church of God - Seventh Day" with headquarters at salem, West Virginia, and World Headquarters in Jerusalem. "Two together number less then four thousands members."¹⁵

It is interesting to note that most of the brothers who had left our body was of our type of organization. Their main objection was that it was not organized biblically and the name was not taken out of the Bible. Why were they opposing so much our present form of organization? In order to focus the right understanding of their op- position, I have ran accross the paper, which was written by A. M. Dugger and C. O. Dodd, who are seventh-day baptist, and I quote their defence and understanding of our organization which is in the line with the present day Church of God - Adventist.

Again we find God's true people, like Israel of old, desiring to be like the nation about (1 Samuel, fourth chapter), forming an organization with a president, vice president, and the general organization patterned after the civil courts of worldly nations. in the absence of Moses, when he went upon Mount Sinai to receive the tables of stone, Israel varshipped

the calf and so it has ever been among God's children. Their history has been of repeated backslidings, and the Lord raising up others to carry on his work in the earth.¹⁶

It kind of irritates me when I read something like this quoted statement. I wonder what "the calf" has to do with the organization? Did they apostatize because of organizing themselves according to the Egyptian line or because of pure adoration of an idol?

I wonder what would above authors say about Moses who acted as a judge to the Israel's Nation. While he was judging, he received a visit from his father-in-law where he saw his work. He was quite dis- turbed for the impractability of his son-in-law. What did Jethro say? "Out you must yourselve search for capable God-fearing men among all the people, hones and incorruptable men, and appoint them over the . people as officers over units of thousand, of a hundred, of fifty or of ten" Ex. 18:21. N.E.B.

We may see here that Moses was not affraid to adopt this new system - organization. Even though other nations were using this same method, he didn't see the possibility of apostacy among his people. If the world is using one type of organization, this does not mean that the system is evil! There are many things that this world has and we still may use it without having any fear of sin or curse. We still may receive many blessings if we use it. Sister White said,

Evil does not result because of organization, but because of making organization everything, and vital godliness of little moment. When form and machinery take the pre- eminence, and a labourious task is made of carrying on the work that should be done with simplicity, evil will re- sult and little will be accomplished in proprtion to the effort put forth.¹⁷

Present Status

It is hard to be a President without a Conference and having a Conference without grouping the people into localities. It was quite a pain to lead people without general rules and a structure and now they themselves had seen this need for better function. This need Mr. Dugger and Padd justify as "Thus the reorganization became more and more impressed upon the church and its needs more apparent."¹⁸ Sad to say but they are contradicting themselves from the previous position which we had quoted, little while ago.

Their type of organization is more or less congregational type by one exception and that is they have the general conference of churches who have power over issues referred to it. Those who are seeking to be ministers are examined at a conference by a committee which is chosen before hand for such a matters. If passed their testing they are ordained as Pastors or general evangelists.

Tracing the line of their development as we have found they called their paper the Hope of Israel which was published at Hartford, Michigan. It was later published at Marion, Iowa, and then received a new title called the "Christian Publications Association" and its name of the paper changed to "Advent and Sabbath Advocate" later called "Advent and Sabbath" was dropped and now it is known as "Bible Advocate", which is published at Stanberry, Missouri.

Doctrinal Differences

The background of these three men, we find personal views which they held inspite to numerous counsells from sister White and church leaders.

They all rejected the Spirit of Prophecy, without having any valid reason. They all were very loose and undisciplined, none of them had a courage and right spirit to accept the counsel and repent from their sins but instead they all rebelled. In the book called, "The visions of E. G. White not of God" by B. F. Snook and W. H. Brinkerhoff have compiled numerous statements which according to their interpretation reveals E. G. White's mistake and contradiction. Looking through these complements I have found out that all of them have been taken out of context or few lines here and there pieced together.

Another aspect of their view which Mr. Snook and Brinkerhoff held was their rejection and unbelief in three angels messages of Rev. 14, where they believed this had been fulfilled in part by the Waldenses. They also rejected the two-horned beast in Rev. 13, saying it doesn't represent United States and "the sign promised by our Saviour in Mark 16:17 were to come this side of the apostolic church."¹⁹

Another view which Marion Party held and was accepted by the "Church of God - Adventist was the Sanctuary and judgment and the earth are not to be desolated during the one thousand years. They believed in having Lord's Supper once a year and that Christ died on Wednesday

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and was resurrected in evening of Saturday. In short summary we may say that "Church of God - Adventist" believes as follows.

Their understanding of Scripture does not greatly differentiate from the main Protestant body or even from S. D. A. acceptance of doctrine except in minor details. They accept Scriptural Sabbath, which is Seventh-day. They believe in literal coming of Jesus Christ prior thousand of years. They reject the view of life after death and accept the resurrection of the righteous dead at the second advent of Christ, who is going to rule with them for thousand years on earth. After thousand years of right complete destruction of the righteous the wicked. Saints are receiving the reward and the new Creation of the Earth. They believe that Christ was crucified on Wednesday and arose near sundown, Saturday, and that Lord's Supper should be kept only once a year. Ten commandments are moral code and are separate from the Law of Moses. Sin is the transgression of the Ten Commandments and when person accepts Christ, that means he will repent, baptize himself by immersion and will receive Holy Spirit who will sustain him in his future holy life.

Conclusion

It is very pathetic to see how men may fall under evil influence and personal weaknesses that they have no power to reject but fall under evil influential thoughts. They rather choose to become slave of the evil one rather than of Jesus Christ. Pride, self-centredness overpowers men and they are robbed of humility and the power of meekness.

What was the outcome of Marion Party? Men who were not willing to humble themselves and in Christ love accept counsel but rather fall deeper into delusion. They were the men who became slaves of their own pleasures. For them smoking had more value than the message of Jesus Christ and were willing to continue to live in their unreformed style of life. What was the outcome of their separation? Just another offshoot who needs Jesus Christ very badly?

Understanding their opposition we may say that we don't find a real reason of leaving the Seventh-day Adventist. They have never told us the real reason of leaving the church, like because of tobacco or because person had to learn how to pray and have a christian fellowship with his family and others. They claim of unbelief in Spirit of Prophecy.

Observing their rebellious spirit it is no wonder that they are so unsuccessful. They call themselves church of God, but question is if God is there? Evidences of God's church is in growth, success and many blessings.

Comparing the Marion Party, which was later formed and organized into the "Church of God - Adventist" with the S. D. A. church from which they came out are very small in success. From 1866, when they reorganized themselves and up to now here are their figures:

Summary of Statistics from 1936²⁰

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Members | 1,250 |
| Churches | 45 |
| Church buildings | 22 |
| Expenditures (all) | \$9,732.00 |

Observing these figures are we able to say this is God's Church and His leading in His work? It is amazing how men's heart can harden that they can't even feel or see the curse which is over them! Many had even seen their mistake but had no humbleness to return to God even if it is so, and one of these was Mr. Brinkerhoff who said,

Of Brinkerhoff's case, I learned from Gro. Starr of Iowa, that the day he was day he was baptized Brinkerhoff was present and met him as he came up out of the water, and, shaking hands with him, said:
I am glad to see you take your stand to go with this people. They have the truth, and I am sorry I ever left them. It is too late for me now to join them, I have opposed them, and have trained my family in that opposition. I could not meet the opposition from my family should I take my position with this people. I am a lost man.²¹

We all have to decide on which side to stand and take, but let the motives be true and sincere. Let's not take the side because of our sins which we have to leave them behind, but because we love them we rather choose to be revolutionaries and deceivers. Let's humble ourselves and stay with the Lord and his church.

Footnotes

¹Don F. Neufeld, Ed., Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966), p. 853.

²G. I. Butler, The early History of the "marion" Movement (Takoma Park: Ellen G. White Publication, 1944), p. 8.

³E. G. White, Testimonies for the church (9 vols.; Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1946), II, p. 625, 626.

⁴Ibid.

⁵G. I. Butler, The early History of the "marion" Movement (Takoma Park: Ellen G. White Publication, 1944), p. 10.

⁶Review and Herald, July 25, 1866.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Arthur L. White, The Church of God - An Intraductory Statement (Takoma Park: Ellen G. White Publication, 1944), p. 4.

⁹Review and Herald, Feb. 20, 1866.

¹⁰E. G. White Estate - files.

¹¹J. N. Soughborough, Church of God - Snook and Brinkerhoff (Takoma Park: Ellen G. White Publication, 1944), p. 5.

¹²Ibid.

¹³A. W. Spalding, Captains of the Host (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), p. 209.

¹⁴J. N. Loughborough, The Church of God - Experience of Mr Cranmer (Takoma Park: Ellen G. White Publication, 1944), p. 16.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶A. W. Spalding, Captains of the Host (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), p. 209.

¹⁷A. N. Dugger and C. O. Dodd, History of the Church of God (E. G. White Estate: Paper).

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³E. G. White, Testimonies for the church (9 vols.: Mountain Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), II, p. 625, 626.

⁴Ibid.

⁵G. I. Butler, The early History of the "marion" Movement (Takoma Park: Ellen G. White Publication, 1944), p. 10.

⁶Review and Herald, July 25, 1865.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Arthur L. White, The Church of God - An Introductory Statement (Takoma Park: Ellen G. White Publication, 1944), p. 4.

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¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶W. Spalding, Captains of the Host (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), p. 209.

¹⁷A. N. Dugger and C. O. Dodd, History of the Church of God E. G. White Estate: Paper.

¹⁸E. G. White, Fundamentals of Christian Education. Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), p. 253.

¹⁹G. I. Butler, The early History of the "marion" Movement. Tokoma Park: Ellen G. White Publication, 1944), p. 40.

²⁰Review and Herald, Feb. 20, 1866.

²¹Census of Religious bodies of the United States, 1936, Vol. II, Part. I, pp. 36-37.

²²Pacific Union Recorder, Jan. 9, 1913.

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