



MINISTERIAL  
TRAINING  
CENTER  
303 - 452-7976

March 25, 1977

Mr. Lowell Tarling  
17 Hay Street  
West Ryde, Australia 2114

Dear Mr. Tarling:

Your letter inquiring about the history and teachings of our church organization was referred to us. I regret that we have practically no printed material available concerning our history. We will be enclosing information about our teachings.

As you are no doubt aware, there were five church denominations which emerged from the William Miller movement. They were the Seventh-day Adventists, the Church of God (Seventh Day), the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith, the Advent Christian Church, and the Life and Advent Union. The last two mentioned merged later. This information comes to us from Elder S. J. Kauer who taught at Midwest Bible College, formerly operated by our church. His source of information was a book on religious census information written in the 1920's. Photo copies can be made available, I'm sure.

For further information about the Church of God (Abrahamic) you may write to "The Restitution Herald", 131 N. Third St., Oregon, Illinois 61061. Perhaps you have already done so. I know little about this church other than the fact that their beliefs are similar to ours, except for the Sabbath observance and belief in the pre-existence of Jesus.

The Church of God (Seventh Day) was formed in Michigan in the 1860's, their early collective efforts centered in the publication of "The Hope of Israel" in 1863. The editor was Elder Gilbert Cranmer, and the city was Hartford. This early effort was unable to sustain itself, and after a short experience, the magazine went defunct. Not long thereafter, two ministers who left the Seventh-day Adventist Church determined to resurrect the magazine, which they did. Their last names were Brinkerhoff and Snook. Since they revived the publication, it has been published continuously. It is now named "The Bible Advocate." From Michigan, the publication was moved to Marion, Iowa; then to Stanberry, Missouri; and finally to Denver, Colorado.

Our church was officially chartered in 1899 in Gentry County, Missouri, in which the small city of Stanberry is located. In the early 1930's a series of personal clashes threatened the unity of the church. In 1933 there was a major division, with the departing segment setting up headquarters in Salem, West Virginia. This movement was led by Elder

Andrew N. Dugger. The group remaining at Stanberry and the apostate group headquartered in Salem competed with each other for about 15 years until it was considered advisable by both groups that avenues for reconciliation should be sought. These efforts led to reconciliation and reunification in August, 1949, and a new organization was structured with its headquarters in Denver, Colorado.

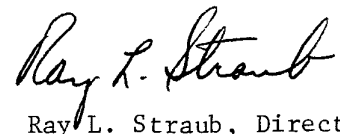
A group of ministers previously affiliated with Salem quickly grew dissatisfied with the "merger" church and formed plans to implement a "Back to Salem" movement. This involved Elder A. N. Dugger, a principal financier who lived in Salem, Elder F. L. Summers, and about six or eight other ministers. It wasn't long until this movement began to splinter. Elder Dugger, with a friend, Elder Ed Severson, migrated to Jerusalem where they set up their world headquarters, now known as the Mt. Zion movement. Two others, Joe Ling and an A. C. Olson moved to Caldwell, Idaho to establish their organization, now owned and operated by Elder Martin Ogren. Their vociferous spokesman for awhile was an Elder M. L. Bartholomew, who has since formed his own organization. Those remaining in Salem published a magazine, still in circulation, called "The Advocate of Truth." The organization is maintained mostly by children of the deceased Elder F. L. Summers, the main leader being a son-in-law, Elder Chris. Royer.

Also, there was a dissident group to unification emerging from the Stanberry group. It was centered in Meridian, Idaho, and focused mainly around an Elder A. H. Stith and several sons-in-law of leadership calibre. Their frustrations with the merger dealt with the new organizations determination to take a more rigid stand on the matter of prohibiting the eating of unclean meats. This group in Meridian, Idaho also adopted a position of allowing complete local autonomy in the conduct of local church affairs. Gradually, as certain local units became dissatisfied with our move toward centralization, they would drift toward identity with the "Meridian" organization.

The most informed of historians concerning our various Sabbathkeeping groups is a Mr. Lawson Briggs, a member of the editorial staff of Plain Truth Magazine, published by Ambassador College in Pasadena, California. He and a friend have engaged in some rather comprehensive research, and to my mind has reflected more objectivity than some ministers of our own church. If I remember correctly, he has information concerning the William Miller movement, and some of the circumstances concerning the Church of God's refusal to go along with the Whites, who were early personalities involved with the Seventh-day Adventist movement. I spoke with Mr. Briggs by telephone a few months ago, and I learned that he does not have any of his research available in printed form, yet. He invited our participation in moving that direction. It is possible that we may begin such-movement this coming summer.

Hopefully, this information will be of some help. Please be assured that we stand ready to help further, if you desire. Also, we would be interested in the product of your research efforts--particularly in your book when it becomes available.

Sincerely,



Ray L. Straub, Director

P. S. In rereading my letter, it seems wise for me to point out that Elder M. L. Bartholomew may have remained with the Salem organization instead of leaving with the organization which headquartered in Caldwell, Idaho. I am quite sure he is no longer with the Salem group, if he did remain.

Also, it is probable that Elder Chris. Royer is no longer in the official/unofficial leadership role with the Salem organization that he was a decade or more ago when we were in closer contact. Of all of the "splinter" groups, we have the most frequent contact with the "Meridian" group purely on the basis that they have more people around the country who are identified with them. Contacts among all other groups are few in number and seldom heard about.

*I have learned that literature describing the Church doctrines has already been sent.*



# The Church Of God Publishing House

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POST OFFICE BOX 325  
SALEM, WEST VIRGINIA 26425

Mr. Lowell Tarling  
17 Hay Street  
West Ryde, 2114  
Australia

Dear Friend of Truth,

Greetings to you in the precious name of Jesus our Saviour,

Thank you for your letter of request. It will be fine to get a book of your stature on the scene of action for the Lord. Since your sympathies are for Mr. Miller I assume that you are not a Sabbath observer. Perhaps I am wrong in this observation. You are correct though in saying Mr. Miller was the most sincere of the Advent movement of the middle 1800's. He admitted that a mistake had been made in setting a date for the coming of the Lord. Mrs. White had come from the Church of God, (7th Day) and took some people with her that believed that she was a Prophet of the Lord. In 1866 she had a vision that they should not call themselves Church of God but Seventh Day Adventists.

The Church of God (7th Day) never went along with the Advent Movement of that time. The reason for this is that Israel had not yet become a nation and this was one of the Bible prophecies that Jesus would not return until Israel is in their boundaries again. That is another Study. You can imagine how enemies of the Church of God could use this against the Church. Who wants to have anything to do with such a Church that denies the second coming of Christ. The Church did suffer. But when Israel is now established in her own land we fully are vindicated and preach that Christ is even at the door of His second coming.

Mrs. White was not sincere in actions when she instituted the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment which began at the time Jesus should have come. She said that Jesus had to move at that time so he moved in heaven.

The Seventh Day Baptist folks say they were the first ones to come to America keeping the Sabbath. But they did not become a denomination until 1830. There are historical papers of Sabbatarians coming to Rhode Island from the Mill Yard Church in London, England. The Mill Yard Church did not become a Seventh Day Baptist Church until 1929. They were Church of God up to that time. So the S D B folks have the same tap roots as we do.

You are right concerning Mr. Armstrong. He was asked not to preach the spurious doctrine of British Israelism. He would not and was not credentialed again.

We are totally depleted of our history book. Much of it was taken from Randolph's History of S D Baptists. You might look these books up in your libraries near you. Truth Triumphant by E. G. Wilkinson, An Impelling Force in History, by L.R. Conradi. Sabbath and Sunday, by A. H. Lewis, A Critical History of the Christian Church by A. H. Lewis, History

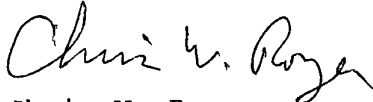
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of the Advent Movement, A. L. Wythcome.

I would like to know of your book in greater detail. But I do not want to burden you with having to write to me. When you get a summary or an out line as advertising, you could send us one. Then also when your book is completed we would like a copy. Of course we would like to pay for it.

Thank you for your interest in our group. We are fundamentalists and on fire for the Lord, eager to save the lost. God bless you.

Your servant in the service of the Master,

  
Chris W. Royer