

"IT IS NOW TIME FOR THE LAYMAN TO VOICE HIS OPINION, AND EXPRESS HIS DESIRES CONCERNING THE CHURCH'S ACTIVITIES . . ."



THY WORD IS LIGHT IN A TIME OF DARKNESS

CHURCH OF GOD - 7th Day

P.O. Box 2370

Denver, Colorado

December 10, 1955

Dear Brethren,

This is your opportunity to voice your desires in a democratic institution -- the CHURCH -- which was founded for His disciples by the Lord Jesus Christ. Church means family, and as a member of such a family you have a voice in the things that concern the family of God.

By having a voice we do not mean in giving alone. As a member we feel that YOU should have the opportunity to voice your thoughts in the future work of the church. You may do this by reading the closing instructions in this message and following suggestions given. It is your opportunity to speak to us.

No doubt, you have heard of the recent conference of ministers of the Church of God, held at Denver, Colorado, November 16-23. Also present were departmental officers, staff workers, ministerial applicants and students and others who are directly involved in the church work. Personally, we have never viewed a better spirit of cooperation and willingness to face our problems and the task of carrying forth the great commission. There was not one occasion of discord or strife. There were many tears of consecration. It seemed that God's spirit brought each one there with the feeling of wanting to understand and best prepare for a good future. Rather than refusing to understand, we all learned from one another. There were remarks of a "change of opinion" as we were given the opportunity to learn of the various phases of the work and its attendant problems.

There are many different parts and branches of the church work throughout our country, Canada and Mexico. Different people are working in different places under very different conditions. It is, therefore, necessary for the field workers, ministers and national officers to meet in conference and thoroughly study and confer on the general function and problems of the gospel work.

We have had our opportunity to voice ourselves. Now it is up to the layman to express himself. We have told you in previous letters this fall, and through our publications, about the various projects and activities going on in the Church of God. We would like to know how you feel about the various activities, and your thoughts which will help to make them more effective.

Brethren, this message is coming to you especially in the interest of the national departments of the church. We wish to mention the necessity of the various national activities; then at the close of this message, we want your valuable opinion. Your voice in this survey will COUNT!

First of all, we have the gospel message itself, obtained from the Bible. But in order to present the truth and carry the gospel, we must have the tools or voice to do it. We must constantly work on publishing literature which does tell the story of the gospel. Without this literature -- regular magazines, Sabbath school materials, missionary tracts and evangelism literature -- we cannot complete our task.

Your local church or Sabbath school, the pastor, field minister or missionary all depend upon such literature. There are TWO ways to get such tools. Each local church would need to run its own publishing plant and employ a working staff. That would be so costly as to render it impossible to most local groups.

I believe in the Bible truths as preserved and carried by the Church of God - 7th Day.

Christ the Savior - The Commandments of God - Kingdom truth

I am interested, as a layman, in all the national work of the church and believe it all necessary.

I am anxious to make full use of church helps, literature and instructions, in witnessing for Christ wherever I can.

As to ideas for improving our efforts or my thoughts concerning the church activities, I offer the following constructive and sincere opinion:

Would you like to see new gospel literature being published each year for use in witnessing? What are your suggestions about it?

SIGNED

The other way is for all of us of like faith to place our resources together and hire one staff in one plant to do this work for the benefit of every member of the body, and for winning souls everywhere. EVERY YEAR we save thousands of dollars by having national offices which specialize in the various needs of the work in the field. It is easy to see that the national work is not something apart from us, but that it exists to serve every local area. Since it is hired to serve the local churches, we all share the cost of operation.

Now when we have published literature and missionary tools we cannot leave them on the shelf. We must have TRAINED workers, Ministers home and foreign missionaries. We again put our efforts together and provide SCHOOLS Ministerial training, and missionary instructions.

▶ EVERY DEPARTMENT is needed to develop the full pattern of the work. Here is where we sometimes might have a tendency to support one part above another because of being able to see the outward results. For instance, one of us might feel only an interest in radio work, thinking that it reaches many people with the gospel message. You might even hear someone say:

"I'm putting everything into radio because I think it will do more good there ..."

Then there are others who, in all sincerity, feel that the only real, worthwhile activity is education and the schools. They feel that the church has long needed them and that we should make up for past lack by putting everything into them now.

There are still others who, being acquainted with the enormous potential in personal evangelism as a fast method for gaining membership, feel that they should support only Home Missions, which is specializing in this particular phase.

Brethren, not one part alone is the answer! Each of them together -- EVERY PART -- properly functioning is the answer. But we must see that each part has the opportunity to carry out its duty in order for other parts to be fully successful.

May we refer here to I Corinthians 12 where the apostle Paul is teaching the function of a working church. He speaks of the human tendency to bestow certain honor on the more comely (attractive) parts of the body, without considering the necessity of the uncomely parts of the body. (See verses 21-25.)

▶ Yes, there are parts in the Lord's work which do not seem so attractive. For instance, the lonely man who stands by the press as the literature comes off may be the forgotten man --or the workers who prepare that literature! The unknown workers, busy day and night, are so necessary to the work. Without them we would not get very far in the gospel work.

Radio, home missionary witnessing, or the field evangelists -- any of them might be called the more attractive parts because they are in more direct contact with the public. But think of the many long hours and months of work behind the scenes by the unknown workers which are continually necessary to make the field work a success.

ALMOST A FULL YEAR'S ACTIVITY DEPENDS UPON the United Fund fall campaign!

We can vote "YES" to the continuance of each necessary activity through the "Harvest Thanks" offerings.

We can take part in these activities and partake of the services offered by these departments.

They exist to serve YOU. They are your source of supply for many needs.

You can freely express your voice in these activities. (Please do so at the close of this letter.)

ALL MEMBERS, including the workers themselves, can make a sacrifice of love to support this work.

To go out into the field with workers, to engage in house to house visitation or personal evangelism, or to go on the air waves without the necessary literature, staff work and tools behind the scenes is like throwing money to the wind! If one or two things alone were the answer to sending forth the full gospel, wouldn't our church officers stop budgeting money for the various other parts? Every part is vital, in order for other parts to stay alive! That is why we believe we can best serve Christ through a completely organized body of believers. It is the Bible way.

The apostle Paul preached this kind of a message to the church of God in his day. He compared the church to a living body. He said that not all have the same calling or office. Many people pray for revival among God's people. The truest form of constant revival is a working, witnessing people. If we feel need of revival let us begin by a personal search. "Have I obeyed God's instructions to give, thus removing any trace of material covetousness from my heart? Am I willing to openly witness for Christ? Do I enter whole-heartedly into the church's activities and learn their problems?" When we have answered these questions we will experience many joys which we may have previously denied ourselves.

The other way is for all of us of like faith to place our resources together and hire one staff in one plant to do this work for the benefit of every member of the body, and for winning souls everywhere. EVERY YEAR we save thousands of dollars by having national offices which specialize in the various needs of the work in the field. It is easy to see that the national work is not something apart from us, but that it exists to serve every local area. Since it is hired to serve the local churches, we all share the cost of operation.

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In olden times the tithe was just the beginning of giving. The people also were required to bring burnt offerings, freewill offerings, heave offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, wave offerings and thank offerings -- THANK OFFERINGS! Yes, today we have once per year when we have our HARVEST OF THANKS. Those who are employed in the Lord's work full time are sacrificing to stay in it. But they are all instructed to share in giving -- not because their gifts are needed but because they also must obey God and share the blessings.

As a church, we do not observe Christmas, since we find no such command in the Bible. In tracing the story of the Christmas celebration we find that it did not originate within the primitive Christian church, but from pagan festivals. We believe in the beautiful story of the nativity. But we believe in placing our gifts at HIS FEET, as the wise men did, and not in unholy celebrations.

Most Americans are spending hundreds of dollars to celebrate this feast. We should point to a better way. Cannot we give \$50, \$100 or more to the UNITED WORK of spreading the story of Christ and His salvation, and match the money others spend in vanities? How much do Americans who hold church membership average in giving to God? Surveys show that it amounts to only 32¢ per week! A true Christian thinks more of God than that.

This year we have among us new converts and NEW MEMBERS because that you gave bountifully during the past year, so that they could be reached by our workers. You have also received many spiritual blessings and provision during the year. There will be people in the Kingdom of God because of your help during the testing days.

When you have decided what to do about this year's offering to the UNITED FUND, we would really appreciate your thoughts on the future work of the church and its glorious message of simple gospel truth.

Turn to the back page of this message, express YOUR VOICE by filling out the form. Then enclose it in the self-mailing envelope herein. Be sure to tear off this page from this letter to save postage, then send it postage-free at your earliest convenience.

There is space to check all questions, and also space for your own comment. Your voice will become a valuable opinion in this SURVEY when all are placed together. Results will be reported in the "Harvest Field Messenger." By the way, be sure to get this monthly magazine which reports the church activities.

Let your opinion be candid, frank and constructive. Don't forget. Do it now. It is most urgent to our future work at this time when new plans are in the making. And most of all we wish you GOD'S BLESSINGS.

Yours in humble service,

UNITED FUND COMMITTEE



DID YOU KNOW THAT SECURITY BONDS ARE STILL AVAILABLE?

A good place for your S-a-v-i-n-g-s is through purchase of BONDS issued by your church. They pay the same interest return as your bank, and can be redeemed at the time you designate. Your savings can thus work for the Lord rather than for the commercial world. -----Check here if interested in further information.