

OBJECTIVE COMMENTS

It is again time to publish the Bulletin, through which we greet members and friends of the Church of God (7th Day), and bring to them comments, reports and other reading matter in which we feel they will be interested and in which they will find strength.

We always want to furnish information concerning the work of Reform, Planning, Unity, and Missions.

Since, according to the laws of our land, it is quite lawful to organize a committee within an organization (which right the Executive Board of the General Conference has acknowledged), and since there is extreme need of reform and progress, a committee was selected in the Council Meetings of December, 1960, and is known as the Reform and Planning Committee. It succeeded the Laymen's Research Committee which some time ago was organized under the same right, and for the purpose of laying the foundation for badly needed reform in the organization.

The responsibilities of the RPA Committee are to lead in the work of church reform, planning, unity, and missions.

This type of work consequently develops into associational endeavors common to the desires of an extended number of people, who want church reform, in getting back to the Bible Plan of church activity and organization.

This over-all endeavor within the organization of the Church of God (7th Day)

Please address all mail to:

REFORM and PLANNING ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 688

Denver 1, Colorado

is known as the Reform and Planning Association.

Its four principal objectives are:

Reform - Planning - Unity - Missions.

Reform is the road to better things for the Church, where rights of Christians composing the laity are recognized

and appreciated; and where the real aim of the Church (proclamation of the Gospel) is primarily considered and promoted.

There is an evident tendency today in Christendom to regard super-structure in church government, erection of beautiful Church buildings, and increased multitudes of nominal Christians as progress of the church, without recognition of the individual aspect in the composition of the Church.

The Church is composed of converted individuals whom God sees fit to add to the Church. In reality, the Church of God is not made up of wood, stone, and metal formed into particular types of constructions, nor of unconverted multitudes, but of individuals around the world who "fight the good fight of faith" and are laying "hold on eternal life."

Beautiful buildings are in order when they are regarded as means to an end --the end of fulfilling the aims of the Church, without becoming the end themselves.

The same is true with church organization. It is a tool used as a means to the end of the Gospel's proclamation.

An increase in converted people to Christ is real church progress. It is grand to be instrumental in persuading people to the way of life eternal--people that God will be pleased to add to His Church. God doesn't use men to do the real act of adding to, and taking from His Church. He does that Himself.

No small group of men, women, officials or ministers compose the Church entirely. Neither is a denominational organization the Church. It is therefore very irregular for a small group of people or "authorities" to refer to themselves as the Church by remarking that he or she doesn't cooperate with the Church, when he or she doesn't (Continued on page 7)

IN THIS ISSUE

Objective Comments

From the Mail:

Domestic

Foreign

Church Organization and Activity

(The Bible Plan)

FROM THE MAIL

At Home:

I would like to say as a testimony, "I believe this to be one of the greatest meetings of its kind in the Church of God that I have attended, since the meeting of the Church in Fairview, Oklahoma, in 1949, to effect the 'Merger.' It will no doubt go down in history as another milestone in the progress and advancement of the people of God." ---Elder Emmett Samson, Oregon.

 We attended the Council Meetings Friday morning and other sessions. We really enjoyed our fellowship with the brethren and received many blessings. We enjoyed the Sabbath services at the West Denver Church. Brother Roy Marrs delivered a very good message following a good lesson study.

We went to the home of Brother and Sister Floyd Merriam following the church services, where they had prepared a wonderful dinner. That evening we again enjoyed the fellowship of over 30 brethren at the home of Brother and Sister Charles Adams, and another bountiful meal served in their basement. We shall never forget the wonderful hospitality of all these dear brethren.

It was a privilege to get to be in the home of Brother and Sister B. F. Marrs for a while on our arrival in Denver....

Sunday night we were piloted out to Willard and Ruth Hawkins by Brother and Sister Beecher Adams. It was so good to see Willard again, and to see Ruthie and children for the first time. ---Charles and Alice Henion, Oregon.

 I was privileged and greatly appreciated that privilege, to attend a meeting in Denver, which I'm sure will go down in Church of God history as a turn for happier days ahead.

I do not intend to attempt to explain what took place there. You will probably hear from one of the committees set up for this purpose.

But do not take too lightly what was done in this meeting eventhough it might be belittled. If you want to see a great work done, quit sitting with your hands folded, waiting for a miracle. Stand up and be counted. ---Luvelt Palmer, Idaho.

 I did not plan at first to attend the Advisory Council Meetings in Denver. However, after seeing how things were developing and being encouraged to go by others, I decided to go. I have not been sorry at all. There was a wonderful spirit of cooperation and freedom of expression, without abuse of freedom. If properly conducted, the arrangements made have the potential for a lot of good, as I see it.

 ---Elder Roy A. Marrs, Californi
 It is difficult for me to express my feelings in words for the joy that I received in attending the Advisory Council Meetings. It was good to see old friends again and also to make new friends. The thing that impressed me most however, was that all who attended the meeting possessed the same line of thought. Although the people came from churches of God over a wide and vast area, their problems were about the same, and their ideas for solving them were approximately the same.

They all agreed that our present system of church government is hierarchical, oppressing, and not Biblical. The voice and rights of the church membership have been taken away, and the people are forced to submit to a super-monstrous church government, set on ruling with an iron hand, regardless of the cost.

The general feeling among all was that this meeting would be the starting point of restoring the church government to the people themselves, and that the spiritual experience of the Early Church can again be enjoyed.

The church has sold its "Pentecostial Birthright" for a mess of machinery, but let us pray that this system will be forever banished, and through local autonomy and restoration of rights, the Spirit can again be free to work in the church, the home, and in the hearts and minds of men.

When Jesus comes, His kingdom will work because He is a righteous King. Until then, a democracy is the only form of government that will be a success, if people are to be happy and enjoy that freedom which God Himself has given. "The truth shall make you free." Let us learn the Bible truth about church government. It is found in the book of Acts and writing of the Apostles. ---Elder Leo Merriam, California.

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From the Mail at Home (Continued from Page 2)

Greetings to all in the name of Jesus.

Am glad to receive the letter of announcement as a fore-runner concerning detailed accounts of the Council and Associational Sessions which will be available.

Thanks, Brother Adams, for the note and Fellowship News

I appreciate your interest and concern in behalf of everyone concerned. All things are possible with God. We will give Him all the honor and glory, praise His name!

Yes...according to your request, not only did I pray myself, but petitioned the Tacoma Church for the meetings. ---A. C. Tontz, Washington.

I am thankful for the opportunity to express myself concerning the meetings of the Advisory Council.

I went fearing that the results would be contrary to my wishes. The reason for my fears stemmed from some ministers (one of whom is an Executive Board member) asking me why we wanted to split the Church. I didn't know of any such intentions, but thought that perhaps they did. After my attending a meeting I was rejoicing for the members' greatest desires were to see the wonderful Gospel of Jesus Christ preached --that in love, peace, and liberty--not desiring a split.

Christ died that we might be free from the "yoke of bondage." Now we find that we are engangled with another yoke which binds the Spirit, restricts the preaching of the Gospel, and creates an atmosphere of distrust (to say the least). All of us realized these things, and we came together after much prayer, I believe, desiring that God would help us find the means whereby we might untangle ourselves from this yoke through loving and peaceful means.

I was especially thrilled when the Association voted to form a committee to improve relations between our organization (Church of God, 7th Day), and the Meridian, Idaho Group. Somehow I had always felt that I didn't have a true picture of them. May God help us to grow in the spirit of unity and love.

I left the meetings feeling that I must firmly uphold our aims with love and consideration for all.

May God help me always to have love in my heart, and may He cause me to stand for truth, justice, and liberty for all is my prayer. ---Lawrence M. Meier, Colorado.

I have meant for some time to write my testimony of the pleasure I enjoyed by being in the Advisory Council Meetings in Denver.

Eventhough I was not a delegate, I was treated with every courtesy and could feel the blessing of God's presence around us, and see His Spirit leading us to a closer fellowship, and a greater working for lost souls. ---Sister W. Otto, Michigan.

We greatly enjoyed the meetings in Denver, and the fellowship with others who also had the interest of the Church at heart. Everyone there was bound together with love and a sincere desire to do more for the Cause of Christ.

Although those at the meetings came from different parts of the country, each had basically the same ideas in mind, and we feel that much was accomplished at the meetings toward better church government and unity.

If each person desiring democratic church government will voice his opinion, and then work with others to obtain democracy, the church will soon be back in the hands of the people. We sincerely hope and pray that God's will be done in these matters. ---Bryan and Mary Sue Burrell, Oklahoma.

It was a privilege for me to attend the Advisory Council Meetings in Denver. I must say that I have never seen a more peaceful and dignified assembly in all my church career. It was a joy to sit down with brethren from over the country, and from different stations of life, to analyze our church problems, then unanimously to arrive at what we believe to be a solution.

We hope that through the united efforts of people everywhere that love the Church of God and desire to see the salvation of souls, there will be happier and brighter days ahead for the Church.

It was good to have representatives of the Bible Church of God, Meridian, Idaho, meet with us. They cleared up many questions that were in our (Continued on page 4)

minds. These brethren are very honest and zealous for the work of the Lord. May He richly bless their endeavors. I feel we have entrusted the Reform Work to capable men. They have our support and best wishes. May the Lord bless in this noble work. ---Carl Merriam, California. Page 4

I received your letter, Reform and Planning Bulletin, and minutes of the Council Meetings.... I enjoyed them all very much.

After a series of several committee meetings and four general business meetings of our local group here in Lodi, we finally became officially united into one church last night.... I have been elected pastor.

We have a large group of people attending church here now. The enrollment is 169, and the attendance last Sabbath was 92. We seldom ever have under 90 people at the Sabbath services.

At our meeting last night a unanimous decision was made to ask you to come to Lodi, and conduct a revival meeting for us. ---Elder Leo. S. Merriam, California.

(We rejoice to see advancement in unity of Spirit and fellowship which really is in fulfillment of our objectives in the RPA--Reform Movement. The brethren there are to be commended as they progress in carrying out the aims of the Church in Christian democracy and freedom, declaring the Bible philosophy of local church autonomy. I hope I shall be able to accept their invitation to help them in their proposed meetings.---Ed.)

Just thought I would write you a few lines.... I did go to Tennessee and held a nine-night revival and baptized one before I left.

We are looking for a building this week in which to have church, and ask that you pray for us that we find one the Lord wants us to have. Everyone in our group seems happy.... It surely seems good to be free. ---Elder Harvey Otto, Michigan.

(Brother Otto was elected a member of the RPA Committee in our December Council Meetings. He also answered a call to help in Tennessee, without the approval of the District Overseer, although he was not going at the expense of the district. Consequently he was fired as local pastor of the Detroit Church, by the Overseer and a majority of his district board, not by the Detroit Church. His pay was stopped on the day he left to help in Tennessee, through the influence of the Overseer over his District Board. Through this same influence the Detroit Church was split. The same thing has happened elsewhere as many know. How foolish can men be? How long will it take for an hierarchy to learn that work of this type feeds the flame, piling more "coals" on their heads? Please remember Brother Otto and the Detroit Church in your prayers. ---Ed.)

Abroad:

A F R I C A

I feel that our foreign missions program should include parts of Nigeria, West Africa, from where a prominent worker for many years--one whom we know personally--wrote: "Hope this finds you and family and the church in West Denver well and happy. Please greet brethren for me...."

I totally decided to stop writing for publication. No ministers in Ahoada, Ogba, and Egbema Districts receive a brass farthing share from the General Conference.... No man or woman has been sending us any financial help in this part of Nigeria.... We are not getting any help whatsoever from anyone there in the States, whether conference or individuals.... We need letters of encouragement from many of you."

---Pastor Nelson I. Dimkpah.

I N D I A

When I read the comments and expressions of the brethren in the Advisory Council Meeting, I felt very much, for I was not among them. There must be freedom of thought, spirit, and action under the guidance of the word of God. The truth-loving children of God must overthrow the dominating, self-seeking, evil, dictatorial powers in the Church of God. Where there is love, there is no fear. May the dear Lord help the children of God to be united in speech and action for His glory in these closing days of human history.

I was impressed much with the Bulletin of the Council.

I am glad to write you that the work in India is (Continued on page 7)

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What Is the Church?

The word "church," as used in the Bible, is from the Greek word "ekklesia," defined as a popular assembly, a congregation, a local church, or Christian congregation. The word comes from the Greek verb "ekkaleo" (to summon forth), further analyzed as "ek," a preposition meaning from, or of, and the verb "kaleo," to call, summon, or invite.

There was in ancient Athens the assembly that directed the local government. This assembly was composed of those called together to consider local conditions.

When Christ began His ministry, He called His disciples from their various vocations, and said, "Follow me" (Matt. 4:18-22). He invited them to go with Him. Thus they were summoned to leave their homes, friends, occupations, and He trained them for a special work. They, in turn, were to train others in spiritual matters. He gave them a world-wide commission, and they were to begin that work when they received the power of the Holy Spirit (See Matt. 28:19,20; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). Until they received that power they were to stay in Jerusalem. The record states they remained there waiting, until the Power came. There were then and there 120 who were waiting, who were His followers, His called-out ones, His church at that time.

Paul stated that Christ regarded the Church as His purchased possession, for which He died, that He might cleanse and purify. And as the Church is His body, He is the Head, or the director of the Church. He is to give instructions, and the Church is to follow the same (See Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23-27).

The Twelve Apostles were instructed by Christ Himself. Christ gave personal revelation to Paul, which is recorded in his writings.

Under the labors of the Apostles the group of believers grew in numbers, three thousand at one time, with additions daily; and five thousand at another time. The record states that they were multiplied. How great the membership came to be is not recorded (See Acts 2:47-49; 4:4; 5:14).

Did the Apostles Seek to Rule in Material Things?

With the rapid increase in numbers, a problem arose in Jerusalem. A common fund was available to meet the needs of the members, but a complaint was registered in regard to neglect of widows (See Acts 6:1-8). As the Apostles realized it was their duty to give their full time to prayer and ministry of the Word, they asked the Church to select seven men to attend to this material need, the cause of the complaint. This was done. The seven men chosen were men of faith, prayer, and power through the Holy Spirit.

This example plainly illustrates the duties of the Twelve--attending to the ministry of the Word and prayer; and those of deacons--attending to material needs of the people and other appropriate work.

The Apostles said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:2,4). Certainly, any group of people that teaches there must be a Board of Twelve patterned after Bible example, must remember as well, the duties of as set forth in the Bible for these twelve men.

In the course of time persecution drove many believers into Judea and Samaria, but the Apostles remained in Jerusalem. By this the good news of salvation was taken to other places, and churches were raised up (See Acts 8:1,14). Persecution continued, but the churches grew.

The very zealous persecutor, Paul, was converted and became a devout follower of Christ.

One of the new churches was at Antioch where Paul and Barnabas labored. There they were called by the Spirit for a special work, and were sent out by and from this local church--not from Jerusalem, nor by the Apostles. Their mission work took them into Cyprus and parts of Asia Minor where they raised up churches, in which they ordained elders (See Acts 13 and 14). This was without being sent by the Apostles, or any evident direction whatsoever from Jerusalem. They returned to their local church at Antioch, not to Jerusalem, thus showing that they did not (Continued on page 6)

consider Jerusalem as authoritative headquarters, nor that the Apostles (Page 6) were their directors, since those at Jerusalem were not consulted about their call to mission fields. It was not necessary for them to get permission from Jerusalem, or any other general headquarters to go. The Spirit of God issued the call, gave the necessary permission, and Paul and Barnabas were sent out from the local church at Antioch.

Why Did Paul, Barnabas and Others Go to Jerusalem?

In the absence of Paul and Barnabas from Antioch, some Judaizing teachers from Jerusalem caused contention in Antioch by teaching it was necessary to obey the Law of Circumcision (See Acts 15). Who had sent teachers to Antioch? Did the Apostles at Jerusalem send them?

After some contention at Antioch, it was decided that Paul, Barnabas and others should go to Jerusalem (source of the trouble) to learn why this was done, who was responsible for such doings, and what should be done to settle the matter.

The reason this delegation was sent from Antioch to Jerusalem, was because the trouble-makers were from there--Jerusalem being the source of the trouble. The whole church at Jerusalem was sorry because of the difficulty, and that those causing the trouble went out from them. They all sent greetings by letter to the church at Antioch as follows: "The apostles and elders and brethren send greetings to the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch.... Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such command!" (Acts 15: 23,24).

In Jerusalem this company was received by the Apostles, the elders, and the whole church. Paul and Barnabas related their experiences in the mission journey they had made (after first reporting to Antioch). This would be expected from two wonderful missionaries, but was incidental to the real purpose (teaching of circumcision) for going to Jerusalem. Had the trouble originated in some other place or church, they would have gone there to get the matter settled. Peter told of going to the home of Cornelius and of the results. Finally, from the discussion, James summed up a decision which was to be made known to all the churches.

The Apostles, elders, and the whole church (See Acts 15:22) joined in this decision, that no added burden such as circumcision be placed on Christian converts. To aid Paul and Barnabas, two men were sent with them to Antioch. By this it was shown the Apostles did not authorize the teaching imminating from Jerusalem, that caused the trouble in Antioch.

Another interesting point here to be remembered is that the church at Antioch was not raised up by workers sent from Jerusalem by the Apostles, but by devout Christians who had gone there through persecution and zeal for Christ and His work.

Was This Meeting at Jerusalem an Organized General Conference?

Some have tried to show that this meeting in Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 15, was a general gathering from the various churches for what is called a "General Conference. However, examination of the record reveals that only two churches were involved--Antioch and Jerusalem. It mentions only Peter and James of the Twelve Apostles. Were all the others there, or were they elsewhere at that time? The record does not specifically state. There is nothing to show that this was a general meeting of any kind, or that James held any administrative authority whatsoever. Any attempt to try to show that this was a "general conference," comes from reading between the lines something that is not in the record.

The whole church at Jerusalem took part in this meeting and approved the suggested decision sent to Antioch. The Apostles alone did not make the decision or issue the directive. Neither does the record mention that delegates from elsewhere had any part in deciding or sending this instruction to Antioch: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well."

Paul's Instructions Regarding Churches:

To the Ephesians Paul stated that Christ is Head of the (Continued on page 9)

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Objective Comments (Continued from Page 1)

(Page 7)

agree or conform to the wishes of this small number (board or committee).

There is no such thing as man putting anyone out of the Church of God. On the other hand, man may exclude people from denominational membership.

It is through the practice of democratic reform that these Christian principles may be brought into belief and practice. It is up to us to live our convictions, which is the most effective way of teaching.

Planning then is consequential of the conviction for reform. Proper and successful reform is brought about and maintained by adherence to carefully formed plans--plans for activity within our area of work.

Dreams of great things in the distant future is not alone the remedy of present ills, nor security for success of today. There are little, first things--primary things, fundamental things, and basic things that must first have attention. Reality of visions of the future is achieved only after all the many preliminary steps have been taken. If plans for these first things are followed out, the distant objectives will result. The beginning is not the end, and the beginning is of first consideration. Let us join together in these first things by living and otherwise teaching our convictions in matters of reform, unity, and missions.

Reasonable, basic and sound planning with proper fulfillment, leads to admirable attainment. Hence the objective--planning.

Unity of the Spirit is the way to spiritual strength and achievement, and to unity of faith. Seemingly, it would be most impossible to attain unity of faith, when one group will have nothing to do with another because there is some difference of opinion. Paul and Barnabas differed at times, but neither tried to cast the other out of the Church and its fellowship.

The work of splitting and separating could never bring about unity of faith. To vote someone out of the ministry of the church (if such could be done) because of some difference of opinion and practice could not bring about unity of faith.

The Cooperative Association formed at the December, 1960, Council Meetings is potentially high in opportunity of bringing unity among various groups. Through this type of association, progress can be made in unity of faith. As a prerequisite however, there must be unity of Spirit. "Splitting," causing to split, and "casting out" are not indicative of it.

With proper contact and communication, it doubtless would be found that there is really less difference than had otherwise been estimated. To say the least, this third objective--unity--is a noble one.

Missions may be regarded as the essence of the Great Commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...."

Hardly anything is more encouraging than good mission programs at work--both at home and abroad.

There is opportunity through the RPA and the CA to broaden mission efforts.

It would be most commendable for the RPA to be able to assist spiritually and financially, those ministers who have been, are, or will be, unjustly cast out because they stand for what they believe to be right and just.

Many, many in the past have even lost their lives because they dared to stand firmly upon their convictions. In comparison, it is a small (Continued on page 11)

From the Mail (Continued from Page 4)

progressing. Many educated people are coming into the light through our paper ("The True Gospel," our monthly church magazine in the native tongue--Ed.). We are getting good results in our literature work.

Fourteen people were baptized last year. There are more to be baptized in the Passover Meetings.

Now, there are eight workers on the payroll. We are receiving \$35 per month from the West Denver Church for the Gospel work.

Many women who would not be permitted to come out of their homes, wherever we go preaching, are asking for literature.

Our workers also divided into three groups and will go on preaching for 20 days in every month. This is a very nice season for us to preach (Continued on page 8)

in the villages. In rainy season it is very hard to go as there are no roads. (Page 8)

This year we gathered \$250.00 in the local churches as offerings and tithes. In our area a cooly can get only 20 cents per day. Most of our church people suffer very much in the rainy season. After transplantation there is no work in the fields. Ninety-nine per cent of our church flocks are coolies. ---Pastor Jalli Prakasam.

(In the dry season our brethren in India go into the villages among the "untouchables" to minister and preach in open air. Rainy season hinders this. This is also true in other tropical areas such as Equatorial Africa. God bless them.--Ed.)

P H I L I P P I N E S

I have just arrived home from...Bukidnon Province, about 400 miles away from my home. I stayed there for three weeks with continuous preaching every night.

There are eleven precious souls who are preparing for baptism, as fruits of our efforts. I hope the Lord will bless them as they search for the truth.

I was forced to close my effort because I had no more money for my daily expenses. Upon my arrival home in Tubod, my wife handed your two letters to me with the two checks of 15 and 25 dollars.... I am really thankful to all of you who have given me this money to support me in the Lord's work here in the Philippines.

Please ignore the report of Mr. Taylor in the Harvest Field Messenger of November, 1960, page 13, because it is false. I am telling you the truth, and the truth alone. God knows all of these. They (Juanito Gapul and Benjamin Dingal--Ed.) are no longer with us in the General Conference. They are now working for the "Radio Church of God" under Armstrong. Mr. Taylor's report...is very ridiculous. We are just laughing upon reading it because we really know that it is foolish and false.

Since October, 1959, when my aid was cut off, I never ceased to work for the Lord of taking care of the brethren in the different places who remain true and faithful to the Lord.

Mr. Gapul is going around...to draw members of the church to the "Radio Church of God" under Armstrong.

I am very glad to inform you brothers and sisters who are sending me a little support for the Lord's work here in the Philippines, in the name of the General Conference of the Church of God, 7th Day, that in spite of opposition...I am able to stand firm and true to my affiliation to the "Merger" and uphold its doctrines...and to maintain the faith of the few who remain true and faithful to God.

In Kiokong, Maramag, and Bukidnon Province where I have been working recently, we have almost 100 members, including young people. Gapul and Elder Benjamin Dingal were able to draw away from us four families of about nine members, to join the "Radio Church of God" under Armstrong.

We who remain firm and true to our affiliation to the General Conference are branded by him (Charles Taylor--Ed.) as defective ministers of the Church of God. Gapul and Elder Dingal who deserted and are now working with Elder Armstrong in the "Radio Church of God" and who denounced the doctrines of the General Conference, are branded by him as good people or fine ministers.

Please pray for me,...Elder Penaredondo (who is now weak because of his old age) and all lay preachers in the different places. ---Elder H. C. Rosell.

(For many years Elder Rosell has represented the Church of God, 7th Day in the Philippines. We were privileged to work together there in 1954, in mission efforts and for unity under the General Conference banner. "Taylor," mentioned in his report is Charles Taylor who was made Chairman of Foreign Missions by the Executive Board several years ago. Gapul and Dingal are former ministers of the Church of God, 7th Day, but are now with Elder Armstrong. See the report in the Harvest Field Messenger, November, 1960, page 13. The same situation is true in India where the Gen. Conference supports the defectors, and where I also was privileged to serve in 1954. We have been willing to advise them on these things where we have had personal experience, but evidently such advice has not been, and is not wanted. --Ed.)

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Church Organization and Activity (Continued from Page 6)

(Page 9)

church which is His body (See Eph. 1:22,23). A visible head of the Church along with hierarchical church government is not a product of the Early Church and is not found to be taught in the Bible. Such teaching and practice originated through the works of men after the days of the Apostles, and history of the Dark Ages--church history--brings this to light. A simple, moderate form of church government however, is quite in order as a means of reaching the world with the Gospel. Bible examples are simple and moderate.

Paul also taught that Christ's relationship to the Church is like that of a husband to his wife. He taught that the church is the "household of God," and that the members "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone: in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:20-22).

Paul further compared the functions of church members to the harmony of service of the different members of the human body (1 Cor. 12). There were in the Early Church apostles, prophets...governments (Verse 28).

Then there is supposed to be some form of church government and order. The same thoughts of harmony are found in Romans 12:3-8, where "he that ruleth" is mentioned. Now, who in the Church has authority to rule in any way? The answer is found in Paul's statement in 1 Tim. 5:17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." From special emphasis, this eliminates those who don't do well and are overly engaged in material business--financial allocations, budgeting, and figuring out means of securing greater authority over others. Here they are qualified, by "the elders that rule well...who labor in the word and doctrine." Anything to the contrary is wrong.

It is true as Paul taught, that the church has a duty also in this respect, "to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you: and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake" (See 1 Thess. 5:12,13). Also "remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Heb. 13:7).

Where Paul mentions "elders ruling" and other similar remarks, he refers to the local elders and churches. Local elders who do serve well are worthy of honor. Local elders are overseers according to the Bible. From the above texts, it is evident that certain ones have oversight of their respective churches and are due respect if they serve well. In fact, Paul called the local elders at Ephesus overseers when he said to them: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Paul here had asked the elders of Ephesus to meet him at Miletus, and there he told them they were overseers of the flock--that it was their duty to feed the Church of God. Elders do have oversight of their local churches. There is nothing wrong however, in advising elders of other churches with regard to common endeavor, when this advice is wanted. Much responsibility and work rest upon the shoulders of local elders--responsibility and work in behalf of the flock.

Not "Being Lords over God's Heritage"

Peter spoke of the work of the elders as being similar to that given by Paul (See 1 Peter 5:1-4). "Feed the flock of God which is among you, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither being lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock." They are to regard themselves as under-shepherds of the "Chief Shepherd." Not by constraint are the elders to feed the flock; not for money; not as "lords over God's heritage," but willingly and as examples to the flock.

Deacons are mentioned in the New Scriptures, and seven were chosen at Jerusalem. There were deacons in other churches, but there is no mention that a church had to have seven always. A church is entitled to have as many deacons as it needs, and no indication is given that executive and administrative authority is for deacons, except that they were to look after the needs of the flock they serve. There are certain qualifications set forth for both elders and deacons in the New Scriptures, for service to the flock in such capacities (See 1 Tim. 3).

Twelve and Seventy

(Continued on page 10)

The Twelve Apostles were men of God called for a specific work (Page 10) of the Gospel--setting forth the way of eternal life--the "keys of the kingdom" (See Matt. 16:18,19). Their office was apostleship. Paul and Barnabas are also referred to as apostles. Succession of the Twelve is not taught in the Scriptures. No mention is made of their successors in the office of apostleship, except for Judas. Nowhere were any of the apostles said to have executive or administrative duties that gave them such authority over others, to tell them when, where, and for how much money they should preach.

At one time Christ chose seventy men to go into places where He planned to go. He sent them "two by two," and neither did they have any business, authoritative executive and administrative duties (See Luke 10:1). There is nothing to indicate that a body of seventy was to be continued, and no other mention is made of this group. Except in number, can they be said to have had resemblance to the seventy who aided Moses in the judgment of Israel. The Sanhedrin of Christ's time were men who opposed Christ and His work (Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea excepted). Such were the leaders in the persecution that came to the Church in Judea a few years after Pentecost.

Christ did not want His church to be patterned in any way after the ways of the Gentiles either. His followers were not to exercise lordship over others, as were the ways of the Gentiles. He considered service to be worthy of honor and respect (See Matt. 20:25-28; Luke 22:24-27). Christ came to serve and He wants His people to live for service--not merely to receive it from others.

Bible Way of Settling Church Problems

As long as the Church is composed of members and leaders prone to temptation and failings, there will arise difficulties in the Church. The spiritual members are to come to the aid of the weak ones overtaken in faults (See Gal. 6:1).

Christ also gave instructions as to how to proceed with the erring (See Matt. 18:15-17).

According to James, he who redeems the erring has done a noble work (See James 5:19,20).

Difficulties are to be settled Biblically, not by the exercise of lordship over others in seeking to cast people out of the Church, for God only is the One who adds to and takes from the Church. Obedience to Christ's instructions in Matthew 18, is the Bible plan of solving church problems.

Local Church Autonomy and Work in Common

The Bible upholds local autonomy in the Church. Nowhere is there a hint of a general super-structure with hierarchical and dictatorial power over local churches, for this type of organizational structure was originated by men after the days of the Apostles. Every local church in the days of the Apostles was considered a unit in itself. The local elders are servants of the church, and not bosses in the accepted sense of the word. But two or more churches can, and should work together in projects of common interest for the advancement of the Gospel. In such cases there should be no selfish rivalry, but the closest ties of Christian fellowship should prevail. Any organization other than that as an instrument for service and fellowship is of man, not of God.

A modest, simple general organization advocating local church autonomy, is in order as a promotional means of fulfilling the common aims of the Church and perpetuating the Christian way of life.

This article is in keeping with "What the Church of God Believes and Why"--a discussion of No. 15. ---Glenn Wilhelm & C.E.A., Jointly.

Elder B. F. Marrs remains in Porter Hospital with internal cancer, and is in critical condition.

For some time he has wanted to answer and acknowledge the many letters and cards from brothers and sisters in the faith, as well as from other friends over the country. But he has not been able to do so.

He and family appreciate so much all kindness and sympathy expressed, and would like for this brief note to be considered acknowledgement of same. He asks that all who have supported his work in any way, support the Reform and Planning Association, since he can no longer work. Those caring to send further letters and cards address: Elder B.F. Marrs, Porter Hospital, 2525 So. Downing St, Denver, Colorado.

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Objective Comments (Continued from Page 7)
thing to be cast out of job and fellowship.

(Page 11)

Really, what may appear at times to be defeat, is opportunity. Christians prosper in Spirit, faith, and works, through persecution.

New mission fields have been opened up through adversity, such as happened in the Early Church when local churches (Antioch, for example) were raised up by devout people scattered by persecution.

Fields abroad are crying out for help that is, and may be extended by work of the Reform and Planning Association.

At the moment, the RPA Committee is considering four principal areas abroad, hoping to be of greater help there in the future. These areas are:

Africa, India, West Indies and the Philippines.

Interest of people in the movement for reform, makes it imperative that the RPA set forth an extended program for missions abroad.

One brother recently wrote that it was late for the erection of church buildings and that the crying need is for the proclamation of the Gospel to the world. He was especially interested in areas abroad, and emphasized it by sending along several hundred dollars to be used in these areas.

In all of the main areas listed above, people of the Reform Movement are helping to some extent. This aid and work are considered a good beginning and should be expanded a great deal. This can only be done according to interest of Church of God members and friends in missions abroad.

In one of these areas (India) we are helping to publish our church paper (The True Gospel) and tracts in native dialect. We would like to see this type of publication expanded there (See Pastor Prakasam's report). The work in India has had its "ups and downs," as I have personally and on-the-scene observed, but it has been organized for many years--not in recent ones.

We hope to be of greater assistance to the entire ministry in these various fields--not forgetting our obligations at home, however.

We sincerely invite the cooperation of every local church or individual supporting missions abroad directly, in sending to the RPA Office information as to how much and to whom support is being sent. This is for the purpose of preventing inequity in distribution which otherwise will happen. The RPA delegates in session last December recommended this. We do want it understood however, that RPA encourages local church projects in foreign fields. The office only wants to be helpful in making local church and individual projects and support more effective and useful.

Now, as we compose a summary in our minds, of RPA objectives, we must admit that under prevailing conditions Reform, Planning, Unity, and Missions are noble ones.

Since at the time of the "Merger" in 1949, there was not agreement on details of the "Bible Plan" of church organization, the Article of Belief, No. 15, on this subject was written and approved as follows:

"Salvation is through faith in Christ, but for the purpose of co-operation in the proclamation of the Gospel, and the upholding of true Bible standards and doctrines, and for the fellowship of the believers, the Church should be organized in accordance with the Bible plan."

---What the Church of God Believes and Why.

To add to the freedom granted in the above open article, there was plain understanding and agreement that church organization would not be considered as a doctrine of the Church--a tenet of faith essential to salvation--but as a means to the end of promoting the work of the Gospel. This article, understanding, and agreement should still hold true; otherwise, there is the betrayal of the confidence of many. Had it not been for this understanding and confidence there doubtless, would have been no "Merger."

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Guide to Bible Study:

Search the Scriptures

- Psa. 12:6, "The words of the Lord are pure words..."
- Acts 20:32, "I commend you to God, and the word of his grace..."
- Acts 17:11, "...Searched the scriptures daily..."
- John 5:39, "Search the scriptures..."
- Matt. 11:25, "O Father...thou...hast revealed..."
- Prov. 30:6, "Add thou not to his words..."
- Psa. 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet..."
- Psa. 25:9, "The meek will he guide in judgment..."
- 1 Cor. 2:13, "...Comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
- 2 Tim. 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved..."
- 2 Tim. 3:15, "...From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures..."
- 2 Tim. 3:16, "...Profitable for doctrine, for reproof..."
- 2 Tim. 3:17, "...Thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- Rev. 1:3, "Blessed is he that readeth..."
- Rev. 22:18, "If any man add unto these things..."
- Eph. 6:14, "...Having your loins girt about with truth."
- John 17:17, "...Thy word is truth."
- Eph. 6:17, "...The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
- 2 Peter 1:5, "...And to virtue knowledge."
- 2 Peter 3:18, "Grow in the grace, and in the knowledge."

Please don't overlook Elder Leo Merriam's comments on church progress in Lodi, California.