



MONTHLY BULLETIN... VOLUNTEER MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITY
REFORM AND PLANNING ASSOCIATION

CHURCH OF GOD, 7TH DAY - PHONE: CHERRY 4-4948
P. O. BOX 688, DENVER 1, COLORADO

July, 1961

RESEARCH • REFORM • PLANNING • COOPERATION • MISSIONS

SUIT FILED IN CIVIL COURT BY GENERAL CONFERENCE OFFICIALS

against
THE CALIFORNIA STATE CONFERENCE

Letters and newspaper clippings reveal that General Conference officials have gone to law to dissolve the California State Conference, in effort to oust the State Conference Committee that is justly, not in accord with them on varied issues and improprieties in General Conference officialdom.

Even in spite of efforts by the Reform Movement for proper arbitration and conciliation, to keep the issues from extended publication and entering the courts, General Conference officials proceeded to file suit, as the following verifies.

From either the STOCKTON RECORD or the Lodi newspaper, the following is listed:

NATIONAL CHURCH UNIT WANTS STATE GROUP DISSOLVED

Action Centers in Lodi Area

LODI, July 7--The General Conference of the Church of God, 7th Day, filed a suit yesterday against the Church's State Conference asking the state group be dissolved and its privileges be forfeited because of alleged abuse of authority.

The court also is asked to place a restraining on the California Conference and its directors to keep them from collecting and receiving debts.

Co-defendants with the State Conference are its directors: Roy A. Marrs..., Byron Owen..., Raymond Johnson..., Leo S. Merriam..., W. O. Perry..., Trinidad Padilla..., David Blanke..., Oscar Seibel..., Julius Henry..., Samuel C. Maynor..., and 20 Does.

Disobeyed Orders

The suit alleges that in violation of the law and in abuse of its power, the California Conference deliberately ignored and disobeyed lawful orders of the General Conference in July, 1960. It alleges on December 31, 1960, the General Conference revoked the charter of the State Conference and demanded the California group's assets and property, but the State Conference refused to comply.

According to the suit, this action resulted in disunity, misunderstanding, and heresy; a loss of membership and confidence in the General Conference; financial confusion, and the neglect of pastoral duties by church ministers....

Seven-Member Board

The state group, headed by its seven-member board, represents churches in San Joaquin, Sacramento, San Bernadino, and Los Angeles counties.

According to the Rev. E. A. Straub of Lodi, field representative for the General Conference, most churches in the State Conference are not in harmony with the rulings of the state board, and practically all the churches have passed resolutions supporting the action of the General Conference in revoking the charter of the State Conference.

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Picture Above: R. P. A. Committee, elected by members of Advisory Council, at their lay-sponsored meeting, held in Denver, Colorado, December 22-26, 1960. One member of the committee, Elder Harvey Otto, Michigan, not present for picture. From left to right, Elder Charles Adams, Chairman, Denver, Colorado; Samuel C. Maynor, California; John Westfall, Missouri; Burton Rodgers, Missouri; and Byron Burrell, Oklahoma.



Those in the following pictures are named from left to right:

Samuel C. Maynor, Calif., Chairman; Roy A. Marrs, Calif., Secretary; Luvelt Palmer, Idaho, Bible Church of God Council Chairman; and Mark Burnham, Idaho.



Carl Merriam, Calif.; Edward M. Blenis, Oregon; Leo S. Merriam, Calif.; and Charles E. Adams, Colorado.



Roy A. Marrs, Samuel C. Maynor, Edward M. Blenis, Maggie Crawford, Mo.; Mrs. Harvey Otto, Mich.; M. S. Marrs, Okla.; Owen L. Martin, Ill.; and Alice Henion, Oregon.



Samuel C. Maynor, Morton Pedersen, Colo.; Beecher and Betty Adams, Colo.; Floyd B. Merriam, Colo.; Burton and Gladys Rodgers, Mo.; Jay J. Carlock, Oregon; Flossie A. Marrs, Colo.; and Harold Willhelm, Colorado.



Carl Merriam, Mr. and Mrs. Luvelt Palmer, Idaho; Leo S. Merriam, John B. Westfall, Mo.; Lee Roy and Faye Stucker, Iowa; Garner Thompson, Mich.; Flossie A. Marrs, and Burton Rodgers.



Mary Sue Burrell, Oklahoma; Harold Willhelm, Lawrence Meier, Colorado; and Charles E. Adams.

The above pictures are shots taken at the council meetings in Denver, when the Reform and Planning and the Cooperative Associations were formed last December. These indicate interest in the discussions so much enjoyed

by the assembly. This interest was manifested throughout the sessions and all seemed to get a blessing (many blessings). The work set in order at these council sessions was for the purpose of progress and better conditions in the Church of God.

FIVE REASONS

Why the Church of God, 7th Day, Needs Reform

(Continued from the June Bulletin)

This article has been compiled as a result of an RPA editorial staff meeting, to summarize the need of reform in the Church of God, 7th Day. It is a composite report made after an analysis of the evidence itself.

Many details of evidence cannot be published here for the simple reason that they are too voluminous, and because we and the reader might be inclined to consume our thoughts with case details; whereas, the main aims of this article are to project the basic, root causes giving rise to reform.

First of all, may we remind you once again that the evidence in support of these five major reasons is genuine. Perhaps the best proof of bad conditions are the confessions collected and documented--testimonies by ministers and members of the Executive Board of the General Conference, in letters they have written, or testimony given before witnesses. Besides those, of course, there stands the record of a decade of the unlawful course itself, which has brought the Church of God (Merger) into a state of anarchy, resulting from inconsistent and irregular legislation and irregular handling of church affairs by officers in high position. God help them!

Reform efforts were not always successful in ancient Israel, so that the curtings of God followed, rather than blessings (1 Kings 21; Acts 7:52; Matt 23:37).

It is our constant vision, that through God's mercy, present reform efforts will result in general reform and revival. The true saints of God shall be delivered and redeemed and not forsaken, as they abide in His will--solid as a rock in time of storm (2 Cor. 4:9,17,18; Heb. 13:5).

In the spirit of Christ's warning to the churches, reform must aim to bring about a more spotless church, made up of saints who have been washed and made ready for redemption. Such must be true, pure, and of good conscience before God. No matter how much it costs, or how earthly men may slay and slander, one who is Christ's must personally be true, having no part with a lie. This requires discernment, correction of self, and no compromise of conscience.

The second coming of Christ is near--very near. The closing of the age is at the door of our generation, we believe (See Revelation 7:13,14; also chapters 1,2 & 3; Matt. 24:29-33; Rev. 19:7-9).

Part I, "Need to Restore Church Heritage," and Part II, "Need to Restore Church Honesty," were covered in the June, 1961, issue of the Bulletin. Now, we proceed to Parts III, IV, & V.

III. Need to Restore Church Legality

By the phrase "to restore church legality," it is inferred that there has not been complete legality of operation or practice in the organization.

In the (Merger) Church of God, 7th Day, speaking mainly of its General Conference area, there have been many irregularities of operation.

In 1949, a constitution and bylaws were adopted by the General Conference, and amended in later conferences by the assembled members present.

It was the duty of the elected officers of trust to execute and abide by these instruments. This they have not always done, and have resented reproof and correction, eventhough these errors bordered on malfeasance, and later growing into serious malfeasance.

One thing which the Constitution forbids the Executive Board to do, is amending or changing the Constitution and Bylaws. This too, has been attempted by the Executive Board, per resolutions on record. In other words, the Executive Board has passed resolutions (laws) which are in conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws. At the present time, it appears that the Executive Board aims to prepare resolutions for the 1961 General Conference, to "legalize" what it has already "illegally done" to ministers and members. Such would not be new to several officers of such practice.

If there had been sufficient judicial discipline provided for in the church, several officers would long ago have been removed, rather than left to use their offices and church money to go throughout the land among the (Continued on page 4)

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Five Reasons for Church Reform (Continued from page 3)

people, to defend themselves and discredit those who have sought to have them and their unlawful practices corrected.

Because of such sowing of confusion and lack of discipline, they are holding office by mere force and presumption, ignoring charges filed against them. As a result there are created schisms and divisions among the people, wherever some officers have gone in the past few years with their errors and half-truths--and often complete falsehoods.

This is what can happen in a church where there are no judicial procedure and discipline; where the people (the employer) have forfeited their rights and voice, later assumed by leaders or elected officers (the employees).

Why would the people ever choose to allow men whom they elect and pay salaries to make the laws of the Church? It is easily perceived that under such a circumstance some elected, salaried men would make laws aimed at protecting their own positions, power, and profits, rather than the interest of the people who had given up their rights to them.

In this article, we must strive for brevity, so we shall summarize practices of officers of the General Conference to whom the Church entrusted all practical powers. In theory the people felt they were retaining the power to legislate at the General Conference. In practice however, from 1949 to 1959, the major part of all legislating (law-making) was taken over by the Executive Board.

If one only thinks about how little is accomplished at General Conference sessions and how few laymembers are present at these business sessions where ministers and families and varied connections out number the few laymen present; and then, if you could view the volumes of resolutions passed by the Executive Board between conferences, you could realize why the complete chaos into which the Church has been plunged.

Ministers and department heads were not allowed full access to these records. Certainly not laymen! Thus it is, that many resolutions have been handled by the Executive Board, which were secret, until such resolutions were needed and could be used when convenient, or when they were advantageous to the board.

Do the readers think they would pass or use a law not to their advantage? or that they have provided any advantages or laws to protect others in their just rights? Why have they kept their "laws" hidden?

Not only have they drawn up laws from "under the table" to surprise someone whom they wanted to squelch, they have been known to use their powers to take vengeance. For example, if someone was exercising his just right and offended a board member who carried a personal grudge, this member could misrepresent to the rest of the board members, getting them to "pass a law" which he knew would be aimed at an individual. However, the law once passed, would be used against the intended victim. Again, board members would be known to "act first" illegally. Such actions being illegal, they were thus, in standing malfesance. What to do? They would simply use their "law-making powers" to "clear themselves." They would pass "laws" to make "legal" that which was "illegal." Can any reader fail to see that such a condition of dishonesty would destroy any church, any society, any country, any government?

In addition, after the Executive Board would "pass laws," then they would find that they could not always live up to them (or would not). Some members (especially the chairman) would then habitually ignore or violate their own resolutions.

We would not dare to publish these statements if we could not defend them with true witness and evidence.

We have previous to these revelations petitioned for neutral and fair hearings, or arbitration. We have exhausted all private channels. Now we "tell it to the church," per Matthew 18:15-17--to the select list of members to whom the Bulletin is sent.

In a church that is legally operated, there would be proper judicial procedure to insure that elected minister-officers obeyed and honored the Constitution, the Bylaws, the ministerial requirements--all of which Executive Board members have transgressed, without proper rectification.

In a legally operated church, an officer in violation of grave matters, could and would be removed, and he would not be allowed to help (Continued on page 5)

Five Reasons for Church Reform (Continued from page 3)

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Five Reasons for Church Reform (Continued from page 4)

"pass another law" to legalize his wrongs!

In a legally operated church, there must be provision for the voice of the people in any legislation affecting them, the officers they elect, and the ministers they employ. True ministers of God would welcome this, for it would be their release "from bondage" to the "few" who gain supreme power over them.

In a legally operated church, there must be a working, practical knowledge of law-making and of the science of law, so that the rights of all are protected and the true mission of the church be enhanced.

Please remember that in a church where Christ can dwell as the Head, laws should not aim to bind the saints. Church laws should rather be for protecting the freedom--the righteous liberty of saints, and to build a wall of protection against the unholy passions of men who would encroach upon, and steal away the rights of the members of the body, and dethrone Christ, the rightful Head of the Church.

We, the Church of God (a part of it, we believe), should fear the encroachment of any formation of power, outside the local church, which in effect destroys the entity and Biblical heritage of the local churches composing the Body of Christ.

IV. Need to Restore Human Rights and Christian Dignity

There are certain basic, inalienable rights which belong to the individual. These are looked upon as having been granted by the divine Creator.

They are summed up sometimes in such words as: "All men are created equal before God...with right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness." The United States of America forever enshrined these rights of the individual, and enthroned human dignity deriving these great truths and principles from the Holy Bible.

Can the Church do less than the State? If the Church destroys these rights, and human dignity, the State soon will!

These human rights include the right also of the accused individual to be assumed innocent until proved guilty, and the right to a fair trial before unrelated, unbiased persons.

Human rights emphasize many things: That it is wrong to trespass on that which is "thy neighbor's"--his home, his family, his happiness, his good name--without recourse to an equitable and lawful process, whereby these things cannot be taken away by mere accusers.

Only he who commits a crime against society, or becomes a violator of the rights of others, should forfeit some of his own freedom to protect the welfare of all. What greater crime is there than to obstruct justice? or to trespass on the rights of one's neighbor?

The aim of reform now going on in the Church of God, 7th Day, is to do more than honor these principles with our lips, as in the past. If the Church of God, 7th Day, is to be great, be blessed, and be revived in an overwhelming revival, she must institute and legally establish reforms which will uphold and defend the human, moral rights of every individual with which the Church is concerned.

In dealing with its members, the Church must render justice and equity, and operate within the framework of human rights and Christian dignity. This framework must be clearly set forth according to the many Scriptural texts that so define it.

V. Need to Restore the Message and Unity of the Church

The above phrase "to restore the message and unity of the Church," infers that these are seriously impaired. Indeed they are so badly impaired that it will require a practical rebirth and revival of the true remnants of the Church in order to restore its message from God.

If it (Church) is revived, and its members are "spiritual" (not carnal), unity will be restored. We cannot legislate unity. We cannot force unity. We cannot realize unity by simply saying "we are in unity," or pretending unity. The key to unity--the true road--is found in Ephesians 4:1-16.

To arrive at unity we must not concentrate on it as our "god," sacrificing truth and principle to achieve it. Christ did not. We must not make a fetish of unity. Like happiness, it is illusive when it is sought merely as a selfish goal. It is found when we are seeking right things. It is a product of something (Cont'd on p.6)

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much greater.

When we do right things in the world--things to bring joy to others, suddenly we find joy for ourselves, and fellowship with those of similar and like persuasion.

If we are in Christ and learn to respect each other, humbly walk side by side with fellow-Christians; if we do not seek to force our own way; if we seek to understand others--their good motives and their problems; and when we seek that which is above, unity will arrive--the kind of unity that is coveted.

We should not insist on unity of personal thoughts, for then we destroy the source of light and life, and deny the working of the Spirit. In differences, there can be exploration of truth, exercise in patience and charity, and a firm arrival at a strong unity of faith and teaching of God's word--and unity in the love of God.

The message of the Church of God--its essential, established message--has been overshadowed by corrupt systems which reform seeks to correct. The message has become of little effect in a setting of human chaos and lack of Christian dignity.

The message will become strong, powerful, and converting, the day that we are restored to the principles of Christian reform and revival.

If we who have questioned and raised our voices in warning are silenced and destroyed, the questioning will cease for a time. The silence might please and comfort the opposers of reform. But, a confused church, under bondage to that which is wrong, will continue to follow in an ever-narrowing circle, until the circle is at last irrevocably closed; and "the closing of the circle may represent the end of something precious to us all."

Such will be the lament--the epitaph--of an unreformed and unconverted church, or people. May it now be our lament.

Instead of disappearing, we hope first to show the conditions which have appalled us and led us to our firm stand, so that reform can be realized.

We trust in a holy God, that our course of action will help to resolve the more serious problems which have plagued the Church of God, 7th Day, and have caused such loss to the Cause.

May our efforts be in keeping with our responsibility to God; to the church in all fidelity to its mission; and to the saints everywhere, is our prayer.

--Lois Merriam

Suit Filed in Civil Court by General Conference Officials (Continued from page 1)

The Rev. Straub said three directors--Blanke, Pidilla, and Perry--have voted in favor of the action of the General Conference (Perry, Blanke, and Pidilla are not directors, terms having expired in January and were not reelected --Ed.).

Robert Mertz, attorney for the plaintiff said, '...The State Conference serves as an advisory board for the assistance of the overseer, the Rev. Israel Haeger of North Sacramento, and serves to plan for the welfare of the churches under its jurisdiction. However, churches do not have to abide by any rulings other than those issued by the General Conference....'

The General Conference, a world-wide organization with headquarters in Denver, and incorporation in Missouri, filed suit in the San Joaquin County Superior Court in Stockton, asking the state group be dissolved and its privileges be forfeited because of alleged abuse of authority....

'The members in California want the dissolution of the State Conference for their own protection,' said Rev. Straub. 'The people presently ignore the state board rulings because they want to cooperate with the General Conference.' ...

Pastor of the local church at Poplar and Washington Streets is Leo S. Merriam, who is one of the 10 state directors named as defendants in the suit (the state board is composed of seven members, not 10--Ed.).

And so it goes, splashed in newspaper headlines. This further emphasizes the fact that some General Conference officials will go to great lengths in their efforts to "rule or ruin" (the Lodi Report is available for those who request it).

Statements by the official (or officials) named in the above newspaper report, will doubtless not go unchallenged. The California State Conference officials, elected by the people, are deemed capable of defending the (Continued on page 10)
