



Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society

(Incorporated, State of New Jersey, 1916)

Rev. Albert N. Rogers, President

Rev. C. Harmon Dickinson, Treasurer

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Seventh Day Baptist Building, 510 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, New Jersey
07061

October 15, 1968

William T. Joyce
3123 Bowdoin Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50313

Dear Mr. Joyce:

The Article on English Seventh Day Baptists (Wine-brenner) was written by a well-known and highly respected Seventh Day Baptist minister. The article on the German Seventh Day Baptists was written by one well-known to Seventh Day Baptist leaders. Their facts can be relied upon as true.

However, your conjecture that the Sabbathkeeping Churches of Christ that existed in Michigan in the early 1860's were descendants of those early congregations which for one reason or another, did not choose to affiliate with our (S.D.B.) General Conference is not correct.

I believe if you look more deeply into the subject you will find that these early Michigan "churches of Christ" were former followers of William Miller - or the 2nd Advent Movement. After the great disappointment of 1844 there was great confusion among these folks. One of the strong supporters of the 2nd Advent movement was a Joseph Bates. Following the disappointment I understand he spent those early years seeking out the isolated believers and presenting to them "additional light which had sprung from the study of the Bible." The seventh-day Sabbath was one of the new truths, of course. I know he visited Jackson, Mich., in 1849 and a small church was organized there.

In the late 1850's or early 1860's the Sabbathkeeping Second Advent groups decided the time had come to choose a name - an official name - and organize into a conference. Several names were suggested - Church of God, Church of Christ, etc. The name chosen, however, was Seventh Day Adventists. This caused much hard feeling. Many churches refused to come into the conference, forming a conference of their own - Church of God. The Michigan groups did not come into the Conference and eventually joined the Church of God Conference, headquarters in Stanberry. It was the Michigan group that issued the paper - "Hope of Israel." They eventually separated from the main Conference of Church of God.

In 1917, the Church of God in Michigan, in their state conference - after previous consultation and study - voted to join the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference.

In 1904 the Seventh Day Baptist Church of Battle Creek, Mich., was constituted. A number of Seventh Day Baptists - members of other Seventh Day Baptist Churches - had found employment in Battle Creek. These - with converts to the beliefs of Seventh Day Baptists - made up the membership of the church.

I enclose photocopies of the following --

1. Extracts from the History of the Michigan Conference of "The Church of God", written by M.A. Branch, White Cloud, Mich.
2. Pages from a booklet - The Backward Look - by Adelbert Branch, 1937. He gives a short history of the work in Michigan under a sort of preface - Lest We Forget.
3. Sabbath Recorder article - 1917 -

I add that our General Conference was organized in 1802. The Conference was an outgrowth of the General Meeting established in 1696. It was sometimes spoken of as the Yearly Meeting. It was originally spoken of (The Confernce) as the Sabbatarian General Conference. In 1818, it was agreed to adopt the official name - Seventh Day Baptist - therefore the Conference became - - The Seventh Day Baptist General Conference.

Many of our Seventh Day Baptist churches carry the phrase - Church of Christ - in their corporate name. The Plainfield Church was incorporated under the name - The Seventh Day Baptist Church of Christ at Plainfield, N.J.

Let me say there is no connection between the denomination called Church of God and who observed the seventh day as the Sabbath - there is no connection between this denomination and The Seventh Day Baptist Denomination. The Church of God above had its rise in the 2nd Advent Movement of William Miller. Out of the same movement came the Seventh Day Adventists.

Very truly yours,

Evalou St. John
Evalou St. John, Librarian & Curator