

Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society

(Incorporated, State of New Jersey, 1916)

Rev. Albert N. Rogers, President

Rev. C. Harmon Dickinson, Treasurer

Miss Evalois St. John, Librarian

Seventh Day Baptist Building, 510 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, New Jersey
Box 868 07061

April 17, 1969

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

Dear Mr. Voyce:

I am enclosing the following photocopies which you requested: --

S.D.B. Memorial, Vol. 2, page 121.

This is a portion of the history of the Piscataway Church, org. in 1705. An error has been made in copying or quoting apparently. The original reads -- The Church of Christ. It does not use the term Church of God. I enclose a copy of a page taken from the original records. Almost without exception each recording in the early days began with these words: -- "The church of Christ keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ living in Piscataway & Hopewell in the province of New Jersey being assembled with one accord. . . ." etc.

S.D.B. Memorial, Vol. 2, page 160.

You will find the phrase - ". . . take charge of the church of God dwelling in Shrewsbury. . ." The phrase or term "church of God" as used here does not denote or specify a specific denomination by that name. Rather it refers to a Christian Church.

History of S.D.B's in West Virginia, p. 19

The charge given Jacob Davis.

"I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, that thou take charge of the church of Christ dwelling at Shrewsbury, preach the Word in and amongst them..."

History of S.D.B's in West Virginia, p. 20

"The Church of Christ in Shrewsbury and Middletown in the observance of God's Holy Sanctified Sabbath. . ." You will find the phrase - church of God - in the last line. Again this does not indicate a denominational name.

S.D.B's in Europe and America, p. 163

This is a report or summary of what took place at the 1808 General Conference. Let me say that this letter was written by Conference to -- "To the Seventh Day Baptist Church residing on the west Fork of the Monongahela River." "The Elders, Messengers, and Brethren, composing the Sabbatarian General Conference, now sitting in Hopkinton, State of Rhode-Island, to the Seventh Day Baptist Church, on the west Fork of the Monongahela River, Harrison county, State of Virginia -- sendeth Greeting."

II

The "Baptists" mentioned in this letter of 1808 were not observers of the Seventh Day but were what we designate as First Day Baptists.

I send a photocopy of the letter as it appears in the old minutes of 1808.

Seventh Day Baptists in Europe & America, p. 175

This is a summary of the 1826 Conference. I do not know why this particular letter was chosen by Ambassador College. Perhaps it is the reference to the "Fanatical & unworthy observers of the Seventh-day" which is found in the last paragraph. Perhaps the complete letter will make this clear. Dr. Burnside lived in England.

You mention Dr. Meade's book. We have had correspondence with Dr. Meade in the past. He and others have used as their source material on the Church of God (Seventh Day) a government pamphlet -- Census of Religious Bodies: 1936, volume 11, part 1, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1941. The article on the origin and history of the Church of God (Seventh Day) found in this pamphlet was furnished by A.N. Dugger. The Census Bureau has confirmed this fact. This is the source of all the confusion. The research Department of Encyclopedia Britannica have used this article in the past, also.

I believe I have already told you the following. I repeat it here, however.

A.N. Dugger was an active worker in the Church of God (Adventist) whose headquarters were at Stanberry, Mo. At one time he was editor of their paper - Sabbath Advocate. He was an "overseer", president of their conference, and also at one time treasurer. A quarrel broke out in that group and Mr. Dugger with some others withdrew. They left Stanberry and in 1933 set up what they termed "headquarters" in Salem, W. Va. That was in 1933. Now the Seventh Day Baptists had a church in Salem, W. Va., since 1790, at least. The old Shrewsbury church had moved as a church body to Western Virginia in 1789. They settled in western Virginia and called their settlement "New Salem". We have the original record book in our archives. There is a college in the town or city of Salem which was established by Seventh Day Baptists in the 1900's. It was first an academy (organized 1889). In the article he prepared for the Religious Census of 1936, he calls this early Shrewsbury Church a Church of God. In fact he takes over Seventh Day Baptist history, and some Seventh Day Adventist History.

The Seventh Day Adventists first called our attention to this article, and representatives from both denominations sent letters of protest to the Census Bureau. They were assured that corrections would be made in the next census which was to be taken in 1946. However, no pamphlet has been published by the Bureau since then.

In 1961 I came across a history of the Church of God (Seventh Day) which it was stated - was prepared by the Research Department of Britannica. I immediately wrote to them, as well as to the Census Bureau. I also notified the editor of "Review and Herald." He made a personal visit to Britannica. I enclose a copy of a letter which he sent me in August, 1961.

III

I have had no correspondence with Herbert Armstrong. He may have been a minister in the Church of God (Seventh Day). I have no reason to doubt his word. I do know, however, that the denomination known today as Church of God (Seventh Day) or Seventh Day Church of God was not in existence as a distinct denomination by that name when the first Seventh Day Baptist Church in America was constituted in Newport, R.I., in 1671. I also know that the phrase or term one finds in the Bible - church of God, or church of Christ - even if written Church of God or Church of Christ - I know this term does not stand for specific denomination as we know denominations today. It stands for the Christian Church out of which have come Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc.

You say you have the Year Book of Churches. I send you a copy of page 11 and page 12 for 1923. Read what it states concerning Church of God, Adventist. Note the name of A.N. Dugger. Note the paragraph under History.

The minutes of our General Conference do not indicate any opposition to the term or name "Seventh Day Baptist General Conference." Previously it had been written- Sabbatarian Baptist Conference. Our churches are first of all "Baptist" churches. We are distinguished from other Baptists, or the Body of Baptists - by the observance of seventh day as our Sabbath. All but two members of the first Seventh Day Baptist Church on America - were members of First Day Baptist Church in Newport - generally spoken of as "Dr. Clarke's Church."

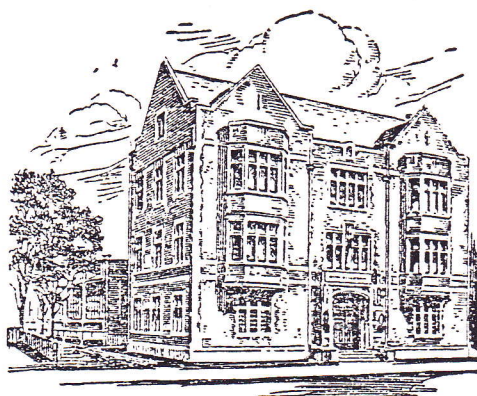
A great many of our S.D.B. churches have in their official name -- the phrase -- The Seventh Day Baptist Church of Christ.

Very truly yours,

Evalois St. John

(Miss) Evalois St. John

P.S. The old S.D.B. Church of Piscataway, N.J., organized in 1705, used the name -- The Sabbatarian Church of Christ, or sometimes we note The Church of Christ in Piscataway keeping the seventh day for a Sabbath.



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Seventh Day Baptist Building, 510 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, New Jersey
June 5, 1968

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

Dear Mr. Voyce:

Your letter of May 29, addressed to the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference has been handed to this society.

In 1852, the Seventh Day Baptists began the publication of a Quarterly known as The Seventh Day Baptist Memorial. It ran for three years - 1852-53-54, and recorded much valuable historical and biographical matter relating to the early history of Seventh Day Baptists. However, there is but one reference to be found in which the term "Church of God" is used in reference to a particular Seventh Day Baptist Church, and that is found to be an error.

On page 121, Vol. 2, No. 3, in a history of the Piscataway Church, the writer makes the statement that the first record in the old church book after the Articles of Faith is as follows:

"The church of God keeping the commandment of God and the faith of Jesus Christ, living in Piscataway and Hopewell . . ."
etc.

The original records are in our archives. I enclose a photo-copy of the ~~the~~ portion referred to, and also include their statement of belief or articles of faith as well as this first record. You will note that in this copy of the original the term used is The Church of Christ. This church was organized in 1705.

The record book of the Shrewsbury Church is also in our archives. The very first page of the record book is very faded and discolored making it impossible for me to make a photo-copy. The exact date of the organization is not known. It was, we are certain before the end of 1745. Sept. 6, 1789, the body of the church "removed from Shrewsbury in order to settle in the state of Virginia." The next date recorded in the book is "ay 3, 1792, after the church had settled at New Salem, Harrison County, Virginia. (Now known as Salem, W. Va.)"

I do enclose a photo-copy of a page from the old records which bears the date 1774. You will note it starts thus --

"The Church of Christ in Shrewsbury and Middletown in the observance of God's Holy Sanctified Sabbath first agreed to the of the Sixth Month 1774"

Twenty-two articles of Faith follow this statement. Our latest issue of the Seventh Day Baptist Yearbook - 1967 - reads thus --
Salem Seventh Day Baptist Church. Con. 1745, at
Shrewsbury, N.J.; 1792 at Salem, W. Va.

I enclose copies of letters taken from the Seventh Day Baptist Memorial of January 1852, and July 1852. In these you will find the distinctive phrase used is The Church of Christ. These letters from England are dated 1668 and 1680.

" The Church of Christ meeting in Bell Lane, London
to a remanent of the Lord's Sabbath-keepers, in ~~and~~ about
Newport, New England. . . ."
26th day of March 1668.

"The Church of Christ, meeting together on the Lord's holy
Sabbath, sendeth greeting to the Church of Christ keeping
the Sabbath on Rhode Island."

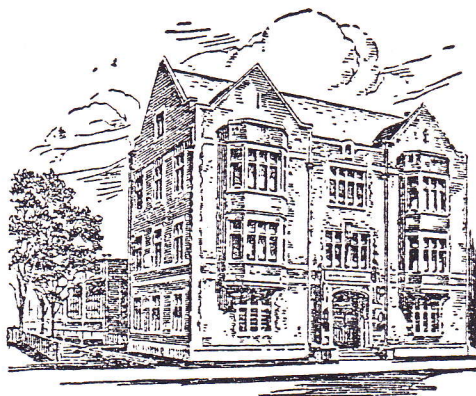
Signed in behalf of the Church, East Smithfield,
London, December 21, 1680

A great dis-service was done to both Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh Day Adventists by an Elder A.N. Dugger who now resides in Jerusalem. As you must know he was formerly a member of the denomination known as The Church of God (Adventist), with headquarters in Stanberry, Mo. In fact the U.S. Census of Religious Bodies 1926 carries the history, doctrine of this order which a footnote states was revised and approved by Elder A.N. Dugger, of the Church of God Publishing House. In 1934 (or 1933) Mr. Dugger and others separated from this group - Church of God (Adventist) - and established a new order - The Church of God (Seventh Day) - with headquarters at Salem, W. Va. In the U.S. Census of Religious Bodies 1936, one finds a history of this new order prepared - as the government states by Mr. Dugger. For the history of this group he deliberately "lifted" the history of the Seventh Day Baptists, added some Seventh Day Adventist history, and called it the History of the Church of God (Seventh Day). Because this pamphlet is put out by the U.S. Government - through its Census Bureau - researchers and students of Church history have accepted his facts as true. One finds ~~the~~ more of this "lifted" history in the book - History of the True Church - by A.N. Dugger and C.O. Dodd, published in 1936.

If you have never seen a copy of this 1936 Census report prepared by Mr. Dugger, I can furnish you with a photo-copy of same.

Sincerely yours,

Evalors *St John*
Librarian



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Miss Evalois St. John, Librarian

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

June 13, 1968

Mr. William J. Voyce
3123 Bowdoin Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50313

Dear Mr. Voyce:

Your letter was received yesterday. We thank you for the \$2.00 enclosed.

The quotation -- "Under the former dispensation", ~~etc.~~, (True Church, p. 274) - is not an exact quote. Neither is it complete. Mr. Dugger again altered it to fit his purpose. It is taken from an article of some eleven pages - Seventh Day Baptist Memorial, Vol. 1, pages 28-39. It is headed "Narrative" and is taken from the Church Records of the First Baptist Church of Newport - generally spoken of as Elder Clarke's Church (John Clarke). Perhaps you are not aware that all of the constituent members of the first Seventh Day Baptist Church to be organized in America - all but one member - were members of Dr. Clarke's Baptist Church.

In order to make this clear I know of nothing better to do than photo-copy the entire "Narrative." I will make no charge for this.

I also send 2 pages from Isaac Backus' History of New England, from which source Mr. Dugger also quotes. Mr. Dugger mentions specifically a Church of God at Noodles Island. The church oh Noodles Island was a Baptist Church but not a church which observed the seventh day as Mr. Dugger states.

I enclose a portion of a letter from London, dated 1741. This church also calls itself "The Church of Christ. ."

From the Shrewsbury Records I copy portions misquoted by Mr. Dugger.

I send you a photo-copy of the 1926 Census of Religious Bodies -- Church of God (Adventist,) in which Mr. Dugger is responsible for the History, Doctrine & Organization report.

Then I enelope the 1936 Census of Religious Bodies -- Church of God(seventh day), the history, doctrine and organization story prepared by Mr. Dugger. This article is most unfortunate for since it is a Government pamphlet it is considered by one who does

not know Mr. Dugger - to be authentic history. It is a very garbled history. I am sure Mr. Dugger knew this when he prepared the article. He has had many opportunities to correct his statements but this he refuses to do.

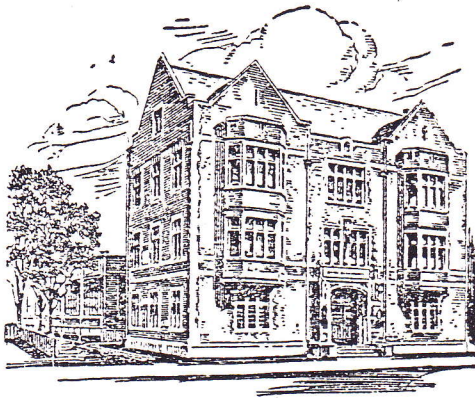
I send a photo-copy of pages from the Sabbath Recorder of Dec. 28, 1942. This gives a review of the book - "The True Church."

I make no charge for these copies. I ask only that you read them carefully and then help to correct some of the mis-statements and claims of Mr. Dugger and which he continues to spread.

Very truly yours,

Evelyn St. John

Librarian



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

October 15, 1968

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

Dear Mr. Voyce:

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
Evalouis, St. John, Librarian & Curator