

***This document provides a quick synopsis of what St. Paul COGIC located in Emporia, VA has been encountering since 2008. Our only desire was and still is to join the rest of our district in the 4<sup>th</sup> Jurisdiction of Virginia under the leadership of Bishop G. Wesley Hardy. During the time of transition of jurisdictions, we did not have a pastor. Therefore, we were left as one church in one district alone. For nearing three years we have not had a solid response to any of our situation whom we petition the National Church for assistance in.***

**Sept. 2008 – Nov. 2008** Superintendent Frank M. Batts, Sr. health begin to fail him. Elders Stanley Smith (assistant superintendent) and Elder Milton Featherston who served diligently at St. Paul COGIC partnered in absence of pastor.

**Nov. 7, 2008** Superintendent Frank M. Batts passed.

**Nov. 2008 – May 2009** Elders Stanley Smith and Elder Milton Featherston were leaders of church. (No pastor)

**Feb. 2009** Bishop Levi Willis, Sr. passed. Jurisdictional Prelate of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Virginia and General Board member.

*April 2009 National Call Meeting- Bishop Levi Willis, II appointed designee over VA 3<sup>rd</sup> Jurisdiction.*

**April 2009** New Millennium evolved under the leadership of Bishop G. Wesley Hardy. All of the Southern District of 3<sup>rd</sup> Jurisdiction joined, except St. Paul COGIC because we had no pastor during the transition of jurisdictions. **St. Paul is the only church in the Southern District.**

**April 18, 2009** Certified letters were sent to Bishop Sheard, Bishop Lyles expressing issues at St. Paul COGIC- no response.

**April 30, 2009** Bishop Levi Willis, II had meeting with members. During this meeting he dismissed a member Greta Scott for voicing her opinion.

**May 5, 2009** Bishop Levi Willis held meeting with St. Paul elected officials advising he was not going to make any administrative changes. Commended officials and Elders of doing a fine job.

**May 5, 2009** Bishop Levi Willis, II sent letter to local banks as an attempt to take authority over accounts including CD's, savings, checking and certificates of deposits.

**May 11, 2009** Administrative Assistant, Eugene Austin and Elder Gray held a meeting with the trustees and officials of St. Paul. During this meeting, the letter sent to bank was discussed. Elder Austin stated Bishop Willis contacted Presiding Bishop Charles Blake and he (Bishop Blake) called BB&T bank to authorize Bishop Willis to have authority over the accounts.

**May 14, 2009** Bishop Levis Willis, II held meeting with church and appointed Elder Gray as pastor on a 6 months trial basis. He stated he would get back with us to see how things were going. It never happened.

**May 28, 2009** Faxed documents to Bishop Sheard- no response.

**Sept. 1, 2009** Mailed certified letters to General Board members, Bishop Charles Blake and Bishop Lyles expressing issues and requesting intervention- no response.

**August 31, 2009** Letter sent by church secretary, Janet Roberts to remove treasury Ronnie Williams from storehouse account at First Community Bank. When approached by officers, she stated she did what her pastor told her to do. The letter was reversed and Ronnie Williams was reinstated as storehouse treasurer.

**Oct. 2009** Names on all accounts were removed and Douglas Hunter name was only on all accounts. Money was withdrawn and paid to members, including Elder Gray and his wife. Ed Loughran, lawyer, was contacted and letter sent on behalf of church members and trustees instructing action to reverse any changes and account put back into its original state.

*Oct. 2009 – Jan 2010- still awaiting response from National. No response.*

**Jan. 24, 2010** Notarized petition sent to National Officials Presiding Bishop Charles Blake, General Board members, Bishop Lyles, Bishop J.O Patterson. The signed petition showed those in agreement with transferring the church from the 3<sup>rd</sup> jurisdiction to the 4<sup>th</sup> jurisdiction of VA. The petition was mailed certified. All received documents.

**Feb. 2010 – May 2010** No response from National.

**June 2010** Communication sent from National advising church to defer transfer request until Bishop Hardy was duly adjudicated and consecrated as Bishop in November 2010. Followed up with Bishop Blake's office- Charlene Sutton, administrative assistant to Bishop Blake; talked to Sateria Smith. Charlene Sutton encouraged her to advise the member to be patient and comply with Bishop Blake's desire- which was waiting until Bishop Hardy was consecrated in November. Ms. Sutton also told Sateria Smith to continue to inform her of any incidents or any other issues that arise at St. Paul.

**Aug. 2010** Sateria Smith talked to Charlene Sutton again to advise her church continued desire is to transfer from the 3<sup>rd</sup> jurisdiction of VA to the 4<sup>th</sup> Jurisdiction of VA.

**Oct. 2010** Sateria Smith followed up with Charlene Sutton to let her know of continued desire to transfer and to find out what is required of us (church). Charlene Sutton advised Sateria Smith to resend documents again so the General Board. Certified letters were sent again to National Officials- Presiding Bishop Charles Blake, General Secretary Bishop Lyles, Bishop J.O Patterson and General Board members.

**Nov. 2010** Bishop G. Wesley Hardy was consecrated as Jurisdictional Prelate of the 4<sup>th</sup> Jurisdiction of Virginia.

**Nov. 2010** Followed up with Charlene Sutton. She wasn't available. Left message. No response.

**Dec. 2010** Followed up with Charlene Sutton. Left message. No response.

**Jan. 2011** Followed up with Charlene Sutton. Left message. No response.

**Feb. 2011** Sateria Smith talked to Charlene Sutton. Ms. Sutton advised Bishop Charles Blake stated this issue is a jurisdictional issue and National was not going to get involved with this. Ms. Sutton also said this issue was between us, the members of St. Paul COGIC and the jurisdiction. Ms. Sutton also told Sateria Smith a note was on St. Paul's file from Bishop Blake instructing her to call Bishop Levi Willis and advise him to take care of this situation.

**May 23, 2011** Letter was sent to National officials, Bishop Charles Blake, General Board members, Bishop Lyles, Bishop Levi Willis, II and Bishop G. Wesley Hardy advising St. Paul Church will no longer support nor interact with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Jurisdiction of VA who is under the leadership of Bishop G. Wesley Hardy.

**June 16, 2011** Membership meeting was held at church. During this meeting members voted to transfer from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Jurisdiction to the 4<sup>th</sup> Jurisdiction of VA under the leadership of Bishop G. Wesley Hardy. All votes were certified and notarized. Results were delivered by overnight delivery to General Secretary -Bishop Lyles, Presiding National Bishop - Bishop Charles Blake and General Board members.

**June 29, 2011** Sateria Smith talked to Charlene Sutton. Ms. Sutton advised she received letters that was sent to Bishop Blake and this issue was on the General Board agenda for discussion at the next meeting which would be in September at the Bishop's conference.

**July 15, 2011** Bishop Willis held meeting with members at St. Paul. He removed Elder Gray as pastor and appointed himself.

**July 15, 2011 – Oct. 9, 2011** **Bishop Levi Willis has not attended any church services.**

**July 21, 2011** Bishop Willis held meeting at St. Paul. During this meeting he stated he removed all **elected** officials from the church. Bishop Willis said he was going to go to court house and remove all trustees personally. A stenographer was present during this meeting. Bishop Willis attempted to dismiss her. The police was called and the police instructed that if the trustees authorized her to be here, she could stay.

**July 22, 2011** Bishop Levi Willis instructed Douglas Hunter to change the locks on the church. Therefore prohibiting elected and sworn trustees over property to gain access and to handle official church business.

**July 23, 2011** Minister Brandon Allen from 2<sup>nd</sup> jurisdiction of Virginia has been preaching on Sunday's, officiating funerals and other church services. Minister Allen was previously a member of St. Paul.

**Aug. 2011** Bishop Levi Willis, II sent letter to bank stating the trustees were no longer members and gained access to "lock" down all accounts from legal accountholders. Trustees are not able to pay utilities and any other official church business because of this.

**Sept. 22, 2011** Bishop Levi Willis, II denied a deceased St. Paul member (George Banks) family request to have his funeral at church because of who was officiating the funeral. Superintendent Dwight Batts, Sr. (son of former pastor) was requested to officiate the funeral by the family. Bishop Willis sent word by Minister Brandon Allen that Dwight Batts was not allowed in the pulpit at St. Paul. Superintendent Batts is currently under the leadership of Bishop G. Wesley Hardy.

**Sept. 30, 2011** Called Charlene Sutton to follow up with status of church issue. – No response.

**Oct. 3, 2011** Called Charlene Sutton. Left message- no response.

**Oct. 7, 2011** Called Charlene Sutton. Left message – no response.

**Oct. 9, 2011** Bishop Levi Willis preached his first sermon as pastor. Bishop Willis held meeting after church. He made one statement advising he appointed Douglas Hunter, Sussex Commonwealth Attorney Lyndia Ramsey and himself as trustees, then dismissed meeting. No voting to remove current trustees or add trustees.

**Oct. 17, 2011** Called Charlene Sutton. No response.

St. Paul COGIC has received 2 garnishments during Elder Gray time as pastor. One garnishment was for \$1,500 and the other for nearing \$13,000. Trustee William Batts was given the garnishment. William Batts, Frank Batts, Jr. and William Jones (trustee board) has been to Norfolk City Circuit Court approximately 5 times regarding this case and it is still not resolved. Norfolk Virginia is approximately 1 ½ hours away from Emporia. William Batts was arrested and charged with contempt of court. The judge ordered William Batts to provide statements to the court showing payments to Elder Gray. Unfortunately, he was not able to provide documents to court. When William Batts went to the bank, Bishop Levi Willis, II had sent letter to bank stating these three trustees were no longer members of St. Paul COGIC and therefore was able to lock down the accounts from the trustees. William Batts, Frank Batts, Jr. and William Jones were and still are the trustees over real estate and property for St. Paul COGIC. The judge summoned the bank managers to appear, they did not. As a result, the judge has

now subpoenaed the bank managers to appear. The judge continued the case again and the trustees are scheduled to meet court in November. Elder Gray was subpoenaed to court; he failed to appear at any court hearing. The trustees were advised Elder Gray has not been able to be located by the authorities. No one has a valid address for him. Unfortunately, after the case is resolved, William Batts still have to appear for the contempt of court charge. Hopefully and prayerfully, the judge will understand and take into consideration that William Batts tried to obtain the information; however, he was not able to because of the letter Bishop Levi Willis sent. We do not know how this case will be resolved or what will come of this case. Hopefully, our church issues will be resolved promptly to eliminate any further undue hardship, stress, oppression and burden caused to the trustees and members alike. Again, our desire is to join the rest of our district who is currently in the 4<sup>th</sup> Jurisdiction of Virginia, under the leadership of Bishop G. Wesley Hardy.