

October 29, 2011

John Daniels, Chairman  
The Publishing Board  
Church Of God In Christ, Inc.  
2500 Lamar Avenue  
Memphis, Tennessee 38114

Dear Sir:

It is my pleasure to greet you and to commend you and your staff for presenting to the Church Of God In Christ the kind and quality of Sunday School literature that makes studying interesting and more informative. The Young Family, who pioneered the publishing of our Sunday School literature for many years, would be proud of the progress that is now being made. Sister Sparks, the pioneer editor of the Whole Truth, would be happy to sit back in her chair and enjoy reading the beautiful “world class” Whole Truth Magazine that presents good news, helpful information, and new insights relative to intellectual and spiritual matters that help us cope with the challenges of our times. In 1946, during the international Youth Congress in Memphis, Tennessee, it was a delightful experience to talk with Sister Sparks concerning the benefits that she thought members throughout the Church could receive by sharing their experiences. She encouraged saints to send in their testimonies: testimonies of healing, special blessings, and how God had saved their families through their personal witness. Sister Sparks considered the Whole Truth to be a powerful tool for winning souls to Christ by presenting the Truth and nothing but the Truth. I remember hearing persons testify that they were convicted by reading the testimonies of persons who had sent them to the Whole Truth.

If the Whole Truth is to become the Official Publication for the Church Of God In Christ, it must publish the Truth and nothing but the Truth, and not TRUTH with a HOLE in it. Our people need to know how the saints are being treated throughout the Church. Because we are members of the same family, what affects one certainly affects the other. As you have suggested, we certainly have capable writers within the Church Of God In Christ who are able to present information that will be of interest to every segment of the Church. People like to hear the TRUTH, even if it hurts. Hearing the

TRUTH may HURT, but when we KNOW the TRUTH, we will be set FREE from those things which tend to Impede our progress in righteousness. The 105<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of the WHOLE TRUTH is evidence of the fact that “we are off to the challenge of reshaping, reintroducing, and rebuilding the Whole Truth.” My prayers are with you as you seek to unify our Church by presenting the WHOLE TRUTH.

**I. WHAT MEANETH THIS? ONE PICTURE CAN BE MADE TO EXPRESS MORE THAN A THOUSAND WORDS COULD NEVER SAY.**

Page 3 of the 105<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Whole Truth appears to present a picture of the leadership of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. that is inconsistent with what our Constitution provides. It seems to show Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr. lifted above the other 10 members of the General Board. He is given the title **Presiding Bishop and Chief Apostle Seventh In Succession** with the ten (10) men below him as **The Presidium Of The Church Of God In Christ**. The record shows that only five (5) men have been elected to the office of Presiding Bishop, but neither of them has been given the title “Presiding Bishop and Chief Apostle Seventh In Succession”. WHY? Because there was no PREDECESSOR for either of them to succeed that would qualify him to claim the position of Seventh in Succession. Beginning with Bishop C.H. Mason, only seven (7) men have been titular head of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. **SENIOR BISHOP AND CHIEF APOSTLE C. H. MASON WAS THE FIRST**. We are told that in the “First General Assembly of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., 1907, whose faith was founded upon the doctrine of the Apostles as recorded on the day of Pentecost, the Lord gave Elder C. H. Mason to be the CHIEF APOSTLE, to which the whole assembly accepted”. **OFFICIAL MANUAL, COGIC, SIXTH EDITION, REVISED 1957, PAGE 9, PAR. 2. SENIOR BISHOP OZRO T. JONES, SR. SECOND AND LAST Senior Bishop of COGIC, but the FIRST and ONLY SUCCESSOR to BISHOP C.H. MASON, OUR FOUNDER.**

In 1968, the Coup d'état in the Church brought about a new system of government with a new CONSTITUTION. The Church renounced the ONE

MAN LEADERSHIP MODEL AND ADOPTED A 12 MAN leadership model (THE GENERAL BOARD) WITH THE Presiding Bishop being one of the Twelve (12). Because of this drastic change, the LINE OF SUCCESSION TO SENIOR BISHOP MASON ENDED and a new line was started from the first PRESIDING BISHOP, BISHOP J.O. PATTERSON, SR. As to PRESIDING BISHOPS in the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., Bishop Blake is the fourth in succession to Bishop J.O. Patterson, Sr., not the seventh.

**SUCCESSOR DEFINED:** One that succeeds or follows; one who takes the place that another has left, and sustains the like part or character; one who takes the place of another by succession. **BLACK'S LAW DICTIONARY, SIXTH EDITION, Page 1431**

**SUCCESSION DEFINED:** The act or right of legally or officially coming into a Predecessors office, possession, position, etc. **Webster's Illustrated Contemporary Dictionary, Page 735.**

**II. The term PRESIDIUM appears to be inappropriately used when describing the ex-officio directors of the church Of God In Christ, Inc. When one considers the connotative and denotative definitions of the word PRESIDIUM, and reviews the historical record of some of the ruthless practices that people living under such authoritarian systems have been made to suffer, I THANK God that there is nothing in the record to corroborate the fact that the General Assembly of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., of which I have been a participating member for many years, ever intended that the General Board, the Ex-Officio Directors of the Corporation, would be classified or function as the PRESIDIUM OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, INC.**

**PRESIDIUM DEFINED:** The supreme policy making committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R.  
**Webster's Illustrated Contemporary Dictionary Encyclopedic Edition**

**PRESIDIUM DEFINED:** In certain Communist countries, a standing committee empowered to act for a larger body, as a legislature.

## **Webster's New World College Dictionary. Fourth Edition**

The aforesaid definition of Presidium should make it clear that the General Assembly never intended that the General Board's function would be patterned after that of Presidiums. The General Board is not the supreme policy making committee of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., nor is it a standing committee empowered to act for the General Assembly as a legislature. The Holy Scriptures, as contained in the old and New Testaments of the Bible, are our rule of faith and practice; and the General Assembly is the only doctrine expressing and law making authority of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc.

### **III. THE TITLES "PRESIDING BISHOP AND CHIEF APOSTLE SEVENTH IN SUCCESSION AND THE PRESIDUM OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST" ARE NOT FOUND IN THE COGIC CONSTITUTION. WHO WOULD HAVE THE AUDACITY TO USE THEM?**

It appears that the "angel that was thrown out of heaven", working quietly in and through certain unwatchful, gullible persons, convinced them that they would get greater recognition by operating under a title that was not a part of the common parlance or vernacular of the social circles in which they travel. It further appears that when the "angel that was thrown out of heaven" saw that they were fascinated by the idea, he further suggested that the leader would really look BIG and more authoritative if he were given a title that no other leader in the Church had been given. It is not clear as to who suggested the title, but it is indeed a title that has never been given to any leader in the history of the church: "PRESIDING BISHOP AND CHIEF APOSTLE SEVENTH IN SUCCESSION". Apparently, they did not heed the instruction from our rule of faith and practice, which says: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." It also appears that without official authorization they have been using the title and transacting business for the Church. Should the church be concerned?

We live in a democratic nation, one which honors God and respects the inalienable rights of its citizens. "In God We Trust" is on all of our currency and coins, and we have the privilege of living in an atmosphere of love and domestic tranquility. There is something in our Spirit that rises up against anything that suggests the curtailment of that freedom or which tends to militate against the same. As a veteran of World War II, I experienced some of the devastation, brutality and inhumane treatment that the Jews and others suffered because of the actions of governments that were controlled by PRESIDIUM, AND THE WORD - ITSELF - SEEMS TO SUGGEST SOMETHING THAT WILL NOT ENHANCE OUR LIVES. If we are not watchful, the "angel that was thrown out of heaven" just may try to slip some of the "presidium spirit into our beloved Church Of God In Christ, Inc. If he had the audacity to try to take over Heaven, he will certainly try to take over the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., the body of baptized believers that is heaven bound. The most recent report from the HGSDC (Holy Ghost Spiritual Discernment Center) indicates that it is possible that some of the actions that the Church Of God In Christ, by its doctrines, constitution, and laws does not approve appear to have orchestrated by the initiator of the presidium spirit: "the angel that was thrown out of heaven". There is no real reason to be because we have him under control. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good (Prov. 15:3) Amen.

**THIS YEAR THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, INC. WILL CELEBRATE ITS 104<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY. ARE WE HAPPY? DO WE HAVE JOY?**

Reports from all over the Church confirm the fact that we have been made to experience some conditions that have tried our souls. But, out of all that we've been through, and in spite of all that we may seem to be going through, God gives us the grace to say: "We Still Have Joy". "The angel that was thrown out of heaven" would like to see us "throw in the towel" and give up, but this JOY we have the world didn't give it to us nor can the world take it from us. The LORD gave us this JOY, and "the JOY of the LORD is our strength". It is this strength that gives us the ability to stand.

As we prepare to celebrate the 104<sup>th</sup> Birthday of our beloved Church Of God In Christ, Inc., the Church that Bishop Mason and the Pioneers established; the Church that our Fathers and Mothers loved and gave their lives to uphold, and the Church that we were taught to love, respect and defend, my prayer is: "LORD, REVIVE US AGAIN". Open our "spiritual eyes" so that we may

read and study your WORD, which is “Spirit and Life”. Open our ears so that we may hear what the “Spirit says to the Church”. Dear LORD, please quicken our CONSCIENCE so that we may become conscious of our sins and with this awareness, bring us to repentance, forgive us our sins, and let your glory rest upon us again. **WHEN YOU RECEIVE THIS MESSAGE, WHEREVER YOU ARE, AND WHOEVER YOU ARE, JOIN ME AND LET’S PRAY. “MORE THINGS ARE WROUGHT BY PRAYER THAN THIS WORLD EVER DREAMED OF”.**

Our beloved Church, the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., was divinely inspired. It is a spiritual church, its mission is to save souls, forgive sins, change lives, and bring healing and restoration to those who come within its spiritual walls. It reaches out to everyone and invites them to come. If this is not true, we should close our doors and go home or to some other seaport town. Sometimes, when I look at how we are attempting to conduct the affairs of a spiritual church, by carnal and worldly standards; and how we are mistreating some of God’s people, all in Jesus’ name, my spirit is grieved. What can we do about it? Above, I have asked you to join me in prayer for our Church, and that’s good. In addition to praying with me, let me suggest that we learn from a song that the pilots are said to have sung as they were dropping bombs on the enemy during World War II: “Praise the Lord and pass the ammuniton, and we’ll all stay free”.

Not only must we pray, but we must join in the PRAISE. We must not look sad or cry, but when we feel like sighing, we must SING AND KEEP GOING. We must support the gunners in the pit (THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL WITH POWER) so that they may blast the devil out of the minds of those he is attempting to destroy. We are in a Spiritual battle, our weapon is not carnal, it is “sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrew 4:12)”. “We can’t lose with the STUFF WE USE”: It is the “infallible, written Word of God”. Jesus defeated the devil with the Word, Bishop Mason and the Pioneers

established the Church Of God In Christ with the Word; Bishops W.R. Nesbitt, A.M. Cohen & Mothers Katie Smith, Della Riley and Lula Henderson preached out churches and won hundred to Christ by preaching and teaching the Word. I preach the Word, I was saved by believing the Word, I've been healed and delivered by believing the Word, and I offer it to anyone who desires to be saved: hear and believe the Word and you will be saved. Not because I said it, but because God said it in His Word.

Our church, the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., and integral of the Church Of God In Christ, of which Christ is the Head, appears to be suffering from the lack of God-Inspired Preaching from the Word of God. To be sure, it appears that some of our Leaders are reading some well-written, skillfully delivered messages that appear to have been prepared by efficient secretaries with the help of the Internet. I've heard messages with such challenging subjects as: "The Lateness of God" and "Give God Something To Look Forward to." As I listened, I said to myself; if he had been in one of my Philosophy classes, I would have taken time to expose him to Metaphysics, especially to the ontological arguments. From that experience I think he would have learned that we believe that God, Eternal Spiritual Presence, is omnipresent and because of His ubiquity; He could never be late, He is here all the time: "an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalms 46:1). Because our God is also omniscient, He knows all things. He knows what you will do before you do it, and he knows the results of your action before you perform it.

There is nothing that you can give Him to look forward to. Our God is also infallible: He does not make mistakes, He cannot lie, and everything He does is Perfect. If I understand words, I think it is profanity to suggest that our God could ever be late. To suggest such seems to bring our God to the level of a man. I don't think we would ever want to be guilty of trying to ANTHROPOMORPHIZE our God. Our "rule of faith and practice" tells us that God is never late and "the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (II Peter 3:9). Deep in my spirit, I can hear the voice of God resounding within me saying: "Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other ( Isaiah 45:22)".

Today, it appears that some of the Preachers who formerly were dynamic Gospel Preachers seem now to be caught in the NET of what they receive from the Internet. Their messages seem to lack the power which comes by the Holy Ghost when they preach from the open Bible, the infallible written Word of God. When one preaches from the Inspired Word of God, the spirit that inspired the writing of the Word seems to ignite the mind, thus lifting the person to the “Outernet” and frees him from the Net of the Internet, and gives him a message that is too hot for paper. Such is the kind that convicts sinners and converts them into saints; that revitalizes the various systems of the body and enables the lame to walk again; and because the Word is “spirit and life” it gives hope to the hopeless.

#### **IV. CONFESSION, REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION ARE ALL A PART OF GOD’S SALVATION FOR FALLIBLE MAN. TRY IT, YOU’LL LIKE IT.**

During our recent Bishop’s Conference, Jacksonville, Florida, September 19 - 22, 2011, I experienced an Altar Call, conducted by Bishop Roger Jones, following a dynamic message by Bishop Edward Robinson, the host pastor, which gave hope to many of the listeners who could identify with Bishop Jones’ testimony. He told how he was a victim of drugs, but God delivered him and restored him to a place of dignity again. He did not try to hide his past, but he seemed happy to tell everybody of the New Life he is now enjoying. Personally, I am convinced that those of us whom God has delivered and caused to be elevated to lofty positions in life are obligated to tell the world how God has changed our lives: that is what witnessing is all about. The contents of the Bible, “our rule of faith and practice”, would certainly be of little or no importance if the story of David of old were not included. David sinned, he confessed, he was forgiven and won the distinction of being a man after God’s own heart. St. Paul left on record a testimony that he was a sinner, but God transformed him and made him to become a powerful witness for Christ. “Whatever things were written were written in the pass for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (Roman 15:4).

It is amazing to observe that there appear to be some persons who are not satisfied with being fallible. By their actions, they seem to suggest that God,



the omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, Infallible Eternal Spiritual Creator of all things, did not know what He was doing when He made man a fallible creature. God made a perfect fallible man, one who is capable of making mistakes and sinning, but who is also capable of confessing, repenting and receiving forgiveness for any and all that he might do that is not in keeping with what the Creator desires. There is no limit to the number of times that he may be forgiven, because God's mercy endureth forever (Psalms 136:1). Our God is Love, and nothing can separate us from His love (Roman 8:38). When God breathed in man the breath of life, and man became a living soul, that breath was God's spirit, for God is Spirit. God, eternal spiritual presence, is in each of us; and if we love God we must love each other and extend to each other the same benefits that the love of God gives. If a brother or sister sins against us, we must forgive him/her just as God forgives us. Jesus, our example, demonstrated this love when he was dying on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." He recognized that the people were committing the sin of crucifying Him because they were ignorant, and this should give us insight into why certain people mistreat us: they may look and profess to be informed, but they just may be ignorant: they lack the knowledge and understanding that comes by being taught the Word of God. In spite of their ignorance, we must continue to love them, forgive them, and continue to teach them the Word, by precept and example." There may be some who are slow learners, and there may also be some who may be "ever learning and never come to know the truth." Because God's Word always accomplishes its mission, we can be sure that there will be some who will know the truth and thus be made free.

**V. WE LOVE AND HONOR OUR GENERAL BOARD MEMBERS, BUT OUR LOVE DOES NOT AND SHOULD NOT CAUSE US TO IGNORE THE HARM THEY HAVE CAUSED TO BE INFLICTED UPON COGIC MEMBERS BECAUSE OF THEIR APPARENT LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE DOCTRINE, LAWS AND CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH.**

During the former and present Administrations of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., since 1968, it appears that, when the General Assembly was not in session, the General Board made certain decisions and approved certain actions that are contrary to what our Biblical doctrines and constitution

approves. The results have been quite unfavorable for those concerned and for the Church. The General Board is elected by the General Assembly to uphold and defend the sacred doctrines and constitution of the Church and not to willfully violate them. To be sure, all actions of the General Board are subject to be reviewed and approved or rejected by the General Assembly, that is, if they are presented to the General Assembly for consideration. Under our present system, the General Assembly is only in session about 7 days each year, and that time is usually spent for things other than business that is vital to the effective operation of the Church. For about 358 days each year, the General Board appears to be in control of everything in the Church. It approves budgets for all departments of the Church. It is very gracious to the Executive Branch of the Church, allowing about three quarters of a million dollars each year for its operation, but only less than one hundred thousand dollars for the Judicial Department. It establishes Ecclesiastical Jurisdictions, of any size that it desires, and selects and appoints Jurisdictional Bishops of its choice, appoints all National Officers, presides over all funerals for deceased Episcopal Leaders, takes over jurisdictions when a jurisdictional bishop dies, presides over the National Convocation, and the Board is given the honor of occupying Center Stage at all National Meetings.

The twelve Bishops are the ex-officio directors of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. During the brief meetings of the General Assembly, April and November of each year, the General Board makes a report to the General Assembly of those matters which it deems important. It usually cites the number of funerals it attended, the number of new jurisdictions and new jurisdictional bishops that have been added, the number of conventions attended, the number of jurisdictional convocations visited, and the number of foreign countries that have been visited. Time usually runs out before it is able to tell how generous the saints were in their love offerings or tell of the problems, legal and otherwise, that are unsolved throughout the Church. Because time is of the essence, they must hurry and adjourn the General Assembly so as not to miss their planes. Our Beloved General Board appears to be unusually Busy taking care of the Lord's work, and we should be grateful to them for desiring to serve.

It is unfortunate that the General Board has not taken time to utilize modern technology in helping it to prepare and present to the General Assembly, when it is in session, reports that reflect what is happening in our Church. While I may sympathize with it for allowing itself to be caught in a position that makes it appear that it never has adequate time to make a complete, intelligent, factual report to the General Assembly so that the contents of the report may be received, studied, evaluated and acted upon, I still insist that it is obligated to do the same. “Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant” (I Cor. 10:1) concerning certain actions that transpired in our Church which have caused pain, suffering, embarrassment, injury to reputation and anguish to some in our fellowship. Because we are helpers one of another”, I am bringing to your attention only two of the cases that I feel the General Assembly should call up and act upon while it is in session. To delay positive action just might be unwise. There just may be some Civil rights matters that are protected by the First and 14<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the U.S. Constitution that some interested parties might like to review.

1. Kansas Southwest Jurisdiction Vs. Board of Trustee Emmanuel Church Wichita, Kansas

The Pastor of Emmanuel Church died in 2004, and five days after his burial, and without a conference with officers and members of the congregation, the Bishop appointed a pastor to the Church. The officers and members rejected the pastor and made the same known to the Bishop who recalled the minister and took over the Church. Because of the lack of concern for the welfare of the Emmanuel Church, during the illness and death of the pastor, the Congregation voted to ask for a transfer to another jurisdiction. The request was denied. Using their constitutional rights, they appealed to the higher authorities, but they also denied their right to transfer. For a brief period, activities at the church were not as would be expected among the saints, but after a short time certain adjustments were made and relationships were better.

It appears that the Bishop wanted to have full control of all business affairs of the church, thus ignoring the rights of the trustees. The duties and functions of trustees are spelled out in the Church’s manual, and pastors

have all of the rights they need within the authority given them by the Church and God to lead - not drive - the sheep. Instead of following the guidelines as set forth in the Church's rules, the Bishop stated in a letter to the Chief Justice words to the affect that he was advised by the General counsel of the Church to take Emmanuel Church to the Civil Courts, and he thought he should rely upon the General Counsel's opinion. It appears that the General Board, whose job it is to uphold and defend the doctrines and laws of the Church, seems to have agreed with the Counsel's opinion: it has sent letters in support of positions that are diametrically opposed to what we believe and teach.

The little ecclesiastical matter that should have been settled within the confines of the Emmanuel Church, but which was changed to a legal matter and taken to the Civil courts for resolution, is now seven (7) years of age. Why is it taking so long to solve the case? Don't the Attorneys know what they are doing? As I view the situation, I think "God is trying to get our attention." During these seven (7) years in the Courts, we have been tested to see who is for real, who will tell the truth, who will stand-up, and with knowledge and clear understanding of what the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. believes, proclaim what we are all about. We are spending thousands of loyalty report dollars that could be used for missions and education, to pay legal fees. We are placing an undue burden on our Court System by taking our problems to them when we should be living in such a way that courts would feel comfortable in directing persons from the courts to us for help.

There are some things about this case that the General Assembly should hear, evaluate and act on while it is in session. Rather than write certain things that would give the General Assembly better perspective of and insight into the nature of this case, it is my opinion that a report from the General Board as to why the case was ever initiated, why it's taking so long to come to an agreement and settle the case, and why the General Church was joined as a Plaintiff against the Emmanuel Church. Once the case is heard before the General Assembly, we will then be able to settle the matter once and for all.

I humbly petition the Chairman of the General Assembly to call for a report from the General Board as to why this case has not been settled. To avoid

possible legal and ecclesiastical problems that might arise out of unresolved issues in this case, and the one discussed below, I recommend the calling of an Emergency Meeting of the Executive Committee of the General Assembly, to consider the appropriate action that should be taken to settle both cases.

## **2. Bishop Holsey L. Thomas and the Delaware Jurisdiction**

After the death of Bishop L. T. Blackshear, Jurisdictional Prelate, Church Of God In Christ, Inc., a distinguished leader, pastor, preacher, and builder, the National Church appointed Bishop Thomas L. Holsey, his faithful assistant as his successor. Bishop Holsey was to Bishop Blackshear as was the Prophet Elisha to the Prophet Elijah: he honored him, he served him, he respected him, he traveled almost everywhere with him, he suffered with him, he contributed to and learned from him, they wept and rejoiced together, and Bishop Holsey was with him when he was “taken away;”. Bishop Holsey has the distinction of being known in all circles of the National church as one who respected and supported leadership, and one who worked well with people. He served on the National Trustee Board, the Screening Committee, the Finance Committee, the Adjutants Corp, and other capacities which give evidence of his leadership abilities.

He was honored and respected in all circles of the Church; consequently, it was obvious that he was a man of aplomb and capable of leading the Jurisdiction. Bishop Blackshear, who was licensed by my father, the late Bishop W. R. Nesbitt, Sr., Pioneer Bishop of the Church here in Florida, would be proud of Bishop Holsey, and that he is his successor. Often when we would meet in Memphis or at airports throughout the country, I would tease Bishop Blackshear about having this young man always with him. Once I remember saying: He must be trying to learn how to be a bishop. He smiled and said: “I thank God for him, he always sticks with me and he is a great help to me. Most of these young fellows don’t want you to tell them anything, but he is not like that: he is just like my son.”

In November, 2009 he was appointed Jurisdictional Bishop of the Delaware Jurisdiction, and in December, 2009 a Gala Inaugural Banquet was given in his honor. The Presiding Bishop, First Assistant Presiding Bishop, Second

Assistant Presiding Bishop, other General Board Members, General Secretary, Bishops, Civic Officials and more than 500 friends and supporters were there. The Presiding Bishop acclaimed him to be one of the Church's best, and had only good things to say about his loyalty and dedication to the Church. All of the other speakers spoke very highly of his leadership abilities and wished for him and his family the blessings that God would give to a faithful servant.

Earlier in the year, before he was appointed, he had made generous gifts to the Presiding Bishop, First Assistant Presiding Bishop, Board of Bishops and others to show appreciation for their work and to assist them with other ministries in which they were engaged. Being aware of some of the financial pressure that some of his brethren were undergoing, and because God had blessed the Delaware Jurisdiction he, with the approval of the Board of Directors of the Jurisdiction, showed brotherly love to some of the National Church Officers and Pastors of the Church, by allowing them to borrow needed funds to help them in their time of trouble. It was all done in Good Faith and with the assurance that it would **be repaid**.

He purchased a beautiful Episcopal Residence for the Jurisdiction, obtained and equipped a Headquarters Office Building, gave \$19,000 to the Haitian Relief Program, and paid off mortgages for congregations in the Jurisdiction. The record shows that all of these acts of altruism were done with the approval of the Board of Directors of the Jurisdiction. He was very wise: he put a sizable sum in investments for the benefit of the Jurisdiction.

It appears that in process of being generous in his giving and trying to help his leaders and others, Bishop Holsey seems not to have taken time to balance his check book before writing a few checks. Not knowing that it lacked sufficient funds to cover two of his checks that he wrote to the National Church for Reports that were not honored at the bank. Based on my knowledge of what happens in the Church's Finance Office, I think it safe to say that there have been other occasions when Bishops have made their reports with checks that were not honored. When the particular Bishops were notified, adjustments were made and the matter was settled. The officers of the church did not proclaim to the world that the Bishops were dishonest or unreliable.

They understood that fallible creatures make mistakes and that they also were candidates that were prone to make similar mistakes.

There must have been something special about the Delaware case, because it attracted the attention of the highest executive leadership of our beloved church. Just about six months before, in the City of Dover, Delaware; in the presence of more than 500 people, they had extolled the virtues of this distinguished gentleman, not because he had been very gracious in giving them financial gifts, but because the evidence would corroborate all that they said. It was in the month of June, 2010 that the General Board, after receiving word that two insufficient funds checks had been received from the Delaware Jurisdiction for national reports, that the Presiding Bishop appointed an Ecclesiastical Oversight Committee to enter the Delaware Jurisdiction and investigate the financial activity of that Jurisdiction.

While some reasonable and prudent men might question his reason or right to have appointed the committee to perform such an audacious process, when one looks at the General Boards Performance Record, it might reveal the fact that nobody does it just like the General Board. Led by the First Assistant Presiding Bishop, the committee went to the Delaware Jurisdiction and looked, questioned whomever they desired, and found things in order pursuant to the requirements of the guidelines set forth in the Charter. They might have also been looking for all of the finance that they might have been told that was there, but it appears to have been “Safe In The Arms Of Jesus, and Nobody could disturb it there.”

After a few days of enjoying the gracious hospitality of Delaware, they summarily removed Bishop Thomas L. Holsey from his office. They would not allow him to preside over his first jurisdictional convocation, they removed him from the churches he was pastor, they took his salary and would not allow him to participate in any of the jurisdictional functions. They closed his jurisdictional headquarters, removed the furniture and equipment and placed it in storage. They accused him of fraudulent activities and this information was voiced among the saints and the public.

Not only did they take away his livelihood, but they also cancelled his insurance and collected the money from it. Just think of the undue stress that

he and his family were made to experience. Is this the way that Godly Leaders should treat a brother in the Lord?

Do you think Jesus would approve such action? Would Bishop Mason and the Fathers of the Church have treated a brother or anyone with such callousness? The CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, INC. of which I have been a member for 87 years, and which follows the JESUS WAY, BELIEVES: “BRETHREN, IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN ANY TRESPASS, YOU WHO ARE SPIRITUAL, RESTORE SUCH A ONE IN THE SPIRIT OF GENTLENESS, CONSIDERING YOURSELF LEST YOU ALSO BE TEMPTED.” ( GAL. 6:1). Judging from the action cited above, how would you rate the spirituality of the LEADERSHIP?

In this case, there is no evidence to established the fact that our beloved Bishop Holsey perpetrated any trespass, crime or sin, but the persons whom we have entrusted to lead the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., when the General Assembly is not in session, removed a Bishop from his office and stripped him of everything that they could, because of “TWO CHECKS” THAT COULD NOT BE HONORED AT THE TIME THAT THEY WERE PRESENTED TO THE BANK. Was that a crime? Don’t many people sometimes present checks that, for one reason or another, must be returned for insufficient funds? Aren’t there some checks in our Finance Office that have not been honored? If the National church were in financial distress, the Leaders to whom the Church been so gracious could have easily given a tenth of what they received from National Meetings, Income from the thousands of Official Day Convocation DVD’s and other gifts that they have so graciously received. Then, too, they might have returned the very liberal financial gifts that Bishop Holsey had given to them just a few months prior to his being unfrocked. This might have helped cover the “TWO CHECKS”.

In St. Paul’s letter to Titus (Tit. 3:13), he instructed him to send Zenas the Lawyer to him at Nicopolis. The bible does not tell us why Zenas was named, but it is reasonable to conclude that the “Religious Leaders” of that day were trying to put him out of circulation and he needed the advice of a good lawyer to help keep him alive a while longer. The old saying: “all lawyers are liars”, is not true. The fact is, Good Lawyers know how to study



facts and present them in such a way that makes “Religious Leaders understand the facts and that they are obligated to “Practice What They Preach”. After it has been brought to their attention, if they elect not to follow it, the LAW will show them how; it will enforce the LAW, because the LAW is for the LAWLESS. ( I Tim. 1:9).

I salute the lawyers who advised Bishop Holsey. His personal attorney, who attended the Inaugural Banquet, where he had the privilege of hearing our beloved Presiding Bishop, was afforded the opportunity to instruct the Leaders of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., relative to the provisions of the COGIC Constitution. He refreshed their minds by telling them of the history of how our laws have been applied in other pertinent cases. He called upon them to comply with our laws, which will satisfy the provisions of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. His letter was a Wake Up Call to the Leadership. The process was initiated, Bishop Holsey was tried before the Board of Bishops. As was the case when Jesus was tried by Pilate, they found no fault in him. It was made clear that the “charges”, that were alleged against him by the General Board, were not supported by the evidence that was presented. The order was given that he should be restored to his position as Prelate in Delaware, and Bishop Holsey was restored. In our beloved Church, the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., whose very name symbolizes the concept of Reconciliation, (II Cor. 5:19) one would think that the Presiding Bishop and General Board would have rejoiced over the fact that their Appointee was cleared of the false charges that had been brought against him.

To the contrary, they appear to have been quite displeased. “Subsequent to the verdict and entry of the Order by the Board of Bishops, Bishop Holsey was never given access to the books and records of the Jurisdiction. The General Board demanded that Bishop Holsey would turn over to them records which he had never received. He told them that he had not been given the said records and books of the Jurisdiction. In response to Bishop Holsey’s answer, the General Board approached the Executive Committee of the Board of Bishops ex parte and demanded that Bishop Holsey be removed from his post as Prelate and also that he be removed as Pastor of his two churches. No prior notice was given to him of such a request or allegations of insubordination. The Board of Bishops acquiesced to the demand and

issued the Order again removing him from his post as Jurisdictional Prelate and as pastor of his two local churches without due process of any kind.

The Lord provided for him another Good Lawyer, one whose legal acumen and apparent understanding of our COGIC Constitution, and how the principles of it should be applied in all phases of the operation of the Church, to appeal his case to the Judiciary Board of the Church . Before the highest Judicatory Authority of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. he made it clear that within our system we believe that the Presiding Bishop, General Board, Officers and members must abide by the constitution, which included the ecclesiastical and civil polity of the church as an organization and non-profit corporation. Noncompliance by any within the system jeopardizes the effectiveness of the total system, thus bringing harm to those who fail to comply.

The point of view expressed by the Lawyer recognizes, as did St. Paul, that every soul should be subject to the higher power because all power is of God (Rom. 13:1). His appeal was successful because there was a Higher Power within the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. to which his appeal could be made: The Judiciary Board. The Godly decision of the Judiciary Board restored him to his position as Jurisdictional Prelate of Delaware and pastor of the two churches from which he had been removed. It is very interesting to observe that while Bishop Holsey was seeking justice within the Church's system, the General Counsel and certain other COGIC representatives visited the U.S. Attorney's Office in Delaware seeking information as to what was needed to effect a federal criminal investigation concerning the alleged fraud that was said to have been committed by Bishop Thomas Holsey.

They were told that it was necessary that they provide the F.B.I. Special Agent with transcripts and other related documents from the internal COGIC trial that they described so that the U.S. Attorney's office might review them to determine whether or to what extent a Federal Criminal Investigation into the allegations might be undertaken. After thirty days had passed, and there were no records from the General Counsel, a letter was sent from the U.S. Attorney's office to the General Counsel to ascertain when he would send the documents. He informed the General Counsel that he was in no way obligated to send the documents to law enforcement, and asked if he wished

to produce the required documents. It appears that those whom the General Counsel represented elected not to produce the internal COGIC records. No records, no review, no possible investigation. I think it is reasonable to conclude that there was no INVESTIGATION. The fact is, the federal authorities never said there would be one. Should we have some concerns as to why the General Counsel petitioned the Judiciary Board seeking to postpone its hearings until the COGIC responded to the governmental-related activities? To what governmental-related activities was the reference made? As I observe, just about two weeks prior to the General Counsel's petition to the Judiciary Board, letters were sent out from the Presiding Bishop and General Counsel, respectively, asking that we all cooperate with the government's inquiry. Did the government's inquiry ever occur? Since we were asked to cooperate with the inquiry, do we have the right to know what the inquiry was all about? I can certainly appreciate our beloved Presiding Bishop's desire that we cooperate with the government's inquiry. Church and State must always work together for they are both empowered by God to work in the interest of the people. It would also be most helpful if the Church would cooperate with the State by taking care of its own business within the Church and not place an undue burden on our Criminal Justice System which is already loaded with "real crime cases".

In our rule of faith and practice, the Holy Bible, we are given the guidelines for adjudicating any matter which arises within our Church. The Bible is our Law Book, and it was inspired by the Holy Spirit - the Spirit of Truth. It is the Law of God for the people; therefore, those who lead God's people and his church must be led by the same spirit that inspired the writing of the Bible. God's people, in God's Church, must be taught God's Agenda, THE WORD OF GOD. As I looked at the theme for our Church this year: "God's people, God's Church, God's Agenda, it was revealed to me that the theme lacks something. Could it be that it is the leadership that will instruct God's people, in the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., by precept and example, to live by the rules that are set forth in God's agenda, the Holy Bible? By permission, I feel led to add the missing component to the theme. Now, the theme should be: "God's Leader, God's People, God's Church, God's Agenda.

PRAYERFULLY, I have set before you two cases that the General Assembly should review and take action on immediately. To delay much longer just may not be the wise thing to do. The problems are a direct result of the failure of our Leaders to follow the spiritual guidelines as set forth in the Bible, “our rule of faith and practice,” or even our own constitution. Our Church is found upon Spiritual Principles, and when we resort to the Civil Law to attempt to solve our problems, there is a real conflict. I am not speaking as a Novice, but as one who has been in Ministry in the Church Of God `In Christ, Inc. for more than 66 years I have been recognized as a Bishop since 1963. I meet the requirements for being a Bishop as set forth in I Tim. 3:2,6.

If you must know, I graduated from College with degrees in Philosophy and History, finished the School of Religion, Howard University 59 years ago, (the first COGIC student to graduate from Howard’s School of Religion), finished Law School 53 years ago, served as College Professor in Humanities and Fine Arts, served as one of seven Board Members for the 17<sup>th</sup> largest School District in the U.S. for 10 years, Executive Secretary of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. during the Administration of the Second and last Senior Bishop of the COGIC, Chief Justice of the COGIC Judiciary Board, and multiple other training that qualify me to speak. It might please you to know that I was the First and only Judge of the First and only Ecclesiastical Court of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., established in the 66<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (1973) for the purpose of adjudicating the West Angeles Church Of God In Christ, Inc. case where Elder Charles E. Blake, now our Presiding Bishop, was the pastor. That case received nationwide publicity, and Bishop Rimson, Chairman of the General Assembly, presented me by telling the General Assembly that he was appointing a man to handle the case that “knows our Laws and Doctrine and is qualified to judge the case”. After two days of hearing very interesting testimonies, the Lord led me to render a just decision, and the General Assembly gave me a STANDING OVATION. When Justice was given, the people rejoiced.

The saints were hugging and kissing and fellowship was restored. I did not receive a penny or a dime, and in the Church we know that is not a crime. The record will show that I have been delighted to serve my Church. In private conferences, to protect the name of persons who are still alive. I

have been called upon to help give counsel in matters that helped guide our Church through some very difficult times. Whether we realize it or not, we not where we should be spiritually. If we would just admit that we are fallible, and not infallible, I think we would all have a greater appreciation for each other and the gifts that God has blessed us to possess.

We all need help, and when we fail to recognize or admit that fact we are prone to act in a way that will be detrimental to ourselves and all concerned. While the General Assembly was not in session, I have written the Presiding Bishop and asked to assist them in getting us out of the courts, but .44 cent stamp was too much to spend to answer my letters. They are wasting our hard-earned money and act as if it does not matter. If the General Assembly will, while it is in session, allow me to help I'll write the opinion that will settle these two cases immediately. Because I love our beloved Church, there will be no FEE, but will ask that you receive a freewill offering from the General Assembly for me. It will be my pleasure to show the General Assembly that following God's way is the way that yields the desired results.

HELEN KELLER was physically DEAF, DUMB and BLIND, but she had an EAR to hear what the Spirit (God who is Spirit) spoke to her. LEADERS of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. will you please "STOP! LOOK! LISTEN! AND HEAR what God is trying to say to the Church.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS THAT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHOULD CONSIDER WHILE IT IS IN SESSION**

1. Postpone the creating of new ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., and the consecration of persons who have been designated to be prelates of the proposed new jurisdictions until the 2012 session of the General Assembly.

REASONS: To allow time to consider questions that are being raised with regard to the need to create new jurisdictions that have the effect of taking away the strength of jurisdictions that have been developed by progressive leadership, sacrifices, and unselfish service.

To investigate the source that prompted the unfavorable press that the

Church and administration are receiving relative to the General Board's choices of persons to be consecrated to the high and sacred office of Jurisdictional Bishop who are said not to meet the required moral standards.

2. NOTE: The postponement will allow the general Assembly time to examine the records of all candidates and clear them for consecration. While the General Board is given authority to appoint all Jurisdictional Bishops, we should not assume that the right to appoint is the right to choose, select, test and approve. It appears that the person to be appointed should have the approval of the Jurisdictional Assembly of the jurisdiction to which he is to be appointed, the Board of Bishops, and the Special Committee of the General Assembly. If this is the method used it appears that many of the expressed concerns will be satisfied.
  
3. Order the Presiding Bishop and General Board; respectively, to cease and desist using the designations Presiding Bishop and Chief Apostle Seventh in Succession and Presidium Of The Church Of God In Christ, Inc. when representing the Church Of God In Christ in the positions to which they have been duly elected. The said designations are unconstitutional and misrepresent the meaning that the constitution intended to convey. The same Order applies to the Publishing House, all departments and agencies of the church that are responsible for the publication of any and all printed matter for the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. This action may serve as a preventive measure to lessen the possibility of one's deception of himself or of causing others, with whom he associates, to be become deceived. "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (Gal. 6:3).
  
4. Postpones the consecration of all Jurisdictional and Auxiliary Bishops until the 2012 Session of the General assembly.
  1. To protect the dignity and sacredness of the process.
  2. To be sure that any negative action taken against any candidate can be justified, by factual proof, so as not to cause injury to the denied candidate.

## **MY CLOSING THOUGHT AND GREETING FOR OUR HOLY CONVOCATION**

When we gather to worship on the first day of Holy Convocation, if we are called upon to give a testimony with which we all can agree, we could all say: God has been good to us. On the other hand, when we check the record of how good we have been to God - and being good to each other determines how good we have been to God - It will show that in certain geographic areas within our Church we have been most unkind, unbrotherly, and unchristlike to God. Because of this fact, our first order of business should be to “confess our faults one to another, and pray one for the other that we may be healed. If we can heal some of the wounds that annoy us, we will be able to worship God in spirit and in truth. We will have a glorious convocation and God’s leaders will lead God’s people, in the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. pursuant to the guidelines as set forth in God’s agenda (the Bible), my prayers are with you.

### **PAX VOBISCUM**

Samuel P. Nesbitt

Now that you have read this document, if the Lord leads you to support us with your prayers and a free will love offering, we will thank you, pray for you and include your name on our mailing list to receive copies of our future writings. We welcome your calls and will be delighted to hear from you at any time. Address all correspondence to the address below:

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