

Church Of God In Christ, Inc.  
General Council of Pastors and Elders  
Judicial Review Committee / Ecclesiastical Appeals Court

P. O. Box 356  
Douglasville, Georgia 30133-0356



**Dr. Frederick D. Jenkins - Georgia**  
Chairman / Chief Ecclesiastical Appeals Court Judge

**ECCLESIASTICAL APPEALS COURT JUDGES**

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Dr. Destry C. Bell, Sr. - Texas  
Supt. Lee E. Blackmon- Texas  
Supt. Timothy Bouknight- Massachusetts  
Dr. Robert E. Garner -Michigan  
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Supt. Bruce A. McCoy -Michigan  
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Supt. Kenneth L. Paden -Georgia  
Supt. Embra R. Patterson -Illinois  
Elder Ward A. Snow -Alabama  
Pastor Talbert W. Swan, II- Massachusetts  
Pastor Carl E. Williams- Tennessee

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Case No. HFJSGvTCOGIC12012010

**THE CASE**

OF

**Bishop Larry L. Shaw and Historic 1<sup>st</sup> Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia  
Church Of God In Christ**

VS.

**Pastor Johnny E. Bradley, Credential Holders and  
Congregation of Tabernacle Church Of God In Christ**



**Church Of God In Christ**  
**General Council Of Pastors And Elders**  
 Before The  
**Judicial Review Committee / Appeals Court**

**The Case of**

Bishop Larry L. Shaw and the Historic 1<sup>st</sup> Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia Church Of God In Christ

**Petitioners**     }  
                           }  
                           }

vs                    }

**Case No. HFJSGvTCOGIC12012010**

Tabernacle Church Of God In Christ of Valdosta, Georgia

**Respondent**     }  
                           }  
                           }

**General Council of Pastors and Elders**

The Chairman of the General Council of Pastors and Elders of the Church Of God In Christ on or about April 12, 2011 received a letter dated December 1, 2010 from Bishop Larry L. Shaw, Jurisdictional Prelate of the Historic First Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia of the Church of God in Christ, Inc.

The letter chronicled and outlines alleged inappropriate behavior on the part of Pastor Johnny E. Bradley, a Summary of complaints lodged against the Tabernacle Church of God in Christ and a Summary Brief of the actions taken to address the issues of concern.

The letter contained a request to wit:

**“We are requesting a hearing by the General Counsel of Pastors and Elders to rule in favor of this verdict. Furthermore that Tabernacle Church of God in Christ remain a viable part of Historic First Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia in accordance with the Constitution of the Church of God In Christ, Inc.”**

The letter along with the Ecclesiastical Council Trial Summary of the Tabernacle Church of God in Christ 501 Holiday Street Valdosta, GA 31603 was forwarded to the Judicial Review Committee / Ecclesiastical Appeals Court of the General Council of Pastors and Elders of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. and received on or about May 5, 2011.

**SYLLABUS BY THE COURT**

The jurisdiction of the Civil Courts to address matters involving church affairs is limited. Purely theological questions and matters ecclesiastical in character must be determined by the authorities of the particular Church involved according to its laws and usage. Civil Courts have no jurisdiction to review or control the decisions of duly constituted Church Authorities. However, when church-related controversies involve civil or property rights, the Civil Courts

may and will take jurisdiction and decide the merits of the case in order to assure regularity of business practices and the right of private use and ownership of property. See *Gospel Tabernacle Body of Christ Church v. Peace Publishers & Co.*, 211 Kan. 420, 422, 506 P.2d 1135, *reh. denied* 211 Kan. 927, 508 P.2d 849 (1973) (court considered whether a board of trustees had authority to convey church property absent approval of members of the congregation).

The Church of God in Christ, Inc. is a 106 plus -year-old ecclesiastical organization. Numerous local churches are a part of its hierarchical system. See *Serbian Orthodox Diocese v. Milivojevich*, 426 U.S. 696, 49 L. Ed. 2d 151, 96 S. Ct. 2372, *reh. denied* 429 U.S. 873 (1976) (Supreme Court recognized that the Orthodox church was a "hierarchical church," with a governing body, set rules of procedure, and an internal appeals procedure). The Church of God in Christ is typically organized with various pastors, bishops, and district superintendents. See *Church of God v. Middle City Ch. of God*, 774 S.W.2d 950, 951 (Tenn. App. 1989).

The Church Of God In Christ has duly adopted a constitution, policies, procedures, bylaws and a Judicial Code of Conduct which apply to its local churches. Jurisdictional Bishops are responsible for ensuring local compliance with the National Church's doctrinal and other policies and are empowered to appoint and remove pastors for the local churches within their jurisdiction. See *Church of God in Christ, Inc. v. Graham*, 54 F.3d 522, 524 (8th Cir. 1995). Part I, the Constitution, Article III, Part 2, Section D, ¶¶ 5, 9, and 11 of the Official Manual of Church of God in Christ.

### STATEMENT OF CASE JURISDICTION

The General Council of Pastors and Elders primary function is that of an Ecclesiastical Appeals Court to review matters referred to it for possible Judicial Errors, Prosecutorial Negligence, Prosecutorial Misconduct, Breach of Judicial Procedure ect., and to function as Ecclesiastical Council to try, hear and determine cases and all other matters referred to it under the Constitution or Laws of the Church, the General Council of Pastors and Elders is not an enforcement arm of the Church.

After careful review of the request for assistance and the documents that were attached the following was determined:

1. That the parties are Clergy and members of the Church Of God In Christ.
2. That all parties, the Local Church, the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and the Clergy are active in the Church Of God In Christ and as such subject to the Authority, Rules, Regulations, Policies, Procedures, Constitution, By-laws, Doctrine, Charter, Discipline and Judicial Process of the same.
3. That neither party has exhausted all Remedies within the Ecclesia that is available to them, in this matter.

The Judicial Review Committee / Ecclesiastical Appeals Court of the General Council of Pastors and Elders of the Church Of God In Christ has both Personal and Subject Matter Jurisdiction in this case pursuant to *Article III Part II Section D* and *Article V Part II Section A* of the Official Manual of the Church Of God In Christ; *Article V Section II*, and *Article V Section II Para 3* of the Rules and Regulations of the General Council of Pastors and Elders, as well as the COGIC Judicial Code of Conduct 1994, there is also sufficient case laws that would allow for resolution in this matter in the Ecclesia: ( *Goesele v. Bimeler*, 55 US. (14 How) 589, *Baker v. Nachtrieb*, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 126, *Attorney General v. Federal Street Meeting-house*, 66 U.S. (1 Black) 262, *Watson v. Jones* 80 U.S. (13 Wall.) 679, *Kreshik v. St. Nicholas Cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Church of North America*, 363 U.S. 190 (*percuriam*), ).

## **STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

Per the Petitioners documentation, this case is a church dispute that began with a letter dated April 20, 2010 from the Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia signed by Pastor Johnny E. Bradley to Bishop Larry L. Shaw, Jurisdictional Prelate of the Historic First Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. The letter was a notice of the Tabernacle Church of God in Christ intent to transfer Jurisdictional affiliation.

### **FACTS**

1. That Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia is a local church in the Church Of God In Christ and on April 20, 2010 was affiliated with the Historic First Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia of the Church Of God In Christ, and desired to transfer its jurisdictional affiliation.
2. That Elder Johnny E. Bradley is the current Pastor of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia.
3. That Bishop Larry L. Shaw is the duly consecrated and appointed Jurisdictional Bishop of the Historic First Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia of the Church Of God In Christ.
4. That on or about April 20, 2010 letters from Tabernacle Church Of God In Christ of Valdosta, Georgia expressing their intent to transfer Jurisdictional affiliation was sent to Bishop Larry L. Shaw Jurisdictional Prelate of the Historic First Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., Bishop John Wayne Leggett, Jurisdictional Prelate of Southern Georgia Second Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. and to Bishop Joel H. Lyles, Jr. General Secretary of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc.
5. That on April 22, 2010 Tabernacle Church of God in Christ had a business meeting where discussion was had on their future Jurisdictional affiliation.
6. That a letter from the General Secretary's Office dated April 26, 2010 sent to Pastor Johnny E. Bradley acknowledging receipt of the April 20, 2010 correspondence.
7. That a letter dated May 22, 2010 from Bishop Larry L. Shaw was sent to Pastor Johnny Bradley, subject; "Failure to follow protocol in regards to church transfer."
8. That a Jurisdictional Investigating Committee issued its Report dated June 19, 2010, in which it concluded that the Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia should be tried under provisions set forth by Article VIII-Church Discipline. Section A. Trial of Local Church for violating the Constitution.

### **ISSUES**

1. Whether Tabernacle Church of God in Christ violated the provisions of the Charter, Constitution, Rules, Law and regulations of the Church Of God In Christ or its Articles of Faith. If so was it a flagrant violation constituting a capital act.
2. Whether the actions of the Jurisdictional Administration was reasonable or excessive.
3. Whether the Jurisdictional Administration violated procedure in its judicial actions. Was the Trial of Tabernacle COGIC flawed?
4. Whether Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia engaged in sexual harassment of Female Lay members as alleged.

## **ADDRESSING THE ISSUES AND FINDING**

**With regards to Issue #1.**

### **CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES FOR TRANSFER OF JURISDICTIONAL AFFILIATION**

#### **SECTION D LOCAL CHURCHES**

18. No local church shall be authorized to change or transfer its Jurisdictional affiliation unless at least Two-thirds of the church's membership agrees for such transfer.

Addendum - April 14, 1982. Two-Thirds of the membership must be present and voting after due notice, before authorization can be given to move the church from one Jurisdiction to another.

a. The Pastor of the church shall notify in writing the General Secretary of the Church of God in Christ, the Jurisdictional Bishops where the church is affiliated, and the Jurisdictional Bishop where the church intends to transfer,

of intent to transfer, which notice shall be given at least thirty (30) days before the local church's membership can act on said transfer.

The notice shall include the following information:

1. Name of Pastor
2. Name and location of the Church.
3. Membership enrollment.
4. Jurisdiction where Church is affiliated.
5. Name and address of Jurisdictional Bishop.
6. Jurisdiction where Church seeks to transfer and name of Bishop of such Jurisdiction.

b. The respective Jurisdictional Bishops or their designee where the Church is affiliated and where the Church seeks to transfer shall be entitled to be present at the membership meeting convened for this purpose.

c. The vote on the transfer shall be by secret written ballot. The respective Jurisdictional Bishops shall be authorized to have a representative present to observe the voting and the counting of the ballots.

d. The respective Jurisdictional Bishops and the Pastors of the local church shall within seventy-two (72) hours notify the General Secretary of the Church of God in Christ of the results.

19. No local church shall be authorized to petition for a transfer of its Jurisdictional affiliations but for one time each twelve (12) month period.

In a letters dated April 20, 2010 Tabernacle Church Of God In Christ of Valdosta, Georgia expressed their intent to transfer Jurisdictional affiliation to Bishop Larry L. Shaw Jurisdictional Prelate of the Historic First Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., Bishop John Wayne Leggett, Jurisdictional Prelate of Southern Georgia Second Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. and to Bishop Joel H. Lyles, Jr. General Secretary of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc in compliance with the constitution of the Church Of God In Christ; on April 26, 2010 Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia had a vote of its membership on the issue of transferring jurisdictional affiliation the result was 75 yes, 13 no, total membership 94, total votes cast 88, number of votes needed for transfer was 63.

A letter dated April 27, 2010 was sent to the General Secretary of the Church Of God In Christ with the result of the vote to transfer jurisdictional affiliation, correspondence of the same was sent to Bishop Shaw, Bishop Leggett, Supt. Williams, and Supt. Robinson, Jr. In a misunderstanding of the 30 days requirement Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia thought the 30 days was after the vote to transfer not before the vote to transfer and in a letter dated May 21, 2010 the General Secretary's Office informed Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of their error and misinterpretation. Follow the instruction given Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia and on May 24, 2010 resubmitted its "Letter of Intent to Transfer Jurisdictional Affiliation." On July 1, 2010 the vote to transfer was cast with the following result 64 yes, 10 no, total vote cast 74, total membership 92, total votes needed to transfer 48. Bishop Shaw, Bishop Leggett, Supt. Williams, Supt. Robinson and the General Secretary of the Church Of God In Christ was informed of this result in a letter dated July 1, 2010. A letter dated July 30, 2010 from the General Secretary acknowledge on July, 1, 2010 Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia has met the constitutional requirement for transferring jurisdiction.

#### **FINDINGS:**

We find that Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia did in fact **ERROR** in its vote of the membership to transfer jurisdictional affiliation on April 26, 2010, not allowing for the thirty (30) day notice before the vote to transfer, however when informed of the error Tabernacle Church of God in Christ did resubmit its notice and allowed for the required thirty (30) day notice, which was acknowledged by the General Secretary's Office in a letter dated July 30, 2010. We find no evidence

in any of the Petitioners documentation that suggest the **ERROR** by Tabernacle Church of God in Christ was a flagrant act requiring capital action.

**With regards to Issue #2.**

In a letter dated April 20, 2010 Bishop Larry L. Shaw, Jurisdictional Prelate Historic First Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia Church Of God In Christ received notice of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia intent to transfer jurisdictional affiliation.

In a letter dated April 27, 2010 Bishop Shaw received notice that Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia had taken a vote on April 26, 2010 and the result was to transfer jurisdictional affiliation.

Bishop Shaw was informed of the vote error by Tabernacle Church of God in Christ in a letter dated May 13, 2010 from the General Secretary's Office signed by Linda Wilkins.

A letter dated May 22, 2010 from Bishop Shaw was sent to Pastor Bradley the subject "Failure to follow protocol in regards to church transfer." Expressing his displeasure and dissatisfaction with the actions of April 26, 2010 at Tabernacle Church of God in Christ and instructed Pastor Bradley to "cease and desist from all action that can be interpreted as blatant disregard for COGIC manual, the constitution of our church and a continuous defiance to leadership."

In a letter dated May 23, 2010 to Pastor Bradley from Bishop Shaw titled "Re: Official Church Inquiry." the following is noted, "...In order for me as Jurisdictional Bishop to hear and understand the conflict in your church, **I therefore announce and declare an official investigation of you as Pastor of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ and the congregation.**"

A May 24, 2010 letter shows Bishop Shaw appointed an Investigating Committee to investigate the Pastor and Members of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ.

A letter dated June 19, 2010 Subject: "Jurisdictional Investigating Committee Report" stating "...that Tabernacle Church of God in Christ should be tried under provisions set forth by Article VIII-Church Discipline. Section A. Trials of Local Churches for the following violations of the Constitution of the Church Of God In Christ. Charge (a) Persistently violating the provisions of the Charter, Constitution and Rules, Law and regulations of the Church Of God In Christ, or its Articles of Faith."

A correspondence dated July 26, 2010 reflected that Bishop Shaw appointed a five (5) member Ecclesiastical Council to determine the merits of the complaint.

A letter dated July 26, 2010 subject: "Tabernacle COGIC Church Trial Summons." From Supt. William M. Williams, Chief of Staff, To: "Pastor, Elders, Ministers, Missionaries & Lay members." Giving notice of a church Trial proceeding set for August 27, 2010.

A Letter dated August 27, 2010 from the Ecclesiastical Council to Bishop Shaw, subject: "Ecclesiastical Council Summary and Recommendations." States the following "...the Council unanimously concluded that the charge against Tabernacle Church of God In Christ should be sustained and render the following judgment....orders the church to be reorganized and the Pastor be removed from office. The Council determined that this action to be in the best interest of the Church of God in Christ."

## **FINDINGS:**

We find that according to correspondence and dialogue of Bishop Larry L. Shaw, Jurisdictional Prelate of Historic First Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia of the Church Of God In Christ, Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia is one of the oldest church in the jurisdiction with a long history of involvement, No documentation has been presented to the court by the Petitioner to suggest that this ERROR shows any pattern of negative behavior on the part of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, the Pastor, Elders, Ministers, Missionaries or Lay members, they misinterpreted the instruction of the thirty (30) day notice, when informed of their error they immediately resubmitted their notice of intent to transfer jurisdictional affiliation in compliance with the Church Of God In Christ Constitutional Amendment of April 14, 1982.

We further find that **Article VIII –Church Discipline, Section A.** Trials of Local churches, as sighted below gave many options to the Ecclesiastical Council to address this **ERROR**, the Court finds it troubling that the Ecclesiastical Council is interpreting (or to mean and) when it ordered that the church be reorganized and the Pastor be removed, when in fact the rules item (3) reads “ It may order that the church be reorganized, or item (5) It may order that the Pastor be suspended or removed from office.” Or not and. While the Court understands item (6) gives the Ecclesiastical Council latitude to make other decision as it determine to be for the best interest of the Church Of God In Christ reorganization and removal is rarely in the BEST interest of the Church Of God In Christ.

- (g) In the event the charges are not sustained, the complaint shall be dismissed. But if the charges are sustained, the Council shall render its judgment or decision as follows:
- (1) It may order that the Church be placed on probation; or
  - (2) It may order or recommend that the Church be given an opportunity to repent of its evil ways and agree to conform to the government and faith of the Church, recognize the Constitutional authorities of the Church, and specifically refrain from committing, in the future, any of the acts embraced in the charges; or
  - (3) It may order that the Church be reorganized; or
  - (4) It may order that the Church be disorganized; or
  - (5) It may order that the Pastor be suspended or removed from office; or
  - (6) It may take such other orders or decisions as it may determine to be for the best interest of the Church of God In Christ.

In this we find that the Jurisdictional Administration acted in excess.

### **With regards to Issue #3.**

In a letter dated April 28, 2010 from Elder Cranston Horne to Bishop Shaw Re: “Letter of Complaint.” Elder Horne identified himself as an adjutant to the superintendent, and his wife as assistant secretary to the jurisdiction and addressed these as official capacity.

In a letter dated April 28, 2010 from Evangelist Joni Horne to Bishop Shaw Re: “Letter of Complaint.” Identifying herself as having been a woman in ministry in the Church of God in Christ for 28 years.

A letter dated May 22, 2010 from Bishop Shaw was sent to Pastor Bradley the subject “Failure to follow protocol in regards to church transfer.” Expressing his displeasure and dissatisfaction with the actions of April 26, 2010 at Tabernacle Church of God in Christ and instructed Pastor Bradley to “cease and desist from all action that can be interpreted as blatant disregard for COGIC manual, the constitution of our church and a continuous defiance to leadership.”



In a letter dated May 23, 2010 to Pastor Bradley from Bishop Shaw titled “Re: Official Church Inquiry.” the following is noted, “...In order for me as Jurisdictional Bishop to hear and understand the conflict in your church, **I therefore announce and declare an official investigation of you as Pastor of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ and the congregation.**”

A May 24, 2010 letter shows Bishop Shaw appointed an Investigating Committee to investigate the Pastor and Members of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ.

A letter dated June 1, 2010 from the Office of Jurisdictional Secretary, Subject: “Jurisdictional Investigative Committee Interview Schedule.” To: Elder Alfred A. Miller, Elder Timothy Wells, Elder Choice R. Barnes, Elder Victor Johnson and Pastor Johnny E. Bradley.

A letter dated June 3, 2010 from the Office of Jurisdictional Secretary, Subject: “Jurisdictional Investigative Committee Interview Schedule.” To: District Mssy Barbara Matchett, District Mssy Dr Corine Jennings, Missionary Hazel Hayes, Missionary Velma Head, Missionary Rossie Moore, Missionary Kim Miller, Missionary Cynthia Wells, Missionary Annie Bradley..

A letter dated June 3, 2010 from the Office of Jurisdictional Secretary, Subject: “Jurisdictional Investigative Committee Interview Schedule.” To: Deacon Henry Hayes, Deacon Johnnie Jones, Deacon Joseph Matchett, Mr. Willie Brown, Mrs Jo Brown, Deacon Theodore Emanuel, Mrs. Vanessa Emanuel, Mr. Larry Love, Mrs Ethel Love.

In a letter dated June 18, 2010 addressed “To Whom It May Concern.” From Superintendent W. M. Williams addressing his denial of entry into Tabernacle Church of God in Christ on May 22, 2010.

In a letter dated June 21, 2010 from Bishop Shaw to The Pastor, All Elders, Ministers and Missionaries, subject: “Tabernacle COGIC Credential Holder’s Summons.” The letter expresses the Bishops’ responsibility and authority to appoint an investigating committee to protect the rights of any member of the local church who has just cause for complaint. That the investigative committee has concluded their investigation. And instruction to appear.

A letter dated August 19, 2010 from the Office of the Bishop, To: “The Pastor, Elders, Ministers, Missionaries & Laymembers.” Subject: “Tabernacle COGIC Church Trial Summons Reminder.”

## **FINDINGS:**

### **According to ARTICLE VIII – CHURCH DISCIPLINE, SECTION A. TRIALS OF LOCAL CHURCHES**

#### 1. Procedures for trial.

- (a) Any member of a local church, who has just cause to believe that the Church of which he is a member has committed any and all of the offenses enumerated hereinabove, may file a charge against the Church, specifically setting out the acts and things complained of. The original charge shall be filed in the office of the Secretary of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of which the Church is a part, or with which it is affiliated, and copies thereof shall be filed with the Clerk or Secretary of the local Church and copy thereof shall be filed in the office of the General Secretary.

- (b) The Clerk of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction shall submit the charge to the Jurisdictional Bishop, who shall appoint an Investigating Committee of not less than three (3) nor more than five (5) members to examine the facts and ascertain whether there is reasonable grounds for having the church brought to trial.
- (d) If, however, the Investigating Committee finds and determines that the church should be tried, it shall submit its recommendations to the Jurisdictional Bishop, who shall appoint an Ecclesiastical Council consisting of five (5) Pastors of the Jurisdiction to determine the merits of the complaint. Said Council shall give written notice to all interested parties and to the General Secretary of the time and place of the hearing at least twenty (20) days prior to the time the Ecclesiastical Council sets the cause down for trial.
- (e) The Parties shall have the right to be represented by Counsel, who shall be members of the Church of God In Christ, but said Counsel may be advised by non-members of the Church.

The Petitioner provided the Court with no letters of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ membership Complaints, allegations, or charges against the Pastors, Elders, Ministers, Missionaries or Lay Members. There is no documentation provided to the Court by the Petitioner showing compliance with paragraphs (a) or (d) as stated above. We find that there was possibly a problem with a Conflict of Interest in that there were members of the Investigating Committee who were also members of the Ecclesiastical Council this should not be since they may be call as witnesses.

#### **With regards to Issue #4.**

In a letter dated December 1, 2010 from the Jurisdictional Secretary Subject: "Request for Resolution Hearing." Ref: "Historic First Jurisdiction vs Tabernacle Church of God in Christ." With Bishop Larry L. Shaw Jurisdictional Bishop signature block the last item of the Summary of Complaints lodged against Tabernacle COGIC is the "Allegation of sexual harassment of Female Laymembers."

#### **FINDINGS:**

We find that the Petitioner provided no documentation or witness to support this very serious allegation. This was a reckless act that should not be tolerated.

#### **OPINION**

But for the fact that Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia expressing its desire to change Jurisdictional affiliation the events that followed would not have taken place nor would this case be before this court.

While the court understands and can appreciate the desire to maintain a rich history for a Jurisdiction it should not come at the expense of reorganizing the Church who's rich history your state your wish to preserve. We are a court of laws, rules, policies, procedures and discipline and as such we must go where the evidence take us and the law rules and policies of our Church demands we go.

The Church of God In Christ, Classification: Protestant, Orientation: Pentecostal, Polity: Episcopal, generally the rule of this church is by Bishops (We are an Episcopacy operating within a Democracy with a Theocratic flavor thus the hiarchy). That is, one man may govern those under him (whether lay members or members of the clergy), and he need not be chosen by the people to be the leader, but can be appointed by a higher authority of the Church Of God In

Christ. The Authority, thus resting in *the one* person the Jurisdictional Bishop unless otherwise provided for by the order and rule of the Church Of God In Christ, this then is communicated to subordinates, and extends over all of the congregations of the Church Of God In Christ.

Decisions are made at a higher level than the local church, with decisions in the local church made at the level of the Pastor not the laity except in those areas where the policies of the Church Of God In Christ permits, thus the Hierarchical Operation of the Church of God In Christ.

## POSITION OF THE COURT

**We Affirm that,** Tabernacle Church of God in Christ of Valdosta, Georgia in its attempt to transfer jurisdictional affiliation did in fact ERROR in its vote procedure, one might say violated the procedure, though not a flagrant violation and when informed of the ERROR did in fact resubmit its intent to transfer jurisdictional affiliation in compliance with the Constitution of the Church Of God In Christ as amended April 14, 1982, as was acknowledged by the General Secretary of the Church Of God In Christ in a letter dated July 30, 2010 therefore the Transfer is Official and final as far as this Court is concerned.

**We Affirm that,** the Jurisdictional Bishop has the responsibility and authority to protect the rights of members of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of his assignment, in this case however we find that Jurisdictional Administration in its effort to maintain order and protocol in the jurisdiction and to continue a legacy its action in this matter was not reasonable in our opinion.

**We Affirm that,** the Jurisdictional Bishop authority to appoint Investigating Committees and Ecclesiastical Council, both however must be governed by the Rules of the Church and the Rule of Law, and no less the Word of God when dealing with the Lord's people.

This ruling is neither a vilification nor vindication of anyone it is our finding after careful and prayerful review of all the documents presented and conversation with the principals involved, it is our hope to bring clarity and understanding of our process to our members. This court serves you the Lord's people and we are privileged to have been given this opportunity to be of service.

Given under my hand this Tenth Day of November 2011

Dr. Frederick D. Jenkins, Chief Ecclesiastical Appeals Judge  
General Council of Pastors and Elders  
Church Of God In Christ  
678/836-4573=Cell  
770/693-7671=Fax  
[drfdj97@aol.com](mailto:drfdj97@aol.com)





- Obstruction of an Official Investigation outlined in the Constitution of the Church of God in Christ.
- Failing to hold, in accordance to the Constitution, the trust of the Charter of the COGIC, Inc. Persuading congregation to disregard the Church of God in Christ constitution.
- Failing to allow the District Superintendent to act in his official role as Supervisor and leader of the District at an official meeting that had Jurisdictional ramification.
- Violating the constitution by intimidating church members and not allowing members to have a voice in the decision making process and ample opportunity to be informed prior to transfer vote by the church.
- Failing to allow your Ecclesiastical Bishop access to the very congregation he is bound to protect and serve.
- Improper and illegal polling of the church in order to move the local church to another jurisdiction.
- Improperly inviting officials of another Jurisdiction to oversee the faulty polling.
- Instigating and agitating an already tense situation by encouraging a disregard for procedure and support of Jurisdictional Meetings and Financial Support.
- Disruptive behavior allowed and displayed by leaders at official meeting.
- Disrespectful conduct and speech toward the Jurisdictional Prelate.
- Allegations of Sexual harassment of Female Laymembers.”

#### **Summary Brief:**

“The (5) Pastor Ecclesiastical Council appointed to preside over the Trial of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, 501 Holiday Street, Valdosta, Georgia convened at 7:30 PM at Full Gospel Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, 809 Frank Cochran Drive, Hinesville, Georgia 31313 on August 26, 2010 to determine the merits of the charge against the church levied by the Investigating Committee under Article VIII-Church Discipline, Section A. 1(a) Persistently violating the provisions of the Charter, Constitution and Rules, Laws and Regulations of Church of God in Christ, or its Articles of Faith. It must be noted that no Credential holder of Laymember of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ appeared in person before the council as summoned. Upon review of the investigative summary and other supporting documentation the Ecclesiastical Council unanimously concluded that the charges against Tabernacle Church of God in Christ should be sustained and rendered the following judgment per guidelines provided in Article VIII-Church Discipline, Section A. Trial of Local Churches, (2). Procedures for trial, item (g)(2) and (5);

“**Orders the church to be reorganized and the Pastor be removed from Office**”. The Ecclesiastical Council determined that this action to be in the best interest of the Church of God in Christ.

I Bishop Larry L. Shaw so order that the unanimous decision of the Ecclesiastical Council be sustained and executed as follows: The Tabernacle Church of God in Christ be reorganized and the Pastor removed from office.”

Because the execution of the afore noted order could potentially have far reaching negative effects on not only the local, district, and jurisdictional body of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. and to insure that all avenues to resolve the alleged issues of concern in this case have been exhausted, and since this matter is now before this court, and since this court does have jurisdiction to hear the issues of this case,

**IT IS THEREFORE, BY ORDER OF THIS COURT** that a **CEASE AND DESIST ORDER** is in effect and shall remain in effect until the Court makes its Final Ruling in this case.

Under this **CEASE AND DESIST ORDER**, Neither the Pastor, nor any Officer of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ shall in any way impede, interfere with, or hinder the efforts of the membership from participating in or carrying out any duties of their appointed or elected office of a local church in the Church Of God In Christ, as outlined in **Article V Section D.** of the Official Manual of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. Copyright 1973, reprinted 1991, 1992.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the Tabernacle Church of God in Christ shall remain in full fellowship as a member church in the Historic 1<sup>st</sup> Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia with all the rights and privileges, as well as obligations as are afforded any member church in the jurisdiction, the same shall apply to the Pastor.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, The Pastor and Officers shall refrain from any efforts to transfer jurisdictional affiliation or sever ties with the Historic 1<sup>st</sup> Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia and the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. until a Final Ruling is rendered by this Court.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that since Pastor Johnny E. Bradley, Credential Holders and congregation of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, as it appears were not given the opportunity to file a brief in this matter, they may do so now, and it must be received by this Court not later that June13, 2011.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that a Copy of this Order is sent by U. S. Postal Certified mail to the central parties involved in this case.

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

Dated: This 13<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2011 at Douglasville, Georgia.

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Dr. Frederick D. Jenkins  
Church Of God In Christ Ecclesiastical Appeals Court  
Chief Judge



## CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that I have this day served the foregoing document upon the parties of record in this proceeding set forth below by mailing a copy thereof, properly addressed by first class registered mail:

Bishop Larry L. Shaw, Jurisdictional Bishop  
Historic 1<sup>st</sup> Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia  
809 Frank Cochran Drive  
Hinesville, GA 31313

Historic 1<sup>st</sup> Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia  
Jurisdictional Council of Pastors and Elders  
809 Frank Cochran Drive  
Hinesville, GA 31313

Elder Danny Buskey, Jurisdictional Secretary  
Historic 1<sup>st</sup> Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia  
1710 City Boulevard  
Waycross, GA 31501

Supt. Arthur Robinson, Jr.  
David Miller Memorial District  
4131 Martin Avenue  
Tifton, GA 31794

Supt. William M. Williams, Chief of Staff  
Historic 1<sup>st</sup> Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia  
1937 Salisbury Way  
Hinesville, GA 31313

Pastor Johnny E. Bradley  
Tabernacle Church of God in Christ  
501 Holiday Street  
P. O. Box 5826  
Valdosta, GA 31603

Pastor Johnny E. Bradley  
4623 Martin Lane  
Valdosta, GA 31601

Congregation of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ  
501 Holiday Street  
P. O. Box 5826  
Valdosta, GA 31603

Bishop John H. Sheard, Chairman  
Board of Bishops  
Greater Mitchell Temple COGIC  
13737 Curtis Avenue  
Detroit, MI 48235

Bishop Joel H. Lyles, General Secretary  
Church Of God In Christ, Inc.  
938 Mason Street  
Memphis, TN 38126

Church Of God In Christ, Inc.  
General Council of Pastors and Elders  
Judicial Review Committee / Appeals Court  
P. O. Box 356  
Douglasville, GA 30133-0356  
678/836-4573=Cell  
770/693-7671=Fax  
Email: [drfdj97@aol.com](mailto:drfdj97@aol.com)

DATED : This 13<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2011.

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Signature





- Obstruction of an Official Investigation outlined in the Constitution of the Church of God in Christ.
- Failing to hold, in accordance to the Constitution, the trust of the Charter of the COGIC, Inc. Persuading congregation to disregard the Church of God in Christ constitution.
- Failing to allow the District Superintendent to act in his official role as Supervisor and leader of the District at an official meeting that had Jurisdictional ramification.
- Violating the constitution by intimidating church members and not allowing members to have a voice in the decision making process and ample opportunity to be informed prior to transfer vote by the church.
- Failing to allow your Ecclesiastical Bishop access to the very congregation he is bound to protect and serve.
- Improper and illegal polling of the church in order to move the local church to another jurisdiction.
- Improperly inviting officials of another Jurisdiction to oversee the faulty polling.
- Instigating and agitating an already tense situation by encouraging a disregard for procedure and support of Jurisdictional Meetings and Financial Support.
- Disruptive behavior allowed and displayed by leaders at official meeting.
- Disrespectful conduct and speech toward the Jurisdictional Prelate.
- Allegations of Sexual harassment of Female Laymembers.”

### **Summary Brief:**

“The (5) Pastor Ecclesiastical Council appointed to preside over the Trial of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, 501 Holiday Street, Valdosta, Georgia convened at 7:30 PM at Full Gospel Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, 809 Frank Cochran Drive, Hinesville, Georgia 31313 on August 26, 2010 to determine the merits of the charge against the church levied by the Investigating Committee under Article VIII-Church Discipline, Section A. 1(a) Persistently violating the provisions of the Charter, Constitution and Rules, Laws and Regulations of Church of God in Christ, or its Articles of Faith. It must be noted that no Credential holder of Laymember of Tabernacle Church of God in Christ appeared in person before the council as summoned. Upon review of the investigative summary and other supporting documentation the Ecclesiastical Council unanimously concluded that the charges against Tabernacle Church of God in Christ should be sustained and rendered the following judgment per guidelines provided in Article VIII-Church Discipline, Section A. Trial of Local Churches, (2). Procedures for trial, item (g)(2) and (5);

“**Orders the church to be reorganized and the Pastor be removed from Office**”. The Ecclesiastical Council determined that this action to be in the best interest of the Church of God in Christ.

I Bishop Larry L. Shaw so order that the unanimous decision of the Ecclesiastical Council be sustained and executed as follows: The Tabernacle Church of God in Christ be reorganized and the Pastor removed from office.”

Because the execution of the afore noted order could potentially have far reaching negative effects on not only the local, district, and jurisdictional body of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. and to insure that all avenues to resolve the alleged issues of concern in this case

have been exhausted, and since this matter is now before this court, and since this court does have jurisdiction to hear the issues of this case,

**IT IS THEREFORE, BY ORDER OF THIS COURT** that a **STAY OF EXECUTION** is in effect and shall remain in effect until the Court makes its Final Ruling in this case.

Under this **STAY OF EXECUTION ORDER**, Neither the Jurisdictional Bishop, nor any Jurisdictional Officer shall in any way impede, interfere with, or hinder the Pastor from carrying out the duties of the office of Pastor as outlined in **Article V Section J.** of the Official Manual of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. Copyright 1973, reprinted 1991, 1992.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the Tabernacle Church of God in Christ shall remain in full fellowship as a member church in the Historic 1<sup>st</sup> Jurisdiction of Southern Georgia with all the rights and privileges, as well as obligations as are afforded any member church in the jurisdiction, the same shall apply to the Pastor.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that a Copy of this Order is sent by U. S. Postal Certified mail to the central parties involved in this case.

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

Dated: This 13<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2011 at Douglasville, Georgia.

---

Dr. Frederick D. Jenkins  
Church Of God In Christ Ecclesiastical Appeals Court  
Chief Judge



## CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

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1710 City Boulevard  
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4131 Martin Avenue  
Tifton, GA 31794

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770/693-7671=Fax  
Email: [drfdj97@aol.com](mailto:drfdj97@aol.com)

DATED : This 13<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2011.

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Signature