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QUESTIONS ON CHURCH ORGANIZATION

By Howard J. Welch, President,
West African Union Mission

Recently a number of questions have been asked about local church organizations and elections and since the answers may be of interest to others we print herewith some of the questions with the answers. In many cases we quote from the church manual which is the official book of authority on matters concerning the local church and its organization.

What is the difference between a company and an organized church?

Answer: A company is a group of believers who meet together for Sabbath school and other services but have not yet been fully organized into a church. When they become sufficiently strong in numbers and in leadership they may be recommended for organization by the district Committee. If this is approved by the Field Committee of the Mission they may be fully organized by an ordained minister as authorized and then voted into the sisterhood of churches at the next meeting of the Mission constituency. An organized church elects its own officers and has ordained Elders and Deacons.

The officers of a company are appointed by the District leader who chooses them in counsel with the members. A company does not have Elders or deacons but should have a leader and treasurer and other officers such as are necessary to carry on the Sabbath School, M.V. Society and other such organizations. The officers of these organizations may be chosen by the baptized members at a meeting presided over by the District Leader or a Pastor appointed by the Mission. (See Church Manual page 64, 1951 Edition.)

How often are church officers elected?

Answer: Yearly, at the beginning of the year. Nominating Committees should be appointed at least 30 days before the end of the year so that the election can take place not later than the second Sabbath in December (Manual page 170). This gives the new officers an opportunity to make plans in advance for their work.

Since elders and deacons are ordained for life must they be re-elected each year in order to hold office?

Answer: Yes indeed. They have no permanent hold on the office. They may be re-elected or not according to the will of the church. No man or group of men are to be considered permanent leaders of the church.

Who should be members of the nominating committee?

Answer: "Only members who are in good standing should be chosen as members of the nominating committee. They should be persons of good judgment and above all have the welfare and prosperity of the church at heart." The pastor or district leader may be a member. If however he is not chosen as a member he should be invited to sit with the committee.

Does the church have to accept the report of the nominating committee?

Answer: No. Its report is subject to the will of the majority of the members. However if there is objection to any name or names there should be no open discussion of personalities before the entire church but the one objecting should move to refer back the report and then if this is done

should meet with the nominating committee to give his reasons. All discussions within the nominating committee should be considered absolutely confidential.

Since church officers are to set a good example in the matter of tithe paying and—"No one is to continue as either a church officer or conference worker who does not conform to this standard of leadership" (Manual page 186) how can the nominating committee assure themselves that those nominated are acceptable in this regard?

Answer: The nominating committee should arrange for one person, usually the pastor or district leader to interview the church treasurer and check his records on each person suggested for office. His findings should not be made public beyond the committee itself.

Should members nominated for office be notified before the report of the Nominating committee is read in church?

Answer: By all means this should be done. No one's name should be read in the church until he or she has been contacted and has agreed to accept if elected. This means that often several meetings of the nominating committee must be held. The work of this committee must not be unduly hurried. It is the Lord's work and should be carefully and prayerfully done.

Is it proper for old leaders of the church to form a committee of their own for the purpose of guiding the church and instructing the church board?

Answer: This is absolutely not proper. Only the duly elected church board has right to exist as a board or committee for the church. We quote from the church manual page 177:

"Self appointed organizations of any kind within the church are not countenanced or recognized. The church as an entity in its organized capacity is the only recognized body. . . . No member or group of members has the right to form any self-appointed organization within the church designed to foster and carry forward the work of the church or conference. . . . When a church member persists in adhering to or taking part in such a movement or organization he is subject to church discipline."

In another issue we shall try to comment further in this matter of church elections and organization. But now in conclusion we wish to present these words from Mrs. E. G. White, written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit:

"The church of Christ is in constant peril.

Satan is seeking to destroy the people of God, and one man's mind, one man's judgment, is not sufficient to be trusted. Christ would have His followers brought together in church capacity, observing order, having rules and discipline and all subject one to another, esteeming others better than themselves. Union and confidence are essential to the prosperity of the church. . . . The prosperity and very existence of a church depend upon the prompt, united action and mutual confidence of its members."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3 page 445.

From Heathenism To Christianity

By J. A. Myers,
Sierra Leone Mission

Travelling from village to village doing in-gathering during the 1957 campaign, two of our members came to a place called Makawo. At this small village, far from a motor-road and from any of our churches, they found a crippled man, by the name of Johnson. They found this man, converted by one of our African Pastors, to be a member of our church.

During the past four years this man had lost all contact with the church. No one knew where he was, and he did not have the privilege of attending meetings with his fellow members. Left all alone, Johnson never left his light behind. He put it up on the candle stick and let it shine. In his daily life, this young man was able to show the way to God to the people of Makawo, and through his example the people of his village found the way to "The Light of the World".

Among the people of the village was a heathen woman, who saw her uncle amongst those following in Johnson's footsteps. She was happy when she met him, and narrated to him her past experience. She had been without a child for years, and had spent a lot on false gods, in the hope of getting children. Throughout her whole life she had been praying to these false gods.

Another message had reached this village; a message about a stronger God, who could change a man from heathenism to Christianity. She decided to follow this God. After some time, during which she closely followed the message given her, this young woman gave herself to the Lord, and promised, as long as she lived, to be true to God.

(Continued on next page)

If Jesus Came to your house

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two,
 If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you would do.
 Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honoured guest,
 And the food you'd serve to Him would be the very best.
 And you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there,
 That serving Him in your home is joy beyond compare.
 But when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door
 With arms outstretched to welcome your heavenly Visitor?
 Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in?
 Or hide some magazines, and put the Bible where they had been?
 Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard,
 And wish you hadn't uttered that last loud hasty word?
 Would you hide your worldly music, and put the hymn books out?
 Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?
 And I wonder if the Saviour spent a day or two with you,
 Would you go right on doing the things you always do?
 Would you go on saying the things you always say—
 Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?
 Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace,
 And would you find it hard each meal to say a 'table grace?
 Would you sing the songs you always sing, and read the books you read?
 And let Him know the thoughts on which your mind and spirit feed?
 Would you take Jesus with you wherever you plan to go?
 Or maybe would you change your plans for just a day or so?
 Would you be glad to have Him stay for ever on and on.
 Or would you sigh with great relief when at last He had gone?
 It might be interesting to know the things that you would do
 If Jesus came in person to spend some time with you!

FROM HEATHENISM TO CHRISTIANITY

(Continued from page 2)

She said: "For years I have been finding a god that will give me a child, but all I did and spent in pleasing these gods, yielded no fruits. Now I have found a friend who has shown me the true God, and I am sure that He is able to bless me with children, and also show me how to train them so that they may be better christians for His kingdom."

Today this woman is attending Sabbath school, conducted by our brother Johnson. She is hoping to be baptized before the end of the year. She told the story of her conversion, and also exhibited a small tin in which were her former gods. She said: "I have given myself to the Lord, so I want you to take these away and destroy them."

What an example! God is able to change the hearts of all men and women so that they may give up their former habits and turn to the Lord. There are many like this woman around us, waiting to hear about the "Light" we have; let us unite all our efforts to reach these people. We need your prayers daily.

My Impression at Kwahu Hospital

By C. Boye-Doe, Manager,
 Book and Bible House, Ghana

It was on the 5th of November, 1957, when I went out to the Kwahu Hospital for a hernia operation. Twice I had undergone surgical operation with other cases at different places, this being the third.

Well, on the 7th of November, I was successfully operated on, and to me December 12th was indeed a memorable day, when the Doctor had sanctioned my discharge from hospital; and what a joy to find myself speeding once more back to Kumasi, my duty station.

During those few weeks' stay at the Hospital, my attention has been particularly drawn to the remarkable work of the staff. Oftentimes, one wonders whether Dr. Lowe, Mr. L. Acton-Hubbard, the Nursing Superintendent, and Sister K. M. Freeth were tire proof, when one sees them moving briskly at work.

At Atobie, where the hospital is located,
 (Continued on page 6)

Seven men in a boat, Seven disciples. They have watched the sun sink behind the mountains after creating a gleaming highway of red-gold reflection across the Sea of Galilee.

Why were these men in Galilee? Because their crucified Master on the night of His betrayal had said, "After I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee" Mark 14:28. And on the morning of the resurrection the angel at the tomb said to the women there, "Go quickly, and tell his disciples . . . behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him" Matthew 28:7. Then Jesus Himself, speaking to the women on their way to the disciples with the glad tidings, urged haste, saying, "Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me" (verse 10.)

They were there because three times they were told to be there, Gladly they had hurried to the designated place in expectation of meeting the Saviour.

We do not know how long they were there, but as they walked up and down the beach there were rich reminders of their Master. On this now calm sea they had once been near destruction when sudden winds had whipped up its glassy surface into a shrieking fury of angry billows yawning to engulf them. In terror they had cried out to the Lord to save them. They had seen the miraculous power of His words "Peace, be still."

Down the beach a little distance was the very place where more than ten thousand persons had thronged Jesus and had witnessed another miracle of His divine power, the multiplication of the few small loaves and fishes. Not far away also was the town of Capernaum, the place where numerous miracles of His ministry had been wrought.

Their hearts must have glowed with warm memories that evening in the afterglow, as they walked in reverie along the beach. How I wish that I might have listened over their shoulders to the loving reminiscences of that afternoon and evening.

This was also their home. Other memories of bygone days naturally were revived and relived. They once had been fishermen. They still loved the water, and fishing. An old boat, perhaps a friend's, with ragged sails, high rudder, and worn seats was available. It was a perfect evening for fishing. Moreover, they needed the funds that a night's catch might supply. So Peter said, "I go a fishing." And the rest said, "We also go with thee."

Now we see them—seven men in a boat.

FIRE ON

By John

The purple afterglow softens into velvety darkness and the winking stars smile overhead. Nine o'clock, ten o'clock, eleven, midnight. The joyful adventure settles down into a weary vigil. Sounds are few—the gentle lapping of the water against the weathered gray planking of the boat; then the rude sounds of rope scraping across the wooden gunwale as the nets are time and again hauled in empty.

Toiling Without Success:

The stillness of the night is punctuated with questionings. "Anything in the net, Peter?" "No." "Poor fishing tonight." "Yes, but maybe we'll have better luck next time."

Then the splash of the net into the water, the scraping of the rope, the stillness of the night. Time passes, and the pulling in of the nets again . . . again . . . again.

It becomes quite a wearisome routine as the hours of one, two, three, and four a.m. slowly arrive. As they look up they note that the blue-black skies are changing ever so slowly into the lighter hues of the gray dawn.

With a weary sigh Thomas may have said, "Brethren, it doesn't look as if we'll catch a single fish. I'm tired: let's go in. The others agreed, and the creaking rudder and the flapping canvass indicated progress toward shore.

On the shore is one who stands watching them. He smiles as the little craft lazily glides into full view. Picturesque indeed is this lonesome little vessel against the dawn, swathed in the early morning mists that are curling upward, yet hesitantly clinging to the surface of the water. When it is about a hundred yards from shore, the stranger calls out to the men, "Children, have ye any meat?" In other words, "Did you catch any fish?"

The disconsolate fishermen waste no breath in conversation. Their disgust is mirrored in their curt reply, "No!"

They are probably intending to turn their attention back to the folding of the nets, casting of the anchor, and dropping of the sail, when the stranger again calls, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find" John 21:6.

THE BEACH

Robertson

Just why these men heeded this advice we cannot say. Perhaps they remembered an earlier occasion when they had objected to the Master's command. Anyway, with some effort they transferred the cumbersome net to the other side . . . and "they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord" (verse 7.)

All eyes now turn toward the Man standing by the fire on the beach. Peter drops his hold on the nets, plunges into the shallow water, and wades hurriedly toward the Master. The others, seeing that they cannot draw the heavy net into the boat, step out of the cumbersome fishing smack into the little boat tendered to it, and decide to pull the net ashore.

Then Jesus says further. "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught." Peter darts back to the net to assist the others in bringing the wriggling slippery mass up on the shore.

"As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread" (verse 9.)

That fire on the beach! Had Jesus kindled it in the ordinary way? Had angels brought the fish to broil on the coals? How did it just happen to be there for the comfort of the disciples at just that place at just that time? These questions must remain unanswered, but one thing is sure—that fire on the beach is a symbol of the rekindling of a holy flame of fervour and faith on the part of the disciples.

"They were too much amazed to question whence came the fire and the food."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 810. But their minds raced backward over the years of their ministry as they ate in mysterious awe and silence. The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand on the mountainside was now brought to their minds. Vividly they recalled the scene beside the sea when Jesus had first called them from their nets. They remembered when He had once before "called them to leave their fishing boats," called to them to launch out into the deep and let down their nets until they began to break with fish.

It was evident to them that He was just

renewing His great commission to them to be fishers of men. It was evident that although He would not be with them personally, He would still provide for their needs. They would not have to be part-time workers.

Not an Accident:

The hand of God was surely over them in this entire experience. Was it an accident that they had toiled all night and caught nothing? No, that was but representative of all of their efforts in their own strength up to this time. It was figurative of their present bewilderment as to what the future would hold. It was symbolic of their mid-night loss of faith at the death of Jesus.

Up to this time they had toiled all night and had caught nothing. Was it an accident that when the net was cast on the right side it was filled with life? No; it meant that Christ still wanted them to leave their nets and catch men. This was a duplication of the miracle at the time of their first call. It was evidence that their physical needs would be supplied by God.

So was the fire on the beach. The food was there, waiting; warmth was there, waiting; fellowship of Christ was there, waiting. Their needs had been anticipated by the great I AM.

Not only was this experience a renewal of their commission, it also brought them into a new and precious experience with Christ that they had never known before. Of Peter it is said: "Heretofore Peter had known Christ after the flesh, as many know Him now; but he was no more to be thus limited. He knew Him no more as he had known Him in his association with Him in humanity. He had loved Him as a man, as a heaven-sent teacher; he now loved Him as God."—*Ibid.*, pages 815, 816.

And I think it was the same with all the disciples as they watched the Master in awe as He divided the food among them that day.

Another wonderful thing was accomplished there in that brightening, chilly morn. A new unity came to the disciples. Peter, who had in his own strength thrice denied the Lord, here by the fire on the beach before the others, thrice confessed his love for Christ, thrice confessed an absence of feelings of superiority over his brethren. It restored their confidence in him because, as they listened, Christ asked Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?"

They would listen to the answer, for before the cross had he not boastfully said, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended"? He boasted he would go to death for Him. But now—he doesn't boast. Realizing that Christ is God and knows all things, realizing that he has no strength of his own, his triple denial still causing his heart to bleed painfully, he replies in deference, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee".

Three times Jesus asked the same question. And the third time Peter was grieved at heart—not angry, but grieved, distrustful of self. And he said, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

Peter was converted. The disciples recognized it. And he was reinstated in their minds as a disciple. Unity was restored. In asking Peter to feed the lambs, Jesus was asking him to be as considerate of others as Christ had been of him.

Calling him aside, He further told him how he would meet his death, that the day would come when he would die for the Lord. Through this means He sought to strengthen and fortify him. What a beautiful picture—the Master with His arm about Peter's shoulder strolling away from the fire, and tenderly telling the impulsive disciple what would befall him in the future!

Friends, the toiling all night and catching nothing was not only Peter's experience, it was the experience of all seven disciples. And that number represents all disciples. All of us who have tried a thousand ways to overcome in our own strength are included here. Proud, boastful, all of us think we can do what the Lord requires, and we fail, only to lay the blame for our failure on someone else.

We must become distrustful of self and dependent upon Jesus, as Peter did. We must be more considerate of the feelings of our brethren as Peter learned. We must put the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness ahead of the boats and the nets of making a living. We must depend upon God for our daily bread, as we pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Finally, and most important in this whole experience, we must learn to appreciate Jesus more. We, like the disciples, must catch a new glimpse of Him, not merely as a man, but as God.

See Him standing by the fire, controlling the circumstances of the seven men in a boat—men toiling all night and catching no-

thing, but at His word filling the net so that it was too heavy to lift.

What can we do without Him? What does it avail even to try without Him? They were totally dependent upon Him, for He is God. He was the One who was turning midnight into day, both literally and spiritually, for He is God. He was the One who was supplying all their needs.

Put your name in Simon's place. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Put your name there, and hear Jesus ask, "Lovest thou me?"

MY IMPRESSION AT KWAHU HOSPITAL

(Continued from page 3)

doctors can operate at anytime emergency calls. I am inclined to hold their work in high esteem, because whilst we are solely on Evangelism, they are doing the twofold work of the Master—healing the sick, and preaching the gospel to lost souls. In fact, modern surgery has done much to humanity, all to the glory of the Great Physician, our coming King.

I would be doing injustice to the hospital as a whole, if mention is not made of Pastor J. A. Hyde, the Senior Doctor, who was at the time of my admission convalescing. Becoming an able patient, I was privileged to attend the Sabbath School and Preaching Services at the hospital's chapel. There I had the opportunity of listening to a revival sermon on "THE THREE GREAT STONES" as delivered by the Pastor-Doctor. Yes, a Pastor and Doctor the same time. Truly Seventh-day Adventists are a peculiar christian organization in which men of good stamina are not lacking. They have the right men at the right places, and of the right professions.

Sister A. Horder had then returned from furlough, and the common topic they were discussing in and out the wards was all about the talk she was going to give on Friday, the 6th of December, 1957. My curiosity was aroused, and my impatience for hearing her grew day by day. At long last, that long expected day had dawned, and the hours sped swiftly until the setting sun, marshalling twilight into view—followed by a partial darkness. The cool evening breeze of Atibie has now transformed everything into blissful serenity and perfect quietness. Presently a drooping form could be seen pacing slowly towards the aisle of the chapel. Whe-

ther nonplussed or dubious, none but himself could tell; yet his complaisance beneath the steps was to stare hither and thither right across the pews where early students were sitting.

Would you please go to the ward and put on the gown (a top coat being worn to church by able patients) before you come in? Ha! that was the sweet familiar voice of the nursing superintendent! Knowing he was improperly dressed, the writer had to obey the order at once. Having now taken a place among the brethren in my long overcoat, I listened very attentively to the talk on "Walking with God." It was a social night's gathering, and I was surprised at the eloquence and alacrity of Sister Amy Horder. Surely men and women who have engaged on active service of Prince Emmanuel are wonderfully endowed with special talents.

The nursing students are also doing well, and they deserve congratulations, but in every respect, they should cultivate placid patience for the patients, in order that healing on the nice work done by the surgeons from the theatre might not be retarded. With this in view, the good name, and principles of the Institution will remain sublime.

Now I would like to thank ministers, co-workers, friends and everyone for their effective prayers on my behalf. I thank the doctors, nursing sisters and students for their never-to-be-forgotten services. Lastly, but not the least, I thank Mr. and Mrs. Rigby, and others for their exemplary work in the Book and Bible House when I was away sick.

I earnestly invite all in the Blessed Hope to join with me in giving praises to the Author and Finisher of our faith, because He is a practical God, Who answers prayers, and He never fails us.

"He Faileth Never"

*Thro' scenes of joy or sorrow Jesus is
mine—,
Thro' every new tomorrow, He will still
be mine,
My Saviour faileth never, Oh how His
glory shines;
I'll trust in Him forever, He is mine,
still mine!*

News Notes

✘ Elder J. M. Bucy, Publishing Secretary for the Northern European Division is spending almost two months in West Africa. In company with F. C. Barfoot, the Union Publishing Secretary, he has been conducting Colporteur Institutes and visiting different parts of the field. Surely our literature evangelists are glad for such help and encouragement as Elder Bucy is able to give them.

✘ Mr. and Mrs. J. Wolfe and son Ian passed through Accra February 20, on their way back to Scotland, their homeland. The Wolfe family had just recently returned from furlough and were beginning their new work at the Awtun Training College. Brother Wolfe, who has suffered for several years from an eye illness suddenly became blind, and was ordered by the specialist to return home immediately for surgery and treatment.

The prayers of our West African Adventists and friends are with him that he may be healed and after a time be able to return for further service here.

✘ Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Rieseberg of the Nigerian Training College in East Nigeria inform us of the arrival of Michael Carver Chidiadi on February 20.

Notes From The Ghana President:

At the Ghana Constituency meeting no mention was made of the following because the election was done by the West African Union Committee.

Pastor W. J. Newman President

Pastor C. B. Mensah Associate

Mr. J. Rigby Secretary-Treasurer

On Sunday afternoon February 16, Pastors Welch, Nielsen, Mensah, Newman and Brother J. A. Mensah were present when Brother Abbey was anointed. Let us continue to pray that the Lord's will may be done for our brother.

The Ministry of Education has granted a special holiday for all our schools on March 31 so that our children can share their faith at the close of the School Week of Prayer.

Pastor G. A. Lindsay, Treasurer of the Northern European Division and Pastor N. B. Nielsen, Secretary-Treasurer for the West African Union were present at our Budget meeting. We appreciate their fine counsel.

Pastor L. Nielsen from Denmark, after 6 years studying in America, has joined our staff at Bekwai as the Bible teacher. We extend a hearty welcome to him, his wife, and two children.

Our first District Leaders meeting for this year was held on February 13. Twenty-three workers being present. We covered much ground and made good plans for Evangelism. Our tithe goal was "Every member

a Faithful Regular Tithing Payer." May the Lord help us all to acknowledge Him as the rightful owner of all that we have.

The foundation stone for the new laboratory at Bekwai is to be laid on 20th March, 1958. We expect a representation from all our Middle Schools.

Training Light Bearers courses have now begun. We expect a large number to be invested before the end of the year.

Greatest Offering For Greatest Advance In Adventist History

By A. F. Tarr

Seventh-day Adventists will be making history on June 21, the first Sabbath of the coming General Conference Session. On that day an offering is to be received which it is anticipated will exceed all other offerings ever taken on a single Sabbath. It is an offering which will reflect the ardent desires of an entire world church to see a great task completed. In order that this may be possible, and that our membership everywhere may give tangible expression to this desire, it has been arranged that gifts be received in all local churches in every country in sufficient time to be incorporated in the great General Conference offering in Cleveland on June 21.

The date set for the offering in the Northern European Division is May 17. Immediately after that day information will be sent by churches through their respective local and union conferences to Division headquarters, and from there it will be flashed across to the General Conference so that the gifts from our entire Division membership, along with those from other world divisions, can be added to the offering taken among the delegates in Cleveland—an offering which it is confidently expected will reach one million dollars.

Through this concerted and universal action of Seventh-day Adventists, we believe that unprecedented gifts from churches and isolated members will flow into the Lord's treasury at this important and critical time. Overwhelming evidence on every hand proclaims that the conditions long predicted by prophets of old are right upon us. All that separates us now from the longed-for return of our Lord is our great unfinished task. Our service, our prayers and our material means

have yet a vital part to play in hastening that day. And in our very response to this call to give as we have never given before, we are bestirring ourselves from the lethargy that may have gripped us in the past and are awakening to a more complete sense of our momentous responsibility in this climactic hour.

The amount which our Division has been called to contribute toward the million dollars is \$28,949.12 or over £10,000. The entire amount, if raised, will be applied toward World-Wide Advance: Forty per cent going to needed work within our own division, and the remaining sixty per cent being appropriated to the world field in which we, too, shall share at the time of the 1958 Autumn Council.

We appeal to every church member in the Northern European Division to give sacrificially and unprecedentedly on Sabbath, May 17. Thus may the work of our church measure up to the demands of the hour, and a new milestone be passed by this great and memorable endeavour to meet the stupendous needs of an advancing work in these critical and ominous times.

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