

J. H. Peterson in Church

Ellen G. White Publications

16-A-1

GENERAL CONFERENCE, TAKOMA PARK 12, D.C.

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October 2, 1956

620 Chestnut Street
Janesville, Wisconsin

Dear Brother

You have written to us asking about the counsel which Sister White may have given us concerning a kitchen in a church basement. You tell us that you are one of the local elders of the church, and you have recently purchased an old building, and I judge that there is a kitchen in the basement of this building. You tell us that there has been some discussion among the members of the congregation on this point.

I do not know of any statement in Sister White's writings published or unpublished relating to the question of a kitchen in the basement of a church. I think you are most fortunate in securing a church building that has a kitchen in its basement, for this can be used to excellent advantage in the conducting of cooking schools to help our own church members in bettering their methods of the preparation of healthful food, and in the conducting of cooking schools to serve the community generally. In the book Evangelism, on pages 526 to 528, you will find a group of statements setting forth the importance of our conducting cooking schools, -- not only for the training of our own people in better cookery, but in teaching it to those not of our faith and those who are joining the church.

You will also find a number of good statements in Counsels on Diet and Foods on pages 254 and 255, 268, 276, and 469. In case you do not have these books easily at hand, I would suggest that you turn to Testimonies for the Church, Volume 9, page 161, and Volume 7, page 113. Here you will find some excellent statements on the point.

I presume your question is based upon the several E. G. White statements which refer to a church organization resorting to the sale of food to raise money for the work of the church. Fancy fairs, bazaars, and suppers are all mentioned. In a question of this kind, we should study all the counsel available to see if we can find the basic principles which Ellen White is endeavoring to place before us.

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In the several statements we have from her pen, relating to the question of the way in which the popular churches raise money, we find the point emphasized that it is not right for a religious group to cater to the indulgence of appetite and the love of pleasure to secure funds for church work; but no where do we find that it is wrong for food to be prepared or served in connection with social activities, or fund raising. This matter is discussed at considerable length in a mimeographed document I prepared some time ago carrying the title of "Concerning Food Sales." I am sending along a copy for your study. This may be of some service to you as you give consideration to the matter of a kitchen in the basement of the church.

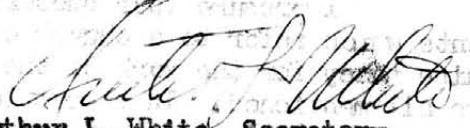
At times questions are asked if Sister White gave any counsel concerning the use of the basement rooms of the church in the interests of the social welfare of the church and its youth. We have no direct counsel from Sister White's pen on this point either. She has made it very clear that the social interests of the church members and the young people must be cared for, and no where in her writings does she indicate that it is out of place for the basement rooms of the church, which have not been dedicated in the sense that the auditorium has, should not be used for Christian gatherings of an appropriate character. During the last years of her life Ellen White was a member of the St. Helena Sanitarium Church. This church edifice was close to the Sanitarium buildings proper. On the ground floor underneath a portion of the church auditorium there was a gymnasium. This was used for gatherings of a secular nature, for marches and other activities which would be carried on in a large medical institution, but which would be out of place for the room dedicated for the service of the Lord.

Ellen White in 1912 made reference to a certain type of program which was put on in this gymnasium, but at no time was there a word of condemnation for the use of this gymnasium in secular programs being so closely linked as it was with the church building.

I do not know of how much service this information may be to you, but it may give you a little guidance in facing some of the problems you do in taking over a church which has been used by another religious group and which has certain provisions in it which we might not ordinarily place in one of our church buildings.

With the best of wishes, I am,

Most sincerely your brother,


Arthur L. White, Secretary
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