

WEST SIBERIAN CONFERENCE MINISTERS' APPEAL

The reorganization of the conference into two missions by the initiative of the Euro-Asia Division (ESD) division and the East Russian Siberian union (ERSU) administrations represented by A. A. Shtele, M. Vilossa and I. F. Khiminets during the West Siberian Conference (WSC) congress on May 15-16, 2002, created the current crisis this area. The WSC was developing dynamically. It built houses of worship and held successful evangelistic crusades, which greatly increased church membership. With its good financial standing it developed all these projects even giving the required 30 % tithes which the division demands from the conferences, without any delay.

The division of the conference into missions violated the WSC regulations, the ESD Working Policy and the church manual. The votes of the delegates from the local churches regarding the reorganization were not taken into account. In addition, the procedure of running this congress was notable for its arbitrary suppression of different trends of thought and of any attempts to ask or to clarify questions. The division representatives openly declared that no other solution(s) would be accepted by the General Conference and that the congress would be dismissed.

These rough violations still continue nowadays. The West Siberian churches found themselves in a legal crisis because it is not possible to register the missions as church organizations and there are two reasons for this. First, due to the existing state laws about religious organizations and second, as a result of the absence of any legal documents such as acts and protocols of the congress. Thus, this creates a double standard in the church organization. That is, the missions are functioning within the juridical status of the former conference instead of their own.

A group of pastors who are not indifferent to the progress and future of the congregations considers it is necessary to return to the former conference status in full accordance with the church manual, the Working Policy guidelines and state laws organs of registration.

A return to the former conference status unites pastors in brotherly cooperation and should exclude any skirmish or purge of the ministers who object to the administration:

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit but in lowliness of mind let each

esteem others better than himself" (PHIL 2:3).

"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly in honor giving preference to one another" (ROM 12:10).

This appeal arose seven months after the WSC congress as a result of much prayer and careful soul searching by the members and pastors who were experiencing the consequences of the decision. During this time, they also waited for God's will to be revealed to them concerning the current circumstances. We have come to the conclusion that we should be honest before God and our conscience.

"Finally, bretheren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is any thing praise worthy, mediate on these things" (PHIL 4:8).