

Rader draws line on church inquiry

By DICK LLOYD
Staff Writer

When the receivership on the Worldwide Church of God has been lifted and the attorney general is off the premises, church officials will answer all questions the attorney general has concerning charges that church officials

have diverted millions of dollars for personal use, church spokesman Stanley R. Rader said Friday.

But the church will continue to resist, Rader said, "until they (state agencies) realize they have made a terrible mistake" in imposing a receivership and taking over property of the church.

"The attorney general is completely wrong-headed on his approach to this matter," said Rader, challenging Attorney General George Deukmejian to a debate on the church vs. state issue.

He said the state code dealing with non-profit corporations "does not give power to examine or seize and desecrate church property."

"This is a state vs. church issue," Rader reiterated at a press conference at which he softened charges he leveled a week ago that Judge Jerry Pacht conducted illegal proceedings in imposing a receivership on the church.

On the recommendation of his attorneys, Rader modified statements he made a week ago that Judge Pacht was involved in a "criminal conspiracy" to conduct secret and illegal proceedings to place the church in receivership.

Judge Pacht has indicated that the complaint filing and the receivership order were done si-

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multaneously and that the hearing was not secret. A court reporter was present and a transcript was available the next day, according to Pacht.

Attorneys for Rader, the treasurer of the \$80-million religious empire said, advised him that Judge Pacht "is not the real villain of this sorrowful episode.

"Rather, they urge that Judge Pacht was as much a victim as was the church . . . because it was Mr. (Hillel) Chodos (attorney for the plaintiffs), Mr. (Lawrence) Tapper (deputy attorney general), along with Judge (Ste-

ven) Weisman (receiver), who deceived, deluded and duped Judge Pacht — who otherwise, in the opinion of my counsel, would not have acted as he did," said Rader.

Rader said his new stance regarding Judge Pacht was neither an apology nor an attempt to mitigate against possible recriminations for remarks he made about the situation and Judge Pacht.

"If anything I've said about Judge Pacht is untrue," said Rader, "I would welcome him suing me. Maybe his condition was such that rather than being

part (of a conspiracy), he was a dupe — he was a victim."

But if the facts turn out to be as he stated a week ago, said Rader, "then I want Jerry Pacht to be censured and removed. And if he denies it, we'll go after him."

A week ago, Rader charged corruption in the court system. Friday he said, "I trust that my counsel are, indeed, correct because I would prefer to understand that the corruption in government, that Watergate revealed so very recently to all of us, does not exist in the judicial system of California and in the Los Angeles Superior Court sys-

tem in particular."

Rader's press conference seemed to deepen a dispute over who caused the collapse of the \$10.6-million sale of the Texas campus of Ambassador College at Big Sandy. Rader blamed the state-ordered receivership for tying up the deed transfer.

On Thursday, Hodge Dolle Jr., an attorney for Southern evangelist William Menge, said escrow proceedings for the sale had been terminated because the church failed to turn all the required documents over to the title company.