

MINISTRY POLICY MANUAL

**CHURCH OF GOD
OF PROPHECY**

Ministry Policy Manual

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section One:

Organizational Structure of the Church of God of Prophecy

I.	The International Assembly	8
A.	The Purpose of the International Assembly	9
B.	The Infrastructure of the International Assembly	9
1.	The Chief Moderator	9
2.	Assembly Counselors.....	10
3.	The Roll and Duties of the Assembly Committees	10
4.	Assembly Business Procedures Revision	15
a.	Assembly Policies & Procedures Revision/BDP Authority	
b.	Local Church Pre-Assembly Expression Process	
c.	Implementation of 2014 BDP Revision	
5.	Recommendations as Official Rulings	15
6.	Dynamics of Theocratic and Hierarchical Govt.	18
II.	International Presbytery	18
III.	General Presbyters/Plurality of Leadership	19
IV.	International Offices	20
A.	Inspirational Leadership	21
B.	Leadership Development and Discipleship Ministries	22
C.	Finance and Administration Ministries	23

National/Regional/State Ministry

I.	Trans-local Ministry	26
II.	The Role of Overseer	27
	The Responsibility of Being an Overseer	27
III.	Church of God of Prophecy Overseer	28
A.	Principal Function	28
B.	Appointment	28
C.	Relationships	28
D.	Qualifications	29
E.	Administrative Duties	29
F.	Supervisory Duties	29
G.	Promotional Duties	30
H.	Appointive Duties /In Consultation With.....	31
I.	Cautionary Rule	31
J.	Overseer Evaluation Process—2008	32

Local Church Ministry

I.	Organizing a New Local Church	38
A.	Considerations That Should Be Included	38
B.	Organizing Procedures	38
C.	Local Church Trustees	39
1.	Authority	39
2.	Selection and Maintenance	40

D.	Deeds for Church Property	40
	Warranty Deed	42
E.	Incorporation	43
F.	Amended and Restated Charter	45
G.	Amended Bylaws	49
II.	Disbanding a Local Church	54
III.	Church Membership	54
	A. Adding Members to the Church	55
	B. Administering the Covenant	56
	C. Teachings of the Church of God of Prophecy	57
	D. Affirmation—Bible Translations	59
	E. Affirmation—The Presence and Manifestations of the Holy Spirit	60
	F. One Accord Curriculum	62
IV.	Church Discipline	63
	A. Objects of Church Discipline	63
	B. Classes of Offense	63
V.	The Local Church Conference	64
	A. The Constituents	64
	B. Types of Conferences	65
	C. Purpose and Objective	65
	D. Officers of the Conference	66
	E. Duties and Powers of the Conference	67
	F. Order of Business	68
	G. The Decision-Making Process	69
	H. The Role of the Local Church's Finance and Stewardship Committee	69
	I. Engaging Our Youth and Children	71
	J. Corporate Tithing Recommendation	71

Ministry Policies

I.	Church of God of Prophecy Ministry Policy Manual Ministerial Competencies	74
	A. General Ministerial Competencies	74
	B. Competencies for Pastors	75
	C. Competencies for National/Regional/State Overseers, General Presbyters, International Ministry Directors, and Trans-Local Personnel	77
	D. General Ministry Advice	78
II.	Recommending a Member for the Church Ministry	79
	A. The Local Church's Responsibility	79
	B. The Necessity of Examination	79
	C. The Official Recommendation	80

III.	Lay Ministry.....	80
	A. Procedure of Certification for Lay Ministry	80
	B. Authorization.....	81
	C. Policies.....	81
IV.	Provisional Lay Pastor Ministerial Permits	82
V.	Licensed Ministers	83
	A. Pastoral Ministry	83
	B. Pastoral Tenure.....	84
	1. Recommendations.....	84
	2. Pastoral Evaluation Process.....	84
	3. Church Ministry Evaluation.....	85
	4. Duties & Responsibilities of the Evaluation Task Forces	85
	5. The Evaluation Process—Educational/Training Needs	86
	6. Ministerial Appeal Process	88
	7. Instruments for Evaluation	90
	C. Evangelistic Ministry (Male/Female)	97
	D. Women/Deaconesses	97
	E. Procedures for Licensure	99
	F. Ordination of Licensed Ministers.....	101
	Deacons/Deaconesses	102
	Bishops.....	104
	G. Ministers Coming into the Church from Other Organizations	106
	H. Authorization.....	106
	I. Overseer's Jurisdiction	107
	J. Change of Status	107
VI.	Elders	107
VII.	General Instructions	107
	A. Guidelines for Ministerial Expense	107
	B. Tithing by Ministers	109
	C. Ministers to Respect Guidance of Assembly in Doctrine ..	109
	D. Identification Card	110
	E. Secular Work	110
	F. Observing Ordinances	110
	G. State-to-State/Nation-to-Nation/Region-to-Region Ministering	110
	H. Performing Marriages	111
VIII.	Reporting System of the Ministry	111
	A. Bishops	112
	B. Licensed Ministers	112
	C. Deacons/Deaconesses	112
	D. Trial Deacons/Deaconesses	112
	E. Lay Ministers	112
	F. Retired Ministers	112
	G. Unable Ministers	112

IX.	Ministerial Discipline	113
A.	The Nature and Purpose of Discipline	113
B.	Offenses that Require Disciplinary Action	113
C.	Discipline Procedures	114
D.	Termination of Ministerial Credentials	117
E.	Restoration of Ministers	118
X.	Revised Governance Document, July 2016	
	The Office of Presbyter (General, International).....	121
	The Character of the Presbyter	121
	Clarifications and Definitions.....	124
	Qualities of the General Overseer	126
	Duties and Responsibilities of the General Overseer	127
	Vacancy of the Office of the General Overseer	128
	Selection Process for the General Overseer	130
	Duties and Responsibilities of the General Presbyters.....	133
	Selection of the General Presbyters.....	134
	Moderating the Selection Process.....	138
XI.	Changes to the Present Financial System	141
XII.	Consideration to Offset International Assembly Expense.....	147
XIII.	The Global Immigration Challenge	149

Section Two: Important Information and Resources

A Statement of Faith for the Church of God of Prophecy	152
Biblical Principles, Beliefs, and Practices	154

Section Three: Forms

Membership Transfer/Acknowledgement	175
Church/Pastor Endorsement	177

Ministry Policy Manual Study Guide and

Ministerial Examination	179
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SECTION ONE

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

The organizational structure of the Church of God of Prophecy exists and operates at three interdependent levels—international, national/regional/ state, and local. The international level of the church organization functions on a worldwide basis and provides a global network of support and interaction for the Church’s ministries in all 50 United States and more than 130 other nations. The national/regional/ state level provides more focused leadership and support directly within the context of the nations, regions, and states where the Church is at work. The local level is the heartbeat of the Church, providing caring congregations in the thousands of cities, towns, and communities around the world where the Church’s mission is carried out on a daily basis. These local bodies of believers form the framework within which the Church meets its objectives of worship, evangelization, equipping believers, and preparation for Christ’s return. At all levels of organization in the Church, efforts are being made to retain a dynamic flexibility in order to avoid stagnation. In increasingly complex and ever-changing societies, the ability to remain relevant to people’s needs is dependent upon the ability to respond to societal change in a positive manner without compromising truth. God is dynamic, not static; He is a God who moves and acts in the affairs of mankind. The Church is committed to be a mobile and pilgrim people who move when He moves and who stop when He stops. Thus, the organizational structures described below are currently serving our mission, but they are subject to review and revision as God’s Holy Spirit may direct.

I. THE INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The International Assembly, a meeting open to all members, is the highest decision-making body in the Church of God of Prophecy. It currently convenes every two years. The general overseer of the Church establishes the program and acts as general moderator for the Assembly. During discussions of doctrinal and business matters, every member has an equal voice.

In concluding the International Assembly business procedure adopted in the 88th International Assembly, we recommend that if a leadership session is needed in the decision-making process, only bishops and elders who labor in prayer and in the Word, should dialogue the Scripture. In order to give further clarification to our decision-making process, we

recommend that reports concerning policies, procedures, and finances presented by Assembly standing committees be accepted by overwhelming consensus. All matters of a doctrinal nature must be accepted by “one accord” (93rd Assembly Minutes, 2004, p. 333). The Assembly also provides times of inspirational worship, preaching, teaching, and fellowship. It is during the International Assembly that the General Presbytery reveals the burden of its heart and provides vision for the direction it believes God is leading the Church. At the international level of organization, the General Presbytery, led by the general overseer, who is selected by one accord in the International Assembly to serve for an indefinite term, has a broad range of spiritual and administrative leadership responsibilities. It makes the final selection of all international leadership, including the national/regional/state overseers and the standing Assembly committees. Furthermore, the General Presbytery constantly seeks God for spiritual direction and casts vision for the worldwide outreach efforts of the Church.

A. The Purpose of the International Assembly

The primary purpose of the International Assembly is to serve as an interpretative and decision-making body that deals with pressing universal truths requiring definitive decisions for translocal matters in expediting the proclamation of the Gospel (Acts 1:21–23; Ephesians 2:13–16, 19, 20; Acts 15:6–9). It is the place at which members of the Church and their official representatives assemble together under the headship of Christ to search the Scriptures. As the Bible is illuminated by the Spirit, understanding and resolution of differences of interpretations, which tend to be divisive among the churches, will be received. The International Assembly accepts the Bible as its highest authority.

A secondary function of the International Assembly is to decide on administrative actions the Church deems helpful in accomplishing the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20).

Specific matters without universal impact, which pertain to particular regions, will be handled by the presbytery in that region in harmony with accepted Assembly interpretations.

B. The Infrastructure of the International Assembly

1. The Chief Moderator

The general overseer of the Church of God of Prophecy shall serve as moderator of the International Assembly. In this role, in consultation with the general presbyters, they will have the following responsibilities:

- a. The authority to convene a International Assembly as outlined by the International Assembly
- b. The moderation of the International Assembly
- c. The appointment of Assembly committees
- d. The facilitation of the decision-making process in conjunction with the Assembly counselors

2. Assembly Counselors

The general presbyters will serve as the Assembly counselors (*90th Assembly Minutes*, 1998, p. 87).

3. The Role and Duties of the Assembly Committees

Over the last several years, it has become increasingly apparent that the roles and duties of the three primary Assembly committees (Administrative, Biblical Doctrine and Polity, Finance and Stewardship) needed to be better defined and articulated to avoid occasional confusion or overlapping of functions. These three committees are referred to as “standing committees” because the nature and influence of their work is ongoing even when Assemblies are not in session. These committees require enormous time, effort, and cooperation to carry out their assigned functions as well as to provide the best possible ministry they can to this body. In an effort to help clarify the Church policy regarding these various committees, the general presbyters have expressed their support for the Assembly committee for Biblical Doctrine and Polity to define both the role and duties of these three Assembly standing committees appointed by the general overseer of the Church of God of Prophecy. We humbly submit these clarifications based upon research of past rulings concerning these committees and the intent seen in their origin. We offer these observations and recommendations:

Definition of an Assembly “Standing Committee”

- a. A committee appointed at the Assembly by the general overseer in consultation with the general presbyters.
- b. A committee that functions on an ongoing basis with meetings outside the Assembly.
- c. A committee that gives a report to the Assembly for their consideration and response.
- d. A committee that has a global scope or sphere of influence in this Church.

Board of Directors (Formerly Administrative Committee)

Note: Upon the advice of counsel, references to the Administrative Committee are intended to reflect the new term “Board of Directors” per the IP Meeting- 2018.

- a. Both the General Properties Committee and the Executive Committee served in much more limited roles with fewer duties. The Administrative Committee (hereafter AC) was birthed out of a 1983 ruling that changed the name to the AC that assumed many of these roles (*83rd Assembly Minutes*, 1988, p. 45).
- b. With the reorganization of the general overseer’s office in 1991, the general overseer was given the authority to use his own discretion in appointment of International Offices committees and in the number of persons who would compose such committees (*86th Assembly Minutes*, 1991, p. 108).
- c. The AC is appointed by the general overseer. They will serve to bring items of an administrative and practical nature needing Assembly approval. They are to arrange for various personnel and International Offices committees who need to report to the Assembly (*88th Assembly Minutes*, 1994, pp. 150, 151).
- d. It is not the responsibility of the AC to set the agenda of the other Assembly committees [e.g., BDP and F & S], nor to dictate the agenda of the Assembly (*88th Assembly Minutes*, 1994, pp. 43, 44).
- e. The AC of the International Offices serves to bring such items of administrative and practical nature to the International Assembly for its approval. The AC will bring to the Assembly for its consideration all other matters (not under the jurisdiction of the other Assembly committees). Decisions are reached through overwhelming consensus (*90th Assembly Minutes*, 1998, pp. 89, 150).
- f. Input from the general presbyters will add a significant leadership dimension to the process of deciding matters that will be presented to future International Assemblies. The role of the AC will remain essentially one of reporting decisions taken between Assemblies and of clarifying existing working practices (*94th Assembly Minutes*, 2006).
- g. During the transition between general overseers, by mutual consent of the incoming general overseer and his predecessor, arrangements for proper office accommodations and remuneration is to be made by the AC. (*94th Assembly Minutes*, 2006).

The transitional growth of the administrative needs has by necessity required the Administrative Committee under the direction of the general overseer to take on more responsibilities. Prior to the introduction of the plurality system that resulted in the offices of the general presbyters, there was need for this group to be the primary administrative assistants. With the transformation of plurality, the role of the AC was less-inclusive. It is clear that the role of this committee by necessity has grown out of need to assist the general overseer and general presbyters who represent the Assembly when it is not in session. With this understanding, some flexibility must be given the AC to rightly serve in its role while also respecting the roles and duties of the general presbyters and other Assembly-mandated committees. From time to time, it may be advisable for this committee to meet with the general presbyters or other Assembly committees to review the AC's responsibilities and to assure the Assembly that all the committees will work harmoniously for the edifying of the Church.

Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee

The Assembly Committee for Biblical Doctrine and Polity (hereafter BDP):

- a. The Committee is appointed by the general overseer to serve the Church by preparing an exposition for dialogue on universal matters of biblical doctrine, theology, ethics, and polity for Assembly consideration.
- b. The Committee should reflect the international constituency of the Church (as much as possible). As a standing committee, it should interact with the international Church in the process of report development.
- c. The Committee is to prepare a preliminary expositional report that should be distributed to the Church no later than 90 days prior to the ensuing Assembly for their consideration. Additional expositional matters not included in the report should not be considered in that Assembly, but in the following Assembly after a document is introduced and distributed; however, urgent matters may appear. This does not preclude any dynamic move of the Spirit to give direction.
- d. Matters of biblical doctrine, theology, ethics, and polity for Assembly consideration should be directed to the BDP Committee. The general moderator (general overseer), in consultation with the Assembly counselors (general presbyters) and the BDP Committee, may introduce matters

of an emergency nature not included in the Assembly Report (*88th Assembly Minutes*, 1994, pp. 150, 151).

- e. In the interest of maintaining clarity and efficiency, it would seem wise for matters requiring biblical exposition to be solely dealt with by the BDP Committee (*90th Assembly Minutes*, 1998, p. 89).
- f. In order to give further clarification to our decision-making process, we recommend that reports concerning policies, procedures, and finances presented by Assembly standing committees be accepted by overwhelming consensus. All matters of a doctrinal nature must be accepted by “one accord” (*93rd Assembly Minutes*, 2004, p. 333).
- g. The intent of the expositional process is to provide each Assembly with a report(s) for decision and distribution to facilitate study, prayer, and meditation until the next Assembly, when it would be presented for decision (*93rd Assembly Minutes*, 2004, p. 111).
- h. The BDP Committee has been requested by the general presbyters to make a clarifying statement concerning our position on Church government. We recognize the delicate balance between our theological/ecclesiastical make-up of the Church and the business structure that we must maintain for legal purposes (*94th Assembly Minutes*, 2006, pp. 176, 177).

In light of the above decisions regarding the role and duties of the Assembly Committee for Biblical Doctrine and Polity, this body is to serve the Church by continually revisiting the Word of God to assure that we are walking in the light of truth. Henceforth, we further recommend that the BDP Committee should not only bring matters to the Assembly for their consideration, but also meet with the leadership and other committees as deemed necessary by the general overseer and general presbyters to provide counsel in areas of doctrine and polity. We further recommend they should assist in the editing of the *Assembly Minutes* and *Ministry Policy Manual* to ensure that decisions made by the Assembly pertaining to doctrine and politics are accurately recorded. Pertaining to what matters may be referred to the BDP, it has been the practice of this body that subjects brought for study or resolution to this Committee would come through the general overseer and general presbyters by an Assembly official decision or because a matter has overwhelming importance and concern to the global Church.

Finance and Stewardship Committee

The Assembly Committee for Finance and Stewardship (hereafter F & S):

- a. The F & S Committee is appointed by the general overseer to serve the Church by formulating and articulating biblically-based and globally-oriented financial plans and stewardship principles for Assembly consideration.
- b. The F & S Committee should reflect the international constituency of the Church (as much as possible). As a standing committee, it should interact with the international Church in the process of report development.
- c. The F & S Committee is to prepare a preliminary report that should be distributed to the Church no later than 90 days prior to the ensuing Assembly for their consideration. Any biblically based recommendation should be accompanied by scriptural references; any practical stewardship matters should include appropriate rationale. Additional matters not included in the report should not be considered in that Assembly; however, urgent matters may appear. This does not preclude any dynamic move of the Spirit to give direction.
- d. Matters related to F & S for Assembly consideration should be directed to the Committee. The general moderator, in consultation with the Assembly counselors and the Committee, may introduce matters of an emergent nature not included on the Assembly Report.
- e. The general overseer or International Assembly may utilize this Committee to assist in providing accountability and policy formulation in financial administrative processes (*88th Assembly Minutes*, 1994, pp. 149–151).
- f. The F & S Committee is to focus on practical matters, including promotional and fund-raising projects. Thus, when determining the Assembly's expression, the one-accord principle will be used for the BDP on doctrinal matters while the overwhelming consensus will determine all other matters and those presented by the F & S and the AC.
- g. It is the responsibility of the F & S Committee to review and establish the salary and benefits of all International Offices appointees and to develop an investment policy for the International Offices funds (*87th Assembly Minutes*, 1992, p. 62).

Having reviewed all prior duties of the F & S Committee, it is obvious that too much of the role of the Finance & Stewardship Committee was obscured during the transitional period of the last few years. We, therefore, recommend that all of the above stated duties of the F & S Committee be recognized so that they may serve this Church in providing better accountability of all Church finances. Furthermore, this would include the use of the F & S Committee to provide accountability in policy formulation in the financial administrative process and in setting salaries for the general overseer and general presbyters. It is the responsibility of the F & S Committee to review and establish the salary and benefits of all International Offices appointees and to develop an investment policy for the International Offices funds. Their counsel to the AC is essential to provide broader insight and external review of all our financial decisions. We also recommend that their expenses to attend meetings be reimbursed or provided as other Assembly standing committees.

We humbly recommend the above report with special appreciation to all those who have served in the past and presently serve on our Assembly committees. Their commitment to the mission of this Church and willingness to work without salary on their respective committees is to be commended by this body (95th Assembly Minutes, 2008, p. 47, BDP Committee Report).

Editorial Note: The F&S Committee reviews and establishes the salary and benefits of the general overseer, general presbyters, and executive ministry directors. All other appointee salaries (translocals) and benefits are established by their respective executive ministry director.

4. Assembly Business Procedures Revision

After several years of implementation of a proxy system as an effort to give a voice to those who were unable to attend the International Assembly, we certainly realize that these efforts to give voice have in some ways lessened the voice. Since the Bible Doctrine and Polity committee had been given authority to make procedural adjustments to the process, (*ref: 93rd International Assembly Minutes 2004*, page 112) in collaboration with the general presbyters, the Bible Doctrine and Polity Committee have made such adjustments that were implemented in the 2014 International Assembly business. It is with great hope that the historical nature of the International Assembly as the highest decision making body can be regained while allowing for global participation by the following revision below.

a. Assembly Policies and Procedures Revision Bible Doctrine & Polity Committee Authority

Authority was entrusted in the Assembly Committee for Biblical Doctrine and Polity (BDP) by the International Assembly (IA) to make changes to the proxy system (*ref: 93rd International Assembly Minutes 2004*, page 112). Any changes to the proxy system will not require further Assembly approval, but such adjustments after consultation with the general presbyters, will be instituted immediately as of February 1, 2014 and will be applicable to preparations for the 2014 International Assembly and all subsequent Assemblies. In the spirit of the original Assembly Policies and Procedure Document, these adjustments were made to maintain global participation and to retain the dynamic of the working of the Holy Spirit in the delegates attending the International Assembly.

b. Local Church Pre-Assembly Expression Process

- 1) Each local church should begin in January (of an International Assembly year) a review of any new recommendations coming before the Assembly. It will no longer be necessary for a selected representative from the local church for the upcoming Assembly. Instead, each local church would simply send their expression concerning pending recommendations by March 1 to the state/regional/national office. By April 1, the overseers will submit all expressions to their respective general presbyter (GP). The GP submits all expressions by April 1 to the general overseer's office for a report by the appointed liaison to the International Assembly (prior to the IA).
- 2) The process will include procedural changes following the International Assembly committees' report and recommendations. The Assembly moderator shall lead the Assembly delegates present into a dialogue concerning the matter brought before the Assembly for decision. There will be no need for proxies, but a simple report of the expressions of the local churches. The moderator should encourage delegates during the dialogue to be mindful of the reported expressions by the local churches. The decision making will rest upon the delegates present in the International Assembly with submission at all times to the Holy Spirit. Doctrinal matters will continue to require a one-accord agreement, while matters of policy and practice (or financial nature) will continue to be adopted

by overwhelming consensus. This adjustment was required because of the difficulties of the past proxy system and to allow for more inspirational decision making and discernment by the Holy Spirit in all of our Assembly business sessions.

c. Implementation of 2014 BDP Revision

This Pre-Assembly Expression process will be the local church's opportunity to declare their discernment regarding International Assembly business. These results will be tabulated and the official numbers will be presented to the International Assembly for each business item under consideration. This action will maintain the historical nature of the International Assembly being the highest decision making body while allowing for those unable to be present opportunity for expression. These expressions will serve to assist in the discussion and discernment process of the International Assembly body present.

After the reading of the business being considered the Pre-Assembly Expressions will be displayed on the screens in order for those present to see the discernment of the greater Church body. The moderator will open the floor for discussion and decision. The motion to accept, along with a second to the motion will be received and the question, "All in favor" will be extended. Should there not be a one-accord expression for decision received (when one is required), the moderator will give opportunity to submit, or abstain in agreement with the approved International Assembly Business Procedures. (*98th International Assembly Journal [Minutes] 2014*, pp. 29-31)

5. Recommendations as Official Rulings

Whenever the committees designated to do so present reports to the International Assembly, a recommendation and/or recommendations are given for the said Assembly's consideration. We would like this International Assembly to give the following statement consideration for our official records: "When a recommendation and/or recommendations are presented in proper order by the International Assembly committees designated to do so, the said recommendation and/or recommendations, when accepted by the International Assembly, become the official ruling/rulings of this Church body. Moreover, we regard only those recommendations, which have been properly presented to and accepted by the International Assemblies of the past, as the official ruling/rulings of this Church body except in those instances where they have been subsequently amended."

6. Dynamics of Theocratic and Hierarchical Government

The Assembly Committee for Biblical Doctrine and Polity has been requested by the general presbyters to make a clarifying statement concerning our position on Church government. We recognize the delicate balance between our theological ecclesiastical make-up of the Church and the business structure that we must maintain for legal purposes.

From the inception of this Church body at the beginning of the twentieth century, our pioneering fathers realized the powerful dynamics of recognizing that in all ministerial and spiritual operations that we were to pattern ourselves after the theocratic principles of the Bible. At the same time, the wisdom of early church Assemblies also realized the critical need to develop a system of hierarchical government in all matters of business pertaining to property, monetary operations, and legal matters. This dynamic requires us as ministers and members to confess that this important balance would be needed to function in a secularized society that did not often reflect a belief in a “direct rule of God through Spirit-filled leaders.”

We hereby declare this Church to be a body striving to operate under theocratic principles in all spiritual, ministerial and inspirational areas, but to recognize that we also function as a hierarchical government to maintain proper order and discipline in all areas pertaining to business and management of our organization. While this statement is being given to clarify our present type of government, this position has been reflected by past Assembly decisions and court rulings throughout our history (BDP Report, see *94th Assembly Minutes 2006*, p. 152).

II. INTERNATIONAL PRESBYTERY

The general overseer, general presbyters, regional/national/state overseers, and the International Offices executive directors and its ministers who serve in trans-local ministries constitute the International Presbytery. This body meets regularly at the International Assembly and at other times as determined by the general overseer and general presbyters. It convenes for counsel, recommendations, and decisions on Church-wide matters that fall within its Assembly mandates. The General Presbytery may invite individuals to observe and/or address these meetings as they deem necessary (*Revised Governance Document/ July 2016*).

Among the responsibilities of the overseers serving in the International Presbytery are the following:

- Licensing and ordaining of ministers (*36th Assembly Minutes*, 1941, p. 92; *88th Assembly Minutes*, 1994, p. 153)

- Disciplining of ministers (*82nd Assembly Minutes*, 1987, p. 56; *54th Assembly Minutes*, 1959, pp. 128, 256; *58th Assembly Minutes*, 1963, pp. 126, 256)
- Disbanding of churches (*71st Assembly Minutes*, 1976, p. 134)
- Restoring ministers (*82nd Assembly Minutes*, 1987, p. 47)
- Dealing with ministers who preach contrary doctrine (*54th Assembly Minutes*, 1959, p. 128)
- Dealing with ministers who usurp authority (*58th Assembly Minutes*, 1963, p. 126)
- Handling certain matters pertaining to marriage (*78th Assembly Minutes*, 1983, p. 137; *80th Assembly Minutes*, 1985, p. 139)
- Establishing procedures and policies for ministerial license (*88th Assembly Minutes*, 1994, p. 153)

Those who serve as overseers are responsible for the appointment of pastors. Overseers who have this responsibility should fully consider the needs and desires of both the pastor and local church to ensure their maturing and growth. Each overseer, jointly with the ministerial review board of the nation/region/state (or group of nations/regions/states where necessary), should develop an appropriate pastoral evaluation process that is fair, orderly, and effective. Evaluations can be a means of self-improvement and accountability and provide opportunities for both commendation and admonition. Having them periodically and consistently builds confidence, gives assurances, and keeps the participants and those they serve well informed. This knowledge will provide a basis on which to effectively do the four-year evaluation. The requirement of the ministry to equip the saints is such that sufficient time must be expended for the maturity of both the minister and the congregation.

III. GENERAL PRESBYTERS/PLURALITY OF LEADERSHIP

A move toward “plurality of leadership” was accepted in the 1994 General Assembly. This plurality of the general overseer’s office is represented by the general presbyters, one of whom is recognized as the general overseer. The general overseer is selected for recommendation by the International Presbytery to the International Assembly for approval (88th Assembly Minutes, 1994, p. 154), whereas the remaining general presbyters are selected and approved only by the International Presbytery (88th Assembly Minutes, 1994, p. 155). In both cases, general presbyters are chosen according to their giftedness by God for providing direction to the worldwide Church in accomplishing its mission.

General presbyters are selected by, but not limited to, persons from the International Presbytery as gifted by God to provide leadership to the worldwide Church in accomplishing its Christ-ordained mission. They

work with the general overseer to provide shared-leadership responsibility in carrying out the functions of the general overseer by developing vision, processes, and plans in accomplishing the church's mission. The plurality of leadership is to stay abreast of the international Church's needs in order to facilitate its mandate of world evangelization:

"The General Presbytery shall be composed of the general overseer and the general presbyters (chosen by the International Presbytery) assigned to specific areas of the world. If the general overseer in consultation with the general presbyters determines that additional general presbyters are necessary for specific areas of the expanding global work, the International Presbytery would have to approve this decision.

"The general overseer and all general presbyters . . . perform the duties of general oversight for the Church worldwide and for particular divisions or world regions of the Church. In this context, the general overseer would be chairman of the General Presbytery, with the two vice-chairmen (those chosen among the general presbyters to serve in day-to-day matters with the general overseer), who may also moderate the Assembly's non-business sessions at the discretion of the general overseer.

"The general overseer and the General Presbytery . . . are accountable to the International Presbytery and to the International Assembly for both their function and work. They shall meet twice yearly or whenever the need arises to handle administrative work and strategy. Although the general presbyters may have oversight for vision and order, they shall not view a specific area as their own domain to rule, but seek consultation with the general overseer and the other general presbyters as the need arises" (*The Governance of the Presbytery*, 2016).

IV. INTERNATIONAL OFFICES

The mission of the Church's International Offices is "Empowered by the Holy Spirit through prayer, we will plant churches and equip leaders to carry out the biblical mandate to make genuine disciples of all peoples of the world, to the glory of Christ our Lord, Head of the church." The staff of the International Offices is also selected by the General Presbytery and works with them to carry out the worldwide mandate of ministry given by God to the Church. Some of the departments headed by these staff members are briefly described in a subsequent section.

Instead of being divided into many different departments with separate agendas, the work at the International Offices is carried out by three inter-related ministry divisions. These ministries work together across organizational lines to better serve the needs of the Church at large. Each area is led by an executive ministry director who selects and employs appropriate middle-management personnel and support staff.

The ministry divisions and their responsibilities are as follows:

A. Inspirational Leadership

This ministry area provides spiritual oversight, vision, and direction to the Church as a whole. Responsibility for credentialing and ministerial discipline rests with this ministry. It is also to provide the arrangements necessary for conducting the International Assembly. This area consists of the general overseer and the general presbyters.

The office of the general overseer is recognized within the Church of God of Prophecy as one that provides, to the membership in general and the leadership in particular, God-given direction to accomplish the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20) given by the Lord Jesus Christ. The general overseer, selected (without ethnic preference) by and accountable to the International Assembly, should have freedom to exercise his spiritual giftedness and realize the potential for ministering as the Holy Spirit directs. His selection is in accordance with the one-accord principle. He is responsible, in conjunction with the general presbyters, to carry out the following functions:

1. Inspirational—Short-term and Long-range Planning
 - a. World outreach evangelism
 - b. Representation among others involved in the kingdom of God
 - c. Leadership development
 - d. Special events/meetings
 - 1) International Assembly / International Assembly Task Force
 - 2) Presbytery meetings
 - 3) Other
2. Administrative/Executive
 - a. Appointment of general and area leadership
 - b. Establishment of ordination and licensure requirements and procedures in conjunction with the International Presbytery
 - c. International Offices committees—serve as ex-officio members
 - d. Stewardship—international budget and planning
 - e. Representation for the International Assembly in legal matters
 - f. Development of plans for infrastructure to meet the changing needs of the body
 - g. Management and implementation of infrastructural changes

3. Oversight of the Ministry

- a. Pastoral oversight
- b. Discipline
- c. Counseling
- d. Education

4. Prayer Ministries

5. Accountability for General Oversight and the Implementation of International Assembly Recommendations

- a. To International Assembly through the Administrative Committee
- b. To International Presbytery through spiritual recognition/confirmation

Note: For further details of general overseer's and general presbyters' duties as outlined in *The Revised Governance Document*, see Section IX in this manual.

B. Leadership Development and Discipleship Ministries

Leadership Development and Discipleship Ministries consists of five distinct but unified departments. Accredited Ministry Development (AMD), Center for Biblical Leadership (CBL), Children's Ministries (CM), Communications, and Youth Ministries (YM).

Leadership Development and Discipleship Ministries exists to engage and develop leaders so that they are equipped to make disciples. The ministries of Leadership Development and Discipleship provide leadership and discipleship resources and training opportunities for the Church of God of Prophecy globally.

1. Accredited Ministry Development Partnerships

- a. ACTS (Agriculture, Crafts, Trades and Studies)
- b. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- c. Lee University
- d. Western Theological Seminary

2. Center for Biblical Leadership

- a. Foundations Course
- b. Non-accredited Training Courses
- c. Records: BTI/Tomlinson College transcripts

3. Children's Ministries

- a. 1-Day Training Intensive
- b. Children's Ministry Leadership Conference
- c. IMPACT! video training
- d. Institute of Children's Ministry
- e. Trainer's Training
- f. Webinar

4. Communications

- a. Editorial and Art Services
- b. Public Relations
- c. Social Media
- d. White Wing Messenger (English, French, Spanish)

5. Youth Ministries

- a. Youth Ministry Certification
- b. Leadership Academy

C. Finance and Administration Ministries

This area is responsible for management of financial, administrative, and publishing functions. It integrates administrative services and ministries in the following categories:

1. Finance and Administration Ministries

- a. Accounting and Budgeting processes
- b. Administrative Services
- c. Fields of the Wood, Archives and related sites
- d. Financial Services
- e. Global Missions Ministries
 - 1. Mission Giving
 - 2. Project Giving
 - 3. Helping Hands
 - 4. One Child Fund
- f. Heritage Ministries
- g. Information and Technology Services

- h. International Accounting
- i. Mail Operations
- j. Maintenance
- k. Media Services
 - 1. Website
 - 2. Media Productions
- l. One Accord Curriculum
- m. Properties Management
- n. Records
- o. Retail Operations
- p. Stewardship Resources
- q. White Wing Publishing House
- r. World Language

NATIONAL / REGIONAL / STATE MINISTRY

I. TRANS-LOCAL MINISTRY

The Assembly has agreed that there is a functional, apostolic ministry in these last days, and this ministry does not operate as the original foundational apostles. International Offices ministries, general presbyter offices, and the national/regional/state overseers are expressions of an ongoing apostolic-type ministry that is still needed in the Church. Persons that fill such a role should be individuals who have a calling on their lives to fulfill this type of ministry. They should be experienced individuals who have long-field tenure and have manifested the anointing and giftedness for a trans-local ministry before they are appointed to such responsibility. This is not meant to limit the Holy Ghost from calling and raising up whomever He chooses.

Their ministerial function may be changed when it becomes apparent that the sense of anointing has departed and that they have been released from the burden of the trans-local work. Rotation of trans-local, gifted workers should not be based solely on years of service or age factors, but on matters of giftedness, ability, competence, and anointing. Those responsible for the appointment of the trans-local ministry should be in brotherly consultation with the person well in advance of any decision to change the role of ministry. If at all possible, a mutual agreement should be reached between those who make such appointments and the appointees as regarding their future role of ministry. Reviews for general appointees must be every four years, beginning with the International Assembly in the year 2002.

For those serving as national/regional/state overseers, a special committee shall perform the evaluation. The overseer shall select not more than 1/3 of the members of the committee. The licensed ministers in that nation/region/state shall select the other remaining members. The findings of the evaluation shall be submitted to the appropriate general presbyter for consultation and discussion with the overseer. Vacancy of a general appointee's office could occur at any time by resignation, personal reasons, ill health, gross negligence, or immorality. Some offices may be changed due to structural or reorganizational reasons as determined from time to time by responsible church bodies and/or authorities. Due consideration needs to be given those individuals affected by these changes.

Note: This replaces the ruling of the International Assembly decision of 1990 concerning rotation (*85th Assembly Minutes*, 1990, p. 45); see (J) "Overseer Evaluation Process" under the following section.

II. THE ROLE OF OVERSEER

“If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work” (1 Timothy 3:1).

The Responsibility of Being an Overseer

The office of a “servant-leader” (overseer) is a biblically-based function in the church. To fulfill the office of overseer is an awesome responsibility. There are many overseer leadership challenges, but none surpasses that of one’s total commitment to caring for, nurturing, protecting, and leading the ministry of an entire nation/region/state.

The caring overseer must always make himself available for personal counsel with any minister or local church representative in his assigned area. This is not to say

that the overseer should address every situation; rather, when possible, the various levels of leadership should function so as to allow the body ministries to operate fully. The overseer should encourage delegation of all ministerial functions, including his office work, but should always remain ready to support and undergird any and all church work under his “servant-leadership.”

It is most important that the overseer commit priority time in prayer, biblical studies, planning, promoting, and evaluating of those ministries, which will serve the spiritual needs and potentialities of the churches. The overseer must feel a deep commitment to the New Testament principles, equipping the ministry and laity.

The overseer should desire to give special attention to the development of a ministerial, educational program to better equip the ministry, as the ministry is a biblical gift for the purpose of equipping the saints for body ministry. The Center for Biblical Leadership (CBL) will assist the overseer in developing this educational program.

The office of overseer has a broad base of responsibility and authority within the nation/region/state assigned by appointment. The “servant-leader” (overseer) should use power and authority with restraint and be very careful not to abuse either the authority or the influence of his office. Also, he must be careful not to promise people more than he can deliver.

The overseer should strive to build the character that reflects openness, honesty, fairness, and godly firmness in all his relationships. It is most important never to betray the confidence of the ministry or laity in his nation, region, or state.

The role of overseer provides a challenge for development and growth of the churches. He can spark revival in his assigned area by giving himself to prayer and ministering the Word. He can affect mobilization of all energies that are committed to the Church, resulting in spiritual and numerical growth

of the organized churches, as well as the establishment of churches in new communities. He can equip and develop spiritual leaders by giving himself to the joy of discipleship.

III. Church of God of Prophecy Overseer

A. Principal Function

The overseer is responsible for the organizational structure, implementation, and administration of the total ministries of the Church of God of Prophecy in a given nation, region, or state, as well as the supervision of the ministers and personnel involved in those programs and ministries.

B. Appointment

1. The general presbyter initiates evaluations of the national/regional/state overseers in his specific area per Assembly recommendation (*The Governance of the Presbytery*, 2008, p. 14).
2. The national/regional/state overseer is appointed through the general presbyter in consultation with the general overseer.
3. He should reside in the nation/region/state over which he is made overseer (where possible).
4. As a normal rule, the overseer will be notified two or three months prior to the International Assembly if his ministry is to be changed. The overseer will be contacted by his general presbyter through an official communication prior to this time.

C. Relationships

1. The overseer is directly responsible and accountable to the general presbyter in the area where he serves.
2. The overseer must maintain a “servant” relationship as he directly supervises the national/regional/state office staff, programs, and ministers.
3. The overseer is responsible to appoint pastoral leadership for each local church, and in a sense, he is the pastor for all the ministry in his area.
4. The general overseer, the general presbyters, and staff members of the International Offices, are always available to the overseer for counsel and support.

D. Qualifications

(These are broad-based qualifications.)

1. An ordained minister
2. A man of proven ability and experience (not a novice)—1 Timothy 3:6
3. A loyal minister of the Church of God of Prophecy and committed to the church's biblically-mandated mission

(See competencies for National/Regional/State Overseers, etc., p. 75.)

E. Administrative Duties

(To be performed in conjunction with the plurality of this office.)

1. To create and maintain all records pertaining to the national/ regional/ state work—such as minister's reports, church clerk reports, ledgers, financial records, Finance and Stewardship Committee records, as well as any and all other files.
2. To report the organization of new churches to the office of the general presbyter for record keeping and for forwarding to the general overseer's office.
3. To make monthly accountability reports to the appropriate offices on forms prepared for same.
4. To officiate at all ordination services in his nation/region/state, to process new minister's applications; to sign credentials of all ministers in his area who have been approved by the presbytery; and to serve along with the general overseer/general presbyters as a presbytery member in counseling, disciplining, and/or revocation of ministerial credentials.
5. To decide the geographical boundaries of each district in his assigned area.
6. To discontinue or disband churches and report same to the general presbyter's office on forms prepared for such reports; to transfer members from disbanded churches to a church most convenient for the member.
7. To implement resolutions and directives duly passed by the International Assembly.

F. Supervisory Duties

1. To supervise, with the Finance and Stewardship Committee, all funds received and disbursed by the national/regional/state treasurer.

2. To see that the reporting system of the Church functions promptly and accurately.
3. To evaluate all national/regional/state reports and surveys as a means of measuring job performance and projecting future goals.
4. To delegate responsibilities to others for more effective administration.
5. To approve the setting in order of new churches before organization is effected.
6. To contact churches whose clerks are delinquent in reporting.
7. To supervise and/or delegate the care and maintenance of all national/regional/state properties.
8. To supervise all office administrative functions necessary to ensure proper oversight of the work assigned to the overseer.

G. Promotional Duties

1. Leadership development—Mark writes in his gospel following Jesus’ calling of leadership, ***“And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach”*** (Mark 3:14). The phrase “that they should be with him” is an indication of the importance of developing the next generation of leaders. While your function is great and encompasses a vast geographic area, it is necessary for you to find ways to mentor a small group of future leaders—those who could possibly replace you in the future.
2. Evangelism and missions (home and abroad) are key to the mandated challenge of the church. Therefore, the overseer should place promotional priority on evangelism and missions. He should arrange for and assist in conducting a general evangelism campaign throughout his nation/region/ state. Home and global missions should be promoted on a regular basis.
3. To promote, through the district overseer, district activities. To also promote a national/regional/state convention or meeting at which the overseer will give general instructions relative to the growth and development of the ministry and churches.
4. To promote national/regional/state or district meetings to introduce and launch programs.
5. To promote all the departmental ministries of the Church. In most cases, the overseer will appoint national/regional/state leadership for the departmental ministries, but the overseer should feel responsible to always give promotional directions when the opportunity arises.

6. To promote the circulation of the *White Wing Messenger* as well as other church-published periodicals and publications.

H. Appointive Duties

1. To appoint pastors in consultation with the local church and minister. *
2. To appoint national/regional/state staff.
3. To appoint a national/regional/state ministerial review board.
4. To appoint national/regional/state boards and committees as needed.
5. To appoint district overseers and any other personnel necessary to administrate the national/regional/state programs.

*As was requested during the business session of the 100th International Assembly, The Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee offers the following definition: “In consultation with” does not require that an overseer physically or digitally visit with the entire congregation, a pastoral committee, initiate a survey, or conduct a vote or expression. In consultation with may include any one of the following:

- A conversation with a key leader or key leaders via in person, by phone, letter, email, or some other similar venue.
- Extending the opportunity to individuals who would like to convey thoughts to the overseer in his selection of a pastor.

Overseers are not required to engage in all of the above. “In consultation with” is a very broad provision. The overseer has latitude to be creative in the method and modality of consultation and is thereby not limited to the above suggestions. While “in consultation with” is preferred, there may be certain situations which make it uniquely difficult for if not altogether precluding the overseer from consulting with members of the local congregation. In these instances, the Overseer could consult either with the general presbyter and/or the overseer’s plurality team. Ultimately, the pastoral appointment is at the discretion of the overseer. (100th International Assembly 2018-BDP Committee Report)

I. Cautionary Rule

1. Before launching large financial projects, the overseer should seek counsel from the general presbyter. The overseer must have the consent of the General Trustees before buying, selling, or encumbering properties.
2. For the purpose of emergency or economy, the National/Regional/State Finance and Stewardship Committee may pass a measure giving the overseer authority to make expenditures not to exceed a reasonable

amount. No action or any disbursements of funds may be taken unilaterally by either the overseer or the Finance and Stewardship Committee.

J. Overseer Evaluation Process—2008

Purpose

From the outset of this endeavor to introduce a satisfactory means of evaluation and the subsequent implementation of this process, this committee has observed and others have injected into our work the need to readdress this subject. Evaluations were never intended to simply be used for the purpose of changing pastors or overseers; rather, it is time for us to have the grace and understanding to better train or qualify our leaders. We encourage our local churches and leadership across every level to take the initiative to provide evaluations that will foster better ministerial development and replace the removal mentality as simply the only resolution.

Evaluations are an integral part of everyday life and should be a means of self-improvement and accountability, providing opportunity for both commendation and admonition. Having them periodically and consistently builds confidence, gives assurance, and keeps the participants and those they serve well informed (91st Assembly Minutes, 2000, Assembly Committee for Biblical Doctrine & Polity, p. 104). Furthermore, its purpose is to help identify weaknesses so that they can be addressed, while enhancing strengths in ministry. Today, pastors are serving on a longer-term basis, and given the fact that there is a worldwide leadership crisis, we need well-equipped ministers. An evaluation is a valuable tool in trying to reach this purpose. It must be remembered that the ultimate goal of this process is to strengthen ministry. Any change or move in ministry would not necessarily be related to the evaluations but could be performed at the discretion of the respective overseer or the general presbyter at whatever time would be deemed necessary or appropriate. We know that the following stated guidelines may not always be applicable in every nation where available personnel or logistics may require some modifications to this procedure.

Process

National/state/regional overseers' evaluations will be performed every four years. This supersedes previous rulings. An Evaluation Task Force of not more than six licensed ministers in good standing shall be selected, one-third by the overseer and two-thirds by the ministry

in the region, to see that the process is properly carried out. Those selected will serve for four years. For the purpose of impartiality, the overseer should not attend the meeting for selection of two-thirds of the Evaluation Task Force or the selection of the moderator for that meeting. The Evaluation Task Force shall select a chairperson and a secretary from among themselves. Their responsibilities would include consultation with the ministry of the region and with the general presbyter, assimilating the information and providing a written report. The chairperson and secretary (or another selected Evaluation Task Force member) shall give a signed copy of the written report to the overseer being evaluated. If this overseer should so desire, he could request a meeting of the entire Evaluation Task Force. The overseer should be given commendation where he has excelled, encouraged to take objective actions for improvement in areas of weakness, and to further develop in areas he has demonstrated strength.

The evaluation report will be submitted to the general presbyter who will deal with it as he deems appropriate (*95th Assembly Minutes*, 2008, p. 51).

Overseers and Pastors Leadership Accountability and Growth Process—2008

I. Specific Areas of Focus

1. Personal Life

Example as a spiritual leader in lifestyle

Handling of personal finances (insurance, retirement portfolio, provision for family, financial counselor, continuing education, debt-free living).

Share examples of Spiritual Disciplines (study, meditation and solitude, prayer, fasting, service, simplicity, stewardship, confession, celebration).

Give us an overview of your family life (family time, achievements, vacations, future plans).

2. Ministry to the Local Church (Pastoral Role)

Visitation (Churches)

Visitation (Pastor's home, office, restaurant)

Keeps any confidence

Is sensitive to local church needs

- Demonstrates a warm and caring attitude
- Relationship with ministers in the state
- Relationship with local churches/members
- Availability and sensitivity in problem situations

3. Leadership (Administrative) (If I lead, do I follow those who lead me?)

- Supports international/state missions
- Dealing with divisive ministers and/or churches
- Providing leadership when ministry discipline is needed
- Supports sound biblical doctrine
- Uses good judgment in making decisions
- Demonstrates competent problem solving skills
- Shows consideration for differing opinions and ideas
- Is flexible enough to change as the situation demands
- Pursues tasks to completion
- Establishes a constructive climate in all meetings
- Ability as an administrator, planning and conducting state meetings
- Promptness in answering letters, telephone calls, and e-mails
- Overall image as a leader
- Good working relationship with district overseers, committees, and staff
- Effective communication (calendars, e-mail, web)

4. Financial Oversight

- Monitoring/giving sound oversight to state budget

5. Vision and Goals for the Future. (Growth Process—Fulfilling the Great Commission)

- Cooperates with others to promote Church goals in the state
- Efforts for evangelism and church planting

II. General Areas of Focus

Are there any weaknesses, problems, situations that need to be addressed? (*95th Assembly Minutes*, 2008, p. 56).

National/Regional/State Overseer's Evaluation—2006

This evaluation is your opportunity to participate in assessing the ministry of your overseer. The only way this instrument can assist the overseer is for you to prayerfully and carefully answer each question. Individual responses will remain anonymous. A summary of the information will be shared with the overseer. If this is done at the time of a review, a summary will also be sent to the general presbyter. Thank you for your prayer and contribution in this process.

Personal Character/Integrity

	Highest			Lowest
How would you view your overseer's personal character?	5	4	3	2 1
How do the people in your church view his integrity?	5	4	3	2 1
Do you feel he is honest in his commitments to you?	5	4	3	2 1
Would you add any observations or comments?				

Administrative Skills

	Highest			Lowest
Does the overseer provide clear and sufficient vision?	5	4	3	2 1
How does he handle the national/regional/state finances?	5	4	3	2 1
Is he prompt and attentive to administrative details?	5	4	3	2 1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?				

Spirituality and Worship

	Highest			Lowest
Is the overseer a good example of worship?	5	4	3	2 1
Is the overseer a good example of prayer?	5	4	3	2 1
Does his preaching/teaching inspire you?	5	4	3	2 1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?				

Evangelism and Outreach

	Highest			Lowest
Do you believe he promotes evangelism in your region?	5	4	3	2 1
Do you think we have an effective outreach in this region?	5	4	3	2 1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?				

Pastoral/Church Oversight

	Highest			Lowest
Does the overseer take an interest in your local church?	5	4	3	2 1
As a minister, does he provide you with pastoral care?	5	4	3	2 1
In a crisis, does he support your ministerial position?	5	4	3	2 1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?				

Teamwork and Morale	Highest		Lowest	
Does the overseer ask for your input in planning?	5	4	3	2 1
Does he work well as a team player with other leaders?	5	4	3	2 1
Do you feel the overseer is an encouragement to you?	5	4	3	2 1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?				

Problem Solving and Conflict Management	Highest		Lowest	
How do you feel the overseer works through conflicts?	5	4	3	2 1
How does he treat others who disagree with him?	5	4	3	2 1
Does he accept advice or counsel from other ministers?	5	4	3	2 1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?				

Family Life and Personal Appearance	Highest		Lowest	
Does the overseer spend time nurturing his family?	5	4	3	2 1
How would you view his leadership in his family?	5	4	3	2 1
Does his appearance in public bring respect to his office?	5	4	3	2 1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?				

General Comments:

Please state in a few words how you feel about our overseer continuing in his present position as national/regional/state overseer.

Thank you for your responses, and they will be held in strictest confidence. Please mail this survey back to the following address:

(Ministry Policy Manual, 2006, p. 382)

LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRY

Local Church Ministry

I. ORGANIZING A NEW LOCAL CHURCH

After a new area has been evangelized, and the people have been made acquainted with the church through its prominent Bible doctrines, teachings, and scriptural standards for eligibility of membership, the minister in charge must come to a conclusion about the advisability of organizing a local congregation. No church should be organized without the approval of the national/regional/state overseer.

A. Considerations That Should Be Included:

1. The strength or weakness of the new church if organized with the prospective members, including any who may transfer from an already organized church.
2. The prospects for future growth in view of the stability of the community's population and the attitude of the community toward the church.
3. The availability of a building or regular place to hold services.
4. The national/regional/state overseer's advice.

All of the above being favorable, the overseer or authorized minister—bishop or licensed minister—acting as moderator may proceed with the business of setting the new church in order.

B. Organizing Procedures

The following procedures should be used in organizing a new church:

1. Be sure that some capable person will record the minutes of the organization of the new church.
2. The moderator should begin with a clear statement to the congregation concerning the intention to organize and explain the purpose of such organization according to the Scriptures.
3. The prominent teachings of the Bible should be carefully read and explained.
4. The moderator should give opportunity for any who desire membership to present themselves and then administer the church covenant to them.
5. The moderator will appoint a clerk and treasurer, and other church officers, depending on the local situation and the willingness of such persons to serve.

Financial Ethics:

“In order to provide protection to the pastoral/ministry family and avoid a possible conflict of interest, and in the interest of fiscal integrity, pastors or members of the pastoral family should not serve as treasurer of the ministry body. (This also applies to the state/regional/national levels of ministry).

In extreme circumstances, where there appears to be no other option, approval must be granted by the state/regional/national overseer. For states/regions/nations, approval must be granted by the respective general presbyter.” (*98th International Assembly Journal [Minutes]* 2014 p.180)

6. If the overseer is not present, he should be notified of the new church immediately so that he may appoint a pastor.

C. Local Church Trustees

The role of local church trustees provided below is comprised of direct quotes from Assembly rulings regarding their authority and selection.

1. Authority

Since certain needs relative to the deeding of our church properties are pressing in some localities, we recommend that this Assembly adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS it has been advised by competent attorneys that specific mention of proper authorities be stated in an effort to ease the complications arising in our endeavors to be recognized by the courts, and to facilitate the handling of deeds to our church properties,

BE IT RESOLVED that trustees to hold title to local church property for the Church of God of Prophecy with international headquarters at Cleveland, Tennessee, be selected by the local church either in a regular or called business meeting, said trustees to be vested with authority to bargain, buy, sell, convey or encumber such property by mortgage or otherwise only when authorized to do so by the local church in regular or called business meeting, and with the consent of the General Trustees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that said consent of the General Trustees be evidenced by a separate writing or by the signature of the Chief Clerk of the said General Trustees, such documents to be notarized (*58th Assembly Minutes*, 1963, p. 125).

2. Selection and Maintenance

Diligence should be given to the selection and maintaining of local church trustees for holding church properties. While it is not always necessary for changes in trustees to be immediately recorded on property deeds, any such change should be carefully recorded in the minutes of the local church conference in which the selection was made, and this record should bear the signature of the conference clerk and moderator.

We recommend that attention be given to this matter annually in the September (see p. 363, 2004 *Ministry Policy Manual*) conference to make certain that any vacancies which might have occurred have been properly filled.

In those states or nations which require that registered deeds be likewise updated, this could be taken care of at the same time (*77th Assembly Minutes*, 1982, p. 83).

D. Deeds for Church Property

(Quoted from *89th Assembly Minutes*, 1996, pp. 161, 162)

The following resolution was adopted by the 58th Annual Assembly of the Church of God of Prophecy, held in Cleveland, Tennessee, September 10–16, 1963:

WHEREAS it has been advised by competent attorneys that specific mention of proper authorities be stated in an effort to ease the complications arising in our endeavors to be recognized by the courts, and to facilitate the handling of deeds to our church properties,

BE IT RESOLVED that trustees to hold title to local church property for the Church of God of Prophecy with International Offices at Cleveland, Tennessee, be selected by the local church either in a regular or called business meeting, said trustees to be vested with authority to bargain, buy, sell, convey or encumber such property by mortgage or otherwise only when authorized to do so by the local church in regular or called business meeting, and with the consent of the General Trustees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that said consent of the General Trustees be evidenced by a separate writing or by the signature of the Chief Clerk of the said General Trustees, such documents to be notarized.

BE IT RESOLVED that state church trustees appointed by the state overseer to hold title to property for the Church of God of Prophecy with International Offices at Cleveland, Tennessee, be vested with authority to bargain, buy, sell, convey, or encumber such property by mortgage with the consent of the General Trustees. This applies to property being held by state trustees where churches have been disbanded or are too weak

to function and to property that has been given to the state. All other property with title in the state trustees or a state Holding Association may be disposed of or mortgaged only by the consent of the state convention in session (modified in 1981).

Notes:

1. Requests for Letters of Consent from the General Trustees must be sent through the office of the state/national/regional overseer and not directly to the General Trustees.
2. The following Warranty Deed form has been prepared by the General Trustees and should be used where it is possible to do so. Blank forms may be secured from the General Trustees.

WARRANTY DEED

FOR AND IN CONSIDERATION OF the sum of _____

Dollars (_____) cash in hand paid and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, We, _____

have this day bargained and sold and by these presents do hereby bargain, sell, transfer and convey unto _____

local Trustees for the Church of God of Prophecy, at _____, for the use and benefit of the Church of God of Prophecy, with International Offices at 3720 Keith Street NW, Cleveland, Tennessee, and their successors and assigns, the following described real estate, to wit:

(Add description of real estate here.)

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD said real estate unto the said _____ local Trustees, for the use and benefit of the Church of God of Prophecy, with International Offices at 3720 Keith Street NW, Cleveland, Tennessee, and their successors and assigns forever, provided, however, that neither they nor their successors in office as such local Trustees may sell, convey or encumber the said real estate without the written consent of the General Trustees of the said Church at Cleveland, Tennessee, which consent may be evidenced by a separate writing or by the Chief Clerk of the said General Trustees joining in the execution of a deed of the above named Trustees or their successors in office for the purpose of certifying the consent of the General Trustees to the execution of such conveyance.

WE COVENANT that we are lawfully seized and possessed of said real estate; that we have a good and lawful right thus to sell and convey the same; that the title thereto is clear, free and unencumbered, and that we will forever warrant and defend said title against the lawful claims of all persons.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, witness our hands and names, this ____ day of _____, 20 ____.

E. Incorporation

In connection with the matter of Local Church Incorporation, we have the following on record.

“In many cases, it simplifies business transactions for local churches and states to be incorporated. It has been brought to our attention that some local churches are incorporating without the knowledge of the state office, and are possibly becoming more independent in their local operations.” **Thus, the following resolution was adopted:** “Local churches must have the consent of the state overseer to incorporate. The state overseer should work with the local church in drawing up the articles of incorporation, seeing there is no violation of previous Assembly rulings in regard to holding, selling, or purchasing of church property. We further recommend that the General Property Trustees draw up a standard set of articles of incorporation which could be used by states and local churches” (*83rd Assembly Minutes*, 1988, p. 45).

Rationale

Inasmuch as the above recommendation allows for incorporation, it seems important to have a consistent approach in taking this action. Since the business world we live in today is becoming increasingly sophisticated, and the fact that it is not always possible to conduct the business of the church without formal, legal recognition, it seems appropriate to properly assist our local churches, and nations/regions/states in this process as is deemed necessary.

Recommendation

In an effort to ensure consistency and to offer a degree of protection in the pursuit and implementation of incorporation, we recommend the following procedures that should be adhered to closely:

1. Local churches must have the written consent of the national/regional/ state overseer to pursue incorporation. This consent should be kept as part of the official records of the church regarding this matter. In the case of the local church, a copy of the actual incorporation documents should be sent to the Trustees of the Church of God of Prophecy at the International Offices in Cleveland, Tennessee.
2. The national/regional/state overseer should work with local churches in drafting the Charter/Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. In no case shall the incorporation documents violate current International Assembly rulings and guidelines in regard to the holding, encumbering, selling, or purchasing of church property or the doctrine and polity of the church.

3. In the case of a nation/region/state incorporating, the consent shall come from the general overseer/general presbyter assigned such responsibility. The same provision for adherence to International Assembly rulings and guidelines shall apply, and a copy of the final draft and/or approved incorporation document shall be sent to the Trustees of the Church of God of Prophecy at the International Offices in Cleveland, Tennessee. A sample of the model used by the International Offices can be obtained from the Trustees to be used as a guideline for incorporation. It should be understood, however, that the incorporation document developed must comply with appropriate state or national laws as well as the International Assembly rulings. Legal counsel should be obtained to properly draft such documents in compliance with applicable laws.

4. We further recommend that the International Offices of the Church be incorporated as the Church of God of Prophecy located at 3720 Keith Street NW, Cleveland, Tennessee, as a Not for Profit, Religious, and Public Benefit Corporation within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and that the Church of Prophecy Holding Association Incorporation be merged into the incorporation of the Church of God of Prophecy. A copy of this Incorporation Charter and the Articles of Merger of the Church of Prophecy Holding Association will be placed in the *Minutes of the 90th Assembly* (See also *91st Assembly Minutes*, 2000).

Charter (Articles of Incorporation) International Offices

The Administrative Committee has been working to update the Articles of Incorporation to bring these documents in line with recent Assembly rulings. The amended charter has been filed with the Tennessee Secretary of State's office (*95th Assembly Minutes*, 2008, p. 46).

Note: The Amended and Restated Charter which follows is current and is on file with the Tennessee Secretary of State. These are scanned copies of the originals on file.

AMENDED AND RESTATED CHARTER

OF

CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

Pursuant to the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, Church of God of Prophecy amends and restates its Charter as follows.

1. The name of the Corporation is Church of God of Prophecy.
2. The street address of both the registered office and the principal office of the Corporation is:

3720 Keith St., N.W.
Cleveland, TN 37312
County of Bradley

3. The name of the registered agent at the registered office of the Corporation is Randall E. Howard.
4. The Corporation is a public benefit corporation and is organized exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future Internal Revenue Code.

5. The Corporation is a religious corporation.

6. The Corporation has members.

7. The Vision Statement of the Corporation is as follows:

The Church of God of Prophecy will be a Christ-exalting, Holiness, Spirit-filled, all-nations, disciple-making, church-planing movement with a passion for Christian union.

8. The Mission Statement of the Corporation is as follows:

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, through prayer, we will plant churches and equip leaders to make genuine disciples of all the peoples of the world, to the glory of Christ our Lord, Head of the Church.

9. The Corporation is formed for any lawful purpose or purposes not expressly prohibited under the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Corporation's purposes also include the limited participation of the Corporation in any other

activities, including taxable activities, but only to the extent the activities would be permitted by a tax-exempt corporation. More particularly, without limitation the purposes of the Corporation are:

- (a) To bear witness for Christ and His truth and to spread the gospel of the Kingdom in all its fullness and power, so that the rule of God is brought about in the hearts of human kind;
- (b) To promote the Christian religion by any appropriate form of expression, within any available medium, and in any location, through the Corporation's combined or separate formation, of a church, ministry, charity, school, or eleemosynary institution, without limitation;
- (c) To ordain, employ, and discharge ordained ministers of the Gospel, and others, to conduct and carry on divine services at the place of worship of the Corporation, and elsewhere;
- (d) To handle affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by the civil authorities;
- (e) To collect and disburse any and all necessary funds for the maintenance of the Corporation and the accomplishment of its purpose within the State of Tennessee and elsewhere; and
- (f) To make distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended.

This Corporation is also organized to promote, encourage, and foster any similar religious, charitable, and educational activities; to accept, hold, invest, reinvest and administer any gifts, legacies, bequests, devices, funds, and property of any sort or nature, and to use, expend, or donate the income or principal thereof for, and to devote the same to, the foregoing purposes of the Corporation; and to do any and all lawful acts and things which may be necessary, useful, suitable, or proper for the furtherance of accomplishment of the purposes of this Corporation.

10. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Charter, the Corporation will not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from federal income tax except under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Code.

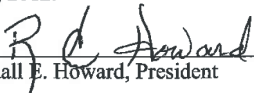
11. If the Corporation is ever determined to be a private foundation as defined in Section 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended, it will comply with the requirements of T.C.A. 48-51-501.

12. Upon dissolution of the Corporation and after payment of all liabilities, the assets of the Corporation will be distributed to one or more organizations designated by the Board of Directors that are exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and that are of like faith and order of the Corporation.

13. The directors of the Corporation will have no personal liability to the Corporation for monetary damages for breach of their fiduciary duties as directors. However, this provision does not eliminate the liability of any director (i) for any breach of the director's duty of loyalty to the Corporation, (ii) for acts or omissions not in good faith or that involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, or (iii) under Section 48-58-304 of the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act. If the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act is later amended to authorize the further elimination or limitation of the liability of Directors, then the liability of a Director of the Corporation will be limited to the fullest extent permitted by the amended Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act.

14. The Corporation has the power to indemnify its directors to the fullest extent permitted by the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Dated March 22, 2012.



Randall E. Howard, President

CERTIFICATE REQUIRED BY T.C.A. 48-20-107(d)

Randall E. Howard, President of Church of God of Prophecy, certifies to the Secretary of State that:

1. the Amended and Restated Charter does not contain any amendment requiring approval of the members; and
2. the Amended and Restated Charter was duly adopted by the Board of Directors of Church of God of Prophecy on March 20, 2012.

This March 22, 2012.

CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

By: R. E. Howard
Randall E. Howard, President

AMENDED BYLAWS
OF
CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

Article I
Name and Principal Office

Section 1. The name of this Corporation is Church of God of Prophecy (the "Church").

Section 2. The principal office of the Corporation is located at 3720 Keith Street, NW, Cleveland, Tennessee 37312.

Article II
Directors

Section 1. The corporate powers of the Church are vested in a Board of Directors (the "Board") of at least three Board members. The Board members are the General Overseer selected by the International Presbytery and confirmed by the International Assembly, the General Presbyters selected by the International Presbytery and affirmed by the International Assembly, the two Executive Ministry Directors and up to four other persons selected by the General Overseer. For internal and other purposes, the Board is also referred to as the Administrative Committee.

Section 2. The term for a Board member is from International Assembly to International Assembly.

Section 3. If the position of General Overseer becomes vacant, it may remain so until the selection and confirmation of a new General Overseer at the next International Assembly.

If a vacancy occurs in the Board because a General Presbyter ceases to serve in that position for any reason, the Board may select another Board member to fill the remainder of that term (as Board member and not as a General Presbyter).

If a vacancy occurs in the Board for a Board member selected by the General Overseer, the General Overseer will select another person for that position. If the General Overseer position is vacant, a majority of the General Presbyters will select the person for the vacant position.

A successor Board member will serve the balance of the predecessor's term.

Section 4. Any Board member may call a special meeting of the Board.

Section 5. The Board may elect, appoint, remove or discharge officers, agents, or employees of the Church, prescribe their duties (in addition to those set out in the Bylaws); fix their

compensation; and require from them security for money or property in their control. However, the Board cannot take any actions contrary to the other provision of these Bylaws.

Section 6. The Board will conduct the affairs of the Church, decide its policies, consistent with the Minutes of the International Assembly, and may enact rules and regulations for the conduct of the affairs of the Church that are consistent with the laws of the State of Tennessee, the Charter of the Church, and these Bylaws.

Section 7. The Board may contract, and incur indebtedness, for the Church. The Board may authorize the president or treasurer to execute a note, contract, or other obligation of the Church necessary to effect a loan or secure credit for the Church.

Section 8. A Board member will not be compensated for serving as a Board member. However, the Church may reimburse a Board member for expenses incurred in attending a meeting of the Board or attending to the business of the Church.

Section 9. The Board will designate the depositories for the funds of the Church.

Section 10. The Board will meet immediately following each International Assembly of the Church at the office of the Church, or any other place that the majority of the Board members agrees upon, and may adjourn the meeting to a later date. The Board may meet at other times also. The Board may meet outside the State of Tennessee if a majority of the Board members agrees to do so and if the notice of the meeting specifically designates the meeting place.

Section 11. Any actions required or permitted by the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act to be taken at a meeting of the Board may be taken without a meeting if all Board members consent to taking such action without a meeting. The affirmative vote of the number of Board members that would be necessary to authorize or take such action at a meeting is the act of the Board. The action must be evidenced by one or more written consents describing the action taken, signed by each Board member, and included in the minutes filed with the corporate records reflecting the action taken. Written consents and votes taken by consent action may be in electronic form pursuant to the Tennessee Uniform Electronic Transactions Act.

Section 12. The Board shall present to each International Assembly of the Church a general statement of the affairs of the Church at the end of the immediately preceding fiscal year. On non-Assembly years an audited statement will be available at the corporate office upon request.

Section 13. As long as due notice is given, a simple majority of the Board members constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business, but a smaller number may adjourn to a later date.

Section 14. A Board member acting individually, and not as the Board, has no power or authority to bind the Church.

Section 15. A Board member may be indemnified by the Church as authorized by the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Section 16. The president shall preside at all meetings of the Board. The Board may elect a vice-president to serve in the absence of the President.

Article III

Members

Section 1. The members of the Church are those persons who have taken the covenant of the Church.

Section 2. Each International Assembly of the Church shall constitute a meeting of the members of the Church.

Section 3. The president, secretary, or other officer of the Church shall give notice of the International Assembly consistent with the past practice of the Church.

Section 4. A quorum consists of a simple majority of those present at the officially designated business session of the International Assembly.

Section 5. A member may act in person or by proxy according to the procedure established by the Church.

Section 6. The Board may call a special meeting of the International Assembly.

Section 7. At a special meeting of the International Assembly only the business specified in the notice of the meeting may be transacted.

Article IV

Officers

Section 1. The General Overseer, who is selected by the International Presbytery and confirmed by the International Assembly, shall serve as the president. The Board shall appoint the secretary and may appoint one or more General Presbyters to perform the duties of the president in the absence, disability, or death of the General Overseer. The Executive Director of Finance and Administration shall serve as treasurer, unless the Board appoints a different individual. The Board may appoint a vice-president and other assistant officers.

Section 2. Officers, other than the president, shall serve until the Board appoints their successors. However, the Board may remove an appointed officer before the expiration of the term. The appointment to an office is not an employment contract to serve until the term of office expires.

Section 3. The same person may hold two offices, except that the president cannot also serve as secretary.

Section 4. The General Overseer in conjunction with the General Presbyters has general oversight and management of the affairs of the Church.

Section 5. The secretary shall keep appropriate permanent records of the proceedings of the minutes of the Board.

The secretary, or the president, may issue all notices of the meetings of the Board.

The secretary will perform the duties of the treasurer in the event of the treasurer's absence or disability.

The secretary has charge of and shall preserve the books, records, files, and documents of the Church unless the Board designates this duty to be performed by another person. The secretary shall hold these books and records at all times subject to the inspection of the Board members.

Section 6. The treasurer (or some other person designated by the Board) shall keep a strict account of the financial affairs of the Church and be able to account for the assets and liabilities of the Church. The treasurer is the custodian of the funds and accounts and obligations of the Church, but is subject to the direction of the Board in selecting depositories for Church funds.

In the absence or disability of the secretary, the treasurer will perform the secretary's duties.

Section 7. Each assistant officer has the same power to perform the duties of the office if the officer is unable or unavailable to perform the duty.

Section 8. An officer may be indemnified by the Church as authorized by the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Article V Corporate Seal

Section 1. The Corporation has a seal.

Article VI Dissolution

Section 1. Upon dissolution the Board shall transfer the net assets of the Church as authorized by the Charter and the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, and the transferee shall be an organization that is qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1906, as amended.

Article VII
Amendment of Bylaws

Section 1. The Board may amend these Bylaws at the meeting following the International Assembly or at an interim meeting if notice for the interim meeting announces the amendment that will be considered.

Adopted June 18, 2013.

II. DISBANDING A LOCAL CHURCH

To disband a local church means to disorganize or render it non-existent. Except in extreme cases a church will have already ceased to function before it is officially disorganized.

The presbytery should not disband any work that is properly organized and functioning; in fact, it is not the practice to disband a church that is in working order with the probable exception of extreme cases. The only time it is necessary to disband a church is when the members move away or become scattered and not enough members remain to carry on the services. Before a church is disbanded, if there are loyal members, they should be transferred to the churches nearest them. If there are members that are disloyal, they are to be notified, if possible, that the church is disbanded. Since they are disloyal, they could not be transferred, and their membership would automatically cease when the church is disbanded by proper authority.

No church should be disbanded by anyone other than the national/regional/ state overseer. The national/regional/state overseer should have the consent of the general overseer before disbanding a church. Special care should be given to members when disbanding a church. They should be contacted for the purpose of assessing their feelings and noting the church to which they desire their membership transferred. If it is known that members are disloyal, they should not be transferred to another church; however, special attention should be given them (*42nd Assembly Minutes*, 1947, p. 44).

Note: Due to changes in church governance since the 1947 Assembly, the disbanding of a local church by a national/regional/state overseer may be approved with the consent of the respective general presbyter and the general overseer.

III. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

We recommend the following concerning membership: In the New Testament, people received the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ, were baptized in water, and were added to the church (Acts 2:41–47; 3:19; Romans 10:10). Furthermore, they were expected to continue in a life of discipleship (Acts 2:42). Salvation is both instantaneous (new birth, regeneration) and also the all-inclusive work of redemption, beginning with regeneration and culminating with the glorified body (Hebrews 9:28). In the context of the Book of Acts and especially in the verses of them being “added to the church,” the instantaneous aspect of salvation is evident. Regarding the Church of God of Prophecy, membership requirement should be an individual’s experience of salvation (which includes repentance, denouncing, and forsaking of sin) and their public commitment to the Church covenant. Membership in the

Church denotes acceptance, which is the basic need of every new believer. Therefore, as we minister to these people let us endeavor to give them this sense of belonging.

In accordance with the New Testament pattern and principle, once a believer has been received into the Church as a member, it is important that every pastor and church use godly discernment in the discipleship process. Ongoing discipleship, nurturing, and discipline by the pastor and church are very important for those who become members (Acts 16:4, 5, 1 Corinthians 6:9–11). Henceforth, we further recommend that the Church of God of Prophecy, in general, develop a program of extensive discipleship to help all our members mature in Christ Jesus. This will require great wisdom and loving care by our leadership and people as we continue in the harvest (*93rd Assembly Minutes*, 2004, p. 112).

Church membership is a biblical principle, and those who desire to join themselves to the church are making an important decision. Great care should be taken by both the candidate for membership and the minister who is to officiate the service to ensure that there has been sufficient prayer and counseling.

A. Adding Members to the Church

It is the responsibility of the pastor who will be the shepherd of the new member to ensure that the candidate for membership is familiar with the teaching, government, and practices of the church. Stress should be placed on the following points:

1. The Teachings Made Prominent

They should be thoroughly explained with an opportunity given for any questions the applicant may have. Special explanations can be made about those teachings that have particular public implications in today's moral climate, such as: 1) abstinence from all liquor or strong drinks; 2) concerning tobacco, opium, morphine, etc.; 3) membership in lodges/secret societies; and 4) marriage, divorce and remarriage.

2. Walking in the Light

It should be distinctly understood that a saved member is expected to go on to water baptism, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues. Walking in the light also includes keeping pace with the advancing church program as it moves forward to perfection.

3. Loyalty to the International Assembly

This should be presented as participating in and being loyal to the

worldwide church, which stands for the whole Bible, rightly divided. This includes helps and governments (1 Corinthians 12:28).

4. Divine Healing

The applicant should be encouraged to exercise faith in God to heal.

5. Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

Since there is so much controversy on this subject among Christians, it is important that the Bible teaching be explained. To this end, the 94th International Assembly, 2006, considered, amended, and passed *The Biblical Institution of Marriage* Document (94th Assembly Minutes, 2006, p. 152; See *Ministry Policy Manual*, 2008, Appendix 3).

6. Tithing and Giving

The Bible plan for paying tithes into the local church treasury and giving offerings for the support of the church's program should be explained showing the promised blessings of God upon those who tithe and give.

7. The Church Covenant

The obligation for membership should be explained.

B. Administering the Covenant

The prominent teachings should be read and explained again just before giving opportunity for church membership. When all are satisfied, the minister should invite any who desire membership to stand before the congregation. He/She will then ask the local church if they know of any reason why any applicant should not be accepted as a member. If there are objections from the local church, the applicant should be asked to wait for counseling. If there are no objections, the minister administers the following covenant:

Will you sincerely promise in the presence of God and these witnesses that you will accept the [this] Bible as the Word of God, believe and practice its teachings rightly divided—the New Testament as your rule of faith and practice, government and discipline, and walk in the light to the best of your knowledge and ability? The answer is, I will.

(A Unified Covenant BDP Report 2018 – Covenant Statement)

Even though in 1987 the work “only” was not used in the English version of the covenant and does not appear in the 1987 Spanish Assembly Minutes either, it was later inserted in the translation of the Spanish version.

- We, therefore, recommend that the word “only” be dropped from the Spanish and any other language version of the covenant, so we can have a unified Covenant.
- We recommend that all translations of the Covenant should have the same content.
- We would also like to encourage our ministers to continue administering the membership Covenant to the new members being received into our fellowship.

(100th International Assembly 2018, BDP Report)

It is important that each potential member responds affirmatively to the obligation. Then the minister may say, “By virtue of the authority that is vested in me as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, I pronounce you a member of the Church of God of Prophecy.” It is customary to allow the congregation to extend the right hand of fellowship, welcoming the new members into the church. The local church clerk should record the name and address of each new member immediately.

How to Transfer a Member (This is from the 1992 Business Guide)

Transfer Procedure: Transfers should be made only by order of the local church in regular or called conference; or when a church ceases to function, the state/national/regional overseer can transfer members. We feel there should not be undue delay in presenting request for transfers to the conference for action after they have been received. (69th AM, 1974, p. 130, QSC).

When transfer of membership is made from one church to another, we recommend that the church clerk to which the transfer is sent advise the church clerk from which it was received as to whether it was accepted. The transfer should be accepted or rejected not later than the next regular conference (59th AM, 1964, p. 131, QSC).

(See Transfer form on page 171)

C. Teachings of the Church of God of Prophecy

The Church of God of Prophecy stands for the whole Bible rightly divided—the New Testament as the only rule of government and discipline. Listed below are some basic Bible beliefs:

REPENTANCE—Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19.

JUSTIFICATION—Romans 5:19; Titus 3:7.

REGENERATION/BORN AGAIN—Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:1, 4, 5; John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 3:9.

SANCTIFICATION—subsequent to Justification; Romans 5:2; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:12; 1 John 1:9.

HOLINESS—Luke 1:74, 75; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; Hebrews 12:14.

BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT—subsequent to cleansing, the enduement of power for service; Matthew 3:11; Luke 24:49–53; Acts 1:4–8.

SPEAKING IN OTHER TONGUES—as the evidence of the baptism with the Holy Ghost; John 15:26; Acts 2:4; 10:44–46; 19:6.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT—Galatians 5:22, 23; Ephesians 5:9; Philippians 1:11.

FULL RESTORATION OF THE GIFTS TO THE CHURCH—

1 Corinthians 12:1, 7–10, 28, 31; 14:1.

SIGNS FOLLOWING BELIEVERS—Mark 16:17–20; Romans 15:18, 19; Hebrews 2:4.

DIVINE HEALING—provided for all in the atonement; Psalm 103:3; Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 8:17; James 5:14–16; 1 Peter 2:24.

WATER BAPTISM—Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:8–10; John 3:22, 23; Acts 8:36–38; 10:47, 48; 16:33; 19:3–5.

THE LORD'S SUPPER—Luke 22:17–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–33.

WASHING THE SAINTS' FEET—John 13:4–17; 1 Timothy 5:10.

TITHING AND GIVING—Genesis 14:18–20; 28:20–22; Malachi 3:10; Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6–9; Hebrews 7:1–21.

RESTITUTION WHERE POSSIBLE—Matthew 3:8; Luke 19:8, 9; Romans 13:8.

PRE-MILLENNIAL SECOND COMING OF JESUS—first, to resurrect the dead saints and to catch away the living saints to meet Him in the air; Matthew 24:27; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17—second, to reign on earth 1,000 years; Zechariah 14:4, 5; Luke 1:32; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10; Jude 14, 15; Revelation 5:10; 19:11–21; 20:4–6.

RESURRECTION—Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15; Revelation 20:5, 6.

ETERNAL LIFE FOR THE RIGHTEOUS—Matthew 25:46; Luke 18:30; John 10:28; Romans 6:22; 1 John 5:11–13.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT FOR THE WICKED—no liberation nor annihilation; Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9; Revelation 20:10–15; 21:8.

ABSTINENCE FROM ALL LIQUOR OR STRONG DRINKS—

Proverbs 20:1; 23:29–32; Isaiah 28:7; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:10; Galatians 5:21.

CONCERNING TOBACCO, OPIUM, MORPHINE, ETC.—Isaiah 55:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31, 32; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:3–8; James 1:21.

CONCERNING FOOD AND DRINKS—Romans 14:2, 3, 17; 1 Corinthians 8:8; 1 Timothy 4:1–5.

ON THE SABBATH—Romans 14:5, 6; Colossians 2:16, 17.

ADORNMENT—the Christian’s use of adornment should be guided by the biblical principles of sobriety, modesty, submission, and self-discipline; Matthew 16:24; 1 Timothy 2:1–10; 1 Peter 3:17; 1 John 2:16. (*88th Assembly Minutes*, 1994, p. 155; Committee for Biblical Doctrine and Polity Report.) Scripture explicitly teaches the use of adornment for occultic, lascivious, and idolatrous practices is prohibited (Acts 8:9; 13:6; 19:19; 1 Corinthians 5:10; 6:9; Galatians 5:19–21).

MEMBERSHIP IN LODGES/SECRET SOCIETIES—Matthew 5:34; John 18:20; 2 Corinthians 6:14–17; James 5:12.

WHOLESOME SPEECH OF THE BELIEVER—Matthew 5:34; James 5:12.

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE—Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:18–25; Deuteronomy 6:7; Matthew 5:32; 14:3, 4; 19:3–12; Mark 10:12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 5:1–5, 6:9–18; 7:2, 11; Colossians 3:18–21.

Note: For further information, see the revised and expanded *Biblical Principles, Beliefs, and Practices of the Church of God of Prophecy*, based on International Assembly changes; see *Ministry Policy Manual, 2010*, Appendix 1.

D. Affirmation—Bible Translations

“... we recommend that this Assembly give voice of approval of the English King James Version of the Bible as being the authority for our Church doctrine and teaching” (*56th Assembly Minutes*, Section 4, September 18, 1961, pages 131, 132).

“... we recommend that this Assembly give voice of approval of the Spanish Antigua Version de Casiodoro de Reina of the Bible up to 1909 A.D. as being the authority for our Church doctrine and teaching in the Spanish language” (*66th Assembly Minutes*, Section 9, September 13, 1971, page 143). **These citations are the historical rulings of the Church of God of Prophecy concerning Bible Translations.**

In recent years, there has been a tremendous advance in scholarly work concerning biblical translations that have utilized the increased knowledge of the original languages of Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. Additionally, cultural understandings of the modern English, Spanish, French, and other languages have made the archaic words of past translations more difficult for the average reader to comprehend and respond appropriately.

Furthermore, the message of the Gospel is now being translated into scores of other global languages. Daily, we are challenged to face the need to present the Gospel in the most effective methods possible to reach all nations. The Church of God of Prophecy has become an international movement encompassing many languages and cultures. As such, we must affirm the diversity of appropriate translations needed for the ever-widening harvest throughout the nations.* All mankind needs to hear and read the “good news” in the language that speaks to their understanding.

In light of this urgent need of the harvest, we encourage our ministers to use appropriate translations in their preaching that will bring all people to the saving light of Jesus Christ. While we embrace the earlier translations referenced in the 1961 and 1971 Assembly rulings, we also want to encourage our ministers to use other legitimate and reliable translations to plant the seed of the gospel of Jesus into every hungry heart and to inspire a deeper understanding of God (ACBDP Report, 96th Assembly, 2010).

E. Affirmation—The Presence and Manifestations of the Holy Spirit

During the last three decades, the Holy Spirit has been poured out to such an extent that many believe we are continuing to live in the time of the fulfillment of Acts 2:15–18, when God said, “I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.” Spirit-filled believers make up the largest and fastest-growing segment of Christianity in the world. The academic world is interested; governments are interested; books are being written; and studies are being done about this worldwide movement.

At the same time, Christianity in the Western world seems to be slowed or drifting from Spirit-filled influence. During the last decade, there has been external influence by misconceptions portrayed in the media as well as internal influence from Christian leaders to distract, suppress, and, in some cases, outright oppose any visible ministry or manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Some have advocated that the spiritual gifts or corporate ministries of the Holy Spirit do not have place in public worship today.

This persuasion has resulted in not only the rapid decline of spiritual manifestations in the church, but it has also subsequently discouraged believers from actively seeking the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is this urgent matter that recently led the Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches of North America to entertain a discussion with the Pentecostal Society of Scholars as to how bishops and pastors can best respond to this imminent challenge. The conclusion among scholars and ecclesiastical leaders gathered in March 2009 was that Spirit-filled ministries must rise up with

new inspiration to live and minister in the fullness of Pentecost, thereby demonstrating a more vibrant and effective approach to ministry than those who would water down the activity of the Spirit, seeking approval from seekers and more liberal elements in Christianity today. The Church of God of Prophecy wants to go on record as believing and practicing **THE PRESENCE AND MANIFESTATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**.

While there has always been a need among our leadership and pastors to maintain biblical order and decent behavior in the House of the Lord, such zeal for structure and fear of false manifestations of the Holy Spirit should never be practiced in a manner to “quench the Spirit” or “despise prophecies” (1 Thessalonians 5:19, 20). Subsequently, this should encourage us to embrace “spiritual discernment” that enables church leaders to both enhance and encourage the genuine moving of the Holy Spirit that edifies and comforts believers. Scriptures are abundant throughout the New Testament in that such ministries are a fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to send to us “another comforter” (John 14:16, 17). Furthermore, the Bible undeniably declares, “. . . Be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). A careful examination of the Greek verb translated “be filled” shows that it is a present tense, revealing that this blessing is one that we can experience now. The fact that the verb is used in the imperative mood does not leave the obedient disciple an option. Since the verb is also in the passive voice, it is not something we gain by human effort or achievement, but is done for him or her as they submit to God (Acts 2:38, 39).

Adding to this personal renewal in Jesus Christ, we must ask ourselves, “What happens when Holy Spirit-filled believers go to church?” Paul clearly answers this question when he writes to the Corinthian church. He expressly details the various gifts of the Holy Spirit that are given “. . . for the profit of all,” namely word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gift of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:4–11). These phenomena need not only to occur in the congregation but should go beyond. As Paul unfolds the blessing of these manifestations, he also gives anointed instructions about abuses and how to handle such anomalies (14:6–33). But nowhere in the text does the apostle command or insinuate that these manifestations of the Holy Spirit should ever be rooted out from the experience of corporate worship by the believers. Instead, the apostle, when speaking even to a church rife with abuses, still encourages and gives imperative commands that these ministries are essential to edifying and empowering the church (1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:1–5, 39).

Throughout the Acts of the Apostles, speaking in tongues in the public arena was not seen as a detractor, but as a source of interest to unbelievers

and as an enjoyment, even ministry, to believers. We see in multiple references both the attraction that speaking in tongues offered to those in the community and the encouragement for a bolder witness that it gave to the disciples (Acts 2:1–8; 4:31–33; 10:44–48; 19:1–6). In a world that has become increasingly attracted to the cults, the media, and techno gadgets, the Holy Spirit's presence is one key ingredient in our churches that can attract and fill the needs of people hungry for something beyond their daily life of drudgery. In fact, this actuates the blessing and need of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23) to strengthen the believer in their normal life experience.

In the Church of God of Prophecy, our roots lie in the Holiness-Pentecostal historical tradition that was anchored to biblical truth. If there is no evidence in our church services today to give witness to this outward manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we will simply appear as imposters. On the other hand, when the Spirit is active among us, His anointing is obvious to unbelievers and will work powerfully in their hearts and lives. We encourage this ministry body to pray, entertain, and welcome genuine miracles, healings, speaking in tongues, and other manifestations such as described in 1 Corinthians 12. These must no longer be the rare exception or never practiced; rather, we commend to our pastors and leadership that these gifts, the very moving of the Holy Spirit, will draw men and women to come and see what is happening within your community of believers. We encourage our ministers and our people to freely use their anointed gifts to minister to others (1 Peter 4:10, 11).

In this age, there is a spiritual thirst among people to experience God, and the Church of God of Prophecy must be prepared to offer them the Spirit that can quench this desire. Let the Church be Spirit-filled and ready to offer deliverance, inspired truth, and real-life victory. We are truly thankful that there are areas in the world where the flames of the Spirit are burning brightly, and we commend such fervency with an admonition to continue to allow the Holy Spirit to spread. Indeed, we must now commit ourselves once again to be churches filled with the spiritual outpourings that can refresh and change people's lives (ACBDP Report, 96th Assembly, 2010).

F. ONE ACCORD CURRICULUM

Our COGOP curriculum, One Accord Resources, continues to be one of the best and most widely circulated in the Pentecostal market. Our Spanish material is growing and being used by both the International Pentecostal Holiness Church and the Church of God. And GAP, our young adult curriculum, is growing into one of the largest Pentecostal young adult

curricula available, as it's being used and promoted by the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, and the International Pentecostal Holiness Church. Our partnerships are growing, and we expect to announce even more in the near future. We would like to encourage our churches to be a part of this partnership by purchasing and using One Accord curriculum. (100th International Assembly, Administrative Committee Report 2018)

IV. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

A member who, through the deception of Satan, has become disloyal or backslidden presents a challenging problem for the local church and the pastor. Before dealing with such a one, biblical attitudes must be prevalent in the lives of those seeking to bring about reconciliation. Such attitudes are love, patience, and humility.

A. Objects of Church Discipline

Those who must deal with this problem should have the soul of the erring one on their hearts, not his/her wrongdoing or failings (Galatians 6:1). If possible, these should not be mentioned. Three objects should be kept in mind:

1. The Glory of God

Anything that properly requires discipline is dishonoring God. If a sinner is recognized as a member of the church, the body of Christ, it reflects on God's holiness, making Him appear to approve of sin.

2. The Purity of the Church

It is only through formative and corrective discipline that the local churches can advance in purity and perfection. Urging the expelling of an unworthy member, Paul said, "... Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Corinthians 5:6).

3. The Spiritual Good of the Member

The persons who exercise discipline should have as their ultimate objective the salvation or restoration of the erring member. This is the principle reason for church discipline (1 Corinthians 5:3-5).

B. Classes of Offense

Two different kinds, or classes, of offense are described in the New Testament:

1. The Private or Personal Offense

This is an offense brought about by one member who is in conflict

with another. In Matthew 18:15–17, our Lord instructs us to begin reconciliation by private confrontation. Thus, the first step is to go to the offender privately and seek to bring about reconciliation. This may resolve the conflict. If not, the second step is to confront the erring one with one or two witnesses (preferably friends of the offender). If this effort proves fruitless, the third step is to bring the matter to the church for confrontation.

It must be remembered not to take the last step first; it must also be remembered that it is the offended one who is to select one or two witnesses to go with him/her to the offender. The church may elect to do this again later, but first the offended one must do it. Up to this point, reconciliation has been the goal. When the church confronts the offender, then restoration becomes the church's goal (2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15).

2. The Public or General Offense

This is an offense against the church that brings reproach on the body of Christ through unholy living, spreading false doctrine, or bringing division within the church. Such an offense is usually dealt with without delay. Paul warned Timothy to withdraw himself from those who consent not to wholesome words (1 Timothy 6:3–5). To the Romans he wrote, “. . . Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

Reconciliation of this magnitude requires a different approach from that of the private offense. The pastor, and perhaps the local deacons, should confront the offender about his/her attitude and intent. If there is no desirable change after one or two confrontations, the church may need to resort to exclusion (Titus 3:10). However, the church must realize that discipline is not punishment. Punishment has the past in mind; it is retributational. Discipline has the future in mind; it says, “We love you too much to allow you to continue repeating this offense.” The possibility of exclusion sets the stage for restoration by showing the severity of this kind of offense.

V. THE LOCAL CHURCH CONFERENCE

Note: Approved Minutes of conference should always be dated and signed by both the pastor and church clerk.

A. The Constituents

The conference is open to every member of the local body. All members have a voice in all business matters; however, the Assembly has advised that

“children be given no voice . . . until they are of age to use wisdom” (*45th Assembly Minutes*, 1950, p. 110).

B. Types of Conferences

Local church conferences generally fall into one of two categories—regular or called.

1. The regular quarterly conferences are advised for the first Monday night in June, September, December, and March (for quarters ending in May, August, November, and February). A quorum consists of all members present at the conferences after due announcement.
2. A called conference may be convened by the pastor or overseer at any time necessary—even at the beginning or close of a regular worship service. However, it is advised that
 - a. called meetings should be announced ahead of time, especially for other than routine matters—transfers, for example;
 - b. a called conference should not be held unless the business cannot wait until the next regular conference;
 - c. business should never be transacted hastily or hurriedly, or as an effort to address issues while a known objector is absent; and
 - d. only the business that necessitated the called conference should be acted upon.

Note: Other matters may be discussed, but official action should not be taken unless the membership has been duly notified and those present are agreeable to official action by overwhelming consensus or one-accord as the case may be. In the eyes of the law, “legal business” might be declared illegal if transacted without proper notice being given to the membership in advance.

C. Purpose and Objective

There are generally four purposes for the regular conference:

1. To keep all members informed of the progress of the local church by reviewing the work through reports of the clerk and treasurer, local leaders, and pastoral care ministry.
2. To receive and grant membership transfers.
3. To transact all other business relative to the efficient operation of the local church.
4. To develop plans for the outreach and spiritual development of the local church.

The objective of conferences is to obtain the best possible solutions to local church problems, giving all members equal opportunity to express themselves.

In light of the above purposes and objective, it is advised that the general membership be informed of any official actions taken by the conference. After all, all members will be expected to cooperate in the actions of the conference, and they are entitled to know what was done.

D. Officers of the Conferences

Three officers are directly involved in local church conferences:

1. Pastor

The pastor is the moderator. If there is no pastor, the overseer has authority to act or appoint a licensed minister to preside.

2. The Church Clerk

The church clerk keeps the minutes of the meeting, reads the previous minutes and all papers and correspondence as requested, and signs the officially accepted minutes along with the moderator.

a. The specific duties of the church clerk are . . .

- 1) taking and recording the minutes of all business procedures;
- 2) sending out and receiving membership transfers;
- 3) writing letters authorized by the conference;
- 4) answering requests for information from the national/regional/state office and International Offices; and
- 5) preserving and filing all papers and records of the church as assigned to him/her.

b. The clerk's records include . . .

- 1) an alphabetized church membership roll with current addresses and telephone numbers;
- 2) historical and statistical information about each member, such as date of birth, date added to the church, date of transfer received/ granted, and date disfellowshipped, etc.;
- 3) copies of incoming and outgoing reports; and
- 4) completed minutes of all meetings that are an official record of transactions of important events.

3. The Church Treasurer

The church treasurer reads the financial report and keeps the books

ready for questions or inspections. Sometimes, one person serves as both clerk and treasurer, especially in smaller churches. For the protection of the funds and the treasurer's own integrity, all church funds should be deposited in a church bank account, never in the individual's personal account; and they should not be kept on one's person or in the home.

Financial Ethics:

In order to provide protection to the pastoral/ministry family and avoid a possible conflict of interest, and in the interest of fiscal integrity, pastors or members of the pastoral family should not serve as treasurer of the ministry body served. (This also applies to the state/regional/national levels of ministry)

In extreme circumstances, where there appears to be no other option, approval must be granted by the state/regional/national overseer. For states/regions/nations, approval must be granted by the respective general presbyter. (*98th International Assembly Journal (Minutes) 2014*; F&S Committee Report pg. 180)

a. The treasurer's duties include:

- 1) receiving and holding all funds as authorized by the church—tithes, general and special offerings, and ministry funds;
- 2) keeping proper account of all monies received and disbursed, including each individual's tithes and contributions for verification of non-taxable contributions;
- 3) the proper filing of all receipts, vouchers, and other papers relating to financial accounts;
- 4) the making of all necessary financial reports, both monthly and quarterly;
- 5) making himself/herself fully acquainted with the general church's financial system.

E. Duties and Powers of the Conference

The local church in conference has certain duties, along with the power or authority to carry them out:

1. To select the local church trustees.
2. To direct the raising and spending of all monies not already designated by the International Assembly.
3. To accept and grant membership transfers.

4. To discipline and/or reconcile members of the local congregation, when necessary.
5. To set forth candidates for the ministry, with the recommendation of the overseer.
6. To receive an account of the business of the International Assembly in the first regular conference after that Assembly.
7. To assist in setting the days and times for the regular church services.
8. To sell, borrow, or execute a mortgage on local church property after proper consent of the General Trustees through the Chief Clerk.

Note: All actions are subject to review by the general presbyters and national/regional/state overseers.

F. Order of Business

While not absolutely necessary to use the *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised*, it provides a guide for the orderly conduction of business. These, however, should not interfere with the spiritual nature of the conference when spiritual matters are being decided.

1. The following is the usual order of business:
 - a. Official opening of the conference, usually with a statement similar to the following: “The local church at _____ is now in business conference to transact any business which may properly come before it” (The statement is necessary to make the acts of business legal and binding in case the minutes should be needed in legal procedure any time in the future. The clerk must include this statement in the minutes of each conference.)
 - b. Minutes should be read by the clerk of the last regular conference, and of any and all called conferences held since, with opportunity being given for corrections and acceptance.
 - c. The treasurer’s report, including an itemized statement of receipts, disbursements, and balances, with discussion, corrections, and acceptance following.
 - d. Reports from the ministry activities of the local church, which include those of the deacons and lay ministers.
 - e. Pastor’s report of the work done in the Pastoral Care Ministry.
 - f. Receiving and granting of membership transfers.
 - g. Reopening of any unfinished business from previous conferences.
 - h. New and/or miscellaneous business.

2. The rights and duties of members during the conference include the following:

- a. The right to offer motions or resolutions.
- b. The right to discuss or explain (or request explanation of) any subject brought before the conference.
- c. The right to hold the floor without interruption until finished unless such is called out of order by the moderator.
- d. The duty to await recognition by the moderator when introducing or discussing a motion or when otherwise desiring to speak.
- e. The duty to refrain from speaking on any matter not properly moved, seconded, and stated by the moderator.
- f. The duty to not interrupt one who has been given the floor even when opposing a matter.
- g. The duty to indicate a choice by a “yea” or “nay” or “abstain” when “the question” is put before the conference by the moderator.

G. The Decision-Making Process

All administrative decisions are concluded by the local conference when an overwhelming consensus of the members present are in agreement. However, spiritual matters, such as setting one forth in the ministry or withdrawing fellowship from a member, are to be decided upon in “one-accord.”

H. The Role of the Local Church’s Finance and Stewardship Committee Recommendation

We recommend that the former Finance and Appropriation Committee be re-named the “Finance and Stewardship Committee” (or an acceptable equivalent). The pastor, in cooperation with the local church conference, should appoint or select the members of the Finance and Stewardship Committee. This Committee should meet as often as needed to discharge, monitor, and plan the financial affairs of the church. Responsibilities of the Committee would include the following:

1. Development of a detailed financial plan (budget) that ensures the local church’s operational expenses and income are balanced and presented to the local church conference for approval. The Committee should work closely with the pastor and church treasurer to ensure the effectiveness of the financial plan.

2. Ensure that attention is given at the annual planning stage to the disbursement of all funds as outlined by the International Assembly and the state, regional, and national conventions.
3. The Committee should give a report of its work, at least annually, to the local church conference. The church treasurer, however, should be the one responsible to give detailed financial information appertaining to fund balances and accounts at each quarterly conference.
4. Decisions to encumber existing church property or any transaction that would increase the indebtedness of the church should be carefully evaluated by the committee before being presented to the local church conference for approval.
5. Pastors should be careful in presenting any financial matters to the business conference that do not have the overwhelming support of the Committee. The pastor should always be an active member of the Committee.
6. The Committee should encourage and plan for effective year-round stewardship education at the local church along with measures designed to demonstrate financial accountability.

We would encourage churches, both large and small, to empower their Finance and Stewardship Committee to perform fully the function and role as recommended. This would be a good opportunity for the church to widen the involvement of the membership in the financial management process. By ensuring diversity and balanced representation in the choice of men and women who will serve, a clear statement in respect to openness and accountability can be made. (*91st International Assembly, Minutes 2000* pp. 95, 96)

In the same way that our overseers have found that the national/regional/state Finance and Stewardship Committee added to the credibility of their office, we believe that the local church's Finance and Stewardship committee will similarly be a blessing to pastors.

This recommendation supersedes all former International Assembly recommendations in respect to the local church financial committee.

I. Engaging Our Youth and Children

Editor's Note: Refer to Stewardship Committee Report, 92nd Assembly, 2002.

Rationale

During the last several years we have implemented many changes in the financial structure of this Church. In so doing, we have failed two of the most energetic groups: the youth and children of the Church. We feel the time has come to release this dynamic resource for the betterment of the kingdom of God by encouraging the development of fund-raising efforts throughout the world.

We envision our youth and children being involved in projects such as helping build medical facilities in developing countries, youth and children's conferences outside North America, youth and children's homes or schools in any part of the world. This may also include projects such as the printed Gospel, not only in tract form but Bibles as well, for nations and areas such as China, India, Central America, and Africa. This would include any other worthwhile project that may arise. When one project is completed, a new project should then be implemented. This is an opportunity for the youth and children of the Church to join in a ministry project that connects them to the harvest God is leading us to reach.

Recommendation

We therefore recommend a process be implemented that will connect the youth of our Church to specialized projects such as those stated in the rationale. This is meant to be an ongoing course of action made up of short-term projects.

We further recommend the director of the Leadership Development & Discipleship Department be the facilitator of this ministry opportunity.

J. Corporate Tithing Recommendation

Editor's Note: Refer to Assembly Committee on Biblical Doctrine and Polity Report, 92nd Assembly, 2002.

Although we should avoid legalistic demands, the very structure of the creation of God contains the principle of tithing and giving. In the New Testament, churches were taught the importance of sharing their resources to meet the needs of their brethren beyond their local churches. The apostle Paul directed Corinth to follow in the practice of the churches in Galatia by sharing their resources or gifts to help the mother church in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1–3). He called upon them to come into loving submission to his authority and share their financial blessings with

the greater body. Similarly, our Assembly has given directives to our churches today to practice the sharing of their tithe and offerings to bless the global Church. As local churches bear their gifts to this God-ordained authority, they too shall prosper from such obedience in love. In our own Church history it has been our practice to support the global ministries of this worldwide body through the sharing of ten percent of the tithe from our local churches to the International Offices, and through mission giving, Harvest Partners, and Helping Hands as adopted by the International Assembly. This is a biblically sound practice, and we therefore recommend that our dedicated congregations continue in these faithful and charitable practices.

MINISTRY POLICIES

I. CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY MINISTRY POLICY MANUAL MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES

The competencies below are divided into three broad categories. First are general ministerial competencies, which are applicable to all levels of leadership in the church (It should be noted that “ministerial” in this instance includes lay ministers and other local leaders as well as licensed ministers). Second are pastoral competencies that are applicable specifically to those gifted for and called to or within the shepherding ministry of the pastor; and third, competencies for national/regional/state overseers, general presbyters, and directors and trans-local personnel of the International Offices as applicable and appropriate to their functions.

It is important to note that these competencies form developmental guidelines and not necessarily prescribed checklists. With the exception of our Lord, no one, not even the apostles, possessed all of these skills, abilities, and functional knowledge. Therefore, these should be used as motivation for continued growth, not as barriers to ministry. Furthermore, it should be strongly emphasized that the mere exhibition of all these competencies would never guarantee success in ministry. Apart from calling, anointing, and a helpless dependence on the Holy Spirit, achievement of these items by an individual is of little, real value.

These competencies may be modified in order to best reflect the desired outcomes and goals of regional leadership and to meet the needs of the region’s and local church’s ministries. These can also serve, at all levels, as a basis for the criteria against which evaluations can be done.

A. General Ministerial Competencies

In order to be fully equipped for the work of ministering, a person should know or be able to do the following:

1. Learn and practice the process of personal spiritual and character formation in developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and, in so doing, become conformed to His image.
2. Have a general knowledge of the nature, history, importance, background, and content of the Bible.
3. Have a working knowledge of the various methods of Bible study and be able to utilize these methods in their growth and ministerial work.
4. Become familiar with the various types of evangelism (personal, mass, cross-cultural, etc.), in order to be personally equipped to effectively share the gospel.
5. Develop communication skills that will enable effective interaction with other people, (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, listening).

6. Develop relational skills that will enable them to work effectively with those to whom and with whom they minister.
7. Understand and practice biblical principles of stewardship in regard to time, money, and service, and teach others to be committed to these principles.
8. Develop and utilize the basic skills of counseling so that a broad spectrum of people can be helped.
9. Have a working knowledge of the history of Christianity, including the major events, people, and movements that have brought Christianity to its current state.
10. Have a working knowledge of the history, polity, organization, and doctrine of the Church of God of Prophecy.
11. Understand the major issues of Christian ethics and how those issues impact the daily life of the Christian.
12. Be aware of ways in which the Christian faith can be lived out practically, not just theoretically, by developing and participating in practical ministries that relate to the actual life situations of people.
13. Learn and practice the skills necessary to be a lifelong learner, so that the process of personal development can continue.
14. Be knowledgeable of the major issues of systematic theology and relate them to the lives of those to whom they minister.
15. Develop the leadership and appropriate administrative skills necessary to carry out ministry in the church and world.

These competencies are considered of such vital importance that all who acknowledge a call to, or gifting for, any area of ministry, lay or professional, should strive to develop them.

B. Competencies for Pastors

In addition to the general competencies for all ministers, those who serve as pastors should know or be able to do, the following:

1. Develop and model personal spiritual disciplines (e.g. Prayer, fasting, meditation, study of the Word, servant-hood, submission, simplicity, confession, etc.).
2. Carry out the biblical principles of shepherding and caring for the spiritual needs of the members and friends of the local church.
3. Understand and utilize a variety of leadership styles appropriate to differing circumstances.
4. Develop and utilize problem-solving skills.

5. Develop and utilize skills in personal counseling and human relations.
6. Exhibit skills in developing the leadership potential of local members.
7. Understand, and be sensitive to, the role of the national/regional/state and international church and their various ministries.
8. Utilize biblical principles and procedures to discipline and restore fallen (erring) members.
9. Maintain positive intra-church relationships through constant, open, and effective communications with members, fellow-workers, peers, and those responsible for the overall supervision of the churches.
10. Display biblical integrity and ethics in such areas as treatment of others, impartiality, confidentiality, dependability, etc.
11. Understand and practice appropriate standards for the management of church property, facilities, equipment, and technology.
12. Understand and practice sound principles of financial management.
13. Understand and practice sound principles in legal matters.
14. Work with the overseer to initiate and carry out church-planting projects and new-field evangelism.
15. Be familiar with, and be able to use, proper techniques for moderating services and business sessions.
16. Exhibit effective techniques for program/calendar planning, taking into account the various activities of the national/regional/state and international church, the local community, and families.
17. Lead the local church in the process of discipleship and assimilation of new attendees/members.
18. Act with grace and proper ministerial etiquette in every situation that may arise in the congregation, community, and in the home.
19. Conduct personal ministry through visitation of both members and non-members in homes, medical facilities, places of business, etc.
20. Perform with proper dignity the various ministerial duties required on special occasions such as baby dedications, weddings, and funerals.
21. Prepare and preach doctrinally sound and effective sermons based on the Word of God under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.
22. Provide visionary leadership by clearly demonstrating God-given anointing and vision for the ministries and future of the local church.
23. Lead the worship life of the local church, in terms of both public, corporate worship, and lifestyle worship.*

24. Lead the local church in fulfilling the Great Commission within the local community.
25. Lead the congregation in developing a global worldview of the local church's responsibility in expanding world mission efforts through such activities as sending, giving, and personal support of missionaries.
26. Be aware of, and minister to, the unique needs of families, both his/her own and those within the local congregation.
27. Lead the church in, or provide other leadership for, Bible-based educational activities.
28. Lead the church, when necessary, through the process of change and transformation.
29. Manage the varied demands placed on the spiritual, physical, and emotional resources of a pastor through balanced seasons of personal retreat, restoration, and recreation.
30. Encourage and model the habits of lifelong learning.

C. Competencies for National/Regional/State Overseers, General Presbyters, International Ministry Directors, And Trans-Local Personnel

In addition to the general competencies for all ministers, those who serve as national/regional/state overseers, general presbyters, international ministry directors, and trans-local personnel, should know or be able to do the following:

1. Develop and model personal spiritual disciplines (e.g. prayer, fasting, meditation, study of the Word, servant-hood, submission, simplicity, confession, etc.).
2. Carry out the biblical principles of shepherding and encouraging overseers, pastors, and other ministers.
3. Understand and utilize a variety of leadership styles appropriate to differing circumstances.
4. Develop and utilize problem-solving skills.
5. Develop and utilize skills in personal counseling and human relations.
6. Exhibit skills in developing the leadership potential of other ministers.
7. Understand, and be sensitive to, the biblical role of the local church and its various ministries as well as of the whole Church and its national and international ministries and purposes.

***Note:** The term “lead” includes making adequate provision/s for, through effective delegation.

8. Utilize biblical principles and procedures to discipline and restore fallen (erring) ministers.
9. Perform the role prescribed for the overseer in the process of ministerial credentialing.
10. Maintain positive intra-church relationships through constant, open, and effective communications with church officials, fellow-workers, pastors, etc. at all levels of the church.
11. Display biblical integrity and ethics in such areas as treatment of others, impartiality, confidentiality, dependability, etc.
12. Understand and practice appropriate standards for the management of church property, facilities, equipment, and technology.
13. Understand and practice sound principles of financial management.
14. Understand and practice sound principles in legal matters.
15. Promote, encourage, and model the principles of church-planting and new-field evangelism.
16. Be familiar with, and be able to use, proper techniques of moderating services, conferences, conventions, and business sessions.
17. Exhibit effective techniques of program/calendar planning, taking into account the various activities of the local churches and other church agencies.
18. Encourage and model the habits of lifelong learning.
19. Develop, promote, encourage, and deliver a leadership development/ministerial education program in the nation/region/state and internationally as appropriate.

D. General Ministry Advice

The ministry is a high and holy calling and should not be entered into lightly. A deep reverence and sincerity toward God, who has called the candidate, should always be first and foremost in priority as he prepares for entering the ministry. It is not the church that calls, but God. Therefore, one's first allegiance should be to God. The candidate must meet some fundamental requirements and qualifications before he is licensed or ordained. God's work does not operate in a vacuum, but in the real world where civil duties are required, as well as spiritual. The apostle Paul instructed Timothy to "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (4:5).

II. RECOMMENDING A MEMBER FOR THE CHURCH MINISTRY

A. The Local Church's Responsibility

The local church's responsibility in the matter of ministerial recommendations is no less awesome than the individual's profession of the calling. It is too sober a business to allow personal feelings or relationships to influence the recommendation. The applicant should be made aware of this from the start so that there will be no feeling of offense if the local conference does not see fit to grant the recommendation or if more time is requested.

B. The Necessity of Examination

The welfare of the church and its mandate to carry out the Great Commission requires that men and women entering the ministry be examined as to their qualifications in order that the ministry not be degraded by being committed to unworthy persons. It is expected that the candidates be of mature spiritual stature and possess the necessary gifts and abilities sufficient to lead and instruct God's people.

For this reason, no new minister shall be licensed or ordained without first having served a time of apprenticeship with experience in preaching and ministry under the supervision of a seasoned and experienced minister in the church. In this way, the church will have opportunity to observe and ascertain the candidate's potential for the ministry.

The areas of proof to the local church will include the following:

1. Evidence of the spiritual experiences of justification, sanctification, and baptism with the Holy Ghost in the everyday conduct of life, having been baptized by immersion.
2. Evidence of God's calling.
3. Evidence of aptitudes and abilities by way of positive response to the requirements.
4. Evidence of a beginner's knowledge of the Word of God and of the teachings and practices of the Church.
5. Evidence of consistent and persistent study of the Scriptures.
6. An interest in the general, ongoing program of the Church.
7. Evidence of ability to preach with a dependence on and the unction of the Holy Ghost.

Since licensure is a formal endorsement, the church has the responsibility to require the candidate to meet minimum qualification standards before granting ministerial privilege and authority. It should assist the candidate

toward meeting those requirements. The Presbytery has prescribed the completion of the *Foundations Course* before the candidate can apply for ministerial licensure. The candidate should be made aware of this so that he/she may begin immediately to apply him/herself in preparation for his/her being set forth as a minister. In some cases, the overseer may assist the candidate in completion of the course when the circumstances demand.

C. The Official Recommendation

It is the local church in conference that does the recommending of those entering the ministry. If there is reason to believe that the applicant is still not ready for the ministry, for reasons of which the overseer may not be fully aware, two possibilities exist: 1) explanatory communication between the church and the overseer; or 2) an application and endorsement, clearly reflect the situation, so that the Presbytery can reach the proper decision.

As a matter of record in the local church's minutes, it would be in order to rescind the recommendation of a candidate for the ministry if the recommendation does not result in acceptance and licensing by the proper authority. This would include recommendations for lay ministers, ministers, and bishops.

III. LAY MINISTRY

When a person (who has been saved, sanctified, filled with the Holy Ghost, and baptized by immersion) begins to recognize that he/she has been called by God into the ministry, it is necessary that he/she have a time of preparation and study to prepare him/herself for the ministry. The lay ministry period is a time when a ministerial candidate can prove him/herself deserving of being recommended for the ministry by the local church, examined by the Presbytery, and licensed by the church. The Lay Minister's Certificate is designed to give the ministerial candidate the recognition needed while gaining experience and being proven. This certificate is to be endorsed by the overseer of the nation/region/state in which the lay minister is working. It is necessary for the local church where he/she is a member to recommend the one who desires to work for the Lord to the overseer; and if in his judgment the candidate is worthy of receiving this certificate, it can be granted (*55th Assembly Minutes*, 1960, p. 134).

A. Procedure of Certification for Lay Ministry

The following are the formal steps that will be taken by the local church to prepare the candidate for being licensed:

1. The ministerial candidate will be recommended initially for the office of lay minister by the local church in regular or called conference, after being formally recommended to the church by the pastor.

2. After the local church approves the recommendation of the pastor, the *Lay Minister's Application* will be completed by the candidate. The pastor and church clerk will complete and sign the Lay Minister's Endorsement section of that application form. The completed form (both sections) will be sent to the overseer for his action.

3. The overseer will either approve or reject the application. If he rejects, he will notify the pastor and the candidate of his reason(s) and advise them what requirements remain to be fulfilled. If the application is approved, the overseer will issue the official *Lay Minister's Certificate* for the current calendar year and mail it to the pastor with instructions that it should be presented to the candidate in a public ceremony of installation and consecration. The overseer will write to commend and instruct the candidate regarding the exercise of the ministry, under the guidance of the pastor, and the duty to report quarterly to the local church conference on the form in **back of the *International Assembly Minutes***.

B. Authorization

The *Lay Minister's Certificate* authorizes the lay minister to publish, preach, and defend the gospel of Jesus Christ; to conduct prayer meetings; and to hold revivals. He/she cannot receive members, baptize, administer the Lord's Supper, conduct business meetings, or perform weddings.

C. Policies

1. The lay minister should keep a careful record of all ministerial activities so that an accurate quarterly report can be given to the local church conference on the forms provided **in the *Assembly Minutes***. This report must be made in duplicate. One copy will be sent to the overseer so that the activities may be observed from that office, and the second copy will be kept on file in the local church office.

2. When the local church concludes that a lay minister has satisfactorily been prepared to become a minister in the church, it could make known its feelings to the overseer, who could make the recommendation, at his discretion, that the candidate is to be set forth in regular conference (*78th Assembly Minutes*, 1983, p. 135).

3. The local church's endorsement of the lay minister is limited to that ministry only and does not authorize further advancement in the ministry without approval of the overseer and further action by the local church in "regular" or "called" conference.

4. The *Lay Minister's Certificate* must be renewed at the beginning of each calendar year if the lay minister wants to continue pursuing the ministry. The request for renewal should be made to the overseer.

5. When a lay minister moves to a new location, his/her membership should be immediately transferred to a church in that area. Preparation for becoming licensed may then continue between the lay minister, the local church, and the overseer. It is to be understood that this new local church would give its consideration [recommendation] at the end of the year to the person's worthiness of continuing as a lay minister. If the local church deems it wise, the lay minister would be set forth in conference in the regular manner as was done initially by the church from which the lay minister transferred (*77th Assembly Minutes*, 1982, p. 83).

IV. PROVISIONAL LAY PASTOR MINISTERIAL PERMITS

Due to the need of supplying pastors to churches in situations in which licensed ministers were in short supply or nonexistent, lay ministers and those who were called into ministry, but not yet licensed, have sometimes been given temporary, provisional permits authorizing them to do the work of pastoral ministry (baptize, administer the Lord's Supper, conduct business meetings, etc.).

These provisional permits were often issued in the form of a minister's ID card. Overseers who issued these provisional permits did so with the intent that the recipient would proceed to fulfill the requirements for licensure, beginning as a lay minister. However, it has often been the case that recipients of the provisional permits were content with their status and privilege, and did not pursue a valid minister's license, continuing to execute duties designated for licensed ministers only.

Therefore, we recommend that:

- Only newly appointed lay pastors (holding valid lay ministers' certificates) may be issued provisional permits authorizing them to perform pastoral duties normally reserved for licensed ministers (to baptize, administer the Lord's Supper, and moderate business conferences, etc.) when no licensed ministers are available to pastor a church.
- The permit will authorize the lay pastor to perform these pastoral duties only in the local church to which he/she has been appointed.

- The permit will be issued in the form of a letter, with clear limitations for validity, to extend from the term of appointment (i.e. for the convention term) to not more than two years.
- During the two-year period, the lay pastor holding the temporary ministerial permit will be expected to complete the requirements for a valid minister's license, issued by the general overseer's office.
- Lay pastors, holding lay ministers' certificates, cannot perform marriage ceremonies. However, if a couple has been previously legally married in a civil ceremony, a lay pastor may perform a Christian ceremony to bless the marriage of that couple, if they attend his/her local church.
- If, at the end of two years, the lay pastor holding a temporary provisional permit has not obtained his/her permanent minister's license, he/she may continue to serve as a lay minister, but without authorization to perform the ministry of a duly licensed pastor. (*100th International Assembly 2018 – BDP Report*)

V. LICENSED MINISTERS

All who are called of God into the preaching ministry shall be licensed with a minister's license following completion of the requirements as set forth by the general overseer in conjunction with the International Presbytery.

A. Pastoral Ministry

Those experiencing a calling into the pastoral ministry are to be set forth by the local church. After meeting specified requirements, over a certain timeframe, they are to be examined and licensed by the national/regional/state and International Offices. Pastoral responsibilities include the following:

1. The oversight of the local church (1 Peter 5:2).
2. Administration of discipline (Titus 1:13; 3:10).
3. Settling disputes among Christians (1 Corinthians 1:10).
4. Conducting public worship (1 Corinthians 14:26).
5. Preaching and teaching the Word (2 Timothy 4:2).
6. Administration of the ordinances (Matthew 28:19; John 13:15; 1 Corinthians 11:23–34).

Those men in this ministry who prove themselves worthy of being an elder could become ordained as a bishop.

B. Pastoral Tenure

1. Recommendations

Where possible, a pastoral candidate should serve an internship requirement under an experienced pastor or minister who will work in conjunction with the national/regional/state overseer. The national/regional/state overseer or a pastor who has proven pastoral ability and qualifications to teach may develop a pastoral training and educational program.

Each overseer, jointly with the ministerial review board of the nation/region/state (or group of nations/regions/states where necessary), should develop an appropriate pastoral evaluation process that is fair, orderly, and effective. Evaluations can be a means of self-improvement and accountability, and provide opportunities for both commendation and admonition. Having them periodically and consistently builds confidence, gives assurances, and keeps the participants and those they serve well-informed. This knowledge will provide a basis on which to effectively do the four-year evaluation/review. A pastor's tenure could be reviewed at any time where immorality, libelous behavior, incompetence, inability, disability, or improper conduct develops (Galatians 5:19–21). If at all possible, a mutual agreement should be reached between the overseer, pastor, and the local church about a pastoral appointment or change. While the overseer is to see that each church is supplied with a pastor, it is understood that all pastors and/or ministers under consideration must be in harmony with the principles of ministerial ethics articulated in this *Ministry Policy Manual* (91st Assembly Minutes, 2000, p. 104).

2. Pastoral Evaluation Process

Pastoral evaluations will be performed every four years. This supersedes previous rulings. There shall be an Evaluation Task Force composed of not more than six leaders—elders in good standing from each local church: one-third selected by the pastor and two-thirds by the congregation, to see that the process is properly performed. The Evaluation Task Force shall select a chairperson and a secretary from among themselves. The pastor is not to participate in the selection of two-thirds of the Evaluation Task Force or of the chairperson and secretary. Their responsibilities would include consultation with the local church congregation and the overseer to acquire the necessary information. The chairperson and secretary (or another selected Evaluation Task Force member) shall give a written, signed copy of the

report to the pastor being evaluated and to the overseer. If the pastor should so desire, he/she could request a meeting with the entire Pastoral Evaluation Task Force. The pastor should be given commendation where he/she has excelled, encouraged to take objective actions for improvement in areas of weakness, and to further develop in areas where he/she has demonstrated strength. The overseer in consultation with his respective Administrative Counseling Board (composed of at least three pastors from that nation/region/state) would deal with the report as appropriate.

3. Church Ministry Evaluation

In remaining consistent with the pastoral evaluation, a process should be developed to evaluate the ministry, vision, and direction of the local church. This process shall be performed every four years. Outside ministry opinions could be invited to assist in a non-biased evaluation. This process would be under the direction of the Evaluation Task Force. It is to be understood that all evaluations are to be conducted in a timely and orderly fashion. We recommend that each local church develop a similar process to assess the leadership of their local churches, including their ministry directors.

4. Duties and Responsibilities of the Evaluation Task Forces

It is incumbent upon the members of the Evaluation Task Forces not to express their own feelings, but to report the actual findings resulting from the evaluation process. The following guidelines would help in giving direction to the Evaluation Task Forces, as well as providing a measurement of a person's qualifications and integrity to serve in this vital capacity:

- Attendance—Willingness to attend all Evaluation Task Force meetings
- Confidentiality—Lack of this would disqualify anyone from serving on this group
- Diligence—Willingness to actively participate in doing whatever work is needed
- Prayer—Commit themselves to quality group prayer sessions
- Love—Know to exhibit love for the person being evaluated
- Compassion—Show true concern and desire to help the person improve
- Objectivity—Possess ability to see all things without partiality

- Vision—Demonstrate knowledge and support for the individual's goals

5. The Evaluation Process—Educational/Training Needs

There has been much concern and confusion in the attempt to implement the evaluation process that was introduced to the Assembly in 2000. This process seems to have inflicted much fear in the person being evaluated and sometimes justly so, as it has been used as a tool of unjust criticism. Perhaps, part of the fear is that the assessment has been made with nothing set in place to deal with the observations, both in terms of improving those being evaluated and in educating the evaluators with objectivity. As a church body, it is incumbent upon us to deal with this dilemma appropriately and to implement procedures that will afford us the best instrument, evaluators, and ministry possible.

It is important that the ministers and members involved in the evaluation process be well-informed as to their function. This is not a time to simply find fault, but to objectively assess ministry for its enhancement. Those who participate in this work must familiarize themselves with the contents of this document prior to the beginning of the process. At the beginning of the meeting to select the Evaluation Task Force members, there shall be a reading of the duties and qualifications of those who would serve on the Evaluation Task Force as it appears in this document. Education includes sufficient prayer by the church.

When an evaluation has been completed, the strengths and weaknesses of the minister would have been noted. Steps should then be taken to address the areas of weakness and further compliment strengths. The church should take active steps to provide opportunity and finances to enhance his/her potential to overcome weaknesses. Subsequent evaluations would include an assessment as to whether the improvements deemed necessary are significant (The above steps should also apply to the evaluation of overseers.).

At times, a change of leadership may be necessary because of gifting, leadership styles, congregational needs, etc. However, simply reassigning leadership to another church/region does not necessarily address the need for improvement. If appropriate training/development does not take place, the problems only resurface. Our goal should be to develop and have the best ministers possible.

Short tenures in pastoral/overseer ministry undoubtedly hinder the work. As Dr. Rick Warren notably observes in his book *The Purpose Driven Church*, “A long-term pastorate does not guarantee a church will grow, but changing pastors every few years guarantees a church won’t grow”

(Warren 1995:66). Until a few years ago, we averaged pastoral change every two years. As we move towards long-term pastorates/overseer leadership, we want to begin a process to objectively address the causes that have so often resulted in change of leadership and stymied church growth.

There is also a great need for churches to examine their own leadership and power structures to confront internal reasons for lack of church growth and constant pastoral failures in their particular locale. Frequently, overseers and pastors have lamented the fact that some churches have developed a mentality that functions under their own mindset without regard to the vision and direction a minister feels inspired by God. In such cases, it may not be the pastoral leadership that requires change or adjustment, but the core thinking and power structure of that local church. We encourage during the evaluations that every Evaluation Task Force also examine the attitudes and underlying hindrances within their own congregation that impedes the effectiveness of any minister to properly shepherd their flock.

The following are some suggested courses of action that could be considered where needed for pastors. The same principle could be applied to an overseer or local church although the practical application may differ.

- a. The pastor could consult with the local church Evaluation Task Force and work together with them in addressing the needs for improvement. The Evaluation Task Force members should be qualified to objectively help the pastor where improvements are necessary. They should be willing to pursue any outside resources that could assist the process. Consideration could also be given to a pastor selecting a small group of individuals whom he/she can have confidence in and whom can be trusted. It also stands to reason that those chosen should be stable mature Christians who can objectively assess and address problems and seek out the necessary resources to bring resolution.
- b. If the pastor and local church cannot reach an amicable agreement on which approach will be used, then the overseer should be called in to assist in the educational/mentoring process.
- c. The pastor could further be encouraged to seek out a good educational institution in their region to further assist him/her. Should such an institution not be readily available, there is an abundance of correspondence and online courses available.
- d. Consideration could be given to selecting a group of pastors in an

area (e.g., Europe/CIS/Middle East) who are qualified and feel the burden to train ministers and can assist local churches to become vibrant. It is evident that we have people among us called by God for this purpose, and it is also obvious that there is a great need for this type of ministry. This task would best be accomplished by those who have a burden for pastoral training and who are God-called shepherds.

e. Consideration could be given to establishing a Church school/college that would operate on a continual basis to especially train those who desire to enter the ministry. This of course would be open to all ministers; however, it stands to reason that all would not have the time or resources to do this. There may be the need to establish regional schools as an extension of this Church school/college to address the situation.

f. In light of this call for more emphasis on training and equipping of our ministers, there also must be an implementation of an appeal process for them. While the evaluation process may at times reveal and provide training to help alleviate weaknesses in a minister's qualifications or leadership style, there may also be situations that expose him/her to unjust criticism or unfair accusations that jeopardize his/her leadership appointment. Therefore, a process of ministerial appeal must be implemented to provide reasonable safeguards and accountability.

6. Ministerial Appeal Process

As we moved toward developing stronger and vibrant local churches, it has also been revealed that there must be some kind of "ministerial appeal process" that would give our ministry a sense of protection from false accusations and/or abuse by those in authority over them or by a group of discontent individuals who simply want to control a minister. We need to always give proper love and respect to those called into the ministry. Therefore, we recommend that when there is not public knowledge of moral or ethical failure on the part of a minister serving in the position of pastor or overseer, that prior to his or her removal from their present office, they be given a "right of appeal" to a Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group. This is paramount if he/she believes the removal from their pastoral or administrative office was not justified. The Ministerial Appeal Process is not designed for the normal pastoral or overseer appointment decisions or tenure.

This Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group would be composed of three of their colleagues serving in the same ministerial office (pastors/overseers) and chosen by either their respective general presbyter or the general overseer who will review the offense(s) by the minister that is being presented by their local church, their overseer, or their general presbyter as a basis for removal from office. If the minister is a pastor, his/her colleagues should come from pastors in the state or region. If an overseer, it shall be composed of his colleagues (overseers) within his general presbyter's area.

The process of the Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group shall be as follows: Any minister upon hearing of their impending removal from office shall have the "right of appeal" for a period of ten days after they are notified in writing (required) by their overseer or general presbyter. This appeal should be sent by the minister in written form (emails are acceptable), both to the general presbyter and general overseer's office, by the minister. At this point, the appropriate general presbyter (in the case of a pastor) or the general overseer (in the case of an overseer) shall immediately appoint a Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group of three of the minister's colleagues. This is not a standing committee, but simply a group for this specific appeal. As godly arbitrators, this counseling group shall presume no prior guilt until they have carefully weighed all the information gleaned from a joint meeting of all parties involved. This group shall then arrange within two weeks to meet with the pastor and church, pastor and overseer, or the overseer and general presbyter, whichever is appropriate to ascertain what the nature of the offense was and listen to each party's explanation of their actions (teleconference calls are acceptable by the counseling group). After they have met, if the Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group finds no evidence to nullify the action of the overseer or general presbyter in removing a minister from his office, they will simply send all parties involved a letter (within five days) stating that the minister's appeal has failed and the action taken against him/her was warranted.

After consultation by the Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group, if an action against a pastor was found to be unwarranted, then a letter should be sent (within five days) to his/her general presbyter advising him that they have found reason to question the validity of the charges against the minister and encourage his/her reinstatement to their pastoral position. A copy of their letter should be sent to the pastor also. The final decision will rest with the Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group unless the general presbyter/general overseer, along with his counseling group, can produce substantiating evidence otherwise.

If the action against an overseer's removal is found to be warranted, the Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group shall send a letter (within five days) to the general overseer (and the overseer who made the appeal) that the overseer's appeal has failed and the action taken against him was justified. If the charges against an overseer are found to be unwarranted, the Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group shall send a letter (within five days) advising the general overseer that they have found reason to question the validity of the charges against the overseer and encourage his reinstatement to his overseer position. A copy of their letter should be sent to the general presbyter also. The final decision will rest with the general overseer, who will decide whether to support their findings by reinstating the overseer or to overrule their decision only after consultation with the two vice-chairmen of the General Presbytery.

Overturning the action of any overseer or general presbyter is a serious matter and should be done only where there is no justifiable reason why the removal of a minister from his/her office was absolutely essential. The Ministerial Appeal Counseling Group should be composed of ministers who have displayed maturity and good character. Also, all matters that are given to them concerning the case should be kept extremely confidential, and their failure to do so would constitute their immediate removal from this counseling group.

7. Instruments for Evaluation

We are pleased to present the instruments for evaluation for the overseers, pastors, and church ministries. We trust this will move us toward a consistent process. As the instrument is used, we would welcome any suggestions for its improvement. We would like to commend those states/regions/nations that have already designed an instrument and implemented the evaluation process. We would also like to encourage them to continue to use the instruments, which have been proven to be successful for their state/region/nation. However, we do want to remind all states/regions/nations that the section dealing with ministerial appeal process applies to all areas of the world and all levels of ministerial leadership as defined in the document.

Additional Thoughts

We trust that these recommendations will be a blessing and help as we continue in the harvest. As we stated earlier, we know that these stated guidelines may not always be applicable in every nation where available personnel or logistics may require some modifications to this

procedure. We have included with this Report a new instrument for your Evaluation Task Force to consider using in your evaluation process. Surveys are not mandated to be distributed to the members or ministry, but your Evaluation Task Force can adapt or modify the following or use another such as the instrument found in the *2006 Ministry Policy Manual*; “Church Ministries and Pastor’s Evaluation—2006,” pp. 80–84.

We humbly recommend this Report with special appreciation to all our dedicated pastors and overseers who serve so faithfully and diligently.

Overseers and Pastors Leadership Accountability and Growth Process—2008

I. Specific Areas of Focus

A. Personal Life:

- Example as a spiritual leader in lifestyle
- Handling of personal finances (insurance, retirement portfolio, provision for family, financial counselor, continuing education, debt-free living)
- Share examples of spiritual disciplines (study, meditation and solitude, prayer, fasting, service, simplicity, stewardship, confession, celebration).
- Give us an overview of your family life (family time, achievements, vacations, future plans).

B. Ministry to the Local Church (Pastoral Role):

- Visitation (churches)
- Visitation (pastor’s home, office, restaurant)
- Keeps any confidence
- Is sensitive to local church needs
- Demonstrates a warm and caring attitude
- Relationship with ministers in the state
- Relationship with local churches/members
- Availability and sensitivity in problem situations

C. Leadership (Administrative) (If I lead, do I follow those who lead me?):

- Supports international/state missions
- Dealing with divisive ministers and/or churches
- Providing leadership when ministry discipline is needed

- Supports sound biblical doctrine
- Uses good judgment in making decisions
- Demonstrates competent problem-solving skills
- Shows consideration for differing opinions and ideas
- Is flexible enough to change as the situation demands
- Pursues tasks to completion
- Establishes a constructive climate in all meetings
- Ability as an administrator, planning and conducting state meetings
- Promptness in answering letters, telephone calls, and e-mails
- Overall image as a leader
- Good working relationship with district overseers, committees, and staff
- Effective communication (calendars, e-mail, web)

D. Financial Oversight

- Monitoring/giving sound oversight to state budget

E. Vision and Goals for the Future (Growth Process—Fulfilling the Great Commission)

- Cooperates with others to promote church goals in the state
- Efforts for evangelism and church-planting

II. General Areas of Focus

Are there any weaknesses, problems, situations that need to be addressed? (*95th Assembly Minutes*, 2008, p. 52).

Church Ministries and Pastor's Evaluation—2006

This evaluation is your opportunity to participate in assessing the areas of ministry in your local church. This instrument is divided into three sections: CHURCH MINISTRIES, PASTORAL MINISTRIES, AND GENERAL COMMENTS.

The only way this instrument can assist the pastor and the church to meet the needs of those whom we encounter as a body is to carefully and honestly answer each question. Individual responses will remain anonymous. A summary of the information will be shared with the pastor. If this is done at the time of a review, the summary will also be sent to the state, regional, or national overseer. Thank you for your prayer and contribution in this process.

Part One: Local Church Ministries

Please evaluate the following church ministries, with five being the highest rating and one being the lowest.

	Highest			Lowest	
Facilities/church building	5	4	3	2	1
Fellowship	5	4	3	2	1
The work of spiritual gifts	5	4	3	2	1
Outreach/evangelism	5	4	3	2	1
Teaching/preaching	5	4	3	2	1
Worship/music	5	4	3	2	1
Does the church make visitors feel welcome?	5	4	3	2	1
Does the church always show a genuine love for all people—members/non-members, Christian/non-Christian?	5	4	3	2	1
Does the church have leadership that works together as a team?	5	4	3	2	1
Does the church have effective Youth Ministries?	5	4	3	2	1
Does the church have effective Children’s Ministries?	5	4	3	2	1
Is the church committed to church growth?	5	4	3	2	1
Does the church have a balance between praise & worship and preaching the Word of God?	5	4	3	2	1
Does the church meet your spiritual needs?	5	4	3	2	1
Is the church sound doctrinally?	5	4	3	2	1
Do the service schedules meet your needs?	5	4	3	2	1

Subjective Input

1. If you rated some areas as weakness, what are some ideas or programs that might strengthen these areas?

2. Are there any other concerns that need to be addressed?

No _____ Yes _____ Please be specific.

3. List several goals you feel should be achieved that would benefit your local church's needs and growth in the next five to ten years.

Part Two: Pastoral Ministries

Please evaluate the effectiveness of your pastor in fulfilling his/her calling and responsibilities (five being the highest, one being the lowest).

Personal Character/Integrity

	Highest			Lowest	
How would you view your pastor's personal character?	5	4	3	2	1
How do the people in your church view his/her integrity?	5	4	3	2	1
Do you feel he/she is honest in his commitments to you?	5	4	3	2	1
Would you add any observations or comments?					

Administrative Skills

	Highest			Lowest	
Does the pastor provide clear and sufficient vision?	5	4	3	2	1
How does he/she handle the national/regional/state finances?	5	4	3	2	1
Is he/she prompt and attentive to administrative details?	5	4	3	2	1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?					

Spirituality and Worship

	Highest			Lowest	
Is the pastor a good example of worship?	5	4	3	2	1
Is the pastor a good example of prayer?	5	4	3	2	1
Does his/her preaching/teaching inspire you?	5	4	3	2	1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?					

Evangelism and Outreach

	Highest			Lowest	
Do you believe he/she promotes evangelism in your region?	5	4	3	2	1
Do you think we have an effective outreach in this church?	5	4	3	2	1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?					

Pastoral/Church Oversight

	Highest			Lowest	
Does the pastor take an interest in your local church?	5	4	3	2	1
As a minister, does he/she provide you with pastoral care?	5	4	3	2	1
In a crisis, is he/she supportive of you?	5	4	3	2	1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?					

Teamwork and Morale

	Highest			Lowest	
Does the pastor ask for your input in planning?	5	4	3	2	1
Does he/she work well as a team player with other leaders?	5	4	3	2	1
Do you feel the pastor is an encouragement to you?	5	4	3	2	1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?					

Problem Solving and Conflict Management	Highest			Lowest	
How do you feel the pastor works through conflicts?	5	4	3	2	1
How does he/she treat others who disagree with him?	5	4	3	2	1
Does he/she accept advice or counsel from other leaders?	5	4	3	2	1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?	<hr/>				
<hr/>					

Family Life and Personal Appearance	Highest			Lowest	
Does the pastor spend time nurturing his family?	5	4	3	2	1
How would you view his/her leadership in his family?	5	4	3	2	1
Does his/her appearance in public bring respect to his office?	5	4	3	2	1
Would you like to add any observations or comments?	<hr/>				
<hr/>					

General Comments:
Please state in a few words how you feel about our pastor continuing in his/her present position as Senior Pastor of this local church.

Thank you for your responses, and they will be held in strictest confidence. Please mail this survey back to the following address:

C. Evangelistic Ministry

Those who feel called to be evangelists are to preach the Gospel, lead sinners to Christ, and baptize. Much of their work will be itinerant; however, the nature of their work should not excuse them from being rooted in a local church where they may receive instruction, care, and discipline.

Those with an evangelistic ministry are to be acknowledged (set forth) by a local church and licensed through both national/regional/state and International Offices. They would receive a Minister's Certificate (license). Those men in this ministry who prove themselves worthy of being an elder could become ordained as a bishop.

Women are to be acknowledged in the preaching ministries of the church. Those who feel a calling on their lives will be set forth by a local church and, after meeting the usual ministerial requirements within a specified time frame, be examined by the national/regional/state and International Offices for issuance of a Minister's Certificate (license). National/regional/state leadership may place temporary restraints relative to their ministerial functions based upon cultural consideration that would hinder the work of the Gospel until full implementation can be achieved. The only restraints that seem to be consistent with the New Testament is upon women serving in apostolic (bishopric) or eldership roles, such as ordaining elders. Therefore, they could not be ordained as a bishop.

The evangelist should have accountability to a shepherd (pastor) and local church. Churches should consider sponsoring an evangelist as a missionary and contribute to his/her ministry. The evangelist should return periodically to the sponsoring church to labor in outreach and instruct others in soul-winning.

D. Women/Deaconesses

1. Deaconesses. The subject of "deaconesses" was first addressed in this church in the 3rd International Assembly as follows:

"It was decided that women who are qualified and feel the call to the work as given in Romans 16:2 in connection with Acts 6:3, which indicates that she is a female deacon and her work similar to a deacon, should be appointed by the church to minister. We further recommend her as the woman mentioned in Titus 2:3-5, which duty she should exercise as directed by the Spirit. She may also, along with the elder men, take her part of 1 Peter 5:1-4" (3rd Assembly Minutes, 1908, p. 28).

The 4th Assembly readdressed this subject in the following manner:

“It was decided that female ministers had their place in the Lord’s vineyard in the days of the apostles and must be recognized in these days, but for lack of precept and example for ordination in the New Testament, the Assembly advises for the present that the wives of deacons be considered deaconesses by virtue of the position and ordination of their husbands” (4th Assembly Minutes, 1909, p. 33).

Under further examination, we have found no evidence in Scripture of a woman being given a ministerial title based on her husband’s ministry.

Concerning the deacon, the 84th Assembly stated that *“He is to be a male and at least 30 years of age” (84th Assembly Minutes, 1989, p. 35).*

A careful examination of 1 Timothy 3:8–13 identifies three groups of people. In verses 8–10, it refers to male deacons, verse 11 refers to female deacons, and verse 12 mentions the wives of deacons. In verse 11, the phrase “even so must their wives” (KJV), in the Greek simply says “women.” In the context of the passage, verses 8–10 give us the qualifications of the male deacon. However, since the word for deacon in the Greek “diakonos” is the same for masculine and feminine gender, Paul is using the term “women” to refer to the female deaconess. This could not be a reference to the wife of a male deacon for the following reasons:

- a. If Paul deemed it necessary to give the qualifications of a male deacon’s wife, he would have also given the qualifications of a bishop’s wife in the proceeding verses.
- b. Even if Paul chose to give only the qualifications of a deacon’s wife, he would have done it after verse 12 where he specifically makes mention of a deacon’s wife.

In Romans 16:1, mention is made of Phoebe, who is referred to as “diakonos” in the Greek. In the King James, this is rendered as “servant.” Even though the word “diakonos” does carry the meaning of servant, the primary meaning is deacon, which could also mean deaconess. “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchrea” (The New Revised Standard, NLT).

Further research shows that the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* also renders the word “servant” in Romans 16:1 as “deaconess.” Barnes further states in his notes on the New Testament (Romans 16:1) that the phrase, “Which is a servant,” in the Greek is “*Who is a deaconess.*” He also states, “*It is clear from the New Testament that there was an order of women in the church known as deaconesses*” (*Barnes Notes on the New Testament, Quick Verse 7, CD-Rom*).

Philip Schaff acknowledges that there were deaconesses in the early church and especially in the Eastern churches, it continued until the end of the 12th Century (*History of the Christian Church, Quick Verse 7, CD-Rom*).

Given there is scriptural evidence that supports having “Female deacons,” called “deaconesses,” we recommend women who qualify as “deaconesses,” be set forth by the local church in the same manner and according to the same requirements as their male counterparts.

Furthermore, after careful and prayerful examination of the age limit currently placed on deacons to be “at least 30 years of age,” we find this has no scriptural support and is inconsistent with our present rulings that allow a licensed minister to be set forth at whatever age the local church and pastor determine is appropriate. Therefore, we recommend that the age of deacons and deaconesses be left to the discretion of the local church and pastor with consultation with their national/regional/state overseer. These candidates should be mature individuals who have proven themselves faithful.

The Assembly Committee for Biblical Doctrine and Polity for the Church of God of Prophecy humbly submit this document with deep prayer for your review and consideration for the 94th International Assembly, 2006

E. Procedures for Licensure

Note: See the Ministry Policy Manual Study Guide and Ministerial Examination.

Licensed Minister

1. After the candidate for licensure has completed a minimum of one year as a lay minister and has demonstrated competence as a minister, the pastor may recommend, with the overseer’s approval, to the local church that he/she be set forth for the ministry in a regular or called conference of the local church.
2. Once the local church has set the candidate forth for the ministry and the church clerk has recorded the action in the minutes of the church conference, the pastor and church clerk will complete the *Church and Pastor’s Endorsement*. The clerk will forward it to the overseer for his action.
3. When the overseer has received and approved the *Church and Pastor’s Endorsement* form, he will ensure the candidate is enrolled in or has completed the *Foundations Course* which has been prepared by the Center for Biblical Leadership.

To complete the *Foundations Course*, the following steps are necessary:

- a. The ministerial candidate should purchase the four courses and the *Ministry Policy Manual* that constitute the *Foundations Course*. Each of the courses contains examinations at the end that are to be completed by the ministerial candidate. The *Foundations Course* may be taken by the candidate in either a group study or as an individual study (see the accompanying description of the *Foundations Course*).
1. The Bible—Sp., Fr.; Introduction to the Bible—Eng.
2. Spiritual Formation
3. History of Christianity
4. *Church of God of Prophecy—Concise History, Polity, Doctrine and Future*
5. *Ministry Policy Manual*
 - a. The candidate who takes the *Foundations Course* as a part of a group study should have the instructor forward the grades to their overseer.
 - b. Once the examinations are completed, they should be sent to the ministerial applicant's overseer for grading. After grading, the grade sheet should be sent to the appropriate general presbyter's office, who will issue the numbered *Foundations Course* certificate that is needed for the Application for Ministerial License.
 - c. After completing the *Foundations Course* and receiving the numbered certificate of completion, the candidate should complete the Application for Ministerial License and submit it to the national/regional/state overseer.
 - d. When the applicant has completed the application, the overseer will arrange for the candidate to appear before a review board of three or five able ministers, including the overseer, who will examine the candidate regarding his/her knowledge of the Scriptures, doctrine, church history, polity, personal and family devotional life, family life, personal business, financial situation, and personal standing with those outside the church.
 - e. The review board may desire a meeting prior to the official meeting to become acquainted with the applicant. The official meeting with the review board should open with prayer; after which, the moderating overseer will read an appropriate scripture verse/passage and speak regarding the purpose of the meeting, the profound significance of the sacred calling to the ministry, and why adequate preparation is important. Following this, general questions may be asked by members of the review board in the areas named

above. The applicant will be counseled as the situation requires and as the Spirit of the Lord directs.

f. When the review board is satisfied that the candidate is ready for licensure or ordination, it shall recommend that the candidate be licensed or ordained by the presbytery. Should the review board decide that the candidate is not ready to be licensed, it will make such recommendation, or the candidate may be given more time to prepare.

g. When more time is needed, a date will be set, with the candidate's consent, for a second meeting with the review board. If he/she is not approved after the third appearance before the board, the Presbytery may conclude that he/she not be reconsidered for at least one full year, at which time the candidate would be required to start from the beginning.

h. The authority of licensure is limited to the Presbytery, composed of the general overseer/presbyter and national/regional/state overseers. review boards serve in advisory roles. Upon approval by the review board, a recommendation letter will be written by the overseer to be placed in the candidate's file in the national/regional/state office, who will also forward a copy along with the Church and Pastor's Endorsement and the completed application to the general presbyter's office. Upon receipt of the recommendation letter and other specified forms, the general overseer/presbyter will, after his approval, issue a license or ordination certificate and mail it to the overseer for his signature.

i. The newly licensed minister should be encouraged to continue preparing for ministry with CBL's Certificate programs and/or a college of his/her choice.

F. Ordination of Licensed Ministers

Editor's Note: Refer to Assembly Committee on Biblical Doctrine and Polity Report, *92nd Assembly 2002*.

Our ministers are often faced with the question (either in written or oral form), "Are you an ordained minister?" or "Have you been ordained?" For our ministers who are not bishops or deacons, their answer usually is, "No." Henceforth, we have to recognize that in many circles of the Christian community this raises questions about their ministerial credentials. For many such civil or religious authorities, if ministers are not "ordained," they have no authority in pastoral or other areas of ministry. Since a simple definition of ordination is "appointment or admission to the Christian ministry," in a very real sense, all of our licensed ministers are ordained,

especially when we consider that ordination is also understood as the “laying on of hands” with prayer. Thus, from a practical point of view, all of our licensed ministers have the right to say they are ordained without necessarily referring to the distinct ordination of bishops or deacons.

For consistency and compliance with biblical principle, we recommend that when persons receive their ministerial license this be accompanied by the “laying on of hands” with prayer. We also recommend that the ordaining of brethren as bishops or deacons remain a distinct, unique ceremony and certification, as has been our practice.

After licensing, the minister continues to be a private member of the local church and is subject to its government and discipline as prescribed by the International Assembly. However, in matters relating to his/her ministry, the minister is under the supervision of the Presbytery. The local church may take no action regarding the termination of a licensed minister.

The same would apply in the case of deacons/deaconesses ordained under the Church’s new procedures. Complaints may be lodged with the state/national/regional overseer’s office, but any revocation of ministers’ licenses must be initiated by the overseer in the usual manner.

Deacons/Deaconesses (as applicable)

Both biblical and historical records concerning the activities of deacons confirm they served alongside and in harmony with the bishop or pastor as servants to the congregation. They were assigned responsibilities which contributed to the spiritual and social well-being of the congregation. This office functions to:

1. Complement the office of the bishop or pastor (Acts 6:1–7);
2. Serve more in the temporal needs of God’s work, such as coordinating relief to the poor and needy (Acts 6:1–5);
3. Conduct church business affairs and conferences when officially authorized by the pastor or overseer;
4. Teach and defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and
5. Baptize, and administer the Lord’s supper and the washing of the saints’ feet.

They constitute a vital part of local church government (Philippians 1:1). The qualifications of a deacon are similar to a bishop, except for the requirements of age and the teaching and direct oversight of the flock. Their qualifications are taken from the scriptural references of 1 Timothy 3:8–12 and Acts 6:4 (as a prototype). The New Testament account regarding the office and function of deacons/deaconesses gives very clear

understanding that their activities are generally confined to and carried out in the local congregation. This ministry is local rather than translocal. Since deacons/deaconesses function in the arena of a local church, they are to be acknowledged (set forth) by the congregation and with pastoral recommendation. They serve first as trial deacons/deaconesses for a period of not less than one year, after which time they are to be recommended to the national/regional/state overseer of their respective area for approval and licensure. Because their service and ministry is based more within a local area, there is no need for them to be licensed through the International Offices.

Diacons/deaconesses are ordained at the local church or national/regional/state convention by the overseer, pastor (credentialed with a ministers license), and other deacons of their local church. The deacon/deaconess should report quarterly to his/her local conference and annually to the national/regional/state overseer. Should discipline become necessary, the local church would work in conjunction with the national/regional/state office to address the situation. When moving to a new location, the eldership status of a deacon would continue but would need reaffirmation from the new congregation after an appropriate time. The deacon/deaconess should never attempt to transact business matters, etc. over the desire of the pastor or the local church, nor usurp the authority of the pastor or local church (*66th Assembly Minutes*, 1971, p. 44).

Summary:

- The diaconate candidate is selected on a one-year basis, by the local church and pastoral recommendation.
- The candidate is to fulfill all scriptural prerequisites.
- After the one-year trial basis, the candidate may be recommended for ordination as a deacon/deaconess.
- The location for ordination of the candidate should be left to the discretion of the overseer; should the overseer be unable to participate in the ordination of a deacon due to scheduling conflicts, health issues, geographical distances, etc., the overseer may designate a representative of his office such as district overseer/presbyter, to participate alongside the pastor in the deacon ordination due to the absence of the overseer.
- The overseer is to participate in the ordination ceremony, along with the pastor (who is a duly licensed Church of God of Prophecy minister), and any other deacons from the candidate's local congregation.
- Deacons/deaconesses are to report quarterly to the local church and annually to the state/regional/national office.

- The office of deacon is not trans-local; consequently, in the event of a deacon/deaconess transferring his/her membership from one local church to another, the recognition to the diaconate is subject to the discretion of reaffirmation by the new local church for the individual to serve as a deacon/deaconess.

(100th International Assembly/BDP Report 2018 Business Acts)

Bishops

It is important to realize that individuals function according to their giftedness within an office. The bishop is one of the eldership offices that provides oversight leadership to the church. A bishop could function as a general appointee, national/regional/state overseer, district overseer, an evangelist, or as a pastor. Bishops serve either on local or translocal levels. Whatever the level, bishops are to lead “among” those they serve, rather than “over” those they serve. They are responsible for the diligent oversight of the flock in their particular area of the work. Some of the functions of the bishop include the following:

1. Properly caring for the flock (1 Peter 5:2);
2. Shepherding in a Christ-like manner;
3. Declaring the counsel of God;
4. Protecting the flock against grievous wolves;
5. Watching in spiritual matters; and
6. Caring for the weak and needy (Acts 20:28–35).

Scripturally, as an elder, a bishop is not to be a novice, but must display a mature, Christian lifestyle. He is to be a male and at least 30 years of age. He must fulfill the qualifications as described in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. Prior to receiving a bishop’s license, he should have fulfilled significant years of faithful ministerial service, without reproach, making full proof of his ministry. Those who are to be considered for ordination as a bishop should be involved in a program of ministerial development. The nature of his ministerial service should indicate that he is worthy to be recognized as a biblical elder in maintaining the integrity of the scriptural requirements.

In light of the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:12) concerning some men gifted to celibacy/singleness, we further recommend that bishops may also be individuals who have a God-called commitment to celibacy for the sake of their ministry in the kingdom. (See BDP Report, *94th Assembly Minutes*, p. 152.)

Because of local and translocal functions, bishops are to be acknowledged (set forth) by a local church and licensed through both national/regional/state and International Offices. Bishops who are no longer under specific appointment should function under the authority of their local church as they continue to make full proof of their ministry. The International Presbytery should make provisions to ensure that the quality of ministry is maintained through periodic review. During this time of transition, national/regional/state leadership should recognize tenured pastors as elders in the process of becoming ordained as bishops.

1. Recommending

The International Assembly instructed that an individual should not be set forth by the local church for a bishop's license except at the request of the national/ regional/state overseer (*55th Assembly Minutes*, 1960, p. 135).

2. Authorization

The bishop is authorized to publish, preach, and defend the gospel of Jesus Christ; to baptize, establish churches, administer the Lord's Supper and the washing of the saints' feet, assist in ordaining elders by special appointment, and solemnize the rites of matrimony in legal marriage as outlined in the New Testament and interpreted by the International Assembly. The bishop who is pastoring has the authority to conduct all local church business conferences.

3. Procedure for Ordination

The process to obtain the minister's license is also used for licensure of the bishop except that the overseer must first make a recommendation to the local church and the minister must be involved in a program of ministerial development before appearing before the ministerial review board. In the absence of the apostles, it was determined that the authority to ordain should be in the Assembly and those the Assembly invests with such authority. The overseers act as a Presbytery in cooperation with the general overseer/presbyters. It is also advised that the Presbytery fast before the laying on of hands in ordination (Acts 13:3; 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14; [*7th Assembly Minutes*, 1912, p. 63]; [*8th Assembly Minutes*, 1913, p. 120]).

When a bishop is to be ordained, it is required that either the general overseer/presbyter, or a bishop whom he authorizes to represent him, be present and participate in the ordination service.

After ordination, the bishop continues to be a private member of the local church and is subject to the government and discipline of the local church as prescribed by the International Assembly. However, in matters

relating to his ministry, he is under the supervision of the Presbytery. The local church may take no action regarding the termination of an ordained bishop.

After ordination, the Presbytery shall continue to show constant and personal concern for the growth and enhancement of the minister and his work.

4. Ordination

Bishops are ordained by the laying on of hands by member(s) of the International Presbytery at the first opportunity following the issuance of the bishop's license.

Note: Ordination is usually done in the International Assembly. However, it is not always possible for the newly licensed bishop to attend the Assembly. The general overseer/general presbyters may authorize another (possibly an International Offices representative) to represent him as a member of the Presbytery and join the overseer in the act of ordination in a national/regional/state convention or other special services.

G. Ministers Coming into the Church from Other Organizations

When ministers come from another organization, they may be licensed or ordained after they have been examined to determine their qualifications and their spiritual and doctrinal purity. In exceptional cases, with the specific order of the general overseer/general presbyter, some of the standard provisions for examining candidates may be waived.

H. Authorization

Licensed ministers are authorized to preach and defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ, establish churches, baptize, administer the Lord's Supper, and the washing of the saints' feet. Those who pastor have the authority to conduct local business conferences and pastors credentialed with a minister's license may solemnize the rites of matrimony in legal marriages. Ministers who are not currently pastoring a church may receive permission from their overseer to solemnize the rites of matrimony in legal marriages that are biblically valid according to the Church's understanding. When the general overseer's office receives approval from the overseer's office, a special permit will be issued and mailed directly to the minister.

I. Overseer's Jurisdiction

The general practice has been that jurisdiction over a minister (minister's license) under appointment is with their supervising overseer. For ministers not under appointment, jurisdiction follows his current place of residence—where he actually lives—and not necessarily where his membership is registered.

J. Change of Status

Regarding “Change of Status” (that is, from one type of license to another), this is no longer automatically done. Candidates applying to change their ministerial status must be set forth in the usual manner at the direction of the overseer through the local church except that qualifying study requirements, already met, would not have to be repeated.

VI. ELDERS

The principle of eldership serves as a framework for understanding how leadership is selected and recognized within the church. Leadership should be chosen from among those whose experience, moral life, and abilities are manifest in such a way that the hand of God is evidenced upon them. Such leadership is needed in every dimension of the church's life. This principle applies to those who will provide leadership in “prayer and word” (bishop) and those who provide care for the temporal needs of the church (deacon). It should not, however, be misconstrued that eldership always requires a license within the church. Some will function as elders because of their quality of life and not because of a license in the church. At the same time, it is apparent that those who serve in leadership roles should possess eldership character.

The study presented at the 89th International Assembly, 1996, affirmed the understandings of elders as passed in two previous Assemblies. In the 18th International Assembly, 1923, it was stated, “We recommend that the general overseer's recommendation, as to making all bishops and deacons elders, be accepted by the Assembly . . .” (*18th Assembly Minutes*, 1923, p. 24). The 78th Assembly of 1983 concluded: “We recommend that the minimum age for a bishop hereafter be set at age 30” (*78th Assembly Minutes*, 1983, p. 137).

VII. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Note: This section is under review and will be updated in the next printing. Always refer to your country's guidelines regarding ministerial expenses.

A. Guidelines for Ministerial Expense

(Developed by the Executive Committee and approved by the 79th Assembly.)

First of all, let every minister look upon tithing as both a privilege and responsibility. The Word of God is very explicit concerning tithing. Ministers should see to it that tithing is carried out in such a way and manner as to have the favor of God upon it and not in any way seek to take advantage of the Lord in this regard.

Each minister must distinguish between living expenses and ministerial expenses. Everybody has living expenses, consisting of food, clothing, shelter, etc. However, there are certain professional people, including ministers, who have expenses in the course of their work which the average wage-earner does not have.

In no case shall living expenses such as house rent, water, lights, grocery bills, etc., be paid before paying his/her tithes; all these shall be paid out of the remaining nine-tenths (*13th Assembly Minutes*, 1917, pp. 294, 295; see also *Business Guide*, Section VII Minister's Support, Pastor's Expense, p. 111).

Since some ministers are provided parsonages, others without such benefits have felt that their cost of housing should be considered as expense in the ministry. The more realistic approach would be for those who are provided housing to consider this as supplemental income on which they would pay tithes, even as they do on grocery poundings and other things they receive as a means of additional support. After all, food, clothing, and shelter are basic expenses that everyone has.

A minister's automobile in many places is almost indispensable in carrying on his/her work; therefore, it seems proper to pro-rate automobile expenses in proportion to the amount it is used in ministerial work. This relates to the cost of the vehicle and its operating costs. Consideration may also be given to other types of travel—plane, train, bus, etc.—and computing expenses accordingly.

For income tax purposes, some ministers keep a record of the actual expenses of each trip that is a function of the ministry. For these persons, automobile expense is not a problem when computing their income that is to be tithed.

Other ministers, especially in the USA, may prefer to keep a strict record of miles traveled in the ministry and take credit for this mileage as outlined by the Internal Revenue Service. In countries where this is not applicable, ministers could use a reasonable amount per mile traveled in the ministry for calculating their expense.

Regrettably, many ministers still must resort to secular jobs to supplement their income, and they use their automobiles in going to and from their jobs. Of course, this is not expense in the ministry, as neither would be other personal uses of these vehicles, such as shopping, visiting relatives, etc.

Consideration may also be given to ministerial long distance telephone calls. The purchase of books for study in sermon preparation and for preparedness in other facets of one's ministerial work would be chargeable as expense in the ministry, as would expenses to attend ministerial training programs, conventions, and General Assemblies.

These guidelines are not meant to be all-inclusive, but to serve as markers that guide the individual conscience and one's desire to worship the Lord through tithing and giving. In regard to calculating tithe, it seems that one who is capable of counseling others in separating professional from living expenses is also able to properly make such judgments in regard to his/her own expenses. A good rule of thumb to follow is for the minister to tithe personal income in the same manner that others would be counseled to tithe. Basically, expense in the ministry is that which is incurred in the discharge of ministerial duties that would not have been otherwise acquired.

Tithing is a form of worship, and ministers should be examples to other Christians in honoring God with their substance.

B. Tithing by Ministers

A minister should not be allowed to retain a license who does not tithe on personal income. Paul's instructions to Timothy are timely in reference to this question: ". . . be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). Tithing is a teaching made prominent by the Assembly. Every minister, in being examined for the ministry, stated that he/she paid tithes faithfully on all personal income. When a licensed minister in the Church fails to be an example in this matter of stewardship, it indicates a spiritual problem. It is the Presbyter's responsibility to investigate and, if possible, help the failing minister overcome this problem. If a minister does not respond to such attempts to help by repenting and resuming faithfulness in being an example of the believers, the Presbytery has no recourse but to see that his/her ministry is terminated (*81st Assembly Minutes*, 1986, p. 35).

C. Ministers to Respect Guidance of Assembly in Doctrine

A minister should not be allowed to preach anything that brings confusion and conflicts with the doctrine of the Church. If this is done, the attention of the national/regional/state overseer should be called to it. The individual should be admonished and cited by the overseer to the findings and rulings of the International Assembly. If such a one persists and continues in the practice, then the minister should be brought before, and dealt with by, the Presbytery (*54th Assembly Minutes*, 1959, p. 128).

D. Identification Card

In some cases, a pastor needs identification to certify that he/she is a duly appointed pastor. It was therefore recommended by the Assembly that a uniform identification card be made available by the International Offices and issued by the national/regional/state overseers as the need arises (*75th Assembly Minutes*, 1980, p. 165).

E. Secular Work

Overseers should discourage ministers from working at manual labor where the tithes are sufficient for their support (*48th Assembly Minutes*, 1953, p. 107).

F. Observing Ordinances

The pastor of the local church should ensure that the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Feet Washing are conducted at least quarterly (*57th Assembly Minutes*, 1962, p. 134).

- We reaffirm the practice of the ordinance of Footwashing as taught and commanded by Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.
- We recommend that it be observed as often as possible, whether after Communion or at a separate time.
- We recommend it to be observed in a spirit of humility and love toward one another.
- We recommend that this updated version of the doctrine of footwashing be taught to the members of the Church of God of Prophecy.

(100th International Assembly BDP Report 2018 Business Acts; for additional information see also MPM Section 2 Biblical Principles, Beliefs and Practices)

G. State-to-State/Nation-to-Nation/Region-to-Region Ministering

Licensed and ordained ministers have been examined and approved by the Presbytery as being duly authorized to preach in the Church of God of Prophecy. If for some reason an overseer objects to a particular minister who desires to minister within his area of supervision, the basis for his objection should be communicated directly and personally to the particular minister. If this is done, it would not then be necessary for every minister in good standing to secure approval before preaching in another nation, region, or state.

Where a minister feels that an overseer's objections are unjust, the matter may be brought to the general presbyter who will either hear the case himself or appoint a select committee to assist in resolving the situation.

We must endeavor always and in every way to relieve tensions between fellow-licensed ministers, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (*82nd Assembly Minutes*, 1987, p. 51).

H. Performing Marriages

The minister should thoroughly acquaint himself with the Church's teaching regarding Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage (The Biblical Institution of Marriage and the Recommendations therewith) as presented, amended, and passed by the 94th International Assembly 2006, and be guided by its provisions and any guidelines set forth or authorized by the General Presbytery for its implementation (*94th Assembly Minutes*, 2006, pp. 152–177; See *Ministry Policy Manual*, 2008, Appendix 3).

The minister should inquire of both parties to be married if they are of age according to the requirements of the particular area in which they reside. If either of the couple is underage, inquiry should be made to determine if the parents have given consent to their marriage. If they have not given consent, it is not advisable to perform the ceremony until the parents give consent. Marriage ceremonies should be performed in harmony with the teachings of the Bible. If, in some cases, the minister needs additional advice, he/she may consult the overseer.

Pastors, credentialed with a minister's license, and bishops are authorized to perform marriages by virtue of their roles and offices (*95th Assembly Minutes*, 2008, p. 13). However, those who are new as pastors, or not capable of providing marriage counseling, should seek the permission of their overseer before performing marriages. A special permit to perform marriages may be granted by the general overseer's office upon the request of the national/regional/state overseer to licensed ministers who are not pastoring. All special permits are subject to the approval of the general presbyter and may be recalled at any time by either the general presbyter or the general overseer. Neither this permit nor the minister's license takes the place of the national/state law. A minister must meet all the requirements of the state or country in which the wedding ceremony will be performed.

VIII. REPORTING SYSTEM OF THE MINISTRY

Effective October 1, 1996, licensed ministers and pastors are to send the tithes of income from the ministry with their monthly reports to the national/regional/state office.

Note: Report forms are in the *Assembly Minutes*.

A. Bishops

1. Report monthly to the national/regional/state office.

B. Licensed Ministers

1. Report monthly to the national/regional/state office.

C. Deacons/Deaconesses

1. Report quarterly to the Local Church Conference and annually to the national/regional/state office.

D. Trial Deacons/Deaconesses

1. Report quarterly to the Local Church Conference in duplicate.
2. Duplicate report to be forwarded to the national/regional/state overseer by the church clerk.

E. Lay Ministers and Provisional Lay Pastors

1. Report quarterly to the Local Church Conference in duplicate or, if pastors, monthly to national/regional/state office.
2. Duplicate report to be forwarded to the national/regional/state overseer by the church clerk.

Note: Lay ministers tithe to the local church unless they are an appointed pastor in which case they should tithe to the national/regional/state office as other pastors do. Lay ministers licenses should be renewed at the first of each calendar year at the national/regional/state office.

F. Retired Ministers

1. Report monthly and pay tithes from the ministry to the national/regional/state office.
2. Report annually to the national/regional/state office if no tithes from ministry.

G. Unable Ministers

Not required to report to state or International Offices. Should inform offices of a change of address.

Note: Those who receive a monthly allotment from Ministerial Services will continue to pay their tithes to the national/regional/state office.

IX. MINISTERIAL DISCIPLINE

A. The Nature and Purpose of Discipline

Discipline is the church's exercise of authority given by Christ through the Scriptures: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18). The goals of discipline are that God may be honored, that those who fall into error may be brought to repentance and restoration, and that purity, integrity, and the general welfare of the church may be maintained.

The purpose of discipline is for correction and edification, not for destruction. Being redemptive as well as corrective, it should always be exercised with mercy and humility in the spirit of Galatians 6:1, 2: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

B. Offenses that Require Disciplinary Action

Offenses, both private and public, being sins against God, are grounds for discipline. However, there are levels of discipline that are to be determined by the nature of the offense and the attitude and restitution of the offender. Some private matters can be settled to the satisfaction of both the offended and the offender by following the principle of Matthew 18:15: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Or the offender may take personal initiative and the matter be settled in accordance with the principle of Matthew 5:23, 24: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

1. A private offense is defined as being something which the minister commits against one, or a very few persons, and which violates the divine law and does wrong or injury to particular individuals.

Following the principle of Matthew 18:15, the offended should go to the offender in the spirit of meekness and tell him/her his/her fault and entreat him/her to make restitution. If he/she makes restitution and is reconciled, that should be the end of the matter.

If the offender is contentious and uncooperative and refuses to be reconciled, then the offended should select one or two others

of reputation to go with him/her for the purpose of effecting a reconciliation (Matthew 18:16). If he/she still refuses to be reconciled, then the offender must be brought before the overseer since a local church is not authorized to discipline a licensed or ordained minister. In the event the offender is an overseer, the matter may be brought before the general overseer/general presbyter and pursued according to the general principles outlined below.

In most cases of private offenses, the overseer should try to bring about a restoration when the case is brought to his attention. He should endeavor to bring the offender to repentance and restoration before any further disciplinary action is taken. The principle is established in 2 Timothy 2:24–26, “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

Any accusations made against a minister must be verified by two or more witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19).

2. A public offense is more notorious in nature and less personal in its focus. Some examples of public offenses requiring disciplinary action are the following: moral indiscretions; gross incompetence and/or negligence which would render the minister unfit to represent the Church adequately; insubordination, the manifestation of a contentious spirit by refusing to submit to the counsel of those over him/her in the Lord; refusal or inability to minister in harmony with the teachings and polity of the Church in word or conduct; the assumption of a harsh and dictatorial authority toward those with whom he/she works, which could be described as acting as a Lord over God’s heritage (1 Peter 5:2); a deliberate and serious perversion of sound doctrine; habitual failure to manage personal finances so that delinquent debts become a reproach to the church; any violation of the Church’s teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage; ministry without prior approval in another church or institution on an extended basis; and neglect of consistent tithing and giving as a faithful steward of the Lord.

C. Discipline Procedures

These procedures were developed in accordance to the resolution of 84th Annual Assembly (*84th Assembly Minutes*, 1989, p. 133):

1. The Presbytery is empowered to examine candidates for the ministry, to issue licenses, to ordain, and to terminate a minister's endorsement when any infraction is considered serious enough to warrant such discipline.

2. Great care should be exercised in receiving accusations against a minister. In accordance with the principle given in 1 Timothy 5:19, no charges should be received by the Presbytery against a minister unless there are two or three reliable witnesses who have presented to the overseer sufficient evidence of wrong doing. 1 Timothy 5:19 says, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." No witness should be accepted who is known to have ill-will toward the accused, who is not of sound character, who is him/herself under censure, who may have ulterior motives for having the accused person disciplined, or who is known to be contentious and imprudent.

3. In every instance of accusation, the accuser must be warned that if he/she fails to show reasonable grounds for the charges made, the accuser shall be censured as a slanderer of the brethren and shall be disciplined in proportion to the weight of the accusation made against the minister. When the malicious accuser is a lay member, discipline will be exercised by the local church. Where the false accuser is a minister, discipline will be directed by the Presbytery.

4. In all investigations of offenders, it must be remembered that the admonition of Galatians 6:1 governs.

5. Any charges made against a minister must be made by two or three responsible persons who are convinced that the evidence warrants investigation. The accused must be informed of the charges. At a pre-announced time, the charges shall be clearly stated before the overseer. The accused should be present, if possible, to hear the charges as they are formally presented to the overseer. If the accused confesses, the overseer may deal with the person according to his discretion. If he/she rejects the charge and desires a further hearing, a formal hearing of the case should occur within thirty days from the time the charges are formally presented before the ministerial review board.

6. Before the hearing begins, the general overseer/general presbyter should be apprised of the charges against the offender so that he may follow the case and participate as he deems necessary.

7. The overseer shall appoint a panel of five ministers from his region. If panel members are limited, it may be necessary to use only three ministers on the board. The accused shall be given proper notification advising him/her to attend the hearing. Should the person not appear for the hearing (unless providentially hindered, in which case the panel

should be properly notified), such failure to respond should be entered into the records, along with a written account of the charges; and his/her ministry shall be dealt with as the Presbytery deems appropriate.

8. When the hearing is about to begin, the overseer/moderator shall solemnly remind the panel of their awesome responsibility as representatives of Jesus Christ to hear the charges against a fellow minister and to dispose of the case in a manner that would be acceptable before the High Court of Heaven. The moderator shall at this time caution the participants in the hearing to maintain strict confidentiality of the proceedings.

9. The substitution of a panel member is permitted, if for good reason the member desires to be removed from a particular hearing, or if either the accused or the accuser should give the moderator reasons acceptable for substituting another person in that place on the panel.

10. Before and during the hearing of a case, any panel member who expresses an opinion on the merits of the case to either party, or any other person who is not a member of the panel, or a panel member who is absent without permission of the moderator or satisfactory reasons shall be disqualified from taking part in this and subsequent proceedings. The member shall be replaced with a qualified and responsible person.

11. If either party insists, no witness, who is to be later examined, shall be present during the examination of another witness in the same case.

12. The order of the hearing shall be as follows:

The moderator shall charge the panel. The indictment shall be read, and the answer of the accused heard. If charges are denied, the accuser(s) shall be heard and examined, then the witnesses for the accused shall be heard and examined. After the witnesses have been heard and examined, both parties and their witnesses shall be excused from the room, and members of the panel shall express their opinions in the case. When a unanimous decision has been made, both the accuser and the accused shall be recalled to the room for the recommendation of the ministerial review board to the Presbytery. The recommendation shall be announced and entered into the record of the proceedings.

13. The Presbytery shall review the findings of the ministerial review board and make a determination of the minister's status. As early as possible thereafter, the overseer will give the decision of the Presbytery to the accused.

14. When a minister is found by the overseer or ministerial review board to be innocent of any charges that have been made, the overseer should ensure that those who may have been aware of the charges are informed that the minister in question has been exonerated.

D. Termination of Ministerial Credentials

When a minister is found guilty of an offense which is considered by the Presbytery to be serious enough to require the termination of ministry—for instance, an offense of a base and shameful nature—the Presbytery may without delay revoke the ministry in question.

Terminations may occur for the following reasons:

1. Resignation

When a minister, against whom no charges have been filed, has elected to remove himself/herself from the body of licensed or ordained ministers, acceptance of the resignation is subject to the decision of the Presbytery.

2. Decease

When the death of a minister is verified, his/her name will be removed from the roll of active ministers.

3. Change of Status

When the wife of a bishop falls into sin and there is no charge against the minister himself, the Presbytery shall not change the status of his ministry to that of a licensed minister unless circumstances so warrant. If so, he shall be informed of the change. A widowed bishop who marries a wife not meeting the criteria for the wife of a bishop shall have the status of his ministry changed according to that of a licensed minister. There is to be no change of status in the case of a bishop who is widowed (*82nd Assembly Minutes*, 1987, p. 57).

4. Revocation

A minister who has been found guilty of or has confessed to a serious violation of biblical principles shall be disciplined; and where the nature of the case requires it, his/her ministry shall be revoked. It is understood that prior to this action, the minister shall be duly informed of the decision.

5. Lapse

Any minister who has not reported to the national/regional/state offices, or who is inactive for two consecutive years (who has not preached at least 12 times per year)—unless due to ill health, retirement, or other justifiable cause—shall be notified by the Presbytery that his/her ministry has lapsed.

6. Suspension

When a minister is censured for an offense that the Presbytery does not deem to be serious enough to warrant revocation, his/her minister's license or ordination certificate shall be held in the national/regional/state office for the period of rehabilitation. Suspension of ministry does not affect the minister's ministerial benefits, insurance, or pension. The extent to which he/she can minister shall be determined by the overseer.

E. Restoration of Ministers

1. Restoring Fallen Ministers

The apostle Paul referred to ministers as stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 4:1). He wrote, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (v. 2). When a person is called by God into the ministry and set apart with due recognition by the church for this high calling, it is expected that his/her life be above reproach. A minister must be faithful in all things.

When a minister goes back into sin and brings reproach upon the name of Christ, it places a blot upon the church's image before the world. We want to be merciful and dare not fail to forgive one who truly repents of having failed the Lord. However, it is necessary that a person prove faithfulness as a Christian and as a member of the Church before returning to the ministry. To be licensed too soon before demonstrating faithfulness in all things does damage to the image of the ministry of the Church of God of Prophecy.

When a minister's license or ordination has been terminated due to falling into sin, the person may not be relicensed until after an extended time of help and counseling directed toward complete rehabilitation and until the confidence of the church is fully restored as in his/her readiness to be a minister in the Church of God of Prophecy.

In the case of a bishop who resigned or was revoked because of moral (sexual) failure, he cannot be restored to the office of bishop, but under a supervised restoration process by the Presbytery, may be re-licensed as a minister as said Presbytery may deem appropriate. (See Biblical Doctrine and Polity Report of the *94th Assembly Minutes*, p. 152.)

The primary help and counsel should come through the pastor and local church. However, where possible, it is highly recommended that the overseer be directly and actively involved in the restoration process. The factors relating to the minister's failure should be explored and properly identified so as to prevent any recurrence.

Although there is no specific time period for effecting the full restoration of a fallen minister, no one should be relicensed until a proven record of faithfulness and integrity has been established. In some cases, this might require a year; in others, a longer period may be needed depending upon the degree of damage suffered from the seriousness of the sin and the rate of progress being made by the candidate.

With the underlying principle in discipline being redemption, justice can best be served with mercy. A local church should readily extend its support and strength to a minister who is repentant.

When restoration is considered to be complete, the candidate may then be set forth for the ministry with the approval of the overseer. The person will be relicensed by following the procedures required of all candidates for the ministry.

2. Procedure for Restoration

“A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench: till he send forth judgment unto victory” (Matthew 12:20).

When a minister fails and undergoes discipline, it is imperative that responsibility be immediately assigned for his/her restoration.

Regardless of one’s previous position, the pastor will normally be the primary person to initiate the restoration process. Contact should be made with the erring one as soon as possible. It is vital that the pastor convey genuine Christian love and support. Sometimes, there will be attempts to justify oneself, to deny guilt, to accuse superiors of mishandling the case, or to experience bitterness. At other times, there will be open confession and a true spirit of penitence. In any case, it is the role of the pastor to establish a good rapport with the person with the aim of leading him/her away from negative attitudes and back to spiritual health.

At the earliest possible time, the pastor, overseer, and the former minister’s immediate supervisor (when such is the case) will meet together as a committee and coordinate their approach. Each one should accept a significant role in helping his/her former co-worker in the ministry. They should be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and recognize that every person is unique and therefore must be worked with on an individual basis. He/she must be made to feel the support and willingness of those helping.

At some point, the candidate should meet with the committee regularly for prayer, counsel, reinforcement, and guidance. The pastor should appoint a prayer/visitation group or class of Spirit-filled individuals

who will minister daily by telephone, cards, etc. The companion must also be included in the restoration process. In most cases, the spouse has been wounded and needs healing.

Often, the committee will find that those involved would benefit from professional Christian counseling. Help should be given in finding competent counseling. If the former minister is the head of a household, he/she may need help in finding employment; and the pastor should see that help is given in that area.

The membership of the local church should see the penitent minister as a wounded member of the body who needs healing. Members who are acquainted with the individual should be encouraged to call and/or write expressing their confidence that he/she will make it.

During the first several months, the local church should be patient and supportive as the healing process begins. At some point, depending on the individual's progress, the person should have an opportunity to participate in the services of worship. As progress is made toward full recovery, he/she may be permitted to minister. After a year or so, if the progress is satisfactory, the candidate may be recommended for relicensing in the ministry through the normal process if the local church and overseer feel the person is ready (See the exception regarding bishops, paragraph 3, p. 110).

X. REVISED GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT, JULY 2016

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OF BIBLICAL DOCTRINE AND POLITY GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESBYTERY PRESENTED TO THE INTERNATIONAL PRESBYTERY OF THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

INTRODUCTION

After the 98th International Assembly of 2014, the General Overseer and the General Presbyters approached the Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee requesting the revision and rewriting of the Governance Document to further simplify the selection process of General Overseer and General Presbyters. It is clear that we need to periodically review the guidelines that direct this body. The International Presbytery (IP) has the responsibility to amend procedures no longer helpful or effective to perform their sacred responsibility. This new document addresses our current understanding and vision for the church, while preserving the principles embodied in the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, this document will

supersede all prior documents and versions. We submit this document to the International Presbytery as a means to better explain and not as an end, as if we had obtained a perfect understanding. We continue to recommend this document be reviewed every four years (or when deemed necessary) to keep it current and applicable to our changing dynamics. We realize fully that this harmonization may not be complete, yet it is submitted with respect for what the IP has requested. Regardless how well any group writes this governance document, this body must always rely on Holy Spirit discernment that we constantly pursue His leading in all our procedures and decisions. May it provide an instrument for better servanthood by the International Presbytery to Christ and His people!

THE OFFICE OF PRESBYTER (GENERAL, INTERNATIONAL):

The selection to serve as a presbyter in the Church of God of Prophecy began first with the wondrous call to follow Christ and afterwards with the individual's call into the ministry. Following considerable experience in mission and ministry, the selection to be a presbyter is ordinarily accomplished by God through the avenues of church government. It is a great honor to be selected to serve in this capacity and as such should be taken with seriousness, with meekness, and with a determination to represent Christ, the Church, and the office of presbyter with dignity, grace, and integrity. The Church of God of Prophecy presbyter should always conduct himself with a Christ-like character that is representative of a mature leader.

THE CHARACTER OF THE PRESBYTER

(1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 6: 3-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Exodus 18:21).

The office of the Church of God of Prophecy presbyter is a position of importance and necessity. The individuals that fill these positions throughout the nations of the world are esteemed, honored, and respected by the people whom they serve. Therefore, each presbyter should approach his responsibilities with solemnness and prayerfulness, and the office should in no way, and at no time, be used to further one's own personal agenda. Moreover, while this leadership role should exemplify several desirable qualities, none is more important than for the individual to have a Christ-like character in actions, communications, and deeds.

An important indicator of the character of the presbyter is the testimony of his spouse and his family. All current and potential Presbyters should have the full blessing of their spouses and family members under his legal care. A presbyter who does not have the full support of the family will

be severely handicapped in work, travel, and relationships. Therefore, during the selection process of all presbyters, the state and support of his immediate family should be considered. During the qualifying process, the wife of the candidate should be interviewed in regards to his spiritual and moral character.

The presbyter should strive to have the character and the mind of Christ in all things. According to the Apostle Paul, one who reflects the character of Christ does nothing that is motivated by selfish ambition and glory. The promotion of Christ and the work of the Gospel should be the heart's desire of all who hold the office of presbyter. Jesus modeled unselfishness in all of His words and His deeds. He, Jesus, did not come to do His own will, but He came to do the will of the Father. Throughout history, men and women, who were spiritual giants, served as Christ did and looked out for the best interest of others over their own. The propagation of the Gospel must always be the paramount goal.

The presbyter should be characterized by his love for both God and for others. Godly love requires and calls for self-sacrifice. Loving leadership embraces not a spirit of dictatorial dominion over others, but rather, it takes on the gentle loving role of the Good Shepherd who leads with gentleness and unselfishness. While it is understood that the presbyter will at times be required to make difficult decisions that will affect the lives of many, the authority exercised must always be from a position of love.

The presbyter must be a leader of moral, mental, and physical courage. God has not called His people to live in fear and dismay, but, rather, He calls them to trust Him at all times and in all situations. Many of the nations of this world are faced with economic, social, political, and religious unrest, yet the Church of God of Prophecy presbyter must be courageous in the face of all these difficulties. If the presbyter displays courage in times of trouble, it will bring comfort and inspire hope in those that he leads. The scripture admonishes God's people to be strong and courageous, and it is imperative that the Church of God of Prophecy presbyter possess and exhibit these virtues.

The presbyter must be decisive. Continuous procrastination in decision-making cripples the morale of the church, and it causes discouragement and frustration. To refuse to make a decision is to decide for the status quo. In making decisions, the presbyter should strive to apply the principles that are set forth in the scriptures, seek advice through plurality, and endeavor to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The presbyter must strive to be like Christ who demonstrated humility in all things. Humility is the virtue of esteeming others more than oneself. In addition, when one possesses this virtue, he is neither a self-seeker nor is he a self-promoter. The presbyter, who is humble, seeks neither credit nor applause as long as the work of Christ is accomplished. Humility is exemplified by submission to God and to others. As is in all things, Christ is the perfect example of a spiritual leader as He esteemed others, took on the role of a servant, and humbled Himself to the will of the Father to die on the cross.

The presbyter must be a person of forgiveness, and one who refuses to be vindictive or to hold a grudge. In the work of ministry, confrontations are inevitable, and occasions will arise when hurtful things may be said against the presbyter; however, the presbyter must avoid all temptation to retaliate. A swift, angry, and carnal response always proves harmful to the work of the Lord. Therefore, a presbyter must never react hastily and should always demonstrate the ability to handle criticism (fair and unfair) with grace. Christ-like character strives to forgive all injustices.

The presbyter must be a person of integrity and sincerity. Integrity is the quality of being complete, undivided, and sound. It is represented by a firm adherence to the Christian code of moral values and is necessary in all matters of lifestyle, conversation, personal communications, finance, and business. The leader with integrity does not attempt to serve two or more masters, but his heart is set solely upon serving and obeying Christ. The sincere presbyter strives to live a life of purity both inwardly as well as outwardly.

The presbyter is not to be a servant to money or to greed. Many of those that the presbyter serves may do better financially than he, himself. However, the presbyter must never allow greed to dictate his motives or actions. Since the Church preaches the Gospel to the rich as well as the poor, there may be occasions when individuals with financial means will try to sway decisions through the influence and power of money. The presbyter should never be given to the influence of monetary wealth and should, at all times, make decisions based upon the will of God and according to the scriptures.

The presbyter must always be careful how he presents himself through the avenues of social media. Technology has made it possible for anyone with a computer to communicate with potentially millions of people. Therefore, the presbyter should, at all times, be considerate of Christian

brothers and sisters of other cultures and act as an instrument of peace, unity, and reconciliation rather than confusion. It is unbecoming to the office of presbyter to use social media as a means for self-promotion, social and political expressions that are insensitive to the feelings of others. The presbyter should never allow himself to be drawn into conversations via social media that are demeaning regardless of the subject matter. The presbyter should be aware and intentional as to how his character is advertised to others. Since the presbyter is a Bishop, it is expedient that he offers this same admonition to his wife and family.

The Church of God of Prophecy presbyter is to be a person filled with the Holy Spirit, given to prayer, and walking in holiness. It is a great work and a tremendous honor for the individual that is called to serve in this capacity. The office of presbyter carries a weighty responsibility, and it cannot adequately be undertaken without Divine guidance, strength, and wisdom. Therefore, it is essential that the presbyter maintain a strong, personal relationship with Christ and daily seek the continuous filling of the Holy Spirit in order to fulfill his calling with excellence.

The Church of God of Prophecy International presbyter should be an example to those that he serves and leads. It is important that he demonstrate a spirit of generosity, grace, and love in order to draw out those same qualities in those he leads. Therefore, if it comes to light that he is not personally tithing, reporting, or leading his nation to support the International account, he will not be allowed to speak in International Presbytery meetings. Also, he must come into compliance with these disciplines and show consistency as prescribed by his leaders or he will not be reappointed. In essence, he is disqualifying himself to serve as a presbyter.

CLARIFICATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

The following terms, definitions, and ministry descriptions are to be understood as defined below:

GENERAL OVERSEER: While the general overseer works in conjunction with the General presbyters to provide leadership, inspiration, vision, and governance, he remains the leader among leaders. Therefore, all members of the general presbytery and International Presbytery should show deference to his position in all relevant matters. Their attitude towards his leadership and authority should reflect the spirit that our Lord Jesus Christ modeled in His life (Philippians 2:3-8, 12-14, Hebrews 13:17). In like manner, the general overseer should respect and honor the position

and the office of the general presbyter as outlined by the International Assembly. In so doing, he embraces the spirit of plurality as he pursues relational leadership in his work.

GENERAL PRESBYTER: The general presbyter is a servant leader who oversees large areas of the world. His area may encompass one or more continents and will certainly include several nations and states. General presbyters are selected by the International Presbytery and shall be evaluated every four years by the overseers in their area of the world where they have been assigned. The general presbyter's location should be a decision made in consultation among the general overseer, general presbyters, and area overseers where he serves.

Although the general presbyters may have oversight for vision and order, they shall not view a specific area as their own domain to rule but should seek consultation with the general overseer and the other general presbyters as the need arises.

GENERAL PRESBYTERY: The general overseer and all general presbyters, who are chosen by the International Presbytery, make up this body. Together they perform the duties of general oversight for the Church of God of Prophecy globally and for their particular divisions or world regions. In this context, the general overseer would be chairman of the general presbytery, with the two vice chairmen (those chosen among the general presbyters) to serve in day-to-day matters with the general overseer. The general presbyters may also moderate the Assembly at the discretion of the general overseer. If the general overseer, in consultation with the general presbyters, determines that additional general presbyters are necessary for specific areas of the expanding global work, the International Presbytery would have to approve this decision. Areas that are not in full participation with the reporting and financial system of the general church may instead have a representative appointed by the general overseer in consultation with the general presbyters. The General Presbytery is accountable to the International Presbytery and to the International Assembly for their function and work. They shall meet twice yearly or whenever the need arises to handle administrative work and strategy.

INTERNATIONAL PRESBYTERY: The general overseer, general presbyters, regional/national/state overseers, and the International Offices executive directors and its ministers who serve in trans-local ministries constitute the International Presbytery. This body meets regularly

at the International Assembly and at other times as determined by the general overseer and general presbyters. It convenes for counsel, recommendations, and decisions on Church-wide matters that fall within its Assembly mandates. The General Presbytery may invite individuals to observe and/or address these meetings as they deem necessary.

AREA PRESBYTERY: A general presbyter with the regional/national/state overseers under his jurisdiction sitting together for discussion and counsel on regional/national/state matters or any area-wide matters that may be referred to them or about which they may be consulted as a body.

THE GENERAL OVERSEER

QUALITIES OF THE GENERAL OVERSEER

The person chosen to fill the office of general overseer should be an individual of outstanding character and integrity, and this person should exhibit the Fruit of the Spirit. It is expedient that the general overseer be a man of prayer with a burden for those that are lost. His concern should be for all the nations of the world and not for one geographical region. He should be devoted to equipping others for the work of the ministry and be a person with administrative skills. 1 Peter 5:1-3 states that the qualities of humility and of shepherding are essential to leadership. The apostle Paul instructed Timothy in six broad categories regarding qualifications for a godly leader. They are as follows: (1) Be faithful in the preaching of Biblical truth, (2) Be bold in exposing and refuting error, (3) Be an example of godliness to the flock, (4) Be diligent and work hard in the ministry, (5) Be willing to suffer hardship and persecution in service for the Lord. (6) And one who serves his family well and has their respect. Acts 6:3-7 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7, list qualities such as “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom,” “given continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word,” “full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,” and “blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, one that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; not a novice, lest he be lifted up in pride, and he must have a good report of them that are without.” Exodus 18:21 admonishes that leaders be “able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.” From these passages and others, it is clear that integrity, faith, even-temperedness, soundness of judgment, a teachable spirit, peacemaking qualities, purity, cooperativeness, sensitivity to God’s

Spirit, submissiveness, humility, leadership abilities, good governance, unshakable commitment, and Christlikeness reside in the person selected to fill the office of general overseer.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GENERAL OVERSEER

The International Assembly recognized and passed that the general overseer “...provides, to the membership in general and the leadership in particular, God given direction to accomplish the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) given by the Lord Jesus Christ,” and “...should have freedom to exercise his spiritual giftedness, and realize the potential for ministering as the Holy Spirit directs.” Due to the enormity of the responsibilities of the position of general overseer and knowing that the Holy Spirit is the Guide, the duties and responsibilities of the general overseer can never fully be defined. However, certain outlines can help facilitate orderliness in the work without infringing the Holy Spirit’s divine prerogative to lead where He will.

Regarding the general overseer’s authority pertaining to the International Offices, significant matters should be resolved through mutual consultation between the general overseer and the general presbyters. The principle of “first among equals” applies to the general overseer and deference should be given to his office. With this in mind as well as the biblical practice of “shared leadership” (1994 Assembly Minutes, page 153), we propose the following:

It shall be the duty of the general overseer, assisted by the General Presbyters, to provide inspirational leadership to the Church by and/or through:

- (A) Overall comprehensive, world outreach planning and strategies consistent with the Church of God of Prophecy’s renewed emphasis on the proper role of the local church and the practical responsibilities of Area, Regional, and International Offices.
- (B) Encouragement of leadership development both with existing church leaders and by discovering and engaging leaders that God is raising up.
- (C) Represent the Church of God of Prophecy among other Christians and the greater Kingdom of God in order to foster good relations and promote biblical unity.

(D) Nurture the ministry by taking oversight. This includes, but is not limited to, counseling and establishing, in conjunction with the International Presbytery, procedures and requirements for ministerial licensure, ordination, discipline, and restoration.

(E) Arrange and convene special meetings or events such as International Assemblies, General and International Presbytery meetings, leadership gatherings, and global promotions.

(F) Recognize, appoint, and commission executive directors, International Offices leadership and personnel, facilitate and participate in the selection of general presbyters and/or make effective arrangements thereof. In the spirit of plurality, he should also be consulted in the appointments of state, national, and regional leaders.

(G) Develop plans for organizational infrastructure to meet changing administrative, relational needs of the Church with a focus on unity, fellowship, and effectiveness.

(H) Take oversight of all budgetary finances to see that funds are properly distributed within the framework of the Church's accounting procedures and ensure that proper audits are performed by independent accounting organizations and reported to the International Assembly.

(I) Initiate, interface, and participate in the selection and evaluation of the general presbyters.

VACANCY OF THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL OVERSEER

The office of the general overseer may become vacant in one of four ways:

(1) Church Body Recognition, (2) Personal/Health Reasons, (3) Death or Incapacitation, and (4) Moral Improprieties.

(1) Church Body Recognition

Once chosen it is expected that the general overseer serve the church as long as the Lord's hand is upon him. Every six years the International Presbytery should discern the manifestation of God's presence upon the individual serving in the capacity of general overseer. If a continued confirmation of the Holy Spirit is upon him, the International Presbytery should reaffirm this observation. However, if at that time it is discerned that God's hand has lifted from the individual for this office, the International Presbytery will be asked to evaluate this assessment and determine if the Lord desires to release the individual from this position.

(2) Personal/Health Reasons

In the event that the general overseer desires to no longer serve because of personal, health, or age related reasons, he should make his intent known to the General Presbytery and the International Presbytery and should

maintain his position, where possible, until arrangements can be made for the selection of the new General Overseer at the upcoming International Assembly

(3) Death or Incapacitation

In the event of the general overseer's death or incapacitation that leads to his inability to fulfil his duties, the function of the office will continue with an interim general overseer who should be chosen from among the sitting general presbyters. The general presbyters have the responsibility of informing the International Presbytery within ten days of the situation, and arrangements should begin in order to fill the office of the general overseer at the upcoming scheduled International Assembly.

(4) Moral Improprieties

In the unfortunate event of moral failure by the general overseer, it will become the duty of the first vice-chairman to call a meeting of the general presbyters, and together, the general presbyters will declare the office of general overseer vacant. If the general presbyters deem it necessary to remove the general overseer from his office, the function of that office will continue in the manner as stated in the next paragraph.

When the office of the general overseer becomes vacant, the first vice-chairman will call a meeting of the general presbyters, and they will decide among themselves within ten days the person from among the sitting general presbyters who will immediately assume the role as the general overseer. This person will function as the interim general overseer with all rights and duties until the upcoming International Assembly and will simultaneously retain his role and responsibilities as a general presbyter and will work within the boundaries of plurality. It should be understood that this individual will not necessarily, nor automatically, become the next selected general overseer nor should he be excluded from consideration. It is imperative that the normal governance and procedural process be followed in the selection process of the general overseer, and full communication should take place with the International Presbytery within ten days, or sooner if possible, of the selection of the general overseer.

QUALIFYING GROUP FOR THE GENERAL OVERSEER

The general overseer, the International Offices executive directors, two designates chosen by the International Presbytery, and the general presbyters of areas with nominees will form the Qualifying Group for general overseer. No individual shall serve in qualifying themselves for

the office of general overseer. They will function in a similar manner to the Qualifying Group for the general presbyter when reviewing potential nominees and when presenting them to the International Presbytery for consideration

SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE GENERAL OVERSEER

1) The general overseer will be chosen by the International Presbytery in a closed meeting. Their choice will be presented for approval to the International Assembly by the general presbyters, and an expression by acclamation will be called for from the Assembly delegates. Upon the acceptance of the presented candidate by the International Assembly, the new general overseer should be anointed with oil and prayed for by the laying on of hands of the general presbyters while a prayer of unison is made by the entire Assembly. When this is complete, the new general overseer shall be given a time to express his heart, and afterwards, he will assume the responsibility to moderate the remainder of the International Assembly in the event there is no sitting general overseer.

2) On the Assembly year that a new general overseer is to be chosen, the candidates for that office will be selected in the following manner. Approximately nine months prior to the Assembly, each international presbyter will be asked to spend a minimum of three days in seclusion, private prayer, and some form of fasting, for the purpose of seeking God's will. He or she should have in hand a printed or electronic directory of all the international leaders that include a picture and a short resume that introduces the work, ministry, family, and education of each. After the period of prayer and seclusion, he or she will submit one name for consideration via email or other designated means to the qualifying committee. Note: A presbyter may submit the name of a fellow presbyter or any bishop, whom he knows very well, that has exceptional abilities, godly character, cooperates with others, and has proven to be a gifted leader. A presbyter who nominates a minister who is not already a part of the international presbytery should be able to demonstrate that the nominated minister is willing to serve in this capacity, and be able to meet all the rigorous ethical demands and background checks. He should also submit a similar biographical sketch of the minister as that provided for the International Presbytery in preparation for the next step.

3) After receiving all the nominations for general overseer, the qualifying committee should remove all names that did not receive at least two expressions, except for the ministers who are not part of the International Presbytery (Note: These ministers from outside the International Presbytery automatically move forward because they may not be widely known. Moving to the next step gives all of the International Presbytery the opportunity to read their biography and prayerfully consider their nomination. Afterwards, they will be subject to the same rules as the other nominees). Those ministers should be allowed to move forward after the qualifying committee has been satisfied. Of course, every person who has been nominated has the right to withdraw his name from the process. All persons meeting the above criteria are to have their names submitted back to the International Presbytery via email or other means along with those ministers from the field with their resumes for further consideration within 30 days.

4) Upon receiving the qualifying list, the international presbyter will have up to twenty-one days to pray over the list. He or she will then cast one expression for one candidate back to the qualifying committee by the prescribed date. The qualifying committee will then take the top seven candidates based on the numeric record and arrange for all of them to be interviewed. The interview should be, where feasible, conducted by the same person, asking the same questions, recorded, posted securely, and made available for a limited time to only the International Presbytery approximately twenty-one days before the International Assembly.

5) It is appropriate, but not mandated, for an extra day to be placed into the schedule to relieve the pressure of time. The first meeting should begin with prayer, singing, a sermon and communion. The sermon should address the needs of the church and the qualities necessary in the person to become the next general overseer. This part of the process should be planned by the acting general overseer. After the time of worship and recollection, all individuals that are not necessary to the process of selecting the general overseer will be asked to leave the room. The international presbytery and trans-local ministers will be the only ones remaining in the room along with those individuals deemed necessary for technical matters. All cell phones and computers will be turned off (not silenced), and full attention will be given to the matter at hand. Participants are asked not to communicate in any manner or form with those outside the meeting in any capacity.

6) To better prepare for the meetings of the International Presbytery (IP) and the selecting process of general presbyters, the IP's would be asked by the office of the general overseer to choose four bishops (at least two from outside North America) from among themselves at least 60 days prior to the Pre-Assembly Meetings. These four will serve as IP counselors during sessions where a moderator is to be chosen to serve for the selecting process. All four of these IP counselors would be selected prior to the Assembly through the oversight of the office of the general overseer. It is important for all the IP's to know the document and it is essential for the four counselors to study and fully understand the Governance Document. They would be expected to arrive one day prior to the International Presbytery meetings for an intensive training in the governance document, as well as spiritual discernment and appropriate procedures of moderation by the BDP chairman and secretary. One of the four counselors will be chosen by the International Presbytery to serve as the moderator. The remaining three will serve as his counselors during the selection process of the general overseer or general presbyters.

7) Following a prayer for God's help, the moderator and the counselors will ask the candidates to leave the room. These four counselors will not mark ballots for the selection so that they can moderate and judge the proceedings effectively. They will be called back in one at a time and given the opportunity to share their heart. They will also allow the International Presbytery to ask questions of each candidate being careful to keep the allotted time for each one approximately the same. All candidates should be asked a standard series of questions. It is important that the moderator make every attempt to keep the process fair and unbiased for all.

8) Once all candidates have had their opportunity to speak and answer questions, the moderator will call for the first ballot. Each member of the International Presbytery will have a card with the names of the nominees on it. Each participant will cast his/her expression with solemnity and integrity. The name placed on each individual ballot by a member of the International Presbytery will be one of those on the final qualifying list. All of those receiving five or less votes would have their names removed. As names are removed from the list throughout the process, those individuals would be allowed to return to the meeting room and participate in the selection process.

9) At the completion of the second round, all names receiving ten or less votes would be removed; after the third round, all names receiving 15 or less votes will be removed; after the fourth round, all names receiving twenty or less votes would have their names removed. This procedure would continue until two names remain.

10) The moderator will open the floor for discussion, and the Presbytery should feel the freedom to discuss—without any fear of retribution—the ministry, character, family, and abilities of these two individuals. There should once again be a time of prayer, and afterwards the expressions will be cast. If one candidate does not receive a two-thirds majority, the moderator should again open the floor for discussion and prayer, after which the expressions will be recast. If after three attempts neither person gets at least two-thirds of the expressions, the moderator should call for the counselors to meet with the current general overseer and the general presbyters for the purpose of discerning the way forward. After their consultation, they shall bring a recommendation to the International Presbytery for approval. (Note: At any point in the process above, should a person receive seventy percent of the expressions, the moderator would call for submission and a one-accord decision should be sought. The International Presbytery makes the final selection of the new general overseer based upon the “one-accord” principle (*88th Assembly Minutes* p. 153).

11) In the event that the general presbyters decide to withdraw themselves from the selection process, they should first consult with the International Presbyters from their regions of oversight. The International Presbytery should have a voice in resubmitting the name of their general presbyter, with his consent, as a candidate for general overseer.

GENERAL PRESBYTERS

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GENERAL PRESBYTERS

Administrative Responsibilities

1. Global Leadership – To work with the general overseer in providing shared leadership to the world-wide church in accomplishing its Christ-ordained mission (*88th Assembly Minutes* p. 155).

2. Oversight - Oversee the work of the church in their area. This will of course be done in conjunction with the general overseer, as each of these will be under the order of plurality.
3. Licensing - Direct the licensure of ministers in their area.
4. Leadership Development - Facilitate the thrust for training of ministers in their area at every level and assure effective communication of Assembly decisions to those leaders within their areas of responsibility.
5. Evaluation - Conduct evaluations of National/Regional overseers and overall ministry effectiveness in their area as a whole.
6. Discipline - Provide means for discipline of overseers or other ministers where there is no Presbyterial leadership. This would likely be through an Area Review Board or similar body.
7. Area Plurality - Create a body of leadership for the area that reflects plurality in decision making.
8. National Plurality - Work to encourage the practice of plurality in the area.
9. Placement - Pray for and initiate the process for replacement of the General Overseer as outlined by the Governance document.
10. Assembly Actions - Lead their area in understanding and implementing Assembly actions.
11. Funds Flow - Coordinate movement and disbursement of funds into the region and out to the national treasurers.
12. Reporting - Monitor the reporting of the nations to assure a continued flow of valuable information that provides accurate knowledge of the state of the church in each nation.
13. Budget - Make budget decisions for the area in a manner complimentary to plurality.
14. Accountability - Develop and maintain a unified system of stewardship and accountability within their area.
15. Harvest Partners - Lead in promoting and facilitating the work of the overseers in their connection with Harvest-Partner churches.
16. Legal - Confirm and help safe-guard the legal standing of the church in each nation.

Inspirational Responsibilities

1. Vision - Seek God for the visionary leadership needed in the region. This can also be done in the plurality of leadership.

2. Strategy - Work with the overseers as a whole or the plural leadership body of counselors to coordinate strategies for the area overall.
3. Outreach - Lead the area in outreach to the unreached regions as God opens doors and with systematic emphasis. Church planting would certainly be a major method here.
4. Primary Ministries - Give inspirational leadership for primary ministries, as well as others inspired of the Spirit. These certainly include Prayer, Praise/Worship, and Spiritual Warfare, Evangelism/Missions, Youth, Children, and Family Ministry.
5. Pastoral - Provide pastoral leadership and ministry to the overseers of his area.
6. Presence - Be a visible presence representing the church universal and the Assembly.

Leadership in the Nations of their Area

1. Conferences - Design and hold meetings that will draw together the leadership of the area, and possibly representatives from beyond, for fellowship, information, training, inspiration, vision casting, dialogue, and other functions best done in this setting.
2. Recruiting - Evaluate the need for laborers in the area and work with the Global Outreach Ministry or General Presbyters from other areas to recruit those from whatever regions possible.
3. Communication - Communicate as a spokesperson the needs, victories, opportunities, and all that would build bridges of cooperation between the various areas of the church ministries.
4. Discernment - Continuously seek God for discernment to see the unique cultural context of the nations in the area and how these can be woven into the gospel work and church life, or how they can enhance our universal body.

Global Responsibilities

1. Evaluation - Sit regularly with all general presbyters as the plurality of leadership to review, discuss and give input on the global status of the church.
2. Assembly - Work as general presbyter in providing leadership to the General Assembly of the church.
3. Interfacing - Connect with other areas to create harmony and unity in ministry and in doctrinal essentials.

4. Accountability - Receive counsel from the other general presbyters concerning their area of the general presbytery.
5. Service - Serve the church universal by sharing in the burden that the church fulfill its mandate and reach its destiny for this age.
6. Facilitation - Facilitate the flow of inspirational services that come from the International Offices, as well as provide a response as to more effective helps possible.
7. Representation - Bring to the general presbyter's meetings a representation of the needs, views, and gifts of one's area so that their place in the body is manifest.

In all matters of the work of the general presbyters, they shall have involvement in subjects before the general overseer for consultation, decision or dissemination. While they should be available for consultation to the general overseer, at no time should the general presbyters usurp the authority in a specific area assigned to the general overseer, nor interfere in the internal operations or ministerial cohesiveness of an area assigned to another general presbyter. Where questions of this "balance of plurality" have been overstepped, all offices involved shall work out this through mutual respect and prayer. If the issue cannot be resolved, the general overseer or general presbyters may bring such matters to the attention of the International Presbytery at their next session. The International Presbytery shall at all times serve as the servants of the Lord and of the Assembly to hold accountable both the general overseer and the general presbyters to their honored positions.

With the aforementioned responsibilities, the International Presbytery has requested that all presbyters of the IP be informed at least 60 days before their meetings of any subject or decision that will appear before their body. This will permit the IP's reasonable time to study and pray about those issues or subjects they will be addressing while they are in session.

SELECTION OF GENERAL PRESBYTERS

PROCESS AND RECOGNITION OF THE VACANCY OF THE GENERAL PRESBYTER'S OFFICE

- 1) Where vacancies occur among the General Presbytery, the general overseer with the respective plurality group from that area will decide how that work is to be carried on until a new selection is made.

2) The general overseer, the International Offices executive directors, two designates chosen by the International Presbytery, and the general presbyter of areas with nominees will form the Qualifying Group for general presbyters. No individual shall serve in qualifying themselves for the office of general presbyter. They will function in a similar manner to the Qualifying Group for the general overseer when reviewing potential nominees and when presenting them to the International Presbytery for consideration.

3) The general overseer shall initiate the process of selection of general presbyters when necessary: (1) personal/health reasons (2) church body recognition, (3) moral improprieties (4) death. The procedure will begin with a meeting of the overseers of their particular area moderated by the general overseer or his designate. Such meetings would be preceded by proper notification to the overseers in writing, and a call to prayer and fasting in preparation for the meeting. As far as practical, the principles and procedures outlined for the selection of the general overseer will be observed with modifications where necessary, to conform to area needs.

a) Call to prayer by the general overseer for ministers in the area of concern.

b) International presbyters who oversee ministers in that area are to consult with them about potential candidates they may recommend. It should be understood that the nominee would not necessarily have to be from or live in that state, nation or region. Once candidates are nominated, each overseer along with his plurality group shall reduce the list of names to two that will be recommended from their state, nation, or region to the general overseer or his designate.

c) It would seem biblically sound and wise in light of the general overseer's global knowledge and working relationship with all presbyters, that he also has the authority in consultation with the GP's to submit one name to be included to the final list.

d) The general overseer or his designate would convene a meeting of the overseers in that area (or otherwise consult with them in an effective manner) and narrow the names to not more than three before submitting them to the Qualifying Group.

e) The Qualifying Group performs background and stewardship checks and reports their findings to the general overseer. Note: The general overseer in consultation with the GP's must approve all nominees being presented to the International Presbytery.

f) The Qualifying Group presents the names that have been qualified to the International Presbytery. If only one nominee or possibly none are available, then this should be deferred to the general overseer in consultation with the GP's and IP's to help come up with two or more nominees.

g) After review, qualified nominees would be identified, and a biographical data sheet prepared for each one being submitted to the International Presbytery by the Qualifying Group. All qualified persons (names), their biographies, and appropriate information gleaned by the Qualifying Group shall be submitted to all the International Presbyters at least 30 days before the IP Meeting. It is to be understood that the Qualifying Group would have observed an appropriate time of prayer and fasting, both individually and corporately, in attempting to qualify nominees.

MODERATING THE SELECTION PROCESS

h) To better prepare for the meetings of the International Presbytery (IP) and the selecting process of general presbyters, the IP's would be asked by the office of the general overseer to choose four bishops (at least two from outside North America) from among themselves at least 60 days prior to the Pre-Assembly Meetings. These four will serve as IP counselors during sessions where a moderator is to be chosen to serve for the selecting process. All four of these IP counselors would be selected prior to the Assembly through the oversight of the office of the general overseer. It is important for all the IP's to know the document and it is essential for the four counselors to study and fully understand the Governance Document. They would be expected to arrive one day prior to the International Presbytery meetings for an intensive training in the Governance Document, as well as spiritual discernment and appropriate procedures of moderation by the BDP Chairman and Secretary. One of the four counselors will be chosen by the International Presbytery to serve as the moderator. The remaining three will serve as his counselors during the selection process of the general overseer or general presbyters.

i) The moderator selected shall state the purpose of the meeting. A representative of the Qualifying Group (with the exception of the general overseer or a general presbyter) shall present all nominees by calling them forward and reading their biographies. The biographical data should have already been distributed to all presbyters thirty days prior to this IP meeting. In addition, the name of each nominee shall be placed on a separate sheet of paper with sufficient copies for all participants (changed Presbyters), and rendered without order of preference of any kind, and free of markings, notations or other comments. Anyone, whose name appears on the list, may not moderate or participate in the presentation.

j) Nominees selected for the process shall be given fifteen to twenty minutes to address the International Presbytery to express his heart and vision. The IP will then be given the opportunity to ask questions of the nominee.

k) The moderator that was selected by the IP may consult with the three (3) counselors as needed. These four will not mark ballots for the selection so that they can moderate and judge the proceedings effectively. In addition, a secretary and assistant shall be chosen for the meeting. The names of nominees may not be considered for moderator or counselors for this special process. The moderator shall call for prayer for all the nominees and thereafter excuse them from the meeting to another site where they will continue in prayer and reflection. They will remain away from the meeting until recalled by the International Presbytery. The moderator shall call immediately for a time of concert prayer, after which there shall be at least thirty minutes in session for private reflection, meditation, and personal prayer. During this time there shall be no person-to-person, group discussions, or comparisons whatsoever.

l) The general overseer and general presbyters may give an expression when selecting anyone for general overseer or general presbyter, as long as they are not one of the nominees for the particular position that they will cast an expression for during the meeting.

m) When the time mentioned above has expired, the moderator shall call the session to order to begin the process of selection. Each member of the International Presbytery will have a card with the names of the nominees on it. Each participant will cast their expression with solemnity and integrity.

n) The moderator shall call for a time of prayer after which the first expression will be made. All of those receiving five or less votes would have their names removed. At the completion of the second round, all names receiving ten or less votes would be removed; after the third round, all names receiving fifteen or less votes will be removed; after the fourth round, all names with twenty or less votes will be removed. This procedure would continue until two names remain. The moderator will open the floor for discussion, and the Presbytery should feel the freedom to discuss—without any fear of retribution—the ministry, character, family, and abilities of these two individuals. There should once again be a time of prayer, and afterwards the expressions will be cast. If one candidate does not receive a two-thirds majority, the moderator should again open the floor for discussion and prayer, after which the expressions will be recast. If after three attempts neither person gets at least two-thirds of the expressions, the moderator should call for the Counselors to meet with the current general overseer and the general presbyters for the purpose of discerning the way forward. After their consultation, they shall bring a recommendation to the International Presbytery for approval. (Note: At any point in the process above, should a person receive seventy percent of the expressions, the moderator would call for submission and a one-accord decision should be sought. The International Presbyters make the final selection of the new general presbyter based upon the “one-accord” principle (*88th Assembly Minutes* p. 153).

o) Once a general presbyter is selected (for recommendation) to the Assembly, and presented to the International Presbytery in session, the Moderator will no longer direct the meeting. He shall relinquish the role of moderator to the general overseer, who shall report the selection to the General Assembly in an orderly and dignified manner befitting the occasion.

4) The Assembly has provided that the qualifications of general presbyters are essentially the same as the general overseer.

5) Persons chosen as general presbyters would be announced and presented to the International Assembly at the first opportunity after their selection. Where applicable, general presbyters would be formally introduced to their respective areas. An appropriate installation ceremony should be devised in either case.

6) All general presbyters are selected by the International Presbytery and shall be evaluated every four years by the overseers in their area of the world where they have been assigned. They may be retained after this evaluation process if recommended by the International Presbyters or they may be replaced at the discretion of the same body. Where the general overseer feels a strong sense of a need for a change in a general presbyter, he should first speak to the individual personally asking for him to consider rotating out, if they agree then the process of replacement would begin. If not, the general overseer should bring this to the attention of their respective area for them to pray about and consider. If the area presbyters do not agree and he still feels a strong burden for a need of change, the general overseer in consultation with the GP's then may present this conviction to the IP for their consideration. It is imperative that we maintain anointed dynamic leadership at all levels.

Respectfully Submitted to the International Presbytery:

Phil Pruitt, Chairman
Tim McCaleb
Nelson Joel Torres
Delroy Hall

Elías Rodríguez, Secretary
Leonard Carswell
James Kolawole

XI. CHANGES TO THE PRESENT FINANCIAL SYSTEM

Changes to the Present Financial System as currently listed in the *Minutes of the 95th International Assembly* (pp. 72–77).

Preamble:

Since our last Assembly, we have experienced unprecedented times (i.e., except for the Great Depression) through the course of events that occurred in the fall of 2008, resulting in a worldwide economic decline. Our Church members have not gone untouched by these developments. Indeed, several are enduring financial setbacks because of unemployment, the reduction of their working hours, the closing of businesses, etc. Nevertheless, many are discovering that these are the times to rededicate ourselves to the exercise of responsible stewardship, which includes tithing and giving. Notwithstanding a slight decline (i.e., just under four percent) in the total tithes received annually at the International Offices, there have been some record-breaking months

during this period (i.e., April 2009 is one of the top five months on record for most tithes paid). Quoting our Stewardship Ministries director, “Faithful stewards do not give less in tough economic times; they give more. Numerous pastors have shared with me that their churches are experiencing record tithing and giving. . . . The International Offices are currently receiving record amounts of tithes from the local churches. This blessing rises from pure hearts and clean hands of faithful stewards, who have learned that tithing and giving is the only confident way to journey through recessions, bailouts, and daily reports of financial ruin occurring all around us” (Jan Couch, “Tithing and Giving Brings Peace,” *White Wing Messenger*, Vol. 87, No. 12, July 2009, pp. 4, 5). The Finance and Stewardship Committee expresses our gratitude to all of our members, ministers, and churches that are tithing faithfully and giving generously into the Present Financial System of our Church. Let us stand together on the promises of God’s care for us as mentioned by the psalmist David: “I have been young and now I am old. And in all my years I have never seen the Lord forsake a man who loves him; nor have I seen the children of the godly go hungry. Instead, the godly are able to be generous with their gifts and loans to others, and their children are a blessing” (Psalm 37:25, 26 TLB). Too, as we collectively face the challenges now before us, let us together resolve to pray for the following: 1) for God to reveal to us His plan: “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7 KJV); 2) for God to instruct us: “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jeremiah 33:3 KJV); 3) for godly wisdom to be manifested among us: “And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do . . .” (1 Chronicles 12:32 KJV); and 4) to stand in the council of God: “But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds” (Jeremiah 23:22 NIV).

Overseer and Pastoral Compensation

Rationale: When an increase in an allotment is considered for an overseer or pastor, it is currently to be 1) studied and approved via a task force of ministers (i.e., chosen by tithe-paying ministers at the convention) or a task force of members (i.e., seated by the church conference) who are serving for a two-year period or 2) if recommended by the Finance and Stewardship Committee, any increase is to be approved in the national/regional/state convention (i.e., by tithe-paying ministers) or at the local church conference, respectively (pp. 72, 73 of the *95th Assembly Minutes*). Some conventions and conferences have found this procedure to be functional for them and continue

to use it effectively; however, this additional layer of accountability has been shown for most to be inconvenient, impractical, and cumbersome. As a result, 75 percent of the national/regional/state offices surveyed (source: Finance and Stewardship Committee, Financial “Snapshot” Survey, November 2008) and many local churches have sought out more efficient methods. In fact, it has proven more feasible for them to instead empower their Finance and Stewardship Committee (or its equivalent) to authorize an appropriate compensation package for the overseer or pastor, correspondingly, independent of their convention or conference. Furthermore, they have demonstrated successfully that accountability may still be achieved using this or a similar alternative approach. With this in mind, perhaps it is now appropriate to officially give the intermediate offices and the local churches more flexibility when considering compensation packages for the overseer or pastor. Specifically, the convention and/or conference could imbue their Finance and Stewardship Committee (or its equivalent) to function as their fiduciary agent of accountability, as is already efficiently happening in many nations/regions/states and local churches. In this manner, such conventions and/or conferences may elect to facilitate this process while simultaneously meeting the accountability standards of the intermediate office or church being served.

Recommendation: On pages 72, 73, of the *95th Assembly Minutes*, in the section **Overseer and Pastoral Compensation**, delete the 4th sentence of the 3rd paragraph, as it is presently listed:

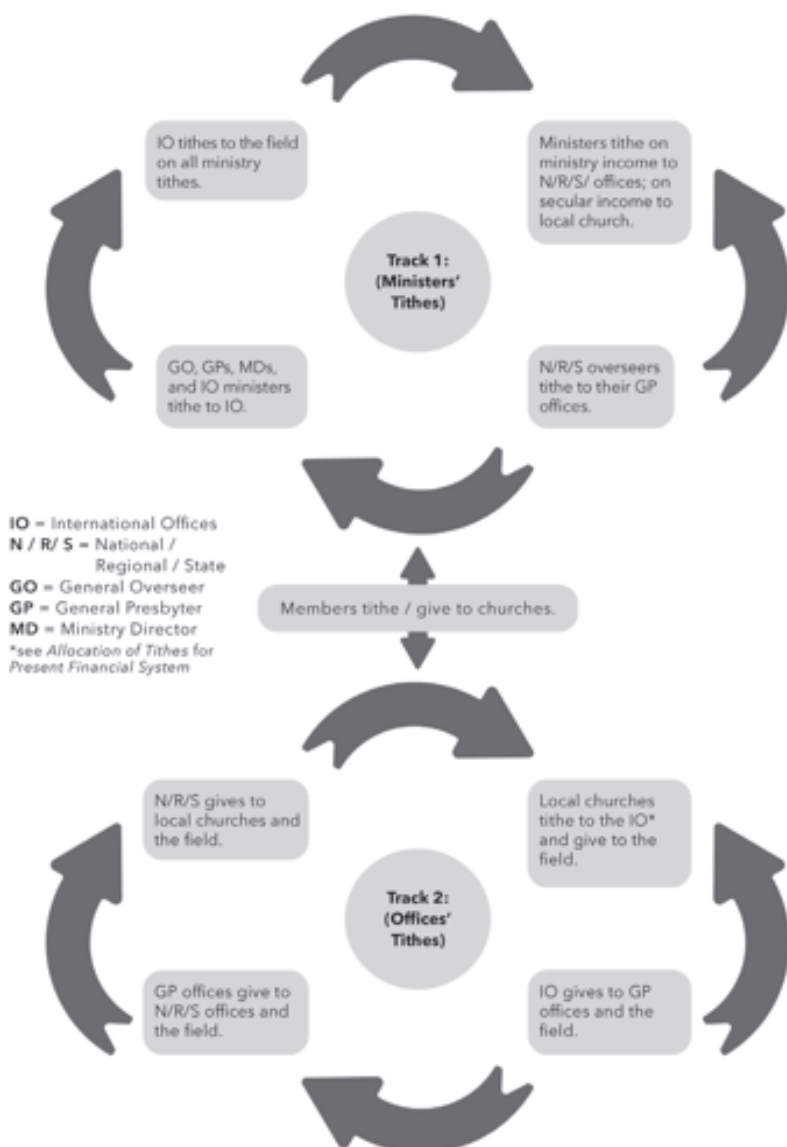
“. . . If the Finance and Appropriations Committee (now Finance and Stewardship) for the nation, region, state, or local church is used to consider pastoral or overseer compensation, any increase in compensation, merit, or cost of living adjustment should be approved by the ministers paying tithes to that office (nation, region, or state) at their convention . . .” and insert the following sentences in its place: “. . . If the Finance and Stewardship Committee (or its equivalent) for the nation, region, state, or local church is vested with the delegated authority of the convention or conference, correspondingly, to consider overseer or pastoral compensation (i.e., in addition to the current annual allotment set by the Administrative Committee), then any increase in compensation, merit, or cost of living adjustment may be approved by this same commissioned group, who is serving as the fiduciary agent of accountability for the convention or conference being served; otherwise, any increase (i.e., in addition to the current annual allotment set by the Administrative Committee) in compensation, merit, or cost of living adjustment should be approved by a task force as explained above via the ministers paying tithes to that office (nation, region, or state) at their convention or by the members paying tithes

to the local church at their regular conference, respectively. However, the Finance and Stewardship Committee (or its equivalent) is not authorized to increase overseer or pastoral compensation (i.e., in addition to the current annual allotment set by the Administrative Committee) in cases when and where the national, regional, state, or local offices have personnel who are supplemented from sources external to their offices and/or conventions/conferences. In such cases, said personnel are subject to the decisions of the Finance and Stewardship Committee (or its equivalent) of the offices supplementing them with funds. . . .”

Flowchart/Diagram of Present Financial System

Rationale: The following Diagram of the Present Financial System is offered as an additional visual aid to the existing Flowchart of the Present Financial System. The focus of the diagram is to bring more clarity about the tithing/giving procedures among the ministers and various church offices. These illustrations (i.e., flowchart and diagram) are to be updated automatically by the Assembly Finance and Stewardship Committee as approved changes occur.

Recommendation: On page 77, of the *95th Assembly Minutes*, in the section **Flowchart/Diagram of Present Financial System**, place the new illustration (the following diagram) that will complement the current illustration (the existing flowchart) that is now located on page 77 of the *95th Assembly Minutes*.



The 95th International Assembly adopted resolutions to amend the Present Financial System in order to primarily assist the general presbytery offices, the intermediate offices, and the local pastors. The following is a brief summary of these resolutions:

- Tithes of National/Regional/State Overseers: Now, the national/regional/state overseers tithe to their respective general presbytery office. This action has redirected funds away from the International Offices and toward the general presbytery offices, thereby allowing for more funds to assist with struggling intermediate offices and to be used for church-planting and evangelization.
- Discontinuation of the Church Ministries Support Offering: This action has redirected funds away from the International Offices and toward the national/regional/state offices via the creation of the Harvest and Leadership Development offering.
- Establishment and Implementation of a Harvest and Leadership Development Offering: Now, an offering to help the national/regional/state offices with operations, harvest outreach, church-planting, and leadership training is to be received monthly at the local church and then 100 percent sent to the respective national/regional/state offices. This offering has a great potential to bless the intermediate offices.
- Supplementary Funds for the National/Regional/State Offices: When there is a need for more operational funds at the national/regional/state offices beyond the ministerial tithe, the respective conventions of these intermediate offices may now adopt resolutions (i.e., that are not in contradiction to the current Assembly rulings or the present financial system) to have their local churches send in an additional amount (i.e., equivalent to a certain percentage of the tithe sent to the International Offices) in order to provide them with much-needed additional financial support. As mentioned earlier, those intermediate offices who are receiving supplementary funds from their churches have increased their monthly receipts by an average of 27 percent.
- Fiscal Responsibility: An annual report of all pastors, overseers, presbyters, and general appointees is now to be given from the supervising office to the local church or office being served that affirms whether or not the minister is faithful in reporting and tithing. This practice should promote transparency and accountability and encourage our ministers to both model and mentor faithful tithing, per International Assembly guidelines.
- Retirement Planning: All ministers under appointment have been encouraged to participate in a retirement plan in conjunction with their local churches or national/regional/state/presbytery/International

Offices, allotting a portion of their annual budget to include some amount to give to their respective pastor, overseer (national/regional/state), general presbyter, general overseer, or International Offices' ministry director, as matching funds for retirement. Where no retirement plan currently exists, the national overseers, in coordination with the International Offices (i.e., Stewardship Ministries) and their respective general presbyter, are asked to establish an appropriate retirement plan for their ministers under appointment who serve as pastors, overseers, or presbyters within the existing laws of their sovereign nations.

- **Parsonage Allowance:** Each local church or national/regional/state/presbytery/International Offices, with respect to the laws of their sovereign nations, are to now designate a reasonable portion of the monthly allotment as a housing or parsonage allowance for their respective pastor, overseer (national/regional/state), general presbyter, general overseer, or International Offices ministry director, to assist him/her in the upkeep of his/her residence (whether owned personally or by the Church) to defray the costs of maintenance, repairs, rent/mortgage, utilities, furnishings, etc. In some cases, designating most or all of the compensation as a parsonage allowance may be reasonable and may also have a tax advantage (depending on the nation/state) for the pastor, overseer, presbyter, ministry director, etc.

XII. CONSIDERATION TO OFFSET INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY EXPENSE

The International Assembly has been a pinnacle point of this Movement for the past 99 years. It has had a distinct purpose and function in our past, and will continue to do so in our future. The Assembly provides the Church of God of Prophecy with direction, fellowship, inspiration, connection, as well as our platform to transact business. It holds a special place in all of our hearts. Its roots go back to our inception and it is a vital part of who we are.

The Assembly has great value and worth to this Church. However, it does not occur without a tremendous investment of our financial resources. This biennial event comes with financial challenges to our already demanding International Offices budget.

In an effort to relieve this share in the expense on our International Offices finances and not thwart the current ministries provided (including Evangelism and Leadership Development), we therefore recommend that consideration is given to implementing an Assembly Expense Offering, to be received by every local church globally on the third Sunday of January or an annual budgeted amount. Each local church should feel the flexibility

to receive this offering at a date before May 1 should it work better in their overall budget process. The May 1 date will give adequate time for it to be sent to the state/regional office then to the International Offices before the end of the fiscal year.

This annual offering or a budgeted amount from each local church would provide additional funds necessary for International Assembly expenses, as well as make it possible to maintain our commitment to the harvest, leadership development, and prayer.

We further recommend that each church submit the Assembly Expense Offering to each state, regional, or national office. This would, in turn, be forwarded to the International Offices.

Assembly Expense Detail (Additional Information)

As we continue to walk after the biblical principles of finance and stewardship, it becomes more and more apparent for the need to address recurring constraints and deficits of budgeting needs. One such item is the continued short fall in adequately funding the International Assembly.

Records will show the expense of conducting the International Assembly is growing larger. Being a good steward requires us to evaluate the expenses of said event. While it is not our desire to minimize or devalue the need of conducting the International Assembly, we recognize the value to this body of believers, for the assembling together in order to transact business, offer fellowship, and receive proper strategic instruction while serving God's kingdom and edifying this movement. It is our desire to bring, with transparency, the need of reducing International Offices expense for funding such an endeavor of corporate meeting. Just as we are instructed to be good stewards of our individual affairs, we have received the same admonition to be good stewards over the house of God. The realization of this could mean making necessary adjustments or even becoming proactive in bringing awareness to specific needs in order to help generate more financial support. Rather than assuming this body of delegates is aware of the rising cost, we choose to bring that information to your attention. As you are personally aware, the rising cost of everything has made an impact on your personal life. The same is true for this international church. Our Assembly expense for the 2014 International Assembly was \$ 962,538.94. The offerings and rebates for that Assembly totaled \$126,625.17. Consequently, our net cost was \$835,913.77. This figure translates to a \$417,956.88 impact on the annual International Offices budget. The budget for the 2014 and 2012 International Assembly has been placed on the website and the International Presbytery was made aware of this before the Assembly began.

While we see an annual Assembly Expense Offering as a proactive way to share in funding the International Assembly, we may be approaching a time to consider an adjustment in our Assembly cycle. In light of the above

information, we request the general overseer and general presbyters ask the appropriate Assembly committee to analyze this for feasibility and present it to the International Assembly as they deem necessary.

XIII. THE GLOBAL IMMIGRATION CHALLENGE

Resolution by the Church of God of Prophecy 95th International Assembly, 2008

Today a significant amount of fear and hatred is negatively affecting the mindset of many nations because of the redistribution of population groups through immigration. As Christians, we must ensure that our response to the issue of immigration is directed by a Christian world view that is shaped by biblical principles rather than secular or current attitudes. A number of biblical principles relevant to immigration run through the Bible. Primarily, we as Christians are aliens on this earth. “. . . And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth” (Hebrews 11:13 NIV). Our status as aliens and strangers formulates the basis for our attitudes and responses toward those people who live outside our society.

We affirm as Christians that our material possessions do not really belong to us. The Promised Land belonged to the Israelites only in the sense that as host, God allowed the Israelites to dwell in the Promised Land as His guests (Leviticus 25:23). Indeed, the children of God were strangers and foreigners in the land they lived in. Similarly, as aliens and strangers in our world today, the material resources of this world do not belong to us. We have what we have because of God; as our host, He has distributed material resources to us, His guests. As recipients of God’s graciousness and generosity, we need to guard against selfishness and possessiveness, which would cloud our attitude toward immigrants.

We affirm that we are all strangers and foreigners in this world. Borders and national ethnic identity should never separate us as God’s people. As non-citizens working in their country of residence, aliens exist outside the social and political network of the society they are residing in; thus, they are rendered powerless. Aliens are very vulnerable to exploitation. As Christians, we should recall our roots as aliens and, thus, identify with their plight (Exodus 23:9) by treating them with kindness and helping them as earlier nations did to Israel and were blessed by God for their generosity. As Christians, no one should ever be considered an outsider. “. . . The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself . . .” (Leviticus 19:33, 34 NIV). The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37–40; Mark 12:30, 31; Luke 10:27) is to apply to the alien because he or she is our neighbor.

We affirm the privilege of serving the outsiders of society that mirrors the ministry and life of Jesus. Because Christ identified with the stranger, we are to extend the same treatment to the alien and stranger that Jesus would give to others (Matthew 25:3–5 KJV). Historically, immigration policies around the world appear to be directed more by racism and economic self-interest than compassion. Immigration quotas throughout many nations have favored people groups established long ago because of political interest or racial preferences while limiting immigrants from less desirable nations because of education, economic status, or trade skills. We must be people of compassion who pray and extend love to those caught up in the confusing and unjust immigration maze, as the Lord would be to the outcast of His day.

We affirm that God has a purpose in the migration moves of people around the world. “Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites [Nile region]?” declares the LORD. “Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor [Crete] and the Arameans from Kir?” (Amos 9:7 NIV). God has never asked us to understand His purposes; however, today’s immigration situation presents the church an opportunity to do ministry among diverse people of every race or ethnic background. By His grace and only for His grace alone, we could have been one of these “little ones” (e.g., Matthew 10:42; 18:6) had we been born in a different time or another country where the suffering, political, and social injustices would have forced us to flee looking for a better life for our loved ones. Therefore, we did not choose the country where we were born, but we can make the choice to show God’s love for the lost, His compassion for the afflicted, and His Spirit of service toward our neighbor, the “stranger at our gates” (Deuteronomy 14:21; 24:14; 31:12). As His children, we are called by God to aid the vulnerable. We must see the alien and the stranger as individuals made in the image of God, the object of Christ’s love. Furthermore, we must see not only them, but all people from every nation as having intrinsic worth by God, needing our affirmation and acceptance.

SECTION TWO

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Report of the Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee to the 99th International Assembly of the Church of God of Prophecy

A Statement of Faith for the Church of God of Prophecy

Introduction and Rationale

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3 NKJV).

Late in the fall of 2015, the General Overseer and General Presbyters asked the Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee to write a statement of faith that would clearly and concisely express the core beliefs of the Christian faith that have been historically embraced by the Church of God of Prophecy. In the course of its writing, members of both the Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee and the General Presbytery made contributions to the document’s content. It is important to affirm that the resulting document does not replace the doctrinal positions in Biblical Principles, Beliefs, and Practices of the Church of God of Prophecy. On the contrary, we continue to hold the biblical and theological truths that identify and distinguish the Church of God of Prophecy as a church within the Classical Pentecostal movement.

The Church of God of Prophecy Statement of Faith offers a public statement of the basic tenets of the Christian faith in clear and simple language. The beliefs stated in the document express our solidarity and commonality with Christians within the Church throughout the world, while preserving some of our theological distinctions. It does not attempt to address every biblical teaching, theological position, or practice in orthodox Christianity or the Church of God of Prophecy. Instead, we hope to offer a clear and concise statement of our faith that will introduce people of other Christian traditions, and even people of non-Christian faiths to the Church of God of Prophecy. We are convinced that our present exposure to and cooperation with other Christians, and our exposure to people of non-Christian religions make such a statement imperative.

The Church of God of Prophecy Statement of Faith also offers a standard, unified, and cohesive declaration of the foundational articles of our faith that can be used by ministers and churches in printed and digital media.

Our prayer is that, as members of the Church of God of Prophecy, we may continue to boldly and “earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”

Respectfully submitted,

Philip Pruitt, Chairman	Elías Rodríguez, Secretary	Delroy Hall
James Kolawole	Carswell Leonard	Timothy McCaleb
Nelson Joel Torres		

Statement of Faith (Amended 2018)

We believe in the Holy Trinity—one God, eternally existing in Three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe in one God, the Father, creator of heaven and earth, of all things seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. All things were made through Him and for Him. He is true God and true man. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary. He suffered, died, was buried, and on the third day He rose from the dead. He ascended to the right hand of the Father, and He will return to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who eternally proceeds from the Father. He is Teacher, Comforter, Helper, and Giver of spiritual gifts. Through Him the saving and sanctifying works of Jesus Christ are applied to the life of believers. He is the empowering Presence of God in the life of the Christian and the Church. The Father has sent His Son to baptize with the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues and bearing the fruit of the Spirit are New Testament signs of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

We believe that salvation is by grace through faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross; and that He died in our place. The believer's sins are forgiven by the shedding of His blood. We believe that healing of mind, body, soul, and spirit is available to the believer through the blood of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. We believe in one baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the grace of God brings forgiveness and reconciliation to those who repent, as well as transformation in holiness, enabling them to live a Christ-like life. Sanctification is both a definite work of grace and a lifelong process of change in the believer brought by the blood of Jesus, the Word of God, and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

We believe in one holy, universal Church, composed of all true believers in Jesus Christ, offering fellowship and calling for service to men and women of all races, nations, cultures, and languages. We believe in the spiritual and ultimate visible unity of the Church.

We believe that the Bible—both Old and New Testaments—is the inspired Word of God. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself and His will to humankind, sufficient for instruction in salvation and daily Christian living. The Bible is the Christian's rule of faith and practice.

We believe that God will ultimately reconcile all things in heaven and earth in Christ. Therefore, we look forward to new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

(100th International Assembly 2018 – BDP Report.)

Biblical Principles, Beliefs, and Practices of the Church of God of Prophecy

Preface

Since the beliefs of the Church of God of Prophecy are based on biblical principles, we realize that we are on a spiritual journey striving to “walk in the light” when it comes to our understanding of timeless truth. The following doctrinal insights reflect our current findings through our International Assemblies. We must always be acutely aware that as human instruments, we are subject to limited comprehension. As such, we desire to continually seek greater light that better aligns us to Scripture and brings correction to our finite knowledge. Henceforth, following each Assembly, the Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee would be expected to make any further adjustments that would be required in light of this mandate to reflect Assembly decisions.

From its beginnings, the Church of God of Prophecy has based its beliefs on “the whole Bible rightly divided.” We accept the Bible as God’s Holy Word, inspired, inerrant, and infallible. We believe the Bible to be God’s written revelation of Himself to mankind and our guide in all matters of faith; therefore, we look to the Bible as our highest authority for doctrine, practice, organization, and discipline.

The Church of God of Prophecy is firm in its commitment to orthodox Christian belief. We affirm that there is one God eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe in the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, the physical miracles He performed, His atoning death upon the Cross, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal return in power and glory at His second coming. We profess that regeneration by the Holy Spirit is essential for the salvation of sinful mankind. We believe the sinner is brought to an awareness of the need for salvation through the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. We believe that in sanctification by the blood of Christ, one is made holy. We affirm the present, active ministry of the Holy Spirit who guides the Church and by whose indwelling and empowerment we are able to live godly lives and render effective service to God and others. We believe in the oneness and ultimate unity of believers for which our Lord prayed, and that this should be visibly displayed “that the world may know, see, and believe” God’s glory, the coming of His Son, and the great love He has for His people (John 17:20–23). We are committed to the sanctity of the marriage bond and the importance of strong, loving Christian families.

The Church embraces all biblical doctrines as taught in the New Testament and have listed some that may be helpful to believers seeking to mature in Christ Jesus:

REPENTANCE

The presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the world and upon the human heart through the Gospel of Jesus Christ (John 16:8–11) brings **CONVICTION**, an awareness and acknowledgement of sin against God and the need to confess that guilt with Godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10). In short, repentance means not only being sorry for sin, but a turning from and forsaking the old life (sin habits) for a new walk by faith in God through the Holy Spirit and in company with the people of God (Acts 2:42). The result of repentance is salvation, a work that is both instantaneous (new birth—John 3:3–8) and life-inclusive, beginning with the giving of new life by the Holy Spirit to the believer and climaxing with a glorified body (Hebrews 9:28; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19). Repentance results in Justification, Regeneration, or what is called the “Born Again” experience as explained on the following pages.

JUSTIFICATION

“Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1, 2). Justification is both a state and an act: On the part of the repentant one, it is the state of being without offense toward God. On God’s part, it is His act in forgiving the actual sins for which one has repented and declaring the individual accepted in a new relationship. The individual is said to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ; that is, one’s sins are covered (atoned for), and God no longer holds that person accountable for those sins. New spiritual life has begun (2 Corinthians 5:17), a beginning sometimes referred to as “Regeneration.”

REGENERATION/BORN AGAIN

Regeneration describes the work of God in providing new spiritual life in the believer. Human beings without Christ are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1) and must be made alive or regenerated through the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). This giving of new spiritual life through Jesus Christ enables right relationships with God, the ability to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24), and is simultaneous with Justification (previous paragraph). It is God’s gracious act to rekindle the spiritual life lost in Adam (1 Corinthians 15:22) so one may now walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh (Romans 8:1–11). Accordingly, the individual is said to be “Born Again” or born of God (1 John 5:1). In responding to the double question of Nicodemus, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter

the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:4, 5). To be born again, then, is to become a new creation in Christ, a child of God, justified and regenerated as a result of true repentance and faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. There is no other way to enter the kingdom. This entrance into a new life of discipleship to Christ (Acts 2:42) engages the believer in actively seeking more of God, fellowshiping and worshipping with God's people, and intentionally obeying God's Word as the believer learns how to "possess his vessel (whole body) in sanctification and honour" (1 Thessalonians 4:4).

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification, like salvation, ultimately spans the entire life of the believer. Initially, it is a work of grace subsequent to being justified, regenerated, or born again. It is an instantaneous work, which both sets one apart for God (1 Corinthians 1:2) and crucifies and cleanses the old nature, enabling the believer to be free from the dominant rule of sin: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For, he that is dead is freed from sin" (Romans 6:6, 7). "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11). This dethroning of the old nature, this cleansing, this setting apart, places upon the believer the scriptural demand to "mortify the deeds of the body" through the Spirit (Romans 8:12, 13) and to "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication (sexual immorality), uncleanness, inordinate (abnormal) affection, evil concupiscence (desire for earthly things), and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5). Second Peter 3:17, 18 further encourages growth in God's grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." There is then in sanctification, a responsibility on the part of the believer to "put off" some habits and practices, and to "put on" others, which means there must be intentionality to holiness (Ephesians 4:22–32). Sanctification empowers us against sin's control; the believer responds with a renewed mind to be transformed into the image of Christ (Romans 12:1, 2) and to be holy in life and conduct (2 Corinthians 7:1).

HOLINESS

Holiness is a command of our Lord: “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:14–16), the state of being free from sin (sin’s dominance) made possible by God’s sanctifying and cleansing work (Romans 6:11–14; 1 Corinthians 6:11), and further sustained by active, whole-hearted pursuit of a life of Christ-likeness on the part of the maturing believer. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11, 12). “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” (1 Thessalonians 4:7). “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). Holiness must also be the Church’s collective goal as the body of Christ to demonstrate the praises (virtues) of Him “who hath called (us) out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9, 10).

BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy (Spirit). For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38, 39). The baptism with the Holy Spirit as it occurred at Pentecost and in subsequent places in the Book of Acts (8:14–17; 10:44–46; 19:2–7) is a definite experience that is subsequent to the salvation and sanctification experiences or may accompany them in a somewhat simultaneous way. Jesus said to His disciples, “. . . for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:17). This indwelling is a definite, instantaneous experience described in the Scriptures by the word “baptism” and is accompanied by the evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. The baptism is also the Holy Spirit’s enduement of the believer for service in the kingdom, as the Church was empowered at Pentecost to go forth with the message of the Gospel: “But ye shall receive power; after that the Holy (Spirit) is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). This experience should not be confused with water baptism, regeneration, or sanctification.

The Holy Spirit “is come” (has been sent by Christ—Acts 2:33) to “reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment,” to serve as the church’s guide and director, and to reveal the things of Christ (John 16:7–15). As such, it is important for believers to seek both the baptism (Acts 2:38, 39) and His

fullness (Ephesians 5:18) in order that they may become familiar with His leadership and guidance and cooperatively participate in His work, both for personal Christian maturity and for service in Christ's mission to the world.

SPEAKING IN OTHER TONGUES

Speaking in (with) other tongues—languages (magnifying God through uttering His wonderful works in languages normally unknown to the speaker—Acts 2:4–8; 11; 10:44–46) is common in the Book of Acts to describe the coming of the Holy Spirit upon believers as clearly stated in the foregoing scriptural texts. Acts 19:6 also shows the same result (speaking in tongues and prophesying) when the apostle Paul laid hands on 12 believers in the city of Ephesus for them to receive the Holy Spirit. In regulating the order and use of spiritual gifts to the Corinthian saints (1 Corinthians 12–14), Paul also allows for the private use of tongues in prayer to God and indicates that this edifies the individual believer's spirit (14:2–4). The gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues for public use in the assembled congregation are, of course, to be distinguished from the baptism with the Spirit as applied in the individual's experience. Paul makes this clear by referring to his own experience (cf. Acts 9:17–19) when he says, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all" (1 Corinthians 14:18). While closing his admonition by prioritizing the gift most useful for the public edification of all (prophecy), he was careful to add, "and forbid not to speak with tongues" (v. 39).

Following the biblical pattern in Acts, the Church of God of Prophecy and other classical Holiness/Pentecostal churches teach that speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance is the initial evidence (observable by others) of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. However, it is not to be regarded or sought as an "end-all" experience. Daily walking and living in the Spirit (Romans 8:1–14) will continue to build Christian character (the fruit of the Spirit) and should be the desire and practice of every believer.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

As mentioned above, daily walking and living in the Spirit will cause the fruit of the Spirit to be regularly manifested in the life of the believer: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23). Such fruit cannot be produced by the flesh or by human nature. Indeed, the opposing nature and starkly contrary deeds of the flesh are partly enumerated in the same text with the concluding remark, "... they which do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (v. 21). "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (v. 16). "For ye

were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth)” (Ephesians 5:8, 9). The Spirit’s work is crucial to the life of the believer and to the church.

FULL RESTORATION OF THE GIFTS TO THE CHURCH

In accordance with the Spirit’s work, various spiritual gifts are given to and in the church and are manifested through individuals sometimes in an apparently resident manner (repeatedly) and, at other times, spontaneously, as by direct unction of the Spirit in a given setting (1 Corinthians 12:4–11; Romans 12:4–8; Ephesians 4:7–16). Although there are historical periods during which spiritual gifts were not as prevalent as other times, there is no scriptural warrant to support the idea that these gifts ceased. Based on the foregoing scriptural texts and others, the Church of God of Prophecy teaches that spiritual gifts exist in the body of Christ and are owned, distributed, controlled, and operated by the Spirit as it pleases Him. The Church does not advocate personal claims to the gifts, but encourages individuals to humbly know and fulfill their callings to Christian service in response to the Spirit’s leading and with the abilities He gives. As the church is restored to New Testament power, the gifts of the Spirit are expected to serve to edify the body of Christ in these last days just as those same gifts did in earlier times.

SIGNS FOLLOWING BELIEVERS

Because of spiritual gifts and the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, miraculous signs and wonders may accompany the works and ministries of true believers. Mark 16:17–20 records, “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. . . . And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.” While Jesus identified for His apostles what may follow in the lives of those who believe, the import of this text, when balanced against other salvation scriptures such as Romans 10:8–13, does not allow for these to occur (whether simultaneously or one by one) in every instance of salvation. However, the Church sees no Scriptural warrant for the ceasing of these signs, but believe they have occurred and are still occurring today. “For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be

spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy (Spirit), according to his own will” (Hebrews 2:2–4)?

DIVINE HEALING

God’s sovereign grace and mercy, through the atonement of Jesus Christ for all our sins and ultimately for all the consequences of sin, provides for the healing/salvation of our souls as well as our bodies in His work on Calvary. In the tradition of Jesus and His apostles as recorded in the Gospels and Acts (Mark 3:1–5; 9–12; 14, 15; Matthew 10:8; Acts 5:12), the Church believes that divine healing is accomplished by the power of God without the aid of medicine or surgical skills (Matthew 8:14–17). While it is clear that God does not always heal instantaneously in response to all prayers for healing (whether of the individual or of someone else praying on behalf of an individual—see 2 Timothy 4:20), it is also a clear biblical duty of the elders and ministers of the Church to pray for the sick and to visit the sick (James 5:13–18 with Matthew 25:34–40). “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases” (Psalm 103:2, 3). This text specifically addresses the soul, but the whole person (spirit/soul and body) can be divinely healed by the power of God. The healing of persons in response to faith and prayer (Acts 3:11–16) and by God’s special mercy (to spare certain of His servants more sorrow, cf. Philippians 2:25–27) is definitely confirmed in Scripture. We have a duty to continue to pray fervently for the sick, humbly leaving it in God’s hands to work His sovereign will.

WATER BAPTISM

Water baptism is the act of being immersed in water according to the commandment and instructions of Christ (Matthew 28:19). This ordinance has no power to wash away sins, but is the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21) and represents for the believer an identity with the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord (Romans 6:3–5). Mark 16:16 further reinforces the necessity of this step of obedience: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be damned.” On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter told those under conviction what they should do: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Obviously, the apostles literally followed the Lord’s instructions, and we can do no less. Baptism, then, is outward evidence of our submission to Christ in salvation and our public declaration that we are His followers. It

identifies us with His people in His kingdom. “Then they that gladly received His word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (2:41; see also 10:47, 48 and 16:30–33).

THE LORD’S SUPPER

The Lord’s Supper is a sacred ordinance that our Lord Himself instituted on the night He was betrayed as He ate the Passover with His disciples (Luke 22:14–22). He instructed that this be done in remembrance of Him. It is representative of our communion and fellowship with Him. The apostle Paul reiterated the Lord’s instructions to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11:23–25), adding some helpful details: “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, (in an unworthy manner), shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, so that we are not condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another” (vv. 26–33).

It is therefore the Church’s position that this be observed with all gravity and in an orderly manner. No one should approach the Lord’s Table with unforgiven sin in one’s heart, and all should consecrate themselves in prayer before and upon every occasion of this observance. The Lord’s Supper consists of “the fruit of the vine” (unfermented grape juice, as is our practice), representing the blood of Christ, and unleavened bread, representing His broken body on the cross. The Church encourages the Lord’s Supper to be observed at least once a quarter, but to do so more often is certainly compatible with scriptural teaching: “They worshipped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved” (Acts 2:46, 47 NLT).

WASHING THE SAINT’S FEET

The following are excerpts from the 2018 BDP Report concerning footwashing. It began by referencing the Biblical Principals, Beliefs, and Practices of the Church of God of Prophecy published in 2008:

Feet Washing was instituted by Jesus on the night of the Last Supper and is considered by the Church a New Testament

ordinance which we are enjoined to observe. As the Lord's Supper represents our communion with Christ, Feet Washing represents our common unity (community) with each other as followers of Christ and partakers together with Him. Jesus sent two of his disciples to the home of a special friend in Jerusalem to prepare for the Passover meal (Mark 14:12-17). These preparations would have included a basin, water pitcher, and a towel for the customary washing of feet. According to verse seventeen above, the twelve came with Jesus, but there is no mention of the washing of feet. Luke tells us there was anguish among the disciples as Jesus announced that one of them would betray Him and also that there was a quarrel between them as to who should be the greatest (Luke 22:24-27). Jesus taught them servant-hood as their right relationship (verses 25-27) and demonstrated His posture as a Servant among them by washing their feet (John 13:3-5). In establishing this spirit of servant-hood among them Jesus said: "... Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you...If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13: 12-15; 17). The Church encourages that Feet Washing be observed in the same service as the Lord's Supper whenever possible and in a decent and orderly manner.¹

There are some themes that we can highlight from this updated version. First, it recognizes that we are enjoined to observe this ordinance because it is a New Testament teaching. It also emphasizes the communal aspect of our relationship. While the Lord's Supper represents our communion with Christ, footwashing represents our communion with one another. It also accentuates that we are servants one of another, following the example of Jesus, who being Lord and Master, washed the feet of the disciples, and commanded us to wash one another's feet. It also let us know that the Church encourages that footwashing be observed in the same service as the Lord's Supper, but suggests "whenever possible" and in a decent and orderly manner. It opens the possibility for having both ordinances observed at different times, if conditions are not appropriate. We sense that this updated version is divested of a legalistic spirit which enforces the observance of these ordinances; instead, it encourages us to observe it in a spirit of obedience to the New Testament, of servant-hood and brotherly love toward one another.

¹ *Biblical Principals, Beliefs, and Practices of the Church of God of Prophecy* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 2008), 16-17.

To Thomas' argument that footwashing provides a 'cleansing of post-baptismal sins,'* I would like to add Matthias Wenk's statement that footwashing "is a rite to assure each other cleanness in the presence of God" and that this ordinance "creates a community of people that are equally clean because their purity is not defined in moral terms but in their common encounter with Jesus through the rite performed."

* *(In response to discussions during the business session of the 100th International Assembly regarding the forgiveness of post-baptismal sins, the Biblical Doctrine and Polity Committee states that the sentiment of the document would be better served by rewording the statement, ". . . footwashing provides a 'cleansing of post-baptismal sins'" to "footwashing symbolizes a 'cleansing of post-baptismal sins.'" Just as water baptism does not provide cleansing from sin, but symbolizes an inward work of grace wrought through the Holy Spirit in the life of the new convert, footwashing likewise may be an outward expression [or symbol] of the continual cleansing that is effectuated through the Holy Spirit [i.e. "the washing of water by the word"]).*

Conclusion

As we have learned from our forefathers, their primary motivation for washing the feet of the saints was because it was a New Testament teaching, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. Like them, we must also be willing to continue with the observance of this practice, believing Jesus' promise given in the form of a beatitude that "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

Contrary to the Graeco-Roman world, footwashing by the disciples wasn't a sign of subjugation, or superiority of one over the other. It was a sign of equality, not seen before in this world. It was a sign of equality between servants and master, messenger and the one who sends the messenger (v.16). Footwashing was a ceremony that showed mutual submission, produced by love as equals in the Lord.

When observing footwashing, we must avoid a legalistic or judgmental spirit. A spirit of love, respect, auto submission must prevail, as we endeavor to obey Jesus' commandment to wash one another's feet, remembering the blessing: "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (v. 17).

Footwashing not only provides fellowship with Christ and with one another, but also a symbol of continued cleansing from sin, so that we can bear fruit and remain in Him (John 15). Thomas adds that "footwashing signifies the disciple's spiritual cleansing for a continued relationship with Jesus. As such, the footwashing functions as an extension of the disciple's baptism in that it signifies continual cleansing from the sin acquired (after baptism) through

life in a sinful world.”² One great blessing of footwashing in the words of Matthias Wenk is that it “creates a community of people that are equally clean because their purity is not defined in moral terms, but in their common encounter with Jesus through the rite performed.”³

Footwashing should be an ongoing ritual. It is not optional and we should practice it as often as possible. Regarding the continuous practice of footwashing, Frank D. Macchia states:

...the fact that Jesus instructs the disciples to wash each other’s feet, introduces the rite as an ongoing ritual in the church that would convey the full meaning of Jesus’ initial act of footwashing after the crucifixion and resurrection have occurred. The fact that Peter could have no part in Christ without the footwashing (v.8) revealed that this rite was not an option that the church could do without.⁴

Having stated our preceding thoughts, we proceed with the following recommendations:

- 1. We reaffirm the practice of the Ordinance of Footwashing as taught and commanded by Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.**
- 2. We recommend that it be observed as often as possible, whether after Communion or at a separate time.**
- 3. We recommend it to be observed in a spirit of humility and love toward one another.**
- 4. We recommend that this updated version of the doctrine of footwashing be taught to the members of the Church of God of Prophecy.**

(See full *BDP report – 2018 Business Acts*)

² Thomas, *Footwashing in John* 13, 150.

³ Matthias Wenk: “The Church as Sanctified Community,” in *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*, ed. by John Christopher Thomas (Cleveland, TN: CPT, 2010), 131-32.

⁴ Frank D. Macchia, “Is Footwashing the Neglected Sacrament? A Theological Response to John Christopher Thomas,” *Pneuma* 19 (1997), 241.

TITHING AND GIVING

Tithing means to bring one-tenth of our increase into the treasury of the Church (Proverbs 3:9, 10). The first biblical record of tithing to God's work began with Abraham, who paid tithes to Melchisedec (priest of the Most High God) of the spoils from his battle with the kings (Genesis 14:18–20), continued under the law, and received the approval of our Lord (Matthew 10:5–10; 23:23). Other New Testament writers reference God's provisions that they who preach the Gospel should live (be supported) of the Gospel hearers (1 Corinthians 9:6–14; Luke 10:7). See also Hebrews 7:4–10, which gives tithing a certain generational transcendence. The Church considers that the Scriptural obligation to tithe is not fulfilled by just giving directly to the poor or to individuals or good causes. While the Church espouses and participates in all such support, her understanding of the biblical practice of tithing is that tithes are paid—brought into the treasury of the Church for the Lord's work, especially for the benefit of those who minister in the Word (Hebrews 7:8). God's blessings and favor will follow in all the productive areas of life (Malachi 3:7–12).

Giving of offerings differs from tithing and is done in addition to tithing. Both are part of God's plan to finance His work on earth (1 Corinthians 16:1–4; Philippians 4:10–19). A spirit of generosity has always permeated the Church from very early times (Acts 4:32–35), and the apostle Paul quoted our Lord to the Ephesian elders in his farewell address advising them “. . . to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (20:35). Once received into the Church's treasury, tithes and offerings are regulated through appropriate Church decisions and are administered by authorized Church policies and personnel.

RESTITUTION WHERE POSSIBLE

Restitution is the act of restoring something wrongfully taken or the satisfying of one who has been wronged. Making things right as far as is humanly possible is a natural result of salvation by God's grace as seen in the way Zacchaeus responded to our Lord's saving visit to his house: "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.' And Jesus said unto him, 'This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham'" (Luke 19:8, 9). Where it is impossible to make contact with the person or institution involved, the believer should still exhibit a desire to return what was taken, to restore a relationship, or to seek forgiveness. When necessary, those who make restitution should bear patiently any consequences that may result such as legal sanctions, financial costs, or even rejection by the persons

approached. “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men” (Acts 24:16).

PRE-MILLENNIAL SECOND COMING OF JESUS

Our Lord Jesus Christ is coming back to earth again (Acts 1:11), and the Church understands this coming in two phases: First, in mid-air to resurrect the dead saints and to catch away the living saints to meet Him so that all who are in Christ can attend the marriage supper of the Lamb: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; see also 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52). “And he saith unto me, ‘Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he saith unto me, ‘These are the true sayings of God’” (Revelation 19:9). Second, Jesus will return with the saints to reign on earth for a thousand years: “. . . And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection” (20:4, 5; see also Zechariah 14:4–9; Revelation 5:10; 20:6).

RESURRECTION

God’s plan for the world includes a time of accountability of all people (living and dead) before His judgment seat. For this reason, all the dead, both righteous and wicked, will be resurrected. As part of the assurance of this judgment, God raised Jesus from the dead and appointed Him judge (Acts 24:15; Daniel 12:2; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Acts 17:30, 31). However, the resurrection of the wicked dead and their time of judgment will not occur until after the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth with His saints (Revelation 20:4–6). Paul expressed the Christian’s hope in the resurrection this way: “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (Philippians 3:10). We look for the Savior from heaven. Paul says, “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (v. 21).

ETERNAL LIFE FOR THE RIGHTEOUS

In Jesus’ high priestly prayer, He defined eternal life as follows: “‘And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ,

whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). The New Testament everywhere teaches that eternal life is promised to those who believe in Jesus: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Those who die in the Lord and those who are serving Him when He returns will receive the reward of eternal life: “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:22, 23).

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT FOR THE WICKED

How we live our lives in this present world determines our destiny in the next, our eternal reward (Daniel 12:2; Romans 2:4–9). The unconverted and the wicked are doomed to eternal punishment from which there is no escape—no liberation, no annihilation: “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matthew 25:46). “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thessalonians 1:7–9).

ABSTINENCE FROM ALL LIQUOR OR STRONG DRINKS

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1). “But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment” (Isaiah 28:7). “Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags” (Proverbs 23:20, 21). Because of these and other biblical texts, the Church of God of Prophecy teaches abstinence from the use of intoxicating beverages. Scriptural teaching is, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). We are also advised “That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour” (1 Thessalonians 4:4). (See also 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:10; 10:31; Galatians 5:21).

CONCERNING TOBACCO, OPIUM, MORPHINE, ETC.

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy [Spirit] which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). The use of tobacco in any form is forbidden as well as the habitual use of narcotics or other habit-forming drugs. Addictions and enslavements to drugs or other substances are incompatible with the surrender of our bodies to the Lord as holy vessels of honor for His use (Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Thessalonians 4:4). “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

CONCERNING FOOD OR DRINKS

The New Testament makes no rigid rule concerning what foods a Christian shall eat or drink with the exception of strong drink and addictive and enslaving substances. “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days; Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16, 17). Thus, we have no right to judge what our brother or sister eats or drinks. The legal restrictions of the Mosaic Law concerning these were not extended into the Grace Dispensation: “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy [Spirit]” (Romans 14:17). See also 1 Corinthians 8:8 and 1 Timothy 4:1–5.

ON THE SABBATH

The Book of Genesis tells us that on the seventh day, God ended His work and blessed that day and sanctified it (Genesis 2:2, 3). This was no doubt His preparatory plan to set Israel apart as a special people, for to them, He gave the Law, which included the observance of the Sabbath.

Jesus’ corrective to the Pharisees’ strict observance of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27, 28) placed people above enslavement to the day and asserted His Lordship over the day. As such, the Church of God of Prophecy teaches that observance of that day per se was not carried over into the Grace Dispensation. Sunday is not the Sabbath but merely a day set aside to give special attention to the worship of God. In the Early Church, they referred to Sunday as “the first day of the week” and later as “the Lord’s Day” or “Resurrection Day.” Therefore, worship on Sunday is also very appropriate. Christians are required to keep every day holy rather than just one particular day. The Jewish Sabbath was also a type of Jesus Christ who is presented in Scripture as our rest (Hebrews 4:1–11). “Let no man therefore judge you in

meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16, 17). See also Romans 14:5, 6.

ADORNMENT

Scripture does not prohibit the use of a cultural wedding symbol due to marital, social, and cultural conditions; nor does it establish its necessity. In certain instances, the marriage symbol or emblem may strengthen the marriage arrangement and order, and thus its use is not for ornamentation. Therefore, the cultural wedding symbol or emblem, though not necessitated, may be worn due to marital, social, and cultural situations in order to preserve the headship principle and the integrity of marriage (Genesis 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11:8; Ephesians 5:22, 23). Scripture neither prohibits (absolutely) nor necessitates the use of ornamental adornment. It does give strong precautionary principles for its use such as modesty, shamefacedness, and sobriety and calls attention to the ornament of the inner man, that of “a meek and quiet spirit” (1 Timothy 2:9, 10; 1 Peter 3:3, 4). Ornamentation must not be used in any way that lends itself to idolatrous, occult, or lustful practices (Isaiah 3:18–22; Acts 8:9; 19:19; 1 Corinthians 5:10; 6:9; Galatians 5:19–21; Revelation 2:20–23). It is also important to remember that adornment includes more than jewelry alone. To apply the prudent principles of Scripture (both for those who wear and those who do not), an overriding principle is found in Romans 14:13: “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s [sister’s] way.”

MEMBERSHIP IN LODGES/SECRET SOCIETIES

The Bible is opposed to the people of God being unequally yoked together with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14–18); it is opposed to deeds done in secret, and it demands the complete and undivided loyalty of God’s children: “Jesus answered him, ‘I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing’” (John 18:20; see also Luke 16:13). Many secret societies/organizations require the taking of an oath of secrecy, and oath-taking is expressly forbidden (see the following paragraph)—as we shall see shortly (Ephesians 5:12, 13).

WHOLESOME SPEECH OF THE BELIEVER

The taking of an oath is a vain thing and condemned in the Scriptures. An affirmation to the truth of anything is sufficient and usually accepted even in courts of law: “‘But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is

God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matthew 5:34–37; see also James 5:12). The term "swearing" is also used of profanity, which the Bible teaches against: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29; see also 5:4).

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:18–25; Deuteronomy 6:7; Matthew 5:32; 14:3, 4; 19:3–12; Mark 10:12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 5:1–5; 6:9–18; 7:2, 11; Colossians 3:18–21.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

The Church of God of Prophecy affirms the biblical teaching that marriage is sacred and should not be entered into lightly without proper preparation. Marriage was originally instituted by God as a properly recognized covenant relationship between one man and one woman for life. The Church affirms the biblical family as a father and mother in wedlock who may procreate children. The Church further asserts that the home, including the extended family, is to be guided by love, discipline, and other nurturing aspects as taught in God's Word. Because the Church is committed to the sanctity of marriage and human life, we diligently stand against abortion, incest, abuse, euthanasia, adultery, divorce, homosexuality, and lesbianism, which we believe are contrary to God's original design as expressed in His Word. All biblically unlawful unions such as same-sex, incestuous, or polygamous marriages are renounced by the Church even if they are recognized as legal by civil governments.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Concerning "divorce" in the above context, the Church means the breaking of a legitimate, lawful, biblical marriage and holds firmly to the principle that such divorces are not God's will, especially between Christians. Forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing should be sought as a first priority in order to preserve marriages and prevent divorce. The Church also recognizes that despite biblical teaching and honest human effort, divorces do occur sometimes against the will of one or the other party. Therefore, the Church recognizes (in a pastoral sense) those causes, in addition to death, that would be recognized as ending a previously valid biblical marriage. In such cases, delineated on the following page, marriage partners would not be classed as adulterers even though remarried:

1. If persons were divorced and remarried for any reason prior to their personal salvation and have demonstrated a willingness to seek restitution (forgiveness from the offended spouse) and restoration where possible.
2. If a divorce occurred because of a spouse's habitual adulterous behavior and efforts to bring reconciliation are no longer possible.
3. If divorce occurred because of spousal or child abuse, such as incestuous behavior that seriously endangers the life and health of the spouse or family and violates the sanctity of holy matrimony.

Under no circumstances should Christians or church members initiate or seek divorce without completely exhausting all biblical and counseling avenues to restore, rebuild, and sustain their marriages. Marriages that clearly violate biblical standards (such as incestuous marriages) may be appealed to the Presbytery for specific consideration. All divorce and remarriage cases not falling within the categories described above should be referred for counsel and resolution to the pastor and local church leadership, the State/Regional/National Presbytery, or the General Ministerial Presbytery (which includes the general overseer and general presbyters) as may be appropriate.*

*See "The Biblical Institution of Marriage" Final Document, Church of God of Prophecy, *94th International Assembly Minutes*, 2006, pages 152–177. See also "The Family Manifesto" originally written and owned by "FamilyLife," and specially adapted (with permission) by Family Ministries for inter-church use by the Church of God of Prophecy, International Offices.

SECTION THREE

FORMS

CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

Transfer of Membership

Greetings:

Brother/Sister _____

has on this date _____ 20_____ requested his/her membership

transferred from the church at _____

to the church at _____

We hereby commend him/her to your Christian care and fellowship.

Clerk

Date

(Address)

(Address)

It is expected that a member would be in good standing with the local church of which he/she is a member. Transfer should be made only by the local church in business conference; or when a church ceases to function, the Overseer can transfer members. Transfers should always be sent by one clerk to another, and never given to the party transferred.

CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

Membership Transfer Acknowledgement

This is to verify that on (date) _____ 20_____

The Church of God of Prophecy located at (give address)

Received the transfer of membership for _____
from the Church of God of Prophecy located at

Signature of Clerk

(Please return form to acknowledge transfer of membership.)

**The Church of God of Prophecy International Offices
Church and Pastor's Endorsement**

Overseer's Name _____

State/Region/Nation _____

General Presbyter _____

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the local church at

_____ has duly considered the ability, qualifications, and calling of

_____ (Name of Person being Endorsed)

_____ (Address of Person being Endorsed)

After prayerful consideration, we hereby recommend

☐ Him or ☐ Her

To fill the office of

☐ Bishop or ☐ Minister

in the Church of God of Prophecy.

This done in local church conference on the

_____ day of _____, 20____.

This section to be answered for BISHOP applicants only:

Do you consider him blameless? _____

Does applicant have only one wife? _____

Does he rule his household well? _____

Are his children faithful? _____

Is his wife faithful? _____

Do you consider him a person of maturity? _____

Does he have a good reputation for honesty? _____

Is he prompt in his duties at home and in religious services? _____

Signature of Pastor _____ Date _____

Signature of Clerk _____ Date _____

INSTRUCTIONS: The church should exercise special care in recommending one for the ministry. This endorsement blank should be filled in by recommendation of local church conference and signed by the clerk and pastor and mailed promptly to the State/Regional/National Overseer.

MINISTRY POLICY MANUAL

Study Guide and Ministerial Examination

Note: As a Study Guide, the questions are designed to highlight, for the student, areas of emphasis. However, the entire Manual should be carefully studied, as all the information in it is valuable.

Revised 2018

MINISTRY POLICY MANUAL STUDY GUIDE AND MINISTERIAL EXAMINATION

1. I have ☐ I have not ☐ completed reading the section entitled “Organizational Structure of the Church of God of Prophecy.”
2. Match the description with the appropriate level of leadership for the Church.

<input type="checkbox"/> International	a. The framework within which the objectives of worship, evangelization, equipping believers, and preparing for Christ’s return is done.
<input type="checkbox"/> National/ Regional/ State	b. Provides more focused leadership and support directly within the context of the states and nations where the Church is at work.
<input type="checkbox"/> Local	c. Functions on a worldwide basis and provides a global network of support and interaction for the Church’s ministries.
3. In order to give further clarification to our _____, we recommend that reports concerning policies, procedures, and finances presented by Assembly Standing Committees be accepted by overwhelming _____. All matters of a doctrinal nature must be accepted by _____.
4. Which of the following is the primary purpose of the International Assembly?
 - a. To serve as an interpretative and decision-making body that deals with pressing universal truths requiring definitive decisions for translocal matters in expediting the proclamation of the Gospel.
 - b. To decide on administrative actions the Church deems helpful in accomplishing the Great Commission.
 - c. A time for the general overseer to reveal the burden of his heart and provide vision for the direction he believes God is leading the Church.
5. The general moderator of the International Assembly is responsible to do all of the following except:
 - a. Convene a International Assembly as outlined by the International Assembly.
 - b. Moderate the International Assembly.

- c. Appoint Assembly Committees.
 - d. Make final decisions for the International Assembly when there is confusion on an issue.
 - e. Facilitate the decision-making process in conjunction with the Assembly counselors.
6. True ☐ False ☐ The Assembly counselors are composed of the general presbyters.
7. The _____ is to serve the Church by preparing an exposition for dialogue on universal matters of biblical doctrine, theology, ethics, and polity for International Assembly consideration.
8. The International Presbytery consists of the following:
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
9. List the responsibilities of the overseers serving in the International Presbytery:
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
 - g.
 - h.

10. Mark as true (T) or false (F) the following statements about general presbyters:

- _____ They are selected according to their gifting by God, to give direction to the worldwide Church in accomplishing its mission.
- _____ They are selected by the vote of the general membership.
- _____ They will work with the general overseer to provide shared leadership responsibility in carrying out the functions of the general overseer by developing vision, processes, and plans in accomplishing the Church's mission.

11. The mission of the Church's International Offices is "Empowered by the _____ through prayer, we will _____ churches and _____ leaders to carry out the biblical mandate to make _____ of all peoples of the world, to the glory of Christ our Lord."

12. Match the following statements with the appropriate ministry at the International Offices:

- a. Inspirational
- b. Global Missions Department
- c. Leadership Development and Discipleship
- d. Finance and Publishing

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| _____ Accounting and budget process | _____ Educational development |
| _____ Evangelism | _____ Representation among others involved in the kingdom of God |
| _____ Publishing | _____ Oversight of the ministry |
| _____ International Assembly | _____ Heritage Ministries and Fields of the Wood |

13. I have ☐ I have not ☐ completed reading the section entitled "National/ Regional/ State Ministry."

14. None of the leadership challenges of the national/regional/state overseer surpasses one's total commitment to _____, _____, _____, and _____ the ministry.

15. Which of the following are a part of the responsibility of being an overseer?
 - a. Be available for personal counsel.
 - b. Give special attention to the development of a ministerial educational program to better equip the ministry.
 - c. Be deeply committed to the New Testament principle of equipping the ministry and laity.
 - d. Use power and authority with restraint, and be very careful not to abuse either the authority or influence of his office.
 - e. All of the above.

16. True ☐ False ☐ The overseer is responsible for the organizational structure, implementation, and administration of the total ministries of the Church of God of Prophecy in a given nation, region, or state, but not the supervising of the minister or personnel involved in their programs and ministries.

17. The overseer is evaluated every _____ years.

18. The overseer is responsible and accountable to one of the following:
 - a. The local church.
 - b. The pastor in the nation/region/state.
 - c. The general presbyter in the area where he serves.

19. Indicate whether the following is (a) an administrative duty (b) supervisory duty (c) or a promotional duty:
 - _____ Approve the setting in order of new churches before organization is effected.
 - _____ Report newly organized churches to the office of the general overseer.
 - _____ Decide the geographical boundaries of each district in his assigned area.
 - _____ Circulation of the White Wing Messenger as well as other Church-published periodicals and publications.
 - _____ Arrangement of assistance of a general evangelism campaign.
 - _____ Evaluate national/regional/state reports and surveys.

20. The overseer is to appoint the following:
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
21. I have ☐ I have not ☐ completed the reading section entitled “Local Church Ministry.”
22. List the considerations to be used in organizing a church:
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
23. True ☐ False ☐ A church may be organized by the overseer or authorized minister—bishop or licensed minister.
24. True ☐ False ☐ The national/regional/state overseer should not be concerned about the consent of the general overseer before disbanding a church.
25. True ☐ False ☐ The local church trustees are vested with the authority to buy, sell, convey, or encumber the local church property by mortgage or otherwise only when authorized to do so by the local church in regular or called business meeting, and with the consent of the General Trustees.
26. True ☐ False ☐ Local churches must have written consent of the national/regional/state overseer to pursue incorporation.

27. What four teachings may have particular public implications in today's moral climate?

1.

2.

3.

4.

28. Write word for word the obligation for membership:

29. The objectives of discipline are:

1.

2.

3.

30. List and define the two types of offenses:

1.

2.

31. _____ members have a voice in all business matters; however, _____ should not speak until they reach the age of wisdom.

32. What are the two types of conferences that can be held?

a.

b.

33. List the three officers of the conference, and briefly define their role:

a.

b.

c.

34. List the powers of the conference:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

35. True ☐ False ☐

All decisions may be made by the local conference when an overwhelming consensus of the members present are in agreement, even setting someone forth in the ministry.

36. I have ☐ I have not ☐ completed the reading section entitled “Ministry Policies.”

37. The welfare of the Church and its mandate to carry out the _____ requires that men and women entering the ministry be _____.

38. No person will be licensed or ordained without first having served a time of _____ with experience in _____ and _____.

39. The areas of proof of a candidate’s potential for ministry that a local church will consider are the following:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

40. The International Presbytery has prescribed the completion of the _____ before a candidate can apply for license.

41. The Lay Minister’s Certificate authorizes the lay minister to _____, _____, and _____ the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to conduct _____, and to hold _____.

42. The lay ministry period is a time when a ministerial candidate can prove himself/herself deserving of being recommended for the ministry by the _____, examined by the _____, and licensed by the _____.

43. The lay minister should report _____ to the _____
_____ in duplicate.

44. True ☐ False ☐ The Lay Minister's Certificate should be renewed each calendar year by the overseer.

45. List the responsibilities of those who are in the pastoral ministry:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

46. Those with an evangelistic ministry are to be acknowledged (set forth) by a
_____ and licensed through both
_____ offices. They would
receive a _____.

47. Which of the following would not be able to be set forth as a bishop?

- a. A male who is pastoring a church.
- b. A male who is evangelizing.
- c. A woman who is pastoring a church.

48. True ☐ False ☐ The only restraints that seem to be consistent with the New Testament is upon women serving in apostolic (bishopric) or eldership roles, such as ordaining elders. Therefore, they could not be ordained as a bishop.

49. Place in the proper sequence the following elements of the process of licensure: appearance before the ministerial review board, period of apprenticeship, completion of the *Foundations Course*, set forth by the local church, completion of the Application for Ministerial License, approval by the general overseer, and recommendation by the national/regional/state overseer.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

g.

50. Licensed ministers are authorized to _____ and _____ the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to _____ churches, _____, to _____ the Lord's supper, and the washing of the saints' feet. Those who pastor have the authority to _____ business conferences and _____ the rites of matrimony in legal marriages that are _____ valid according to the Church's understanding.

51. True ☐ False ☐ After licensing, the minister continues to be a private member of the local church and is subject to the government and discipline of the local church as prescribed by the International Assembly. However, in matters relating to his/her ministry, the minister is under the supervision of the Presbytery.

52. The two offices that are recognized as being elders are the _____ and _____.

53. True ☐ False ☐ Since deacons/deaconesses function in the local church, they are to be acknowledged (set forth) by the congregation and with the pastor's recommendation.

54. True ☐ False ☐ The bishop is one of the eldership offices that provides oversight leadership to the Church.

55. A bishop could function as a _____, as a national/regional/state _____, as a district _____, an _____, or as a _____.

56. Who is responsible to ensure the quality of the ministry through periodic review?

- a. The local church
- b. The ministerial review board
- c. The Presbytery

57. The bishop is authorized to _____, _____, and _____ the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to baptize, establish churches, administer the Lord's Supper, the washing of the saints' feet, assist in _____ elders by special appointment, and to _____ the rites of matrimony in legal marriage as outlined in the New Testament of the Holy Bible as interpreted by the International Assembly. The bishop who is pastoring has the authority to _____ all local church business conferences.

58. Identify the following as legitimate Ministerial Expense (yes/no) for the calculation of tithes:

_____ Food	_____ Basic telephone charges
_____ Clothing	_____ Travel to and from a secular job
_____ Shelter	_____ Ministerial training program
_____ Ministerial auto expenses	

59. A good rule of thumb measurement would be for a minister to tithe his income the way he would _____ to tithe theirs. Basically, expense in the ministry is the expense incurred in one's _____ duties that he would not otherwise have.

60. A minister who does not tithe his income should not be allowed to retain his _____.

61. True ☐ False ☐ A minister should not be allowed to preach anything that brings confusion and conflicts with the doctrine of the Church.

62. Mark as True (T) or False (F) the following statements about performing marriages:

- _____ a. Marriage ceremonies should be performed in harmony with the teachings of the Bible.
- _____ b. Bishops must receive a special permit to perform marriages.
- _____ c. New pastors or those not capable of providing marriage counseling should seek the permission of their overseer before performing marriages.
- _____ d. A minister must meet all the requirements of the nation/ region/ state in which he/she is performing the marriage.

63. Match the following reporting requirements with the appropriate rank of the ministry. (**Note:** Some may have more than one answer):

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| _____ Bishops | a. Annually to International Offices |
| _____ Licensed Minister | b. Annually to overseer |
| _____ Deacon/Deaconess | c. Quarterly to overseer |
| _____ Trial Deacon/Deaconess | d. Quarterly to Conference |
| _____ Lay Minister | e. Monthly to overseer |
| _____ Retired Minister | f. Quarterly to International Offices |
| _____ Disabled Minister | g. None required |

64. Discipline is the Church's exercise of _____ given by Christ through the Scriptures. The goals of discipline are that _____ may be honored, that those who fall into error may be brought to _____ and _____ and that _____, _____, and the general welfare of the Church may be maintained.

65. The purpose of discipline is for _____ and _____, not for destruction.

66. True ☐ False ☐ A public offense is defined as being something which the minister commits against one or a very few persons, and which violates the divine law and does wrong or injury to particular individuals.

67. List at least five examples of a public offense:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

68. Any accusation made against a minister must be verified by _____ or more witnesses.

69. The _____ is empowered to examine candidates for the ministry, to issue licenses, to ordain, and to terminate a minister's endorsement when any infraction is considered serious enough to warrant such discipline.

70. In all investigations of offenders, it must be remembered that the admonition of _____ governs.

71. True ☐ False ☐ If the accused rejects the charge and desires a further hearing, a formal hearing of his case should occur within 30 days from the time the charges are formally presented before the ministerial review board.

72. True ☐ False ☐ The local church shall review the findings of the ministerial review board and make a determination as to the state of the minister's status.

73. Match the category of termination of a minister's license with the appropriate description:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| _____ Resignation | a. A widowed bishop who marries a wife not meeting the criteria for the wife of a bishop |
| _____ Deceased | b. When a minister has elected to remove himself from the body of licensed or ordained ministers. |
| _____ Change of Status | c. When a minister is censured for an offense that the Presbytery does not deem to be serious enough to warrant revocation. |
| _____ Revoked | d. When the death of a minister is verified. |
| _____ Lapsed | e. Any minister who has not reported to the national/regional/state, or International Offices, or who is inactive for two consecutive years. |
| _____ Suspended | f. A minister who has been found guilty or has confessed to guilt of a serious violation of biblical principles. |

74. True ☐ False ☐ When a minister's license or ordination has been terminated due to his having fallen into sin, he may not be relicensed until he has undergone an extended time of help and counseling directed toward his being completely rehabilitated, and until the confidence of the Church is fully restored as to his readiness to be a minister in the Church of God of Prophecy.

75. True ☐ False ☐ When restoration is considered complete, the candidate may then be set forth for the ministry with the approval of the overseer.

76. Regardless of one's previous position, the _____ will normally be the primary person to initiate the restoration process.

77. True ☐ False ☐ After a former minister has been restored, he/she may be recommended for relicensing in the ministry without the normal process.

78. True ☐ False ☐ The Church of God of Prophecy has a Statement of Faith.