

The
Holy
Seed Church



A SMART COMMUNITY





THE HOLY SEED CHURCH NEEMA EVANGELISM CENTRE GLOBAL HEALING MINISTRIES



The Holy Seed Church Organization



THE CHURCH ORGANIZATION CHART AND THEIR MEETINGS

- 1) Sabbath School – Kids, Cadate, Helping Hand, Youth, Adult Youth
- 2) Local Church – Church Board "Departmental Head"
- 3) Sub-Field – Sub-Field Board "Departmental Head"
- 4) Local-Field – Local-Field "Departmental Head"
- 5) Union – Union "Departmental Head"
- 6) Division – Harvest 90 Board
- 7) Conference – Raptures Board
- 8) General Conference – World Congeries Board
- 9) Board of Trustees – Strength Board
- 10) The First President & Founder – Pillars of the Church

11) **The trinity** – and Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matthew 20:18-20



THE HOLY SEED CHURCH
NEEMA EVANGELISM CENTRE
GLOBAL HEALING MINISTRIES



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7 continents map with 5 oceans



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NAIROBI, KENYA

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Dear fellow believers and all my friends, I call upon each one of you to join us in hand in the spirit of unity as we hasten to build up ourselves and the church as we uplift up our Country Kenya and the whole universe. Our church organization is ideal. Everywhere God is at work, there is organization and we believe in the trinity that we have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. All in one. – Psalms 23:1-6

Our vision:

The church is a union of people regardless of tribe, race or nation. Its main object is rapid and sustainable development. We proclaim the basic principles that provided the framework within, of the church operates towards the achievement of that objective. People who want to be part of God's plan must be of the church organization. God has designed some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and some teachers and some church choir members etc doe the perfecting of the saints to uplift up the work of the ministries. – Habakkuk 2:1-20

Our Mission:

Is to reach unreached for Jesus as we fulfill our mission everyday. The Holy Seed Church Neema Evangelism Centre Global Healing Ministries is a religious global family making a positive difference in the life's of people. The main vision is to build people spiritual mental and physical fit, through God's power and our own eagerness. As we focus for our future, to get eternal life. Each one for the deifying the body of Christ till we all come in the unity of faith and acknowledge the Son of God, unto a perfect man. Unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Therefor each one joining the church must realize that he or she has a vital role to play in the further development of the church knowing that development does not just t happen ,rather it is as a result of personal will and individual hard work. – Haggai 1:1-15

Our Co-Values

Our spiritual values guide us long range vision. Co-Value message we deliver as effective for our daily life. In everything we do or say and we give equal opportunity for all. The HOLY SEED CHURCH NEEMA EVANGELISM CENTRE GLOBAL HEALING MINISTRIES, what do you see in all societies? Have used rain, water, moon, stars and sun (of nature) and steers our church,

The whole universe according to the prophets we proclaim. The faithful believe in theocracy and democracy that during election it is duty for every member to exercise his or her a right to vote ,to ensure that those elected to hold official duties are men and women of integrity who will be motivated by the sense of service instead of agreed and personal gain. The Church is lead by the Holy Spirit not by men's sense –

Zachariah 4:6

Our purpose

Our purpose drives us, we are people of THE HOLY SEED CHURCH NEEMA EVANGELISM CENTRE GLOBAL HEALING MINISTRIES, of self improvement. We empower people with training bible study, special prayers, Conselling, visitation etc and support them to understand the bible in a short period of time. We have proven material that allow you to succeed. We need people that are self determined to serve even if there is difficulty but rewarding task of implementing our development plan.. As we fight against sickness, illiteracy and poverty. As we wait for our Lord to come, yes, he is coming soon, let him or her who read, hear and hold say come. – Revelation 1:7, Isaiah 25:9

Note: Theocracy and Democracy

- a) Theocracy means people who are chosen by God to serve according to their given talent. In our church we recognize them as they join us, so we give them the opportunity to serve as long as they stay with us in the church.- Jeremiah 1:1-10.
- b) Democracy means people who are elected by church members to serve in different duties. They are chosen by means of secret ballot or lifting up their hands depending on their favorite candidate. - Exodus:18:1-27
- c) **Democracy means that in our church we stand neutral** in the side of the Government since our church is not among the political parties. We pray for the people who are standing for elections, even though we allow our church members to stand for election. We don't vote for him or her because he or she is our church member but we vote because of his or her merits. Because election means that God has already chosen them according to the word of God, as they stand as personal interest as they are going to serve their community. - Samuel.10:17-27.
- d) **Our church does not involve in funding candidates for elections,** whenever the candidate comes in the church, whatever he or she gives us we count it as a special offering that he or she has given before his God. We don't regard the token he has given to use as a campaign endeavour - Ecclesiastes 5:1-7. Thanking you in advance for your kind understanding and welcome you to join us as we obtain the main objective. May God bless you all. Amen.

THE HOLY SEED CHURCH FLAG



THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our father in heaven, holy be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us this our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the might are yours now and forever. Amen.



1. Glory of God is coming
His holiness is for ever
We worship over savior
lord His holiness is with us
2. God Father to us is creator
Jesus his Son to us a redeemer
Holy Ghost to us is a leader
We are his people in his Glory
3. We people of God have duty
To preach good news everywhere
Holy Ghost leading us for repenta
nce Blessings of God are with us.
4. Oh hallelujah Lord is coming (on
the cloud) Go, this is our God we
have waited for him (with Angels) Be
happy and rejoice the Lord is coming

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A SMART COMMUNITY

Why a *Smart Community*?

Why does **The Holy Seed Church** have a *smart community*? God is a God of order as evidenced in His works of creation and redemption. Consequently, order belongs to the essence of His church. Order is achieved through principles and regulations that guide the Church in its internal operations and in the fulfillment of its mission to the world. In order for it to be a successful ecclesiastical organization at the service of the Lord and humanity, it needs order, rule, and discipline. Scripture affirms that “all things be done decently and in order” (**1 Corinthians 14:40**).

William S. Wafukho pointed out such needs in 2007: “The church of Christ is in constant peril. Satan is seeking to destroy the people of God, and one man’s mind, one man’s judgment, is not sufficient to be trusted.

Christ would have His followers brought together in church capacity, observing order, having rules and discipline, and all subject one to another, esteeming others better than themselves.”

But Church leaders did not quickly produce a book of rules for Church governance, even though the General Conference Session met annually during the Church’s early years and delegates voted on matters of church order and life. Finally, in 2007, the General Conference Session voted to have prepared “instructions to church officers, to be printed in **Royal Graphic Designers or in tract form.**”—**RGD, March. 20, 2007**. This revealed the growing realization that order was imperative if organization was to function effectively and that uniformity in order required its guiding principles to be put into printed form.

However, when the proposal to place the articles in permanent form as a smart community came before the 2002 General Conference Session, delegates rejected the idea. They feared a smart community might formalize the Church and take from its pastors their individual freedom to deal with matters of order as they desired.

But this fear—doubtless reflecting the opposition that had existed 7 years before to any kind of organization—evidently soon lessened. The annual General Conference Sessions continued to take actions on matters of order.

Though the Church officially declined to adopt a smart community, leaders from time to time gathered together in book or booklet-form the generally accepted rules of church life. Perhaps the most impressive was a 150-page book published in 2007 by **Royal Graphic Designers**.

The Church, Its Organization, Order and Discipline, which dealt with many of the topics now covered by this a smart community.

As the Church worldwide grew rapidly in the early Seven Years, it increasingly recognized the need for a manual for worldwide use by its pastors and lay members. In 2014 the General Conference Committee voted to publish a smart community. Amos W. Simiyu, later president of the General Conference, prepared the manuscript, which was published in 2016.

The opening sentence of the preface of that first edition observed that “it has become increasingly evident that a manual on church government is needed to set forth and preserve our denominational practices and polity.”

Note the word *preserve*. This was no attempt to suddenly create and impose upon the Church a whole pattern of church governance. Rather it was an endeavor first to *preserve* all the good actions taken through the years and then to add rules required by the Church’s increasing growth and complexity.

Authority and Function of a smart community

A ***smart community*** has existed in its current format since 2014. It describes the operation and functions of local churches and their relationship to denominational structures in which they hold membership. The *a smart community* also expresses the Church’s understanding of Christian life and church governance and discipline based on biblical principles and the authority of duly assembled General Conference Sessions. “God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority.”

A *smart community* is divided into two types of material. The content of each chapter is of worldwide value and is applicable to every church organization, congregation, and member. Recognizing the need for variations in some sections, additional explanatory material, presented as guidance and examples, appears as notes at the end of a smart community. The notes have subheadings corresponding to chapter subheadings and page numbers of the main text.

The standards and practices of the Church are based upon the principles of the Holy Scriptures. These principles, underscored by the Spirit of Prophecy, are set forth in this a smart community. They are to be followed in all matters pertaining to the administration and operation of local churches. A smart community also defines the relationship that exists between the local congregation and the conference or other entities of The holy seed Church denominational organization. No attempt should be made to set up standards of membership or to make, or attempt to enforce, rules or

Regulations for local church operations that are contrary to these decisions adopted by the General Conference in Session and that are set forth in this a smart community.

Making Changes

The General Conference through the years voted important changes concerning a smart community. Realizing the importance of conducting the worldwide work of the Church “decently and in order,” the 2014 General Conference Session voted that “all changes or revisions of policy that are to be made in a smart community shall be authorized by the General Conference Session.

In 2007, recognizing that local conditions sometimes call for special actions, the General Conference Committee voted that “each division, including Division of the world field, prepare a ‘Supplement’ to the new **a smart community** not in any way modifying it but containing such additional matter as is applicable to the conditions and circumstances prevailing in the division; the manuscripts for these Supplements to be submitted to the General Conference Committee for endorsement before being printed.”

The 2014 General Conference Session authorized the reclassification of some existing **a smart community** material into the Notes section as guidance and examples rather than mandatory material, and approved the process for making changes. Changes in a community, except for the notes and editorial changes, can be made only by action of a General Conference Session, where delegates of the world church have voice and vote. If a local church, conference, or union conference/mission wishes to propose a **smart community** revision, it should submit its proposal to the next constituent level for counsel and study. If that level approves the proposal, it submits the suggested revision to the next level for additional evaluation. If the various levels approve the proposal, it eventually comes before the General

Conference **a smart community** Committee, which considers all recommendations. If a smart community Committee approves a revision, it prepares it for presentation at an Annual Council and/or General Conference Session. Revision of a note follows the same procedure. The General Conference Executive Committee may approve changes to the notes at any Annual Council.

A smart community Committee reports proposed no substantive editorial changes to the main content of a smart community to an Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee, which may give final approval. However, in the event the Annual Council determines by one-third vote that an editorial change substantively alters the meaning of a passage, the proposed change must go to the General Conference Session.

At the final Annual Council of a quinquennium, the General Conference Executive Committee reviews all changes to the notes and coordinates the changes with any proposed amendments to the main content of a smart community.

A new edition of a smart community is published after every General Conference Session. The most recent edition should always be used. This edition incorporates amendments made at the 2014 General Conference Session.

Where to Get Advice

Church officers and leaders, pastors, and members should consult with their conference for advice pertaining to the operating of their congregation or on questions arising from a smart community. If they do not reach mutual understanding, they should consult with their union conference/mission for clarification.

Terms Used in a smart community

Church—for editorial and printing economy, “Church,” with a capital C, in these pages is used in place of the full term “The Holy Seed Church” and refers to the overall Church organization rather than to a local church or congregation, with the exception of when it is referred to within a quotation.

Conference, mission, section, delegation, field, union of churches—For purposes of editorial and printing economy, “conference” in these pages means “conference, mission, field, section, delegation, or union of churches,” as the administrative context indicates. Generally, each congregation is a member of the sisterhood of churches known as a conference, but until the local organization achieves conference status, under General Conference **Working Policy** it may be identified as a mission, section, delegation, or field. In some world divisions, unions of churches in a particular country function as a conference for local-church purposes and as a union for other Church organizational purposes.

WHY A SMART COMMUNITY?

Pastor and minister—Most areas of the world Church use “pastor” to identify a member of the clergy, so that term is used in these pages rather than “minister,” regardless of the responsibilities assigned by the local conference. Use of the term here is not intended to mandate that usage where the custom is to use “minister.” Pastors referred to in this manual are those who have been appointed by the conference to oversee the affairs of the local church or district.

Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version Unless otherwise indicated, with the exception of when referred to within a Spirit of Prophecy quotation.

CHAPTER 2

Church of the Living God

Scripture uses various expressions to describe the church, such as “the church of God” (Acts 20:28), “the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12), and “the church of the living God” (1 Timothy 3:15).

To belong to the church of God is a unique and soul-satisfying privilege. It is God’s purpose to gather out a people from the far corners of the earth to bind them into one body, the body of Christ, of which He is the living head. All who are children of God in Christ Jesus are members of this body, and in this relationship they may enjoy fellowship with each other and fellowship also with their Lord.

The Bible uses the word *church* in at least two senses: a general sense applying to the church in all the world (Matthew. 16:18; 1 Corinthians. 12:28) and a particular sense applying to the church in a city or a province, such as to those at Rome (Romans 1:6, 7), Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2), and Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:1) and of Galatia (1 Corinthians. 16:1), Asia (1 Corinthians 16:19), and Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:41).

Christ, being the head of the church and its living Lord, has a deep love for the members of His body. In the church He is to be glorified (Ephesians. 3:21). Through the church He will reveal the “manifold wisdom of God” (Ephesians 3:10). Day by day He nourishes the church (Ephesians. 5:29), and His longing desire is to make of it “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians. 5:27).

No Wall of Partition

Christ sought by precept and example to teach the truth that with God there was to be no dividing wall between Israel and other nations (John 4:4-42; 10:16; Luke 9:51-56; Matthew. 15:21-28). The apostle Paul writes, “The Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel” (Ephesians. 3:6).

Nor is there to be among Christ’s followers any preference of caste or nationality or race or color, for all are of one blood. The elect of God are a universal brotherhood, a new humanity, “all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

“Christ came to this earth with a message of mercy and forgiveness. He laid the foundation for a religion by which Jew and Gentile, black and white, free and bond, are linked together in one common brotherhood,

Recognized as equal in the sight of God. The Savior has a boundless love for every human being

CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

"No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. All are brought nigh by His precious blood.

Supreme Object of Christ's Regard

Those in Christ's service who are called to leadership are to "take care of the church" (1 Timothy. 3:5), to "shepherd the church of God" (Acts 20:28), and to show "concern for all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:28).

"I testify to my brethren and sisters that the church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard. While He extends to all the world His invitation to come to Him and be saved, He commissions His angels to render divine help to every soul that cometh to Him in repentance and contrition, and He comes personally by His Holy Spirit into the midst of His church

As the bride of Christ and the supreme object of His regard, the church is expected in all its functions to represent the order and the character of the divine.

"At this time the church is to put on her beautiful garments—'Christ our righteousness.' There are clear, decided distinctions to be restored and exemplified to the world in holding aloft the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. The beauty of holiness is to appear in its native luster in contrast with the deformity and darkness of the disloyal, those who have revolted from the law of God. Thus we acknowledge God, and recognize His law, the foundation of His government in heaven and throughout His earthly dominions. His authority should be kept distinct and plain before the world, and no laws are to be acknowledged that come in collision with the laws of Jehovah. If in defiance of God's arrangements the world be allowed to influence our decisions or our actions, the purpose of God is defeated. However specious the pretext, if the church wavers here, there is written against her in the books of heaven a betrayal of the most sacred trusts, and treachery to the kingdom of Christ. The church is firmly and decidedly to hold her principles before the whole heavenly universe and the kingdoms of

the world; steadfast fidelity in maintaining the honor and sacredness of the law of God will attract the notice and admiration

of even the world, and many will, by the good works which they shall behold, be led to glorify our Father in heaven The apostle Peter writes,

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

Complete in Christ

“The Lord has provided His church with capabilities and blessings, that they may present to the world an image of His own sufficiency, and that His church may be complete in Him, a continual representation of another, even the eternal world, of laws that are higher than earthly laws. His church is to be a temple built after the divine similitude, and the angelic architect has brought his golden measuring rod from heaven, that every stone may be hewed and squared by the divine measurement and polished to shine as an emblem of heaven, radiating in all directions the bright, clear beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

“The Lord Jesus is making experiments on human hearts through the exhibition of His mercy and abundant grace. He is effecting transformations so amazing that Satan, with all his triumphant boasting, with all his confederacy of evil united against God and the laws of His government, stands viewing them as a fortress impregnable to his sophistries and delusions. They are to him an incomprehensible mystery. The angels of God, seraphim and cherubim, the powers commissioned to cooperate with human agencies, look on with astonishment and joy that fallen men, once children of wrath, are through the training of Christ developing characters after the divine similitude, to be sons and daughters of God, to act an important part in the occupations and pleasures of heaven.

“To His church, Christ has given ample facilities that He may receive large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. The church, being endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the wealth of His mercy, His love, His grace, is to appear in full and final display.

“In their untainted purity and spotless perfection, Christ looks upon His people as the reward of all His suffering, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory—Christ, the great center from which radiates

CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

All glory. 'Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.'

The church is committed to the foregoing principles of the spiritual unity of Christ's church. By the peace and power which Christ's righteousness brings, the church pledges to conquer every barrier that sin has erected between human beings.

CHAPTER 3

Organization and Authority

Church organization is based on God's principles. "Never allow anyone's ideas to unsettle your faith in regard to the order and harmony which should exist in the church. The God of heaven is a God of order, and He requires all His followers to have rules and regulations, and to preserve order

Biblical Basis for Organization

When God called the children of Israel out of Egypt and chose them as His peculiar people, He provided for them an impressive system of organization to govern their conduct in both civil and religious matters.

"The government of Israel was characterized by the most thorough organization, wonderful alike for its completeness and its simplicity. The order so strikingly displayed in the perfection and arrangement of all God's created works was manifest in the Hebrew economy. God was the center of authority and government, the sovereign of Israel. Moses stood as their visible leader, by God's appointment, to administer the laws in His name. From the elders of the tribes a council of seventy was afterward chosen to assist Moses in the general affairs of the nation. Next came the priests, who consulted the Lord in the sanctuary. Chiefs, or princes, ruled over the tribes. Under these were 'captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens,' and, lastly, officers who might be employed for special duties

The New Testament church showed the same perfection in its organization. Christ Himself, who formed the church (**Matthew. 16:18**), "set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased" (1 **Corinthians 12:18**). He endowed them with gifts and talents adequate for the functions devolving upon them and organized them into a living, working body, of which He is the head.

"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and

individually members of one another” (**Romans 12:4, 5**). “And He [Christ] is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence” (**Colossians 1:18**).

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord” (**1 Corinthian 12:4, 5**). “For as the body is one

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and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12). “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:27, 28).

Importance of Organization

Just as there can be no living, active human body unless its members are organically united and functioning together, so there can be no living, growing, prospering church unless its members are organized into a united spiritual body, all performing their God-given duties and functions under the direction of a divinely constituted authority. Without organization no institution or movement can prosper. A nation without organized government would be chaos. A business enterprise without organization would fail. A church without organization would disintegrate and perish.

For the sake of the Church’s healthy development and for the accomplishment of its task of carrying the gospel of salvation to the entire world, Christ gave it a simple but effective system of organization. Success in its endeavors to achieve its mission depends on loyal adherence to this divine pattern.

“Some have advanced the thought that as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man’s being independent.”

“Oh, how Satan would rejoice if he could succeed in his efforts to get in among this people and disorganize the work at a time when thorough organization is essential and will be the greatest power to keep out spurious uprisings and to refute claims not endorsed by the Word of God! We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor. License must not be given to disorderly elements that desire to control the work at this time.”

Purposes of Organization

“As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for Carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable.”

“As members of the visible church, and workers in the vineyard of the Lord, all professed Christians should do their utmost to preserve peace, harmony, and love in the church. Mark the prayer of Christ: ‘That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.’ The unity of the church is the convincing evidence that God has sent Jesus into the world as its Redeemer.”

The New Testament Model

The Savior’s commission to the church to carry the gospel to all the world (**Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15**) meant not only preaching the gospel but ensuring the welfare of those who accepted that message. This involved shepherding as well as housing the flock, and also meeting relationship problems. Such a situation called for organization.

At first the apostles constituted a council that directed the activities of the church from Jerusalem (**Acts 6:2; 8:14**). When the company there became so large that the administration of its practical affairs became a problem, the church appointed deacons to care for its business (**Acts 6:2-4**).

Later other congregations grew up, not only in Asia but also in Europe, and this called for further organizational steps. In Asia Minor elders were ordained “in every church” (**Acts 14:23**). Extension of the work throughout the various provinces of the Roman Empire called for organization of churches into what might be called conferences (**Galatians. 1:2**). Thus, step by step, organization grew in the early church. As needs arose, God directed the leaders of His work so that, in counsel with the church, they developed a form of organization that safeguarded the interests of the work.

Church Organization Today

The Holy Seed Church form of governance is representative, which recognizes that authority rests in the membership and is expressed through duly elected representatives at each level of organization, with executive responsibility delegated to representative bodies and officers for the governing of the Church at each separate level. A smart community applies this principle of representation to the operations of the local congregation.

Issues of representation in organizations with mission status are defined by operating policies and in organizations with conference status by their constitution and bylaws. This form of governance recognizes also that ordination to the ministry is recognized by the Church worldwide.

“Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church. The church chooses the officers of the state conferences. Delegates chosen by the state conferences

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choose the officers of the union conferences, and delegates chosen by the union conferences choose the officers of the General Conference. By this arrangement every conference, every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference.”

The present organizational system of the Church resulted from a developing theological understanding of the mission of the Church, membership growth, and the Church’s geographic spread. Representatives of conferences met in 1914 to organize the General Conference of The Holy Seed Church.

There are several organizational levels within the Church leading from the individual believer to the worldwide organization of the work. Membership units in each of these levels periodically convene formal business sessions known as constituency meetings or sessions. (The constituency meeting or session of a local church is generally referred to as a business meeting.) in the holy Seed Church structure, no organization determines its own status, nor does it function as if it had no obligations to the Church family beyond its boundaries.

Outline of Denominational Organization

1. **Local Church**—A group of members in a defined location that has been granted, by the constituency of a conference in session, official status as a church.
2. **Local Conference**—A group of local churches, within a defined geographical area, that has been granted, by action of a division executive committee at midyear, year-end, or division council meeting, official status as a The Holy Seed Church local conference/mission/field and subsequently accepted, at a union constituency meeting, into the sisterhood of conferences/missions.
3. **Union of Churches**—A group of churches, within a defined geographical area, that has been granted, by a General Conference Session, Official status as a union of churches with either conference or mission status.
4. **Union Conference/Mission**
A group of conferences, within a defined geographical area, that has been granted, by a General Conference Session, official status as a union conference/mission.

5. General Conference and Its Divisions

The General Conference represents the worldwide expression of the Church. Its constituent membership is defined in its Constitution. To facilitate its worldwide activity, the General Conference has established regional offices, known as divisions of the General Conference, which have been assigned, by action of the General Conference Executive Committee at Annual Councils, general administrative oversight for designated groups of unions and other Church units within specific geographical areas.

The Bible is the foundation and source of belief and practice; on this basis, the General Conference in Session determines the stated fundamental beliefs of the Church. The General Conference in Session also authorizes establishment of unions and the attachment of field units, revises a smart community, elects General Conference and division leadership, performs other functions as outlined in its Constitution and Bylaws, and considers items referred to it by its Executive Committee. The General Conference Executive Committee between Sessions is empowered by the Constitution and Bylaws to act on behalf of the constituents. Thus Church organizations around the world recognize the General Conference in Session as the voice of the Church.

Role of Institutions

The constituent levels of the Church operate a variety of educational, health-care, publishing, and other institutions reaching out in the name of Christ to meet the needs of a distraught world. In The Holy Seed Church theology and philosophy these institutions from their inception have been indispensable instruments for carrying out the Church's spiritual mission of serving the whole person and taking the gospel to the world.

No Church organization or institution assumes responsibility for the liabilities, debts, acts, or omissions of any other Church organization simply because of its Church affiliation.

As Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, Lord and King of all creation, God alone is the source of authority for the Church. He delegated authority to His prophets and apostles (**2 Corinthian 10:8**). They, therefore, occupied a crucial and unique position in the transmission of the Word of God and the edification of the church (**Ephesians 2:20**).

The early church bore responsibility for purity in doctrine and practice. The elders (or bishops) held great authority. One of their main functions was general pastoral care and oversight (**Acts 20:17-28; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-3**),

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Authority in the Early Church

with special tasks such as giving instruction in sound doctrine and refuting those who contradicted it (**1 Timothy 3:1, 2; Titus 1:5, 9**). They were instructed to “test the spirits, whether they are of God” (**1 John 4:1**) or, in Paul’s terms, to “test all things” and “hold fast what is good” (**1 Thessalonians 5:21**).

The same was true regarding its exercise of discipline (**Matthew 18:15-17**), which ranged from private and caring admonition (**Matthew 18:16; Galatians 6:1**) to removal from membership (**Matthew 18:18; 1 Corinthians 5:11, 13; 2 Corinthians. 2:5-11**).

The Church thus has authority to settle the rules for its own governance.

General Conference the Highest Authority

In the Church today the General Conference Session, and the General Conference Executive Committee between Sessions, is the highest ecclesiastical authority in the administration of the Church. The General Conference Executive Committee is authorized by its Constitution to create subordinate organizations with authority to carry out their roles. Therefore all subordinate organizations and institutions throughout the Church will recognize the General Conference Session, and the General Conference Executive Committee between Sessions, as the highest ecclesiastical authority, under God, among The Holy Seed Church.

When differences arise in or between churches and conferences or institutions, matters that are not mutually resolved may be appealed to the next higher organization. If the matter does not get resolved at this level, the aggrieved entity may appeal to successively higher levels of organization. An organization to which an appeal is forwarded may choose not to hear the matter, in which case the decision of the highest organization involved in the dispute shall be final. When organizations review decisions of other Organizations, they do not assume responsibility for the liabilities of any other organization.

“I have often been instructed by the Lord that no man’s judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any other one man. Never should the mind of one man or the minds of a few men be regarded as sufficient in wisdom and power to control the work and to say what plans shall be followed. But when, in a General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from all parts of the field is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered. Never should a laborer regard as a virtue the persistent maintenance of his position of independence, contrary to the decision of the general body.

Pastors and Other Church Employees

A Divinely Appointed Ministry

“God has a church, and she has a divinely appointed ministry. ‘And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.’

“Men appointed of God have been chosen to watch with jealous care, with vigilant perseverance, that the church may not be overthrown by the evil devices of Satan, but that she shall stand in the world to promote the glory of God among men.”

Conference President

The conference president should be an ordained pastor of experience and good report. He stands at the head of the gospel ministry in the conference and is the chief elder, or overseer, of all the churches. He works for their spiritual welfare and counsels them regarding their activities and plans. He has access to all the churches and their services, business meetings, and boards, without vote unless granted by the church, or unless he is a member of that congregation. He may, by virtue of his office, preside over any meeting of any church when necessary. He has access to all church records.

The conference president does not have authority to set aside the duly elected officers of the church, but will work in cooperation with them. They in turn are bound, in recognition of the ties of conference fellowship, to counsel with him over all that pertains to the welfare of the church. They should not attempt to exclude him from a proper discharge of his duties.

Conference Departmental Directors

Conference departmental directors foster important lines of denominational work under the general direction of the conference committee in consultation with the conference president. In order to successfully carry on the work assigned to them, these employees must have access to the churches so they can present and Develop their plans. These employees will have sympathetic consideration for all church plans, even outside their respective departments.

Departmental directors are not vested with administrative or executive authority, so their relation to local churches is advisory. Their work does not bear the same relationship to the churches as that of the conference committee or president. In the promotion of their specific kinds of work, they labor throughout the entire conference. However, they are not expected to counsel churches regarding elections and other administrative duties or any other line of service, unless especially requested to do so by the conference president.

Ordained Pastors

Ordained pastors appointed by the conference committee to act as pastors or district leaders do not take the place of the president in their respective fields. They are not charged with administrative powers as is the president, but they cooperate with him in carrying out the plans and policies of the conference.

On assignment to a local church, the ordained pastor is assisted by the local elders. By virtue of ordination, the pastor is qualified to function in all rites and ceremonies. The pastor should be the congregation's spiritual leader and adviser. Pastors should instruct the officers in their duties and plan with them for all lines of church work and activity.

The pastor is a member of the church board and serves as its chairperson. If the pastor desires to be relieved of the responsibility of acting as chairperson of the board, an elder serves as chairperson in cooperation with the pastor. The pastor, with the assistance of the elders, is expected to plan for and lead out in all spiritual services, such as Sabbath morning worship and prayer meeting, and should officiate at the communion service and baptism. Pastors should not surround themselves with any special body of counselors of their own choosing, but always cooperate with the elected officers.

When an evangelist is asked to conduct an evangelistic effort where there is a church, the conference should invite the pastor to assist the evangelist, thus giving the pastor an opportunity to become acquainted with prospective members.

Pastors or assistant pastors are not nominated or elected to such positions by the church. Their connection with the church is by appointment of the conference committee, and such appointments may be changed at any time. A pastor may be removed from office by conference committee action without the individual's church membership being affected. But when a

PASTORS AND OTHER CHURCH EMPLOYEES

Pastor is removed from church membership and subsequently restored to membership as a layperson; the pastor's membership restoration does not mean restoration to the ministry.

Licensed Pastors

To give individuals an opportunity to demonstrate their call to the ministry, especially in the area of soul winning, prospective candidates are granted pastoral licenses by the conference. The granting of such licenses confers the opportunity to develop the ministerial gift.

Licensed pastors are authorized to preach, to engage in evangelism, to lead out in outreach (missionary) work, and to assist in all church activities.

There are circumstances, however, where it is necessary for the conference to appoint a licensed pastor to carry responsibility as a pastor or assistant pastor of a church or group of churches. In order to open the way for a licensed pastor to perform certain pastoral functions, the church or group of churches being served must elect the pastor as a local elder. Then, since the right to permit the extension of a licensed pastor's authority rests first with the division executive committee, it must approve the extension by specifically and clearly defining the additional functions that that licensed pastor may perform. The extended functions are limited only to the church or group of churches where the pastor is assigned and is an elder.

After the division committee acts, the conference committee may act

The conference committee shall not extend the functions of a licensed pastor beyond what has been authorized by the division committee. It also shall not authorize a licensed pastor to perform the extended functions in any church beyond where the licensed pastor is assigned and is an elder. A conference committee action cannot be substituted for church election or ordination to gospel ministry.

Bible Instructors

The conference may employ Bible instructors and assign them to work with evangelistic efforts or with local congregations. Though the instructors work under the general direction of the conference, an instructor assigned to an evangelistic effort works under the direction of the evangelist conducting the campaign, and an instructor assigned to a church works under the direction of the pastor. An instructor should not, except by special arrangement with the conference, be asked to carry a church office, but should be left free to carry on soul-winning work.

Conference Directs Church Employees

The conference president in counsel with the conference committee directs all conference employees, such as pastors, Bible instructors, and departmental directors, who receive their credentials from and are responsible to the conference, not the local church. A church may ask the conference president for the services or help of conference employees, but appointments in all cases rest with the conference committee. The conference committee may change employee assignments whenever it believes they are needed. The employee or the church may appeal to the

conference committee for a hearing on the decision to remove the employee, and the committee will carefully consider the appeal in light of the needs of the entire conference. If the employee refuses to cooperate with the committee and declines to work in harmony with its decisions, the committee may regard the employee's conduct as insubordination and may deal with it accordingly. In no case should the employee appeal to the church regarding such decisions. If a local church supports an employee's refusal to cooperate, it also becomes subject to conference discipline.

Credentials and Licenses

God's work is to be jealously safeguarded by responsible leaders from the local church to the General Conference. Official credentials and licenses are issued to all authorized full-time Church employees and are granted by controlling committees for limited periods.

In a local conference, the committee confers authority upon individuals to represent the Church as pastors and gospel workers. This authority is represented by the granting of credentials and licenses, which are written commissions, properly dated and signed by the officers of the conference. The authority thus conveyed is not personal or inherent in the individual but is inherent in the granting body, which may recall the credentials for cause at any time. Credentials and licenses granted employees are not their personal property and must be returned when employment is terminated or at the request of the organization that issued them.

No one should be allowed to speak to any congregation unless he/she has been invited by the church in harmony with guidelines given by the conference. It is recognized, however, that there are times when congregations may be addressed by government officials or civic leaders; but all unauthorized persons shall not be given access to the pulpit

Expired Credentials and Licenses

Credentials and licenses are granted for the duration of the term as provided for by the conference

PASTORS AND OTHER CHURCH EMPLOYEES

Constitution and bylaws or operating policy and are renewed by a vote of the conference in session or by the executive committee. Possession of an expired credential or license gives the person no authority whatsoever.

Retired Employees

Retired employees deserve honor and consideration for helping build up God's church. They may continue to bless and help the congregations where they hold membership through election to any office. They also may exercise pastoral functions under the direction of the conference committee.

Former Pastors Without Credentials

Individuals previously ordained as pastors but who no longer have valid credentials may be elected as elders and, if their ordinations have not been invalidated, need not be ordained as elders. Their services are limited to the functions of a local elder.

CHAPTER 5

Organizing, Uniting, and Dissolving Churches and Companies

Organizing a Church

A church is organized by an ordained pastor on the recommendation of the conference executive committee. (For the procedure for organizing a company.) Since so much is involved in the organization of a church, the local conference president should be invited to be present.

When a company of baptized believers is prepared to assume the responsibilities of an organized church, it must consult with the conference president and obtain approval from the conference executive or steering committee prior to seeking a date for the organization to take place.

When the baptized believers assemble on the agreed-upon date, the individual officiating should first present a brief review of the church fundamental beliefs of The Holy Seed Church.

Then the one presiding should make a call asking all who are in agreement with these principles and who desire to unite in church fellowship to come forward. The name of each person should be recorded.

If any are already members of the conference church or another congregation, the one officiating should present the letters of transfers they have secured. Those transferring form the nucleus of the congregation.

If, however, there are no transferring members, then three members (preferably established Sabbath keepers among those present) should be selected as a nucleus. **They may be asked these questions: Do you accept Christ as your personal Savior? Are you in full harmony with the principles of faith that have just been presented? Have you been baptized by immersion? Are you in regular standing and enjoying one another's confidence?**

If they answer these questions in the affirmative, the three are declared the nucleus of the new church. Then one after another the names that were recorded are called, each person is asked the questions listed in the preceding paragraph, and the presiding person takes a vote among the nucleus to receive each individual into church fellowship. Each person thus received becomes a member of the church and is qualified to vote on the next name. Care should be taken to see that full fellowship and brotherly.

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love exist among those received into membership. Should any difficulty arise in any case over a question either of doctrine or of fellowship, action should be deferred unless the matter can be adjusted kindly and tactfully.

When the nucleus has voted on all potential members, the church is a complete entity and ready for election of officers. Members then should choose a nominating committee, with the officiating pastor serving as chairperson. The nominating committee brings in nominations to fill the various church offices. When these have been elected, the elders should be ordained, unless they have already been ordained as elders. A similar but shorter service should take place for ordination of deacons and deaconesses.

The church then is fully organized and ready for service.

Before the organizing meeting ends, the members should vote to request the conference to receive the newly organized church into the sisterhood of churches at the next conference session.

To maximize success of the new congregation, conference and local leaders should see that all officers are fully instructed concerning their duties. The church also should have the materials needed for the communion service, which, if possible, should be celebrated as part of the organizational meeting. The treasurer, the clerk, and the other officers should receive all the necessary records or equipment needed to carry out their responsibilities.

Organizing a Company

Where a number of isolated believers reside near one another or where they belong to a small group, house church, or church planting core group, they should consider forming a company of believers for fellowship, worship, and mission with the objective of growing into an organized church or multiplying house churches in that geographical area.

Company status is approved by vote of the conference committee, which, should it become necessary, may subsequently dissolve the company. The division and/or conference should have written guidelines for organizing companies within its territory.

Church members who are part of small groups or house groups may form the nucleus of a new company. Membership of all those who want to be part of a company should be held in either the conference church or a local church (mother church). If membership for those who want to be part of a company is to be held in the conference church, the conference committee will vote their membership transfers to the conference church and indicate that they are part of the new company.

When the conference committee approves establishment of a company, a leadership team should be appointed, including a leader, a clerk, and a treasurer. The appointment should be carried out by the district pastor, or

other pastor appointed by the conference committee, in counsel with the group being established as a company.

All other company appointments should be made by vote of those who are part of the group that is forming the company. The district pastor or other person authorized by the conference committee shall preside at such a meeting. Only members of The Holy Seed Church in regular standing shall be appointed.

The leader of a company shall not be ordained to that office and does not have the authority to perform those functions that are vested in an elder of a church. However, where exceptional circumstances warrant, the conference committee may appoint a person of church experience and leadership ability to serve as elder of the company.

The clerk of the company shall keep record of all activities and meetings of the company and shall send regular statistical reports to the mother church or the conference executive secretary. These reports should include statistics on attendance and activities of the company, including outreach ministries conducted during the week or on Sabbath.

The treasurer of the company shall keep record of all money received and disbursed and shall send promptly, at the time established by the conference, all tithes and offerings, other than funds collected for local purposes, to the conference treasurer, who also is treasurer of the conference church.

If the members of an organized company are members of the conference church, the company does not possess the right to administer discipline or transfer or receive members. All such matters must be referred to the conference committee, which constitutes the board of the conference church. The conference president is the elder of the conference church.

If the conference organizes a company through a neighboring mother church instead of through the conference church, the functions listed above (such as reporting and membership) would be cared for by/through the mother church.

Since a company should want to grow and eventually be recognized as a church, its leadership should prepare members for church status by promoting all activities generally carried on by a church.

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Uniting Churches

When it is advisable to unite two churches, the conference committee should recommend such a course. In a duly called meeting, presided over by the conference president or the pastor or other ordained pastor, each church should vote on the question of union. When favorable action has been taken by both churches, a joint meeting of the two churches should be

arranged, with the conference president presiding or in his absence an ordained pastor appointed by the conference.

A carefully written statement of agreement should be prepared setting forth the reasons for uniting and stating any special matters or conditions involved, such as the disposal of property and responsibility for financial obligations. It should provide for the new name of the united church and for the release from service of all officers of the two churches.

Adoption of the agreement by the united body consummates the union of the two churches. Members of the new congregation then should choose a nominating committee to nominate officers to serve for the remainder of the current year.

A copy of the agreement should then be filed with the conference.

The entire membership of both churches unites in the new organization. It is not permissible to remove any members by failing to include them in the membership list at the time of uniting. The united body becomes responsible for the order and discipline of all members. Members under discipline should be dealt with as provided elsewhere in this A Smart Community.

All records of both churches become a part of the records of the united body. The local conference should be notified so that it may take suitable actions at its next session.

Dissolving or Expelling Churches

“Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. . . . For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones” (**Ephesians 5:25-30**).

This spirit should permeate all efforts to help an erring church and all aspects of any discipline that may be applied—always to help and save for the cause of God. Church status is not necessarily perpetual. A church may be dissolved or expelled from the sisterhood of churches for the following reasons:

1. Loss of Members

Occasionally, despite efforts to preserve a church, so many members are lost by moving away or by death or by apostasy that the existence of the church is threatened. Under such circumstances the conference committee should recommend possible dissolution of the church. Before a church takes final action to dissolve, the remaining members shall be invited to transfer their memberships to other churches.

If enough members remain, the congregation may call a business meeting, presided over by the conference president or by a pastor designated by him, to vote to approve letters requesting transfer of all members in regular standing to unite with other churches. In this way the church dissolves itself upon recommendation of the conference committee, and the way is opened for the conference committee to take action recording dissolution of the church.

If, in the judgment of the conference committee, there are too few members available to call a business meeting, the conference committee shall have the authority to recommend transfer of members in regular standing to other churches or to the conference church. In this way the church is dissolved.

If at the time of dissolution there are members who are under discipline and therefore cannot be granted letters saying they are in regular standing, their memberships shall be provisionally held in the conference church while conference administration ensures that every effort is made as soon as possible to help such members to a satisfactory Christian experience. If the efforts are successful, their memberships may then be confirmed in the conference church or letters granted to them for transfer to other churches. If they cannot be reclaimed, they should be removed from membership by vote of the conference committee.

2. *Discipline*

Occasions for expelling churches for disciplinary reasons are rare because the mission of the church is to seek and to save. Where serious problems such as apostasy, refusal to operate in harmony with the *A Smart Community*, or rebellion against the conference persist, earnest efforts should be made to avert the need for expulsion. The pastor should seek to deepen the spiritual life of the church through preaching and personal visitation ministries. The conference should encourage a series of revival meetings to lead the members to renew their covenant with their Lord. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the pastor, in cooperation with the

ORGANIZING, UNITING, AND DISSOLVING CHURCHES

Conference committee should counsel with the church and its leadership, seeking to bring healing and reconciliation and to preserve the church.

Such remedial measures are preferable to permitting the deterioration of relationships, which could lead to expulsion of the church.

However, if all efforts to preserve the church fail, the conference committee should give careful study to the question of expulsion. If such action is decided upon, the conference shall follow the following procedure:

- a. The decision to recommend expulsion, with supporting reasons, shall be presented to the church itself in a business meeting for its information and consideration.
- b. If the church does not accept the recommendation, it may respond in one of the following ways:
 - 1) Eliminating the causes for discipline and accepting the conference specifications, request the conference to rescind the recommendation to dissolve or expel.
 - 2) Appeal to the union executive committee, or to the division in case of a union of churches, to arbitrate on behalf of the church.
- c. If the church remains in rebellion, the conference executive committee makes a recommendation to a regular or specially called constituency meeting that the church be dissolved.
- d. If the constituency takes action to expel, the conference shall enforce the decision.

Care of Members, Records, and Funds

Loyal members of a dissolved or expelled church may desire to retain their memberships in the Church. To ensure their welfare, their memberships shall be provisionally held for up to one year in the conference church to allow opportunity for those who desire to have their memberships in the conference church confirmed or transferred to another church. Their standing shall be evaluated by the conference committee, and, if satisfactory, the conference committee may recommend them for membership in the conference church or churches of their choice.

The names of members of a dissolved or expelled church who are under discipline shall be referred to the conference secretary for early attention by the conference committee as set out in “Loss of Members,” above.

On dissolution or expulsion of a church for loss of members or for disciplinary reasons, all offerings, financial accounts, and all property real or personal, whether held in the name of the local church or the conference

Or other denominational legal association, are held in trust for the conference. The conference therefore has the right, the authority, and the duty to administer, protect, or dispose of such property and funds. All records of the church are to be held in the custody of the conference secretary and/or treasurer.

In cases where discipline is not involved, an alternative to dissolving or expelling a church is to return it to company status. Such a decision will be made by a majority vote of the conference committee, following consultation with the district pastor and members, and conveyed to the church by the pastor or conference representative.

At a business meeting, letters of transfer may be voted to all remaining members in regular standing to the conference church or to other churches in the cases of any members who wish to transfer. At the same meeting, the pastor, in counsel with the local members, shall appoint from the members of the new company a leadership team, including a leader, a clerk, and a treasurer. For details of other organizational matters relating to a company,

CHAPTER 6

Membership

The solemn obligations of membership in the body of Christ should be impressed on everyone desiring Church membership. Only those giving evidence of having experienced the new birth and enjoying a spiritual experience in the Lord Jesus are prepared for acceptance into membership. Pastors must instruct candidates in the fundamental teachings and related practices of the Church so they will enter the Church on a sound spiritual basis. While there is no stated age for baptism, it is recommended that very young children who express a desire to be baptized should be encouraged and entered into an instruction program that may lead to baptism.

The apostle Paul writes: “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (**Romans 6:3, 4**).

Luke also reports: “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.’ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (**Acts 2:38-41**).

“The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to ‘the principalities and powers in heavenly places,’ the final and full display of the love of God.”

Baptism

A Prerequisite to Membership

“Christ has made baptism the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He has made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wishes to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

“Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at

the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. They have obeyed the command: ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing.’ And to them is fulfilled the promise: ‘I will receive you, and Will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, said the Lord Almighty.’ **2 Corinthians 6:17, 18.**”

Baptism is the avenue of induction into the Church. It is fundamentally the pledge of entrance into Christ’s saving covenant and should be treated as a solemn and yet joyful welcome into the family of God.

Membership in the Church is possible only in those churches included in the sisterhood of churches recognized by a conference.

Mode of Baptism

The Church believes in baptism by immersion and accepts into membership only those who have been baptized in this manner. (“Church Fundamental Beliefs of The Holy Seed Church.”) Those who acknowledge their lost state as sinners sincerely repent of their sins, and experience conversion may, after proper instruction, be accepted as candidates for baptism and Church membership.

Thorough Instruction and Public Examination Before Baptism

Candidates individually or in a baptismal class should be instructed from the Scriptures regarding the Church’s fundamental beliefs and practices and the responsibilities of membership. A pastor should satisfy the church by a public examination that candidates are well instructed, are committed to taking this important step, and by practice and conduct demonstrate a willing acceptance of Church doctrines and the principles of conduct which are the outward expression of those doctrines, for “by their fruits you will know them” (**Matthew 7:20, Isaiah 8:20**).

If public examination is impractical, then candidates should be examined by the board or a committee appointed by the board, such as the board of elders, whose report then should be given to the church before the baptism.

“The test of discipleship is not brought to bear as closely as it should be upon those who present themselves for baptism. It should be understood whether they are simply taking the name of The Holy Seed Church, or whether they are taking their stand on the Lord’s side, to come out from the world and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. Before baptism there should be a thorough inquiry as to the experience of the candidates. Let this inquiry be made, not in a cold and distant way, but kindly, tenderly, pointing the new converts to the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Bring the requirements of the gospel to bear upon the candidates for baptism.”

MEMBERSHIP Baptismal Vow and Commitment

Baptismal Vow

Baptismal candidates and those being received into fellowship by profession of faith shall affirm their acceptance of the fundamental beliefs in the presence of the local congregation or other properly appointed body.

The pastor or elder should address the following questions to the candidate(s), whose reply may be by verbal assent, raising the hand, or other culturally appropriate method.

His or Her Vow

1. Do you believe there is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons?
2. Do you accept the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary as the atoning sacrifice for your sins and believe that by God's grace through faith in His shed blood you are saved from sin and its penalty?
3. Do you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal Savior, believing that God, in Christ, has forgiven your sins and given you a new heart, and do you renounce the sinful ways of the world?
4. Do you accept by faith the righteousness of Christ, your Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, and accept His promise of transforming grace and power to live a loving, Christ-centered life in your home and before the world?
5. Do you believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word, the only rule of faith and practice for the Christian? Do you covenant to spend time regularly in prayer and Bible study?
6. Do you accept the Ten Commandments as a transcript of the character of God and a revelation of His will? Is it your purpose by the power of the indwelling Christ to keep this law, including the fourth commandment, which requires the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord and the memorial of Creation?

7. Do you look forward to the soon coming of Jesus and the blessed hope, when "this mortal shall . . . put on immortality" [**1 Corinthians**

15:54, KJV]?

As you prepare to meet the Lord, will you witness to His loving salvation by using your talents in personal soul-winning endeavor to help others to be ready for His glorious appearing?

8. Do you accept the biblical teaching of spiritual gifts and believe that the gift of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church?
9. Do you believe in Church organization? Is it your purpose to worship God and to support the Church through your tithes and offerings and by your personal effort and influence?
10. Do you believe that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit; and will you honor God by caring for it, avoiding the use of that which is

harmful, and abstaining from all unclean foods; from the use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages; from the use, manufacture, or sale of tobacco in any of its forms for human consumption; and from the misuse of or trafficking in narcotics or other drugs?

11. Do you know and understand the fundamental Bible principles as taught by The Holy Seed Church? Do you purpose, by the grace of God, to fulfill His will by ordering your life in harmony with these principles?

12. Do you accept the New Testament teaching of baptism by immersion and desire to be so baptized as a public expression of faith in Christ and His forgiveness of your sins?

13. Do you accept and believe that the Holy Seed Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship? Do you desire to be a member of this local congregation of the world Church?

Alternative His or Her Vow

1. Do you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, and do you desire to live your life in a saving relationship with Him?

2. Do you accept the teachings of the Bible as expressed in the Statement of Church Fundamental Beliefs of The Holy Seed Church, and do you pledge by God's grace to live your life in harmony with these teachings?

3. Do you desire to be baptized as a public expression of your belief in Jesus Christ, to be accepted into the fellowship of The Holy Seed Church, and to support the Church and its mission as a faithful steward by your personal influence, tithes, Special and offerings, and a life of service?

MEMBERSHIP

Baptismal Covenant

The Church has adopted its 55 fundamental beliefs, together with the baptismal vow and Certificate of Baptism and Commitment, as a baptismal covenant.

A printed copy of this covenant, with the Certificate of Baptism and Commitment properly completed, should be given to all accepted into membership by baptism. An appropriate certificate also should be given those accepted on profession of faith.

The Certificate of Baptism and Commitment contains a space for the new member to sign as an affirmation of commitment. Following the baptism, the Certificate of Baptism and Commitment should be presented to the candidate as a covenant document. The commitment reads as follows:

Commitment

1. I believe there is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons.

2. I accept the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary as the atoning sacrifice for my sins and believe that by God's grace through faith in His shed blood I am saved from sin and its penalty.
3. I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and personal Savior and believe that God, in Christ, has forgiven my sins and given me a new heart, and I renounce the sinful ways of the world.
4. I accept by faith the righteousness of Christ, my Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, and accept His promise of transforming grace and power to live a loving, Christ-centered life in my home and before the world.
5. I believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word, the only rule of faith and practice for the Christian. I covenant to spend time regularly in prayer and Bible study.
6. I accept the Ten Commandments as a transcript of the character of God and a revelation of His will. It is my purpose by the power of the indwelling Christ to keep this law, including the fourth commandment, which requires the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord and the memorial of Creation.
7. I look forward to the soon coming of Jesus and the blessed hope, when "this mortal shall put on immortality" **[1 Corinthians 15:54, KJV]**. As I prepare to meet the Lord, I will witness to His loving salvation by using my talents in personal soul-winning endeavor to help others to be ready for His glorious appearing.
8. I accept the biblical teaching of spiritual gifts and believe that the gift of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church.
9. I believe in Church organization. It is my purpose to worship God and to support the Church through my tithes and offerings and by my personal effort and influence.
10. I believe that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit; and I will honor God by caring for it, avoiding the use of that which is harmful, and abstaining from all unclean foods; from the use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages; from the use, manufacture, or sale of tobacco in any of its forms for human consumption; and from the misuse of or trafficking in narcotics or other drugs.
11. I know and understand the fundamental Bible principles as taught by The Holy Seed Church. I purpose, by the grace of God, to fulfill His will by ordering my life in harmony with these principles.
12. I accept the New Testament teaching of baptism by immersion and desire to be so baptized as a public expression of faith in Christ and His forgiveness of my sins.
13. I accept and believe that The Holy Seed Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship. I desire to be a member of this local congregation of the world Church.

Voting Acceptance Subject to Baptism

After the candidates have, in the presence of the church membership or other properly appointed body, answered the questions of the vow in the affirmative, or assurance has been given to the church that they have already done so, the church should vote on their acceptance into membership subject to baptism, which should not be unduly delayed.

Receiving Members Who Are Not Known

In preparing for the baptism of converts, an evangelist should invite the pastor or elder to visit the baptismal class to become acquainted with the candidates. Such contacts will enable the church to be better prepared to receive the new members.

Baptismal Preparations

At the baptismal ceremony the deacons should make necessary preparations and also assist male candidates into and out of the water. The deaconesses should assist female candidates.

Care should be exercised to see that proper attire is provided for the candidates, preferably robes of suitable heavy material. If robes are not available, the candidates should dress in modest attire.

MEMBERSHIP

The baptism should be followed by a short welcoming ceremony.

Rebaptism

Rebaptism is specifically mentioned only in **Acts 19:1-7**, where the apostle Paul endorsed it for a group of believers whose previous baptism of repentance had been by John. In addition to repentance, Christian baptism is associated with an understanding of and personal commitment to the gospel and the teachings of Jesus and a reception of the Holy Spirit. With this increased understanding and commitment, rebaptism is acceptable

Individuals From Other Christian Communions

On biblical grounds, individuals from other Christian communions who have embraced The Holy Seed Church beliefs and who have previously been baptized by immersion may request rebaptism.

The following examples, however, suggest that rebaptism may not be required. Evidently the instance of **Acts 19** was a special one, for Apollo's is reported to have received John's baptism (**Acts 18:25**), and there is no record that he was rebaptized. Apparently some of the apostles themselves received John's baptism (**John 1:35-40**), but there is no record they were rebaptized..

If a new believer has accepted significant new truths, President William Simiyu supports rebaptism as the Spirit leads the new believer to request it. This follows the developmental pattern of **Acts 19**. An individual who has previously experienced baptism by immersion should evaluate his/her new religious experience and determine whether he/she desires rebaptism. There is to be no urging.

“This [rebaptism] is a subject which each individual must conscientiously take his position upon in the fear of God. This subject should be carefully presented in the spirit of tenderness and love. Then the duty of urging belongs to no one but God; give God a chance to work with His Holy Spirit upon the minds, so that the individual will be perfectly convinced and satisfied in regard to this advanced step.”

Apostasy and Rebaptism

Although apostasy existed in the apostolic church (**Hebrews 6:4-6**), Scripture does not address the question of rebaptism. President William Simiyu supports rebaptism when members have apostatized and then are reconverted and wish to rejoin the Church.

“The Lord calls for a decided reformation. And when a soul is truly reconverted, let him be rebaptized. Let him renew his covenant with God, and God will renew His covenant with him.”

Inappropriate Rebaptism

On the basis of biblical teaching and the guidance of The Holy Seed Church, rebaptism should occur only in special circumstances and should be relatively rare. To administer baptism repeatedly or on an emotional basis lessens its meaning and represents a misunderstanding of the gravity and significance that Scripture assigns to it. A member whose spiritual experience has become cold needs a spirit of repentance which leads to revival and reformation. This experience will be followed by participation in the communion service to signify renewed cleansing and fellowship in the body of Christ, making rebaptism unnecessary.

Profession of Faith

Individuals who have accepted the fundamental beliefs of The Holy Seed Church and who desire membership in the Church on profession of faith may be accepted under any of the following four circumstances:

1. A committed Christian coming from another Christian communion who has already been baptized by immersion as practiced by The Holy Seed Church.
2. A member of The Holy Seed Church who, because of world conditions, is unable to secure a letter of transfer from his/her home church.

3. A member of The Holy Seed Church whose request for membership transfer has received no response from the church where he/she is a member. In such a case the church shall seek assistance of the conference or conferences involved.

4. An individual who has been a member, but whose membership has been misplaced or has been withdrawn because he/she was a missing member, yet who has remained faithful to his/her Christian commitment.

Great care should be exercised in receiving members if they have formerly been members of another congregation. When a person applies for membership on profession of faith, inquiries should be made concerning the applicant's former experience. Church officers should seek the advice and help of the conference president. Sufficient time should be taken to investigate the facts.

MEMBERSHIP

When a person applies for membership on profession of faith and it is found that he/she still is a member of another congregation, no steps should be taken to receive that person into membership until the church holding the membership grants a letter of transfer. If, after the process of transfer is followed, a church refuses to grant a letter of transfer and the member feels the letter has been unjustly denied, the member may appeal to the conference committee. Following this procedure will result in a higher appreciation of the sacredness of Church membership and in wrongs being made right. No church has the right to withhold transfer unless the person is under discipline.

When an individual whose membership has been removed seeks readmission to church membership, readmission is normally preceded by rebaptism.

Transferring Members

When members move to a different area, the clerk of the church holding their membership records should write to the secretary of the relevant conference requesting that a pastor in the new locality visit them and help facilitate their membership transfer to the new congregation.

The clerk of the church holding the membership records also should notify the transferring members of the intention to give their new addresses to the conference.

Members who move to another locality for longer than six months should make immediate applications for letters of transfer. Members moving to an isolated area with no church within a reasonable distance should apply to join the conference church.

Method of Granting Letters of Transfer

Members should apply for their letters of transfer to the clerk of the church with which the members desire to unite (the receiving church). That clerk sends the request to the clerk of the church from which the members desire to transfer (the granting church).

When the clerk of the granting church receives the request, the clerk brings it to the pastor or elder, who in turn presents it to the board. After due consideration, the board votes to recommend, favorably or otherwise, to the church. The pastor or elder then brings the recommendation to the attention of the church for a first reading. Final action is taken the following week, when the request is presented to the church for a vote.

The purpose of the one-week interval is to give members an opportunity to object to the granting of the letter. Objections ordinarily should not be publicly stated but be lodged with the pastor or elder, who then refers them to the board for consideration. The board should give each objector opportunity to appear to present his/her objection. If the objection is not based on valid grounds, the person raising objection should be admonished to withdraw it. If the objection is based on valid grounds, it is the duty of the board to investigate. Final action on granting the letter is deferred until the matter has been satisfactorily settled.

If the objection involves personal relationships, every effort should be made to effect reconciliation. If public offenses are involved, disciplinary measures may be called for. If there is some spiritual lapse, efforts should be made to restore the member.

Clerk to Prepare Letter

When the church has granted the letter of transfer, the clerk fills out the regular transfer form and forwards it to the clerk of the receiving church.

The clerk of the receiving church then passes the letter to the pastor or elder, who presents it first to the board for recommendation, after which the request is presented to the church at its next regular service. The vote accepting the person into membership usually is taken at the regular service one week later. The clerk of the receiving church then adds the member's name and date of admittance to the membership record. The clerk also fills out the return portion of the letter of transfer, certifying that the member has been accepted, and returns it to the clerk of the granting church.

Letter Valid Six Months

A letter of transfer is valid for six months from date of issue.

Alternative Method for Membership Transfer

A division may approve alternative methods for transferring members between churches within the division, but when members request transfers

to a church in another division, the above “Method of Granting Letters of Transfer” must be followed.

Membership During Transfer

Under no circumstances shall the clerk of the granting church remove a member’s name from the membership record until the return portion of the transfer letter has been received, certifying that the member has been voted into the fellowship of the receiving church. To do so deprives the person of membership during the

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transfer. The clerk, the elders, the pastor, and the conference president are all responsible for seeing that all churches adhere to this procedure.

Receiving Members Under Difficult Conditions

World conditions sometimes prevent communications concerning a membership transfer. In such situations, the receiving church, in counsel with the conference, should satisfy itself as to the applicant’s standing and then receive him/her into membership on profession of faith. If the way later opens to communicate with the granting church or to the conference where it is located, the receiving church should send a letter stating what it has done.

Counted in Statistical Reports

When quarterly and annual statistical reports are made, a member to whom a letter has been granted, but whose return certificate has not been received, is counted as a member of the granting church. When the return certificate has been received, the name is then removed from the membership record of the granting church and not included in subsequent reports.

If Member Is Not Accepted

The receiving church must receive the member unless it knows a valid reason it should not extend the privilege of membership. If a church does not receive the member, the clerk should return the letter to the granting church with a full explanation of the reasons. The person’s membership then remains with the granting church, which should cooperate with the member to resolve the matter.

Letters Granted Only to Those in Regular Standing

Letters of transfer are granted only to members in regular standing, never to a member under discipline. Qualifying statements are out of order except when the pastor or board of the granting church has factual or proven knowledge that the member has been involved as a perpetrator of child abuse. In that case, for the safety of children, the pastor or elder should provide a confidential statement alerting the pastor or elder of the congregation to which the member is transferring.

If a member who has moved to a new location has grown indifferent, the pastor or elder of the granting church may, to be clear in the matter before the transfer is granted, take up the question with the pastor or elder of the receiving church.

No Letter Without Member's Approval

In no case should a church vote a letter of transfer contrary to the desire of the member, nor should a Church accept a member by a letter granted under such circumstances. Membership is the personal relationship of an individual to the body of Christ, and a church should recognize this relationship and avoid any action that might be construed as arbitrary.

On the other hand, a member is under obligation to recognize the welfare of the church and to make every effort to relieve the church of problems incident to absentee members. When a member moves, he/she should promptly request a letter of transfer.

When a church is expelled from the sisterhood of churches by action of a conference session, the memberships of all loyal members, except those who refuse, are considered moved to the conference church on a provisional basis. The conference church then may issue letters of transfer for loyal members and deal with other memberships as may be necessary.

Church Board Cannot Grant Letters

A board has no authority to vote letters of transfer or to receive members by letter. The board's authority is limited to making recommendations to the church. Action on all transfers of membership, favorable or otherwise, must be taken by the church. The clerk has no authority to remove names from or add names to the membership record except by vote of the church, unless a member requests in writing to be removed from church membership, in which case the church board must act on the request. Efforts should be made to restore the individual to the church family. When a member dies, the clerk records the date of death in the membership record, and no action by the church is necessary.

Membership in the Conference Church

Isolated members should unite with the conference church, which is a body organized for the benefit of believers who otherwise would be without church privileges. Aged and infirmed members who live near a church and conference officers and other employees, including pastors, should be members of a local church, not the conference church.

The conference president is the presiding elder of the conference church, and the work normally carried by the clerk and the treasurer is handled by the conference secretary and treasurer. Since the church has no board, all business normally conducted by a local church board is conducted

by the conference committee, which also appoints delegates from the conference church to the conference session.

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Membership Record

The church should have one membership record. Names are added or removed only on the vote of the church or at death. Under no circumstances should a church keep a retired membership list.

CHAPTER 7

Discipline

General Principles

The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy set forth in clear, unmistakable language the solemn responsibility that rests upon the people of God to maintain their purity, integrity, and spiritual fervor. If members grow indifferent or drift away, the church must seek to reclaim them for the Lord.

Dealing With Erring Members

“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (**Matthew 18:15-18**).

“In dealing with erring church members, God’s people are carefully to follow the instruction given by the Savior in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.

“Human beings are Christ’s property, purchased by Him at an infinite price, bound to Him by the love that He and His Father have manifested for them. How careful, then, we should be in our dealing with one another! Men have no right to surmise evil in regard to their fellow men. Church members have no right to follow their own impulses and inclinations in dealing with fellow members who have erred. They should not even express their prejudices regarding the erring, for thus they place in other minds the leaven of evil.” ‘If thy brother shall trespass against thee,’ Christ declared, ‘go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.’ Do not tell others of the wrong. One person is told, then another, and still another; and continually the report grows, and the evil increases, till the whole church is made to suffer. Settle the matter ‘between thee and him alone.’ This is God’s plan.”

God's Plan

“Whatever the character of the offense, this does not change the plan that God has made for the settlement of misunderstandings and personal injuries. Speaking alone and in the spirit of Christ to the one

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Who is in fault will often remove the difficulty. Go to the erring one, with a heart filled with Christ's love and sympathy, and seek to adjust the matter. Reason with him calmly and quietly. Let no angry words escape your lips.

Speak in a way that will appeal to his better judgment. Remember the words: ‘He which converted the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.’ **James 5:20.**

“All heaven is interested in the interview between the one who has been injured and the one who is in error. As the erring one accepts the reproof offered in the love of Christ, and acknowledges his wrong, asking forgiveness from God and from his brother, the sunshine of heaven fills his heart. The Spirit of God binds heart to heart, and there is music in heaven over the union brought about.

“ ‘But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ . . .

Take with you those who are spiritually minded, and talk with the one in error in regard to the wrong. As he sees their agreement in the matter, his mind may be enlightened.“

‘And if he shall neglect to hear them,’ what then shall be done? Shall a few persons in a board meeting take upon themselves the responsibility of disfellowshipping the erring one? ‘If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church.’ Let the church take action in regard to its members.

“‘But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.’ If he will not heed the voice of the church, if he refuses all the efforts made to reclaim him, upon the church rests the responsibility of separating him from fellowship. His name should then be stricken from the books.

“No church officer should advise, no committee should recommend, nor should any church vote, that the name of a wrongdoer shall be removed from the church books, until the instruction given by Christ has been faithfully followed. When this instruction has been followed, the church has cleared herself before God. The evil must then be made to appear as it is, and must be removed, that it may not become more and more widespread. The health and purity of the church must be preserved, that she may stand before God unsullied, clad in the robes of Christ's righteousness. “‘Verily I say unto you,’ Christ continued, ‘whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’

“This statement holds its force in all ages. On the church has been conferred the power to act in Christ’s stead. It is God’s instrumentality for the preservation of order and discipline among His people. To it the Lord Has delegated the power to settle all questions respecting its prosperity, purity, and order. Upon it rests the responsibility of excluding from its fellowship those who are unworthy, who by their un-Christ like conduct would bring dishonor on the truth. Whatever the church does that is in accordance with the directions given in God’s Word will be ratified in heaven.”

Authority of the Church

“The world’s Redeemer has invested great power with His church. He states the rules to be applied in cases of trial with its members. After He has given explicit directions as to the course to be pursued, He says: ‘verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever [in church discipline] ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ Thus even the heavenly authority ratifies the discipline of the church in regard to its members when the Bible rule has been followed.

“The Word of God does not give license for one man to set up his judgment in opposition to the judgment of the church, neither is he allowed to urge his opinions against the opinions of the church.”

Church’s Responsibility

“God holds His people, as a body, responsible for the sins existing in individuals among them. If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins.”

“If there were no church discipline and government, the church would go to fragments; it could not hold together as a body.”

Unconsecrated Resist Discipline

“There are many who do not have the discretion of Joshua and who have no special duty to search out wrongs and to deal promptly with the sins existing among them. Let not such hinder those who have the burden of this work upon them; let them not stand in the way of those who have this duty to do. Some make it a point to question and doubt and find fault because others do the work that God has not laid upon them. These stand directly in the way to hinder those upon whom God has laid the burden of reproving and correcting prevailing sins in order that His frown may be turned away from His people. Should a case like Chan’s be among us, there are many who would accuse those who might act the part of Joshua in searching out the wrong, of having a wicked, fault-finding spirit. God is not to be trifled with and His warnings disregarded with impunity by a perverse people.

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“Those who work in the fear of God to rid the church of hindrances and to correct grievous wrongs, that the people of God may see the necessity of abhorring sin and may prosper in purity, and that the name of God may be glorified, will ever meet with resisting influences from the unconsecrated.”

Safeguarding Unity of the Church

Christians should make every effort to avoid tendencies that would divide them and bring dishonor to their cause. “It is the purpose of God that His children shall blend in unity. Do they not expect to live together in the same heaven? . . . Those who refuse to work in harmony greatly dishonor God.” The church should discourage actions that threaten harmony among its members and should consistently encourage unity.

Although all members have equal rights within the church, no individual member or group should start a movement or form an organization or seek to encourage a following for the attainment of any objective or for the teaching of any doctrine or message not in harmony with the fundamental religious objectives and teachings of the Church. Such a course would result in the fostering of a divisive spirit, the fragmenting of the witness of the Church, and thus in hindering of the Church’s discharge of its obligations to the Lord and the world.

Reconciliation of Differences

Every effort should be made to settle differences among church members and contain the controversy within the smallest possible sphere. Reconciliation of differences within the church should, in most cases, be possible without recourse either to a conciliation process provided by the Church or to civil litigation.

“If matters of difficulty between brethren were not laid open before others, but frankly spoken of between themselves in the spirit of Christian love, how much evil might be prevented? How many roots of bitterness whereby many are defiled would be destroyed, and how closely and tenderly might the followers of Christ be united in His love!”

“Contentions, strife, and lawsuits between brethren are a disgrace to the cause of truth. Those who take such a course expose the church to the ridicule of her enemies and cause the powers of darkness to triumph. They are piercing the wounds of Christ afresh and putting Him to an open shame. By ignoring the authority of the church they show contempt for God, who gave to the church its authority.”

Civil litigation is often carried on in a spirit of contention that results from and reveals human selfishness. It is this kind of adversarial proceedings that must be discouraged by a church that seeks to exhibit the

spirit of Christ. Christian unselfishness will lead followers of Christ to suffer themselves to be defrauded (**1 Corinthians 6:7**) rather than to “go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints” (**1 Corinthians 6:1,2**).

While there are, in the modern world, occasions for seeking decrees of civil courts, Christians should prefer settlement within the authority of the Church and should limit the seeking of such decrees to cases that are clearly within the jurisdiction of the civil courts and not within the authority of the Church or for which the Church agrees it has no adequate process for orderly settlement. Such suits before civil courts should never become revengeful adversary proceedings but should develop out of a desire to seek arbitration and to settle differences amicably.

Examples of such civil cases may include, but are not limited to, the settlement of insurance claims, the issuance of decrees affecting the boundaries and ownership of real property, the deciding of some matters involving the administration of estates, and the awarding of custody of minor children.

While the Church should set up procedures within the constraints of legal practice to avoid the type of litigation referred to in 1 Corinthians 6, it should constantly be on guard against turning from its gospel mission and taking up the duties of a civil magistrate. (**Luke 12:13, 14**)

God’s ideal for members of His Church is that they should, as far as possible, “live peaceably with all men” (**Romans 12:18**). The Church should use its readily accessible and reasonably prompt process by which many differences among members can be settled. Should the Church fail to respond to a request for help in reconciling a difference, or if the Church acknowledges that the nature of the case is such that it is not within its authority, it should be recognized that the member has exhausted the possibilities of the biblically outlined procedure for the settlement of differences and that what he/ she should do beyond that point is a matter for his/her conscience.

However, when the Church, endeavoring to assist in timely and amicable settlement of differences among its members, recommends a solution, members should not summarily reject the recommendation. As 1 Corinthians 6:7 indicates, it is no light matter for a member, outside the orderly processes of the Church, to litigate a grievance against another member.

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Members who demonstrate impatience and selfishness by their unwillingness to wait for and accept recommendations of the Church in the settlement of grievances against other church members may properly be subject to the discipline of the church because of the disruptive effect on

the Church and their refusal to recognize properly constituted Church authority.

Settlement of Grievances of Members Against the Church

The same principles that influence resolution of differences among members apply to the settlement of grievances of members against Church organizations and institutions.

Members should not instigate litigation against any Church entity except under circumstances where the Church has not provided adequate process for orderly settlement of the grievance or where the nature of the case is such that it is clearly not within the authority of the Church to settle.

Settlement of Grievances of the Church Against Members

At times Church organizations or institutions may have grievances against members. In such circumstances, Church administrators must, in Christian forbearance, keep in mind the biblical counsel for settling disputes among Christians and apply that counsel to the settlement of grievances of the Church against its members. The Church should, in preference to litigating matters in a secular court, make every reasonable effort in cooperation with the member to provide a process by which orderly settlement of the problem can be accomplished.

The Church recognizes the need of exercising great care to protect the highest spiritual interests of its members, to ensure fair treatment, and to safeguard the name of the Church. It cannot afford to deal lightly with such sins or permit personal considerations to affect its actions, and at the same time it must strive to reclaim and restore those who err.

“If the erring one repents and submits to Christ’s discipline, he is to be given another trial. And even if he does not repent, even if he stands outside the church, God’s servants still have a work to do for him. They are to seek earnestly to win him to repentance. And, however aggravated may have been his offense, if he yields to the striving of the Holy Spirit and, by confessing and forsaking his sin, gives evidence of repentance, he is to be forgiven and welcomed to the fold again. His brethren are to encourage him in the right way, treating him as they would wish to be treated were they in his place, considering themselves lest they also be tempted.”

Reasons for Discipline

The reasons for which members shall be subject to discipline are:

1. Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the fundamental beliefs of the Church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same.

2. Violation of the law of God, such as worship of idols, murder, stealing, profanity, gambling, Sabbath breaking, and willful and habitual falsehood.

3. Violation of the commandment of the law of God, which reads, “You shall not commit adultery” (**Exodus 20:14, Matthew 5:27-28**), as it relates to the marriage institution and the Christian home, biblical standards of moral conduct, and any act of sexual intimacy outside of a marriage relationship and/or non-consensual acts of sexual conduct within a marriage, whether those acts are legal or illegal. Such acts include but are not limited to child sexual abuse, including abuse of the vulnerable. Marriage is defined as a public, lawfully binding, monogamous, heterosexual relationship between one man and one woman.

4. Fornication, which includes among other issues, promiscuity, homosexual activity, incest, sodomy, and bestiality.

5. The production, use, or distribution of pornographic material.

6. Remarriage of a divorced person, except the spouse who has remained faithful to the marriage vow in a divorce for adultery or for sexual perversions.

7. Physical violence, including violence within the family.

8. Fraud or willful misrepresentation in business.

9. Disorderly conduct which brings reproach upon the church.

10. Adherence to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization.

11. Persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church.

12. The use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages.

13. The use, manufacture, or sale of tobacco in any of its forms for human consumption.

14. The use or manufacture of illicit drugs or the use, misuse, or sale of narcotics or drugs without appropriate medical cause and license.

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Process of Discipline

When grievous sins are involved, the church has two ways in which disciplinary measures must be taken:

1. By a vote of censure.
2. By a vote to remove from membership.

Discipline by Censure—In cases where the offense is not considered by the church to be so serious as to warrant the extreme course of removing membership, the church may express its disapproval by a vote of censure.

Censure has two purposes: (1) To enable the church to express its disapproval of a grievous offense that has brought disgrace upon the cause

of God and (2) to impress offending members with the need for a change of life and reformation of conduct and to give them a period of grace and probation during which to make those changes.

A vote of censure is for a stated period of from a minimum of one month to a maximum of 12 months. It terminates an erring member's election or appointment to all offices and removes the privilege of election while it is in effect. Members under censure have no right to participate by voice or by vote in the affairs of the church or lead church activities, such as teaching a Sabbath School class. They are not deprived, however, of the privilege of sharing the blessings of Sabbath School, church worship, or communion. Membership may not be transferred during the period of censure.

Votes of censure must not carry any provision involving removal of membership in case of failure to comply with any condition imposed. Assessment should be made at the expiration of the period of censure to determine whether the disciplined members have changed course. If their conduct is satisfactory, they may then be considered in regular standing without further action and shall be notified that the censure has ended. If their conduct is not satisfactory, the church again should consider appropriate discipline. Any return to church office must be by election.

Discipline by Removal From Membership

Removing individuals from membership in the church, the body of Christ, is the ultimate discipline that the church can administer. Only after the instruction given in this chapter has been followed, after counsel from the pastor or the conference when the pastor is unavailable, and after all possible efforts have been made to win and restore them to right paths, should an individual be removed from membership.

No Additional Tests of Fellowship

No minister, congregation, or conference has authority to establish tests of fellowship. This authority rests with the General Conference Session. Anyone seeking to apply tests other than those herein set forth does not, therefore, properly represent the Church.

Timeliness of Discipline

The church must care for the disciplinary process within a reasonable time and then communicate its decisions with kindness and promptness. Delay in administering discipline may increase the frustration and suffering of the member and the church itself.

Caution About Judging Character and Motive

“Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church, but He has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive. He knows our nature too well to entrust this work to us. Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we supposed to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. Often we regard as hopeless subjects the very ones whom Christ is drawing to Himself. Were we to deal with these souls according to our imperfect judgment, it would perhaps extinguish their last hope. Many who think themselves Christians will at last be found wanting. Many will be in heaven who their neighbors supposed would never enter there. Man judges from appearance, but God judges the heart. The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time.

There is in the Savior’s words another lesson, a lesson of wonderful forbearance and tender love. As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. Were they to be separated from the church, others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast.”

At a Properly Called Meeting

Members may be disciplined for sufficient cause, but only at a properly called business meeting after the church board has reviewed the case. The meeting must be presided over by an ordained pastor, or licensed pastor who is ordained as a local elder of the church concerned, or, in the pastor’s absence and in counsel with the pastor or with the conference president, an elder of the local church.

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By Majority Vote

Members may be removed from membership or otherwise disciplined only by a majority vote of members present and voting at a duly called meeting. “The majority of the church is a power which should control its individual members.”

Church Board Cannot Remove Members

The board may recommend to a business meeting the removal of members, but under no circumstance does the board have the right to take final action. Except in the case of the death of members, the clerk can remove a name from the records only after a vote of the church in a business meeting.

Fundamental Rights of the Members

Members have a fundamental right to prior notification of the disciplinary meeting and the right to be heard in their own defense, introduce evidence, and produce witnesses. No church should vote to discipline a member under circumstances that deprive the member of these rights. Written notice must be given at least two weeks before the meeting and include the reasons for the disciplinary hearing.

Lawyers Not to Represent Members

The work of the Church in its administration of order and discipline is an ecclesiastical function that in no sense has to do with civil or legal procedure. Therefore, the Church does not recognize the right of members to bring legal counsel to represent them in any meeting called to administer order or discipline or for the transaction of any other church business. Members wanting to bring legal counsel into a meeting should be informed that they will not be given a hearing if they insist on bringing legal counsel.

The church also should exclude all nonmembers from any church meeting called for the administration of church order or discipline, except when they are called as witnesses.

Transferring Members Under Censure

No church shall receive into membership persons who are under censure of another congregation, because that would condone the offenses for which the members have been disciplined. The acceptance into membership of those under discipline is such a serious violation of Church policy that an offending church may be subject to discipline by the conference constituency.

Members Not to Be Removed for Nonattendance

Church leaders should faithfully visit absentee members and encourage them to resume attendance and to enjoy the blessings of worship with the congregation. When because of age, infirmity, or other unavoidable cause members find it impossible to attend worship services regularly, they should keep in contact with church leaders by letter or other means. However, as long as members are loyal to the doctrines of the Church, nonattendance shall not be considered sufficient cause for removal from membership.

Members Moving Away and Not Reporting

When members move, they should inform the clerk or elder of their new address. While remaining members of that church, they should report and send their tithe and offerings at least quarterly. If, however, members move without leaving a forwarding address and make no effort to contact or report to the church, and the church cannot locate them for at least two years, then the church may certify that it has tried without success to locate the members and the members may be removed by a vote of the church. The clerk should record in the membership record: "Whereabouts unknown.

Voted to designate as missing."

Members Not to Be Removed for Pecuniary Reasons

Though members should support the work of the Church to the extent they are able, they should never be removed because of their inability or failure to contribute financially to the Church.

Removing Members at Their Request

Great care should be exercised in dealing with members who request to be removed from membership. The Church recognizes the right of the individual to withdraw membership. Letters of resignation shall be presented to the board, where the resignation will be recorded with the effective date according to the resignation letter. Out of Christian consideration for the individuals involved, action shall be taken without public discussion. Efforts should be made to restore the individual to the church family.

Notification to Those Removed From Membership

A church removing members must notify them in writing of the action taken but with the assurance of enduring spiritual interest and personal concern. This communication should, where possible, be delivered in person by the pastor or by a board designee. The former members should be assured that the church hopes they will return to the church and that one day there will be eternal fellowship together in the kingdom of God .

DISCIPLINE

Reinstating Those Previously Removed From Membership

When persons have been removed for discipline, the church should, where possible, maintain contact and manifest the spirit of friendship and love, endeavoring to bring them back to the Lord.

Those previously removed may be received again into membership when confession of wrongs committed is made, evidence is given of real repentance and change of life, and the life is consistent with Church standards and it is clear that the member will fully submit to Church order and discipline. Such reinstatement should preferably be in the church from which the member was dismissed. However, when this is not possible, the church where the person is requesting reinstatement must seek information from the former church about the reasons for which the person was removed from membership.

When dealing with perpetrators of sexual abuse, it should be remembered that restoration to membership does not remove all consequences of such a serious violation. While attendance at church activities may be permissible with properly established guidelines, a person convicted or disciplined for sexual abuse should not be placed in a role which could put them in contact with children, youth, and other vulnerable individuals.

Neither shall they be given any position which would encourage vulnerable individuals to trust them implicitly.

Because removal from membership is the most serious form of discipline, the period of time before members may be reinstated should be sufficient to demonstrate that the issues which led to removal from membership have been resolved beyond reasonable doubt. It is expected that readmission to membership will be done in connection with rebaptism.

Right of Appeal for Reinstatement

While it is the right of the church to administer discipline, this does not set aside the rights of members to seek fairness. If members believe that they have been treated unfairly by the local church, or not had the right to be heard fairly, and the church is unwilling to reconsider the case or if the officers refuse to consider their applications for reinstatement, the former members have a right to appeal in writing to the church for a hearing. The church should not neglect or refuse to grant such hearings. If it does, or if the former members still feel unfairly treated by the church after the appeal, they have the right to a final appeal for a hearing to the executive committee of the conference.

If, after a full and impartial hearing, the conference committee is satisfied that an injustice has been inflicted by the church, the committee may recommend reinstatement to membership. But if membership is still refused by the church, then the conference committee may recommend membership in some other church. On the other hand, if it finds good grounds for sustaining the church in refusing to reinstate the former members, it will so record its decision.

CHAPTER 8

Local Church Officers and Organizations

Choosing quality officers is important for the prosperity of the church, which should exercise the greatest care when calling men and women into positions of sacred responsibility.

General Qualifications

Moral and Religious Fitness

“Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens”
(Exodus 18:21).

“Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business” (**Acts 6:3**).

“Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (**1 Timothy 3:7**). “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (**2 Timothy 2:2**).

“A bishop [elder] then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

“Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and Great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (**1 Timothy 3:2-13**; see also **Titus 1:5-11 and 2:1, 7, 8**).

“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (**1 Timothy 4:12-16**).

Feeding and Guarding the Church

The apostle Paul called together “the elders of the church” and counseled them: “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among your selves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears” (**Acts 20:17, 28-31**; see also **1 Peter 5:1-3**).

Respecting Pastors and Officers

“And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves” (**1 Thessolians 5:12, 13**; see also **1 Timothy 5:17** and **Hebrews 13:7, 17**).

“The Thessalonian believers were greatly annoyed by men coming among them with fanatical ideas and doctrines. Some were ‘disorderly, working not at all, but . . . busybodies.’ The church had been properly organized, and officers had been appointed to act as ministers and deacons.

But there were some, self-willed and impetuous, who refused to be subordinate to those who held positions of authority in the church. They claimed not only the right of private judgment, but that of publicly urging their views upon the church. In view of this, Paul called the attention of the Thessalonians to the respect and deference due to those who had been chosen to occupy positions of authority in the church.”

“Those who hold responsible positions in the church may have faults in common with other people and may err in their decisions; but notwithstanding this, the church of Christ on earth has given to them an authority that cannot be lightly esteemed.”

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Not Hurried Into Office

“In many places we meet men who have been hurried into responsible positions as elders of the church when they are not qualified for such a position. They have not proper government over themselves. Their influence is not good. The church is in trouble continually in consequence of the defective character of the leader. Hands have been laid too suddenly upon these men.” (**1 Timothy 5:22**.)

Those Opposing Unity Not Suitable for Office

“There have of late arisen among us men who profess to be the servants of Christ, but whose work is opposed to that unity which our Lord established in the church. They have original plans and methods of labor.

They desire to introduce changes into the church to suit their ideas of progress and imagine that grand results are thus to be secured. These men need to be learners rather than teachers in the school of Christ. They are ever restless, aspiring to accomplish some great work, to do something that will bring honor to themselves. They need to learn that most profitable of all lessons, humility and faith in Jesus. “Teachers of the truth, missionaries, officers in the church, can do a good work for the Master if they will but purify their own souls by obeying the truth.”

Unsafe to Choose Those Refusing to Cooperate

“God has placed in the church, as His appointed helpers, men of varied talents, that through the combined wisdom of many the mind of the Spirit may be met. Men who move in accordance with their own strong traits of character, refusing to yoke up with others who have had a long experience in the work of God, will become blinded by self-confidence, unable to discern between the false and the true. It is not safe for such ones to be chosen as leaders in the church; for they would follow their own judgment and plans, regardless of the judgment of their brethren. It is easy for the enemy to work through those who, themselves needing counsel at every step, undertake the guardianship of souls in their own strength, without having learned the lowliness of Christ.”

Local Membership

Members in regular standing are eligible for election to leadership positions in the church where they hold membership. Exceptions may be made for the following:

1. Students, who are members in regular standing but who, for purposes of education, live away from home and regularly attend a church in the area of their temporary residence.
2. A conference employee assigned by the conference as pastor/leader for two or more congregations.
3. An elder who, when necessary and with the recommendation of the conference committee, may be elected to serve in more than one church within a district.

Other exceptions may be considered by the conference committee.

Setting Tithing Example

All officers shall set an example in the matter of returning a faithful tithe to the Church. Anyone who fails to set such an example shall not be elected to church office.

Not Delegates Ex Officio

No church officer is a delegate ex officio to a conference session. If the church wants an officer to serve as a delegate, it must elect that officer as a delegate.

Distributing Responsibility

The church should not lay too much responsibility on a small group of willing officers, while others are underused. Unless circumstances make it necessary, election of one individual to several offices should be discouraged.

Removal and Readmission

When an officer is removed from membership and subsequently readmitted, the readmittance does not reinstate the individual to the former office.

Term of Office

The term of office for officers of both the church and its auxiliary organizations shall be Local Church one year, sub-Field two years, field four years Union three years, Division five years, Conference seven years & General Conference ten years except where the church in a business meeting votes to have elections every two years in order to facilitate continuity and development of spiritual gifts and eliminate the work involved in having yearly elections.

While it is not advisable for one person to serve indefinitely in a particular position, officers may be reelected. This is how election should be conducted church members elected for local leaders, local leaders for field leaders for Union leader for Division leaders for Conference leaders for General conference.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Elders

Religious Leaders of the Church

Elders must be recognized by the church as strong spiritual leaders and must have good reputations both in the church and community. In the absence of a pastor, elders are the spiritual leaders of the church and by precept and example must seek to lead the church into a deeper and fuller Christian experience.

Elders should be able to conduct the services of the church and minister in both word and doctrine when the assigned pastor is unavailable. However, elders should not be chosen primarily because of social position or speaking ability, but because of their consecrated lives and leadership abilities.

Elders may be reelected, but it is not advisable for them to serve indefinitely. The church is under no obligation to reelect and may choose others whenever changes seem advisable. Upon the election of new elders, the former elders no longer function as elders but may be elected to other church offices.

Ordination of Elders

Election to the office of elder does not in itself qualify one as an elder. Ordination is required before an elder has authority to function. Between election and ordination, the elected elder may function as church leader but not administer the ordinances of the church. The ordination service is performed only by an ordained pastor currently credentialed by the conference. As a courtesy, a visiting ordained pastor may be invited to assist. However, only on the specific request of conference officers would a visiting ordained pastor or a retired ordained pastor conduct the ordination.

The sacred rite of ordination should be simply performed in the presence of the church and may include a brief outline of the office of elder, the qualities required, and the principal duties the elder will be authorized to perform. After the exhortation, the ordained pastor, assisted by other ordained pastors and/or local elders who are participating in the service, will ordain the elders by prayer and the laying on of hands. Once ordained, elders need not be ordained again if reelected, or upon election as elders of other churches, provided they have maintained regular membership status. They are also qualified to serve as deacons.

Relationship to the Pastor

If the conference committee assigns a pastor or pastors to the congregation, the pastor, or senior pastor if more. Than one, should be considered the ranking officer and the local elders as assistants. Since their work is closely related, they should work together harmoniously. The pastor should not assume all lines of responsibility, but should share these with the elders and other officers. The pastor regularly serving the church acts as the chairperson of the board. There may be circumstances, however, when it would be advisable for an elder to act as chairperson. The pastoral work of the church should be shared by the pastor and the elders. In counsel with the pastor, the elders should visit members, minister to the sick, foster prayer ministries, arrange or lead out in anointing services and child dedications, encourage the disheartened, and assist in other pastoral responsibilities. As under shepherds, elders should exercise constant vigilance over the flock.

If the pastor is a licensed minister, the church or churches served should elect the pastor as an elder. Because the pastor is appointed to the position in the church by the conference, the pastor serves the church as a conference employee, is responsible to the conference committee, and maintains a sympathetic and cooperative relation to and works in harmony with all the plans and policies of the local church. Elders, who are elected by the church, are responsible to that body and to its board.

Work of Elders Is Local

The authority and work of elders are confined to the church in which their election has been made. It is not permissible for a conference committee by vote to confer on an elder the status that is granted to an ordained pastor to serve other churches as elder. If that need exists, the conference committee may recommend to the church needing an elder that it invite and elect the elder of a nearby church to serve. Thus by election one individual may, when necessary, serve more than one church. Such an arrangement should be made only in counsel with the conference committee. Authority to elect elders is inherent in the local church and not in the conference committee. The only way one may be qualified for serving the Church at large is by ordination to the gospel ministry.

Conducting Church Services

Under the pastor or in the absence of the pastor, an elder is responsible for the services of the church and must either conduct them or arrange for someone to do so. Communion services must always be conducted by an ordained/commissioned pastor or local elder. The pastor usually chairs the business meeting. In the absence of the pastor, and with approval of the pastor or the conference president, an elder should serve as chairperson.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Baptismal Service

In the absence of an ordained pastor, an elder shall request the conference president to arrange for the baptism of those desiring to unite with the church. An elder should not officiate in the service without first obtaining permission from the conference president.

Marriage Ceremony

In a marriage ceremony the charge, vows, and declaration of marriage are given only by an ordained pastor except in those areas where division committees have approved that selected licensed or commissioned pastors who have been ordained as local elders may perform the ceremony. Local laws may require that persons conducting marriage ceremonies also hold state licensure/permit to do so. An ordained pastor, a licensed or commissioned pastor, or an elder may deliver the sermonette, offer the prayer, and give the blessing.

To Foster Tithing

By faithfully returning tithe, elders do much to encourage other members to return a faithful tithe. Elders can foster tithing by public presentation of the scriptural privilege and responsibility of stewardship and by personal labor with members in a tactful and helpful manner.

Elders should regard all financial matters pertaining to members as confidential and shall not give such information to unauthorized persons.

To Foster Bible Study, Prayer, and a Relationship With Jesus

As spiritual leaders, elders are responsible for encouraging members to develop a personal relationship with Jesus by strengthening their habits of personal Bible study and prayer. Elders should model a commitment to Bible study and prayer. An effective personal prayer life of every member, supporting all ministries and programs of the local church, will enhance the church's mission. Elders may ask the board to appoint a council to assist in this role of development and encouragement.

To Foster All Lines of Work

Under and in cooperation with the pastor, elders are spiritual leaders of the church and are responsible for fostering all departments and activities of the work. Elders should maintain a mutually helpful relationship with other officers.

To Cooperate With the Conference

The pastor, elders, and all officers should cooperate with conference officers and departmental directors in carrying out approved plans. They should inform the church of all regular and special offerings, promote all the programs and activities of the church, and encourage all officers to support conference plans and policies.

Elders should work closely with the treasurer and see that all conference funds are remitted promptly to the conference treasurer at the time established by the conference. Elders should see that the clerk's report is sent promptly to the conference secretary at the close of each quarter.

Elders should regard all correspondence from the conference office as important. Letters calling for announcements should be presented at the proper time.

In the absence of the pastor, the first elder should see that the church elect's delegates to conference sessions and that the clerk sends the names of delegates to the conference office.

To Foster Worldwide Work

Elders also should foster world mission work by carefully studying the worldwide work and encouraging members to personally support mission work. Their kindly, tactful attitude will encourage liberality of members both in church services and Sabbath School.

Training and Equipping of Elders

The Ministerial Association, in cooperation with the departments, promotes the training and equipping of elders. However, the pastor has the primary responsibility for training elders.

Free to Work Effectively

Elders especially should be left free of other burdens to perform effectively their many duties. It may be advisable in some cases to ask elders to lead the outreach (missionary) work of the church, but even this should be avoided if other talent is available.

First Elder

It may be advisable, because of church size, to choose more than one elder because the burdens of the office are too great for one person. If the church elects more than one elder, one should be designated "first elder."

The work should be divided among the elders in harmony with their experience and ability.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Limitation of Authority

Elders do not have the authority to receive or remove members. This is done only by vote of the church. Only the board may recommend that the church vote to receive or remove members.

Church Leaders

Occasionally no one possesses the experience and qualifications to serve as an elder. Under such circumstances the church should elect a person to be known as “leader.” In the absence of the pastor or a conference-assigned pastor, the leader is responsible for the services of the church, including business meetings. The leader must either conduct the church service or arrange for someone else to do so. If the church leader is unable to lead out in the business meeting, the conference should be contacted for assistance.

A leader, who is not an ordained elder, may not administer baptism, conduct the Lord’s Supper, perform the marriage ceremony, or preside at business meetings when members are disciplined. A request should be made to the conference president for an ordained pastor to preside at such meetings.

Deacons

The New Testament identifies the office of deacon with the Greek word *daikon*’s, from which the English “deacon” is derived. The Greek word is variously interpreted as “servant, minister, and writer, attendant” and in Christian circles has acquired the specialized meaning now attached to “deacon.”

The men who came to be known as the seven deacons of the apostolic church were chosen and ordained to attend to the business of the church. **(See Acts 6:1-8.)** Their qualifications, slightly less exacting than those of elders, are listed in **1 Timothy 3:8-13**.

“The fact that these brethren had been ordained for the special work of looking after the needs of the poor did not exclude them from teaching the faith. On the contrary, they were fully qualified to instruct others in the truth, and they engaged in the work with great earnestness and success.”

“The appointment of the seven to take the oversight of special lines of work proved a great blessing to the church. These officers gave careful consideration to individual needs as well as to the general financial interests of the church, and by their prudent management and their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole.”

Today appointment of deacons through election brings similar blessings in church administration by relieving pastors, elders, and other officers of duties that deacons may perform well.

“The time and strength of those who in the providence of God have been placed in leading positions of responsibility in the church should be spent in dealing with the weightier matters demanding special wisdom and largeness of heart. It is not in the order of God that such men should be appealed to for the adjustment of minor matters that others are well qualified to handle.”

The Ministerial Association, in connection with the departments, promotes the training and equipping of deacons. However, the pastor, in conjunction with the elder(s), has the primary responsibility for training the deacons.

Board of Deacons

where a church has a number of deacons, it should organize a board of deacons chaired by the head deacon and with another deacon serving as secretary. Such a body provides a way to distribute responsibility and coordinate their contributions to the well-being of the congregation. It also provides a training ground where new deacons are instructed in their duties.

Deacons Must Be Ordained

Newly elected deacons cannot fill their office until they have been ordained by an ordained pastor currently credentialed by the conference.

The sacred rite of ordination should be characterized by simplicity and performed in the presence of the church. The pastor may give a brief outline of the biblical office of deacon, the qualities required for service, and the principal duties deacons are authorized to perform. After a short exhortation to faithfulness in service, the pastor, assisted by an elder where appropriate, ordains the deacons by prayer and the laying on of hands.

If they retain church membership, deacons, once ordained, do not have to be ordained again if they move their memberships to other churches. When the term for which they were elected expires, they must be reelected if they are to continue to serve as deacons.

Elders subsequently elected as deacons need not be ordained as deacons because ordination as elder covers this office.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS Deacons Not Authorized to Preside

Deacons are not authorized to preside at the Lord's Supper, baptism, or business meetings and are not permitted to perform the marriage ceremony or officiate at the reception or transfer of members. If a church has no one authorized to perform such duties, the church leader shall contact the conference for assistance.

Duties of Deacons

The work of deacons involves a wide range of services for the church, including:

1. Assistance at Services and Meetings

Deacons are usually responsible for welcoming members and visitors as they enter the church and for assisting them, where necessary, to find seats. They also cooperate with the pastor and elders for smooth functioning of all meetings.

2. Visitation of Members

In many churches visitation is arranged by distributing membership by districts and assigning a deacon to each district with the expectation that he will visit each home at least once a quarter.

3. Preparation for Baptismal Services

Deacons make necessary preparations for baptismal services.

4. Assistance at Communion Service

At the service of foot-washing, the deacons or deaconesses provide everything needed, such as towels, basins, water, and buckets. After the service they see that the utensils and linen are washed and properly stored. Remaining bread and wine should not be consumed, but disposed of in a respectful manner by deacons and deaconesses following the Lord's Supper.

5. Care of the Sick and Aiding the Poor and Unfortunate

Deacons and deaconesses are charged with assisting the sick, poor, and unfortunate and should keep the church informed of their needs and enlist the support of members. Money should be provided for this work from the fund for the poor and needy. The treasurer, on recommendation from the board, will pass over to the deacons or deaconesses whatever may be needed for use in needy cases.

6. Care and Maintenance of Property

In churches where the responsibility for the care and maintenance of church property is not assigned to a building committee, deacons and deaconesses have this responsibility.

Deaconesses

Deaconesses were included in the official staff of the early Christian churches.

“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church [deaconess] in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also” (**Romans 16:1, 2**).

Deaconesses should be chosen for their consecration and other qualifications that fit them for the duties of the office.

The Ministerial Association, in connection with the departments, promotes the training and equipping of deaconesses. However, the pastor, in conjunction with the elder(s), has the primary responsibility for training the deaconesses.

Board of Deaconesses

If a church elects several deaconesses, it should organize a board of deaconesses chaired by the head deaconess and another deaconess serving as secretary. This board is authorized to assign duties to individual deaconesses and cooperates closely with the board of deacons, especially in welcoming members and visitors and in home visitation. It also provides a training ground where new deaconesses are instructed in their duties.

Ordination Service for Deaconesses

Such a service, like the ordination of deacons, would be carried out by an ordained pastor currently credentialed by the conference. The ordination service should be characterized by simplicity and performed in the presence of the church.

If they retain church membership, deaconesses do not have to be ordained again if they move their memberships to other churches. When the term for which they were elected expires, they must be reelected if they are to continue to serve as deaconesses.

Deaconesses Not Authorized to Preside

Deaconesses are not authorized to preside at any of the services of the church or business meetings and cannot perform the marriage ceremony or officiate at the reception or transfer of members.

If a church has no one authorized to perform such duties, the church leader shall contact the conference for assistance.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Duties of Deaconesses

Deaconesses serve the church in a wide variety of activities, including:

1. Greeting and Visiting Guests and Members

In many churches, deaconesses assist in greeting guests and members at meetings and in visiting members in their homes when they cannot attend services.

2. Assistance at Baptisms

Deaconesses ensure that female candidates are cared for both before and after the ceremony. They also give such counsel and help as may be necessary regarding suitable garments for baptism. Robes of suitable material should be provided. Where robes are used, the deaconesses should see that they are laundered and carefully stored.

3. Arrangements for the Communion Service

Deaconesses and deacons arrange for everything needed for this service and see that everything used is cared for afterward. Before the communion service begins, deaconesses set the communion table, including preparing the bread and wine, pouring the wine, placing the plates of unleavened bread, and covering the table with the linen provided for that purpose. Deaconesses assist in the service of foot-washing, giving special aid to women visitors and new members.

4. The Care of the Sick and the Poor

Deaconesses assist deacons in caring for the sick, needy, and unfortunate.

5. Care and Maintenance of Property

In churches where the responsibility for the care and maintenance of church property is not assigned to a building committee, deacons and deaconesses have this responsibility.

Clerk

Much of the efficient functioning of the church depends on the work of the clerk. Because of the important and specialized functions of this office, it is wise to choose one who can be reelected to provide continuity in record keeping and reporting. Large churches may elect assistant clerks as needed.

When the clerk, as secretary, cannot attend a business meeting, the clerk should arrange for an assistant to be present to take the minutes.

No Names Added or Removed Without Vote

The clerk has no authority to add names to or remove names from the membership record without a vote of the church, which must always vote to add or remove a

Name, except in the case of the death of a member, or when a member requests in writing to be removed from membership. When a member dies, the clerk will record the date of the death in the membership record.

When a member submits a written request to the church board to be removed from membership, the clerk will record the action of the board.

Transferring Members

The clerk handles correspondence between members and churches in the transferring of memberships.

Corresponding With Members

The clerk should try to keep in touch with absent members.

Notice of Delegates for Conference Sessions

The clerk, on authorization of the board, promptly notifies the conference of delegates elected to represent the church at a conference session, using blanks or forms provided by the conference.

Reports to Be Furnished Promptly

The clerk must promptly furnish reports requested by the conference. Some are quarterly, others annual. It is essential that reports be sent to the conference secretary within the time specified because they are important for the accuracy of reports prepared by other organizations of the world Church. The clerk collects information for these reports from the other officers and department leaders.

Church Records

The clerk keeps church records, which should be carefully preserved. All records and account books of all officers are the property of the church and are to be surrendered to the newly elected clerk at the expiration of the term of office of the previous clerk, or to the church at any time during the term on request of the pastor or elders.

Treasurer

Because of the important functions of the treasurer, it is wise to choose one who can be reelected to provide continuity in record keeping and reporting. Large churches may elect assistant treasurers as needed.

The treasurer can greatly encourage faithfulness in the returning of tithe and deepen the spirit of liberality on the part of the members. A word of counsel given in the spirit of the Master will help members to render

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Faithfully to God His own in tithes and offerings, even in a time of financial stringency.

Treasurer the Custodian of All Funds

The treasurer is the custodian of all church funds. These include (1) conference funds, (2) local church funds, and (3) funds belonging to auxiliary organizations of the local church.

All funds (conference, local church, and local church auxiliary) are deposited by the treasurer in a bank or financial institution account in the name of the church, unless the local conference authorizes another system.

Surplus church funds may be deposited in savings accounts upon authorization of the board. Where large balances are carried for building or special projects, the board may authorize separate bank accounts. Such accounts, however, shall be operated by the treasurer and reported to the church along with all other church funds.

All church bank accounts are exclusively for church funds and are never to be combined with any personal account or funds.

Conference Funds

Conference funds, which include tithe, all regular mission funds, and all funds for special conference projects and institutions, are trust funds. At the close of each month, or more often if requested by the conference, the treasurer shall send to the conference treasurer the entire amount of conference funds received during that period of time. The church may not borrow, use, or withhold such conference funds for any purpose.

Sabbath School Funds

All Sabbath School offerings are to be passed over weekly to the treasurer by the Sabbath School secretary-treasurer, the treasurer keeping a careful record of all such offerings. These mission funds are transmitted to the conference office as outlined in the previous paragraph. Sabbath School expense funds are held in trust, subject to the orders of the Sabbath School council (see pp. 97, 98), to meet the routine expenses of the Sabbath School.

Local Church Funds

Local church funds include church expense, building and repair funds, and the fund for the poor and needy. These funds belong to the local church and are disbursed by the treasurer only by authorization of the board or business meeting. However, the treasurer shall pay from the expense funds all bills for local expense that have been authorized by the board.

Funds of Auxiliary Organizations

Auxiliary organization funds include such funds as church outreach programs, family life, Adventist Youth Ministries, Adventist Community Services or Dorcus Society, Sabbath School expense, and that portion of the health ministries funds belonging to the church, and may include church school funds. All money received by and for these organizations is turned over promptly to the church treasurer by the secretary of the organization, the deacons, or whoever has received the funds. These funds belong to the auxiliary organizations of the church. They may be disbursed only by order of the auxiliary organization to which they belong.

The treasurer shall give receipts for all funds received. On receiving money from the treasurer, the secretary of the auxiliary organization shall give a proper receipt to the treasurer.

Safeguarding the Purpose of Funds

When an offering is taken for worldwide missions or for any general or local enterprise, all money placed in the offering plate (unless otherwise indicated by the donor) shall be counted as part of that particular offering.

All offerings and gifts contributed by individuals for a specific fund or purpose must be used for that purpose. Neither the treasurer nor the board has the authority to divert any funds from the objective for which they were given.

The funds of auxiliary organizations, often donations given for specific purposes, are raised for that special part of the church's work for which the auxiliary organization is established. Such funds are held in trust by the treasurer, and they too may not be borrowed or in any way diverted by the treasurer or the board from the objective for which they were raised.

When an auxiliary organization is discontinued, the church in regular business session may take action indicating the disposition of any balance of funds in the account of the organization.

Money for Personal Literature Orders

Money for personal orders of literature, books, pamphlets, magazines, and subscriptions for periodicals is cared for by the treasurer in areas where a local The Holy Seed Church Book Center does not exist.

Proper Method for Payment of Money by Members

The treasurer should urge that all money paid in by members, other than the regular church collection, be placed in tithe and offering envelopes, unless an alternative method has been implemented by the conference.

Members should list the various items and amounts on the envelope as indicated and to make sure that the money enclosed equals the total shown.

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They should also sign their names and give their addresses, and place the envelopes in the offering plate or hand them to the treasurer, who should preserve the envelopes to serve as vouchers until all accounts are checked by the conference auditor.

Members who return their tithes and offerings by check or postal notes should, where legally possible, make such checks or notes payable to the church, rather than to any individual.

Receipts to Members

Receipts should be issued promptly for all money received from members, no matter how small the amount, and a strict account of all receipts and payments should be kept by the treasurer. All general offerings not in envelopes should be counted by the treasurer in the presence of another officer, preferably a deacon or deaconess, and a receipt given to such officer.

Proper Method of Remitting Funds to the Conference

In sending remittances to the conference treasurer, all checks, bank drafts, or money orders should be made payable to the organization wherever legally possible and not to any individual. A copy of the treasurer's records for the period should be enclosed with the remittance.

Remittance blanks are furnished by the conference.

Preservation of Financial Documents

Financial documents, vouchers, or receipted bills should be secured for all funds received and disbursed in accordance with the system authorized by the local conference.

Books Should Be Audited

The conference treasurer or other individual appointed by the conference committee, audits the church financial records, usually each year.

The treasurer's books and other financial records relating to the work of the treasurer, the church school treasurer, and the treasurer of any other organization may be called for and inspected at any time by the conference auditor or by the pastor, district leader, head elder, or by any others authorized by the church board, but should not be made available to unauthorized persons.

Reports of all funds received and disbursed should be presented at the regular business meetings of the church. A copy of these reports should be given to the leading officers.

When the number of individuals returning tithe in the church is reported, the spouse and minor children who are non-wage earners but members of the church should be counted in this group, in addition to the wage earner of the family.

Relations With Members Confidential

The treasurer should always remember that relations with individual members are strictly confidential. The treasurer should never comment on the tithe returned by any member or on the income or anything concerning it, except to those who share the responsibility of the work. Great harm may be caused by failure to observe this rule.

Interest Coordinator

An interest coordinator should be elected to make sure that interests developed through the church's missionary outreach are cared for promptly. This person is a member of the board and the personal ministries council and works directly with the pastor and chairperson of that council.

Duties of this office include:

1. Keeping an organized list of all interests received by the church.
2. Assisting the pastor and chairperson of the personal ministries council in enlisting and recruiting qualified members for follow-up service.
3. Presenting to the board a monthly report on the number of interests received and followed up. When an interest is sufficiently developed, it should be shared with the pastor.

Departments and Other Organizations

Church structure, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is vital for the spiritual growth of members and for the fulfillment of the Church's mission. It is the skeleton of the ecclesiastical body. And "the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love" (**Ephesians 4:16**).

The most important elements of structure and organization are the officers and the departments and other organizations. This section describes their objectives, leadership, and functions. The work of the departments and auxiliary organizations is closely tied to the work of the pastor because all are equally engaged in gospel outreach. The pastor serves as a counselor to these organizations, and they in turn

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

assist in the overall church outreach programs. In case of emergency, or where circumstances require, the pastor may call a meeting of any committee or organization.

Every church should utilize the services of the departments and organizations to nurture its members and accomplish the mission given by Christ (**see Matthew 28:19; Revelation 10:11; 14:6**).

Children's Ministries

Children's ministries develop the faith of children from birth through age 14, leading them into union with the Church. It seeks to provide multiple ministries that will lead children to Jesus and disciple them in their daily walk with Him. It cooperates with the Sabbath School and other departments to provide religious education to children and fulfills its mission by developing a variety of grace-oriented ministries for children that are inclusive, service-oriented, leadership-building, safe, and evangelistic.

"Too much importance cannot be placed on the early training of children. The lessons that the child learns during the first seven years of life have more to do with forming his character than all that it learns in future years."

"It is still true that children are the most susceptible to the teachings of the gospel; their hearts are open to divine influences, and strong to retain the lessons received. The little children may be Christians, having an experience in accordance with their years. They need to be educated in spiritual things, and parents should give them every advantage, that they may form characters after the similitude of the character of Christ."

"Children of eight, ten, or twelve years are old enough to be addressed on the subject of personal religion. If properly instructed, very young children may have correct views of their state as sinners and of the way of salvation through Christ."

"When Jesus told the disciples not to forbid the children to come to Him, He was speaking to His followers in all ages—to officers of the church, to ministers, helpers, and all Christians. Jesus is drawing the children, and He bids us, Suffer them to come; as if He would say, They will come if you do not hinder them."

Children's Ministries Coordinator and Committee

The church elects a children's ministries coordinator to develop ministries that nurture the faith of children. The coordinator should have leadership ability as well as experience and passion for working with children.

The children's ministries coordinator works with the pastor and board to establish a children's ministries committee to provide ministries for children. The committee should consist of individuals with interest and experience in working with children. Ordinarily the members include Sabbath School division leaders, Vacation Bible School leader, The Holy Seed Church Junior Youth leaders, and two to three others who have a passion for ministry to children.

If the church has a children's ministries department, Vacation Bible Schools, children's branch Sabbath Schools, Neighborhood Bible Clubs, and Story Hours, they will come under the direction of children's ministries.

Everyone involved in work with children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification.

Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required.

Resources

For children's ministries resources.

Communication

Communication ministry calls for the support of every layperson, Church employee, and Church institution. The communication department promotes the use of a sound program of public relations and all contemporary communication techniques, sustainable technologies, and media in the promulgation of the gospel. The church should elect a communication secretary and, where needed, a communication committee.

"We must take every justifiable means of bringing the light before the people. Let the press be utilized, and let every advertising agency be employed that will call attention to the work."

"Means will be devised to reach hearts. Some of the methods used in this work will be different from the methods used in the work in the past."

Communication Secretary

The communication secretary should have the ability to meet people and rightly represent the Church, sound judgment, good organization, effective writing skills, and a willingness to carry out assignments.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

He secretary gathers and disseminates news to local media, cooperates with the conference communication director, and presents periodic reports to the business meeting. The conference communication department provides appropriate instruction and help to communication secretaries. The pastor, who is primarily responsible for the communication program of the church, will work closely in an advisory capacity with the communication secretary or committee. Any department or organization may appoint an

individual to provide the communication secretary or committee with information about newsworthy events.

Communication Committee

In a large church a communication committee may more adequately handle the many facets of the public relations and communication program. The church elects the committee, and the communication secretary serves as chairperson. Members of the committee may be assigned specific communication responsibilities, such as working with the press, media producers and online personnel, and internal church media. If there is a nearby Church institution, a member of its public relations or communication staff should be invited to sit with the committee.

Central Communication Committee

If several churches in an area arrange for a central communication committee, the communication secretary of each church should be a member and should work in harmony with any general plan that will better coordinate the handling of news and other media activities for the cooperating churches. The establishment of this committee would be initiated by the conference communication director. Meetings of the central committee would be called and presided over by a chairperson selected by the group.

Education

Church entities operate schools from kindergarten through university levels for the purpose of transmitting to students the Church's ideals, beliefs, attitudes, values, habits, and customs. The source, the means, and the aim of Adventist education are a true knowledge of God, fellowship and companionship with Him in study and service, and likeness to Him in character development.

Education Secretary

The church elects an education secretary to promote and generate support for Christian education. The secretary is a member of the Home and School Association executive committee and works in cooperation with the association.

Home and School Association

A church with a school shall establish a Home and School Association, the purpose of which is to provide parent education and unite the home, the school, and the church in endeavors to provide Christian education for the children. Parents of students, school patrons, and church members should be encouraged to be active members of the association.

Home and School Association officers shall be a leader, assistant leader, secretary-treasurer, librarian, and the educational secretary. To give

continuity, some of the officers should be elected for second terms. All shall be members of the church.

The leader of the association shall be a member with success in training children, whose mind is open to new ideas, and who believes in the importance of Christian education.

The secretary-treasurer keeps the records of the association and reports to the director of the conference education department at the beginning and end of each school year. Association funds are channeled through the church/school treasurer, kept as a separate account, and audited under denominational policy.

The principal is an ex officio member of the Home and School Association committee.

Church School Board

The administrative body of every elementary (primary) school and junior academy (partial high school) operated by one church shall be a church school board elected by the church or a school committee appointed by the church board. Thus this body may be a separate school board, the church board, or a school committee of the church board appointed for this purpose. Division working policies explain the functions of school boards.

School board members should be chosen for their consecration, their belief in and loyalty to the principles of Christian education, their good judgment and tact, their experience in school matters, and their financial judgment and ability. They should believe in and be willing to follow denominational educational policies and recommendations.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

If two or more churches jointly operate what is known as a multiconstituent school, the administrative body shall be drawn from the constituent churches.

One or more members of the school board should be chosen from among the members of the church board, so that the school board may be closely related to the church board.

The pastor should be a member of the school board. If the school is operated by more than one church, generally the pastors of the participating churches concerned are members of the board.

In junior academies and elementary schools, the principal or head teacher should be a member of the board.

Some members of the board may be parents of children attending the school, so the board may profit from parental viewpoints and counsel resulting from close observation and experience.

The school board officers shall be a chairperson and a secretary. If the school is operated by one church, the church elects the chairperson.

In multiconstituent school boards, additional officers shall include a treasurer, a vice chairperson, and an assistant secretary. At its first meeting after its election, a union school board elects its own chairperson from among its members. In the event that agreement between the churches is not possible, the appointment will be made by the conference board of education or the conference committee. The principal of the school generally is appointed secretary of the board.

Any action of a multiconstituent school board that involves the supporting churches in financial obligations must be submitted to their respective boards for approval.

Where a separate school board is elected, one of two plans may be followed to establish time of election and term of office: **(1) all the members may be elected at the close of the calendar or fiscal year and function for one year; (2) the members of the first board may be chosen for terms of One, Two, Three, Four, Five and Ten years, respectively, with replacement members being chosen each succeeding year for a term of Ten years.** The purpose of this plan is to have a nucleus of experienced members on the board to ensure a continuity of policy. When a midterm vacancy is filled, the new member serves the remainder of the original term.

The school board or school committee should meet at a regular time and place at least once each month during the school year.

The school board chairperson calls meetings, presides, sees that the actions of the board are carried out, and countersigns all financial orders issued by the secretary. The chairperson is a member ex officio of the elementary school and junior academy inspection committee, which surveys and evaluates the school and its work. The secretary keeps a permanent record of meetings, issues orders for money to pay accounts or obligations, and carries on correspondence for the board.

Where one church operates a school, the work of the treasurer is usually carried by the church treasurer or an assistant church treasurer, who receives tuition and other money, pays out money on the order of the secretary (countersigned by the chairperson), keeps a careful account of all transfers, and at each monthly meeting gives a detailed report to the board. In a multiconstituent board, a treasurer is appointed by the union board.

Family Ministries

The objective of family ministries is to strengthen marriage and the family. The family was established by divine creation with marriage at its center.

As the primary setting in which values are learned and the capacity for close relationships with God and others is developed, its health is vital to the Church's disciple-making mission.

Family ministries uphold the biblical teaching related to the family and lifts up God's ideals for family living. At the same time, it brings an understanding of the brokenness experienced by individuals and families in a fallen world. The department facilitates understanding, unity, and love at home and in the family of God. It fosters reconciliation between the generations promised in the Elijah message of **Malachi 4:5, 6** and extends hope and support to those who have been hurt by abuse, family dysfunction, and broken relationships. Relational growth opportunities are provided through family life education and enrichment. Individuals, married couples, and families are helped to avail themselves of professional counseling when necessary.

Ministry to families in the local church focuses on premarital guidance for couples, marriage strengthening programs, and the education of parents. Ministry to families also gives attention to the special needs of single parents and stepfamilies and provides instruction in family-to-family evangelism.

"Our work for Christ is to begin with the family; in the home. There is no missionary field more important than this. By many this home field has been shamefully neglected, and it is time that divine resources and remedies were presented, that this state of evil may be corrected."

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

"God designs that the families of earth shall be a symbol of the family in heaven. Christian homes, established and conducted in accordance with God's plan, are among His most effective agencies for the formation of Christian character and for the advancement of His work."

"The mission of the home extends beyond its own members. Far more powerful than any sermon that can be preached is the influence of a true home upon human hearts and lives."

Family Ministries Leader(s)

An individual or married couple for the Church's definition of marriage) may be elected to serve as family ministries leader(s). They should model strong and growing family relationships and exhibit a sincere interest in fostering the well-being of all families. In order to be effective, the family ministries leader(s) must have an understanding of God's redemptive plan for dealing with the brokenness in relationships that sin has brought. The leader(s) also must maintain appropriate confidentiality and know when and how to encourage individuals in critical situations to seek professional counseling.

Family Ministries Committee

The board may establish a family ministries committee chaired by the family ministries leader(s).

Resources

For family ministries resources.

Health Ministries

The Church believes its responsibility to make Christ known to the world includes a moral obligation to preserve human dignity by promoting optimal levels of physical, mental, and spiritual health.

In addition to ministering to those who are ill, this responsibility extends to the prevention of disease through effective health education and leadership in promoting optimum health, free of tobacco, alcohol, other drugs, and unclean foods. Where possible, members shall be encouraged to follow a primarily vegetarian diet.

Health Ministries Leader

For planning and implementing an efficient program, the church elects a health ministries leader and, if needed, an associate leader. The leader should be health-oriented and interested in promoting the Church's standards in healthful living among members and in the community through church-operated health ministries programs. The leader should be able to screen programs and information that are representative of the ideals and philosophy of the Church and to integrate them into an effective spiritual and physical witness.

Health Ministries Council

Where practical, a church may appoint a health ministries council to provide leadership to both members and community in the field of healthful living and to assist in cooperative soul-saving activities through a viable program of health and temperance and spiritual emphasis. The council, in collaboration with the personal ministries council, shall lead out in developing a schedule of health ministries activities that include such programs as stop-smoking plans, cooking schools, health classes, stress-control programs, and related endeavors. If not serving as chairperson, the pastor should be an ex officio member.

Health Ministries or Temperance Society

In some areas a health ministries or temperance society may be established as a separate entity distinct from Church organizations. The conference health ministries director should be involved in establishing such an entity.

World Health Ministries Sabbath Offering

The entire World Health Ministries Sabbath Offering is sent to the conference to be distributed according to policy. Upon the church's request to the conference, up to 30 percent of the offering received in the church may revert to the church for health ministries programs.

Resources

For health ministries resources.

Music

Selecting Music Coordinators

The church should take great care in selecting music leaders, choosing only those who are thoroughly consecrated and provide appropriate music for all church worship services and meetings. Secular music or that of a questionable nature should never be introduced into our services.

Music leaders should work closely with the pastor or elders in order that musical selections harmonize with the sermon theme. The music leader is under the direction of the pastor or elders and does not work independently. The music leader should counsel with them about the music to be rendered and the selection of singers and musicians.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Selecting Musicians

Sacred music is an important part of public worship. The church must exercise care in selecting choir members and other musicians who will rightly represent Church principles. They should be members of the church, the Sabbath School, or The Holy Seed Church Youth Ministries. Because they occupy a conspicuous place in church services, they should be examples of modesty and decorum in their appearance and dress. Choir robes are optional. Churches may have multiple choirs. A children's choir is a means of spiritual nurture, bonding to the church family, and outreach.

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty

The public affairs and religious liberty (PARL) department promotes and maintains religious liberty, with particular emphasis upon liberty of conscience. Religious liberty includes the human right to have or adopt the religion of one's choice, to change religious belief according to conscience, to manifest one's religion individually or in community with fellow believers, in worship, observance, practice, witness, and teaching, subject to respect for the equivalent rights of others.

Religious Liberty Leader

The elected religious liberty leader cooperates with both the pastor and the conference or union PARL department. The leader should be of positive spiritual influence, able to meet the general public, interested in public affairs, proficient as a correspondent, and concerned with the preservation of liberty for God's people.

Religious Liberty Associations

Each church is considered an informal religious liberty association, and every church member is considered a member of the association. The pastor or an elder is the chairperson.

Resources

For Public Affairs and Religious Liberty resources.

Publishing Ministries

Publishing ministries coordinates and promotes literature evangelism under supervision of the publishing ministries council and the appropriate publishing organization for the territory. It assists other departments in the promotion, sale, and distribution of subscription magazines and other missionary literature. The department works with the pastor and other departments in planning for systematic ways to involve members in publishing ministries. “There are many places in which the voice of the minister cannot be heard, places which can be reached only by our

Publications the books, papers, and tracts filled with the Bible truths that the people need.” The mission of publishing ministries is evangelism and the nurture of church members. President William Simiyu encouraged members to “sell or to give away our literature.”

Selling Through Literature Evangelists

“God calls for workers from every church among us to enter His service as canvasser evangelists [literature evangelists].”

Giving Away (Sharing) by Church Members

“Let every believer scatter broadcast tracts and leaflets and books containing the message for this time.”

Publishing Ministries Coordinator

The church elects a publishing ministries coordinator to provide leadership in literature evangelism activities.

Publishing Ministries Council

The board appoints the publishing ministries council, which works under the board’s direction. The publishing ministries coordinator chairs the council. The pastor, personal ministries leader, and personal ministries secretary serve as ex officio members. Members should have interest and experience in literature evangelism.

Resources

For publishing ministries resources .

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Sabbath School and Personal Ministries

Sabbath School

The Sabbath School, the primary religious education program of the Church, has four purposes: study of the Scripture, fellowship, community outreach, and world mission emphasis. The General Conference Sabbath

School and Personal Ministries Department distributes the Sabbath School Bible study guide for all age levels, provides designs for Sabbath School programming within the context of the various world division cultures, provides resources and training systems for Sabbath School teachers, and promotes world mission Sabbath School offerings.

“The Sabbath school is an important branch of the missionary work, not only because it gives to young and old a knowledge of God’s Word, but because it awakens in them a love for its sacred truths, and a desire to study them for themselves; above all, it teaches them to regulate their lives by its holy teachings.”

“The Sabbath school, if rightly conducted, is one of God’s great instrumentalities to bring souls to knowledge of the truth.”

Officers of the Sabbath School Council

The church elects Sabbath School officers and members of the Sabbath School council. Officers include the superintendent and any assistant superintendents; secretary and any assistant secretaries; a leader for each division, including adult and extension divisions; children’s ministries coordinator and/or Vacation Bible School director; and Investment secretary.

The officers, teachers, and all Sabbath School members should cooperate with other departments in all outreach (missionary) work, as well as carrying on Sabbath School evangelism by means of regular Sabbath School classes and such activities as Decision Days, pastors’ Bible classes, Community Guest Days, Vacation Bible Schools, and branch Sabbath Schools, including Neighborhood Bible Clubs and Story Hours.

The Sabbath School council is the administrative body of the Sabbath School. It consists of the superintendent (who serves as chairperson), any assistant superintendents, secretary (who serves as secretary), any assistant secretaries, division leaders, Investment secretary, personal ministries leader, children’s ministries coordinator and/or Vacation Bible School director, an elder (appointed by the board or by the board of elders), and the pastor.

As soon as possible after the officers are elected, the superintendent should call a council meeting to appoint, as needed for the various divisions, other officers who do not serve as members of the council. These may include assistant division leaders, division secretaries, music directors, pianists and/or organists, and greeters.

In addition to the appointed officers listed above, the council studies the need of all divisions and groups and appoints teachers whose names are submitted to the board for approval. To maintain the integrity of the Sabbath School lesson curriculum and the quality of teaching, the council

should exercise great care in choosing teachers. Particularly when selecting teachers for the children's divisions, the council should consult with division leaders. All teachers shall be members of the church in regular standing.

The council is responsible for the successful operation of the entire Sabbath School through the superintendent. The council should meet regularly as needed. The council should ensure that program helps and materials, including the Sabbath School Bible study guide prepared by the General Conference, are supplied in sufficient quantities.

Superintendent and Other Sabbath School Officers

The superintendent is the leading officer of the Sabbath School and should begin planning for its smooth and effective operation as soon as elected. The superintendent should support the plans and emphases of the conference Sabbath School department and should implement decisions of the Sabbath School council concerning the operation of the Sabbath School.

The church may elect one or more assistant superintendents.

The secretary should complete the quarterly report on the appropriate form immediately after the last Sabbath of the quarter and mail it before the deadline to the conference Sabbath School and personal ministries directors.

The secretary also should place a copy in the secretary's permanent file, give copies to the superintendent and the pastor, and present it at the business meeting.

The Investment secretary promotes the Investment plan for mission support in all Sabbath School divisions and keeps all members informed as the program progresses.

The Vacation Bible School (VBS) director leads in organizing, promoting, and launching community evangelism through the annual VBS.

The church may assign this responsibility to the children's ministries coordinator.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The council may appoint a music director for the Sabbath School in consultation with division leaders. As an expression of worship, music should glorify God. Singers and other musicians should be as carefully selected as are the leaders for other parts of the Sabbath School service and should be measured by the same standards. The council also may appoint pianists and organists for the divisions.

Sabbath School Division Leaders

The church board elects a leader for each division. The Sabbath School council may appoint assistant division leaders as needed. The Sabbath School Handbook, available from The Holy Seed Church Book Center or the conference Sabbath School department, contains information about all divisions, from beginners through adult and the extension division, which cares for those unable to attend Sabbath School.

Sabbath School Teachers

The Sabbath School council chooses and the church board approves Sabbath School teachers. They should have an aptitude for teaching and be willing to study ways to improve their teaching abilities. They should be diligent in preparation, regular and punctual in attendance and examples in the daily study of the Sabbath School Bible study guide.

The council should make special effort to select teachers for children and youth who have an interest in those age levels and ability to meet their needs. Everyone involved in work with the children's divisions must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advice as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required. All teachers should be encouraged to participate in the teacher training courses available through the conference Sabbath School department.

Every Sabbath School should have a weekly teachers' meeting. Realizing that "none but those who have fortified the mind with the Truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict", Sabbath School leaders should strongly encourage regular systematic study of the Word. The Sabbath School Bible study guide is designed to encourage daily feasting on the Word, a practice that has done much to maintain unity throughout the Church. Every member should have access to the appropriate age-level Sabbath School Bible study guide published by the General Conference and/or division. Similarly, every leader and teacher Should have access to the helps produced for the various Sabbath School divisions by the General Conference and or division.

Teachers should have at least 30 minutes during which to teach their classes.

Sabbath School Offerings

The Sabbath School secretary should accurately record Sabbath School offerings and pass them on to the treasurer as soon as possible. Extension division offerings should be added to the regular Sabbath School offerings. Many Sabbath Schools take offerings for Sabbath School expense. With the exception of that expense fund, all Sabbath School offerings are for the

support of the mission fields and are to be passed on in their entirety by the treasurer to the conference. These funds include the regular weekly Sabbath

School offering, the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, Sabbath School Investment, and Birthday-Thank Offering. Each is to be identified as a separate fund in the financial system of the church. Mission funds are distributed according to policy. No mission funds may be retained by the church or conference.

The Sabbath School expense offering and the mission offering, where the calendar of offerings is being used, shall not be taken as one offering and divided according to an agreed-upon formula or percentage. The offerings may be taken as combined offering where the church is operating under a division-approved combined offering plan.

Resources

For Sabbath School and personal ministries resources.

Personal Ministries

A personal ministry provides resources and trains members to unite their efforts with those of the pastor and officers in soul-winning service. It also has primary responsibility for programs assisting those in need.

Personal Ministries Council

The personal ministries council guides the outreach (missionary) efforts of the church and works under the direction of the board. The council should meet at least once each month and should consist of the pastor, an elder, the treasurer, and leaders of the other departments and auxiliary services functioning in that congregation. The personal ministries council may assign subcommittees for specialized tasks. All subcommittees report to the personal ministries council. The personal ministries council and leader are responsible for organizing small group ministries.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Personal Ministries Officers

The church elects the personal ministries officers, including the leader, assistants (as needed), and the secretary. The leader trains and directs members in outreach (missionary) service and chairs the personal ministries council. The leader reports in the monthly church outreach (missionary) Sabbath service and business meetings about total outreach (missionary) activities of the congregation. Assistants may be assigned to coordinate the Bible correspondence school, Bible evangelism, literature distribution, Ingathering (or equivalent appeals), small group ministries, member training, and other soul-winning programs.

The secretary serves as representative of The Holy Seed Church Book Center for all departments of the church and works with the leader in developing the outreach (missionary) programs of the church.

THSC Men

The Holy Seed Church Men is a subsidiary of the personal ministries department. It includes lay preaching efforts, prison ministry, and Community Services.

Bible School Coordinator

The Bible school coordinator organizes and coordinates the church's Bible school outreach ministry to the community. The coordinator should work closely with the pastor, the interest coordinator, and the personal ministries leader.

The Holy Seed Church Community Services Leader or Dorcus Society Leader

The church elects The Holy Seed Church Community Services leader or Dorcus Society leader, assistant leaders (as needed), and secretary-treasurer of The Holy Seed Church Community Services, which in some areas is known as the Dorcus Society. This organization gathers and prepares clothing, food and other supplies for those in need and works closely with The Holy Seed Church Men, deacons, deaconesses, and other church departments in community outreach. The Holy Seed Church Community Services or Dorcus Society ministry, however, includes more than giving material aid. It focuses on identifying needs and responding with services based on these specific needs. Examples are educational seminars, community development, visiting, counseling, and other services relevant to the community.

The Holy Seed Church Community Services Leader or Dorcus Society Leader is a member of the Personal Ministries Council and the church board. If the church operates a Community Services center, the personal ministries council is its governing committee. The Council appoints the director of the center, who is a member of the Council as well as the church board.

Ministry to People With Disabilities

This ministry functions under the personal ministries council and develops programs for members and others with disabilities. It should create witnessing programs, recommend how to make church facilities more accessible, help solve transportation problems, and recommend ways to involve members with disabilities. The coordinator of Ministry to People with Disabilities serves as a liaison with organizations providing services for people with disabilities, such as Christian Record Services, and promotes Christian Record Services programs.

Resources

For Sabbath School and personal ministries resources.

Stewardship Ministries

A stewardship ministry encourages members to respond to God's grace by dedicating all they have to Him. Stewardship responsibility involves more than just money. It includes, but is not limited to, the proper care and use of the body, mind, time, abilities, spiritual gifts, relationships, influence, language, the environment, and material possessions. The department assists members in their partnership with God in completing His mission through the proper utilization of all of His gifts and resources.

When the Spirit of God takes possession of the life, "those whose hearts are filled with the love of Christ will follow the example of Him who for our sake became poor, that through His poverty we might be made rich. Money, time, influence—all the gifts they have received from God's hand, they will value only as a means of advancing the work of the gospel

Stewardship Ministries Leader

The stewardship ministries leader should practice the principles of Christian stewardship and should have an understanding of the spiritual and financial ministry of the Church. The leader will work in cooperation with the conference stewardship ministries director, the pastor, and the board. The leader acts as a liaison between the conference stewardship ministries department and the congregation.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Resources

For stewardship ministries resources.

Women's Ministries

Women's ministries uphold, encourages, and challenges women in their daily walk as disciples of Jesus Christ and as members of His church.

Its objectives are to foster spiritual growth and renewal; affirm that women are of immeasurable worth by virtue of their creation and redemption, equip them for service, and offer women's perspectives on church issues; minister to the broad spectrum of women's needs, with regard for multicultural and multiethnic perspectives; cooperate with other departments to facilitate ministry to women and of women; build good will among women to encourage mutual support and creative exchange of ideas; mentor and encourage women and create paths for their involvement in the church; and find ways and means to challenge each woman to use her gifts to further global mission.

Women's Ministries Leader and Committee

The elected women's ministries leader develops specific ministries to nurture women and equip them for service. She serves as chairperson of the women's ministries committee and encourages ideas and plans that maximize women's contributions to the mission of the Church.

The leader assists the board with integrating activities and programs for women into the larger church program. She keeps the church informed of the contribution of women's ministries to church life. The leader's liaison for training and resource material is the conference women's ministries director.

The women's ministries leader should be a sensitive, caring woman with a burden for women's ministry and concerns, a balance in her perspectives, an ability to encourage other women to cultivate their spiritual gifts, and an ability to work well with women in the church, the pastor, and the board. The women's ministries committee fosters ministry to women in the church. This committee should be composed of those interested in the broad spectrum of women's needs and services and those with varied talents and experience.

Resources

For women's ministries resources.

Youth Ministries

The various youth organizations of the church should work closely with the youth ministries department of the conference.

World Youth Ministries (WYM)

The church works for and with its youth through the WYM. Under the WYM, youth are to work together, in cooperation with the wider church community, towards the development of a strong youth ministry that includes spiritual, mental, and physical development of each individual, Christian social interaction, and an active witnessing program that supports the general soul-winning plans of the church. The goal of WYM should be to involve all youth in activities that will lead them to active church membership and train them for Christian service.

WYM Mission

To lead young people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and help them embrace His call to discipleship.

WYM Motto

The love of Christ compels us, Seed More Fire!

WYM Aim

The rapture Message to all the world in my generation. The youth ministries program of the church comprises three broad categories, namely: Junior Youth (Adventurers: ages 0-6 and Pathfinders: ages 7-13), Senior Youth (Ambassadors: ages 14-20 and Young Adults: ages 21-26), and Public Campus Students: ages 27-100+.

God said to Moses, “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (**Deuteronomy 6:6-9**). The apostle Paul added, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (**1 Timothy 4:12**). “We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth.”

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

“When the youth give their hearts to God, our responsibility for them does not cease. They must be interested in the Lord’s work, and led to see that He expects them to do something to advance His cause. It is not enough to show how much needs to be done, and to urge the youth to act a part. They must be taught how to labor for the Master. They must be trained, disciplined, drilled, in the best methods of winning souls to Christ. Teach them to try in a quiet, unpretending way to help their young companions. Let different branches of missionary effort be systematically laid out, in which they may take part, and let them be given instruction and help. Thus they will learn to work for God.”

“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!”

While there is to be an active World Youth Ministries (WYM) in every church, it is important that the youth program not be isolated from the rest of the church. In addition to their WYM participation, youth should be integrated into responsible leadership and in all lines of church work. As young elders, deacons, and deaconesses, for example, they can work with and learn from experienced officers.

“In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, unscripted energies. Young men and

women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow men.”

World Youth Ministries Committee

The World Youth Ministries (WYM) Committee is the umbrella organization in the church for the general planning of the youth ministry program. The WYM Committee includes the following church-elected officers: Young Adults leader, Public Campus Ministries leader/coordinator, Ambassador leader, Pathfinder director, Adventurer director, plus the personal ministries leader, youth Sabbath School division

leader, children’s ministries leader, health ministries leader, principal of the school, the WYM sponsor, and the pastor. If there are no distinct Ambassador ministry or young adults ministries established in the church, or until such time as they are established, the WYM Committee will plan for the senior youth ministry to include both age groups.

In parts of the world where there is no Pathfinder or Adventurer ministry, or until such time as they are organized, the WYM Committee will plan for appropriate activities for the junior youth. The WYM leader (formerly known as the WYS director), who is a member of the board, chairs this committee. The committee should meet as necessary to develop short- and long-range goals and plans for a successful ministry.

Young Adults Ministries Committee

The Young Adults Ministries Committee is responsible for Young Adult activities and works in coordination with The Holy Seed Church Youth Ministries (WYM) Committee. The church elects the following Young Adults Ministries officers: leader, associate leader, secretary-treasurer, and music director. This group forms the nucleus for the Young Adults Ministries Committee, which appoints other officers for the respective activities.

Public Campus Ministries

Strengthening the Youth Ministries of the church, Public Campus Ministries (PCM), in collaboration with the World Ministry to College and University Students (WMCUS), provides vision and strategic planning for ministry to and support for The Holy Seed Church students (ages 21-26+) who attend college or university institutions not operated by The Holy Seed Church.

Public Campus Ministries Leader/Coordinator

The church may appoint a Public Campus Ministries leader/coordinator to develop an intentional ministry with the purpose of caring for the special needs of college or university students in institutions not operated by The Holy Seed Church, in consultation with and support of The Holy Seed Church Youth Ministries Committee.

Ambassador Ministry

The Ambassador Ministry provides a specialized program to meet the needs of youth, ages 14 to 20. It offers young people in this age group organization and structure, and promotes their active involvement in the church, locally and globally. The ministry is designed to strengthen the current senior youth ministry of the Church. It challenges them to experience and share a personal relationship with Christ, helps them develop a lifestyle that is consistent with The Holy Seed Church belief system, provides training in diverse vocational interests, and provides them with a safe environment for the wholesome development of lifelong friendships. Its activities are to be carried out in accordance with conference policies and in coordination with the WYM Committee of the local church.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Ambassador Committee

The Ambassador Committee is responsible for Ambassador activities and works in coordination with The Holy Seed Church Youth Ministries (WYM) Committee. The church elects the following Ambassador Officers: leader, associate leader, secretary-treasurer, assistant secretary-treasurer, and music director. This group forms the Ambassador Committee which appoints other officers for the respective activities.

Pathfinder Club

The Pathfinder Club provides a church-centered outlet for the spirit of adventure and exploration, in the context of spiritual development and soul-winning, for ages 7 to 13. Activities are carefully tailored to include outdoor living, nature exploration, crafts, hobbies, or vocations.

Pathfinder Committee

The Pathfinder Club director and deputy directors are elected by the church. If two deputy directors are elected, there should be one male and one female. One of the deputy directors may also serve as club secretary and treasurer. The director is a member of the board and The Holy Seed Church Youth Ministries (WYM) Committee. Additional Pathfinder staff may include instructors of craft and nature classes and counselors who are each responsible for a unit of six to eight Pathfinders. Resource materials are available from the conference youth ministries director.

Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advice as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required.

Adventurer Club

The Adventurer Club provides home and church programs for parents with 0 to 6-year-old children. It is designed to stimulate the children's curiosity and includes age-specific activities that involve both parents and child in recreational activities, simple crafts, appreciation of God's creation, and other activities that are of interest to that age. All is carried out with a spiritual focus, setting the stage for participation in the church as a Pathfinder.

Adventurer Committee

The church elects the club director and associates. Additional staff members are selected by the administrative staff of the club. The director is a member of the World Youth Ministries (WYM) Committee.

Resource materials are available from the conference youth ministries director. Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advice as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required.

WYM Officers

The leaders/directors of the four youth ministry entities must exemplify Christ like graces and have a burden for soul winning and contagious enthusiasm. In helping motivate youth to work together and take responsibilities, the leaders/directors will be in the background—guiding, counseling, and encouraging youth, helping them gain experience and the joys of achievement. The leaders/directors should study the youth profile of the church and seek to involve every eligible youth in the World Youth Ministries (WYM).

The leaders/directors will keep in touch with the pastor, their respective sponsors, and the conference youth ministries director, taking advantage of opportunities for in-service training and leading their respective ministry into a cooperative relationship with the church and the conference.

The associate leaders/deputy directors (if needed) will assist the leaders/directors and perform leadership duties when the leaders/directors are absent. The respective committees may assign additional responsibilities to the associate leaders/directors.

The secretary-treasurers will keep a record of the activities of their respective ministries, submit monthly reports on forms provided to the conference youth ministries director, and encourage youth to report their witnessing activities during the ten-minute personal ministries period.

The respective assistant secretary-treasurers (if needed) assist with the secretary- treasurers' work as assigned.

WYM Sponsor

The World Youth Ministries (WYM) sponsor may be an elder or other person on the board who understands the objectives of the WYM, is sympathetic with youth and their involvement in the church's ministries, and will serve as a valued counselor to the youth. The sponsor serves as a guide or counselor to WYM officers and joins them regularly in WYM Committee meetings. The sponsor will work with the WYM leader to present the ministry's needs to the board.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The sponsor should become acquainted with the conference youth ministries director and keep the director informed of changes in officer personnel and other WYM matters. Along with WYM leaders, the sponsor should attend conference youth training institutes to keep informed about developments in youth ministry.

For the sake of continuity, the sponsor, if possible, should serve multiple terms. Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required.

Resources

For youth ministries resources.

Induction Service

All newly elected officers of the local church may be included in an induction service conducted by a pastor holding a current license or credential. If no pastor is available, an elder of the church may conduct the service for officers other than elders, deacons, and deaconesses. If the church holds an induction service for newly elected officers, it should include leaders of all departments and other organizations.

CHAPTER 9

Elections

The election of church officers who will perform their duties prayerfully, seriously, and competently is an important work. This chapter outlines the election procedure, from appointment of the nominating committee to filling vacancies between annual elections.

Nominating Committee and the Election Process

Officers are elected every one or two years through an appointed nominating committee. This committee brings its report to the church, which then votes on the names presented. This procedure enables the church to give careful study to each name prior to election and avoids the competitive element that may arise when nominations are made from the floor.

The nominating committee shall study the needs of the church and inquire into the fitness of members to serve in the different offices. This is another reason officers shall not be nominated from the floor or by general ballot. The size of the nominating committee will range from five members in a small church to a larger number in a large church. The number to be chosen is left to the discretion of each church and should be studied by the board. A suitable recommendation then will be brought to the church, using a minimum of time in the Sabbath worship hour.

When and How the Nominating Committee Is Appointed

The nominating committee should be appointed early in the closing quarter of the church year and should report at least three weeks before the final Sabbath of the church year.

The pastor or district leader or, in the absence of the pastor or district leader, the elder should bring the matter to the attention of the church. The church shall then appoint an organizing committee responsible to nominate the nominating committee. This organizing committee may be chosen in one of two ways:

1. By nominations, verbal or written, from the floor. If verbal nominations are made, no member may nominate more than one person.

The effort of one individual or a small group to dictate to the entire membership is disapproved. Every effort should be made to ensure fair representation in the composition of the organizing committee. Everything of a political nature should be avoided. The pastor or district leader shall serve as chairperson of this organizing committee. If a pastor or district leader has not yet been appointed to serve as church leader, the chairperson of this organizing committee shall be appointed by the board from among the members of the organizing committee. The size of the organizing committee should be five to seven more than the number of board members.

2. By the church authorizing the board, together with five to seven additional persons chosen by the church (see preceding paragraph), to function as the organizing committee. If this method is adopted, the chairperson of the board normally serves as chairperson of the organizing committee.

ELECTIONS

How the Process Works

The steps of the nominating process are:

1. The church appoints by vote an organizing committee by one of the two methods listed above.
2. The organizing committee recommends names to the church for the nominating committee, with a recommendation for secretary. Every effort should be made to ensure fair representation in the composition of the nominating committee.
3. By vote, the church appoints the nominating committee and the secretary.

The pastor or district leader is an ex officio member and serves as chairperson of the nominating committee. Should the pastor or district leader choose not to serve as chairperson, or if a pastor or district leader has not been appointed to the church, the organizing committee shall

4. recommend the name from the proposed nominating committee to serve as chairperson.
5. The nominating committee meets to prepare the list of officers that it will present to the church for approval.
6. By vote, the church appoints its officers for the ensuing year.

Who Should Be Members of the Nominating Committee

Only members in regular standing should be chosen to serve on the nominating committee. They should be persons of good judgment who have the welfare and prosperity of the church at heart.

Work of the Nominating Committee

The chairperson should call a meeting of the committee as soon as possible after its election. With earnest prayer the committee should begin preparing a list of nominees for all offices. Nominees must be members in regular standing of the church making the appointments. The list of nominees will be presented to the church at a Sabbath service or at a specially called business meeting. In making their selections, the committee may counsel with others who are well informed. This committee does not nominate either the pastor or the assistant pastor(s), who are appointed by the conference.

The list of officers to be considered by the nominating committee may vary with size of membership. A larger church may determine it needs more officers. A smaller church may have fewer. The committee deals with all leadership positions except Sabbath School teachers, who are recommended by the Sabbath School council and approved by the board. For a list of possible officers.

Nominating Committee to Get Consent of Prospective Officers

Having nominated persons who are faithful, loyal members of the local church, except when the conference has approved an exception, the appropriate members of the committee should inform them of their nominations and secure their consent to serve.

Members May Appear Before the Nominating Committee

Members desiring to appear before the committee to make suggestions or objections should be given opportunity to do so. After they have addressed the committee and retired from the room, the committee should consider their comments and then make its report to the church.

Nominating Committee Discussions Are Confidential

All inquiries and discussions of the committee are confidential. It is a violation of Christian ethics and the spirit of the golden rule for a member of the committee to repeat outside of the committee any personal or sensitive information discussed. To offend in this regard is reason for excluding the committee member from future participation in the work of a nominating committee. Should the necessity arise for inquiries to be made outside the committee, the chairperson should make them.

Reporting to the Church

The nominating committee's report is presented to the church as a whole and not to the church board, which has no jurisdiction in the process. The report may be presented at a Sabbath service or at a specially called business meeting. When the nominating committee is ready to report, the chairperson should make appropriate remarks to the church. A copy of the report should be placed in the hands of members or read aloud by the secretary of the committee. The chairperson should announce that the church will vote on the report one or two weeks later. Every member should vote in the election of officers. Election is by majority vote of those present and voting.

ELECTIONS

Objections to the Report of the Nominating Committee

Members may object to the nominating committee's report and should present their objections in person to the committee before the second reading of the report by making an appointment through the chairperson or pastor. Or, at the time of the second reading of the report, a member may request that the whole report be referred without discussion to the committee for further consideration. It is the usual procedure for the chairperson to accept the referral. However, if the request becomes a motion, it is no debatable and is decided by majority vote.

The chairperson should announce when and where the committee will meet to hear objections. At that time members making objections, or any other member who desires to do so, should appear before the committee. If the election is deferred because of objections, it would be a serious matter for those raising objections to fail to appear before the committee.

After giving due consideration to the objections presented, the committee will exercise its judgment as to whether or not any change is warranted in the committee's recommendation to the church business meeting. When the report is again presented, the church proceeds to vote on the report of the committee.

Trivial or groundless objections to any name should never be made, but if there are serious reasons that any nomination should be changed, these reasons should be stated to the nominating committee.

Filling Vacancies Between Elections

If an office of the church becomes vacant during the term of office because of death, removal, resignation, or any other reason, the board nominates a successor to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term of office and submits the nomination to the church for election.

Delegates to Local Conference Session

Administrative authority in a conference originates with its constituency. The churches of a conference elect delegates to the conference session to represent them in the councils of the conference. The conference session elects conference personnel, grants credentials and licenses (unless

The conference constitution gives its executive committee this responsibility), amends its constitution and bylaws if necessary, and transacts other business. One of its most important acts is the election of the executive committee, which functions for the constituency between sessions. In this committee is vested the delegated power and authority of all the churches of the conference.

Choosing Delegates

It is God's plan that members chosen to be delegates be trustworthy, tried, and proved, "able to reason from cause to effect," because they are to "lay the plans that shall be followed in the advancement of the work."

The number of delegates from each church to a conference session is determined by the conference constitution. When the time comes to select delegates, the pastor, or the head elder in cooperation with the pastor, brings the matter before the church. A committee may be appointed to nominate delegates, or the board may be asked to nominate them. Nothing of a political nature should be allowed to come into this work. Men and women of known piety and loyalty and who are able to attend the session should be nominated as delegates.

When the committee or board has completed its work, it reports its nominees to the church. The church then votes on the nominations. No church officer is a delegate *ex officio*. After the election, the clerk fills out the delegates' credential blanks and returns them to the secretary of the conference. The delegates become the representatives of the church, to unite with the delegates of other churches to transact all business coming before the conference session.

Delegates to a union conference/mission session are chosen by the conference, not by the churches. The delegates to a General Conference Session are chosen by the divisions and the union conferences/missions.

Duty of Delegates

Delegates to a conference session are not chosen to represent merely the church or conference. They should view the work as a whole, remembering their responsibility for the welfare of the worldwide work of the Church. It is not permissible for church or conference delegations to organize or attempt to direct their votes as a unit. Nor is it permissible for the delegates from a large church or the conference to claim preeminence in directing affairs in a conference session. Each delegate should be susceptible to the direction of the Holy Spirit and vote according to personal convictions. Any church or conference officer or leader attempting to control the votes of a group of delegates would be considered disqualified for holding office.

ELECTIONS

Responsibility of Conference Officers

The local church has no authority outside its own body. It unites with other churches in the conference in delegating authority and responsibility to the conference officers and executive committee to carry on the work of the conference between sessions. Conference officers are answerable to the conference as a whole and not to any one church.

Conference Executive Committee

Conference executive committee members are elected to represent the work in the entire conference, not that of one church, district, or institution. Each member should foster all interests of the work in all parts of the field and make decisions only after prayerful and careful study. Decisions of the committee are not to be controlled or influenced by any church, group, or individual

CHAPTER 10

Services and Other Meetings

General Principles

The apostle John declared that “true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him” (John 4:23).

“Although God dwells not in temples made with hands, yet He honors with His presence the assemblies of His people. He has promised that when they come together to seek Him, to acknowledge their sins, and to pray for one another, He will meet with them by His Spirit. But those who assemble to worship Him should put away every evil thing. Unless they worship Him in spirit and truth and in the beauty of holiness, their coming together will be of no avail.”

. Purpose of Services and Meetings

The purpose of all services and meetings is to worship God for His creative work and for the benefits of His salvation; to understand His Word, His teachings, and His purposes; to fellowship in faith and love; to witness about our personal faith in Christ’s atoning sacrifice at the cross; and to learn how to fulfill the gospel commission of making disciples in all the world (Matthew 28:19, 20).

Reverence for the House of Worship

“To the humble, believing soul, the house of God on earth is the gate of heaven. The song of praise, the prayer, the words spoken by Christ’s representatives, are God’s appointed agencies to prepare a people for the church above, for that loftier worship into which there can enter nothing that defiled. “From the sacredness which was attached to the earthly sanctuary, Christians may learn how they should regard the place where the Lord meets with His people. God Himself gave the order of His service, exalting it high above everything of a temporal nature.

“The house is the sanctuary for the family, and the closet or the grove the most retired place for individual worship; but the church is the sanctuary for the congregation. There should be rules in regard to the time, the place, and the manner of worshiping. Nothing that is sacred, nothing that pertains to the worship of God, should be treated with carelessness or indifference.”

SERVICES AND OTHER MEETINGS

Teach Children Reverence

“Parents, elevate the standard of Christianity in the minds of your children; help them to weave Jesus into their experience; teach them to have the highest reverence for the house of God and to understand that when they enter the Lord’s house it should be with hearts that are softened and subdued by such thoughts as these: ‘God is here; this is His house. I must have pure thoughts and the holiest motives. I must have no pride, envy, jealousy, evil surmising, hatred, or deception in my heart, for I am coming into the presence of the holy God. This is the place where God meets with and blesses His people. The high and holy One who inhabitant eternity looks upon me, searches my heart, and reads the most secret thoughts and acts of my life.’ ”

Decorum and Quietness in the Place of Worship

“When the worshipers enter the place of meeting, they should do so with decorum, passing quietly to their seats. Common talking, whispering, and laughing should not be permitted in the house of worship, either before or after the service. Ardent, active piety should characterize the worshipers.

“If some have to wait a few minutes before the meeting begins, let them maintain a true spirit of devotion by silent meditation, keeping the heart uplifted to God in prayer that the service may be of special benefit to their own hearts and lead to the conviction and conversion of other souls. They should remember that heavenly messengers are in the house. If when the people come into the house of worship, they have genuine reverence for the Lord and bear in mind that they are in His presence, there will be a sweet eloquence in silence. The whispering and laughing and talking which might be without sin in a common business place should find no sanction in the house where God is worshiped. The mind should be prepared to hear the Word of God, which it may have due weight and suitably impress the heart.”

Hospitality

“Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels” (Hebrews 13:2). Every church should cultivate a spirit of hospitality, an essential element of Christian life and experience. Nothing is so deadening to the spiritual life of a church as a cold, formal atmosphere that drives out hospitality and Christian fellowship. Especially selected greeters should cordially welcome visitors, who also may be welcomed at the time of the worship service.

Place of Music in Worship

Power of Music

“Music can be a great power for good, yet we do not make the most of this branch of worship. The singing is generally done from impulse or to meet special cases, and at other times those who sing are left to blunder along, and the music loses its proper effect upon the minds of those present.

Music should have beauty, pathos, and power. Let the voices be lifted in songs of praise and devotion. Call to your aid, if practicable, instrumental music, and let the glorious harmony ascend to God, an acceptable offering
Psalms 150.”

Sing With Spirit and Understanding

“In their efforts to reach the people, the Lord’s messengers are not to follow the ways of the world. In the meetings that are held, they are not to depend on worldly singers and theatrical display to awaken an interest. How can those who have no interest in the Word of God, who have never read His Word with a sincere desire to understand its truths, be expected to sing with the spirit and the understanding? How can the heavenly choir join in music that is only a form? “The singing is not always to be done by a few.

As often as possible, let the entire congregation join.”

Pulpit Not a Forum

The Church confers no right to any pastor, elder, or other person to make the pulpit a forum for advocating disputed points of doctrine or church procedure.

Testing New Light

Members who think they have new light contrary to the established views of the Church should seek counsel from responsible leaders.

“There are a thousand temptations in disguise prepared for those who have the light of truth; and the only safety for any of us is in receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest prayer; and if they see no light in it, yield to their judgment; for ‘in the multitude of counselors there is safety.’ ” (See Acts 15:1-32.)

This plan was followed in the early church. When a difference of opinion arose at Antioch over an important question, the believers sent representatives to Jerusalem to submit the question to the apostles and elders. The believers in Antioch joyfully accepted the decision of the Jerusalem Council, thus preserving unity and brotherly love.

The counsel to test new light must not be regarded as deterring anyone from diligently studying the Scriptures, but rather as a protection against the infiltration of false theories and erroneous doctrines into the Church. God wants His children faithfully to search His Word for light and truth, but He does not want them to be led astray by false teachings.

“We have seen only the glimmering of divine glory and of the infinitude of knowledge and wisdom; we have, as it were, been working on the surface of the mine, when rich golden ore is beneath the surface, to reward the one who will dig for it. The shaft must be sunk deeper and yet deeper in the mine, and the result will be glorious treasure. Through a correct faith, divine knowledge will become human knowledge.”

“New light will ever be revealed on the Word of God to him who is in living connection with the Sun of Righteousness. Let no one come to the conclusion that there is no more truth to be revealed. The diligent, prayerful seeker for truth will find precious rays of light yet to shine forth from the Word of God. Many gems are yet scattered that are to be gathered together to become the property of the remnant people of God.”

When new light shines forth from the sacred page to reward the earnest seeker after truth, it does not make void the old. Instead it merges with the old, causing it to grow brighter with added luster. Therefore, “the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18).

Although the child of God must stand ready to accept advancing light, one must never give heed to any voice, however pious and plausible, that would lead away from the fundamental doctrines of the Bible.

“We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith. They gather together a mass of Scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories. This has been done over and over again during the past fifty years. And while the Scriptures are God’s Word, and are to be respected, the application of them, if such application moves one pillar from the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, is a great mistake. He who makes such an application knows not the wonderful demonstration of the Holy Spirit that gave power and force to the past messages that have come to the people of God.”

SERVICES AND OTHER MEETINGS

Importance of Maintaining Unity

It is important that we maintain “the unity of the faith” (Ephesians 4:13), and just as important that we seek to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (verse 3). Such unity requires caution and counsel with church leadership.

“God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing and another having faith and views entirely opposite, each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without regard to the opinion of his brethren, and justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ?

“Though we have an individual work and an individual responsibility before God, we are not to follow our own independent judgment, regardless of the opinions and feelings of our brethren; for this course would lead to disorder in the church. It is the duty of ministers to respect the judgment of their brethren; but their relations to one another, as well as the doctrines they teach, should be brought to the test of the law and the testimony; then, if hearts are teachable, there will be no divisions among us. Some are inclined to be disorderly, and are drifting away from the great landmarks of the faith; but God is moving upon His ministers to be one in doctrine and in spirit.” In view of these considerations, it is evident that the pulpit must be reserved for the preaching of the truths of the Divine Word and the presentation of denominational plans and policies for the advancement of the work of God, not personal views and opinions.

Unauthorized Speakers

Under no circumstances should a pastor, elder, or other officer invite strangers or any unauthorized persons to conduct services. Individuals who have been removed from the ministry or who have been removed from membership in other places, or designing persons who have no authority from the church, should not be given access to the pulpit. Those worthy of confidence will be able to identify themselves by producing proper credentials. At times it is acceptable for government officials or civic leaders to address a congregation, but all others should be excluded from the pulpit

SERVICES AND OTHER MEETINGS

Unless permission is granted by the conference. Every pastor, elder, and conference president must enforce this rule.

Sabbath School and Worship Services

Sabbath School

The Sabbath School, one of our most important services, is the church at study. Every Sabbath our members and thousands of interested friends meet in Sabbath School to study God’s Word systematically. All members of the church should be encouraged to attend Sabbath School and bring visitors.

Each Sabbath School should endeavor to provide appropriate age-level programs. Materials and resources are available from the conference, union, and division.

Sabbath School should promote local and worldwide mission activities, the mission offering, and significant time for Bible study.

Announcements and Departmental Promotions

Thoughtful consideration should be given to the length and character of the announcements and departmental promotions during Sabbath services. If they deal with matters not specifically related to Sabbath worship or the work of the church, pastors and officers should exclude them, maintaining even in this respect a proper spirit of worship and Sabbath observance.

Many churches issue printed bulletins giving the order of service and also the announcements for the week. Where this is done, there is little or no need for oral announcements. Where no such printed provision is made, many churches make the announcements before the worship service begins.

Proper consideration also should be given for the various departments to promote their programs, but great care should be exercised to safeguard the time needed for studying and preaching the Word of God.

Worship Service

The Sabbath worship service is the most important church meeting.

Here members gather weekly to unite in worshipping God in a spirit of praise and thanksgiving, to hear the Word of God, to gather strength and grace to fight the battles of life, and to learn God's will for them in soul-winning service. Reverence, simplicity, and promptness should characterize the service.

Skill, Study, and Planning Required

“Is it not your duty to put some skill and study and planning into the matter of conducting religious meetings—how they shall be conducted so as to do the greatest amount of good, and leave the very best impression upon all who attend?”

“Our God is a tender, merciful Father. His service should not be looked upon as a heart-saddening, distressing exercise. It should be a pleasure to worship the Lord and to take part in His work. Christ and Him crucified should be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion. As we express our gratitude we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts. ‘Whoso offered praise glorified’ God. Psalm

50:23. Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator, with ‘thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.’ **Isaiah 51:3.**”

Form of Service

The Sabbath morning service has two main divisions: the congregational response in praise and adoration, expressed in song, prayer, and gifts, and the message from the Word of God.

There is no set form or order for public worship. A short order of service is usually better suited to the real spirit of worship. Long preliminaries should be avoided. The opening exercises should not consume time required for the preaching of the Word of God

Church Outreach (Missionary) Service

The first Sabbath of each month is the Church Outreach (Missionary) Sabbath. This worship service focuses on lay evangelism and may feature plans and activities of various departments. “God has committed to our hands a most sacred work, and we need to meet together to receive instruction, that we may be fitted to perform this work.”

Public Prayer

“Christ impressed upon His disciples the idea that their prayers should be short, expressing just what they wanted, and no more. One or two minutes is long enough for any ordinary prayer.”

“Let those who pray and those who speak pronounce their words properly and speak in clear, distinct, even tones. Prayer, if properly offered, is a power for good. It is one of the means used by the Lord to communicate to the people the precious treasures of truth. Let God’s people learn how to speak and pray in a way that will properly represent the great truths they possess. Let the testimonies borne and the prayers offered be clear and distinct. Thus God will be glorified.”

SERVICES AND OTHER MEETINGS

Supplying Literature on Sabbath

Generally Sabbath is the opportune time for the personal ministries secretary to place literature in the hands of members. Objectionable methods that divert the attention from true worship and reverence should be avoided.

Communion Service

The communion service customarily is celebrated once per quarter. The service includes the ordinance of foot-washing followed by the Lord’s Supper. It should be a most sacred and joyous occasion to the congregation, pastor, and elders. The service usually takes place during the worship service but may be scheduled at other times.

Ordinance of Foot-Washing

“Now, having washed the disciples’ feet, He said, ‘I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.’ In these words Christ was not merely enjoining the practice of hospitality. More was meant than the washing of the feet of guests to remove the dust of travel. Christ was here instituting a religious service. By the act of our Lord this ceremony was made a consecrated ordinance. It was to be observed by the disciples, that they might ever keep in mind His lessons of humility and service.

“This ordinance is Christ’s appointed preparation for the sacramental service. While pride, variance, and strife for supremacy are cherished, the heart cannot enter into fellowship with Christ. We are not prepared to receive the communion of His body and His blood. Therefore it was that Jesus appointed the memorial of His humiliation to be first observed.”

In the act of washing the disciples’ feet, Christ performed a deeper cleansing, that of washing from the heart the stain of sin. The communicants sense an unworthiness to accept the sacred emblems before experiencing the cleansing that makes them “completely clean” (John 13:10). Jesus desired to wash away “alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. Pride and self-seeking create dissension and hatred, but all this Jesus washed away. Looking upon them, Jesus could say, ‘Ye are clean.’

The spiritual experience that lies at the heart of foot-washing lifts it from being a common custom to being a sacred ordinance. It conveys a message of forgiveness, acceptance, assurance, and solidarity, primarily from Christ to the believer, but also between the believers themselves. This message is expressed in an atmosphere of humility.

The Lord’s Supper

Angels declare that Jesus, the Redeemer of this world, is holy. Likewise, the symbols representing His body and His blood are holy. Since the Lord Himself selected the deeply meaningful symbols of the unleavened bread and unfermented fruit of the vine and used the simplest of means for washing the disciples’ feet, there should be great reluctance to introduce alternative symbols and means, except under emergency conditions, lest the original significance of the service be lost. Likewise in the order of service and the traditional roles played by the pastor, elders, deacons, and deaconesses, there should be caution lest substitution and innovation tend to make common that which is sacred.

The service of the Lord’s Supper is just as holy today as it was when instituted by Jesus Christ. Jesus is still present when this sacred ordinance is celebrated. “It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence.”

Unleavened Bread and Unfermented Wine (Grape Juice)

“Christ is still at the table on which the paschal supper has been spread.

The unleavened cakes used at the Passover season are before Him. The Passover wine, untouched by fermentation, is on the table. These emblems Christ employs to represent His own unblemished sacrifice. Nothing corrupted by fermentation, the symbol of sin and death, could represent the ‘Lamb without blemish and without spot.’ 1 Peter 1:19.”

Neither the wine nor the bread contained elements of fermentation because on the evening of the first day of the Hebrew Passover all leaven, or fermentation, had been removed from their dwellings (Exodus 12:15, 19; 13:7). Therefore, only unfermented grape juice and unleavened bread are appropriate for use in the communion service, and great care must be exercised in providing these elements. In isolated areas where grape or raisin juice or concentrate is unavailable, the conference office will advise or assist.

A Memorial of the Crucifixion

“As we receive the bread and wine symbolizing Christ’s broken body and spilled blood, we in imagination join in the scene of Communion in the upper chamber. We seem to be passing through the garden consecrated by the agony of Him who bore the sins of the world. We witness the struggle by which our reconciliation with God was obtained. Christ is set forth crucified among us.”

SERVICES AND OTHER MEETINGS

A Proclamation of the Second Coming

“The Communion service points to Christ’s second coming. It was designed to keep this hope vivid in the minds of the disciples. Whenever they met together to commemorate His death, they recounted how ‘he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.’ In their tribulation they found comfort in the hope of their Lord’s return. Unspeakably precious to them was the thought, ‘As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.’ 1 Corinthians 11:26.”

Announcing the Communion Service

The communion service may appropriately be included as part of any Christian worship service. However, to give proper emphasis and make communion available to the greatest number of members, usually it is part of the worship service on the next to the last Sabbath of each quarter.

On the preceding Sabbath an announcement should be made of the service calling attention to the importance of the forthcoming communion, so that all members may prepare their hearts and put aright any unresolved differences they have with one another. When they come to the table of the Lord the following Sabbath, they then can receive the intended blessing. Those absent for the announcement also should be invited to attend.

Conducting the Communion Service

Length of Service Time is not the most significant factor in the communion service. However, attendance can be improved and the spiritual impact increased by

- (1) eliminating extraneous items from the worship service on this high day,**
- (2) avoiding delays before and after foot-washing, and (3) having the deaconesses arrange the emblems on the communion table well beforehand.**

Preliminaries

The introductory portion of the service should be brief, including only short announcements, a hymn, prayer, offering, and a short sermon before separating for the foot-washing and returning for the Lord's Supper.

Foot-Washing

Each church should have a plan for meeting the needs of its members for the foot-washing service.

Bread and Wine

Following the foot-washing, the congregation comes together once again to partake of the bread and the wine

Celebration

Communion should always be a solemn, never somber, experience. Wrongs have been righted, sins have been forgiven, and faith has been reaffirmed. It is a time for celebration. Let the music be bright and joyous. The service should end on a high note, such as with a musical feature or congregational singing, followed by dismissal. An offering for the poor is often taken as the congregation leaves. After the service the deacons and deaconesses clear the table, collect the utensils, and respectfully dispose of any remaining emblems. In no case should these emblems be consumed or returned to common use.

Who May Participate

The Church practices open communion. All who have committed their lives to the Savior may participate. Children learn the significance of the service by observing others participating. After receiving formal instruction in baptismal classes and making their commitment to Jesus in baptism, they are thereby prepared to partake in the service themselves.

“Christ's example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord's Supper. It is true that open sin excludes the guilty. This the Holy Spirit plainly teaches. 1 Corinthians 5:11. But beyond this none are to pass judgment. God has not left it with men to say who shall present themselves on these occasions. For who can read the heart?

Who can distinguish the tares from the wheat? ‘Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.’ For ‘whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.’ ‘He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.’ 1 Corinthians 11:28, 27, 29. There may come into the company persons who are not in heart servants of truth and holiness, but who may wish to take part in the service. They should not be forbidden. There are witnesses present who were present when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and of Judas. More than human eyes beheld the scene.”

Every Member Should Attend

“None should exclude themselves from the Communion because some who are unworthy may be present. Every disciple is called upon to participate publicly, and thus bear witness that he accepts Christ as a personal Savior. It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence. Hearts and hands that are unworthy may even administer the ordinance, yet Christ is there to minister to His children. All who come with their faith fixed upon Him will be greatly blessed. All who neglect these seasons of divine privilege will suffer loss. Of them it may appropriately be said, ‘Ye are not all clean.’ ”

SERVICES AND OTHER MEETINGS

Who May Conduct the Communion Service

The communion service is to be conducted by an ordained/commissioned pastor or an ordained elder. Deacons or deaconesses are not permitted to conduct the service.

Communion for Those Who Cannot Attend

If members are ill or cannot for other reasons attend the communion service, the pastor or elder, possibly accompanied and assisted by a deacon or deaconess, may conduct a special service in their homes.

Prayer Meeting

Prayer Meetings Should Be Interesting

“The prayer meetings should be the most interesting gatherings that are held, but these are frequently poorly managed. Many attend preaching, but neglect the prayer meeting. Here, again, thought is required. Wisdom should be sought of God, and plans should be laid to conduct the meetings so that they will be interesting and attractive. The people hunger for the bread of life. If they find it at the prayer meeting they will go there to receive it.

“Long, prosy talks and prayers are out of place anywhere, and especially in the social [prayer] meeting. Those who are forward and ever ready to speak are allowed to crowd out the testimony of the timid and retiring. Those who are most superficial generally have the most to say. Their prayers are long and mechanical. They weary the angels and the people who listen to them. Our prayers should be short and right to the point. Let the long, tiresome petitions be left for the closet, if any have such to offer. Let the Spirit of God into your hearts, and it will sweep away all dry formality.”

More than ordinary efforts should be made to assure the success of the prayer meeting. The meeting should begin on time, even if only two or three persons are present. There should be a short, 10- to 30-minute Scripture study or presentation from the Spirit of Prophecy, followed by prayer, testimonies, and a benediction. Vary the plan of the service from week to week. If members are unable to assemble at the usual place for prayer meeting, home meetings may be of great benefit.

Business Meetings

The local church operates within defined roles in The Holy Seed Church structure. Within the context of those roles, the business meeting is the constituency meeting of the local church. Members in regular standing are encouraged to attend and are entitled to vote. A member under censure has no right to participate by voice or vote.

Business meetings shall be held at least once a year. The pastor, or the board in consultation with and support of the pastor, calls the meeting. Business meetings typically are announced a week or two in advance at the regular Sabbath worship service, with detail as to time and place. The pastor, an elder arranged by the pastor, or, in some cases, the conference president, serves as chairperson of the business meeting.

Each church decides what the quorum will be for future meetings.

Votes by proxy or letter are not permitted. Major items should be decided at a regular or specially called business meeting.

The business meeting has authority over the board and may delegate responsibilities to the board in addition to those already assigned by the

The business meeting agenda should include reports about the work of the church. At least once a year the agenda should include reports covering church activities. Based on those reports, a proposed plan of action for the next year, including an annual budget, should be presented for approval.

When possible, reports and plans for the next year should be presented in writing. In order to maintain a spirit of cooperation between the church and conference, the church shall secure counsel from conference officers on all major matters.

Conference and union officers (president, secretary, treasurer) or their designee may attend without vote (unless granted by the church) any business meeting of any church in their territory. An action to allow voting is not required if the officer is currently a member of that congregation.

SERVICES AND OTHER MEETINGS

Church Board and Its Meetings

Definition and Function

Every church must have a functioning board whose members have been elected during a church business meeting. Its chief concern is having an active discipleship plan in place, which includes both the spiritual nurture of the church and the work of planning and fostering evangelism.

Included in church board responsibilities are:

1. An active discipleship plan.
2. Evangelism in all of its phases.
3. Spiritual nurturing and mentoring of members.
4. Maintenance of doctrinal purity.
5. Upholding of Christian standards.
6. Recommending changes in church membership.
7. Oversight of church finances.
8. Protection and care of church properties.
9. Coordination of church departments.

The gospel commission of Jesus tells us that making disciples, which includes baptizing and teaching, is the primary function of the church (Matthew 28:18-20). It is, therefore, also the primary function of the board, which serves as the chief committee of the church. When the board devotes its first interests and highest energies to involving every member in proclaiming the good news and making disciples, most problems are alleviated or prevented, and a strong, positive influence is felt in the spiritual life and growth of members.

Spiritual Nurture

Christ's love for the Church needs to be manifested within the Church by His followers. True discipleship entails not only Biblical teaching (Matthew 28:20), but also a passionate commitment to loving our fellow believers unconditionally. This was the heart of Christ's message to His disciples as He faced the cross (John 15:9-13). Christ's command to them applies to us: that we "love one another." President William Simiyu powerful insight into this historical scene is still vital for us: "This love is the evidence of their discipleship." Therefore, it is one of the primary functions of the board to ensure that members are nurtured and mentored in a personal, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

Discipleship

The purpose of the Church as the body of Christ is to intentionally disciple members, so that they continue in an active and fruitful relationship with Christ and His Church. Discipleship is based on an ongoing, lifelong relationship with Jesus. The believer commits to “abiding in Christ” (John 15:8), to being trained for fruitful discipleship by sharing Jesus with others, as well as to leading other members to also be faithful disciples. The Church, individually and collectively, shares responsibility for ensuring that every church member remains part of the body of Christ.

Membership

The board is elected by the members at the time of the regular election officers. In addition to conference-appointed pastors, the church should elect a representative board that includes the following officers:

	Elders		World Youth Ministries leader
	Head deacon		Adventurer Club director
	Head deaconess		Ambassador Club leader
	Treasurer		Bible school coordinator
	Clerk		Children’s ministries leader
	Interest coordinator		Church music coordinator
	Family ministries leader		Sabbath School superintendent
	Health ministries leader		Women’s ministries leader
	Home and School Association leader		Personal ministries leader and secretary
	Pathfinder Club director		Young adults leader
	Stewardship ministries leader		
	Public Campus Ministries leader/coordinator		
	Publishing ministries coordinator		Religious liberty leader
	Communication committee chairperson or communication secretary		
	Education secretary/church school principal or head teacher		



World Community Services leader or Dorcus Society
leader World Men's coordinator

In some cases, depending on the size of the membership, the board may not include all of this list or may add additional members. The pastor appointed by the conference to serve the church always is a member of the board.

SERVICES AND OTHER MEETINGS

Officers

The chairperson of the board is the conference-appointed pastor. If the pastor prefers not to act in this capacity or is unable to be present, he/she may arrange for an elder to preside as chairperson.

The clerk serves as secretary of the board and is responsible for recording, presenting, and preserving the minutes of the meetings.

Meetings

Because the work of the board is vital to the life, health, and growth of the church, it is recommended that it meet at least once each month, more frequently if needed. It is well to fix the monthly meeting time for the same week and the same day each month. The board meeting is announced at the regular Sabbath worship service, and all board members are urged to attend.

Each church should determine at a business meeting the number of board members who must be present to constitute a quorum at future meetings. Votes by proxy or letter are not permitted.

Work of the Board

The board is responsible to:

1. Ensure that there is an active, ongoing discipleship plan in place, which includes both spiritual nurture and outreach ministries. This is the most important item for the board's attention.
2. Study membership lists and initiate plans for reconnecting (reclaiming) members who have separated from the church.
3. Train local church leadership in how to encourage intentional spiritual growth in themselves and others.
4. Evangelize the outreach (missionary) territory of the church. Once each quarter an entire meeting should be devoted to plans for evangelism. The board will study conference recommendations for evangelistic programs and methods and how they can be implemented locally. The pastor and the board will initiate and develop plans for public evangelistic meetings.

Coordinate outreach programs for all church departments, although each department develops its plans for outreach within its own sphere. To avoid conflict in timing, competition in securing volunteers, and to achieve maximum beneficial results, coordination is essential. Before completing and

announcing plans for any program, each department should submit its plans to the board for approval. The departments also report to the board on the progress and results of their outreach programs. The board may suggest how departmental programs can contribute to the preparation, conduct, and follow-up of a public evangelistic campaign.

5. Encourage the personal ministries department to enlist all members and children in some form of personal outreach (missionary) service. Training classes should be conducted in various lines of outreach ministry.

6. Encourage the interest coordinator to ensure that every interest is personally and promptly followed up by assigned laypersons.

7. Encourage each department to report at least quarterly to the board and to members at business meetings or in Sabbath meetings in regards to spiritual nurture and evangelism.

8. Receive regular reports. The board should consider details of church business and receive regular reports of the treasurer on the church's finances. The board should study the membership record and inquire into the spiritual standing of all members and provide for visits to sick, discouraged, or backslidden members. Other officers should periodically report.

9. Promote The Holy Seed Church Education.

Committees of the Board

The board should permit no other business to interfere with planning for evangelism. Should other business be too time-consuming, the board should appoint committees to care for specific areas of church business, such as finance or church building projects. Such committees will then make recommendations to the board.

Finance Committee

Each church should have a mission-driven, broadly-based consultative financial planning and budgeting process with a committee structure that can give detailed review to the ongoing financial planning and budgeting. In some cases, this may take the form of a finance committee. In other cases, in smaller churches, this process may be handled directly by the church board.

If the church establishes a separate committee for this purpose, the responsibilities should include reviewing budget requests and the review of the annual operating budget as well as a review of the financial position of the church as reflected in the financial statements. The approval of the budget and the review of the financial statement shall then be recommended to the church board and onward to the business meeting of the church for action.

SERVICES AND OTHER MEETINGS

School Board Meetings

The church school is usually supervised by a church school board. The church elects a chairperson to preside over meetings and a secretary to keep records of meetings and actions. This board should meet at regular times. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson. Some churches prefer to have the church board, or a subcommittee of the church board, also serve as the school board.

Home and School Association Meetings

The Home and School Association should meet monthly and coordinate the activities of home, school, and church. Attention should be given to the education of parents, as well as to assisting the school to obtain needed resources, such as room parents, books, teaching materials, and equipment.

Materials to assist Home and School leaders are available through the conference education department.

Youth Meetings

Leaders of the church's various youth groups should schedule regular meetings that involve the church's young people in meaningful activities that will tie them closer to the church and train them for useful service.

Senior Youth Ministries Meetings (Ambassadors and Young Adults)

Senior Youth Ministries meetings should convene on a regular schedule and focus on developing the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical characteristics of the church's youth. Meetings also provide Christian social interaction and witnessing programs supporting the soul-winning plans of the church. For resources

Public Campus Ministries Meetings

Where the church has appointed a Public Campus Ministries director/coordinator, meetings should be organized to care for the special needs of public college/university students in consultation with and support of The Holy Seed Church Youth Ministries Committee.

Junior Youth Ministries Meetings (Adventurers and Pathfinders)

Junior Youth Ministries meetings are similar in purpose to Senior Youth Ministries, but involve junior youth. Adventurer Club meetings provide specialized programs for primary/early school-age children designed to complement and strengthen parental involvement in early childhood development, while Pathfinder Club meetings provide specialized indoor

and outdoor activities for the holistic development of children from 7 to 13 years old. Meetings and other activities are to be carried out according to conference policies as outlined in the club manuals and in coordination with other youth-related and family-related organizations of the church.

CHAPTER 11

Finance

The biblical plan for the support of the work of God is by the tithes and offerings of His people. The Lord says, “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house” (Malachi 3:10). The Church has followed this plan from its earliest days.

“The system of tithes and offerings was intended to impress the minds of men with a great truth—that God is the source of every blessing to His creatures, and that to Him man’s gratitude is due for the good gifts of His providence.”

“Tithes and offerings for God are an acknowledgment of His claim on us by creation, and they are also an acknowledgment of His claim by redemption. Because all our power is derived from Christ, these offerings are to flow from us to God. They are to keep ever before us the claim of redemption, the greatest of all claims, and the one that involves every other.” “The tithe is sacred, reserved by God for Himself. It is to be brought into His treasury to be used to sustain the gospel laborers in their work.”

“He has given His people a plan for raising sums sufficient to make the enterprise self-sustaining. God’s plan in the tithing system is beautiful in its simplicity and equality. All may take hold of it in faith and courage, for it is divine in its origin. In it are combined simplicity and utility. Every man, woman, and youth may become a treasurer for the Lord and may be an agent to meet the demands upon the treasury. Says the apostle: ‘Let every one of you laid by him in store, as God hath prospered him.’ ”

“God has made the proclamation of the gospel dependent upon the labors and the gifts of His people. Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the Lord’s work. Of the means entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion—the tenth. He leaves all free to say whether or not they will give more than this.”

“God has given special direction as to the use of the tithe. He does not design that His work shall be crippled for want of means. The portion that God has reserved for Himself is not to be diverted to any other purpose than that which He has specified. Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, nor to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord’s work.”

Stewardship

Christians are God's stewards, entrusted with His goods and, as His partners, responsible to manage them in harmony with His guidelines and principles. The divine counsel is that as His stewards, we are to "be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2). Though the question of stewardship covers many aspects of Christian life and experience, without doubt the stewardship of our means is vitally important. It concerns the entire Church family and involves our recognition of the sovereignty of God, His ownership of all things, and the bestowal of His grace upon our hearts.

While this aspect of Christian stewardship concerns our material possessions, it nevertheless reacts upon our Christian experience. The Lord requires certain things of us, in order that He may do certain things for us.

Our yielding obedience to what our heavenly Father requires places this phase of stewardship upon a high spiritual plane. He does not arbitrarily demand either that we serve Him or that we recognize Him with our gifts. But He has so arranged that when we work in harmony with Him in these things there will flow to our own hearts great spiritual blessings.

"God desires all His stewards to be exact in following divine arrangements. They are not to offset the Lord's plans by performing some deed of charity or giving some gift or some offering when or how they, the human agents, shall see fit. It is a very poor policy for men to seek to improve on God's plan, and invent a makeshift, averaging up their good impulses on this and that occasion, and offsetting them against God's requirements. God calls upon all to give their influence to His own arrangement."

Tithe

In recognition of the biblical plan and the solemn privilege and responsibility that rest upon members as children of God and members of His body, the Church, all are encouraged to faithfully return a tithe, one tenth of their increase or personal income, into the denomination's treasury.

Tithe shall not be used in any way by the local church, but held in trust and remitted to the conference treasurer. Thus tithe from all the churches flows into the conference treasury, and percentages are forwarded to the next-higher level in accordance with General Conference and division working policies to meet the expenses of conducting the work of God in their respective spheres of responsibility and activity.

FINANCE

These policies have been developed for the gathering and disbursing of funds in all the world and for the conducting of the business affairs of the cause. The financial and business aspects of the work are of great importance. They cannot be separated from the proclamation of the message of salvation. They are indeed an integral part of it.

Systematic Benevolence and Unity

The financial plan of the Church serves a larger purpose than appears in its financial and statistical reports. The system of sharing the funds with the world fields, as outlined by General Conference Working Policy, serves a wonderful purpose of unifying the Church's spiritual work throughout the world.

How Tithe Is to Be Used

Tithe is held sacred for the work of the ministry, for Bible teaching, and for the support of conference administration in the care of the churches and of field outreach (missionary) endeavors. Tithe shall not be spent on other work, on paying church or institutional debts, or on building programs, except as approved under **General Conference Working Policy**. For more information on the use of tithe. Malachi 3:1-10

“A very plain, definite message has been given to me for our people. I am bidden to tell them that they are making a mistake in applying the tithe to various objects which, though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied. Those who make this use of the tithe are departing from the Lord's arrangement. God will judge for these things.”

How Tithe Is Handled

Tithe is the Lord's and is to be brought as an act of worship to the conference treasury through the church in which the person's membership is held. Where unusual circumstances exist, members should consult with conference officers.

Church and Conference Officers to Set Example

Elders and other officers, as well as the pastor and conference and institutional employees, are expected to set good leadership examples by returning tithe. No one shall be continued as either a church officer or conference employee who does not conform to this standard of leadership.

Offerings

In addition to the tithe, Scripture emphasizes our obligation to bring offerings to the Lord. The withholding of offerings is classed with withholding tithe and is called robbery (**Malachi 3:8**). Since the Church's earliest days, members have given liberal offerings that have blessed and prospered God's work.

In addition to the traditional calendar of offerings program, where each offering taken is for a specific purpose, the General Conference has approved the combined offering system and the personal giving plan. The division committee is authorized to determine which plan(s) will be used in its territory.

Sabbath School Offerings

The Church's most widely used and successful method of regular systematic giving is through Sabbath School offerings, which are devoted to world mission work.

Other Offerings

Other offerings are taken from time to time for world mission work and for general and local projects. When any offering is taken, all money collected, unless otherwise indicated by the donor, shall be counted as part of that particular offering.

Special Gifts to Fields

The financial support of the worldwide work of the Church is based on the budget system. Appropriations are made to the various fields on the basis of budgeted needs. This is a fair and equitable method of distributing the funds.

Where special gifts outside the regular budget plan are made to a particular field, a disparity is created to the disadvantage of other fields. If such gifts are given for the purpose of starting new work, the work thus started may languish when the special gift is used up, or it may have to be included in the budget for its future support. Thus other fields, with perhaps greater needs but without the opportunity of making them known, would be deprived of their equitable part of general funds that would be diverted to the work started by special gifts.

History has proved the wisdom of having members generously and loyally give their offerings and gifts through the accepted channels and knowing that every field shares in the benefits of their giving.

Assisting the Poor and Needy

Offerings for the poor and needy are taken to assist the members who require help. A reserve fund should be kept for such emergency cases. In addition, the church should take a benevolent attitude toward all in need, and the board may make appropriations from this fund to assist the church's health and welfare work for families in the community.

Church Budget for Local Expenses

The most satisfactory method of providing for church expenses is the budget plan. Before the beginning of the new budget year, the board should prepare a budget of expenses for church activities during the next year. The budget should include all income and expenses, including those related to all departments. It should provide for such projected costs as utilities, insurance, maintenance, janitor service, funds for the poor and needy, and church school expense.

The budget should be presented to the church for its study and adoption, and for plans to assure that funds shall be provided to balance the budget during the coming year. Funds to meet the church expense budget may be raised by offerings or subscriptions. Members should be urged to support their local church in proportion to their financial circumstances.

FINANCE

General Financial Counsel

Regulation of Soliciting Funds

The following are regulations for soliciting funds:

1. No conference, church, or institution, without special counsel and arrangement, shall plan work requiring solicitation of funds from outside its territory. Any solicitation within its territory shall be in harmony with local, union, division, and General Conference policies. No authority is granted to denominational employees representing special interests in one part of the field to solicit help in any other part of the field or in any other conference without arrangement with and written authorization from conference officers where the fund-raising would take place.

2. The following principles protect churches from unauthorized, fraudulent, and undenominational solicitation:

a. Pastors and officers shall not grant the privilege of the pulpit to persons for fund-raising who have not been recognized or recommended by the conference. No permission shall be granted to solicit funds either publicly or privately without such recognition.

b. All funds contributed for any cause in response to appeals shall be passed through regular church channels.

c. Conference and church officers shall take such steps as may be necessary to prevent unauthorized or illegal public solicitation.

3. No campaign other than the Annual Appeal (Ingathering or equivalent appeal), which involves using Appeal literature and containers with authorized Appeal labels, shall be conducted for the solicitation of money for either home or overseas mission work. Unions and conferences should prevent violations of this regulation.

4. Interdivision employees visiting their home churches or otherwise communicating with their home bases are asked to solicit funds only for enterprises included in the budget of appropriations, working in cooperation with churches and conferences to raise the funds required to meet the appropriations on which our world mission work depends. All such funds shall be passed through regular channels.

Questionable Methods for Raising Funds

The local church should take a strong stand against questionable methods for raising money.

“When money is raised for religious purposes, to what means do many churches resort? To bazaars, suppers, fancy fairs, even to lotteries and like devices. Often the place set apart for God’s worship is desecrated by feasting and drinking, buying, selling, and merrymaking. Respect for the house of God and reverence for His worship are lessened in the minds of the youth. The barriers of self-restraint are weakened. Selfishness, appetite, the love of display, are appealed to, and they strengthen as they are indulged.”

“As God’s work extends, calls for help will come more and more frequently. . . . If professing Christians would faithfully bring to God their tithes and offerings, His treasury would be full. There would then be no occasion to resort to fairs, lotteries, or parties of pleasure to secure funds for the support of the gospel.”

Tithes and Offerings Not a Personal Trust Fund

Tithes and offerings donated by members to the Church do not create a trust fund for the future benefit of the givers. These funds shall be used for the current purposes for which they are given.

Financing Building Plans

Churches considering the purchase or erection of church or other buildings, or incurring debt of any kind, should counsel with conference officers before undertaking such financial obligations. In the purchase or building of church properties, in no case shall commitments be made or building operations begun until approval has been given by the conference and union committees. These committees will approve only after they have assured themselves that the financial arrangements conform to established policies. In giving financial counsel, the conference committee should consider the size of the congregation, its financial strength, and the location of the building.

FINANCE

Handling and Accounting for Funds

The gathering and handling of funds for the Lord’s work is a sacred responsibility. The proper channel through which these funds flow is first from members to the local church, where the treasurer receives the funds.

The treasurer disburses funds intended for local church purposes. The treasurer holds in trust and passes on to the conference treasurer funds intended for conference or general purposes. The treasurer of the local church works under the direction of the board. Treasurers of any level (**local church, conference, union, or division/General Conference**) do not act independently. They disburse funds only by action or authority of responsible committees.

Auditing

Every set of accounting records, from those of the local church to those of the General Conference, are subject to audit by auditors appointed for the purpose. This rule, which also applies to every denominationally affiliated institution, provides the maximum of safety in the handling of funds.

CHAPTER 12

Standards of Christian Living

High Calling of God in Christ Jesus

The Christian's life is not a slight modification or improvement, but a complete transformation of nature. This means a death to self and sin and a resurrection to a new life as a new person in Christ Jesus.

The heart of the Christian becomes the dwelling place of Christ by faith. This is brought about by "the contemplation of Christ, beholding Christ, ever cherishing the dear Savior as our very best and honored Friend, so that we would not in any action grieve and offend Him". Thus Christians "have the companionship of the divine presence," and as we realize that presence, "our thoughts are brought into captivity to Jesus Christ" and our habits made to conform to the divine standard.

We should bear in mind that "as a shield from temptation and an inspiration to purity and truth, no other influence can equal the sense of God's presence."

"No part of our conduct escapes observation. We cannot hide our ways from the Most High. Every act, every word, every thought, is as distinctly marked as though there were only one person in the whole world, and the attention of heaven were centered upon him."

God's love extends to everyone and to His children in particular. His ear is ever open to the appeals of His people, those who have turned from the world and given themselves to Him. Out of this sacred relationship grows a respect and a reverence that is manifested every day and everywhere.

As Christians we are members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. Therefore, we should say no word and perform no act that would bring dishonor upon "that noble name by which you are called" (James 2:7). We are reformers. In every phase of life we should "study carefully the divine-human character and constantly inquire, 'What would Jesus do were He in my place?'" This should be the measurement of our duty." Through the remnant Church God will demonstrate to the entire universe the adequacy of the gospel to save men and women from the power of sin. As members of that Church we should emphasize again the great Bible standards and renew allegiance to these God-given principles.

We should come up to the high standards of the Christian life and be separated from the world. To this end we would heed the Lord's

admonition: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

STANDARDS OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

Bible Study and Prayers

Spiritual life is maintained by spiritual food. We must maintain the habit of devotional Bible study and prayer if we are to perfect holiness. In a time when a flood of communication pours forth from the printed page, radio, television, the Internet, and other modern mass media, when thousands of voices plead for a hearing, we must close our eyes and our ears to much that seeks entrance to our minds and devote ourselves to God’s Book, the Book of all books, the Book of life—the Bible. If we cease to be the people of the Book, we are lost, and our mission has failed. Only as we daily talk to God in prayer and listen to His voice can we hope to live the life that is “hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians. 3:3) and finish His work.

Prayer is a two-way conversation in which we listen to and talk to God. “Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend.” “Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite,” and “without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path.”

The home is the cornerstone of the Church. A Christian home is a house of prayer. “Fathers and mothers, however pressing your business, do not fail to gather your family around God’s altar. Those who would live patient, loving, cheerful lives must pray.”

Community Relationships

While our “citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20), we are yet in the world as an integral part of human society and must share with our fellow citizens certain responsibilities in the common problems of life. Wherever we live, as children of God we should be recognized as outstanding citizens in our Christian integrity and in working for the common good.

While our highest responsibility is to the Church and the gospel commission, we should support by our service and our means, as far as possible and consistent with our beliefs, efforts for social order and betterment. Even though we must stand apart from political and social strife, we should always, quietly and firmly, maintain an uncompromising stand for justice and right in civic affairs, along with full adherence to our religious convictions. It is our sacred responsibility to be loyal citizens of the nations to which we belong, rendering “to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21).

Sabbath keeping

The Sabbath is a token of God's love to humanity. It is a memorial of God's power in the original creation and also a sign of His power to recreate and sanctify our lives (Ezekiel 20:12), and its observance is an evidence of our loyalty to Him and of our fellowship with Him.

The Sabbath holds a special place in our lives. The seventh day of the week, from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday (Leviticus. 23:32), is a gift from God, a sign of His grace in time. It is a privilege, a special appointment with the One who loves us and whom we love, a sacred time set aside by God's eternal law, a day of delight for worshipping God and sharing with others (Isaiah 58:13). We welcome the Sabbath with joy and gratitude. "The Sabbath—oh!—make it the sweetest, the most blessed day of the whole week."

"The Sabbath is God's time, not ours; when we trespass upon it we are stealing from God. God has given us the whole of six days in which to do our work, and has reserved only one to Himself. This should be a day of blessing to us—a day when we should lay aside all our secular matters and center our thoughts upon God and heaven.

"We are not to teach our children that they must not be happy on the Sabbath, that it is wrong to walk out of doors. Oh, no. Christ led His disciples out by the lakeside on the Sabbath day and taught them. His sermons on the Sabbath were not always preached within enclosed walls."

"God's love has set a limit to the demands of toil. Over the Sabbath He places His merciful hand. In His own day He preserves for the family opportunity for communion with Him, with nature, and with one another."

The Sabbath hours belong to God and are to be used for Him alone. Our own pleasure, words, business, and thoughts should find no place in the observance of the Lord's day (Isaiah 58:13). Let us gather in the family circle at sunset and welcome the Sabbath with prayer and song, and let us close the day with prayer and expressions of gratitude for His wondrous love. The Sabbath is a special day for worship in our homes and churches, a day of joy to ourselves and our children, a day in which we can learn more of God through the Bible and the great lesson book of nature. It is a time we can visit the sick and work for the salvation of souls. We should lay aside the ordinary affairs of the six working days and perform no unnecessary work. We should not let secular media occupy our time on God's holy day.

"The Sabbath is not intended to be a period of useless inactivity. The law forbids secular labor on the rest day of the Lord; the toil that gains a livelihood must cease; no labor for worldly pleasure or profit is lawful upon that day; but as God ceased His labor of creating, and rested upon the Sabbath and blessed it, so man is to leave the occupations of his daily life, and devote those sacred hours to healthful rest, to worship, and to holy deeds."

STANDARDS OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

A program of activities in harmony with the spirit of true Sabbath keeping will make this blessed day the happiest and best of all the week for ourselves and for our children—a veritable foretaste of our heavenly rest.

Reverence in the Place of Worship

Christians who appreciate God’s omnipotence, His holiness, and His love will always manifest a spirit of deep reverence for God, His Word, and His worship. “Humility and reverence should characterize the deportment of all who come into the presence of God.” We will recognize that “the hour and place of prayer are sacred, because God is there.” We will come to the house of worship, not carelessly, but in the spirit of meditation and prayer, and will avoid unnecessary conversation.

As parents we should reverently instruct our children how they should behave in “the house of God” (1 Timothy 3:15). Faithful instruction and discipline of youth at home, Sabbath School, and church regarding reverence for God and His worship will go far in holding their loyalty in after years.

Pastors who sense the sacredness of God’s service will, by example, instruction, and conduct in the pulpit, foster reverence, simplicity, good order, and decorum in the church.

Health and Temperance

Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

“Both mental and spiritual vigor are in great degree dependent upon physical strength and activity; whatever promotes physical health promotes the development of a strong mind and a well-balanced character.”

For this reason, we live intelligently in accordance with health principles of physical exercise, respiration, sunshine, pure air, use of water, sleep, and rest. By conviction we choose to eat healthfully, wear suitable clothing, practice cleanliness, engage in proper recreation, and freely choose to follow the principles of health, self-control, and wholesome diet.

Therefore we abstain from all forms of alcohol, tobacco, and addictive drugs. We strive to preserve our physical and psychological balance by avoiding any excess.

Health reform and the teaching of health and temperance are inseparable parts of the Church’s message. Instruction came to us through the Lord’s messenger “that those who are keeping His commandments must be brought into sacred relationship to Himself, and that by temperance in eating and drinking they must keep mind and body in the most favorable condition for service.” Also, “it is the Lord’s design that the restoring influence of health reform shall be a part of the last great effort to proclaim the gospel message.”

We belong to God, body, soul, and spirit. It is therefore our religious duty to observe the laws of health, both for our own well-being and happiness and for more efficient service to God and society. We must keep our appetites under control. God has furnished us with a liberal variety of foods sufficient to satisfy every dietary need. “Fruits, grains, and vegetables, prepared in a simple way, make, with milk or cream, the most healthful diet.”

When we practice the principles of healthful living, we will not feel the need for stimulants. Nature’s law forbids our use of intoxicants and narcotics of any kind. From the early days of this movement abstinence from the use of liquor and tobacco has been a condition of membership.

God has given us great light on the principles of health, and modern scientific research has abundantly verified these principles.

Dress for women and men

As The Holy Seed Church Christians we have been called out from the world. Our religion must have a molding influence on all our activities. Our habits must stem from principle and not from the example of the world. Customs and fashions may change, but principles of right conduct remain the same. Early in our history President William Simiyu wrote that the purpose of Christian dress is “to protect the people of God from the corrupting influence of the world, as well as to promote physical and moral health.” He also counsels that we should avoid gaudy display and profuse ornamentation, fads and extreme fashions, particularly those transgressing the laws of modesty, and that our clothing should be, when possible, “of good quality, of becoming colors, and suited for service” “rather than display.” Our attire should be characterized by modesty, “beauty,” “grace,” and “appropriateness of natural simplicity.” Isaiah 3:16-26, 1st Corinthians 11:2-16, Deuteronomy 22:5.

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The people of God should always be found among the conservatives in dress, and will not let “the dress question fill the mind.”

“To dress plainly, abstaining from display of jewelry and ornaments of every kind is in keeping with our faith.” It is clearly taught in the Scriptures that the wearing of jewelry is contrary to the will of God.

The apostle Paul admonishes us to dress ourselves “in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing” (1 Timothy 2:9). The wearing of ornaments of jewelry is a bid for attention not in keeping with Christian self-forgetfulness.

In some countries and cultures the custom of wearing the wedding ring is considered imperative, having become, in the minds of the people, a criterion of virtue, and hence it is not regarded as an ornament. Under such circumstances we do not condemn the practice.

Let us remember that it is not outward adornment that expresses true Christian character, but “the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God” (1 Peter 3:3, 4). We should avoid the use of cosmetics not in keeping with good taste and the principles of Christian modesty.

We should observe cleanliness and Christ like deportment as we seek at all times to please and rightly represent Christ our Lord. Christian parents by example, instruction, and authority should lead their sons and daughters to attire themselves modestly and thus win the respect and confidence of those who know them. Let us consider ourselves well dressed only when we meet the demands of modesty by wearing tasteful, conservative clothing.

Simplicity

Simplicity has been a fundamental feature of the Church from its beginning. We must continue to be a people called to live a simple life. Increase of pomp in religion always parallels a decline in spiritual power.

As “the life of Jesus presented a marked contrast” to the display and ostentation of His time so the simplicity and power of our message must be in marked contrast to the worldly display of our day. The Lord condemns “needless, extravagant expenditure of money to gratify pride and love of display.” In harmony with these principles, simplicity and economy should characterize our graduating exercises, our weddings, and all other church services.

Modern Media

Like our bodies, our inner beings need wholesome nourishment for renewal and strengthening (2 Corinthians 4:6). Our minds are the measure of our persons. Food for our minds is of the utmost importance in developing character and in carrying out our life’s purposes. For this reason we should carefully evaluate our mental habits. What we choose to read, hear, and watch, whether by book or magazine, radio or television, the Internet, or other modern media shapes and impacts our character.

Books and other literature are among the most valuable means of education and culture, but these must be well chosen and rightly used. There is a wealth of good literature, but equally there is a flood of literature, often in most attractive guise, that damages minds and morals. The tales of wild adventure and of moral laxness, whether fact or fiction, however presented, are unfit for Christians of any age.

“Those who indulge the habit of racing through an exciting story are simply crippling their mental strength and disqualifying their minds for vigorous thought and research.” Along with other evil results from the habit of reading fiction, we are told that “it unfits the soul to contemplate the great problems of duty and destiny” and “creates distaste for life’s practical duties.”

Radio, television, and the Internet have changed the whole atmosphere of our modern world and have brought us within easy contact with the life, thought, and activities of the entire globe. They can be great educational agencies through which we can enlarge our knowledge of world events and enjoy important discussions and the best in music.

Unfortunately, however, modern mass media also can bring to their audiences almost continuous theatrical and other performances with influences that are neither wholesome nor uplifting. If we are not discriminating, they will bring sordid programs right into our homes.

Safety for ourselves and our children is found in a determination, by God's help, to follow the admonition of the apostle Paul: "Finally, whatever things are true noble just pure lovely of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

STANDARDS OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

Recreation and Entertainment

Recreation is a purposeful refreshing of the powers of body and mind. A vigorous, wholesome mind will not require worldly amusement but will find a renewal of strength in good recreation.

"Many of the amusements popular in the world today, even with those who claim to be Christians, tend to the same end as did those of the heathen. There are indeed few among them that Satan does not turn to account in destroying souls. Through the drama he has worked for ages to excite passion and glorify vice. The opera, with its fascinating display and bewildering music, the masquerade, the dance, the card table, Satan employs to break down the barriers of principle and open the door to sensual indulgence. In every gathering for pleasure where pride is fostered or appetite indulged, where one is led to forget God and lose sight of eternal interests, there Satan is binding his chains about the soul."

We must avoid anything that dramatizes, graphically presents, or suggests the sins and crimes of humanity—murder, adultery, robbery, and similar evils, which to a large degree are responsible for the breakdown of morality. Instead, we should find delight in God's great world of nature and in the romance of human agencies and divine workings.

Social dancing is another form of amusement with an evil influence. "The amusement of dancing is a school of depravity, a fearful curse to society." (See 2 Corinthians. 6:15-18; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; 2 Timothy 2:19-22; Ephesians 5:8-11; Colossians 3:5-10.)

Recreation is essential. But instead of joining the multitudes who are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:4), we should endeavor to make our friendships and recreations both Christ-centered and church-centered.

Music

“Music was made to serve a holy purpose, to lift the thoughts to that which is pure, noble, and elevating, and to awaken in the soul devotion and gratitude to God.” Jesus “held communion with heaven in song.”

Music is one of the highest arts. Good music not only gives us pleasure but elevates our minds and cultivates our finest qualities. God often has used spiritual songs to touch the hearts of sinners and lead to repentance. On the contrary, debased music breaks down morality and draws us away from our relationship with God.

We should exercise great care in the choice of music in our homes, social gatherings, schools, and churches. Any melody partaking of the nature of jazz, rock, or related hybrid forms, or any language expressing foolish or trivial sentiments, will be shunned.

Conclusion

Standing amid the perils of the last days, bearing the responsibility of speedily carrying the last offer of salvation to the world, and facing a judgment that will culminate in the establishment of universal righteousness, let us consecrate ourselves body, soul, and spirit to God, determining to maintain the high standards of living that must characterize those who wait for the return of their Lord.

CHAPTER 13

Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage Social Relationships

God gives us the social instinct for our pleasure and benefit. “By mutual contact minds receive polish and refinement; by social intercourse, acquaintances are formed and friendships contracted which result in a unity of heart and an atmosphere of love which is pleasing in the sight of heaven.”

Proper association of the sexes is beneficial to both. Such association should be conducted upon a high plane and with regard for the social conventions that have been prescribed for our protection. It is the purpose of Satan to pervert every good thing, and the perversion of the best often leads to that which is worst.

Today the ideals that make these social relationships safe and happy are breaking down to an alarming degree. Under the influence of passion

unrestrained by moral and religious principle, the association of the sexes has to a large extent degenerated into freedom and license, sexual perversions, incest, and sexual abuse of children.

Millions have abandoned biblical standards of conduct and are bartering the sacred experiences of marriage and parenthood for the bitter, remorseful fruits of sin. Not only are these evils damaging the familial structure of society, but the breakdown of the family in turn fosters and breeds these and other evils. The results in distorted lives of children and youth are distressing. The effects on society are both disastrous and cumulative.

These evils have become more open and threatening to the ideals and purposes of the Christian home. Adultery, pornography, abuse of any kind (including sexual abuse of spouses, children, and the elderly), incest, and homosexual and lesbian practices are among the perversions of God's original plan and illustrate the brokenness of humanity. As the intent of clear passages of Scripture (see Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:22, 29; 20:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10; Romans 1:20-32) is denied and as their warnings are rejected in exchange for human opinions, much uncertainty and confusion prevail. Since ancient times and civilizations Satan's plan always has been to cause people to forget that God is their Creator and that when He created humankind in His own image, He created both "male and female" (Genesis 1:27).

Though God's Word alerts us to the degrading results of the world's obsession with sex and the pursuit of sensual pleasure, Christ came to destroy the works of Satan and reestablish the relationship of humans with their Creator. Though fallen in Adam and captive to sin, when we are in Christ we receive full pardon and the right to choose anew the better way to complete renewal. By means of the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit, we all may be freed from the grip of sinful practices as we are restored to the image of our Creator. As parents and spiritual guides of youth, we must gain a sympathetic understanding of their problems, seek to provide for them a Christian social environment, and spiritually draw near to them so we can impart the ideals, inspiration, and power of Christianity.

Whatever may be the mistakes of our parents or peers, it is our responsibility and privilege to know and to hold the highest ideals of Christian manhood and womanhood. We can build Christian character that will buttress us against evil and make us uplifting influences in society by reverent Bible study, a deep acquaintance with the works of nature, rigorous guarding of the sacred powers of the body, earnest purpose, constancy in prayer, and sincere, unselfish ministry to others.

Social gatherings for both young and old should be occasions for happy fellowship and improvement of the powers of mind and soul, not for light and trifling amusement. Good music, elevating conversation, good recitations, suitable still or motion pictures, games carefully selected for educational value, and, above all, the making and using of plans for outreach (missionary) effort will bless and strengthen the lives of all.

The Youth Ministries Department of the General Conference has published helpful information and practical suggestions for the conduct of social gatherings and for guidance in other social relations.

Our homes are by far the best places for social gatherings. In large centers where it is impossible to hold such gatherings in homes and where there is no social center of our own, we should secure a place free from influences destructive of Christian standards, rather than a place ordinarily used for commercial amusements and sports, such as social halls and skating rinks, which can suggest an atmosphere contrary to Christian standards.

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

Chaperonage

Chaperonage, the happy and cordial association of those older in years with young people, is one of the most wholesome influences in the lives of children and youth. “There is danger that both parents and teachers fail to come sufficiently into social relation with their children or scholars.” It is the duty of our homes, schools, and other institutions to care for the morals and reputation of those placed in our charge. As parents we should strongly support the regulations of the institutions serving our youth and children, and we should institute equal safeguards in our homes. To make this possible, we must learn how to be welcome companions of our children. But it rests chiefly upon the young people themselves to make chaperonage an honored and happy relationship.

Courtship

Courtship is recognized as a preparatory period during which a man and a woman, already mutually attracted, become more thoroughly acquainted with each other in preparation for intended marriage.

“Let those who are contemplating marriage weigh every sentiment and watch every development of character in the one with whom they think to unite their life destiny. Let every step toward a marriage alliance be characterized by modesty, simplicity, sincerity, and an earnest purpose to please and honor God. Marriage affects the afterlife both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will make no plans that God cannot approve.”

Failure to follow these principles in Christian courtship may lead to tragedy. Unity of husband and wife in ideals and purposes is a requisite to a happy and successful home. Differences of partners regarding religion are likely to mar the happiness of the home and lead to confusion, perplexity, and failure in child rearing. The Bible advises, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

“The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing

wherever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fear of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities.”

Worship of God, Sabbath keeping, recreation, association, use of financial resources, and training of children are components of happy family relationships. Because differences in these areas can often lead to a deterioration of these relationships, to discouragement, and even to

Complete loss of Christian experience, an adequate preparation for marriage should include premarital pastoral counseling in these areas.

“‘Can two walk together, except they be agreed?’ Amos 3:3. The happiness and prosperity of the marriage relation depends upon the unity of the parties; but between the believer and the unbeliever there is a radical difference of tastes, inclinations, and purposes. They are serving two masters, between whom there can be no concord. However pure and correct one’s principles may be, the influence of an unbelieving companion will have a tendency to lead away from God.”

The Spirit of Prophecy consistently counsels against marriage between “the believer and the unbeliever” and further cautions against uniting with fellow Christians who have “not accepted the truth for this time.” Marriages are more likely to endure, and family life to fulfill the divine plan, if husband and wife are united and are bound together by common spiritual values and lifestyles. For these reasons the Church strongly discourages marriage between The Holy Seed Church and a member of another religion and strongly urges its pastors not to perform such marriages.

The Church recognizes that it is the prerogative of each individual member to make the final decision relative to the choice of a marriage partner. However, it is the hope of the Church that if the member chooses a partner who is not a member of the Church, the couple will realize and appreciate that The Holy Seed Church pastor, who has covenanted to uphold the principles outlined above, should not be expected to perform the marriage.

If a member does enter into such a marriage, the church is to demonstrate love and concern with the purpose of encouraging the couple toward complete unity in Christ.

Marriage

Marriage is a divine institution established by God Himself before the Fall, when everything, including marriage, was “very good” (Genesis 1:31).

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). “God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. ‘Marriage is honorable’; it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise.”

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

God intended the marriage of Adam and Eve to be the pattern for all future marriages, and Christ endorsed this original concept: “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:4-6). Marriage, thus instituted by God, is a monogamous, heterosexual relationship between one male and one female.

As such, marriage is a public, lawfully binding lifelong commitment of a man and a woman to each other and between the couple and God (Mark 10:2-9; Romans 7:2). Paul indicates that the commitment that Christ has for the church is a model of the relationship between husband and wife (Ephesians 5:31, 32). God intended marriage to be as permanent as Christ’s relationship with the church.

Sexual intimacy within marriage is a sacred gift from God to the human family. It is an integral part of marriage, reserved for marriage only (Genesis 2:24; Proverbs 5:5-20). Such intimacy, designed to be shared exclusively between husband and wife, promotes ever-increasing closeness, happiness, and security, and provides for the perpetuation of the human race.

Unity in marriage is achieved by mutual respect and love. No one is superior (Ephesians 5:21-28). “Marriage, a union for life, is a symbol of the union between Christ and His church. The spirit that Christ manifests toward the church is the spirit that husband and wife are to manifest toward each other.” God’s Word condemns violence in personal relationships (Genesis 6:11, 13; Psalms 11:5; Isaiah 58:4, 5; Romans 13:10; Galatians 5:19-21). It is the spirit of Christ to love and accept, to seek to affirm and build others up, rather than to abuse or demean them (Rom. 12:10; 14:19; Ephesians 4:26; 5:28, 29; Colossians 3:8-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:11). There is no room among Christ’s followers for tyrannical control and the abuse of power (Matthew 20:25-28; Ephesians 6:4). Violence in the setting of marriage and family is abhorrent.

“Neither husband nor wife is to make a plea for ruler ship. The Lord has laid down the principle that is to guide in this matter. The husband is to cherish his wife as Christ cherishes the church. And the wife is to respect and love her husband. Both are to cultivate the spirit of kindness, being determined never to grieve or injure the other.”

The entrance of sin adversely affected marriage. When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost the oneness that they had known with God and with each other (Genesis 3:6-24). Their relationship became marked with guilt, shame,

blame, and pain. Wherever sin reigns, its sad effects on marriage include alienation, unfaithfulness, neglect, abuse, sexual perversion, domination of one partner by the other, violence, separation, desertion, and divorce.

Marriages involving more than one husband and one wife are also an expression of the effects of sin on the institution of marriage. Such marriages, though practiced in Old Testament times, are not in harmony with the divine design. God's plan for marriage requires His people to transcend the mores of popular culture that conflict with the biblical view.

The Christian concept of marriage includes the following:

1. ***Divine Ideal to Be Restored in Christ***

In redeeming the world from sin and its consequences, God seeks to restore marriage to its original ideal. This is envisioned for the lives of those who have been born again into Christ's kingdom, those whose hearts are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit and who have as their primary purpose the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. (See also 1 Peter 3:7.)

2. ***Oneness and Equality to Be Restored in Christ***

The gospel emphasizes the love and submission of husband and wife to one another (1 Corinthians 7:3, 4; Ephesians 5:21). The model for the husband's leadership is the self-sacrificial love and service that Christ gives to the Church (Ephesians 5:24, 25). Both Peter and Paul speak about the need for respect in the marriage relationship (1 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:22, 23).

3. ***Grace Available for All***

God seeks to restore to wholeness and reconcile to Himself all who have failed to attain the divine standard (2 Corinthians 5:19). This includes those who have experienced broken marriage relationships.

4. ***Role of the Church***

Moses in the Old Testament and Paul in the New Testament dealt with the problems caused by broken marriages (Deuteronomy 24:1-5; 1 Corinthians 7:11). Both, while upholding and affirming the ideal, worked constructively and redemptive with those who had fallen short of the divine standard. Similarly, the Church today is called to uphold and affirm God's ideal for marriage and, at the same time, to be a forgiving, reconciling, healing community, showing understanding and compassion when brokenness occurs.

Divorce

Divorce is contrary to God's original purpose in creating marriage (Matthew 19:3-8; Mark 10:2-9), but the Bible is not silent about it. Because divorce occurred as part of the fallen human experience, biblical legislation was given to limit the damage it caused (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). The Bible

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consistently seeks to elevate marriage and to discourage divorce by describing the joys of married love and faithfulness (Proverbs 5:18-20;

Song of Solomon 2:16; 4:9-5:1), by referring to the marriage-like relationship of God with His people (Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah. 3:1), by focusing on the possibilities of forgiveness and marital renewal (Hosea 3:1-3), and by indicating God's abhorrence of divorce and the misery it causes (Malachi 2:15, 16). Jesus restored the creation view of marriage as a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman and between the couple and God (Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9). Much biblical instruction affirms marriage and seeks to correct problems that tend to weaken or destroy the foundation of marriage (Ephesians 5:21-33; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:7).

Marriage rests on principles of love, loyalty, exclusiveness, trust, and support upheld by both partners in obedience to God (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:6; Corinthians 13; Ephesians 5:21-29; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7).

When these principles are violated, Scripture acknowledges that tragic circumstances can destroy marriage.

Divine grace is the only remedy for the brokenness of divorce. When marriage fails, former partners should be encouraged to examine their experience and to seek God's will for their lives. God provides comfort to those who have been wounded. God also accepts the repentance of individuals who commit the most destructive sins, even those that carry with them irreparable consequences (2 Samuel 11; 12; Psalms 34:18; 86:5; Joel 2:12, 13; John 8:2-11; 1 John 1:9).

Scripture recognizes adultery and fornication (Matthew 5:32) and abandonment by an unbelieving partner (1 Corinthians 7:10-15) as grounds for divorce. There is no direct teaching in Scripture regarding remarriage after divorce. However, there is a strong implication in Jesus' words in Matthew 19:9 that would allow the remarriage of one who has remained faithful but whose spouse has been unfaithful to the marriage vow.

Church's Position on Divorce and Remarriage

Acknowledging the biblical teachings on marriage, the Church is aware that marriage relationships are less than ideal in many cases. The problem of divorce and remarriage can be seen in its true light only as it is viewed from Heaven's viewpoint and against the background of the Garden of Eden. Central to God's holy plan for our world was the creation of beings made in His image who would multiply and replenish the earth and live together in purity, harmony, and happiness. He brought forth Eve from the side of Adam and gave her to Adam as his wife. Thus was marriage instituted—God the author of the institution and the officiator at the first marriage. After the Lord had revealed to Adam that Eve was verily bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, there could never arise a doubt in his mind that the two of them were one flesh. Nor could ever a doubt arise in the

mind of either of the holy pair that God intended that their home should endure forever. The Church adheres to this view of marriage and the home without reservation, believing that any lowering of this high view is to that extent a lowering of the heavenly ideal. The belief that marriage is a divine institution rests upon the Holy Scriptures. Accordingly, all thinking and reasoning in the perplexing field of divorce and remarriage must constantly be harmonized with that holy ideal revealed in Eden.

The Church believes in the law of God and also in the forgiving mercy of God. It believes that victory and salvation can as surely be found by those who have transgressed in the matter of divorce and remarriage as by those who have failed in any other of God's holy standards.

Nothing presented here is intended to minimize the mercy of God or the forgiveness of God. In the fear of the Lord, the Church here sets forth the principles and practices that should apply in this matter of marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

Though marriage was first performed by God alone, it is recognized that people now live under civil governments; therefore, marriage has both divine and civil aspects. The divine aspect is governed by the laws of God, the civil by the laws of the state.

In harmony with these teachings, the following statements set forth the position of the Church:

1. **When Jesus said, “Let not man put asunder,”**

He established a rule of conduct for the Church, under the dispensation of grace, that must transcend all civil enactments that would go beyond His interpretation of the divine law governing the marriage relation. Here He gives a rule to which His followers should adhere even if the state or prevailing custom allows larger liberty. “In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus declared plainly that there could be no dissolution of the marriage tie, except for unfaithfulness to the marriage vow.”—TMB 63. (Also see Matt. 5:32; 19:9.)

2. **Unfaithfulness to the marriage vow**

has generally been seen to mean adultery or fornication. However, the New Testament word for fornication includes certain other sexual irregularities (1 Corinthians 6:9; 1)

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Timothy 1:9, 10; Romans 1:24-27). Therefore, sexual perversions, including incest, child sexual abuse, and homosexual practices, are also recognized as a misuse of sexual powers and a violation of the divine intention in marriage. As such they are just cause for separation or divorce.

Even though the Scriptures allow divorce for the reasons mentioned above, as well as for abandonment by an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:10-15), the church and those concerned should make earnest endeavors to effect a reconciliation, urging the spouses to manifest toward each other a

Christ like spirit of forgiveness and restoration. The church is urged to relate lovingly and redemptive toward the couple in order to assist in the reconciliation process.

3. **In the event that reconciliation is not effected,**
the spouse who has remained faithful to the spouse who violated the marriage vow has the biblical right to secure a divorce and also to remarry.

4. **A spouse who has violated the marriage vow**
(see sections 1 and 2 above) shall be subject to discipline by the local church. If genuinely repentant, the spouse may be placed under censure for a stated period of time rather than removed from church membership. A spouse who gives no evidence of full and sincere repentance shall be removed from membership. In case the violation has brought public reproach on the cause of God, the church, in order to maintain its high standards and good name, may remove the individual from membership.

Any of these forms of discipline shall be applied by the church in a manner that would seek to attain the two objectives of discipline—to correct and redeem. In the gospel of Christ, the redemptive side of discipline is always tied to an authentic transformation of the sinner into a new creature in Jesus Christ.

5. **A spouse who has violated the marriage vow and who is divorced**

does not have the moral right to marry another while the spouse who has been faithful to the marriage vow still lives and remains unmarried and chaste. The person who does so shall be removed from membership. The person whom he/she marries, if a member, also shall be removed from membership.

6. **It is recognized that sometimes marriage relations**
deteriorate to the point where it is better for a husband and wife to separate. “Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife”

(1 Corinthians 7:10, 11). In many such cases, the custody of children, the adjustment of property rights, or even personal protection may necessitate a change in marital status. In such cases it may be permissible in some countries to secure what is known as a legal separation. However, in some jurisdictions such a separation can be secured only by divorce.

A separation or divorce that results from factors such as physical violence or in which “unfaithfulness to the marriage vow” (see sections 1 and 2 above) is not involved does not give either one the scriptural right to remarry, unless in the meantime the other party has remarried, committed adultery or fornication, or died. Should a member who has been thus divorced remarry without these biblical grounds, he/she shall be removed

from membership, and the one whom he/she marries, if a member also shall be removed from membership.

7. A spouse who has violated the marriage vow and has been divorced and removed from membership and who has remarried,

or a person who has been divorced on other than the grounds set forth in sections 1 and 2 above and has remarried, and who has been removed from membership, shall be considered ineligible for membership except as provided below.

8. The marriage contract is not only sacred

but also possibly more complex when, for example, it involves children. Hence, in a request for readmittance to membership, the options available to the repentant may be severely limited. Before final action is taken by the church, the request for readmittance shall be brought by the church through the pastor or district leader to the conference committee for counsel and recommendation of steps the repentant one, or ones, may take to secure readmittance.

9. Readmittance to membership of those who have been removed for reasons given in the foregoing sections shall normally be on the basis of rebaptism.

10. When a person who has been removed from membership is readmitted to membership, as provided in section 8, every care should be exercised to safeguard the unity and harmony of the church by not giving that person responsibility as a leader, especially in an office that requires the rite of ordination, unless by very careful counsel with conference administration.

11. No pastor has the right to officiate at the remarriage of any person who, under the stipulation of the preceding paragraphs, has no scriptural right to remarry.

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Local Church Ministry for Families

The Church as a redemptive agency of Christ is to minister to its members in all of their needs and to nurture everyone so that all may grow into a mature Christian experience. This is particularly true when members face lifelong decisions such as marriage and distressful experiences such as divorce. When a couple's marriage is in danger of breaking down, every effort should be made by the partners and those in the church or family who minister to them to bring about their reconciliation in harmony with divine principles for restoring wounded relationships (Hosea 3:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11; 13:4-7; Galatians 6:1).

Resources that can be of assistance to members in the development of a strong Christian home are available through the church or other church organizations. These resources include: **(1) programs of orientation for**

couples engaged to be married, (2) programs of instruction for married couples with their families, and (3) programs of support for broken families and divorced individuals.

Pastoral support is vital in the area of instruction and orientation in the case of marriage, and healing and restoration in the case of divorce. The pastoral function in the latter case is both disciplinary and supportive. That function includes the sharing of relevant information, some of which may be sensitive and must be handled with great discretion. However, this ethical concern alone should not be the grounds for avoiding disciplinary actions established in sections 1-11 above.

Just as God forgives, members are called to forgive and to accept those who have failed (Isaiah 54:5-8; Matthew 6:14, 15; Ephesians 4:32). The Bible urges patience, compassion, and forgiveness in the Christian care of those who have erred (Matthew 18:10-20; Galatians 6:1, 2). While individuals are under discipline, either by censure or by being removed from membership, the church, as an instrument of God's mission, shall make every effort to maintain caring and spiritually nurturing contact with them.

CHAPTER 14

Fundamental Beliefs of The Holy Seed Church

The Holy Seed Church accepts the Bible as their only creed and holds certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference Session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word.

1. *The Holy Scriptures*

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration. The inspired authors spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to humanity the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative, and the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the definitive revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (Psalms 119:105; Proverbs 30:5, 6; Isaiah 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Hebrew 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.)

2. The Trinity

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three Coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. God, who is love, is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isa. 6:8; Matthew 28:19; John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22; 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2.)

3. The Father

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also those of the Father. (Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 4:35; Psalms 110:1, 4; John 3:16; 14:9; 1 Corinthians 15:28; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 John 4:8; Revelation 4:11.)

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4. The Son

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (Isaiah 53:4-6; Daniel 9:25-27; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Romans 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:17-19; Philippians 2:5-11; Colosians 1:15-19; Hebrews 2:9-18; 8:1, 2.)

5. The Holy Spirit

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He is as much a person as are the Father and the Son. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Genesis 1:1, 2; 2 Samuel 23:2; Psalms 51:11; Isaiah 61:1; Luke 1:35; 4:18; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13;

Acts 1:8; 5:3; 10:38; Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthian 12:7-11; 2 Corinthian 3:18;
2 Peter 1:21.)

6. *Creation*

God has revealed in Scripture the authentic and historical account of His creative activity. He created the universe, and in a recent six-day creation the Lord made “the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them” and rested on the seventh day. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of the work He performed and completed during six literal days that together with the Sabbath constituted the same unit of time that we call a week today. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was “very good,” declaring the glory of God. (Genesis 1-2; 5; 11; Exodus 20:8-11; Psalms 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Isaiah 45:12, 18; Acts 17:24; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2; 11:3; Revelation 10:6; 14:7.)

7. *The Nature of Humanity*

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7, 15; 3; Psalms 8:4-8; 51:5, 10; 58:3; Jeremiah 17:9; Acts 17:24-28; Romans 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Ephesians 2:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 John 3:4; 4:7, 8, 11, 20.)

8. *The Great Controversy*

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God’s adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the global flood, as presented in the historical account of Genesis 1-11. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be

vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. (Genesis 3; 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-18; Romans 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Hebrews 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:6; Revelation 12:4-9.)

9. *The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ*

In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The bodily resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow. (Genesis 3:15; Psalms 22:1; Isaiah 53; John 3:16; 14:30; Romans 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, 19-21; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 2:15; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.)

10. *The Experience of Salvation*

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, Substitute and Example. This saving faith comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace.

Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 45:22; 53; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 33:11; 36:25-27; Hebrews 2:4; Mark 9:23, 24; John 3:3-8, 16; 16:8; Romans 3:21-26; 5:6-10; 8:1-4, 14-17; 10:17; 12:2; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Galatians 1:4; 3:13, 14, 26; 4:4-7; Ephesians 2:4-10; Colossians 1:13, 14; Titus 3:3-7; Hebrews 8:7-12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:21, 22; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Revelation 13:8.)

11. *Growing in Christ*

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus' victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in

peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds.

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No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in

Jesus, we are called to grow

into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church. We are also called to follow Christ's example by compassionately ministering to the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of humanity. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience. (1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalms 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12; Matthew 20:25-28; 25:31-46; Luke 10:17-20; John 20:21; Romans 8:38, 39; 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18; Galatian 5:22-25; Ephesians 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; Philippians 3:7-14; Colossians 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 23; Hebrews 10:25; James 1:27; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 1 John 4:4.)

12. The Church

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to humanity, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word revealed in the Scriptures. The church is God's family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish. (Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:3-7; Matthew 16:13-20; 18:18; 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38-42; 7:38; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11; 5:23-27; Colossians 1:17, 18; 1 Peter 2:9.)

13. The Remnant and Its Mission

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on

earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Daniel 7:9-14; Isaiah 1:9; 11:11; Jeremiah 23:3; Micah 2:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 4:17; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Jude 3, 14; Revelation 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4.)

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14. Unity in the Body of Christ

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, Kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Psalms 133:1; Matthew 28:19, 20; John 17:20-23; Acts 17:26, 27; Romans 12:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 5:16, 17; Galatians 3:27-29; Ephesians 2:13-16; 4:3-6, 11-16; Colossians 3:10-15.)

15. Baptism

By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Savior, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38; 16:30-33; 22:16; Romans 6:1-6; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12, 13.)

16. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Savior. In this experience of communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot-washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christ like humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The communion service is open to all believing Christians. (Matthew 26:17-30; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Revelation 3:20.)

17. *Spiritual Gifts and Ministries*

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts that each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love. (Acts 6:1-7; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27, 28; Ephesians 4:8, 11-16; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

18. *The Gift of Prophecy*

The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the church. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Numbers 12:6; 2 Chronicles 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.)

19. *The Law of God*

The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with His people and the standard in God's judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Savior. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, and its fruit is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow human beings. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness. (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Psalms 19:7-14; 40:7, 8; Matthew 5:17-20; 22:36-40; John 14:15; 15:7-10; Romans 8:3, 4; Ephesians 2:8-10; Hebrews 8:8-10; 1 John 2:3; 5:3; Revelation 12:17; 14:12.)

20. *The Sabbath*

The gracious Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts. (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; 31:13-17; Leviticus 23:32; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Isaiah 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Ezekiel 20:12, 20; Matthews 12:1-12; Mark 1:32; Luke 4:16; Hebrews 4:1-11.)

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21. *Stewardship*

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, Abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources.

We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow human beings, and by returning tithe and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us

by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. Stewards rejoice in the blessings that come to others as a result of their faithfulness. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chronicles 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 23:23; Romans 15:26, 27; 1 Corinthian 9:9-14; 2 Corinthian 8:1-15; 9:7.)

22. *Christian Behavior*

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with biblical principles in all aspects of personal and social life. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things that will produce Christ like purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting though-se

whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our

thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholeness, joy, and goodness. (Genesis 7:2; Exodus 20:15; Leviticus 11:1-47; Psalms 106:3; Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 10:31; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 10:5; Ephesians 5:1-21; Philippians 2:4; 4:8; 1 Timothy 2:9, 10; Titus 2:11, 12; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 John 2:6; 3 John 2.)

23. *Marriage and the Family*

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between a man and a woman who share a common faith.

Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, a man and a woman who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ through marriage may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving, tender, and caring guide who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God which embraces both single and married persons. (Genesis 2:18-25; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:5-9; Proverbs. 22:6; Malachi 4:5, 6; Matthew 5:31, 32; 19:3-9, 12; Mark 10:11, 12; John 2:1-11; 1 Cor. 7:7, 10, 11; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4.)

A SMART COMMUNITY FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF THE HOLY SEED CHURCH

24. *Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary*

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle that the Lord set up and not humans. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. At His ascension, He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and, began His intercessory ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary. **In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days,** He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement.

In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom.

This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Leviticus 16; Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6; Daniel 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Hebrews 1:3; 2:16, 17; 4:14-16; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; Revelation 8:3-5; 11:19; 14:6, 7, 12; 20:12; 22:11, 12.)

25. The Second Coming of Christ

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Savior's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is near. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1-6; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:8; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 1:7; 14:14-20; 19:11-21.)

26. Death and Resurrection

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Job 19:25-27; Psalms 146:3, 4; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10; Daniel 12:2, 13; Isaiah 25:8; John 5:28, 29; 11:11-14; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 1 Timothy 6:15, 16; Revelation 20:1-10.)

27. *The Millennium and the End of Sin*

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in Heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth.

The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Jeremiah 4:23-26; Ezekiel 28:18, 19; Malachi 4:1; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3; Revelation 20; 21:1-5.)

28 *The New Earth*

On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen. (Isaiah 35; 65:17-25; Matthew 5:5; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 11:15; 21:1-7; 22:1-5.) **Read more on page 202**

CHAPTER 8

Notes

These notes contain explanatory material regarding how a church may proceed in a particular matter. A church may adopt alternative ways of handling such items. Such alternative methods should be in harmony with generally accepted principles of Church organization and operation.

1. *Marriage Ceremony*

In some countries or states a pastor must be legally appointed and registered in order to conduct the marriage service. In many lands the pastor may perform the ceremony in the church, but the marriage contract is legally signed by the district registrar, who usually sits in the vestry and listens to the approved form of marriage declaration. In still other lands the pastor cannot perform the ceremony at all because it is recognized as a state responsibility and is looked upon as a civil contract. In such cases members usually retire to the home or place of worship, where a pastor conducts a special service to seek the blessing of the Lord upon the couple.

2. *Training and Equipping of Elders*

While the pastor has the primary responsibility for training elders, conferences are encouraged to schedule periodic meetings for their training. In order to support a pastor-elder team relationship, pastors also should attend the training meetings. Leaders of companies who function in the place of elders also should be invited.

3. *Training and Equipping of Deacons and Deaconesses*

While the pastor has the primary responsibility for the training of deacons and deaconesses, the Ministerial Association of the conference is encouraged to schedule periodic meetings for the training of the deacons and deaconesses.

4. *Care and Maintenance of Church Property*

Deacons and deaconesses must see that the church building is kept clean and in repair and that the grounds are kept clean and attractive. This also includes ensuring that janitorial work is done. In large churches where it is necessary to employ a janitor, the deacons should recommend a suitable person to the board, which votes to employ such help, or the board may authorize the deacons to employ a janitor. Board authorization should be obtained for all major repair expenses. All bills for repairs, as well as for recurring expenses, such as water, electricity, and, fuel, are referred to the treasurer for payment.

5. *Clerk Keeps Records*

Board minutes should be recorded in the church record book, or in another appropriate record system adopted by the church, giving the time and date of meeting, number attending, and a report of all actions taken. The clerk should also make a list of committees appointed at the meeting, giving to the chairperson a list of the members of each committee, together with its terms of reference and an outline of work it is asked to do. The church record book may be secured from The Holy Seed Church Book Center or, in some countries, from the publishing house.

The church record book contains a place for recording membership, including columns showing how and when members are received or removed. This record must be kept chronologically, and supporting data for each entry also should be recorded in the section where minutes of membership actions are kept. The membership record must be accurately and currently maintained in order to show the official standing of the membership.

6. *Corresponding With Members*

The clerk should correspond frequently with absent members and should pass on to them news of church progress, encouraging them, in turn, to report their Christian activities each quarter.

7. *Money for Personal Literature Orders*

Where a local The Holy Seed Church Book Center does not exist, members may place money for personal orders of literature, books, pamphlets, magazines, and subscriptions for periodicals in an envelope, with the order form properly filled out, and hand it to the personal ministries secretary. The treasurer then remits both order and payment for all such literature to The Holy Seed Church Book Center or to the publishing house, according to the system adopted by the conference.

At the close of each quarter the personal ministries secretary will report to the church, at its quarterly business meeting, about the standing of its account with The Holy Seed Church Book Center and/or publishing house and shall provide a copy for the treasurer.

8. *Safeguarding Children*

Church should be a safe place to bring our children. Everyone involved with children who are minors must meet all Church and legal standards and requirements. In order to safeguard our children, churches are encouraged to adopt policies that would provide a measure of safety and protection for children. Such policies should include the following:

NOTES

a. *Two-Adult Policy*

Have two adults present in children's classrooms or activities.

b. *Open Door*

Discourage private or one-on-one contact and encourage an open-door policy in all situations. Where an open door is not possible, station a second adult at the door.

c. *Volunteer Screening*

Have all volunteers complete a volunteer information form, check their references, and, if required by law, do a police background check.

d. *Six-Month Policy*

Require a waiting period of six months for newly baptized or transferring members who have indicated a willingness to work with children.

e. *Training*

Provide regular training for teachers and volunteers to help them understand and protect children and how to nurture their faith.

Local church leaders should consult with the conference in order to ascertain conference procedures and requirements, including local legal requirements for individuals working with children.

Additional resources are available from The Holy Seed Church Risk Management at www.theholyseedchurch.org.

9. **Children's Ministries Resources**

The Children's Ministries Handbook: A Step-by-Step Guide for Children's Leaders Around the World (2005); *The Children's Ministries Coordinator: A Step-by-Step Guide for Organizing Children's Ministries in the Local Church* (2005); and *Pastor's and Elder's Handbook for Children's Ministries* (2005). Silver

Spring, Md.: Children's Ministries, General Conference of The Holy Seed Church. For further information, contact your local conference children's ministries director and www.theholyseedchurch.org.

10. **Family Ministries Resources**

Caring for Families Today: A Guide for Family Ministries (2009).

Silver Spring, Md.: Family Ministries, General Conference of The Holy Seed Church. For further information, contact your local conference family ministries director and www.theholyseedchurch.org.

11. **Health Ministries Resources**

CELEBRATIONS (a 12-program outline of the essential health ministry presentations, includes scripts and Power Points), *CHARTERS* (a series of lectures with PowerPoint for presentation to lay audiences), *Foundations for Health Ministry* (84 lectures on basic health for health ministry leaders), *Breathe Free* (stop-smoking curriculum), *Youth Alive* (a program to build resiliency in our youth), *Vegetarian Cuisine Instructor's Course* (a comprehensive how-to manual), *Birthing Companions* (to support young pregnant women in their pregnancy), *Regeneration* (a 12-step program for recovery in addiction), and *My Vegetarian Food Pyramid* (posters large or small).

12. **Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Resources**

For further information, contact your local conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director or visit www.theholyseedchurch.org.

13. **Publishing Ministries Resources**

Literature Ministry Training Manual (volumes 1-3 with PowerPoint presentations); *The Publishing Ministry and the Church* (booklet); *Student Literature Evangelism Manual*; *Miracles of Grace* (a book of 365 testimonies of literature evangelists around the world); *The Literature Evangelist* (a quarterly magazine of General Conference Publishing Ministries). For more information, contact your local conference or union publishing director.

14. **Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Resources**

Sabbath School Bible study guides for various ages (CQ, *Cornerstone Connections*, *Real-Time Faith*, *Power Points*, *Primary*, *Kindergarten*, and *Beginner*); *In Step with Jesus* (a four-quarter Sabbath School Bible study guide for new members); *Sabbath School Handbook*; *Personal Ministries Handbook*; *Keys for Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Leaders* (a

series of leaflets); *Reaching and Winning* (a series of booklets for personal ministries to peoples of various faith systems and other target groups); *Keys to The Holy Seed Church Community Services* (a leaflet/handbook); *The Sharing* (departmental newsletter); and *Community Services and Urban Ministry Certification Program* (www.theholyseedchurch.org). For further information, contact the local conference Sabbath School and personal ministries director. Other resources may be found at www.theholyseedchurch.org, GraceLink.net, JuniorPowerPoints.org, RealTimeFaith.net, CornerstoneConnections.net, CQBibleStudy.org, SabbathSchoolU.org, InStepWithJesus.org, or the Sabbath School app can be downloaded on a mobile device.

NOTES

15. *The Holy Seed Church Community Services*

Some territories continue to have an active Dorcas Society and The Holy Seed Church Men, or have alternate names for social ministry out of the local church that have been officially approved by regional church administrative units. In such cases, the church should elect an The Holy Seed Church Community Services coordinator (not a director) to coordinate all community services conducted by the local church departments, services, and deacons/deaconesses, which have their individual leaders. Leaders of Dorcas, The Holy Seed Church Men, other officially approved local church social ministries organizations, and The Holy Seed Church Community Services coordinators at the local level participate as members of the Personal Ministries Council under the umbrella of the Personal Ministries Department as stated in this A Smart Community.

When community services work is newly organized in a territory, it is recommended to follow The Holy Seed Church Community Services model, which involves all church members, in a wide array of community services based on identified needs. For more information go to www.theholyseedchurch.org and click on The Holy Seed Church Community Services tab.

16. *Stewardship Ministries Resources*

Steps to Discipleship (2009). Nairobi: Stewardship Ministries, General Conference of The Holy Seed Church. For further information, contact your local conference, union, or division stewardship ministries department or visit www.theholyseedchurch.com.

17. *Women's Ministries Resources*

Leadership certification levels 1-4; resource materials for Day of Prayer, Women's Emphasis Day, and Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day; *Pastor's and Elder's Handbook for Women's Ministries*. For further information, contact your local conference women's ministries director and visit www.theholseedchurch.org.

18. ***Adult Youth Ministries Organizational Plan***

Detailed information regarding The Holy Seed Church Youth Ministries organizational plan is available from the conference youth ministries director. Each church should study its own youth and family profile, resources, personnel, facilities, and school relationships, developing the best youth ministry in keeping with these factors. Different terms such as “club,” “society,” “fellowship,” or “action,” may be selected, but the name “The Holy Seed Church” should always be used to clearly identify the organization.

19. ***Adult Youth Ministries Resources***

Local church officers should first contact their respective conference/mission, union, and division for resources. In addition, the General Conference Youth Ministries Web site also provides support for all levels of youth ministry at www.theholyseedchurch.org.

CHAPTER 9

Notes

1. ***Sample List of Church Leaders***

The nominating committee selects members to serve as officers in a variety of positions. A small church may have a short list of officers. A large church may have a long list of officers. Here is a list that may be considered:

Elder(s)

Deacon(s)

Deaconess(es)

Clerk

Treasurer and assistant(s)

Secretary coordinator

Church board

Church school board

The Holy Seed Church Community Services leader or Dorcas Society leader
The Holy Seed Church Community Services secretary-treasurer or Dorcas Society

secretary-treasurer

Adult Youth Ministries leader and associate(s)

Adult Youth Ministries sponsor

Adult Youth Ministries secretary-treasurer and assistant

Adult Youth Ministries music leader

Adult Youth Ministries pianist or organist

Adventurer Club director

Ambassador Club leader

Bible school coordinator

Children’s ministries coordinator Church chorister or song leader or music coordinator Church organist or pianist

NOTES

Communication secretary or communication committee
Education secretary/church school principal or head teacher
Family ministries leader(s)
Health ministries leader
Ministry to People With Disabilities coordinator
Pathfinder Club director and deputy director
Personal ministries leader
Personal ministries secretary
Prayer ministries director
Public campus ministries leader/coordinator
Publishing ministries coordinator
Religious liberty leader
Sabbath School superintendent(s) and assistant(s)
Sabbath School secretary and assistant(s)
Sabbath School division leaders, including leaders for the adult and extension divisions
Sabbath School Investment secretary
Stewardship ministries leader
Vacation Bible School director
Women's ministries leader
Young adults leader
Additional personnel considered necessary
Home and School Association officers (leader and secretary-treasurer):
If only one church supports a school, the church nominating committee makes recommendations to the school board, which then makes the appointments. If more than one church supports a school, the school board conducts the whole process.

CHAPTER 10

Notes

1. *Sabbath School*

The usual length of time for Sabbath School is one hour and ten minutes. This, however, does not prevent a conference from adopting a longer or shorter period, though it is important to have sufficient time to regularly promote the missionary activities and responsibilities of the world church, along with the mission offering, plus at least thirty minutes for Bible study.

2. *Forms of Service*

Forms of service vary from country to country and culture to culture. Following are two suggested forms:

Longer Order of Worship

Musical prelude	Offering
Announcements	Hymn of consecration
Service participants enter	Sermon
Doxology	Hymn
Invocation (prayer)	Benediction
Scripture reading	Congregation standing or seated for a few moments of silent prayer
Hymn of praise	Musical postlude
Prayer	
Anthem or special music	

Shorter Order of Worship

Announcements	Hymn or special music
Hymn	Sermon
Prayer	Hymn
Offering	Benediction
Congregation standing or seated for silent prayer	

3. Form of Service

As the participants enter and kneel, the congregation should, with bowed heads, implore the presence and blessing of God. A worshipful hush prepares the way for the exercises that follow.

The two main divisions of the worship service are:

- The congregational response in praise and adoration, expressed in song, prayer, and gifts.
- The message from the Word of God.

NOTES

The one leading the worshipers into the presence of God with the pastoral prayer should do so with a sense of awe, realizing its importance. Customarily the person praying kneels facing the congregation, and the congregation, as far as practicable kneeling, in turn faces the individual praying. The prayer should be brief but should include adoration, thanks, and mention of the personal needs of worshippers, as well as of the world field.

The offering is a vital part of the worship hour. While we are counseled to “worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,” we are also exhorted to “bring an offering, and come into His courts” (Psalms 96:9, 8). So the presentation of our gifts to God quite naturally finds its place as a part of the worship service. Special music or a devotional hymn is appropriate. Then comes what should be one of the most important parts of the worship hour—the spiritual feeding of the flock of God. Blessed results to the glory of God always follow when a congregation is truly fed and feels that “God has visited His people” (Luke 7:16).

The one who brings the message should fully sense the sacredness of this work and should be thoroughly prepared.

The elder collaborates with the church pastor in planning the order of the service. If the church has no regular pastor, the elder is in charge of the service and should either conduct it or arrange for someone to do so. From time to time a meeting for testimony and praise may be conducted, or the time may be given to certain members to relate their experiences in outreach (missionary) work.

4. *Times of Meetings*

In order to strengthen and develop the outreach (missionary) spirit among our members, auxiliary personal ministries meetings might be conducted in one or more of the following ways: a. The ten-minute weekly personal ministries meeting held each Sabbath, usually following the close of the Sabbath School and preceding the preaching service.

b. A midweek meeting combined with the weekly prayer meeting. On this occasion, the first part of the service may be given to a devotional message, followed by a season of prayer, remembering that worship is vital in spiritual growth and preparation for service.

The remainder of the time may be devoted to training for lay evangelistic service. Instruction in soul-winning methods is presented, and the members are given opportunity to present and discuss problems they have met in lay evangelism.

Personal ministries meetings should meet at times suited to local conditions. The personal ministries council should carefully plan to make the personal ministries services of the church occasions for spiritual revival and practical training, and see that they are conducted with the same regularity and continuity as other meetings of the church.

5. *Foot-Washing*

Men and women should be provided separate areas for foot-washing. Where stairs or distance is a problem, special arrangements should be made for those with disabilities. In places where it is socially acceptable and where clothing is such that there would be no immodesty, separate arrangements may be made for husband and wife or parents and baptized children to share with each other in the foot-washing ceremony. To encourage shy or sensitive people who may view the selecting of a foot-washing partner as an embarrassing experience, church leaders should be designated to help such persons find partners.

All should thoroughly wash their hands before returning to participate in the Lord's Supper. Those leading out in the service should do this publicly for hygienic purposes.

6. *Bread and Wine*

A hymn may be sung during the reassembly of the congregation as the officiating pastors or elders take their places near the bread and wine (unfermented grape juice) and the deacons and deaconesses take their places.

The covering over the bread is removed.

A suitable passage of Scripture may be read, such as 1 Corinthians 11:23, 24; Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; or Luke 22:19; or a brief sermon may be given at this point in the service rather than earlier. This can be especially effective if the sermon emphasizes the meaning of the bread and wine so its message is still fresh in the minds of participants as the emblems are being distributed.

Those officiating normally kneel while the blessing is asked on the bread. The congregation may kneel or remain seated.

Usually most of the bread to be served is broken ahead of time, with a small portion left on each plate for the elders and/or pastors to break. (All handling the bread must wash their hands thoroughly before returning for the communion service.) The pastors and elders hand the plates containing the bread to the deacons, who then serve the congregation, though in small congregations the pastor or elders may serve all participants.

NOTES

During this time there may be a choice of special music, testimonies, a summary of the sermon, selected readings, congregational singing, or meditative music.

Participants should retain their portions of the bread until the officiating pastors or elders have been served. When everyone has been seated, the leader invites all to partake of the bread together. Silent prayers are offered as the bread is eaten.

The pastor then reads a suitable passage, such as 1 Corinthians 11:25, 26; Matthew 26:27-29; Mark 14:23-25; or Luke 22:20. Leaders kneel as the prayer is given over the wine. Again, deacons serve the congregation. Activities such as those suggested during the passing of the bread may be continued at this time. After the officiating pastors or elders have been served, all worshippers partake of the wine together.

An optional method is for the bread to be blessed and broken; then the bread and wine are placed on the same tray and passed to the congregation.

The worshipper takes both from the tray at the same time. The bread is eaten, followed by silent prayer. Then after prayer over the wine, it is taken, followed by silent prayer. Where pews or seats are equipped with racks to hold the wine glasses, the collection of glasses is unnecessary until after the service.

7. *Business Meetings*

Reports may comprise the following activities:

a. A report from the clerk showing the present membership of the church and the number of members received and those transferred to other churches. Note also should be made, giving the number but not necessarily the names of those who were removed from fellowship during the year, as well as those who have died. A brief statement of the decisions of the church board in its meetings may interest members.

b. A report from the personal ministries leader giving a statement of outreach (missionary) activities, including Community Services activities, together with plans for future work. This should be followed by a report from the personal ministries secretary.

c. A report from the treasurer showing the amount of tithe received and sent to the conference, a statement of mission offerings received and forwarded, and a statement showing local church funds received and disbursed.

d. A report from the deacons and deaconesses concerning visits to members, their activities in behalf of the poor, and their other nurturing work.

e. A report from the secretary of the young people's society outlining the activities in outreach (missionary) and other lines by the youth of the church.

f. A report from the Sabbath School secretary giving the membership and other matters pertaining to the Sabbath School.

g. A report from the treasurer about the financial status of the church school, with details as to its needs in equipment and other matters.

h. A report from the principal or teacher of the church school covering such matters as enrollment, the educational progress of the school, baptisms among the schoolchildren, and the results of the children's efforts in denominational endeavors.

i. A report from the Home and School Association leader covering the activities and needs of that organization.

j. A report from the communication secretary covering press, radio, television, and other communication activities involving church and community.

8. *Other Committees of the Board*

Leaders of other board-appointed committees should periodically report.

For example, in a large church, the board may appoint a committee for evangelistic planning composed of the heads of the church outreach departments, with an elder as chairperson. This committee will report to the board and will also assume the task of department coordination of outreach programs.

9. *The Holy Seed Church Youth Ministries Resources*

Resource materials to help The Holy Seed Church Youth Ministries leadership are available from the division, union, and conference youth ministries departments. Included in these resource materials is *Youth*

Ministry Accent, a quarterly journal published by the General Conference Youth Ministries Department. Available leaflets covering a broad spectrum of topics to help in youth ministry may be secured from the conference youth ministries department and The Holy Seed Church Book Center.

CHAPTER 11

Notes

1. *Stewardship Ministries Resources*

Steps to Discipleship (2009). Silver Spring, Md.: Stewardship Ministries, General Conference of The Holy Seed Church. For further information, contact your local conference, union, or division stewardship ministries department or visit www.theholysseedchurch.com.

NOTES

1. *Sample Annual Budget Church Proposed Operating Budget* **Estimated Receipts**

Sabbath School Expense Collections	Kshs.	51,500.00
Church Fund for the Needy		38375.00
Combined (Church) Budget Giving		89,500.00
Welfare Fund		29000.00
Total Receipts		<u>Kshs. 208,375.00</u>

Estimated Expenses

Repairs and Painting Church Building	Kshs.	20,000.00
Fuel		30,000.00
Janitor and Supplies		80,075.00
Insurance on Building and Furnishings		22,750.00
Church Fund for the Needy		95,450.00
Sabbath School Supplies		44,500.00
Emergency Expense		26,000.00
Light		13,800.00
Water		9,860.00
Gas		12,000.00
Stationery and Supplies		85,500.00
Laundry		39,95.00
Church School Subsidy		9,000.00
Welfare Expense		75,000.00

Evangelism and Church Planting 9,000.00

Total Proposed Expenses

Kshs. 536,930.00

*Additional columns (such as Last Year's Budget and Last Year's Actual) should be included for comparison, but have been left out of this sample because of space constraints.

General Index

Notes: (1) The terms listed in this index refer to the local level (church, company, or sub-field, field, Union, Division, Conference & General Conference), unless indicated otherwise; **(2)** Page references followed by an italicized *n* and number indicate an end note.

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29) Child dedication

13And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. 14But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. 15Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, and he shall not enter therein. 16And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them. Mark 10:13-16. Every child must be dedicated to the Lord and certificate of the dedication.

30) OFFERING

Giving is basic to worship. The offering appeal should be brief, intelligent, and worshipful. It has an overwhelming potential for teaching the basic Christian concepts of self-denial, sacrifices, and trust. Hence the offering appeal must emphasize a spiritual motivation. It should also explain the financial need. It should say why we give our money and where it will go. People will give if they are spiritually motivated and are convinced of a practical need.

31) PRAYERS

Prayer are speaking to God on behalf of the people. It may be considered the most significant part of worship. Prayer much more often than do pastors. It is one of the most significant things you do and it deserves your learning to do it well. Kneeling is the preferred posture for prayer; however, since prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend, the position of the heart or mind is more important than the position of the knees. Posture in prayer is important, but it is only symbolic. Scripture counsels, —So rend your heart and not your garments|| Joel 2:13.

God considers the inner expression even more significant than the outer. Pride that finds our clothes too precious or our knees too tender for kneeling before our Maker is tragic irreverence. But pride that leaves us standing on the inside while kneeling on the outside is

irreverence also. Your public prayer should be though in advance. We sometimes think of prayer as including seven elements. Not all need to be in every prayer but all should be considered as you plan your prayer. Their order is significant, based on the supposition that we must show reverence for God and then get right with God before we ask anything else of God. Address to God. Remember, God's name is Holy. Speak it as your begin your prayer, but do not repeat it meaninglessly. Praise. Adore God's name; thank Him for what He has done. Repentance. Ask God's forgiveness for the past. Dedication. Ask his strength for the future. Commit yourselves to Him before requesting things of Him. General intercession. Intercede for God's work, world leaders, and your congregation, including the young, old, parents, ill, discouraged, etc. Specific intercession. Remember special prayer requests, the meeting itself, and the speaker.

32) A Word of Encouragement.

Close by affirming the right by which we approach the throne room: I Jesus' name. —One or two minutes is long enough for any ordinary prayer|| Note: Prayer tend to be long, not so much because we have a great deal to say, but because we say each thing forwards, backwards, then from the middle both ways. Having in your mind an outline such as the above will help eliminate that tendency.

youth, children day. However you do it, design your worship service so children in your church grow up feeling worship is a pleasant experience and it is for them.

For God is not the Author of confusion. Let all things be done decently and in order|| 1 Corinthians 14:33-40. Every feature of the worship service must related to the whole, move toward an objective, and culminate in congregational response. It should be planned so as to progress towards a point of commitment. Praise you the LORD Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent

greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the tumbrels and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise you the LORD. Psalms 150:1-6.

33) CONGREGATIONAL PARTICIPATION

The worship of God is not a spectator sport. We tend to think of worship as consisting of: preacher as actor, God as prompter, and congregation as audience. Actually, true worship consists of: congregation as actor, preacher as prompter, and God as audience. Much of the public worship of God consists of praise and prayer, and every follower of Christ should engage in this worship|| Thus, for each worshiper, worship must become a participating event. For each worship leader, there is a responsibility to plan the service so there is not only the right amount of congregational participation, but that it comes at right intervals. In other words, congregational participation, should not be lumped together in one portion of their worship, but purposely scattered throughout the service. The morning prayer, offering, and even listening to the sermon should be participating events. However, the congregation probably participates most actively in the following three ways:

(a) SINGING: The congregation not only participates in the singing of hymns, but may also sing the introit, prayer response, and benedictory response. An effective offertory is the congregation singing –we give thee but thine own.|| Many hymnal songs work well for responses; so do such informal songs as – We have this hope,|| – Father, we Love You,|| –Because He Lives,|| –Hallelujah,|| You might use the time between morning glory and main service for congregational singing. Sometimes a small group may lead out in this, with music from either the hymnal or other sources.

(b) LITANY (responsive reading). Responsive reading fits well for the call to worship, Scripture reading offering

dedication, or sermon response. The centrality of the Bible in worship is emphasized when people read directly from Bibles. However, this involves a little training of the congregation and providing pew Bible or some other means of making certain everyone has the same version. The reading can be divided in much imaginative way, such as: leader, women, men, choir, left side, right side, and balcony, all.

(c) Covering the head in worship: 1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. 2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. 3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

34) SCRIPTURE READING Scripture is central Christian worship. Jesus began His public ministry in Nazareth by reading from scripture Luke 4:14-21. Paul instructed that his epistles be read in the churches Colossians 4:16/ 1 Thessalonians 5:27. Passages chosen should be relevant to the emphasis of the day. Unfortunately, the congregation does not to perceive this relevance. Some worship leaders omit separate Scripture reading time and ask their congregations to turn to and possibly read aloud some passages during the sermon. This may require pew Bibles so everyone reads from the same the version.

A well-prepared reading of scripture can provide a moving experience. When the Levites officiated, —They read distinctly from the book,|| and —all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law|| Nehemiah 8:8-9.

Encourage audience participation. Use responsive readings. Vary the ones reading Scripture and thus reflect the diversity of the congregation: male/female, young/ old, married/single, different ethnic groups.

Record a shut-in reading a Scripture. Prepared an illustrated Scripture reading. Many psalms lend themselves to illustration through nature pictures, the most important let the Holy Spirit guide you the scripture you present in church service.

35) PUBLIC TESTIMONIES

It is sometimes appropriate to encourage members to share with others in the worship service a story of some incident in their lives in which God has led in a special way. Particularly helpful are testimonies shared with the congregation showing how a church member was helped by the ministry of some other member. Such testimonies are a public demonstration of the power and working of God in the midst of the church family.

It is unlikely, and perhaps unwise, that you include every one of the above elements in the worship service every week. Congregations appreciate a basic sameness in their worship service but they also like a little variety, something different and special. Thus, think about all these elements in your planning, but provide variety by including some of them in the service only occasionally. Otherwise, your services will either run too long or you will leave too little time for preaching, which must be kept central in worship.

36) ORDER OF WORSHIP

Worship should not only include the right parts or elements, but these should be orderly.

Every man praying or receiving message from God we called prophesy is order of worship should not only include the right parts or elements, but these should be orderly. _For God is not the Author of confusion. Let all things be done decently and in order|| 1 Corinthians 14:33-40. Every feature of the worship service must related to the whole, move toward an objective, and culminate in congregational response. It should be planned so as to progress towards a point of commitment.

Praise you the LORD Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet:

praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the tumbrels and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise you the LORD. Psalms 150:1-6.

37) CONGREGATIONAL PARTICIPATION

The worship of God is not a spectator sport. We tend to think of worship as consisting of: preacher as actor, God as prompter, and congregation as audience. Actually, true worship consists of: congregation as actor, preacher as prompter, and God as audience. Much of the public worship of God consists of praise and prayer, and every follower of Christ should engage in this worship||

Thus, for each worshiper, worship must become a participating event. For each worship leader, there is a responsibility to plan the service so there is not only the right amount of congregational participation, but that it comes at right intervals. In other words, congregational participation, should not be lumped together in one portion of their worship, but purposely scattered throughout the service. The morning prayer, offering, and even listening to the sermon should be participating events. However, the congregation probably participates most actively in the following three ways:

(a) SINGING:

The congregation not only participates in the singing of Praise, hymns, Worship as we may also sing the introit, prayer response, and benedictory response. An effective offertory is the congregation singing –we give thee but thine own.|| Many hymnal songs work well for responses; so do such informal songs as – We have this hope,|| – Father, we Love You,|| –Because He Lives,|| –Hallelujah,|| You might use the time between morning glory and main service for congregational singing. Sometimes a small group may lead out in this, with music from either the hymnal or other sources.

(b) LITANY

(responsive reading). Responsive reading fits well for the call to worship, Scripture reading offering dedication, or sermon response. The centrality of the Bible in worship is emphasized when people read directly from Bibles. However, this involves a little training of the congregation and providing pew Bible or some other means of making certain everyone has the same version. The reading can be divided in much imaginative way, such as: leader, women, men, choir, left side, right side, and balcony, all.

(c) Covering the head in worship:

1. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.
2. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.
3. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.
4. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonored his head.
5. But every woman that prayed or prophesied with her head uncovered dishonored her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.
6. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.
7. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.
8. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.
9. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.
10. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.
11. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.
12. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

13. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

14. Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15. But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

16. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

The woman shall not wear that which pertained unto a man; neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abominations unto the LORD thy God, Deuteronomy 22:5. We use a dove as a registered church log. The church decoration allows to use all colors as Rainbow including church flag, but this color are used depending the way church members, pupils in the schools, in the hospitals, etc. wearing to perform their duties. In the church women are supposed to cover their head using white and sky blue colors but on uniform they can apply all colors depending their suggestion approved by the church board. Read more

38) SAMPLE WORSHIP FORMATS

Here are two sample formats. The Church fundamental beliefs can be consulted for addition samples.

{a} LONGER FORMAT: Prelude- Instrument or congregational singing. Introit -Music by choir, instrument, or congregation Call to worship – Possible congregational participation. Doxology – Not necessary if congregation sang introit.

39) Invocation Hymn of praise Prayer

Response by choir, instrument, or congregation.

Welcome and announcements - May include personal ministries period. You might want announcements earlier, but the entire congregation will not be present.

Another option is to place the announcements just before prayer and conclude the announcements with prayer requests.

Soul winning experiences and interviews should be included somewhere, at least sometimes.

This could be during announcements or while the offering is taken. Offering - If the offertory does not hold worshipers' attention, use this time to have testimonies and interviews, or invite the children to make their way forward for the children's story. The congregation may sing as the offering is brought forward and dedicated, thus emphasizing giving as an act of worship. Scripture reading Music –Special music or a pulpit hymn introducing the sermon. Sermon Hymn of invitation/dedication Benediction postlude – Response by choir, instrument, or congregation.

{b} SHORTER FORMAT

Introit silent prayer or singing as speakers kneels. Hymn - Congregation remains standing. Prayer – Includes invocation of God's presence. Announcements - May include personal ministries. Offering, sermon, Benediction Do not follow any format just because it is expected, but only if it works in bringing your congregation into a meaningful encounter with God. Worship is encounter.

40) PREACHING

Preaching is both traditionally and purposely central worship All elders may not be preachers, but the Bible suggests that they should be –able to teach|| 1 Timothy 3:2. The apostle Paul, on his last visit, called an elders' meeting in Ephesus and counseled, –Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood|| Acts 20:17-28. Elders, as well as pastors, are shepherds and the principal work of a shepherd is to feed the flock.

Some elders preach regularly, others very seldom.

However, all can benefit from an understanding of preaching principles. Here are eight rules for effective preaching.

41) KNOW CHRIST PERSONALLY

Peter and John met a lame man at the temple gate. Then man asked for money, but Peter answered, —Silver and gold I not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk|| Acts 3:6.

There is nothing harder than trying to give to others what you do not have yourself. Peter worked a miracle because, though he had no money, he did have Christ. If you do not have Christ yourself, you cannot give Him to others.

But if you Him in your own life, your preaching can work miracles in the lives of your listeners. Preaching is overflowing. You cannot overflow an empty cup. If you cannot seem to come up with anything to preach, you are looking at the empty cup of your own soul and trying to get it to pour out on others what it does not have. First fill your own cup. Only then are you ready to overflow.

On the other hand, the cup that is overfilled has to overflow. When you are filled with Jesus, it is easier to speak about Him than to be quiet. You can hardly wait for next sermon.

42) BIBLICALLY :

Perhaps the best counsel on preaching ever given was Paul's exhortation, —Preach the word|| 2 Timothy 4:2!

Preaching must always be Christ-centered and Bible teaches. Stories, sociological or philosophical discourse, with the Bible scarcely opened, will not feed the soul or produce revival and reformation. Are you ever reluctant to preach for fear you will not find enough to say?

Biblical preaching is such a preacher's best friend. When you begin biblically, you have an inexhaustible supply of sermon material. Your well is guaranteed never to run dry. Biblical preaching is much more than using a lot of Bible texts. The truly biblical sermon does not just include the Bible, it begins with the Bible. Biblical preachers come to the Bible first in their sermon preparation. As nearly as possible, they come with a blank mind, knowing nothing but their passage or topic. They do not open the Book looking for something that

agrees with what they want to say. They open it to find what it wants them to say.



43) PREACH RELEVANTLY:

The Bible is relevant to everyday living, and it is up to you to seek out its application to those who will be listening. Show how the Bible speaks to the needs of this day, how its salvation theme still applies. Make the Word's message primary in your preaching. If available, see how Bible commentaries and other Christian's authors apply your passage to practical Christian living. Use current events, nature, and experiences in your own life to make your sermon relevant to life as your listeners live it.

A) POSITIVELY:

People must know they are sinners before they will seek salvation. However, your first calling is not to denounce sin, but to announce salvation. Successful preaching is invariably hope-centered preaching. Never send people home on flat tires. The word gospel means good news. If you are not preaching good news, you are not preaching the gospel.

B) PREPARE EARLY:

Good sermons do not come from hurried preparation. Yet, with all your other duties, sermon preparation time is necessarily limited. Early preparation provides a practical solution to the time problem. Here is how it works: Do your Bible study and reading several days

before you are scheduled to speak. Keep at it until you feel you know about what God wants you to say. The ideas need to soak in your mind. You must find illustrations and practical applications.

Now go about your other duties. Let the sermon wander through your mind, floating somewhere between the conscious and subconscious. Starting your sermon early eases the pressure and increases creativity. Creativity despises deadlines. Last-minute sermon preparation produces first-rate ulcers and third-rate sermon. The brain's filing system tends to jam when pressed too hard. But if you take off the pressure, it may produce profusely. Starting early saves time.

Instead of gazing at the ceiling or leafing through books trying to come up with story, let illustrations come out your week. This makes your sermons practical and interesting. Sermon that grows out of the present fit the present. As you work, as you travel, as you relate to your family, ask "Could my sermon help here?" Or: Is there something here that could illustrate my sermon?" The sermons whose illustrations and practical applications grow out of living are relevant to life.

44) ORGANIZE LOGICALLY:

A logical sermon outline is organized into three main parts. In the introduction you want to arouse the interest of your hearers and probably introduce your theme. The theme is the point of your sermon in one sentence, the one point you most want people to take home. During the body of the sermon enlarge the theme by giving, in logical sequence, the principal lessons you wish to present. State each lesson, prove it biblically, then give illustration and/or practical application. In the conclusion summarize by briefly repeating your theme and main points, then focus on leading your listeners to make a personal decision for Christ.

45) SPEAK CLEARLY:

In delivering your sermon, speak so that your listeners can hear and understand. "So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading" Nehemiah 8:8.

"The culture and right use of the voice are greatly neglected. There are many who read and speak in so low a manner that they cannot be readily understood. Some have a thick, indistinct utterance, others speak in a high key, in sharp, shrill tones that are painful to the hearers.

By diligent effort all may acquire the power to read intelligibly, and speak in a full, clear, round tone, in a distinct and impressive manner. By doing this we may greatly increase our efficiency as workers for Christ."

46) PLAN ANNUALLY:

To save time, plan your preaching a year at a time. Planning requires looking in both directions, so first list the sermons you have neglected or overemphasized. Then, on the basis of your findings, the denominational and secular calendar year, the needs of your congregation, and your particular interests and concerns, select the topic and passages for next year's preaching. Yearly planning produces balanced preaching. Preachers who love their people provide them with food that is not only tasty and nutritious but also varied. When you have been feeding the congregation an unvaried diet based on whatever you like best, the process of planning a sermon year will practically force you to face the fact. Heresy/error does not so often come from preaching what is false, but from an incomplete presentation of the gospel. It results from an overemphasis upon one truth at the expense of other truth. Yearly planning produces balanced preaching, and balanced preaching helps produce balanced Christians.

45) CHURCH DEDICATION:

A church dedication offers a valuable opportunity to place The Holy Seed Church Neema Evangelism Centre Global Healing Ministries into the community spotlight. To the congregation, it represents the celebration of a

difficult project successfully accomplished. Pastors need a great deal of counsel and assistance from their elders in planning the program. Guests play an important part in a dedication service. City officials and community pastors are often invited to attend. Conference/mission officials and former pastors should be asked to participate. For these reasons, set the date far in advance after consultation with conference/mission leaders.

{a} ORDER OF SERVICE

1) A typical order of service would be: 2) Hymn 3) Opening prayer 4) History of the church 5) Reading 6) Special song or hymn 7) Dedicatory sermon 8) Act of dedication (optional) 9) Prayer of dedication 10) Hymn or special song 11) Benediction

(b) HISTORY OF THE CHURCH:

In view of the fact that their direct relationship with the congregation usually tend to be short, Pastors and conference officials should not dominate the dedication service. Church facilities belong more to the congregation than to the clergy.

An elder or other local leader whose roots go deep into the history of the church can do a better job of telling its story. Charter or lifetime members should be recognized and honored. Proper appreciation ought to be expressed to those most directly involved with the present building. Give special recognition to the pastor who led out in the building program. Often this pastor, who worked so hard and was so directly involved in the building, has moved on before the debt is paid and the building dedicated.

In fact, the conflict sometimes created in the difficult process of building occasionally necessitates the pastor's moving. The sacrifice involved should be recognized. The history can climax with announcement of upcoming plans and programs for serving the community. The church must not emphasize its past without also projecting its future. The service is not to be used as an

occasion for raising money toward church indebtedness. All debts incurred in the building's purchase or erection must be paid before its dedication.

(c) SCRIPTURE READING

Appropriate Scripture readings could be chosen from 2 Chronicles 6:14, 42 or 1 Kings 8:23,53 (Solomon's prayer dedicating the Temple).

(d) ACT OF DEDICATION

The dedication itself takes place during the dedicatory prayer. To increase audience participation, have a responsive reading of a litany or poem before the prayer.

A burning of the mortgage, or a piece of paper symbolizing it, could take place just before the prayer or during the history portion of the service. This can be a climactic event, especially if the church has been in debt for some time and has recently sacrificed significantly to become debt-free. It may be very appropriate to sing the doxology as the mortgage burns.

(e) DEDICATION WEEKEND

A church dedication can, of course, be held at any time, including morning Glory. However, because it is such a special event in the life of the congregation, you may include several weekend services. For example: (1) Saturday - church holds meeting in different groups and in consecration. This could include a communion service and special music program. (2) Morning glory - Our church at study, Use special participants such as long time members or former pastors. (3) Worship hour - Our church at worship. Have a guest speaker. (4) Sunday afternoon - Our church in dedication. The dedication service. (5) Sunday evening - Our church in fellowship. Social events. A booklet becomes a precious memento to church members. Some churches sell extra copies to pay for printing.

(f) CHURCH OPENING

Since the Holy Seed Church only debt-free buildings, congregations often move into a new church home

before it is finished and long before its dedication. It is appropriate, however, that there be some special program for this event, although it should not be considered as significant as the dedication. Music, of course, should play a large part in such a happy experience.

There can be a ribbon-cutting. Some congregations march from the old premises to the new. People love entering a new building but hate leaving the pleasant memories of the old. One bridge from the old to the new former building. Both the church dedication and the church opening are newsworthy events in most places. These occasions should be used to achieve favorable community attention to the church and its program.

46) COMMUNION

One of the surest responsibilities of eldership is assisting the pastor in the celebration of communion, or leading in the service yourself. Only ordained ministers or elders conduct the service.



Communion is one of the most solemn and yet joyous occasions in our churches. When it is a time that calls for heart-searching and forgiveness, it is also a time of encouragement and spiritual renewal. Therefore, being able to lead the congregation in this sacred service is one of the most deeply spiritual duties that you, as an elder, will be called upon to perform.

{a}RENEWING RELATIONSHIP

The celebration of communion gives opportunity for those attending to renew and rebuild relationships with God and with their fellow members. As they join together in the washing of one another's feet and in the eating and drinking of the symbols of Christ's death, they are reminded of their need of God's continued grace and forgiving love and for closer fellowship with one another. The Communion service should unite our members and help them to leave with renewed strength and confidence to continue God's mission in the world.

(b) WHEN TO HOLD

The A Smart Community says, "In the holy Seed church the communion service customarily is celebrated once per quarter." The words "customarily" suggest only that it has been the practice or custom of our church to hold Communion on a quarterly basis. Paul states,; for as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26). This informs us that the Bible has not established any set number of time for holding the service. It is not how often we celebrate the Communion that is important, but how often we remember "Lord's death." The communion service should most often be held during the Sunday worship hour. However, there may be other or additional occasions when your church chooses to celebrate the service: the conclusion of a week of prayer, the end of a series of revival meeting, a camp meeting, a church retreat, or during youth meetings. Whenever or wherever communion is celebrate, careful preparation should be made with every detail thoughtfully planned and rehearsed.

The service ought to be announced at last a week in advance so people may prepare for the event. Deacons and deaconesses should prepare the bread and the wine well beforehand and have the sanctuary and the rooms to be used for Foot washing properly equipped.

(c) PREPARING THE EMBLEMS

Only unleavened bread and the unfermented juice of the grape should be used in the Lord's Supper. Where it is impossible to obtain grapes, grape juice, or grape concentrate the juice of raisins may be used. In isolated areas where none of these are readily available, the conference or mission will provide advice or assistance. Recipe for communion bread. 1. 1 Cup fin-ground flour (preferable whole grain) 2.4 teaspoon salt 3. 2 tablespoons cold water 4.4 cup olive or vegetable oil.

Sift flour and salt together.

Pour the water into the oil, but do not stir. Add this to the dry ingredients and mix with a fork until all the flour is dampened. Roll out between two sheets of waxed paper to the thickness of thick pie pastry. Place on an ungreased, floured baking sheet, and mark off with a sharp knife into bite-size squares, being careful to pick each square to prevent blistering. Bake at 450 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 to 15 minutes. Watch carefully during the last five minutes to prevent burning. Serves 50 persons.

(d) WHO MAY PARTICIPATE?

At the time of his last supper, Jesus declared that the bread was a symbol of His body which was "given for you" Luke 22:19. The wine was a symbol of His blood "which is shed for many for the remission of sins" Matthew 26:28. Jesus gave His life for sinner and His invitation to them is to partake of the Communion in remembrance of His sacrifice that is able to set them free from sin. All who feel the need for forgiveness from sin should seek in this ceremony the symbol their cleansing.

The Holy Seed Church observes open Communion. Adults wishing to participate should not be stopped from doing so. It is not the work of church officers to decide who is worthy or unworthy to take part. "Christ's example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord's Supper. It is true that open sin excludes the guilty. This the Holy Spirit plainly teaches. But beyond this none are to pass judgment. God has not left it to men to say who shall present themselves on these occasions. For who can read the heart?" There may be some in the congregation who feel that their sin is the very reason they should participate! Especially encourage these members to attend. Tell them that, as they come in repentance and accept the symbols of Jesus death, they

will find forgiveness for their sins and release from their guilt.

(e) SERMON

It is the usual custom in our churches that a 15-20 minutes sermon is preached before members separate for the Foot washing. During this sermon you have opportunity to make clear the meaning of the Foot washing and to encourage members to make clear the meaning of the might have had with others in the congregation. Sometimes you may choose to vary the service by spending a few minutes explaining the meaning of Foot washing and then leaving the rest of the sermon until after participants return.

By saving the sermon until before the Lord's Supper emblems are passed you will be able to focus attention more fully on their meaning. {f} Here are suggested communion sermon texts: 1. Jesus' example in foot washing. John 13:13-17 2. The Lord's Supper (Mark 14, Luke 22) Matthew 26:26 3. Self-denial in those who follow Jesus. Matthew 16:24 4. Eat the flesh and drink the blood. John 6:53-56 5. One bread, one body. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 6. Proclaiming the Lord's death. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 7. Christ's suffering 1 Peter

Note: Each person will be delivered one on a different occasion regarding Lord's Supper not all at a time because time is short to handle service.

(f) FOOT WASHING

Foot washing is a powerful symbol. When we kneel before one another as Jesus once did, and take someone's feet in our hands to wash them, we are taught important lessons of humility. Through this ceremony, disagreements between members can be settled and wrongs made right (Matthew 5:23). The water that is poured over our feet by our partner represents the spiritual cleansing and refreshing that comes when Jesus applies His blood to our lives. Foot washing should be carefully planned. Basin, water, towels, adequate space

and seating, and congenial surroundings need to be provided by the deacons and deaconess.

Visitors, new members, youth, and children should be tactfully encouraged to join the foot washing, either to participate or to observe. Assist people to find partners with whom they can share the ceremony. Because Foot washing can be an occasion for making wrongs right, opportunities might be provided for families to share the ceremony together. Alienation most often occurs within families, perhaps between husband and wife, parents and children, or between children.

The ceremony of Foot washing is an excellent way for families to make new beginnings. Consider making provision for families to take part together. When members have assembled ready for Foot washing, the ceremony can begin with prayer. There may be some present who would like to ask forgiveness of their partner for some wrong they have committed.

Encourage this kind of confession between participants.

In some places members sing hymns quietly as they wash each other's feet. Some partners like to pray for each other during the ceremony. The whole experience should be a time of sharing and joy that brings members together in unity. At the completion of the Foot washing, members may shake the hand of their partners, or embrace or kiss them, according to the local custom for showing Christian love.

47) LORD'S SUPPER

It works well for the congregation to sing a hymn as they reassemble and the leader, along with the assistants, take their place behind the Communion table. The servers will follow

and be seated in the front seats. You may make some introductory remarks about the Lord's Supper or begin

your short sermon according to whichever order of service you have chosen to follow. (h) The bread is then uncovered and prayer is offered for God's blessing upon this symbol of Jesus' body. The deacons then take the bread and offer it to members of the congregation. On their return, the elders and yourself are served and you lead the congregation in eating the bread. The same procedure is followed for distributing the fruit juice. During the serving of the bread, hymns sung, passages of Scripture such as 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 may be read, hymns sung, testimonies given, special music presented. (c) In some of our churches the deacons carry both the bread and juice on the one tray. Worshipers take them together from the tray. Following the service, the juice glasses are in racks provided in the backs of the seats. By following this method, the deacons need to move through the congregation only once, eliminating activity extraneous to the purpose of the ceremony.

(i) ENDING THE SERVICE

The communion service should end joyously. Wrongs have been righted. Sins have been forgiven. Faith and hope have been restored. It is a time for rejoicing. Close the service with bright, joyful music. Dismiss the congregation by benediction or silent prayer. Following the serving, deacons and deaconesses should dispose of the leftover bread and juice in a respectful manner. In no case should it be eaten or drunk.

(j) THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND

Often there are church members unable to attend communion because of sickness, isolation, old age, or any number of other reasons. Elders and deacons should attempt to visit these people and offer them communion.

If the person is sick, Foot washing is not usually included.

48) GROUNDBREAKING

A groundbreaking service encourages congregational involvement and unity in supporting a building project. It engenders enthusiasm especially if the church has

been planning, praying, and giving for the building over a long period of time. At last tangible is happening.

(a) PLANNING THE SERVICE: Pastor and elders should work together in planning a groundbreaking.

(b) SETTING THE TIME: Groundbreaking is not entirely a religious service and thus does not belong on church service day. Sunday is often an ideal time.

(c) INVITING THE GUESTS: Conference/mission representatives should be invited. Local political and other community leaders might attend. Pastors from other churches will sometimes come. The news media ought to be notified and encouraged to give liberal coverage.

(d) PREPARING THE SITE: The site should be cleared. Perhaps a platform needs to be erected and a sound system installed. If the service is going to be long. Chairs may be needed. Drawings of the proposed building should be prominently displayed. A mockup of the structure will help people visualize it. If the ground is to be broken with shovels, several should be provided. Sometimes the shovel blades are painted gold or silver. Alternatively, an earthmoving machine may be used to turn over the first dirt.

(e) An excellent plan: for including congregational participation is to break the ground with a plow. A long rope is attached to it, and the congregation pulls the plow through the ground creating a beautiful symbol of a congregation pulling together in the building project. If the building has been marked out ahead of time, a furrow can be plowed around its perimeter and the building easily visualized when the groundbreaking is finished.

(f) ORDER OF SERVICE: The order of service suggested below may be used when the audience is comfortably seated and when you have planned for regular service. However, the service could be abbreviated, depending upon local circumstances. Opening - Many congregations do not sing well outdoors. For that reason, congregational singing may be omitted, especially if the group is small. Prayer - Involve a non-the holy seed

church pastor or a leader in the local congregation to offer the prayer. Special song, sermonette - This ought to be very brief. It should consist mostly of a scripture reading and a litany in which everyone can participate.

Ezra 3:10, 11; 6:14 Matthew 21:42; Acts 4:11;

1Corinthians 3:9-11; 1 Peter 2:4-8. Special song, Speeches-Special guests may be invited to speak briefly, but in view of the full program they should be few in number. Have someone narrate the history of the church or of the present building project, and talk about the immediate plans for beginning the building.

Groundbreaking - Special participants in breaking the first ground usually include the pastor; head elder, building committee chairperson, and representatives from the conference /mission and community. A child should be included as a representative of the church of the future. If the building is a school, include the school board chairperson, principal, and a teacher. Special song or hymn of dedication Benediction.

(g) STONELAYING: A stone laying service may take place of groundbreaking. It is held after the building has begun and features the laying of a stone to become part of the foundation. The service can follow the same general order as for groundbreaking.

49) HOUSE DEDICATION: PURPOSE:

The practice of house dedication varies according to culture and the wishes of each individual family. The world church does not have any regular tradition for such service. Some family may request the dedication when purchase or building their first home, some when they pay off the mortgage and the home is truly there. Still others ask for a house dedication whenever they move to a different home.

Typically, the house dedication is held after the house is completed, the furniture installed, and probably the family moved in. Such a service provides an excellent opportunity to invite the neighbors to the special occasion to get acquainted with them, and to establish one's family as a Christian witness in the neighborhood.

This is the purposes of dedicating a house: to set it aside to be spiritual service to the family and their neighborhood.

A) WHO OFFICIATES

No license or ordination is required for house blessing services an elder may perform the service, but should do so with the knowledge and cooperation of the pastor.

B) ORDER OF SERVICE

Attendees often include non Christian neighbors. People typically gather in the living room of the home and may the room be crowded. Some will likely be standing. Thus, the service should usually be no more than 30 minutes in length. The following order is suggested: Congregation -

This should be considered optional, depending on the situation. Appropriate songs include "Happy the Home"

and "Love at Home." Prayer - Since there are three prayers in this short service, the first and last should be

brief and not repeat the prayer of blessing. This first prayer is for the purpose of invoking God's presence in the service. History of house and family - This could be

given by a family member, perhaps the head of the

household. Message.- The message might include:

Scripture such as Genesis 24:67, Psalm 127; 2 Samuel 23:15; Isaiah 65: 21-24; Luke 10:38-42; Micah 4:4.

A story or poetry. Litany such as asking questions of the family either informally or in a written litany and receiving their answers as a family commitment.

Suggested questions: Do you pledge to make this house a place of you're, where the family alter and daily devotion are revered? Do you pledge to make this house a place of family love and unity? Do you pledge to make this house

a light and a blessing to the community? Candle ceremony- Your message could close with the lighting of a candle to symbolize the light of Jesus present in this home and the use of this house to let that light shine throughout the neighborhood.

The candle can remain burning throughout the remainder of the service. Prayer of blessing - The family

might kneel with joined hands in a circle surrounding the kneeling pastor or elder. Others stand surrounding the family. Include in your prayer a blessing on the house, the family, and the neighborhood. Special song:- "Bless this house" is an ideal song for this setting.

Benediction - Perhaps a formal benediction such as Numbers 6:24-26
House tour - At this juncture the family may wish to invite guest to tour the house. Refreshments are optional.

c) WEDDING

"The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind.

And it is a blessing whenever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fact of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities" Every wedding should therefore be a time of spiritually renewal, joyful celebration, and individualized service to the couple and their families.

D) DENOMINATIONAL GUIDELINES:

Who officiates In chapter6 Officers and Their Duties," the A Smart Community stipulates, "In the marriage ceremony the charge, vows, and declaration of marriage are given only by an ordained minister except in those areas where division committees have taken action to approve that selected license or commissioned ministers who have been ordained in as local elders may perform the marriage ceremony. Either an ordained ministers, license or commissioned minister, or a local elder may officiate in delivering the sermonette, offering the prayer, or in giving the blessing." In other word words, you as local elder may not perform the entire service, but you may assist. As the ranking local leader your presence and interest can be crucial. Pastors restricted.

There are some circumstances where denominational guidelines forbid ministers to marry a given couple. There are circumstances where pastors' own consciences prevent them from performing the ceremony. In either case, couple may feel rejected and church members may misunderstand. There is no more important or delicate time for elders to support their pastors. **Spiritual ceremony:** In many countries in the world a church wedding involves both a legal contract and a spiritual commitment. In other countries a religious ceremony cannot take place until a civil/legal ceremony has taken place. Any

wedding ceremony in which the secular overshadows the spiritual should be considered inappropriate in The Holy Seed Church. Congregation guidelines: You or your pastors should lead your church in preparing wedding guidelines.

Do this at a time when no request for a wedding has been received and no feelings are likely to be hurt. Give these guidelines, along with a wedding application should list specific requests of the couple and reflect that the guidelines have been read and will be followed. Study the A Smart Community and minister's manual with your church board to make them aware of denominational marriage guidelines.

Then, based on these and local customs/tradition, draw up your church's own guidelines. Items you may wish to include: who may be married in the church; music whether or not the church's wedding coordinator must be used; decoration; candles; dress, photographs; rice or confetti; reception; fees equipment and services available from the church. Exceptions to the guidelines must be few, and should be approved only by a designated committee. Pastors should not have to take full responsibility for dealing with the aggravation expressed by families whose plans have been contrary to the congregation's guidelines.

50) STUDY GUIDE: Note

Special services are just that, special, and they need to be planned and conducted as such. Normally the pastor leads out and, as an elder; you are there to assist him on those occasions.

KNOW: (a) Baptism is a symbol of death to the old life and the beginning of a new life in Jesus. It demonstrates a person's desire to become a member of God's family. (b) It is important that new members become bonded into the church community and are made to feel accepted and loved by the congregation. (c) Dedication of a child reminds each of us of God's miracle of birth and the commitment of parents and congregation to support and help "raise up a child in the way he should go." (d) Communion is one of the most solemn and yet joyous occasions in our churches. While it is a time that calls for heart-searching and forgiveness, it is also a time of encouragement and spiritual renewal. Assisting or leading this special service is one of the deepest spiritual duties of an elder. (e) The holy Seed Church observe open communion. Anyone desiring to partake of the emblems of our Lord's death is welcome to participate.

(f) An elder can be agent of spiritual blessing to those who are unable to attend Communion by visiting and holding a simple Communion format with them. (g) The time of a death and planning of the funeral is an important time of ministry by an elder. It is important to be sensitive to a family's needs, culture, and traditions during this time. (h) A new parish induction is a special service that only elders can perform. This service, and the subsequent support of the new pastor, can help minimize the difficulties of transition for both the congregation and the new pastor and his family. If you do not emphasize this significant service, no one will. {}Prayer for the sick is another form of ministry through which an elder can be a great blessing to the people. Those prayers can come during visitation or through a formal anointing service. A wedding is a time of spiritual renewal, joyful celebration, and individualized service to the couple and their families.

51) THIS QUESTIONS ARE SAMPLE HOW TO STUDY YOUR

BIBLE: (1) What are the steps in preparing someone for baptism? What are your responsibilities in that preparation? (2) What are the four basic purposes of child dedication? (3)

What is the different between a church dedication and a church opening? (4) What are ways that an elder can help out in the planning of a church dedication? (5) What does "open communion" mean? (6) How soon should you visit the family after you hear of the death of a family member? (7) What are the three suggestions for smoothing the transition of a new pastor? (8) List the steps involved in an anointing service. (9)

Why it is it important to have wedding guidelines for your church? Why should this be done when no wedding are being planned?

GUIDELINES HOW TO HANDLE PRACTICE:

(a)What are some things you could do to make a person's baptism more special? (b) Come up with a sample format for a baby dedication, and what the church can do tangibly for the family and child. (c) What could be done for the children during a communion service to help them understand and experience in their own way its meaning? (d) Write out plan for visiting and supporting a person in grief over a death. (e) In what practical ways can you help your congregation smooth the transition of a new pastor? What can you do to bury the old? How can you help support the idea of not replacing too soon? In what ways can you celebrate the new?

52) BREAK OUT SESSION QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION:

- (1) On a person's baptismal day, what things can you do personally to help him/her become bonded into the church community and made to feel accepted? What are things your church might do to help bond and communicate its acceptance and love? What are some things you could do to make a person's baptism more special?**
- (2) What are some specific things you have done/seen in relation to making a child dedication special?**
- (3) How might you help increase participation of more members in communion?**
- (4) What does "The Holy Seed Church observe open communion" mean to you?**
- (5) What specific help could you be to a pastor during times of funerals and weddings? What are some ways you might support a family during the time of a death?**
- (6) How do you feel about the concept of not replacing a pastor for around three months?**
- (7) What might you do to welcome a new pastor to your congregation?**
- (8) What are some ways to help your congregation smooth the transition of a new pastor? What can you do to bury the old?**

53) FUNERAL A DIVERSITY OF TRADITION

Because of the wide diversity of cultures represented in our churches around the world, there are many different customs observed following the death of a member.

Every society creates rite that gives expression to grief, show respect for the deceased, and provide support for those who mourn. As a church leader, it is important that you honor these traditions and minister to those who grieve in a way that is meaningful to them. Some members of your congregation may come from very different backgrounds than yours and you must be sensitive to their grief traditions. However, you should move away from traditional customs that go contrary to Christian principles and biblical understandings on death, especially those customs that infer the immortality of the soul or the honoring of the spirits.

(a) ORDER OF SERVICE:

Despite the diversity of funeral rites, the ceremony should include certain Christian values and practices. Time should be given for prayer and for the reading of appropriate scriptural passages. Mourners should be encouraged to look to Jesus as the conqueror of death and the One who has the power to raise the dead. Words of comfort based on the sure promises of God's Word should be shared. Help the mourners to leave the ceremony with hope rather than despair. The following suggested order of service may adapted to fit the customs of your community: Music Scripture reading Prayer Life story of the deceased (obituary) Music Testimonies Photograph church, family and friends Sermon (15-30 minutes) Committal of the body (if the service is held at the graveside) Music Closing prayer

(b) VISIT THE FAMILY

Visit the family as soon as possible after you hear of the death of a member. Show your sympathy and sorrow in the culturally acceptable way. You may share with them some of God's promises (John 11:25 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:16) and pray with them. Perhaps the most helpful thing that you can do is just to sit with them, even if you are unable to say anything. As an elder you represent Christ and Christianity to them. Your mere presence will bring comfort and assurance. Take your spouse along. Women are usually superior to men in such circumstances, especially at consoling women and children.

(c) OFFER CHURCH SUPPORT

There are many ways you and the church members can assist grieving families. Relation can be located and notified of the death, food can be prepared, telephones answered, small children cared for, and funeral details arranged. In some countries, there are funeral directors in the community who care for all aspects of a funeral. In such cases, you can assist the grieving family by contacting and negotiating with the funeral director. In areas where there are no funeral directors, you can offer the support of the church in preparing the body for the funeral. Never force the help of the church on a grieving

family, but let them know that there is support that they can depend on if they wish.

(d) THE FUNERAL SERVICE WHO OFFICIATES

Usually no license is required for conducting a funeral. In the absence of a minister, an elder may lead out. This should not be done, however, without the pastor's approval. An elder or friend of the family may be called on to assist the minister in the service by giving the obituary, prayer. In some places the pastor or elder who conducts the funeral must make sure proper death certificates are obtained from civil authorities before interment.

(e) HELPFUL BIBLE PASSAGES:

The Following May Prove Helpful In Your Preparation Of A Scripture Reading Or Sermon: (a) General: Job 14:1-2, 14:15, Psalms 23:1-4, Psalms 27:4-5, 13-14; Psalms 46; Psalms 90; Psalms 91:1-2, 11-12; Psalms 121; Isaiah 35:3-10; Isaiah 40:28-31; Isaiah 43:1-2; John 14 1-6; Romans 8:14-39; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Hebrews 4:14-16; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Revelation 7:15-17 Revelation 14:13; Revelation 21:1-4; Revelation 22:1-5. (b) Funeral of a child: 2 Samuel 12:16-23; Mark 10:13-16 (c) Funeral of a young person: Ecclesiastes 11:6-10; Ecclesiastes 12; Luke 7:11-15 (d) Funeral of a godly woman: Proverbs 31:10-31; Acts 9:36-42; Matthew 26:10-13. (e) Funeral of the elderly: Genesis 5:24; Genesis 15:15; Matthew 11:28; 1 Timothy 4:6-8. 50.

54) NEW FILD INDUCTION

The holy Seed Church tends to take for granted the acceptance of a new pastor in the field and community. As a result, new pastors are left alone to work their way into the affection of church members. Not enough emphasis is placed on assisting the bonding process between new pastors and their congregations. Some special services only pastors can perform; elders cannot. A new parish induction is a special service only elders, assisted by conference/mission leaders, can perform;

pastors cannot. If you do not emphasize this significant service, very possibly no one will.

(a) DIFFICULTIES OF TRANSITION

The transition of a pastoral family from one parish to another may engender anticipation and enthusiasm on the part of both family and parish. However, the change can be delicate and difficult. It is invariably accompanied by some degree of grief.

(b) CONGREGATIONAL GRIEF

In marriage, a loss through divorce may be more devastating than a loss through death, for in divorce the loved one chooses to leave. As a result one feels rejection leads to anger. Likewise, when a pastor chooses to move from one parish to another, the congregation feels some degree of grief, rejection, and anger: "What is wrong with us?" "Why would our pastor want to leave us?" "I got hurt loving the last pastor. I am not going to love the new one and get hurt again." If the previous pastor did not choose to leave, but was arbitrarily reassigned by the conference/mission, the congregation may be angry at the conference and resent the replacement.

If the previous pastor was not appreciated, the congregation may feel distrust of and anger toward all ministers. People tend to resent and resist change- especially conservative people, and these make up a large portion of most congregations. New pastors invariably represent change. Therefore, there may be some temptation to resent and resist the new pastor.

(c) PASTORAL FAMILY GRIEF

The pastoral family has much more to grieve over than the church family. They get uprooted- an experience especially devastating to spouse and children. They move into a new town and a strange house, with financial and social strains. The children have to start in a new school. The spouse may have to hunt for a new job. Most serious of all, the pastoral family has had to leave

their friends. Where the congregation may be grieving the loss of one family, the new family is grieving the loss of all their friends in their previous parish. All of this adds up to potential problems during pastoral transitions.

(d) SMOOTHING THE TRANSITION

Some suggestions for smoothing the bury the old. The old must be set aside before the new can be accepted. The congregation can express its appreciation and verbalize its grief over losing the outgoing pastor through a well-promoted and attended farewell. Do not replace too soon. Some may feel that new pastor must assume responsibilities immediately after the former pastor leaves. Research, however, indicates that it typically takes about three months before a congregation is ready to welcome a new pastor. This interim period gives time for church members to separate themselves emotionally from the former pastoral family. It also provides a unique opportunity for the latent lay leadership of the parish to emerge.

Meanwhile, the congregation rediscovers its need to be pastured. Celebrates the new. Conference/missions and congregations should make the service of installing a new pastor as significant an event as possible. Just as a wedding is an important symbolic act publicly establishing a new home, an installation service for a pastor is an important symbolic act publicly establishing a new pastorate. One different, though, is that the bride can plan her own wedding.

Pastors cannot plan their own installation. Elders and conference/mission officials must take the responsibility. Elders or other congregational leaders should not do it by themselves, as pastors are employed and assigned by the conference. Conference officials must not do it by themselves, as though they are authoritatively imposing the pastor on the congregation.

The congregation is a community, a church family. The conference representative is normally not a member of that family and thus can hardly welcome the new pastor to it. Too often the conference/mission official makes only a brief introduction of the new pastoral family on morning Glory. The church then plans only a secular, social event as a welcome. It is far better to have a formal, spiritual installation service. In some situations pastors and members of other churches in the area may be invited.

(e) PASTORAL INSTALLATION SERVICE

Ideally the installation service should be part of the Sunday worship service, when most members are present. The suggested service below emphasizes introduction of the entire pastoral family. Certain pastoral families might not prefer this much public exposure, but some agreeable emphasis should be placed on welcoming the whole family. The pastor's family, not the pastor, is most likely to feel unwelcomed. Introduction of conference/mission representative - The head elder should introduce the conference representative as coming to present the new pastoral family.

f) Conference representative's remarks:

The conference representative should explain the purpose of the installation service: to help bond the church and pastoral family together and to dedicate the new pastor church team to ministering in the community. The conference leader should also introduce each member of the pastor's family, presenting a brief biographical sketch of each. An additional option: the conference leader may present to the pastor a tray with a lighted candle for each church in the parish, and then a charge to keep the lights shining brightly and help them grow in number. Welcome by local elder: The elder speaks for the congregation in welcoming the pastor.

The entire pastoral family may be invited to the platform, in which case the elder's spouse may well give a special welcome to the pastor's spouse. A child, youth

leader, or church school teacher from the congregation could welcome the pastor's children.

g) Litany - Elders

We come on this day to open a new chapter in the history of our church, the beginning of a new pastorate.

Congregation: We have received gifts from God, who has equipped us for ministry, and provided a new pastor to lead, train, and encourage us. Pastoral Family: We come seeking to serve you in lifting up Jesus Christ that together we might grow. Congregation: We invite you to lead us in our walking with God.

h) Pastoral Family

We seek your love as we become part of this church family. Congregation: We wish to have you as part of our family, and we open our hearts to you. Conference Representative (to pastor): God has given to you the challenge of leading these people in their preparation for the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Pastor: I accept this challenge. Under God, I pledge to do my best always to lift Him up. Conference representative: As a church, you face the challenge of presenting the gospel to your community.

Congregation and Pastor: We accept this challenge to present the living Christ through our lives and our ministries. All: We covenant, before Christ and each other this day, to place Christ first, to seek the guidance of His Spirit, and to work together for the hastening of his coming.

Installation Prayer: The pastoral family might face the congregation with the conference representative on one side of them and the head elder on the other. Other elders or church leaders may be invited forward to form a human chain from the pastor and elder on the platform to the first pew. Everyone, including the congregation, is then invited to join hands and kneel together for the installation prayer. This act symbolizes a uniting of pastor and people. The head elder prays, inviting the congregation's commitment in supporting the new

pastor. The conference/mission representative prays, officially installing the pastor as congregation leader. The conference representative then leads the elders in welcoming the new pastoral family with a handshake. Pastor's Sermon / Church welcome after the service closes, as the congregation leaves the sanctuary, members welcome the pastoral family. A fellowship meal provides an excellent closing to the installation.

54) PRAYER FOR SICK

The book of James tells us that if any member is sick. "Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven" (James 5:14-15). Here is another form of ministry available to elders that can bring great blessing to your people. Prayer ought to be at the heart of every elder's ministry, and prayer for the sick is a significant part of such a prayer ministry. When you visit the sick, you should be mindful, not only of their physical condition, but of their spiritual condition as well. Often during illness, people feel helpless and discouraged.

Sometimes their faith wanes and they need your encouragement and reminder that God loves them. The formal anointing service is reserved for those with significant physical illness. However, the text asks, "Is anyone among you sick?" I do not ask, "Is anyone among you doing?" The anointing service ought not to be used for every frivolous physical complaint. It should be reserved for serious illness, but not just for fatal illness. In some places, anointing has become almost a lost rite because of the traditions of some non-the holy seed church denominations that have used anointing as though it were a last rite.

(a)WHO OFFICIATES

The sick should call for the elders of the church. Local elders may officiate at an anointing service in the absence of a minister, but should do so with the pastor's

approval. Ideally a minister leads out, assisted by the presence and prayers of available elders.

(b) PREPARING FOR THE SERVICE

Where held. An anointing service may be held in church, home, nursing home, or hospital. If in a hospital, it should be conducted so as not to interfere with the physician and hospital staff. Length and formality of the service depend on the place it is held and the condition of the recipient. Who attends? In addition to the minister and the elders, it may be well for others having a special gift of prayer to be present.

The recipient might wish to invite praying friends. Non-Christian family or friends are usually not invited, but need not be asked to leave if present. Those who lead out should have a serious commitment to Christ, believe firmly in divine healing, and have prepared their hearts for the occasion. Preparing the recipient. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Psalms 66:18).

Encourage the sick person to examine his/her life before the anointing. An excellent way to prepare for the service is for the individual to study the chapter "Prayer for the sick" in *The Ministry of Healing*. Respect the privacy of persons not waiting to speak too specifically about their ailment. On the other hand, you should learn as much as the recipient is comfortable in sharing so your prayer can be specific.

(c) ORDER OF SERVICE

Preliminary remarks. As leader, you should explain to the group the purpose of anointing and how it takes place. The recipient might be invited to testify to his/her faith and give the reason for requesting healing. If the sick person is not too critical to warrant a brief service, take time to read from the scriptures the prerequisites to divine healing. These include: 1. Belief that God can and does heal. 2. Confession of sin. 3. Commitment to healthful living: Much illness results from habits of living. Assure the sick that God freely forgives our sins of

the past, put it is presumptuous to ask Him to heal our bodies if we intend to go on abusing them. 4. Willingness to use human means: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17). God may already have ungifted some physician to who He will lead the sick person for healing. God works miracles, but He often chooses to work them through gifts He places in human hands.

5. Trust God's answer. Sometimes God heals immediately, sometimes slowly, sometimes not until Christ's Second Coming. If the afflicted person is not healed immediately, it ought not to be interpreted as a sign either of the individual's spiritual weakness or of God's unwillingness to heal. The service should climax with the certainty that everything has been placed in God's hands and that God can be trusted. Scripture to be read or excerpted could include: James 5:14-16; Numbers 21:8-9; psalms 103:1-5; Psalms 107: 19-20; Mark 16:15-20.

There anointing prayer. If you are leading out you should have a small vial of olive oil. Everyone kneels. The recipient may wish to pray. If so, he/she should probably pray first. Other designated leaders pray in turn. You pray last. As you begin to pray, place a little oil on the fingertips of your hand. Near the close of your prayer, apply the oil to the forehead of the one you are anointing. This symbolizes the Holy Spirit's touching the afflicted in a specific and special way. The Holy Seed Church do not follow or support the practice of some who apply oil to the part of the body in which the infirmity exists. Concluding the service.

As soon as the prayer season ends, say your goodbyes and leave. A little time for getting acquainted and social; fellowship might precede the anointing, but should not follow it. Leave while a spirit of reverence prevails and the presence of God permeates the room.

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

We end this Constitution and Rules where we began, with an appeal for all elders to take up the challenge of vibrant, spiritual church leadership. Your ministry is vital to the ongoing growth and development of the church. Because of the unique leadership talents the Holy Spirit has given you, you can make a tremendous difference. Consecrate yourself to Christ daily and learn on Him for grace and guidance. "The elders who are among you I exhort. Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (1 Peter 5:1-4). The Bible says "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." God is perfect and holy and our sins separate us from God forever. The Bible says "The wages of sin is death," {Romans 3:1-31}. The good news is that, about 2,015 years ago God sent His only Son Jesus Christ to die for our sins. Jesus is the Son of God. He lived a sinless life and then died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. "God demonstrates His own love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," {John 1:1-13}. Jesus rose from the dead and now He lives in heaven with God His Father. He offers us the gift of eternal life of living forever with Him in heaven if we accept Him as our Lord and Savior. Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me." God 53.

a) THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM

{Luke Chapter 17}. {a} 20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see [it].

23 And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after [them], nor follow [them].

24 For as the lightning, that lightened out of the one [part] under heaven, shineth unto the other [part] under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

25 But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they boiled;

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed [them] all.

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

{b}The cross of Jesus Christ {1 Corinthians 1:18-21}

Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephan's: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

{c} Matthew 24:35-38 Context

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things are fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noel were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noel entered into the ark.

{d} Proverbs 30:5-6 Contexts: {e} Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. {f} Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

NOTE: This verse affirms tree propositions:

1. The heavens and earth will pass away. 2. Christ's words will not pass away and the word of God shall stand forever." 3. Everyone who believes the word of will receive internal life. "Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. Please forgive my sins and give me the gift of eternal life.

I ask you in to my life and heart to be my Lord and Savior. I want to serve you always ever and ever Amen."

I welcome you all to feel free before your Lord as you as you join us to fellowship together in prayers. I request you to remain humble in order to follow how prayers are being conducted. There are the chosen servants of God who will assist you in prayers, remember where you have come from, what you have passed through, they didn't cause is to happen to you, instead understand that that they are telling you is a revelation from God. For this reason, you should be cooperative, avoid complaining, murmuring, gossiping and enmity {Galatians 5:16-26.}

According to our procedures, when you enter into the church, please switch off your phone or put it on silent made of on voice mail. For any recording, you must ask for permission before you start recording. You must also take part in prayers not sitting idle and know that blessing do not come fully unless you submit yourself into prayers - Matthew 7:7. Anything you see or notice during service or in prayers, you are requested to ask before you have the church, because you are not aware so that that you can understand your Prayers. In case of the occurrence of anything you will be liable because you did not ask.

55) The Holy Seed Church Flag



The holy seed is a chosen seedling that is growing rapid like an arrow in a soldiers hand, happy is the man who has many such arrows. He will not be defeated when he meets his enemies in the place of judgment.

Happy are those who by the Lord, who live by his commands, your work will provide for your needs you will be happy and prosperous, your wife will be like a fruitful vine in your home and your children will be like young olive trees round your table. A man who obeys the lord will surely be blessed like see Jerusalem prosper all the days of your life! May you live to see your grandchildren making a global peace be with Israel you can't miss to join us!

Listen while I sing you this song, a song of my friend and this vineyard, my friend had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug the soil and cleared it of stones, he planted the finest vines. He built a tower to guard them, dug a pit for treading the grapes he wait for the grapes to ripen, but every grape was sour. The holy seed is germinated to a seedling that has grown to give a ripen grapes is I and you. But we are not giving good grapes instead we are giving sour grapes why? Because we are not taking care of those who are in needs. Look the widow who is sitting under your table asking for your help and you don't.

The orphans stranding at your feed holding your clothes crying for your help but you don't beside you, you have your brothers and sister who need your help but you are not helping them. How can you say that we are going to heaven while we have division among ourselves? Every person has been given talent from God and motives to perform his duties, being a leader in the government or pastor in the church. We have to give respect to each other according to his talent the way he present his views, because we are building up the government and churches to have a global peace.

Because in heaven we have only one table that we are going to sit after crises is over. Because we are going to be saved by Jesus Christ himself, so he will not save two groups so only the chosen holy seed will prosper. Now I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ hat yee all speak the seem thing and that there be no division among you, but the ye be perfectly doing together in the same mind and in same judgment, knowing that the son of God is at than to harvest I and you as a holy seed. (1 Corinthians 1:10-31)



The Seed germinates and becomes a seedling

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the color of another as the appearance of fire round about within it, form the appearance of his doing even upward and form the appearance of his doing even downward, I saw it were the appearance of fire and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord, and when I saw it I fell upon my face and I heard a voice if one that spake.

Them hath he filled with wisdom of health to work all manner of work of the engraver, in blue, and in purpose in scalet and in fine linen and other weaver even of them that do any work and of those that devise cunning work. Then wought Bezaleel and Aholiah, and every wise hared ma, in

whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary according to all that the Lord had commanded.

Come now, and let se reason together, saith the Lord: through your sins be as scarlet, they shall they shall be as wool if he be willing and obedient , ye shall eat the good of the land: The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still paths waters. He restored my soul: he lendth me in the paths of righteousness for his names sake. Yea, though I walk through he valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me, they rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou prepares a table before me in the presence of mine enemies thou anoints my head with oil, my cup runneth over, surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him . Add thou not unto his words lest he reprove thee and thou every word of God is pure he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. And thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and those be found in liar two things have I required of thee deny me them not before I die: Remove me far from vanity and lies give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full and deny thee and say, who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor and steal and take the name of my God in vain.

Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief for the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing event the diving a sunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: But all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him whom we have and it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon al flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions, and also upon servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit and I will show wonders in the heavens and into earths, blood, and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood , before the great and the terrible day of the Lord came and it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for n mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance as the lord hath said.

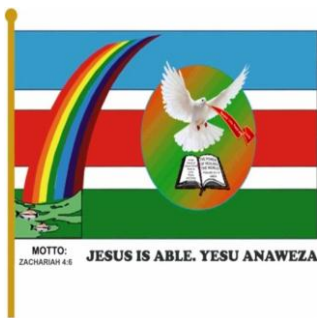


God Sent Jonah to Nineveh

Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of A-mit-tail saying, Arise go to Nini-e-veh that great city and cry against it for their wickedness is come up before me.....then the men feared the Lord exceedingly and offered a sacrifice unto the lord and ,made vows now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And John was in the belly of the fish three days and three night ... and the Lord space unto the fish and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land and the word of the lord came unto Jonah saying the

second time saying go and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.....and he cried and said, yet forty days Nin-e-veh shall be overthrown so the people of Nin-e-veh believed god and proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, form the greatest of them even the King of Niv-e-neh and he arose from his throne and he laid his robe form him and covered him with sackcloth and sat in sales and he caused it to be proclaimed and publishes through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying let neither man or beast, herd nor flock taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water who can feel if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce angers that we perish not? And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had said:- that he would do unto them; and he did it not so Ni-ne-veh was saved from distraction.

And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nation into it and there shall in no wise enter into it anything that delifith, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie but they which are written in the lamb's book if life and he showed me a pure river if water of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of this lamb: In the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river was there the tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month and the leaved for the tree were for the healing of the nations.



Definition of the Parts of the Flag

1. Sky Blue - Heavenly kingdom and mercy of God.
2. White - Holiness of God and peace to all Creations.
3. Red - The Holy Spirit and blood of Jesus Christ.
4. Green - A promise land and the New Jerusalem.
5. The Dove - The gospel to the gentiles.
6. Gold - The kingdom (Church)
7. Rainbow - The seal of God.
8. Water - The living water.
9. The Fish – Transport and Revelation of Christ.

GOD IS WALKING WITH HIS PEOPLE DISCOVER YOUR DESTINY IN YOUR LIFE!!!

THE FIRST CHURCH IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

- 1 God had happy sabbath in a very beautiful garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, He blessed and gave them power to rule the whole World - Genesis 2:1-25

THE SECOND CHURCH BY NOAH

2. God chose Noah to build up the Ark to save the whole universe, but only 8 people were saved and God made a covenant that will not destroy again by water instead by fire. He gave them a sign of Rainbow - Genesis 9:1-29

THE THIRD CHURCH BY ABRAHAM

- 3 He got favour from God after giving his son Isaac as sacrifice, being the only son. Instead God gave him a lamb so he was blessed and called father of FAITH. His seed shall be like stars of Heaven - Genesis 21:1-7;22:1-15

THE FORTH CHURCH BY JACOB

- 4 After wrestling over night with an angel. He demanded to be blessed and he was given the name ISRAEL. Genesis 28:10-12. Remember God does not see people being rich or poor but He searches broken hearts. Because Jacob was a cattle keeper, he was given blessing by God through his father instead of Isaac giving to his son Essau as the first born. 1 Samuel 16:7

THE FIFTH CHURCH CALLED ISRAEL BY MOSES

- 5 God Chose him to deliver sons and daughters of Israel from the hands of Egyptians and bring them to Caanan. Which took them 40 years instead of 40 days because of their disbelief. We understand that Joshua and Caleb reached as they lead the Israel people. Joshua 5:6

THE SIXTH CHURCH IS CALLED JOURNEY FOLLOWERS BY JOHN THE BAPTIST

- 6 Who was chosen by God to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. He preached good news preparing the people to meet Jesus Christ until he saw him coming, then he said "look, this is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of people" So John the Baptist fulfilled the Prophecy. - John 1:29-34

THE SEVENTH CHURCH IS CALLED CHRISTIANS BY JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF

- 7 And his disciples converted many people upto now we're christians. John 1:35-51. After the death of Jesus, the disciples took 70 years to start naming churches like EPHESUS, SMYRNA, PERGATUM, THYATIRA, SARDIS, PHILADELPHIA AND LAODICEA ETC. These are the first seven churches that were founded by the disciples. Since then we have millions of churches preparing people to meet our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Revelation 1:1-20; 2:1-29 and 3:1-22

THE HOLY SEED CHURCH NEEMA EVANGELISM CENTRE GLOBAL HEALING MINISTRIES

- 8 Is a religious organization movement that is like arrows in a soldiers hand. Happy is the man who has many such arrows. He will never be defeated when he meets his enemies in the place of judgement - Psalms 127:1-5

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