

CHURCH GOVERNMENT— STATE
(S21 through S34)

STATE — THE IMPERIAL POWER
(1922-1923)

S21. STATE OVERSEERS (Administrative Bishops, see p. 153.)

(60th A., 1984, pp. 42, 43; 73rd A., 2010)

I. SELECTION

State overseers shall be appointed by the International Executive Committee, and a rating instrument shall be designed to indicate the state overseers' performance, and this rating sheet shall substitute for the preference ballot as the primary source of information. Also, that a place be provided on the rating sheet for the individual's preference for state overseer. Only performance sheets with state overseer preferences that are returned will be counted in the reappointment of state overseers.

II. QUALIFICATIONS

The office of state overseer is an honored and vital position in the Church of God (Acts 20:28). It is therefore fitting that the person who serves in this capacity be a person of strong spiritual authority and able to demonstrate capable leadership qualities, such as

1. The ability to oversee persons as well as programs (Acts 20:28).
2. An attitude of submission to those over him in the Lord (Hebrews 13:7).
3. Leadership qualities to motivate and delegate responsibilities for efficient operation (1 Corinthians 16:1; 1 Timothy 1:18, 19; 5:1, 2).
4. Sensitivity to those whom he serves by exemplifying compassion, trustworthiness, concern, and integrity (Hebrews 6:10; 1 Timothy 1:18, 19; 4:12, 13; 6:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 2 Corinthians 4:1-3; 6:3-12a).
5. Adaptability to the cultural differences and changing role of church ministry (Acts 6:1-7; 2 Timothy 4:1, 2).

III. ACCOUNTABILITY

1. He shall be accountable to those who appoint him and dedicated to those whom he serves (2 Timothy 2:4, 5; Luke 16:2).
2. He shall be a model by demonstrating Christlike attributes in his lifestyle and administration (2 Corinthians 6:3, 4a).
3. He shall be diligent in his relationship with his family, his community, his colleagues, and those over him in the Lord, so as not to bring a reproach to his witness and position (1 Timothy 3:2, 4, 5; 1 Corinthians 12:18, 20, 25, 28-30; 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Romans 14:16; James 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:12, 14; 2 Timothy 2:24, 25).
4. He shall stay abreast of the times in terms of administration, finances, office procedures and techniques, and communications.
5. He shall be evaluated periodically by the International Executive Committee.

IV. ORIENTATION

Overseers who are appointed for the first time shall be given a period of orientation immediately following their appointment by the International Executive Committee.

V. TERM OF OFFICE (64th A., 1992, p. 88; 69th A., 2002, p. 48)

The state overseer's term of office shall be for two years, terminating the Sunday following the close of the International General Assembly. He shall be eligible to succeed himself for an additional term in the same state. Any additional terms in the same state beyond the two terms (four years) must meet the following criteria:

1. He must receive a minimum of a two-thirds majority of the vote of the ministers [in his state or region].
2. The success of his administration must merit said consideration [for an additional term in the same state].
3. The International Executive Committee must believe his reappointment to be in the best interest of the state.

The tenure of office [for the state overseer] is for a maximum of 12 years in nonmission states. He may serve all or part of his tenure in any state or number of states depending upon the above-stated criteria. He may be eligible for reappointment as a state overseer after serving in some other capacity for at least two years.

VI. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES (25th A., 1930, p. 21; 28th A., 1933, p. 43; 39th A., 1944, p. 23; 41st A., 1946, p. 26; 42nd A., 1948, pp. 28-30; 44th A., 1952, p. 35)

The state overseer shall:

1. Arrange for and assist in conducting a general evangelistic campaign throughout his state or territory.
2. Appoint district overseers, pastors, and make changes or fill vacancies in pastorates, when necessary.
3. Approve the setting in order of churches before organization is effective.
4. Approve the selection, purchase, and construction of all church, parsonage, or Sunday school properties, together with the respective district overseers.
5. Officiate at all ordination services in his territory, sign credentials of all ministers in his territory who have been approved by the general overseer, or return such credentials to the general overseer, giving reasons for not signing.
6. Sign revocation when terminating the ministry of any individual.
7. Discontinue inactive churches; sign a report of same on forms prepared for this use and send to the general overseer.
8. Transfer members of churches which have ceased to exist, to the church most convenient for the member.
9. Appoint any officer in a local church, Family Training Hour and/or YPE, Sunday school, or Women's Ministries, when necessary.
10. Pass on all questionnaires of applicants to the ministry in his territory who are considered worthy, and sign such applications, showing his endorsement of the applicant before submitting applications to the general overseer.
11. Decide the bounds of each district in his state or territory.

12. Report the organization of new churches to the secretary general on forms prepared for same.
13. Conduct a convention on each district once each year, or group two or more districts for one convention, and at least one state convention, giving general instructions in doctrine and general interests of the church.
14. Call district or state ministers' meetings or prayer conferences to arrange for the state program.
15. Before launching large financial state projects, have the approval of the International Executive Committee.
16. Where the state overseer is serving as pastor, or has relatives who are members of the church, or other conditions that would render him incapable of giving a fair trial to an offending member who has been excluded from the church, he has a right to appeal to the general overseer, who shall select two ordained bishops to sit with him to decide whether or not the offending party should have another trial.
17. The state overseer, with the district overseer, may authorize exhorters to pastor churches, baptize, and receive members into the church, when such authority is necessary or in case of an emergency.
18. The state overseer shall make monthly reports to the general overseer on forms prepared for such reports.
19. Leave all records pertaining to the state work, such as minister's reports, church treasurer's reports, ledgers, financial records, state board decisions, or any other record of importance, in the files in the state office for his successor's information.
20. Live in the state or province over which he is made overseer.
21. To model, encourage and provide formal training and prayerful guidance to pastors in the following areas: Preparing and managing an annual local church budget; dealing with local church conflict resolution; and impacting the local community (74th A., 2012).

S22. STATE COUNCIL

I. SELECTION

The ministers of each state, in conference, shall elect a board of councilors to the state overseer (the state overseer serving as ex officio chairman) after the following manner:

1. States having 251 or more churches elect not less than 12 ministers.
2. States having 91-250 churches elect not less than 10 ministers.
3. States having 61-90 churches elect not less than eight ministers.
4. States having 21-60 churches elect not less than six ministers.
5. States having up to 20 churches elect not less than four ministers (63rd A., 1990, pp. 79, 80).

With the exception of national, territorial, provincial, or mission states, all councilmen must be ordained bishops. When sufficient ordained bishops are not available in national, territorial, provincial, or mission states, ordained ministers may be appointed as councilmen by the general overseer and respective state overseer (51st A., 1966, p. 62).

II. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES

The State Council shall:

1. With the state overseer, have supervision of the state missions money, surplus tithes, state parsonage, campground, and all other funds received and disbursed by the state treasury.

The proceeds from the sale of property of disbanded churches, less expenses incurred by the state/regional offices for that particular church, shall be disbursed exclusively for church assistance and church planting (73rd A., 2010).

2. After state office expenses have been paid, be authorized to use the surplus tithe of tithes from the state treasury to supplement the income of underpaid pastors and evangelists (43rd A., 1950, p. 15; 45th A., 1954, pp. 29, 30; [1974]) .
3. Meet as often as the ministers and the overseer [in the state] deem necessary.
4. Consider and pass on appeals and applications for help on new projects, evangelism, needy ministers, or such emergencies as may arise from time to time.
5. Counsel and act with the state overseer in the study and preparation of recommendations for the State Ministers' Conference (43rd A., 1950, pp. 19, 20).
6. With the state overseer, employ the state secretary and treasurer and set salary, and so forth. However, where the state overseer receives the limit in salary and expense, no member of his immediate family shall be employed as state secretary and treasurer.

S23. STATE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. In each state, territory, or country where needed, the state overseer shall, at a state meeting or called meeting of the ministers of the church, or at a state convention of the membership of the church, appoint a State Board of Trustees of not less than five male members. (Any three members of the said board, with the consent of the state overseer, shall have authority to make all necessary transactions or arrangements for the sale or transfer of property, or for the borrowing of money and pledging of property to secure the payment of the same, and to execute all necessary conveyances pursuant to the direction of the International Executive Committee [1994]).
2. Members of the State Board of Trustees shall hold office until their successors are appointed, and this board shall hold title to manage, and control, or cause to be managed and controlled, pursuant to the direction of the church, all real estate in which the churches or membership of the churches in the state hold a common or general right of interest. These boards shall use the said properties, including, without limitation, campgrounds, state parsonages, and the like, for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Church of God.
3. The said State Board of Trustees shall also hold title to, manage, or cause to be managed and controlled, pursuant to the direction of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) all real and personal properties in places where no church has been organized (53rd A., 1970, Item 15, pp. 44-46; [1994]).
4. Provided further, that the State Board of Trustees is hereby authorized and empowered, with the consent of the state overseer, to transfer and convey to a Local Board of Trustees,

- and without a conference of the ministry of the state, such trust property for use of a church, for which such Local Board of Trustees are the trustees (43rd A., 1950, p. 17; [1994]).
5. As directed by the state/regional overseer and state/regional council of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), the State/ Regional Board of Trustees shall have the right to purchase, sell, transfer and convey, or to borrow money and pledge state/region-alowned property to secure the repayment of the same, at any time, provided that the amount involved annually shall not be more than the following schedule:

Category	Amount
5-star	\$750,000
4-star	\$500,000
AAA	\$350,000
AA	\$250,000
A	\$200,000
Others	as approved by the International Executive Committee

If the amount involved shall be more than the above schedule, then the said proposition or transaction shall be submitted to the International Executive Committee for consideration and, if approved, also to a duly constituted conference of the ministry of the state/region, which will require a two-thirds majority vote for approval. If the said conference shall approve the proposition by a two-thirds majority vote of those attending, then the State/Regional Board of Trustees, with the consent of the state/regional overseer, shall have full power to purchase, sell, hypothecate, transfer and convey any of the said property, or to borrow money and pledge the property for the repayment of the same. (This applies only to the states/regions in the U.S.A. and Canada.) (69th A., 2002, pp. 48, 49)

6. In the case of mission states, approval of the International executive Committee shall be necessary to borrow money or to encumber the state in any manner (53rd A., 1970, pp. 44-46; 62nd A., 1988, Journal, pp. 49, 50; [1994]).
7. Any person appointed to the State Board of Trustees shall be a male member in good standing of the Church of God. If at any time, any member of any Board of Trustees shall cease to be a member in good standing, or if by reason of death, removal, incapacity, or unwillingness to perform all duties of his office, his place on the Board of Trustees may be declared vacant: on the General Board by the general overseer; on a State Board by the state overseer; on a Local Board by a local church conference; and the same authority that declares said office vacant shall appoint a person to serve until the time for regular appointments, and the one so appointed shall have all authority held by the one removed (35th A., 1940, pp. 32-34; [1994]).

S24. STATE BOARD OF MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT

(57th A., 1978, pp. 37, 38; 64th A., 1992, p. 78)

I. SELECTION

1. Each state shall have a State Board of Ministerial Development.
2. The board and board chairman shall be appointed biennially by the state overseer and approved by the State Council.
3. The board shall consist of not more than five and not less than three members, and may consist of ordained ministers or bishops, and where possible, at least one qualified layman.
4. The board shall meet as often as the state overseer and chairman deem necessary.

II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The State Board of Ministerial Development shall:

1. Implement and supervise, under the direction of the state overseer, the educational programs promoted or suggested by the [church].
2. Promote Church of God educational institutions at the state level.
3. Help implement the Ministerial Internship Program.
4. Stimulate and nurture continuing education programs at all levels.
5. Serve in an advisory capacity to churches who sponsor Christian day schools, kindergartens, or day-care centers, or who are in the process of developing such programs.
6. Promote and supervise the Ministerial Development Institutes (MDI).
7. Consult with the state overseer in developing annual regional workshops and seminars for the ministry in areas of Biblical theology, pastoral and personal growth, pastoral administration, counseling, preaching, and such like, in cooperation with the [general church].
8. Work with the Center for Ministerial Care in meeting the needs of ministers and their families.

S25. STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP BOARD

(53rd A., 1970, p. 39, p. 41; 67th A., 1998, p. 52; 73rd A., 2010)

I. SELECTION

1. Each state shall have a State Youth and Discipleship Board.
2. The board shall be elected by the ministers of the state.
3. The Board shall consist of not less than three members, who may be either ordained ministers or bishops. In states/regions where the administrative bishop and state council shall determine there are not enough qualified ministers to consider, exhorters who hold credentials with a ministerial file number, and report to state and international headquarters on a monthly basis, shall be considered eligible to serve (72nd A., 2008).

II. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES

1. The board shall meet as often as the state [Youth and Discipleship] director and state overseer deem necessary.
2. The board shall counsel with and assist the state overseer and state [Youth and Discipleship] director in drafting and promoting a program of Christian education for the local churches in each state, to be ratified by the ministers of the state.
3. The board shall, with the state [Youth and Discipleship] director, plan and conduct a state youth camp (or camps and other state youth activities) as deemed necessary in each respective state.

S26. STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP DIRECTOR

(54th A., 1972, pp. 42, 43, 44; 55th A., 1974, p. 53; 56th A., 1976, pp. 48, 49, 55; 69th A., 2002, p. 50; 71st A., 2006, p. 46; 73rd A., 2010)

I. SELECTION

1. The state Youth and Discipleship director shall be nominated by the state overseer and elected by the State Council prior to the International General Assembly.
2. The state Youth and Discipleship director's term of office shall be for two years, with a maximum of eight consecutive years in a respective non-mission state.
3. Credentialed ministers (where practical) shall be used to fill the office.

II. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES

The State Youth and Discipleship director shall work under the supervision of the state overseer, and the duties and authorities of the Youth and Discipleship director are to be defined by the state overseer and state council (74th A., 2012).

S27. STATE EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS DIRECTOR (USA MISSIONS)

(54th A., 1972, pp. 55, 56; 55th A., 1974, p. 57; 56th A., 1976, pp. 48, 49, 55; 71st A., 2006, p. 46; 73rd A., 2010; 74th A., 2012)

SELECTION

1. The state overseer may submit to the State Council the names of nominees for state Evangelism and Missions director for election prior to the International General Assembly. Ordained bishops (where practical) shall be used to fill the office.
2. The state Evangelism and Missions director's term of office shall be for two years, with a maximum of eight consecutive years in a respective non-mission state.

S28. EVANGELISM PROGRAM

Each state is to participate in simultaneous revival efforts during the month of October, with a membership emphasis at the conclusion of the revival [1980].

S29. EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATIONS

Evangelistic associations or other organizations of this type shall not be organized within the Church of God without the express approval of the International Executive Council. All existing organizations shall be either approved by the International Executive Council or be dissolved (50th A., 1964, p. 55).

S30. STATE WORLD MISSIONS BOARD (64th A., 1992, p. 75)

I. SELECTION

1. Each state shall have a State World Missions Board.
2. The board and board chairman shall be appointed biennially by the state overseer.
3. The board shall consist of not more than five and not less than three members. The members shall be ministers or laymen who have shown strong support for world evangelization.
4. The board shall meet as often as the state overseer and chairman deem necessary.

II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The State World Missions Board shall:

1. Promote world evangelization in the Church of God in the state.
2. Promote state, district, and local world missions conferences, seminars, banquets, and so forth.
3. Assist with the scheduling of field representatives and missionaries on furlough.

S31. STATE MUSIC BOARD (58th A., 1980, p. 37; [1994])

I. SELECTION

1. Each state shall have a State Music Board.
2. The board and board chairman shall be appointed biennially by the state overseer.
3. The board shall consist of not more than five and not less than three members and should consist of ministers, ministers of music, and qualified laymen.
4. The board shall meet as often as the state overseer and chairman deem necessary.

II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The State Music Board shall:

1. Promote the ministry of music in the Church of God in the state.
2. Implement and supervise, under the direction of the state overseer, the musical programs promoted by the Division of Discipleship Ministries (Worship and Music).

3. Consult with the state overseer in developing state or regional workshops or seminars for ministers of music, choir directors, pianists, organists, and other interested church musicians.
4. Provide a fellowship for church musicians on the state level which will provide for the interchange of information, current trends, and resource materials in church music.
5. Assist in the placement of church musicians when called upon.
6. Assist local churches in establishing and improving their music programs.
7. Periodically study the musical needs and interests of the churches in the state.

S32. DISTRICT OVERSEERS

I. SELECTION

Each district shall be under the care and supervision of a district overseer, appointed by the state overseer.

II. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES

The district overseer shall:

1. Conduct conferences in each of the churches on his district. However, he may authorize the local pastor to conduct the conference, (65th A., 1994, Item 7, p. 88).
2. See that a general evangelistic effort is put forth in his district during the year.
3. See that the state program is carried out in the churches of his district.
4. Assist the state overseer in the appointment of pastors, when called upon to do so.
5. Together with the state overseer, pass on the selection, purchase, and construction of all church properties on his district.

S33. DISTRICT YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP DIRECTOR (73rd A., 2010)

The district overseer is, by virtue of his office, district Youth and Discipleship director, but if the work requires, the state Youth and Discipleship director, together with the district overseer, may appoint an assistant to serve in this capacity (41st A., 1946, p. 29).

S34. WOMEN'S MINISTRIES (STATE)

(50th A., 1964, p. 65; 53rd A., 1970, p. 43; 59th A., 1982, p. 43; 67th A., 1998, p. 52; 73rd A., 2010)

I. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

To facilitate this ministry each state shall institute whatever means they deem advisable in keeping with the declared purposes of the Church of God.

II. PRESIDENT

1. The office of Church of God Women's Ministries president [at the state level] shall be created.

2. The wife of the state overseer shall fill this office.
3. The purpose of this office shall be to provide leadership for the Women's Ministries [at the state level] in cooperation with the general church program [1982].

CHURCH GOVERNMENT— LOCAL
(S35 through S54)

S35. RELATIONSHIP OF LOCAL CHURCH TO THE INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(58th A., 1980, pp. 38, 39; [1994]).

1. The Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) has a centralized (by legal definition “hierarchical”) form of church government. The International General Assembly, the highest authority of the Church of God, governs the ownership of all church property, both real and personal. All property is held in trust for members composing said International General Assembly. The local churches, the names of which are officially registered with the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A. are the results of the faithful services of the ministers and representatives of the International General Assembly; and these churches, when thus received by the representatives of the International General Assembly, then become and compose constituents of the International General Assembly. Therefore, the right of any local church as a whole to withdraw from the International General Assembly is not recognized and does not exist, but those members who prove disloyal to the government and teachings as promulgated from time to time by the International General Assembly, or who are otherwise disorderly, are to be dealt with as individuals.
2. The International General Assembly of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) is that organized body with full power and authority to designate the teachings, principles, and practices of all the local churches composing said Assembly.
3. The International General Assembly governs the operation (including ownership of all real and personal property) of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A., at all structural levels: international, national, state/territorial, district, and local. The International General Assembly has vested in the office of the state overseer authority over the local churches. Some of his powers, all of which are more fully explained elsewhere in this book of *Minutes*, can be exercised to remove pastors, to appoint pastors, or a special Board of Trustees, which may be the State Board of Trustees, to hold title to local property.
4. A Local Board of Trustees shall hold title to, manage, and control, pursuant to the direction of the local congregation, all real estate owned by the local congregation by which they are selected, provided that all such property shall be used, managed, and controlled for the sole and exclusive use and benefit of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A. In the event that the majority or all of the local church depart from the faith or discontinue fellowship with the organization, the state overseer shall at any time have power to appoint other trustees to hold the property for the Church of God.
5. Local churches, when they have been accepted into the Church of God, are therefore bound by the decisions of the International General Assembly in matters of doctrine, teaching, and polity.

S36. LOCAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT PLAN

(72nd A., 2008)

A Local Church Development Plan shall be implemented by the International Executive Committee, in conjunction with each respective state/regional overseer, for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of local churches in the fulfillment of their mission, through a plan designed to involve lay leadership, together with pastoral oversight, for church growth in the twenty-first century.

This shall be a standardized plan designed to meet the needs of local churches at each numerical level.

S37. MEMBERS (45th A., 1954, p. 27; 61st A., 1986, p. 54; 68th A., 2000, p. 83)

I. PROCEDURE FOR RECEIVING MEMBERS INTO THE CHURCH

A. Church Membership

Church membership is Scriptural, and any person presenting himself as a prospective member is making a serious and far-reaching decision. It is the responsibility of the pastor to see that all persons making themselves available for membership are fully informed of the doctrine, teachings, government, and heritage of the Church of God. In keeping with this responsibility, the pastor shall inform all persons presenting themselves for membership through one or more of the following ways:

1. Counsel with prospective members privately concerning the membership requirements and their responsibilities to them.
2. Conduct special membership classes where prospective members are taught membership requirements.
3. Read and explain the membership requirements in a public meeting.

B. Procedure for Receiving Members

Following this [the foregoing] procedure, the minister shall invite prospective members to stand before the altar and face the congregation. The minister shall then proceed by giving the following charge to the applicants as he stands before them.

1. *You realize in presenting yourself for membership that you are assuming a solemn obligation, and it is expected that you will always be true to your promise and faithfully fulfill and discharge your obligation as a loyal member.*
2. *Do you publicly confess and testify that you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior in the full pardon of your sins? (The applicant(s) will answer, I do.)*
3. *Are you willing to walk in the light of the Scripture as it shines upon your path? (I am.)*
4. *Are you willing to abide by and subscribe to the discipline of the Church of God as outlined by the Scripture and set forth in the Minutes of the International General Assembly? (I am.)*
5. *Are you willing to support the church with your attendance and temporal means to the best of your ability as the Lord prospers you? (I am.)*
6. *Do you agree to be subject to the counsel and admonition of those who are over you in the Lord? (I do.)*
7. *If there be any member who has a legal objection to any of these becoming members of the Church of God, the objector may now so state.*

8. *By the authority vested in me as a minister of the Church of God, I take great pleasure in welcoming you into this membership and extending to you the right hand of fellowship. May I encourage you to call for the services of your pastor when needed.*
9. *I have confidence that you will ever be a faithful member and a blessing to the church and that the church will be a blessing to you. I pray our fellowship will always be bound together with unbroken love. (The minister shall then pray.)*

C. Instructions

It would be well to have a musical background while the church gives the right hand of fellowship.

It is believed that friends of the church should be extended the privilege of bidding the new members Godspeed in like manner (45th A., 1954, p. 27).

II. LOCAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP (65th A., 1994, Item 4, p. 86)

We affirm the Scriptural pattern of elders and deacons (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 4:14; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:6-9) and every local congregation, in consultation with the state and territorial overseers, is encouraged to implement this Scriptural pattern of leadership.

Further, the International Executive Committee shall make available quality resources to assist overseers and pastors in the implementation of this Scriptural pattern.

III. LOCAL CHURCH PART OF THE ASSEMBLY

1. The local churches, the names of which are officially registered with the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A., are the result of the faithful services of the ministers and representatives of the International General Assembly; and these churches, when thus received by the representatives of the International General Assembly, then became and composed a part of the International General Assembly. Therefore, the right of any local church as a whole to withdraw from the International General Assembly is not recognized and does not exist, but those members who prove disloyal to the government and teachings as promulgated from time to time by the International General Assembly, or who are otherwise disorderly, are to be dealt with as individuals (15th A., 1920, p. 50; 45th A., 1954, pp. 27, 28; 50th A., 1964, p. 54).
2. If a church is organized and they do not accept the teachings of the International General Assembly, they cannot be recognized by headquarters [at any level of church government] as a Church of God (15th A., 1920, p. 68).

IV. REQUIREMENTS OF MEMBERS

A. Exclusion for Nonattendance

Members should be excluded from the Church of God for nonattendance of the regular services of the church of which they are members, unless they have a good reason. Notice the question is only for continued nonattendance; this doesn't mean just for a few times missing service (20th A., 1925, p. 41).

B. Stand Against Gambling

Inasmuch as the Church of God believes gambling to be contrary to Christian principle and practice; and

Inasmuch as there has been a tendency to compromise among some states and churches, teaching that state lotteries, bingo games, games of chance, and so forth, are not contrary to present Christian moral standards; therefore

The Church of God continues its stated opposition to the evils of gambling and urges its people to exhibit by precept and example its belief in the high standards of holiness conduct required of all believers (50th A., 1964, p. 55).

C. Holy Living and Modesty

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15, 16).

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" (1 Timothy 2:9).

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:3, 4) (35th A., 1940, p. 31; 66th A., 1996, p. 61).

V. LOCAL CHURCH AND RETIRED MINISTERS (70th A., 2004 p. 58)

That each local church establish a program to "Adopt a Retired Church of God Minister," recognizing them on special days of their lives (i.e. birthdays, anniversaries, hospitalizations) and assisting them financially when they are invited to speak or on aforementioned occasions.

S38. MEMBERSHIP

I. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

1. When a member in good standing moves from the vicinity of one church to another, a letter of recommendation should be given on request, in harmony with [the scripture] "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints" (Romans 16:1, 2) (1st A., 1906, Bk. Min, p. 18).
2. Inasmuch as we live in a mobile society which affects many of the constituents of the church, it is important that pastors and leaders show care and concern in assisting members

in relocating, by making available to them information relative to the churches in the area to which they are moving.

3. A member's name should remain on the membership roll until an official request for transfer is received (64th A., 1992, p. 77).
4. Requests for transfers should be granted within two weeks, when requested by the proper authorities, providing no charges are pending. Transfers may be granted or members' transfers may be received at any regular church service (46th A., 1956, p. 24).
5. Inasmuch as the Full Gospel Church of God in Southern Africa is a part of the Church of God in America, it should be understood that the transfer of membership between local churches of the respective countries is reciprocal; but in no case is it legal to retain local church membership in both countries (46th A., 1956, p. 23).

II. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP NOT PERMITTED

Inasmuch as the local Church of God membership is composed of Christians who have accepted the teachings, doctrines, and government of the Church of God, and who have been formally received into its fellowship; therefore, no local church has authority to set up or recognize an associate membership of Christians who, for some reason, have not been formally received into its fellowship (45th A., 1954, p. 28).

III. MEMBERSHIP ROLL

The pastor and church treasurer shall maintain an accurate, up-to-date membership roll, staying in contact with members who are unable to attend church regularly and members who are in the Armed Forces, encouraging them to attend and transfer their membership to a local Church of God or Ministry to the Military Center in the area where they are stationed (63rd A., 1990, p. 78).

IV. EXCLUDED MEMBERS

1. Individuals who have been excluded from any local church shall not be admitted to membership in any other local church until fellowship has been established in business session with the church from which they were excluded. And if the church has been disbanded where he/she was a member, his/her case must be passed on by the state overseer of the state where he/she was excluded and the district overseer where he/she now lives.
2. In case excluded members are put forward by those in authority, such as being used as Sunday school teachers, or otherwise given prominence in the church, especially over protest of the church that excluded them, such action shall be considered disloyalty and all those who do such should be dealt with accordingly (29th A., 1934, p. 56).

V. PROCEDURE IN DEALING WITH MEMBER

If a member who is not a minister shall be charged with any offense which makes it necessary to deal with the member, formal charges in writing shall be given to the member not

less than three days (when practical) prior to the time and place of the meeting. The member shall have a right to be heard and offer corroborating testimony at the meeting. Further, the charges shall be heard and a decision rendered by the local church and pastor's council or (if a church does not have a pastor's council or board of elders) by the members who are present at the meeting and in good standing with the church. Disciplinary options include but are not limited to: official reprimand, restitution, censure, restrictions, and, where necessary, excommunication (74th A., 2012).

In those cases in which he deems it in the best interests of the local church to do so, the state/regional overseer shall have the authority to excommunicate an unruly or uncooperative member without a formal hearing. A member disfellowshipped by a state/ regional overseer shall have the right to appeal to the International Executive Committee within 10 days of the written notice of the overseer's action. The decision of the International Executive Committee is final, with no further recourse for appeal by the member. The local church must remove the member's name from the membership roll when notified of the action by the state overseer (71st A., 2006, p. 48).

VI. RIGHT TO APPEAL

If the member is not satisfied with the decision of the conference, he/she may appeal. The complainant must, within ten (10) days, notify the state overseer (in writing) the reasons for dissatisfaction. In such case, the church treasurer and pastor must furnish the state overseer the full information (in writing) of the business meeting in which the member was excluded.

The state overseer shall have power to make the final decision in the matter of the appeal. If in his judgment the case warrants calling a state board, he may do so. In either case there shall be no further appeal.

In the event the appeal is sustained, the state overseer shall notify the pastor and treasurer in writing of the decision, and instructions shall be that the pastor or treasurer read the letter to the members in a called meeting. If the appeal hearing results in clearing the member of formal charges, he/she shall be reinstated in good standing without delay.

When a member wishes his/her membership dropped from the roll of a local church, his/her request shall be made in writing to the pastor, with a copy to the treasurer. His/her request shall be granted by the church in conference, provided he/she has been a loyal member and there are no charges pending. Since this action will have been instigated by the member, he/she needs no notification (31st A., 1936, p. 34; 38th A., 1943, p. 30; 42nd A., 1948, p. 29; 54th A., 1972, p. 53).

S39. CONFERENCES

I. PURPOSE

A church conference is a business meeting for the purpose of transacting any business necessary for the operation of the local church (65th A., 1994, Item 7, p. 88).

II. WHO MAY CONDUCT A CONFERENCE

1. No pastor has the right to hold a conference without permission from the district overseer (22nd A., 1927, p. 32; 46th A., 1956, p. 25; 54th A., 1972, p. 54).
2. No conference shall be held in the district except under the direction or supervision of the district overseer. This does not exclude the authority of the overseer of the state, which is fully explained in the *Minutes* of the International General Assembly (13th A., 1917, p. 36).
3. In any instance where there is not a sufficient number of active members in the local church to assist in conducting a conference, the state or district overseer, and two or more ministers whom he may select, shall make full disposition of all matters that may demand attention.
4. The state and district overseers should see that at least one conference a year is conducted in each local church in their respective state or territory (37th A., 1942, p. 36; 65th A., 1994, Item 7, p. 88).
5. The local church has a right to appoint a committee in conference to look after some affairs of the church. Such a committee, however, is to do nothing that would conflict with or violate the local, state, and general church program and government, or create confusion (46th A., 1956, pp. 25, 26).

III. REGULAR CONFERENCE

1. The regular conference, consisting of the membership, is called or set for any regularly designated time by the pastor or district overseer. The purpose of the conference is to inform the church of its financial status. The church conference shall also consider any other business referred to it by the pastor and his church council. All major disbursements must be approved by the church in conference.
2. The regular conference should be announced at least ten (10) days before it is to occur.

IV. CALLED CONFERENCE

1. The called conference consists of all members of the local church who wish to attend, said conference to convene at a time set by the pastor to take care of business arising between the regular conferences. This does not exclude the rights of the state and district overseers to call or moderate conferences in local churches (65th A., 1994, Item 7, p. 88).
2. When it is necessary to have a called conference, all members of the local church should be notified if possible (46th A., 1954, p. 32).

V. ORDER OF CONFERENCES

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall serve as the guide for conducting all business conferences.

Usual order of business:

1. Financial reports of various departments of the church
2. Other reports of committees, and so forth
3. Transfer of membership, if any
4. Unfinished business left from previous meeting
5. New business

S40. PASTOR

I. APPOINTMENT OF PASTORS

1. The authority for the appointment of pastors is vested in the state overseer (45th A., 1954, p. 34; 51st A., 1966, p. 59).
2. Local churches are to refrain from taking action on the selection of pastors until authorized to do so by the state overseer (28th A., 1933, p. 38).
3. The state overseer shall appoint the pastor subsequent to consultation with the district overseer, and after having given members of the local church an opportunity to express themselves regarding their desire for pastor of their choice (61st A., 1986, p. 53).
4. The state overseer may call for an expression from the membership (at least 16 years of age) when there is an apparent decline in the spiritual health and well-being of the local church (61st A., 1986, p. 53).
5. The signature [of the individual expressing a pastoral preference] is required on the local church uniform pastoral preference ballot (49th A., 1962, p. 53).

PASTORAL PREFERENCE EXPRESSION

Name of church _____

Are you are member of this local church? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you attend services regularly? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you pay tithes regularly to this church? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you recommend a pastoral change? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, whom do you recommend for pastor?

Signature _____

II. PROCEDURE FOR EFFECTING A PASTORAL CHANGE

When a pastor desires a pastoral change, he/she shall submit a letter of request to the state overseer, who shall keep this request in strictest confidence, except with those involved in the placement process (61st A., 1986, p. 53).

III. PROCEDURE FOR LAITY CONTACTING STATE OVERSEER

The state overseer serves both the ministry and laity; therefore, when loyal, tithing members of a local church have a legitimate concern as it relates to the welfare of their church, they have the right and privilege to contact their state overseer, after they have contacted their pastor and district overseer. All concerns expressed to the state overseer should be communicated to the pastor and district overseer with the names of the individuals expressing such concerns. These concerns should be preferably in writing, not as part of a petition (63rd A., 1990, p. 76).

IV. ASSISTANT PASTOR

Where assistant pastors are needed, they are to be nominated by the local church and pastor, subject to the approval and appointment of the state overseer (44th A., 1952, p. 31; 74th A., 2012).

V. REFORMATION SUNDAY OFFERING

The pastor of each local church shall set aside Reformation Sunday (the last Sunday in October) annually in honor of aged ministers for the purpose of raising a special love offering, said receipts to be sent to the Church of God Secretary General (64th A., 1992, B., 3., p. 247).

S41. CHURCH AND PASTOR'S COUNCIL

(34th A., 1934, p. 22; 50th A., 1964, pp. 57, 58; 51st A., 1966, p. 60; 56th A., 1976, pp. 50, 51; 73rd A., 2010)

I. SELECTION

1. When a local church deems it practical to have a Church and Pastor's Council, said council shall be elected by the governing body of the church consisting of the loyal members. Members of the Church and Pastor's Council shall be loyal members of the church.
2. This council is to be elected biennially and by ballot.
3. A system of rotation may be used whereby council members will serve a designated length of time.
4. In the event the office of one of the council members is vacated between elections because the incumbent dies, becomes disabled, or is in any other way disqualified, the pastor is to submit to the governing body of the local church the names of the two individuals who received the next highest number of votes in the last election, so that one may be selected to fill the vacancy. Alternates may be elected during the regular election to fill any vacancies.

II. SIZE AND CHAIRMANSHIP

The number on the Church and Pastor's Council shall be:

Membership up to 100, not less than three (3) councilors.

Membership 101-225, not less than five (5) councilors.

Membership 226-350, not less than seven (7) councilors.

Membership 351-500, not less than nine (9) councilors.

Membership 501 and over, not less than twelve (12) councilors.

The pastor shall serve as chairman of the Church and Pastor's Council, shall call all regular monthly or quarterly meetings, and may call special meetings as needed. No meeting shall be called without the permission of the pastor, district overseer, or state overseer.

III. QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHURCH AND PASTOR'S COUNCIL

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3).

A member who serves on the Church and Pastor's Council must be:

1. A loyal member of the church, adhering to its teachings.
2. Baptized in the Holy Ghost.
3. Faithful in tithing.
4. A regular church attendant.
5. One who works in harmony with the local, state, and general church's program and reflects a cooperative attitude toward the progress of the church.

IV. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Church and Pastor's Council, under the direction of the pastor, shall promote the general and state outreach programs of the church.
2. The Church and Pastor's Council shall work in harmony with the pastor and assist him/her, when called upon, in the institution and direction of the local church program in the following areas:

Spiritual

The Church and Pastor's Council, under the direction of the pastor, shall encourage spiritual growth of the local congregation with emphasis on personal Bible reading, prayer, family devotions, tithing and giving, Christian service, and personal witnessing.

Financial

The Church and Pastor's Council, under the direction of the pastor, shall approve the disbursement of church funds. (This does not include Women's Ministries monies.) All major disbursements must be approved by the church in conference. Each congregation shall determine what amount constitutes a major disbursement.

Physical

The Church and Pastor's Council, under the direction of the pastor, shall provide and maintain proper building facilities for the congregation and a proper residence for the pastor. The council shall see that all church properties are properly insured and tax-exempt, when the secular government provides such exemption.

S42. CHURCH TREASURER

(1st A., 1906, Bk. Min, p. 15; 13th A., 1917, Bk. Min, pp. 19, 286; 24th A., 1929, p. 23; 30th A., 1935, p. 36; 45th A., 1954, p. 26; 49th A., 1962, p. 33; 50th A., 1964, p. 58; 51st A., 1966, p. 60; 55th A., 1974, p. 54; 56th A., 1976, pp. 51, 52; [1976]; 65th A., 1994, Item 10, p. 89; 68th A., 2000, p. 82).

I. SELECTION

1. A church treasurer shall be appointed by the pastor and confirmed by the council and/or the church body.
2. The church treasurer or a member of the council may serve as recording secretary of the Church and Pastor's Council.
3. Each local church is to provide the treasurer with a copy of the current *Minutes* of the International General Assembly. An adequate bookkeeping system, such as the recommended Church of God bookkeeping system, is to be used in all churches.

II. QUALIFICATIONS OF CHURCH TREASURER

To serve as church treasurer one must be:

1. A loyal member of the church, adhering to its teachings.
2. Baptized in the Holy Ghost.
3. Faithful in tithing.
4. A regular church attendant.
5. One who performs duties under the supervision of the pastor and with his approval.
6. One who works in harmony with the church's program and reflects a cooperative attitude with reference to the progress of the local church.
7. Any exceptions to the above qualifications must be approved by the state overseer.

III. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH TREASURER

The church treasurer shall:

1. Determine and maintain an accurate record of the date of the organization of the church and all other vital information pertaining to the local church organization.
2. Keep an accurate record of the names and addresses of all local church members.
3. Report monthly to the secretary general, on MAP (Moving Active Pentecostals) ministry forms, the names and addresses of all members moving from their local church to another area.
4. Record and maintain accurate minutes of all church conferences and business transactions (loans, property transactions, and so forth).

5. Maintain an accurate record of all the local church conferences and disbursements, at the church, where possible.
6. Prepare monthly reports and send one copy to the secretary general and one copy to the state overseer by the fifth of each month on the [reporting] forms provided by the secretary general's office.
7. Prepare a financial report for each quarterly conference.
8. Furnish an itemized list of all receipts and disbursements to the pastor each week.
9. Disburse money from the church treasury under the direction of the pastor. (The pastor and treasurer are to sign all authorized checks.)

S43. FINANCIAL SYSTEM

(25th A., 1930, p. 21; 45th A., 1954, p. 32; 56th A., 1976, p. 53; 62nd A., 1988, Journal, p. 50; 65th A., 1994, Item 5, p. 86; 72nd A., 2008; [2010]).

I. FINANCE COMMITTEE

Because of an ever-increasing responsibility upon those handling money in the local churches, each church is to have a Finance Committee.

A. Selection

The Finance Committee shall consist of the treasurer and two other members. The second and third members shall be appointed by the pastor and confirmed by the Church and Pastor's Council and/or the members of the church (70th A., 2004 p. 56).

B. Qualifications of Finance Committee Members

A member of the Finance Committee must be:

1. A loyal member of the church, adhering to its teachings.
2. Baptized in the Holy Ghost.
3. Faithful in tithing.
4. A regular church attendant.
5. One who works in harmony with the church's programs and reflects a cooperative attitude with reference to the progress of the local church.
6. Any exceptions to the above qualifications must be approved by the state overseer.

C. Duties and Responsibilities of the Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall:

1. Receive and count all monies.
2. Prepare funds for deposit.

II. TITHING

1. All members and ministers of the Church of God shall pay tithes into the church where they are members.
2. Beginning September 1, 2010, local church treasurers shall send monthly, with their monthly report, an amount equal to 7 percent of all tithes paid into the local church, to the secretary general, of which, 4.75 percent will be designated for the International offices and 2.25 percent designated for World Missions (72nd A., 2008; [2010]).

Further, that the amount sent monthly to the secretary general be decreased by one-half percent annually (the reduction shared equally by the International Offices and World Missions) until September 1, 2014, after which World Missions will be funded by not less than one-fourth of the 5 percent received by the International Offices. Any increase beyond this amount must be approved by the International Executive Council (72nd A., 2008; [2010]).

3. Local church treasurers shall follow the same reduction schedule as that for International Offices and World Missions in the amount sent monthly, with their monthly report, to the state treasurer, from tithes paid into the local church. However, the division of the amount sent to the state treasurer shall be for the support of the state/ regional office and home missions (72nd A., 2008; [2110]).

Percentage of Tithes Paid Into the Local Church To Be Sent to International Office and State/Regional Office

Local church treasurers shall send a percentage of tithes paid into the local church according to the following schedule to the International Office (secretary general) with their monthly report, and an equal amount to their State/Regional Office (state treasurer) with their monthly report, with the remainder for the support of the

Begin September 1, 2010	7%	To International Office
	7%	To State/Regional Office
Begin September 1, 2011	6.5%	To International Office
	6.5%	To State/Regional Office
Begin September 1, 2012	6%	To International Office
	6%	To State/Regional Office
Begin September 1, 2013	5.5%	To International Office
	5.5%	To State/Regional Office
Begin September 1, 2014 (and continuing)	5%	To International Office
	5%	To State/Regional Office

Note: For breakdown of percentage division of amount sent to the secretary general for International Offices and World Missions, see pages 201-202 this book.

4. Surplus tithes are to be used for the benefit of the ministry as may be decided by the state overseer, pastor, and local church, and churches having surplus tithes are encouraged to sponsor a work in a new field within the state, or in some mission state or territory. Each new work in a mission state or territory, sponsored by a local church, shall be under the direction of the respective state overseer and local church sponsoring such work. A monthly report of the progress of the new work shall be furnished to the sponsoring church (33rd A., 1938, pp. 50, 51; 36th A., 1941, p. 48; 38th A., 1943, p. 30; 45th A., 1954, p. 29; [1986]).

III. CHURCH REPORTS (65th A., 1994, Item 6, pp. 86-88)

A. Consistency in Reporting

The principle of local churches giving a tithe of their tithe for worldwide ministry has been a part of Church of God practice from its earliest days. As a Scriptural principle (Genesis 14:18-20; 28:20-22; Malachi 3:10; Luke 11:42; 1 Corinthians 9:6-9; 16:2; Hebrews 7:1-21) and an approved program of the International General Assembly, tithing the tithe provides a way for each local church to have a part in contributing to the worldwide ministry of the church. Through faithfulness and consistency in this practice, the local church extends its ministry far beyond its own borders and releases God's blessing in the same way that a church member's practice of tithing brings blessings into his/her personal life.

Where there is delinquency in local church reporting (reports and/or finances), the following procedures are recommended:

1. When a church is two months delinquent in reporting, the state overseer shall meet personally with the pastor, relative to correcting the matter.
2. When the church is three months delinquent, a board of inquiry shall be appointed to investigate and make recommendations.
3. Should the delinquency continue, a state board shall be appointed to consider the filing of appropriate charges.
4. Where the foregoing investigation has proven fault on the part of a pastor, that he not be considered for any appointment or position until proper disposition has been made for payment of the delinquent funds.

B. Accumulated Delinquent Funds

The state overseer is required to fully inform any pastoral candidate of the current financial condition of the prospective church prior to finalization of said candidate's appointment.

Where there has been an accumulation of delinquent funds from a local church for which the present pastor is not responsible, the following procedures are recommended:

1. That the state overseer or a committee appointed by him shall meet with the current pastor to study the situation and make recommendations for an appropriate resolution of the problem according to one of the following options:
 - Immediate payment
 - Payment plan

- Partial payment and partial assistance
- Full assistance be given when the above options have been exercised and it is beyond the ability of the local church to satisfy the delinquent debt within a maximum of 12 months.

NOTE: There is no provision for forgiveness of ministry money owed. However, assistance may be provided through funds being made available by (1) an individual, (2) another local church, (3) the state office, (4) international headquarters, or any combination of the above.

2. When all other sources for payment of the delinquent amount have been exhausted, the state overseer shall have the right to appeal to the secretary general with a proposal providing for mutual participation in the payment of the accumulated delinquent funds. Further, that a standing committee of action chaired by the secretary general be appointed by the general overseer to consider and make final disposition of such proposals.

S44. CHURCH PROPERTY

(35th A., 1940, p. 30; 46th A., 1956, p. 24; 63rd A., 1990, pp. 78, 79; [1994])

I. CENTRALIZED FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) has a centralized (by legal definition “hierarchical”) form of church government. The International General Assembly, the highest authority of the Church of God, governs the ownership of all church property, both real and personal. All property is held in trust for members composing said International General Assembly [1994].

II. AUTHORITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The International General Assembly of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) is that organized body with full power and authority to designate the teaching, government, principles and practices of all the local churches composing said Assembly [1994].

- 1 The International General Assembly governs the operation (including ownership of all real and personal property) of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) at all structural levels: international, national, state/territorial, district, and local.
- 2 Local churches, the names of which are officially registered with the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A., are the result of the faithful services of the ministers and representatives of the International General Assembly; and these churches, when thus received by the representatives of the International General Assembly, then become and compose a part of the International General Assembly. Therefore, the right of any local church as a whole to withdraw from the International General Assembly is not recognized and does not exist, but those members who prove disloyal to the government and teachings as promulgated from time to time by the International General Assembly, or who are otherwise disorderly, are to be dealt with as individuals.

III. POLITY AND PROPERTY

Believing a centralized form of government to be the Biblical (Acts 15:13–29) standard for our churches, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) early adopted such a form of government and has consistently practiced a centralized form of government [1994].

Therefore:

1. The polity of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) regarding both real and personal property ownership directly reflects the religious conviction that a centralized (by legal definition “hierarchical”) form of government is Biblically mandated.
2. Title to all real and personal property now owned or hereafter acquired by the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) at any structural level shall be held by and/or conveyed and transferred to its duly elected or appointed trustees and their successors in office in trust for the use and benefit of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.). Every instrument of conveyance of real estate shall contain the appropriate trust clauses under the caption “Deeds” as set forth in Section V below.
3. No state, council, board, agency, local church, individual, or other entity of a local Church of God can financially obligate the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) without prior written specific consent from the International Executive Committee.

IV. ALL PROPERTY OWNED IN TRUST FOR CHURCH OF GOD (CLEVELAND, TENNESSEE)

Title to all properties held at general or state/territorial level, or by a local church, shall be held in trust for the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) subject to the provisions outlined in the International General Assembly *Minutes*. Should any member or members, in whole or in part, decide to withdraw from the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.), or to take action contrary to the polity of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.), it is understood that the ownership of all property, both real and personal, remains with the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) [1994].

V. STANDARD DEEDS RECOGNIZING TRUST OWNERSHIP [1994]

In order to secure the right of property, real and personal, care shall be taken that all conveyances and deeds be drawn and executed in due conformity to the laws of the respective states, provinces and countries in which the property is situated, and also consistent with the International General Assembly *Minutes*’ provisions that property is held in trust for the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.). All deeds or other written instruments by which properties are held or hereafter acquired for the use and benefit of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) shall contain one of the following applicable statements:

1. To have and to hold by the General Board of Trustees and their successors in trust; for the exclusive use and benefit of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.

2. To have and to hold by the State/Territorial Board of Trustees and their successors in trust; for the exclusive use and benefit of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.
3. To have and to hold by the Local Board of Trustees of the local Church of God (their names are to be recorded on the deed) and their successors in trust; for the exclusive use and benefit of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee. The deeds for all local church property shall also contain each of the following clauses:
 - A. The said Local Board of Trustees shall have full right, power and authority to sell, exchange, transfer and convey said property or to borrow money and pledge the said real estate for the repayment of the same and to execute all necessary deeds, conveyances, and so forth, provided the proposition shall first be presented to a regular or called conference of the said local church, presided over and approved by the state or territorial overseer of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.), or one whom he may appoint, and the project approved by two-thirds of all members of the said local congregation present and voting. Certification is to be given in writing by the state/territorial overseer that this transaction is in the best interest of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.), provided that he approves such action [1994].
 - B. If the local congregation at the place above described shall at any time cease to function or exist, or shall act contrary to Church of God polity, or separate from the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.), then said trustees shall hold title to said real estate, including personal property, for the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) generally in the state where said real estate is located; and said trustees shall convey the said real estate upon demand to the State Board of Trustees of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) in said state, which said state board shall be authorized to use said real estate and personal property, or the proceeds derived from the sale of same (said state board being authorized to sell and convey the said real estate and personal property at any time after title is vested in it), for the use and benefit of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) in that state generally; or the founding of another Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) in the same state, or for the promotion of one already existing [1994].
 - C. If at any time the Local Board of Trustees shall cease to exist or perform its duties for any reason, then the state overseer of the state in which said real estate is located shall have the authority to declare all offices on the said board vacant, and the State Board of Trustees of the Church of God for that state shall automatically then hold title to said property as evidenced by an appropriate instrument filed in the local county register of deeds [1994].
 - D. The limitations set forth herein are those appearing in the *Minutes* of the International General Assembly of the Church of God most currently in effect, and said *Minutes* are expressly incorporated herein by reference [1994].

4. Standard Church of God Warranty Deed Forms are available from the International Offices of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) and should be used whenever practical. The standard Church of God Warranty Deed (printed form) shall contain the essential language recited in Section V, Item 3, A–D above, as amended from time to time by the International General Assembly. Printed standard Church of God Warranty Deed forms dated prior to 1994 are sufficient as they likewise establish the ownership of local church properties in an express trust for the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.).

VI. REGISTRATION OF DEEDS [1994]

All deeds shall be registered or recorded directly upon their execution in their respective county courthouses. Copies of the executed deeds for general, state, and local properties shall be maintained as follows:

General properties—office of the secretary general
State properties—office of the state/territorial secretary-treasurer
Local properties—offices of the state/territorial overseer and
local church treasurer

Before any deed is recorded, it is to have the written approval of the proper person: general properties, by the secretary general; state and local properties, by the state or territorial overseer.

VII. INSURANCE

Pastors and churches are required to keep all property under their care adequately insured where practical (38th A., 1943, p. 30).

VIII. CHURCH LEGAL LIABILITY (65th A., 1994, Item 9, p. 89)

Inasmuch as the National Child Care Act of 1993 has direct legal impact and implications with regard to ministry to minors, it is recommended that all church pastors, staff ministers, church leaders, and volunteer workers be informed of the general statement of the law. Further, since state laws regarding child abuse differ from state to state, it is imperative that all church pastors, staff ministers, church leaders, and volunteer workers make a thorough study of respective state laws and take all necessary steps for compliance and legal safeguard.

S45. LOCAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES [1994]

I. SELECTION

Each local church or congregation that owns any property (either real or personal), shall appoint a Local Board of Trustees, to consist of not less than three members, said board to be selected by the local congregation in a business meeting.

II. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES

1. Members of the Local Board of Trustees shall hold office until their successors are appointed. The Local Board of Trustees shall hold title to, manage and control, pursuant to the direction of the local congregation, not inconsistent with the International General Assembly *Minutes*, all real estate and personal property owned by the local congregation by which they are selected, provided that all such property shall be used, managed, and controlled for the sole and exclusive use and benefit of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.).
2. The said Local Board of Trustees shall have full right, power, and authority to buy property for the use or benefit of the local congregation; to sell, hypothecate, exchange, transfer, and convey any of the local property held by it, or to borrow money and pledge the said property for the repayment of the same; and to execute all necessary deeds, conveyances, and so forth, provided that each of the following conditions is met: (1) the proposition shall first be presented to a regular or called conference of the local church; (2) presided over by the state overseer, or one whom he may appoint; (3) approved by a two-thirds majority vote; and (4) provided further that the board have a certification, in writing, from the state overseer, or one whom he may appoint, that the proposition is not adverse to the interest of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.).
3. If any local church shall cease to function or exist, or remain in good standing with the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.), then the Local Board of Trustees shall hold the local property, both real and personal, in trust for the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) generally in the state or territory where located, and said local board shall convey the local property as directed by the state/territorial overseer to the state/territorial Board of Trustees, to be used and disposed of by it for the use and benefit of the church in that state/territory generally; or said state/territorial board may use the said property, or the proceeds derived from the sale of the same, for the founding of another church in the state/territory, or the promotion of one already existing.

III. REMOVAL/REPLACEMENT

1. If the Local Board of Trustees has ceased to exist or perform its duties, then the state overseer shall have the authority to declare all offices thereon vacant and to appoint a special board of successor trustees, which may be the State Board of Trustees for that state, who shall thereupon automatically hold title to all property.
2. Furthermore, in the event of dissension within a local church of the Church of God, the state overseer of the Church of God for the state in which the local church is located shall have authority to declare the offices of the Local Board of Trustees vacant and to appoint a special Board of Trustees, which may be the State Board of Trustees, as successors to the Local Board of Trustees, and such special board so appointed shall automatically then hold title to the local property both real and personal.
3. If a sufficient number of qualified members are not available in any local church to constitute the Board of Trustees, another or others may be selected from another church.

4. Any person appointed to said Local Board of Trustees shall be a member in good standing of the Church of God. If at any time, any member of the said local board shall cease to be a member in good standing, or if by any reason, whether of death, removal, incapacity, or unwillingness to perform any duty of his office, or further, at the discretion of the state overseer, his place on the board may be declared vacant by the state overseer. The same authority that declares said office vacant is authorized to appoint another person to serve until the time for regular appointments, and the one so appointed shall have the same authority, responsibilities and duties as held by the one removed.

S46. INCORPORATION OF LOCAL CHURCHES [1994]

The Church of God is incorporated in the state of Tennessee as a 501 (C) (3) not-for-profit organization. There are certain occasions that require a local church to incorporate. It is understood that an incorporated local church does not lose its ecclesiastical relationship to the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) and the attributes of that relationship. The act of incorporation merely creates a legal entity to hold in trust the properties, both real and personal, of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.).

All churches that request to incorporate must first be approved in writing by the International Executive Committee. All charter/ documents for incorporation of a local church must include the following clauses:

- A. Providing a place of worship for its members, who shall be members in good standing of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A., and conducting the affairs of the congregation according to the rules and regulations of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A., and specifically the International General Assembly *Minutes* of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A., promoting the cause of Christianity in accord with the teachings, tenets, and customs of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A., receiving, managing, and disbursing gifts, bequests, and other funds for the benefit of the congregation and the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A., owning and maintaining suitable buildings and facilities necessary for their acquisition, upkeep, maintenance and sale, all in accord with the International General Assembly *Minutes* of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.
- B. In the event this corporation shall cease to exist, or depart from the polity of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A., as expressed in the International General Assembly *Minutes* of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A., and otherwise, the assets of the corporation shall revert to the State Trustees for the Church of God in the state of _____, or to one or more organizations described in Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code (U.S.A.) or the corresponding sections of any prior or future Internal Revenue Code (U.S.A.). Further, that the proceeds/assets from the disposition must go directly into real property purchases or improvements.
- C. Once a charter for incorporation of a local church is filed with the state government, a copy of the approved charter is to be sent to the Church of God state office for the state in which the local church is situated.

S47. APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION, PURCHASE, OR REMODELING PLANS FOR LOCAL CHURCH [1994]

The state overseer shall require any local church in his state, before acquiring property, beginning or contracting for construction or purchase of a new church or educational building or a parsonage, or remodeling of such a building, if the cost will exceed 10 percent of its value, to submit for consideration and approval a statement of the need for the proposed facilities, preliminary architectural plans, and estimate of the cost, and a financial plan for defraying such costs. Before finally approving the building project, the state overseer or his designee shall ascertain whether the preliminary architectural design and financial programs have been reviewed, evaluated, and approved by proper authorities.

S48. ALL PROPERTY HELD FOR CHURCH OF GOD [1994]

All property, real or personal, held by or for a particular local church, state office, department or agency, whether legal title is lodged in a corporation, a trustee or trustees, or an unincorporated association, is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.

The centralized governmental structure of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) does not provide for local church ownership of properties outside the trust relationship for the sole and exclusive use and benefit of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.). All deed conveyances, or other actions purporting to effect ownership or control of real or personal property, which are inconsistent with the requirements as set forth in these International General Assembly *Minutes* are deemed invalid and ineffective to alter the essential trust relationship for the benefit of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.).

Where there does not exist an express trust covering real or personal properties utilized by local churches, then an implied trust in favor of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) exists by virtue of the Church of God polity as expressed in these *Minutes*.

S49. AFFILIATION WITH CHURCH OF GOD [1994]

Non-Church of God churches that wish to affiliate with the Church of God will be allowed to join as associate churches. They shall be able to retain ownership of their properties. They shall make monthly reports to the state/regional and general offices with the same financial accountability as International General Assembly congregations. The pastor shall submit to a background check, and he/she shall secure Church of God ministerial credentials in accordance with the denomination's polity.

Further, appropriate forms of organization shall be processed in a legal business meeting to show acceptance of the faith, government, polity, and practices of the Church of God, and willingness to abide by the actions of the International General Assembly as it relates to their status as an associate church. In order to be accepted as an associate church, the group must accept the basic doctrinal commitments, teachings, and practical commitments as stated on pages 151-159 of this book of *Minutes*, Church of God Book of Discipline, Church Order and Governance.

An associate church can remove its associate status by placing the church properties on a Church of God warranty deed with the approval of the administrative bishop and the state/regional council (74th A., 2012).

S50. INVESTMENTS AND LOANS

(44th A., 1952, p. 34; 46th A., 1956, pp. 24, 25; 48th A., 1960, p. 32; 50th A., 1964, p. 61; 52nd A., 1968, pp. 50, 51; 62nd A., 1988, Journal, pp. 48, 49; [1996]).

MINISTERS' RETIREMENT PLANS

A. Investment and Loans

The Ministers' Retirement Plans (Aged Ministers' Plan and Church of God Ministers' Retirement Plan), in excess of a reasonable operating reserve, are to be invested at a fair market rate. Said investments are to be made by the Board of Trustees of the Church of God Benefits Board, Inc. upon recommendation by the Investment Committee.

B. Policy on Loans

The interest rate of local church loans from the Ministers' Retirement Plans (Aged Ministers' Plan and Church of God Ministers' Retirement Plan) is to be determined by the Board of Trustees of the Church of God Benefits Board, Inc. Amortization of loans is not to exceed twenty (20) years.

Loans from the Ministers' Retirement Plans (Aged Ministers' Plan and Church of God Ministers' Retirement Plan) are to be made according to the following criteria:

1. Certified appraisal
2. First mortgage required
3. Underwritten by State Council
4. Certified resolution by local church conference
5. Loss payee clause on insurance policy
6. Title insurance
7. Financial statement reflecting ability to repay
8. Loan not to exceed sixty percent (60%) of appraised value

The borrower shall be provided an amortization schedule covering the period of the loan. All delinquent payments received more than 10 days after the due date shall be charged a two percent (2%) late penalty. The two percent (2%) penalty for late payments shall be waived in the event payments must be made from state funds.

S51. CHURCH PROMOTION

I. EDUCATION PROGRAM

No church shall implement a Christian day school without permission from the state overseer. It is further suggested that pastors be advised that guidance can be furnished from the [General Board of Education and the State Board of Ministerial Development] (57th A., 1978, p. 38; 64th A., 1992, p. 78).

II. KNOW YOUR CHURCH WEEK

A week is to be set aside to be known as Know Your Church Week, and all legitimate efforts are to be concentrated to better inform our people of their own church, its doctrines, and the way it works. Concentration is to be on promotion of our church publications during this week (43rd A., 1950, p. 20; [1972]).

S52. WOMEN'S MINISTRIES (LOCAL CHURCH)

(31st A., 1936, pp. 32, 35; 45th A., 1954, p. 32; 53rd A., 1970, p. 43; 54th A., 1972, pp. 44, 45; 67th A., 1998, p. 52)

I. NAME

1. That each local church organize and maintain a ministry which shall be generally known as the Church of God Women's Ministries.
2. Where a ministry of this type is functioning under a different name, it may continue, if they so desire.

II. OFFICERS

The local church Women's Ministries Committee shall consist of a president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer, of which the pastor is chairman. The manner of selecting, electing, or appointing these officers shall be left up to the pastor.

III. PRESIDENT

The president shall:

1. Preside at each meeting of the Women's Ministries.
2. Be responsible for the general promotion of the Women's Ministries in the local church.
3. Consult with the pastor about times and places of special services, such as in rest homes, prisons, and hospitals.

With the aid of the Women's Ministries, consult with the pastor about worthy projects for the church.

IV. VICE PRESIDENT

The vice president shall:

1. Assist the president.
2. In the absence of the president, preside over regular meetings of the Women's Ministries.

V. SECRETARY-TREASURER

The secretary-treasurer shall:

1. Keep a record of all regular meetings of the Women's Ministries.
2. Keep a record of all finances and give a report of same to the Women's Ministries at regular meetings.
3. Report each month to the state Women's Ministries president, which will also include the YLM (Young Ladies Ministries) report.
4. Disburse monies when authorized to do so by the Women's Ministries, the president, and with the approval of the pastor.

VI. PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

Some of the purposes of the Women's Ministries, under the guidance of the Women's Ministries Committee and pastor, are to meet each week, or as often as convenient, to engage in prayer for the welfare of the church and the lost, to visit the sick, rest homes, prisons, PTAs, and other worthy civic organizations where their influence could be effective for God, the church, and the community. Further, they are to raise funds to be disbursed in behalf of the local church, state, and general work, after consulting with and having the approval of their pastor.

S53. SUNDAY SCHOOL (63rd A., 1990, pp. 76, 77)

The Sunday school represents the primary disciple-making agency in the local church. Its potential contribution to the lives of the people cannot be overestimated. Because of this, it deserves the best that can be provided in planning, organizing, coordinating, and supervising a quality program.

Therefore we recommend,

That each local church sponsor a Sunday school for the purpose of helping individuals grow in the knowledge and grace of God through regular and balanced study of the Scriptures.

That all Sunday schools function according to the guidelines established by the Ministry of Youth and Discipleship.

That each Sunday school be characterized by the following elements: (1) an environment of true Christian fellowship, (2) meaningful interaction with the Word of God, (3) a continual pointing of people toward worship and Christian service, and (4) a consistent outreach to the lost.

That each pastor be active in the promotion and execution of an aggressive Sunday school ministry.

That all Sunday school staff members be involved in the Church Training Course program on an ongoing basis.

That Sunday school outreach and extension attendance be reported according to the instructions given on the local church treasurer's report form.

That all Sunday schools use Church of God curriculum, where practical.

That Sunday schools be established when new churches are set in order.
That Sunday schools be established as opportunities to organize new churches.
That the Sunday school in each new church be provided free literature by the Church of God Publishing House the first quarter following the organization of the church.

S54. FAMILY TRAINING HOUR AND/OR YPE

(63rd A., 1990, pp. 77, 78)

1. The acronym *YPE* (Young People's Endeavor) shall not be deleted from the book of *Minutes* of the International General Assembly, and that each time the term *Family Training Hour* is used in the *Minutes*, that "and/or YPE" be included.
2. The Church of God Family Training Hour and/or YPE is a midweek evangelistic and educational program sponsored by the local church to provide personalized, age-level training for each member of the family. The Family Training Hour and/or YPE sets forth a structure to provide each member of the family with a sense of belonging, to help develop talents, channel the desire to serve, promote spiritual growth, and train for Christian service.

Therefore, we recommend, that each local church establish a weekly Family Training Hour and/or YPE program designed to fulfill the following objectives: (1) motivate a sense of mission—both spiritual and secular—in each member of the family, (2) mobilize the family for New Testament service and worship, (3) magnify the importance of God's Word in family life, (4) maintain a fresh emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in directing family affairs, and (5) minister to family needs and relationships.

That each Family Training Hour and/or YPE function according to the guidelines established by the Ministry of Youth and Discipleship.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT— MINISTRY
(S55 through S65)

S55. APPLICANTS FOR MINISTRY

I. MINISTERIAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (59th A., 1982, p. 43)

1. To more adequately ensure the formation of proper ministerial attitudes, and to offer a structured approach to practical ministerial training, each state or territory, where possible, shall provide beginning ministers with the opportunity to serve an internship under an experienced and competent pastor.
2. Guidelines for the internship program shall be established by the International Executive Committee and implemented by the Office of Ministerial Development in cooperation with overseers (57th A., 1978, pp. 36, 37).

II. INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

In order to coordinate the present licensing requirements with the Ministerial Internship Program (MIP), the following measures are to be implemented:

1. Place questions concerning the ministerial candidate's involvement with MIP on the license application.
2. Coordinate the MIP reading list with required texts for various levels of ministry.
3. Require all MIP participants to be licensed at exhorter level, or be in the licensing process (having passed the examination and awaiting certification), before being eligible for the MIP program (70th A., 2004, p. 56).
4. Require all exhorters to participate in the MIP, or its equivalent, before being promoted to the rank of ordained minister. Equivalent shall be defined as the MIP reading requirement under the supervision of the state overseer, or one whom he appoints, plus one of the following:
 - One year of pastoral ministry
 - One year of evangelism ministry
 - One year of associate pastoral ministry

III. RULE REGARDING SETTING FORTH APPLICANTS FOR MINISTRY

The local church or churches should refrain from taking action on setting forth applicants for the ministry until the district overseer has conferred with the state overseer; and he [the district overseer] shall be authorized to do so [approve setting forth the applicant] by the overseer of the state (25th A., 1930, p. 22).

IV. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF APPLICANTS FOR MINISTRY

1. All applicants for the ministry, including ordained bishops, ordained ministers, exhorters, ministers of music, and ministers of Christian education, must have the baptism in the Holy Ghost (21st A., 1926, p. 32; 50th A., 1964, p. 56; DF 8, 9).
2. Our ministers should inform themselves in the Teachings and Doctrines as set forth by the International General Assembly of the Church of God (42nd A., 1948, p. 29).

3. Since we do not license or ordain applicants for the ministry unless they pay tithes, they are required to pay tithes to retain their license (22nd A., 1927, p. 29).
4. All applicants for ministry shall serve as exhorters before making application for ordained minister certificate, except ordained ministers coming from other reputable organizations, licensed ministers of music, and ministers of Christian education (43rd A., 1950, p. 14 ; 50th A., 1964, p. 56).
5. All applicants for the ministry should be actively engaged, either in evangelistic or pastoral work, before being recommended for the ministry (46th A., 1956, p. 26).
6. All applicants for the ministry, including those advancing in rank, must give consent to the state/regional office to conduct criminal background checks (70th A., 2004 p. 55).

V. DIVORCED AND REMARRIED APPLICANTS (44th A., 1952, p. 35; 45th A., 1954, p. 29; 60th A., 1984, p. 43; 64th A., 1992, p. 81; 69th A., 2002, p. 49)

1. No applicant whose former spouse is living, or whose spouse's former spouse is living, shall be considered eligible for ministerial credentials except in cases where the divorce occurred because of the infidelity of the former spouse (see Matthew 19: 9); or that the divorce occurred prior to conversion (see 2 Corinthians 5:17) or due to abandonment by an unbelieving spouse (see 1 Corinthians 7:15). Conversion is interpreted as that point in time when one makes a public commitment to Christ, followed by a consistent Christian lifestyle. In no case shall this provision apply to one who once walked with Christ [lived as a Christian], but who later divorced and/or remarried while living in a backslidden condition.
2. The records of all such applicants shall be investigated and approved [or disapproved] by the respective state overseer, his council, and the International Executive Committee, prior to his or her being set forth [for the ministry] by the local church.
3. Applicants for ordained bishop who have a living former spouse, or whose spouse has a living former spouse, shall be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the International Executive Council, before being set forth [for ordination] by the local church.
4. Persons with previous marriages, who now prove themselves faithful to God and to present family responsibilities, shall be permitted to hold the rank of exhorter, ordained minister, or ordained bishop, provided they are otherwise qualified.

VI. HONORARY CERTIFICATES

That applicants for the ministry who have passed the age of retirement be granted honorary certificates, if they pass the state board examination and are endorsed by the general overseer. However, they will not be eligible for insurance, aged ministers' pension, or other financial benefits (44th A., 1952, p. 55; 50th A., 1964, p. 50).

VII. INTERNATIONAL MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALING (65th A., 1994, Item 13, p. 91)

All ministers duly ordained in the Church of God by a given national office may also receive an ordination credential from the International Offices of the Church of God, provided they apply through their respective area superintendents.

S56. ORDAINED BISHOP (68th A., 2000, pp. 80, 81; 71st A., 2006, p. 47)

I. THE MEANING AND USAGE OF THE TERM *BISHOP*

A. Biblical Understanding of Ordination

1. The offices of the church are ordained offices in a twofold sense.

First, the offices have been ordered or placed by the Lord as Head of the Church. The Scriptures name and define these offices by specific nomenclature and by description of functions. We may find it desirable to attempt to maintain Biblical nomenclature, but we must remember that the office is to find its primary meaning in the Biblical description of office and not in the title. The loss of Biblical title does not mean that Biblical function is abandoned or lost by loss of title or by shifting meanings of words in the contemporary setting.

Second, the persons placed in office are placed there by the calling of God and equipped by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 28, 29; Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:11, 12). The equipment which the Lord provides incorporates both natural abilities and spiritual gifts.

2. Ministerial leadership offices include *bishops* (also called *elders* and *stewards*) and *deacons*. These leaders are not primarily operatives in an organization or hierarchy, but they are members of a living organism; therefore, the leaders and the led are members one of another. They partake of and transmit a common life drawn from a single life Source who is the Head of the body, Jesus Christ. This fact makes all the members of the body accountable to each other and each member responsible to promote the well-being of all others in the body. This also requires that every member have a relationship of submission to others in the body.

Leadership in the body of Christ is always related to the ministry of the Word, the grace of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. In addition to the ordination of the offices of the church, God also ordains individual members in particular offices/functions. Ordination must be understood as God's act. The church ordains only in a secondary and responsive manner to the ordination that God has already established. As a responsive act, ordination by the church recognizes and honors God's ordination of persons in the body of Christ. This is also responsive to the individual minister who professes a particular calling or ministry. This is the corporate body's reverent "Amen" to the prior act of God, and to the professed calling of the minister.
4. The Church of God has chosen such terms as *Exhorter* (novitiate), *Ordained Minister* (intermediate level) and *Ordained Bishop* (the highest level of credentialed minister). These terms do not deal with the essential meaning of ordination; that is, they do not arise out of Biblical language and are not the products of Biblical exegesis. They are the products of a tradition in church polity, but they are not Biblical terms.
5. The act of ordination in the activity of the church is represented by such acts as the laying on of hands and sending ministers forth by the Holy Spirit in response to divine calling (Acts 13:1-4). Such an ordination seems also to be represented in the apostle Paul's statement of Timothy's designation for ministry by prophecy and the

laying on of the hands of the presbytery (1 Timothy 4:14). The act of ordination, then, is the act of the church in affirming the call of God upon a minister, and sending the minister forth by the Holy Spirit.

6. It is appropriate for the church to require stages of the demonstration of calling and gifts. This evidence of calling and spiritual equipment should be observable in the life and ministry of the individual in the course of his/her fulfillment of ministry in the body of Christ. This demonstration of calling should be on a continuing basis in order to show the consistency of ministry and professed calling. No one should maintain credentials at any level of ministry who does not continue to show credible evidence of the Holy Spirit's calling and gifts in his/her service in the church.
7. It seems that the passage in Acts 13:1-4 is a paradigm of ordination. This ordination consists of the call of God, the approbation of the body of Christ represented in the laying on of hands, and sending the ministers forth under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Note the order and circumstances revealed in Acts 13:1-4. The body of believers described here included prophets and teachers. They were ministering to the Lord in fasting and praying. The Holy Spirit said, "*Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them*" (v. 2). The believers responded by continuing in fasting and praying. Finally, they "*laid hands on them and sent them away*" (v. 3). The climax of this narrative is, "*so, they being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, departed*" (v. 4).

Every act of sending forth is a responsive act on the part of the church to divine ordination. This order is also entirely consistent with that found in 1 Timothy 4:14.

B. New Testament Designation of Church Ministries and Offices

In the New Testament, there are three foundational texts that identify church ministries: Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-12, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11, 12. To these we may also add such texts as Acts 6:1-7 (for the ordination of the seven who relieved the Apostles by serving tables); 1 Timothy 3 (in the statement of qualifications for bishops and deacons); and Titus 1:4-9 (where the words for bishop, elder, and steward are used interchangeably).

From these sources we offer the following conclusions:

1. The terms *bishop* (overseer), *elder*, *steward*, and *pastor* are used in Scripture interchangeably. This is not to say that these terms are synonymous, but they overlap in such ways that they are used to explain each other.
2. These offices by their application in Scripture are local in origin. Those who serve in these offices very often extend their ministries beyond the local level. In this way, they may serve many congregations (in modern terms, districts, states, regions, nations, geographic areas). When this is done, a local office becomes effective in broader areas of function.
3. In terms of the current polity of the Church of God, the following designations are recognized: *District Overseer*, *Administrative Bishop*, and *Presiding Bishop*. It is

still the local definition that is basic to the meaning of the office. The only clear exception to this conclusion is that of the *Apostles*, especially where that term is used of the Twelve and Paul.

4. It would not be consistent with the Biblical order of ministry to limit any one of these titles to a hierarchal group (such as district, state, nation or geographical area). This would imply that a local minister could no longer be called by his/her proper ministerial title. Therefore, pastors and others in spiritual oversight can be appropriately designated as *bishops*.
5. There is an implied hierarchy in a system that arranges Biblically equal titles according to territory or elevated placement in an organizational structure, but this is not Biblical order.
6. There are offices in Scripture (such as, *Apostles*) that have authority over other offices, but Scripture provides these precedents. These offices have their own titles and do not usurp and distort offices for which they have oversight. For example, the oversight authority of one office (such as, *administrative bishop*) in relationship to another office (such as, *pastor*) should not violate the legitimate authority of either office.

C. Use of the Title Bishop

We recognize that there may be cultural differences in various countries that would limit the usage of the title of *bishop*. In such cases, countries should be allowed to use the title as appropriate.

II. QUALIFICATIONS OF ORDAINED BISHOPS

1. The applicant for ordination as bishop must meet the Biblical requirements as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.
2. An applicant for ordination as bishop may be ordained when he is twenty-five (25) years of age, provided he has had at least eight (8) years of active ministry, or when he is thirty (30) years of age, provided he has had at least five (5) years of active ministry, if he is otherwise qualified. In those cases in which a ministerial applicant has had verifiable active ministerial experience prior to receiving credentials, exceptions to the age qualifications can be made upon recommendation by the ministerial applicant's administrative bishop and with the approval of the Executive Council (72nd A., 2008).
3. In the case of military chaplains, the International Executive Committee shall be empowered to waive age, time, and performance minimums for ordination as bishop, if the applicant is otherwise qualified (51st A., 1966, p. 58).
4. Must have the baptism in the Holy Ghost (DF 8, 9).
5. Must successfully pass the examination given by a duly constituted board of examiners for ministerial candidates. It is understood that the examination will embrace areas of church government, doctrine, and general Biblical knowledge.
6. Applicants for ordination as bishop who have a living former spouse, or whose spouse has a living former spouse, shall be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the International Executive Council before being set forth by the local church (64th A., 1992, p. 81).

7. The wife of the applicant for ordained bishop's license must be grave, not a slanderer, sober, and faithful in all things (41st A., 1946, p. 27).
8. It is understood that female ministers are not eligible for ordination as bishop (63rd A., 1990, p. 79).
9. Candidates striving to advance from the second rank of ministry to the third rank of ministerial credentials are encouraged, where feasible, to complete level two of the Certificate in Ministerial Studies or its approved equivalency.

III. RIGHTS AND AUTHORITIES (47th A., 1958, pp. 28, 29).

The ordained bishop shall have full right and authority to

1. Preach, publish, teach, and defend the gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Serve as pastor and/or district overseer, or in other official capacities or appointments.
3. Baptize converts.
4. Receive believers into fellowship of church membership.
5. Administer Holy Sacraments (ordinances).
6. Solemnize rites of matrimony.
7. Assist in ordination ceremonies of fellow ministers.
8. Establish and organize churches.
9. Use the following titles while holding these specific positions:

State/Territorial Overseer (or international equivalency)

Administrative Bishop

International Executive Committee members

Executive Bishop

General Overseer

Presiding Bishop

10. In accordance with the agreement between the Full Gospel Church of God in Southern Africa and the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A., the ordained bishops of the Full Gospel Church of God in Southern Africa are members of the Church of God International General Council, and ordained bishops of the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A., are members of the General Council of the Full Gospel Church of God in Southern Africa, when visiting Southern Africa (46th A., 1956, p. 28; 68th A., 2000, p. 81).

S57. ORDAINED MINISTER (68th A., 2000, p. 81).

I. QUALIFICATIONS OF ORDAINED MINISTERS

1. Must have the baptism in the Holy Ghost (DF 8, 9).
2. The candidate for ordained minister shall be actively engaged in the ministry either in pastoral or evangelistic work.
3. Must be thoroughly acquainted with the Teachings and Doctrines of the Church of God as set forth by the International General Assembly.

4. Must successfully pass the examination given by a duly constituted board of examiners for ministerial candidates. It is understood that the examination will embrace areas of church government, doctrine, and general Biblical knowledge.

II. RIGHTS AND AUTHORITIES (47th A., 1958, pp. 28, 29).

The ordained minister shall have full right and authority to

1. Preach, publish, teach, and defend the gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Do the work of an evangelist.
3. Serve as pastor of a church.
4. Baptize converts.
5. Receive believers into fellowship of church membership.
6. Administer Holy Sacraments (ordinances).
7. Solemnize rites of matrimony.
8. Establish churches. The ordained minister shall be privileged to sit in the International General Council without voting privileges.

An ordained minister may be ordained as bishop at the age of twenty-five (25) years, provided he has had at least eight (8) years in active ministry, or at the age of thirty (30) years provided he has had five (5) years of experience in active ministry, if he is otherwise qualified.

In the case of military chaplains, the International Executive Committee is empowered to waive age, time, and performance minimum for ordination as bishop (51st A., 1966, p. 72).

It is understood that female ministers are not eligible for ordination as bishop (63rd A., 1990, p. 79).

S58. EXHORTER (20th A., 1925, p. 37; 45th A., 1954, p. 29; 65th A., 1994, Item 14, p. 91).

The church shall have an order of the ministry known as exhorter, whose license is signed by the district overseer where his membership is and endorsed by the state overseer.

I. QUALIFICATIONS OF EXHORTERS

1. The church recognizes the exhorter as a regular rank of the ministry. It is, however, the primary rank, and all applicants for the ministry must serve as exhorter before being promoted in rank, except ordained ministers coming from other reputable organizations.
2. Must have the baptism in the Holy Ghost (DF 8, 9).
3. The candidate for exhorter must be actively engaged in the ministry either in evangelistic or pastoral work before being recommended for licensing.
4. Must be thoroughly acquainted with the Teachings and Doctrines of the Church of God as set forth by the International General Assembly.
5. Must successfully pass the examination given by a duly constituted board of examiners.

II. RIGHTS AND AUTHORITIES

The exhorter shall have full right and authority to

1. Preach and defend the gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Serve as evangelist.
3. Serve as pastor of a church.
4. In cases of emergency the exhorter may be authorized by the state overseer to baptize converts and receive believers into fellowship of church membership (47th A., 1958, pp. 28, 29).
5. When an exhorter is serving as pastor, and where state laws recognize the credential of an exhorter as those of a duly authorized minister of the gospel, the exhorter may solemnize the rites of matrimony (54th A., 1972, p. 46).
6. Exhorters who are serving as helpers and assistants may receive tithes when available (21st A., 1926, p. 32).
7. The exhorter must be active in the ministry, and shall be required to pay tithes [into the local church where his or her membership is located] and to make monthly reports to the state overseer and to the secretary general. The exhorter may be promoted to the rank of ordained minister when deemed qualified by the state overseer and others concerned (42nd A., 1948, p. 27).

S59. FEMALE MINISTER (63rd A., 1990, p. 79; 68th A., 2000, pp. 81, 82)

Female ministers are to use the same ministerial titles as male ministers, with all the requirements, duties, responsibilities, and ministry opportunities of male ministers who hold either the first or second level of ministerial credentials as presently set forth in this book of *Minutes* of the International General Assembly. It is understood that female ministers are not eligible for ordination as bishop.

S60. MINISTER OF MUSIC AND MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

I. QUALIFICATIONS OF MINISTERS OF MUSIC AND MINISTERS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. Must have the baptism in the Holy Ghost (DF 8, 9).
2. Must be thoroughly acquainted with the Teachings and Doctrines of the Church of God as set forth by the International General Assembly.
3. Must possess the necessary training, either formal or an adequate substitute thereof, to enable him [or her] to serve the church effectively in either of these highly specialized areas of the ministry.
4. Must successfully pass the examination given by a duly constituted board of examiners.

II. RIGHTS AND AUTHORITIES

The minister of music and/or minister of Christian education shall have full right and authority to

1. Serve as music director, Christian education director, teacher, or assistant pastor of local churches.
2. Publish, defend, and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. The minister of music and/or minister of Christian education shall not be eligible for ordination as long as he [or she] remains solely in the field of music or Christian education.
4. In the event the minister of Christian education or minister of music enters into a pulpit ministry, we recommend that he/she be given credit for his/her period of licensure [as minister of Christian education or minister of music] and that this period serve in lieu of the exhorter's licensure (50th A., 1964. p. 55).

S61. LAY MINISTER CERTIFICATION (65th A., 1994, Item 12, pp. 89-91).

That a lay minister's certificate be issued to applicants who have a call of God into a specialized area of local church ministry where certification is deemed necessary and appropriate.

I. QUALIFICATIONS

The candidate must

1. Be a loyal member of the Church of God, adhering to its teachings.
2. Be baptized in the Holy Spirit.
3. Be faithful in tithing.
4. Be a regular church attendant.
5. Be one who works in harmony with the local, state, and international church's program and one who reflects a cooperative attitude toward the progress of the church.
6. Have completed at least one year of apprenticeship in local church ministry under the supervision of the pastor. The apprenticeship consists of successful completion of the Church of God Lay Leadership Development Program (levels 1 and 2), formerly called The Timothy Plan.
7. Have the approval of the local church governing body with a recommendation from the pastor and church council.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITIES

1. The lay minister's certificate must be renewed every two years by the local church where the lay minister is a member. Renewal requires that the individual continue to be actively engaged in one or more specialized areas of local church ministry, such as children's ministry, youth ministry, prison ministry, elderly ministry, music ministry, and so forth.

2. Whenever a lay minister transfers to another Church of God, the present certificate is terminated. The new church may approve the applicant and issue the lay minister's certificate. Once a person has completed the leadership development program and apprenticeship at one church, it is not necessary to repeat this process in order to be certified by another local church.
3. The lay minister shall serve as a helper to the pastor and shall be eligible to conduct various services and ministry activities sponsored by the local church under the supervision of the pastor.
4. The lay minister shall be authorized to represent the local church in the community as a certified Christian worker.
5. The lay minister shall teach and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through areas of specialized ministry.
6. The lay minister shall serve as a model within the local church for the mentoring and discipling of believers.
7. Certificates are to be obtained from the state/territorial office.

S62. MINISTERIAL REPORTING

I. FORMS FOR MONTHLY REPORTING

In keeping with the financial system of the Church of God, it has been decided by the International General Assembly to furnish Report Forms, in triplicate, to all ministers, for reporting to international and state headquarters on the first of each month.

II. RECORDING OF MONTHLY REPORTS

The secretary general [his office] shall maintain the following record system for all ministers' reports.

1. Each report shall be recorded monthly on an individual record and summarized annually. A copy of said annual summary shall be placed in each minister's file and a duplicate copy mailed to the minister.
2. A permanent record shall also be maintained and filed in the vault [at International Offices].
3. All reports shall be microfilmed for permanent record before being destroyed.

III. DELINQUENT REPORTING

1. When a minister becomes delinquent in reporting to international and state headquarters as much as three (3) months, he/she shall be urgently admonished by the state overseer of the state where he/she is ministering to bring his/her reports up to date.
2. Further, he/she shall be notified in writing that if he/she fails to report for a period of six (6) months, his/her license will be subject to revocation, after due disciplinary process (55th A., 1974, pp. 56, 57).

S63. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTERS

(68th A., 2000, p. 77; 71st A., 2006, pp. 47, 48)

1. All ministers are expected to take care of their financial obligations promptly. Ministers who fail to maintain proper credit will be warned by the state overseer, and if satisfactory disposition is not made regarding financial obligations, the state overseer will refer the case to a state board for proper action (63rd A., 1990, p. 81).
2. All Church of God ministers should remain within the bounds of the decisions of the International General Assembly, and they are not to teach anything contrary to the Teachings authorized by this body (10th A., 1914, p. 31).
3. When a minister moves to another state without assignment, he/she is to notify his/her former and present state overseers at once. Further, he/she is to give his/her present state overseer information about himself/herself and family, previous ministerial work, what he/she would like to do, and how long he/she plans to remain in that state (45th A., 1954, p. 28).
4. Inasmuch as our ministers are expected to pledge full allegiance to the Church of God and its program, and inasmuch as we do not accept ministerial credentials from other organizations, licensing associations, or any other, we recommend that where our ministers hold such credentials they be required to surrender same; and where applicants to the ministry hold such credentials, they be required to surrender same before being approved for licensing (46th A., 1956, p. 25).
5. Believing a centralized form of government to be the Biblical (Acts 15:13-29) standard for our churches, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) early adopted such a form of government and has consistently practiced a centralized form of government [1994].
6. Be it therefore resolved that the International General Assembly does not recognize or approve the practice of our ministers setting up independent congregations who do not subscribe to the doctrines, faith, practices, teachings, and government of the Church of God.
7. Be it further resolved that we do not approve our ministers pastoring or otherwise assisting such independent congregations, and declare that ministers who persist in doing so are out of harmony with our stated policy of centralized government; and appropriate action should be initiated by proper authorities against offending ministers (46th A., 1958 p. 27).
8. No Church of God minister shall be required to violate a confidence, when such has been entrusted to him/her in the performance of his/her professional duties or in the course of his/ her care of souls, except with the express permission of the person who has confided in him/her or in order to prevent a crime. This provision shall not preempt any applicable state or other required reporting laws, nor be used to conceal a felonious act toward another individual (51st A., 1966, p. 77; 74th A., 2012).
9. In order for any minister to be considered eligible for election or appointment by the International Executive Committee, General Council or General Assembly, the minister must be current on both personal ministerial reports and the local church reports with required finances from the church he/she pastors (if applicable). Any exceptions must be approved by the International Executive Committee. Further, this same measure applies to state/regional positions and boards. Any exception at the state/regional level must be approved by the state/regional overseer in writing (73rd A., 2010).

10. Responsible Use of Social Media: Christians are exhorted by Scripture to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), to provide things honest in the sight of all persons (Romans 12:17), and to do all things for the edification of others (Romans 15:2). The use of social media by believers should conform to these and other Biblical standards (74th A., 2012).

S64. DISORDERLY MINISTERS

(68th A., 2000, pp. 72-77; 71st A., 2006, pp. 47, 48; [IE Council: January 2006])

INTRODUCTION: SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES

In Scripture the church is likened to a body of believers (1 Corinthians 12). It is to function in unity, diversity, and respect. It is to be sensitive to the needs of other members. When one suffers, all suffer; when one is honored, all are to rejoice (1 Corinthians 12:25, 26). The apostle Paul further instructs believers to rejoice with those who rejoice, and mourn with those who mourn (Romans 12:15). In this manner, members of the body of Christ affirm each other and minister to each other.

The discipline of a member of the body of Christ is a painful, but necessary experience. Since we are members of the same body, disciplinary action against any member, in reality, brings the whole body under judgment (1 Corinthians 12:12). Therefore all such action is to be undertaken in love and with a view toward restoration and reconciliation.

A minister who is found guilty of any of the violations of ministerial covenant and trust prescribed in these *Minutes* shall be disciplined for the purpose of restoration and maintaining accountability and integrity within the church and the ministerial body. The discipline and restoration process shall be based on Scriptural principles. It is in Biblical order, and it is consistent with the theology of grace and restoration, that a disciplined minister has an opportunity to be restored as a minister in the Church of God.

In Biblical usage, the concept of restoration carries the connotation of putting back together that which is broken, mending torn fishing nets, setting a broken limb, and restoring gently one who has fallen (Galatians 6:1). From the beginnings of humankind (Genesis 3:15), and throughout Biblical history (Revelation 3:19-22), the theme of the Bible is God's love for all people, even when they have disappointed themselves and turned from their relationship with Him.

I. FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION

Forgiveness and restoration are distinct from each other in definition and purpose.

A. Forgiveness

1. *Definition:*

Forgiveness is the remission of sin by Christ in the extension of His grace and mercy. The role of the church is to be a community of the forgiven and the forgiving. Each member of the body, having been forgiven, is to be a forgiving member of the body. "*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*" (Ephesians 4:32).

2. *Purpose:*

The purpose of forgiveness is the renewal and continuation of fellowship in the body of Christ (Matthew 18:15-20). Forgiveness is not based on merit and is to be extended without counting (Matthew 18:21, 22).

B. Restoration

1. *Definition:*

Restoration is the “mending of the net” (Galatians 6:1), so that which is torn can be placed in service again. This spiritual mentality calls for all the members of the body of Christ to bear one another’s burdens in the fulfillment of the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2-4).

Restoration is a conditional and rehabilitating process in which the offender demonstrates to the church and society that he/she is worthy of renewed trust and stewardship.

Renewal involves evidence of godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:9, 10), and a demonstration that the offender has cleared himself/ herself in the matters of offense (2 Corinthians 7:11).

2. *Purpose:*

The purpose of ministerial restoration is to place an offending minister back in a position of usefulness and activity appropriate to his/her demonstration of renewed spiritual capabilities.

C. Role of the Church

In both forgiveness and restoration the church is to confirm its love for the disciplined brother or sister and comfort him/her lest Satan gain an advantage (2 Corinthians 7:6-11).

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

A. Suspension

As used in this section, the term *suspension* means the cessation of all ministerial activity, including ministerial voting privileges. During suspension, the minister may, under certain circumstances, maintain his/her membership in a group insurance program and/or the Minister’s Retirement Plan as provided by the policies of the Benefits Board. The cost of any personal insurance for which he/ she may be eligible during the period of suspension shall be the responsibility of the minister.

B. Revocation

As used in this section, the term *revocation* means the termination of ministerial credentials with the Church of God, including all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.

III. DISORDERLY CONDUCT

A. Explicit Heterosexual Misconduct

1. Any minister found guilty of adultery, fornication, or other sexually explicit heterosexual misconduct shall have his/her ministerial credentials suspended for a minimum period of two years. Should said minister desire reinstatement of credentials, he/ she shall submit to the prescribed program of restoration.
2. At the discretion of the state/territorial overseer and state/ territorial council, the minister may be allowed to engage in limited, supervised ministerial activity during the second year of the disciplinary period.
3. At the conclusion of the two-year period, upon successful completion of the restoration program, and with the recommendation of the state/territorial overseer, the International Executive Council shall make a decision concerning the reinstatement of credentials and at what level. (See **S5. International Executive Council, III. Duties and Authorities**, Item 11.)
4. Any minister found guilty of sexual abuse of a child or a second offense involving adultery, fornication, or any other sexual misconduct, or any combination of these offenses, shall have his/her credentials permanently revoked. He/she must be disfellowshipped from the church. However, the opportunity for reconciliation and restoration to church membership shall be given future consideration in appropriate cases (72nd A., 2008).

B. Other Heterosexual Misconduct

1. Any minister found guilty of any other heterosexual misconduct shall have his/her ministerial credentials suspended for a minimum period of one year. Should said minister desire reinstatement of credentials, he/she shall submit to the prescribed program of restoration.
2. At the discretion of the state/territorial overseer and state/ territorial council, the minister may be allowed to engage in limited, supervised ministerial activity after the first six months of the disciplinary period.

At the conclusion of the one-year period, upon successful completion of the restoration program, and with the recommendation of the state/territorial overseer and the approval of the International Executive Council, the minister shall be reinstated to his/her former rank of ministry. (See **S5. International Executive Council, III. Duties and Authorities**, Item 11.)

C. Unbecoming Conduct

1. Any minister found guilty of unbecoming ministerial conduct shall be disciplined under a plan determined by the state/ territorial overseer, in consultation with the trial board. Disciplinary options shall include official reprimand, restitution, censure, remedial action, reexamination, restrictions, and, where necessary, suspension of credentials.

2. Unbecoming ministerial conduct shall be defined as violations of personal integrity, of doctrinal fidelity as accepted by the Church of God, and of leadership accountability.
3. For any violation of doctrinal fidelity, re-examination at the appropriate level shall be required.
4. For any suspension of credentials under this section, the offending minister shall submit to the prescribed program of restoration for a minimum period of one year.
5. At the discretion of the state/territorial overseer and state/ territorial council, the minister may be allowed to engage in limited supervised ministerial activity during the last six months of his/ her suspension. At the conclusion of the disciplinary period, upon successful completion of the restoration program, and with the recommendation of the state/territorial overseer and state/territorial council and the approval of the International Executive Council, the minister shall be reinstated to his/her former rank of ministry.
6. Any minister found guilty of more than one violation of unbecoming ministerial conduct shall have his/her entire disciplinary record submitted to the International Executive revocation of credentials (68th A., 2000, pp 76, 77).

D. Homosexual Offense

The credentials of a minister must be revoked when found guilty of a homosexual offense, and he/she must be disfellowshipped from the church. He/she is never to be reinstated to the ministry (43rd A., 1950, pp. 18, 19; 46th A., 1958, p. 27; 50th A., 1964, p. 54).

IV. PROGRAM OF RESTORATION

Any minister whose credentials have been suspended shall be offered a program of restoration. The restoration process shall involve ministry from the entire church body.

A. Supervision

In the Church of God, the prescribed program of restoration is supervised by the International Executive Council and implemented by a ministry team including, but not limited to the following: the ministerial advocate, the state/territorial overseer, the local church, a pastoral mentor, a Christian counselor, and the Center for Ministerial Care.

B. Coordination

The Center for Ministerial Care shall coordinate the ministry team and serve in a facilitative and consultative role. (Any exceptions to this procedural approach, such as in areas outside the United States of America, shall be approved by the office of the ministerial advocate.)

C. Procedures

1. The disciplinary process officially begins when the minister enters the restoration program by notifying the Center for Ministerial Care in writing on the forms provided.

2. If requested, the person being disciplined shall be allowed up to three months to make necessary emotional, vocational, and family adjustments prior to entering the restoration program, provided the limits on ministerial activities are observed.
3. Should a minister whose license has been suspended, fail to voluntarily enter the restoration program within three months from the date of being advised by the state/territorial overseer of the disciplinary action and the requirement to enter the restoration program, said minister's credentials shall be revoked.

D. Healing and Renewal

The disciplined party must show evidence of healing and renewal of strength against the temptations that provoked his/her failure. This is to be demonstrated by:

Confession of the shame and ramifications of his/her offense.

Acceptance of personal blame and responsibility for the offense.

Submission to the authority of the church in its disciplinary and restorative processes.

V. ADDITIONAL RULINGS—DISORDERLY MINISTERS

1. The disciplinary record of all ministers shall be cumulative and the entire record shall be considered in all disciplinary actions.
2. In the event the individual being disciplined is not credentialed by the Church of God, but is engaged in ministerial activities, the policies relating to suspension and revocation of ministry as defined in this section shall apply (68th A., 2000, p. 77).
3. All ministers having their ministry revoked for the cause of failure to pay tithes shall be required to show a record of at least six (6) months of loyalty in tithing before being reinstated to the ministry (33rd A., 1938, p. 49; 56th A., 1976, p. 55).
4. Ministers who resign their ministry to evade charges instituted, or being instituted against them as a result of alleged offending conduct, shall be considered guilty (46th A., 1956, p. 23).
5. Where ministers have had their ministry revoked for any cause and engage in ministerial activities in opposition to the Church of God, our ministers and members shall be considered disloyal in promoting their ministerial activities (44th A., 1952, p. 31).
6. Where a minister's work has been generally known, either before or after he/she surrendered his/her license, his/her application for reinstatement to the ministry shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the International Executive Council, and the general overseer shall determine whether or not his/her case should come before the International Executive Council (43rd A., 1950, p. 16).
7. A minister whose license is revoked and who goes into open sin shall be required to be baptized in water before his/her ministry is restored, and we further recommend that this apply to any and all ministers who shall apply for membership in the Church of God (37th A., 1942, p. 36).

8. The past record of ministers who present themselves to the Church of God shall be investigated; and where there have been accusations of immoral conduct, said ministers shall not be eligible to be an ordained minister or an ordained bishop until endorsed by three-fourths of the International Executive Council (36th A., 1941, p. 47).
9. When a minister has been tried by a state board and his/ her license ordered revoked, and the local church where his/her membership is instructed to withdraw fellowship, the local church shall be required to carry out the decision of the state board. Further, where the offending minister has been found guilty of the sexual abuse of a child, an offense that requires withdrawal of church membership and permanent revocation of ministerial credentials, the guilty party shall be prohibited from attending, participating in, or having any involvement with, any activities of the local church or churches where the victims in said offense presently attend or have attended (36th A., 1941, p. 48; 74th A., 2012).
10. Ministers who do not report or who are not actively engaged in preaching and other ministerial work for as much as six (6) months, provided such inactivity is not caused by illness or age, shall have their ministry revoked (35th A., 1940, p. 35).
11. The minister who allegedly walks disorderly while in another state, should be tried by a state board in the state where the alleged offense was committed, and if found guilty his/her ministry should be revoked by the overseer of the state where his/ her membership is (23rd A., 1928, p. 41).

S65. OFFENDING MINISTERS

I. MINISTERIAL DISCIPLINE (63rd A., 1990, pp. 70-75)

Trial Procedures and Appeals for Church of God Ministers

Inasmuch as Church of God hearings and/or trials of its ministers or members are ecclesiastical rather than civil in nature, and concern matters within the Christian brotherhood, to be judged by the guidelines of Holy Scripture rather than civil law, the ministers and members of the Church of God do hereby agree that legal counsel may not attend or participate in those proceedings.

However, the accused, as well as the person bringing the charge shall be given the option of inviting a duly credentialed Church of God minister to appear with him/her throughout the hearings, trials, or appeals for the purpose of personal support only. Further, in matters of alleged sexual, physical, or psychological abuse by the accused, where there may be alleged victims or witnesses to the same, each of those alleged victims or witnesses shall be given the option of inviting a duly credentialed Church of God minister to appear with him/her throughout hearings, trials, or appeals for the purpose of personal support only (74th A., 2012).

A. Guidelines for State Overseers

1. Warn ministers who are delinquent in reporting.
2. Revoke the license of ministers who have not reported for as much as six (6) months.
3. Arrange for trial of accused ministers, notifying the accused of charges, time, and place of trial.
4. Terminate the license of a convicted minister by signing a revocation which is sent to the general overseer.

5. Revoke the ministry of one who is a member of his state when his/her trial, conviction, and offense were in another state.
6. In rare instances involving church and pastor estrangement, a board of three (3) ministers appointed by the state overseer might be of some help to the overseer. Such a board could listen to problems and render an advisory opinion. This type of procedure, in acute cases, furnishes a broader base of strength for the overseer.
7. In instances of increasing rumor and/or question, the state overseer could appoint a board of investigation to separate fact from rumor, provide a clearer conception of the problem at hand, and possibly indicate a proper course of action.

B. Trial Procedures

1. *Filing of Charges*

Any charge brought against a minister must be in writing and signed by the individual bringing the said charge. Prior to any formal trial or hearing, the state overseer shall, where possible, arrange a face-to-face meeting between the accused and the accuser, in keeping with the commands of Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17. Said meeting to be moderated by the state overseer, or one whom he shall appoint.

- a. The burden of proof rests upon the individual making the charge.
- b. Refuting said charge rests upon the one charged.
- c. Any charge should be presented to the state overseer of the state in which the alleged offense is committed.
- d. After a charge is brought in writing, the burden of handling said charge rests with the state overseer, who is considered the pastor of any minister serving under his charge.

2. *Selection of Trial Board*

The state overseer shall appoint all trial boards.

- a. He should avoid using the State Council as a trial board.
- b. All members of a trial board should be individuals of experience, such as a pastor or evangelist.
- c. The trial board should consist of not less than three (3) ordained bishops.
- d. Conflicts of interest, such as relatives, those taking sides, or those connected in any way which would hinder a fair trial or cast a shadow upon the system of the church to deal ethically or fairly with all men should be avoided.
- e. Any minister appointed to a trial board who feels he cannot render an impartial decision should so state and be replaced.
- f. Any officer in the trial procedure who feels there is a conflict of interest should have the right to call said conflict to the attention of the state overseer or the general overseer and expect it to be corrected before proceeding with consummation of the trial.
- g. Any ministerial liaison or advocate who is subjectively involved, or whose family is involved, should have the right not to participate in any decisions related to the case, absent himself voluntarily, and request to be replaced for any given trial.

- h. The accused minister shall be given the option of inviting another duly credentialed Church of God minister to appear with him [or her] during hearings, trials, and appeals, for the purpose of personal support. (Since this is an ecclesiastical matter in the brotherhood of the church, no legal counsel may be present.)

3. *Notification of Defendant*

The state overseer shall set the date of trial and notify defendant of charges, time and place of trial, at least seven (7) days prior to trial. Notification shall be given by certified mail with a return receipt, where possible. If defendant waives the time limit in favor of an earlier trial, he/she should sign a statement to that effect which will become a part of the trial record. The defendant may, with the consent of the state overseer, waive trial by the state board to a board appointed by the general overseer and his assistants, in which case there shall be no appeal.

4. *Consideration for Person Making Charge*

- a. The right of fair and courteous treatment
- b. The right to be instructed concerning all procedures
- c. The right to produce witnesses with corroborating testimony and evidence
- d. The right of notification of trial, procedures, and the right of appeal
- e. The right to appeal any conflict of interest which might occur
- f. The right to be heard, to face the one being charged, and to face those hearing said charge

5. *Consideration for Person Charged*

- a. The right to be considered innocent until proven guilty, in accordance with our trial system
- b. The right to know what he/she is charged with and the person(s) bringing the charge (in writing)
- c. The right of fair and courteous treatment
- d. The right to be instructed concerning all procedures
- e. The right to plead "guilty" or "not guilty"
- f. The right to refute said charges and to produce witnesses, testimony, and other evidence
- g. The right to be heard, to face the accuser and those hearing said charges, and to be present in the hearing room while evidence is being heard
- h. The right of appeal concerning any conflict of interest which might occur
- i. No defendant can avoid a trial by board by confessing to a lesser charge. Trial by board can be avoided only by confessing to the greater charge. For example: any confession of "unbecoming conduct with the opposite sex" must be tried by board to determine that indeed the individual is not guilty of the greater charge of "adultery."

6. *Trial Procedures*

- a. Secretary of Record—the state overseer shall appoint a secretary to keep a record of trial proceedings.

- b. Register of Witnesses—both the defense and prosecution shall furnish a list of witnesses prior to the trial. Testimony should then be limited to these witnesses, unless one comes forward during the trial with new evidence.
- c. The Trial—the state overseer shall moderate the trial unless the defendant is related to him, in which case he shall disqualify himself and the moderator shall be appointed by the general overseer. The trial should be opened with prayer, followed by appropriate remarks by the chairman. The charges should be read to the defendant in the presence of the person(s) who signed the charges. The charges shall then become a part of the trial record.
- d. When a group of individuals has preferred charges, they may testify individually or they may select a spokesman from their number to represent them, provided the defendant is so notified and offers no objection. However, in morals cases each witness must testify individually. In all cases, individual testimony must be given if the defendant so desires.
- e. After all prosecution witnesses have testified, the defendant shall be given an opportunity to face each witness individually and to defend himself/herself. After the defendant has had opportunity to face his/her accusers, defense witnesses will then be called and heard individually. Character witnesses may be heard individually or collectively at the discretion of the board.
- f. The board shall retain the prerogative to recall any witness on either side at any time during the trial. The board may go into executive session at any time in order to clarify testimony, discuss possible changes in procedure, or determine what action present circumstances may dictate.

7. *Notification of Decision*

- a. When all testimony has concluded, the defendant shall be excused and told that he/she will be notified of the board's decision. In most instances, the defendant can be notified in person or by telephone, and the decision confirmed by certified mail, where possible. After deliberation, the board shall present its decision in writing, signed by each member, to the state overseer, who in turn will notify the defendant and the complainant and take appropriate action.
- b. The trial board's decision will become part of the defendant's permanent record at the state office and will also be filed at International Offices (74th A., 2012).
- c. In the event the trial board renders a decision of guilt, said decision must be in agreement with the ruling of the International General Assembly listed under caption **S64. DISORDERLY MINISTERS**.
- d. Both the one charging and the one being charged should be notified of the decision of the trial board, and (a) recommendations for conforming to said decision and/or (b) a record of this follow-up should be kept in the individual's file.

II. APPEALS

- A. Any appeal from a decision of a state trial board must be presented to the general overseer in writing and signed within ten (10) days after the defendant has received written notification of the decision from the state overseer.

B. An appeal may be granted when requested in writing within the prescribed time limit for one or more of the following reasons:

1. The trial was conducted improperly.
2. New evidence which was not available at the time of the trial becomes available.
3. There is a conflict of interest in those conducting the trial.
4. The International Executive Committee deems such advisable for other reasons.

Note: Every minister has a right to expect courteous treatment and fair dealing from his/her superiors in all matters relating to his/her position or field of labor in keeping with the dignity of a minister of the gospel. In the event these rights are apparently denied, and by this denial his/ her ministry shall be greatly curtailed and damaged, he/ she shall have the right to appeal to the general overseer, in writing, who, with the International Executive Committee, shall take whatever steps are necessary to effect a possible solution, if in their opinion the appeal warrants such action. The purpose of the right of appeal is to open channels whereby differences between the concerned parties may be resolved (54th A., 1972, pp. 54, 55).

CHURCH GOVERNMENT— PERSONNEL

(S66 through S73)

**(The rulings in this division of the Book of Discipline, Church Order,
and Governance apply only to the United States of America.)**

S66. EMPLOYMENT OF FAMILY MEMBERS

(44th A., 1952, p. 31)

The general officials and all other Ministry heads of the church shall refrain from employing members of their immediate family if said employees are to work under their personal supervision.

Where the state overseer receives the limit in salary and expenses, no member of his immediate family shall be employed as state secretary and treasurer.

S67. COMPENSATION FOR STATE LEADERS

I. STATE OVERSEER (64th A., 1992, pp. 88, 89)

A. Compensation

After a study has been made of the United States government cost-of-living index, the compensation of state overseers shall be set annually by the International Executive Council and become effective on September 1 of each year.

B. Other Compensation and Appropriations

1. One-half of the state overseer's Social Security tax (which is to be reported as taxable income according to the information of federal income tax consultants)
2. Contribution of an amount equal to a minimum of five percent of the state overseer's compensation to the Church of God Ministers' Retirement Plan for the state overseer
3. Premiums for medical insurance coverage
4. Reimbursement for expenses incurred in official business on the general level
5. The State Council is authorized to reimburse expenses incurred for official business on the state level, where funds are available.
6. The State Council is authorized to approve other gifts to the state overseer of up to \$5,000 annually, directly from the state treasury.

II. STATE YOUTH AND DISCIPLESHIP DIRECTOR (64th A., 1992, pp. 89, 90)

A. Compensation

After a study has been made of the United States Government cost-of-living index, the compensation of the state directors of Youth and Discipleship shall be set annually by the International Executive Council and become effective on September 1 of each year.

B. Other Compensation and Appropriations

1. One-half of the state director's Social Security tax (which is to be reported as taxable income according to the information of federal income tax consultants)
2. Contribution of an amount equal to five percent of the state director's compensation to the Church of God Ministers' Retirement Plan for the state director
3. Premiums for medical insurance coverage
4. Reimbursement for expenses incurred for official business on a general level
5. The State Council is authorized to reimburse expenses incurred in official business on the state level, where funds are available.

III. STATE EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS DIRECTOR (64th A., 1992, pp. 89, 90)

A. Compensation

After a study has been made of the United States government cost-of-living index, the compensation of state directors of Evangelism and Missions shall be set annually by the Executive Council and become effective on September 1 of each year.

B. Other Compensation and Appropriations

1. One-half of the state director's Social Security tax (which is to be reported as taxable income according to the information of federal income tax consultants)
2. Contribution of an amount equal to five percent of the state director's compensation to the Church of God Ministers' Retirement Plan for the state director
3. Premiums for medical insurance coverage
4. Reimbursement for expenses incurred for official business on a general level
5. The State Council is authorized to reimburse expenses incurred in official business on the state level, where funds are available.

S68. COMPENSATION FOR PASTORS (64th A., 1992, pp. 81-84; 71st A., 2006, pp. 44, 45)

I. BASIC COMPENSATION

"Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:13, 14).

The basic pastoral compensation shall consist of the following, based on the availability of appropriate tithe funds in the local church:

1. The compensation as designated for the appropriate membership category in **S69. PASTOR'S MINIMUM COMPENSATION SCALE**.
2. One-half of the pastor's Social Security tax (which is to be reported as taxable income according to the information of federal income tax consultants)
3. Premiums for health insurance coverage
4. Contribution by the local church to the Church of God Ministers' Retirement Plan for the pastor of an amount equal to at least five percent of the cash compensation received by the pastor
5. Adequate housing accommodations, including utilities

These guidelines are ecclesiastical in application and are not a basis for any involvement outside the process of the Church of God.

II. UNDERPAID PASTORS

Pastors of churches where the tithe income is not sufficient to meet the Pastor's Minimum Compensation Scale shall receive 90 percent of the gross tithe. Further, that churches where

the tithe income is not sufficient to pay the pastor's salary according to the minimum scale should endeavor to increase the pastor's income in an amount equal to minimum scale or more through freewill offerings or other means.

III. EXPENSES AND OTHER BENEFITS

There is clear instruction in the Scripture which admonishes the members of the church to recognize effective and fruitful spiritual leadership.

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. The labourer is worthy of his reward" (1 Timothy 5:17, 18).

Therefore, all churches are encouraged to provide automobile travel expense allowances and to provide incentives such as higher percentages of retirement, annuity and insurance plans, and so forth, based on increases in finances, pastoral responsibility, pastoral effectiveness, and longevity.

The church to which the pastor has been appointed should pay reasonable moving expenses.

IV. COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT (70th A., 2004 p. 56)

Annually, the International Executive Council shall make a study of the United States government's cost-of-living index. Afterwards, the Council shall authorize accordingly an adjustment in the **Pastor's Minimum Compensation Scale**, to become effective on September 1 of each year. Announcement of this annual adjustment shall be made by correspondence.

V. COMPENSATION INCREASE

That the current **Pastor's Minimum Compensation Scale** be increased by 10 percent effective September 1, 2002 (69th A., 2002, p. 50).

S69.PASTOR'S MINIMUM COMPENSATION SCALE

(Effective September 1, 2012)

(Same as prior year (9/1/11) due to no COL increase.)

Membership	Weekly Compensation	Membership	Weekly Compensation
1 - 25	\$781.00	751 - 775	\$1,527.00
26 - 50	\$830.00	776 - 800	\$1,542.00
51 - 75	\$875.00	801 - 825	\$1,564.00
76 - 100	\$919.00	826 - 850	\$1,582.00
101 - 125	\$964.00	851 - 875	\$1,600.00
126 - 150	\$1,011.00	876 - 900	\$1,616.00
151 - 175	\$1,056.00	901 - 925	\$1,638.00
176 - 200	\$1,105.00	926 - 950	\$1,654.00
201 - 225	\$1,118.00	951 - 975	\$1,676.00
226 - 250	\$1,141.00	976 - 1000	\$1,689.00
251 - 275	\$1,158.00	1001 - 1050	\$1,728.00
276 - 300	\$1,177.00	1051 - 1100	\$1,763.00
301 - 325	\$1,194.00	1101 - 1150	\$1,800.00
326 - 350	\$1,216.00	1151 - 1200	\$1,842.00
351 - 375	\$1,232.00	1201 - 1250	\$1,875.00
376 - 400	\$1,250.00	1251 - 1300	\$1,912.00
401 - 425	\$1,268.00	1301 - 1350	\$1,951.00
426 - 450	\$1,290.00	1351 - 1400	\$1,984.00
451 - 475	\$1,304.00	1401 - 1450	\$2,021.00
476 - 500	\$1,325.00	1451 - 1500	\$2,061.00
501 - 525	\$1,343.00	1501 - 1550	\$2,094.00
526 - 550	\$1,364.00	1551 - 1600	\$2,134.00
551 - 575	\$1,378.00	1601 - 1650	\$2,168.00
576 - 600	\$1,397.00	1651 - 1700	\$2,205.00
601 - 625	\$1,416.00	1701 - 1750	\$2,243.00
626 - 650	\$1,435.00	1751 - 1800	\$2,280.00
651 - 675	\$1,453.00	1801 - 1850	\$2,317.00
676 - 700	\$1,472.00	1851 - 1900	\$2,352.00
701 - 725	\$1,487.00	1901 - 1950	\$2,391.00
726 - 750	\$1,511.00	1951 - 2000	\$2,427.00

Churches with more than 2,000 members should follow the process of \$20.00 per week increase in minimum salary for each increase of 50 members in continuing this scale.

Presently established churches whose pastor's salary structure is adversely affected by this scale should maintain their pastor's present compensation (observing annual adjustments) until membership has increased to a higher compensation bracket.

S70. COMPENSATION FOR OTHER PERSONNEL

(50th A., 1964, p. 60; 51st A., 1966, p. 58; 54th A., 1972, p. 43; 55th A., 1974, p. 53; 56th A., 1976, p. 48; 62nd A., 1988, Journal, pp. 50, 51; [1994])

I. ASSISTANT PASTOR

Social Security

1. Local churches shall pay to the assistant pastor one-half of the amount owed by the assistant pastor for participation in the Social Security program. (This measure is retroactive to include the year of 1968.)
2. The amount paid [to the assistant pastor for Social Security tax] is to be reported as taxable income according to the information of federal income tax consultants.

II. FULL-TIME EVANGELIST

A. Church of God Ministers' Retirement Plan

Where the tithe of tithes sent to the state treasurer is sufficient, the State Council shall be permitted to pay for [the full-time evangelist's] participation in the Church of God Ministers' Retirement Plan and, also, monthly premiums on hospitalization insurance.

B. Expenses

That the expenses for housing, utilities, travel, lodging, and food (actual expense if lodging and meals are not provided during appointments) be allowed [the full-time evangelist] as determined by the International Executive Council.

III. SUPPLEMENTAL INCOME FOR UNDERPAID PASTORS/ EVANGELISTS

(43rd A., 1950, p. 15; 45th A., 1954, pp. 29, 30; [1974])

After state office expenses have been paid, the State Council is authorized to use the surplus tithe of tithes from the state treasury to supplement the income of underpaid pastors and evangelists.

S71. MINISTERS' RETIREMENT PLAN CHURCH OF GOD BENEFITS BOARD, INC. (59th A., 1982, p. 42; 60th A., 1984, pp. 45, 46; [1994])

I. HISTORY

In 1982, the Church of God International General Assembly approved the creation of the Church of God Ministers' Retirement Plan.

The International Executive Council constituted the board of trustees with the power and duty to correct errors made in the operation and administration of the plan; to delegate authority to any agent or agents; to carry out the duties of the board; and to decide all other matters relating to the plan not otherwise specifically assigned under the provisions of the plan.

The International General Assembly, as noted in **S4., II., Item 1** of the Supplement to the 1992 *Minutes* of the Church of God 64th International General Assembly, authorized

and directed that the International Executive Council “shall consider and act upon any and all matters pertaining to the general interest and welfare of the Church of God.” After a review and study of present issues affecting the benefits program of the church, the general overseer with the counsel of the International Executive Council appointed the Committee on Separation of Pension Funds on January 25, 1993. The committee was composed of Floyd H. Lawhon, chairman, Raymond F. Culpepper, Raymond E. Crowley, O. Wayne Chambers, and Robert E. Fisher to study and address certain issues. Their assigned mission was “to do an impact study on the separation of the pension funds and report back to the next International Executive Council session.”

II. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The Committee on Separation of Pension Funds made diligent inquiry and study of historical and present issues affecting the benefits programs of the church. In addition, the committee studied the performance and administration of the plans, and the need for changes to strengthen the church’s benefits programs for the better maintenance and retirement income security of the ministry. Those included must be United States citizens who are ministers, their dependents and beneficiaries, evangelists, missionaries, lay workers, and employees and their dependents who are engaged in the work of assisting the Church of God in performing its ministries and carrying out its supporting programs.

The committee addressed the operations, management, and administration of the church’s benefits program, with primary attention devoted to the separation of pension funds through a corporate trust from general church funds.

III. CONSULTANTS AND RECOMMENDATION

The committee engaged qualified consultants to investigate, report, and advise the church concerning certain facts and issues.

Consultants included the following: Buddy E. Kimsey, CPA of the firm of Kersey, Arnett & Kirksey, Certified Public Accountants, Wedgewood Office, 4395 N. Ocoee, Cleveland, Tennessee, 37312; Mike Mudry, Fellow in the Society of Actuaries, Hay Huggins & Co., 229 South 18th Street, Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Gary S. Nash, attorney, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, L.L.P., 1700 Pacific Avenue, Suite 4100, Dallas, Texas 75201; and Michael E. Callaway, attorney, 140 Ocoee St., NE, Cleveland, Tennessee 37364-1169.

Consultants provided an analysis of the possible impact on the overall financial statements of the church if the pension funds were completely separated from the church financial statements. Consultants provided the following recommendation:

It is imperative to separate the pension funds (especially those of the Ministers’ Retirement Fund) from the overall church operating assets, both to provide adequate protection of the assets of the funds, and to provide better operating information through the financial statements of the church.

IV. WALL OF SEPARATION

The committee received many requests expressing a great desire and need to “build a wall” to protect the pension assets from the claims of creditors of the church. The study made diligent inquiries of other mainline religious denominations and churches as to their policies and practices concerning the carrying out of the fiduciary responsibilities, and for the protection of pension and benefit funds from the claims of church creditors. Reports were received of multimillion dollar settlements and judgments against major church bodies.

The appointed committee met numerous times during the years 1993-94 and reported their findings and submitted recommendations to the International Executive Council recognizing the litigious society and climate in which the Church of God seeks to carry out its mission and ministries. The Committee on Separation of Pension Funds met with the International Executive Committee on December 7, 1993, to seek their input and ideas on preliminary findings and recommendations being considered.

V. COMMITTEE REPORT

Following extensive study, the appointed committee submitted their findings and recommendations to the International Executive Council in January 1994, for action which would strengthen the retirement income security of the ministry and staffs of the Church of God, provide a firm foundation for growth, management, and administration of the church's benefits programs, and receive wide support from church constituents.

A. The Report included some of the following findings:

1. The church desires and intends to separate, safeguard and shield the funds dedicated and intended to provide retirement income security and welfare benefits under the church's benefit plans from the claims of creditors of the church.
2. Serving as the 24-member board of trustees for the management and administration of the pension and benefits plan, the International Executive Council is hindered in time, experiential expertise, and continuity of management necessary for addressing the special and complex operational issues of the benefit plans.
3. The church needs to reengineer its benefit, management, and administration structure to meet the needs of a fast growing church and to lay a new foundation in order to “build the wall” that will both protect the benefits funds and provide an effective management system.
4. The creation of a controlled affiliate church benefits board affords the opportunities to call on persons gifted in administration, money management, leadership, and other qualities for service in the trusteeship areas of the benefits program.

B. The Report made the following recommendations:

1. That the International Executive Council approve the incorporation of a nonprofit, controlled affiliate, church benefits board with trust powers, as in the form of articles of incorporation, and this board shall be the trustee of the Ministers' Retirement Plan and such other plans as the International Executive Council may determine.

2. That the Executive Committee, as part of its duties and authority, shall timely appoint the trustees from the membership of our local churches to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) Benefits Board, Inc., in accordance with its articles of incorporation and by-laws, taking care to appoint gifted lay leaders to at least four of the eight trustee positions.

VI. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACTION

During the January 18-21, 1994, meeting of the Church of God International Executive Council, the final report from the Committee On Separation of Pension Funds was presented.

The International Executive Council serving as the trustees for the Ministers' Retirement Plan duly authorized the incorporation of the Church of God Benefits Board, Inc., and requested the International Executive Committee to proceed promptly to search for qualified and capable candidates for trustee service and identify the persons to be appointed as the members of the initial Board of Trustees of the Church of God Benefits Board, Inc., consistent with the terms and classifications of the proposed articles of incorporation.

VII. BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND ELECTED OFFICERS

The members of the board of trustees are appointed by the Church of God International Executive Committee.

The president and chief executive officer, secretary, chairman, and vice chairman of the board are elected by the board of trustees.

The president and chief executive officer of the Church of God Benefits Board, Inc., directs the benefits programs of the Church of God.

VIII. PURPOSE

The purpose of the corporation is to act as the trustee of the plans and funds collected through the various retirement and benefits plans maintained by the corporation for ministers, missionaries, evangelists, employees, and other functionaries and their beneficiaries of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) and such organizations controlled by or affiliated with the Church of God.

IX. PRINCIPAL FUNCTION

The corporation's principal function is the administration and funding of plans and programs for the provision of retirement benefits and welfare benefits for the ministers, missionaries, evangelists, employees, and other functionaries (and their widows, orphans or other beneficiaries) of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, U.S.A.) and such organizations controlled by or affiliated with the Church of God.

For more information, contact President/CEO, Church of God Benefits Board, Inc., P.O. Box 4608, Cleveland, TN 37320-4608. Phone: (423) 478-7131, or Fax: (423) 478-7889.

S72. AGED MINISTERS' PENSIONING PLAN

(41st A., 1946, pp. 27-29)

*[Enrollments in the Aged Ministers' Pensioning Plan ceased as of December 31, 1982. Applications for benefits from this plan ceased as of August 31, 1992. As of that date, the contributions of eligible ministers enrolled in the plan, who had not as yet applied for a pension, were either (1) applied toward the purchase of a guaranteed annuity for the minister; or (2) rolled over into the Church of God Ministers' Retirement Plan in the name of the minister. For a more detailed description of this plan, see the Supplement of the 1992 **Minutes** of the International General Assembly, S65.]*

Based upon actuarial studies, the Aged Ministers' Pension Fund, Disabled Ministers' Pension Fund, and the Ministers Widows' Fund shall be adjusted by the International Executive Council according to the needs of the funds (74th A., 2012).

S73. INSURANCE

I. MINISTERIAL INSURANCE

Life Insurance-General

1. Any minister or member may carry insurance with any regular life insurance company.
2. Should anyone unite with the church who has insurance with a fraternal or secret order, he may continue his insurance with said order, provided he does not attend their secret meetings (35th A., 1940, pp. 31, 32).

Group Life

On August 30, 1928, the Church of God provided a group life insurance policy for its ministers.

Dividends

All dividends from the ministerial group insurance shall be paid to the general church treasury and credited to the general tithe fund (32nd A., 1937, p. 35; 35th A., 1940, p. 31; 46th A., 1958 p. 26).

II. PERSONNEL INSURANCE

Employees of the Church of God working in the various state offices shall be permitted to secure group life insurance, provided they pay the full premium at the prevailing rate (50th A., 1964, p. 66).

CHURCH OF GOD HISTORY REVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction

1. The Church of God began in the _____ of Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia. *Appalachian Mountains*
2. The founders of the Church of God preached a solid _____ message. *Holiness*
3. _____ was the term most often used to describe the Church of God in its early days. *Movement*
4. The existence of false teachings in the early days of Pentecostalism made the leaders of the church understand the need for the development of _____. *educational institutions*
5. The church is both a _____ and a _____. *human organization;
divine organism*
6. The basic reason for having polity and for following parliamentary procedure is to accomplish _____ and what the church ought not to do. *what the church ought to do*
7. Any member of the Church of God who is _____ years of age and above who is present at the General Assembly is able to speak at the Assembly. *16*
8. Since the Church of God has a _____ form of government, members do not represent local churches but themselves. *centralized*
9. _____ is the official history of the Church of God. *Like a Mighty Army*
10. The Church of God had its beginning in _____. *1886*
11. On August 19, 1886, seven people covenanted with _____ and his son, _____, to find the spiritual life lacking in their churches. *Richard Spurling;
R.G. Spurling Jr.*
12. The Church of God was first called the _____. *Christian Union*
13. In 1896, a revival occurred at _____ near Camp Creek in Cherokee, North Carolina, that emphasized sanctification. *Shearer Schoolhouse*
14. _____ was a significant layman in the early days of the Church of God. *W.F. Bryant*

15. The first General Assembly was held on January 26, 27, _____ at the home of J.C. Murphy in _____. *1906; North Carolina*
16. The name "Church of God" was adopted in the _____ General Assembly. *second*
17. At the second General Assembly, the Assembly instituted a new order of ministry—_____. *"evangelist"*
18. The first general overseer of the Church of God was _____. *A.J. Tomlinson*
19. The *Church of God Evangel* was first published as the *Evening Light* and *Church of God Evangel* in _____. *1910*
20. Recognizing education as an important tool for fulfilling the Great Commission, the _____ was opened on January 1, 1918. *Bible Training School*
21. _____ and _____ Barr returned to their native Bahamas, as the first Church of God missionaries in 1909. *Edmund, Rebecca*
22. _____ was elected as the second general overseer in the Church of God in 1923. *F.J. Lee*
23. In 1924, the Assembly established the office of _____, and his responsibility was to serve as clerk of the Assemblies. *general secretary*
24. At the General Assembly in 1926, three standing boards were created: _____. *Missions Board; Board of Education, and the Publishing Committee*
25. In 1929, the _____, composed of all ordained ministers, was established to convene prior to the Assembly. *Bishops Council*
26. The Bible Training School was renamed _____ in honor of F.J. Lee in 1947. *Lee College*
27. In 1948, the _____ was adopted. *Declaration of Faith*
28. The Assembly approved _____ to be licensed to preach in 1909. *women*

CHURCH OF GOD POLITY REVIEW QUESTIONS

Review questions are based on the *Book of Discipline, Church Order and Governance of the 73rd International General Assembly*.

1. The Church of God stands for the _____ rightly divided. *whole Bible*
2. The _____ is the only rule for government and discipline in the Church of God. *New Testament*
3. The _____ remains the Church of God's mandate from Christ. *Great Commission*
4. The mission of the Church of God is to communicate the power of Jesus Christ in the _____ of Pentecost. *Spirit and power*
5. The Church of God is a _____ body. *judicial*
6. A local church _____ withdraw from the International General Assembly. *cannot*
7. The official name of the church is _____. *Church of God*
8. The membership of the Church of God is composed of Christians who have accepted the _____ of the Church of God. *teachings, doctrines, and government*
9. The International _____ is composed of all members and ministers of the Church of God 16 years of age and above. *General Assembly*
10. The purpose of the International General Assembly is to advance the _____ of the Church of God. *mission, vision, and commitments*
11. The International General Assembly meets _____. *biennially*
12. _____ serves as the official guide for the business of the International General Assembly. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*

13. The International General Assembly elects the _____.
general overseer, the assistant general overseers, the secretary general, the director of Youth and Discipleship, the assistant director of Youth and Discipleship, the director of World Missions, and assistant director of World Missions
14. The officers of the International General Assembly consist of the _____ and a secretary.
moderator
15. The _____ serves the International General Assembly as secretary.
secretary general
16. The International General Council is composed of all _____ of the Church of God.
ordained bishops
17. The International _____ shall elect the Council of Eighteen.
General Council
18. The general overseer, his assistants, the secretary-general, and _____ shall constitute the International Executive Council.
Council of Eighteen
19. Standing Boards are appointed by the _____.
International Executive Committee
20. The International General Assembly grants to its _____ the same voice that it affords all credentialed ministers in the International General Assembly.
laity
21. _____ are approved to sit in the International General Council.
Ordained ministers, exhorters, and laity
22. The International General Council meets _____ to consider recommendations that are to be presented to the International General Assembly.
biennially
23. The largest group that comprises the International Executive Council is _____.
pastors
24. A member of the Council of Eighteen is eligible to succeed himself for _____ term(s).
one

25. The distribution of tithes sent to the International Offices is the responsibility of the _____.
_____.
26. State and provincial overseers are appointed by the _____.
27. After an International Executive Committee member has served eight years, he is ineligible to serve in that role for _____ year(s).
28. The general overseer will be elected for a _____-year term.
29. The assistant general overseers are elected for a _____ - year term.
30. Furnishing the International General Assembly with financial reports is a primary responsibility of the _____.
31. The director of Youth and Discipleship will be able to succeed himself _____ term.
32. The _____ develops and sets forth the policy of the World Missions ministry and its operation.
33. The _____ determines the eligibility of prospective missionaries.
34. The _____ provides diverse involvement in order to support an international perspective in fulfilling the mission of the Church of God.
35. The _____ advises the International Executive Committee on issues of international concern.
36. The _____ recommends prospective missionaries to the director of World Missions.
37. A qualification of a _____ is his ability to oversee people as well as programs.
38. As part of his accountability, a _____ is to be a model by demonstrative, Christlike attributes in his lifestyle and administration.
- general overseer and the International Executive Council*
- International Executive Committee*
- two*
- four*
- four*
- secretary general*
- one*
- World Missions Board*
- World Missions Board*
- International Council*
- International Council*
- assistant director of World Missions*
- state overseer*
- state overseer*

39. The state overseer's term of office shall be for _____ years. *two*
40. The tenure of offices for the state overseer is for a maximum of _____ years in nonmission states. *twelve*
41. The state overseer appoints _____ when necessary. *district overseers, pastors, and local church officers*
42. The state overseer approves the selection, purchase, and construction of all church, parsonage, or Sunday school properties, together with the respective _____. *district overseer*
43. Before launching large financial projects, the state overseer must have the approval of the _____. *International Executive Committee*
44. The state overseer, with the _____, may authorize exhorters to pastor, baptize, and receive members into the church, when such authority is necessary. *district overseer*
45. Except in national, territorial, provincial, or mission states, all state councilmen must be _____. *ordained bishops*
46. With the state overseer, the _____ has supervision of the state missions money, surplus tithes, state parsonage, campground, and all other funds received and disbursed by the state treasury. *State Council*
47. Each state will have a _____. *State Board of Ministerial Development, State Youth and Discipleship Board, State World Missions Board, and a State Music Board*
48. The _____ are appointed biennially by the state overseer. *State Board of Ministerial Development, State World Missions Board, and State Music Board*
49. The State Board of Ministerial Development is appointed by the state overseer and approved by the _____. *State Council*
50. The _____ helps stimulate and nurture continuing education programs at all levels. *State Board of Ministerial Development*

51. The _____ is elected by the ministers of the state. *State Youth and Discipleship Board*
52. The State Youth and Discipleship director is nominated by the _____. *state overseer*
53. The State Youth and Discipleship director is elected by the _____. *State Council*
54. The state overseer will submit to the _____ the names of nominees for State Evangelism and Missions director. *State Council*
55. The State Evangelism and Missions director's term of office is two years, with a maximum of _____ consecutive years in a nonmission state. *eight*
56. Evangelistic associations or other organizations of this type cannot be organized in the Church of God without the express approval of the _____. *International Executive Council*
57. The board and board chairman of the State World Missions Board shall be appointed _____ by the state overseer. *biennially*
58. Each district is under the care and supervision of a _____, who is appointed by the state overseer. *district overseer*
59. The district overseer sees that a (an) _____ is put forth in his district during the year. *evangelistic thrust*
60. The _____, with the district overseer, may appoint an assistant to serve as the Youth and Discipleship director for the district. *State Youth and Discipleship director*
61. The _____ serves as the Church of God state Women's Ministries president. *wife of the state overseer*
62. The Church of God has a _____ form of government. *centralized*
63. The _____, the highest authority of the Church of God, governs the ownership of all church property. *International General Assembly*
64. The International General Assembly governs the operation of the Church of God at the _____ levels. *International, national, state/territorial, district, and local*

65. A _____ holds title to, manages, and controls, at the direction of the local church, all real estate owned by the local congregation. *local Board of Trustees*
66. The Church of God affirms the scriptural pattern of _____ and deacons. *elders*
67. A member's name should remain on the membership roll until an _____ for transfer is received. *official request*
68. A request for transfer of membership should be granted within _____, providing no charges are pending. *two weeks*
69. When making formal charges against a member is necessary, the charges are to be given to the member not less than _____ prior to the time and place of the meeting. *three days*
70. A _____ is a business meeting for the purpose of transacting any business necessary for the operation of the church. *church conference*
71. No _____ has the right to hold a conference without permission from the district overseer. *pastor*
72. No conference will be held in a district except under the direction of the _____. *district overseer*
73. The state and district overseers should see that at least _____ conference(s) is/are conducted in each local church. *one*
74. The regular conference consists of the _____. *membership*
75. The purpose of a church conference is to inform the church of its _____. *financial status*
76. A regular conference should be announced at least _____ days before it occurs. *ten*
77. A _____ takes care of business arising between regular conferences. *called conference*

78. The usual order of business in a conference includes _____.
financial reports of various departments of the church; other reports of committees, and so forth; transfer of membership, if any; unfinished business, if any; and new business
79. The authority to appoint pastors is placed in the _____.
state overseer
80. When a pastor desires a pastoral change, he/she will submit a letter of request to the _____.
state overseer
81. Laity may contact the _____ about local church issues after they have talked with their pastor.
district overseer
82. Assistant pastors are subject to the approval and appointment of the _____.
state overseer
83. A local church can determine if it is practical to have a _____.
Church and Pastor's Council
84. The Church and Pastor's Council is to be elected _____ by ballot.
biennially
85. The _____ serves as the chairman of the Church and Pastor's Council.
pastor
86. A Church and Pastor's Council meeting can be called only with the permission of the _____.
pastor, district overseer, or state overseer
87. The Church and Pastor's Council assists the pastor in the _____ area(s) of the church.
spiritual, financial, and physical
88. All major local church disbursements must be approved by the church in _____.
conference
89. A church treasurer will be appointed by the _____ and confirmed by the Council and/or body.
pastor
90. Each local church is to provide the treasurer with a copy of the _____ of the International General Assembly.
Minutes
91. The Finance Committee consists of the treasurer and _____ other members.
two

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| 92. A local church that owns any property will appoint a ____. | Local Board of Trustees |
| 93. Before approving a building project, a ____ or his designee will determine if the design and financial programs have been approved by proper authorities. | state overseer |
| 94. No church will implement a ____ without permission from the state overseer. | Christian day school |
| 95. The local church Women's Ministries committee will consist of ____. | president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer |
| 96. The chairman of the local church Women's Ministries is the ____. | pastor |
| 97. All applicants for the ministry must have ____. | the baptism of the Holy Spirit |
| 98. The applicant for ordination as bishop must meet the biblical requirements found in ____. | 1 Timothy 3:1-7 |
| 99. An applicant for ordination as bishop may be ordained when he is twenty-five years of age, provided he has had at least ____ years of active ministry. (If he has had verifiable active ministerial experience, is recommended by the applicant's administrative bishop, and is approved by the Executive Council, the number of years of active ministry may be waived.) | eight |
| 100. When an exhorter is serving as pastor and he meets the requirements of the civil laws, he/she may officiate ____. | weddings |