

Zion Assembly Church of God

11th Annual General Assembly Minutes

September 9-14, 2014
Bridgewater Place
Knoxville, Tennessee

Theme:
“Pressing Toward The Mark”



A Biblical Explanation of the . . .

General Assembly

The General Assembly is an extraordinary event because 1) it represents the universal [or catholic] expression of the church in worship, fellowship, and decision-making, and 2) it is the highest tribunal of authority on earth under Christ in matters of faith and spiritual government.

In the General Assembly the ministers and members meet together with God in a decision-making capacity in order to determine the will of God, to seek His light and guidance for the future course of the church, and to commit themselves to live and work by the resolutions adopted by Assembly. The Assembly represents the one time of the year that the ministers and members gather together in His name from all over the world to bind and loose in the earth what God has bound and loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19). They consecrate themselves to understand the will of God---to find the perfect mind of Christ. This is why in Jacob's words the church is a *dreadful place* (Genesis 28:16, 17): for it is at this special time that the church acts in its official capacity as God's *ekklesia*, having been ordained and authorized by Christ to do so (Matthew 16:19; 18:17; Mark 13:34; Luke 19:13; John 20:23; Acts 1:13-21; 6:1-6; 15:1-29). Here in this special meeting, the church reasons together with God (Isaiah 1:18; Acts 15:6-19, 28), and the ministers and members look judiciously into the Holy Scriptures (Acts 15:15-18 and compare with Amos 9:11, 12) seeking at the same time for the Spirit's illumination until an understanding is reached with God and one another on what is precisely the will of God (vv. 28-29). Then, having come to this understanding, all agree to "walk by the same rule" and "mind the same thing" (Philippians 3:16), that is, they bind ourselves to live and walk as one body by the decisions agreed upon in this sacred meeting.

Because the Bible is the supreme objective authority of the church, the General Assembly is "a judicial body only," that is, all decisions in regard to faith and government that are binding on the ministers and members must be shown to be in accord with the teachings of Christ and the apostles revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

The biblical model for the General Assembly and church's judicious process is found in Acts 15:1-29 in which the *apostles and elders* gathered together with the *whole church* (vv. 12, 22, 28) to deliberate together with the Spirit until an understanding of the will of God was determined. Thus it is said that the decisions made in the Jerusalem council *seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us* (v. 28). Then on this basis, they all agreed to live by the *decrees* [dogmas] *for to keep* (16:4). Thus it is said also, *And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily* (v. 5).

An underlying principle upon which the government of the church is established is corporate counsel based on the model in Acts 15. The church goes forward and operates by the counsel of the General Assembly which is made up of ministers and members from around the world, that is, by all of whom Providence has blessed to attend and participate. The wise man wrote, *Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety* (Proverbs 11:14). And again, *Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established* (15:22).

When Rehoboam was made king in the Old Testament theocracy, it is said that *all Israel* came to Shechem to make him king (1 Kings 12:1). Moreover, it is emphasized that Rehoboam failed because he did not heed the counsel of the *elders and the people* in making decisions (vv. 6-15), but rather heeded the select counsel of a group of *young men that were grown up with him* (vv. 8-10), signifying that Rehoboam was partial in his

decision-making and succumbed to the opinion of the young men who actually opposed the will of God. Indeed, those young men, Rehoboam's former peers, typically were full of themselves, arrogant, boastful, and harsh in their opinions (vv. 10-14).

It will be noticed in the narrative regarding the house of God under Rehoboam that ultimately the will of God is all that really matters, and that the will of God is best determined by the deliberations and discerning gifts of the people who consecrate themselves to the Lord. Ultimately, however, God always has His way, sometimes in spite of the leaders and the people. *Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord* (v. 15; see also v. 24). Tragically, Rehoboam's actions caused the house of God to divide (vv. 16-20), but even this division was determined in the divine counsel and prosecuted according to the will of God. See the prophet Ahijah's prophecy (1 Kings 11:29-39). Thus God's fixed purpose in and through David was fulfilled in Christ through the southern kingdom of Judah. Nothing could prevent that!

The church under the spirit and terms of the New Covenant operates as *the habitation of God through the Spirit* (Ephesians 2:21). The ministers and members form the temple of God and are unified through the indwelling power and wisdom of the Spirit. This is the key to theocratic government--the indwelling graces and gifts of the Spirit being allowed to prevail in the church. For the Spirit creates a spiritual dynamic within the church that unites the ministers and members together in one body of Christ. The 120 on the day of Pentecost--before the Spirit had been poured out--were in *one accord* (Acts 2:1) because they had been *continually in the temple praising and blessing God* (Luke 24:53). Thus the essential key to the unity and power of the church is sanctification and remaining in a consecrated state in Christ. When everyone's ego is crucified [and is kept crucified!], then Christ rules supreme and the kingdom of God prevails! Thus Christ says in His prayer to the Father, *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth . . . That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in you, that they may be one in us . . . And the glory which you gave me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one* (John 17:17-23).

It is said following the day of Pentecost that *the multitude of them who believed were of one heart and of one soul* (Acts 4:32) and *great grace was upon them all* (v. 33). Likewise, the key to God's glorious government in this last day's Zion depends on our willingness to allow the Spirit to hold sway over us and prevail among us. The apostle Paul understood this divine principle and encouraged the church in the New Testament to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* (Ephesians 4:1-3). He went on to say, *[For] there is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in the one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through you all, and in you all*⁷ (vv. 4-6).

We see then that it is imperative that we cultivate the graces of Christ within us and labor in prayer to create a heavenly atmosphere in the place where we meet to deliberate and act for God. The power fell on the day of Pentecost because they were together in accord in one place. And they succeeded and grew because they were of one heart and one soul and great grace was upon them all.

Should we expect God's blessings to fall on this last day's Zion on the basis of anything less than He required of the New Testament church? Surely not. It is an ancient and timeless principle that cannot be transgressed if we expect the blessings and favor of God to be upon this latter day house: *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! . . . It is like the precious ointment upon the head . . . As the dew . . . that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing* (Psalm 133:1-3).

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Wade H. Phillips
Presiding Bishop

Welcome “Delegates”... and Friends...

From my perspective this is perhaps the most important Assembly that we have held since the first one in September 2004.

In this Assembly we will celebrate the remarkable success and increases of our first ten years for which we give God all the glory! But we must ask ourselves at this point, Where do we go from here?

The program directors and speakers will attempt to answer these questions in this Assembly in conjunction with the theme, “**Pressing Toward the Mark.**” Certainly we have accomplished a great deal since 2004, but there is far more to be done; and it will take great wisdom and much love to accomplish the mission that Christ has given to His church. May the Lord help us to hear “What the Spirit is say to the churches.”

Join with us in prayerful expectations that the Lord will anoint everyone on the program and that He will come into our midst in a special way and manifest His glory.

*Come, Holy Spirit, move on me,
By your anointing, set me free
Pour out new wine,
On this thirsty heart of mine.
Come, Holy spirit, move on me.*

**Assembly Sites
2004-2014**



**Ramada Inn & Convention Center
Pigeon Forge, TN**



Site of 2004 Assembly

**United Christian Church
Cleveland, TN**



**Site of 2005-2010 & 2013
Assemblies**

**T. L. Lowery Center
Cleveland, TN**



Site of 2011 Assembly

**Living Word Church
Cleveland, TN**



Site of 2012 Assembly

Knoxville, TN



Site of 2014 Assembly

Administration

Presiding Bishop/ Moderator.....Wade H. Phillips

Superintendent of Operations..... E. A. McDonald

Chief Clerk.....Marie Crook

Julia Massey, Sandra Moore, Brenda Reitler, Rita Goodrum, Shirley Kimble,
Mindy Newberry, Sandy Morris, Molly Hayward, Donna Ponders

Chief Usher.....Tod Deakle

Eddie Davis, Vernon Johnson, Milford Kimble, Cecil Ponders,
Bill Reid, Robert Ramirez, Lynn Jones, Daren Childers, Jerry
Nichols, Dave Ashley, Jim Hayward, Matthew McDonald. J. L. Green

Chief Registrar.....Donna Ponders

Shelby Erwin, Ally Thompson, Mandy Thompson, Chloe Brooks
Elizabeth McDonald, Heather Melton, Ashley Reitler, Rachel McDonald,
Shelia Deakle

Assembly Business Committee

ChairmanJoseph Steele
Zachary Snyder
L. W. Carter
E. A. McDonald
Ray Dickson
Scott Neill
Miguel Garcia Sr.

Video/Internet Streaming.....Scott Neill, Tanner Herring

Ashley Neill

Sound Equipment.....Doug Powers

Photography.....Julie Steele,
Regina Brooks

Projection Director.....Jerry Ponders

Stage Manager.....Ricky Graves

Music.....Zachary Snyder

Maintenance/Props.....Jim Orange

Greetings!



E.A. McDonald
Superintendent of Operations

“Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness” (Psalm 30:4). Once again it is time to come together and let the church be the church, and let God’s people rejoice. It is time to “sing unto the Lord a new song of praise and hope.” We extend a hearty welcome to everyone and encourage you to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. We desire that this General Assembly be uplifting to each one and to provoke a deeper dedication to Christ and His church.

For the first time since our First General Assembly we are having our Annual meeting away from Cleveland. We appreciate Bridgewater Place for providing this facility which has been renovated recently. Please help us express our appreciation to Bridgewater by properly following the instructions given in this Assembly. Those needing directions to the hotels should ask the ushers for a copy of the map which has been prepared for you. The Assembly site is on I-40 exit 379. Most of the hotels and restaurants are located on I-40 exit 378.

The following instructions are given to help make your attendance to the General Assembly a memorable and enjoyable experience in the Word and Spirit. Personnel have been appointed to address any problem that may arise during this Assembly. We request that everyone use the **main auditorium entrance** and **that no one enter into the office area unless absolutely necessary**. Please do not bring drink or food into the Auditorium. If you should need assistance while you are here, please consult with the authorized persons (listed below) to make any adjustment or change in the facilities or equipment. Ushers will be stationed at each aisle entrance for your convenience. If you encounter a problem of any kind please report it to one of the ushers.

Those needing to use special equipment during the Assembly [risers, stage props, sound tracks, power point, projectors, microphones, instrument hook ups, etc.] should notify the following persons upon your arrival at the Assembly. **Stage Manager, Clyde Davis; audio by ministry center; projection director, Power Point, Kari Snyder; video and internet, Scott Neill; music and sound equipment Zachary Snyder.**

Sound Tracks: CDs should be given to the Sound Engineer before the beginning of the session in which you will need the track.

Parking: Please observe all parking signs throughout the city such as: parking for handicapped, permit only, and personalized parking spaces.. Cars parked in unauthorized areas may be towed at the owner’s expense. Please observe also all parking instructions that will be announced during the Assembly.

Nursery: Nursery facilities are provided for your convenience, please look for directions to the Nursery posted as you enter the auditorium.

Children’s Ministry: Children’s worship time is listed in the Assembly Program. Directions to the Children’s Ministry room will be posted.

Videos: Videos and cassettes will be made available for purchase. God bless you, and may you have a joyful time in the Lord this week.

Pre-Assembly Programs

Assembly Business Committee Monday, September 8, 2014

The Assembly Business Committee will meet at beginning at 6:00 p.m. to finalize its report to present to the 10th Annual General Assembly. The Doctrine Committee will meet with this committee at this time in regard to its work on the *Abstract of Faith*. Anyone who has relevant questions or presentations may do so at this time. Personal interviews with the Committees should be arranged through the chairmen.

Ministers' Meeting Tuesday, September 9, 2014

Beginning at 9:30 a.m. the annual ministers' conference will convene in the Assembly auditorium at Bridgewater Place. All ministers are encouraged to attend and participate including mission directors. The purpose of the meeting is to promote unity and understanding through prayer and discussion. The Assembly Business Committee's report will be read and discussed. Also the floor will be open to discuss all relevant issues that might need clarification.

Ministers' and Companions' Luncheon (Immediately Following Ministers' Conference) 12:15 p.m.

All ministers and their companions are honored guests at the ministers' luncheon. This is sponsored by the International Offices. The luncheon will be held on the Assembly site at Bridgewater Place. Special singing: Todd & Karen Newberry, Brenda Whitlock. Guest speaker: Bishop . Comments and special presentations by the First Lady. Dress code: most of the men prefer to wear suit and tie for this occasion.

Assembly Program

Tuesday

6:30 p.m. “O Sing unto the Lord . . . For the
Lord is great, and greatly to be praised”
---Cheryl McDonald, TN

Welcome!--- Scott & Vicki Neill, SC

Official Opening of the Assembly

Multi-lingual Concert of Prayer led by representatives
from Africa, Central America, North America,
Southeast Asia, South America

Stirring Exhortations on Assembly Theme (six minutes each):

“Press!”-----Pam Jones, IN

“Toward!”-----Corey Hall, MS

“The Mark!”--Jorge Estroz, Argentina

Message---*“Who will Reach the Mark?”*

---Ron Massey, WV

Special Songs---Zachary and Kari Snyder, IN
Assembly Expense Offering

Message—*“Pressing . . . in the Holy Ghost”*

(Luke 4:14; Acts 1:8)

---Byron Harris, TN

Altar Service

Wednesday

9:00 a.m.

Pressing in Praise!---Nicole Pounders & Alicia Harris, MS

Special Songs---Everett Cox, GA

Message---*“Pressing . . . in Proper Order and Discipline”*

(Acts 16:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Hebrews 13:7, 17)

---Miguel Garcia, Sr., CA

International Leaders' Reports:

-----Presiding Bishop

-----Assistant Presiding Bishop

-----Field Secretary

-----Field Secretary

-----Field Secretary

-----World Mission Director

-----US Missions & New Fields Director

-----Ladies Ministries Director

-----School of Ministry Director

-----Shepherding Ministries Director

-----Communications/Media Ministries Director

-----Youth Director/Camp Coordinator

-----Children's Ministries Director

-----Sunday School Director

-----*Voice of Zion/SYNC* Booster

General Treasurer's Report

---Lunch Break---

[**Note:** *Kidz' Konvention* schedule: Wednesday 7:00-8:00 p.m.;
Thursday 1:30-3:30, 6:00-8:00; Friday; 7:00-8:30 p.m.;
Saturday: 8:45-10:00 a.m. 2:30--4:00; 7:00-8:30 p.m.
A special Children's Program is scheduled for Sunday
morning in the main auditorium]

2:00 p.m. Musical Prelude

Reports from Around the World

Note: Overseers, have your region organized and ready to march on time. Turn in your written reports to the Presiding Bishop as you leave the stage.

2:10 United States

Note: The eight regions in the United States will report at designated intervals during the Assembly week.

2:15 East Africa

Kenya---Joshua Amara, national overseer

Sudan---Elijah Wafula, national overseer

Ethiopia---Geremew Eshete Esuendele, national overseer

Uganda---Maurice Ogada, national overseer

2:30 West Africa

Nigeria---Yomi Adekunle, national overseer

Ghana---David Dordah, national overseer

Cameroon---Eyong Eric Eyong, national overseer

Togo, Benin, Ivory Coast, Liberia---Amos Agbonifo,
field secretary

2:45 Central Africa

Malawi, Mozambique---Maliele Dzuwa, national overseer

Zimbabwe, Zambia---David Gomba, mission representative

Tanzania, Burundi, DRC (Congo)---Edward Agar, national
overseer

2:55 United Kingdom

England---Joshua Amara, national overseer

3:00 **Central America**

Nicaragua---Freddy Garcia, national overseer

Guatemala---Ricardo Valenzuela, national overseer

3:15 **Caribbean**

Dominican Republic---Sandraud Pierre, national overseer

Haiti---Santenniel Hostellus, national overseer

3:30 **Mexico**

Danny Ramirez, national overseer

3:40 **South America**

Peru---Yum V Munoz Quispe, national overseer

Chile---Javier Diaz Perez, national overseer

Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay---George Estroz,
national overseer

3:55 **Southeast Asia**

Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar (Burma),

Bangladesh---Boonyong Bureenok, national overseer

Pakistan----report by Presiding Bishop

India Mid-East---Talari Padma Rao, provincial overseer

India Central---John Babu Ganta, provincial overseer

India South---V. Binoy Joseph, provincial overseer

4:20 **Far East**

Philippines/Guam

Domingo Resurreccion, national overseer

---Supper Break---

Wednesday Evening

Note: *Kidz' Convention* 7:00-8:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m. Worship Him!---Kari Snyder, IN

Mid-Central Region March & Report

(Kentucky, Indiana)

---Ricky Graves, overseer

Message—“*Pressing . . . in the Power of His Light*”

(Isaiah 60:3; Matthew 5:14-16)

---Joseph Steele, GA

Special Singing---Todd & Karen Newberry

Taylor's church

Assembly Expense Offering

United States' Missions & New Fields

“*Pressing . . . to Fulfill the Mission
in the United States*”

---Program directed by L. W. Carter

Thursday

Note: *Kidz' Convention today 1:30-3:30, 6:00-8.00 p.m.*

9:00 a.m. **Mid-East Region March & Report**

(West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland)

---L. W. Carter, overseer

Camp Report and Program—Miguel Garcia, Jr.,

International Coordinator

Sunday School Program

—Donna Pounders, director

Special Songs---Juan Lopez, CA; Becky Land, SC

Message---“*Pressing . . . in All Wisdom*” (Colossians 1:28)

---Joel Brooks, MS

—Lunch Break---

1:30 p.m. **Tennessee State March & Report**

---Rocky Dalton, overseer

Message—“*Pressing . . . in Faith with a Holy Determination*”

(Matthew 11:12; Hebrews 11:33;)

---Doug Powers, VA

Special Songs—Dewey Gibson, VA; Charles Shelton, MS

In Memory . . .

[**Note:** *Ministers and their companions should be seated near the rostrum in preparation for the ordination service*]

Ordination Service

Thursday Evening

6:00 p.m. **South-Central Region March & Report**
(Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana)
---Joel Brooks, Overseer

Special Songs—Gina Brooks, MS, WV; Becky Land, SC

School of Ministry Program

---Wade H. Phillips

Message: “*Pressing ...in the Knowledge of the Son of God*”

(Ephesians 4:13)

---Todd McDonald

“Celebrating Ten Years of Progress” ---Presiding Bishop

Assembly Expense Offering

Praise Reports—Edward Agar, Congo; Amos Agbonifo, Liberia
Boone Bureenok, Bangladesh

Special Songs—Jim Melton, WV; Zach and Kari Snyder, IN

Healing Message & Prayer Service

---Kim Erwin, AL

Friday

[**Note:** *Front three rows of seating are reserved for Youth Program*]

9:00 a.m. **South Atlantic Region March & Report**

(North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida)

---Scott Neill, Overseer

Special Songs---McDonald Family, TN; Andy Davis, SC

Message: “**Pressing...Together as One Body**”

1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 3:16,17)

---Zachary Snyder, IN

Voice of Zion Boost—Glenda Major, CA

[**Attention!** *All youth [12-35] meet now in the Corridor for Youth March*]

Special Songs--- “The Impossibles,” SC; Joy Bryant, SC

Youth Program—Miguel Garcia Jr., director

—Afternoon Break—

Attention: *The annual SYNC luncheon will be held in the Banquet Room at 12:15 p.m. Glenda Major & Alice Jones in charge. All SYNC members and invited guests are encouraged to attend.*

Friday Evening

6:15 p.m. **Mid-West and Southwest Regions March & Report**
(Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Utah, Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma)

---Joseph Steele, overseer

Special Songs---The Four Pops

Senior Ambassadors' Program—William F. Jones, VA
“Pressing . . . in Hope”

Special Songs---Billy Summerlin, MS; Krista Flowers, SC

Joshua, David, Elijah

Communications & Media Ministries Program

---Scott Neill, minister

“And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them. And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore am I sent.”

---Luke 4:42, 43

Saturday

Note: *Kidz Convention* today 8:45-10:00 a.m.,
2:30-4:00. 7:00-8:30 p.m.

8:15 a.m. Morning Prayer Service---Dave Ashley, WV in charge

8:45 Praise Him!---Nicole & Alicia

Special Songs---Michael George, SC; Doug Powers, VA

Message---*“Pressing . . . the Truth in Love”*

(Ephesians 4:15; I Corinthians 13:6,8)

---Tom Brown, WV

---Assembly Choir---

Recognition of Special Guests

Special Singing---Everett Cox, GA; Brenda Whitlock, MS

Presiding Bishop’s Annual Address

---Lunch Break---

2:30 p.m. Worship Him!---Michael George, SC

Special Singing---Cliff & Becky Kelton, MS;

Assembly Business Committee Report

---Supper Break---

Saturday Evening

7:00 p.m. Pacific Coast South Region March & Report
(California, Nevada)

---Miguel Garcia, Sr., overseer

Special Songs---West Mobile Ladies Choir

Message---*“Pressing...in all Gentleness”*

(1 Corinthians 4:21; 2 Corinthians 10:1; Ephesians 4:2)

---Bruce Sullivan, SC

Assembly Expense Offering

Special Singing---Yomi Adekunle, Nigeria; Miguel Garcia, Sr.

World Mission Program

---E. A. McDonald Jr., director

“Pressing . . . into All Nations”

(Genesis 18:17-18)

--- Parade of Nations---

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee . . . Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.”

---Isaiah 49: 15, 18

Sunday

8:45 a.m. Sunday School Lesson---Gavan McDonald, SC

Pacific Coast March & Report

(California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington)

---Miguel Garcia, Sr., Overseer

10:00 Special Singing---Trevor Graves, KY; Juan Lopez, CA

Children's Ministries Program

---Cheryl McDonald, director

Special Singing---TBA

Ladies Ministries Program

---Rosie Ramirez, director

---Assembly Choir---

Message---***“Glory in Crossing the Finish Line”***

(Acts 20:24; 2 Timothy 4:8)---Danny Ramirez

Announcements

Appointments

Consecration Service

Song: *“Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All”*

led by Debbie, Betty, Dreama, Brenda

Assembly Program Adjustments

*The Assembly program proceeded
as scheduled with the following exceptions:*

Thursday

Juan Lopez, CA sang in absence of Becky Land, SC

Friday

Joy Bryant, SC sang in absent of “The Impossibles,” SC

Sunday

Rick Ferrell, KY taught Sunday School lesson
in absence of Gaven McDonald, SC

Note: Joshua Amara overseer of Kenya, and field secretary, was relieved of his positions shortly after the Assembly for disciplinary reasons. In October, his license and ministry was suspended and he was put under discipline. On February 5, 2015 his license was revoked for failing to comply with the church discipline and he was excluded from the church.

Attendance: 448

International Staff Reports 11th Annual General Assembly

Presiding Bishop's Report August 4, 2013--September 9, 2014

Note: This report reflects a little more than 13 months of work, since the Assembly was moved back this year from August to September.

I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless You; and I will praise Your name for ever . . . Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable (Psalm 145:1-3).

I praise the Lord for His inspiration and strength this year to continue to rebuild His house and fulfill the church's mission in this world. Wonderful gains have been made in spreading the word of His kingdom to the nations, giving hope and assistance to tens-of-thousands of lost and desperate people. The church was established in five new nations ---South Africa, Bangladesh, Liberia, Zimbabwe, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo---and work was done also in Rwanda, Zambia and other nations. Here in the United States the church was established in Texas and several of our churches throughout the US had increases. We will be hearing about all these good reports throughout this Assembly by the overseers and missionary representatives.

The practical work connected with my office has included the following: answering all correspondence and calls that have come into the office---roughly 475 letters and e-mails. I kept up a regular correspondence with the overseers and ministers, and served as the editor-in-chief of our church magazine, the *Voice of Zion*. I want to thank our secretary, Marie Crook, for her capable and untiring assistance, and my wife, Dale, for her assistance in helping out in so many ways at the International Offices.

Hundreds of ministers and members were given counsel both in the office and on the field. I have worked with the General Staff, the Assembly Business Committee, the Doctrine Committee, the overseers, pastors, and ministers to promote the work in all of its various dimensions and operations. I want to thank Brother E. A. McDonald for his cooperation and assistance, and the General Staff and the regional overseers who have

cheerfully cooperated with me in the promotion of the work. Most of our leaders sacrificed to move the work forward in their regions and throughout the world, and it should be said that several performed exceptionally. I want to take this opportunity here also to commend the companions of our overseers and international workers; for they have helped to carry the load of the work.

Again this year served I served as president and superintendent of the School of Ministry, worked with Brother McDonald in overseeing and directing the mission work, and I planned and moderated the General Assembly. I also helped to edit the Sunday School literature, except for the September lessons. The overseers and ministers who cooperated with the Presiding Bishop and World Mission Director in some of our special world mission outreach efforts should also be commended. These include Bishops L. W. Carter, David Gomba, Amos Agbonifo, Miguel Garcia Sr., Edward Agar, Boonyong Bureenok, Maliele Dzuwa, Danny Ramirez, Todd McDonald, Hans Brooks, Byron Harris, Zachary Snyder, Yomi Adekunle, and Duniani Asukulu Frederic.

My work as president of the School of Ministry included organizing and planning materials for the schools in the Pacific Coast North and Pacific Coast South regions, and the regular term of the school here in Cleveland. Sister Norie Garavito was especially instrumental in assisting to plan and execute the Pacific Coast South school, and Sister Glenda Major was instrumental in assisting with the Pacific Coast North school. I also want to thank the overseer of this region for his cooperation and assistance---Bishop Miguel Garcia Sr. and also Field Secretary, Danny Ramirez, for his support and work. The Cleveland school included some of the instructors writing new course lessons. I wrote and prepared the materials for the post-graduate seminar course. Sister Marie Crook was again an invaluable assistant in this school.

In regard to course materials for the School of Ministry, we are developing these on DVDs to send the overseers and schools in the various nations where the church is established and well enough advanced. These DVD will be available also to our ministers and churches here in the United States. Our communications and media ministries director, Scott Neill, is working with me in connection with this work and producing the final products. This year we produced five of the lessons. There will be between 50 and 100 lessons on various topics and doctrines when the program is completed. Other instructors in the School of Ministry will assist in this work this coming year.

In November, I went to Guatemala for the national convention there, and stayed afterward to conduct a one-week term of the School

of Ministry. Bishop Carter traveled with me and Brother and Sister Ramirez also met us in Guatemala City, and we all traveled together in a rented vehicle to Puerta Barrios (about a 5 hour trip) where our national headquarters is located. These were fruitful events. The national overseer, Ricardo Valenzuela, did a splendid job with his efficient staff in preparing the facilities for the school and convention and in accommodating the International Staff. The overseers of Nicaragua, Mexico, and Honduras attended with several students from their countries. All together, five nations participated in these events. Brother Ramirez and Brother Brooks did all of the verbal translation work for the classes, and again Norie Garavito did the written translation.

You may have read the report in the *Voice of Zion* that our rented vehicle on this mission trip was shot up by a gang of thugs with automatic weapons. They apparently were either planning to rob us or trying to frighten us away from pursuing our mission there. Either way, their plan failed; for we continued uninterrupted with the convention and the school to fulfill our mission; and before we left Puerta Barrios the police had identified the assailants and arrested them. (This gang had reportedly been held suspect already by the police for murder and robbery, and the police were keeping their eye on them). Coincidentally, the rented vehicle began to fail mechanically on the road back to Guatemala City, but somehow by the grace and providence of the Lord it kept going until we arrived at the airport. The vehicle was close to being totaled, but we had purchased a full coverage insurance policy for about \$100 and the vehicle was all fully covered. Thank the Lord for His sustaining grace and gracious providences!

I was able to attend with my wife two of the regional conventions in the United States this year---the Mid-East and South Atlantic regions. These were both well planned and inspirational meetings.

Many have enquired both from within and without the church about the history of the church that I am writing. After much consideration and prayer, I decided this year that it would be best to publish this history in 3 volumes. I am pleased to announce that Volume I has been completed and is now with the publisher. It should be off the press by the end of October. We will announce the exact date in the *Voice of Zion*. The first volume covers 1886 to 1923, the second from 1924 to April 1990, and the third volume from May 1990 to the present. This first volume is about 800 pages and has about 110 corresponding photographs, most of which have never been seen. Please join with me in prayer that this history will further our vision and mission in Zion Assembly, for this is the primary purpose that I took on this massive project.

I want to thank each of you who enquired about me during a recent illness and prayed for my healing. I can say with David that “the Lord delivered me from the horrible pit.” It turned out to be a combination of several things---overwork, stress, a severe sinus infection, and wrestling with principalities and powers. But I’m confident that God allowed it for my perfection and good and for the advancement of the ministry. After several examinations and about three weeks of suffering, I finally wound up in the hospital for four days. They gave me strong antibiotics and some other chemicals and told me that I needed plenty of rest. But every time I would fall asleep, they would come into my room, turn on the lights, and wake me up to give me a sleeping pill or some other medication. So I put a sign on my door that said, “Ebola patient. Enter with extreme caution.” After that, I didn’t see a doctor or nurse for about 9 hours and finally got some rest!

The following are some personal statistics in regard to the work.

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Sermons Preached..... | 188 |
| Converted..... | 13 |
| Sanctified..... | 6 |
| Holy Ghost Baptisms..... | 4 |
| Added to the church..... | 7 |
| Baptized in Water..... | 0 |
| Tithes paid..... | \$3425.00 |
| Offerings given..... | 425.00 |

Miles traveled.....29,000
 (approximately 13,000 by air, 16,000 on the ground).

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Revivals conducted | 2 |
| Churches visited..... | 15 |
| Regional Conventions Attended..... | 2 |
| General Assembly (Moderated)..... | 1 |

Thank you again for your prayerful support and cooperation, and for the many kindnesses you have shown to me and my family. May the Lord bless and keep you in His great love and wonderful grace.

Humbly submitted,

Hadell Phillips

Assistant Presiding Bishop's Report

Greetings:

In the book of Revelation, whenever Man and Angels assemble together in the presence of God, they fall on their faces before the throne and worship saying, "Salvation, blessings, glory, honor, power, wisdom, and thanksgiving unto our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb."

In the presence of God men are made to know that they are but mortals, flesh and blood beings, made from the dust of the earth, helpless and hopeless apart from God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

As I look back on my life and ministry which is now in my 48th year, I can say of a certainty with Paul, it was the abundant grace of God through faith and love which is in Jesus Christ that has enabled me, and counted me faithful putting me in the ministry.

Today I can say I have done nothing, I know nothing, I can do nothing apart from Jesus Christ. I have done all things by the grace of God through Jesus Christ who has strengthened me.

Demands on the office of Presiding Bishop have increased greatly during the last ten (10) years and requires an insurmountable amount of time and energy. I have tried to be available to assist the Presiding Bishop whenever and wherever I was needed.

Besides talking with Bishop Phillips daily over lunch, I have corresponded and given counsel to all who called upon me in the US and abroad. I taught Biblical Survey at the School of Ministry in Cleveland. I served as International Office representative and preached twice in the Regional Convention in Portland, Tennessee. I visited the church in Pulaski, Tennessee. I preached the funeral of Betty Ruth White, wife of Bishop Arlynn White, overseer of the Northern territory on the West Coast. I have also been faithful to my local church.

I want to give honor to Sister Marie Crook and Cheryl McDonald for their assistance with the office work and helping to keep me organized.

I have preached and taught 43 sermons and lessons. Added to the church 25. Traveled approximately 30,000 miles.

Respectfully submitted,
E.A. McDonald

GEN. CHURCH YEARLY RECEIPTS, EXPENDITURES, BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2014

| | TITHES | VOZ | 50% ORPHAN | EXPENSE | MISSIONS | B.L.D.FUND | SC OF MIN | E.FUND | YOUTH | O.C.E-MAR | OTHER | TOTAL |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| FIRST QUARTER | | | | | | | | | | MISSION | | ALL FUNDS |
| BALANCE FORWARD | 10623.6 | 0 | 11217.68 | 0 | 5974.61 | 0 | 2497.8 | 4329.54 | 9423.91 | 1733.58 | 0 | 45600.72 |
| RECEIPTS | 42536.74 | 11708.3 | 3956.78 | 4746.58 | 6346.95 | 0 | 2059.09 | 260 | 1292.63 | 16375.87 | 12936.9 | 102221.94 |
| EXPENDITURES | -29448.2 | -5496.25 | -3110 | -10590.58 | -4352.16 | -10146.09 | 0 | -700 | -268.62 | -45702.46 | -14619.5 | -124433.86 |
| BANK BALANCE | 23714.14 | 6212.05 | 12064.46 | -5844 | 7969.4 | -10146.09 | 4556.89 | 3889.54 | 10447.92 | -27592.91 | -1682.6 | 23588.8 |
| SECOND QUARTER | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BALANCE FORWARD | 23714.14 | 6212.05 | 12064.46 | -5844 | 7969.4 | -10146.09 | 4556.89 | 3889.54 | 10447.92 | -27592.91 | -1682.6 | 23588.8 |
| RECEIPTS | 39098.59 | 2873.5 | 4396.97 | 527.79 | 5287.57 | 0 | 1659.33 | 163 | 3530.65 | 85048.76 | 1980.31 | 144266.47 |
| EXPENDITURES | -30646.2 | -3911.84 | -3210 | -5540.29 | -3531.24 | -9846.09 | 0 | -1893.43 | -1883.43 | -48361.4 | -2190 | -109120.59 |
| BANK BALANCE | 32166.53 | 4873.61 | 13251.43 | -10856.5 | 9725.73 | -19892.18 | 6216.22 | 4052.54 | 12095.14 | 9094.45 | -1892.29 | 58734.68 |
| THIRD QUARTER | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BALANCE FORWARD | 32166.53 | 4873.61 | 13251.43 | -10856.5 | 9725.73 | -19892.18 | 6216.22 | 4052.54 | 12095.14 | 9094.45 | -1892.29 | 134524.36 |
| RECEIPTS | 47065.62 | 5394.89 | 4354.69 | 452.78 | 5528.62 | 0 | 1270.29 | 396 | 1468.93 | 1417.96 | 8440 | 75789.68 |
| EXPENDITURES | -29446.2 | -4320.54 | -2540 | -10163.79 | -4925.12 | -9846.09 | -723.26 | -500 | 0 | -37615.77 | -7030.6 | -107111.37 |
| BANK BALANCE | 49785.95 | 5947.96 | 15066.12 | -20567.51 | 10329.13 | -29838.27 | 6763.25 | 3948.54 | 13564.07 | -27103.36 | -482.89 | 27412.99 |
| FORTH QUARTER | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BALANCE FORWARD | 49785.95 | 5947.96 | 15066.12 | -20567.51 | 10329.13 | -29838.27 | 6763.25 | 3948.54 | 13564.07 | -27103.36 | -482.89 | 27412.99 |
| RECEIPTS | 46586.13 | 1276.18 | 4760.79 | 214.12 | 3625.77 | 0 | 9364.76 | 240 | 1525.85 | 92308.84 | 1676.5 | 161784.94 |
| EXPENDITURES | -31516.2 | -2718.06 | -2534 | -9362.81 | -4448.85 | -9846.09 | -15357.91 | 0 | -50.4 | -26738.45 | -1317.25 | -103890.02 |
| BANK BALANCE | 64855.88 | 4506.08 | 17292.91 | -28716.2 | 9706.05 | -39684.36 | 770.1 | 4188.54 | 15043.52 | 39467.03 | -121.64 | 85307.91 |
| YEARLY SUMMARY OF ALL FUNDS RECEIVED, EXPENDITURES, AND BALANCE IN TREASURY JUNE 30, 2014 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | TITHES | VOZ | 50% ORPHAN | EXPENSE | MISSIONS | B.L.D.FUND | SC OF MIN | E.FUND | YOUTH | MISSION | OTHER | TOTAL |
| BALANCE FORWARD | 10623.6 | 0 | 11217.68 | 0 | 5974.61 | 0 | 2497.8 | 4329.54 | 9423.91 | 1733.58 | 0 | 45600.72 |
| RECEIPTS | 175288.08 | 20952.87 | 17469.23 | 5941.27 | 20988.81 | 0 | 14353.47 | 1059 | 7622.06 | 195151.53 | 25035.71 | 494065.84 |
| EXPENDITURES | -121086.8 | -16446.79 | -11394 | -35657.47 | -17257.37 | -39684.36 | -16081.17 | -1200 | -2202.45 | -158418.08 | -25157.35 | -444655.84 |
| BANK BALANCE | 64855.88 | 4506.08 | 17292.91 | -28716.2 | 9706.05 | -39684.36 | 770.1 | 4188.54 | 15043.52 | 39467.03 | -121.64 | 85307.91 |

General Treasurer's Report

When I reflect upon the past ten years of this great restoration of the church my spirit is humbled that God has allowed me to participate in this glorious work which He has begun in us. I believe that what God has begun, He is able to bring to fruition. It is my desire to be faithful until He has finished His will in me and I hear Him say well done, my good and faithful servant.

This year has been the best year financially that the church has had since the restoration of the church beginning in 2004. For the first time our total receipts for 2014 have exceeded \$500,000.00. The pastors and churches are to be commended for their faithfulness to support the work of the church through the International Offices.

I want to give special recognition to my able assistant, Cheryl McDonald. Cheryl picks up the mail from the Post Office, records all receipts from the ministers and churches, makes copies of all checks, makes bank deposits, makes out the checks and records distribution of all funds. She then lets me put my signature on the bottom of the checks and reads the report to the General Assembly. She also helps me with the other office responsibilities.

I appreciate Sister Cheryl and Sister Crook for their valuable work that they have done this year in assisting me with various responsibilities.

Respectfully submitted,
E. A. McDonald

2014 Media & Communications Report

It has been an honor to serve our church this year in the position of Communications and Media Ministries Director. I thank God for the opportunity. This year we have updated the General Website to another service so that we can add pictures and make other additions quicker and easier.

As Brother Phillips stated during his report, he came to Greenville and stayed a week to record the first set of DVD's on the *Abstract of Faith* that will be used for the School of Ministry as we begin to spread the teaching of the church around the world.

I attended the 2014 School of Ministry. We set up all of the Video and recording equipment for the 2 week session in Cleveland. We recorded the classes and will be editing them for use also in the School of Ministry as we expand our school around the world.

In June, I was privileged to attend the Western Regional Convention under the direction of Bishop Miguel Garcia, Sr. What a powerful Holy Ghost convention the Lord blessed us with. While in California, I preached at the Van Nuy and the Rialto churches.

During this Assembly we are streaming live in English and Spanish. We had some glitches last night on the Spanish stream, but we were up and live this morning for Joshua Amara's message. There is a schedule on the General Website showing the streaming schedule. As you can see on the screen, we are planning on you being able to log onto the General Website and listen to the messages after the Assembly is over.

As you can see we have expanded our Assembly visuals to 2 screens in the front and 1 screen in the back. I want to thank Tanner Herring for his expert skills in operating this audio visual system during this assembly.

Jerry Pounders is operating the sound system for us during the Assembly. He brought the system from Columbus church so that we would not have to rent a system.

Thanks to my wife, Vicki, for her help during the year and also my daughter Ashley for serving as a video technician in our streaming. On most Sundays we are streaming live our services from the Greenville, SC church.

Respectfully submitted
Scott Neill

International Sunday School Director

Greetings to the 11th Annual General Assembly

I am blessed to have had the opportunity to serve in the capacity of Sunday School Director this year, and I give the Lord the glory and honor for all that has been accomplished.

As director my responsibility is to organize outreach events that will help promote Sunday School attendance as well as oversee the distribution of the Sunday School material each month. We currently have two great options in place for individuals to receive the Faith- N- Focus material. Lessons can be downloaded directly from the website or individuals can subscribe to have the lessons emailed. Currently we email lessons to 323 subscribers each month; 259 subscribe to the English translation and 64 subscribe to the Spanish translation. Nearly all who subscribe to the Spanish lessons request the English translation as well. In almost all cases, these 323 individuals make copies and distribute the lesson material in the church or mission where they attend.

The Sunday School department would not be successful without the dedication of many who work faithfully behind the scene. Zion Assembly is blessed to have an incredible team of writers, editors and translators who make up the Faith-N-Focus Sunday School Curriculum Staff. Currently, our staff consists of 14 volunteer writers (2 for the adult literature, 6 for the teen, and 6 for the children). We have 3 on the Sunday School editorial staff. We also have 3 volunteer translators who prepare the Spanish literature each month. It is our intention to honor these individuals during this year's General Assembly.

I would like to give special recognition to our Sunday School Editor, Brother Todd McDonald for his untiring devotion to the Sunday School Department. He not only writes and edits the literature, but he also plans and schedules the curriculum and manages the staff of writers, editors and translators.

This year I organized High Attendance Day (March 23, 2014)

Attended the Ladies Retreat in Pigeon Forge, TN

Attended and taught at the South Central Youth Camp held in Millport, AL

Spoke during the High Attendance Sunday outreach in Columbus, MS

Attended the South Central Regional Convention during which time I promoted the work of the Sunday School Department.

Respectfully Submitted,
Donna Pounders

SYNC Director

Greetings to the 11th Annual General Assembly.

I want to give thanks to God for His mercies and blessings this year. I feel very blessed to be able to be a small part of what God is doing in Zion Assembly Church of God. It is very humbling to work with such a wonderful group of talented, professional and loyal workers.

This Assembly year I have striven to clarify what “Subscribe Your Neighbor Club” (*SYNC*) is. I had postcards made with a notice that the current year’s *Voice of Zion* Magazine was about to expire and mailed them out to all of the current *Voice of Zion* Subscribers. I then followed that post card with a second postcard that explained what the Subscribe Your Neighbor Club (*SYNC*) is, and how to join. I suggested that readers might consider joining *SYNC* with their new subscription.

This year, I sent out packages of materials to each of the *SYNC* boosters, asking them to not only boost *SYNC* throughout the year but also to encourage the subscribers in their districts to join prior to February 28, in order to enter “Thank you *SYNC* Members” drawing (the drawing was used as a mode of advertising during regional conventions). We had three gifts per region, with first prize being \$50.00. Joining by February 28 helps the *Voice of Zion* team at the International offices in managing their already heavy workloads.

This last Assembly year, I was able to travel throughout California and was blessed by being able to boost membership at each location. My thanks to my regional overseer, Bishop Garcia, for his loyal support.

I traveled to Cleveland, TN and planned and organized the *SYNC* luncheon with the faithful help of Alice Jones and the talented and hard work of Jim Orange. With the help of Marie Crook and my family I sent out invitations, made and purchased the decorations and gifts for the luncheon. I arranged for a staff of 4 to be with me at the 2014 Assembly in order to put on our luncheon.

I attended the School of Ministry in Cleveland TN and took a class at my local college in Fresno in order to be better qualified for the position I am filling in *SYNC* Ministries. I tried to address the language barrier with the *VOZ* being printed only in English by encouraging leadership to teach Bible classes from the teaching in the *Voice of Zion*. I am trying to grow membership by encouraging our leaders to become members of *SYNC*. I organized and planned the *SYNC* program for the Assembly.

We are very grateful for every one of the 410 *Voice of Zion* members and 68 *SYNC* Members God gave us this year. *SYNC* Ministry has been self supporting. It has been a great honor to work in Zion Assembly and to promote our magazine.

Respectfully submitted,
Glenda G. Major

US Missions and Field Director Report

Greetings to the 11th General Assembly

This year 2013-2014 has been another growing year for the church. We now have 9 missions operating within the United States. But we have not yet touched the surface of what can be accomplished. If only more men and women will give heed to the call God has placed on them to go out into the highways and byways, the work will prosper at a far greater speed. Souls are hanging in the balance!

One of the most gratifying things we have ever done is to lead someone to the Lord and the church. When we observe how they take hold of the Gospel and begin to work and give heed to the Great Commission, that is so rewarding. Let me encourage the churches to pray more about U.S. Missions and become more involved.

My personal work for this year involved seeking out leads and contacts for missions. I drove approximately 4,000 miles doing this work. I have tried to stay in contact with each Regional Overseer, boosting the work and having services where possible.

I preached 137 sermons: 7 saved, 6 sanctified, and 2 filled with the Holy Ghost. I took 1 member into the church. Visited 794 homes, paid \$1756 tithes to General Headquarters. Taught in School of Ministry in Cleveland and Guatemala. Purchased a building in Roanoke, VA and added a kitchen. Served on Assembly Business Committee. Taught and preached in Ministers seminar in Mississippi. I also pastored the Roanoke Virginia church this year.

I praise the Lord for his goodness and the good health he has given me. My aim in life is to work as long as I am physically able.

Humbly Submitted,
L.W. Carter

International Children’s Ministries Director

Greetings to the 11th Annual General Assembly

As a Children’s Minister, I take Proverbs 22:6 literally which says, “Train up a child in the way he should go...” I am aware that we must seize every moment to teach children in the way of the Lord. I am grateful for each opportunity I have had this past year to teach and to be trained. In November 2013, I organized children’s classes for the Eastern Regional Youth Convention in Cleveland, TN. To better prepare myself for ministry, I once again attended the Creative Ministry Solutions puppet conference in Anderson, SC, on March 7-8, 2014. At this conference, I learned basic puppetry techniques and methods for making ministry more effective. On June 1, 2014, I conducted the Children’s Day service for the Cleveland, TN church. The week of June 16-20, 2014, I taught the children’s daily Bible Class for the Tennessee/Mid-Central regional youth camp which was held in Westmoreland, TN. On July 26, I taught a children’s class for the Tennessee State Convention at Chestnut Hill, TN. For this year’s assembly, I have recruited teachers, coordinated classes, and organized activities for an exciting Kidz Konvention. I have also prepared the Children’s Sunday morning program for this General Assembly.

In order to promote Children’s Day in Zion Assembly, I created thematic lessons and an ideas page and sent them out by e-mail. According to all reports, this year’s Children’s Day was another great success. Throughout the year, I have continued to write a quarterly newsletter, entitled “The Chalkboard”, which is intended to connect and encourage our Children’s Ministers. I have corresponded with many children’s ministers on an individual basis through hand-written and electronic mail. I want to be an encourager for those working in the harvest fields. I praise the Lord for every dedicated individual who is willing to train our young ones.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl H. McDonald

Shepherding Ministries Report

Greetings with the love of Christ Jesus to the 11th General Assembly! I give thanks to our Lord to have served you as Shepherding Ministry Director for the past Assembly year. I give honor and respect to our Presiding Bishop and to all the leadership and membership of Zion. It has been a privilege and a joy to serve with our International staff to further the work of the church.

In this past Assembly year I . . .

attended the annual ministers conference and the 10th Annual General Assembly; prepared and gave a Shepherding report to the Assembly and also the southeast Youth Convention; wrote and sent letters of communication to our regional overseers and pastors; used the internet and Facebook to encourage brotherhood among the saints; encouraged prayers and support for our Presiding and Assistant Presiding Bishops and families; along with Shepherding duties I have served as overseer of Tennessee and pastored the Chestnut Hill church; also served on the Doctrine Committee. I have been faithful in tithing, giving, and reporting to the International Offices.

I would like to encourage the continuing love and support of our leadership in Zion, beginning with our Presiding Bishop, and including our overseers, pastors, deacons, and evangelists worldwide.

Respectfully submitted,
Rocky E. Dalton

Ladies Ministries Report

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.”

Our Western Region Retreat was held on January 31 thru February 2, 2014 at the Double Tree, Ontario, CA. We had a total of 112 women present. Sister Rebecca Pereira was our guest speaker along with classes taught by Sister Josefina Ortega and Sister Barbara Rivera. Our Regional overseer, Miguel Garcia, Sr. was invited to greet the ladies along with giving us encouraging words.

Our Easter Region Retreat was held on February 7-9, 2014 at The Inn at Christmas Place, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. We had a total of 81 women present. Kim Erwin and Pam Jones presented the word of God. We praise god for all the blessings He gave us. We thank the Lord for our Presiding Bishop Wade Phillips and Assistant E.A. McDonald for taking the time to come and speak to us.

On February 21-22, 2014 we had the privilege to have a ladies retreat in Argentina. We had our services in Neuquen local church. Our national overseer, Jorge Estroz, along with his wife Sandra opened their home to Sister Norie Garavito and I. We had a total of 24 ladies that were hungry for the word of God and fellowship. Sister Estroz, Gladys Perez and Norie Garavito presented the word. I would like to thank our headquarters for making it possible for me to make this trip.

As of today we have two deposits for next year's retreats.

1. Oak Tree Lodge for a total of \$875.00 2. Double Tree for a total of \$1,500.00.

Respectfully submitted
Rosie Ramirez

International Youth Director's Report

First and foremost I want to thank God for the awesome opportunity he has entrusted me with; and enabling me to direct and guide our youth ministry in Zion Assembly Church of God at such a time as this. His love and grace never ceases to amaze me. It is my desire to please Him in all that we do: to see young people who are truly rooted in this great faith that has been passed on to us by our forefathers, and wake up to the calling on their lives to ***“Go into all the world to preach, teach and make disciples!”*** This has been an exciting year of work. We have sought God out in prayer and believe wholeheartedly that He is the one directing the leadership, our congregations, our youth and our church. It has been a year of learning and adapting; of meeting brothers and sisters from other nations; of encouraging everyone that even though we are miles apart we are part of the same work

It has also been a year in which we have jumped into a few initiatives that God placed upon our hearts.

1) ***“Youth Convention- “Rooted and Built Up”***- We celebrated our youth conventions last year where we felt the presence of the Lord in a mighty way, great fellowship along with some age appropriate classes that were a blessing to the body. Held last November 1-2, 2013 in Cleveland, TN, we had the biggest attendance to date. 200! Pacific Region Youth Convention was held November 8-9, 2013 with an attendance of 220! Altogether we had a total of 440 in attendance at our two youth conventions, Praise the Lord!

2) ***“One Year Bible reading”*** initiative- Began on January 31, 2014 and following through to January, 2015- At which time we will begin once more. It was published on Voice of Zion magazine.

a. We hear testimonies from young people that started and have continued to be faithful to reading and studying God's word daily, that it's helped them build a discipline and have learned a lot. Praise the Lord!

b. One of the things that has been exciting is the fact we have been able to partner with ***“OneYearBibleOnline.com”*** a website and provider of free tools that provide comprehensive guides to reading the word of God daily for one full year. They are able to look at plans and print them out to keep track of their progress throughout the year. They also have been able to use any number of free mobile phone apps. What an exciting time to live in!

3) ***“FAST14”***- Another initiative began in January and followed through in the month of June and another one scheduled in November right before our youth convention. It has been publicized on the Voice of Zion magazine, and it encourages our young people to humble ourselves before God and ask him to pour out his spirit upon us, we need his spirit

today more than ever before. Let us keep praying and fasting.

- 4) **“Offering for VOZ”**- We as the young people of Zion Assembly Church of God have a desire to be part of the work God is doing in his church, we don’t want to stay pat watching others work, we want to work right along the ministers and field workers. We have encouraged an offering to be taken up at all local churches ever three (3) months of a minimum of \$100 and be sent over to the International Offices to help with the translation and printing of the Voice of Zion magazine. It is the vision that God has given us and with God’s help we intend to follow through with it.

The Region that has sent in the VOZ offering project so far is- South Central Region Youth- **\$138.00**

Total Youth Media offering- **\$6,260.20 (For the Year)**

The Youth Awards for the regular media offerings for 2014 are as follows:

- 1st- Chestnut Hill, TN: **\$742.70**
- 2nd- Idamay, WV: **\$624.31**
- 3rd- West Mobile, AL: **\$462.92**

- 5) **“Social Media”**- We have also taken the initiative to use some of the social media tools available to us, such as an official *“VICTORIOUS Youth Ministries Facebook”* page that has garnered 202 followers and we believe that’s scratching the surface, along with an official *“Twitter”* account that allows us the opportunity to provide church and ministry information. It has allowed us to pass along information to our brothers and sisters around the globe.
- 6) **Looking “Forward”**- God has placed so many things in our heart as it regards to a vision and direction for our youth. This year will be about discipleship and leadership training, we are currently working on a comprehensive leadership manual that has taken close to a year to put together in conjunction with some of our local/regional directors that have provided their ideas and expertise.

We desire you prayers. Our desire is to glorify God in all we do; to see young people grow spiritually and in their respective ministries to help the Church of God grow.

Sincerely,
Miguel A. Garcia Jr.

Field Secretary Report

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are busy in West Africa fulfilling the great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ--*Go ye into the world and preach the gospel*. Doors have opened for evangelism this year, and we have endeavored to go through these doors for the glory of God and to build the Lord's house.

Zion Assembly Church of God is pacesetting in African, leaving a good example for the people. We are preaching the pure Gospel in its fulness--the undiluted Word of God. We are endeavoring to raise up women and men in the faith, and to settle them in God's church.

We must say, however, that the needs are great. Many need materials for building, and musical instruments for ministry. Some of the people are destitute for the basic necessities of life--food and shelter; and we endeavor to do what we can for them. But all need to hear the Gospel, and this is our most urgent effort.

By the grace of God, I have in recent years been able to penetrate into the French-speaking countries---Republic of Benin, Togo, Ivory Coast, and Liberia. Also here in Nigeria I have been able to establish five churches under the government and teachings of Zion Assembly.

During my visit to the Republic of Benin (Cotonou), I was received by the ambassador of Nigeria in Benin with warm hospitality and honor. While in Togo (Lome) I stayed in a good hotel near where three Zion Assembly churches are established. I had the privilege to preach to our French-speaking people through an interpreter.

Most of these nations are dominated by the Roman Catholic religion, and many of the people are under the influence of various forms of idol worship. They are superstitious and easy prey for demonic forces. But the Lord enabled us to lead many souls out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel.

We are pressing forward (cf. Philippians 3:13-14) to see our members in Liberia and Sierra Leone healed and delivered from the deadly Ebola disease.

We are preparing to have a convention soon in Togo. I have also received many invitations to come to Sierra Leone (Freetown) and Guinea to establish churches. Pray for us that the Lord will strengthen us for the great task that we face in West Africa.

Respectfully submitted,
Amos Agbonifo

Field Secretary Report

Countries ministered: Guatemala, Mexico, United States. Served as translator in School of Ministry in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala and Rialto, California. Instrumental in the organizing of two missions in California, also two in Mexico. Organized two churches in Mexico.

Air miles traveled---26,000

Land miles traveled---14,000

On call 24-7 to assist the General Offices in every possible---assisting in translating, and communication regularly with the Presiding Bishop and giving counsel as a field secretary.

Respectfully submitted,
Danny Ramirez

“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.”

--- John 4:34-36

World Mission Secretary

It has been my honor and pleasure to served God and His Church as World Mission Secretary for the past three years. As in all departments of the church the work and correspondence continues to increase daily.

The work in the 2014 Assembly year began with a 17 day trip in November to East Africa where I conducted a School of Ministry in Gieta, Tanzania, and Zambia in Central Africa. The ministers and church leaders attending the two schools were more than one hundred twenty-five (125). Bishop Asukulu Fredric overseer of our eighteen churches in the Democratic Republic of Congo also attended the school. He and his churches had united with Zion Assembly just prior to the beginning of the school. Bishop Fredric along with a pastor and his wife from the DRC were a blessing to the School in Gieta. We also had the lead Pastor and two church leaders from the nation of Burundi. Edward Agar, National Overseer of Tanzania is to be commended for the good work he is doing among the nations.

The Mission Representative to Central Africa, David Gomba joined me in Zambia for the School of Ministry in that nation. David November who was pastor of three churches in the nation of South Africa also attended the school. Following the school Bishop Gomba went to South Africa and received Brother November and his three churches in Zion Assembly. Brother November now serves as the National Overseer of South Africa for Zion Assembly.

David Gomba also traveled to Zimbabwe, Central Africa from Zambia and met with Memory Jandura wife of Brother Jandura who passed away just before he was to leave Zimbabwe to attend the School of Ministry in Zambia. Since that time, Bishop Phillips and I made arrangements to receive Sister Jandura and the church in Zimbabwe into Zion Assembly over the phone. On Sunday morning Bishop Phillips and I made a phone call and administered the covenant to Sister Jandura and 25 members of her church.

On the above trip to Africa I traveled approximately 25,000 miles which required take off and landings for eleven (11) flights.

We also had the School of Ministry scheduled in February for South West and South East India where we support a Children's Orphanage Ministry. However, the Indian Embassy would not grant our request for a Visa and this 21 day trip had to be cancelled.

This year the church has reached 5 new countries. The following brethren are to be commended for their vision and work in new fields. The church was organized in DRC by Edward Agar, National Overseer of Tanzania; South Africa by David Gomba, Mission Representative; Zimbabwe by E. A. McDonald; in Bangladesh by Boonyong Bureenok and Liberia by Amos Agbonifo.

We currently have active contacts through Asia, Africa, and Central America. Our overseers and leaders of the Nations are to be commended for their vision and outreach efforts. We are expecting great things to be accomplished on the Mission Fields in 2015.

We also recognize that without the vision and hard work of our ministers and church members to raise funds for this important work, we would not be able to accomplish the Great Commission.

The leadership at the International Office wants to commend you for your faithful work this past year. The General Assembly reports sent from the National Overseers to the Presiding Bishop show that Zion Assembly has been organized in forty (40) countries with over eighty two thousand (82,000) members. Your faithfulness to send your reports quarterly and yearly are greatly appreciated.

As National Overseer you are connected to the International Office and work directly under the leadership of the Presiding Bishop. The Presiding Bishop and World Mission Secretary will be glad to advise you concerning any problems or concerns or information you should require. If you have any question about your work as overseer or allotment please contact the International Office at zionchurch11@bellsouth.net or worldmissions@zionassemblychurchofgod.com. Below is a list that may be helpful to you in fulfilling the responsibilities of the State or National Overseer.

DUTIES OF STATE AND NATIONAL OVERSEERS

-Each overseer is to have the oversight of his state, nation or territory. The national and/or state overseer with the Presiding Bishop constitutes the official presbytery in his respective area. In addition to his general responsibility for the work under his jurisdiction, he is responsible for specific duties.

-To conduct or order a general evangelistic campaign in his state or nation during the year. If there are only a few churches in the state or area assigned him, he will serve primarily as the evangelist, evangelizing new fields and endeavoring to establish new churches. If his area has a large number of churches and ministers, he will be responsible to organize and direct the evangelistic efforts of his workers in new fields.

-To see that every church is supplied with a pastor.

-To divide his nation or state or territory into districts and place over each district an overseer. This is not a rule, but it is considered best when there are sufficient churches to make it practical. He should conduct district meetings at intervals during the year where special instructions concerning the work can be given.

-To hold one general convention each year in the area most convenient for all the churches to attend.

-To secure the name and address of every bishop, deacon, and evangelist under his jurisdiction and keep a record of those so he can report to the Presiding Bishop and maintain good government and discipline.

-Keep an accurate record of the location of every church and the number of members in his territory, and a record of increases so this information can be reported each year to the General Assembly. This can be done by keeping in touch with the clerks of the churches. Every minister and clerk should take an interest in imparting this information to the overseer. All new churches organized should be reported to the overseer.

-To visit every district and church each year, if possible, and look after the interests of the church in every way, as a pastor over a large circuit.

-Ministers to be licensed by Zion Assembly Church of God must fill out a Ministers application certificate so that each minister has a record here at the International Offices.

Ministers who unite with Zion Assembly Church of God and hold credentials in good standing with another organization (such as Bishop, deacon, evangelist, or female evangelist) will maintain his ministerial status in Zion Assembly Church of God upon completion of the application and approval of the Presbytery (Regional or National overseer and Presiding Bishop). Applicants should write a letter of resignation to the organization with whom they hold credentials advising them of their separation from that church. A copy of the letter along with the completed application should be submitted to the National Overseer for acceptance. He should then attach a ministers endorsement from and send them to the Presiding Bishop of Zion Assembly Church of God. Upon endorsement by the Presiding Bishop, the license will be sent back to the national overseer for his signature and forwarded on to the minister.

-New applicants for the ministry should be set forth for the ministry by the local church in the business meeting. Upon approval by the local church in conference, the minister should fill out a Ministers Application Certificate. This certificate along with the Ministers Endorsement form

signed by the church clerk and local pastor should be sent to the Regional/National Overseer. Upon approval by the Regional/National overseer, the forms should be sent to the office of the Presiding Bishop for his endorsement. The license will be signed by the Presiding Bishop and sent to the Regional/National overseer for his signature and then forwarded to the minister.

It has been my pleasure and honor to work with the National Overseers and to serve Zion Assembly Church of God as World Mission Secretary. However, I am now 76 years old and feel that it is time to let someone else fill this position. During the General Assembly, Bishop Scott Neill will be appointed to serve the church as World Mission Secretary. I am confident that he will be a blessing to you as you continue to labor faithfully for Christ and His church. He is a good man and will be contacting you by email presently. All correspondence related to the mission work and any other needs should be directed to him at *worldmissions@zionassemblychurchofgod.com*

I will continue my work as the Assistant Presiding Bishop and Business Manager at the International Offices. However, I will not keep regular business hours at the office, but I will pray for you.

Respectfully,
E.A. McDonald

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE REPORT

[We, your Assembly Business Committee, after prayerful and careful consideration, present this report to the General Assembly for your consideration].

(Ed. Note: After a slight amendment of Section IV, this report was accepted in full without dissent or controversy).

Section I

Cost of Living Adjustment

The last time the Assembly adjusted the “full-paying” allotment was in 2008. Inflation has increased the cost of living by approximately 10%. The current weekly allotment is set at \$895.00. This committee recommends that we increase the weekly allotment by \$40.00, bringing the amount to \$935.00 per week, which represents a 4.47% increase since 2008 (a bit less than 1% per year). This applies only where funds are available.

Section II

Term Life Insurance

We recommend that a term life insurance policy be purchased on the Presiding Bishop in the amount of \$150,000.00 for which the premiums will remain level for 15 years at \$296.23 per month. This rate is based on age and current health, and is the most reasonable that we could find after several months of searching. The primary purpose of this coverage is to provide for Sister Phillips should our Presiding Bishop die before the age of 82. We feel that it would be wise at this point for the church to plan ahead should this occur.

Section III

Backing of Local Church Loans by The International Offices

We recommend that the International Offices should not stand as the guarantor on any loans made by local churches or by ministers or members for obtaining property or other material necessities for their ministries. If the International Offices would be in a position financially to be able to do so, it would still not be advisable since one may be denied and another granted; certainly all cannot be accommodated. We want to be good stewards at the International level by not assuming debt unless it is deemed agreeable by the General Assembly. And by the same token we want to encourage, as well as admonish, our local churches about the importance of fiscal responsibility. A local church should never go into debt without first “counting the cost” and obtaining a consensus among the members.

It should also be understood that there is naturally and legitimately going to be some disparity, or inequality, between congregations and individuals in the church, particularly in regards to finances and means. There should not be an obligation to equalize that disparity as a general rule or disposition. There may be cases when the Lord will prompt some to use their means to make up the lack of others but this should be done freely and not as a rule. Socialism as an economic system has failed and thus operating the church with that system in mind would be detrimental. In order to be sound in doctrine in governmental procedure, Acts 4:32 (“having all things in common”) should be interpreted as a narrative account in history instead of the rule of the church. The Scriptural plan is that what a congregation has (property and otherwise) is to be in direct proportion to how much that particular local church has labored and sacrificed (2 Thessalonians 3:10; Ephesians 4:28).

Section IV

Special Allowance and Circumstances for Women to Administer the Ordinances

It has been brought to the attention of this committee that in some women’s prisons the inmates can only be ministered to by female ministers. This includes baptizing them and offering them the Lord’s Supper as well as other church administrations. In such cases, we recommend that where

only female ministers are available, that the presbytery be authorized to give them permission to perform these functions under the authority and supervision of the presbytery. It should be understood that this authority is not permanent or inherent in female ministers but Allowed only under special circumstances.

In order to support this recommendation and to show that this is not a new allowance, we cite the 1932 Assembly Minutes of the Church of God. The question was asked, “Should a female evangelist administer the Lord’s supper and feet washing?” The answer given was: “This has been considered permissible in isolated places when it was not convenient to secure the services of a male minister.”

Section V

Facility Usage Policy To Be Put Into Force For Legal Protection

Legal threats abound to undermine the ability of churches to minister to their communities. Those threats can come in the form of a request to use the church’s facilities in ways that violate the church’s religious beliefs. Many churches fear that they will be forced by the government to allow use of their church buildings for things like same-sex “wedding” ceremonies. Some jurisdictions have considered attempting to define church facilities as places of public accommodation that are required to abide by non-discrimination laws and regulations.

However, [in the United States of America] church buildings are private property and are used primarily for the exercise of religion. As such, the use of church buildings is cloaked with First Amendment protection [in the US Constitution] both under the Free Exercise Clause and the Free Speech Clause. If the government attempts to force a church to use its private property in ways that are inconsistent with its religious beliefs, the government would violate the church’s First Amendment rights. Put simply, a church has a right to only allow uses of its facilities that are consistent with its religious beliefs and to deny all other uses.

Thus, it is important that we adopt a policy, in advance, to protect the church’s right to minister in the face of these potential legal threats. Therefore we recommend that this Assembly adopt the following written policy regarding the use of our general, national [where similar laws exist], regional and local church facilities:

Use Policy

“Zion Assembly Church of God facilities were provided through God’s benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of its members. The church desires that its facilities be used for the fellowship of the body of Christ and always to God’s glory. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, we may make our facilities available to approved non-member persons and groups on occasion, in a spirit of Christian charity.

However, facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs, or advancing, advocating, or engaging in practices that conflict with Zion Assembly Church of God’s faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, the church’s Abstract of Faith. Nor may these facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed by the pastor as inconsistent with, or contrary to the church’s faith or moral teachings. The pastor, or his official designee, is the final decision-maker on whether a person or group is allowed to use local church facilities.

This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two important reasons. First, allowing its facilities to be used for purposes that contradict the church’s beliefs would be material cooperation with that activity, and would be a grave violation of the church’s faith and religious practice. (cf: II Corinthians 6:14; I Thessalonians 5:22.) Second, it is very important to the church that it presents a consistent message to the community, which the church’s ministers and members conscientiously maintain as part of their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To allow facilities to be used by groups or persons who express beliefs or engage in practices contrary to the church’s faith would have a severe negative impact on the message that the church strives to promote.

It could also be a source of confusion and scandal to the church’s members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that by allowing use of our facilities, the church is in agreement with the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using the church’s facilities.

Therefore, in no event shall persons or groups who hold, advance, or advocate beliefs, or advance, advocate, or engage in practices that contradict Zion Assembly Church of God’s faith use any church facility. Nor may facilities be used in any way that contradicts the church’s faith. This policy applies to all church facilities, regardless of whether the facilities are connected to the church’s sanctuary, because the church sees all of its property as holy and set apart to worship of God. (cf: Colossians 3:17)”

We also recommend, that each local church, having their own facilities, present this policy at their next business conference to be accepted and recorded in their minutes. If property is owned at the national, regional, or state level, the officers should carry out this same action in their business conferences. In addition, “Facility Use Request Forms,” “Facility Use Guidelines” and an “Agreement Statement,” will be available upon request by the national/regional/state overseer.

Special recognition is hereby given to *Alliance Defending Freedom* for providing the legal research and much of the suggested wording in this section.

Section VI

Additional “By-Laws” Pertinent to Zion Assembly Church of God

This committee feels that it would be beneficial for the church to consider and place on permanent record certain policy statements specific to matters of operation that may be challenged by individuals or organizations in a court of law, with the previous section as an example. Others may include, but are not limited to, the procedure for member discipline; the revocation of membership; the way an individual may remove their own membership; the offices that may be held only by men; those who may be excluded from a marriage retreat, etc. Though these policies are plainly stated in our church documents, having them compiled into one concise location might prevent problems. Some previous Assembly rulings may fall into this category. Additions could be made as occasion arises. These could eventually appear in the form of a manual or pamphlet, like the *Abstract of Faith* or the *Business Guide* (which will be completed around the time of the printing of the 2014 Assembly Minutes). It could also serve as an important resource for counseling potential members of the church.

Section VII

Reporting By Retired Ministers

We recommend that retired licensed ministers report to their national/regional/state and the International Office once per year. This report is to be sent by May 31st.

Section VIII

“Let Us Rise Up and Build”

We fully endorse Section V of the Presiding Bishop’s annual address titled “Let Us Rise Up and Build.” We believe that in order to build a tabernacle for Zion Assembly, a system of giving must be incorporated. The pastor or a designated Tabernacle Fund booster should boost and receive a Tabernacle Fund offering once a month.

One possibility to help facilitate this offering is for the International Offices to design and make available offering boxes that can be displayed in conspicuous places as a reminder of this important endeavor. An inscription such as “Let Us Rise Up and Build” could be placed on this box. As funds come in each month, the treasurer shall include the offering in with their regular monthly report.

In order for this to be effective, the pastors and national/regional/state overseers must catch this vision, expect great things from it, and zealously boost the offerings from time to time throughout the year for the offerings to become substantial.

Section IX

General Financial System

We recommend that we continue to operate the same financial system for this upcoming Assembly year, and that funds be transferred between accounts to bring all funds into a positive balance.

Humbly Submitted,

Joseph Steele (*Chairman*),

Zachary Snyder, (*Secretary*),

L.W. Carter, E.A. McDonald, Ray Dickson,

Miguel Garcia Sr., Scott Neill, Byron Harris

Presiding Bishop's Annual Address

September 13, 2014

Knoxville, Tennessee

Introduction

This is the eleventh time we have gathered in a solemn Assembly, in this “Dreadful Place” (Genesis 28:17) to seek the mind of Christ and to implement His will for His church---to “bind in the earth what the Lord has bound in Heaven, and to loose in the earth what He has loosed in Heaven.”

Earlier in this Assembly we celebrated the wonderful progress that has been made in our first ten years---since April 2004. And it has been marvelous; we have moved from one milestone to another. Beginning with 85 members [we have learned recently that there were 85 charter members rather than 83 as was reported in the 2004 Minutes], seventeen of whom were ministers, we now have over 1000 ministers, 760 churches, and over 82,000 members in 40 countries, including ministers and churches in 19 states here in the United States. In addition, the Lord has enabled us to restore the doctrine, fellowship, and governing infrastructure of the church. We have also been able to construct an efficient and impressive headquarters complex, and many of our churches have been able to purchase properties and to construct their own sanctuaries and ministry facilities. And this year, for the first time, over \$500,000 came into the General Treasury for the church's world outreach ministries and operating expenses. Surely, we can say with the inspired Psalmist, “This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes!”

But we must now ask ourselves in this Assembly, “Where do we go from here?” And more importantly, “How do we go from here?”

Section I

The Practical Headship of Christ

Zion Assembly is the Lord's church. Christ is the head of it, and fulfilling His sovereign will and purpose is our heart's desire and firm commitment. The apostle Paul said,

[Christ] is before all things, and by Him all things consist [are held together]. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence (Colossians 1:17-19).

Jesus is with the Father and Holy Spirit the one true God, for God eternally exists in a trinity of persons---Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. That's why we baptize *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* (Matthew 28:19). Jesus is the *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending . . . which is, and was, and which is to come, the Almighty* (Revelation 1:8). He is with the Father and Holy Spirit the One who says, *I am He: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Savior* (Isaiah 43:10-11). And again, *I am God, and there is none else* (45:21). Jesus has always existed in the bosom of God (John 10:30; 17:5). This is why the plural pronoun is used in the very beginning, for example, when God said, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness* (Genesis 1:26). Creation was the act of the Holy Trinity---the eternal Three-in-One.

The Lord spoke to me about two months ago when first beginning to think and pray for this address, and said, "I am the Head of the church." That seemed a little puzzling to me, since I felt the Lord knew that I fully believed that He is the head of the church, and all of us together in Zion Assembly have boldly confessed and proclaimed this truth in our *Abstract of Faith*. Still, His words---"I am the head of the church"---kept ringing in my mind for several days. Then suddenly I realized that what He was trying to get through to me is that His headship is often taken for granted among us, and consequently is not always being honored and practiced in our government and operations. This is really not something new, however; for we have historically in our tradition perverted the idea of Jesus' headship. Early on in our history, Jesus was perceived as having gone back to the Father in heaven, and in His "absence" the General Overseer and the church here on earth were understood to be in His place. This was a serious misinterpretation of the Scriptures, and indeed a popish concept. Consequently, it caused a lot of problems, contributing substantially to the disruptions in the church in 1919, 1923, and 1943.

The truth is that Jesus in His eternal deity never really "went away," and He has never been "out of the picture": for He is omnipresent and illimitable. Now let me show you a mystery. Even when Jesus ascended to the Father after His resurrection, He yet in His deity remained with the church. That's why He said, *I will never leave you nor forsake you!* Now listen to His words in John 3:13: *And no man has ascended up to heaven,*

but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And again after he ascended to the Father, He appeared to the apostle John through the Spirit. While under the power of this revelation, John wrote, I turned to see the voice that spoke to me . . . and saw seven golden candlesticks [which represented the seven churches in Asia]; and in [their] midst . . . one like unto the Son of God . . . and His countenance was as the sun shines in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His hand upon me, saying Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that lives . . . And, behold, I am alive for evermore (Revelation 1:12-18).

Now observe; ten days after He ascended back to the Father, He came back in the Holy Ghost and now dwells more intimately and efficaciously in the church, even more so than when He was here on earth in the flesh (1 Corinthians 2:1-14; 2 Corinthians 5:16). Neither did the Holy Ghost take Jesus' place. Listen to the words of Jesus in regard to the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

But now I go my way to Him that sent Me . . . [and] sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you . . . Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father has are Mine: therefore said I, He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you. A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father (John 16:5-7, 13-16).

These words, sure enough, puzzled the disciples (vv. 18-19); but when the Spirit came and filled them, then they understood; for the indwelling Spirit revealed Jesus' words to them. This is why the apostle Paul says, *No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost* (1 Corinthians 12:3), for it is the work of the indwelling Spirit to reveal to us the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-14).

Now see here; those who saw and knew Jesus in the flesh did not really see and know Him as the Son of God, for *no man can say Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost*---because *the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God* (v. 14). The natural man has eyes but cannot see, and ears but cannot hear (v. 9). The natural man only saw Jesus' natural

man; he could not discern that He was actually God in flesh---the only begotten Son of God! That's why Jesus said, *A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while and you shall see Me* (John 16:16). It was only when He went away to the Father and returned in the Spirit, that their eyes were fully opened! They not only now discerned that He was God in the flesh, but their ears and hearts were now opened to His doctrine. And thus their *sorrow was then turned into joy* (v. 20)!

Now behold, brethren; there is still a deeper and a more glorious revelation of Christ to be opened to us in this last days Zion; but we need a heart, a ready willingness, to follow His guidance and headship as we move deeper into the end-times. Every day I pray to know the Mind of Christ and for grace to obey and implement His will: and for divine wisdom to lead the church in the right direction. Time is indeed short and we must be diligent to do our Master's will! God forbid that any of us should say, *My lord delays His coming . . . And to begin to eat and drink with the drunken* (Mathew 24:48). Recall Jesus' sobering warning, *The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looks not for Him . . . And shall cut him asunder; and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: [where] there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth* (vv. 49-51).

Now listen to the apostle's prayerful wish for the church in his day: *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power . . . which He wrought in Christ . . . and set Him on His own right hand in heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion . . . And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all* (Ephesians 1:17-23).

We see then that the practical headship of Christ is in the work and gifts and manifestations of the Holy Ghost. For Jesus said, the Holy Ghost *shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you* (v. 15). And again, *He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear; that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come* (v. 13).

In consideration, I want to encourage us here to open our hearts and our worship services up to interventions of the Holy Ghost; and to seek for His gifts and manifestations in our midst. For *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty* (2 Corinthians 3:17): and where liberty is, there is salvation and victory and deliverance.

*Come, Holy Spirit, move on me,
By Your anointing, set me free.
Pour out new wine,
On this thirsty heart of mine,
Come, Holy Spirit, move on me.*

Section II

We are in the Midst of the End-times

There should be no question in the mind of any Spirit-filled and consecrated child of God that we are now in the very last days. The *parousia*---the coming of the Lord in the air, in the *rapture* (John 14:3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)---is imminent! All of the prophetic signs and warnings of Jesus and the apostles are now in sight. We are seeing them unfold daily before our eyes on television and through computer technology.

Jesus' words in Matthew 24 are being acted as we speak in the Middle East and northern Africa (in Syria, Iraq, Kurdistan, Israel, Palestine, Iran, Libya, Egypt, Ethiopia), and other strategic places around the world---China, Russia, Ukraine, Afghanistan, et al. It is true that Jesus' prophetic words in Matthew 24 may be more broadly interpreted and applied to events in the first century as well to some events in the Dark Ages, but vv. 29-31, 36-43 seem especially to include the time just before and after the Rapture. From this perspective, then, we may apply His prophetic words to Israel's national restoration in May 1948 and forward to His return in the last days in the clouds to "rapture away" His church. Further, some of His predictions (including those in Matthew 25) point to the Great Tribulation time and to His wrath and judgment which will be poured out upon the earth, followed by His return to earth with His church to defeat the Antichrist and His armies in the Battle of Armageddon. And finally the prophecy includes also the establishment of His kingdom on earth for a thousand years (Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-34, and compare with Revelation 19; 20).

Now Jesus gives several distinct signs and their consequences in Matthew 24, which the apostles make clearer in their epistles. But I feel impressed here to call your attention only to three signs in particular and their consequences. These should be sufficient to show how close we are to the fulfillment of all things; and this should in turn stir us to lay aside every weight and hindrance to fulfill the mission of the church and prepare ourselves for Jesus' imminent return.

1. Great religious deception

We are warned by Jesus and the apostles that the power of deception is going to be so great that only the revelation of Christ in the Holy Ghost and a consecrated lifestyle will be sufficient to keep believers true to Him as His coming draws ever closer (compare Matthew 24: 4--6, 11, 23-28 with 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8; 2 Peter 2; Jude 4-19; and Daniel 7; 11; 12). As we will notice more carefully in a moment, many in these last days will recant their testimony and lose their witness. Many will go after false christs and be pulled into the powerful current of antichrist, and will become “offended” by the “narrow way” that Christ has laid out for the church to follow.

2. Wars and rumors of wars

Jesus warning that there will be “wars and rumors of wars” (Matthew 24:6) brings to mind the prophecy in Ezekiel 38-39 of Gog, the chief prince of Meshech, and the great coalition of evil that will be formed to come against the land of Israel in an effort to defeat God’s eternal purpose. There are different views on the interpretation of the passage in regard to exactly who Gog and his followers are, and the time that this battle will take place. Some say Gog is Russia (or more particularly the Russian prince or leader), and that Russia will form a coalition with many of the Arab nations in the Middle East and come against Israel. Others teach that Gog and his armies are more or less representative or symbolic of evil in general in the world, and represents a worldwide coalition against Christ and the saints on earth in the very last days.

There are also different interpretations on when this passage will be fulfilled. Some say it is the Battle of Armageddon that will take place after the Rapture; others believe it will be fulfilled in our day before the Rapture? Personally, I am inclined to think, after having studied this passage for over forty years, that this coalition of forces may be speaking not of the final battle after the Rapture, but of a separate battle that may take place before the Rapture. Accordingly, we may see it fulfilled in our lifetime; and I have always favored the traditional view that Gog is probably Russia and that the nations and tribes joined with Gog are predominantly peoples in the Middle East and northern Africa.

Still, it does not seem necessary to hold to a strict interpretation in this regard; for either way---that is, whether it depicts a regional coalition in the Middle East or a global coalition of forces that may include China,

and whether it is speaking of a battle that will be fulfilled in our day before the Rapture or of one after the Rapture---it does not seem so important. For in any case, we are doubtlessly seeing the development of this prophetic scenario unfolding before our eyes in this present generation. The developments in the Middle East and the world in the last 60 years coincide with Jesus' prediction of *the beginning of sorrows* (v. 8). Interestingly, the Greek word here for *sorrow* signifies "birth pains" or "labor pains," and thus depicts "the sorrow of a woman in travail." The significance is that judgment is coming!

We may be sure that "wars and rumors of wars" will not cease finally until Christ returns to put down, once for all, all belligerence and rebellion of the ungodly against His will; establishes His glorious kingdom on earth; and rules with His church for a thousand years with a rod of iron (Jude 14-16; Revelation 12:5; 19:11-14; 20:4-7).

3. Lawlessness and Moral Degradation

Jesus said, "And because *anomia* shall abound the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12). The word *anomia* literally means "no law," but is translated 'iniquity' in the KJV and 'lawlessness' in most other translations. This iniquity or lawlessness here signifies in one sense religious deception; particularly acceptance of a system of moral values that stand in contradiction to the law of Christ. Judeo-Christian principles and the law of God revealed in the Bible, which have conditioned the thinking and development of Western Civilization for two thousand years, will be overturned in favor of a New World Order established by the spirit of antichrist! Now our Lord warns that this state of affairs will be discouraging and devastating to millions of professing Christians, and also to millions of genuine Christians who are not prepared for this deception, and have not fortified "against that day!" In fact, Jesus says, "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another" (v. 10). The word "offended" here in our KJV is translated from the Greek word, *skandalizo*. It implies that the great majority of the people in the world will change their traditional views on morality and follow the spirit of antichrist. Those who hold to traditional Christian values will then be marginalized and belittled; and, consequently, many then will be "shocked" by the developing situation and will become offended for having to stand alone on Jesus' teachings (compare Matthew 13:21). At that point (and I say that point in time is now), many will turn away from the truth and join in the false Ecumenical Movement, and become part of

the Great Prostitute Church system---MYSTERIOUS, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOIMNATIONS OF THE EARTH (Revelations 17:5)

Several of the apostles---Paul, Peter, and Jude, et al.---expand on Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24. But here only two references from the apostle Paul will be sufficient to emphasize the point; in fact, in one of these prophecies, Paul is actually only repeating what the Holy Ghost had been saying explicitly to the churches in his day.

Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

(Note: it may seem as if this prophecy is speaking of the Roman Catholic Church exclusively, but a couple of years ago I heard a speech on television by one of the leaders of the gay and lesbian movement, and she warned her followers not to rejoice too much about their recent victory in the California courts that allowed homosexuals to legally marry; for, said she, "after all, our ultimate goal is not to win the right to legally marry, but to do away with the institution of marriage altogether." Certainly the Roman Catholic teaching forbidding priests and nuns from marrying is a serious error and has occasioned incalculable corruption, but the gay and lesbian agenda to completely destroy marriage is blasphemous and the very epitome of lawlessness. It is antichrist!

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as

Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. (2 Timothy 3:1-8)

This prophecy by the apostle shows the collateral effects of the worldwide apostasy predicted; and, as we have seen in our own experience in recent years, even many in the church will “depart from the faith.” There is now widespread intolerance against traditional Christian values and practices; not only among unbelievers and pagans but also among professing Christians. The “falling away” spirit has caused weaker Christians to cower to social pressure and compromise traditional Christian teachings based on the authority of the Bible. So-called liberal “Christians” now boldly oppose moral values based on biblical authority. They cringe at fundamental truths like creationism over against the theory of evolution; they have forsaken the doctrine of the final authority of the Bible in favor of their own moral order (or disorder!). Jesus said, “Many shall be offended” and begin to betray and hate one another; that is, they will turn against those with whom they once had agreed, and with whom they once had fellowshiped on the basis of biblical teachings and values.

We have seen Jesus’ prophetic words in this passage fulfilled especially in the last two generations. Gradually, as the spirit of antichrist and worldliness has increased, those not firmly established upon Rock have become “shocked” (this is another implication of the word “offended” used in Matthew 24:10); they feel “scandalized” by Zion Assembly’s denunciation of homosexuality as a gross form of fornication and an abomination before the Lord; by our denunciation of divorce and remarriage; by our declaration that the theory of evolution is a lie; by our proclamation and witness of the power Gospel to deliver and keep believers from the dominion of sin! Jesus is not a sinning God, and He does not own a sinning people. He came to recreate sinners in His image!--to give them power over the world, the flesh, and the devil! Hear the bold proclamation of the apostle: *Sin shall not have dominion over you! And let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity!*

The world despises our doctrine that declares the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross to be the means (through faith) to regenerate and transform men into the image of God. In fact, they feel scandalized by our insistence that members of Christ’s body should teach and practice a lifestyle consistent with the character of God, including plainness and purity in dress, and truth and holiness in our walk “in this present world.” Look, you can’t talk your way to Heaven; you must walk your way to Heaven! Many today talk the talk, but they don’t walk the walk! Jesus

said many will say, *Lord, Lord*, but continue to walk crooked. Listen to the apostle: *There is now therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ, who walk . . . after the Spirit* (v. 1), and again, *Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh* (Galatians 5:16).

God's church is ruled by the Holy Ghost and the revelation of God's Word; but the great majority of professing Christians today are ruled by the consensus of their own opinions. They legislate their own laws, civil and religious, instead of judicially searching out and applying the laws of God revealed in Holy Scripture, substituting men laws in lieu of God's Word. This of course makes their organizations and fellowships no more than ecclesiastical democracies. But the Lord's church---His government on earth---is a theocracy. We are governed by the Scriptures and the Holy Ghost, not by the consensus of social opinion. We are ruled from above, not below; we bind and loose in the earth what has been bound and loosed in Heaven!

Section III

The Role of the Church in the Midst of the End-times

In regard to the identity and role of the church in the midst of these end-time events, Jesus said, we are a "city set on a hill" in the midst of the cities of men. We are a virgin bride in the midst of a world of harlots; a holy nation in the midst of secular political states; a "peculiar people" in the midst of a fallen race under the delusion of Satan. We are a redeemed people in the midst of an unredeemed world. The apostle Paul saw God's church as set apart from the Jews and the nations of the world, saying, *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles [nations], nor to the church of God* (1 Corinthians 10:32).

"Bad Guys" and "Good Guys"

Here is what I want us to grasp. There has arisen in recent years a manifest and gross evil in the world---a ruthless barbarism. We see it in the terrorist and Jihadist groups--- Hamas, Boca Haram, Al Qaeda, and now Isis. The Pentagon reported recently that there are now over 40 terrorist groups in the world, compared with only 17 in 2001. Now observe; over against these groups are western democratic nations and other nations who decry the barbarism of these radical groups. These nations are perceived as "good guys" over against the "bad guys," and they form coalitions [NATO, UN, et al.] to stop the "bad guys." But here is the powerful deception

that is affecting many Christians. For the “good guys”----while in some ways not as barbaric and ruthless as the “bad guys”---are still not part of God’s church nor His kingdom. The “good guys” make up what we call “civilization,” and thus are endeavoring to preserve the principles of political and religious freedom: but in the final analysis the “bad guys” and the “good guys” fall in the ditch together: for only those who accept Christ and are regenerated will be saved. Look, either one has the blood of the Lamb of God sprinkled over his doorpost, or else he is part of “Egypt.” That is the test! God says, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” The only hope for fallen man is the transforming power of the grace of God!

*Chiefest of sinners Jesus can save,
As He has promised so will He do;
O sinner, hear Him, trust in His word,
Then He will pass, will pass over you.*

Let me ask you, brethren, what is worse: to force women---as radical Islamists do under Sharia law---to wear burkas and submit to the bondage of an unjust and barbaric system of rule; or in the name of freedom and liberty, and, yes, even in the name of Christ, to encourage women to murder [abort] their babies; to go on dates naked with a person whom you have never met before; to sun-bath nude on public beaches; to have babies out of wedlock; to encourage divorce and remarriage; to defend and encourage homosexuality and same sex marriages; to participate in an ever-increasing pornography industry; to waste hard-earned money on lotteries and games of chance in gambling casinos; to legalize “recreational” drugs and prostitution; and fill the earth with profane and blasphemous words and ideas against the true and living God? What is worse to behead 500 children and make a public spectacle of them, or tear out of women’s wombs limb by limb 50 million of the unborn!

I know, of course, that Islam is antichrist and radical Islam is ruthless and terribly barbaric. And I am for supporting the United States, or any nation, in an effort to destroy ruthless barbarians: for God has given the political state “the sword” to do this very thing (Romans 13:1-7). But the moral apostasy in the United States and the western world today is also antichrist and terribly ruthless and pagan. The terror groups are antichrist in the sense that they deny the deity of Christ, the Son of God, and His saving power! They are therefore, “against Christ.” But the so-called civilized world is also antichrist in that it is developing a world system to “stand in the place of Christ.” My point is that we cannot look to the United States

or any civil nation for truth and righteousness. Our hope, brethren, must not be in the United States or any civil nation. As far as salvation and eternal life are concerned, we must look to Christ, the head of the church and King of the kingdom.

You see then, brethren, how important our doctrine of the Pre-millennial Second Coming of Christ is. The Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches (which compose together almost 2 billion professing Christians) are for the most part *a-millennial*, and most of the newscasters and commentators and prognosticators on television are either Roman Catholic or members of the World Council of Churches. And further, most of the leaders of the western world are either Roman Catholic or members of the World Council of Churches. Even most of the justices that sit on the Supreme Court of the United States are Roman Catholic.

This does not mean that we should not continue to pray for a revival in America and the world, and labor and use our influence toward this end. Indeed, we should. And we should support the civil state in promoting just and righteous causes. But we must wake up to the reality that the western world is at this very moment in the motion of accepting and developing an antichrist system---a New World Order. God's church must therefore stand on its own ground as His "holy nation"---and remain separated in spirit from the civil states in which we live. We are a "city set on a hill" called and ordained by the Lord to embody and manifest the light of Christ in a dark world (Exodus 19:5-8; 23:2; 1 Peter 2:9).

I notice also that we tend think in terms of "good guys" and "bad guys" in the United States in regard to our two-party political system. We are either democrats or republicans for the most part, and each party tends to blame all of the woes in America on the other party. And, thus, we often adopt a real affection for one party or the other, tending to see one party as being more or less angelic and the other as being of the devil. I was asked by one pastor not long ago in discussing this situation, "But Brother Phillips, isn't one party more right than the other, and cannot one nation be right and another wrong?" My answer was in turn in the form of a question. I asked, "Right in regard to what? The economy? Political issues? Civil rights? Big government over against little government? More taxes over against less taxes. A strict form of capitalism over against a moderate kind of capitalism? etc. Under these impressions, we tend to line up and be identified with either Rush Limbaugh or Jesse Jackson, with Newt Gingrich or Hillary Clinton, with Harry Reid or John Boehner. Now I will grant you that three of the persons just mentioned hold more conservative political views than the other three; but one would be hard

pressed to identify any of them with spirit and principles of the kingdom of God and teachings of Jesus Christ.

To be sure, one party or one nation may be more right on a certain issue than the another, yet on another issue the other party or nation may be more right. Uganda, for example, under the influence of evangelical preachers got a national law passed that made homosexuality a crime against God and the state, while the United States was at the same time rapidly attempting to make homosexuality normal and homosexual marriage legal. In this instance, Uganda was right and America wrong. Some nations have decried abortion, while America has embraced it! Again, in this instance America is wrong while these other nations are right. Historically, of course, America, with the exception of the stigma of slavery, was for over two hundred years a model of Christian principles and charity. This is why the decline of America today is such a calamity. It deeply grieves our spirit that freedom in America---which once signified freedom to serve God and to honor His Word---is now interpreted to mean the right to blaspheme God, rebel against His will and pervert His teachings.

In any case, my point is that we must in Zion Assembly resolutely resist going the way of America and the rest of the so-called civilized nations of the world, which are caving in to the spirit of antichrist! Our calling and mission is to get people saved and sanctified and baptized with the Holy Ghost, and joined together in one body of Christ to be ready for the coming of the Lord. After all, Christ is coming back for His church, not America nor Israel nor Nicaragua nor Kenya nor Thailand nor Haiti nor India nor any other civil nation. Our message is “Christ and Him crucified.” “Repent and believe the Gospel.” “Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven.” “Set your affections on things above”---“fix your eyes on things eternal.” Like Christ, we are here to save and disciple believers in the teachings of Christ, and to be instrumental in perfecting the church and presenting it to Him glorious in holiness (Ephesians 5:25-27). We are commissioned to go into all nations as ambassadors for Christ, not as ambassadors for the civil states in which we live. We represent a “holy nation” made up of believers from all over world who will soon be “caught up” to the Throne of God!

In the World but not of the World

Yes, we are momentarily *in* this world, but we are *not of* this world (John 17:11-19). Our primary citizenship is in Heaven! We should not therefore get too impassioned about temporal things---politics,

social issues, civil rights, etc. Hear the apostle, [*Let not the Christian entangle himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please [Christ]*] (2 Timothy 2:4). All of us here today are citizens of some particular political nation---Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Malawi, Nicaragua, Haiti, Thailand, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, United States, etc. But we should bear in mind that *all nations that forget God shall be turned into hell* (Psalm 9:17), and this includes America and every other nation!

The Rapture and Pre-Millennial Second Coming

Here we should be reminded that we teach and labor with expectations of the “Rapture” and “Pre-millennial Second Coming of Christ.” This is why we feel the urgency to hurry up to fulfill our mission to the nations---to proclaim the Gospel to every creature! Ninety-five percent of the professing Christian world are either post-millennial or a-millennial. Those who believe in the first view believe there will be a glorious 1000 years reign on earth before Christ returns; in the second view, there is no 1000 years reign at all: it is merely symbolic. Those who believe these doctrines are therefore not in any hurry to reach the world with the Gospel, for they believe the world is going to improve---to get better and better. Therefore, their immediate hope and expectation is not in the Rapture or Second Coming of Christ, but in their own abilities and good works to make the world a better place. In fact, they are looking for a “a man of peace” (a Christ substitute) to arrive on the scene of action in this world who will create a new world order and solve the world’s problems. They believe this New World Order will make this present world a paradise. Whereas we believe in Zion Assembly that divine wrath and judgment in the earth are imminent, and, therefore, we must hurry to publish the Gospel and to get people in “the Ark of safety.” We believe the world at this very moment is being powerfully deceived by Satan and is preparing to form a worldwide coalition against the sovereign lordship of Jesus Christ!

You see, then, brethren, how important our doctrine of the Pre-millennial Second Coming of Christ is. The Roman Catholic Church and World Council of Churches (which together compose almost 2 billion professing Christians) are for the most part a-millennial, and most of the newscasters and commentators and prognosticators on television are either Roman Catholic or members of the World Council of Churches. And further most of the leaders of the western world are either Roman Catholic or members of the World Council of Churches. Even most of the justices who sit on the Supreme Court of the United States are Roman Catholic.

We Should be Model Citizens

Lest we be misunderstood here, we do not teach that our members should not vote, nor that we should not go to Parent-teachers meetings in the public schools, nor that we should not write our congresswoman and elected officials to express our view on some particular issue. In fact, our ministers and members in Zion Assembly should be exemplary citizens eager to fulfill their social responsibilities. Indeed, we should use our prayerful influence and privilege to vote to encourage the nations in which we live to acknowledge and submit to the lordship of Christ and His teachings. But neither the United States nor any other civil nation will be transformed into the “light of the world” nor become the “city set on hill” that Jesus refers to in Matthew 5:14). We should therefore not get too impassioned about temporal things, nor get too involved in politics and civil affairs; that is, we should not get *entangled* in worldly matters. Our calling precludes us from getting caught up in political activism. Most especially we should be careful not to create divisions within the church over political and temporal issues. For men are converted through Spirit-filled prayers and the proclamation of the Gospel, not political and philosophical debates! We should focus therefore with a singular heart and vision on fulfilling the mission of the church in this world---to proclaim the Gospel; to evangelize the lost; to disciple believers; and to build up and perfect the church for Christ’s coming. This is our calling and divine vocation.

Stay Focused on the Church’s Mission

Now observe; while Jesus was predicting and describing the conditions of the world in the last days, He paused and said, *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, and then shall the end come* (Matthew 24:14). It was as if He was saying that while the world is doing what it must do, My church will be focused on the special mission that it must do namely, to preach the Gospel, baptize believers, make disciples, unify My people in one body, perfect the church, and warn unbelievers of Christ’s imminent return and the consequences of not knowing Him! We must “set our hands to the plow” and not look back; nor be distracted by things to the right or left, but “look right on!” Farmers used to put blinders on plow horses so they would not be distracted and thus plow straight furrows. The ministers of Zion Assembly should also remain consecrated and to fix their minds on fulfilling the work of the church’s mission in this world. This is why we are depicted as “oxen” by the apostle, for we must be focused on “treading out the corn.”

God's Church Stands on its Own Foundation

God's church stands on its own foundation---Christ; she has her own agenda set by the Lord; her own mission in the world; and her own aims and goals; and thus her members all pull together in the same harness! This is why God's people were forbidden under the Law to plow with an ox and an ass together (Deuteronomy 22:10); for it invites confusion and prevents the church from fulfilling her mission in the world. An ox and an ass can't agree and pull together, for they have different natures! So also Christians and sinners don't agree, and consecrated Christians don't agree with so-called liberal "Christians." For "What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols?" Paul refers to the passage in Deuteronomy in regard to the ox and ass in order to counsel believers not to marry unbelievers: because such a marriage almost always ends in tragedy (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). The world at this very moment is in the motion of forming one world government with one world religion; and ethnic Jews and lukewarm Christians, along with the heathen and pagans---all those blinded by the power of Satan---are marching in step to the sound and rhythm of the world's drum roll. But Zion Assembly is marching to a sound from Heaven. We are getting our marching orders from our great Captain, the Lord Jesus. We do not run with the crowd (Exodus 23:2, Psalm 1:1-3; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17)! We are a united people---a holy army for Christ. Our training manual and law book is the Bible!

Howbeit We Speak Wisdom among Them Who are Perfect

Recently during a sickness, I watched the News on television for several hours a day for several days. I watched especially CNN, FOX, and HLN, and sometimes MSNBC. They reported on the riots in Ferguson, Missouri in connection with the killing of a young black man, Michael Brown, by a white police officer; the war between Hamas and Israel and the complicated situation that exists between the Palestinians and Hamas and Israel; the rapid rise and aggression of the militant Jihadist group named Isis in Syria and Iraq, and the implications of Isis' vision of a worldwide Caliphate state. The networks covered also the complicated situation that exists between Syria, Iraq, Kurdistan and Isis and other Jihadists groups, which is all the more complicated by the irreconcilable differences between Sunni and Shiite Muslims. The coverage included also the aggression of Russia and the confrontation of Russia and Ukraine; the recent aggressions of China, etc. And all the networks of course interviewed and questioned

the so-called “experts” in each of their reports---namely, military generals and colonels, “brilliant” national political leaders in the likes of Harry Reid, Nancy Pelosi, John Kerry, and Hilary Clinton, and social and civil activists like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, and of course young university professors and lawyers, men and women between 25-40 years of age who profess to know all about war and complicated world events; for, after all, they took several courses in college on international studies to get their doctorate degrees.

The Scriptures make Us Wise unto Salvation

What became obvious to me after a few days of almost unbearable listening was that all of these experts failed to see the big picture, and thus interpreted the situations in the world piecemeal and on the basis of momentary fixes. The problem is that they have embraced worldviews that are faulty at their core---worldviews that to one degree or other interpret the world from a humanistic point of view, mixed with personal prejudices influenced by political, social, economic, academic, and racial affiliations. And therein is the big difference between the world’s interpretation and solution for the global problems in the world today and our interpretation and solution in Zion Assembly. We see and understand the world from God’s point of view revealed in the Holy Scriptures, that is, we see the prophetic picture already predestined by the prescient mind of Christ. Again, we know the end from the beginning, because it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. *The Holy Scriptures . . . make you wise unto salvation* (2 Timothy 3:15). This is why David could say, *I understand more than the ancients*. He was not boasting in his own wisdom but in the wisdom of the prophetic Word of God (Psalm 119:100). We know that the situation in the Middle East today began in the house of Abraham in the contention between Sarah and Hagar (Genesis 21:9-21; Galatians 3:16, 29; 4:28-31)--between the “son of promise” over against the “son of the bondwoman,” and that this contention has never ceased. It was embodied in Isaac and Ishmael and in Jacob and Esau. Deeper still, it may be seen in the contention between Abraham and Lot---the latter having afterward “pitched his tent toward Sodom” and became apparently the progenitor of the Moabite and Ammonite peoples that dwelled south of the Dead Sea. You can follow the contention between the plan of Jehovah and the carnal plan of man through history to the rise of Islam in the seventh century, to the Crusade wars over Jerusalem in the 11th-13th centuries, and on up to the bitter contentions and wars between Muslims and Jews and liberal “Christians” and their sympathizers in the world today.

Gog and his Armies

But we see also in Zion Assembly that the core problems in the world today are in the final analysis between Christ and the Dragon and his two great “beasts” in the Apocalypse---the Antichrist and the False Prophet--and also the developing Great Harlot Church (see Revelation 13-18). We see presently the prophetic prince, Gog, and his tribes emerging in the north and east and south of Israel. But here is what the “wise men” of this world fail to see: Russia and the atheists and also the unregenerate “Christians” and idolatrous peoples in the Middle East and elsewhere are being driven by the spirit of the Dragon and the beasts and the developing false religious system in the world today. But actually the Dragon himself and the two beasts and the apostate church are on a course set by God Himself. Satan and the Antichrist and the blind religious leaders of today are only following a plan ordained by Jehovah. Listen to the prophetic Word:

Thus says the Lord God; Behold I am against Gog . . . I will turn you back, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you forth, and all your army . . . All of them clothed with all sorts of armor, even a great company with bucklers and shields . . . Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them . . . Gomer, and all of his bands, the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all of his bands: and many people with them . . . After many days you will be visited: in the latter years you will come in the land [of Israel] that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many . . . out of the nations . . . You shall ascend and come like a storm, you will be like a cloud to cover the land, you, and all your bands, and many people with you . . . it will come to pass that at that same time will things come into your mind, and you will think an evil thought: And you will say, I will go up to the land of [Israel]; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey . . . To carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil . . . But in that day when my people Israel dwells safely . . . You will come from your place of the north parts, you, and many people with you . . . a great company and mighty army . . . it will be in the latter days, and I will bring you against My land . . . And I will be sanctified in you, O Gog, before their eyes . . . And it will come to pass when Gog shall come against the land of Israel . . . That My fury will come up in My face. For

in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking [earthquake] in the land . . . And the mountains will be thrown down . . . And every wall will fall to the ground . . . I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains . . . Every man's sword will be turned against his brother. And I will [intercede] against [Gog and his armies] and bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed. I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on many peoples who are with him , flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and the eyes of many nations then shall know that I am the Lord (Ezekiel 38:3-23).

This prophecy goes on in the next chapter to show that the slaughter of the armies in this invasion against Israel will be so great that five out of every six or 83% of the armies (Ezekiel 39:2) will be destroyed and fall upon the mountains of Israel, and the “birds of prey” [buzzards, hawks, ravens, et al.] and beasts of the field will feed upon the carcasses; and it will take “seven months” to bury the dead of Gog and his armies. Israel will set aside a huge tract of land for them in the Transjordan for a graveyard and call it the Valley of Hamon Gog [literally, “valley of the hordes of Gog”] (v. 11). And Israel will go out and burn the weapons of these invading armies for seven years and they will “plunder those who had plundered them, and pillage them who had pillaged them.”

Zion Assembly's Worldview

Now observe; we are seeing before our eyes today God's end-times plan unfolding. Even as we speak, the various terror groups and Jihadists are fighting, even among themselves. And when they are gathered together under Gog to fight against Christians and the land of Israel, God will turn them against themselves, like he did in the days of King Jehoshaphat (see 2 Chronicles 20:22-23). This is what the world's “wise men”---statesmen, political and military experts, lawyers, academic professors, etc.---fail to see. They interpret world events from their local and regional settings, and from a present or immediate point of view disconnected from God's prophetic plan. They don't see the big picture---the prophetic picture revealed in the Scriptures. The “good guys” fail to understand that if they do in fact get together and defeat Isis, that the spirit of Isis will simply rise again in another Jihadist group. For the spirit of Isis is an ancient spirit that will not finally be defeated until God's plan is fulfilled in these very lasts days. Defeat Al Qaeda and Isis comes forth. Defeat the Muslim

Brotherhood and Hamas comes forth. The “wise men” on CNN, FOX, HLN, MSNBC and the celebrated radio gurus of today cannot grasp the fact that it is the Dragon and the spirit of Antichrist that are behind these groups and that they will not finally be defeated except by Christ and the church at the Second Coming (Revelation 13:1-8; 20:8).

Yes, we know in God’s church the end from the beginning by the light of God’s prophetic Word. We don’t claim to be able to identify presently every detail of every prophecy, but we see the big picture so “that day” shall not catch us unaware and “overtake us as a thief!” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-9). We see the ancient coalition of nations beginning to form before our eyes today on television, and we may be sure according to Ezekiel 38-39 and many other prophecies that before the crisis in the Middle East and Eurasia is over that Gomer (symbolic probably of Indo-European peoples located north of the Black Sea), Russia, Persia (modern-day Iran), Ethiopia (ancient Cush), Libya (ancient Put), Turkey or part of Turkey, Iraq (ancient Babylon), Syria, Sheba (Yemen), and various ancient tribes will come against the land of Israel, and God will intervene and there will be a great slaughter, and Jehovah (not Allah nor Krishna nor Shiva nor Satan nor Man) will be glorified!

Let me encourage you then, brethren, pay more attention to your overseers and pastors and teachers in Zion Assembly and less to the world’s unregenerate “experts” and false prophets.

Where is the wise? . . . Where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For the world by wisdom knew not God . . . Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men . . . [And] God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise . . . that according as it is written, He that glories let him glory in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:20-31).

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them who are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to [nothing]: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they know it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:6-10)

The “fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom,” not the wisdom of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton! Hear the prophet: *Out of Zion shall forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem* (Isaiah 2:4), and the apostle: *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things that you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them; And that from a child you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ* (2 Timothy 3:13-15). And again, *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known [through] the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which He purchased in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Ephesians 3:10-11).

And again,

According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world . . . In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; [And] having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will: That we should be to the praise of His glory . . . in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, nto the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:4-14).

Section IV

How Do We Go from Here?

I mentioned in the *Introduction* of this Address that we must in Zion Assembly answer the questions, “Where do we go from here?” and more important why, “How do we go from here to reach the ‘mark?’ I feel a great burden and inspiration to address these questions in this Assembly and to give the church my understanding.

The answer to the first question is rather simple: we know what “the mark” is, and so therefore we must simply press forward until we

cross the finish line---until we complete our divine mission. I asked Pastor Bruce Sullivan to address the question---“Where do we go from here”---in a message in the *Voice of Zion* in April of this year, and I thought he covered the subject well. But I’m concerned at this point about our knowledge and ability in regard to “How” we should carry out our mission and proclaim our message to the nations. We must prepare ourselves to be able to minister effectively and successfully.

The Biblical Order of Ministry

A key passage that informs us in regard to the biblical order of ministry is Ephesians 4:11-16:

And he gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Three points are especially noteworthy in grasping the essential message in this passage. *First*, the word “perfecting” in v. 12 is derived from the Greek word *katartismos* which in turn is derived from *katartizo*. This word signifies to “equip,” “train,” “arrange,” “fit,” “adjust,” “mend,” “repair,” etc. *Second*, it is the saints who are to be equipped, adjusted, trained, mended, repaired, taught and fitted to do the work of the ministry. *Third*, it is the overseers and pastors-teachers who are to do the equipping and training of the members to do the “work of the ministry.”

I don’t believe we can overemphasize how important it is to understand the significance of this divine order in the church. This is God’s plan and method to enable us to fulfill our mission in the world. The work of the ministry is given to the saints---the members of the church; the equipping and training of the saints is the work and responsibility of the overseers and pastors-teachers.

I am convinced that if we can grasp the meaning and implications of these instructions, and conform ourselves to this divine order, that we

will begin to see phenomenal growth. Failing to understand this passage, and some others that correspond to it in the New Testament, is probably why we have never really excelled in our history in fulfilling the church's mission. I mean, after all, even if we add up the members of all of the groups that claim Christian Union in 1886 for their origin, there are less seven million members. That is less than one person for every thousand persons on earth today, and the ratio is still less if we calculate back to 1886.

Interestingly, we came closer between 1908 and 1920 in putting into practice the divine plan for ministry revealed in Ephesians 4:11-13 than we have at any time since then. It is fairly obvious that the reason for our success in those early years was because we depended and leaned more on the guidance and intercession of the Holy Ghost in our meetings and personal lives, and we were more free and open in our worship, and consequently also less judgmental and rigid in the way we presented the Gospel message; whereas, later on we tended to become more creedal (29 Teachings!) and legal and exclusive in our thinking. And this in turn caused us to become a little uppity and arrogant and narrow. We tended to hold the saints of God in other Christian organizations at arm's length because they did not understand and hold to all of our peculiarities---because they did not look and act exactly like us.

Now I am about to say some things "not lawful for a man to utter"--things that may sound a little alarming to some of you---but if you will be patient and fair-minded and hear me out, I believe you will see that my counsel is biblical and according to divine wisdom. Looking back, it is obvious to me that our turn toward legalism and being judgmental was a costly mistake and certainly not in keeping with the teachings and practices of Jesus and the apostles. In fact, this mindset was quite contrary to their teachings and practices.

“A New Impetus”

Last year I raised this issue in the Annual Address in calling for a "new impetus" in our approach to ministry, and I believe we have made a little progress in this direction; but we are far from really breaking through into the kind of outreach and growth that the Lord desires to give us, especially the kind that the prophet envisioned.

Sing, O barren, you that did not bear; break forth into singing, cry aloud . . . for more are the children of the desolate than the children

of the married wife . . . For you will break forth on the right hand and on the left; and your seed shall inherit the Gentiles . . . Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of your habitations: spare not, lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes (Isaiah 54:1-3).

Again,

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burns. And the Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory: and you will be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. You will also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You will no more be termed Forsaken; neither will your land any more be termed Desolate: but you will be called Heph-zihai, and your land Beulah: for the Lord delights in you, and your land will be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so will your sons marry you: and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so will your God rejoice over you (Isaiah 62:1-5).

And again,

Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you . . . And the Gentiles will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together; they come to you . . . Then you will see, and flow together, and your heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto you, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto you (Isaiah 60:1-5).

Ministering in Love and Wisdom

I am convinced that in order for us to fulfill these wonderful and thrilling prophecies, we must minister according to the instructions and practices that Jesus and the apostles taught us and exemplified in their ministries. I assigned several subjects for our overseers and pastors to preach in this Assembly to help us see that we must reach out and minister in love and wisdom and gentleness in order to see the inflow and growth

that we so much desire to see.

I want here to offer a couple of illustrations to show how we should minister. First we must genuinely love people. And this love---the love of Christ in us toward them---will basically condition how we relate and minister to them. While Jesus, of course, never compromised truth and the message of the church, yet He delivered it with great love and wisdom. He sat and ate with sinners; ministered in the marketplaces [malls and Walmart]; took time to witness and minister openly to the Samaritan woman at the well; gently and lovingly ministered to the woman caught in the very act of adultery, and forgave her; and, significantly, at the same time reproved the legalists and hardliners in the Jewish church. His message was not a set of propositions---like we might see in a Declaration of Faith or an *Abstract of Faith*---but anointed explanations of the Gospel presented in the form of parables, illustrations, allegories, word pictures, similes, analogies, etc. He was not rigid and blunt, but loving and wise. *For he that wins souls is wise* (Proverbs 11:30). Recall the words of James, Jesus' brother, who spoke much about divine wisdom over against human wisdom: he said, *Let him know, that he who converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins* (James 5:20); and Paul's wise counsel to the Corinthians:

For though I be free all men, yet I have made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became a Jew; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without the law, as without the law (being not without the law to God, but under the law of Christ) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I might be partakers thereof with you (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

And where did Paul get this great wisdom and gracious congeniality? From our Lord! Listen to his words to the Romans: *We then who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me . . . Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus . . .* (Romans 15:1-5). Read also the rest of this

passage, for it shows that his aim is to win the Gentile world to Christ!

Now note what the prophet says concerning Jesus' ministry and how He in great love and wisdom ministered to people.

Behold my servant, whom I will uphold; my elect, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him: he will bring forth judgment to the Gentiles . . . A bruised reed will He not break, and the smoking flax will He not quench: He will bring forth judgment unto truth (Isaiah 42:1-3).

One who is already weak and leaning on a bruised reed should be assisted and supported, not further wounded or crippled (that is, don't knock the props out from under them); and where there is the smallest glimmer of hope (represented in the "smoking flax"), we should try to reignite the fire--to built up and encourage what remains of faith, not quench it.

We could cite many more passages here that support the need to modify our approach to ministry, particularly in regard to how to minister to unbelievers and to saints who are entangled in other religious organizations which do not teach the whole truth. But here I feel led to simply do what the Lord says in Isaiah 1:18: *Come, let us reason together.*

Not all Christians are Equally Enlightened

It is important to understand that not all Christians are equally enlightened in regard to the teachings of Christ and the apostles. Some have more light than others (Acts 18:24-26; Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13). This is why we should be careful to "[receive] him that is weak in the faith" (Romans 14:1) and by no means "set him at nought" (v. 10), that is, do not look down on him or hold him in contempt. It is unwise and counter-productive to judge every man by the light we have; and this is true in regard to divorce and remarriage; the use of tobacco; the wearing of jewelry and adornments and cosmetics; and other teachings and practices peculiar to us. Not everyone has the light on these teachings that we do in Zion Assembly. See here; a sinner is first convicted of his sin and feels "godly sorrow," then he repents and is reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 7:10); and afterward he is gradually illuminated to understand all of Jesus' teachings. He must be taught by the church and guided by the Spirit into all truth (cf. Proverbs 4:18; John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 18:24-26; 1 Corinthians 8:7; 1 Peter 2:2); and as he walks in the light, he will grow up in Christ and be perfected (Ephesians 4:11-16). There is first the dawn and afterward

the brightness of the noon-day sun (Song of Solomon 6:10); first the babe in Christ, then the adult (Matthew 18:3; 1 Peter 2:2). So a sinner who is divorced and remarried may repent and be converted, but it may be days or months or even years before he or she truly and fully realizes that his/her marriage is not scripturally valid and ordained by the Lord.

And what we have said here in regard to divorce and remarriage is true also in many cases in regard to the use of tobacco, the wearing of jewelry and gaudy attire, and other practices that are contrary to modesty and a sober, biblical lifestyle. The newborn babe in Christ simply may not have the light on these things, and will be illuminated only in God's time by the Scriptures and the Holy Ghost. Until that time, their judgment must be left up to the Lord--*for them who are without God judges, but [we] judge them who are within [the church]* (1 Corinthians 5:12-13). It is true that the church is instrumental in leading men into greater light and truth--as Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos--but, still, true revelation with spiritual conviction is essentially the work of the Holy Ghost (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 12:3); otherwise our efforts are in vain.

Understanding the Nature of Sin

We need to understand the nature of sin and how God judges sin, so that we might judge like God. Jesus said, *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment* (John 7:24). We hold in Zion Assembly more or less to the Wesleyan view that sin is willful disobedience and rebellion against God and His commandments; so that, accordingly, we are not eternally accountable for what we do not know. Certainly, we must seek to know the whole counsel of God; but again, this is a growing process. Understanding this is important, for it will help prevent us from being legalistic, narrow-minded, and judgmental! Study the following Scriptures:

1. James 4:17---*He that knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin.*
2. Luke 12:46-48---*And that servant who knew His master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to His will, will be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, will be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask more.*

3. John 9:41---*If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.*
4. Romans 14:14---*There is nothing unclean of itself.*
5. Hebrews 10:26---*For if we sin willfully after we have come to the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins.*

Now lest we be misunderstood, we are not advocating that we take believers into the church who use tobacco, wear jewelry, or have more than one living wife or husband, etc. For before a candidate is received into membership, he or she should be counseled and be agreed with us in our interpretation of Jesus' and the apostles' teachings. But some believers need time to critique our interpretation and to pray until they can see "eye to eye" with us (Isaiah 52:8); and, ultimately, they must be convinced by the Spirit. Until that time, unless they manifest works that are plainly sinful and ungodly, we should respect their Christian testimony and pray for them without any rash pre-judgment. And, although we have not entered into covenant union with them---that is, have not incorporated them into the body---we can worship and fellowship with them to the extent of the light they have in Christ. Remember Jesus' answer to the Disciples who forbade a man to cast out devils in His name because he was not in full fellowship with the church. Jesus said, *Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me. For who is not against us is on our part* (Mark 9:38).

Section V

“Let Us Rise Up and Build”

Joash was seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem . . . And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest . . . And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded to repair the house of the LORD. And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year; and see that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened it not. And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for the

tabernacle of witness? For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim. And at the king's commandment they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD. And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD the collection that Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness. And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end. Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance. And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the LORD. So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it. And when they had finished it, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, even vessels to minister, and to offer withal, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada. (2 Chronicles 24).

I selected this passage to illustrate two important points: first, to emphasize that God's church in history and prophecy has fallen on several occasions and has had to be restored. This was the understanding of our forefathers and foremothers when they came out of the common denominations of their day and set in order Christian Union on August 19, 1886, and this is our view now in Zion Assembly. We believe the restoration view of the church gave divine approval to their actions in 1886 and again in 1923, and that it justified our actions in 2004. Interestingly, the two largest religious organizations that claim to have roots in the work of R. G. Spurling and Christian Union in 1886---Church of God and Church of God of Prophecy---no longer hold to a restoration view of the church and consequently have accepted the "invisible church" myth; and this inevitably has led them to freely admit that their visible organizations are no more than common denominational structures.

The Church is God's Visible Government in the Earth

It is not my purpose here to show the inherent fallacies and self-contradictions in the doctrine of an "invisible" or "spiritual church" (for

we have proven this adequately elsewhere in our literature), nor to defend our restoration interpretation of the church in history and prophecy. We will say simply here that we believe the church has fallen on several occasions in history and has had to be reorganized and restored under new administrations; or, to put it another way, the church has died and has needed to be brought to life again on more than one occasion. We have sufficiently proven by Scripture and logic that there is simply no such thing as an “invisible church” or “spiritual church.” God’s church is a visible and universal body formed by a covenant to keep and obey God’s Word (cf. Exodus 19:5-8; 24:7-8; John 17:6, 8, 14; Acts 2:40-42, e.g.); and when the church falls, it can be restored formally only on the basis of a covenant (cf. 2 Kings 23:2-3; 2 Chronicles 23:16, e. g); for it is Christ’s *ekklesia*, authorized and empowered to bind and loose in the earth what God has bound and loosed in heaven!

The second reason I selected this passage is because that in the days of King Joash and Jehoiada the priest, and under their direction, the people of God committed themselves to restore the House of God and adopted a financial plan to complete this noble task. This financial plan was a modified version of Moses’ plan to build the tabernacle for the “church in the wilderness.” But before we look at Joash’s financial plan to restore the House of God, we should noticed how apostate the church had become under the seductive powers and machinations of Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel and King Ahab.

The Era of Wicked Athaliah

After a glorious restoration of the church under good King Asa and his son, King Jehoshaphat, the rule of the kingdom fell to Jehoram, the firstborn son of Jehoshaphat. But unlike his father and grandfather, Jehoram ruled in wickedness. He murdered his brothers and “strengthened himself with the sword” (2 Chronicles 21:2-4). Much of Jehoram’s wickedness can be explained by the fact that he married Athaliah, whom the Scripture calls “that wicked woman.” Now this woman was every bit as wicked and treacherous as her infamous mother, Jezebel. Without going to deep into this fascinating era in the history of the church, suffice it to say that Athaliah was the “power behind the throne” for several years in Judah: eight years during Jehoram’s reign, then after he died (having suffered from a horrible disease in his bowels inflicted upon him by the Lord), she ruled vicariously through her son, Azariah [or Ahaziah] who died after one year also by the providence of God. It is said by the prophet that “[Azariah] also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother

was his counselor to do wickedly” (22:3). The problem with Azariah was that, like his mother and grandmother, he ran up against Jehu whom God had ordained as a mighty warrior to execute judgment upon the house of Ahab (vv. 7-9).

Athaliah proceeded to set up altars to Baal throughout the mountains of Judah and, like her mother, seduced the servants of God to commit fornication and to worship Baal. She even destroyed part of the House of God in order to construct temples to Baal, and took the “holy vessels and dedicated things” of the Temple to magnify and adore Baal. Moreover, after the death of Azariah, Athaliah killed all the “seed royal” (or thought she had!) to usurp the throne of David.

She attempted to overthrow the plan of God by leaving no royal seed in the line of David. What a foolish woman---to think that she could overturn the plan of God! God had made a covenant with David that his seed would be preserved right on up to the time of Jesus, “the son of David,” who was foreordained to become the Head of the church and King of the kingdom! What Athaliah did not know was that Azariah’s half-sister, Jehoshabath, the daughter of King Jehoram by a secondary wife, had stolen Azariah’s baby, Joash, and hid him for six years in a bedchamber in the House of God to await the proper time to announce that he was the true heir to the throne of David (vv. 10-12). Now this Jehoshabath had married the high priest, Jehoiada, who entered into a covenant with many of the chief elders and military leaders of Judah (23:1-3; 2 Kings 11:17) to achieve this end---to arrange for Joash to be installed on the throne in Judah, and for Athaliah to be executed before she could enter the Temple (vv. 12-15; 2 Kings 11:20).

The King’s Financial Plan

It was thus that Joash at seven years of age was set on the throne of Judah, and was tutored and guided by the wisdom and godliness of Jehoiada, the high priest (though neither Joash nor Jehoiada were perfect before the Lord). And after Joash came of age, God put it in his heart to “repair the house of God” (24:4); and to finance this project he commanded the priests to make a chest and to bore a hole in the lid of it, and to set it by the right side of the altar in the Temple (v. 8; Kings 12:9). Joash also modified Moses’ financial plan in that he made the offering to be a freewill offering and took special precautions to insure that the money would be used wisely and solely to restore the House of God.

Now the result of this restoration was that the people tore down the

temples of Baal, destroyed the altars of idolatry and broke in pieces the images of Baal, and at the same time reestablished the Law of God and true worship in the House of God. And “all the people of the land rejoiced.” Then the people gave freely and brought their offerings abundantly and put them in the chest according to the king’s commandment.

An Atonement Offering

Now let me impress upon our minds in conclusion here that this offering was an “atonement ransom” for their souls, that is, according to the law of Moses they were purchasing their own redemption (Exodus 30:11-16). You see, then, the significant difference here in the offering that we are about to give to the Lord to rebuild His House. We are still calling it “Atonement Money” (v. 16) or a “Ransom Price,” but we know that it was Christ, and Christ alone, who purchased our salvation on the cross at Golgotha and gave Himself a ransom for us (Mark 10:45). God laid the sins of us all on Him and He suffered and died in our place. He was beaten and mocked and derided for our redemption and healing. To God be all the glory! So our giving here this morning is a Thanksgiving Offering for Jesus’ atonement, and for all that He has done for us.

Now here is my challenge to you this morning: How much is your redemption worth to you? What is it worth to you that Christ has so marvelously and wonderfully intervened for you a thousand times since He saved you?---in miraculous and compassionate interventions, healings and deliverances? Many of us here today have prospered and have been abundantly blessed in many ways. What are these blessings worth to you?

As I thought on this offering some weeks ago, my first impression was that Dale and I would lead the way and give \$2000, one thousand for each of us. I thought this would represent a substantial sacrifice for us--proportionate to our financial status and budget--and make a fair show of our gratitude to the Lord. Then I felt a strong impression in my spirit that we should give \$5000. Now, believe me, Dale and I really don’t have this to give. But then something came over me and I broke out in tears. I began to worship the Lord, and the Spirit began to say through me, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for You have created all things, and for Your pleasure they are and were created!” Then as I began to weep still more deeply, I cried out, “all that I have belongs to Thee, O Lord, and all that I am is because of You!” So I spoke to Dale about what the Lord had impressed upon me, and, as always, she said, “If that is what you feel impressed to do, let’s do it.” And later she said, “The

Lord is worthy: let's build Him a tabernacle!"

I want you to take a moment here to think about your gift to offer up to Jesus today for the great Ransom that He paid for your Redemption. What is His death and sacrifice worth to you? What are the hundreds of gracious interventions that He has made in your behalf worth to you? He gave His life that you might have life! He was beaten and reviled for your healings! I call on you here today to give liberally and sacrificially. Jesus said, *Give, and it shall be given unto you good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over . . . For with the same measure that you mete withal it shall be measured to you again* (Luke 6:38).

“Will a Man Rob God?”

Let me ask you if you think the Lord feels any different today than He did in the days of the prophet Haggai, when He had brought His people out Captivity in Babylon. You recall the story. The Lord desired for his people to build Him a house---to restore the Temple; but they rather went about building themselves “ceiled houses”---beautiful and expensive houses--and spent the money with which God had blessed them on themselves. And this provoked the Lord to reprove the people and to warn them of His retribution. Listen to what the Lord says through the prophet,

Is it time for you, O you, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and [My] house lie waste? Now therefore . . . Consider your ways. You have sown much, and bring in little . . . And he that earns wages [puts] it into a bag with holes . . . You look for much, and lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? Says the Lord. Because of My house that is waste, and you run every man to his own house (Haggai 1:2-9).

I hesitate to say here what the Lord has impressed upon me to say to this Assembly in regard to this offering; but I must obey the Lord. I believe this is a fearful moment for some: because the Lord has moved me to admonish you about the seriousness of “robbing God.” Listen to the prophet Malachi who also prophesied during the time that the Temple was in disrepair after the Babylonian Captivity. *Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings* (Malachi 3:8-10). Now listen carefully to the judgment that the Lord pronounces. *You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed Me.* The Lord then calls on the people to give of their substance so that *there may be meat in My house*, and He warns them that if they resist His will, *I*

will allow the devourer to destroy what you have!

The final item that I have been impressed upon to bring to your attention is in regard to Joash's financial plan to rebuild God's house, namely, that the offerings were taken up "day by day" and also "from year to year" by "all Israel" until the house of God was "repaired and completed" and "set in its state" (2 Chronicles 24:5-13). Now listen to the divine record: "they restored the house of God to its original condition and reinforced it" (v. 12, NKJV).

A Vision to Restore All

Before the work began to go down in our former fellowship, we had built a great Tabernacle that seated over 10,000; an impressive Bible college that sat on 100 acres of land; a modern Publishing House; and an ultra-modern Headquarters Office building. But as the people lost their vision and began to "fall away" from the faith, the Lord withdrew His favor. And the result was that the Bible college was closed, the Publishing House went down, and then the Tabernacle was destroyed. It was all a reproach and a manifest judgment from the Lord.

It was these conditions in part that compelled us in April 2004 to reorganize the church under a new administration. Now this is our vision in Zion Assembly: we have committed ourselves to restore the House of God, and I believe this commitment should include not only the restoration of the spirit, doctrine and fellowship of the church, but the physical facilities that we had labored so hard to build up, because these facilities are more or less necessary in order for us to have a place to worship and to minister effectively.

Let us then, brethren, "Rise up and Build!" We have restored the Headquarters Office facilities and we have the small beginnings of a publishing plant; now let us build us a Tabernacle and a Bible College! We have devised a plan to build the Bible College based on Elisha's plan recorded in 2 Kings 6:1-5---a plan we presented two years ago and since have raised \$160,000 toward making it become a reality. This is what we have designated *The Prophets' Plan*, and we are preparing brochures this year for our pastors and churches to use in boosting this plan in their communities. I believe there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, out there who will help us build a Bible College. They just need to be contacted, informed, and encouraged.

Now in order to build a Tabernacle, I am proposing that we receive an offering on a regular basis to finance this vision, using for a pattern Moses' plan in Exodus 30:12-16 to build the Tabernacle in the Wilderness,

and King Joash's modification of that plan recorded in 2 Kings 12 and 2 Chronicles 24. We could call this *The King's Plan*. In order to give "day by day" and "year to year" toward this fund, we simply need to incorporate it as part of the church's regular financial system. The pastor or duly appointed Tabernacle booster could promote and receive once a month a Tabernacle Fund offering. We could design and make offering boxes to be displayed in the local churches in conspicuous places, and on the boxes write the inscription, "Tabernacle Fund---Let Us Rise Up and Build," or "There shall be a Tabernacle" (an allusion to Isaiah 4:6), or something to that effect. Then as the funds come in each month, the money can be counted by the local treasurer and sent into Headquarters with the regular monthly report. Of course, the pastors and workers will need to catch the vision, expect great things, and zealously boost the Tabernacle Fund from time to time for it to be substantial.

If this plan meets with the approval of the Assembly Business Committee, the committee then can draw up a resolution to present to the Assembly for consideration and approval.

May the Lord continue to bless and prosper our undertakings as we seek to fulfill the mission of the church. Amen.



International & Regional Appointments 2014-2015

International Staff

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Presiding Bishop..... | Wade H. Phillips |
| Assistant Presiding Bishop/Business Manager..... (special one year appointment) | E.A. McDonald |
| World Mission Secretary..... | Scott Neill |
| Field Secretary..... | Sandraud Pierre |
| Field Secretary..... | Amos Agbonifo |
| Field Secretary..... | Boonyong Bureenok |
| Field Secretary..... | Miguel Garcia, Sr |
| Field Secretary..... | Danny Ramirez |
| General Treasurer..... | Cheryl McDonald |
| United States' Missions & New Fields Director..... | L.W. Carter |
| Communications/Media Ministries..... | Scott Neill |
| <i>Voice of Zion</i> Lay-out & Design/Office Assistant..... | Marie Crook |
| Shepherding Ministries Director..... | Rocky Dalton |
| School of Ministry Director..... | Bruce Sullivan |
| Ladies Ministries Director..... | Rosie Ramirez |
| Sunday School Director..... | Donna Pounders |
| Sunday School Literature Editor (Adult)..... | Todd McDonald |
| Youth Ministries Director..... | Miguel Garcia, Jr |
| Children's Ministries Director..... | Cheryl McDonald |
| Camping Coordinator/Advisor..... | Miguel Garcia, Jr. |
| <i>Voice of Zion/SYNC</i> Booster..... | Glenda Major |

Regional Overseers

United States:

Mid-East

(Virginia, West Virginia,
Pennsylvania, Maryland).....Tom Brown

South Atlantic

(North Carolina, South Carolina,
Florida).....Bruce Sullivan

Mid-Central

(Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois).....Rick Ferrell

Tennessee, Georgia.....Joseph Steele

South-Central

(Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana).....Joel Brooks

North-West

(Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota,
South Dakota).....A.B. White

Pacific Coast North

(Oregon, Washington,).....A.B. White

Pacific Coast South

(California, Nevada).....Miguel Garcia, Sr.

South-West

(Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma).....Samuel Hernandez

National Overseers:

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Argentina..... | Jorge Estroz |
| Bangladesh..... | Boonyong Bureenok |
| Benin..... | Amos Agbonifo |
| Burundi..... | Edward Agar |
| Cambodia..... | Boonyong Bureenok |
| Cameroon..... | Eyong Eric Eyong |
| Chile..... | Javier Perez Diaz |
| Dominican Republic..... | Sandraud Pierre |
| Democratic Republic of Congo..... | Edward Agar |
| England..... | Joshua Amara |
| Ethiopia..... | Geremew Eshete |
| Ghana..... | David Dordah |
| Guatemala..... | Ricardo Valenzuela Chavez |
| Haiti..... | Santainel Hostelus |
| Honduras..... | Hans Brooks |
| India (Mid-east)..... | Padma Rao Talari |
| India South..... | Joseph Binoy |
| India Central..... | John Babu Rao Ganta |
| Ivory Coast..... | Amos Agbonifo |
| Kenya..... | Joshua Amara |
| <i>(Note: Joshua Amara was suspended in this position in October, and Elijah Wafula was appointed in his place).</i> | |
| Liberia..... | Amos Agbonifo |
| Malawi..... | Mariele Dzuwa |
| Mexico..... | Danny Ramirez |
| Mexico Assistant:..... | Francisco Lopez |
| Mozambique..... | Mariele Dzuwa |
| Myanmar (Burma)..... | Boonyong Bureenok |
| Nicaragua..... | Freddy Garcia |
| Nigeria..... | Yomi Adekunle |
| Paraguay..... | Jorge Estroz |
| Pakistan..... | Boonyong Bureenok |
| Peru..... | Yum V Munoz Quispe |
| Philippines..... | Domingo Resurreccion |
| Rwanda..... | Edward Agar |

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| South Africa | David November |
| South Sudan | Elijah Wafula |
| Tanzania | Edward Agar |
| Thailand | Boonyong Bureenok |
| Togo | Amos Agbonifo |
| Uganda | Maurice Ogada Odede |
| United States | Wade H. Phillips |
| Uruguay | Jorge Estroz |
| Zambia Mission Representative | David Gomba |
| Zimbabwe Mission Representative | David Gomba |

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

---Matthew 28:19-20

Assembly Business Committee

Chairman: Joesph Steele
Byron Harris, Scott Neill,
L.W. Carter, Zachary Sndyer, Ray Dickson
Miguel Garcia, Sr.

Doctrine Committee

Chairman: Bruce Sullivan
Tom Brown, Trevor Graves, Ricky Graves,
Rick Ferrell, Kris Newberry, Joel Brooks
Jimmy Johnson

Construction Committee

Chairman: Wade H. Phillips
L. W. Carter, Ricky Graves, Lynn Jones,
Cecil Pounders, Tod Deakle

International Properties

Chairman: Wade H. Phillips
E.A. McDonald, Todd McDonald,
Lynn Jones, Joesph Steele

General Trustees

Wade H. Phillips, E.A. McDonald
Todd McDonald, Scott Neill, L.W. Carter

Churches/ Pastors/ Missions
United States

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Anaheim, CA..... | Juan Avila |
| Arroyo Grande, CA..... | Eddie Gill |
| Bakersfield, CA..... | Juan Lopez |
| Bayou La Batre, AL..... | Tod Deakle |
| Browder, KY..... | Daniel Schroader |
| Chestnut Hill, TN | Byron Harris |
| Cleveland, TN..... | Todd McDonald |
| Colton, CA..... | Daniel Urcadiz |
| Columbus, MS..... | Ricky Graves |
| Dallas, OR..... | Kim Merrill |
| Fairfield, CA..... | A.B. White |
| Fairmont, WV..... | Jerry Reel |
| Fort Morgan, CO..... | Nazario Ornelas, Jr. |
| Ft. Oglethorpe, GA..... | Joseph Steele |
| Fresno, CA..... | Alex Garcia |
| Fries, VA..... | Micheal Correll |
| Goshen, IN..... | Zachary Snyder |
| Greenville, SC..... | Scott E. Neill |
| Hartsville, TN..... | Kris Newberry |
| Hesperia, CA..... | Jose Lozano |
| Idamay, WV..... | Tom Brown |
| Jacksboro, TN..... | Ray Dickson |
| Karnes City, PA..... | Brenda Reitler |
| Kosciusko, MS..... | Billy Summerlin |
| Lompoc, CA..... | George Solomon |
| Lompoc, CA (FCI)..... | Vicente Garcia |
| Lompoc, CA (UOP)..... | Vicente Garcia |
| Madera, CA..... | Jual Lopez |
| Mesquite, TX..... | Samuel Hernandez |
| Oil City, PA..... | Majorie Gifford |
| Okolona, MS..... | Joel Brooks |
| Pelzer, SC..... | Bruce Sullivan |
| Pulaski, TN..... | William Crook |
| Rialto, CA..... | German Bor |

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Roanoke, VA..... | L.W. Carter |
| Rubidoux, CA..... | Gilberto Zavala, Sr. |
| Salisbury, MD..... | Buddy Quillen |
| San Jose, CA..... | Jorge Carrasco |
| San Jacinto, CA..... | Guillermo Amador |
| Saticoy, CA..... | Noemi Argueta |
| Scottsville, KY..... | Rick Ferrell |
| Soledad, CA..... | Juan Lopez |
| Smithfield, WV..... | Lee Brown |
| Los Angeles (South Central)..... | Raul Carrasco, Sr |
| Taylors, SC..... | Andrea Faye Davis |
| Van Nuys, CA..... | Miguel Garcia, Sr. |
| Ware Shoals, SC..... | Tommy Harvey |
| West Mobile, AL..... | Kim Erwin |
| Wilmington, NC | Robert Llanaeza |

Missions
United States

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Cabin Creek, WV..... | Ron Massey |
| Flintville, TN..... | Roger Barbour |
| Gainesville, MO..... | Jerry Tingler |
| Hartsville, SC..... | Jimmy Johnson |
| Highgrove, CA..... | Pete Sarry |
| Little Rock, CA..... | Samuel Pereira |
| Rubidoux, CA..... | Gilberto Zavala, Sr. |
| Sacramento, CA..... | A.B. White |
| Salton City, CA..... | Fatima Valades |
| Sylmar, CA..... | Reynaldo Renderos |

International Churches/Missions

| Nation | Churches | Missions |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Argentina | 5 | 3 |
| Bangladesh | 2 | 7 |
| Benin | 5 | 2 |
| Burundi | 6 | 3 |
| Cambodia | 2 | 5 |
| Cameroon | 2 | 0 |
| Chile | 13 | 2 |
| Dominican Republic | 15 | 22 |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | 23 | 6 |
| England | 1 | 0 |
| Ethiopia | 1 | 1 |
| Ghana | 1 | 0 |
| Guatemala | 11 | 15 |
| Haiti | 301 | 41 |
| Honduras | 15 | 4 |
| India Mid-East | 14 | 14 |
| India Central | 15 | 2 |
| India South | 31 | 3 |
| Ivory Coast | 1 | 1 |
| Kenya | 35 | 10 |
| Liberia | 1 | 0 |
| Malawi | 35 | 26 |
| Mexico | 4 | 4 |
| Mozambique | 23 | 5 |
| Myanmar | 1 | 12 |
| Nicaragua | 5 | 2 |
| Nigeria | 20 | 4 |
| Pakistan | 1 | 0 |
| Paraguay | 1 | 0 |
| Peru | 1 | 0 |
| | 93 | |

International Churches/Missions

| Nation | Churches | Missions |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Philippines | 7 | 11 |
| Rwanda | 1 | 1 |
| South Africa | 3 | 2 |
| South Sudan | 25 | 3 |
| Tanzania | 50 | 15 |
| Thailand | 20 | 6 |
| Togo | 7 | 10 |
| Uganda | 4 | 3 |
| United States | 43 | 12 |
| Uruguay | 1 | 1 |
| Zimbabwe | 1 | 3 |
| Zambia | 0 | 1 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 42 | 764 | 256 |

In addition to these statistics, the church has 1010 ministers and 82,150 members in 42 nations and regions.

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Dalton, Rocky
Diaz, Javier Patricio Perez
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Fields, Charles
Garcia, Miguel, Sr.
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Graves, Ricky
Jones, William
Kelton, Clifford
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Davis, Jimmy
Dickson, Ray
Erwin, Todd
Everett, Patrick Meredith
Ezakiel, Paulo
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Green, J.L.
Llaneza, Robert
Martinez, Luis Acberto
Marwa, James
Mapambano, Stivin
Monday, Sam
Moore, Wayne
Newberry, Todd Kenneth
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Agwanda, Josh
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Brown, Brooks Lee
Brown, Tom
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ABSTRACT OF FAITH

Note: The following has been accepted by the General Assembly in proper order that is by agreement in one accord.

INTRODUCTION

Zion Assembly Church of God is a Spirit-filled body of believers who have covenanted themselves together with God to accept and obey the teachings of Christ and His apostles (Exodus 19:3-6; John 14:6, 8; Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:24-32). This commitment is firm, even in this present time of apostasy, when so many are “falling away” and “[departing] from the faith” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Peter 2; 3:1-12; Jude 3-19).

The ministers and members of Zion Assembly have committed themselves to live and worship together in this “most holy faith,” to walk in truth, to “endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” “and to cultivate among themselves the graces of love and holiness.” They seek for the perfections of Christ in their fellowship, and by His grace and power to conform to the image of Jesus Christ so completely that when He appears they shall be like Him (Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:1-17; 1 John 3:2).

Besides this internal disposition to cultivate mutual love and care within the household of God, the ministers and members of Zion Assembly have committed themselves to labor for the unity of all believers, until all “see eye to eye,” “speak the same thing,” “walk by the same rule” (Isaiah 52:8; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 3:16). In this manner, they seek to carry forward the apostolic vision: “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

Zion Assembly has further obligated itself to publish and to proclaim the full Gospel into all the world in obedience to Christ’s commission to the church (Matthew 28:19).

Note: The articles on *Man, Sin, Works of the flesh, Christian Perfection, Perseverance, and Antichrist* have been added to this edition of the *Abstract of Faith*. They were accepted by the 8th Annual General Assembly in proper order on September 10, 2011.

Church Membership

Membership in Zion Assembly Church of God is open to all believers whose testimony is evidenced by the fruit of the new birth, and who are willing to covenant themselves together with Christ and the church to walk in the light of the Gospel. Candidates become members by the following solemn obligation:

Will you sincerely promise in the presence of God and these witnesses, that you will accept this Bible as the Word of God, believe and practice its teachings rightly divided, with the New Testament as your rule of faith and practice, government and discipline, and agree to walk together as one body in the light of the Gospel to the best of your knowledge and ability?

In response to this covenant formula the candidate answers, “I will by the grace of God.” The minister then lays hands on the new member and offers prayer for divine guidance and strength; the congregation follows with an affectionate welcome and extends the right hand of fellowship.

Prominent Teachings in the Scriptures

Note: *The following statements are not meant to form a creed, or to be thought of as an exhaustive statement of beliefs upon which the church is built. They are simply an abstract of some of the important and fundamental teachings and principles set forth in the Holy Scriptures, which form an essential part of the church’s Rule of Faith.*

The Trinity—The Bible teaches that the one eternal God exists in three persons: namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These Three have distinct identities, yet they form one undivided Godhead, subsisting in the same nature (Romans 5:5; 15:16, 30; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 5:19; John 3:5; Ephesians 2:18; Titus 3:5). The Father is God (Ephesians 4:6), the Son is God (John 1:1-3; 10-1; Hebrews 1:8; Revelation 1:8), the Holy Spirit is God (John 14:17; 16:13; Acts 5:3; 1 Corinthians 2:10), yet there are not three gods, but one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). The three persons of the divine Trinity work together in perfect unity for the salvation of man (John 3:5; 6:44; 14:6, 16, 17; 2 Corinthians 5:19).

Jesus Christ—Jesus Christ is the “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15), and God’s “only begotten Son” (John 3:16). Through Him, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received into glory, and now sits on the right hand of God to make intercession for us (Acts 7:55; 1 Timothy 3:16). Through Him alone men have access unto the heavenly Father. It is through His sacrificial and atoning death on the cross that we are saved. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). He is the spotless “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). He is also the head of the church and the savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23).

The Bible—The Holy Scriptures—both Old and New Testaments—reveal God and His will for man. They are inspired, inerrant, infallible, and unchangeable (2 Timothy 3:14-16; 2 Peter 1:16-21). The truths of the Scriptures are revealed by prophecy, type, precept, and example, illuminated through the power of the Holy Spirit. The teachings of the Bible, particularly in the light of the New Testament, are the Church’s final rule for faith, practice, government, and discipline (Acts 2:42; 2 Peter 3:1, 2). Walking in the light of God’s Word is the guiding principle and commitment of Zion Assembly Church of God. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

The Church—The church is a visible body of believers formed and incorporated by covenant with God to keep His commandments (Exodus 19:5-8; 24:3-8; Psalm 119:57; John 14:15; 17:6, 8, 14; 1 Peter 2:9). It is theocratic in form and function, providing order and government through the Spirit and the Scriptures for God’s people (Isaiah 2:2-4; 9:7; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 12:28). The church is presently imperfect, spotted with backsliders and “false brethren” (1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 2:4; Jude 4). It is thus distinguished from the kingdom of God, the latter being the spiritual realm of all born again believers (John 3:3-8; Romans 14:17; Colossians 1:13). One is “born” into the kingdom; he/she is “added to the church” (John 3:3-8; Acts 2:47). The church will succeed to proclaim the gospel into all the world (Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16); will be perfected “with the washing of water by the word,” and will be presented to Christ glorious in holiness (Ephesians 5:26, 27). The General Assembly is the highest tribunal of authority in the church for the interpretation of the Scriptures (Acts 15; 16:4, 5). The purpose of the General Assembly is

to promote unity and fellowship among the saints, to search the Scriptures for additional light and understanding, and to resolve differences in interpretations which tend to be divisive among the ministers and churches. All matters of faith, government, and discipline are discussed before the entire body of the church assembled and resolved in one accord with the manifest approval of the Spirit (vv. 12, 22, 28). This form and order is based on the precedent: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us" (Acts 15:28). All male members in good standing have an active voice in the Assembly. Women are a vital part of the church's life and ministry. In matters dealing with church authority, however, they voice their opinions through their husbands and church elders (1 Corinthians 11:3, 7-9; 14:34-36; 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1-17).

Man---Man is unique in all of God's creation. Only he was created in God's image and likeness (Genesis 1:27; 5:2; Ecclesiastes 7:29; 1 Corinthians 11:7; Ephesians 4:24), and therefore man has a unique relationship to God. His nature is composed of soul, spirit, and body (Job 32:8; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Matthew 10:28; 1 Corinthians 15:45; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12), though "soul" and "spirit" may be fully distinguishable only to the Spirit of God (Hebrews 4:12 and compare John 12:27 and 13:21). Of all the living things on earth, only man has God-consciousness and an immortal soul (Genesis 2:7; 1 Corinthians 15:45). He thus has an everlasting destiny in heaven or hell, with eternal life or everlasting death and damnation (Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:4-6; 21:7, 8). He was created by divine decree in one day; he did not therefore evolve, nor does he exist by chance. Moreover, the uniqueness of man is seen in that he was given authority in earth over all living things including animal life (Genesis 1:26, 28). This uniqueness is partly why the Psalmist exults, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14), and why he asks, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (8:3, 4).

Man was created *male* and *female* (Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 21-25) in order that the genders might come together under divine institution as husband and wife (2:21-25; Mark 10:6-9) to procreate the race of man---to "be fruitful, and multiply" (v. 28; 9:1)---and to provide comfort and companionship for one another (Proverbs 18:22; Ecclesiastes 9:9; Ephesians 5:22-25, 28-31; 1 Peter 3:7). This is the divine order for man, making *fornication* (pre-marital sex, homosexuality, incest, bestiality) and *adultery* (unfaithfulness in marriage, and divorce and remarriage while one's first companion is still living) vile corruptions of God's expressed will and design for man (Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:28; Mark 10:7-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11, 39).

Included in man's God-consciousness is an innate sense of morality---of moral right and wrong---and a sense of accountability for his behavior (Acts 17:28-30; Romans 1:19, 20; John 1:9). Moral responsibility and accountability are predicated on the nature of man's God-consciousness and free will, that is, his ability to choose and act in obedience or disobedience to God's revealed will (Joshua 24:15-25; 1 Kings 18:21; Ezekiel 20:39; Luke 13:35; John 3:36; Revelation 22:17).

Man was created holy, in the moral image of God (Genesis 1:27, 31; 5:1, 2), but his fall in Eden plunged him into sin and corruption. His fall was predicated on the fact that he has free will. Adam chose, under the influence of Satan's seductive power, to disobey God. Because man is a race, unlike the angels, sin was transmitted to all men through Adam's transgression (Genesis 3:6; Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:21). His redemption and reconciliation to God was made possible by the sacrifice of Christ (Romans 5:15-19).

Christ is the second man Adam (1 Corinthians 15:22, 45). He is therefore called the Son of Man as well as the Son of God (Matthew 12:8; 16:13; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Colossians 1:15, 19; Hebrews 1:8; Revelation 1:8). In Him God and man exist in one person (John 1:1-3, 14; Philippians 2:5-8). The first Adam failed and plunged man into sin; the second man Adam, Christ, lived triumphantly over sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15), making it possible for us also to triumph over sin and be saved (Isaiah 53:4-9; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:21-24). He that believes and repents and is born again shall be saved (John 3:3-8, 16; 10:28). Christ is the perfect man, and all men can be made perfect in and through Him, our redeemer and sanctifier (Hebrews 2:11; 10:10, 14; 13:12).

Sin---Sin is a real and expressed evil. It originated in Satan in heaven (Isaiah 14:12-14; John 8:42; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 12:7-9), and in man in the Garden Eden when Adam rebelled and transgressed against God's explicit command and ate of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:6, 17). Sin is thus willful rebellion against the law of God (Exodus 35:19; Psalm 51:3; Hebrews 4:7; 10:26; 13:18; 2 Peter 3:5) It may be defined as *lawlessness* (Romans 3:20; 4:15; 5:13; Galatians 3:19; 1 Timothy 1:9), *transgression* (Psalm 119:158; Ephesians 2:1; 1 John 3:4), *disobedience* (Romans 8:7; Titus 1:16; 3:3; 1 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 2:7,8), and *rebellion* (Psalm 78:8; Lamentations 1:18; 3:14; Daniel 9:5). Sin exists also in unbelief (John 3:18; Titus 1:15; 1 John 2:22-24; Revelation 21:8).

Unlike the angels, mankind is a race; thus when the first man Adam sinned, sin was transmitted to all men through him (Romans 5:12). All men are therefore born with the sin nature and thus with the propensity

to sin (Psalm 51:5; 58:3; Ephesians 2:3; 1 John 1:8). None are exempt, including Mary, the mother of Jesus. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Sin exists in two forms: 1) in the very being of man, in his rebellious nature (Romans 6:6; Ephesians 2:3); 2) in actual acts of transgression (Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13). Sin is conceived in the heart and is expressed in thought (Genesis 6:5; Matthew 15:19), word (Matthew 5:22), and/or deed (Romans 1:32).

Death and everlasting damnation is the penalty that God imposed upon mankind for sin (Romans 6:23). The Good News is that the shedding of Jesus’ blood, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection provided the remedy for sin (Romans 5:15-19; Hebrews 9:22). By grace, through faith in Christ, transgressions are forgiven and the “old man,” the sin nature, is crucified.

In justification, actual transgressions are pardoned and washed away (Romans 3:28-30; 5:1; Ephesians 2:5; 13-18); in sanctification, the very nature of sin rooted in man’s heart is uprooted and removed (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14; Colossians 3:3-10). The sanctified believer is thus made free from sin (John 8:36).

Works of the Flesh---The “works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like” (Galatians 5:19-21). The apostle Paul sets forth three general categories of carnality [“works of the flesh”]: 1) sensual and sexual sins, which include adultery, fornication, immorality, impurity, unfaithfulness, and lewdness of all kinds, which may be committed before and/or during marriage; 2) sins of spiritual deception and demonic seduction through false religion, which include idolatry, witchcraft, sorcery, divination, necromancy, magic, enchantments, palm readings, superstitious rituals of paganism, and new age teachings and practices; 3) sins that stem from a malicious and spiteful spirit, which include hatred, enmities, wrath, strife, jealousy, uncontrolled anger, murders [actual or harbored in the heart], bitter disputes, dissensions, factions, heresies, seditions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and ranting and rioting.

The list of the “works of the flesh” given by the apostle Paul in Galatians 5 is not a complete list of sins. There are many more subtle works of the flesh and of the spirit that are not so “manifest” or obvious, including greed, covetousness, stealing, extortion, gossip, slander, whisperings, and evil speaking. The apostle thus adds to his list of sins

the words, “and such like.” His point in bringing these sins to the attention of the church, and identifying them in particular, is to make us more conscious of the destructive nature of sin, and to set forth God’s remedy for sin in Christ. Deliverance from the powerful works of the flesh cannot be obtained through the law and practices of religion, but only “through sanctification of the Spirit” and the Word of God (Galatians 5: 16-18, 24; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13). The sanctifying power of Jesus’ blood received by faith through the Holy Spirit is the remedy! The “old man” must be crucified in order for the believer to be made free from and victorious over sin (John 8:36; Romans 6:6; 8:1-6; Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 2:11, 12). Further, the old man is kept crucified by our daily consecration and “walk in the Spirit” according to the Word of God (Galatians 5:16, 25; 2 Timothy 2:21-23)

Salvific Work of Grace

Conviction is a revelation to man by the Holy Ghost of the righteous judgment of God. Through conviction, unregenerated souls see themselves as sinners before God, experience guilt, and realize their separation from Him who is holy, just, and good (Isaiah 6:1; John 6:44; Acts 2:37, 38). True repentance can be made only through the work of the Spirit in conviction (John 16:7-15; 1 Corinthians 12:3; see also John 8:32; 14:6).

Repentance is the act of confessing one’s sins before God, being willing to forsake them and to turn to Christ with all of one’s heart, mind, soul, and strength. True repentance can be made only in the spirit of “godly sorrow” (2 Corinthians 7:9, 10). Repentance is manifested by certain fruit “meet for repentance” (Matthew 3:8; Romans 6:2). The act of repentance should be followed by water baptism [see below] (Mark 1:4, 5, 15; Luke 13, 3; Acts 3:19; 5:30, 31; 1 John 1:9). Repentance is a prerequisite experience for justification.

Justification is the state of being void of offense toward God. It is made possible through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. It is the act of God in forgiving the transgressions of a penitent sinner. Justification is the result of repentance and faith (Romans 8:1, 2; 3:23-26; 1 John 1:7). The genuinely justified person has “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:1, 2). Justification signifies the pardon (forgiveness) aspect of the new birth.

Regeneration (Born Again) is the act of God in creating new life in the heart of the believer through the Holy Ghost. It is a definite and instantaneous experience. Man is dead in sins and trespasses through Adam, and can be quickened or regenerated only through faith in Christ and His atoning sacrifice (Ephesians 2:1, 4, 5; Colossians 2:13, 14; John 5:24). Regeneration is the same as the new birth. “Born Again” is another term for regeneration. The result of this experience is that the believer becomes a child of God. It is through this new birth that one becomes a part of the Kingdom of God. Jesus said: “Ye must be born again” (John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23). The new birth is a prerequisite condition for the experience of sanctification.

Fruit of the Spirit is of divine origin. It is the very life of God poured into the heart of the regenerate believer. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Galatians 5:22, 23). We are admonished in the Scripture to walk in the Spirit and not to fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:9; Philippians 1:11).

Divine Healing is provided for all in the atonement. Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the cross provides healing for the whole man, including his body. Divine healing is effected by faith without the aid of medicine or surgical skills. In cases where one is healed through the assistance of physicians, medicine, herbs, etc., God is still to be praised: for it is God who heals in any case. “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases” (Psalm 103:2, 3; Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 8:17; 2 Peter 2:24; James 5:14-16).

Subsequent Grace

Sanctification is the second definite work of grace wrought in the regenerated heart by faith. In sanctification, the carnal nature is eradicated (“the old man is crucified”) so that the believer no longer has the inclination or propensity to sin; that is, in sanctification the desire to sin is removed (Hebrews 10:10; 13:12, 13; Romans 6:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). Sanctification enables the believer to bring his/her body under subjection to Christ, and to live a life consistent with the spirit of holiness and in accordance with the Word of God. Sanctification is a prerequisite condition for the baptism with the Holy Ghost.

Holiness is the result of sanctification. It is a state of grace and purity

in which perfect Christlikeness is desired and pursued (Matthew 5:48; 2 Corinthians 7:2). God has called us unto holiness (Thessalonians 4:7). “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:15, 16). “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14; see also Luke 1:74, 75; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Titus 2:11, 12; Eph. 1:4; 4:13, 24). Paul expressed his desire to “present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Colossians 1:28). Christ is returning for a church that is glorious in holiness: “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Ephesians 5:27; see also Psalm 45:9-13).

Christian Perfection---The perfection of the believer is the call and aim of the Gospel (Matthew 5:48; John 8:36; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 6:1; James 1:4; Jude 24). Redemption anticipates purification and perfection, and this state of grace is to be attained “in this present world” (Titus 2:11-14). Christ gave His life and shed His blood to make believers perfect in Him (Hebrews 10:1, 14; 13:21), both individually and corporately in the body of Christ (Matthew 5:48; John 17:20-23; 2 Corinthians 13:9; Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 1:10; 2:14-22; 4:11-16; 5:27; Revelation 19:7, 8). This glorious experience has therefore been called “Christian perfection,” for it is attained in and through the grace of Christ by the Holy Spirit. The grace of perfection therefore glorifies God, not man.

It is important to understand that Christian perfection is not the same as absolute perfection: for only God is absolutely perfect (Exodus 9:14; 1 Samuel 2:2; 1 Chronicles 17:20; Job 11:7; Mark 10:18). Thus Christian perfection is defined and explained in the Scriptures in ethical terms, rather than in legal terms; that is, Christian perfection is a state of grace attained through a perfect relationship with God. As such, it is rooted in and springs forth from “perfect love” (Matthew 5:44-48; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17). Love is in fact the “bond of perfectness” (Colossians 3:14). Christian perfection is therefore essentially grounded in love and wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit (1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Chronicles 15:17; 16:9; 19:9; Romans 5:5; Hebrews 10:22). Accordingly, a believer may err in mental judgments, be forgetful, be sick or afflicted physically, have moments of anguish and perplexity, etc., and yet not be charged with sin or willful rebellion and disobedience against God’s will and law (Romans 8:33; Ephesians 4:26; Hebrews 10:26). The human condition therefore does not necessarily militate against the saint’s perfect relationship with God and with his fellow man.

There is, moreover, growth in sanctification and in perfection unto a more glorious state of perfection in Christ. Thus the saint is transformed ever more perfectly by the Spirit of God into the image of Christ “from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18). Sanctified believers are admonished to continue to “perfect holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). The Good News is “we know that, when [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him” (1 John 3:2; Ephesians 5:27).

Perseverance---Perseverance reveals the grace imparted to a believer to live in obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in spite of any opposition or hardship that may challenge his Christian faith (2 Timothy 2:3-4). Although the word “perseverance” is used only once in some translations of the Bible (for example, Ephesians 6:18 in the King James Version) there are many other words that are closely related to it, such as *abide* (John 15:4-5, 7-9), *endure* (Matthew 10:22), *continue* (John 8:31-32), *steadfast* (Hebrews 3:14, 1 Peter 5:8-9, 2 Peter 3:17), *patience* (Luke 21:19), *overcome* (Revelation 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 21:7). In each of these references, the words clearly imply a fight of faith for the follower of Christ. Therefore, perseverance is not an act of God for a believer, but the action of the believer in response to the command of Christ to continue in His Word and grace.

In considering perseverance, two questions immediately present themselves: 1) what is God’s role? 2) what is man’s role? Philippians 2:13 says that God works in us both to will and to do His good pleasure. But how is this work accomplished in us? It is by His grace. Paul shows that it is by grace that our walk with Him begins (Ephesians 2:8-9), and in another place that this same grace teaches us that “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world,” and to “look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13). Further, God’s grace is able to keep us faultless with joy (Jude 24). It is important to understand, however, that man must respond in faith and accept the grace He has provided for him (Romans 10:9-10). It is at the crisis moment of transforming faith that man begins his walk with God; but just as man turns to God for saving grace, he must also seek Him for sustaining grace (Matthew 7:7-11, 21-27; Luke 8:15; 11:28; John 14:15, 23; Jude 24). Man’s perseverance depends on his continued desire to walk with the Lord (John 8:31; Colossians 1:23; Jude 21). This is shown further by the original New Testament word, *sozo*, that signifies “to save.” This word is expressed in three tenses: “I am saved,” “I am being saved,”

“I shall be saved.” Thus, man must be willing to continue to “press” into the kingdom of God, and to persevere at all costs in order to be finally saved (Luke 9:23; 16:16).

The commandment to persevere---endure, abide---in Christ carries eternal consequences. The inheritance of eternal life hinges on the Christian’s decision to continue to seek the grace of God and to walk in obedience to His Word. We must be “willing and obedient” (Isaiah 1:19) and “willing to live honestly” (Hebrews 13:18). According to the apostle John, if an individual does not remain in the doctrine of Christ, he does not have God, and he that does not have the Son of God does not have life (2 John 9; 1 John 5:12); therefore the judgment for those who do not persevere is eternal damnation and separation from God (Matthew 25:41-46, Hebrews 10:26-27).

Practical Graces

Restitution is the act of restoring something wrongfully taken, or the satisfying of one whom otherwise has been wronged (Matthew 3:8; Luke 19:8, 9). This act alone does not save, but it gives evidence of a heart that has truly repented. Restitution glorifies the grace of God and supports the testimony of the believer. It also gives opportunity to reconcile with those who have been wronged. It is the fulfillment of the law of love (Romans 13:8). Some restitutions should be made only with great care and with pastoral guidance, in order to avoid further offense or injury.

Sabbath means rest. Observance of the Sabbath in the Old Testament (the seventh day) was instituted to point to the believer’s spiritual rest in Christ under the New Covenant. The Old Testament requirement to keep the Sabbath holy is now superseded by the commandment: “Be ye holy,” for in Christ the believer is enabled and required to live holy every day. Sunday is not the Sabbath, but is a day set aside by the church to give special attention to the worship of God and the fellowship of the saints (Hosea 2:11; Colossians 2:16, 17; Romans 14:5, 6; Hebrews 4:1-11).

Meats and Drinks---The prohibitions against certain meats and drinks in the Old Testament were not extended into the New Testament church. These ceremonial aspects of Mosaic legislation were “nailed to the cross” of Christ, and done away with in the covenant of grace (Colossians 2:13-17; Ephesians 2:15; Hebrews 9:8-11). What one eats and drinks (with the exception of intoxicating beverages) is now a matter of conscience, and

does not violate the nature and principles of the kingdom of God (Romans 14:17). However, one should be mindful of the Scriptural injunction: "...whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (See also: Romans 14:2; 1 Corinthians 8:8; 1 Timothy 4:1-5).

Tithing And Giving---Tithing is the giving of one tenth of one's increase to Christ, our High Priest. It began as a voluntary act with Abraham, was required under the Mosaic law, and carried forward by Christ as a discipline for the New Testament church (Matthew 23:23). Tithes are to be brought to the house of God and properly distributed by the ministers having the charge of the treasury (Malachi 3:10). Freewill offerings are to be encouraged and regarded as a gift from the heart. Tithing and giving into the church are part of God's plan to finance His work through the church on earth. We are required in the Scriptures to be good stewards of that which God has entrusted in our care (See also: Genesis 14:18-20; Luke 11:42; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9; Hebrews 7:1-21).

Swearing and Profanity—Taking an oath is contrary to the spirit of the New Testament. "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation" (James 5:12). Jesus said, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all...But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matthew 5:34, 37; see also Exodus 20:7). An affirmation of the truth is sufficient; it is acceptable even in secular courts. Similarly, the use of profanity reflects an impure heart and has no place in the life of a child of God (Matthew 15:18, 19; Philippians 1:27; 3:20; 1 Peter 1:15; 2 Peter 2:7; James 3:8-10).

Intoxicating Beverages and Drugs—"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). The Scriptures teach against the consumption of alcohol or other intoxicating beverages because God has called us to perfect sobriety (1 Peter 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; Timothy 3:2; Titus 2:2). Believers are admonished not to "...give place to the devil." So-called moderate or social drinking certainly gives place to the adversary and thus believers should totally abstain (Ephesians 4: 27; see also: Isaiah 28: 7; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:10; Galatians 5:21). Much of what is said about intoxicating beverages is true also of drugs. The use of drugs such as tobacco, marijuana, opium, cocaine, etc., impair the body and is not in keeping with the teachings and

principles of Christ and the Scriptures. These things defile the body and are inconsistent with God's call to soberness (2 Corinthians 7:1; Isaiah 55:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31, 32; Ephesians 5:3-8; James 1:21). Drugs used for medical purposes should be taken only under the care and direction of a physician, and then only in good conscience.

Gambling (“Gaming”)—Due to the increase of lotteries and other forms of gambling, we feel that we should make it clear that Zion Assembly Church of God is opposed to gambling in any form. Gambling brings with it a negative effect on society and is immoral (Exodus 20:17; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10). This sin is associated with wasting time, money, and possessions. It also carries with it the stigma of greed and covetousness (see Exodus 20:17; Psalms 10:3; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Ephesians 5:5; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10; Hebrews 13:5). Gambling of any kind (lotteries, casinos, sports betting, video poker, (slot) machines, on-line gambling, bingo, etc.) is denounced in principle throughout Scripture. It is also addictive, leads to increased crime, and often destroys marriages and homes.

Unequal Yoke—The Bible teaches against the children of God being unequally yoked with unbelievers. Binding ourselves with unbelievers in organizations and secret orders with an oath is contrary to the Spirit of Christ and the plain teaching in the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 6:14-17). As the espoused bride of Christ, we have covenanted ourselves to give undivided loyalty to Christ. “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:2; Jeremiah 50:5). Membership in organizations which require an oath of secrecy should be dissolved before becoming a member of the church. “Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing” (John 18:20).

Spirit Baptism and Spiritual Gifts

Baptism with the Holy Ghost is an instantaneous experience wrought in the life of the believer subsequent to entire sanctification. In this baptism, Christ is the agent; the Spirit is the element (Matthew 3:11). The baptism with the Spirit on the sanctified life is accompanied with speaking in tongues: “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:2-4; see also: 10:44-47; 19:1-6). The baptism with the Spirit is a baptism of

spiritual empowerment for service in the kingdom of God (Luke 24:49; John 15:26; Acts 1:8); it also enables one to minister effectively within the church for the self-edification of the body (1 Corinthians 12:12-28; Ephesians 4:11-16).

Speaking in Tongues always accompanies the baptism with the Holy Ghost. The believer speaks in “unknown tongues” as “the Spirit gives utterance” (Acts 2:4). “Unknown tongues” is distinguished from speaking by the gift of the Spirit in “divers tongues,” that is, in languages that are known to man (Acts 2:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:2). In either case (“unknown tongues” or languages known to man), the manifestation of tongues (and interpretations) is always consistent with the Word of God (1 Corinthians 14:26). The gift of tongues is a sign to unbelievers (vv. 14:21-23), but serves also for the self-edification of the believer (v. 4).

Gifts Of The Spirit—There are various gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). The gifts of the Spirit were in operation in the New Testament church, but thereafter the church began to “fall away” and the manifestations of the spiritual gifts began to wane. After the apostasy in the fourth century, and the ensuing “dark ages” of Christian history, the manifestations of spiritual gifts (particularly tongues-speaking) were almost non-existent (manifested on occasion mainly among so-called heretics and unorthodox Christians). In these last days (particularly since early in the twentieth century) God is again pouring out His Spirit “upon all flesh” according to prophecy in order to fulfill His eternal purpose through the church (Joel 2:28-32; 3:16-18; Acts 2:38, 39).

Signs Following Believers—Signs in the New Testament were mainly for the purpose of confirming the Word of God and Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. As believers went forth preaching the Word in Jesus’ name, the Lord worked with them and confirmed the Word with signs following (Mark 16:15-20). Miraculous signs follow believers in order to confirm the proclamation of the Word of God, to convict sinners, and to edify the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12-14).

Ordinances

Water Baptism is the act of being immersed in water by the minister of the Gospel in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It is commanded by Christ and represents His death, burial and resurrection,

which are experienced in the life of the believer (Romans 6:3-5). This ordinance has no power to wash away sin, but is the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21). Water baptism is valid only when the candidate is actually born again (Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:8-10; 16:15, 16; John 3:22, 23; Acts 10:47, 48; 16:33). Water baptism is identified with spiritual regeneration; it is not the door into the church.

Lord's Supper is a memorial meal, which calls to remembrance the sacrifice of Christ, who shed His blood for our sins. Jesus commanded that this sacred meal be observed "in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:24). The broken, unleavened bread represents His body; the fruit of the vine (unfermented grape juice) represents His blood. This sacred ordinance should be observed with holy reverence, only after careful self-examination (1 Corinthians 10: 16, 17; 11:23-30). It is the outward sign of Christ's covenant with the church (Luke 22:20).

Feet Washing is an ordinance in the church. Following the institution of the Lord's Supper, Christ girded himself with a towel, washed the disciples' feet, and said: "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). This ordinance is distinguished from the cultural practice of feet washing in the Middle East; it has spiritual significance and is commanded to be observed by believers (1 Timothy 5:10). The purpose of feet washing is not fulfilled through charity and good works. It is to remind us that we have one Master and Lord, who is the head of the church, and we are all His servants, and servants of one another.

Divine Sanctities

Sanctity of Life—Human life is sacred because it is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Taking of innocent life is thus strictly forbidden in Scripture, including abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, genocide, and suicide (self-murder). "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). Whosoever sheddeth innocent blood will not be held guiltless before God (Genesis 9:6; Numbers 35:30, 31; Romans 13:8-10; Revelation 21:8).

Sanctity of Marriage—Jesus said, "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one

flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder” (Matthew 19:4-6). Accordingly, marriage is between a male and female until death (Mark 10:2-12; Romans 7:2); as such it is a divine institution that should be held in the highest esteem among all men and women (Hebrews 13:4). Adultery, fornication, divorce and remarriage are sinful practices that violate the laws of God, and injure the home and family. Nevertheless, unfaithfulness (sexual relationships outside of marriage) is not grounds for divorce and remarriage, for “whosoever marrieth her which is put away committeth adultery” (Matthew 19:9). Therefore, those who remarry while their first companion is alive are not eligible for membership in the church (see Exodus 20:14, 17; Malachi 2:14-17; Matthew 5:32; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 6:15-20; 7:2, 3).

Sanctity of the Body—Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we are admonished to glorify God in our body (1 Corinthians 6:20-21). “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy” (3:16-17). We are also admonished to present our bodies “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Romans 12:1), and “...whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31b). Incest, same sex unions, and all homosexual and lesbian relationships are strictly forbidden by the Scriptures. These practices are an abomination to God, though they may be sanctioned by a state or religious institution (Romans 1:24-28; Leviticus 18:22, 23; 20:10-21). Practices such as “body piercing,” tattooing, mutilating and disfiguring the body are of pagan origin and contrary to the spirit of holiness and biblical principles. These practices should have no place in the lives of believers (Cf. Timothy 2:8-10; Romans 12:1, 2; Isaiah 3:16-22; 1 John 2:15-17).

Eschatology

The Rapture and Pre-Millennial Second Coming Of Jesus—Christ is coming again in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:27, 28). “The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; see also 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52). All who are caught up in the first resurrection will attend the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9). Christ will then return to earth and reign with the saints for a thousand years (vv. 4, 6; see also Zechariah 14:4, 5; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Jude 14, 15; Revelation 5:10; 19:11-21).

Resurrection—There will be a resurrection for both the righteous and the wicked. The righteous will be raised at Christ’s first appearance in the clouds of glory. The resurrection of the wicked will occur after the thousand years reign of Christ on earth. “And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15; see also Daniel 12: 2; Revelation 20: 4-6; John 5: 28, 29; 1 Corinthians 15:12-23, 41-58).

Eternal Life for the Righteous—The reward of the righteous is everlasting life in the presence of God. “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matthew 25:46; Luke 18:29, 30; John 10:28; Romans 6:22; 1 John 5:11-13).

Eternal Punishment for the Wicked—Those who reject or disregard the call to repentance and salvation are doomed to eternal damnation (John 3:15-21). In hell there is no escape, no liberation, no annihilation. Hell is the “the second death,” and is a place of eternal torment. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8; see also: 20:10-15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Jude 14:15; Matthew 25:46; Mark 3:29).

Antichrist---Antichrist can signify either “against Christ” or “in the place of Christ,” or a combination of the two meanings. Antichrist is one who opposes Christ or who assumes the prerogatives of Christ as our Lord and Savior.

While only the apostle John uses the word, antichrist, the apostle Paul is apparently speaking of the same spirit and principle when he refers to the “mystery of lawlessness” and the “lawless one” in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 8. John identifies certain “false prophets” and “deceivers” as antichrists (1 John 1-3; 2:18; 2 John 7). The prophet Daniel is in reference to this same spirit in his prophecy of the “beast” in Daniel 7, which corresponds also with John’s vision of the “beast” in Revelation 11; 13; 17; 19.

We may conclude then that the spirit of antichrist signifies the deceptive and seductive spirit in the world that seeks to confuse the true identity of Christ and to corrupt His Gospel. Antichrist may take many religious, social, and political forms, but all have the same goal---namely, to compromise and corrupt the true doctrine of salvation in Jesus Christ with false doctrines and the pretense of false Christs (Matthew 24:4,5, 11, 23, 24).

Prophecy predicts that a particular person in the very last days will come on the scene that will embody and personify the spirit of antichrist in the world. This man is variously characterized as the “lawless one” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 8) and the “beast” (Daniel 7:10, 11, 25; Revelation 13:1). Jesus is in reference to this spirit of deception and lawless spirit in Matthew 24:5, 24 and John 5:43. Our concern in the church, however, is not so much with the coming of the particular Lawless One---“the beast”---but with the spirit of antichrist now prevailing in the world: for it seems that the prophetic Lawless One will not be fully revealed until after the rapture of the church (2 Thessalonians 2:7, 8). Until then, the Spirit of God and the church will restrain and prevent his rise to power and his full revelation.

God’s church rests upon the revelation---the “rock”---that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:13-18), and that He was incarnate in the virgin Mary, died for our sins, and was resurrected on the third day so that man can be redeemed and brought back into fellowship with God our Father (Romans 5:6-10). The Spirit of Christ indwells believers, enabling them to live their lives consistent with the law of God (Romans 8:1-7); whereas the spirit of antichrist opposes the truth of God revealed in the Holy Scriptures, providing substitutions for the saving grace of Christ. The diabolic influence of antichrist is found throughout the world, resisting the true Gospel and substituting in its place myriads of false gospels (Galatians 1:1-9; 2 Corinthians 11:3, 4). These are “lying spirits” set to deceive and destroy precious souls (2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:13, 14). John exhorts believers to “try the spirits”---test them, prove them---against the truth of Christ and His teachings revealed in the Scriptures (1 John 4:1-3). The spirit of antichrist, personified in the Lawless One, will be completely destroyed with the brightness of Christ’s second coming and the power of His Word (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Meanwhile the saints are empowered to resist and overcome the spirit of antichrist in the world through faith, the Word of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Principles for Practical Christian Living and Discipline

The following guidelines are explicitly revealed in the Scriptures or else shown to be consistent with biblical teachings. They are brought to our attention to enhance our relationship with Christ and one another, and to encourage us to live in a way that will bring glory and honor to the name of Christ and to support the witness of the church. We are admonished

in the Scriptures: "...be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12b). Jesus instructs us: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Prayer—Jesus' admonition to "watch and pray" (Matthew 26:41a) has never been more urgent than today. We live in "perilous times," and Christ and the apostles warned that the times will only worsen as we approach our Lord's return. Therefore, daily prayers and family devotions should be a priority in every church home. Maintaining a prayerful attitude is a key to spirituality for every individual and local congregation. Again Jesus said, "...men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1a), and the apostle encouraged believers to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We are also enjoined to "...pray one for another..." (James 5:16a). Special prayers should be made for those in authority and for those who have given themselves in service to God and to the ministry of the Word (1 Timothy 2:1-3). Prayer is so essential to the life of the church that the church is called "the house of prayer" (Isaiah 56:7; Matthew 21:13).

Bible Study—Reading and studying the Scriptures are invaluable to the spiritual welfare of the child of God. Every member of the church is encouraged to be a faithful student of God's holy Word. Paul instructs us to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God..." (2 Tim 2:15a), for "the holy scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (3:15). Further, he says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (v.16). The importance of the Word of God is eloquently expressed by Psalmist: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." And again, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:105, 11).

Church Attendance and Worship—Worship and fellowship with believers of "like precious faith" is a vital part of the Christian life. Worship should be heartfelt in the Spirit, and in harmony with the Word of God (John 4:23b; Ephesians 5:19). Each member of the church is a part of the body of Christ, and thus the body will be hindered to the degree that one member fails to actively participate in its life and mission. Accordingly, members should actively support every function of the church, and participate as much as possible. The exhortation of the Hebrew writer is worthy of our careful attention: "And let us consider one another to

provoke unto love and good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some; but exhorting one another: and so much more as we see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). Children should be instructed at home, and taught by precept and example to respect the house of God. Ministers and their families should be examples in their lifestyles and conversations. “And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane” (Ezekiel 44:23a). A prayerful attitude creates an atmosphere conducive for worship and the ministry of God’s Word. Believers should therefore be prayerful as the minister delivers the message, lest Satan come and steal the Word of God from their hearts (Mark 4:4, 15). God’s love “shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” should fill the atmosphere of our worship services. Love should govern our every action and be shown to everyone without partiality (1 Corinthians 13). We should take special care to show love to visitors. Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

Walking Circumspectly—Children of God should “walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time for the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15,16). Living a consecrated life at home and abroad will give no place for anyone to justly think or speak of you as a hypocrite. Our manner of life and conversation should be holy in word and deed, as becoming to a child of God. As representatives of Christ in this world, and members of the Church of God, we should fashion ourselves with modesty and sobriety (Psalm 1:1-3; Philippians 1:27; Thessalonians 5:15-23).

Entertainment and Worldly Attractions—Christians should never participate in worldly attractions and entertainment where the principles of holiness may be compromised. Believers should participate in activities with unbelievers only with a guarded disposition, lest one becomes entangled or entrapped in the snares of Satan. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8; see also 2 Peter 2:19-22).

Illicit Relationships—Paul admonishes us to “give no place to the devil” (Ephesians 4:27). Forming too close an intimacy with the opposite sex, even if they are brothers and sisters in the Lord, creates an environment for temptation and gives opportunity for the “wiles of the devil.” Samson is a classic case of this unwise behavior, which led to his fall from grace (Judges 16); whereas Joseph wisely fled from a similar situation

(Genesis 39). Paul perhaps had Joseph in mind when he exhorted, “Flee fornication” (1Corinthians 6:18). The words of James, the Lord’s brother, also come to mind: “Lust when it is conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death” (James 1:13-15). In view of these solemn admonitions, great care should be taken to avoid associations and situations, which could reflect upon one’s character and bring reproach upon Christ and the church.

Outward Adornment—Christians are ambassadors (representatives) for Christ in this present world (2 Corinthians 5:20). As such they should be careful to adorn themselves as befitting their Lord’s plainness and purity. Adorning oneself after a worldly fashion with facial paint, gold, pearls, costly apparel, etc. is inconsistent with the testimony of one professing a life separated unto God. “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and 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 3:1-6; see also 1 Timothy 2:8-10; Isaiah 3:16-24; 61:10).

Corporate and Self-Discipline—Self-examinations to evaluate one’s own faith and spirituality are healthy (1 Corinthians 11:28). Sincere concern for others is also good and to be encouraged. We are our brother’s keeper. Counsel should be given only in the spirit of love and with godly wisdom, and according to the rule of discipline outlined in the gospel (Matthew 18:15-20). (A harsh spirit of criticism is detrimental to the spiritual welfare of both the critic and the one receiving the criticism: Matthew 7:1-5; 2 Corinthians 2:1-11; Galatians 5:14, 15; Ephesians 4:30-32). Discipline should be administered only as a last resort, and always through prayerful counsel and with the ultimate good of the erring brother/sister in mind (1 Corinthians 5:1-7; Galatians 6:1-5).

2012 was the first year that the Presiding Bishop's Commendation Award were bestowed upon deserving members. It has since become an annual Assembly event. The Assembly Business committee passed this in the 2012 General Assembly

The following were recipients of these awards:

2012

*Honoria Garavito, CA
William (Bill) Reid, TN
Joshua Amara, Africa*

2013

*Marie Spurling Crook, TN
Miguel Garica, Sr., CA
Dale Phillips, TN*

2014

*Yomi Adekunle, Nigeria
Glenda Major, CA
Danny Ramirez, CA*

Roy C. Miller was born in Riceville, Tennessee in 1891 and moved with his parents to Cleveland in 1902. He was drawn to the great



Roy and Lula Miller

revival in Cleveland in the summer of 1908, and after observing the manifestations of God's power was sanctified and Spirit-baptized. The young man was enthralled with Tomlinson and became a devout follower. That same year, Roy joined the Church of God and in 1910 acknowledged his

call to preach. He was licensed on April 12, 1911. In October

1910 he traveled with Tomlinson and some others to Florida to conduct camp meetings. It was there that he met Miss Lula Williams. After the others returned to Cleveland, Roy remained in Florida through the winter to evangelize---and to court the affections of Lula. In February 1911 he joined the "Pentecostal Worldwide Mission Band" and sailed with Tomlinson and a party of twelve, including Lula, to evangelize the Bahamas. The tour of the islands took a toll on Roy physically, but he pressed on. When the Mission Band returned from the Bahamas, Roy again remained in Florida to evangelize and fortify his relationship with Lula. The couple were married during a revival meeting in Arcadia on July 7, 1911. Soon after this meeting, they traveled with Tomlinson to Alabama to conduct camp meetings. It was in one of these meetings that Roy contacted a cold which progressively grew worse and finally resulted in pneumonia. Still, he and Lula ["Lu"] pushed on with Tomlinson to Mississippi. While there, Roy was appointed to oversee the state. Though growing more seriously ill, he participated in the Assembly in January 1913, and gave his report as an overseer. In the course of his sickness his father and mother begged him to see a doctor, but he refused on the basis of the church's teachings at that time that one should fully trust Christ for healing, and inevitably to accept death rather than consult physicians and use medicines. He was praised by Tomlinson for his stand, but nevertheless on June 28, 1913 he took his last breath in this life. He was 22 years of age. Roy left behind in this world a baby son and his young wife Lula.

Notes

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