

# Zion Assembly Church of God

## 14th Annual General Assembly Minutes

September 5-10, 2017  
United Christian Church  
2200 Peerless Rd.  
Cleveland, Tennessee

### “Show the House to the House”



*“Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them” (Ezekiel 43.10-11).*

## *The General Assembly: The Highest Tribunal of Authority in the Church*

The first General Assembly recorded in Acts 15 was a demonstration of the New Testament church's government and divine order. No doubt the unity of the church would have been shattered in its infancy if the decisions of this government had not been respected and obeyed. For the church had become passionately divided in opinion over two issues: namely, the practice of circumcision and certain dietary laws that had been observed under the Old Covenant. The fundamental issue at stake was this: What was the basis of the church's fellowship? Could believing Jews fellowship with believing Gentiles who had not been circumcised and were eating things unlawful under the Old Covenant? These issues were settled in divine order in the council in Jerusalem (A.D. 51/52). This is why our forefathers declared early in our historical development that the **“General Assembly is the highest tribunal of authority in the church on earth.”**

Three things are worth noting in examining the procedures and principles followed by the apostles and elders in that first General Assembly:

1. The whole church came together to address the issues, not just the bishops and elders. This is clear from Acts 15.4, 12, 22, 28. The church from the beginning was therefore obviously not an Episcopal or Presbyterian form of government. Moreover, since delegates from many of the local churches were present and participated, and the decisions were kept uniformly by all the churches (vv. 23, 30, 31; 16.4-5), the government was obviously not Congregational in form and practice. It is clear also that, though the apostles and elders led the way in the discussions (15.6-18), everyone present participated and agreed together in the final decisions (vv. 22, 25, 28).

2. The highest authority in this council was God and His Word in Holy Scripture. This may be seen in James' decision [the Council's moderator], which he based on “the words of the prophets” (vv. 15-17), and on what **“seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us”** (v. 28). This formula---God and His Word in Holy Scripture, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the mutual agreement among the Assembly delegates on the meaning of the Scriptures---is what we

call “theocratic government.” We believe this is the biblical model for church government in distinction from Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational models.

3. There was a duly recognized order for the meeting and due respect given to its authorized officers in charge: and, not insignificantly, there was also a deep spirituality that had been cultivated and continued among the delegates. One by one those who had something to contribute to the council’s understanding were given liberty to speak---Peter, Paul, James (the Lord’s brother), et al.---and this brought about the necessary light and understanding to resolve the issues. The believing Pharisees who had been contrary in opinion apparently were enlightened and came into agreement with the final decision. It is possible that some may have went out from this meeting and later joined with the Judaizers to form a dissenting sect (v. 24); but this dissenting sect was certainly not God’s church: for it taught and practiced things contrary to the apostles’ and elders’ doctrine and the church’s rule of faith and practice (cf. Acts 15.25-31; 16.4-5).

Too much emphasis cannot be put upon the need for right living and a moderate spirit in the process of discussing and settling issues. Hear the apostle, “*Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand*” (Phil. 4.5). This is of paramount importance. The General Assembly is no place for arrogant, stubborn spirits and self-willed dispositions. On the contrary, love, meekness, and mutual respect among brethren must prevail if the church is going to function in divine order. Further, we are called to “reason together” with God (Is.1.18); after all, all men are finite and prone to misjudgment, only God is infinite and infallible. Therefore, we will “*come to the knowledge of the truth*” only in humbleness of mind and by submitting to the preeminence of the Holy Spirit and the will of God recorded in Scripture.

This special gathering---the General Assembly---should be grounded therefore in much prayer with fasting. Consecrating ourselves through spiritual disciplines is necessary if we want the atmosphere of this important meeting to be charged with the presence of the Lord; and if we truly desire the Holy Ghost to reveal the mind and power of Christ. Only in this way can we answer the apostolic call in Zion Assembly to be “*an holy nation*”---“*an habitation of God through the Spirit,*” and “*the pillar and ground of the truth.*”

---WHP

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**Wade H. Phillips**  
*Presiding Bishop*

## Welcome Delegates

This Assembly has been called so that we might consecrate ourselves upon the Altar of God, and commit ourselves afresh to serve the purposes of God, including the mission that He has given to us to win souls and plant churches in every nation on earth (Mt. 24.14; 28.19-20).

In Zion Assembly we see the purposes of God revealed and fulfilled in and through His church, the City of God! "*Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God*" (Ps.

87.3). "*. . . and they shall call thee, The city of God, the Zion of the Holy One . . .*" (Is. 60.14). It is thus that God's church is also called the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, and the temple of God; and it is referred to by a number of other glorious titles and exalting metaphors in the Bible.

*"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain [government] of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills . . ."* (Is. 2.2).

We want this Assembly to be transformed this week into an Awesome and Dreadful place (Gen. 28.17)! Surely we need to hear the Lord's awe-inspiring voice speak to us in this critical hour, through prophetic preaching and various gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost. We need to see the Spirit of God in action, and to "*Hear what the Spirit saith to the churches!*"

### *About the Theme*

There is every reason to believe that the Assembly theme---"**Show the House to the House**" (Ezekiel 43.10)---is a prophecy of the New Testament church seen through the lens of the Old Testament temple and tradition. Accordingly, the descriptive language is highly symbolically. The entire prophecy reminds us of how important the church is in God's unfolding plan. This prophetic vision should stir our hearts to exert every bit of our energies to restore God's house according to the pattern revealed in the New Testament, and to inspire us to go forward to plant churches in every nation on earth; that the world may see through the light of the church the glory and wonder of our Lord Jesus Christ (Mt. 5.13-16; Jn. 13.35; 2 Cor. 3.2-3).

The prophetic vision of the church is indeed encouraging and exciting. We are promised twice in our theme passage in Ezekiel 43.7, 9, "*. . . and I will dwell in the midst of [My restored church] for ever*. The church has indeed fallen in the past on several occasions, but God has always mercifully raised her up again. However, Ezekiel's prophecy [chapters 43-48] seems to depict a final last days restoration that will not be interrupted until the church is perfected, caught up in the Rapture, lavished by Christ at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, then returns with Him to defeat the Antichrist and his armies in the Battle of Armageddon, and, finally, is exalted to rule and reign with Christ on earth for a thousand years (compare Ezekiel 43-48 with Rev. 16.12-16; 19.11-21; 20.3-7).

# Zion Assembly Church of God

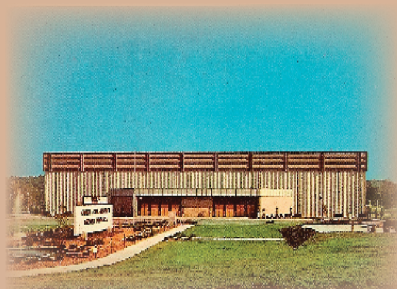
## International Ministries Center



# United Christian Church

(Assembly site 2017)

# Historical Assembly Sites



# Administration

**Presiding Bishop**..... Wade H. Phillips

**Superintendent of Operations**..... Scott E. Neill

**Chief Clerk**.....Marie Crook  
Julia Massey, Sandra Moore, Brenda Reitler, Rita Goodrum,  
Shirley Kimble, Sandy Morris, Molly Hayward, Billie Smith.

**Chief Usher**.....Tod Deakle  
Eddie Davis, Vernon Johnson, Cecil Pounders, J. L. Green,  
Bill Reid, Corey Hall, Robert Ramirez, Daren Childers, Jerry Nichols,  
Jim Hayward, Lee Jaynes, Matthew McDonald, Ashley Neill.

**Chief Registrar**.....Mandy Thompson  
Shelby Erwin, Elizabeth McDonald, Ally Thompson, Ashley Reitler,  
Rachel McDonald, Emma Erwin.

## Assembly Business Committee

**Chairman** ..... Joseph Steele  
Zachary Snyder  
L. W. Carter  
Jim Orange  
Byron Harris  
Scott Neill  
Yomi Adekunle  
Pete Sarry (Alternate)

**Video and Internet Streaming**.....Allen Thompson,  
Danny Shroader

**Sound Equipment**.....Jerry Pounders

**Photography**.....Julie Steele, Regina Brooks

**Projection Director**.....Tanner Herring

**Stage Managers**.....Joseph Steele/Rick Ferrell

**Music**.....Zachary Snyder/Kim Erwin

**Special Programs Director**.....Wanda K. Busbee

**Maintenance/Props**.....Jim Orange

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# Greetings!

**Scott E. Neill**  
**Superintendent of Operations**

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

Matt. 5.16

Eighth grade science class will always stand out in my memory. The science teacher taught us that, at night, it appears that the moon is shining. In reality, the moon does not shine. The light from the sun travels 186,000 miles per second and bounces off the moon to make it look like it is shining. In other words, the moon is a witness to the fact that the sun is shining on the other side of the world. Jesus is the light of the world. The only way for people who are living in darkness to see the light of Christ is through God's Spirit and Word reflected in us. We are like the moon, we are shining to reflect what God is doing in His church. God help us to be a bright, bold, shining light.

We are grateful that the United Christian Church once again has opened its doors for us to convene our annual Assembly. Everyone is encouraged to be respectful of their property and equipment this week.

**The following instructions** are offered to help insure that everything will operate and proceed smoothly during each part of the Assembly.

- 1) Delegates should consult with the appointed Assembly staff (Superintendent of Operations, ushers, stage managers, etc.) in dealing with any problems that may arise during the week.
- 2) Always remain in designated areas of the building---auditorium, main hallway, children's church room, nursery room and bathrooms located in the main hallway.
- 3) Food and drink are not allowed in the auditorium, except at the moderator's table.
- 4) If you are on the program and need assistance with equipment, see Jerry Pounders.
- 5) If you need to put pictures, scriptures, etc. on the projection screens, see Tanner Herring.
- 6) Give soundtracks and media devices to Sound Engineer, Jerry Pounders before the session in which you are on the program.
- 7) Observe all parking signs in the church parking lot and also throughout Cleveland.
- 8) Nursery facilities are provided for your convenience. Observe directional signs.
- 9) Children's church worship times are posted throughout the Assembly program.
- 10) Please refrain from chewing gum in the sanctuary.

We pray and trust that you will enjoy your time in Cleveland and be abundantly blessed in this great 2017 General Assembly.

# **Pre-Assembly Programs**

## **Assembly Business Committee**

**Monday, September 4, 2017**

The Assembly Business Committee (ABC) will meet at the International Ministries Center beginning at 6:00 p.m. to finalize its report to present to the 14th Annual Assembly. The Doctrine Committee (DC) will meet with the ABC in regard to any business that needs to be presented to the Assembly for consideration. Anyone who has relevant questions or presentations may interact with the ABC and DC at this time. Personal interviews with the Committees should be arranged through the chairmen.

## **Ministers' Meeting**

**Tuesday, September 5, 2017**

Beginning at 9:30 a.m. the annual Ministers' Conference will convene in the International Ministries Center in Cleveland. The meeting is open to all; however, ministers are especially encouraged to attend and participate. The purpose of the meeting is to promote unity and understanding through prayer and discussion. The preliminary report of the ABC will be read and discussed, and the floor will be open to discuss any issues that might need clarification.

## **Ministers' and Companions' Luncheon (Immediately following the Ministers' Meeting)**

**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 in the Cafeteria of the United Christian Church. Special singing: The Erwin Family, TN; Becky Land, SC. Guest speaker: Bishop A.B. White, overseer of northern CA/OR/WA. Comments and special presentations by the First Lady of Zion Assembly. Dress code: most of the men prefer to wear suit and tie for this occasion.

# Assembly Program

## Tuesday Evening

6:30 p.m. Praise and Worship---Snyder Family, IN

Welcome---Scott and Vicki Neill, TN

## Official Opening of the Assembly

*Multi-lingual Concert of Prayer* led by representatives from Africa, North America, Southeast Asia, South America and Caribbean.

### 10 Minute Mini-Sermons---“Show the House to . . .

. . . **the House**” (Ezek. 43.10)---David Gomba, Tanzania

. . . **the ‘Other Sheep’**” (Is. 56.6-8; 60.3-5, 10, 14; Jn. 10.16)

---Josue Hernandez, CA

. . . **the World**” (Jn. 17.21; Eph. 3.10)---Jeannie Quillen, MD

Special Songs---Erwin Family, TN

**Shepherding Ministries Boost**---Byron Harris, director

**Reaching Out to . . .** (10 minutes each)

...**Orphans**---Elijah Wafula, Kenya

...**Prisoners**---Rickey Brunet, TN

...**Shut-Ins**---Andrea Faye Davis, SC

## Assembly Expense Offering

**Message and Altar Call** (Hag. 2-9)

---Anthony Delaunay, Canada

[**Note: Kidz’ Konvention** schedule: Wednesday 7:00-8:00 p.m.;

Thursday 1:30-3:30, 6:15-8:00; Friday: 6:15-7:15 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.

## Wednesday

9:00 a.m. “. . . it is good to sing praises unto our God”

---Nicole Pounders & Alicia Harris, MS

Special Songs---Molly Hayward, MD; Gina Brooks, AL

**Message---***“Bring ye all the tithes into the Storehouse [Treasury], that there may be meat in Mine House . . .”*

(Mal. 3.10)---Ron Massey, WV

### **International Leaders’ Reports:**

-----Presiding Bishop

-----International Executive Council

-----World Mission Director

-----School of Ministry Director

-----Shepherding Ministries Director

-----Communications/Media Ministries Director

-----Sunday School Director

-----Youth Director/Camp Coordinator

-----Ladies Ministries Director

-----Children’s Ministries Director

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

### **General Treasurer’s Report**

---Afternoon Break---

2:00 p.m. Musical Prelude

### **Reports from Around the World**

*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 North America

Canada---Wade H. Phillips, national overseer  
Mexico---Danny Ramirez, national overseer  
United States---L.W. Carter, national overseer

## 3.00 Africa

Kenya---Elijah Wafula, national overseer  
South Sudan---Elijah Wafula, national overseer  
Ethiopia---Teketel Zewde, national overseer  
Uganda---Maurice Ogada, national overseer  
Nigeria---Yomi Adekunle, national overseer  
Ghana---David Dordah, national overseer  
Cameroon---Eyong Eric Eyong, national overseer  
Togo/Benin---Mark Agbonifo, national overseer  
Liberia, Sierra Leone---Amos Agbonifo,  
national overseer  
Malawi/Mozambique---Maliele Dzuwa, national overseer  
Zimbabwe, Zambia---David Gomba, mission representative  
Tanzania---David Gomba, national overseer  
DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo)---Odo Byamundu,  
national overseer  
South Africa---David November, national overseer

## 3.30 Central America

Nicaragua---Freddy Garcia, national overseer  
Guatemala---Ricardo Valenzuela, national overseer  
Costa Rica---Eugenio Cespedes, mission representative

## 3:35 Caribbean

Dominican Republic---Sandraud Pierre, national overseer  
Haiti---Saintaniel Hostellus, national overseer

## 3:50 South America

Peru, Bolivia---Yum V. Munoz Quispe, national overseer  
Chile---Javier Diaz Perez, national overseer  
Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay---Jorge Estroz, national overseer

#### 4:05 **Middle East/India**

Pakistan---Sam Bureenok, mission representative  
India Mid-East---Talari Padma Rao, provincial overseer  
India Central---John Babu Ganta, provincial overseer  
India South---V. Binoy Joseph, provincial overseer

#### 4:15 **Southeast Asia**

Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar (Burma), Sam Bureenok  
national overseer  
Bangladesh---Suku Ranjon Skider, national overseer

#### 4:30 **Far East**

Philippines---Domingo Resurreccion, national overseer

---Evening Break---

### **Wednesday Evening**

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

7:00 p.m. "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart  
in the Assembly..." (Ps. 111.1)---Kari Snyder

**Senior Ambassadors' Program**—Ruth Tingler, director

*"Who is left . . . that saw this House in her first glory"*

(Hag. 2.3)

Guest Singers---**Voices of Hope**

**Assembly Expense Offering**

**United States' Missions & New Fields**

---directed by L. W. Carter



*"The glory of this Latter House shall be greater . . ."*

(Hag. 2.9)

## Thursday

Note: ***Kidz' Convention*** today 1:30-3:30, 6:15-8:00 p.m.

9:00 a.m. Camp Report—Miguel Garcia, Jr.,  
International Coordinator

## Sunday School Program

—Donna Pounders, director



Special Songs---Vernon Johnson, VA; Victoria Green, TN

Praise Reports: Jimmy Johnson, SC; Wayne Floyd, SC

Message---“***Show them the [Form, Pattern, Ordinances, Laws] of the House***” (Ezek. 43.11)

---Anton Burnette, TN

---Afternoon Break---

1:30 p.m. “Unto [God] be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus”  
(Eph.3.21)---Nigel and Susan Morgan, Toronto, Can.

Special Songs—Cliff and Becky Kelton, MS; Charles Shelton, MS

***In Memory . . . Members:*** Reba Gates; Henry E. Murray; Harold Granger;  
Karen Freeze, Bishop Claxton Cook; Bishop Neal Knowles;  
Lucille Morrell; James Johnson Sr., Elijah Wafula, Sr.  
***Friends:*** Edna Mae Thomas, Bishop Sylvester Okango.

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

Message—“***Diligently using our God-given gifts for ministry***”

(Rom. 12.3-8)---Todd McDonald, SC

Ordination Service

---Evening Break---

## Thursday Evening

6:15 p.m. “O Magnify the Lord”---Program of **Music and Praise**  
---directed by Zachary Snyder

### School of Ministry Program

Bruce Sullivan, Superintendent



### Assembly Expense Offering

Special Songs—Jim Melton, WV; Erwin Family, TN

Praise Reports—Alice Jones, TN; Anthony Delaunay, Canada

### Healing Message & Prayer Service

---Joel Brooks, AL

*“Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee; In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.” Acts 3:6-8*

## Friday

**Attention:** *Front three rows are reserved for Youth Program.  
All youth [12-35] meet at 9:45 in the Corridor for Youth March.  
Youth Luncheon in Banquet room downstairs immediately  
following the Youth Program*

9:00 a.m. Special Songs---Teresa Pettit, AL

***Voice of Zion/SYNC boost***  
—Glenda Major, director



**Attention:** *The annual SYNC luncheon will be held in the  
Banquet room downstairs on Saturday immediately following the  
Presiding Bishop's Address. Glenda Major & Alice Jones in charge.  
All SYNC members and invited guest are encouraged to attend.*

Special Songs---Andy Davis, SC; Trevor Graves, KY



**Youth Program**

Miguel Garcia Jr., director

*“Let no man despise thy youth; but be  
thou an example of the believers, in word, in  
conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in  
purity.” 1 Tim. 4.12*

## Friday Evening

6:15 p.m. Praise Him!---Nicole and Alicia

Message---“*And the glory of the Lord came into the House*” (Ezek. 43.4)---Danny Ramirez, CA

Special Guest Singers:  
**The King’s Messengers**

**Assembly Expense Offering**



### **World Mission Program**

---Scott E. Neill, director

“*Shining our Light to the Whole World*”  
(Mt. 5.16)

---**Parade of Nations**---

“*Let your light so shine before men,  
that they may see your good works, and  
glorify your Father which is in heaven.*”  
Mt. 5.16

## 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**

---Allen Thompson, MS, in charge

8:45 Praise Him!---West Mobile Choir

**Message---**“**[Earnestly Contending] for the Faith . . .**” (Jude 3)

---Tom Brown, WV

Special Songs---**The King’s Messengers**

Recognition of Special Guests

---Assembly Choir---

### **Presiding Bishop’s Annual Address**

---Afternoon Break---

*“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” 1 Pet. 2.9*

## Saturday Afternoon

2:30 p.m. Worship Him!---Monday Family, TN  
Special Singing---West Mobile Choir

## Assembly Business Committee Report

---Evening Break---

## Saturday Evening

7:00 p.m. “I will praise [the Lord] with my whole heart”  
---Michael George, SC

Message---“*And when the Queen . . . had seen . . .  
the House ...*” (1Kg. 10.4-10)  
---Zachary Snyder, IN

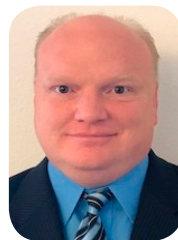
## Assembly Expense Offering

Special Singing---Lee Brown, WV; Becky Land, SC



Scott E. Neill  
*director*

**Media Ministries Program**  
“ . . . to Make All Men See . . .” (Eph. 3.9)



Anton Burnette  
*Website Assistant/Media Consultant*

# Sunday

8:45 a.m. Sunday School Lesson---Charles Barker, IN

9:15 Special Singing---Trevor Graves, KY

## Ladies Ministries Program

---Kim Erwin, director



## Children's Ministries Program

---Cheryl McDonald, director

---Assembly Choir---

Message---“*Go out . . . compel them to come in,  
that My House may be filled*” (Luke. 14.23)

---Pete Sarry, CA

Announcements

Appointments

Consecration Service

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

---led by Betty, Debbie, and Brenda

## **Assembly Program Adjustments**

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

### **Note:**

**The Presiding Bishop gave excerpts from his message throughout the Assembly and completed it on Saturday as scheduled.**

### **Tuesday**

**Jerry Pounders, MS replaced  
Anthony Delaunay, Canada (due to illness).**

### **Wednesday**

**J.J. Davis, VA replaced  
Ron Massey, WV(due to illness).**

### **Wednesday Evening**

**Joseph A. Steele, TN replaced  
L.W. Carter (due to surgery of the latter's grandson).**

### **Friday**

**Zachary Snyder, IN replaced  
Teresa Pettit, AL (unable to attend due to job responsibilities).**

### **Friday Evening and Saturday Morning**

**Erwin Family, TN replaced  
King's Messengers (due to illness)**

### **Sunday**

**Wayne Moore, SC replaced  
Charles Barker, IN (due to illness).**

### **Recognition of Special Guests:**

**Howard Thompson, County Commissioner  
Tina Turner, Beau Burris: United Community Bank**

**Registered Attendance: 440  
Actual Attendance (Estimation):**

*2012 was the first year that the Presiding Bishop's Commendation Award was 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 have been recipients of these awards:*

**2012**

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

**2013**

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

**2014**

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

**2015**

*Robert Barron Ramirez, CA  
Wanda K. Busbee, SC  
Alice Jones, TN*

**2016**

*Jeanette Surratt, SC  
Donna Pounders, MS  
Saintainel Hostelus, Haiti*

**2017**

*Ricky Graves, KY  
Gaven McDonald, SC  
Zachary Snyder, IN*

**International Staff Reports**  
**Fourteenth Annual General Assembly**  
**September 9, 2017---September10, 2017**

**Presiding Bishop's Report to the**  
**Fourteenth Annual General Assembly**  
**September 12, 2016--September 6, 2017**

*“And I Daniel . . . saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet I heard the voice of His words: and when I heard . . . then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees, and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me . . . stand upright . . . And . . . I stood trembling . . . But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me . . . And I remained there with the kings of Persia . . . Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days . . . And when he had spoken . . . I became dumb. And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips . . . Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me . . . And said, O man greatly beloved, Fear not . . . be strong . . . I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince . . .” (Dan. 10.7-21).*

*“At my first answer no man stood with me . . . Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory and honor for ever and ever. Amen” (2 Tim. 4.16-18).*

I can identify somewhat this year with these two experiences---one by a prophet and the other by an apostle. It has been in many ways a trying

and challenging year, but also a victorious and fruitful one. In all of our endeavors and through all of the challenges that have arisen, the Lord has been faithful and has stood beside me, supplying strength, enabling grace, and anointing sufficient for every situation, and sufficient to withstand all resistance from principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. He has been the Source of my ability to fight and persevere.

Connected with *the care of all the churches*, I have answered all correspondence and calls that have come into the office (roughly 275 letters and e-mails); 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 my secretary, Marie Crook, for her untiring assistance; and my wife for her assistance with the paper and for attending to many other chores and errands. Brother Neill has been valuable as a proof-reader. This year also, Renetta Kelton moved to Cleveland from Mississippi and joined our work force in the International Offices. She loves the church and is a hard worker, willing to tackle whatever task she is given. Also Glenda Major and her husband, Steve, moved recently to Cleveland from California, and they have already been a blessing both to the International Offices and to the local church. Glenda has been of course a part of the International Staff in her capacity as *Voice of Zion* and *SYNC* booster; but now she will be a lot closer to the work at hand, and she has a deep passion for the work on the envisioned Bible college to go forward.

I have counseled many hours with the ministers and churches, both in the office and on the field, in person and by phone and email. I have worked with the General Staff, the Executive Council, the Assembly Business Committee, the Doctrine Committee, the overseers, pastors, and ministers to promote the work in all of its ministries and phases. There were again this year several disciplinary actions taken. These always preoccupy too much of our time: but they are a necessary part of our reason for being as overseers and elders in the church. The good news is that, by the grace of the Lord, every problem was solved---in some cases counsel alone was sufficient; in other cases discipline was necessary; and in a few cases, a minister had to be removed from his position and his license revoked. But, in all cases, it may be said without reservation, and with the witness of the brethren, we counseled and acted in love and

I want to commend Bishop Scott Neill for his exceptional cooperation, hard work, and faithful assistance---he has really helped to lighten my load. Also I want to thank the General Treasurer, General Staff members, the regional and national overseers, and pastors, all of whom have been cheerfully cooperative with the Presiding Bishop in the promotion of the work. Some of these sacrificed much to move the work forward in their

regions and throughout the world. I want to take this opportunity here also to commend the companions of our overseers and international workers, for they minister and attend to them so that they may in turn minister and attend to others.

I have again this year worked with Brother Sullivan and served as president of the School of Ministry, worked with Brother Neill and assisted to direct the mission work throughout the world, and planned and moderated the General Assembly. The world mission work this year included five trips to Canada. I made also two trips to California and to nine other states to assist the overseers and pastors in the work.

My work connected with School of Ministry included helping to organize and plan materials; also wrote and taught several lessons for the schools in northern and southern California and in Cleveland. I attended and participated in three of the regional and state conventions in the United States---Alabama/Mississippi, Virginia/West Virginia/Pennsylvania/Maryland; North and South Carolina, and Tennessee; was privileged also to have my faithful companion, Dale, with me for two of these conventions.

This year was filled a great deal with writing. Besides the monthly chore of being the chief editor and writer for the *Voice of Zion*, I wrote a new book, *The Bible Church*, and a 22 page tract, *Millennial Glory*, both of which seem to be doing a lot of good within and without the church.

I praise the Lord for the progress made this year. What can we say but *To God be the glory, great things He hath done!* Some of us planted, others watered; but *God has given the increase!*

The following are some personal statistics in regard to the work. I offer these only to make myself accountable to this honorable body.

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Sermons Preached.....                          | 232       |
| (includes written messages and lessons taught) |           |
| Revivals conducted.....                        | 1         |
| Converted.....                                 | 10        |
| Sanctified.....                                | 6         |
| Holy Ghost Baptisms.....                       | 3         |
| Added to the church.....                       | 11        |
| Baptized in Water.....                         | 2         |
| Tithes paid.....                               | \$3640.00 |
| Offerings given.....                           | \$3220.00 |

Miles traveled.....31,200 (approximately 6000 by air, 25,200 on the ground).

Churches organized..... 0

Churches visited.....18

Regional Conventions attended.....3

General Assembly .....1  
(Moderated)

Thank you again for your prayerful support and cheerful cooperation. Everyone has been so kind and gracious to me and my family. I wish we had time to recognize the scores of faithful ministers and workers who have assisted the Presiding Bishop in the discharge of his duties and responsibilities and the promotion of the work. But the Lord has the perfect record, and He will shortly reward all of you at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and in the glorious Millennium that is just ahead. May the Lord bless and keep you all in His loving grace and infinite power.

Humbly submitted,



Wade H. Phillips

**World Mission Director's Report  
to the  
Fourteenth Annual General Assembly  
September 6, 2017**

Psalm 28:7

*The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.*

Psalm 113:3

*From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD'S name is to be praised., my heart trusted in him and my heart greatly rejoices."*

I hold the words of the Psalmist David dear when he says, "*the Lord is my strength, my shield, my heart trusted in him and my heart greatly rejoices*"

I want to thank the Lord for all that He has done and accomplished this year. I have been able to settle down into the saddle of workings of the awesome task and responsibility of the World Mission Department. I would like to take this opportunity first to thank my precious wife Vicki for all her support, prayer and especially a listening ear throughout this past year. She has traveled with me on various trips and I thank God for her.

I appreciated the opportunity over the past year to work closely with our Presiding Bishop I have been given the privilege to learn from his knowledge of how to handle many situations that come across my desk. Most days we held at least one and on many occasions several conferences dealing with situations from the mission work around the world.

Throughout the year I have been able to accomplish the following things with the Lord's help:

1. During last years' assembly, I coordinated the travel plans for the overseers that attended.
2. Received and answered many emails, phone calls, Facebook Messenger messages and Wbatsapps too many to put a number on!
3. Zion Assembly is now represented in 48 countries, including the three new countries that have just been opened up in the last 2 months. More information will be given about this during the World Mission Program on Friday evening.

4. In the last 4 weeks, with the assistance and translating of Brother Danny Ramirez, two new ministers took the church covenant by way of conference calls to Venezuela. Brother Bani Rangel Jimerez was installed as the interim overseer until the Assembly. A new minister, Brother Gomez and his wife, were received into the church by covenant in the country of Guinea which is in western Africa.

5. In November, I attended the Youth Convention in Pulaski, TN.

6. I made a trip to Chile and Argentina in which Brother Javier Diaz was reinstated as the National Overseer. While in Chile, two new churches were organized in Santiago, with one being a Haitian church. I am thankful for Brother Sandraud Pierre being able to accompany me at the last minute to serve as a translator. Several meetings were held with individual ministers while in Chile. I was privileged to attend the Argentina Convention while there. Many thanks to Overseer Jorge Estroz for his hospitality while there.

7. I taught classes in the School of Ministry in Northern and Southern California and also here in Cleveland, Tennessee. I also recorded all of the classes so we can use them to prepare teaching materials for online programs. In the Cleveland School, I served as morning devotion director in which I was able to pull a few coat-tails of those who expounded the Word beyond the allotted time of seven minutes.

8. I was honored to be able to attend 6 Regional and State Conventions this summer: Northern California as the Headquarters Representative; preached in the Southern California convention; Headquarters Representative to South Central and Mid Central regions; attended and preached at the South Carolina Convention and also attended the Tennessee Convention.

9. Prepared paperwork and oversaw the distribution of the allotments that we send out to the Overseers and mission workers each quarter. With the assistance of General Treasurer, Vicki Neill, we are during this assembly implementing new procedures to their issue all overseers and mission workers debit cards so that money can be deposited into their accounts and they can retrieve the funds in their country by the way of ATMS. Please help us pray that this will be successful so that it eliminates many problems that we are facing in getting funds out to the field.

10. Oversaw the Spanish translation of 2 issues of the *Voice of Zion*.

11. At this point, I would like to thank Norie Garavito, Danny Ramirez, Renetta Kelton, Roberto Lopez, and Miguel Garcia, Jr. in assisting in translating and also with conference calls that I have had to make.

12. I would like to thank also Sister Marie Crook and Sister Renetta Kelton for all their help in the office.

13. Wrote two articles for the *Voice of Zion* and assisted Brother Phillips in monthly editing.

14. Attended ABC committee meetings at retreat in Murphy, NC, Pigeon Forge, TN and during the School of Ministry.

15. While in Pigeon Forge for ABC committee meeting, I joined Bishop Phillips and greeted the Ladies that attended the East Coast Ladies Retreat.

16. We published a new book entitled, “The Bible Church” authored by Bishop Phillips. We have just received in the last month the Spanish translation from Norie Garavito and will be publishing it in the upcoming months.

17. Booked airline tickets for missionary trips that have been made throughout the year.

18. Conducted 3 revivals.

19. Made 21 church visits.

20. Submitted my monthly reports and tithes.

21. Traveled 27, 000 miles by air and 16,000 miles by automobile.

22. Worked closely with Anton Burnette who came on staff to assist with the International Website and Media Ministries.

Thanks to my wife and daughter for all of their support and love.

Humbly submitted,  
Scott E. Neill, *World Mission Director*

## **General Treasurer's Report 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly**

I am thankful for all the Lord's blessings and for the privilege to serve the Lord and Zion Assembly Church of God for another year as General Treasurer. It has been exciting to watch all that God has done. Because we have all worked together this year, much has been accomplished and we give God all the glory.

I appreciate the work done in each local church and for your faithful support to the International Offices. Pastors and ministers, thank you for faithfully sending your Minister's Reports and financial support each month to the International Offices. I appreciate the work you do and your sacrifices of love for the Lord Jesus Christ. I would also like to recognize and thank the local Church Treasurers for your labors of love. You are servants who faithfully work not only during every service, but also throughout the year to handle the local church funds. You get little to no recognition, yet you tirelessly serve in the background because of your love for the Lord. Your work helps to keep the local church doors open and you also make sure that local church funds are sent to the International Offices. Local treasurers, I would like to ask you to stand and allow this General Assembly to show its appreciation to you for your labor of love. Thank you pastors, ministers, and local treasurers for all you do for the Lord and Zion Assembly Church of God.

In addition, I would like to thank all the individuals who have made pledges to the College Fund and faithfully paid those pledges. Because of your faithfulness, paying off the mortgage on the International Properties will soon be a reality and it will be done in record time. In man's eyes, this is an amazing and unheard of accomplishment. In God's eyes, it is a simple task. To God Be The Glory for what HE has done!!

During the past month, I have worked with the World Mission Director to set up a new World Mission bank account with SmartBank, a new bank here in Cleveland. This new account will improve and simplify the methods for transferring funds to our ministers around the world. It will also give us better control over our international finances and reduce the transfer fees. We thank God for answering prayer and opening a new avenue for managing mission funds. I ask for your prayers as we work to be good stewards over the funds with which God has blessed Zion Assembly Church of God.

As General Treasurer, my responsibilities have been to pick up the mail from the Post Office and distribute it to all appropriate offices; record and deposit all funds received from local churches, ministers, individuals,

and companies; and pay all the bills for the International Offices. I was involved in the financial meetings with the Presiding Bishop and World Mission director regarding the handling of various funds. I prepared financial reports for the Presiding Bishop and International Staff. I want to thank my husband, Scott Neill, for his help. He often stops by the Post Office and bank for me when he is in town. I appreciate him.

Since October 1, 2016, I have traveled within the United States with the World Missions Director, and boosted the work of the General Treasurer's Office.

- I have visited five churches in Mississippi, Tennessee, and South Carolina.
- Attended the East Coast Youth Convention, East Coast Ladies Retreat, and attended Post Graduate classes in the School of Ministry, Cleveland, Tennessee.
- I attended four State/Regional Conventions: Tennessee, North/South Carolina, Kentucky/Illinois, and Alabama/Mississippi.

Humbly and respectfully submitted,  
Vicki S. Neill, *General Treasurer*

# Zion Assembly Church of God

## SUMMARY OF ALL FUNDS: July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

|                                  | Balance Forward     | Total Income        | Total Expenses      | Ending Balance      |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Checking Account Balance         | \$78,899.25         | \$460,238.15        | \$455,283.09        | \$83,854.31         |
| College Fund Account             | \$35,711.52         | \$61,674.16         | \$51,000.00         | \$46,385.68         |
| Tabernacle Fund Account          | \$7,157.63          | \$2,321.92          | \$0.00              | \$9,479.55          |
| PayPal Checking Account          | \$122.16            | \$1,385.68          | \$1,028.20          | \$479.64            |
| PayPal Online Account            | \$1,451.76          | \$782.87            | \$1,401.63          | \$833.00            |
| <b>TOTAL: ALL ACCOUNTS/FUNDS</b> | <b>\$123,342.32</b> | <b>\$526,402.78</b> | <b>\$508,712.92</b> | <b>\$141,032.18</b> |

## Fund Balances Statement: July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

| Fund                            | Balance Forward    | Total Income        | Total Expenses      | Ending Balance     |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Emergency Fund                  | \$2,187.79         | \$2,354.72          | \$0.00              | \$4,542.51         |
| Ladies Retreats Fund            | \$3,589.65         | \$11,371.07         | \$8,095.79          | \$6,864.93         |
| Missions Fund                   | \$56,959.46        | \$181,276.43        | \$162,151.41        | \$76,084.48        |
| School of Ministry Fund         | \$1,000.24         | \$14,488.28         | \$10,435.91         | \$5,052.61         |
| Spanish Voice of Zion Fund      | \$1,536.00         | \$317.00            | \$463.61            | \$1,389.39         |
| Sunday School/Orphanage Fund    | \$6,511.70         | \$18,585.92         | \$6,600.00          | \$18,497.62        |
| Tithe/General Fund              | \$0.00             | \$214,152.64        | \$247,021.50        | -\$32,868.86       |
| Voice of Zion Fund              | \$477.98           | \$9,087.09          | \$8,562.11          | \$1,002.96         |
| Media Fund                      | \$6,636.43         | \$8,605.00          | \$11,952.76         | \$3,288.67         |
| <b>TOTALS: CHECKING ACCOUNT</b> | <b>\$78,899.25</b> | <b>\$460,238.15</b> | <b>\$455,283.09</b> | <b>\$83,854.31</b> |

## Other Funds Balance Statement: July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

| Account                            | Balance Forward    | Income             | Expenses           | Ending Balance     |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| College Fund                       | \$35,711.52        | \$61,674.16        | \$51,000.00        | \$46,385.68        |
| Tabernacle Fund                    | \$7,157.63         | \$2,321.92         | \$0.00             | \$9,479.55         |
| PayPal Checking Account            | \$122.16           | \$1,385.68         | \$1,028.20         | \$479.64           |
| PayPal Online Account              | \$1,451.76         | \$782.87           | \$1,401.63         | \$833.00           |
| <b>TOTALS OF OTHER FUNDS ACCTS</b> | <b>\$44,443.07</b> | <b>\$66,164.63</b> | <b>\$53,429.83</b> | <b>\$57,177.87</b> |

## International Ministries Properties Mortgage

July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

|                              | Balance Forward | Principal Paid | Interest Paid | Ending Balance |
|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Mortgage on Int'l Properties | \$214,947.37    | \$83,300.74    | \$6,909.26    | \$131,646.63   |

## International Ministries Properties Mortgage

YEAR-TO-DATE

July 1, 2016 - September 1, 2017

|                              | Balance Forward | Principal Paid | Interest Paid | Ending Balance |
|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Mortgage on Int'l Properties | \$214,947.37    | \$160,187.48   | \$7,791.22    | \$54,759.89    |

# Sunday School Director

## *Greetings to the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly*

I give God all the glory and honor for the opportunity and gift that he has given me to serve in the capacity of Sunday School Director again this year. He alone is worthy of praise for all that was accomplished.

As director I organize outreach events that helped promote Sunday School attendance, oversaw the electronic distribution of the Sunday School material each month, making sure that everyone is able to receive the material in a timely manner. I managed and received the Sunday School Quarterly Reports from the local churches.

We currently email the Faith-N-Focus material in both English and Spanish to over 330 individuals each month, many of whom are Sunday School superintendents and pastors, who then make copies and distribute the lessons in their local churches or missions. This past year we have received several requests from outside Zion Assembly, which I find extremely exciting! In addition to those who receive the material by email, we have many more that choose to download the lessons directly from the website.

In 2015 we implemented a Sunday School Quarterly Report. The report is easily accessible on the International Office website. The information can be entered and the form submitted with one easy application. We encourage each church to submit the reports to the Sunday School Director quarterly via email. The information received is beneficial in recording local growth and events.

This year we are pleased to honor three churches for their excellence in giving to support the orphanage work in Zion Assembly.

1st: \$2,031.93 (West Mobile, AL)

2nd: \$1,940.02 (Greenville, SC)

3rd: \$1,089.50 (Cleveland, TN)

This past year I was honored to attend the following events, having the opportunity also to promote the work of Sunday School outreach:

Ladies Retreat in Pigeon Forge, TN

School of Ministry in Cleveland, TN

Served as Headquarters Representative during TN/GA Regional Convention  
South Central Regional Convention

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Donna Pounders*

# Sunday School Literature Editor

## *Report to the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly*

As Sunday School Literature Editor, my responsibilities include curriculum development, writing the adult literature, and editing all of the Sunday School literature (children, teen and adult) for electronic publication. This year in April, we introduced a new adult format which allowed two printing options: booklet and large print. Thus far, the new format has been received with positive feedback. To summarize the 2016-17 literature, the adult studies covered the following topics: Church Growth Principles, and the Epistles of Peter. The children studied the Life of Christ, followed by Bible Heroes.

We have many people involved in the editorial process. I appreciate Brother Phillips for his assistance in editing. I also appreciate Sister Marie Crook for coordinating our long-distance correspondence. The Sunday School Editorial Department is a team of volunteers committed to Sunday School education in Zion Assembly. An important part of my responsibilities is coordinating this team. I enlist a team of writers and a team of children's writers. I work with them to prepare the teen and children's literature. We have a great group of teen writers, as follows: Miguel Garcia Jr., Trevor Graves, Byron Harris, Pam Jones, Zach Snyder, and Allen Thompson. Our children's writers are doing a wonderful job. The writers are Shanda Graves, Alicia Harris, Tracy McCafferty, Kari Snyder, Kara Spicer and Mandy Thompson. In Zion Assembly, we have some quality writers who contribute their time and talent to make Sunday School a successful ministry. Furthermore, I work with skilled translators to prepare the Spanish literature for our Hispanic brothers and sisters both here in the United States and abroad. We appreciate Sister Norie Garavito, Sister Noemi Diaz, and Brother Gerson Diaz for their translation work. Thanks to all of our editorial staff for their hard work this year.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Todd McDonald*

## **International SYNC Director**

### ***Greetings to the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly***

I wish, first of all, to acknowledge my gratitude to God for all of His blessings this past year including allowing me to work in *Voice of Zion* and SYNC Ministries. I cannot put into words what it has meant to have been allowed the privilege and honor to have worked for such professional and dedicated men and women of God as those who labor to put out the *Voice of Zion*. Their dedication to accomplish this task is a labor of love. Their love and devotion is shown in the quality of the magazine.

I have also been blessed to have been allowed to work alongside the regional *Voice of Zion*/SYNC directors in each region. It was my great joy to attend the Conventions held in Northern California, West Virginia, Kentucky and Mississippi. It especially blessed my soul to be in attendance during the various SYNC programs the regions held. My genuine thanks to all the overseers and pastors who permitted me to come into their churches and conventions during this past physical year.

This past physical year I have again at various times sent out letters of reminders and encouragement to the regional workers. In October, I sent out to the *Voice of Zion* subscribers, cards especially designed to remind each subscriber to renew their subscriptions. In December, I purchased and sent out Christmas cards for all the *Voice of Zion* subscribers, and endeavored to let them know that we sincerely value their support.

Alongside Sister Alice Jones and my faithful family, I planned and organized the SYNC luncheon. We put together and sent out invitations and also mailed an additional note for the date change of the luncheon. We purchased and prepared decorations and gifts for each region and arranged for the staff to work at the luncheon. I planned and organized the SYNC program for the Assembly, as well as worked to put together a Voice of Zion and SYNC table in the foyer. We are grateful to God that He has provided the financial means to support the SYNC program.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Glenda Major*

# Ladies' Ministries Report

## *Greetings to this 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly*

The ladies of Zion enjoyed gathering for our Western and Eastern Retreats. I am pleased to report that we had an increase in our overall attendance this year.

### **WESTERN REGION**

Despite the treacherous weather conditions and road closures, 69 California ladies made their way to the retreat in Soledad Canyon in Acton, CA on Saturday morning, February 18, 2017. God greatly blessed. I am thankful for the continued service of our southern California Ladies' Ministries director, Maria Avila, and all those who assisted her in this retreat.

### **EASTERN REGION**

On the weekend of February 24-26, 2017, in Sevierville, TN, at the Oak Tree Lodge, we had a total of 136 ladies to attend. We were honored to have 30 ladies from the Belmont and Emmanuel Baptist Churches (Eastern Tennessee) to visit during the Saturday morning session. They presented a beautiful program titled "Priceless Stories of Women in the Bible."

Reports of experiences included 3 saved, 2 sanctified and several testified to receiving strength, healing, direction and deliverance. The **TOTAL ATTENDANCE for both retreats was 205. PRAISE THE LORD!**

God bless the ladies of Zion! May you continue to display a "pattern of good works" in ALL THINGS. (Titus 2:7)

Respectfully submitted,  
*Kimberly Erwin*

## International Youth Camp Director

### Greetings to the 14th Annual General Assembly

I would like to greet this General Assembly in the Name that is above all names, Jesus Christ!

One of the most important ministries we can have is healthy camping ministries. It is through this ministry that we are able to minister one on one. This is a time they can worship God freely amongst their peers with men and women who have prayed and are working to lead them back to a personal relationship with our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. Believe it or not, there are young people struggling in their walk, and if it weren't for camp, they would leave the church. Some I have personally spoken to have been refreshed by a camp counselor who saw a need, took the time to counsel, to pray and to encourage them in their walk. We have had a successful camp year. My hat goes off to the many staff workers who worked camp this year. I thank God because in Zion Assembly we have healthy Holy Spirit-filled summer and winter camps. It is a place where we encourage the youth to press deeper into God's unlimited power and the reports we have received throughout the different regions tell us that God is moving!

This year young people and kids that sought salvation, were touched by God, baptized with the Holy Ghost, and baptized in water. We are truly living in exciting times!

Here is our report for Summer Camps:

Professed Salvation: 37

Professed Sanctification: 30

Baptized w/ the Holy Ghost: 8

Baptized in Water: 41

Professed Healings: 6

Visitors: 12

Total attendance at Summer/Winter Camps: 356 (increase of 23 over last year)

Thank you, and God bless each and every regional overseer for their unrelenting support for the camp ministry; and for putting our young people first. All the camp coordinators, camp directors, volunteer staff and kitchen workers, along with camp boosters and fundraisers who made this year's camps possible are to be commended. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the Lord and camp ministry.

Humbly Submitted,

*Miguel A. Garcia, Jr.*

## Mid-Central & Tennessee Region Youth Camp

### “CAMP JUBILEE”

On June 9, 2017, sixty-eight (68) campers and 44 staff gathered at Mission discovery campground in Westmoreland, Tennessee looking forward to a great time at Camp Jubilee.

This year’s overall camp theme was ‘LIVING THE DREAM.’ We also had a theme for each day. Those themes were : TRUST – even in The Pit we can trust in the Lord that He has a plan: TRUTH – living and speaking the truth even if it leads us to The Prison; and lastly TRIUMPH –living out the dream (plan) God has for us in The Palace.

Each morning after breakfast we started the day with the “Living the Dream” drama, a play acting out the life of Joseph (Genesis 36, 38-45). Shanda Graves wrote and directed the drama with camp staff from Scottsville church campers loved it! Some of the campers were coming early to get a front row seat for the play.

Following the drama, campers went to their classes which were taught by Kara Spicer, Kari Snyder, and Zac Snyder. Each class was such an inspiration to the campers as the teachers were prepared and inspired to teach. After classes Derrick McBride was ready for some fun with water games. Everyone, even the staff, had a blast participating in these games, especially the Human Bowling Game.

Our services each night were powerful. Worship was lead by Trevor Graves and CIT-Shelby Erwin. Brother Anton Brunette preached the Word and all the campers from the youngest to the oldest, along with staff, were inspired by the messages. We will always remember the following quote, “The Bible is right and everyone else is wrong”. The altar was filled each night with campers seeking the Lord. Everyone was blessed.

Camp Jubilee has outgrown the existing campground and we are anticipating more growth. We will be moving to a larger facility next year to accommodate the increase. Praise the Lord!

We are happy to report there were 112 registered campers. There were 22 saved, 10 sanctified, 5 baptized with the Holy Ghost, 6 professed heading, and 31 baptized in water. We also had 12 visitors attend one of our evening services. We are so thankful for the increase!

There is not enough space to tell of all the events that took place at Camp Jubilee, or to mention all the staff who helped to make the camp a success. Also a special “thank you” to Emily Carey for taking the pictures during camp. She has posted them on the Camp Jubilee face book page for viewing.

To God be the glory for all He did at Camp Jubilee this year. Campers and staff left camp with a desire to be “Living the Dream”---living out the plan God has for their lives.

Humbly Submitted,  
*Pam Jones*

## Youth Ministries Director

### Greetings to the 14th Annual General Assembly

I greet this General Assembly in the name of Jesus Christ, the prince of peace and our only hope of glory.

I'm comforted by the words of the Psalmist David in **Psalm 91:1-2**, "***He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust.***"

In the midst of trouble He has been my hope; in weakness He has been my strength; in times of darkness His word has been a ***lamp unto my feet; and a light unto my path.***"

It is my desire to please God in all that I do for Him here on earth and in the church. I want to be found faithful in the little He has placed on me. I want so much to hear those words in Matthew 25:21 "***...Well done, thou good AND faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord***".

How sweet will that day be when we enter into heaven, and we hear those words spoken out of the mouth of our sweet Savior? I get excited just thinking about it!

This year has been a little more packed with events, trips and revival; but through it all God has been good. I was asked to attend two National conventions as the Headquarters Representative in Honduras and Nicaragua. Both conventions were a blessing, and I was able to meet more young people in the church who are excited about working for the Lord! I was also honored to have been invited to preach at the Northern California Regional Convention. It was a great time in the Lord with our brethren. We also held two Youth Rallies; one in Anaheim, California which saw young people at the altar seeking the Lord and some accepting their call into the ministry; and another rally in Mobile, AL that turned into an outright revival weekend, one received the baptism with the Holy Ghost; we had one saved and many touched but the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Exciting things are happening. I purposed in my heart last year as I stood before you that I would be traveling a bit more, and I have. I want to see our young people ready and excited to work. All in all, I have travelled approximately 18,500 miles by air and land.

I have answered calls, text messages and emails. I thank God we have young men and women who have a desire to build God's house. We have begun to discuss how Youth Ministries can be a strong arm in outreach and discipling. I want to thank all the Regional Directors and their [wives/husbands] for their support and prayers.

I would like to thank also my wife and children for their support, love and prayers.

It is my greatest joy and privilege to serve God and His church in this capacity this year. Yet there is still a lot of work to do, and we are ready to do it.

Name of Director: Miguel A. Garcia Jr.  
Number of messages preached during year: 22  
Saved: 3  
Baptized with the Holy Ghost: 1  
Many lives touched and filled  
Organized two (2) Youth Conventions  
One held in Pulaski, TN and the other one in Rialto, CA  
How many registered for Youth Convention: Over 400  
Wrote 8 lessons for teen SS lessons

Total offering collected by Youth Ministries \$5,289.00

- 1) Greenville Church- \$945.01
- 2) Cleveland Church- \$748.00
- 3) Columbus Church- \$486.36

I want to encourage each local youth ministry to continue the excellent work in sending in Media Ministries offerings. I also would like to encourage what we are doing in collecting a quarterly offering for the translation of the *Voice of Zion* in Spanish.

The year 2018 will see the youth ministries department team up with world missions department on our very first youth missions trip. We are going to Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico! We have flyers and applications in the youth ministries booth outside.

We are excited and looking forward to the many blessings God has for us as we seek Him daily.

*“Have I not commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest”.* Joshua 1:9

Humbly Submitted,

*Miguel A. Garcia Jr.*

# **International Children's Ministries Director**

## **Greetings to the 14th Annual General Assembly**

I thank God for the calling which He placed on my life. At the young age of seven, I felt God's power and presence. As I learned to surrender to His Spirit, He drew me into a closer relationship with Him. I knew my life would never be the same for now I would be in His service as in II Timothy 2:3 which says, "*Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*" My enlistment was not to sit on a church pew but to actively serve in God's Army and minister to children.

God has blessed me with many opportunities throughout my life to work in Children's Ministries. This past year has been spent in one of my most active missions. Every Wednesday, I prepare food and a Bible lesson to feed the bodies and souls of the children who attend our mid-week service at our local church. In May, we reached our goal of 50 children and youth under the age of nineteen in one session. As a result, our pastor, Todd McDonald, had two buckets of orange slime poured over his head. It was a wonderful memory for all who experienced it! In June, my husband and I organized a successful Vacation Bible School in our local church. I taught three sessions at the Carolinas Regional Convention in July. I created thematic lessons and an ideas page, to promote Children's Day throughout Zion Assembly. I received many wonderful reports from Children's Day programs from around the world. I collected these and prepared them for printing in the Voice of Zion magazine. For this year's assembly, I have recruited teachers and coordinated the classes for another exciting Kidz Konvention. I have also prepared the Children's Sunday morning program for this General Assembly. I thank God for the dedicated soldiers of the Lord who serve alongside of me to train and prepare children to live for Jesus.

Respectfully submitted,

***Cheryl H. McDonald***

# International Shepherding Ministries Director

## Greetings to the 14th Annual General Assembly

It is an honor and a privilege to serve the Lord. I thank God for allowing me to serve in this capacity as Shepherding Ministries Director. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my wife and family for the support during this past year. I also would like thank our Presiding Bishop for having the trust and faith in me to appoint me to this position. God has truly blessed us with His great love and provided so many opportunities to show love to one another and the lost world.

As the Shepherding Ministries director, I was able to attend our School of Ministry. I was also able to minister in two revivals. I attended and ministered in youth camp, winter retreat, two of our regional conventions, and visited seven local churches. Along with my duties as a local pastor, I wrote nine lessons for the teen Sunday School, articles of the *Voice of Zion* magazine. I also served on the Assembly Business committee. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve and to minister to precious souls in Zion Assembly. I am overwhelmed with joy and anticipation for what God will do in the upcoming year. I want to encourage our local churches to continue to keep the unity of the Spirit in love for one another. May God receive all the glory and honor for what was accomplished this past year.

Humbly Submitted,

*Byron Harris*

# 2017 ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE AND DOCTRINE REPORT

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

## Section I

### **The Simultaneous Death and/or Moral Failure or Physical Incapacity of the Presiding Bishop and World Mission Director**

The Assembly has decreed that in the event of the death and/or moral failure or physical incapacity of the Presiding Bishop (PB) the World Mission Director (WMD) will fill the office of the PB until the next Assembly. However, no procedure is in place in the event that both the PB and WMD should die or become incapacitated at the same time.

We recommend, therefore, that in the event of the death and/or moral or physical failure of the PB and WMD at the same time, the secretary of the International Executive Council (IEC) call a meeting of the Council and preside over the selection of a moderator for the meeting. The selection of moderator should be accepted unanimously. The meeting will then proceed to select an interim Presiding Bishop to fill the position until the Assembly. Then that Assembly will follow the normal procedure of selecting the Presiding Bishop.

## Section II

### **Exhorter License**

Throughout our history we have withheld evangelist licenses from those who have not been baptized with the Holy Ghost, with the evidence of speaking in tongues. The duties of an evangelist are as follows: to administer the ordinances, perform marriages, receive members into the church, and to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe it would be wise for those who feel called into the ministry, but have not yet been baptized with the Holy Ghost, to receive an exhorter's license. This will give them recognition by the church to preach the Gospel until they are baptized with the Holy Ghost, with the evidence of speaking in tongues. But they will not be authorized to perform marriages, receive members into the church, and administer the ordinances except by special appointment and supervision of the Presbytery---the Presiding Bishop and the National\State overseer. The Exhorter License will be renewed annually in order to monitor the progress of the minister.

## **Section III**

### **Regional/State Functions and Sundays**

Because a large number of regional or state activities take place on Sunday, the ministry and outreach of the local churches are often hindered numerically, financially, and spiritually. We recommend therefore that other than the General Assembly, Ladies Retreats, and International Youth Camp state activities should not be planned to include Sunday.

## **Section IV**

### **International Symbol or Logo**

In consultation with the sub-committee appointed in the 2016 Assembly we now present for your consideration the finalized design to be used as the official international symbol/logo for Zion Assembly Church of God. In addition, the International Offices will oversee the translation of the church's name on each logo design in every nation in the particular language of each nation and will distribute them in the needed format when necessary. This will keep the name and logo uniform throughout the world.



## **Section V**

### **International Properties Indebtedness**

We want to once again give full support to the Presiding Bishop's vision for a Bible college and the expansion of our International Ministries Center. We share the belief that to effectively proclaim the message and to carry out our mission as God's church, it is imperative to build and operate our own Bible college to equip our ministers with the proper tools to spread the last day's message.

## **Section VI**

### **Emergency Fund Increase**

We recommend that the yearly contribution toward the Emergency Fund be increased from \$5.00 to \$12.00 (\$1.00 per month). These funds will be used to assist ministers and local churches in the event of an unforeseen financial hardship. We further encourage our pastors, church ministers, and Shepherding Ministries directors to invite non-members to contribute.

## **Section VII**

### **Start Date for Pastoral Appointments**

We recommend that the pastor's start date begin the first Sunday of the following month after the state convention.

## **Section VIII**

### **Rules of Discipline Needed for Modern Forms of Communication**

We fully support Section V of the Presiding Bishop's annual address. We recommend that no local church service or church function be "live streamed" without special permission from the pastor or the person in charge. We further recommend that great caution be taken by pastors and members of Zion Assembly in conduct and conversation when participating in social mediums such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Let us always consider the admonition of Paul that we are to "...give [no] place to the devil (Ephesians 4:27)."

## **Section IX**

### **"From the Cradle to the Grave" Senior Ambassadors Ministry**

We fully support Section IV of the Presiding Bishop's Annual Address in Senior Ambassador Ministries. It is clear that due to the immense need for ministry among seniors that we adopt a support ministry that effectively meets the peculiar needs of seniors. We further recommend that the Presiding Bishop be given authority to appoint an international Senior Ambassador director who will organize and oversee the purposes and goals of this ministry. Each National/Regional/State Overseer, as well as each local pastor/church minister, should also appoint Senior Ambassador leaders.

## **Section X**

### **Department of Education/ Director of Education**

We fully support Section IV of the Presiding Bishop's Annual Address to create a Department of Education and Director of Education. It would seem wise and more efficient if all of Zion Assembly's educational ministries (Sunday School, School of Ministry, *Voice of Zion* magazine, Bible College, etc.) be brought under one education administration. This will bring harmony to the message and direction of said ministries. We further recommend that the Department of

Education include a committee or board of directors, the latter of which would include by virtue of their appointed positions the Sunday School director, Sunday School literature editor, the School of Ministry superintendent, *Voice of Zion* editor [Presiding Bishop], the assistant publisher, and, looking forward, also the president of the Bible college.

## **Section XI**

### **Media Ministries**

We fully support Section IV of the Presiding Bishop’s Annual Address in regard to Media Ministries. It seems evident that reviving and supporting this ministry will be pleasing to the Lord. To help facilitate this we recommend that the monthly offering previously received in the local church designated as “Youth Offering” be used for Media Ministries. We further recommend that the youth of each local church help raise funds throughout the year to go toward Media Ministries. It also seems wise to appoint a Media Ministries booster who could help the local church stay abreast of this important ministry.

## **Section XII**

### **Recommendation to the Ministry**

#### **Regarding Assembly Minutes and *Voice of Zion* Subscription**

We recommend and encourage that all ministers (bishops, deacons, male/female evangelists, exhorters) purchase Assembly Minutes and maintain a yearly subscription to the church’s magazine *Voice of Zion*. The resources for ministry in these materials are invaluable.

### **Respectfully Submitted,**

Joe Steele, *Chairman*  
Zachary Snyder  
L.W. Carter  
Jim Orange  
Scott E. Neill  
Byron Harris  
Yomi Adekunle (absent)  
Alternates: Pete Sarry, Tod Deakle

## Bishops, Deacons, and Marriage

The committee has been presented with the following question: Are men required to be married in order to hold the office of bishop or deacon?

The marital status of bishops and deacons has long been a matter of discussion within Christianity. Throughout the dark ages, it was argued that ministers be required to abstain from marriage in order to focus on ministering in the Kingdom of God. However, the church has concluded that, while the Bible commends the “single life” as a means of ministering without the distraction of familial responsibilities (1 Cor. 7:32, 35), it was clearly never a requirement for ministry. It would seem it was this false requirement for celibacy which caused the Spirit to inspire the writer of Hebrews to emphatically declare, “*Marriage is honourable in all...*” (Heb. 13:4) and for Paul to write condemning those who “forbid” marriage (1 Tim. 4:3). Therefore, it is clear, bishops and deacons may marry.

The question now asked as to whether a bishop or deacon must be married, seems to stem from the following two scriptures: 1 Tim 3:2, 12 which states the candidates for bishop or deacon, “...*must be blameless, the husband of one wife...*” and Titus 1:6, which requires a bishop to be “*blameless, the husband of one wife...*” While these scriptures do speak of marriage, it seems clear these scriptures were not given to make marriage a requirement for holding the office of bishop or deacon. Instead, they seem to have been given to require the candidates for the office, who are married, to have a blameless reputation of faithfulness to one spouse. In fact, these scriptures can literally be interpreted, “a man of one woman.” Therefore the candidate for the office of bishop or deacon must be a man of notable reputation for faithfulness to one wife and not be regarded as a “womanizer.” For this reason, a bishop was required to be recognized as the “husband of only one wife”, consistent with Christ’s teaching regarding marriage.

It further seems unreasonable to conclude these scriptures were meant to disqualify “unmarried” men from being bishops and deacons when 1 Corinthians 7 spends a great deal of time commending the choice to remain unmarried for the sake of ministry. Why would Paul commend the single life in 1 Corinthians 7 and then disqualify one who is unmarried from being a bishop or deacon when writing to Timothy and Titus?

It would also appear Paul himself was unmarried (1 Cor. 9:5) and yet he held the office of “apostle.” A careful reading of Acts 1:20 seems to make clear “apostles” were also considered bishops. Paul would then have been ineligible for the office of apostle (seeing it was a “bishopruck”) if marriage was a requirement.

Therefore, we recommend bishops and deacons be faithful men of good reputation. Whether they are married or single, they are to be pure and blameless in regard to marital integrity and their relationships with women. *“But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.”* (1 Cor 7:17 )

## **Role of Women in Conference**

The question has been asked of the committee, “Can the women of the church be asked for their input during a church conference or must strict silence be observed on their part?”

Throughout scripture we are told God has created a “Divine Order” for the home. In 1 Timothy 2:13 Paul points out God’s Divine order by creating Adam first and Eve second. This order was confirmed after the fall when God proclaimed to the woman, *“...Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee”* (Gen 3:16 KJV. See also 1 Tim. 2:14).

Throughout the Old Testament we see the saints recognizing this “Divine Order” and operating under a “patriarchal” system where the husband led the family. Peter points this out using Sarah as an example of godliness in her submission to Abraham (1 Pet 3:5-6). Consequently, when decisions had to be made, the elder men would counsel together as representatives of their families. Though the New Testament clearly teaches there is no difference in value between a man and woman (Gal. 3:28), it does confirm there is a difference in their roles. The husband is declared to be the head of the wife and leader of the home (Eph. 5:23) and wives are told to submit themselves unto their own husbands (Eph. 5:22) and children to their parents (Eph.6:1).

Even though the husband is declared to be the “head” of the wife, the New Testament clarifies the role of “headship” stating the leaders should be the servants of those under their oversight (Matt. 20:27). In that spirit, the husband is to be motivated by self-sacrificing love for his wife (Eph. 5:25). Therefore, in love, he is to make decisions based on the best interests of his family and not as a “lord” over God’s heritage (1 Tim. 5:3). The husband is to lead in love and the wife is to submit in love. It should then be noted, it is an abuse of power, and perversion of God’s plan, for a man to make a decision without considering the needs of his wife.

The Bible condemns any rejection of this “Divine Order” in the family (1 Tim. 2:12). The Bible calls it a “shame” for a woman to disregard the process and dishonor her husband as her head (1 Cor. 11:5, 7; 1 Cor. 14:35). It further condemns any attempt by the woman to “usurp” the authority of the husband (1 Tim. 2:12). This “Divine Order” is to be recognized and followed in matters of the church as well as in matters of the home. Therefore, the church has long held that men are to act as representatives of their families in church matters. During these times, the women are to keep silent in the church (1 Cor. 14:34). (*Note: It should be pointed out this “silence” doesn’t mean “absolute silence”*). Though the women can take active roles in worship in the church, the decision making

process is delegated exclusively to the men of the church. However, just like in the decision process of the home, a man should never seek to represent his family in church matters without seeking and considering the wise counsel and concerns of his wife.

This committee confirms the exclusive role of men in the final decision-making process of the church. Prior to the conference, every effort should be made to inform ALL members of the matters to be discussed and the men of the congregation should discuss all matters with the female members they represent before entering into conference. If unforeseen circumstances should arise whereby the conference needs information from a female member, the moderator may call on female members to give specific input.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

Bruce Sullivan, *Chairman*  
J.J. Davis, Rick Ferrell, Todd McDonald.  
Joel Brooks, Tom Brown, Sandraud Pierre  
Alternate: Jimmy Johnson, Trevor Graves

**Wade H. Phillips**



*Presiding Bishop*

**Marie Spurling Crook**



**Chief Clerk**

# *Presiding Bishop's Annual Address*

Cleveland, TN  
September 10, 2016

## **Bible Pledge**

I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word. I promise to read and study it, and by the grace of God to obey it. I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God.

## **Church Pledge**

I promise to walk together with my brothers and sisters in Zion Assembly according to the light we have received together in our General Assemblies. I will be faithful to our commitment to proclaim the "whole counsel of God," and will work together with my fellow members under the church's divine government and discipline. I will strive always to keep and promote the faith "once delivered to the saints"---one God, one Faith, one Mind, and one Church for all. Amen.

## **Introduction**

This is the fourteenth time in as many years that I have stood before you to deliver the annual address. I'm happy to report that my joy is full, and my expectations are running high for the continued growth and advancement of the church. In fact, I'm more enthused now about God's church than when I first caught a vision of her in November 1967---almost 50 years ago. I can identify therefore with the prophetic vision that burned in the spirit of A. J. Tomlinson, which he carried to his grave in 1943: namely, the exciting expectation of a perfect and glorious church. His confidence in the ultimate triumph of the Bible church never abated. In his annual address in 1942, he declared, "Every part of the inhabited world is ours to take for the Church of God. The enemy . . . is a strong and wily opponent but he is not strong enough



to overcome us . . . and we expect nothing but ultimate victory.” In his last entry in his celebrated *Diary*, he wrote, “Great things close by now.”

I thank the Lord for our increases since we reorganized and began to restore the church in April 2004 not only in the number of churches, ministers and finances, but in regard to spiritual maturity. Since that eventful weekend on April 18-20, hundreds of ministers and tens-of-thousands of believers and faithful workers have become settled in the government, teachings, and discipline of the church.

It is an unspeakable blessing to be called into the ministry of the Lord, and particularly to find oneself right in the middle of fulfilling ancient prophecies, especially those related to the perfection of the Bride of Christ and the glorious day when she will be united forever with her Bridegroom!

When the Church of God arises with her garments bright and fair,  
And ascends to meet her Bridegroom for the marriage in the air;  
She'll out shine the sun at noon-day, not a wrinkle, not a spot, Will  
you be among the Bride or will you not?

She has stood thru all the ages, persecution thru the years, But  
when Jesus comes to claim her, God shall wipe away all tears, And  
the Lamb Himself shall feed her, He will feed her from the throne,  
And to living fountains lead her as His own.

Trouble will then all be ended, after teardrops have been dried,  
And the Church of God has gathered over on the other side; There  
as millions join the singing, that glad song that's sweet and new,  
Saying Jesus has redeemed us, hallelu.

That will be the last assembly, over on the shining shore, When  
the Church of God assembles to come back no, never more; But  
with Jesus and the angels, there thru all eternity, She'll be shouting  
hallelujah, victory.

### Chorus

*She'll be shining, shining thru the ages, After earth and time have  
been forgot; She'll be wearing garments pure and spotless, Have  
you on the wedding robe, or have you not.*

Think of it. We are actually putting the bridal gown on God's people and laboring to remove all of the spots and wrinkles in preparation for that glorious day. In the words of the apostle Paul, we are "*warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*" (Col. 1.28). And we are promised in God's prophetic Word that we will succeed to accomplish this seemingly impossible task (Eph. 5.27; Rev. 19.7-8). No wonder someone has said, "If God has called you to be a minister, don't stoop to be a king!"

It's true that there has been a little shaking-up and weeding-out here and there. You who have been in the church from the beginning may recall that we warned soon after we reorganized fourteen years ago that this would probably be the case in some instances, based on our own experiences and the examples we have in God's Word (Mt. 24.10-12; Acts 20.29; Gal. 3.1-4; 4.19; 2 Thess. 2.2-8; 2 Tim. 1.15; 4.10, 16; Rev. 2.5-16, 20-24; 3.2-3, 15-22). So it should not surprise any that a few here and there have "*went out from us because they were not of us.*" A few joined Zion under false pretenses, others had misconceptions of the government, teachings, and discipline; and a few simply "*departed from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons . . .*" and thus "*turned aside after Satan*" (1 Tim. 4.1; 5.15; 2 Pet. 2.21).

The good news is that the overwhelming majority of our people have remained steadfast in the faith and true to the teachings of Christ and the government and fellowship of the church; and a significant part of this victorious number is present here this morning! You have decided to stand on the blessed promises of God, and are anticipating that we will soon see amazing exploits and glorious victories accomplished by the church. Like the inspired Psalmist, you are looking through the lens of God's prophetic Word, and are able to thus exclaim, "*Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God*" (Ps. 87.3).

## **Section I**

### **"Show the house to the house"**

*"Thou son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, show them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the*

*whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. This is the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house” (Ezek. 43.10-12).*

## **A. The Setting**

Ezekiel was taken with other hostages [approximately 10,000 exiles] to Babylon about 597 B.C. when King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem and robbed the Temple of its gold and treasures. This prophet was married and lived in his own house along the Chebar river [Nebuchadnezzar’s royal canal] near Tel-abib [Nippur], which was located a few miles southeast of Babylon (Ezek. 3.14, 24). There he was called into the ministry and preached [prophesied] for about 22 years [1.1-3; 29.17-21). His ministry ran congruent and parallel with the prophet Jeremiah’s in Jerusalem, and it overlapped with the early years of Daniel’s ministry in Babylon.

The Babylonian Captivity was God’s judgment upon His people for their disobedience and sinful rebellion; but the Lord intended it also to serve as a means toward His people’s repentance and reconciliation.

## **B. The Prophetic Vision**

There are nuances of meaning in Ezekiel’s temple vision and prophecy [chapters 40-48] that seem to apply to the restoration of the City of God and the Temple following the Babylonian Captivity in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. But the prophecy points mainly and more especially to the restoration of the church in the Gospel Age, under the terms of the New Covenant; then finds its ultimate fulfillment in the Millennium and finally in the new heavens and new earth.

The city and temple in Ezekiel’s vision are literal, not allegorical; however, there is a great deal of symbolism in the prophecy: for the New Testament church is envisioned and described through the lens of the Old Testament temple and tradition. This is in part what we have traditionally called the “vision of the church.”

## C. The Messenger

What is said by the angel to Ezekiel, therefore, may be reckoned to all of us who are called in these last days to show the church, the house of God, to others; namely, “. . . *behold with [your] eyes, and hear with [your] ears, and set [your] heart upon all that I shall show thee*” (40.4). Why? Because “*to the intent that I might show them unto thee [so you can in turn] declare all that [you see] to the house of Israel.*”

A prophetic messenger, which all of us are called to be in this last days church (Joel 2.28-30; Acts 2.16-18; cf. also Num. 11.26-29; 1 Cor. 12.28; 2.9-16; Eph. 4.3-8, 11-16; et al.) must be anointed by the Spirit of God and gifted with spiritual insight and spiritual understanding. Most especially, we must have a vision of the prophetic church: for how can we “*show the house*” to [others] if we don’t see it ourselves! Like the prophets of old, anointed and faithful messengers of the church today do not stand in the light of their own reason, nor utter forth their own thoughts; rather they are channels through whom the revelation of Christ comes forth through the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12.3; 2.9-16). For **God’s church** is not built upon the wisdom of flesh and blood but upon divine revelation, most especially the revelation that Jesus is “*the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Mt. 16.13-17). See, you might build a denomination or an independent ministry on “book learning” and human wisdom, but not the House of God! Thus Jesus said to Peter: “*Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood [has] not revealed this unto thee, but My Father who art in heaven. And upon this rock I will build My church*” (v. 18).

It is only when we are thoroughly convinced by the Spirit that Jesus is the Son of God (1 Cor. 12.3), that we begin to take seriously His commandments and teachings and His sovereign headship over the church. Like the prophet Habakkuk when he received the vision of the Gospel church, we also can then “*Write the vision and make it plain . . . That he may run that reads it. For [in the end times the vision] shall speak, and not lie; because it will surely come . . .*” (Hab. 2.2-3).

## D. The Message

Though some aspects of Ezekiel’s prophecy are complicated and difficult to interpret, the essential points are plain and simple to understand. The Lord was calling His church to repentance, reconciliation, and restoration: for His people had gradually come to ignore His law and commandments, and finally flat-out rebelled, committing abominations

and grievous transgressions. In a more extended sense, however, his prophecy envisioned the church in the Gospel age, and further in her perfection and glory in the Millennium and in heaven. The “river” in 47.1-12, while natural and actual, is also symbolic of the Holy Spirit and His essential and preeminent place in the church: for He is the very life and sustenance of the church (v. 12; see also Ps. 46.4; Rev. 22.1-2).

## 1. Exaltation and Glory of the Church

Remarkably, the means the Lord chose to awaken and restore His people was to “*show the house to the house*” or [*“show the church to the church!*”]. The essential problem was that the people of God had lost the biblical or prophetic vision of the church. Preaching the church to bring about revival and restoration may seem astonishing to some, because it is so foreign and contradictory to the way so many think today: for the great majority of Christians believe the church is one thing and evangelism another, as if the message of the church itself is not spiritually convicting and part of the message of salvation. But, see, the Bible teaches everywhere that salvation is connected with the nature, the preaching, and the mission of the church. In fact, the church should not be separated from the message of the Cross; for the internal life of the church came forth miraculously *through* the grace and power of the Cross (cf. Acts 20.28; Eph. 2.11-19; 3.6; 5.29-32; Heb. 9.11-26; 1 Pet. 1.22-23).

Moreover, the church is instrumental in our spiritual discipline, and even toward our final salvation: for it administers the divine ordinances, instructs and disciplines us, and encourages and guides our growth in grace (cf. Mk. 16.16; Mt. 16.17-19; 18.18-20; Jn. 20.23; 1 Cor. 5.1-13; 2 Cor. 3.2-3, 9-17; 5.18-21; 6.1). In this sense, it does not seem too much to say that the church is “*none other but the house of God and . . . the gate of heaven*” (Gen. 28.17).

Reflecting back on our former fellowship in the 1980s and 1990s, I can see so vividly now that the fading vision of the church was the primary reason [or else directly connected with it] for the falling away at that time. One prominent leader said in a general staff meeting during that time: [“I get very uncomfortable when Christ and the church are mentioned in the same breath”]. And he expressed further a sentiment embraced by most of the leaders at that time, namely, “Our faith must be Christ plus nothing!” I responded, “Well, that’s interesting, for Jesus and Paul were apparently very comfortable with speaking of Christ and the church together. Paul, for example, said, ‘*But I speak concerning Christ and the church*’ (Eph. 5.32).” And in connection with Peter’s and the apostles’ revelation of Jesus

as the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus said, “*Upon this rock I will build My church.*”

Further, the prophets had no reservations in exalting the church. Isaiah, for example, said, “*And it shall come to pas in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house . . . shall be exalted above the hills*” (Is. 2.2). And again the same prophet magnified the church, declaring in a prophecy,

*“And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called **Hephzibah**, and thy land **Beulah**: for the Lord **delighted in thee**, and thou shalt be **married**”* (62.2-4).

And again another prophet prophesied, saying,

*“For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath He sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth **the apple of His eye** . . . Sing and rejoice, **O daughter of Zion**: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee . . . And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and thou shall be My people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee”* (Zech. 2. 8-11).

What is made indisputably clear in Ezekiel’s prophecy is how special the church is to God, and how strategically important it is in His plan for man and for the fulfillment of His mission in the world. In fact, the church is not only indispensable for the spiritual edification and stability of God’s people, but also for the world itself. Try as they may, social and civil institutions can no more solve what is going on in America and in other parts of the world right now than can humanly-crafted religious institutions. For there is no political, economic, nor religious answer for the hatred, bitterness, resentment, violence and chaos running rampant in the world today. Nothing short of repentance and a spiritual awakening will turn the tide of the present flood of ungodliness now engulfing the world.

But wait! you may want to argue that what made America great in the past was her republican-democratic form of government: and you may insist that this system gave us freedom and individual dignity; or you may argue, it was America’s capitalistic- economic system that made the nation

great, for it gave us jobs and riches; or you may argue it was her celebrated Constitution and Bill of Rights, which gave us liberty, justice, and equality. But I declare that it was never any of these things that made America great; rather it was the exercise of Christian faith and biblical principles that under-girded these institutions---namely, prayer, confession, repentance, Bible study, the proclamation of holiness and obedience to the laws of God, and the acknowledgement of the sovereignty of Lord Jesus Christ over all things. The favor of God was once enjoyed in this nation because the great majority of Americans exalted biblical truth and denounced sin and ungodliness!

Yes, Americans at one time [for over 300 years] without apology, and almost universally, declared boldly with one voice that this is a Christian nation. Witness the answer of the Supreme Court in 1892 in the case of the *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States*.

“Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of The Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that is should be otherwise; and in this sense and to this extent our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian . . . This is a religious people. This is historically true. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation . . . we find everywhere a clear recognition of the same truth . . . These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation.”

But now we are witnessing the fall of America for denying the very things that once made her great! But the Good News is God’s church does not have to fall with America; in fact, we believe God has raised up Zion Assembly for this very reason: not to save America per se as a political entity, but to save **“whosoever will”** in America and **in** every nation, tribe, and tongue on earth! For, after all, all these things have happened as examples for us *“upon whom the ends of the world are come.”* Our message is the Kingdom of God, and our purpose is to build God’s house upon the principles and power of the Kingdom (Mt. 1.14-15; 6.10, 13; 16.19; 24.14; Lu. 16.16; Rev. 12.10).

## **2. Stay Consecrated and Focused on the Church's Agenda**

I am pleading and reasoning with you once again in this Assembly, therefore, not to get entangled with the affairs of this life, nor to get caught up in the politics of it. Do not identify yourself too intimately nor zealously with political parties and common social agendas, nor get caught up in patriotic emotionalism, nor cling to the coattails of any particular politician: for these things are a form of worldliness. Rather, I charge you to fill your place and time in this world as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ and an ambassador for God's church (2 Cor. 5.19-20). Let the zeal of God's house become your burning passion in life (Ps. 69.9; Jn. 2.17; 1 Tim. 3.15)! Preach and exalt the truths of the Gospel; build the City of God--- "*the Zion of the Holy One*" (Is. 60.14); and proclaim the prophetic vision of God's Kingdom on earth.

## **3. The Church is a Visible and Corporate Reality: It has Definitive Forms, Ordinances, and Laws**

Just as plain to see in Ezekiel's prophecy is that the church is anything but a vague, mystical body floating about somewhere out there in the clouds or cosmos; nor is it in anyway an invisible body somehow spiritually or mystically present in and among denominations and independent churches and ministries; nor is it merely a futuristic ideal. So let us not, as others, get lost in a jungle of fantasies about a "mystical body of Christ" or a mythological church. For the City of God in the Bible has definiteness, material substance, and is always revealed in vivid detail as a concrete reality.

The great majority of people today talk "church" but they are not really serious about the church. Have you ever heard the saying, "talk is cheap!" Well, this is especially true in regard to God's church because the church means so much to the Lord. I believe God is ready to move in miraculous fashion to fulfill His prophetic promises and purposes in the church. We may expect therefore that He will soon move upon His people to get serious and sober-minded about the church of the Bible, and He is going to use Zion Assembly to "show the house" to them.

A minister in our former fellowship called me on the phone sometime back to congratulate us on our stand in Zion Assembly, and to assure me that he was still preaching the church. He went on to say that he had just preached a message comparing the church to "Cinderella." He said, ["One of these days, the true church will emerge, and we will know

her because her foot will fit the glass slipper”]. I asked him if he believed the fellowship he was in was God’s church. He said, “no.” I said, [“Then what church are you preaching?”]. He said, [“The one in the Bible”]. I said, [“But there is no actual church in the Bible. There is the history of the church that existed centuries and even millennia ago in the Bible, but there is no real church in the Bible: for the church is made up of flesh and blood people, and the Bible is pen and ink.”]. I emphasized this point to illustrate that the church is no fairy tale, nor is it a spiritual or mystical body, nor an ideal. Rather, it is a real concrete city here in this world. Further, I admitted that Zion Assembly is presently imperfect, but insisted that it is nevertheless destined to be perfected and “caught up” in glory to meet Christ in the air at His appearing in the twinkling of an eye (Jn. 14.1-3; 1 Thess. 4.16-18; 1 Cor. 15.51-53; see also Eph. 5.27; Rev. 19.7-8; 20.5). My point to this minister was that we are laboring with real people in a real church, and though Zion Assembly is presently imperfect, we are promised in God’s prophetic Word that it will be eventually perfected “*by the washing of water by the word*” (Eph. 5.26-32).

The prophetic church of the Bible is no fuzzy myth, nor creature of human imagination: it is rather a concrete organization, with distinct ministers and members, distinct doctrines, and a distinct discipline. It is a visible, universal body with government and divine order. It has definite standards, definite doctrines, and definite forms, all revealed in the Bible. There need be no guesswork in building God’s house. The pattern and forms are perfectly revealed. “*I shall show you. . . now behold . . . and He brought me [and I saw]. . .*” [Ezek. 41.8]. So the Lord took Ezekiel up on a “*high mountain*” [40.2], just like He did the apostle John in Rev. 21.9-10, so he could see from that vantage point more clearly and more comprehensibly. See, if you want to *see* the church in her glory, you have to get caught up in the Spirit---in the spirit of revelation!

In Ezekiel’s vision, the church is mapped out by the infinite mind and hand of God with sharp measurements, precision of thought, exactness in design, and definiteness in size and measurements. See,

*“And He brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in His hand, and a measuring reed; and He stood in the gate . . . And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man’s hand a measuring reed . . . Then He measured . . . And He measured . . . And He measured . . .”* (Ezek. 40.3-49)

*Note*, the man laying out and measuring the city is called an angel (“messenger”), and almost certainly is the Lord Himself, see 44.2, 5. His “*appearance like brass*” cannot mean any other than Christ (compare Rev. 1.15), for He is the primary designer and architect of His house--- *Upon this rock I will build My house!* Ezekiel is privileged to see Jesus’ blueprints of the church over 550 years before the Lord was conceived in flesh and born in Bethlehem.

The church’s divine forms, pattern, order, priestly administrations, offices, laws and ordinances are all wonderfully arranged. Why? Because God’s people [church] is not a mob or crowd. [Ever hear anybody say, ‘what kind of crowd did you have last night’]. But, see, the church is not a crowd; it is rather a carefully arranged city in which each member has been “*set [in the church] as it has pleased [God]*” (1 Cor. 12.12-28); it is a real body that He has “*tempered together,*” that is, “*fitly joined together and compacted*” so that every member is fitly joined together with every other member to form the visible and corporate body of Christ (Eph. 1.22-23; 4.16; Col. 1.24).

The church is to built by “line and rule” (Ezek. 40.3), with exactness like a skillful carpenter [like our Lord was]---with a plumbline and a ruler (Is. 28.17; Amos 7,7-8; Zech. 4.10). The careful carpenter and/or stone mason measures with exactness, and all the more when one is building the House of God! It must be built with fear and trembling precisely according to the “*pattern shown to thee in the mount*” (Ex. 25.40; Heb. 8.5)! And so here the Lord cautions Ezekiel to “*behold with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee . . . [so you can then ‘declare all that you see [of the house] to the house’ [40.4].*”

#### **4. “Show them the Ordinances and Laws of the House”**

We must be careful how we handle the Word of God, and “*take heed how [we] build*” upon the foundation laid by the apostles (1 Cor. 3.10-15; Eph. 2.20). Remember “*every man’s work shall be tried with fire,*” and thus will be made “*manifest*” for what it is (vv. 12-14). Behold, “*the day shall declare it.*” I believe we are living in that day!

Again, I can recall in our former fellowship the primary warning sign of the falling away that took place beginning in the early 1980s. It was linked directly with the fading vision of God’s prophetic church among the leaders in those days: and this fading vision trickled down gradually to the members. When reference was made to the “Prominent Teachings”

of the church, many of the leaders began to say, "The church has no teachings." They said, "The teachings belong to God, not the church." Such comments made obvious that they had lost (or were losing) their understanding---"their vision"---of the church, particularly the intimate relationship between Christ and the church, that is, the union, the *theosis*, the divinization of the church. They could no longer comprehend that Christ had **deposited in His church His doctrine, and had given to her "the keys to the Kingdom."** They had lost their vision of the City of God on earth.

Look, Jesus said, "***If My words abide in you***", and again, [***"Whatsoever you bind and loose in the earth shall be bound in Heaven."***] And again. "***Whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained***" (Jn. 20.23). We should not be intimidated by this language? For, hear the prophet: "***Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that . . . I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people***" (Jer. 31.31-33). Significantly, these same words are used by Ezekiel in His vision of the church [37.26-28; 43.7, 9]. We see then that the church embodies the teachings of Christ, and proclaims them. The Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of the church. Thus, Paul could say, "*my gospel*" (Rom. 2.16) and "*our gospel*" (2 Thess. 2.14).

See, doctrine and discipline are no fuzzy things in God's house. They may be fuzzy things in a denomination or in some preacher's independent ministry, but not in God's house. Hear again the prophet: "***Write the vision, and make it plain!***"

Now observe; **the forms, and laws, and ordinances identify the House**---that is, those who embrace and hold to these forms, and laws, and ordinances of the House are identified as the House! Likewise, "***whosoever takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city . . .*** (Rev. 22.19)! Note carefully the words, "***All the ordinances,***" "***all the laws,***" and "***all the forms,***" and note further, we are to make them plain and emphatic: "***write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form . . . And all the ordinances . . . and do them***" (Ezek. 43.11).

Again, we must get sober and serious about the laws and ordinances of God---all of them! It is rather amazing to me how modern-day Christians are able to dismiss so easily so many of the words of Christ and the apostles from their thoughts! They think it no great transgression to be selective---to take what they want and ignore the rest. Makes one wonder who they think they are fooling! Jesus said, "***Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God***" (Mt. 4.4). And again, "***Whosoever therefore shall break one of these***

*least commandments, and shall teach men to do so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven . . .*” (5.19).

Liberalism is dangerous and tricky. It is said that liberal preachers and liberal churches claim that one should be able to believe anything one wants, *just as long as he does not really believe it*, nor especially so long as he does not sincerely embrace with conviction what he claims to believe.

## 5. Holiness

Still, the beauty of God’s house is not merely in her external design and forms, but in the inner beauty that shines out through her divine institutions, and more especially out of the hearts and souls of the people who make up her fellowship. **“God shall beautify the meek with salvation”** (Ps. 149.4; see also Ps. 76.9; Mt. 5.5; 1 Pet. 3.4): and this beauty is more especially evident when His people are consecrated and set apart by the sanctifying power of Christ. They can then say with Christ, **“the prince of this world cometh, [but] hath nothing in me!”** (Jn. 14.30). It was this standard that David had in mind when he said, **“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”** (Ps. 51.7), and Jeremiah declared that the sanctified “Nazarites” are **“whiter than milk”** (Lam. 4.7).

Look, Christ has opened to us through His death the **“Holies of Holies.”** Let us then **“. . . [have] boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus”** (Heb. 10.19). Sanctification and heart purity are no longer suited to the High Priest alone, that is, for Christ alone---but for **“whosoever will.”** So let us plunge into this **Fountain of Cleansing Blood**, and proclaim holiness to others and to write it upon tables and make it plain for everyone to see!

Arguably, holiness is the preeminent attribute of God’s church: for if His holiness had not been violated in Eden, there would have been no need for Him to have poured out His love in the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross---**“to purchase the church with His own blood”** (Gen. 3.14-15; Acts 20.28; Jn. 3.16). In other words, God expressed His love because His holiness had been violated!

This is why we are selling reprints of old holiness classics [written in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries], and promoting them in our School of Ministry. For it is difficult to find today a fellowship that is clinging to and proclaiming second work sanctification and **“true holiness”** (Eph. 4.24).

Holiness is the divine preoccupation throughout Ezekiel’s vision of the restoration of the church and her future glory. “Holy,”

“holiness,” “separation,” “dedicated” and similar terms are repeated time and again to drive the point home: that holiness is the preeminent attribute of God’s house! *“Now let them put away their whoredom . . . far from Me, and I will dwell in the midst of them forever”* (43.9).

I can remember a television commercial sponsored by the Zenith company in the early 1960s. After praising the superior qualities of Zenith products, the commercial depicted a bolt of lightning flashing across the screen, then suddenly the lightning burned the emblem of Zenith into the TV set. Simultaneously a powerful voice then said, *“The quality goes in before the name goes on!”* Surely, we should in Zion Assembly make sure that we have embodied God’s holiness before we advertise ourselves to be His church---Hispeculiarpeople! This brings us to the next section of this address.

## Section II

### **“GoComeBe”**

This word---*Go-Come-Be*---may sound a little like Swahili, but it is nowhere found in a dictionary of Swahili, nor in any dictionary for that matter; in fact, I invented the term to explain in a word the ministry and mission of the church; namely, we must:

1. **“Go.”** Go to the nations and proclaim the whole counsel of God--the *“all things whatsoever”* that Christ commanded (Mt. 28.19; Mk. 16.15). Jesus said, *“Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit . . .”* (Jn. 15.16). Again He says in regard to the invitation of the *“great supper”*, **“Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city”** and extend the invitation to all---to *“the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.”*

2. **“Come.”** It is important to understand, that the *“Go ye”* command is not an end of itself. For after we go, we must then say to those in the marketplaces and in the streets and lanes of the cities: **“Come; for all things are now ready”** (Lu. 14.12-23). The Lord’s commission to the church is not therefore fulfilled simply by going and preaching: for the servants of the Lord are then commanded to *“bring in”* the people to the House of God (v. 21). We must say to the people, **“Come and see”** and **“bring them”** to the House of God (Jn. 1.39-42; 4.29); in fact we are commanded even to *“compel them to come in, that My house may be filled”* (v. 23). For the embodiment of the Gospel in the gathered people of God is our most powerful and effective witness. Paul says, *“Ye are our epistle written*

*in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart” (2 Cor. 3.2-3).*

It is in the midst of the church---in our worship services and fellowship meetings---that sinners and “other sheep” are most affected and emotionally moved. Few people indeed are deeply and lastingly moved by our witness on the streets and in the marketplaces; and even fewer become through this means productive and fruitful for the church.

**3. “Be.”** We must “*be*” the “*salt of the earth*” and “*light of the world*”---a “*city set on a hill*” (Mt. 5.13-14). When sinners and “other sheep” come into our churches, we must receive them in grace and with love, joy and cheerfulness. They must see the glory of the Lord upon us, and behold our divine order and sanctified peace in grace (Is. 60.1-5; Col. 2.5). This is what so impressed the queen of Sheba (1 Kg. 10.1-8). “*And when the queen had seen all Solomon’s wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel . . . There was no more spirit in her. And she said . . . Howbeit I believed not the [report], until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me . . .*” (vv. 4-7).

This is the message of the apostle Paul to the Corinthian church. He encourages spirituality and divine order in the church for the sake of favorably impressing unbelievers and the unlearned who may “*come in*” to the worship services (1 Cor. 14.23-25). If all things are as they should be in the church, the sinner or unlearned will be convicted and convinced [judged] by the Spirit: “*And thus the secrets of his heart [will be] made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth*” (v. 25).

May the Lord help us to love Him and to love His people, and to be all that He has called us *to be*: namely, blameless in love and holiness!

### **Section III**

#### **Expansion of International Ministries Center**

#### **Fulfilling Our vision for a Bible College**

We have been planning and boosting this building project for a number of years: and now finally the time has come to make our vision a

reality. I believe the overwhelming majority of our people are ready to go forward.

You will recall that we agreed a few years ago to pay-off our indebtedness before breaking ground and going forward on this expansion project. Meanwhile, an opportunity came open that we could not pass up: namely, the owner of the property and business that adjoins our property on the eastside (Lloyd's Used Cars) offered to sell us his property for \$160,000. A special-called Assembly agreed that this would be a wise thing to do, so we renegotiated a loan with our bank to do this. Including the previous balance, this upped our indebtedness to about \$220,000. Since then (February 2016), we have paid down our debt to \$54,000. This has been a tremendous accomplishment by our people. Praise the Lord!

So here we are this morning. I believe you are ready to give sacrificially and to raise an offering here right now to pay-off everything, so that we can have a mortgage burning ceremony in May 2018 (during the School of Ministry) and to break ground at the same time for our new building project! You heard the bank representatives; they are ready when we are. Are you ready?

This expansion on our International Ministries Center will accomplish two things. It will provide more offices and much needed storage space, a kitchen and fellowship hall, and adequate space for a library and archives. This will meet our immediate need for more adequate facilities for our Headquarters' operations; and also provide the facilities necessary to operate our college when we get it up and running.

## Envisioning the Bible college

We simply can't go forward effectively without an institution through which to ground and settle our ministers and workers in our distinctions in Zion Assembly---in our peculiar teachings, church government, and discipline. By this I mean, an established Bible college will afford to us the time and channel to ***“completely furnish”*** (2 Tim. 3.17) our ministers and dedicated workers with the knowledge and skills to take the church forward, including being able to convince others of our prophetic vision of the church. Paul said, *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same **commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also**”* (2 Tim. 2.2). And again, ***“Hold fast the form [pattern] of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwells in us”*** (vv. 13-14).

We will say a little more about this in the next section, but suffice it to say here that a “Director of Education” will almost certainly be needed to oversee this great work, and begin to lay the educational foundation for the college. We anticipate that at least two years [perhaps three] will be needed to develop the initial materials, courses, schedules, staff, etc. for the college. We have already begun to think about developing on-line courses, and “J-terms”---that is, intensive classes in January, June, and July. There will be in fact a number of hurdles to leap as we embark on this great adventure, including choosing a name for the college.

## **Section IV**

### **Our Support Ministries System: Harnessing the Means, Gifts, and Energies of Every Member**

One of the outstanding leadership traits of A. J. Tomlinson, the church’s first General Overseer, was his organizational abilities. During his oversight and administration (1903-1943), he led the way in developing an auxiliary or support ministry system in the church; believing that it was not only wise to do so but consistent with the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. This system subdivided the work of the church into departments to meet the various needs represented---Sunday school, Missions, Women’s auxiliary, Youth ministries, Children’s ministries, Finance Department [Treasury], etc. The impact of this system was rather remarkable during his 40-year tenure of leadership, and afterwards also under Milton Tomlinson’s 47 year tenure. It enabled the church to minister to and nourish people of all ages and races, both men and women, with all of their diversity of needs; and, at the same time, it encouraged growth and the expansion of the church throughout the world.

The wonder of this support ministries system was that it perfectly accommodated and gave expression to the apostle Paul’s theology of ministry in Ephesians 4.1-16, Colossians 2.19, et al; that is, it enabled the church to utilize and channel the energies of every member to achieve maximum production for the whole body---to bring forth the maximum amount of fruit unto harvest! Thus, one of Tomlinson’s favorite slogans was “Everyone a worker, and a work for everyone.” Now compare this saying with the apostle’s in Ephesians 4.14-16:

*“That we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about . . . But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into [Christ] in all things . . . From whom the whole body fitly*

*joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”*

The biblical image of the church as a “city” also suggests a support ministries system. For a city must departmentalize in order to function smoothly and efficiently. A variety of supporting auxiliaries, including a mayor and administration department, sanitation department, law enforcement department, fire department, treasury and tax assessing department, deeds and records department, water and utilities department, education department, etc. are necessary for the existence and maintenance of a city. So also with the City of God. Doubtlessly, Jesus’ designation of the church as “a city on a hill” in Matthew 5.14 implied such a system.

I have been a firm believer in the wisdom of this strategy for ministry for almost fifty years. When the support ministries are properly organized and implemented in the church, and the members are assimilated into the system and harnessed with their duties and responsibilities, the church inevitably grows numerically, spiritually, and financially. As the apostle says, these ministries [*“joints”, “bands”*] unite the members together [*“compacts them by that which every joint supplieth”*] so as to [*“[make] increase of the body.”*] In point of fact, I attribute most of our growth and increases in Zion Assembly since 2004 to restoring the support ministries in the church.

In my experience as a pastor and overseer for 48 years, I have found that Christians are happiest when they are settled in the government and discipline of the church, being yoked together with other members in the ministry of the church, and fully engaged in the particular duties and responsibilities assigned to them. In fact, when each member is preoccupied with his/her duties and responsibilities, and cooperating with other members who are preoccupied with their assignments and duties, wonderful things begin to happen: the church as a whole begins to grow and flourish, and all of the faithful and conscientious members grow up together in Christ and stay out of trouble. This discipline enables the members further to fulfill two biblical principles: 1) to *“study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands . . .”* (1 Thess. 4.11) and thus not to be a *“busybody in other men’s matters”* (1 Pet. 4.15); and 2) it enables each member to find his place in the church and to apply himself fully to his specially assigned duties, working within his own calling and giftedness. Each member thus becomes a blessing to the whole church, rather than a hindrance or a *“troubling”* (1 Chron. 2.7; Prov.

11.29; 15.27; Rom. 16.17-18; 1 Cor. 12-12-28; Gal. 5.7, 10).

It is said that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. There is much truth and wisdom in this statement. On the other hand, there is strength in a “*threefold cord*” (Ecc. 4.12). Who can argue against the fact that there is strength in unity, when everyone is in harmony with the Lord and one another. When we are loving one another in the church and working together under its government and divine order, there is no limit to what can be accomplished! If the Babylonians could together achieve such a remarkable wonder in opposition to God (Gen. 11.1-9), think how much can be achieved by God’s people with His help and blessings (Neh. 2.17-20; 4.6-9; 6.15-16; Ps. 127.1; 133.1-3; Col. 2.3-7).

Still, notwithstanding the fact that our support ministries have been a great blessing, it is obvious that this system has not reached its maximum potential in Zion Assembly, for we have not incorporated and assimilated every member into the support ministries. Thus, the means and energies of all of the members have not been harnessed and utilized. This should be the goal of every pastor: to assimilate every member into one or more of the auxiliaries or support ministries. Every member should get into the yoke with Christ and put his hands to the plow (Mt. 11.29; Lu. 9.62; Phil. 4.3). This will help keep the individual members spiritually consecrated, and assist the whole church to be more fruitful and productive (Jn. 15.1-8; 1 Cor. 12.4-31; Eph. 4.14-16).

Finally, it is necessary from time to time to update and modify the various departments of the church in order to meet current needs. This has been our practice for more than a hundred years. Accordingly, it seems in order now to update, add to, and modify some aspects of our existing system.

## A.

### **“From the Cradle to the Grave”**

When I first joined the church in 1967, I recall hearing a slogan for ministry that was commonly repeated among our ministers and members, namely, “From the Cradle to the Grave.” This slogan indicated that the church acknowledged the need and responsibility to minister to men and women of all ages---from infancy to seniors living in the twilight of their years. I believe it would be good and profitable for us to start thinking about reviving the old Cradle Roll ministry [with nurseries and nursery directors] and to be more diligent in organizing classes for all ages in our Sunday schools.

## Senior Ambassadors Ministry

I'm especially concerned here, however, about the age group we have been referring to for a number of years as "Senior Ambassadors"---you know, those whom the song writer described as coming to that time of life when "... your apples all is gathered . . . and your cider-makin's over, and your wimmern-folks is through . . . And the angels wantin' boardin' . . . when the frost is on the punkins and the fodder's in the shock."

It is estimated that about 650 million people in the world today are 62 or older; and within the next 30 years that number is expected to be close to 2 billion. At that time, seniors will outnumber children 14 and under for the first time in recorded history. Even now, there are more people over 65 years of age than there are under 18. Accordingly, a significant part of our focus for ministry should be directed toward our seniors: for the greatest opportunity for harvest in the next two or three decades will be the older adult population.

Seniors face tremendous challenges as they mature and are forced to make difficult "adjustments." These may include:

1. The "empty nest" syndrome: children growing up and leaving home.
2. Death of one's spouse
3. The loss of a job or career due to retirement, often a forced situation
4. Severed ties with friends due to death or having moved away
5. Loss of social and personal status
6. The general perception that seniors are weak and inferior
7. Physical disabilities
8. Decrease in alertness and the ability to remember
9. Loneliness; depression
10. Dementia and/or Alzheimer's
11. Need for institutional care---e. g., nursing home.
12. Limited income/financial struggles

As in the case with other support ministries [auxiliaries] in the church, the primary concern should be with our senior members *in* the church; that is, we should first minister "*especially unto them who are of the household of faith*" (Gal. 6.10). But we should see this ministry also as an outreach to seniors [saved and unsaved] in our local communities, as a means to spread the Good News of the kingdom and to build the church of God.

In consideration of the immense need for ministry among seniors,

I propose that we adopt a support ministry that is especially streamlined to meet their needs. It seems that we have already in place the basis or rudiments for this ministry, namely, our Assembly “Senior Ambassadors Program.” This program could be expanded to include regular services and ministries to seniors on local and regional levels. The ministries may include special worship services or Bible studies in homes or in the church’s facilities, singspirations, field trips, picnics/parties, recreational get-togethers---card games, board games, etc. It may include also one-on-one time with Senior Ambassadors, e.g., reading aloud to them, taking them shopping, helping them to write letters, spending time with them on the phone, and providing transportation for them. All of these suggestions may be the means to show God’s love and care in an especially effective and influential way through the body of Christ.

I propose, therefore, that the Assembly give the Presiding Bishop leave to appoint an international director for this auxiliary, and that national and state directors be appointed also by the overseers, and for pastors to appoint local leaders who will organize and carry forward the purpose and goals of this ministry. The international director will be responsible to gather and develop materials for this special ministry and pass it on to the national, state, and local leaders, and to encourage and boost the leaders to carry-out this good work on a regular basis.

If this seems wise and acceptable to the Assembly Business Committee, a recommendation may be made to the Assembly for the church to adopt and implement these measures.

## **B. Shepherding Ministries**

When we first set Zion Assembly in order in 2004, we thought it wise to carry forward the old “Assembly Band Movement” support ministry. This ministry was adopted in 1916 under the title “Watchers over Tens” as a means to assist the pastors in shepherding their flocks. Accordingly, the churches were divided into cell groups, and leaders were appointed by the pastors to help keep the members active and spiritual---through home prayer meetings and Bible studies, home visitations, phone calls, hospital visits, nursing home visitation, etc.

In reflecting on this work in Zion Assembly over the past 14 years, however, it is obvious that this system has not been as effective as we had hoped. The reason for this seems to be because this ministry was designed to assist pastors of large growing churches; whereas most of our churches have remained relatively small with 30 or fewer members. The pastors

have thus been able to tend to their members pretty much personally, without the assistance of under-shepherds.

Now we are not suggesting that we should do away with the Shepherding Ministries; rather we are recommending that some updating and revamping is needed for this ministry to do the church some real good. Accordingly, there are other ways that Shepherding Ministries can become productive and edifying to the churches. First, the regional and local Shepherding Ministries directors can be a real help in boosting financial support and material assistance for the overseers and pastors, and thus fulfill the often-repeated commandment toward this end (Deut. 25.4; 1 Cor. 9.7-14; 1 Tim. 5.17-18). Also, local directors can be especially instrumental in collecting Emergency Dollars, and working diligently and cheerfully to encourage their churches to become 100% in the Emergency Fund. It is a matter of record that relatively few of our churches have succeeded to reach this mark of honor, and this can only be, primarily, because not enough cheerful and zealous oversight has been taken toward this end.

Second, the local Shepherding directors can solicit the help of others to do correspondence work---writing letters and/or emails and making phone calls to members who live away and cannot attend regular worship services and local church activities [I know of some real effective work along this line that is being done by some of our people]. Third, the directors can solicit help to visit shut-ins [homebound members], and to reach out to stray or detached members. Fourth, they can encourage a prison or jail outreach ministry. Indeed, there are a number of good works that can be done through Shepherding Ministries and through prayer and a little imagination.

The spirit that must drive this ministry is pastoral, which was perfectly exemplified by our Lord. His whole life was spent caring for and tending the sheep, and reaching out also to the lost. And He taught and commissioned His church to do the same: to carry forward His ministry of outreach and reconciliation (Mt. 28.18-20; Cor. 5.18-20). The apostle Paul thus wrote: "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus . . .*" (Phil. 2.5-8; see also Mt. 18.12-14; Jn. 15.16; Acts 20.28; Col. 1.28; Eph. 4.16). We are indeed "our brother's keeper."

Working closely with the pastors [and always under their supervision], the Shepherding Ministries directors can be a tremendous assistance to the overseers and pastors in caring for the flock, and acting also as a catalyst for outreach and numerical growth as well as encouraging deeper spirituality within the church.

**C.**  
**Department of Education/  
Director of Education**

We are planning to move forward this year with our expansion for the International Ministries Center. As already mentioned in Section III, this will include building facilities that will accommodate our envisioned Bible college. Accordingly, it seems in order to appoint an educational director who will oversee the development of a library, lesson materials, curricula, etc. and indeed oversee the entire development and progress of the school.

Further, it would seem wise and more efficient if we brought all of our educational ministries---Sunday school, School of Ministry, *Voice of Zion* magazine, Bible college, etc.---under one education administration. This will help us to operate on the same page, so to speak---to preach and teach the same thing; to have “*one mind*,” to “*walk by the same rule*,” to “*speak the same thing*,” and to have “*the same judgment*” (Rom. 15.5-6; 1 Cor. 1.10; Eph. 4.11-16; Phil. 3.16; et al.)

The Department of Education would include a director and a committee or board of directors, the latter of which would include by virtue of their appointed positions the Sunday school director, the Sunday school literature editor, the School of Ministry superintendent, *Voice of Zion* editor [Presiding Bishop], the assistant publisher, and, looking forward, also the president of the Bible college.

The education director would meet regularly with the board or committee to develop and maintain unity of mind and action in regard to all of our educational literature, materials, and goals.

**D.**  
**Media Ministries**

We have for many years acknowledged the great potential of modern technology to assist us in fulfilling the global mission of the church. In fact, it may have been factored into God’s thinking and plan all along as a means to enable us to reach the world with the full Gospel, including the peculiar message of the church. The modern technologies of which we are referring include radio, television and film-making, which we utilized in our former fellowship as far back as the 1940s; and we have experimented in recent years in Zion Assembly---since 2009--

-in radio, live internet streaming, CDs and DVDs. But, in assessing our overall progress through these means, we must admit we have not really made a great deal of progress. And because of this our interests and efforts through these means have somewhat waned in the last few years.

But in view of the incredible possibilities that can be attained through Media technology we simply must revive our flagging zeal and harness every means available to us to evangelize the world and fulfill the mission of the church. Let us then, in the words of the prophet, “*Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion . . . Shake thyself from the dust, arise . . . lift up the voice . . . break forth into joy*” (Is. 52.2-9).

There is every indication that reviving and supporting Media Ministries will be pleasing to the Lord and according to His guidance and direction. Foremost among these indicators is the addition to the church this year of Anton Burnette and his family. Brother Burnette has come to us having been prepared by the Lord for this great work. He has been educated and involved in Media Ministries for a number of years, and is an expert in setting up websites. And now he has a biblical vision of the church and is fully committed to the church’s global agenda and mission. Accordingly, we are ready to plunge again into cyber technology, and to get behind the leadership of Brother Burnette---to *be strong and do exploits*, and to make some real progress in our outreach and growth through these means.

Brother Burnette will be explaining and promoting our plans for this work tonight on the program; so, sufficient for the moment, I will only say briefly here that the potential good that might be realized through Media Ministries is enormous, including the on-going development and expansion of our website; live internet streaming; television programs; and the development and distribution of CDs and DVDs.

Now in regard to how we will finance this ministry, the groundwork has already been laid, namely, our youth ministries and individual pledges (see *Assembly Minutes*, 2009, p. 33). Historically, the youth in our former fellowship raised millions of dollars to finance what was in those days called the Free Literature Department---a program that succeeded to publish tens-of-millions of tracts, brochures, etc. to be distributed throughout the world. We agreed to continue this system in our first Assembly in 2004; that is, we agreed for the youth department to continue to help support written publications (see *Assembly Minutes*, 2004, p.19; 2011, pp. 32, 41). Later this concept was expanded to include Media Ministries.

Notwithstanding our noble intentions, thus far there has been little progress made through this system. There seems to be two basic reasons for this: 1) generally speaking, only modest growth has been realized in our youth work, both numerically and in organizational development,

particularly on the local level; and 2) the financial aspect of this system has not been enthusiastically emphasized and promoted.

Brethren, surely we can do better! What is needed is for us to put some teeth into this plan. I want to encourage our overseers, pastors, and all of our ministers and faithful members, therefore, to get behind our Media Ministries and Youth work: for, then, each of these ministries will draw support from the other: the Youth will help raise funds for the use of Media Ministries, and the Media Ministries will produce materials--tracts, pamphlets, brochures CDs, DVDs, etc.--for the youth to use in their work. It might be good for the Assembly to endorse these visionary plans to help put some teeth into our efforts in going forward.

## **Section V**

### **Rules of Discipline Needed for Modern Forms of Communication**

The need for this section has been occasioned by *Facebook* and *live internet streaming*. As just pointed out, we acknowledge that modern technologies provide the potential for much good and accelerated advancement; but they provide also the occasion for a lot of unwise, negative talk, and also public exposure of things that should be kept personal and/or within the confines and discipline of the church. Indeed, in some instances these technologies have given place for the manifestation of the “*works of the flesh*”; for example, some *Facebook* communications have degenerated into gossip, tale-bearing, and evil speaking. So, whereas in the New Testament church, some unruly members “*wandered about from house to house*” becoming busybodies, idle and carrying tales (2 Thess. 3.11; 1 Tim. 5.13; 1 Pet. 4.15), nowadays some do the same thing by going from one website to another or one *Facebook* page to another. We are reminded here of the apostle Paul’s admonitions, “. . . *give [no] place to the devil*” (Eph. 4.27), and “*give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully*” (1 Tim. 5.14), and again, “*make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof*” (Rom. 13.14). Rather, we are counseled to “*cut off occasion*” from the devil and his ministers who readily use these means to discredit our testimony and hinder our progress (2 Cor. 11.12-15).

There is in fact a lot of wise counsel in the writings of the prophets and apostles and in the teachings of our Lord in regard to this subject--admonitions that caution against being drawn into arguments, quarrels and contentions with friends and neighbors, and especially with fellow saints, all of which are made all the worse by the spectacle of becoming public

through *Facebook* and other technological mediums (cf. 1 Tim. 6.20-21; 2 Tim. 2.23-25; Titus 3.9-11).

Overseers and pastors should especially be careful not to be duped by the convenience of these modern devices to disgrace the name of the Lord and injure the reputation of the church (1 Tim. 3.1-15; Titus 1.7-9).

I have a number of times as your Presiding Bishop in the past four or five years cautioned against the things of which we are now speaking, but a few of our people, and even a few of our ministers, have apparently not considered my counsel worthy of their attention and respect. Like unruly children, a few may need the “*rod of correction*” before they will give due heed to the counsel of a father or elder (Prov. 1.8; 4.1; 5.12-14; 15.5, 10, 12; 22.15; 23.13-15; 19.20).

In consideration, I’m asking the Assembly Business Committee to reinforce the counsel of the Presiding Bishop and to draw up some rules to present to the Assembly that will regulate our conduct relative to our communications and behavior via *Facebook* and the use of live streaming.

## **Section VI**

### **International Symbol or Logo**

We have been attempting to develop and adopt a universal logo for the church for many years. I suggested a few ideas and gave a preliminary design for a logo in 2005, and a former member of the church in Kentucky developed an electronic rendering of this design. This design was then passed on to the Assembly Business Committee [ABC] that same year and the ABC presented to the Assembly for consideration. It was applauded and accepted (*Assembly Minutes*, 2005, p. 10).

However, the design was rather complicated and busy, and thus the committee recommended that it be modified and simplified to use as a standard symbol to represent the church, particularly for display on church signs, Marques, etc. This symbol was to be presented to the 2006 General Assembly; but as it turned out, simplifying the design to represent the uniqueness of the church was more difficult and involved than expected: and so the Assembly ended that year without having approved of a symbol.

In the following years, other important issues seemed to take precedence over the development of a church about two years ago. At that time, I felt strongly impressed that it was “high time” for us to complete a design and bring it to the Assembly for consideration. So a sub-committee was appointed after the Assembly in 2016 to get

this work done---to finalize a design. This sub-committee was made up of the following persons: L.W. Carter, chairman, Scott E. Neill, Rick Ferrell, Kari Snyder, Derrick McBride. I and a few others were also involved in the process. Sister Snyder was especially instrumental and came up with the basic computer design that is being brought before the Assembly today.

One final thing should be said before presenting this symbol to the Assembly. It had been presumed that a universal symbol could not have any wording, simply because the symbol is to represent the whole church throughout the world: for any wording would seem to bias the church in favor of one language over others, and thus represent more particularly one nation, tribe, or culture over others. However, after much discussion and prayer, it was finally agreed upon in the sub-committee that a basic design could be adopted and that the name *Zion Assembly Church of God* could be inscribed in the language of each nation or tribe.

We are now ready to pass the work of this sub-committee on to the ABC for any further consideration, and, if it be considered wise and profitable, to bring the findings of the sub-committee and the ABC to the Assembly for a final resolution.

## International Appointments 2017-2018

International Executive Council.....Wade H. Phillips, Scott E. Neill, L. W. Carter, Bruce Sullivan, Joseph Steele, Joel Brooks, Rick Ferrell [This council was nominated by the Presiding Bishop and unamously approved by the General Assembly]

World Mission Director/Assistant Publisher.....Scott E. Neill

General Treasurer.....Vicki Neill

Field Secretary.....L.W. Carter

Communications/Media Ministries.....Anton Burnette

Shepherding Ministries Director.....Wilma Carter

Education Director.....Anton Burnette

[Note: this was a new office created this year]

School of Ministry Director.....Bruce Sullivan

Ladies Ministries Director.....Donna Pounders

Sunday School Director.....Donna Pounders

Sunday School Literature Editor.....Todd McDonald

Youth Ministries Director.....Pam Jones

Children's Ministries Director.....Cheryl McDonald

Executive Secretary/Office Assistant.....Marie Crook

Camping Cordinator/Advisor.....Miguel Garcia, Jr

*Voice of Zion*/SYNC Booster.....Glenda Major

Senior Ambassadors Director.....Ruth Tingler

[Note: this was a new office created this year]

**International Executive Council**  
*Addresses, Phone numbers and email addresses*

Phillips, Wade H. (Presiding Bishop),  
P.O. Box 2398, Cleveland, TN 37320; ph.423-476-3337;  
presidingbishop@zionassemblychurchofgod.com

Brooks, Joel, 12194 Landing Circle, Irvington, AL;  
ph. 251-776-2617; brookszacog@yahoo.com

Carter, L.W. British Woods Dr., Roanoke, VA 24019;  
ph. 540-597-8792; lwcarter43@hotmail.com

Ferrell, Rick, 105 Canterbury Dr., Crossville, TN 38558,  
ph. 615-670-1750; rsjsferrell@gmail.com

Neill, Scott E., P.O. Box 2398, Cleveland, TN 37320-2398;  
ph. 864-420-4288; zascott@att.net

Steele, Joseph A., 1850 Strawhill Rd. Cleveland, TN 37323;  
ph. 828-226-8060; jajrstele@gmail.co

Sullivan, Bruce, 1141 Miller Rd. Greenville, SC 29607;  
ph. 864-419-2991; pastorbps@aol.com

**International Staff**  
*Addresses/ Phone Numbers/ E-mail Addresses*

Phillips, Wade H. (Presiding Bishop, *Voice of Zion* Editor),  
P.O. Box 2398, Cleveland, TN 37320;  
ph. 423-476-3337; zionchurch11@bellsouth.net **or**  
presidingbishop@zionassemblychurchofgod.com

Neill, Scott E. (World Mission Director/Assistant Publisher),  
P.O. Box 2398, Cleveland, TN 37320-2398;  
ph. 864-420-4288; zascott@att.net

Crook, Marie (Executive Secretary/ Office Assistant/*Voice of Zion*  
Layout & Design), P.O. Box 2398, Cleveland, TN 37320;  
ph. 423-476-3337, zionchurch11@bellsouth.net **or**  
internationaloffices@zionassemblychurchofgod.com

Neill, Vicki (General Treasurer), P.O. Box 2398, Cleveland, TN  
37320-2398; ph. 423-476-3337

Burnette, Anton (Education Director), P.O. Box 2398, Cleveland,  
TN 37320-2398, ph. 423-476-3337

Carter, L.W. (Field Secretary), 329 British Woods Dr.,  
 Roanoke, VA 24019; ph. 540-597-8792;  
 lwcarter43@hotmail.com

Sullivan, Bruce (School of Ministry Director), 1141 Miller Rd.  
 Greenville, SC 29607; ph. 864-419-2991;  
 pastorbps@aol.com

Pounders, Donna (Sunday School Director), 1615 Dale Rd.,  
 Caledonia, MS 39740; ph. 662-251-1270  
 sundayschoolservices@zionassemblychurchofgod.com

McDonald, Cheryl (Children's Ministries Director),  
 1010 Blythwood Dr., Piedmont, SC 29673;  
 ph. 423-716-8767;  
 childrensministries@zionassemblychurchofgod.com

McDonald, Todd (Sunday School Literature Editor (Adult),  
 1010 Blythwood Dr., Piedmont, SC 29673;  
 ph.423-716-8767;  
 sseeditor@zionassemblychurchofgod.com

Major, Glenda (*Voice of Zion*/ SYNC Booster), 118 Bullens Ocoee  
 TN 37361; ph. 559-974-6574; GMAJORINC@AOL.COM

Garcia, Miguel, Jr. (Camping Co-ordinator/Advisor), 8049 Bellaire  
 Ave., N. Hollywood CA 91605; ph. 818-795-2443;  
 victoriousyouthministry@gmail.com

Carter, Wilma (Shepherding Ministries Director), 329 British  
 Woods Dr., Roanoke, VA 24019; ph. 540-597-8792;  
 lwcarter43@hotmail.com

Pounders, Donna (Ladies Ministries Director), 1615 Dale Rd.,  
 Caledonia, MS 39740; ph. 662-251-1270

Tingler, Ruth (Senior Ambassador Director), 53 Brazo CT  
 Roanoke, VA 24012 ph. 540-309-1039  
 PR3336@lumos.net

Jones, Pam (Youth Ministries Director), 3460 Whispering Wood  
 Dr.NE New Salisbury IN 47161; pamjones938@gmail.com

## **Assembly Business Committee**

*Chairman:* Joel Brooks

L.W. Carter, Scott E. Neill, Elijah Wafula,  
Anton Burnette, Zachary Snyder,  
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Alternate: Tod Deakle

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| California (North), Oregon, Washington.....                   | A.B. White       |

**United States Overseers Addresses/Phone Numbers  
E-mail Addresses**

- Brooks, Joel (Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana),  
5013 Langham Place, Mobile, AL 36619;  
ph. 662-477-7181; brookszacog@yahoo.com
- Carter L.W. (West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland),  
329 British Woods Dr., Roanoke, VA 24019;  
ph. 540-597-8792
- Carter, L.W. (Colorado, Kansas, Missouri), 329 British Woods Dr.,  
Roanoke, VA 24019; ph. 540-597-8792;
- Ferrell, Rick (Tennessee), 105 Canterbury Dr., Crossville, TN  
38558; ph. 615-388-8559; rsjsferrell@gmail.com
- Graves, Ricky (Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois), 1995 Pleasant Grove  
Rd., Westmoreland, TN 37186; ph. 615-644-4127
- Hernandez, Samuel (Texas, Arizona New Mexico), 3733 Gannet  
Dr., Mesquite, TX 75181; ph. 214-762-0723
- Steele, Joe A. (California (south) Nevada) 1850 Strawhill Rd.  
Cleveland TN 37323; 828-226-0227; jajrsteele@gmail.com
- Sullivan, Bruce (North Carolina, South Carolina), 1141 Miller Rd.,  
Greenville, SC 29607; ph. 864-419-2991;  
pastorbps@aol.com
- White, A.B. (California (north), Oregon, Washington), 2801  
Dove Ave. Apt.1228, Fairfield, CA 94533;  
ph. 707-980-0544; arlynnwhite@sbcglobal.com

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| Roanoke, VA.....                          | J.J. Davis                 |
| Rubidoux, CA.....                         | Gilberto Zavala, Sr.       |
| Salisbury, MD.....                        | Buddy Quillen              |
| Salton City, CA.....                      | Fatima Valadez             |
| Santa Barbara, CA ( <i>Mission</i> )..... | G.W. Solomon               |
| San Jose, CA.....                         | Jorge Carrasco             |
| Scottsville, KY.....                      | Ricky Graves               |
| Smithfield, WV.....                       | Lee Brown                  |
| Taylors, SC.....                          | Andrea Faye Davis          |
| Twin Pines, SC ( <i>Mission</i> ).....    | Wayne Floyd                |
| Vallejo, CA (Field Work).....             | A.B. White (contact)       |
| Visalia, CA ( <i>Mission</i> ).....       | Art Carrillo               |
| Ware Shoals, SC.....                      | Greg Kelly                 |
| West Mobile, AL.....                      | Joel Brooks                |
| Wilmington, NC .....                      | Robert Llana               |

**United States**  
**Pastoral Addresses/Phone Numbers/Email Addresses**

- Avila, Juan (**Anaheim, CA** [*Santa Ana (Mission)*]),  
9027 Stacie Lane, Anaheim, CA 92809; ph.714-313-4753;  
preacher4christ@gmail.com
- Barbour, Roger (**Flintville, TN/ Field Work**), 83 N. Vanntown  
School Rd., Flintville, TN 37335; ph. 931-937-6788  
RDBarbour@yahoo.com
- Brooks, Joel (**Mobile, AL**), 12194 Landing Circle, Irvington, AL  
36654; ph. 2517762617; brookszacog@yahoo.com
- Brooks, Joel (**Kosciusko, MS**), 12194 Landing Circle, Irvington, AL  
36654; ph. 2517762617; brookszacog@yahoo.com
- Brown, Lee (**Smithfield, WV**), Rt. 1 4618 Mannington Rd,  
Smithfield, WV 26437; ph. 304-334-2752;  
leebrownlisa@gmail.com
- Brown, Tom (**Idamay, WV**), P.O. Box 271, Mannington,  
WV 26582; ph. 304-859-1055; pastortom@1cloud.com
- Burnette, Anton (**Cleveland, TN**), P.O. Box 2398, Cleveland, TN  
37320, ph. 423-716-5352; antonburnette@gmail.com
- Carrasco, Jorge (**San Jose, CA**), 1901 O'Toole Way; San Jose, CA  
95131; ph. 408-605-2106; Bethinketh@gmail.com
- Carrasco, Raul, Sr. (**East Los Angeles, CA**); 9626 1/2 Kalmia St, Los  
Angeles, CA 90002; 323-477-6080
- Carrillo, Arthur (**Visalia, CA /Mission**), 3443 W. Sue Street, Visalia,  
CA 93277; ph. 559-308-2871; zacog-centralcal@outlook.com
- Childers, Daren (**Browder, KY**), 3559 Legacy Run, Owensboro, KY  
42301; 270-903-9544; dardccool@live.com
- Davis, J.J (**Roanoke, VA**) 951 Norbourne Ave. Vinton, VA  
24179; ph. 304-365-0847; johnjdavis18@gmail.com
- Dalton, Rocky (**Fries, VA**), 1622 Powder Mill Rd. Ivanhoe, VA  
24350; ph. 276-699-0024; bishoprock2014@gmail.com
- Davis, Andrea Faye (**Taylors, SC**), 61 Allen Rd., Travelers  
Rest, SC 29690; ph. 864-979-2672; davis618@bellsouth.net
- Deakle, Tod (**Bayou La Batre, AL**), 8365 Hemley St., Bayou La  
Batre, AL 36509; ph. 251-824-8134; toddeakle@yahoo.com
- Dickson, Ray (**Jacksboro, TN**), 519 Mountain Rd., Clinton, TN  
37716; ph. 865-310-9181; ardickson12@yahoo.com

Fermin, Fernando (**Rialto/Assistant Pastor**), 353 South Riverside St.,  
Rialto, CA 92376; fernandofermin4@gmail.com

Ferrell, Rick (**Crossville, TN**), 105 Canterbury Dr., Crossville,  
TN, 38558; ph. 615-388-8559; rsjsferrell@gmail.com

Floyd, Wayne (**Twin Plains, SC**), 24 Honey Path, Kingstree, SC  
29556; ph. 843-372-7883

Garcia, Miguel, Jr. (**Arleta, CA**), 8049 Bellaire Ave. N. Hollywood,  
CA 91605; ph. 818-795-2443;  
zionofthevalley.pastor@gmail.com

Garcia, Vincente (Lompoc, CA (USP/FCI), 618 East Pine St. #68,  
Lompoc, CA 93436, ph. 808-736-8553

Graves, Ricky (**Scottsville, KY**); 1995 Pleasant Grove Rd.,  
Westmoreland, TN 37186; 615-644-4127;  
rgraves13@nctc.com

Gifford, Majorie (**Oil City, PA**), 9 Wabash Ave. Apt 301, Oil City,  
PA 16301; ph. 814-676-1794

Harris, Byron (**Columbus, MS**), P.O. Box 284, Caledonia, MS  
39740; ph. 662-574-3629; parker3134@yahoo.com

Hernandez, Josue (**Lancaster, CA**), 43033 Carpenter Dr., Lancaster,  
CA 93535; ph. 661-916-6562; hernandezleyre@yahoo.com

Hernandez, Samuel (**Mesquite, TX**), 2429 Spoodill CT, Mesquite,  
TX 75181; ph. 214-762-0723

Johnson, Jimmy (**Hartsville, SC/Mission**), 1939 Long Branch Rd.  
Hartsville, SC 29550; ph. 843-861-4265;  
jimsfarm24@aol.com

Kelly, Greg (**Ware Shoals, SC**), 200 Browing Rd., Central, SC  
29630; ph. 864-933-3310

Lamour, Chase (**Okolona, MS**), 1101 Spruill Rd., Caledonia, MS  
39740; ph. 662-386-4868; chase\_lamour@yahoo.com

Llaneza, Robert (**Wilmington, NC**), 6811 Fallen Tree Rd.,  
Wilmington, NC 28405; ph. 910-632-3470;  
llaneza@hotmail.com

Lopez, Juan (**Madera, CA**), 601 E. 12th St., Madera, CA 93638;  
ph. 559-706-8617; juan\_lo@yahoo.com

Lopez, Robert (**Oxnard, CA**), 13121 Chase Street, Arleta, CA 91331;  
951-999-2111; lopezrobert1969@gmail.com

Lozano, Jose (**Hesperia, CA**), 15582 Lime St., Hesperia,  
CA 92337; ph. 310-365-5627; claudialozano89@gmail.com

Massey, Ronald (**Cabin Creek, WV/Mission**), P. O. Box 326,  
 Dawes, WV 25054; ph. 04-595-3204; rjmassey52@aol.com

McBride, Derrick (**Pulaski, TN**); 2171 Main St., Lynnville, TN  
 38472; 337-603-5774; zion.pulaski@gmail.com

McDonald, Todd (**Greenville, SC**), 1010 Blythwood Dr., Piedmont,  
 SC 29673; ph. 423-716-8768; tcmd@att.net

Merrill, Kim (**Dallas, OR/Mission**). 1415 SW 10th St., Dallas, OR  
 97338; ph. 503-623-2915; rkmerrill@msn.com

Ornelas, Nazario (**Fort Morgan, CO**), 629 Gayle St., Fort Morgan,  
 CO 80701; ph. 970-217-0953; nornelas1953@gmail.com

Parker, James (**Fresno, CA**), 8222 E. McKinley, Fresno, CA 93727;  
 ph. 559-288-0304; 39bluechevy@gmail.com

Quillen, Buddy (**Salisbury, MD**), 4901 Scotty Rd., Snow Hill, MD  
 21863; ph. 443-880-1659 or 443-880-1659

Reitler, Brenda (**Karnes City, PA**), 157 Cove Run Rd, East Brady,  
 PA 16028; ph. 330-835-7648; breitle53@hotmail.com

Sarry, Pete (**Highgrove, CA**), 12046 Preston St. Grand Terrace, CA  
 92313; ph. 951-237-2337; petes7573@yahoo.com

Schroader, Daniel (**Horse Branch, KY**), 1128 Hopewell Rd. Horse  
 Branch, KY 42349; ph. 270-256-7052;  
 dapperdanny@gmail.com

Solomon, G. W. (**Lompoc, CA and Santa Barbara/Mission**), 4773  
 Baxter St., Santa Barbara, CA 97338; ph. 805-636-3010;  
 billsolomon80@yahoo.com

Steele, Joseph A. (**Rialto, CA**), 1850 Strawhill Rd. SE, Cleveland, TN  
 37323; 828-226-0227; steeleja@gmail.com

Snyder, Zachary (**Goshen, IN**), 30197 Blaine Ave.,  
 Elkhart, IN 46516; ph. 574-849-6175; zs82@att.net

Sullivan, Bruce (**Pelzer, SC**), 1141 Miller Rd, Greenville, SC  
 29607; ph. 864-419-2991; pastorbps@aol.com

Valadez, Fatima (**Salton City, CA**), 2336 Falcon St. , Thermal, CA  
 92274; ph. 760-469-1821

Zavala, Gilberto, Sr. (**Rubidoux, CA**), 1225 W 8th St. # 80, Corona,  
 CA 92882; ph. 951-264-1362; zavalerosalinda95@gmail.com

White, Arlynn (**Arroya Grande, CA, Vallejo, CA, Fairfield, CA  
 Mission and Hermiston, OR, Field Work**),  
 2801 Dover Ave. Apt. 1228, Fairfield, CA 94533;  
 ph. 707-980-0544; Arlynnwhite@sbcglobal.net

# National Overseers

|   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Argentina</b> .....                    | Jorge Estroz              |
| <b>Bangladesh</b> .....                   | Suku Ranjon Sidker        |
| <b>Benin</b> .....                        | Mark Agbonifo             |
| <b>Bolivia</b> .....                      | Yum V. Munoz Quispe       |
| <b>Burundi</b> .....                      | David Gomba               |
| <b>Cambodia</b> .....                     | Sam Bureenok              |
| <b>Cameroon</b> .....                     | Eyong Eric Eyong          |
| <b>Canada</b> .....                       | Zachary Snyder            |
| <b>Chile</b> .....                        | Javier Diaz               |
| <b>Costa Rica</b> .....                   | Eugenio Cespedes          |
| <b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b> ..... | Byamungu Odo              |
| <b>Dominican Republic</b> .....           | Sandraud Pierre           |
| <b>England</b> .....                      | Scott Neill               |
| <b>Ethiopia</b> .....                     | Teketel Zewde             |
| <b>Ghana</b> .....                        | David Dordah              |
| <b>Guatemala</b> .....                    | Ricardo Valenzuela Chavez |
| <b>Guinea</b> .....                       | Philippe Seraphin Gomez   |
| <b>Haiti</b> .....                        | Saintaniel Hostelus       |
| <b>Honduras</b> .....                     | Jonatan Hernandez         |
| <b>India (South)</b> .....                | V. Binoy Joseph           |
| <b>India (Mid-East)</b> .....             | Talari Padma Rao          |
| <b>India Central</b> .....                | John Babu Rao Ganta       |
| <b>Kenya</b> .....                        | Elijah Wafula             |
| <b>Malawi</b> .....                       | Maliele Dzuwa             |
| <b>Mexico</b> .....                       | Danny Ramirez             |
| <b>Mozambique</b> .....                   | Maliele Dzuwa             |
| <b>Myanmar (Burma)</b> .....              | Sam Bureenok              |
| <b>Nicaragua</b> .....                    | Freddy Garcia             |
| <b>Nigeria</b> .....                      | Yomi Adekunle             |
| <b>Pakistan</b> .....                     | Scott Neill               |
| <b>Paraguay</b> .....                     | Jorge Estroz              |
| <b>Peru</b> .....                         | Yum V Munoz Quispe        |
| <b>Philippines</b> .....                  | Domingo Resurreccion      |
| <b>Rwanda (Mission Rep.)</b> .....        | David Gomba               |

|                            |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Sierra Leone</b> .....  | Amos Agbonifo       |
| <b>South Africa</b> .....  | David November      |
| <b>South Kenya</b> .....   | Joanes Oboo         |
| <b>South Sudan</b> .....   | Elijah Wafula       |
| <b>Tanzania</b> .....      | David Gomba         |
| <b>Thailand</b> .....      | Sam Bureenok        |
| <b>Togo</b> .....          | Mark Agbonifo       |
| <b>Uganda</b> .....        | Maurice Ogada Odede |
| <b>Uruguay</b> .....       | Jorge Estroz        |
| <b>United States</b> ..... | Wade H. Phillips    |
| <b>Venezuela</b> .....     | Bani Rangel Jimenez |
| <b>Zambia</b> .....        | David Gomba         |
| <b>Zimbabwe</b> .....      | David Gomba         |

## **National Overseers**

### **Addressess/Phone Numbers/E-mails**

- Estroz, Jorge (**Argentina**), Juan D. Peron 148 vista hermosa  
Centenario, Neuquen Argentina 8309; 542994896251;  
asambleadesionuruguay@hotmail.com
- Skider, Suku Ranjon (**Bangladesh**), ZACOG Bangladesh Village,  
Kaligram, P.O. Jalirpar, Gopalgoni, South 7911 Bangladesh;  
01916036712; Suku\_clb@yahoo.com
- Agbonifo, Mark (**Benin**), 01 BP Cotonou, 00229 Benin;  
22968400079; tokunbomark@yahoo.com
- Quispe, Yum V. Munoz (**Bolivia**), Asosacion War Accopampa,  
Mz. N. Lt. 10 Ayacucho, Peru; 966807780;  
ymq\_777@hotmail.com
- Gomba, David (**Burundi**), P.O. Box 14451, Dar ES Salaam, NONE  
Tanzania East Africa; 255784599066;  
rucode\_macademi2004@yahoo.com
- Bureenok, Surisak (**Cambodia**), Tambon Dan Kwian Chokchai  
Nakhonrachasima Thailand 30190; (66) 089-844-5120;  
surisak\_b@hotmail.com
- Eyong, Eric Eyong (**Cameroon**); ZACOG Cameroon P.O. Box 471,  
Kumba, MEME Division, South West Region, Central  
Africa; 23775936447; pastoreyong@yahoo.co.uk
- Snyder Zachary (**Canada**), 30197 Blaine Ave. Elkhart IN 46516;  
574-849-6175; zs82@att.net
- Diaz Javier (**Chile**), Esmeralda 60 villa araucania 4700000, Es,eranda 60  
56043, Chile; 978668559; laiglesiaenchile@hotmail.com
- Cespedes, Eugenio (**Costa Rica**), Oficina De correos, Ciudad Colon,  
Mora San Jose De Costa Rica, 10701; 550684469643  
laverdadescritural@gmail.com
- Pierre, Sandraud, (**Dominican Republic**), Calle Dr Mario Garcia  
#33; Ensanche Quisqueya, Santo Domingo,  
Distrito Nacional 000000, Dominican Republic; 8297976138;  
sandraudpierre@hotmail.com
- Odo, Byamungu, (**Democratic Republic of Congo**), South Kiva, Fizi  
Territory, Sector of Mutambala, Baraka Center, Dem.  
Republic of Congo; +243898451443;  
zionassemblychurch1@gmail.com
- Neill, Scott (**England**), P.O. Box 2398, Cleveland, TN 37320;  
864-420-4288; zascott@att.net

Wasse, Teketel Zewde (**Ethiopia**), P.O. Box 4548; Addis Ababa 4548 Ethiopia; 251910688478; teketelzewde@yahoo.com

Dordah, David (**Ghana**), P.O.Box 643, Wa, Upper West Region, Ghana +23321; 233244840511; pastordordah@yahoo.com

Chavez, Ricardo Valenzuela (**Guatemala**), Colonia La Repegua, Santo Tomas de Castilla, Puetro Barrios Izabel, Guatemala 50245388495; ricardovchavez@hotmail.com

Gomez, Philippe (**Guinea**), Lycee Alpha Yaya Diallo, N'Zerekore, Guinea Conakory; 224628385727

Hostelus, Saintaniel (**Haiti**), Rue/Alexandre Bas-Aviation #15, Cap-Haitien, Nord 000000 Haiti; 50947787654; saintanielhostelus22@yahoo.com

Ramirez, Jonathan Hernandez (**Honduras**), Col Garcias a Dios Etapa 504, La Ceiba, Atlantida 504 Honduras; 9667791; jonathanhernandez1949@hotmail.com

Ganta, John Babu Rao (**India-Central**), Kottapeta, Laxmaneswaram , Narsapuram West Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh, 534275 India; 919440197013; jbrgabta@gmail.com

Talari, Padma Rao (**India-Mid-East**), Rock Church Naidu Street, Bapunagar Rd. A.P. State 521201, India; 8008373847; bathanychurch@yahoo.com

Binoy, V. Joseph (**India-South**), ZACOG in India, Thombikandam P.O, Ranni, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, 689676 India; 9544516258; zacogindia@yahoo.com

Wafula, Elijah (**Kenya**), Box 3078, Kitale Kenya, Ncpb Road Kitale, Rift Valley 30200, Kenya; 254722672323; welijah2000@yahoo.com

Oboo, Joanes (**Kenya-South**), Box 18 Muhuru Bay Kenya 40409; 254710560501; joanes.okal@yahoo.com

Dzuwa, Maliele (**Malawi**), Area 36, P.O. Box 20151 Lilongwe 2, Malawi, Lilongwe, Central; 265999145597; dzuwamaliele@yahoo.com

Ramirez, Danny (**Mexico**), 661 South Magnolia Ave., Rialto, CA 92376; 9095181271; ramirez3134@sbcglobal.net

Dzuwa, Maliele (**Mozambique**), Our private bag, P.O. Box 20151 Lilongwe, Malawi, 265999145597; dzuwamaliele@yahoo.com

Bureenok, Surisak, (**Myanmar** [Burma]), Tambon Dan Kwian Chokchai Nakhonrachasima Thailand 30190; (66) 089-844-5120; surisak\_b@hotmail.com

Garcia, Freddy (**Nicaragua**), Bello Amanecer, 1 etapa, 5ta Calle, Casa Q-469 Ciudad Sandino, Zona 9 Managua, Managua 505 Nicaragua; 50586002898; freddygarcia@gmail.com

Adekunle, Yomi (**Nigeria**), P.O. Box 30769 Secretariat too state, Ibadan too state Ibadan, Oyo 234, Nigeria; 2347033672742; yomiadekunle2008@yahoo.com

Neill, Scott, (**Pakistan**), P.O. Box 2398, Cleveland, TN 37320; 864-420-4288; zascott@att.net

Estroz, Jorge (**Paraguay**), Juan D. Peron 148, Vista Hermosa Neighborhood, Centenario, Neuquen Argentina 8308; 052994896251; asambleadesionuruguay@hotmail.com

Quispe, Yum V. Munoz (**Peru**), ZACOG Asosacion War Accopampa, Mz. N. Lt. 10 Ayacucho, Peru; 966807780; ymq\_777@hotmail.com

Resurreccion, Domingo (**Philippines**), B2L9 Capitol Parkland St. Carmarin, 1424 Caloocan City, Philippines; 09393718496; domres2004@yahoo.com

Gomba, David (**Rwanda**), P.O. Box 14451, Toangoma Dar ES Salaam, Temeke 002, Tanzania; 255784599066; rucode\_macademi2004@yahoo.com

Agbonifo, Amos (**Sierra Leone**), God Glory Special District, 46 Harvna St. IFAKO, Lagos, Nigeria; 08037277028; osabagonifo@yahoo.com

November, David (**South Africa**), 10 Langkloof Close, Belhar 7493, Cape Town RSA; 0788478333; hoadeltt@gmail.com

Wafula, Elijah (**South Sudan**), Box 3078, Kitale 30200 Kenya, East Africa; 254722672323; welijah2000@yahoo.com

Gomba, David (**Tanzania**), P.O. Box 14451, Dar ES Salaam, NONE Tanzania East Africa; 255784599066; rucode\_macademi2004@yahoo.com

Bureenok, Surisak (**Thailand**), 145 Moo10 Tanod TumbonNongRawiang Mung, Nakhonrachasima Thailand 30190; (66) 089-844-5120; surisak\_b@hotmail.com; 66898445120

Agbonifo Mark (**Togo**), CARRE 3424 AGLA CONTONOU, BENIN cotonou, COTONOU 00229 Benin; 22968400079; tokunbomark@yahoo.com

Ogada, Maurice Odede (**Uganda**), P.O. Box 29707; Kampala Uganda; 256785904643; mauriceogada2013@gmail.com

Phillips, Wade H. (**United States**), P.O. Box 2398 Cleveland TN 37320  
423-476-3337; zionchurch11@bellsouth.net or  
presidingbishop@zionassemblychurchofgod.com

Estroz, Jorge (**Uruguay**), Juan D. Peron 148,  
Vista Hermosa Neighborhood, Centenario, Neuquen  
Argentina 8308; 052994896251;  
asambleadesionuruguay@hotmail.com

Jimenez, Bani Rangel (**Venezuela**), Barrio Belle Monte Calle 128 nro.  
38A-585 Maracaibo Estado Zulia Venezuela

Gomba, David ( **Zambia, Zimbabwe**), P.O. Box 14451, Dar  
ES Salaam, NONE Tanzania East Africa; 255784599066;  
rucode\_macademi2004@yahoo.com

## International Churches/Missions

| Nation/Provinces             | Churches | Missions |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Argentina                    | 7        | 3        |
| Bangladesh                   | 3        | 4        |
| Benin                        | 5        | 0        |
| Bolivia                      | 1        | 0        |
| Burundi                      | 6        | 3        |
| Cambodia                     | 3        | 5        |
| Cameroon                     | 5        | 0        |
| Canada                       | 1        | 0        |
| Chile                        | 14       | 1        |
| Costa Rica                   | 1        | 4        |
| Dominican Republic           | 12       | 2        |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | 31       | 6        |
| England                      | 0        | 1        |
| Ethiopia                     | 2        | 2        |
| Ghana.                       | 1        | 3        |
| Guatemala                    | 17       | 3        |
| Guinea                       | 0        | 0        |
| Haiti                        | 300      | 3        |
| Honduras                     | 5        | 16       |
| India Mid-East               | 15       | 0        |
| India Central                | 25       | 3        |
| India South                  | 27       | 3        |
| Kenya                        | 27       | 2        |
| Malawi                       | 63       | 1        |
| Mexico                       | 8        | 3        |
| Mozambique                   | 45       | 5        |
| Myanmar                      | 1        | 5        |
| Nicaragua                    | 6        | 2        |
| Nigeria                      | 52       | 2        |

|               |            |            |
|---------------|------------|------------|
| Pakistan      | 1          | 0          |
| Paraguay      | 1          | 0          |
| Peru          | 3          | 2          |
| Philippines   | 7          | 10         |
| Rwanda        | 0          | 1          |
| Sierre Leone  | 3          | 0          |
| South Africa  | 4          | 3          |
| South Kenya   | 11         | 2          |
| South Sudan   | 3          | 1          |
| Tanzania      | 14         | 4          |
| Thailand      | 9          | 0          |
| Togo          | 3          | 10         |
| Uganda        | 2          | 2          |
| United States | 45         | 8          |
| Uruguay       | 1          | 1          |
| Venezuela     | 0          | 0          |
| Zimbabwe      | 3          | 2          |
| Zambia        | <u>0</u>   | <u>1</u>   |
|               | <b>793</b> | <b>128</b> |

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**In addition to these statistics, the church has 1024 ministers and 84, 376 members in a total of 48 nations and provinces. Some members exist in nations where no church has yet been established.**

## **Bishops**

Adekunle, Yomi  
Agbonifo, Amos O.  
Avila, Juan  
Brooks, Joel  
Burnette, Anton  
Carter, Lanny Woodrow  
Chavez, Ricardo Valenzuela  
Clement, Erasto  
Dalton, Rocky  
Espinoza, Ernesto  
Ferrell, Rick  
Fields, Charles  
Ganda, Kenneth  
Garcia, Miguel, Jr.  
Gomba, David  
Graves, Ricky  
Harris, Byron  
Hostelus, Saintaniel  
Jones, William  
Kelton, Clifford  
Massey, Ron  
McDonald, E.A.  
McDonald, Todd  
Misago, John Karegea  
Neill, Scott E.  
Oboo, Joanes Okal  
Perez, Javier Patricio Diaz  
Perez, Jorge Enrique Estroz  
Pierre, Sandraud  
Phillips, Wade H.  
Ramirez, Daniel  
Resurreccion, Domingo  
Sarry, Pete  
Sebutoto, Audax Petro  
Snyder, Zachary A.  
Steele, Joseph A.  
Sullivan, Bruce  
Wafula, Elijah  
Webster, Davis

White, A.B.

## **Male Evangelists**

Abeka, Daniel  
Abura, Lazaro Orango  
Achacha, Julias  
Adebayo, Según  
Adegboyega, Idowu Israel  
Adebowale, Elijah Idili  
Adelere, Adediran Solomon  
Adera, John Odhiambo  
Aderemi, Aderoju Timothy  
Agbe, Nyakou  
Agbonifo, John Idemudia  
Agullana, Arnel Ganno  
Agwanda, Joash  
Akali, Ezakia  
Akilolu, Taiwo Francis  
Akuom, Sulman O.  
Akwanya, Gerald  
Alanya, Michael  
Alfredo, Robert B.  
Aluodo, Richard  
Amando, Julio  
Amos, Adetokun  
Armand, Behanzin A.  
Aremu, Abraham  
Auyo, Juliiias Myereere  
Ayobami, Sanni Olusegun  
Awiti, Daniel Oshiambo  
Bagonle, Adebowak Elijah  
Ballios, Jorge antonio  
Bamidele, Ademibawa Moall  
Barbour, Roger  
Barker, Charles D.  
Barrios, Jorge Antonio  
Benjamin, Ammana. China  
Betin, Akpatcho  
Bor, German  
Brown, Brooks Lee

Bundgere, Daniel Eliaz  
Bureenok, Surisak  
Brunet, Ricky Paul  
Carrasco, Sr., Raul  
Carrasco, Jorge  
Carillo, Raul Arthur  
Catig, Teofilo  
Chamorro, Vidal Morinigo  
Chandra, Murala Surya  
Childers, Daren  
Christophe, Essee  
Clary, Kevin  
Coello, Jose elis Orlando  
Cook, Joseph Norris  
Corrales, Eugenio Cespedes  
Cortez, Carlos Jesus  
Cortez, Luis Orlando  
Creary, Nevil Sena  
David, Oyadokun Olatundo  
David, Samuel C.  
Davis, John J.  
Deakle, Tod  
Diram, Joseph Oje  
Dogbeda, Nouwe Kami  
Duba, Ratna Babu  
Ebenezer, Adebisi Oluseye  
Edward, Orobosa Kelly  
Elisha, Chokka  
Emanuel, Abioye Aladimeji  
Espinoza, Carlos Adan Garcia  
Esuendalew, geremew Eshete  
Estacio, Mario,  
Etta, Silas  
Everett, Patrick Meredith  
Eyong, Eric Eyong  
Felix, Kentangie John  
Fisayo, Nathaniel  
Fredic, Duniani Asukulu  
Gaba, Elias  
Galvan, Nestor  
Ganta, John Babu Rao

Garcia, Alejandro  
Garcia, Ivan Freddy  
Garcia, Vincente  
Garcia, Vitalino Martinez  
Geda, Janes A.  
Geremew, Eshete Esuendalew  
Gill, Edwin David  
Gomez, Luis Orlando  
Gomez, Philippe Seraphin  
Gonzales, Arthur  
Gonzalez, Ruben Dario Fleitas  
Graves, Trevor  
Graves, Travis  
Gregory, Daniel  
Gregory, Jonathan  
Gwara, Tom  
Haleluya, Martin  
Hall, Jonathan "Corey"  
Harvey, Tommy John Jr.  
Hernandez, Leyre Josue  
Hernandez, Nolvin  
Hernandez, Samuel  
Ignacio, G. Benjamin  
Ignacio, Ernesto  
Ignacio, Melchor Gundran  
Israel, Adebaye Oluwasagun  
Israel, Koumako  
Jaramillo, Alex Raymond  
Jaramillo, Robert  
Jandura, Godwin  
Jaoka, Juma  
Jaynes, Robert Lee  
Johnson, James, Jr  
John, Felix Kentangie  
Joseph, Okello Nabii  
Juma, Eluid  
Kagose, Peterlis  
Kanydere, Simion William  
Kayode, Oluwadepo Isaiah  
Kelly, Greg  
Knowles, Wyburn Neal

Kumar, Boddu Arunodaya  
Lacorte, Jerry Seneres  
Lagos, Mario  
Larmour, William Chase  
Llobrera, Alejandro G.  
Llobrera, Alvin  
Lozano, Jose Manuel  
Lopez, Juan  
Lopez, Virgilio Amador  
Lopez, Francisco  
Lourdes, La Cruz Martinez Sandra  
Lumbly, Samuel G.  
Lwamba, Justin  
Mabombe, Daudi  
Mabula, Paulo  
Mafuru, Alex  
Magare, Ondigo  
Maliyamungu, Michael Barnaba  
Maliyamungu, Paskal  
Mang'ira, Antinius  
Masese, Antonius Minira  
Matabaro, Sylvester Fansisco  
Mathayo, Allex  
McBride, Derrick  
Mchura, Joseph  
Mellado, Luis Alberto Martinez  
Mendes, Feri Joel Martin  
Miduda, Vitalis  
Miruka, Amos Otieno  
Mito, George  
Mlengera, Meshak  
Mnyangala, Michael Barnaba  
Morgan, Nigel  
Montecinos, Carlos Amador  
Morakinyo, Ariwajoye Thomas  
Morinigo, Maria Sirila Acosta de  
Moses, Adebayo Kayode  
Muga, William  
Myodonga, Frederick Ochali  
Ndosh, Daudi  
November, David Allen

Nyanjerechi, Jeremia  
Oberio, George Otineno  
Obiero, Mourice  
Oboo, Joanes Okal  
Ochali, Frederick  
Ochanda, John  
Ochola, Patrick  
Ochola, Simon  
Odede, Maurice Oguda  
Odhiambo, Tom  
Odongo, Michael  
Odongo, Moses Okoko  
Ogbebo, Franklin Emokpea  
Ogira, Ezra Ochola  
Ogla, Bernard Otieno  
Ogola, Lawrence, Oluoch  
Oguntore, Samuel Bamikohh  
Ogunleye, Peter Fowrunso  
Ojetunde, John Owseye  
Ojwang, Peter Otieng  
Oketch, John Okoth  
Oketch, Joseph Ombajo  
Okeyo, Steve O.  
Okimyi, Kigina Daniel  
Okinyi, Florence Aoko  
Okode. Jane Akinyi  
Okong'o, Samwd O.  
Okong's Silas  
Okoth, Simon  
Okumu, Joshua  
Olaide, Adebayo Kehinde  
Oldyede, Aderibgbe Babatumde  
Olal, Moris Anyanga  
Olal, Michae Ngome  
Olawuyi, Adekunle  
Oloo, Almas Olouoch  
Olubenga, Oyeyemi Gabriel  
Oludare, Ayeni Moses  
Olufemi, Olagunju Issac  
Olusola, Adeleye Jonathan  
Ombalo, Michael

Ombeta, Paul Odonyo  
Omity, Makori  
Omondi, Fred  
Onesi, Matthew Bayode  
Onyango, Josia  
Onyango, Philip Tel  
Ooko, Agnes  
Opiyo, Lukas  
Orange, James  
Ornelas, Jr, Nazario  
Origi, John  
Orwa, George Ohola  
Osewe, Bernard  
Otieno, Boaz  
Otieno, Francis  
Otieno, Okello  
Otumba, Julias A.  
Ouma, James Ng'anda  
Ouyo, Julias Myerere  
Oweri, Julias  
Owiti, Syprose  
Oyando, Eucabet  
Oyediran, Timothy T.  
Oyonge, James M.  
Ozuda, Isaiah Omonid  
Paillaleo, Juan Huenul  
Pailahueque, Jorge Enrique  
Parker, James  
Pastran, Manuel Antonio  
Paulasa, Jorge Mario  
Perez, Gladys  
Perez, Leonardo Mendez  
Pierre, Sandraud  
Pounders, Bobby  
Pounder, Daniel Joshua  
Pounders, Jerry  
Prakash, Yannabathula  
Punda, Mika O.  
Quezada, Erica Pilar Pinto  
Quezada, Sofanor  
Quillen, Joseph

Quispe, Yum Munoz  
Rajoro, Peter  
Ramirez, Hernandez Jonathan  
Ramirez, Odalis Margoth  
Rangel, Ezequiel del Carme  
Rao, Nimmala Sanjeeva  
Rao, Talari Padma  
Rao, Yadia Mohan  
Ratnam, Sirra Mani  
Reel, Jerry  
Rodriquez, Carlos Rafael  
Ruben, Perez Dario  
Ruiz, Jose Dionicio  
Saez, Mario Alfonso Flores  
Saka, John Onyango  
Sakwa, Dan Ouma  
Sakwa, Jack Obimbo  
Sakwa, Jacob Obimbo  
Samson, Akinlolu  
Samson, Akinola Akinlolu  
Sanchez, Antiono  
Sanchez, Carlos Lopez  
Sanchez, Pedro Danilo  
Senapati, Gabriyel  
Sidker, Skuku Fanjon  
Socia, Clarence  
Solom, Pstyomi Adekunle  
Solomon, George W.  
Stephen, Ayoola Oloinka  
Stonell, Raymond  
Tabares, Werner  
Taulinus, Fidel  
Thompson, Allen  
Tingler, Jerry  
Tolentino, Jr, Fererico D.  
Torres, Cesar Auyusto P.  
Urcadiz, Daniel C.  
Valdez, Wilber Santos  
Viswanatham, Biddika  
Vicxeau, Jean  
Wagner, Ricardo Astorga

Wale, Adeyemo Femi  
Walowa, Joshua O.  
Wambogo, Janes Mbagga  
Wasse, Teketel Zewde  
Wesley, Janga John  
Wilcox, Bruce  
Zavala, Gilberto  
Zuilenam, Quillermo Lionlaf

## **Female Evangelists**

Alabi, Opeyemi Elizabeth  
Alfredi, Maria  
Antango, Jane  
Atieno, Monica  
Bolano, Adejane J.  
Chicag, Ana Gladys Martinez  
Clardy, Dorothy  
Creary, Nevil Sena  
Daudi, Lensa  
Davis, Andrea Faye  
Dorcus, Oyediran Tunrayo  
Dorkas, Oyediran Tunrayo  
Daudi, Lensa  
Edward, Veline Nelson  
Elizabeth, Ilesanmi Omodasola  
Elizabeth, Alabi Opeyemi  
Erasto, Rose, Atieno  
Esther, Omotomilola Temitope  
Erwin, Kimberly J.  
Faida, Rebecca  
Fayoke, Asummo Omotola  
Flores, Claudia Irene  
Folasade, Ajayi Cecilia  
Folasade, Osobu Paulina  
Garcia, Irma Yolanda Martinez  
Gonzales, Griselda Santiago  
Grace, Sanni Iyabo  
Gifford, Majorie  
Jandura, Memory D.  
Jones, Pamela Lynn  
Joseph, Dorkas  
Joselyn, Treva  
Kimble, Shirley  
Lwanba, Mwajuma  
Maciel, Olga Beatrice  
Martinez, Luis Acberto  
Michael, Issac  
McKee, Ofelia  
Morgan, Suson

Mojirayo, Taiwo Agnes  
Obegoriola, Alarape  
Obuyo, Damaris O.  
Odhimago, Roseline Achiong  
Ogonda, Joyce Adhiambo  
Okumu, Elly  
Olajumoko, Olaiya Olanike  
Oluwa, Adebowale Janet  
Omotunde, Durodola Adepeju  
Ortiz, Celia Waldina Hernadez  
Opakunle, Florence Tomi  
Owira, Grace Auma  
Periera, Rebecca  
Pinela, Margarita del Saez  
Pounders, Donna  
Quillen, Jeannie  
Reitler, Brenda  
Rivera, Barbara  
Romo, Reina  
Sadler, Florence  
Sandra, Lecruz Martinez  
Sirrio, Janet  
Snyder, Kari Elaine  
Stephenson, Tina  
Suna, Susilia  
Tomi, Opakunle Florence  
Williams, Linda  
Wilson, Nancy  
Woldemichael, Eyerusalem W.

### **Exhorters**

Steven McKane

### **Deacons**

Akara, Vincent O.  
Ashley, Dave  
Carasco, Sam  
Clary, Kevin  
Corrales, Eugenio Cespedes  
Creary, Nevil Sena  
Davis, Clyde (Eddie)  
Davis, Jimmy  
Dickson, Ray  
Erwin, Todd  
Everett, Patrick Meredith  
Ezakiel, Paulo  
Gobson, Dewy Allen  
Green, Daniel  
Green, J.L.  
Jaramillo, Robert  
Llaneza, Robert  
Martinez, Luis Acberto  
Marwa, James  
Mapambano, Stivin  
Mlengera, Meshak  
Monday, Sam  
Moore, Larry Wayne  
Nyambaso, Kisyeri  
Odoyo, Alfanyo  
Okoth, Elisha  
Okomgo, Elphace  
Oombo, James Opany  
Omity, Makori  
Omwando, Peterson O.  
Onwaga, Joash Odongo  
Pounders, Cecil  
Reid, William  
Reitler, Edward  
Spicer, Chad  
Villers, Tom

# 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; I 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" (1 Corinthians 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).

# NOTES

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**Zion Assembly Church of God  
International Offices  
P.O. Box 2398  
5512 Waterlevel Hwy  
Cleveland, TN USA 37320-2398  
(423) 476-3337**

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