

Zion Assembly Church of God

Minutes of the 19th Annual General Assembly

August 30-September 4, 2022

**International Ministries Complex
5512 Waterlevel Hwy
Cleveland, Tennessee 37323**

Published November 2023



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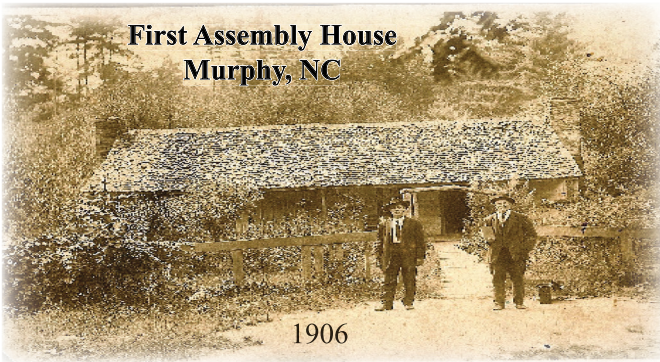
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Zion Assembly Church of God

International Ministries Complex



Historical Assembly Sites



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

19th Annual General Assembly

Zion Assembly Church of God
August 30–September 4, 2022

THEME

“Approaching the Midnight Hour”



International Ministries Complex

5512 Waterlevel Hwy

Cleveland, Tennessee 37323

Administration

Presiding Bishop.....Wade H. Phillips

Superintendent of Operations..... Anton Burnette

Chief Clerk.....Wanda Busbee

Julia Massey, Rose Snyder, Brenda Reitler, Rita Goodrum, Sandy Morris, Renetta Kelton, Becky Kelton, Chrystal Martinez, Babs Sullivan, Judy Floyd, Kim Merrill, Mindy Newberry, Billie Smith, Marie Llaneza, Rosa Nicholson

Chief Usher.....Tod Deakle

Chad Spicer, Vernon Johnson, J. L. Green, Joey Steele, Daren Childers, Henry Rodriguez, Jerry Nichols, John Bolin, Kevin Clary.

Chief Registrar.....Victoria Burnette

Shelby Erwin, Holly Drake, Brooke Barger, Emma Erwin, Ally Thompson.

Assembly Business Committee

Chairman.....Zachary Snyder

J.J. Davis

Byron Harris

Travis Graves

David Gomba

Tod Deakle

Alex Jaramillo, Alternate

Video and Internet Streaming.....America Wagner

Jake Wagner

Madison Kachel

Sound Equipment.....Jonathan Burnette

Allen Thompson

Photography.....Julie Steele

Projection Director.....Jacob Burnette

Donnie Burnette

Stage Manager.....Joseph A. Steele

Music.....Kim Erwin, Zachary Snyder

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

Maintenance/Props.....Jim C. Orange



Wade H. Phillips
Presiding Bishop

Welcome Delegates

It is a delight to welcome every minister, member, visitor, special guest, and friend to this 19th Annual Assembly of God's last days church. We trust that you will be blessed and edified during this great *"feast of fat things"* (Is. 25.6-7). May the Lord make it a spiritual banquet with anointed, powerful proclamations of the Word of God, Spirit-filled praise and rejoicing, and heartfelt intercommunion of the saints.

The General Assembly provides a forum for us to hear from God; proclaim His Word; rekindle the fires of holiness and Pentecostal power; fan the flames of evangelism; stir our affections for fellowship with God and one another; deepen our consecration; and to lay out a plan to more effectively disciple believers and unite all of God's people together in one-fold (Jn. 10.16; Eph. 1.10; 2.14-16; 3.6; 4.11-16).

About the Theme:

"Approaching the Midnight Hour"

We do not hesitate to say that we are living in the very last days and that the coming of our Lord is imminent. Certainly, our redemption is "nearer than when we first believed." Those living close to God sense [spiritually discern] the urgency of the hour (1 Thess. 5.1-9). The Holy Spirit is urging us to hurry up and *"Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city . . . out into the highways and hedges"* to fulfill the great commission—to evangelize the lost and disciple believers in every nation; so that in this present world and in the world to come *"that Lord's house may be filled"* (Lk. 14.21-23).

What wide-awake believer will argue against the glaring signs that point to His imminent return! Without question we are living in the season and time when the "midnight cry" will be sounded and the church's voice is magnified, exclaiming, plainly and loudly, under the anointing of the Spirit, *"Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go out to meet Him"* (Mt. 25.5-6; 1 Thess. 5.1-6).

We trust that by the time this great Assembly closes, all will be convinced that Jesus' coming is close at hand; and, accordingly, all will be stirred to consecrate themselves to go back to their respective communities, and like Samson's foxes, set the fields on fire with the glorious Gospel of Christ and His mighty baptism of Pentecostal power! (Jer. 20.9; 23.29; Mt. 3.11; Acts 2.3). May the Lord help us convert sinners to Christ and transform believers into dynamic Spirit-baptized heralds of the Kingdom of God (Mt. 24.14; Acts 1.2-5)!



Greetings!

Praise God for the General Assembly! This special meeting is a holy convocation in which the entire church gathers together before the Lord. It is wonderful after a year of working in the fields to come together as one congregation to do the Lord's business.

We are glad to be having the Assembly at the International Ministries Complex. The property at headquarters is yours. Your faithfulness and giving have made this place possible. Make yourself at home while being respectful and reverent at all times. The following instructions are offered to help ensure that everything will proceed smoothly during each session 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.
- 3) Food and drink are not allowed in the auditorium, except at the moderator's table (exception is water).
- 4) If you are on the program and need assistance with equipment, see Anton Burnette.
- 5) If you need to put pictures, scriptures, songs, etc., on the projection screens, see Jacob or Donnie Burnette.
- 6) Give soundtracks and media devices to the Sound Engineer 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 you will enjoy your time in Cleveland and be abundantly blessed in this great 19th General Assembly.

Anton Burnette
Superintendent of Operations

Artistic Preconception of Future Assembly Tabernacle and International Ministries Complex



We are on schedule, with the help of the Lord and commitment of our faithful people, to pay-off in four years or less the present indebtedness on the two-story Educational Wing of our International Ministries Complex [IMC]. When this is realized, we will rejoice and celebrate together the accomplishment of such a monumental task. But we will not “rest on our laurels!” Once this great accomplishment is concluded, we will press on immediately to fulfill the vision for our IMC. The final stage laid out in the 2014 Assembly includes the construction of an Assembly Tabernacle. We appreciate the boldness of the vision and the enthusiasm and commitment of our people to make this great vision become reality!

Pre-Assembly Programs

International Properties Tours

Guided tours of our International Ministries Complex [IMC] will be conducted 9:00-10:00 a.m., Tuesday August 30th; 10:00-11.00 a.m., Wednesday August 31st; and 6:00-7:00 p.m., Saturday September 3rd. Tour guides: Joe and Julie Steele/Madison Kachel. Tourists meet at the Entrance [Foyer] of the Assembly Auditorium. A short history of the reorganization and restoration of the church in 2004 will be presented, along with the historical development of the IMC, including the envisioned Assembly Tabernacle to be constructed on the westside of the existing original building. An orientation of the various facets of ministry and the facilities is part of the overall tour presentation.

Ministers' Meeting Tuesday, August 30, 2022

The Annual Ministers' Conference will convene at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary of the International Ministries Complex. The meeting is open to all; 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 reports of the ABC and DC will be read, and the floor will be opened 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 Fellowship Hall of the International Ministries Complex. Special singing: Zach and Kari Snyder; Special speaker: E.A. McDonald. Comments and special presentations by Dale L. Phillips. Dress code: most of the men prefer to wear suit and tie for this occasion.

Assembly Business and Doctrine Committees Wednesday Morning, August 31, 2022

The Assembly Business Committee (ABC) will meet at International Ministries Complex beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday to finalize its report to present to the 19th Annual General Assembly. The Doctrine Committee (DC) will meet at the same time in a separate room to finalize its report. 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.

Assembly Program

Tuesday Evening

6:30 p.m.

Are you ready for an exciting, uplifting, Spirit-baptized time in the Lord?—Anton Burnette

Joy-filled Praise—Crossville church

Opening of the 19th Annual General Assembly: Comments and Official Declaration

Multi-lingual Concert of Prayer:
—national overseers

Ladies Ministries report—Pam Jones, director
Media Ministries report—Anton Burnette, director
Voice of Zion/SYNC boost—L.W. Carter, director



Praise Reports/Exhortations—Joseph Binoy, India;
Freddy Garcia, Nicaragua; Elijah Wafula, Kenya

Assembly Expense Offering

Special Songs—Becky Land

Presiding Bishop's Annual Address

Section I

“The Most Important Message in the Bible”

Note: *Kidz' Konvention* schedule:

Wednesday: 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Thursday: 1:30-3:00, 6:30-7:30; Friday: 9:30-11.15 a.m.; 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Saturday: 8:45-10:00 a.m. 2:30-4:00; 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Sunday: A special Children's program is scheduled for Sunday morning in the Main Auditorium.

Wednesday Evening

Note: *Kidz' Convention* 6:30-8:00 p.m.

6:30 p.m.

Sing hallelujah!—California “delegation”

International Leaders' Reports:

Presiding Bishop

General Executive Council

General Treasurer's Report

[Note: All overseers and international leaders turn in your written reports at the Assembly Clerk's table]

Special Songs—Vernon Johnson, MD

Senior Ambassadors' Program

—Donna Pounders, director



“The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness” (Prov. 16.31)

Assembly Expense Offering

Presiding Bishop's Annual Address

Section II: **“The Grace, Purpose, and Divine Order of Discipline”**

Special Singing—Ashley Davis, WV

Message: **“The Midnight Hour”** (Mt. 25.5-6)

—Scott E. Neill, SC



Thursday Morning

Note: *Kidz' Convention* today 1:30-3:30, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

9:00 a.m. Camp Reports—Kim Erwin, coordinator



Special Songs —Kim Erwin

Message—“*More than Conquerors . . .*” (Rom. 8.37)

—Pam Jones, KY



Praise Reports: David Gomba, Tanzania;
Eugenio Cespedes, Costa Rica

Fishers of Men Program

—Bruce Sullivan, director



—Lunch Break—

1:30 p.m. “*O sing unto the Lord a new song . . .*”

—Renetta/Isabella Kelton

In Memory . . .

Members: Neto Ramirez, CA; Dorothy Clardy, SC; Tim Kelly, SC;
Jim Duffle, SC; Fatima Valdez, CA; Mavis Omsby, Canada;
Bro. and Sis. Wright, Canada; Jeanie Castillo, CA

Friends: Burel McKane, Canada

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

Special Singing—Yomi Adekunle, Nigeria

Message—“*Blameless*” (1 Tim. 3.2, 10; 1 Thess. 5.23)

—Rick Ferrell, TN



ORDINATION SERVICE

—Supper Break—

Thursday Evening

6:30 p.m. Sing Praises—led by Cleveland church

Tract Ministries Presentation

—Glenda Major, director



School of Ministry Program

—Anton Burnette, Superintendent



Assembly Expense Offering

Testimonies of God’s healing power—TBA

Special Song—Becky Land, SC

Message—“*And he . . . gave them power [authority] against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and . . . disease*” (Mt. 10.8)



—Ambrosio Lopez, CA

Healing Line and Prayer

Friday Morning

Attention: The annual SYNC luncheon will be held today at 12:00 in the Fellowship Hall; L.W. Carter in charge. All SYNC members and invited guests are encouraged to attend.

9:30 a.m. Exalt His Name!

—Alex and Holly Drake, KY

Presiding Bishop’s Annual Address Section III: “Our Church Identity and Exclusiveness”

Special Songs—Victoria Green, TN

Message—“*Go out quickly . . .*” (Lk. 14.21).

—Danny Wilson, NC



—Afternoon Break—

Friday Evening

[Attention: Front three rows are reserved for Youth Program.
All youth (12-35) meet at 7:30 in the Corridor for Youth March]

6:30 p.m. “Make joyful noise”—Scottsville church

Shepherding Ministries Program

—Wilma Carter, director



Message—“Signs and Wonders: Marks of God’s church”

(Mk. 16.17-18; Acts 4.29-31, 5.12-14)

—L.W. Carter, VA



Youth Program

—Kim Erwin, director



[Attention: Youth Afterglow immediately following
Youth Program in the Fellowship Hall.

Kidz Convention in the morning 8:45-10:00 a.m.,
2:30-4:00. 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Saturday Morning

8:45 a.m. Morning Prayer Service—Daniel Green, TN

9.15 “Let Zion Rejoice!”—Trevor Graves, KY

Message—“The Grasshopper Spirit” (Numb. 13.31-33)

—Tom Brown, WV



Recognition of Special Guests

—Assembly Choir—

Presiding Bishop’s Annual Address
Sections IV-V: “Before there was a Church Flag”

—Lunch Break—

Saturday Afternoon

2:30 p.m. Praise Him!—Alicia Harris, TN

Special Singing—Oreeda Burnette, TN

Assembly Business Committee Report Doctrine Committee Report

—Supper Break—

Saturday Evening

6:30 p.m. *“I will sing of the mercies of the Lord”*
—West Mobile church

Message—*“Set your affections on things above . . . ”* (Col. 3.2)
—Jose Lozano, CA



Special Singing—Henry Rodriguez, CA

Assembly Expense Offering

World Mission Program

—Wade H Phi-



llips

Recognitions

Special Presentation: “Around the World in 80 days”
—America Wagner

Praise Reports: Leyre Hernandez, CA; Benigno Torrez, Bolivia

Mission skit—Greenville church

—Parade of Nations—

Message—*“. . . the wedding garment . . . ”* (Ps. 45.9,13-14;
Song 4.7; Rev. 19.8; Mt. 22.10-12; Eph. 5.27; Col. 1.28)
—Zachary Snyder, AL



Sunday

9:30 a.m. Sunday School Lesson—Todd McDonald, TN



10:00 Proclaim the Glad Tidings!—California “delegation”

Sunday School Program

—Mandy Thompson, director



Children’s Ministries Program

—Kayla Graves, director



—Assembly Choir—

Message—*“Occupy till I come”* (Lk. 19.13)

—Byron Harris, MS



Announcements

Appointments

Consecration Service

Song: “Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All”

—led by Debbie, Dreama, and Brenda



Heaven will surely be worth it all.
Worth all the sorrows that here befall;
After this life with all its strife,
Heaven will surely be worth it all.

Assembly Appointments

2022-2023

International Executive Council _____

Field Secretary _____

Field Secretary _____

Field Secretary _____

World Mission Director _____

General Treasurer _____

Executive Secretary _____

Department of Education/Media Ministries _____

Assistant Publisher _____

Shepherding Ministries Director _____

School of Ministry Institute Director _____

Fishers of Men Director _____

Ladies Ministries Director _____

Sunday School Director _____

Sunday School Literature Editor _____

Senior Ambassadors Director _____

Youth Ministries Director _____

Children's Ministries Director _____

Camping Coordinator/Advisor _____

Voice of Zion/SYNC Booster _____

Tract Ministries Director _____

Committees

Assembly Business

Chairman _____

Doctrine

Chairman _____

General Properties

Chairman _____

General Trustees _____

National Overseers

1. Argentina _____

2. Bangladesh _____

3. Benin _____

4. Bolivia _____

5. Burundi _____

6. Cambodia _____

7. Cameroon _____

8. Canada _____
9. Chile _____
10. Colombia _____
11. Costa Rica _____
12. Cuba _____
13. Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) _____
14. Dominican Republic _____
15. Ghana _____
16. Guatemala _____
17. Guinea _____
18. Haiti _____
19. Honduras _____
20. India, Mid-East _____
21. India, South _____
22. Ivory Coast _____
23. Kenya North _____
24. Kenya South _____
25. Liberia _____
26. Malawi _____
27. Mexico, North _____
28. Mexico, South _____
29. Mozambique _____
30. Myanmar (Burma) _____
31. Nepal _____
32. Nicaragua _____
33. Nigeria _____
34. Pakistan _____
35. Paraguay _____
36. Peru _____

- 37. Philippines _____
- 38. Rwanda _____
- 39. Sierra Leone _____
- 40. South Sudan _____
- 41. Tanzania _____
- 42. Thailand _____
- 43. Togo _____
- 44. Uganda _____
- 45. United States _____
- 46. Uruguay _____
- 47. Venezuela _____
- 48. Zimbabwe _____
- 49. Zambia _____

State Overseers

United States:

- North Carolina/ South Carolina _____
- West Virginia/Virginia/ Pennsylvania/Maryland _____
- Indiana/Kentucky/Michigan/Illinois _____
- Tennessee/ Georgia _____
- Mississippi/ Alabama/ Louisiana _____
- Idaho/Wyoming _____
- Colorado/ Kansas/ Missouri _____
- Texas/Arizona/NewMexico _____
- California/ Nevada _____
- Oregon/Washington _____

A Biblical Explanation of the . . . General Assembly

The General Assembly is an extraordinary event because 1) it represents the universal [catholic] expression of the church in worship, fellowship, biblical interpretation, and decision-making; 2) it is essential for the unity and progress of the church; 3) it is the highest tribunal of authority on earth under Christ in matters of faith, practice, discipline, and government.

In the General Assembly the ministers and members meet together with God in a decision-making capacity: to understand the will of God; to seek His light and guidance for the future course of the church; and to commit themselves to live and work by the resolutions adopted by Assembly. The Assembly represents the one time of the year that we gather together in His name from all over the world to bind and loose in the earth what God has bound and loosed in heaven (Mt. 16.19; Acts 15.1-16.5). We consecrate ourselves to understand the will of God—to find the perfect mind of Christ. This is why in Jacob’s words the church is a “*dreadful place*” (Gen. 28:16, 17); for it is at this special time that the church acts in its official capacity as God’s *ekklesia*, having been ordained and authorized by Christ to do so (Mt. 16.9; 18.17; Mk. 13.34; Lu. 19.13; Jn. 20.23; Acts 1.13-21; 6.1-6; 15.1-29). Here in this special meeting, we reason together with God (Is. 1.18; Acts 15.6-19, 28), and the ministers and members look judiciously into the Holy Scriptures (compare Acts 15.15-18 with Amos 9.11, 12) and seek diligently for the Spirit’s illumination until an understanding is reached on what the will of God is (Acts 15.28-29). Then, having come to this understanding, all agree to “*walk by the same rule*” and “*mind the same thing*” (1 Cor. 1.10; Phil. 3.16; Acts 16.4-5), that is, we commit ourselves to live and walk together as one body in Christ according to the decisions agreed upon in this sacred meeting.

Because the Bible is the supreme objective authority of the church, the General Assembly is “a judicial body only,” that is, all decisions in regard to faith and government that are binding on the ministers and members must be shown to be either explicitly or implicitly in harmony with the teachings of Christ and the apostles.

The biblical model for the General Assembly and our judicious process is found in Acts 15.1-29. Here the *apostles and elders* gathered

together with the *whole church* (vv. 12, 22, 28), and prayed and deliberated with the help of the Spirit until all were able to “*see eye to eye.*” It is said that the decisions made in the Jerusalem council “*seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us*” (v. 28). Then on this basis, all agreed to live by the “*decrees [dogmas] for to keep*” (16.4)—“*And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily*” (v. 5).

Corporate counsel is thus an underlying principle upon which the government of the church is established. The General Assembly is made up of ministers and members from around the world whom Providence has ordained and blessed to participate in the proceedings. The wise man wrote, “*Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety*” (Pr. 11.14), and again, “*Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established*” (15.22).

When Rehoboam was made king in the Old Testament theocracy, it is said that “*all Israel*” came to Shechem to make him king (1 Kg. 12.1). Moreover, it is emphasized that Rehoboam failed because he did not heed the counsel of the “*elders and the people*” in making decisions (vv. 6-15); but heeded rather a select counsel of the “*young men that were grown up with him*” (vv. 8-10), thus signifying that Rehoboam was partial in his decision-making and succumbed to the opinion of the young men who were opposed to the will of God. Indeed, those young men typically were full of themselves: arrogant, boastful, and harsh in their opinions (vv. 10-14).

It will be noticed further, regarding the house of God under Rehoboam, that ultimately the will of God is all that matters, and His will is best discerned and understood by men and women who consecrate themselves to the Lord. In any case, God always ultimately has His way—sometimes in spite of the leaders and the people. “*Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord*” (v. 15; see also v. 24). Tragically, Rehoboam’s actions caused the house of God to divide (vv. 16-20), but this division was foreknown in the divine counsel and thus prosecuted according to the will of God. [See the prophet Ahijah’s prophecy] (1 Kg. 11.29-39). God’s fixed purpose in and through David was fulfilled in Christ through the southern kingdom of Judah; nothing could prevent that!

The church under the spirit and terms of the New Covenant operates as “*the habitation of God through the Spirit*” (Eph. 2.22). The

ministers and members form the temple of God and are unified spiritually through the indwelling power and wisdom of the Spirit. This is the key to theocratic government—the indwelling graces and gifts of the Spirit being allowed to prevail in the church; for the Spirit creates a spiritual dynamic within the church that unites the ministers and members together intrinsically in one body of Christ and illuminates them to understand the will of God. Even before the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, the 120 were in *one accord* because they had been sanctified and were **“continually in the temple praising and blessing God”** (Lu. 24.53). The essential key to the unity and power of the church is in sanctification, and in maintaining a consecrated devotion to Christ. When everyone’s ego is crucified, then Christ rules supreme—the kingdom of God prevails! Thus Christ says in His prayer to the Father, **“Sanctify them through thy truth . . . that they all may be one . . . And the glory which you gave me I have given them . . . that they may be made perfect in one”** (Jn.17.17-23).

It is said following the day of Pentecost that **“the multitude of them who believed were of one heart and of one soul . . . and great grace was upon them all”** (Acts 4.32-33). Likewise, the key to God’s glorious government in this last day’s Zion depends on our willingness to allow the Spirit to hold sway over us and prevail in matters of faith, practice, government, and the prosecution of the church’s mission in the world. The apostle Paul understood this divine principle and encouraged the church to **“walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”** (Eph. 4.1-3). He went on to say, “[For] **there is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in the one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through you all, and in you all”** (vv. 4-6).

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

Should we expect God's blessings to fall on this last day's Zion on the basis of anything less than the basis upon which He blessed that early Zion? Surely not. It is an old principle that cannot be transgressed if we expect the blessings of God to be upon this last day's house: "***Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! . . . for there the Lord commanded the blessing***" (Ps. 133.1-3).

We fully expect the prophets' and apostles' vision of the last day's church to be fulfilled in Zion Assembly: "***The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, says the Lord . . . and in this place I will give peace . . .***" (Hag. 2.9) "***. . . That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing***" (Eph. 5.27).

—WHP

“And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things . . . And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.”

—Acts 15.23-28; 16.4-5

Historic Assembly Sites

2004 - 2022

Ramada Inn & Convention Center, Pigeon Forge
Site of First Annual Assembly 2004



United Christian Church, Cleveland, TN
2nd, 6th, 7th, 10th, & 12th - 16th
Annual General Assemblies



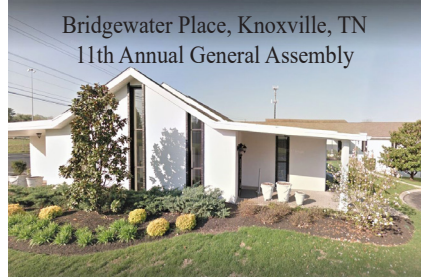
T.L. Lowery Center, Cleveland, TN
8th Annual General Assembly



Living Word Church, Cleveland, TN
9th Annual General Assembly



Bridgewater Place, Knoxville, TN
11th Annual General Assembly



Int'l Ministries Complex, Cleveland, TN
3rd-6th, 9th, 17-19th Annual General Assemblies





Upcoming Events

Int'l Youth Camp
Camp Hickory Hills
Dickson, TN

October [pending] 2022
[site pending]

Youth Conventions

Pacific Coast (Rialto)
Cleveland, TN

November 4-5, 2022
November 11-12, 2022

Ladies' Retreat
Black Fox Lodge
Pigeon Forge, TN

February 24-26, 2023

Assembly Program Adjustments

The Assembly program proceeded
as scheduled with the following exceptions:

*Note: The Presiding Bishop read the various sections
of his address throughout the Assembly.*

Administrative Adjustments

Additional clerks who served throughout the Assembly:
Stephanie Ferrell, Becky Land, Grace Burnette, Kara Spicer,
Hettie Dodson, Donna Pounders, Kim Merrill, Oreeda Mills,
Brooke Bargeron, Pam Jones, Lynn Weatherly
[Absent: Julia Massey, Brenda Reitler, Rita Goodrum,
Sandy Morris, Rosa Nicholson, Judy Floyd]

Additional Administrative assistance
Music, Spencer Plasse [Kim Erwin, absent]
Usher [Jerry Nichols and John Bolin, absent]

Tuesday

Congregational Singing added: Renetta Kelton and Nadia Garcia
Praise Reports/Exhortation: Elijah Wafula, Kenya: absent

Wednesday

Special Singing: Guest Singer Steve Puckett
[Ashley Davis absent]

Thursday

Camp Report given by Rick Ferrell [Kim Erwin absent]
Special Songs: Henry Rodriguez and California delegates
[Kim Erwin absent]
Testimonies of God's healing power: John Watson and Jim Orange
Special Song omitted: Becky Land

Friday

Special Song added: Lee Brown
Youth Program: Pam Jones [Kim Erwin absent]

Saturday

Recognition of Special Guest: Stan York
Assembly Expense Offering omitted
Pledges received
Special Song: Oreeda Mills

Ministers ordained at the 19th General Assembly

Bishops

Tod Alan Deakle
Benigno Torrez Pari

Deacon

James C. Orange

Evangelist

Chad Lee Spicer

Exhorters

Wanda K. Busbee
Dodson, David
Ferrell, Jack
Mitchell, Payton
Roberts, Tracy Leann

Healing Line: 101

Registered attendance: 239

International Staff Reports

Nineteenth Annual General Assembly

Presiding Bishop's Report

Nineteenth Annual General Assembly

August 30–September 4, 2022

“Likewise . . . all of you . . . be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant . . .” (1 Pet. 5.5-8).

I’ve leaned heavily this year upon the counsel given in this passage by the great apostle. The burden of the work and especially “the care of all the churches” [all 1020 of them!] have at times driven me to my knees calling upon the Lord for strength and wisdom. I have been comforted by our Lord’s promise, “I will never leave you nor forsake you,” knowing that He is willing and able to bear our burdens and carry our sorrows, and to sustain us in all our trials and afflictions.

Besides the normal day-by-day oversight of the ministers and churches, my time and energy again this year were spent a great deal in writing: including regular articles and messages for the *VOZ*; materials for SMI; and outlines for two new books, which Lord willing will be published this coming year. I have also written about two hundred emails and letters to pastors and churches regarding the overall work of the church and issues requiring disciplinary actions.

Another area that consumed much of my time energy was overseeing and arranging for the maintenance of the International Offices and Ministries Complex. On this score, I owe a great deal to the assistance of Brother Burnette and several of our faithful members and friends in the Cleveland church, not the least being Jim Orange, Glenda and Steve Major, Alice Jones, Wanda Busbee, Faith

Stooksbury, the Burnette family, Renetta Kelton, Rosa Nicholson, Jake Wagner, Madison Kachel, and others. Regarding the upkeep of our property on the outside [about three acres], Faith Stooksbury [the mother of Madison] has been an outstanding blessing. She not only assisted Glenda with the gigantic job of decorating and organizing the library, but she stepped into the shoes of Glenda Major, who with the assistance of her husband, Steve, had maintained the property and landscaping for five years—at their own expense!

To the degree that I have been able to fulfill the responsibilities and expectations of this sacred position, especially regarding the “care [for] all the churches,” I owe all to the grace of the Lord. With the assistance of our executive secretary, Wanda Busbee, I have answered all correspondence and calls that have come into the office (roughly 400 letters and e-mails and hundreds of phone calls), and kept up a regular correspondence with the overseers and ministers. I served as editor-in-chief of our church magazine, the *Voice of Zion*; worked closely with the national/state overseers and pastors in overseeing and building up the churches and missions [all 1,020 of them!]. I counseled and acted upon a number of disciplinary situations in several states and countries. These things always preoccupy much of my time: but are a necessary part of our work of overseeing God’s church. By the grace of the Lord, every disciplinary and administrative problem was addressed and solved to the best of our ability. Most of the cases were addressed in counsel with the assistance of the state or national overseer. In two cases the assistance of the Executive Council was needed. In five instances, a minister had to be removed from his position, and in four instances licenses had to be revoked. But in all the cases, it may be said in good conscience [the Holy Ghost as witness], we did our best to act in love and with compassion as well as with justice and mercy in the best interests of the ministers and churches involved.

The General Staff and international department heads and assistants are to be commended for their cooperation and hard work. If I mentioned all the names here, there are about twenty. Worthy of special mention is always the General Treasurer, because the work involves so much time and effort and “know-how.” This year America Wagner did a splendid job. She has been by far the youngest

holder of this office in Zion Assembly, and perhaps the youngest General Treasurer in any international organization. Again, Sister Busbee is worthy of special mention: for almost all the international correspondence of the church [nationally and internationally] crosses her desk and in many instances demands her attention and response. Again, I want to mention Brother Burnette: he has been an invaluable assistant in the finance department and in promoting and advancing all the work worldwide, in addition to his appointed roles in the Education department, SMI, Media ministries, and as the pastor of the Cleveland church. He also serves as our computer expert around the International Offices. Every name mentioned and the several others not mentioned are all hard workers and always anxious to do whatever is needed and helpful to advance the church and her work. I feel like a cheer for them all is in order here.

Special commendations to the regional and national overseers and pastors are also in order here: for almost all have been cheerfully cooperative with the Presiding Bishop in the promotion of the work—even in the face of the lingering Covid-19 pestilence. Some of these have sacrificed much to move the work forward throughout the world. I want to take this opportunity also to commend the companions of our overseers and international workers, for they minister and attend to their husbands/wives so that they may in turn minister and attend to others.

I served as president of SMI in our California and Cleveland schools; planned and moderated the 18th Annual General Assembly. My travels this year included trips to ten states [CA, IN, AL, MS, GA, FL, WV, KY, TN, NC, SC, some of these several times] to assist the overseers and pastors in the work.

My work connected with SMI included helping to organize and plan materials; write and teach several lessons for the schools in California and Cleveland. Also attended and participated in three of the regional and state conventions in the United States—NC/SC; WV/MD/PA/VA; AL/MSLA/; and TN/GA; was privileged to have my faithful companion, Dale, with me for all these appointments.

I praise the Lord for the progress made this year. Some of our ministers planted, others watered; but in everything God gave the increase!

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

Sermons Preached	159
(includes written messages and lessons taught)	
Converted	2
Sanctified	1
Holy Ghost Baptisms	2
Added to the church	0
Baptized in Water	0

Tithes paid.....\$5535.00

Offerings given.....\$7765.00

Miles traveled.....17,200

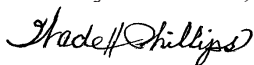
Churches visited 14

Regional Conventions Attended 3

General Assemblies moderated 1

I wish to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart for your prayerful support, kindness, and cheerful cooperation. So many of you have assisted me in so many ways to promote the work. The Lord has the record—and will reward us shortly according to our works. May the Lord bless and keep you in His love and mercies.

Humbly submitted,



Wade H. Phillips

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 following have been recipients of this award:

2012

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

2013

*Marie Spurling Crook, TN
Miguel Garcia, Sr., CA
Dale L. 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
Gavan McDonald, SC
Zachary Snyder, AL*

2018

*Charles and Mary Barker, IN
Clifford and Becky Kelton, MS
Robert and Maria Llaneza, NC*

2019

*Richard and Kim Merrill, OR
Becky Land, SC
Dave and Judy Ashley, WV*

2020

*Dave & Deanna Sanner, WV
L.W. & Wilma Carter, VA
Jose Manuel Lazano, CA*

2021

*Rick and Stephanie Ferrell, TN
Ambrosio "Roberto" Lopez, CA
James "Jim" Orange, TN*

2022 Recipients Presiding Bishop's Commendation Award

*Allen and Mandy Thompson, MS
Joseph and Julie Steele, TN
Lynn Weatherly, AL*



Allen and Mandy Thompson



Joseph and Julie Steele



Lynn Weatherly

General Treasurer's Report

Greetings to the 19th Annual General Assembly

I am grateful to God and His church for the opportunity to serve as the general treasurer this past year. His blessing are immeasurable!

I have had such an amazing experience serving under the mentorship of the Presiding Bishop and others on the general staff. I cannot thank you enough for entrusting me with such an important responsibility within Zion. The experience has been both gratifying and humbling. I appreciate all of your prayerful support. It meant so much to me to receive notes of encouragement from ministers and church treasurers from around the United States. I would like to thank Donna Pounders and Pam Jones for their help as they were always available to guide me throughout this appointment. A very special thank you to my husband Jake for his encouragement and prayer.

While general treasurer, I managed the financial aspects of the international office. I processed and filed monthly ministerial reports as well as those of the local churches. I disbursed approved quarterly mission allotments, prepared various monthly reports off the Presiding Bishop and processed monthly payroll. I also attended Finance Committee meetings to assist in creating and adjusting the budget as needed. In accordance with my appointment I have prepared and will present to this General Assembly the 2022 Annual Treasurer's Report. The document contains a summarized account of any and all receipts and expenditures as well as account totals for fiscal year July 2021 through June 2022 and will be read as part of this report.

Respectfully submitted,
America Wagner, General Treasurer

Zion Assembly Church of God

19th Annual General Assembly

Financial Summary

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

Summary of Accounts						
Accounts:	Balance Forward	Income	Account Transfers-In	Account Transfers-Out	Expenses	Ending Balance
Smart Bank (Operating)	397,309.50	679,517.05		85,110.65	461,454.48	530,261.42
IPBF Money Market Acct.	175,172.55	129.28				175,301.83
Paypal Account	229.00		25,397.60	25,595.65		30.95
Smart Bank (ME - Mission Funds)	827.43		84,507.29	84,578.89		755.83
<hr/>						
Accounts: <u>Misc.</u>	Balance Forward	Received		Transfer to Paypal Checking	Expenses & Fees	Ending Balance
Paypal on Line	46.05	26,382.86		24,794.24	748.66	886.01
Petty Cash	0.00				0.00	0.00
TOTALS:	\$573,584.53	\$679,646.33	\$109,904.89	\$220,079.43	\$462,203.14	\$707,236.04

Fund Balances in Checking Account:					Income Statement
Fund	Balance Forward	Income / Transfer In	Expenses / Transfers Out	Ending Balance	
Bible College Operating Fund	0.00	0.00		0.00	Total Contributions: \$679,646.33
Emergency Fund	17,512.82	4,675.30	200.00	21,988.12	
Ladies Retreat Fund	9,074.75	8,909.18	9,184.78	8,799.15	Total Expenses: \$545,670.18
IYC Retreat Fund	2,348.87	0.00	987.24	1,361.63	
Missions Fund (Inc. & Exp.)	132,433.26	261,956.96	87,511.60		NET INCOME: <u>\$133,976.15</u>
(20% Mission trf. out to IPBF Fund)			52,391.40		
(Mission trf. out to Tithe)			27,307.90	227,179.32	
School of Ministry Institute	20,689.85	22,293.61	14,648.18	28,335.28	
IPBF Fund (Income & Expenses)	104,195.86	141,868.80	126,190.71		
(IPBF trf in fro. 20% Mission)		52,391.40			
Trf. Out - to Underwrite Loan Payment			59,706.39	112,558.96	
Sunday School Fund	38,879.44	20,745.60	11,375.00	48,250.04	
Tithe Fund	70,628.99	209,755.96	278,338.47		
Trf out fr. YouthM to Underwrite Printer			14,468.34		
Trf in fr. Missions to Underwrite Loan Payment		27,307.90			
Trf in fr. IPBF to Underwrite Loan Payment		59,706.39		74,592.43	
Voice of Zion Fund	7,359.65	8,140.28	8,303.44	7,196.49	
Youth-Media Fund	-6,848.22	7,255.11	13,541.62		
Trf in fr. Tithe to Underwrite Printer		14,468.34		1,333.61	
TOTALS	\$396,275.27	\$825,006.49	\$704,155.07	\$530,261.42	

Education Director and Media Director Report to the Nineteenth Annual General Assembly August 30, 2022

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" - 2 Tim. 3.16-17

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve the Lord and His church in regard to the Education and Media departments throughout the last year. I want to thank my wife, Grace, and our children for supporting me in this position, and constantly providing me with prayers and assistance where needed. I want to thank the Cleveland congregation for supporting me in the broader mission of the church.

I appreciate being able to work daily with our Presiding Bishop. He is a well of wisdom and knowledge that I go to often to assist me in the work for which I am responsible.

We have streamed the weekly services of the Cleveland church. We also streamed several headquarters events including the General Assembly, Youth Convention, and the School of Ministry Institute. We also launched our International Sunday School with our Presiding Bishop and others instructing from Cleveland, TN. I have received several reports from around the world from people who have been blessed by these live streams and video archives.

I am thankful for each one of you who has enjoyed these services online. I am thankful for each letter, message, text, or call of encouragement. I am glad that we are making available another avenue for fellowship, encouragement, and outreach.

In the last year, we have accumulated 29k views on Youtube and picked up 106 new subscribers, bringing our total to 638 subscribers. Through this system of outreach, we have made several new contacts

with individuals, nationally and internationally. All the media work completed is with the desire of building our local churches and establishing new missions.

I am thankful for all that has been completed and excited about what is on the horizon. It is our responsibility as the church to take "the all things message" to all countries and all people by all means.

Below is a concise report of my activities for the year:

1. Consistently worked towards the vision and goals for the education and media departments.
2. Worked with the Presiding Bishop and others in overseeing and maintaining the international properties.
3. Updated the Zion Assembly web properties as needed.
4. Coordinated with the Missions Department regarding new international contacts, being a point of contact for national overseers, and assisting the Treasurer with all international allotment and funding.
5. Continued to adapt online content creation plan for Zion Assembly. Emphasizing the best way to represent the church online.
6. Ministered and streamed the Cleveland church services live.
7. Oversaw and instructed at the School of Ministry Institute in California.
8. Oversaw, instructed, and streamed at the School of Ministry Institute in Ten
9. Served as the evangelist at Camp Revelation (Alabama-Mississippi Youth Camp).
10. Attended and streamed the Youth Convention in Cleveland, TN.
11. Attended Executive Council meetings in Cleveland, TN.
12. Submitted my monthly reports and tithes.
13. Thanks to my wife, my children, and our home church for their constant support and love.

Humbly submitted,
Anton Burnette
Director of Education/Director of Media

Voice of Zion/SYNC Ministries Report

It has been a pleasure for me to once again serve as your *Voice of Zion* booster. Thank you Bishop Phillips for this privilege to serve the Church in which I believe.

I have boosted this vital department with all that is in me. I have called each regional overseer and encouraged them to contact every pastor to boost this publication, which once again, I believe to be vital to the Church. I have also called many pastors personally encouraging them to get new subscriptions. Additionally, I have visited over twenty churches. Finally, I have written two letters to all pastors and mission leaders. I also hosted a SYNC luncheon this year at the General Assembly.

As the Church grows, new subscriptions are needed to help with the growth outside of the United States. I am a Lena King Legacy contributor also, sending ten subscriptions to family and friends.

This is a great paper. In fact, the July 2022 edition is one of the most informative issues of all time. Just last month, five issues were sent to a local church because a member had informed a sister in another organization about the history of Zion. If we let it speak, it will speak the Truth to all who will embrace it.

Sermons	69
Saved	4
Sanctified	1
Baptized with the Holy Ghost	2
Baptized in water	5
Took in the church	6
Funerals attended and or officiated	12
Revivals conducted	6
Trips to Canada as overseer	3
Attended executive meetings	2
Visited churches outside of Zion	7
Attended Youth Convention in Cleveland, TN	
Attended the Virginia and South Carolina regional conventions	
Drove approx. 15,000 miles	
Visited over 300 homes	

Respectfully Submitted,
LW. Carter

International Shepherding Ministries Report

It has been an honor and a privilege to have served as the Shepherding Ministries Director for the church this past year. I would like to thank our Presiding Bishop for having confidence in me to appoint me to this position.

I attended five churches this year, sent letters to pastors and regional overseers three times, called regional overseers three times, attended youth convention in Cleveland, Tennessee, attended revival two times in West Virginia, attended a staff banquet in Cleveland, TN, attended and preached at the Ladies Retreat in Pigeon Forge, attend and preached at the Ladies Retreat in West Virginia, attended the School of Ministry, attended two regional conventions, and attended 10 funerals.

My thanks to Bro. Carter, my family, and my local church for their support this past year.

Yours in His Service,
Wilma Carter



International Sunday School Report

Greetings to the 19th Annual General Assembly

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve in the capacity of Sunday School Director another year. This past year I have served as the church minister for Amory, MS. I have preached approximately 70 sermons and taught 50 teen Sunday school lessons. I attended the Youth Convention in Cleveland, TN; the Ladies Retreat in Pigeon Forge, TN; the SMI in Cleveland, TN; served as Camp Director for the South Central Region; and served as the International Headquarters Representative during the South Central Regional Convention.

As the Sunday School Director, I communicated with Brother Bruce Sullivan and Brother Anton Burnette regarding our Sunday school literature for children, teens, and adults in both English and Spanish translations. Brother Sullivan chooses the topics of study each month and updates the templates. I proof read the lessons and create the large print version of English and Spanish adult lessons. Brother Burnette also helps proof read the lessons and posts the Sunday school lessons on the church's website. Once the new lessons are available online, I send an email to the 107 Sunday school lesson subscribers alerting them that the new lessons are available online. Brother Sullivan, Brother Allen Thompson, and I are still working on new lessons for the children, teens, and adults. Sister Renetta Kelton has been helping translate the English lessons into Spanish. All glory be to God for the work being done in the Sunday school department to help further the kingdom of God and equipping the saints of God with spiritual maturity as we strive towards perfection in the last days.

Respectfully submitted,
Mandy Thompson
International Sunday School Director

Award of Excellence

Sunday School Offering



1st Place
Greenville, SC
\$2,217.14



2nd Place
Cleveland, TN
\$1,939.06



3rd Place
Idamay, WV
\$1,522.38

2022 Youth Camp Summary Report

We have seen the power of God move in our camping ministry this season. This would not have happened if it were not for the many volunteers and staff who worked tirelessly to ensure a safe, fun, Christ-centered experience for each camper.

It is our desire to see our local churches embrace the camping ministry and use its resources as an avenue for growth in our children's youth departments. When we do that, we will draw families to the church.

In addition to the reports you've heard this morning, two camp rallies were conducted to help boost and advertise the camping program, one in Crossville, TN, and one in Mobile, AL. Both were a great blessing.

Humbly Submitted,
Rick Ferrell for Kim Erwin, Camping Coordinator

School of Ministry Institute Report 2022

Report of the numbers for SMI:

Rialto, CA: April 3-8, 2022 Approx. 60 students attended

Cleveland, TN: May 3-8, 2022 49 students

Online: Over 5,000 views

I want to commend the instructors for all of their hard work and preparation: Renetta Kelton, Wanda Busbee, Bruce Sullivan, and Wade H. Phillips.

Humbly Submitted,
Anton Burnette
School of Ministry Institute Superintendent

Assistant Publisher Report

I would like to thank the Lord and the Church for the opportunity to serve the church again this year in this position of Assistant Publisher. As we continue to move forward in this great work that God has given us to do, we are understanding more how valuable that our printed material is. Our printed material is the only way to record accurately, and it is one of the effective ways to impact the world for Christ and His Church. By our printing, we are able to preserve our thoughts and ideas and make them available to others.

We are now able to do our own publishing and keep our printing cost to a minimum. I thank the Lord for all that we were able to accomplish this year for the Lord.

Respectfully Submitted,
Scott E. Neill

“Fishers of Men” Report

1. Sermons Preached – 95
2. Bible Studies Taught – 45
3. Prepared lessons for SMI in Cleveland, TN and Rialto, California
4. Taught in SMI in Cleveland, TN & Rialto California
5. Wrote new tract on “The Gospel”
6. I wrote 12 articles called “The Evangelism Corner” for the *VOZ* magazine.
7. Served as Sunday School Editor—I repurposed and issued Sunday School lessons for the 2021-2022 year.
8. Served as Chairman of the Doctrine Committee and met with the Doctrine Committee both in Cleveland, TN and Pigeon Forge, TN.
9. Served as member of the Executive Council and met with the Presiding Bishop on multiple occasions.
10. Served as a part of the Education Committee.
11. Served as pastor of the church in West Pelzer, South Carolina.
12. I am currently finishing a book on “Marriage” which should be out this year.

Pastor Bruce Sullivan



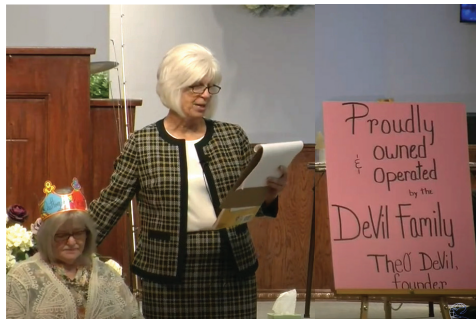
2022 Senior Ambassador Report

“The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness” Prov. 16.31

I am honored to have served as Senior Ambassador Director this past year. The privilege of working beside those who have devoted countless years of service and steadfastness in proclaiming the messages of salvation is immeasurable. These men and women have not swayed from the truth; but continue to labor among us as Bishops, Deacons, ministers, evangelists, teachers, missionaries, worship leaders and prayer warriors. Their dedication to a life of holiness has made them pillars in the church, worthy of following in both conduct and doctrine.

I give glory and honor to God for all inspiration and for affording me the ability to serve in the Church. As with everything, he is my strength and I could not have fulfilled this appointment without his help. I am thankful for his hand upon me and my family and grateful for all blessings. I appreciate our Presiding Bishop, Brother Phillips, for his prayerful support, guidance and vision in helping utilize the role of our older adults and the need for their continual contribution. I value his leadership and example. Thank you to my husband and prayer partner for always praying with and for me. His continual support is an encouragement in all that I do.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Pounders
Senior Ambassador Director



International Ladies Ministries Report

Greetings to the 19th Annual General Assembly

I thank God for the opportunity to serve the Ladies of Zion Assembly as International Ladies' Ministries Director. It is an honor and privilege to be in the service of our LORD in such a way and to work alongside great women of God.

The theme for this year's retreat was "In the Eyes of the LORD." This theme was taken from Genesis 6:8 "*Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*", from Ruth 2:13 "*Let me find favor in thy sight, my Lord ...*" and also from Esther 5:2 "*... When the King saw Esther ... she obtained favor in his sight...*" The emphasis of the theme was to encourage us to know we are favored by God and special to His heart. And that by turning our eyes upon Jesus, we will see the wonder of His love and grace.

On February 25-27, 2022 I attended and conducted the Eastern Regional Retreat which was held in Pigeon Forge, TN. We had 79 ladies in attendance and through anointed worship, spirit-filled devotions and messages, everyone was blessed. The Sunday morning tradition of anointing prayer cloths was a powerful ending to this retreat. There was one lady who was wholly sanctified and one received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. To God be the glory for all that was accomplished.

Sadly, due to Covid we were again unable to conduct a Western Regional Retreat. I want to commend the ladies of this region for finding avenues to minister to the ladies of Zion during this year. Regional Ladies Ministries Director of California, Sister Rosie Ramirez, and I are diligently working to secure a venue to conduct a Ladies Retreat in 2023.

I had the privilege of speaking at a Ladies Conference along with Sister Alice Jones and Sister Wanda Busbee in Idamay, West Virginia.

This conference was held April 1-2, 2022 and was conducted by Sis. Rose Snyder, Regional Ladies Director. The meeting was very timely and exciting. The Holy Spirit moved, and we were all blessed and encouraged.

I have made every effort through phone calls, Facebook Messenger, texting, and emails to stay connected with our ladies to minister the love of God during this difficult time we are facing. Truly we are “Approaching the Midnight Hour,” therefore, “. . . *let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*” (Galatians 6:9)

The year-end balance in the Ladies Retreat Fund is \$8,799.15.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Jones



International Children's Ministries Report

I planned and organized International Children's Day in June and planned the program at my local church. I planned and taught 2 classes and the Children's Program at the Mid-Central Regional Convention. I organized and attended Camp Jubilee as the Director, along with my husband, for the Mid-Central and Tennessee Region. I planned and organized 8 class sessions and the Children's Program at the General Assembly. I had 6 teachers, counting myself, and assistants. There was a total of children in the class sessions.

Faithfully Submitted,

Kayla Graves, International Children's Ministry Director



Tract Ministries Report

I am honored to work in Zion Assembly. These are exciting times. After working in Cleveland, TN for the last five years and seeing the enormous sacrifices Bishop and Sister Phillips make, my husband I feel privileged to work along side and for them.

The depictions in the foyer of our new international buildings are illustrated with two doves flying in opposite directions. This depiction signifies the Gospel going out into all the world. The Tract Ministries is a part of the church that will help accomplish this great commission given by Christ.

God has provided anointed writers in Zion Assembly. Their talents are obviously God-given and ordained. We are grateful to Bishops Todd McDonald, Bruce Sullivan, Zachary Snyder, and our Presiding Bishop for the work they have accomplished in the Tracts Ministry.

As you can see by the titles of the tracts scrolling on the monitors, our focus has been primarily on the scriptural validation of our unique and distinctive doctrinal stance. A display of the new tracts is in the foyer. We are accepting orders. Simply complete the request form, leave it in the basket, and it will be filled as quickly as possible.

I also work in the bookstore and would like to promote the 7x70 pins. We were encouraged at the last Assembly to wear them as a symbol of the love and forgiveness found in Zion. We are proud to be a part of Zion Assembly, and as we go out into the community, these pins will help the community identify us as being a part of one body. I encourage you to wear them for the world to see.

Faithfully Submitted,
Glenda Major, Tracts Ministry Director

International Executive Council Report

Since the close of the 2021 General Assembly, the council met two times in the office of the Presiding Bishop in May 2022 during the School of Ministry Institute. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss issues involving a local church and the pastor.

The bishops on the council are as follows:

Wade H. Phillips

L.W. Carter

Scott Neill

Bruce Sullivan

Joseph Steele

Anton Burnette

Rick Ferrell (secretary)

As we embark upon this time in another great General Assembly, may our attention be evermore drawn to the theme of “Approaching the Midnight Hour.” We can look around and see that the signs of the times are multiplying rapidly. Our time is short, and we must work while it is day.

It is our goal and purpose set forth by this great Assembly to assist the Presiding Bishop in the general oversight of the church. As we fulfill our duties this upcoming year and work with an eternal perspective, we ask that you pray for wisdom and discernment of this council.

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Ferrell, secretary

Assembly Business Committee Report

We, your Assembly Business Committee, after prayerful and careful consideration, present this report for your consideration.

Section I Ministerial Allotment Increase

In the 2020 Assembly it was passed that every two years the cost-of-living for the ministry would be reviewed for possible increases. In that Assembly, the allotment was increased by 4% (\$40.00 per week) due to inflation. In the last two years the same cost-of-living index has estimated that inflation has increased by nearly 10%. We recommend that we increase the weekly allotment by \$75.00, bringing the amount to \$1090.00 per week, which represents a 3.5% increase since 2020. This applies only where funds are available.

We would like to commend all of our ministers who have devoted themselves to the work of the Lord. The vast majority of the ministry who are considered “full time,” by forfeiting secular work, have thereby forfeited retirements, health insurance, and other financial perks of working in the public sector. We certainly feel that the “laborer is worthy of his hire.”

Section II Presiding Bishop’s Annual Address

We would like to take this opportunity to commend our Presiding Bishop’s Annual Address. This committee stands firmly behind each section presented and share in his vision for the church. We also stand in complete agreement with his proposed Assembly Tabernacle and the appointment of the IMC Construction Committee to study out the plans for this endeavor in this upcoming Assembly year.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our members and friends for their unwavering and miraculous financial support since 2004. God has richly blessed Zion, and we anticipate the future with great excitement.

Section III

Dedication of the Church's Library

We recommend that the church's library, located on the second floor of the newly constructed Dove Building, be officially dedicated and named "The Phillips Library," honoring the ministry of Bishop and Sister Phillips. We feel that this is only a small token of our appreciation for the contributions made to the church by these two irreplaceable individuals.

We feel it beneficial to list some of the contributions made that will be a blessing to generations to come:

- 20 large and small rolls of rare film from our church history
- 3 large and very rare bibles, each valued at \$3-500 each
- 450 audio tapes and CDs of our historical background
- approximately 4 large cabinets filled with historical church business transactions as well as copies of the 1924 court deposition
- approximately 2000 extremely rare and old books with several being first editions, complete sets, or almost completed sets that are out of print and no longer available anywhere
- appropriately 3000-4000 historical pictures
- approximately 10,000 or more books in total, plus the perhaps 1000-1500 magazines and historical tracts, some uniquely valuable to our heritage and doctrinal stand

This committee is very well aware that no value could be placed upon this collection, yet the value to Zion Assembly is beyond description. We further recommend that once the archives and library are completed, a dedication ceremony naming the library in honor of the Phillips' be held. We anticipate this special dedication to take place during the 2023 General Assembly.

Section IV

Church Business Guide

We recommend that a Church Business Guide containing all business acts of the Assembly be produced in a single volume in order

to help our ministers and members. We further recommend that this volume also contain a Ministers Manual that will aid the ministry with proper handling of funerals, weddings, visitations, counseling, business conferences, discipline of members, excommunication of members, and other areas of ministry that may be necessary to cover. We recommend that if time permits that this volume be made available by the 2023 Assembly.

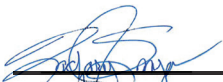
Section V General Funds

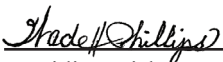
We recommend that we continue to operate the same financial system for this upcoming Assembly year, and that funds be transferred between accounts to bring all funds into a positive balance.


Section VI Nominations for International Executive Council

We nominate the following bishops to serve, along with the Presiding Bishop, on the International Executive Council for the 2022-2023 Assembly year: Scott E. Neill, Bruce Sullivan, Joseph Steele, Rick Ferrell, L.W. Carter, Anton Burnette, and Yomi Adekunle (alternate).

Respectfully Submitted,


Zachary Snyder


Trade Phillips
Presiding Bishop


Travis Graves


Kevin Clary


J.J. Davis, Secretary


Byron Harris


David Gomba


Tod Deakle


Joanes Oboo


Chief Clerk

Presiding Bishop's Annual Address

19th Annual General Assembly
August 30-September 4, 2022

Section I

Most Important Message in the Bible

Jesus said, *“And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached into all the world, as a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come”* (Mt. 24.14). The kingdom of God is both the subject and object of the Gospel. It is the central and most substantive message in the Bible—in both Old and New Testaments. It is the message we are called and commissioned to proclaim in every nation.

No matter where Jesus and the apostles started their message, they ended up proclaiming and explaining the kingdom of God, for the kingdom is *“the power of God unto salvation”* (Rom. 1.16). John the Baptist came preaching the kingdom (Mt. 3.1-2, 5). After His temptation with the devil, and after John was cast into prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the kingdom of God (Mk. 1.14-15; Mt. 4.17, 23).

The **Beatitudes** and **Sermon on the Mount** are all about the kingdom of God (Mt. 5.1–7.28). The **Parables of Jesus** are about the kingdom of God—particularly in the sense of spreading the seeds of the kingdom (Mt. 13.1-9, 18-23) and explaining what the kingdom of God is: Jesus said the kingdom *“. . . is like unto . . . a hidden treasure . . . a pearl of great price . . . mustard seed . . . dragnet,”* etc. (vv. 1-50). Even during His crucifixion, the kingdom was central in the thoughts of Jesus and His teachings. His response to the repentant thief being crucified next to Him [whose dying wish was to be received into Jesus' kingdom], was *“This day thou shalt be with me in paradise”* (Lk. 23.43).

After His resurrection during those forty days before He ascended back to the Father, He taught and preached ***“the things pertaining to the kingdom of God”*** (Acts 1.2-4). And, finally, before His ascension, He commissioned the church to go to every nation with the message of the kingdom of God (Lk. 9.2; Mt. 10.1, 8; 28.19-20).

The kingdom was thus the message of the apostles.

“And when they had preached the gospel . . . and had taught many . . . confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them . . .,” they said ***“we must thru much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God”*** (Acts 14.22-23).

“Wherefore . . . brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure . . . For so an entrance shall be ministered [supplied] unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1.10-11).

The church rested on this promise: they would inherit the kingdom of God: ***“Fear not, little flock, it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”*** (Lk. 12.32; Is. 26.2; Rev. 21.2, 9-10; 22.1-20).

The kingdom is therefore both now and to come—that is, it is now in the heart of believers but will be manifested visibly at the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His reign on earth for a thousand years [the millennium]. But in either case, the kingdom indicates the same thing: it is the rule and reign of Christ both now and forever! It is thus something that presently enters you (Lk. 17.21), but also something in which you enter later at the Second Coming of Christ in the Millennium (Lk. 21.25-27; Acts 14.22; 2 Pet. 1.11; Rev. 11.15).

Violent Warfare

Presently, therefore—that is, in this present age—we can’t see (perceive) nor enter the kingdom of God except through faith and repentance and

the new birth (Jn. 3.3-8; Col. 1.13). The proclamation [preaching] of the Kingdom causes violence—an unavoidable clash between heaven and hell, between good and evil. For by its very nature, the kingdom of God is opposed to Satan’s kingdom and vice-versa! You can count on it. To proclaim the Good News of the kingdom is a declaration of war!

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Mt. 11.12).

“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it” (Lk. 16.16).

This is the reason that after Jesus commanded the church to go into every nation, He said *“but first”* go to Jerusalem and tarry there “[wait] *for the promise of the Father . . . until you be endued with power from on high.*” For, again, they were going to war and needed to be equipped and empowered! (Lk. 24.49-50; Acts 1.4-5, 8; Eph. 6.10-12). This is the reason the army and soldier images are used throughout the Scriptures. (Song 6.8-10; 2 Tim 2.3-4; Lk. 14.31-33): we are called to engage the enemy in spiritual warfare! (2 Cor. 10.4; 1 Tim. 1.18).

The Nature of the Kingdom

“The kingdom of God is not meat and drink [not material food], but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!” (Rom. 14.17).

In this passage, the apostle sets forth three characteristics of the kingdom. First, **righteousness** in the heart. Misunderstanding and misrepresenting this attribute of the kingdom is the grievous error of Calvinism. Those influenced by Calvinism hold that righteousness is merely imputed rather than imparted to the believer! And therefore, one is merely positionally righteous rather than really made righteous. But Paul is emphatically clear on this point: the sincere

believer is actually ***“made righteous”*** (Rom. 5.19). Justification is therefore not merely imputed, nor forensic, nor positional; it is rather transformational! In the new birth one is radically transformed! (Jn. 3.3-8; 2 Pet. 1.22-23) and as such is a new creation in Christ! (2 Cor. 5.17): ***“translated into the kingdom of [God’s] dear Son”*** (Col. 1.13).

What is imputed is faith ***“for righteousness”*** (Rom. 4.3, 9-10, 13, 20-24; 5.1-2, 19; Jn. 8.34-36): faith through which one is transformed into the image of Christ! Faith is therefore **accounted/reckoned** for righteousness. In fact, ***faith is righteousness*** (4.13). Thus, ***Abraham believed God and it [his faith] was accounted for righteousness!*** (4.3, 13). Second, the kingdom is **peace**. Jesus said, ***“My peace I give unto you!”*** Like the righteousness of God, it comes into the heart! ***“Being justified by faith we have peace with God!”*** (5.1). It is peace ***with God***, not peace with the world! ***“In this world ye shall have tribulation”*** (Jn. 16.33; Acts 14.22). It is a peace that is imparted and dwells in the believer. As such, it signifies a state of blamelessness in His sight! The newly born believer now has ***“A good conscience toward God!”*** ***“For there no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus!”*** (Rom.8.1).

Third, the kingdom of God is ***“joy in the Holy Ghost”*** because His kingdom is free, blessed, victorious, and glorious! ***“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full”*** (Jn. 15.11). ***“. . . these things I speak . . . that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves”*** (17.13). Again, Jesus promised, ***“My peace give I unto thee.”*** So also, He now promises, ***“My joy give I unto thee!”***

Spiritual Power

But there is another characteristic that is perhaps the most prominent or outstanding mark associated with the kingdom of God, even more so than righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. That is **power!**

“For the kingdom of God cometh not in word but in power” (1 Cor. 4.20).

“But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you” (Lk. 11.20).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power unto salvation to everyone that believeth . . .”
(Rom. 1.16).

Now there is two dimensions to God’s power: these are represented basically by two Greek words, *exousia* and *dunamis*, both of which are translated “**power**” in the KJV. However, the two terms do not signify precisely the same thing. *Exousia* means delegated or judicious authority—acting in and under God’s authority or for God [as in the power-of-attorney—having the “right” to act on another’s behalf. It is one who has been delegated certain rights (as in Jn. 1.12). This is the absolute authority that dwells in the very being of God. Whereas *dunamis* signifies dynamic power, spiritual power, anointed power: a power that rises up from within one who has been regenerated and Spirit-baptized. ***“He that believeth on me . . . out of his belly shall proceed rivers of living water!”*** (Jn. 7.38; cf. also Rom. 1.16; 1 Cor. 1.24; 4.20).

The disciples preached and cast out devils by *exousia* [delegated authority received from Christ before the day of Pentecost], Mt. 10.1, 7-8; Lk. 12.5; Acts 1.7; Col. 1.16. But after being Spirit-baptized they proclaimed God’s Word more effectively by the anointing and dynamic power of the Spirit rising from within them (Lk. 24.49; Acts 1.8; 4.33; Rom. 1.16; 2 Cor. 12.12). And for this reason, *dunamis* is sometimes translated “**miracles**” (Mk. 9.39; Acts 2.22; 8.13), “**mighty deeds**” (2 Cor. 12.12), “**mighty works,**” etc.

“Thy Kingdom Come!”

The affinity of the word “**power**” with the Kingdom of God, and the fact it is through the manifestation of the Kingdom that the powers

of hell are defeated, is the reason Jesus admonished us to pray as followers: ***“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven”*** (Mt. 6.10). And again, ***“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen”*** (v. 13). We are at war with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Michael and his angels fought with the devil and his angels in the beginning and cast them out of heaven (Rev. 12.7-12), moving the angel of God to cry out,

“Now is come salvation, and strength [dunamis], and the kingdom of our God, and the power [exousia] of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down . . . and they overcame him . . .”

So, we also are empowered to do the same! We are thus commissioned by Christ ***“Go preach . . . heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils [demons]!”*** (Mt. 10.1, 7-8). We now have power over unclean spirits! Over ***“principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places”*** (Eph. 6.10-12). This is the promise of the Lord: ***“I give you . . . power [to tread on serpents and scorpions] . . . and over all the power of the enemy”*** (Lk. 10.19).

“Keys to the Kingdom”

With the same breath in which He declared, ***“Upon this rock I will build my church,”*** Jesus said, ***“And I will give unto thee the keys to the kingdom of heaven”*** (Mt. 16.18-19): meaning we now have access to the absolute authority of Almighty God; we have the keys to open the gates of heaven and to unleash the powers of God’s glory against the gates of hell! That means power [the anointing of the Spirit of the Lord] is to come upon us to proclaim the Gospel with an efficacious anointing, a spiritual power to heal sicknesses and diseases and afflictions and to cast out demons and to do miracles and mighty deeds and to perform exploits! See how it works! The Spirit rises within you, giving utterance to prophecy through which God reveals Himself and His will (Acts 1.8). Note how this was demonstrated in John the Baptist’s mother, Elizabeth [Lk. 1.41-42], and his father, Zechariah [vv. 67-72]. This was much like the old

prophets. But now under the New Covenant, the Spirit dwells *in* the believer and rises with great power and effect to bring in the kingdom of God! (Lk. 11.20; Jn. 14.17, 26; 15.26; 16.13-15).

With this indwelling authority, the Lord expects us to “take charge!” ***“Take the kingdom!”*** (Dan. 7.18, 22, 27). Let the gifts of the Spirit be exercised in and through you! They are in you now because the Spirit of God dwells in you! Let them go! Release them! Let the gifts “operate.” Hear the apostle: ***“Neglect not the gift that is in you!”*** Various gifts for various believers! ***To one is given . . . to another is given!***

Spiritual gifts [Gr. *pneumatikos*] and gifts of charisma [Gr. *charismata*] are to operate and manifest the glory and powers of the Kingdom of God in the church. The church thus becomes the visible manifestation of the kingdom (Ex. 19.5-8; Mt. 5.14-16; Phil. 2.15; 1 Pet. 2.9; Is. 60.1-5). Now observe, we must not only press ***“into”*** the Kingdom (Jn. 3.3-8; Lk. 16.16), we must press ***“in”*** the Kingdom (Acts 14.22; 2 Pet. 1.11). Again, the Lord expects us, under the mighty baptismal fire of the Holy Ghost, to go forward with a holy violence and determination to cast out Satan and conquer in Jesus’ name! (Mt. 3.11; 11.12; Lk. 11.20).

Church and Kingdom

The kingdom is the message, the church is the messenger! But the kingdom is now also made visible in the church. The church is the embodiment of the invisible kingdom (cp. Lk. 17.21 with Mt. 5.14). At His second coming, Jesus will set up His kingdom on earth, and the church will be absorbed or “caught up” into the glory of the eternal kingdom of God. Jesus’ relationship with us then will be King with His kingdom. ***“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God!”*** (Rev. 11.15; 12.10). ***“King of kings and Lord of lords”*** (19.16). The church will still be there—always forever (Eph. 3.21; Col. 1.24-28), but she will be as a queen sharing the everlasting throne with her Royal Bridegroom. She will even

judge the twelve tribes of Israel, the angels, and the world (1 Cor. 6.2-3; see also Ps. 49.14; Dan. 7.22; Mt. 19.28; Rev. 2.26; 3.21; 20.4). Under this image we are thus likened to kings and priests more so than members of a body (1 Pet. 2.5, 9; Rev. 1.6; 5.10). And He is viewed more in the role of King of the kingdom than the Head of the church. Still, the kingdom and church at that point become one and the same. And this was the promise and aim of God from the beginning (Ex. 19.5-8; 1 Pet. 2.9).

But now observe: the church and kingdom even now intersect at given points thru fasting and prayer and consecration! The church has access to the treasures of heaven now! The powers of the world to come are even now within our reach by faith and may be exercised to a great degree! Even now we have been *“enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the powers of the world to come”* (Heb. 6.4-5). We have seen *“the kingdom of God come with power”* (Mk. 9.1). We have been blessed *“with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”* (Eph. 1.3), have been *“sealed with that holy Spirit of promise”* (v. 13). We now know *“what is the exceeding greatness of his power . . . according to the working of his mighty power”* (v. 19). For He has *“quicken[ed] us together with Christ . . . and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* (2.5-6).

Confrontation—Breakthrough!

Having been caught up together into the glory of the kingdom to come, we have been privileged to experience what has been called a **“realized eschatology.”** Our hearts have been opened and enraptured by the Spirit, and the eternal glory of God has been poured into our souls! We are blessed with *righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost*, but also with **spiritual power! We have access to freedom! victory! healing! miracles! peace! tranquility! joy! [laughing and rejoicing in the Spirit], and mighty deliverances!** The powers of hell must yield to the conquering Spirit within us—and let go of their grip! (Dan. 10.1-21; Eph. 6.10-12; 1.3-4, 9; 2.6; Rev. 12.7-10).

We have been empowered to push through all opposing powers and to sit in heavenly places in Christ! We are pushing ahead to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons!

Let us therefore **press!—push!—knock!—ask!—seek!—fight!—wrestle!—strive!—lay hold on!—penetrate the darkness!—deliver those entangled in sin!—break the chains that bind!—heal the bruised and battered!—defeat the devil and forces of evil!** Look, the natural course of things in the Millennium and the new heavens and new earth are now available to us to experience through faith under the anointing of the Spirit! Faith pierces into heavenly glories, and the Holy Ghost presses into our present world! He is our Deliverer, Helper, Comforter! *“The Spirit of God moved upon the waters . . . all the waters—the oceans and seas and great lakes and mighty rivers throughout the world—1000s of them, all at the same time giving form and structure to creation (Gen. 1.2–2.7).*

*“Greater is He that is within you . . .
than he that is in the world”*

“There is no God like Jehovah! There is no God but Jehovah! He is the Creator of the world, the One who said, *“let there be light and there was . . . and He made the stars also*—billions of them, most of them a thousand times bigger than our sun in this galaxy—and our sun is 100 times bigger than our earth.

He just pointed His finger and commanded them, and they were! He spoke them into existence: *creatio ex nihilo*—“out of nothing.” Spoke the whole incomprehensible universe and all the things in it existence—the objects, the motions of the objects, density, size, color, purpose; and the relevance of all things; the balance of nature with its various forms and settings, the organization and administration of all things; and the correspondences of all things, that is, the relationship of all things to each other. Then He made man, fearfully, wonderfully, and mysteriously in His image, after His likeness.

This is the One who, James the Lord's brother, said is the ***"Father of lights"*** [the Father of planets, stars, galaxies, constellations, black holes, all the mysteries of 'outer space']; the One ***"in whom is no variableness [“I am God and I change not!”] neither shadow of turning . . . [not the slightest indication of any instability]."*** Our anchor! high tower! shelter! refuge! mountain! Rock! This is the One who said to the patriarch Job—whom God chastised for ***"darkening counsel by words without knowledge:"*** ***"Where wast thou,"*** saith the Lord Almighty, ***"when I laid the foundations of the earth?"*** (Job 38.3–40.2). Here is the Creator and First Cause of all things! The Designer of all things! In Him we have security, hope, inspirational expectations, eternal life—***righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!*** This is the reign of God, the rule of God, in our hearts and throughout the universe! (Jer. 51.15-16; Job 38.4-11).

***"Shout all ye people," "Clap your hands
all ye people," For He is worthy!***

Is. 12.1-6; Josh. 6.5, 10, 16: This is how you bring down the walls of the enemy! Large cities and indeed the whole world may be ***"shut up"*** against you (Josh. 6.1), but God can bring them down with a shout of victory and praise! (Zep. 3.14-20; Zech. 9.9; 1 Thess. 4.16; Ps. 5.11; 11.1-7; 32.11; 35.27; 47.1-9; 48.1; 65.13; 66.1-5; 132.16; 1 Sam. 2.2; 2 Chron. 13.15-18; Ezra 3.11-13; Job 38.4-11).

The church is nothing without the inner dynamic of the Kingdom working in us!

Claim the Promises!

We need to claim the promises. ***"The saints shall take the kingdom . . ."*** (Dan. 7.18, 22, 27). **Illustration: "Church in the wilderness." Promised Land! "Go, and I will be with you: drive out the Canaanite: the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite** Ex. 23.27-31; 33.2; Ezra 9.1; Neh. 9.8. Yes, drive out the tobacco-ites, drug-ites, liquor-ites, tattoo-ites, lazy-ites, complaining-ites, grumbling-ites, hateful-ites, contentious-ites,

grouchy-ites, worldly-ites, and all the idols, and the pride, malice, jealousy, sedition, and all the revelry, and every spot and wrinkle, blemish and every such thing!

Section II

The Grace, Purpose, and Divine Order of Discipline

The importance of following the divine order for discipline laid out so carefully in the Scriptures has been emphasized on several occasions since this restoration was launched in 2004. This subject cannot be overemphasized, for the very identity of the church rests on a proper understanding and administration of Gospel discipline [Mt. 16.17-19; 18.15-20; Jn. 20.23; 1 Cor. 5.1-13]. It is not too much to say, in fact, that failure to understand the grace and divine order of discipline has greatly injured our fellowship and has hindered our growth and progress in Zion Assembly.

When the counsel and actions of the General Presbytery [which consists of the presiding bishop, overseers, and other elders who may be called upon] are called into question, and in some cases flatly contradicted, particularly in matters of discipline, the whole church is injured. In some instances, local churches have been destroyed, for those who listen to the gainsayers, murmurers, and critics make themselves “judges” over against duly appointed elders; and, as such, they almost always lose respect and esteem for the authority and wisdom of the church. This is of paramount importance to grasp, for where there is no government and authority, there is no church!

King Solomon wrote:

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Prov. 29.18).

Those who refuse to accept the counsel and discipline of the Presbytery indicate plainly they have no prophetic vision or revelation of the church of the Bible because **government** and **church** are virtually synonymous in meaning. The verse in Proverbs just quoted signifies that where there is no *vision* [that is, revelation of God’s law and government], the people *perish* [literally “cast off restraint”]. In other words, they begin to act according to their personal and independent “wisdom” over against the counsel and actions of God-called and ordained elders who represent the church [Acts 15.2-4, 6, 22, 28, 16.4]. What follows is unruliness and confusion. For Jesus taught plainly that the final arbiter in the process of discipline is the church. When private or personal counsel is refused, Jesus said, “. . . *tell it to the church: but if he neglect [refuses] to hear the church, let him be as a heathen man and a publican*” [Mt. 18.17]. And He concludes by emphasizing that the church’s decision to “*bind*” [i.e., to retain sin and blame] or “*loose*” [i.e., to forgive or remove blame—vv. 18-20] is final.

The church thus acts *in persona Christi* [“in the person of Christ”] and, as such, like her Lord, chastises and disciplines those whom she loves and desires to mold into His image (note 2 Cor. 5.18-20; 7.7-10; Gal. 6.1-2; Eph. 4.11-16; Col. 1.28; Heb. 12.8).

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6.1-2).

And again,

“To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5.5).

Discipline and correction properly administered “*in the spirit of meekness*” is therefore a saving grace: for it is dispensed to

ultimately save the soul of the one who is being disciplined. Some instances of disorder may require the elder or elders to act **“boldly”** (2 Cor. 10.2; 13.1-2); to **“use sharpness”** (2 Cor. 13.10); **“to rebuke sharply”** the offender (Titus 1.13; 2 Tim. 3.15-17). On occasion, the elder may even adorn an **“angry countenance”** toward the offender, an expression fitted according to the weight of the offense. Note Prov. 25.23: **“The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.”**

Some may think an angry countenance is inconsistent with love, meekness, and gentleness, but in the process of discipline and correction, it is perfectly in harmony with the fruit of the Spirit, depending on the gravity of the situation. Well, someone might say we should always be sweet. Yes, but it’s difficult to adorn an **“angry countenance”** and to **“rebuke [sin] sharply”** and appear **“sweet”** at the same time! God Himself does not appear as such when we are under His firm hand of reproof and correction. When Jesus was running the moneychangers out of the temple with the whip, the first words that came to their minds were probably not, “Sweet Jesus” but “Holy Smoke, let’s get out of here!” Still, it should always be borne in mind that the aim of discipline is **reconciliation** and **edification**, not **destruction** (2 Cor. 10.8; 13.10).

A disciplinary action is designed primarily not to punish but to “wake up” or “sober up” a brother or sister so he/she may stand before the Lord and the church blamelessly and victoriously, bearing no grudge or complaint. For when one is forgiven and cleared in a matter, he/she almost always then goes forth with a burning desire to spread the word of the Kingdom and to build God’s house.

Paul thus wrote to the church at Corinth regarding an erring brother, explaining that the soul of this brother was in jeopardy of not inheriting eternal life but also that the failure to discipline him was jeopardizing the spirituality and reputation of the whole church:

“For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent . . . for I perceive that the same epistle hath made

you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation . . . For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves . . . yea, what vehement desire, yea what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter” (2 Cor. 7.8-11).

The unruly and independent spirit reminds us of the period of the Judges when, after the passing of Moses and Joshua and before there was a **king** in Israel, that is, a ruling centralized government, “**every man did what was right in his own eyes.**” And to drive home the point of this evil, the phrase—“**every man did what was right in his own eyes**” is repeated four times (Judg. 17.6; 18.1; 19.1; 21.25; see also Deut. 12.8; Acts 15.1–16.5; Heb. 13.7, 17; et al.

It is so easy for men to cast off God’s government and divine order, and to substitute in its place some form of democracy or liberal political arrangement, which inevitably gives place to bad behavior, sin, and lawlessness, and leaves in its path a morally loose and disorderly society, whether it be a man-made social institution or God’s divine institution.

So many seem to say by their actions, “**I love government so long as it does not try to govern me nor instruct me in the way of righteousness.**” The failure to deeply respect God’s government [of which the church is its duly appointed representative in this world] always ends in the manifestation of the “**works of the flesh**”: including heresies, contentions, divisions, schisms, and seditions (Gal. 5.20; 1 Cor.1.10; 12.25).

A Coal-Mine Analogy

I worked in the coal mines for four years both before and after I was saved. Almost instantly I became aware of the miners' perceptual differences between the **“company”** and the **“union.”** For the one was virtually pitted over against the other. The mine was originally incorporated to be a business arrangement between the owners and the “workers” so that all involved might mutually profit. But as it almost inevitably happens, either the administrators [“bosses”] begin to push too hard, or the workers begin to demand too much for their services; and so, the “company” hardens and becomes more forceful, and the workers harden and unionize over against the company. What follows is constant caviling and quarreling over “rights” and “policies.” And consequently, everyone suffers. Most of the mines had to be shut down in fact because the “bosses” and workers were mostly quarreling instead of working, and thus failed to produce enough coal to make the mine profitable. Many of the mines also were shut down over violence and bloodshed due to the contentions and animosities that developed.

Except for the brute violence, I have seen this acted out in our own church tradition time and again. The Presbytery, though ordained and duly appointed by the Lord, begins to be perceived by some as being harsh and unjust, and, as such, the members become reluctant, if not adamantly resistant, to follow and obey the leaders [often accusing them of being **“lord’s over God’s heritage”**]. It is an ecclesiastical version of the “company” verses the “union,” or “the establishment” over against “the people.” It is reminiscent of old Dark Age religion which set up the clergy [i.e., “priests”] over against the “laity”: an arrangement that often led the carnal churches to act and react violently and forcefully.

This problem especially becomes obvious in matters of discipline. The distorted conception is that the presbyters are likened to representatives of a “big institution” [**“run by them up thar on the hill”**], and, as such, the “poor little sheep” see themselves victimized and treated unjustly or unfairly and complain that the elders

["headquarters"] is not only unwise and unskillful in dealing with disciplinary issues, but of being without compassion and feeling. Further, those under these impressions tend to hold the government of God working in and through the church in contempt. It then follows that those infected with this delusion or misperception refuse to accept correction and reproof, and almost without exception begin to agitate the peace and harmony of the church, and in many cases wind up leaving the church (Rom. 2.8; 1 Con. 11.16-19).

All agree that instruction, reproof, correction, and discipline are fine things on paper or as an ideal, but when these principles are applied to real-live situations and to real people, they are often resisted and criticized. Again, the so-called "victim" [that is, the one who is being disciplined] is perceived as being abused and mistreated by the duly appointed government of God. Unfortunately, also, it is all too common for some to become overly sympathetic with the one being disciplined, and they get caught up in the negative spirit and become vocally critical of the leadership. They are like "loving" parents who cannot stomach disciplining their children, and so, fail to teach them how to be responsible, mature individuals, submissive to duly appointed authority [civil or religious]. This kind of so-called "love" most often produces sniffing, irresponsible, disrespectful, complaining, "cry-babies!" who have a hard time fitting into any kind of social order and without enough character sufficient to hold down a public job to support themselves and their families.

Gracious, gentle, howbeit firm, correction with the "rod" will not kill a child but will prevent him from killing himself, for it will help him avoid making sinful choices and becoming rebellious and disrespectful (Prov. 22.15; 23.13-14; 29.15). Make no mistake, when the government and divine order of the church is set aside or ignored, a flood of confusion and "*every evil work*" then comes rushing into the vacuum, injuring and/or destroying the sheep (Gal. 5.15, 19-20; Jas. 3.13-16; 1 Cor. 14.33).

It is so grievous and regretful that these carnal characteristics often take hold of some of our members, and even some of our ministers.

As such, they begin to think and act more like the political and social governments in the world than the government of God [**“theocracy”**] working in and through God-called and Spirit-filled elders of the church. It is so easy to fall into this deadly trap of Satan: i.e., to get **“puffed up”** against the duly ordained authority of the church. That’s what happened to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4.18; 5.2; 2 Cor. 7.8-11).

So, brethren, I lay before you again this tragic inevitability that so often has injured our members and local churches and even on occasion in history has been the downfall of the whole church. When will we ever learn?

Finally, brethren, I will repeat the counsel given on at least five other solemn occasions in our General Assemblies since 2004, namely, that we cannot have a biblical church without high esteem for leaders and the divine institutions of theocratic government, particularly marriage, ordained ministry, the Word of God, and the divine government and discipline of the church. To undercut the wisdom and duly appointed authority of the presbytery [eldership] is to undermine the church herself and her progress, for the power, integrity, and legitimacy of the one rest upon the other.

Section III

Our Church Identity and Exclusiveness

“If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which He witnesses of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man . . . He was a burning and shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the

same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me . . . Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they that testify of me . . . I receive not honor from men . . . How can ye believe which receive honor of one another, and seek not the honor that come from God only?” (Jn. 5.31-47).

“If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is the Father that honoreth me; of whom ye say that he is your God . . . ” (Jn. 8.54).

“For I have not spoken of myself [of my own authority]: but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should speak . . . I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak” (12.49-50).

“And [Jesus] was transfigured before [Peter, James, and John]: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light . . . [and] behold a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud . . . said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Mt. 17.2-5).

Since the church was restored and reorganized in 2004, I have been asked on many occasions how do we stand on exclusivity? That is, do we claim to be God’s church strictly exclusive of all others? My answer has been patently that we do not make such a boast and judgment without certain qualifications. If Zion Assembly remains faithful to her calling and prophetic vision, certainly she will be instrumental and at the core of the ecumenical miracle (Jn. 10.16; 11.49-52; 17.20-23; 1 Cor. 1.10; 12.12-28; Eph. 1.10; 2.14-16, 19-22; 3.6; 4.3-6, 11-16; 5.23-32; Song 6.8-10; Is. 49.1-6; 60.1-5; et al). Still, however, it will be God who makes the final assessment and judgment, not we ourselves. Just as Moses declared during his dispute with Korah and his followers that God would finally

identify and distinguish His peculiar people from the imposters and apostates, so He will also distinguish His church in these last days:

“And [Moses] spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will cause to come near unto him” (Numb. 16.5).

It seems wiser and better to say therefore that we are God’s church, and then give intelligent and Scriptural reasons to support our claim: but we should avoid saying something to the effect, **“We’re it and you’re not.”** For one thing, boasting like that just doesn’t ring right; it smacks of haughtiness and comes across as prideful and braggadocious. Roosters [esp. the cockahoop that sports a showy red crest] are like that; they strut around and get up on fence posts or tree limbs and look over the chicken coop, and crow, **“cock-a-doodle-doo,”** which translated into English means, **“These chicks are all mine, and we are an exclusive brood.”** There is an old saying, **“Every frog croaks for his own pond,”** but when you think about it, it doesn’t seem very flattering or convincing for us to start mimicking frogs or roosters. We will do well rather to heed the advice of Solomon: **“Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips”** (Prov. 27.2); and the apostle Paul: **“For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but, whom the Lord commendeth”** (2 Cor. 10.18), and again, **“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but measuring themselves with themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise”** (v 12).

Another reason we should not make the boast of exclusiveness is that it gives the appearance that we are insecure in our marriage to Christ. What would you think if Sister Phillips went about broadcasting in the neighborhood, **“I’m Wade’s wife! Look at me, I’m his only wife. You’re not his wife, I am.”**

But perhaps the most important reason is that neither you nor I can make **“one hair white or black”** (Mt. 5.36). The fact that our judgment is finite and imperfect, is the very reason Jesus censured us from swearing and oath-taking, for our swearing under oath doesn’t change anything; it doesn’t make a lie true, nor change the truth into a lie. What if I should concede therefore and say, **“Yes Zion Assembly is God’s exclusive church.”** Would my declaration make us any more or any less than what we truly are? The only attestation or declaration that ultimately matters is therefore God’s.

If John the Baptist’s testimony that Jesus is the Messiah, **“the Lamb of God,”** was insufficient, how much more our own testimony and claim that we are God’s exclusive church? If Jesus needed a witness from heaven—the very voice of God to identify and honor Him, how much more do we need a supernatural witness to identify us as God’s **“peculiar people”** and **“special treasure”** (Ex. 19.5-6; 1 Pet. 2.9)? If the **“church in the wilderness,”** that is, the church under the Old Covenant (Acts 7.38) was identified [marked] by supernatural signs and wonders (Ps. 78.4-16, 23-29, 35, 38-39, 52-53, 65-72; 1 Cor. 10.1-4), how much more do we need supernatural signs and wonders to mark the church in these very end-times; for the church under the New Covenant is the very embodiment of the whole Godhead. She is the **“temple of the living God”** (2 Cor. 6.16), the **“habitation of God through the Spirit”** (Eph. 2.21-22), the **“body of Christ”** (Eph. 1.23; 4.12; Col. 1.18; 3.15). In a word, the church is **“called out”** and empowered to be the extension of God’s miracle-working power in the earth (Mt. 28.19; Mk. 16.16-20; Jn. 15.27; Acts 2.43-47; 4.30-31, 33; 5.12; 6.8; 14.3; 15.12). It seems then that we are on safe ground to say that the manifestations of the Spirit are indispensable witnesses in identifying God’s church, and the more we have His gifts operating among us, the more credible is our claim.

In the passage quoted above [Jn. 5.31-47], Jesus mentions four witnesses to His true identity as the Son of God and His exclusive relationship with the Father: **1)** John the Baptist [vv. 33-36], **2)** His own works and miracles [v. 36], **3)** The eternal Father’s own witness

[vv. 32, 36-38], and **4**) the Scriptures, including Moses' inspired writings [vv. 39, 45-47]. Later, however, as His deity became ever more apparent, He acknowledged His eternal oneness with the Father and thus "*[bore] record of [Himself]*" (Jn. 8.14, 18). It is important to grasp, however, that His testimony was yet grounded in the Father's testimony of Him (Jn. 5.19-20; 8.14-18; 15.24; 16.13-15): for though the Father and Son are two persons, they eternally coexist in one Godhead (Jn. 10.30; 14.8-11; 16.12-15; 17.1-10; Phil. 2.5-11; Col. 2.9; Heb. 1.8; 1 Jn. 5.9; Rev. 1.8). Jesus' testimony of Himself therefore did not begin in Bethlehem or in Mary's womb but in His eternal oneness with the Father and the Holy Spirit before the world was created (Jn. 1.1-4, 14, 18; 1 Jn. 5.7-12). As such, His identity as almighty God (Rev. 1.8) unfolded simultaneously with the revelation of the Father and the Holy Spirit and therefore was true, for God cannot lie!

Notwithstanding, Jesus wisely showed the Jews that His testimony was also consistent with the law and Mosaic principles, namely, that "*in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established*" (Deut. 17.6; 19.15; Mt. 18.16; 2 Jn. 8.14-18; Cor. 13.1; Heb. 10.28). And He did this that men might be saved (Jn. 5.34), that is, He used the testimony of men to bring men to salvation until the "*greater witness*" of the Father should be revealed unto them [vv. 36-37]. The brightest and fullest revelation of Christ was not rooted therefore in the testimony of man but in the special revelation of God. For the two infallible witnesses are the heavenly Father and His *only begotten Son* who dwells in the *bosom* of the Father (Jn. 1.1-3, 18; 8.14-18), and the third infallible witness is the Holy Spirit (Jn. 15.26; 16.12-15; 1 Cor. 2.7-16; 12.3; 2 Cor. 3.5; 1 Jn. 5.7-8). Jesus' assertion that "*I receive not testimony from man*" therefore holds true, for only God can reveal the Son, and only the Son can reveal the Father (Mt. 11.25-27; Jn. 1.18; 6.46; 10.15). And the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to bear witness of the Truth (1 Cor. 12.3); namely, that Jesus is co-existent, co-equal, co-eternal, and consubstantial with the Father and Holy Spirit, and through His sacrifice on the Cross alone is salvation and redemption (Jn. 15.26; 16.12-15).

The three persons of the Godhead have one mind, one will, one eternal plan and one purpose (Mt. 5.17; Mk. 1.9-11; Jn. 14.26; 15.26; 16.12-15; 1 Cor. 2.10-14; 12.3). They “conceived” together in eternity one plan of salvation for man and worked it out in history through the three offices they hold: one office peculiar to the Father, one peculiar to the Son, and one peculiar to the Holy Spirit. For all things are *of* the Father, *through* the Son, and *in* the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8.15-17, 26-28, 33-36; Eph. 2.18; 1 Jn. 1.1-3; Jn. 3.9; Gen. 1.1-3, 26).

But someone might say, what about the testimony of the apostles? They were men and gave witness of Christ. They even formed the foundation upon which the church stands—“*built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets . . .*” (Eph. 2.20). True, but even so, their eyewitness testimony was not the very ground of the Gospel of Christ; rather it was the special revelation they had received deep in their being from the Father. The truth of Peter’s declaration, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” came to him only by special revelation from the Father—“*Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven*” (Mt. 16.18). Although Peter, James and John saw Jesus transfigured before them with their very own eyes, and heard God’s voice from heaven, say, “*This is my beloved Son . . . hear ye him,*” yet Peter confessed,

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts . . . For the prophecy came not in old by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1.16-21).

Thus, even the Scriptures themselves would not be a perfectly reliable witness if the writers had not been infallibly carried along by the Holy Ghost. We are assured therefore the Bible came forth from the very “*mouth of God*” in book form through the infallible

operation of the Holy Spirit (Deut. 8.3; Mt. 4.4; Lk. 4.4; John 5.36; 21.24-25; 2 Tim. 3.16; 1 Jn. 5.10-12; 3 Jn. 12; Rev. 1.1-3; 22.18-20).

This is also the reason the apostle Paul was so careful to assert that the Gospel he preached was *“not after man,”* neither was he taught it by men, but by *“the revelation of Jesus Christ”* (Gal. 1.11-12), that is, by disclosure of the ascended, glorified Christ. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9.3-18), Paul did not [*“immediately confer with flesh and blood; neither went up to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles”*] but went rather into the Arabian desert and remained there three years where he received *“revelation upon revelation”* from Christ concerning the Gospel (Gal. 1.11-18; 2 Cor. 12.1-12).

We see, then, that eyewitness testimony came *“from”* man but special [saving] infallible revelation came *from* God through man! And even at that, the eyewitness testimony of the apostles unfolded only slowly and gradually during their three years with Jesus on earth. Little by little they grasped that Jesus was more than a man, that He was Himself God, and through Him and the Holy Spirit, they received the revelation of the Father!

The Works of God in Christ Identified Him

Miracles and supernatural works testified of Christ (Jn. 5.36; 10.37-38; 1 Jn. 5.9-12): in a word, Jesus’ whole life and ministry on earth—His birth [incarnation], death [crucifixion], His baptism [witnessed by the Father and Holy Spirit], His resurrection, His transfiguration, His ascension. His authoritative preaching and teaching [*“never man spoke like this man”*] all marked His deity and oneness with the Father. Finally, the miracles He performed marked Him as the Almighty God who became flesh and dwelled among us (Jn. 1.1-2, 14); so many that, if all had been recorded, *“even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written”* (21.25).

Christ is the *“pearl of great price,”* the *“treasure hid in the field,”* the *“water in the well,”* the *“Rock”* upon which the church is built, the *“Author and Finisher”* of our faith. He is the life behind the light (Jn. 1.4), the divine energy that makes the light appear and increase ever brighter unto *“the perfect day”* (Prov. 4.18; Is. 49.6; 60.3; Rev. 21.24)!

To comfort John in prison, who was facing death for his testimony, Jesus told his disciples: *“Go . . . tell John what things you have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached* (Lk. 7.22-23); and with that report John was able to face his martyrdom with confidence and rejoicing.

Nicodemus: *“Rabbi [Master], we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles except God be with Him”* (Jn. 3.2). This admission by Nicodemus shows that divine works and a heavenly [supernatural] witness speak for themselves, both in identifying Christ and in identifying His church. Jesus’ exchange with the Jews in the Temple in this regard is very revealing. They said to Him, *“How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly”* (Jn. 10.24). He responded,

“I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me . . . If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him” (Jn. 10.24-25, 37-38).

Many years ago, there was a popular TV show called, “To Tell the Truth.” It was set up with a panel of celebrities who were individually to judge and identify between three mystery guests, all of whom claimed to be the same person with a certain profession in life. To illustrate, all three persons would one by one stand up and say something to the effect, “My name is John Baker, and I am the president of the Johnson Toy Manufactory company in

Midland, Texas.” The panelists would then ask the mystery guests pointed questions [regarding personal history, toy manufacturing, supervisory work, Midland, Texas, etc.] to try to ascertain who was telling the truth—who was the real John Baker? After a series of questions, the panelists would then declare who they thought was the real John Baker. Then to conclude the program, the real John Baker would stand up and declare himself.

I see a parallel in this illustration with Christ and the church. For both Christ and church are enshrouded in mystery and can be discovered only as they line up with and fulfill the prophecies concerning them, and bear the fruit of the indwelling Spirit. See, the prophetic evidence identifies them but also the fruit they bear (Jn. 13.35; 15.4-12; Gal. 5.22-26; 1 Jn. 2.4-6; 4.20-21). That’s why the last book in the Bible is called the Revelation. For the Christ whom we have preached for 2000 years will indeed appear in power and be seen for who He really is (Mt. 24.30-31; Mk. 13.26-27; Rev. 19.11-16)! And **“every eye shall see Him, and every knee shall bow!”** (Is. 45.23; Phil. 2.10-11; Rev. 12.10). And the true church will be identified by all the marks laid out in the prophecies concerning her, and by her appearance with Him in glory (Ps. Is. 49.1-6; 25.6-7; 52.1-15; Is. 60.1-5; Hab. 2.2-3; Acts 2.42; Eph. 2.14-22; 3.6, 9-10; 4.1-6, 11-16; 5.23-32; Rev. 19.1, 6-9, 11-19; 20.1-7; et al.). There are literally hundreds of prophetic passages in almost every book of the Bible that identify Christ and the church.

There is indeed a historical witness of Jesus and His church through which they may be identified over against all the false Christs and false churches (Mt. 24.4-5, 11; Jn. 5.43; and cp. Rev. 17.3-18—18.2-5 with 19.5-9). Christ fulfilled all the Old Testament prophetic expectations of the Messiah, and His life and works are laid out before us in the four Gospels and throughout the New Testament; so also the church. It’s on the ground of all this overwhelming evidence that we may **“ . . . try [test] the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”** (1 Jn. 4.1).

Thousands of false Christs have showed up here and there for centuries. In my lifetime thousands around the world, including here in the United States, have made the claim they were the Christ or Messiah, and we may be sure that millions more will appear on the scene and do the same as we go forward (Mt. 24.4-5, 11, 23-27).

A few years back I was witnessing to a motel owner/manager in Atlanta who said he worshipped seven gods and wanted to know if I'd like to see them. I said yes. He had their pictures on a wall in the hallway of the motel—seven goofy looking men bedecked with gay clothing, adorned with all manner of jewels, and plastered with bright and gaudy cosmetics.

A man in Chattanooga some years ago made a stir preaching on the streets and at the railway station claiming he was Christ. On another occasion, a guy showed up about thirty years ago in Fields of the Wood about 5:30 in the morning during our Easter pageant. He was walking around inside the tomb marker “prophesying” and announcing His deity.

Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam and preacher of Black nationalism, protégé of Malcolm X, made the claim that he was the messiah beginning in the late 1980s. Through the years he has attracted tens-of-thousands of followers. Interestingly, he's still living today [b. 1933], but he will surely die, and skin worms will eat his flesh, and his bones will rot and turn to dust!

If given opportunity, I would ask Farrakhan what I asked that guy in FOW on that Easter morning back in 1985:

“Were you born in Bethlehem? If so, was it 2000 years ago? Was your mama’s name Mary? Was she a maiden and virgin when she conceived? Were you conceived miraculously of the Holy Ghost? Did your mother have a cousin named Elizabeth? Was her husband’s name Zechariah? Did they have a son name John? Was he called John the Baptist? Are you a Jew? Are you

circumcised? Was your stepfather's name Joseph? Did you come from the tribe of Judah? Were you baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist? Can you say, before Abraham and Sarah, I AM? Were you there when Enoch and Methuselah were born? Were you there when Methuselah died? Do you know where Moses is buried? Did you bury him? Where were you during the Flood? Did you speak the world into existence?

“Let me see your hands: If you're the Christ, where are the nail prints? Lift your shirt: Where is the scar received from the awful slash of the soldier's lance? Remove your sandals from your feet: Where are the nail prints? Where are the scars in your head from the thorny crown that pressed into your skull?” Did you die on the Cross between two thieves? Were you buried in the tomb provided by Joseph of Arimathea? Were you raised from the dead on the third day? Where are your witnesses who saw you crucified, buried, and raised from the dead on the third day?

Now observe; even if it were possible for the Roman soldiers to have collected Jesus' DNA from His wounds during His crucifixion and had Him cloned, it would be merely a lookalike of His physical appearance. It would not be Him! But, in any case, no one can be truly cloned, including Jesus, for He is a person; and a person or a soul can't be cloned. And, accordingly, neither can one's personal history be cloned, especially Jesus's, for before Jesus had DNA, He existed and occupied the throne with His Father in glory! He in fact is the One who spoke DNA into existence and formed the first man from it!

Further, no one can replicate or repeat Jesus' birth, nor His death on the Cross [between those two peculiar thieves], nor His resurrection, nor His transfiguration, nor His exaltation ordained by the Father, nor His ascension! All those things were the pattern of Jesus' life

laid out and foreordained by the heavenly Father before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13.8).

Still further, Jesus is the **“Chief Cornerstone”** of God’s house. The foundation was laid **“once and for all”** and recorded in the New Testament: and all things are built upon that foundation (1 Cor. 3.11; Eph. 2.20; Is. 28.16-17). In the image of oriental architecture, the walls and weight of the whole building come down upon the chief cornerstone. Jesus holds up and ties together therefore the whole structure!

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Col. 1.16-19).

But now observe; all that we have said here pertains to the historical Jesus, the life of Christ on earth. This is the Gospel witness. The Old Testament prophecies were carved in stone and written on papyri, but now we have a much more efficacious revelation of Christ—a record written in our minds and burned into our hearts (2 Cor. 3.2-3). Accordingly, true believers no longer know Jesus after the flesh. Listen to Paul. 2 Cor. 5.16: **“. . . yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more . . . [For] if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new . . .”** This is to say, the glorified Christ is now known by divine [personal] revelation, not by mere data in a Book, nor by history, nor by physical appearance, but by personal acquaintance and the miracle of *theosis*: Christ in you and you in Christ! This is **“the hope of glory!”** Now, the Almighty God dwells in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Thus says the apostle: **“No man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost”** (1 Cor. 12.3). And this is the **“Rock”** upon which the church is being built! (Mt. 16.13-18).

God's church is therefore “. . . *the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by [or through] the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Eph. 3.9-10).

Now observe; if Jesus Himself needed the witness of the Father and the Holy Spirit and the inspired Scriptures, with manifestations of the very works of God in His life and ministry to verify His identity as the Son of God, how much more do we need these same witnesses to support our claim that we are the church, the Lord's Zion, His “*peculiar people?*” And if God himself witnesses to our identity, what more is needed? Any attempt to prove it in some other way would be all downhill, for our claims are as nothing compared to His supernatural witness! In fact, the church is designed to be the very embodiment of Christ, that is, His legs and arms and eyes and ears and mouth, in a word, His body! And this was the plan from the beginning, that we be formed into “*the body of Christ,*” a body through which Christ might walk and talk and teach and preach and do wonders and work miracles and fulfill His “*ministry of reconciliation*” (Lev. 26.12; Jer. 31.33; 32.39; Ezek. 37. 26-27; 1 Cor. 12.12-28; 2 Cor. 5.18-20).

Notwithstanding the mistakes and missteps of our illustrious fathers and mothers, they did otherwise teach us truly that the church of the Bible is a **visible, divine institution**—an entity distinct from the spiritual kingdom of God, an empirical body formed on the basis of a church covenant between God and believers and endued with power from on high (Lk. 24.49; Acts 1.8; 2.1-4). See, a sinner is “born again” and “*translated into the kingdom [of God]*” by the new birth [Jn. 3.3-8; Col. 1.13), but he/she is added to the church by a verbal, public covenant (Jn. 17.6, 8, 14; Acts 2.47; 2 Cor. 11.2-3; and cp. Ex. 19.5-8 with 1 Pet. 2.9; and note 2 Kg, 23.1-3; Ezek. 16.8). One is not translated into the church; he/she consciously joins it! Just as two persons are joined in marriage, we become members of His

body by a sacred promise or covenant (Is. 62.5; 2 Cor. 11.2-3; Eph. 5.23-32; Jn. 17.6, 8, 14; and cp. Ex. 19.5-8 and cp. with 1 Pet. 2.9).

And, yes, the true church is the **bank of truth** [“an establishment for the deposit of the doctrine of Christ”], as well as the custodian of that Truth (Deut. 6.4-9, 17-25; Ps. 78. 1-7). As such, the apostle says she is **“the pillar and ground of the Truth.”** Right doctrine is embodied and proclaimed by the true Zion of the Lord (Is. 2.2-4; 60.1-5, 14; Mic. 4.1-3; see also Ps. 46.4-5; 48.1-3, 11-14; 78.68-69; 87.1-7). Right doctrine is therefore a mark of the true church.

This is especially true regarding the Gospel and how we view and teach the order of salvation—namely, regeneration, sanctification [the second definite, instantaneous work of grace], the holiness lifestyle, Spirit-baptism with all the gifts of the Spirit including faith healing.

Finally, the church is **God’s government for His people in this present world.** She is called, ordained, and empowered to bind and loose on earth what has been bound and loosed in heaven, including retaining and remitting sins (Mt. 16.18-19; 18.17-20; Jn. 20.23; 1 Cor. 5.1-13). The church administers the ordinances; ordains marriages; proclaims the Word; opens its doors to believers and excludes offenders [heretics, secessionists, contentious persons, and the unruly]. She is presently **“perfecting [herself] in love!”** (Eph. 4.16); and getting ready for the marriage to the Lamb! (Rev. 19.7-8; see also 2 Cor. 7.1).

Now all this is necessary to qualify a body of believers to be the “body of Christ.” Notwithstanding, more is required. The divine witness of the Spirit in our midst is indispensable, for the church is the very **“habitation of God through the Spirit,”** the **“temple of the Holy Ghost”** (Eph. 2.21-22; see also 1 Cor. 3.16-17; 2 Cor. 6.16; see also Mt. 5.14; 1 Cor. 14.21-26; Is. 60.1-5; Phil. 2.15. Gal. 3.1-3).

The prophetic church is therefore a visible, functioning body on earth identified by her divine order and godly discipline and her

proclamation of the full Gospel message (1 Kg. 10.4-9). But she is also marked by her dynamic [spiritual] power, the gifts of the Spirit, and the **“fruit of the Spirit.”** This reminds us of last year’s Assembly sub-theme: **“7 x 70.”** This is a vital part of the restoration we are seeking to achieve in Zion Assembly, for it is the path to the church’s perfection. Reaching full age and completing our mission in the world is a lively expectation for us, for we see plainly in the prophetic Scriptures that the church will attain to this goal (Ps. 45.9-14; 82.7; Song .6.8-10; Is. 60.1-5; Mal. 3.3-5, 16-18; Eph. 5.27; 1 Pet. 2.9; Rev. 19.7-8). So rather than boasting we are God’s church and denouncing all others as imposters, it would be wiser and more productive for us to be like our Lord and go about illustrating and proving who we are by works of righteousness. For, again, our works speak for themselves. Indeed, we must do the works that Jesus did and **“greater works . . . because [He ascended back] to the Father”** (Jn. 14.12). First, we must do **greater works in extent**, for Jesus preached the Gospel and worked miracles for only about three years, and geographically, only about an eighty-mile radius in one country. Whereas the church must preach the Gospel and work miracles in every nation on earth, and we must be committed to accomplish this task for however long it may take! Jesus saved and healed hundreds, perhaps thousands; the church must save and heal millions!

We must also do greater works in power—through healings [physical and psychological], casting out devils, raising the dead [especially those dead in sins and trespasses], cleansing lepers and healing various sicknesses, afflictions, and diseases.

Now how is this to be accomplished: **“Because [Jesus said] I go to the Father.”** My Father and I will send the power of the Holy Ghost upon you: and ye shall be witnesses in all the earth! (Acts 1.8). The Spirit shall dwell with you and be in you! See, the more **exploits** we do, the more Christ is magnified because all our power comes from Him and from the Father through Him. In this way He is glorified in His church:

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4.13).

See, the more miraculous and outstanding works we do, the more the world will take notice. Just as Jesus’ works magnified the Father, so our works magnify Him and through Him the Father. In doing these works through the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus, our light will become brighter and brighter, and we will surely see the promise fulfilled (Prov. 4.18; Is. 49.1-6; 60.1-5): ***“Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”***

Again, we will have greater success, not by boasting, but simply by letting our works testify to who we are. And since it is all of God, where is any room for boasting on our part? For, after all, the Lord is working everything out ***“according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself . . . after the counsel of his own will”*** (Eph. 1.9-11).

Now how do we appropriate this power? It is through consecration, and by ***“asking,” “seeking,” “knocking”*** (Jn. 14.13-14), through prayer, fasting, and faith, and a “holy violence,” that is, by a persistent, sanctified determination to claim the promises of God (Mt. 6.16-18, 33; 7.7-11; Mt. 11.12; 17.21; Lk. 2.37; 16.16; Acts 10.30; 14.23; 27.33; 2 Cor. 6.5; 11.27; also Ps. 35.13; 69.10; 109.24; Dan. 9.3; Joel 2.12).

The Church: Something-in-the-Making An Eschatological Vision

Finally, brethren, there is wisdom in seeing things from the perspective of God’s prophetic point of view in the Scriptures, and by waiting and watching patiently for His plan to unfold, for He is the ***“author and finisher [originator and perfecter] of our faith”*** (Heb. 12.2). No man, nor any heathen god, nor even a man of God, can know and

show the beginning of things from the end and the end of things from the beginning. Only Jehovah can do that (Is. 41.21-29; 42.8-9; 44.5-8; 46.9-13). Zion Assembly doesn't claim to have an infinitely perfect insight into all the mysteries of God, including the infinitely deep mysteries of the church. We therefore ***“live by faith of the Son of God”*** and leave the eschatological conclusion of all things up to God and His infinite wisdom (Eph. 1.10; 5.27; Rev. 19.7-8).

The ***“thee”*** in Is. 60.1-5, like many biblical prophecies, may have several nuances of meaning and several applications. This prophecy in Isaiah was a Word from God for the time then present, centuries before Christ, and yet it looked to the future, even to the very end-times for its complete fulfillment. In this sense, the church is seen as something-in-the-making. The Wesleyan commentator, Adam Clarke, admits that this prophecy had not been fulfilled in his day and so looked expectantly for its future fulfillment. So also, the renown Calvinistic scholar, Jonathan Edwards believed this prophecy was still ***“being fulfilled”*** in his day and would continue to be fulfilled till the entire world was evangelized with the true Gospel.

There are also other prophetic references that speak of the church as ***“thee”*** in an eschatological framework, that is, depicting the church in her prophetic perfection and fulfillment in the very last days. This is what Israel failed to grasp. She was indeed at one time the ***“thee,”*** but she failed as a nation to ***“go on”*** to perfection and was therefore ***“cut off,”*** and believers in the Gentile nations were ***“grafted in”*** (Mt. 3.8-12; 21.33-43); and this was God's eternal plan from the beginning (Rom. 11.1-36, note esp. vv. 33-36).

We may expect, therefore, a more universal and thoroughgoing ***“flowing together”*** of God's people [true believers] in ***“one fold”*** in these very last days (Is. 60.1-10; Eph. 1.10; Jn. 10.16; 11.49-52; 17.20-23). Thus, the apostle Paul's prophecy, ***“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints . . . 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” (Eph. 4.11-13), that is, till all true believers—Jew and Gentile, come together under one government and discipline, in one visible body of Christ (Eph. 1.10; 2.14-16; 3.6; 1 Cor. 1.10; Phil. 3.16; Jn. 10.16; 11.49-52; 17.20-23; 1 Cor. 12.12-28).

Yes, this prophetic vision is an eschatological hope: it will require an ecumenical miracle, but it is, nonetheless, plainly what the Scriptures teach. The betrothed wife [bride of Christ] is something-in-the-making. She is *“making herself ready!”* (Eph. 5.23-32; Rev. 19.7-8).

Is there then more than one bride. No, there is one bride, but the one bride is presently imperfect—something-in-the-making! And we are assured by God’s prophetic Word that she will be perfected and presented to Christ *“without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!”*

This theological perception was a foundational principle upon which Spurling founded [restored] the church in 1886—a principle which Tomlinson later rejected, and, accordingly, changed not only the history and future course of the church, but the church’s self-understanding of her own nature and character. This important difference is plainly shown in Spurling’s *The Lost Link*, pp. 16-17; Tomlinson’s *The Last Great Conflict*, pp. 137-142; Tomlinson, *Answering the Call of God*, pp. 17-18; C. T. Davidson’s *Fields of the Wood*, pp. 125-126; and A. D. Evans, ed. *God’s Anointed—Prophet of Wisdom*, pp. 10-13.

Detached Garage: An Illustration

Through the years I have developed four analogies or illustrations that depict the church as something-in-the-making to help us understand the church prophetically, historically, and theologically. But here I will use only one for the sake of space and time. Several years ago, I noticed on my way to Brother E. A. McDonald’s residence on the north side of Cleveland a new house being constructed in a rather well-to-do-neighborhood. It seemed strange to me that such an expensive house would have a detached garage. For that meant the

owners would have to endure bad weather on occasion to get from their vehicles to their house. I must have passed by this construction site twenty times during a period of about six months, and I was always puzzled by this phenomenon, especially because the house was obviously so expensive and regal looking. Then on one trip only a couple of weeks before the house was finished, I noticed the garage was attached to the house. For some reason the architect called for it to be constructed that way. I was amazed. Suddenly it all made sense. What I had failed to see was the architectural drawings [“blueprints”] which showed the finished work. Accordingly, it caused me to misinterpret the entire construction plan. See, it was a house-in-the-making. Its end was already determined and laid out in the blueprints, but I didn’t see the prints. I was seeing the house in-the-making. So, it is in building God’s house. The prints are in the mind of God and laid out in the prophetic Scriptures (Ps. 100.16; 107.1; Mt. 16.18; 1 Cor. 3.9-15). See, what may seem detached now [and in fact may be detached for the moment] God sees as attached, for He sees the finished product—the whole construction brought under one roof, and He has ordained and predestined it to be so! (Eph. 1.4-5, 11-14; Rom. 8.19-30; Jn. 17.5-23; Rev. 1.11, 17-19; 19.7-8). But it is up to us to build Zion Assembly according to the pattern laid out in God’s prophetic Word.

The Prophetic Vision

Grasping the important differences between the way Spurling and Tomlinson saw the church in this regard is imperative for us to understand our church history since 1886 and how we should go forward from here in Zion Assembly. For Spurling, the church *is* built and yet *is being* built: **it is**, but it is also **something-in-the-making** (Rev. 3.12; 19.7-9). Whereas Tomlinson adopted a static view of the church’s nature, that is, for him the church was not something-in-the-making but rather [in his words] is like the United States government that was completed the moment it was established on July 4, 1776. As such, adding citizens to it in the years ahead or adding articles to the Constitution did nothing to change the original; whereas, Spurling said, the church was restored and set in order on

August 19, 1886, but it was not completed on that day and would not be completed until all the *“lively stones”* were fitted together into the visible structure to complete the **“temple of God”** (1 Pet. 2.4-9; Rev. 3.10-12).

The biblical [prophetic] image of the Jewish betrothal and marriage is also more suited to Spurling’s understanding of the relationship between Christ and the church than Tomlinson’s view. For in the Jewish tradition, the betrothal could be broken if the bride proved unfaithful before the wedding was consummated (Mt. 1.18-20; 2 Cor. 11.2-3; Heb. 3.6; Col. 1.23; et al.). Whereas Tomlinson’s understanding of the church, much like the Roman Catholic Church’s view of itself, assured his followers [Church of God of Prophecy] of their final perseverance and perfection; and, thus, that their fellowship would never finally fall away again!

On reflection, Spurling’s view of the church was truer to Scripture and more fluid and pliable, open to being molded by the Lord into the prophetic *“vessel as seemed good to the potter to make it”* (Jer. 18.1-4); whereas Tomlinson’s view made the church more brittle, strictly exclusive, and predestined for a glorious conclusion. He and his followers would even go so far later [in the late 1930s] to say, more pointedly and emphatically, that the moment he said, **“This is the Church of God”** on June 13, 1903, his declaration made it the “Church of God,” and at that moment the Bible church came into existence again, and **“he became the first member of the church this side of the dark ages!”** Moreover, as such, according to Tomlinson and his followers, the church under Tomlinson’s leadership was prophesied and foreordained to never fall away again!

The effect of those bold statements by Tomlinson and his followers abrogated the work of Spurling and his father and Bryant and others between 1886 and 1903 and changed the entire understanding of the church, reinterpreted the origin of its last day’s restoration, rewrote its history [including the original history that Tomlinson himself had written in *The Last Great Conflict*, pp. 205-214, and foreordained the Church of God of Prophecy’s victorious conclusion.

***“Except the Lord Build the House . . .
Except the Lord keep the City”***

Jesus said, ***“I will build . . . my church”*** (Mt. 16.18; see also Ps. 127.1; Heb. 11.10). Though this statement is correctly translated in future tense, the sense of the passage signifies not so much **when** but **how** Jesus is going to build His church, for the church had already been set in order and commissioned by Christ (see Mt. 10.1-8; Mk. 3.13-16; Lk. 6.12-17). In other words, Jesus is not speaking here in reference to time so much as principle and method: that is, He is saying, My church will in the end—when it is perfected—be made up of only true believers who have a deep personal relationship with Him. Every member will be able to declare with deep conviction and personal revelation, ***“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!”*** This is the Rock upon which the church is being built and will continue to be built until **“we all”** [all true believers] ***“come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”***

Accordingly, we are approaching the midnight hour. The bride will indeed “be ready,” and the prophecies will be fulfilled: ***“The [betrothed wife] hath made herself ready”*** (Rev. 19.7). ***“Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him!”*** (Mt. 25.6). See, only the Lord knows when the bride is perfected, and He alone has ordained the appointed time. In another metaphor, He alone sees the temple in its completion. He alone knows all the stones [future members] who will be [and are being] fitted and framed together into the building: He has ordained it all to be so, according to His good pleasure and the counsel of His own will (1 Cor. 12.18, 24; Rom. 8.28; Eph. 1.4-14; 4.16; Col. 2.19; 1 Pet. 1.2)! Then what remains is for us to do our part and let Him do His supernatural, miraculous part (Rev. 3.12; 1 Cor. 3.9-15; 12.12-28; Eph. 1.9-11; 2 Tim. 2.19).

“Whittling on the Wrong End of the Stick”

Some things about God and His eternal plan, He *“hath put in his own power,”* that is, reserved for Himself alone to know and determine. These things *“are not for [us] to know”* (Acts 1.8). We would do well to heed the advice an old country preacher gave to a rather heady professor of theology who was speculating and postulating ideas about the intra-trinitarian relationship of the three Persons of the Godhead before creation. **“I think,”** said the old preacher, **“that you are whittling on the wrong end of the stick.”**

We Stand by Faith; We Are not Eternally Predetermined

Finally, brethren, we see that Spurling’s view of the church is vitally important, for as such, we may at any given time disqualify ourselves from being God’s church, for we stand by faith both individually and collectively as the church (Rom. 11.20-23; 1 Cor. 10.12; 12.12-28; Josh. 7.1-26; Jer. 18.1-6; Ezek. 37.1-14). We must take heed to ourselves, therefore, for Zion Assembly can potentially fall away and apostatize, no less so than did the church in the wilderness in the Old Testament; and the New Testament church did in the fourth century under the influence and intrusions of the Roman emperor, Constantine I, and our former fellowship did twenty years ago. All these forfeited their identity as God’s church.

“Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (see 2 Cor. 1.24; Col. 1.23; 1 Thess. 3.8; Heb. 3.5-6).

It is said that a lady approached Benjamin Franklin as he walked out of the Constitutional Convention Hall in Philadelphia in 1787, and anxiously asked him the outcome of their deliberations: He replied, **“Madam, we have given you a Republic, if you can keep one.”**

Between now and the *“appointed time”* when the church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4.16-18; Jn. 14.1-3; 1 Cor. 15.51-53), we are admonished by the Lord and His Word to consecrate our time, energy, and money to qualify ourselves to be **“the bride of Christ.”** Just as Moses in the old church, who was called up into the cloud on the mount and received the pattern of the tabernacle and went about building it according to that pattern (Heb. 8.5; 9.1-5), so let us build the church according to the pattern laid out for us in the New Testament (Heb. 9.8-14, 23-28; 10.1-10; 1 Cor. 3.9-15; Eph. 2.20-22). Leave the secret things up to God and eternity. For, after all, nothing will prove itself fully and completely before its time: only *“the day shall declare it!”* (1 Cor. 3.13; Eph. 1.10; 5.27; 2 Tim. 2.19-21; Rev. 19.7-8).

Section IV

Before there was a Church Flag . . .

We owe a great deal to our illustrative fathers and mothers in our tradition of the faith. They were sincere and honest and made great sacrifices to bequeath to us a great and **“goodly heritage”** (Jer. 3.19). We will be forever grateful and indebted to them.

It may be helpful here to point out some of the important biblical teachings and principles that our pioneers handed down to us. For in recognizing Jesus’ and the apostles’ teachings over against the erroneous doctrines and fanatical ideas that crept into the church down through the years, we will be able as we go forward in this great restoration work and perfection venture, to purge the gold and silver, and cast away the dross (Mal 3.2-3; 1 Cor. 3.12-15; 2 Tim. 2.20-21; Eph. 5.26-32), or, under another metaphor, to winnow [purify] the wheat and cast away the chaff (Mt. 3.10-12).

In pursuing this course of action—that is, to critique the great heritage handed down to us—we are in accord with the counsel

of God's Word to praise our forefathers for the great heritage they bequeathed to us but also to mark the errors so that we do not repeat and perpetuate them (Ps. 78.1-72; 1 Cor. 10.1-12; see also Deut. 4.5-24; et al).

Heirs of a Rich Biblical Heritage

First, our illustrious fathers and mothers in the faith handed down to us the apostolic order of salvation that had been covered over with darkness during the apostasy of the Early Church and the ensuing Dark Ages. The divine order of salvation is as follows: that all men are born in sin (Rom. 3.9, 23) and must be redeemed through faith and the blood of Christ to avoid the eternal consequences of God's wrath (Jn. 3.36; Eph. 2.2-3, 7-8). This "*so great salvation*" began to be restored with the "morning stars" of the Reformation—John Wycliffe, John Hus, Girolamo Savonarola, et al. and afterward with Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, et al. and continued through the Anabaptists, Quakers, Mennonites, et al. and from thence to John Wesley and George Whitfield, culminating in our fathers and mothers and other leaders of the holiness-Pentecostal movement in the nineteenth- and early twentieth century.

This biblical *ordo salutis* included conviction of sin [the revelation of the righteous judgment of God], true repentance [forsaking of sin], the new birth [born again/regeneration], instantaneous and entire sanctification [popularly known as the "second blessing"] subsequent to the new birth, which included a lifestyle of practical holiness. Then all culminated with the baptism with the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues and the manifestations of spiritual and charismatic gifts.

Second, they handed down to us a prophetic vision of the Bible church, namely, that the church is visible [not spiritual or "invisible"]; it is distinct from the kingdom of God, which in this present age is invisible (Lk. 17.20-21; Jn. 18.36). In this sense individual believers and the church embody and manifest the kingdom. The church is thus, like the human body, the incorporation of many members in

one divine organization and organism. This visible union is formed by a church covenant—a sacred pledge to believe in and walk by the same rule of faith, government, and discipline (Ex. 19.5-8; 2 Kg. 23.1-3; Neh. 10.29-39; Is. 62.5; Jn. 17.6,8, 14; 2 Cor. 11.2-3; 1 Pet. 2.9). The church is thus universal, made up of local churches throughout the world, all coordinated and operating under this same rule of faith and discipline (Acts 15.1–16.5; Phil. 3.16).

The government and discipline of the church is theocratic in nature and function in contrast with democratic, republican, oligarchical, Presbyterian, episcopalian, monarchical, dictatorships, fascists, and other forms of human government. Its laws and order of discipline come down from God and are revealed in the Scriptures. Its highest authority on earth under God is the General Assembly. As such, the General Assembly is a “judicial body only” in contrast to legislative and executive bodies. The theocratic government of the church functions on the practical level [day by day] through an ordained and appointed hierarchy of elders [pastors, presbyters/overseers] which culminates in a centralized authority of elders appointed by a Presiding Bishop, who in turn is selected and appointed by the General Assembly.

Third, our highly esteemed fathers in the faith also handed down to us a rich heritage of evangelism and revivalism and a worldwide mission vision. We could go on magnifying the rich heritage of faith, government, and discipline that our illustrious pioneers handed down to us, but all was not well.

A “Goodly Heritage” Corrupted

Notwithstanding the rich heritage of faith and discipline bequeathed to us, some unfortunate mistakes were made along the way. Sadly, the rich heritage that we have just noticed and magnified became riddled and cluttered with some strange ideas and fanatical tendencies. The good seed was mixed with corrupt seeds. Indeed, the church of our fathers was at times like a great ship chartered for a certain destiny in a distant land but then was blown off course by winds and storms.

Again, our church tradition has been like a mighty train on the main line of a railroad headed for a certain destination but became sidetracked because someone threw a switch that sent it down the wrong track.

The following is a common scenario I have observed through the years, both by personal experience and as a student of history. Whenever Christians unite themselves together in a church union or some type of association, they inevitably adopt certain forms and religious rituals and practices to help them fulfill their ministry and mission. But often the saints' intimacy with God wanes and they become lukewarm, while the visible forms and rituals remain. Still again, on a few occasions, we have been like the shells of ocean snails and clams that have been washed upon shores [beaches]: the shells testify that life once existed in them but had been extinguished by death and the forces of nature—like the *“dry bones”* in Ezekiel's vision (Ezek. 37.1-14).

Dead Forms and Empty Rituals

Dead forms and empty rituals substituted in lieu of praise, rejoicing, and manifestations of the Spirit is a dismal sight, grievous to behold. For churches leave their “first love,” and the fires go out. They become a self-contradiction: Christless bodies [communions] designed to be inhabited by Christ and the Holy Spirit but then corrupted and broken (Ps. 2.9; 31.12; Is. 12-14; Jer. 18.1-6). They profess to be representatives of the City of God but have not the River of God flowing through them! (Ps. 46.4; 65.9). They were once *“a noble vine,”* having germinated and emerged from a *“wholly right [true] seed”* planted by the Lord, but through the mystery of iniquity was *“turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine”* (Jer. 2.21). *“How is the faithful city become a harlot!”* (Is. 1.21).

It has been said, **“Christianity without Christ is like chicken soup with no chicken in it!”** So also, churches without the active, dynamic power, and manifestations of the Holy Ghost are misnomers, disappointments, empty vessels.

Sadly, the scenario of evil just mentioned has been played out hundreds of times in Christian history: first among the Jews, then among the early Christians, and among Christians in every century since that time. It is a grievous historical fact that can be traced to the very beginning of man—to the fall of mankind through Adam in the Garden of Eden. Dead forms of worship and formalistic rituals replace dynamic Spirit-filled worship and holy living! The symbols and signs of faith lose their meaning and spiritual substance; all that remain are the types and shadows. Intriguingly, the signs become the substance!

The church of God under the Old Covenant, that is, the ***“church in the wilderness”*** (Acts 7.38), succumbed to this evil pattern. The Ark of the Covenant was given to the Israelites as a symbol of God’s presence and glory. Gradually, however, the people backslid in their hearts and in their walk with God. Yet they kept the symbol! (1 Sam. 4.1-21). But for what purpose? For the symbol without the substance is nothing! See, if God goes the glory goes! You can’t contain God in a 2’ x 3’ box! They did the same with circumcision. This rite represented regeneration and heart purity. But again, they backslid in their hearts but perpetuated the ritual. But what good is the form without the substance? Thus, God moved the prophet to exclaim: ***“Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and take away the foreskins of your hearts . . .”*** (Jer. 4.4). For ritual circumcision of the flesh, says the apostle, ***“is nothing!”*** (1 Cor. 7.19; Gal. 5.6, 11; 6.15; Eph. 2.11; Phil. 3.3).

Again, the Jews did the same thing with the Temple. They backslid and gloried in the physical structure rather than in the God of the temple (Mt. 24.1; Mk. 13.1-2). It was a stench in the nostrils of God (Jer. 7.4; Is. 1.13-14; Amos. 5.21-24). Backslidden Israel accepted “lying words” that negated truth (Mt. 15.9; Col. 2.18-22; Titus 1.14). They knew the temple of the Lord but not the Lord of the temple. Jesus condemns the ***“traditions of men”*** that supplant the commandments of God (Mt. 15.2-6, 9; 23.16-33; Mk. 7.3-9, 13; Col. 2.6-23).

Yet again, they abused the symbol of the Serpent on the Pole. The symbol originally represented the crucified Christ (Numb. 21.5-9; Jn. 3.14), but they did not discern Christ as the one who crushed sin and the serpent's head. They rather looked to the serpent image itself for healing and deliverance! Not discerning the significance, the serpent was just *Nehushtan*—"a bronze thing." Without the presence of Christ and His power, "Christianity" is empty and meaningless (2 Kg. 18.4).

Backslidden Israel corrupted their sacrifices. They kept the best lambs and bullocks for themselves and offered deformed and corrupted "gifts" on the altar to God. Their "sacrifices" were hypocritical and offered up only half-heartedly. It was slick religion (Mal. 1.6-14) and robbed God of His glory! That was the sin of Cain: his offering was not given with sincerity and adoration. He did not give his best to the Lord (Gen. 4.2-6; Heb. 11.4; 1 Jn. 3.12). So too, the fastings of the Jews were corrupted by insincerity and self-serving motives (Is. 58.1-12). The Lord hated their *solemn assemblies* and their *fastings* and the celebrations of their *feast days* (Is. 13-14; Amos 5.21-24) because their minds were corrupt and their hearts unclean. They assembled merely as a pretense of fidelity and righteousness.

Intriguingly, when men begin to fall away from God, they often tend to magnify "the church" or some religious system or tradition, using religion as a cloak to conceal their sins and hypocrisy (Zeph. 3.11). "Holy mountain" in Zephaniah's prophecy here signifies the church or a religious group's peculiar or superior identity. So the Jews are identified with Mount Zion/Jerusalem (Ps. 87.2-3; 132.13-14; 133.3) and the Samaritans with Mount Gerizim (Jn. 4.5-23). Joseph Smith claimed he had gotten his vision in New York, part of which was that the "angel" Moroni—the son of Mormon—appeared and directed him to a mountain in which were hidden mysterious golden plates revealing the Book of Mormon. Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists have holy mountains and holy places—Mecca, Medina, Ganges River/human and animal gods, holy cities, holy shrines, and holy relics. Professing Christians groups have exalted "holy" places and traditions—Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Calvary [Golgotha], Garden

Tomb, Via dela Rosa, Jordan River, baptisms, etc. Millions perhaps billions of dollars are spent every year traveling to these holy sites. Roman Catholics have literally a thousand “sacred” places, dead relics, spiritually empty ceremonies, and “holy” celebrations. The Jews white-washed in vain the *“tombs of the prophets”* and *“garnished [adorned] the sepulchers.”* Roman Catholics do the same to those whom they have deemed to be “saints” [Mt. 23.27-29]. They pretend to honor the prophets of the Bible who say what men *should be*, but they despise the living ones *who tell them what they are!* They teach salvation through the so-called Eucharist and make outrageous claims about transubstantiation. It is a system that in a thousand ways corrupts the Gospel of the living Christ!

Corrupt traditions and empty rituals observed in hypocrisy were *“the leaven”* of the Pharisees and scribes that Jesus so much despised (Mt. 23.1-7, 13-33; Mk. 12.15; Lk. 12.1; Col. 2.6-23). The same have, since the first century, marked the way of apostate religion and hypocritical professors of Christianity.

In the Early Church following the passing of the apostles, symbols and traditions gradually replaced the simplicity of salvation and plain heartfelt worship. Priestcraft, sacramentalism, empty forms, relics, candles, bells, incense, rosaries, statues, images and the like supplanted the true preaching of the Gospel and spiritually transforming experiences through faith—heartfelt regeneration, sanctification, and Spirit-baptism. Church government and discipline became a man-handled system of religion—a pretense of theocracy. Gradually, the God of the government and discipline of the church disappeared and all that was left were the forms and rituals. *Ichabod*—*“the glory hath departed”* (1 Sam. 4.21).

The traditions just mentioned became full-blown in the Roman Catholic Church in the fourth through the nineteenth centuries. Layers upon layers of tradition, religious rites, and empty ceremonies corrupted the apostolic faith; like the traditions of the Pharisees and scribes under the old Jewish system, they stood in place of regeneration, sanctification, and spiritual transformation.

True righteousness and holiness, and pure and undefiled religion were supplanted by men-made traditions and religious practices (Mt. 15.3, 6; 1 Tim. 4.1-5; 2 Tim. 3.1-8).

During the “dark ages,” outrageous practices were adopted. They pickled the tongue of the eloquent John Chrysostom (c. 349-407) after he deceased, so also the hand of an acclaimed healer and miracle worker, so that following generations could marvel and admire their bodily remains. They filled their cathedrals with many superstitions. They enshrined splinters that were said to have been derived from the Cross of Christ; declared the “Shroud of Turin” to have been the very burial cloth of Christ; made mannequins of Jesus and the saints and displayed them in their cathedrals throughout Europe and Latin America [so the “faithful” could touch and adore them]; painted and sold pretentious pictures of saints, crafted trinkets and jeweled-studded necklaces and bracelets in honor of Mary and the “saints, etc.

The so-called “Eucharist” was [and continues today] to be elevated above all in worship. During the observance of the Mass, the officiating priest lifts the “host” toward heaven and exclaims, *Hoc est corpus meum* [“This is My body”] and as such “calls down” the Holy Spirit, and presto, the bread and wine are turned into the “real” [substantive] body and blood of Christ so that the faithful participants are declared to be eating and drinking the real flesh and blood of Christ. And they twist and misapply the sacred Scriptures to justify this outrageous practice, e.g., Jn. 6.51-59. This is the heresy of “transubstantiation!” As such, every Mass is said to be a sacrifice!

Evangelicals and Pentecostals have not been immune to fanatical, corrupt, and superstitious practices. They have elevated “miracle water,” “holy relics,” “Holy Ghost sweat,” “Holy Ghost shoes” and handkerchiefs, “holy waterspouts,” images of Jesus and the cross in the form of tattoos, dangling trinkets, necklaces, and bracelets worn as jewelry under the pretense of exalting the Lord. Men and women, too numerous to mention, have been “*vainly puffed up by their fleshly minds!*”

Yes, and our own “Church of God” tradition was tainted with similar corruptions and aberrations of the faith down through the years. Switches were thrown that sent us down the wrong track, not just in the 1990s but more especially in the 1930s through the 1950s, and even earlier. So, when we speak of being a Restoration Movement, we mean going back to 1886 in modern times and back past the “dark ages” to the second century in earlier times, and in the final analysis going back to the model of the church in the days of Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament.

We noticed in Section III some aberrations of the faith that developed between 1886, after the church was restored under the leadership of R. G. Spurling, and before it disrupted and divided under Tomlinson’s leadership in 1923. The two most significant mistakes were (1) after Tomlinson took the helm of leadership in 1903, he changed Spurling’s view of the church as something-in-the-making to his static institutional view of the church, and (2) in 1912-1914 he guided the church in transforming the office of General Overseer into a popish-like position and made the office a lifetime appointment.

These two very different views of the church and the office of General Overseer radically modified the church going forward under Tomlinson. The exaltation of the office of General Overseer was perhaps the primary source of the contentions that developed between 1914 and 1921, which led to the adoption of the intrusive Constitution in 1921 and the fleshly-inspired amendments to the Constitution in 1922, both of which in turn caused the disruption of the church in 1923.

Following the disruption of the church, Tomlinson and his followers developed a stricter view of their exclusiveness which was further entrenched by the adoption of a church flag in 1933. In February 1937, Tomlinson suffered a severe stroke which impaired his ability to think and function normally. Significantly, however, he continued to hold office and make strategic decisions for the church until his death in October 1943.

Accordingly, some bazaar ideas and programs were set forth in 1937-1943. Beginning in 1939, under the influence of his delusional son, Homer, his son-in-law, Avery D. Evans, and the apocalyptic-minded, Grady R. Kent, Tomlinson rewrote the history of the church, making outrageous claims. He even rewrote his own account of the history of the church [see his *The Last Great Conflict* published in 1913, pp. 205-220 and compare with his later claims] to support his revisionist view of the Church of God's origin and historical development, which made him the primary founder of the church and virtually the head and savior of the body.

Accordingly, Bible prophecies were flagrantly twisted and misinterpreted to exalt Tomlinson and his part in the restoration of the church and the fulfillment of the church's mission in the world. For example, he claimed that Is. 66.2 and Jer. 30.21 were prophecies identifying him as the "humble servant" and "governor" of the church (Avery D. Evans, ed., *A.J. Tomlinson: God's Anointed—Prophet of Wisdom* (Cleveland, TN: WWPH, 1943, pp. 10-13; C. T. Davidson, *Fields of the Wood*, Cleveland, TN: WWPH, 1948, pp. 124-134).

His prayer and "revelation moment" on Burger Mountain on June 13, 1903, and his subsequent union with the church on that same morning were interpreted and reconfigured [primarily under Homer's fanciful mind and apocalyptic influence], beginning in 1939 to make Tomlinson the central figure and special agent of the Lord in the restoration of the Bible church and to lead her on to perfection and final victory (Homer A. Tomlinson, *The Great Vision of the Church of God* (New York: self-published, 1939, pp. 1-26; Evans, *God's Anointed*, pp. 7-23; Davidson, *Fields of the Wood*, pp. 7-49).

To accomplish this, several myths were created and adopted as the official views of the church, namely, (1) the "June 13, 1903" myth which made Tomlinson the primary and key figure in the church's restoration rather than Spurling, and the event that transpired on August 19, 1886 (See *VOZ*, Editorials, "Standing Between Two Extremes," July 2022, pp. 2,7, 10-11). Tomlinson's personal "revelation" on June 13th was thereafter said to have fulfilled several

biblical prophecies, including Ps. 132.1-6; Is. 25.6-7; 49.1-23; 60.1-3; 66.2; Jer. 30.21; et al. (2) The place where Tomlinson received his revelation was said to have fulfilled several biblical prophecies, including revealing the name of the place, ***“Fields of the Wood”*** (Ps. 132.4-6). (3) Tomlinson was thus said to have received **“the first vision of the Church of God of the last days”** and became the **“first member of the church this side of the Dark Ages”** (Davidson, *Fields of the Wood*, p. 47, 76). These false declarations were inscribed in marble stones in Fields of the Wood.

Numerous other myths and outrageous claims grew out of the basic three myths just mentioned: for example, Tomlinson proclaimed during the dedication program of Fields of the Wood in September 1941 that the church arose from the Dark Ages the moment he declared, **“This is the Church of God”** (Evans, *God’s Anointed*, pp. 10-13; Davidson, *Fields of the Wood*, p. 134-136), and thus Tomlinson further declared **“You are all Church of God because I am”**; and again, **“Where would this [the church] have been if it hadn’t been for me?”** (Evans, *God’s Anointed*, p. 13).

In the following decade, numerous hollow assertions were made and many passages of the Scripture flagrantly misapplied and misinterpreted to bolster and support these mythological claims and silly ideas. Burger Mountain in Fields of the Wood was ceremonially christened, **“All Nations Mountain.”** Where Tomlinson had prayed on June 13th was christened, **“Prayer Mountain.”** The springs in Fields of the Wood were said to have fulfilled Is. 49.10. Trees native to Palestine were brought in and transplanted in Fields of the Wood to fulfill certain prophecies, including Is. 60.13. The loudspeakers on the Fields of the Wood pavilion were said to have fulfilled the prophecy in Is. 13.2 ***“exalt [magnify] the voice.”*** A church flag was attached to a mountain in 1941 going up to where Tomlinson had prayed on June 13, 1903 and, as such, was said to have fulfilled Is. 13.2. Later the flagpoles erected on the “All Nations Mountain” were said to have fulfilled Num. 2.2. And the list goes on.

Purging and Restoring

Enough has been said here to prove the point, namely, that we have a downside in our history and heritage, which, in turn, should humble us and to teach us to walk more circumspectly before the Lord and our neighbors with sobriety and gravity. Further, it should teach us to be more understanding of the errors and mistakes of others, not **“putting forth [pointing] of the finger”** (Is. 58.9), and to get off our **“high horse”** and **“condescend to men of low estate”** (Rom. 12.16). For in being more understanding, more loving and forgiving of others, we are emulating the spirit and pattern of our Lord who has loved and forgiven us.

The reason the Lord has raised up Zion Assembly is therefore plain: (1) to carry-on the restoration venture that our fathers and mothers handed down to us, namely, to rebuild God’s house on its apostolic foundation (1 Cor. 3.9-11; Acts 2.42; 15.13-18; Amos 9.11; Eph. 2.20; Jude 3; (2) to purge the church of the errors and estrangements that were adopted through the years, which time and circumstances have enabled us to see more clearly (1 Cor. 3.12-15; Eph. 4.11-16; 5.26-32; Col. 1.28; Rev. 19.7-8; Ps. 102.16-18; et al); (3) and to proclaim **“this Gospel”** in every nation, **baptize believers**, and **disciple them** in the **“all things whatsoever”** message that Jesus taught and commissioned us to teach and practice (Mt. 24.14; 28.18-20; Mk. 16.15-20; Eph. 4.11-16; Phil. 1.27; 3.16; 1 Cor. 1.10; Jn. 17.20-23; 2 Tim. 2.2; et al).

Recapturing the Original Vision of the Church

It is indeed unfortunate that the church was distracted and blown off course in the 1930s through 1950s from her original vision and divine charter. As pointed out earlier, this happened only because Tomlinson had been struck down with a severe stroke in February 1937—a blow from which he never fully recovered. It is almost certain that the mythological revision would not have been articulated [at least to the extent that it was] had he not been mentally and emotionally afflicted by the stroke. It is certain he would have been ashamed in the presence of Spurling to have made the claim that the church had

started on June 13, 1903 and that he was the first member this side of the Dark Ages. But as it was, Spurling died on May 24, 1935, opening the door for such a mythological tale.

It was during Tomlinson's stroke years [1937-1943] that Homer, Evans, Kent, and others took advantage of his affliction, magnifying him and his ministry beyond the bar of truth and Christian respectability; for each of the men mentioned [most especially Homer] imagined that he might succeed Tomlinson in the exalted office of General Overseer and be the beneficiary of such an enchanting fairy tale.

Again, Tomlinson's part in the miscarriage of justice against Spurling and the revised view of the origin and early development of the church may be excused for the most part on the basis of the debilitating stroke that left him less than clear-headed and sober-minded, and much dependent upon others, most particularly the delusional Homer. Again, this is regrettable, for, otherwise, our illustrious pioneers had removed the covering of darkness that had swept the Early Church and plunged her into the Dark Ages (Is. 25.6-7; 60.2; 1 Tim. 4.1-3; 2 Tim 3.1-9; Rev. 2.5; 2 Pet. 2.1-22; Jude 3); and they were also zealously pressing forward to evangelize the world with the glory and power of the holiness-Pentecostal Gospel and the ***“prophetic vision of one church for all of God's people”*** (Is. 60.1-5; Jer. 3.12-19; Jn. 10.16; 11.49-52; 17.20-23; Eph. 1.10; 2.14-16; 3.6; 4.11-16; 5.26-32; Phil. 1.27; 3.16; Rev. 19.7-8; et al.)

It has fallen our lot in Zion Assembly since 2004, therefore, to restore the church over against the compromises and defections of our former fellowship on one hand, and the misinterpretations and misguided ideas that developed in the 1930s through 1950s on the other, most of which are being perpetuated today by the ever-increasing number of splinter groups now being scattered over the landscape. Included among the misinterpretations of the Scriptures and aberrations of the faith being heralded by heretics and schismatics are those associated with the “church banner,” “marking program,” “White Angel Fleet,” and “Honor Stone program,” besides the myths mentioned above associated with June 13, 1903, and Fields of the Wood.

May the Lord help us to restore the original message and prophetic vision of the church, with all its glory and power and spiritual gifts, and fulfill the great commission assigned to us by our Lord! Notwithstanding the errors and misguided ideas of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, our blessed forefathers bequeathed to us a **“goodly heritage”** (Jer. 3.19). May the Lord help us to be nothing more or nothing less than the **“city of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth”** (1 Tim. 3.15).

Recapturing the Original Power of the Church

The present urgency in the church is to get back to being **“a habitation of God through the Spirit”** (Eph. 2.22), a body through which the invisible God is manifested! (1 Cor. 12.12-31; 2 Cor. 3.2-3; Col. 1.17-27). We must get so close to God that we will be able to say to the world what Jesus said to Philip in His day: **“Philip, he that hath seen me hath seen the Father”** (Jn. 14.9-11, and compare with 17.20-23; 2 Cor. 3.2-3; 5.18-20; Eph. 4.11-15; 5.27; Phil. 2.15; 1 Thess. 2.14).

So, the whole episode of the Galatian church is applicable to us and our historical journey in seeking for the city of God and its perfection.

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you . . . having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect [that is, fully clothed and spiritually equipped] by the flesh?” (Gal. 3.1-3). **“You did run well,”** what happened? (5.7). The answer is somebody threw a switch, and, as such, perfection was sought through things material and carnal—flags, stones, concrete markers, airplanes, properties, buildings, bread and wine, water, etc., rather than through the Spirit and His wisdom and strength. The principle was no different than the errors committed by the old “church in the wilderness” in seeking for spiritual fulfillment in the ark of the covenant, circumcision, the tabernacle, temple, serpent on the pole, outward ceremonies, etc.

“There is therefore now no more condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit . . . For they that are after the flesh do mind

the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit . . . But if the Spirit of him [the Father] that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, [the Father] that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. 8.1, 5, 9-11).

The perfection of the church and the fulfillment of her mission in the world are almost altogether dependent upon the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit and the manifestations of His gifts operating through the church. This is the reason Jesus said, **“It is expedient that I go away”** (Jn. 16.7) and **“But when the Comforter [the Holy Spirit] is come . . . He will . . . teach and guide and testify”** (Jn. 14.26; 15.26), for, see, everything depended upon His arrival and indwelling. His presence and power judges sin; regenerates new life in believers; transforms believers in holiness and righteousness; glorifies and magnifies Christ; reveals the very thoughts and desires of the Father and the Son (16.7-9, 13-15). He guides, leads, directs, illuminates, empowers, anoints, sustains, heals, administers spiritual and charismatic gifts, and show things to come!

The success of our mission depends altogether on our relationship and intimacy with the Holy Spirit. For He “doeth the work!” that is, He does His work through us. Notwithstanding that our great pioneers in the faith were thrown off course from time to time along their journey, they handed down to us, basically, a right view of salvation and a right view of the church, and urged us to always depend upon the Holy Ghost to succeed in our mission. **Let us then . . .**

“Walk in the Spirit . . . Talk in the Spirit . . . Preach/Prophecy in the Spirit . . . [Lk. 1.41-42, 67; Joel 2.28; Acts 1.8; 2.4; 4.30-31]: for sons, daughters, servants, handmaids, preachers, prophets, apostles all spoke under the anointing and inspiration of the Spirit. **“Teach in the Spirit** [Jn. 14.26; 15.26; 1Cor. 2.2-6] in “words which the Holy Ghost teacheth . . . **Sing in the Spirit and with understanding** [1 Cor. 14.15] . . . Sing in tongues (a glorious and beautiful thing to behold). **Speak in the Spirit** (for he that **“speaketh in the Spirit . . . speaketh**

mysteries.) **Dance** in the Spirit [Ex. 15.20; 1 Sa. 18.6; 2 Sam. 6.14-16; Ps. 149.3; Jer. 31.13-14]; **Run** in the Spirit [Acts 8.30]; **Play** musical instruments (piano, drums, guitars, harps, cymbals, etc.,) in the Spirit [1 Chron. 15.16; Ps. 150.3-6; Is. 38.20] . . . **Rejoice** in the Spirit . . . **Live** in the Spirit . . . Be **led/guided** by the Spirit [Jn. 14.26; 15.26; Acts 8.29]; Make a **Joyful Noise** in the Spirit [Ps. 100.1]; **Love, Forgive, Pray, Groan, Ask, Seek, Knock** in the Spirit [Mt. 7.7-8; Rom. 8.14-16, 26-27; 1 Cor. 13.1-13]; **Shake, Quake, Bake, Drink** [Acts. 2.1-4, 15; 4.32-33; 1 Cor. 12.13; Hos. 7-8], **Discern, Judge** [1 Cor. 2.15; 5.12; 6.2-3]; **Think** [Rom. 8.5; 1 Cor. 2.16]; **See** [1 Cor. 2.7-10]; **Hear** “*what the Spirit saith . . .* (For “*God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit*”) . . . **Feel, Dream** [Joel 2.28-32]; **Envision** [1 Cor. 2.9-10], **Transcend** (Get “*caught up in the Spirit*”)[Rev. 21.2, 9-10], **Translate** [Col. 1.13]. Philip led by the Spirit to the Eunuch was afterward “*caught away*” to Azotus [Acts 8.39-40]; **Elevate/ Levitate** in the Spirit [Eph. 1.3-4, 2.6]; **Jump/Leap** in the Spirit [Lk. 1.41; 6.23; Acts 14.10]; **Shout** in the Spirit (“*all ye people*”); **Clap** in the Spirit (“*all ye people*”).

May the Lord help us to be the habitation of God through which His Spirit might live and move and enable us to fulfill our mission in the world!

Section V

Going Forward with Our IMC Vision

In the 18th General Assembly last year, we gave a detailed account of the historical development of our International Ministries Complex (IMC). This included the original purchase of the old IGA supermarket building and the two plus acres of land it sits on here at 5512 Waterlevel Highway [Rt. 64 East going toward Ocoee]. There was an additional acre purchased in 2016 that adjoined the original property, giving us about three acres upon which to construct and expand the IMC.

The development for the entire complex continued to unfold between 2009-2014, envisioning three phases and an overall financial plan to complete the job and maintain the property and facilities.

We are reprinting below Section V of last year’s annual address (2021 General Assembly)—“Financing the Expansion and Development of Our International Ministries Complex” because it is concise and to the point in all the particulars.

Section V
**“Financing the Expansion and Development of Our
International Ministries Complex”**

“Those who have gathered here this week are eyewitnesses to the working of the hand of God in the construction of this marvelous International “Ministries Complex. The original building was an IGA supermarket [built over 50 years ago] that later became an old greasy “chop shop” of junk cars. We purchased the building in November 2003, anticipating the restoration of the church in the imminent future, which happened only a few months later on April 20, 2004. Our faithful ministers and members have since then been *“laborers together with God”* in the on-going development and construction of this beautiful and adequate multi-complex. Your prayers, hands-on labor, and faithful giving have made this possible by the grace of God. (Let’s give the Lord and each other a handclap of praise).

“In 2009 mention was made of needing additional space to facilitate our International Staff and international events, particularly the School of Ministry, General Assemblies, and day to day operations in the offices. In 2011 we inaugurated “The Prophets’ Plan” to raise funds to expand our Headquarters operations and to make our vision of a Bible College become a reality. The Prophets’ Plan is based on the plan launched by Elisha to build a larger building to house “the sons of the prophets” recorded in 1 Kg. 6.1-5. In

this plan each one of the prophets cut down a tree, hewed it out, and fit it in the new building. To mimic what they did, we estimated the cost of a tree including hewing it out and fitting it in place in our building. The estimation in modern currency was about \$800. Our ministers and members responded generously and enthusiastically, and we raised in one year almost \$90,000. Many gave an amount equal for two trees and some three and some as many as ten. The next year our people again responded well and gave about \$70,000. With this money we took out a loan at the bank, and completely renovated the old IGA supermarket to facilitate the beginnings of our International Ministries Complex.

“The next year (2013) there were stirrings among us to build an Assembly Tabernacle. The aim was to restore not only the spirit, doctrine, and fellowship of the church, but to build again ministries and facilities that had been abandoned in our former fellowship; including the Assembly Tabernacle and the closing of Tomlinson College, both of which were grievously and reproachfully shut down or destroyed in the early 1990s. These things signaled to the “other sheep” and to the world at large that we were a dying church. We were going backward, not forward.

“One aspect of the Restoration was therefore to build an Assembly Tabernacle so that we would not have to depend on others for a place to have our General Assemblies and to avoid the continual rise in costs to rent facilities. But also, we wanted the comforts and conveniences of “home,” that is, we wanted to worship as early and as late as we wished and to have the right to turn our lights on and off as we wished, without being under the thumb and restrictions imposed on us by the owners of the facilities from whom we were renting.

“One more thing added to the equation of building an Assembly Tabernacle: it was generally taken for granted that

our International Ministries Complex would not be complete without an Assembly Tabernacle. Accordingly, the Presiding Bishop recommended in the 11th Annual Assembly held in Knoxville in 2014 a financial plan to build a Tabernacle. It was called The King's Plan because King Joash desired to repair the House of God during his illustrative reign, which had been broken up by the sons of the wicked Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel. An excerpt from the annual address explains the plan.

“Now in order to build a Tabernacle, I am proposing that we receive an offering on a regular basis to finance this vision, using for a pattern Moses' plan in Exodus 30.12-16 to build the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, which King Joash modified to repair the House of God in his day (see 2 Kings 12 and 2 Chronicles 24). To give “day by day” and “year to year” toward this fund (according to Joash's plan), we simply need to incorporate it as part of the church's regular financial system. The pastor or duly appointed Tabernacle booster could promote and receive once a month a Tabernacle Fund offering. We could design and make offering boxes to be displayed by the local churches in conspicuous places, and on the boxes write the inscription, “Tabernacle Fund—Let Us Rise Up and Build” or “There shall be a Tabernacle” (an allusion to Isaiah 4.6), or something to that effect. Then as the funds come in each month, the money can be counted by the local treasurer and sent to Headquarters with the regular monthly report . . . If this plan meets with the approval of the Assembly Business Committee, the committee can draw up a resolution to present to the Assembly for consideration and approval.

“The ABC enthusiastically presented the plan to the General Assembly during the business session that afternoon and the Assembly adopted it unanimously. We were thus off and running zealously with the vision for a new Assembly Tabernacle. “But then certain things transpired that interrupted our immediate plans.

First, the owner of the property that joined our property on the East side of our building suddenly decided to sell us his property in January 2016. After some negotiating [haggling] he agreed to sell it to us for \$160,000. We then called a special Minister’s Council, virtually a special-called General Assembly (the first one in our history), and the Assembly agreed unanimously to put on hold our immediate plans to build a tabernacle to purchase this property: for we didn’t want to pass up the opportunity (see Annual Address in 13th Annual Assembly Minutes, 2016, pp. 97-100). The Lord helped us, and we wondrously paid off the indebtedness for this property and our earlier bank note on the original property in less than two years.

Second, we then agreed to build a two-story 10,000 sq. ft. wing onto our existing property to add much needed office and storage space for our International Office operations, and to house our envisioned Bible College and also provide better facilities for our School of Ministry Institute. This was the fulfillment of a vision cast in 2011.

Third, we decided then (15th Annual Assembly, 2018), to consolidate our Tabernacle Fund, Bible College Fund, and the existing construction loan, and all future construction loans into “one simple building fund account” and call it the “International Properties Building Fund” [IPBF]. (See Presiding Bishop’s Annual Address, pp. 66-68 and the ABC report, pp. 46-47). This resolution too was accepted unanimously by the Assembly.

“Joining together The Prophet’s Plan and The King’s Plan into the IPBF has worked marvelously for us. God has honored it because it is based on His own desire which He put in the heart of Moses, Elisha, the sons of the prophets, King David, King Solomon, and King Joash in their desire to build and repair God’s House.

“Now then, brethren, let’s pick up where we left off, turning our attention again to building an Assembly Tabernacle. To do so, we will have to work on two fronts: paying off our current loan which financed the new wing of our International Ministries Complex and at the same time raising funds for the envisioned Assembly Tabernacle. The Good News is we don’t need another financial plan. We have it! namely, The Prophet’s Plan and The King’s Plan which we have merged together into what we have designated as the IPBF: for this has proven to be a sufficient and inspirational financial strategy, one which God Himself has inspired, and one which Moses, Elisha, the sons of the prophets, and King David, King Solomon, and King Joash [called King Jehoash elsewhere] implemented during their respective reigns. We just need to implement this God-ordained strategy willingly and cheerfully.

“The IPBF has three important financial sources.

1) The church ruled in the 15th Annual Assembly in 2018 that since our Bible College will be the most formidable and utilized facility for teaching and training and sending forth of laborers to the mission fields, twenty percent [20%] of the funds received for World Missions is to be put into the IPBF toward financing the expansion of the International Ministries Complex” (note 15th Annual Assembly Minutes, pp. 46-47).

2) A monthly offering is to be received in the local churches and sent to the General Treasurer with the regular monthly report (see 15th Annual Assembly Minutes, 2018, p. 47).

3) Each year [“from year to year”] according to the example of The King’s Plan in 2 Chron. 24.5-14, note esp. v. 5 we receive a big jubilee offering toward this end—to build God’s house and keep it repaired.

“Finally, brethren, let it always be borne in mind in preparing to build an Assembly Tabernacle that

[We need to] get in the spirit of it, like the sons of the prophets did in Elisha’s day, and the people of God in Moses’ day, and all of Israel did in King David and King Solomon’s days, and in King Joash’s day. There is nothing that we cannot accomplish together if we get in the spirit of it. That’s how the magnificent temple of God was built on Mount Zion [and kept repaired]. The House of God [the Temple] was first in David’s heart, and the vision and affection for it then took hold of the people of God. The spirit of giving got into David and then all the leaders and the people, and they gave in today’s currency more than two trillion dollars (\$2,000,000,000,000) in gold, silver, precious stones, brass, iron, marble, and precious woods to build a house worthy of the true and living God! The account is given in 1 Chron. 29. The key to it all is shown in vv. 2–14, namely, they caught a vision of God’s house, and the vision conditioned their affections and will to make it a reality. David said, *‘I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God’* (v. 2); and the people then *‘offered willingly . . . and gave . . . to the treasure of the house of the Lord’* (vv. 6-8). And when all was given, *‘Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly . . . with a perfect heart to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy’* (v. 9). And when Solomon built the house of God there was nothing like it in all the earth! **(18th Annual Assembly Minutes, pp. 98-103).’**

The Marvelous Response of Our People and the Blessings of the Lord

The intervention of the Lord and the response of our people to the IMC vision has been remarkable and amazing, close to, I would say, the definition of a biblical “Wonder.” I believe the success of this venture has been because 1) the Lord is pleased that we are rebuilding and magnifying His house and 2) because we are raising funds to finance the development of IMC based on plans found in the Scriptures, namely, the “The Prophets’ Plan” (1 Kg. 6.1-5) and “The King’s Plan” (2 Kg. 12 and 2 Chron. 24), and Moses’ Assembly Tabernacle plan. The King’s Plan was virtually a modified version of Moses’ plan to build the Tabernacle in the Wilderness (Ex. 30.12-16).

In 2018 these financial plans were combined into a single fund and renamed [for simplicity’s sake] the International Properties Building Fund (IPBF). The whole financial plan for IMC thus consists in 1) the monthly IPBF offering received by the local churches, 2) 20% of the World Mission Offerings, and 3) the big special offering and pledges we receive at every Assembly toward fulfilling the IMC vision.

The second phase of the IMC—the two-story 10,000 sq. ft. Educational Wing—was completed in 2021 at the cost of approximately 1.4 million dollars. At this point the bank loan has been reduced to \$770,000 based on the financial plan just mentioned. This means that more than \$700,000 has been raised in three years and applied to the principle of the loan. Again, this remarkable achievement has been due to the vision and generous giving of our faithful people, and, of course, to the favor of the Lord!

We are now working toward launching the third and final phase of the IMC vision, namely, the construction of the Assembly Tabernacle. Our strategy is to pay off the existing loan within three years, possibly earlier, and have everything ready to break ground for the final phase of the building as soon as the old loan is paid off.

After some preliminary considerations and discussions with several of the leaders of the church, and the counsel of city and county officials, everyone seems to be in agreement that the building should be an all-purpose facility adequate to meet the present and future needs of the church. The facilities will be designed therefore to serve not only for an Assembly Tabernacle [at least for the next few years], but also to meet the needs for the Bible college and other international events with a gymnasium and corresponding facilities [basketball court, work-out rooms, etc.], more office and storage space, and dormitory rooms for Assembly guests and accommodations for national overseers and missionaries.

Accordingly, we appointed an IMC Construction Committee to study every aspect of this important project and report its findings back to the 2023 General Assembly for further discussion and consideration. Following are some of the considerations: Seating-parking space equation; the overall size of the building; one story with balcony, or two stories; gymnasium: size and corresponding aspects; ascetics [look of the building] to match present overall design: rectangular/square/dome style, etc.? Steel type or stick [wood frame] construction. Cost factors; financing; possibility of renting out the facilities to other groups for various services—conventions, weddings, etc.; Legal tax implications; LGBTQ implications, etc.

The IMC Committee held its first meeting on January 20th and discussed the general parameters of the project and some specifics for consideration. Several members were appointed to look into specific areas of consideration and report to the next meeting scheduled for May 18th at 6 p.m. in the office of the Presiding Bishop. Anyone wanting further information or desiring to give input into the project is welcome to contact the committee chairman or secretary, Anton Burnette (ph. 423-716-5352; email: zionchurch11@bellsouth.net).



From L. to R.: Jim Orange, Cecil Pounders, Anton Burnette (secretary), E.A. McDonald, Kris Newberry, Alice Jones, Glenda Major, Wade H. Phillips (chairman), L.W. Carter.

Following Thru With Our Pledges

“For the zeal of thine house has eaten me up!”
(Ps. 69.9)

We are still praising the Lord for the wonderful response we received in offerings and pledges given at the last Assembly toward the IMC—over \$136,000. Thus far [as of January 12th] a total of \$85,000 has been received and recorded by the General Treasurer. This leaves \$50,000 outstanding. We want to encourage everyone who pledged to follow-through and pay-off his/her pledge. So much depends on it! We fully expect the Lord, according to His Word, to pour out His blessings upon all those who have so faithfully and generously given and/or pledged!

“ . . . and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there will not be room enough to receive it”
(Mal. 3.10).

“Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God . . . Moreover, I have set my affection to the house of my God . . . Then the chief of the fathers and . . . rulers of the king’s work, offered willingly . . . And gave [“gold and silver and precious stones”] to the treasure of the house of the Lord . . . Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they gave willingly to the Lord: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy” (1 Chron. 29.2-9).

International Appointments

2022-2023

International Executive Council:

Wade H. Phillips (chairman), Rick Ferrell (secretary), Scott E. Neill, Anton Burnette, L.W. Carter, Bruce Sullivan, Joseph A. Steele, Yomi Adekunle (alternate).

[Council members were nominated by the Presiding Bishop and unanimously approved by the General Assembly.]

World Mission Director.....	Wade H. Phillips
Field Secretaries.....	Ricky Graves
Mission Representatives.....	Anton Burnette Ambrosio “Roberto” Lopez Leyre “Joshue” Hernandez Yomi Adekunle David Gomba
General Treasurer.....	Tiffany Major
Director of Ed./SMI/Media Ministries.....	Anton Burnette
Shepherding Ministries Director.....	Wilma Carter
Assistant Publisher.....	Scott Neill
Fishers of Men Director.....	Bruce Sullivan
Ladies Ministries Director.....	Pamela Jones
Sunday School Director.....	Amanda Thompson
Sunday School Literature Editor.....	Bruce Sullivan
Children’s Ministries Director.....	Kara Spicer
Executive Secretary/Receptionist.....	Wanda Busbee
Senior Ambassador.....	Donna Ponders
Camping Coordinator/Youth Ministries Director.....	Kim Erwin
Youth Ministries Director.....	Allen Thompson

Voice of Zion/SYNC Booster.....L.W. Carter
Tract Ministries Director.....Glenda Major
Mission Correspondence Assistant.....Renetta Kelton

Committees

Assembly Business Committee

Chairman: Zachary Snyder

J.J. Davis, Byron Harris, Todd Deakle, David Gomba,
Johannes Oboo, Jose Lozano, Kevin Clary (alternate)

Doctrine Committee

Chairman: Bruce Sullivan

Trevor Graves, Joseph A. Steele, Tom Brown,
Yomi Adekunle, Allen Thompson

International Properties Committee

Chairman: Wade H. Phillips

L.W. Carter, Anton Burnette, James C. Orange,
E.A. McDonald, Cecil Pounders,
Glenda Major, Kris Newberry

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Tennessee, Georgia.....	Joseph A. Steele
Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana.....	Zachary Snyder
Idaho, Wyoming.....	A.B. White
Colorado, Kansas, Missouri.....	Joseph A. Steele
Texas, Arizona, New Mexico.....	Samuel Hernandez
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Oregon, Washington.....	Ambrosio “Roberto” Lopez

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Bayou La Batre, AL.....	Tod Deakle
Beaver Dam, KY	Todd Erwin
Bingamon, WV.....	Tom Brown
Browder, KY.....	Daren Childers
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Coachella, CA.....	David Hernandez
Crossville, TN.....	Rick Ferrell
Cleveland, TN.....	Anton Burnette
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Burundi	David Gomba
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Cameroon	Eyong Eric Eyong
Canada	L.W. Carter
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Colombia	David Casanova De La Rosa
Costa Rica	Eugenio Cespedes
Cuba	Daniel Gonzales Oliva
Democratic Republic of Congo	Unduelo Byamungu Odo
Dominican Republic	Saintaniel Hostelus
England (<i>Mission Rep</i>).....	Yomi Adekunle
Ghana	David Dordah
Guatemala	Ricardo Valenzuela Chavez
Guinea	Philippe Seraphin Gomez
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Mexico (South)	Ricardo Valenzuela Chavez
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Nicaragua	Freddy Garcia
Nigeria	Yomi Adekunle

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International Churches/Missions

Nation/Provinces	Churches	Missions
Argentina	7	1
Bangladesh	6	5
Benin	2	1
Bolivia	1	7
Burundi	2	1
Cambodia	1	0
Cameroon	5	3
Canada	2	0
Chile	7	2
Costa Rica	7	5
Dominican Republic	21	0
Democratic Republic of Congo	21	6
England	1	1
Ghana	1	1
Guatemala	21	10
Guinea	2	1
Haiti	234	0
Honduras	7	15
India Mid-East	17	16
India South	29	5
Ivory Coast	1	1
Kenya (North)	40	16
Kenya (South)	13	2
Liberia	1	1
Malawi	112	7
Mexico (North)	2	3
Mexico (South)	4	2
Mozambique	31	1
Myanmar	2	4

Nation/Provinces	Churches	Missions
Nepal	26	1
Nicaragua	8	2
Nigeria	56	8
Pakistan	(contacts)	
Paraguay	1	0
Peru	1	1
Philippines	8	8
Rwanda	0	1
Sierre Leone	1	0
South Africa	(contacts)	
South Sudan	5	1
Tanzania	74	3
Thailand	4	12
Togo	1	1
Uganda	2	2
United States	40	8
Uruguay	1	0
Venezuela	12	1
Zimbabwe	3	1
Zambia	(contacts)	
	860	160

In addition to the above statistics, the church has 1,114 ministers and 76,119 members in 48 nations and provinces. Some members exist in nations where no church has yet been established. The church is also supporting 468 orphans in 5 orphanages in four countries (India, Kenya, Thailand, and Nigeria).

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 Pounders, Bobby
 Powell II, Ryan Keith
 Prakash, Yannabathula
 Punda, Mika O.
 Quezada, Sofanor
 Quillen, Joseph
 Quiroz, Mario Antonio Acevedo
 Quispe, Yum Munoz
 Rajoro, Peter
 Ramirez, Hernandez Jonathan
 Ramos, Merari Arturo de Jesus
 Llanes
 Rangel, Ezequiel del Carne
 Rao, Nimmala Sanjeeva
 Rao, Talari Padma
 Rao, Yadia Mohan
 Ratnam, Sirra Mani
 Reel, Jerry
 Rodriguez, Carlos Rafael
 Ruben, Perez Dario
 Ruiz, Benitez, Juan
 Ruiz, Jose Dionicio
 Saez, Mario Alfonzo Flores
 Saka, John Onyango
 Sakwa, Dan Ouma
 Sakwa, Jack Obimbo
 Sakwa, Jacob Obimbo
 Salazar Torrez, Noel Emilio
 Samson, Akinlolu
 Samson, Akinola Akinlolu
 Sanchez, Antiono
 Sanchez, Carlos Lopez
 Sanchez, Castillo Luis Antonio
 Sanchez, Pedro Danilo
 Schroader, Jr., Daniel
 Senapati, Gabriyel
 Servellón, Manuel Francisco Sosa
 Sikder, Skuku Fanjon
 Solom, Pstyomi Adekunle
 Solomon, George W.
 Spicer, Chad Lee
 Sprinkel, David Samuel
 Stephen, Ayoola Oloinka
 Stonell, Raymond
 Tabares, Werner
 Taulinus, Fidel
 Thompson, Allen
 Tingler, Jerry
 Tolentino, Jr, Federico D.
 Torres, Cesar Augusto P.
 Urcadiz, Daniel C.
 Valdez, Wilmer Santos
 Viswanatham, Biddika
 Vicxau, Jean
 Wagner, Ricardo Astorga
 Wale, Adeyemo Femi
 Walowa, Joshua O.
 Wambogo, Janes Mbaga
 Wasse, Teketel Zewde
 Wesley, Janga John
 Wilcox, Bruce
 Wilson, Danny
 Zuilenam, Guillermo Lienlaf

Female Evangelists

Adekumle, Yomi Olajumoke
Alabi, Opeyemi Elizabeth
Alfredi, Maria
Antango, Jane
Arroyo Hernandez, Yerly
Atieno, Monica
Badmus, Esther Olufunmilayo
Bolanio, Adejane J.
Cardenas, Blanca Esperanza
Castilla Berrio, Maria Mercedes
Chicag, Ana Gladys Martinez
Clardy, Dorothy
Daudi, Lensa
Davis, Andrea Faye
Dominguez, Dina Darleny Rodriquez
Dorcus, Oyediran Tunrayo
Daudi, Lensa
Duniani, Jeanne
Edward, Veline Nelson
Elizabeth, Ilesanmi Omodasola
Elizabeth, Alabi Opeyemi
Erasto, Rose, Atieno
Esther, Omotomilola Temitope
Erwin, Kimberly J.
Etando, Aziza
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
Ilesanmi, Mercy Olawunmi
Ion, Barbara
Jandura, Memory D.
Jones, Pamela Lynn
Joseph, Dorkas

Joselyn, Treva
Kelton, Renetta Venise
Kimble, Shirley
Lopez, Dilcia Noris Villeda
Lwanba, Mwajuma
Maciel, Olga Beatrice
Marolejo, Marely Miranda
Martinez Ramos, Faith
Matute, Gilma Leonor Dominguez
Michael, Issac
McKee, Ofelia
Morgan, Susan
Mojirayo, Taiwo Agnes
Motino, Santos Liliana
Obegoriola, Alarape
Obuyo, Damaris O.
Odhimago, Roseline Achiong
Ogonda, Joyce Adhiambo
Okumu, Elly
Olajumoko, Olaiya Olanike
Olu, Oladele Olukemi
Olufunke, Olujide Felicia
Olutunde, Adeyemi Joseph
Oluwa, Adebowale Janet
Omotunde, Durodola Adepeju
Ortiz, Celia Waldina Hernadez
Opakunle, Florence Tomi
Owira, Grace Auma
Perez, Gladys
Perez Herrera, Juana del Carmen
Periera, Rebecca
Pinela, Margarita del Saez
Quillen, Jeannie
Quezada, Erica Pilar Pinto
Ramirez, Odalis Margoth
Reitler, Brenda
Rigardiz Cumana, Marvis
Amarilys
Rivera, Eva Yamileth Velasquez
Rivera, Yuliana Lizeth Velasquez

Rodriguez Buevas, Karen Paola
Romo, Reina
Sadler, Florence
Sampayo Camargo, Flor Maria
Sanches, Marta Eloidina
Sandra, Lecruz Martinez
Sirrio, Janet
Snyder, Kari Elaine
Socia, Clarence
Stephenson, Tina
Suazo, Delmi Xiomara Matute
Suna, Susilia
Toro Garcia, Maria
Tovar, Maria De la Rosa
Thompson, Amanda Kay
Tomi, Opakunle Florence
Valdez, Nidian Alvarez
Villafranca, Rosa Lidia Dominguez
Williams, Linda
Wilson, Nancy
Woldemichael, Eyerusalem W.

Exhorters

Burnette, Jonathan
Eldridge, Carl A.
Estrada, Cesar Augusto Estrada
Fields, Hayli
Floyd, Judi
Lupton, Kayla
Rodriguez, Henry
Wagner, Jacob

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 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 (Ex. 19.3-6; Jn. 14.6, 8; Acts 2.42; Eph. 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 Thess. 2.1-12; 1 Tim. 4.1-3; 2 Pet. 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 (Rom. 8.29; Col. 1.1-17; 1 Jn. 3.2).

Besides this internal disposition to cultivate mutual love and care within the household of God, the ministers and members 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*” (Is. 52.8; 1 Cor. 1.10; Phil. 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*” (Eph. 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 (Mt. 28.19).

Church Membership

Membership in Zion Assembly 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 (Rom. 5.5; 15.16, 30; 2 Cor. 1.20; 5.19; Jn. 3.5; Eph. 2.18; Titus 3.5). The Father is God (Eph. 4.6), the Son is God (Jn. 1.1-3; 10.30; Heb. 1.8; Rev. 1.8), the Holy Spirit is God (Jn. 14.17; 16.13; Acts 5.3; 1 Cor. 2.10), yet there are not three Gods, but one God (Deut. 6.4). The three persons of the divine Trinity work together in perfect unity for the salvation of man (Jn. 3.5; 6.44; 14.6, 16-17; 2 Cor. 5.19).

Jesus Christ—Jesus Christ is the “*image of the invisible God*” (Col. 1.15), and God’s “*only begotten Son*” (Jn. 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 Tim. 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*” (Jn. 1.29). He is also the head of the church and the savior of the body (Eph. 5.23).

Angels—The word angel means “*messenger.*” Scripture teaches that angels are heavenly and supernatural beings, but also they are creatures (Col. 1.16; 1 Pet. 3.32). As such, they were created to worship God and do His bidding (Is. 6.3; Mt. 26.53; Heb. 1.6-7, 14; Rev. 4.8). Their nature is incorporeal; they are “*spirits*” (Heb. 1.14), created holy and with free will. As such, some fell from their “*estate*” (Jude 6). In regard to the time of their creation, we are not informed explicitly in Scripture, but a few passages indicate that they were created before man and were present when God created man (Gen. 3.1; Job 38.7). In their role as “*messengers,*” they have been commissioned by God to minister in the affairs of man (Heb. 1.13-14; Ps. 34.7). They exist in ordered ranks—“*principalities,*” “*powers,*” “*thrones,*” “*dominions*” (Eph. 6.12; Col. 2.15), and also as “*seraphim*” and “*cherubim.*” The distinctions between seraphim and cherubim are not made clear in Scripture (Gen. 3.24; Ezek. 10.1-3, 7-14; Is. 6.2, 6).

The “*messenger ministry*” of angels can be seen both in the Old and New Testaments (Judg. 6.11; 13.3; 1 Kgs. 19.5; Psalm 91.11; Lk. 1.11; Mt. 1.20; 4.11; 28.5). The Bible reveals that angels are great in number (Deut. 33.2; Dan. 7.10; Mt. 26.53; Lk. 2.13; Rev. 5.11) and have great power, intelligence, and supernatural ability to move with great speed. As such, man is said to have been “*made a little lower than the angels*” (Psalm 8.5). Notwithstanding, though angels are powerful, highly intelligent, and have great mobility, they are not all-powerful, all-knowing, nor omnipresent. (For example, they do not know when the Rapture will take place (Mt. 24.36).

As created beings, angels have a beginning, but they never die nor cease to exist (Lk. 20.36). Angels are not God or gods, and thus man is forbidden to worship them (Col. 2.18). In fact, the holy angels themselves [those who did not join in Satan's fall and rebellion] reject any attempt by man to worship them (Rev. 19.10; 22.28).

Angels cannot repent nor be redeemed from sin, and thus the fallen angels are doomed forever to damnation. Nor do angels act as Gospel evangelists in the work of salvation, this ministry being assigned to born-again believers and more especially to the church (Acts 10.3-6). Yet angels assist the church in its mission (Acts 10.3-7; 11.13-14; 8.26; 5.19-20; Heb. 1.14). Jesus informs us also that the holy angels rejoice at the redemption of sinners (Lk. 15.10).

Scripture teaches that one-third of the angels followed Satan in a great rebellion against God (Is. 14.12-15; Rev. 12.4, 7-9), and that they labor in this present age under Satan's rule to "*steal, and to kill, and to destroy*" (Jn. 10.10; Eph. 6.10-12). These fallen angels are referred to as "*evil spirits,*" "*unclean spirits,*" and "*demons,*" and thus Jesus spoke of "*the devil and his angels*" (Mt. 25.41; see also Rev. 12.7). They have been sentenced to a realm of darkness, and live with the dread of their final judgment in the Lake of Fire (Jude 6; Mt. 25.41; 8.29).

Unlike Adam and the human race, angels were not created as a race, and therefore when one-third of the angels fell under Satan's deception, all the angels did not fall with them. Each was created separately, and each fell by his free choice independently. Nor did Satan transmit his sin to the other angels; but rather deceived one-third of the angels into a rebellion against God; thus each angel sinned of his own volition. Further, unlike the human race, angels do not have sexual desires and do not procreate or reproduce (Mt. 22.30); neither were angels created, like man, male and female; and thus no angel in Holy Scripture is referred to as being female. It is important to understand also that Satan is not the God-ordained head of angels, but rather he assumed his position by deception and in rebellion against the will of God.

Finally, though men are clothed with heavenly bodies in glorification (1 Cor. 15.48-53) and in that glorious state share some angelic characteristics (Lk. 24.34-36), yet they do not become angels. The distinctions between men and angels will remain throughout eternity (Rev. 5.9-13).

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 Tim. 3.14-16; 2 Pet. 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 Pet. 3.1-2). Walking in the light of God's Word is the guiding principle and commitment of Zion Assembly: *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Psalm 119.105).

The Church is a visible body of believers formed and incorporated by covenant with God to keep His commandments (Ex. 19.5-8; 24.3-8; Ps. 119.57; Jn. 14.15; 17.6, 8, 14; 1 Pet. 2.9). It is theocratic in form and function, providing order and government through the Spirit and the Scriptures for God's people (Is. 2.2-4; 9.7; Mt. 18.15-20; 1 Cor. 12.28). The church is presently imperfect, spotted with backsliders and *"false brethren"* (1 Cor. 5.1-13; Gal. 2.4; Jude 4). It is thus distinguished from the kingdom of God, the latter being the spiritual realm of all born again believers (Jn. 3.3-8; Rom. 14.17; Col. 1.13). One is *"born"* into the kingdom; he/she is *"added to the church"* (Jn. 3.3-8; Acts 2.47). The church will succeed to proclaim the Gospel into all the world (Mt. 24.14; 28.18-20; Mk. 16.15-16); will be perfected *"with the washing of water by the word,"* and will be presented to Christ glorious in holiness (Eph. 5.26-27). The General Assembly is the highest tribunal of authority in the church for the interpretation of the Scriptures (Acts 15; 1-16.4-5). 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/or church elders (1 Cor. 11.3, 7-9; 14.34-36; 1 Tim. 2.12; 3.1-17).

Man is unique in all of God's creation. Only he was created in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1.27; 5.2; Eccles. 7.29; 1 Cor. 11.7; Eph. 4.24), and therefore man has a unique relationship to God. His nature is composed of soul, spirit, and body (Job 32.8; Eccles. 12.7; Mt. 10.28; 1 Cor. 15.45; 1 Thess. 5.23; Heb. 4.12), though "*soul*" and "*spirit*" may be fully distinguishable only by the Spirit of God (Heb. 4.12 and compare Jn. 12.27 and 13.21). Of all the living things on earth, only man has God-consciousness and an immortal soul (Gen. 2.7; 1 Cor. 15.45). He thus has an everlasting destiny in heaven or hell, with eternal life or everlasting death and damnation (Rom. 6.23; Rev. 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 (Gen. 1.26, 28). This uniqueness is partly why the Psalmist exults, "*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made*" (Ps. 139.14), and why he asks, "*What is man, that thou art mindful of him?*" (8.3-4; Heb. 2.6).

Man was created *male* and *female* (Gen. 1.27; 2.18, 21-25) in order that the genders might come together under divine institution as husband and wife (Gen. 2.21-25; Mk. 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 (Prov. 18.22; Eccles. 9.9; Eph. 5.22-25, 28-31; 1 Pet. 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 (Mal. 2.14-16; Mt. 5.28; Mk. 10.7-12; Lk. 16.18; Rom. 7.2-3; 1 Cor. 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; Rom. 1.19-20; Jn. 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 (Josh. 24.15-25; 1 Kgs. 18.21; Ezek. 20.39; Lk. 13.35; Jn. 3.36; Rev. 22.17).

Man was created holy, in the moral image of God (Gen. 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 working through Eve,

to disobey God. Because man is a race, unlike the angels, sin was transmitted to all men through Adam's transgression (Gen. 3.6; Rom. 5.12; 1 Cor. 15.21). His redemption and reconciliation to God was made possible by the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. 5.15-19).

Christ is the second man Adam (1 Cor. 15.22, 45). He is therefore called the Son of Man as well as the Son of God (Mt. 12.8; 16.13; Lk. 1.35; Jn. 1.14; Col. 1.15, 19; Heb. 1.8; Rev. 1.8). In Him God and man exist in one person (Jn. 1.1-3, 14; Phil. 2.5-8). The first Adam failed and plunged man into sin; the second man Adam, Christ, lived triumphantly over sin (2 Cor. 5.21; Heb. 4.15), making it possible for us also to triumph over sin and be saved (Is. 53.4-9; 2 Cor. 2.14; 1 Pet. 2.21-24). He that believes and repents and is born again shall be saved (Jn. 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 (Heb. 2.11; 10.10, 14; 13.12).

Sin is a real and expressed evil. It originated in Satan in heaven (Is. 14.12-14; Jn. 8.42; 1 Jn. 3.8; Rev. 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 (Gen. 3.6, 17). Sin is thus willful rebellion against the law of God (Ex. 35.19; Psalm 51.3; Heb. 4.7; 10.26; 13.18; 2 Pet. 3.5) It may be defined as *lawlessness* (Rom. 3.20; 4.15; 5.13; Gal. 3.19; 1 Tim. 1.9), *transgression* (Ps. 119.158; Eph. 2.1; 1 Jn. 3.4), *disobedience* (Rom. 8.7; Titus 1.16; 3.3; 1 Tim. 1.9; 1 Pet. 2.7-8), and *rebellion* (Psalm 78.8; Lam. 1.18; 3.14; Dan. 9.5). Sin exists also in unbelief (Jn. 3.18; Titus 1.15; 1 Jn. 2.22-24; Rev. 21.8).

Unlike the angels, mankind is a race; thus when the first man Adam sinned, sin was transmitted to all men through him (Rom. 5.12). All men are therefore born with the sin nature and therefore with the propensity to sin (Ps. 51.5; 58.3; Eph. 2.3; 1 Jn. 1.8). None are exempt, including Mary, the mother of Jesus. "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3.23).

Sin exists in two forms: **1)** in the very being of man, in his rebellious nature (Rom. 6.6; Eph. 2.3); **2)** in actual acts of transgression (Eph. 2.1; Col. 2.13). Sin is conceived in the heart and is expressed in thought (Gen. 6.5; Mt. 15.19), word (Mt. 5.22), and/or deed (Rom. 1.32).

Death and everlasting damnation is the penalty that God imposed upon mankind for sin (Rom. 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 (Rom. 5.15-19; Heb. 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 (Rom. 3.28-30; 5.1; Eph. 2.5; 13-18); in sanctification, the very nature of sin rooted in man's heart is uprooted and removed (Rom. 6.6; Gal. 2.20; 5.24; 6.14; Col. 3.3-10). The sanctified believer is thus made free from sin (Jn. 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" (Gal. 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 Gal. 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 (Gal. 5.16-18, 24; 1 Thess. 5.23; 2 Thess. 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 (Jn. 8.36; Rom. 6.6; 8.1-6; Gal. 2.20; 5.24; 6.14; Eph. 4.22-24; Col. 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 (Gal. 5.16, 25; 2 Tim. 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 (Is. 6.1; Jn. 6.44; Acts 2.37-38). True repentance can be made only through the work of the Spirit in conviction (Jn. 16.7-15; 1 Cor. 12.3; see also Jn. 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 Cor. 7.9-10). Repentance is manifested by certain fruit “*meet for repentance*” (Mt. 3.8; Rom. 6.2). The act of repentance should be followed by water baptism [see page 19] (Mk. 1.4-5, 15; Lk. 13. 3; Acts 3.19; 5.30-31; 1 Jn. 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 (Rom. 8.1-2; 3.23-26; 1 Jn. 1.7). The genuinely justified person has “*peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Rom. 5.1-2). Justification signifies the pardon (forgiveness) aspect of the new birth.

Regeneration 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 (Eph. 2.1, 4-5; Col. 2.13-14; Jn. 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*” (Jn. 3.3-8; 1 Pet. 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 (Gal. 5.22-23). We are admonished in the Scripture to walk in the Spirit and not to fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5.16; Eph. 5.9; Phil. 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; Is. 53.4-5; Mt. 8.17; 2 Pet. 2.24; Jas. 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 (Heb. 10.10; 13.12-13; Rom. 6.1-6; 1 Thess. 4.3; 2 Thess. 2.13; 1 Pet. 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 (Mt. 5.48; 2 Cor. 7.2). God has called us unto holiness (Thess. 4.7). “*Be ye holy; for I*

am holy” (1 Pet. 1.15-16). “*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*” (Heb. 12.14; see also Lk. 1.74-75; 2 Cor. 7.1; Titus 2.11-12; Eph. 1.4; 4.13, 24). Paul expressed his desire to “*present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*” (Col. 1.28). Christ is returning for a church that is glorious in holiness: “*without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing*” (Eph. 5.27; see also Ps. 45.9-13).

Christian Perfection—The perfection of the believer is the call and aim of the Gospel (Mt. 5.48; Jn. 8.36; 2 Cor. 13.11; Col. 1.22; Heb. 6.1; Jas. 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 (Heb. 10.1, 14; 13.21), both individually and corporately in the body of Christ (Mt. 5.48; Jn. 17.20-23; 2 Cor. 13.9; Col. 1.28; Eph. 1.10; 2.14-22; 4.11-16; 5.27; Rev. 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.

Christian perfection is not the same as absolute perfection, for only God is absolutely perfect (Ex. 9.14; 1 Sam. 2.2; 1 Chron. 17.20; Job 11.7; Mk. 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*” (Mt. 5.44-48; 1 Cor. 13.1-13; 1 Jn. 2.5; 4.12, 17). Love is in fact the “*bond of perfectness*” (Col. 3.14). Christian perfection is therefore essentially grounded in love and wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit (1 Chron. 28.9; 2 Chron. 15.17; 16.9; 19.9; Rom. 5.5; Heb. 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 (Rom. 8.33; Eph. 4.26; Heb. 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 Cor. 3.18). Sanctified believers are

admonished to continue to “*perfect holiness in the fear of God*” (2 Cor. 7.1). The Good News is “*we know that, when [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him*” (1 Jn. 3.2; Eph. 5.27).

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 Tim. 2.3-4). Although the word “*perseverance*” is used only once in some translations of the Bible (for example, Eph. 6.18 in the King James Version) there are many other words that are closely related to it, such as *abide* (Jn. 15.4-5, 7-9), *endure* (Mt. 10.22), *continue* (Jn. 8.31-32), *steadfast* (Heb. 3.14, 1 Pet. 5.8-9, 2 Pet. 3.17), *patience* (Lk. 21.19), *overcome* (Rev. 2.11, 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? Phil. 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 (Eph. 2.8-9), and in another place 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 (Rom. 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 (Mt. 7.7-11, 21-27; Lk. 8.15; 11.28; Jn. 14.15, 23; Jude 24). Man’s perseverance depends on his continued desire to walk with the Lord (Jn. 8.31; Col. 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 (Lk. 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*” (Is. 1.19) and “*willing to live honestly*” (Heb. 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 Jn. 9; 1 Jn. 5.12); therefore, the judgment for those who do not persevere is eternal damnation and separation from God (Mt. 25.41-46, Heb. 10.26-27).

Practical Graces

Restitution is the act of restoring something wrongfully taken, or the satisfying of one whom otherwise has been wronged (Mt. 3.8; Lk. 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 (Rom. 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 (Hos. 2.11; Col. 2.16-17; Rom. 14.5-6; Heb. 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 (Col. 2.13-17; Eph. 2.15; Heb. 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 (Rom. 14.17). However, one should be mindful of the Scriptural injunction: “. . . *whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Cor. 10.31; see also: Rom. 14.2; 1 Cor. 8.8; 1 Tim. 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 (Mt. 23.23). Tithes are to be brought to the house of God and properly distributed by the ministers having charge of the treasury (Mal. 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: Gen. 14.18-20; Lk. 11.42; 1 Cor. 16.2; 2 Cor. 9.6-9; Heb. 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”* (Jas. 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”* (Mt. 5.34, 37; see also Ex. 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 (Mt. 15.18-19; Phil. 1.27; 3.20; 1 Pet. 1.15; 2 Pet. 2.7; Jas. 3.8-10).

Intoxicating Beverages and Drugs—*“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise”* (Prov. 20.1). The Scriptures teach against the consumption of alcohol or other intoxicating beverages because God has called us to perfect sobriety (1 Pet. 5.8; 1 Thess. 5.6; Tim. 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 (Eph. 4. 27; see also: Is. 28.7; 1 Cor. 5.11; 6.10; Gal. 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 Cor. 7.1; Is. 55.2; 1 Cor. 10.31-32; Eph. 5.3-8; Jas. 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”)—Zion Assembly is opposed to gambling in any form. Gambling brings with it a negative effect on society and is immoral (Ex. 20.17; 1 Tim. 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 Ex. 20.17; Ps. 10.3; 1 Cor. 6.9-10; Eph. 5.5; 1 Tim. 6.9-10; Heb. 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 Cor. 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 Cor. 11.2; Jer. 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”* (Jn. 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 (Mt. 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 (Lk. 24.49; Jn. 15.26; Acts 1.8); it also enables one to minister effectively within the church for the self-edification of the body (1 Cor. 12.12-28; Eph. 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 “*divers tongues*,” that is, in languages that are known to man (Acts 2.6; 1 Cor. 12.10; 14.2). In either case, “*unknown tongues*” or languages known to man, and the manifestation of tongues and interpretations must always be consistent with the Word of God (1 Cor. 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 Cor. 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 (Mk. 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 (Mk. 16.17; 1 Cor. 12.12-31).

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 (Rom. 6.3-5). This ordinance has no power to wash away sin, but is the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Pet. 3.21). Water baptism is valid only when the candidate is actually born again (Mt. 28.19; Mk. 1.8-10; 16.15-16; Jn. 3.:22-23; Acts 10.47- 48; 16.3). 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 Cor. 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 Cor. 10. 16-17; 11.23-30). It is the outward sign of Christ's covenant with the church (Lk. 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*" (Jn. 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 Tim. 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.

Proclamation and Public Reading of the Word of God—

The Bible, the written Word of God, is a visible sign and witness pointing men to the Gospel of Christ. The Bible is a sacred record or witness of

Jesus' birth, death, resurrection, ascension, glorification, and on-going intercessory work in unity with the Father in His heavenly throne (Acts 7.55; Rev. 3.21). It is a written revelation of the saving work of God in Christ, and thus analogous to God's Word inbreathed into the hearts of believers.

God's church is bound by a sacred covenant to read, study, and obey the Word of God. Each member is to read, hear, believe, receive, search, study, and obey the Word of God. The church is to proclaim "*all the counsel of God*" (Acts 20.27), teach believers in all nations "*to observe all things whatsoever that [Christ has commanded]*" (Mt. 28.19-20, and to "*rightly divide the word of truth.*" (2 Tim. 2.15).

The public reading of the Word of God is pure proclamation, allowing the Word to speak for itself. The Reading of Holy Scriptures is commanded and encouraged in both Old and New Testaments, and otherwise taught by precept and example by Christ, the apostles, and prophets.

The practice of the proclamation and public reading of the Bible demonstrates a sober reverence for the written Word of God. In an age in which the majority of professing Christians are biblically illiterate and falling away from confidence in the Bible as God's infallible Word written in Scripture, and consequently from serious Bible reading the study, God's church stands out like a "*city set on a hill*" holding forth the light of His Word!

The proclamation and public reading of the Word of God serves to reveal the mind of God; aids in personal and corporate cleansing of the believer; edifies the believer; comforts the believer; and encourages and strengthens corporate unity among believers. Where observed with sobriety, sincerity, and gravity the "Proclamation and Public Reading of Scripture" can produce revival, restoration, and reconciliation (Ex. 24.7-8; Josh. 8.34-35; 2 Kgs. 23.1-20; Neh. 8.1-8, 14-18; 2 Cor. 5.18-20). As such, proclamation, public reading, and responsive readings of the Sacred Scriptures bear all the marks of an ordinance, and thus should be observed as a divine order of worship, ministry, and theocratic administration.

Ministry / Ordination—The church recognizes the ordination and function of the ministry as an ordinance of God placed in the church to reveal Christ and demonstrate spiritual truth. Much like "Water Baptism," the act of "*laying on of hands*" for ordination is

the church acting instrumentally to physically demonstrate God's spiritual calling and appointment of an individual as a servant leader in God's church. By acting instrumentally under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to ordain ministers, the church also reveals and demonstrates true theocracy.

Not only does the act of ordination demonstrate a spiritual truth, but the function of ministry has been ordained by God to serve as a revelation of Christ and His ministry to the world. Christ is the "Great Shepherd" (pastor) who lovingly oversees His flock (1 Pet. 5.1-4). He is the ultimate servant minister who came to "*serve*" (minister) and to be "*served*" (ministered to) (Mt. 20.28; Philem. 2.5-8). Christ has established and ordained the ministry to mirror and reveal His ministry. As the minister serves the flock, tends the flock, watches over the flock, and gives his life for the flock, the minister visibly demonstrates the heart and work of Christ. The membership practices this ordination and aids in this revelation by honoring the ministry and willingly submitting to those who have the rule over them (Heb. 13.7, 17) thus demonstrating the Christian's honor of God and submission to God's government (Col. 3.23-24; Eph. 5.22).

The Church is a divine institution and **bears all the marks** of an ordinance. It has been ordained by God to be the "*light of the world, a city set upon an hill*" (Mt. 5.14). As such it is designed to be the sacred embodiment of truth symbolizing and declaring the mysteries of God to the world through the power of the Holy Ghost. It is the "*Body of Christ and members in particular*" (1 Cor. 12.27) all working together to be the physical representation of Christ in the world. It is the "*house of God,*" (1 Tim. 3.15) the "*temple of God*" (Eph. 2.21; 1 Cor. 3.16) consisting of "*living stones*" (1 Pet. 2.5) "*fitly framed together and builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*" (Eph. 2.21-22). By "*binding and loosing on earth what has been bound and loosed in Heaven*" (Mt. 16.19), the church serves as a revelation of both the invisible God and His invisible Kingdom. The church preaches the Gospel, teaches the doctrine, lives the truth, practices government, submission, and discipline. The church embodies the Gospel for it consists of members who act as witnesses of the transforming power of Christ and His Gospel. "*But ye are a chosen generations, 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). As such, the church serves as an ordinance. In fact, it is the ordinance which embodies and practices all the other ordinances.

Marriage is defined by God as a covenant between an eligible male and eligible female to become husband and wife and it is for life; as such it is a divine institution that should be held in the highest esteem among all men and women. The ordinance of marriage was instituted by God, reaffirmed by Christ, and given further emphasis and clarity by the apostles, and accordingly, practiced by the New Testament churches.

The first marriage ceremony was administered by God after the creation of man. Thus, marriage is the Genesis ordinance, the original ordinance. Marriage is an ordinance in that it acts as a universal witness of God's divine order for the human race (Mal. 2.14-16; Mt. 19.4-5; 1 Cor. 7.2-5, 14; Heb. 13.4; Eph. 5.22-32; Rev. 19.7-8). It is also a channel through which the human race, and more particularly the church of God, is divinely ordered and sustained in holiness and truth. (Mk. 10.6-9; 1 Cor. 7.14-16; Eph. 5.22-32). Perhaps most importantly, the ordinance of marriage is a symbol of salvation and the sacred union between God and His people as bridegroom and bride (Ex. 19.5; Song 5.1; 6.2-9; Is. 49.14-18; 62.5; Ezek. 16.8; Jn. 3.29; Mt. 22.2; 2 Cor. 11.2-3; Eph. 5.25-32; Rev. 19.7-8). Thus, God repeatedly uses marriage terms to explain His relationship with the church, a relationship which culminates in the Bridegroom coming to take His bride to the Father's house for the marriage supper (Rev. 19.7; Eph. 5.25-27; Jn. 14.1-3; Mt. 25.1-10).

The members of the church aid in and practice this ordinance by reflecting Christ and the church through their marriage relationships. The husband loves the wife and gives himself for her (Eph. 5.25-29) while the wife loves her husband and submits to his loving authority (Eph. 5.22-24).

Divine Sanctities

Sanctity of Life—Human life is sacred because it is created in the image of God (Gen. 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*” (Ex. 20.13). Whosoever sheddeth innocent blood will not be held guiltless before God (Gen. 9.6; Num. 35.30-31; Rom. 13.8-10; Rev. 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 not man put asunder” (Mt.19:4-6). Accordingly, marriage is a divine institution between a male and female until death (Mk. 10.2-12; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7.39) and as such it should be held in the highest esteem among all men and women.

Marriage is for life, and therefore divorce for any reason, including unfaithfulness, cannot dissolve a marriage. (The “exception” to this rule mentioned in Mt. 5.32 and 19.9 will be explained below). Thus remarriage after a divorce (while the first companion is still living) constitutes the sin of adultery (see Lk. 16.18; Ex. 20:14, 17; Mal. 2.14-17; 1 Cor. 5.1-5; 6: 15-20; 7.2, 3).

While the Bible commends marriage, and sex within marriage, it clearly condemns sex before or outside of marriage (Heb. 13.4). This condemnation includes sexual relations which might occur between a couple while “living together” or “cohabitating” in a non-married state (see 1 Cor. 5.1- 5; 6. 15-20; 7.2, 3).

Marriage is between one man and one woman for life; therefore sexual relations are lawful only within a God-ordained and biblically recognized marriage. Adultery (which includes remarriage while one’s first companion is still living), polygamy, and fornication (which includes pre-marital sex and cohabitation) are therefore sinful practices that violate the law of God, and injure the home and family.

The meaning of the word fornication has been the subject of much debate. Fornication is sometimes used in Scripture in a broad sense to include all forms of sexual immorality. However, when fornication and adultery are used in the same text, fornication usually refers to unlawful sexual relations before a person has been joined in a biblical, covenant marriage. This is certainly the case in Mt. 5.32 and 19.9. In these references, fornication signified unlawful sexual relations during the ancient, Jewish betrothal period—that is, before

the betrothed couple had consummated their marriage (confer Mt. 1.18-25). Fornication in this context would include also, however, a single person who has married someone else's companion, that is, a divorced person. And it would apply also to an incestuous relationship—a sin of which the believers in Jesus' day were well aware (1 Cor. 5.1-9; Leviticus 18.6-20; see also Acts 15.29, for the reference here by the Jerusalem council seems to indicate this kind of fornication).

In any case, fornication includes a single person who has been joined to another unlawfully in marriage. This was the gross form of fornication in the Corinthian church that Paul so boldly reproved, and for which cause he demanded that the church withdraw fellowship from the violator—“To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5.1-9). It was in this context also that the apostle commanded that in order to avoid the sin of fornication, “*let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband*” (1 Cor. 7.2; see also Mk. 6.16-18; 1 Cor. 5.1). In Gal. 5.19, both adultery and fornication are listed as works of the flesh, and the apostle solemnly warns that “*they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*” For these reasons, those who are entangled in these sins and unlawful marriages are not eligible for membership in the Lord's church (confer 1 Jn. 3.7-10; 1 Cor. 5.11; 6.9-10).

Sanctity of the Body—Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we are admonished to glorify God in our body (1 Cor. 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” (Rom. 12.1), and “. . . whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 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 (Rom. 1.24-28; Lev. 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: Tim. 2.8-10; Rom. 12.1-2; Is. 3.16-22; 1 Jn. 2.15-17).

Eschatology

Scenario of Endtime Events

Rapture and Pre-Millennial Second Coming Of Jesus—

Christ is coming again in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Mt. 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 Thess. 4.16-18; see also 1 Cor. 15.51-52). All who are caught up in the first resurrection will attend the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19.7-9). Christ will then return to earth and reign with the saints for a thousand years (20.4, 6; see also Zech. 14.4-5; 1 Thess. 4.14; Jude 14-15; Rev. 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 Dan. 12.2; Rev. 20.4-6; Jn. 5.28-29; 1 Cor. 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”* (Mt. 25.46; Lk. 18.29, 30; Jn. 10.28; Rom. 6.22; 1 Jn. 5.11-13)

Eternal Punishment for the Wicked—Those who reject or disregard the call to repentance and salvation are doomed to eternal damnation (Jn. 3.15-21). In hell there is no escape, no liberation, no annihilation. Hell is *“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”* (Rev. 21.8; see also: 20.10-15; 2 Thess. 1.7-10; Jude 14, 15; Mt. 25.46; Mk. 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 Thess. 2.3, 8. John identifies certain “*false prophets*” and “*deceivers*” as antichrists (1 Jn. 4.1-3; 2.18; 2 Jn. 7). The prophet Daniel is in reference to this same spirit in his prophecy of the “*beast*” in Dan. 7, which corresponds with John’s vision of the “*beast*” in Rev., chapters 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 falsedoctrinesandthepretenseoffalseChrist(Mt.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 Thess. 2.3, 8) and the “*beast*” (Dan. 7.10-11, 25; Rev. 13.1). Jesus is in reference to this spirit of deception and lawlessness in Mt. 24.5, 24 and Jn. 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 Thess. 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 (Mt. 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 (Rom. 5.6-10). The Spirit of Christ indwells believers, enabling them to live their lives consistent with the law of God (Rom. 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 (Gal. 1.1-9; 2 Cor. 11.3-4). These are

“lying spirits” set to deceive and destroy precious souls (2 Thess. 2.9; Rev. 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 Jn. 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 Thess. 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 Tim. 4.12). 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”* (Mt. 5.16).

Prayer—Jesus’ admonition to *“watch and pray”* (Mt. 26.41) 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”* (Lk. 18.1), and the apostle encouraged believers to *“pray without ceasing”* (1 Thess. 5.17). We are also enjoined to *“... pray one for another . . .”* (Jas. 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 Tim. 2.1-3). Prayer is so essential to the life of the church that the church is called *“the house of prayer”* (Is. 56.7; Mt. 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 (Jn. 4.23; Eph. 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”*” (Heb. 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*” (Ezek. 44.23). 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 (Mk. 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 Cor. 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*” (Jn. 13.35).

Walking Circumspectly—Children of God should “*walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time for the days are evil*” (Eph. 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 (Ps. 1.1-3; Phil. 1.27; 1 Thess. 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 Pet. 5.8; see also 2 Pet. 2.19-22).

Illicit Relationships—Paul admonishes us to “*give no place to the evil*” (Eph. 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 (Judg. 16); whereas Joseph wisely fled from a similar situation (Gen. 39). Paul perhaps had Joseph in mind when he exhorted, “*Flee fornication*” (1 Cor. 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*” (Jas. 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 both the servants and ambassadors of Jesus Christ. As His servants, our focus should always be to walk pleasing in His sight. God told Samuel “. . . *for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward*

appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16.7). As such, our primary focus should not be on adorning our outward person, but the "hidden man of the heart." We are informed that the character traits of the inner man—"modesty," "shamefacedness," "sobriety," and the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," etc., (1 Tim.2.9-10; 1 Pet. 3.3-4) are "*in the sight of God of great price.*"

At the same time, however, our outward appearance is viewed also by men and therefore the saints of God should reflect a Christ-like character and witness (2 Cor. 3.2-3; 5.20; 8.21). As ambassadors for Christ, we should dress in a manner which represents Christ and His values to the world. Those "*professing godliness*" should be holy in their appearance and should never adorn themselves in provocative, seductive, and gaudy clothing and/or cosmetics [lipsticks, eye shadows, etc.] which create a superficial beauty, and which tend to contradict and confuse the godly qualities of "lowliness," "wholesomeness," "holiness," "sobriety," "meekness," "gravity," "purity," and Christ-likeness. For the Lord "[beautifies] the meek with salvation" (Ps. 149.4).

To be sure, our primary and most important emphasis should be on manifesting the inner graces of the Spirit which result from the new birth—love, patience, faith, hope, godly contentment, peace, gentleness, meekness, mercy, sobriety, gravity, etc.; but we are admonished also to adorn the doctrine of God (Titus 2.10), which includes the outward signs of salvation—"lifting holy hands," "praying," "praise," "rejoicing" ["shouting," "clapping of the hands," etc.], "thankfulness," "good works," and a "meek and quiet spirit." Further, it must include also dressing in modest apparel, which logically precludes the wearing of jewelry, gold, pearls, and costly array (1 Tim. 2.9-10; Titus 2.3, 10; 1 Pet. 3.3-5).

It is true that there are many references in the Old Testament that show that God's people under the Old Covenant adorned themselves with jewels and precious stones. But as we move from the Old Testament to the New, we find that these ornaments of gold and silver and precious jewels were symbolic of the inward graces of salvation. Thus, the prophet Isaiah wrote, "*I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels*" (Is. 61.10). In point of fact, the members of the church are themselves the "jewels" of God (Mal. 3.17). We should seek therefore to cultivate the inner light of

the Holy Spirit in our lives, in order to be a “*city set on a hill*” to manifest the light and glory of God’s holiness before a watching world.


Both the inner graces of the indwelling Spirit and our modest outward dress and behavior give witness to the attributes and fruit of believers who have been transformed by the grace and power of Christ, and who have been informed in regard to His teachings and have fully committed themselves to reflect His holy image.

Corporate and Self-Discipline—Self-examinations to evaluate one’s own faith and spirituality are healthy (1 Cor. 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 (Mt. 18.15-20). (A harsh spirit of criticism is detrimental to the spiritual welfare of both the critic and the one receiving the criticism: Mt. 7.1-5; 2 Cor. 2.1-11; Gal. 5.14-15; Eph. 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 Cor. 5.1-7; Gal. 6.1-5).

These 19th Annual Assembly Minutes
were approved and verified by

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Wade H. Phillips".

Wade H. Phillips,
Presiding Bishop/Moderator

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Wanda K. Busbee".

Wanda Busbee, Chief Clerk

