

23rd General Assembly

September 1-6, 2026



THEME

A CHOSEN Generation

Zion Assembly Church of God

**5512 Waterlevel Hwy
Cleveland TN 37323**

Administration

Presiding Bishop.....Wade H. Phillips

Superintendent of Operations.....J.J. Davis

Chief Clerk.....Wanda Busbee

Becky Land, Donna Pounders, Marie Llaneza, Brenda Reitler, Juanita Pyles,
Barbara Ion, Kim Merrill, Rosa Nicholson, Rose Snyder.

Chief Usher.....Tod Deakle

Chad Spicer, J. L. Green, Daren Childers, Jared Spicer, Sam Ferrell, Jerry
Nichols, Daniel Greene, Jack Ferrel, Bill Reid, Richard Merrill.

Chief Registrar.....Mandy Thompson

Shelby Gross, Holly Drake, Thea Ellison, Emma Erwin, Ally Thompson,
Rachel Gregory, McKenzie Thompson, Avery Pounders.

Assembly Business Committee

Chairman.....J.J. Davis

Tom Brown

Joanes Oboo

Byron Harris

Tod Deakle

Leyre Hernandez

Pete Sarry

Media Team

Chairman.....J.J. Davis

Cody Major

Joey Steele

Vernon Johnson

Noah Davis

Ambrosio Lopez

Tiffany Major

Stage Manager.....Joseph A. Steele

Music.....Zachary and Kari Snyder/Kim Erwin

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

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

Spanish Interpreters.....Ambrosio Lopez



Wade H. Phillips
Presiding Bishop

Welcome Delegates

It is a privilege to welcome every minister, member, visitor, and friend to this 23rd Annual Assembly. We trust that you will be blessed and edified during this mighty gathering of saints from around the world. May this week be a spiritual banquet of heartfelt praise and worship, Spirit-inspired preaching, and wholesome fellowship.

The General Assembly provides a forum for us to hear from God and proclaim His prophetic Word: to rekindle the fires of holiness and Pentecostal power; to fan the flames of evangelism; to stir our affections for fellowship with God and one another; to deepen our consecration; and to lay out a plan for the church as we go forward to fulfill our God-ordained mission in the world.

About the Theme . . .

“A Chosen Generation”

The theme for this General Assembly is taken from 1 Pet. 2.9. It elevates the divine call and prophetic expectation of the church, suggesting that we are the on-going progenitors of a new human race (Gal. 3.16, 26-29); that we, being born again through the shed blood of Christ, are a “purchased possession,” a “royal priesthood,” a “holy nation,” a “chosen generation,” to show forth to all nations the “praises” of Christ—His impeccable virtues and heavenly exaltation. And that God has raised up and transformed us by the Holy Ghost that we might reflect in our visible union a new human race begotten by Christ Jesus. He is the Seed that enables us to reproduce a new human race in His image here on earth (Rom. 8.29; 2 Cor. 3.18; Gal. 3.16, 26-29; Eph. 2.19-21). Just as one man, Adam, plunged the race of man into sin and apostasy, so Christ, the Second Adam, has restored in us the glorious image of the Father (Rom. 5.14; 1 Cor. 15.22, 45). And when all are begotten, whom the Father has ordained to eternal life before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13.8; 17.8; Eph. 1.4; Rom. 8.28; Jn. 1.1-14, 16-18), and all are united in visible union (Jn. 10.16; 17. 20-23; 1 Cor. 1.10; Phil. 3.16; Zech. 2.10-11; Is. 2.2-3; 25.6-9; 49.1-6; 60.1-5), then Christ shall offer up the kingdom to the Father so that He and all those reproduced after His Seed, shall be all and in all (1 Cor. 15.20-28; 1 Jn. 5.18-20; Jn. 17.20-23; Eph. 1.10; 2.14-16; 4.11-16; 3.6; 5.26-27).



JJ Davis
*Superintendent
of Operations*

Greetings

Seed, shall be all and in all (1 Cor. 15.20-28; 1 Jn. 5.18-20; Jn. 17.20-23; Eph. 1.10; 2.14-16; 4.11-16; 3.6; 5.26-27).

The General Assembly is a holy convocation. Let us, therefore, enter this meeting soberly and prayerfully and with prophetic expectations.

These beautiful facilities have been provided for us by our Lord and the hard work and liberal giving of our people. This is your International Ministries Complex. We trust you will feel “at home” and be always courteous and respectful toward each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. The following instructions are offered to help ensure everything will proceed smoothly during the several sessions of this important meeting.

- 1) Delegates should consult with the appointed Assembly staff (superintendent of operations, ushers, stage manager, etc.) when dealing with any problems that might arise during the week.
- 2) Always remain in designated areas of the building—auditorium, main hallway, children’s church room, nursery room and bathrooms.
- 3) No food, drinks (except water), or chewing gum is permitted in the sanctuary.
- 4) Please see the Media Team for assistance with sound equipment, images (scriptures, pictures, etc.), and with monitors, soundtracks, and other media devices.
- 5) Observe all parking signs in the church parking lot.
- 6) Kidz’ Convention schedule is posted in the Assembly program.
- 7) 10) Be sure to register!

We trust you will enjoy your time in Cleveland throughout this great 23rd Annual Assembly.

Update on Fellowship Hall Expansion and International Ministries Complex

We stayed on schedule this year and paid off the loan [1.4 million] made with Smart Bank for the Educational Wing of our International Ministries Complex [IMC]. Once this was accomplished, our plan called for the church to move forward with a new impetus to fulfill our overall vision for the IMC. The final stage was laid out in the 2014 Assembly, namely, the construction of a multi-purpose building that would include facilitating our General Assemblies in the immediate years ahead. However, as things happened, a more urgent need arose to expand the seating capacity of our Fellowship Hall. Accordingly, the Assembly resolved to do this first, then to refocus on completing the IMC.

To our chagrin, however, the recently elected or appointed city/county officials in Cleveland virtually halted our plans to expand the Fellowship Hall on the basis that it would require a sprinkler system. To complicate the matter, the sprinkler system would in turn require us to install an 8" waterline under Hwy. 64 or under Old Kinser Road to replace the old 2" waterline. This would be necessary for us to have adequate access to the Ocoee Utilities system. The additional expense needed to comply with this demand is approximately \$200,000. In any case, if not now, we will yet come to grips with this additional expense when we embark on the final phase of our plan to build the new multi-purpose IMC facility.

Meanwhile, we will continue to negotiate and argue our case for the Fellowship Hall expansion before the "powers that be" in Cleveland. Join us in seeking the favor and wisdom of the LORD as we go forward. For the God that parted the Red Sea and stood the mighty Jordan on its head for the sake of His people can in a blink solve our present difficulties with the civil establishment in Cleveland.

Pre-Assembly Programs

Ministers' Meeting
Tuesday, September 1st
10.00 a.m.

The Annual Ministers' Conference will commence at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary of the International Ministries Complex. The meeting is open to all. Ministers and leaders 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)**

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: Becky Land, SC; Guest Speaker: Lee University professor, Dr. David Roebuck. 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 Committee Meeting **Wednesday Morning, September 2nd** **9:00 a.m.**

The Assembly Business Committee (ABC) will meet at International Ministries Complex beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday to finalize its report to the 23rd 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.

National Overseers' Meeting **Monday, August 31st** **10:00 a.m.**

The National Overseers will meet with the Presiding Bishop and Mission Director for a special consultation regarding issues peculiar to their respective nations.

Assembly Program

Tuesday Evening

6.30 p.m.

Praise and Worship—led by the Cleveland church

High expectations for a Spirit-filled week in the Lord!

—Jared Spicer, KY, Allen Thompson, MS

Opening of the 23rd Annual General Assembly:

Comments and Official Declaration

Multi-lingual Concert of Prayer:

by National Overseers

[Special focus on nations under persecution]

Voice of Zion/SYNC boost—Mandy Thompson



Ladies Ministries Report—Pam Jones, director



Assembly Expense Offering

In Concert—Becky Land

Message—“Glorification” (Rom. 8.17-18, 30; 2 Cor. 3.18; 4.6;
Eph. 1.3-14; 2.6; 5.27; Heb. 6.4—Todd McDonald



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.*

Note: 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.

Praise Him!—Crossville church

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]

Message—"A Royal Priesthood" (Ex. 19.5-8;
Deut. 26.16-19; 2 Cor. 5.17-6.10; 1 Pet. 2.5, 9)
—Scott Neill, SC



Special Song—Vernon Johnson, TN

Senior Ambassadors' Program
—Donna Pounders, director



Assembly Expense Offering

Special Singing—Miguel Garcia, Sr., CA

**Message: ". . . many nations shall be joined to the Lord
in that day, and they shall become My people"**
(Zech. 2.10-11; Is. 2.2-3; 49.1-6; 60.1-5; Mt. 5.14;
Jn. 10.16; 11.49-52; Eph. 1.10; Rev. 21.21-27)
—Zachary Snyder, AL



Thursday Morning

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

9:00 a.m. Camp Report—Kim Erwin,
Coordinator



**“Singing and making a melody in your heart
unto the Lord”—Trevor Graves, KY**

Message—“an Holy Nation” (Ex. 19.5-8; 23.2; 24.6-8;
Deut. 4.5-8; 2 Cor. 6.14–7.1; Eph. 5.26-27)
—Pam Jones, KY



Fishers of Men Program—Bruce Sullivan, director



—Lunch Break—

Thursday Afternoon

1:30 p.m. “O Magnify His Name”—Victoria Greene

In Memory . . .

Members: E.A. McDonald, Arlynn White, Raymond Stonell,
Brenda Hill, Gene Price.

Friends: Jimmy Surratt, Albert Monroe, John Emery, Perry Hill,
Anthony Lucas.

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

Special Singing—Yomi Adekunle, Nigeria

Message—“Duly Ordained” (Ex. 29; Mk. 3.13-19; Lk. 6.12-16;
Acts 6.6; 14.23; 1 Tim. 4.14-16; Titus 1.5-9)
—J.J. Davis



ORDINATION SERVICE

—Supper Break—

Thursday Evening

6:30 p.m. **School of Ministry Program**

—Bruce Sullivan, director



Message: “Love never fails” (1 Cor. 13.8)

—Kim Erwin, KY



In Concert—Trevor Graves

Assembly Expense Offering

Miracles of Healing: TBA

Message—“Go . . . [pray for] . . . lay hands on the sick” (Mk.16.18; Acts 5.15-16; 9.17; Jas. 5.14-15)

—Kari Snyder, AL



Healing Line and Prayer

Friday Morning

Attention: The annual SYNC luncheon will be held at 12:00 in the Fellowship Hall. L. W., Carter, guest speaker. All SYNC members, Lena King members and invited guests are encouraged to attend.

9:30 a.m. In Concert . . .

—Alex and Holly Drake, KY



Mortgage Burning Ceremony—directed by Scott Neill

Message “. . . filled with all the fulness of God”

(Eph. 3.19)—Ricky Graves



—Afternoon Break—

Friday Evening

[**Attention:** All youth [12-35] meet at 7:30 in the Corridor for Youth March]

6:30 p.m. “Make a Joyful Noise”—Brass Band (Ps. 150.3-5)

Shepherding Ministries Program

—Alice Jones, director



In Concert: Andy Davis

Media Ministries

—J.J. Davis, director



Youth Program

—Allen Thompson, director



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

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

Saturday Morning

8:45 a.m. Morning Prayer Service—directed by Daniel Green

9.15 “Rejoice, O City of God!”—led by Scottsville church

Message—“And they went forth, and preached everywhere” (Mk. 16.20)

—Tom Brown, WV



—Assembly Choir—

Presiding Bishop’s Annual Address

—Lunch Break—

Saturday Afternoon

2:30 p.m. Praise Him!—led by Michael George

Assembly Business Committee Report

Doctrine Committee Report

Message—“Go . . . and, lo, I am with you . . .”

(Mt. 28.20) —Miguel Garcia, Sr., CA

—Supper Break—

Saturday Evening

6:30 p.m. “Exalt Him!”

—led by Caledonia church

Drama Presentation—“A Chosen Generation”

directed by Donna Pounders



Message—“[Laboring] together with God”

(1 Cor. 3.9-16; 2 Cor. 6.1)—Leyre Hernandez



Assembly Expense Offering

World Mission Program

—Joseph Steele, Mission director



Multilingual Hymn

Awards and Recognitions

National Overseers’ Reports:

Video-slide show

Message—“A Godly Generation vs. a Wicked Degeneration”

—Parade of Nations—

Sunday Morning

9:30 a.m. Sunday School Lesson—Jim Orange, TN

Message—“Steadfast, Unmovable”

(1 Cor. 15:58; Acts 20:22-24; 2 Pet. 3:14-18)

—Lee Spicer, TN



Sunday School Program

—Mandy Thompson, director



Children’s Ministries Program

—Kara Spicer, director



—Assembly Choir—

Message—“... that the world may believe ...

and know ... and be made perfect in One”

(Jn. 17:20-23) —Harris Gregory, KY



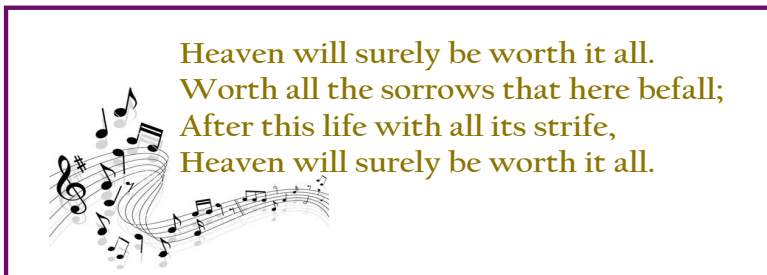
Announcements

Appointments

Consecration Service

Song: “Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All” —led by Becky Land

Official Closing



Assembly Appointments

2026-2027

International Executive Council _____

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 Booster _____

National Evangelist _____

Committees

Assembly Business

Chairman _____

Doctrine

Chairman _____

International Properties

Chairman _____

General Trustees _____

National Overseers

Argentina _____

Bangladesh _____

Benin _____

Bolivia _____

Burundi _____

Cambodia _____

Cameroon _____

Canada _____

Chile (Mission) _____

Colombia _____

Costa Rica _____

Cuba _____

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) _____

Dominican Republic _____

Guatemala _____

Haiti _____

Honduras _____

India, Mid-East _____

India, South _____

Kenya _____

Malawi _____

Mexico, North _____

Mexico, South _____

Mozambique _____

Myanmar/Burma (Mission) _____

Nepal _____

Nicaragua _____

Nigeria _____

Pakistan (Mission) _____

Peru _____

Philippines (Mission) _____

Rwanda _____

South Sudan _____

Tanzania _____

Thailand _____

Togo (Mission) _____

Uganda _____

United States_____

Uruguay (Mission)_____

Venezuela_____

Zimbabwe_____

Zambia (Mission)_____

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/New Mexico_____

California/Nevada_____

Oregon/Washington_____

The General Assembly and Theocratic Government

The General Assembly is an extraordinary event because 1) it represents the universal [catholic] expression of the church in worship, fellowship, and decision-making; 2) it is a factor in the unity and progress of the church; 3) when in session, it is the highest tribunal of authority on earth under Christ in matters of faith, biblical interpretation, church government, and discipline 4) it is informed and guided by the presiding bishop and chief elders of the church (Acts 15.2, 6, 22; 16.4; 21.17-20).

The **presiding bishop** is the chief elder among elders, “*bishop of bishops*” or “*first among equals*” in the hierarchy of the church’s governmental structure (Mt. 20.27; Acts 15.17). He presides over [moderates] the General Assembly. In counsel with the “*chief men among the brethren*” (Executive Council), he acts on behalf of the church when the Assembly is not in session. Even in the General Assembly, these elders [**presiding bishop** and “*chief men among the brethren*”] provide structure, order, and leadership in the discussions and decision-making process; and they also “*ordain the decrees for to keep.*” James, the Lord’s brother, was the presiding bishop, recognized as such shortly after Jesus ascended back to the Father, and he continued in this position until his martyrdom (Acts 15.13-20; 21.17; 1 Cor. 15.7; Gal. 2.9; Jas. 1.1). He thus held this position apparently for about thirty years. Besides the evidence given in Scripture that points to his esteemed position, there is overwhelming evidence in the early church fathers who flourished between the end of the first century to the fourth century. Clement of Rome (possibly the same Clement mentioned in Phil. 4.3), Hegesippus, Eusebius, et. al. all claimed that James, the Lord’s brother, was made Bishop of Jerusalem and as such “*ruled all the churches everywhere*” until his martyrdom.

The General Assembly in Acts 15 was a special-called event. It convened only one time in the New Testament, significantly Jerusalem. It would seem a stretch to consider the meetings recorded in Acts 1.13-26 and 6.1-7 to be general assemblies.

In Zion Assembly, the first General Assembly was convened in 2004 in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Thereafter it became an annual event, representing the one time of the year [unless there is a special-called Assembly] that ministers and members from all over the world assemble in the name of Christ to bind and

loose on earth what God has bound and loosed in heaven (Mt. 16.19; Acts 15.1–16.5). All present consecrate themselves to find the perfect mind of Christ in all matters of faith, government, and discipline. 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 led by the presiding bishop and chief elders acts in an official capacity as God’s *ekklesia* [**“ruling assembled body”**] having been ordained and authorized by Christ to do so (Mt. 16.18-19; 18.18-20; Mk. 13.34; Lu. 19.13; Jn. 20.23; Acts 15.1-29; 16.4-5). In this special meeting, the ministers and members reason together with God and one another (Is. 1.18; Acts 15.6-19, 28); look judiciously into the Holy Scriptures (Acts 17.10-11; compare Acts 15.15-18 with Amos 9.11-12); and seek diligently for the Spirit’s illumination until an understanding is reached in harmony [**“one accord”**] with the Scriptures and the presiding bishop and chief elders (Acts 15.28-29; 16.4). Then, having come to this understanding, all agree to **“walk by the same rule,” “mind the same thing,”** and have **“the same judgment”** (1 Cor.1.10; Phil. 3.16; Is. 52.8), that is, the whole body of the ministers and members commit themselves to live and walk together as one body in Christ according to the Scriptures and the decrees of the sacred meeting.

Because the Bible is the supreme objective authority of the church, the General Assembly correspondingly is “a judicial body only” in matters of faith, government, practice, and discipline, that is, the General Assembly does not legislate but rather interprets the Bible to understand the will and purpose of God. Since the decrees of the General Assembly are binding on the ministers and members (Acts 16.4; Rom. 16.17), they must be shown to be either explicitly or implicitly in harmony with the teachings of Christ and the apostles and elders.

Again, the biblical model for the General Assembly and our judicious process is found in Acts 15.1--16.5. Here the apostles and elders gathered with the whole church (vv. 1-4, 12, 22-23, 28) and prayed and deliberated with the help of the Spirit until all were able to **“see eye to eye”** in harmony with the guidance of the presiding bishop and chief elders, most especially the elders **“who labor in the word and doctrine”** (Acts 6.2,4; 1 Tim. 5.17).

The Assembly is accordingly led and guided by duly recognized **“chief men”** in the church (15. 1-4, 6-17, 22-27). Thus, it is said that the decisions made in the council in Jerusalem **“pleased the apostles and elders and the whole church”** (vv. 22), and again, **“for it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us”** (v. 28). Then on this basis, all agree to live and walk by the decrees [*dogmas*]

of the Assembly which are ordained by the presiding bishop and the elders. And, as such, the churches are established in the faith and increase in number daily (16.4-5).

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 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).

Every male minister and member of the church in good standing is invited to participate in the decision-making process; the women also contribute through prayer and in consultation with their husbands and elders (1 Cor. 14.28, 34; 1 Tim. 2.11-12). This is based on the premise that everyone in good standing is regenerated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who leads and guides into all truth and righteousness (Jn. 14.26; 15. 26, 16.12-15; 1 Cor. 2.1-16). All stand together spiritually therefore as equals before the Lord (Gal. 3.28; Rom. 10.11-13; 1 Cor. 12.12-28; Col. 3.11). Even so, all do not stand on equal footing regarding the callings and gifts of God in the government, ministry, and decision-making. For example, “novices” do not stand on equal footing with bishops and deacons (1 Tim. 3.6), and the roles of men are distinguished from the roles of women in the decision-making process (1 Tim. 2.8-14; 3.1-5). The bishops and elders are called, set apart, and enabled by God to lead and guide the church (1 Tim. 3.1-13), that is, bishops are qualified to ***“teach,”*** for they are called and ordained to ***“labor in the word and doctrine”*** (2 Tim. 3.17), and the deacons assist the bishops [pastors]. The elders are therefore set apart and distinguished for this purpose. Thus, Paul in his letter to the Philippians distinguishes the bishops and deacons from ***“all the saints”*** in his greeting (Phil. 1.11).

It is a startling illumination to realize that in all the New Testament, there was apparently only one General Assembly convened, and it appears to have lasted for less than one day. This means the Apostles and Elders, and their successors ruled the church for more than fifty years without requiring a General Assembly. This revelation exalts the eldership of the church, led by James, the Lord’s brother, Peter and John, and other chief men among the brethren. Accordingly, it puts great weight and responsibility upon elders to be humble and consecrated through prayer and meditation upon the Word of God.

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 who had grown up with him”** (vv. 8-10), which signified that he was partial in his decision-making and succumbed to the opinion of the young men who were actually opposed either wittingly or unwittingly to the will of God. Indeed, those young men typically were full of themselves: arrogant, boastful, and harsh in their judgments (vv. 10-14).

It will be noticed further, regarding the house of God under Rehoboam, that ultimately the will of God is all that really matters, and His will is best discerned and understood by the elders and men and women who have consecrated themselves to the Lord. In any case, God always ultimately has His way—sometimes despite 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 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! Likewise, God’s true church today is foreordained to succeed in her mission and purpose, nothing can prevent that! (2 Chron. 7.13-22; Is. 30.1-16; 60.1-5; Jer. 18.1-11; Ezek. 37-1.14; Mt. 16.18; Eph. 5.26-27).

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 and the Scriptures. This is the key to theocratic government—the indwelling graces and gifts of the Spirit being allowed to prevail in the church in harmony with the Scriptures. Again, it should be emphasized that among the highest gifts in the church are the gifts to oversee [govern/rule] the church; to feed, nourish, discipline, and perfect God’s people (Mk. 13.34; Lk. 19.13; Acts 2.47; 1 Cor. 4.16; 11.1-2; 12.28; Eph. 4.7-16; Phil. 4.17; 1 Thess. 1.6; 2 Thess. 3.7-9; Heb. 13.7, 17).

Now observe: the apostle Paul was **“not a whit behind the very [chief] of the apostles”** (2 Cor. 11.5; 12.11-12) and in a peculiar way was called and chosen by the Lord for a special purpose (Acts 9.11-16; 2 Cor. 11.5; Eph. 3.1-10);

yet he saw the need to report to James and the elders in Jerusalem—men of ***“reputation”*** and high standing in the church, in order to maintain divine order and unity (Acts 21.17-26; Gal. 2.1-2, 9). Even among the apostles there was thus a hierarchy of government and administrative authority. Timothy, Titus, and scores of other elders and ministers were subject to the oversight [rulership] of Paul. Paul was subject to the oversight of James, Peter, John, and the chief elders at Jerusalem (Acts 12.17; 15.13-21; 21.17-26; 1 Cor. 15.7; Gal. 2.11-14), and James, Peter, and John were subject to God and the decrees of the General Assembly—that is, the resolutions adopted by the whole body of the church assembled in duly-ordained order (Acts 15.22-23; 1 Cor. 12.12-28).

The role of the Holy Spirit in the government and divine order of the church is indispensable. He is the ultimate wisdom and power of the church, revealing the Headship of Christ and His ultimate authority. Thus, He does not speak for Himself but for Christ, who in turn speaks for the Father (Jn 5.19-43; 14.26; 15. 26; 16.12-15). He creates a spiritual dynamic within the church that unites the ministers and members together intrinsically in one body of Christ. 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 spiritual unity and power of the church is therefore in sanctification and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which enables us to maintain a consecrated devotion to Christ and for every man to abide in his own calling in the divine order (1 Cor. 12.12-28). When everyone’s ego is crucified, then Christ is free to rule supreme—the kingdom of God prevails! Christ thus 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, God’s glorious government in this last day’s Zion depends on our willingness to allow the Spirit and the revelation of the Scriptures to hold sway over us in matters of faith, practice, and government: and in the fulfillment 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***
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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 the elders with all the brethren were together ***“in one accord in one place”*** (Acts 1.14; 2.1, 46; 4.24; 8.6; Phil. 2.7), and because they answered God’s call and humbled themselves until they were of ***“one heart and one soul and great grace was upon them all.”***

Now you may be saying in your thoughts, this section of the address really exalts the elders. Precisely. Because the Scriptures tell us to do so (1 Tim. 5.17; 1 Thess. 5.12-13; Heb. 13.7, 17). In our history, we have tended to swing the pendulum of church government from one extreme to the other. In the beginning, in our first 25 years, we tended to embrace a democratic or congregational form of church government; and even tended toward individualism. Then beginning about 1912 we began to develop a papal-like episcopal form of government which led to the disruption of the church in 1923. Now, one hundred years later we can see by hindsight and experience a more perfect form of church government—a more perfect theocratic order. The elders indeed should be ***“very highly esteemed in love for their works sake”*** (1 Tim. 5.17; see also 1 Cor. 9.1-14; Phil. 2.25, 29; 1 Thess. 5.12-13; 1 Tim. 3.1-16; 5.1; Heb. 13.7, 17); but all the ministers and members should have a mutual respect, for all have the Holy Spirit who abides within us to teach and lead us in all truth and righteousness. There must be, therefore, a deep sense of humility that permeates the whole universal body of the church (Eph. 4.1-3).

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pet. 5.1-5).

Should we expect God's blessings to fall on this last day's Zion on the bases of anything less than that upon which He blessed the New Testament 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; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 4.4-16; 5.26-27).

—WHP

Assembly Sites

2004 - 2025

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



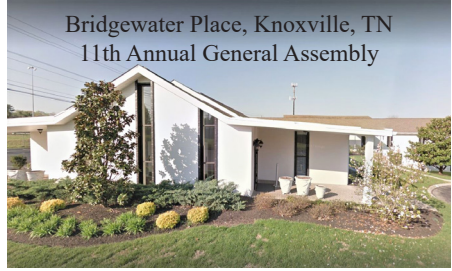
T.L. Lowery Center, Cleveland, TN
8th Annual General Assembly



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, 17th-22nd Annual General Assemblies



—NOTES—

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

—NOTES—

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

