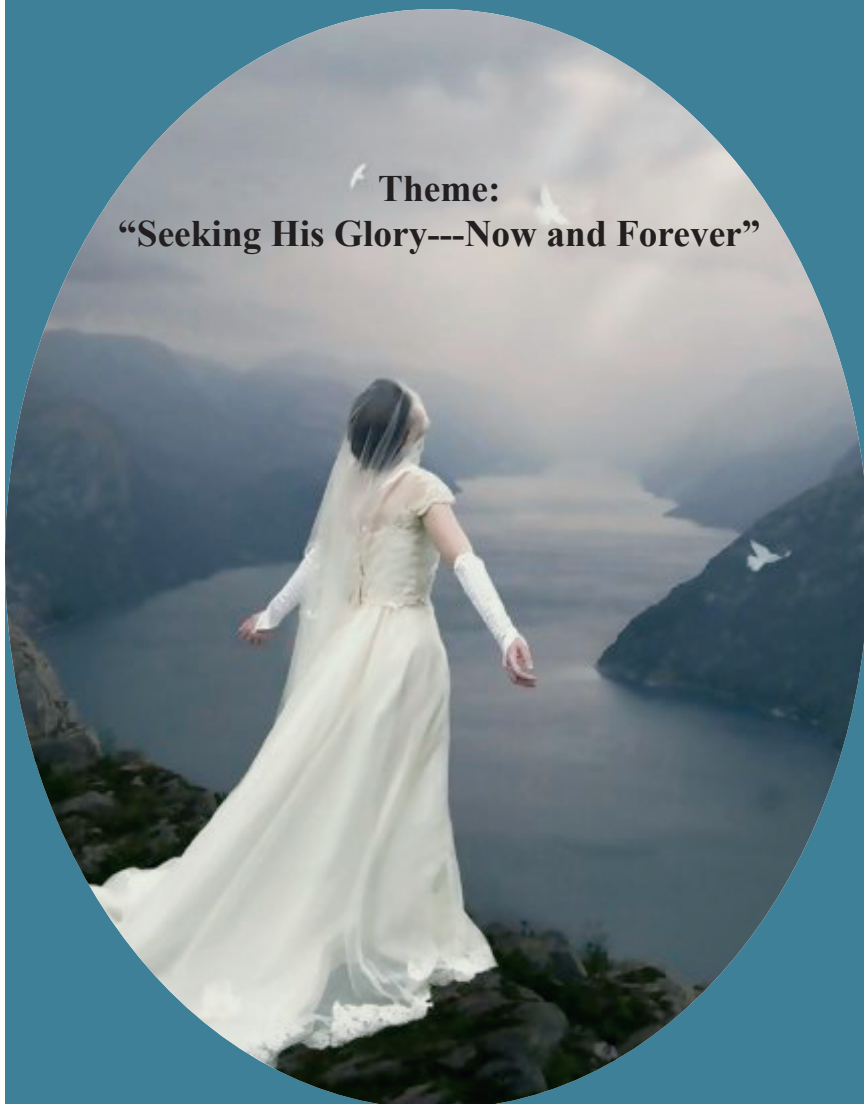


Zion Assembly Church of God  
*Minutes*  
8th Annual General Assembly  
September 6-11, 2011

**Theme:**  
**“Seeking His Glory---Now and Forever”**



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# Zion Assembly Church of God



## International Ministries Complex

*Sites of the 8th Annual General Assembly*

## T. L. Lowery Center



## **J. W. Buckalew (1870-1918)**

### **“Rough and Ready”**



The church has been built by men and women of faith---pioneers who sacrificed temporal comforts and pleasures to answer the call of God and proclaim the fullness of the Gospel. Some have even given their lives to fulfill the church’s mission in this world. We should be careful therefore to honor the names and courageous exploits of these faithful pioneers and not allow them to fall into obscurity. In regard to our illustrious fathers and mothers, may the Lord help us to “have good remembrance of [them] always” (1 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Timothy 1:15 Hebrews 11:4-40).

Typical of many of our early pioneer ministers was J. W. Buckalew. Though unpolished and deprived of a formal education, yet he was powerfully anointed and produced much fruit for Christ and the church. A drunkard, gambler, and brawler before his conversion (being left for dead on one occasion after a fight over a gambling dispute), he was wonderfully saved under the influence of L. P. Adams, and a little later baptized with the Holy Ghost under the preaching of another one of our early pioneers, Miss Clyde Cotton. He subsequently joined the church on February 20, 1910.

Buckalew worked during the day in cotton fields to support his family and preached the Gospel at night. He was a huge man, well over six feet in height, with a hulky frame. He ministered in a roughshod manner, which won him the nickname, “Rough and Ready.” He stood up against severe persecution; was arrested on several occasions for the sake of the Gospel; was stoned and slandered, his revival tents burned to the ground; yet he persevered in the Spirit. He was a fearless warrior for Christ. Thousands gathered to hear him proclaim the Gospel in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and adjacent states.

In 1911 Buckalew was part of the Pentecostal Mission Band that traveled to Florida and the Bahama Islands under the oversight of A. J. Tomlinson, and later was instrumental in winning two of the church’s future leaders, J.B. Ellis and T. S. Payne. He suffered much to help build God’s house, and sometimes for his own shortcomings: but those who knew him well had no doubt that when his spirit departed his body on January 24, 1918, it was caught up in glory. He and his faithful wife, Mattie, were deprived of much in this life, but it worked for them “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17).



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

## Welcome!

Excited, hopeful, expectant! These are a few words we have heard from our people in recent weeks to express their anticipation of this General Assembly. Some of the phrases we have heard are: “I am coming to the General Assembly to hear from God,” “to be healed,” “to be blessed,” “to be up-lifted,” “to get a greater vision of God’s work,” “to see a move of the Holy Ghost,” “to witness the shekinah glory.” We are praying that all of these expectations will be met as we pray and consecrate ourselves for this important meeting.

This is the eighth time we have met like this since 2004, and on every occasion we have heard from God and have sat “in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” We expect no less in this General Assembly. No one will deny that we need to be “filled with the Spirit” and to “walk in the Spirit” during these next few days. Consecrating ourselves insure that we will embody the right spirit and attitude to be a blessing in this important event.

Our theme this year is: *“Seeking His Glory---Now and Forever!”* The glory of God refers to His beauty, power, perfection, and honor. His greatness and supreme authority arise from His holy character. His glory includes His amazing grace, divine mercy, inexplicable goodness, and miraculous power. It is sometimes manifested as a visible presence---in burning fire and dazzling light and miraculous interventions (Exodus 13:21; 14; Leviticus 9:23-24; 1 Kings 8:11). But under the terms of the New Testament, God desires especially to manifest His glory in His church. We are now privileged to be indwelt by His glory and are called to embody His perfections (John 17:6,6, 20-23; 2 Corinthians 3:2,3,18). Indeed, we are to “show forth His praises” (1 Peter 2:9). Even so, we have this glory in “earthen vessels” (1 Corinthians 4:7); so there is still a perfection of glory that will be realized only in glorification---in the rapture and in the new heavens and new earth (Revelation 21:23). We must seek therefore “His glory now and forever.”

This is what we have felt impressed to emphasize in this General Assembly. This is our “high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” We are called to be a “holy nation” “to show forth His [perfections]”---to be the “light of the world!” May the Lord grant it to be so. Amen.

# **Eighth Annual General Assembly**

September 6-11, 2011

## **Administration**

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

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

**Chief Clerk**..... Marie Crook  
(Julia Massey, Sandra Moore, Brenda Reitler, Rita Goodrum,  
Billie Smith, Shirley Kimble, Helen Little, Sandy Morris)

**Chief Usher**..... Eddie Davis  
Ed Reitler, Milford Kimble, Cecil Pounders, Tod Deakle,  
Bill Reid, Robert Ramirez, Lynn Jones, Daren Childers,  
Jerry Tingler, Dave Ashley, Jim Hayward, Carlos Brock

**Chief Registrar**..... Eunice Gregory  
(Matthew McDonald, Heather Melton, Ashley Neill,  
Amy Decareau, Ashley Reitler, Rachel McDonald)

## **Assembly Business Committee**

**Chairman** ..... Charles Fields  
Zachary Snyder  
A. B. White  
Joseph Steele  
Miguel Garcia  
Joshua Amara  
C.R. Gregory  
(Alternates)  
Ray Dickson  
Ron Massey

**Video**..... Scott Neill

**Music and Sound Equipment**..... Zachary Snyder

**Photography**..... Marie Crook

**Projection Director**..... Julie Steele

**Stage Manager**..... C.R. Gregory

# Greetings!



**E.A. McDonald**

*Superintendent of Operations*

It is our sincere desire that you will feel welcome in this 8th Annual General Assembly, and that “Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith... that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:17-19).

The following instructions are given to help make your attendance to the General Assembly a memorable and enjoyable experience in the Word and Spirit. This year we will be in the T.L. Lowery Ministries Center (off Paul Huff Hwy---next to K-Mart at the Bradley Square Mall) for the Thursday-Saturday sessions. The rest of the time we will be in our International Ministries Center. We are thankful for the facilities that have been made available to us for this Assembly. Please help us show our appreciation for the use of the Lowery facility by properly caring for the property and equipment they have provided.

Personnel have been appointed to address any problem that may arise during this Assembly. If you should need assistance while you are here, please consult with the authorized persons to make any adjustment or change in the facilities or equipment. Ushers will be stationed at each aisle entrance for your convenience. If you encounter a problem please report it to one of the ushers.

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

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

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

**Nursery:** Nursery facilities are provided for your convenience, please look for directions to the Nursery in the hallway.

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

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

## **Pre-Assembly Programs**

### **Assembly Business Committee Monday, September 5, 2011**

The Assembly Business Committee will meet beginning at 6:00 p.m. to finalize its report to present to the 8th Annual General Assembly. The Adjunct Committee will meet with this committee at this time in regard to its work on the *Abstract of Faith*. Anyone who has relevant questions or presentations may do so at this time. Personal interviews with the Committee should be arranged through the chairman.

### **Ministers' Meeting Tuesday, September 6, 2011**

Beginning at 9:00 a.m. the annual ministers' council will convene in the sanctuary of the International Ministries Center. All ministers are encouraged to attend and participate, including mission directors. The purpose of the meeting is to promote unity and understanding through prayer and discussion. The Assembly Business Committee's report will be read and discussed. Also the floor will be open to discuss all relevant issues that might need clarification.

### **Ministers' and Companions' Luncheon (Immediately Following Ministers' Conference) 12:30 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 at the Mountain View Inn (take 25th Street, go under I-75, go to light, turn right up the hill). Dress code: most of the men prefer to wear suit and tie for this occasion. Special singing: Brenda Whitlock; Barry McDonald; Guest Speaker: Elijah Wafula; Presentation: Dale L. Phillips.

# Assembly Program

**Tuesday**

6:30 p.m.

“Glory in Praise”---Todd & Cheryl McDonald, TN

**Burning Exhortations** (five minutes each):

“*His Glory in our Body*” (1 Corinthians 6:15-20)

---Tina Stephenson, SC

“*His Glory in our Spirit*” (2 Corinthians 7:1)

---Jeannie Quillen, MD

“*His Glory in our Work*” (1 Chronicles 28:20)

---Bruce Wilcox, TN

**Message**--- “*His Glory filled the Tabernacle*” (Exodus 40:34)

---Harry Purdham, VA

## **Official Opening of the Assembly**

Welcome!---C.R. & Eunice Gregory

Multi-lingual Concert of Prayer for this Assembly,  
led by representatives of Swahili, Spanish, English,  
Greek, Tagalog, Telegu, Luo, Yoruba, French

Special Songs---Marie Crook, GA; Molly Hayward, MD

Assembly Expense Offering

Special Songs---Regina Brooks, MS

**Message**— “*The Glory of His Grace*” (Ephesians 1:6)

---Scott Neill

Prayer and Consecration Time

## Wednesday

9:00 a.m.

Glory in Praise---Nicole Pounders & Alicia Harris, MS  
Special Songs---Jim Melton, WV; Robert Bagwell, SC

Message---“*Glory in Steadfastness*” (1Corinthians 15:58)  
---Byron Harris, MS

### General Treasurer’s Report

International Leaders’ Reports:

- Presiding Bishop
- Assistant Presiding Bishop
- Media Ministries Director
- Field Secretary
- Field Secretary
- Field Secretary
- Ladies Ministries Director
- School of Ministry President
- Shepherding Ministries Director
- Youth Director
- Sunday School Director
- Children’s Ministries Director
- Sunday School Director
- Voice of Zion* Booster
- SYNC* Director

---Lunch Break---

[**Note: Kidz’ Konvention** schedule is: Thursday: 6:30-8:00 p.m. Friday: 10:15-11:45 a.m. 7:00-8:00 p.m. Saturday: 9:00-10:30 a.m. 2:30-4:00 p.m. 6:30-8:00 p.m. A special Children’s Program is scheduled also on Sunday morning in the main auditorium].

2:00 p.m. Musical Prelude

## **Reports from Around the World**

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

### **2:10 United States**

**Note:** *The five regions in the United States will report at intervals as designated in the program.*

### **2:15 East Africa**

Joshua Amara, Field Secretary

Kenya---Joshua Amara, Overseer  
Tanzania---Joshua Amara, Overseer  
Uganda---Joshua Amara, Overseer  
Sudan---Elijah Wafula, Overseer

### **2:30 West Africa**

Joshua Amara, Field Secretary

Nigeria---Yomi Adekunle, Overseer  
Ghana---David Dordah, Overseer

### **2:40 Central Africa**

David Gomba, Mission Representative

Malawi---Mariel Dzuwa, Overseer

### **2:50 United Kingdom**

England---Joshua Amara, Overseer

**2:55 Central America**

Miguel Garcia, Field Secretary

Nicaragua----Freddy Garcia, Overseer

Guatemala----Ricardo Valenzuela, Overseer

**3:10 Caribbean**

Miguel Garcia, Field Secretary

Dominican Republic----Rafael Ventura, Overseer

Haiti---Sandraud Pierre, Overseer

**3:25 Mexico**

Danny Ramirez, Overseer

**3:35 South America**

Miguel Garcia, Field Secretary

Peru---Samuel Medina, Overseer

Chile---Javier Diaz Perez, Overseer

Argentina---Javier Diaz Perez, Overseer

Uruguay---Javier Diaz Perez, Overseer

Paraguay---Javier Diaz Perez, Overseer

**3:45 Philippines/Guam**

Domingo Resurreccion, Overseer

**4:10 Southeast Asia**

(under direction of Presiding Bishop)

Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar (Burma)

**4:15 Middle East**

George Assi, Mission Representative

Pakistan---George Assi, Overseer

India---Padma Talari Rao, Overseer

----Supper Break----

## **Wednesday Evening**

7:00 p.m. Glory in Worship!---Cheryl McDonald

### **Mid-Central Region March & Report**

---Ricky Graves, Overseer  
(Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana)

### **Mid-West Region March & Report**

---Joseph A. Steele, Overseer  
(Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Utah, Missouri)

Assembly Greetings--- Clifford Reagan, GA;  
Roberto Gonzales, KS; Nazario Ornelas, CO

Special Singing---Nichols Family, MS; Victoria Green, TN

Assembly Expense Offering

### **Message--- “Glorify God with one Mind and one Mouth”**

(Romans 15:6) ---Tom Brown, WV

Special Songs: Brenda Whitlock, MS

### **Message— “*Glory in Infirmities*” (2 Corinthians 12:1-10)**

---Rocky Dalton

*“Troubles, persecutions, tribulations,  
and difficulties don’t wither a Christian---  
they strengthen and perfect him.”*

## Thursday

9:00 a.m. Glorify Him in Praise!—Cheryl McDonald

[**Note:** Kidz' Konvention held tonight at 6:30-8:00 p.m.]

### Mid-East Region March & Report

---Rocky Dalton, Overseer

(West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania)

Special Songs---Andy Davis, SC

Camp Reports—Cheryl McDonald, International Coordinator

Kim Erwin (Mid-Central)

Wanda Busbee (South Atlantic)

Cheryl Harvey (Mid-East)

Cliff & Becky Kelton (South-Central)

Debbie Gill (Pacific Coast)

### School of Ministry Program

---Wade H. Phillips



Special Singing---John & Wanda Stamper  
and Margaret, VA

### Message—“*Glory in Proclaiming His Word*”

(Galatians 1:11-24)---Bruce Sullivan, SC

---Lunch Break---

2:30 p.m. Special Singing—Sam Monday & Misty Wilcox, TN;  
Becky Land, SC

### *Voice of Zion*/SYNC Boost—Glenda Major

*In Memory...*

Ordination Service



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

## Thursday Evening

6:30 p.m. Praise Him!—Nicole & Alicia  
**South-Central Region March & Report**  
---Joel Brooks, Overseer  
(Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana)

Special Songs—Billy & Patricia Summerlin, MS

**Senior Ambassadors' Program**—William F. Jones, VA

*“Ageless Glory”*

Assembly Expense Offering

Praise Reports—Lee Brown, WV; Tim Kelly, SC; Jim Melton, WV  
Special Songs---Gina Brooks, MS; Todd & Kim Erwin, KY

### Healing Service

---Lanny Carter, VA

*“But unto you that fear my name shall  
the Sun of righteousness arise with healing  
in his wings”*

---Malachi 4:2

## Friday

9:00 a.m. Praise Him!—Robert & Marie Llanaeza, NC

[*Note:* Kidz Konvention today at  
10:15-11:45 a.m. and 7:00-8:00 p.m.]

### South-Atlantic Region March & Report

---Scott Neill, Overseer

(North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida)



### Sunday School Program

---Todd McDonald, director

Special Singing---Miguel Garcia, CA

Assembly Greetings---Amos Agbonifo, Nigeria,  
Sandraud Pierre, Haiti; Binoy Joseph, India

### Radio & Media Ministries Program

---E.A. McDonald, minister



---Afternoon Break---

*Note:* The first annual *SYNC* luncheon will be held at the International Ministries Center at 1:30 p.m. Glenda Major in charge. All *SYNC* members and special guests are encouraged to attend.

---Supper Break---

## Friday Evening

7:00 P.M. Praise Him!---Nicole & Alicia

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

---Cleveland Church Choir---

**Message**---“*Glory in the Rapture*” (1 Thessalonians 4:16)  
---Kris Newberry, TN

Special Singing---The Cannons, KY

Assembly Expense Offering

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

Special Performance---Ashley Neill, SC

Special Singing---Sharon Compton, VA; Kim Irwin, KY

## Youth Program

---Cheryl McDonald, director



*“What do we mean by ‘success’ anyway? Success by whose standards? The Bible teaches that God is the final Judge before whom we shall all stand one day. God will then pronounce us successful or unsuccessful.”*

---Bill Krishner

## Saturday

8:15 a.m. Morning Prayer Service---Byron Harris in charge

[**Note:** *Kidz' Konvention held today 9:00-10:30 a.m.;  
2:30-4:00 p.m. and 6:30-8:00 p.m]*

8:45 Glory in Praise!---Cheryl McDonald  
Special Songs---Ashley Davis, WV; Lee Brown, WV

**Message**—“*From Glory to Glory*” (2 Corinthians 3:18)  
---Zachary Snyder, TN

---Assembly Choir---

Recognition of Special Guests  
Special Singing---Brenda Whitlock

## Presiding Bishop's Annual Address

---Lunch Break---

2:30 p.m. Worship Him! ---Sam Monday & Misty Wilcox  
Special Singing--- Mark Spangler, GA; Robert Bagwell, SC



**Shepherd's Ministry Program**  
---Rocky Dalton, director

## Assembly Business Committee Report

## Saturday Evening

6:30 p.m.

### Pacific Coast Region March & Report

---A. B. White, Overseer

(California, Oregon, Nevada, Washington)

Special Songs---Sharon Compton, VA; Michael George, SC

Message--- *“Glory in Fruit-Bearing”* (John 15:8)

---Jose Lozano, CA

Special Singing--- Juan Lopez, CA

### World Mission Program

---E.A. McDonald, director

*“Declare My Glory Among the [Nations]”*  
(Isaiah 66:19)



---Parade of Nations---

*“The church is a special body of believers ‘called out’ and called together in sacred covenant, to proclaim and embody Christ and His teachings, to imitate His life, and to make known His Gospel to all nations.”*

# Sunday

8:30 a.m. Sunday School Lesson---William James, CA

9:00 Special Singing---Charles Shelton, MS;  
Michael George, SC



## Children's Ministries Program

---Cheryl McDonald, director

Special Performance---George Family, SC

## Ladies Ministries Program

---Rosie Ramirez, director



---Assembly Choir---



Message---“Glory in God’s Government”  
(Isaiah 2:2; 9:6,7)---Joshua Amara

Announcements

Appointments

Consecration Service

Song: “*Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All*”  
led by Debbie, Betty, Dreama, Brenda

**Margaret Melissa Murphy**  
**(1847-1921)**  
**“Forgotten Mother of the Church”**



Melissa Murphy is virtually unknown to this generation of the church, much like Amplias, Aristobulus, Narcissus, Quartus, Urbane, Apelles, Stachys, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Philologus, and Olympas in the New Testament, all of whom were faithful workers with the apostle Paul (Romans 1:9-15, 21-23). Yet Melissa was a prominent and powerful woman of God in her day and is “worthy of remembrance” in this last day’s Zion.

The subject of this sketch was not called to any special administration of the Word of God; she was not a licensed minister nor gifted teacher, yet she was a faithful mother in the Israel of God, instrumental in nursing the infant Zion through her tender and vulnerable years in the early twentieth century. She was there in the beginning of the holiness revival at Camp Creek in 1896, and to some extent was instrumental for the establishment of the church in that place in 1902.

The Shearer schoolhouse, in which that great revival began, was named in honor of her first husband’s family, located only a stone’s throw from her little cottage; in fact she hosted the first General Assembly in her house. She also fed and entertained the delegates and participated in Assembly discussions. When her first husband (Drury H. Shearer) died, she wed John C. Murphy. Her marriage to Murphy in 1903 was the first wedding officiated by A. J. Tomlinson.

Melissa, with W. F. Bryant and about 40 others, were excluded from the Liberty and Pleasant Hill Baptist churches between 1900 and 1902 for experiencing and proclaiming entire sanctification and Spirit-baptism. Undaunted by the persecutions and violence that followed, she stood firm on her convictions. She was a close friend of A. J. and Mary Jane Tomlinson, moving with her husband next door to the Tomlinson’s on Gaut Street in Cleveland in 1905. When the church was set in order in that city in 1906, she was a charter member. Reflecting on her life, Homer Tomlinson praised her as “a lovely and wonderful woman,” comparing her to Christiana, the wife of Christian, in Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. She was a veritable jewel in God’s restored Zion, a standard of purity, goodness, and spiritual fortitude.

# Assembly Program Adjustments

**Note:** *The Assembly program was carried out as scheduled except for the following changes and adjustments:*

## **Tuesday p.m.**

Message by Donna Pounders, MS  
(Tina Stephenson, SC absent)

Message by Jim Orange, TN  
(Jeannie Quillen, MD absent)

## **Wednesday p.m.**

Assembly Greetings: Asa Hall, NY; Howard Thompson, TN  
(Clifford Reagan, GA and Roberto Gonzales, KS absent)

Special Songs: Juan Lopez, CA  
(Brenda Whitlock, MS absent)

## **Thursday a.m.**

Camp Reports: Cheryl McDonald, Ricky Graves  
(Kim Erwin, Cheryl Harvey, Debbie Gill absent)

Special Singing:  
(John & Wanda Stamper and Margaret, VA absent)

## **Friday a.m.**

Assembly Greetings---Javier Diaz, Chile; Treva Joselyn, WA  
(Sandraud Pierre, Haiti, Binoy Joseph, India absent)

## **Friday p.m.**

Special Singing: Gina Brooks, MS  
(Sharon Compton, VA absent)

## **Saturday a.m.**

Special Singing: The Cannons  
(Ashley Davis, WV absent)

## **Saturday p.m.**

Special Singing: Nichols Family  
(Mark Spangler, GA, Robert Bagwell, SC absent)

Special Singing: Mathew Tingler, VA; Lee Brown, WV  
(Sharon Compton, VA absent)

## **Sunday a.m.**

Sunday School Lesson: Todd McDonald, TN

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The Assembly opened at 7:15 p.m. (September 6),  
closed at 12:13 p.m. (September 11)

Registered Attendance: 378

Actual Attendance (Estimation): 420

## **International Staff Reports 8th Annual General Assembly**

### **Presiding Bishop's Report to the Eighth Annual General Assembly**

**September 1, 2010---August 31, 2011**

*“O come, let us sing unto the Lord . . . Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving . . . For the LORD is a great God, and a great king above all gods . . . O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker” (Psalm 95:1-6).*

This hymn expresses what I feel in my heart today for our great God---the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. I honor and praise Him today for the strength and grace He has given me to serve now for almost eight years in this sacred position.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our wonderful ministers and workers for your confidence, prayers, support, and encouragement. I can say in good conscience that we have done our best to fulfill the obligations and responsibilities of this office. Accordingly, I have answered all correspondence and calls that have come into the office this year (roughly 700 letters and e-mails); kept up a monthly correspondence with the overseers and ministers; served as the editor-in-chief and primary writer of our church paper, the *Voice of Zion*. Sister Marie Crook is especially to be commended for her assistance, and my wife, Dale, for her assistance in packaging and mailing the paper and also for many other chores that she does. These jobs require a lot of time and patience and diligent work, but Dale and Marie have labored with joy and without complaint.

Hundreds of hours have been spent in counseling with the ministers and churches, both in the office and on the field. I have worked with the General Staff, the Assembly Business Committee, the overseers, pastors, and ministers to promote the work in all of the departments and operations. I want to commend Bishop McDonald for his untiring labors in assisting me---particularly this year in regard to our missionary outreach. Also I want to commend the regional overseers, all of whom have been cheerfully cooperative with the Presiding Bishop in the promotion of the work. Some of the overseers have made extraordinary sacrifices to advance the work of the church in their regions.

Besides the responsibilities mentioned above in connection with this office, I have again this year served as the president of the School of Ministry, which has included writing a large part of the lesson material. I have also directed the mission work around the world. Bishops Miguel Garcia, Joshua Amara, E. A. McDonald, Rocky Dalton, and Todd McDonald were helpful in our mission outreach this year. They made several trips at my direction to Africa, India, Mexico, South America, and the Caribbean Islands.

The work of President for the School of Ministry included organizing and planning materials for the two schools in Nigeria, and for the regular terms of the school for the Pacific Coast Region and here in Cleveland. I taught three courses in each of the school here in the United States. Sister Norie Garavito was especially instrumental in assisting with the planning and execution of the Pacific Coast school in California, including the graduation service.

It was my privilege to attend and preach in two of the regional conventions in the United States this year. I worked also with the Sunday School director in planning the Sunday School lessons and assisted with the final edits. I was able to visit and preach in 25 of our churches---including Mobile, AL (twice), Okolona, MS (twice), Columbus MS, Jacksboro, Chestnut Hill, Cleveland, Pulaski, TN; Fairmont, Idamay, Little Bingamon, and Smithfield, WV; Rialto, CA; Pelzer, SC (twice), Greenville, SC (twice), Taylors and Ware Shoals, SC, Adolphus, KY, and Fries and Roanoke, VA. I was the guest speaker in two other organizations for special events, one in Xenia, OH and one in Cleveland. I attended the Ladies Retreat in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee and served on the Adjunct Committee, preparing the new articles that will be brought before this Assembly for consideration to be added to our *Abstract of Faith*. This work included an overnight session in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, and several days work here in our office in Cleveland. I planned and moderated also the General Assembly.

You may have heard that I had some sickness and afflictions this year, but I can say with the apostle Paul, "out of them all the Lord delivered me" (2 Timothy 3:11). Overall, I was out of the office for about three weeks, but most of those days I was able to work from home---and so the work did not suffer. It was necessary to postpone only two appointments and four other appointments were carried out for me by Bishops E. A. McDonald, Todd McDonald, Ricky Graves, and Brother Zachary Snyder.

I want to take this opportunity to give praise to the Lord for the progress that has been made in the church this year, and also for the personal strength that he has given to me. I have felt at times like a failure,

and always more or less inadequate for the peculiar responsibilities associated with the office of Presiding Bishop. My experience enables me to say with the psalmist, “Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost [would have] dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slips [has slipped]; Your mercy, O LORD, held me up” (Psalm 94:17, 18).

Some statistics of personal work:

Sermons Preached.....	199
Revivals conducted.....	4
Converted.....	8
Sanctified.....	3
Holy Ghost Baptisms.....	1
Added to the church.....	0
Baptized in Water.....	0
Tithes paid.....	\$3130.00
Offerings given.....	.960.00
Miles traveled.....	41, 000
(approximately 4,000 by air, 37,000 on ground in behalf of work)	
Churches organized...(assisted)....	0
Churches visited.....	25
Regional Conventions Attended....	2
General Assembly (Moderated).....	1

Finally, I want to express my appreciation to my wife, Dale, for her faithfulness to me and the church, and for her untiring efforts in working with me to build up the church. She and I are “laborers together with God.” Together we want also to take this opportunity to thank everyone in supporting us with your many kindnesses and gracious words, and for the abundance of love that you have showered upon us. I have said it before, but it’s worth repeating: in some ways the office of Presiding Bishop is the corporate expression of the whole church; for so many of you here today have supported and sustained it. May the Lord continue to bless and keep you in His great grace and power. I am by the grace of Christ,

Your willing servant

*Wade H. Phillips*

## **International Shepherding Ministries Director**

I greet this 8th General Assembly with great joy and appreciation for all of God's great love and benefits. I praise and worship Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior. I am thankful for the privilege to have served as your Shepherding Ministries director again this year and for all that God has done through this ministry. It is an honor and a joy to work in harmony with our Presiding Bishop and all of the headquarters staff and my fellow ministers.

### **During this Assembly year I attended:**

Annual Ministers Conference and 7th General Assembly.

Prepared a program for Shepherding Ministries for this Assembly.

Sent letters of communication to Regional Overseers and Shepherding directors.

Attended Mid-East Regional Men's Retreat as guest speaker.

Attended East Coast Youth Convention in TN.

Taught School of Ministry classes in Lagos and Ibadan, Nigeria.

Instructed new shepherding director in Ibadan, Nigeria and gave him materials.

Gave Shepherding Ministries presentation at the TN School of Ministry and taught a class on Spiritual Leadership.

Received a post-graduate certificate at TN School of Ministry.

Participated in Mid-East Region Youth Camp (teaching and music).

Attended the Mid-Atlantic Regional Convention and preached.

Gave counsel and instructions to various Shepherding directors.

Served as Mid-East Region Overseer while pastoring the Fries, VA church.

Served as chairman of the Adjunct Committee.

I have been faithful in tithing and reporting to headquarters.

No. Sermons as Shepherding director---5

Miles traveled by car---3,262 air miles---13,162 ground

Respectively submitted,

Rocky Dalton

# **Assistant Presiding Bishop's Report**

## **Greetings in Jesus name:**

To God be glory, honor and praise for the great things He has done. This has been a blessed year for Zion Assembly. God's people are being awakened by the still small voice of the Good Shepherd, and the sheep scattered abroad are asking their way to Zion. I have been privileged to work another year as Assistant Presiding Bishop and have served in this capacity to the best of my knowledge and ability. I have sought to serve the church with sincerity and integrity, and have assisted the Presiding Bishop, whenever and wherever I have been needed since the General Assembly in 2010,

In November I visited the church at West Mobile, Alabama. I also traveled to Kansas City, Kansas where I met with Danny Ramirez and Jerry Nichols who accompanied me to meet Roberto Gonzales, pastor of an independent Hispanic church in Lenexa, Kansas. After meeting with him and several of his members, I ministered in the afternoon worship service. This work has been followed up by the Regional Overseer, Joseph Steele.

In December, 2010, I visited Kenya, East Africa, and ministered twice to the East Africa Regional Convention. I then traveled to north Kenya where I visited with Brother Elijah Wafula, the district overseer, and pastor of the church at Mois Bridge. While I was there, I visited the schools at Mois Bridge and Yuya, where about 168 children participate in the daily feeding program. We also visited seven independent churches in three days and I ministered to about 60 ministers who represented about 150 independent churches.

In February, 2011 Brother Rocky Dalton and I traveled to West Africa where we conducted two Schools of Ministry in Lagos, and Ibadan, Nigeria. More than two hundred and ten ministers and church leaders representing thirty three church organizations attended these schools. We currently have applications of twenty ministers in Nigeria who desire to be licensed with Zion Assembly.

In March 2001 I conducted a revival in Okolona, Mississippi. In April I prepared materials and taught in the School of Ministry in California. In May I served as an instructor in the School of Ministry in Cleveland.

In June, 2011 Brother Todd McDonald, Miguel Garcia, Sandraud Pierre, Overseer of Haiti, and I went to Haiti where we met with Bishop, Santanel Hostelus, Overseer of the Church of God-Church of the Bible, and about 30 of his ministers. At the close of the two day meeting, Bishop Hostelus and 24 ministers united with Zion Assembly along with about 75 members. We then returned to Dominican Republic where I met with the ministers there before returning home to the US.

In June I was the headquarter's representative to the regional conventions in Cleveland and California. I ministered two times in each of these conventions.

This year I have traveled more than 45,000 miles (mostly by air) doing the work of the ministry.

My Personal Report:

Sermons Preached & Lessons Taught.....	98
Number Saved .....	0
Number Sanctified.....	0
Number Baptized in Water.....	0
Number receiving Holy Ghost.....	0
Number Added to the Church by Covenant.....	90

Where possible I encourage ministers who have labored in ministering to prospective members to receive the members into the church, therefore giving honor to whom honor is due. For practical reasons I was assisted by National Overseer, Saundrud Pierre in receiving Bishop Hostelus of the Church of God---Church of the Bible into Zion Assembly, and together we three received a total of 90 members into the church in Haiti.

More information concerning missions will be given during the mission program on Saturday evening.

My work as General Treasurer and Media Minister will be given as a separate report.

Respectfully Submitted,

*E. A. McDonald*

## World Mission Secretary Report

In behalf of our mission representatives around the world and our staff at the International Offices, we give glory, honor, and praise to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for all that has been accomplished this year in behalf of missions. We want to express our appreciation to everyone who contributed funds, time, and effort to support World Missions in 2011. Many have worked tirelessly, others have given of their finances sacrificially, and still others have sacrificed their time and efforts to help raise funds to send our representatives to the mission fields. In addition to the work done by our regional and national overseers, there have been eighteen World Mission trips outside the US during this Assembly Year. Mission Representatives have been sent to Malawi, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Chili, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Sudan, and two times each to Uganda, Haiti, and Dominican Republic.

In November 2010 Brother Miguel Garcia visited Peru in behalf of the church work there. In December I visited the Kenya National Convention where I preached twice. I then traveled to North Kenya where I met with Brother Elijah Wafula. We visited the Children's ministry program there involving 168 children. We held 7 meetings in three days and ministered to about 60 ministers who represented about 150 independent churches. These brethren are pleading for the School of Ministry to come to North Kenya this Assembly Year. In February 2011 Brother Rocky Dalton and I conducted two Schools of Ministry in Lagos and Ibadan, Nigeria. More than two hundred and ten ministers and church leaders representing thirty-three church organizations attended these schools. In February 2011 Brother David Gomba went to Malawi in Central Africa and met with the overseer of Pentecostal Power Church which has about 20 congregations. The overseer, Mariel Dzuwa, united with Zion Assembly. In March Brother Danny Ramirez went to Mexico with Brother Auturo Hernandez and met with Rudi Sandoval, who oversees a group of about 14 congregations. In June Brother Javier Diaz united with the Zion Assembly and has established the church in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, with 20 local churches and about 400 members. Brother Amara went to Tanzania in July and met with Bishop Edward Agar who oversees an organization of about 40 churches. Bishop Agar and these churches united with Zion Assembly.

In February 2011 Brother Todd McDonald and Miguel Garcia met with Brother Sandraud Pierre, the overseer of Haiti, and Rafael Ventura, the overseer of Dominican Republic, and so the brethren traveled together to Haiti. There they received one minister into Zion Assembly. In June, Brother Todd McDonald, Miguel Garcia and Sandraud Pierre and

I returned to Haiti and met with the Overseer, Santanel Hostelus of the Church of God-Church of the Bible and about 30 of his ministers. At the close of the meeting, Bishop Hostelus and 24 ministers united with Zion Assembly along with about 75 members. Brother Sandraud Pierre returned to Haiti in July and received 10 more ministers into Zion Assembly. Since July Brother Pierre’s report shows that we now have 87 ministers and 87 churches with 23,000 members in Haiti. Other church groups numbering about 40 churches in Haiti have also expressed their desire to unite with Zion Assembly.

Reports show that more than 135 churches with more than 26,000 members have united with Zion Assembly from outside the US during this Assembly year.

You are to be commended for your faithful financial support for World Missions. Thirty four churches participated in October and March mission drives, raising a total of \$100,263.79 for World Missions. The regular second Sunday mission offerings were \$ 18,851.33 making the total mission offering for the 2011 Assembly year \$ 119,115.33.

**RECOGNITION OF MISSION REPRESENTATIVES:**

- East Africa Field Secretary, and Overseer of Kenya,  
Tanzania, and Uganda.....Joshua Amara
- Overseer of Dominican Republic.....Rafael Ventura
- Mission Representative to Malawi,  
Mozambique, Zambia..... David Gomba
- National Overseer of Mexico.....Danny Ramirez
- National Overseer of Philippines.....Domingo Resurreccion
- National Overseer India..... Talari Padma
- National Overseer Chili, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay..... Javier Perez
- Field Secretary to Central America, South America,  
and the Caribbean..... Miguel Garcia
- Lagos, Nigeria.....Bishop Amos Agbonifo

**Others who have made Mission Trips this year:**

- Sunday School Ministries Director..... Todd McDonald
- Shepherding Ministries Director..... Rocky Dalton
- Women’s Ministries Director.....Rosie Ramirez

**Respectfully submitted,**  
*E.A. McDonald*

## **General Treasurer's Report** *8th Annual General Assembly*

We give praise to God for all He has done this past year in Zion Assembly. The economic crunch which is now affecting the whole world has not deterred Zion Assembly from accomplishing her mission. The local churches and pastors are to be commended for their continued support of our international ministries. God has provided the means of supporting all our mission efforts this year. For this we give glory to God. I want to recognize Cheryl McDonald for her able assistance in the Treasurer's office. In addition to her appointed duties as Children's and Youth Ministries director, she serves as the secretary for the treasurer's office. The work of the treasurer includes keeping records of all ministers and local church reports. Reports are recorded on the computer and hard copies for each local church and minister are maintained in permanent files. All reports are totaled at the end of the fiscal year giving a summary of the year's work for each minister and local church. Copies are made of all checks and all funds are deposited in First National Bank of Cleveland. All funds disbursed from the International office are made by check requiring both the signature of the Presiding Bishop and General Treasurer. Books are balanced monthly and at the close of the fiscal year. A yearly summary of all funds sent to the International Offices are made and reported to the General Assembly. It has been an honor to serve the church as General Treasurer another year. I have fulfilled all responsibilities related to this office to the best of my knowledge and ability.

Respectfully submitted,

*E.A. McDonald*

GEN. CHURCH YEARLY RECEIPTS, EXPENDITURES, BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2011												
FIRST QUARTER	TITHES	VO Z-SUB	ORPHAN	EXPENSE	MISSIONS	BLD. FUND	SC. OF MIN	E. Fund	YOUTH	OCT-MAR	OTHER	TOTALS
BALANCE FORWARD	43030.12	-11426.73	16566.76	-27720.01	687.96	-37440.5	1513.93	96	4542.33	24782.84	3547.96	18180.66
RECEIPTS	39074.1	6026.04	4133.67	15196.98	6172.04	0	1113.17	712.04	1198.02	2758.99	7825.37	83211.42
EXPENDITURES	-29411.14	-2404.3	-60	-10889.92	-7985.45	-10735	0	-430	-436.22	-19000.54	-8325.37	-89677.94
BANK BALANCE	52693.08	-8804.99	20640.43	-23412.95	-1125.45	-48175.5	2627.1	378.04	5305.13	8541.29	3047.96	11714.14
<b>SECOND QUARTER</b>												
BALANCE FORWARD	52693.08	-8804.99	20640.43	-23412.95	-1125.45	-48175.5	2627.1	378.04	5305.13	8541.29	3047.96	11714.14
RECEIPTS	36615.77	2008	3917.55	50	3477.8	0	1076.27	205.5	2776.6	48895.8	15657	114680.29
EXPENDITURES	-30011.14	-5381.79	-1255	-4414.94	-6919.01	-10635	0	0	-2052.18	-29465.11	-15452	-105586.2
BANK BALANCE	59297.71	-12178.78	23302.98	-27777.89	-4566.66	-58810.5	3703.37	583.54	6029.55	27971.98	3252.96	20808.26
<b>THIRD QUARTER</b>												
BALANCE FORWARD	59297.71	-12178.78	23302.98	-27777.89	-4566.66	-58810.5	3703.37	583.54	6029.55	27971.98	3252.96	20808.26
RECEIPTS	37349.61	5732	3398.34	1386.65	4533.38	0	876.14	650	763	1521.16	17576.95	73787.23
EXPENDITURES	-29765.55	-5008.17	-1.39	-9667.89	-5025.07	-10635	-1276.21	0	-158.99	-14708.05	-7574.7	-83821.02
BANK BALANCE	66881.77	-11454.95	26699.93	-36059.13	-5058.35	-69445.5	3303.3	1233.54	6633.56	14785.09	13255.21	10774.47
<b>FORTH QUARTER</b>												
BALANCE FORWARD	66881.77	-11454.95	26699.93	-36059.13	-5058.35	-69445.5	3303.3	1233.54	6633.56	14785.09	13255.21	10774.47
RECEIPTS	36215.56	783	4223.33	303.8	4668.11	627.64	6085.98	298	1104.83	47768.17	13235	115313.42
EXPENDITURES	-29609.2	-4947.3	-1200	-3825.74	-6982.15	-11262.64	-3887.46	0	-39.99	-25605	-18640.74	-106000.2
BANK BALANCE	73488.13	-15619.25	29723.26	-39581.07	-7372.39	-80080.5	9501.82	1531.54	7698.4	36948.26	7849.47	20087.67
<b>YEARLY SUMMARY OF ALL FUNDS RECEIVED, EXPENDITURES, AND BALANCE IN TREASURY JUNE 30, 2011</b>												
TITHES	VO Z-SUB	ORPHAN	EXPENSE	MISSIONS	BLD. FUND	SC. OF MIN	E. Fund	YOUTH	MISSION	OTHER	TOTALS	
1869.61	0	5140.03	0	687.96	0	1513.93	96	4542.33	782.84	3547.96	18180.66	
149255.04	13549.04	15672.89	16937.43	18851.33	627.64	9151.56	1865.54	5843.45	100944.12	54294.32	386992.36	
-118797	-17741.56	-2516.39	-28798.49	-26911.68	-43267.64	-5163.67	-430	-2687.38	-88778.7	-49992.81	-385085.4	
32327.62	-4192.52	18296.53	-11861.06	-7372.39	-42640	5501.82	1531.54	7698.4	12948.26	7849.47	20087.67	

Amount transferred ZACOG Media Account:	35000
Amount returned to Media Account:	30000
Balance Owed to Media Account:	5000

Bank Balance after Loan Repayment: \$ 15,087.67

## Media Ministries Director Report

I am grateful to God for the opportunity I have had to pioneer the **Voice of Zion** international radio ministry. The program is currently one hour in length and is broadcast over “Freedom Radio FM” on Saturdays at 10:00 A.M. and Sundays at 11:00 A.M. Eastern Standard Time. The programs have been duplicated and broadcast about four thousand times since the last Assembly. The broadcast is currently on 38 stations with a potential listening audience of more than four and one half million people. The program can also be heard around the world over the “Freedom Radio FM” Website, and our own Church Website 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. According to reliable statistics about two billion people around the world now have access to the program through the internet. Once again I want to express appreciation for all those who pledged to support the broadcast with their prayers and finances in the 2010 General Assembly. More than 44 pledged their financial support and over \$12,000.00 has been received at the International Offices this year to support our radio program. In addition, \$12,000 was given by the Cleveland Church to purchase video cameras and equipment for producing television programs and taping lessons for the School of Ministry to use in our World Mission Outreach. Keeping the Website has been a difficult task this year. We are making needed adjustments for the coming year that will help us be more efficient in posting updated materials on the internet.

Access to our Internet Website is [www.zionassemblychurchofgod.com](http://www.zionassemblychurchofgod.com). You can still access Sunday School materials including more than one hundred Bible Study lessons, Children Ministry helps, Current radio programs, the Presiding Bishop’s Annual Addresses, Publications (including orders for the *VOZ Magazine*, *Abstract of Faith*, General Assembly Minutes, etc), a listing of all local churches and addresses including the pastor’s name; Youth Camp, Men’s and Ladies Retreat applications; General Assembly broadcast, and much more. We will also have a prayer request line and a live update page with updates from the International Offices. Tentative plans include enabling you to place orders and pay for them on our Website by October 1. Please continue to pray for the media ministries and for the success of our radio program.

Respectfully submitted,  
*E. A. McDonald*

## Zion Assembly Media Account Report

Number of Pledges Received at the 2010 General Assembly.....	44
Number of Contributors from September 2010-August 2011.....	38
Amount Pledged at the 2010 General Assembly.....	[\$ 14,050.00]
Balance Brought Forward September 1, 2010.....	\$ 14,760.79
Amount Received from Pledges	
September 2010-August 2011.....	\$12,211.67
Amount Received from private donations through	
Cleveland, TN church for video equipment.....	\$12,000.00
Total Received for year 2010-2011.....	\$ 24,211.67
Expenditures for Video Equipment.....	\$13,234.70
Expenditures for Radio Program.....	10,624.28
Total Expenditures from September 2010- August 2011.....	\$ 23,858.98
Loan Transfer to General Church Account.....	\$ 12,500.00
Current Bank Balance on September 1,2011.....	\$ 2,613.48
Balance of All Funds Including Receivables:.....	\$ 15,113.48

Respectfully submitted  
*E.A. McDonald*

*“All our money has a moral stamp. It is coined over again in an inward mint. The uses we put it to, the spirit in which we spend it, give it a character which is plainly perceptible to the eye of God.”*

---Thomas Starr King

# International Camping Coordinator/Advisor

## Greetings to the 8th Annual General Assembly

As the International Camping Coordinator and Advisor, I praise the Lord for the ministry provided to today's youth through the Camping Program of Zion Assembly Church of God. This year a new regional camp was added increasing our total number of camps within the United States to five. These camps were conducted in the following regions: Mid-Central, Mid-East, South Central, Pacific Coast and new this year, South-Atlantic. My family and I were privileged to attend three of these camps. During the month of June, I taught a Bible class for children ages 7-11 at the South-Central camp in Nauvoo, AL. At the Mid-East camp in Fayetteville, West Virginia, I assisted in the music class and in the children's craft class. In July, I taught daily Bible classes on prayer to three different age groups at the Mid-Central camp in Adams, TN. Each of these camps was a special blessing to me and to the children and youth in attendance.

I want to commend every director, teacher, preacher, counselor, cook, and staff for their dedication to the Lord, the church, and our youth. I am impressed with these devoted individuals who use personal vacation days, as well as travel and lodging expenses to be involved in this ministry. Their hours of planning, preparation, and prayer have paid off in the many spiritual experiences which resulted.

The combined statistics for the 2010-2011 camping ministry are as follows:

Regional Camps conducted: 05

Campers: 228

Staff: 110

Converted: 40

Sanctified: 29

Baptized with Holy Ghost: 11

Baptized in Water: 21

Special Blessings: 6

I appreciate the opportunity to minister to the children and youth in our structured and evangelistic atmosphere. To God be the glory for all that is being accomplished through the camping ministry.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Cheryl McDonald*

## **International Youth Ministries Director**

### Greetings to the 8th Annual General Assembly

I have appreciated the opportunity to minister to the youth of the church this year. In November, I organized the General Youth Convention for the Eastern Region which was conducted in Cleveland, TN with over 125 in attendance. I also had the privilege of traveling to Rialto, California to coordinate the Pacific Coast Youth Convention with an attendance of 265. The theme for both conventions was “Got Direction: Jeremiah 29:11.” The Spirit of the Lord was present in each of the meetings to encourage and direct our youth. At the close of each service, the altars were filled with young people who are hungry to know the Lord’s will for their lives. Zion Assembly is blessed to have a growing group of young ministers who preach under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

In March 2011, my family and I traveled to Adolphus, KY to speak and lead in worship for the Mid-Central Regional Youth Convention. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and worship for the youth of that region.

During the months of June and July, I taught in three of our five regional youth camps. I also organized the Friday night youth program of the General Assembly.

I praise the Lord for His direction and protection over me and my family as we labored together to teach and minister to today’s youth. How great is our God!

Respectfully submitted,

*Cheryl H. McDonald*

*“Youth is a curse to mortal man, when with youth a man has not implanted righteousness.”*

---Euripides

## **International Children's Ministries Director**

### ***Greetings to the 8th Annual General Assembly***

I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside so many gifted children's ministers. Zion Assembly is blessed to have talented individuals who feel a special calling to train children to be Christ's disciples. In order to equip and inform our children's ministers of upcoming events, I have written a quarterly newsletter called "The Chalkboard." As a means of promoting Children's Day, I prepared thematic materials and gathered resources for each local church to use. In November 2010, I organized children's classes for the Eastern Regional Youth Convention. Throughout this year my husband, Todd McDonald, and I have worked together to write Sunday School literature for children. On March 26, 2011 I presented a brief workshop on "Teaching Children About Missions" at the Eastern Ladies' Retreat in Pigeon Forge, TN. In May 2011 I was privileged to teach a class on Youth and Children's Ministry during the Cleveland, Tennessee School of Ministry. During the summer months of June and July I traveled to three of our regional youth camps to work and minister to children. For this year's Assembly I recruited teachers, organized classes and prepared activities for the Kidz Konvention. I also planned the Children's Sunday morning program for this General Assembly. I thank the Lord for using me to teach children about the love of Jesus.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cheryl H. McDonald*

***"Dedication is a lifetime process in which a Christian forms the habit of consciously involving Jesus Christ in every event of everyday of his life"***

---Bertha Munro

## **International Sunday School Director**

### ***Greetings to the 8th Annual General Assembly***

In 2011 my primary work as director of Sunday School Services involved writing, developing, and electronically publishing the Faith-N-Focus curriculum. During the past year, I wrote a six-month study on the topic of “Church Growth Principles.” We then repeated a six-month study, “The Mission of the Church.” During the past six months, Sister Cheryl McDonald has assisted me in developing lesson plans for our children’s teachers. Along with the adult Bible study series, the “Faith-N-Focus for Teens” and the “Faith-N-Focus for Young Disciples” are now available. God has enabled Zion Assembly to provide a free curriculum for all ages: adults, teens, and children. For this, we praise the Lord.

Subscriptions are continually increasing as the church is growing around the world. We have 150 English subscribers and 35 Spanish; however, a few of the Spanish subscribers do not receive the English. Therefore, we actually have 155 total subscriptions: some being for individuals (teachers), some being for churches, and some for countries/regions. Further over and above subscriptions, the lessons are being forwarded, translated, photocopied, and distributed for use.

In addition to Spanish, which covers many of the countries where our churches are organized, the curriculum is being translated for use in the Philippines and in India. I am pleased to report that our overseer in Haiti will be translating the curriculum into French. In brief, the Sunday School ministry is growing with the growth of Zion Assembly. Subscriptions are increasing, the curriculum is expanding, the translation work is growing, and new writers are being added to this ministry.

As the Sunday School Director and a representative of the International Offices, I was privileged to make two mission trips into Haiti this year, the first in February with Brother Miguel Garcia, and the second in July with Brother E. A. McDonald and Brother Miguel Garcia. Both trips were significant in establishing the church in the country of Haiti.

Finally, I want to say “Thank You” to all of our faithful workers in the Sunday School ministry. Your contribution is indispensable. I appreciate the honor of serving Christ and his church in this capacity.

Respectfully submitted,

*Todd McDonald*

# ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE REPORT 2011

*We, your Assembly Business Committee, after prayerful and careful consideration, make the following recommendations for your consideration:*

## Section 1: Abstract of Faith

We would like to commend the members of the Adjunct Committee for their diligent work in preparing the articles on *Man, Sin, Works of the Flesh, Perseverance, Christian Perfection, and Antichrist*. We now present these subjects for your consideration. If approved, the articles will be added to the *Abstract of Faith* and new booklets will be printed in English, Spanish, Swahili, and French.

## Section 2: Behaving Ourselves in the House of God

We recommend that this Assembly endorse Section I, subsection 2, of the Presiding Bishop's annual address titled "Behaving Ourselves in God's House." The ministry of Zion Assembly should promote proper dress and behavior in the house of God, with a sense of reverence and a degree of formality. The ministers especially should be sensitive to the Scriptural responsibility that they be "examples" to the flock. Our places of worship have been dedicated to the adoration of Christ and the performance of ministry in His name. We should endeavor, therefore, to create a spiritual atmosphere for worship, the proclamation of His Word, and the call of sinners to repentance and saints to order. Hallowed by His presence, the place where we meet becomes "holy" and "dreadful" (Genesis 28:17). We should not treat that which God has called sacred and holy casually and irreverently.

### **Section 3: “Remembrance Day”**

We recommend that each local church observe a special “Remembrance Day” on or about April 20th of each year in order to keep before us the significance of our restoration work and purpose since 2004. The anniversary celebration might include preaching, testimonies, skits, dramas, historical readings, reminiscences, and photo displays. The ultimate purpose should be to magnify the prophetic vision of the church, and to recommit ourselves to the great commission that Christ gave to the church before He ascended back to the Father.

### **Section 4: Regional Overseer’s Financial Support**

We would like to emphasize the importance of the 4th Sunday offering which is designated for the regional overseer. We want to encourage our people to honor and support our overseers, for they give so much of their time, effort, and themselves to the work of God. Almost all of our overseers pastor a church in order to be full time in the ministry and to do their overseer work. Some on occasion also have had to do secular work to support their families. We recommend, therefore, that each local church heartily boost this offering (perhaps by appointing a local booster) and that the offering be sent promptly to the regional treasurer with the local church treasurer’s monthly report.

We further recommend that consideration be given to the overseer on special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, and a special offering should be received during the regional convention for the overseer and his family.

## Section 5: Immigration and Marriage

It seems important to bring to the attention of the church the endorsement we gave to a section of the Presiding Bishop's annual address in 2010, titled "Immigration." The endorsement reads as follows: "We fully endorse our Presiding Bishop's annual address on the issue of Immigration. It is to be understood by this Assembly that our position in regard to this issue is to minister to everyone indiscriminately in each and every nation, whether or not they are citizens or considered illegal immigrants in the various nations in which they live, and leave the legal aspects of immigration to the various civil governments."

We recommend further that in cases of marrying illegal immigrants that a record of the marriage be kept by the church, particularly in cases in which the parties may not be able to obtain a license by the state: for then no record would exist that will hold the couple accountable for their sacred vows. In order to remain committed to the importance of the bond of marriage, we recommend that an application for marriage be drawn up by the Presiding Bishop's office (so that necessary information can be obtained and recorded), that a license be designed, and that copies of the application and marriage license be sent to the International Offices for a permanent record. It should be understood, further, that the church's role in officiating and binding marriages is strictly spiritual and moral in nature, not legal. The church continues to believe that only death ends a marriage, and therefore the church has no authority to grant divorces, or to settle disputes arising from divorces in regard to finances, property, children, etc.

Our ministers should use discretion in performing marriages between illegal immigrants, or between a citizen of a particular country and an illegal immigrant, taking into consideration the couple's faith commitment and other considerations that would insure the church and the minister that they are free to enter into a biblically valid marriage (according to our understanding and teaching in Zion Assembly Church of God), and that they are mature and resolute enough to live up to the terms of their sacred vows. We admonish our ministers, therefore, to proceed in performing and sanctioning marriages with much gravity and soberness, always giving due counsel and consideration to the consenting parties.

## **Section 6: Media/Communications Ministry**

We recommend that this Assembly endorse Section V of the Presiding Bishop's annual address titled, "Media/Communications Ministry." This committee stands in full agreement that every available means at our disposal should be used to fulfill the great commission that Christ gave to the church. We further endorse the Presiding Bishop's vision of an international television ministry.

We would like to express our appreciation to all who have responded so faithfully to give to the radio ministry and to those who have followed through with your annual pledges. The offering and pledges this Assembly year will help us to inaugurate the television ministry. Please continue to be faithful to give to this vital ministry.

## **Section 7: General Financial System**

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

## **Section 8: Emergency Fund**

We want to once again bring to the attention of this Assembly an important recommendation that was passed in the 2007 Assembly concerning the Emergency Fund. That resolution was expressed in this way: *"We recommend that each member of the church contribute at least \$5.00 per year to an Emergency Fund that would be used to assist ministers and local churches in the event of an unforeseen emergency. Non-members may also contribute. Requests for emergency help would be directed to the General Treasurer who would then consult with the Presiding Bishop and the General Finance Committee to disperse the funds for emergencies. All Emergency Funds will be received and sent to the General Treasurer with the local Treasurers monthly report within the period of January 1-December 31."* The pastors and churches should endeavor to implement this resolution as much as possible.

## Section 9: *Voice of Zion* Subscriptions/SYNC Membership

We recommend that this Assembly endorse Section VI of the Presiding Bishop's annual address titled, "*Voice of Zion* Magazine." We would like to bring to the attention of this Assembly the importance of subscriptions to our church magazine, as well as SYNC ("Subscribe Your Neighbor Club") memberships. The need is great for this arm of the church to become self-supporting. An increase in subscriptions is of the utmost importance.

We would like also to bring to the attention of this Assembly the need for the *Voice of Zion* to be translated and produced in Spanish and French, in addition to English. Our overall outreach is greatly hindered because funds are not available to translate and publish the paper in these languages. Nevertheless, these goals can be reached if every minister and member will feel the burden and catch the vision of the importance of this need. We recommend, therefore, that each local church appoint a *Voice of Zion*/SYNC booster, and that each booster strive to get his/her local church become 100% in subscriptions this year.

## Section 10: Young People

We recommend that this Assembly endorse Section VII of the Presiding Bishop's annual address titled, "Young People---Indispensable." Young people are indispensable to the life of the church and the fulfillment of the church's mission in the world. A local church that does not have a vibrant and spiritual youth group is a local church that is essentially dying.

In order to promote the importance of the indispensability of young people, we recommend that each church appoint a youth director and that efforts be made to organize a youth group. We further recommend that each local church organize a monthly activity to get young people involved in the church, such as cook-outs, recreational activities, Bible Studies, etc. This will help us to promote and obtain a spiritually healthy youth group. The acronym **YPE** ("Young People's Evening") could be used to identify and boost these activities.

## **Section 11: Headquarters' Expansion/Bible College**

We recommend that this Assembly endorse Section VIII of the Presiding Bishop's annual address titled, "Envisioning a Bible College." We fully support the Presiding Bishop's vision for a Bible college. In order to proceed in this endeavor, we recommend that a wing be added on to the International Ministries Center which can serve the dual purpose of increasing international office space and housing the church's institution for higher learning. We would like to encourage all of our ministers and members to cooperate with The Prophets' Plan, that is, to donate the price of a tree (\$800) as mentioned in the Presiding Bishop's annual address. Again, the college will be of utmost importance in equipping the ministry with the proper tools to spread the last day's message effectively and fulfilling the church's mission in the world.

## **Section 12: Assembly Resolutions**

We recommend that each pastor read the Assembly resolutions to the local church in order to keep those not able to attend the annual gathering informed as to the business acts of the church. It is not necessary, however, for the business acts to be ratified: for the Assembly is the "highest tribunal of authority in the church."

Humbly Submitted,

*Charles Fields, Chairman*

*Zachary Snyder, Secretary*

*Miguel Garcia*

*C.R. Gregory*

*A.B. White*

*Joshua Amara*

*Joe Steele*

# Presiding Bishop's Annual Address

September 10, 2011

## Introduction

Since that notable day in April 2004 when we reorganized the church and restored the pillars upon which it had been established in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century, much has been accomplished; in fact our progress has been remarkable and in some cases miraculous. Beginning with 17 ministers and 83 members and no local churches, no property, no headquarters, no support ministries, no church paper, no training school, and no money, we now have 472 ministers, 34,763 members, 336 churches and 69 missions in 22 countries, including churches in 19 states here in the United States. In addition to the increase in ministers and members, we have instituted a fairly elaborate infrastructure in the church of support ministries, which help us raise funds to evangelize and disciple believers and coordinate our work around the world. The support ministries include the *Voice of Zion*, our official church publication; the School of Ministry, our institution for biblical education; World Mission ministries; Shepherding Ministries; Sunday School Ministries; Ladies Ministries; Youth and Children's Ministries; Media and Communications Ministries. Further, the Lord has enabled us to build an elaborate International Ministries Complex here in Cleveland to facilitate our international offices and global outreach.

These accomplishments give us cause to rejoice, to be sure; but it should be borne in mind always, that, while our progress is the result of a lot of hard work, sacrifices, and determination on the part of our ministers and faithful workers, we could have accomplished nothing without the strength and aid of our Lord. Jesus said, "*Without me you can do nothing,*" and the apostle Paul reminds us that while one plants and another waters, it is "God that gives the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6-9), and again, "*our sufficiency is of God*" (2 Corinthians 3:5). So while we do not want to fail to honor and commend those who work well, we should always give the Lord praise and honor in all things and acknowledge that in Him "we live, and move, and have our being."

## **Section I**

### **Adorned with Grace---Clothed with Humility**

I have felt impressed again this year to stress the importance of maintaining a gracious spirit in the church and an attitude of humility in all things. Remember the admonitions of the apostle Paul: "I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you have been called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (Ephesians 4:1, 2), and again "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others. Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus: Who . . . made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and . . . humbled himself" (Philippians 2:3-8). And what is the main reason the apostle gives for this important counsel: "[that you might] stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (1:27).

### **Cultivating a Winning Personality**

We have emphasized on two other occasions that we are in our adolescence in Zion Assembly and that our corporate personality is still developing. But at this point in time (having been operating now for more than seven years) our personality is rapidly hardening into its permanent form. This should give us cause to reflect and ask ourselves: "Is our present appearance how we really want to be perceived---both in the sight of others and ourselves?" "Is our public image pleasing to the Lord?" "Is our personality productive toward winning people and saving souls, and toward our self-edification in the church---toward the deepening of our love for one another and for a world that is lost and looking for "a resting place?" (Jeremiah 50:5, 6).

We admit that character is more important than personality, but it is not likely that people will learn to appreciate our godly character and soundness in doctrine and faith if we have a corporate personality that "turns off" and repels people. The word personality comes from the Latin word, *persona*. It means "mask." In other words, your personality is your surface appearance---what you look like on the outside and especially how you express yourself outwardly. This is precisely why our personality is so important: because you are first judged to be on the inside what you appear to be on the outside. Remember what the Scripture says, "for the Lord sees

not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). Your appearance is the first impression that people have of you, and first impressions are usually lasting ones. So how we look and act on the surface are extremely important.

## **Behaving Ourselves in God’s House**

This may be a good place to address a matter that apparently needs some attention. It seems some have become lax in how they dress for worship services and present themselves in the house of God. Now I know it is popular today in the mega-churches and in Christianity in general to dress and act casually---in a common fashion; but Zion Assembly is not a common church, nor do we measure ourselves against a common Christianity: for we are called to be the embodiment of God’s light not only to sinners but to “other sheep.” We should measure ourselves, therefore, always against the teachings of Christ and the apostles, not against a worldly Christianity. Now you may think this is a trivial matter, but I tell you how we dress and behave in the house of God is important: for we can injure our witness and diminish our influence in the eyes of the public if we enter God’s house casually, and treat the Lord with too much familiarity; in fact, we can lose respect for ourselves, and injure our own young people and children. Our children need to learn to reverence the house of God, especially during formal times of worship---and we need to set a good example before them. So let me caution you in love to avoid getting caught up in a casual and vulgar Christianity, bearing in mind always that we are “Christ’s ambassadors” (1 Corinthians 5:19), and, that, accordingly, we should dress and behave appropriately in the house of God, with a sense of reverence and a degree of formality. Don’t treat God’s house like your house, and don’t dress and behave in the house of God like you are on a picnic!

Jesus was very concerned about our behavior in God’s house, which He demonstrated by chasing out the moneychangers and reminding them that God’s house is set apart for worship and prayer (John 2:16). The apostle Paul also reproved the Corinthians for treating God’s house in a common manner, saying, “What? have you not houses to eat and drink in? or despise you the church of God?” (1 Corinthians 11:22). And again, “you ought to behave yourselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God” (1 Timothy 3:15). Indeed, throughout the Bible we are taught to come into God’s house with a sense of awe and reverence (Genesis 28:17; Psalm 55:14; 66:13; 84:1-4; 98:6, 8, 9; 100:4).

Now of course we know that the “house of God” is no mere building, especially in the light of the New Testament. The church itself--the ministers and members---are the house of God. Still, however, we take time to dedicate places for worship and divine service, and endeavor to create a hallowed atmosphere where we meet to worship, to proclaim His Word, and call sinners to repentance and saints to order. So the place itself where we come together to worship and do business for God is hallowed by His presence, and as such becomes “holy” and “dreadful” (Genesis 28:17). When the Lord appeared to Moses out of the midst of the burning bush, He said, “. . . put off your shoes from your feet, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground” (Exodus 3:3-5).

I realize of course that the pendulum can swing too far in the opposite direction; we can become too formal, and come across as being stuffy and high-minded. James, the Lord’s brother, addresses this very thing, admonishing us not to put a premium on one who wears “[bright] clothing” and a “gold ring” over against one who may be poor and dressed in humble attire (James 2:1-9). But surely in Zion Assembly we can moderate between these two extremes to form our appearance and behavior. We should be especially careful not to show “respect to persons.” What we want is what the apostle was after in 1 Corinthians 14:24, 25, that is, to create a worshipful and reverent atmosphere in the house of God, and to have such a good and edifying spirit that when unbelievers and the unlearned come into our midst they will be “convinced of all [and] judged of all, and the secrets of [their] hearts will be made manifest; and so falling down on [their] faces [they] will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.”

One thing for certain, brethren, we will not succeed to create this kind of atmosphere and spirit in the church if our ministers and members wear flip flops and tee shirts to worship services and formal meetings, and in general dress and act in a casual and inappropriate manner. Ministers and leaders especially should be careful to set a good example in dress and behavior. Now I appeal to your testimony of salvation, brethren, that you receive this counsel graciously: for it is not meant to rebuke and scold, but to encourage us to adorn the house of God with grace and dignity.

Call to remembrance a few churches in your area withg which you are familiar. Now ask yourself---as if you were not a member of Zion Assembly and were looking for a church---is there any one of them that you would find attractive enough to attend on a regular basis and want to commit yourself to its ministry. When I was preparing this address, three churches I have attended here in our Cleveland area came to mind. My impression of these churches, while not altogether negative, is that I

would not desire to attend them again, nor especially commit my time, effort, and finances to support their ministries. Now let's be painfully honest here for a moment. What do you think is the initial impression of others when they attend your services for the first time. Are they struck by your friendliness, joy, cheerfulness, and sincerity? Do they sense a reverence in your spirit of worship? Or do they see to attend them again, nor especially commit my time, effort, and finances to support their ministries. Now let's be painfully honest here for a moment. What do you think is the initial impression of others when they attend your services for the first time. Are they struck by your friendliness, joy, cheerfulness, and sincerity? do they sense a reverence in your spirit of worship? Or do they see facial scowls and grumpy expressions, and hear gossipy conversations and unkind criticisms, and in general sense a lack of reverence in your worship? Would one attending your services think, "The Spirit of grace and Christ is in this place. I want to come here again and bring my children here." Or would they think, "There is nothing special about this place. It's just another 'run-of-the-mill' church."

We realize of course that some will not desire to come back to our services simply because we proclaim the whole truth, and because we live and practice holiness and are serious about our faith. But that's another matter: for if Christ and His Word offends, then so be it (Matthew 11:6; 13:21). But we should be careful to avoid offending by our own speech and actions. Jesus went to great lengths to illustrate this point. He even arranged on one occasion for Peter to obtain money miraculously to pay temple taxes, so as not to give the tax collectors cause to complain and accuse them. Now this was a great condescension for Jesus, for He actually owned the temple, and of course did not owe taxes on His own house. But He said to Peter, "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first comes up; and when you have opened his mouth, you will find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and you" (Matthew 17:27). The apostle Paul elaborates on Jesus' words here, saying, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (1 Corinthians 10:32). He goes on to say that should be willing to make gracious gestures and overtures---even if they restrict our liberty in the Gospel---so as not to offend another (vv. 27-29), and concludes, saying, "Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (vv. 32, 33 ).

## **Perfecting Our Character**

Now what if we succeed to improve our personality---put on a good face---yet our character is deficient and spotted with carnality? Make no mistake, brethren; it won't take our friends and neighbors long to find us out. You can count on it. And this creates a worse impression than a poor personality, because character reveals what we truly are. So while we want to improve our public image, we must by all means "perfect holiness in the fear of God," being willing always to "change from glory to glory" and to be molded into His gracious and holy image (2 Corinthians 3:18). In fact, we will never fulfill our mission in this world without being conformed to Christ's image (Ephesians 4:13-16; 5:27). Now I know some may not like the word "change" but there it is.

I admonish you therefore, brethren, to be acutely self-conscious of your spirituality: seek to be blameless before the Lord and "walk circumspectly" in the sight of the world: for nothing will more effectively further our cause than for us to embody the living Christ and manifest a wholesome spirituality. On the other hand, nothing will reproach us more and defeat our purpose than to fail to embody and manifest His grace and power; for our peculiar doctrines and symbols and vision of the church---however right and true they may be---have no power in and of themselves to enable us to fulfill our mission. Only His light and glory can enable us with sufficient power to convict and transform sinners into saints, and to draw the attention and interest of the "other sheep" and encourage them to unite with us in the body of Christ. In fact, only His glory will enable us to build up each other in the faith!

### **"Walking in the Light"**

One of the principles that has under-girded the church from the beginning is the principle of "walking in the light." This is reflected in our sacred covenant---"Will you sincerely promise . . . to walk together as one body in the light of the gospel." But more importantly this principle is an apostolic teaching (1 John 1:7; 2:6, 8-11). Now this is extremely important, for our spirit and attitude are affected positively or negatively by our willingness or unwillingness to "walk in the light," and determines also whether the church is going to be dynamic or static, that is, whether we are going to be the living, breathing, growing, maturing body of Christ, or just another credal and common religious organization. God's

church, in contrast to men-made sects and denominations, must move in and through the graces and gifts of the Spirit of God (Ephesians 1:17-19), Who desires to shine His light into our hearts and minds “more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18). The very nature of the church--made up of imperfect humans---necessitates that we must always be sharpening our vision and deepening our understanding of God’s will and purpose, being willing to “change from glory to glory.” This means that on occasion we will need to modify and qualify our perceptions so that we might conform more perfectly to the Spirit’s unfolding revelation of God’s mind and will for us. This is partly what is signified by “walking in the light.” Modifications in our appearance and thinking is often a sign of growth and maturity---of being transformed from little children into adults---rather than a sign of weakness and compromise.

Now because this principle has never been understood very well among us, it has caused our peace at times to be aggravated, and our love to cool; and in a few instances in our history our union and government were burst asunder. Knowing this, we might be tempted to avoid drawing attention to the matter; but this would be in the long run self-defeating, and I would not be much of a leader if I skirted the subject. This problem--the tendency to be fixed in our imperfections---must be understood in Zion Assembly and conquered, if we hope to succeed to take the church forward and to mold it finally into the glorious church envisioned by the apostles and prophets.

The good news is that we have made our way along in Zion Assembly pretty well since 2004 in this regard. To the praise of God’s grace, we have had no divisions in Zion Assembly, and love and unity have generally prevailed. This can be attributed mainly to a certain maturity and a right spirit manifested among our ministers and members. We have cultivated a moderate and reasonable disposition in the church, which has conditioned us with a sense of humility and lowliness and made us willing to “submit to one another in love.” This good spirit in turn has allowed us to counsel together and to sharpen and modify one another with ever-illuminating insights into God and His Word. Certainly our progress could not have been made in an atmosphere of bigoted, egotistical, legalistic, and Pharisee-like attitudes. While we stand firm and unmovable on certain foundational doctrines, we are not “hard shells” and “iron-jackets.” Neither have we allowed ourselves to “major in minors” nor to “strain at gnats and swallow camels.” Rather we have focused on the “weightier matters” of faith, and have zealously engaged ourselves in our mission. Each of us, and all of us together, acknowledge that we are finite and fallible (though not sinful), dependent on the guidance and illumination of the Holy Ghost

and subject to His correcting and perfecting grace. I have never known it all, nor do I now know it all. “I am what I am by the grace of God!” Let us then, brethren, continue in the apostles’ counsel and “adorn the doctrine of God“ (Titus 2:10) and seek to “be clothed with humility” (1 Peter 5:5), that is, let us “put on . . . bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another” in love (Colossians 3:8-14).

The disposition of lowliness that has permeated and prevailed in Zion Assembly until now has compacted us together as one body. We have responded to the apostle’s counsel and avoided “contentions and strivings about words to no profit” (Titus 3:9; 1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Timothy 2:14, 23). We are all well aware that “if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God” (1 Corinthians 11:16). What is said about the “talebearer” in Proverbs 26:20 is true also of the contentious person, that is, “where there is no [contentious person], the strife ceases.” I heard a man a few years ago whom I will call “Burt” (though his real name is Marvin) complain about his family, by which he meant his extended family of brothers and sisters and uncles and aunts and their children. He said, “they’re all alike---argumentative and contentious. Every time I visit them, they always wind up in a fight about something.” Now I know this man’s family pretty well, and his brothers and sisters told me they never have problems until “Burt” shows up. One of them remarked, “You can count on it, within an hour after ‘Burt’ arrives, everybody is at each other’s throat.”

“Burt” reminds me of an episode of the Andy Griffith show in which Barney joins the church choir. After the choir began to sing, the director said someone was singing off-key, so Barney whispered to the director that he would volunteer to weave in and about the choir to see who was the culprit. It quickly became evident to everyone---including the director---who was hitting the sour note. It was Barney! My point is that one person can disrupt the peace and harmony of the whole church if he is not checked: for a contentious person will dig up something to contend about, because he or she has a restless and malignant spirit. This is why the apostle admonishes us to “mark them which cause divisions” (Romans 16:17), and again, “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud [conceited], knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof comes envy, strife, railings [abusive language], evil [suspicions]. . . . from such withdraw [yourselves]” (1 Timothy 6:17).

Thankfully, no contentious person has succeeded to disrupt our

love and unity in Zion Assembly so far. We have had a few contentious persons show up, of course; but we were able to discern their spirits and judge their behavior and thus we gave them no place to work their fleshly ways among us. A few have had to be disciplined, to be sure; but overall only a handful have had to be excluded. We have followed closely the teachings of Christ in Matthew 18:15-20 and Paul's counsel in 1 Corinthians 5 in this regard, and the government of the church has given us peace and unity. So allow me here to boast of you a little, no less than the apostle did of the churches that did well in his day. I can say with Paul,

*“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other abounds; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith . . . Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of God and the Lord Jesus”* (2 Thessalonians 1:3, 4, 11, 12; see also 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Colossians 1:3-6; Philippians 1:3, 6-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 6-8).

This is not to say that we do not have a ways to go. We do, of course. But if we cultivate among ourselves the good spirit that has brought us this far, and follow biblical principles of order and discipline, this same good spirit and government and discipline will continue to purify us, like gold and silver tried in fire, and empower us more and more to be the “Light of the World.”

### **Assembly Business and Adjunct Committees**

While we are on this subject, I want to commend those on the Adjunct and Assembly Business Committees for their diligent service and labor this year, and for exemplifying the very spirit of which we have been speaking. These brethren have endeavored to advance our understanding of God's Word, and to give clarity and conviction to doctrinal matters, as well as to our stand on practical issues. The committee members on each committee have worked splendidly together, and also the two committees have worked together as if they were one committee. I think this unity is outstanding and worthy of special commendation. The work of these committees will help to solidify our fellowship in the church and at the same time enable us to present to the world a unified position on doctrinal matters and rules of order, with a reasonable and meek spirit.

The committees of course are servants of the church, and their work is subject to approval by the General Assembly; in fact, the committees have consulted with and have received counsel from a great many ministers and members in the church throughout their deliberations, and have been supported by the whole church in prayer. So in one sense, the committee reports are always more or less the product of the whole church.

### **Seeking Heavenly Glory: Embodying Christ---Manifesting His Graces**

Now let me show you a common misunderstanding I believe is preventing us from taking giant leaps forward to attain the glory for which we are longing---that is, the glory of becoming the spotless and triumphant church foreseen by the prophets and apostles. We have tended to put perfection behind us instead of in front of us. We have imagined a perfection in our forefathers and in the apostles that was never there, and have fabricated myths and distorted historical reality to support our imaginations; whereas perfection is a glory in front of us, something still to be attained in these last days. I'll try to be more clear and show you what I mean.

It is true that our forefathers sought for and to some degree attained a measure of *shekinah* that we have not seen in our days. We've heard of the "blue smoke," the miracles of levitation, balls of fire, and so on. But, see, our emphasis on these things is part of our problem: for those manifestations are not the glory for which we should be seeking! We should be seeking rather for a greater glory---a Pentecostal glory!---a glory of the Spirit that is internalized in our hearts, rather than an outward glory manifested apart from us, like the glory manifested in the tabernacle and in the temple! Seeking for and expecting some outward glory keeps us from attaining "that which we have not attained"---namely, the eternal glory of Christ embodied within the church and emanating out from the church "*to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

See, we have painted a picture of perfection in our minds in regard to the fathers of the church that was never there---a perfection that was never in the prophets, nor in the apostles, let alone in our fathers and mothers in the twentieth century. We should of course learn to love and appreciate our fathers' faith and applaud them for the sacrifices they made to build the church, but we should avoid making icons of them! As a matter of fact, our leadership today has far excelled that of our fathers in many ways, and

we must acknowledge this if we expect to go forward. For, how can we follow our current leaders through the difficult times ahead and fulfill our mission, if we don't believe they are called and ordained to lead the church in these last days even on to perfection! I have been trying to get us to see this for thirty years. Our former fellowship rejected this light, painted a confusing picture of the church and leadership, and now we are trying to establish these truths in Zion Assembly so we can go forward and fulfill all things. But it has been a difficult task so far.

It is interesting to me to hear us talk about the "good old days," especially by some who weren't there and have not read our history carefully. There was indeed some *shekinah* glory back there, and some special and miraculous moments; but I'm under no delusion of grandeur about those days. I have read our history carefully, and have seen the downside along with the upside. Besides that, I have lived personally through forty-four years of our 125 year history---more than one-third of it. I came into the church in the 1960s, and began to preach in 1969. When I went to West Virginia from Ohio to pastor a church in 1970, I was not warmly greeted in that state, even though I was born there and spent my early childhood there. Some of the hoary heads glared at me with squinted eyes and with a certain scowl on their face, quite suspicious of my presence there. I found out later they were afraid that I was going to get their job. The state CPMA leader (we called them *secretaries* in those days) had made the statement that just as A. J. and M. A. Tomlinson were put in office for life, so he was put in for life to be CPMA secretary in that state. So I became a threat to his self-assumed life-time appointment. And when I got me some "ed-u-ma-cation," I became a threat to a whole lot of folks. Still later when I built a two hundred member church out in the sticks, a great amount of jealousy and carnality showed up. Indeed the church had a great amount of carnality and spiritual immaturity in those days.

Further, I traveled and evangelized in many states and saw the same carnality every where I went particularly in the forms of gossip, slander, jealousy, envy, and hypocrisy. So it would be difficult to convince me that we are not more advanced now and experiencing more glory in many ways than they did in their days! Both A. J. Tomlinson and M. A. Tomlinson were fine leaders, each in his own way, but each made some of the significant mistakes both in regard to biblical interpretation and governmental decisions. Some of their misperceptions created major obstacles that we are still trying to hurdle today, including the myths associated with June 13, 1903, the office of General Overseer, Fields of the Wood, the church flag, the airplane program, and certain concepts associated with holiness and the doctrine of the church.

But see here, brethren; you would be just as disappointed if you could go back and be a part of the apostolic church because there was no perfection in the apostles' day, not even in the apostles themselves. Paul fell out with Peter and Barnabas and Mark over a disagreement in the church's administrative order, which negatively affected and injured the whole church. The "contention" was so "sharp" between them that they "departed asunder one from the other" (Acts 15:39). On another occasion Paul had to rebuke Peter to the face because he "was to be blamed [stood condemned]" (Galatians 2:11). Peter's error on this occasion was an hypocrisy that distorted the very Gospel of Christ and did a lot of damage in the church. But neither was Paul perfect. The best he could say about himself is, "*For I am the least of the apostles . . . not meet to be called an apostle . . . but by the grace of God I am what I am.*"

Now let us look again into the apostle's words to the Corinthian church, and see the glory for which we should be seeking, and how we are to attain it. Paul says, "*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*" (2 Corinthians 4:6). We see then that the more excellent glory is that which we receive into our hearts, namely, the dynamic and radiating graces of Christ. But, see here; we must give His graces preeminence in our lives and cultivate them so they will shine out from us and reveal God. This is a most powerful witness! In fact, the Spirit is working to form in us the very person of Jesus Christ. It may be seen then that God has ordained for us to be in a sense the extension of Christ's incarnation: for the church embodies the living Christ! The ministers of the church, moreover, are instruments of the Spirit in this new work of creation and reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Paul says to the church at Galatia, "*I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you*" (Galatians 4:19). This is why the church is called the "body of Christ:" for it embodies and manifests the eternal and heavenly glory of Christ. Or, to put it another way; the resurrected and ascended Christ, Who embodies the infinite and eternal glory of the Father (Colossians 2:9), is now manifested in the flesh and blood members of the church, which is His body. See 2 Corinthians 3:2, 3; 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 2:9; John 17:5, 10, 20-23; and compare with Isaiah 60:1-5, 18, 21; 61:10; 62:1.

## **Section II**

### **Pillars Needed**

In 1913, the church was about where we are today in numbers and the development of our doctrine and polity, though in some ways we are

far more advanced. The General Overseer at that time, A. J. Tomlinson, spent a good deal of his time endeavoring to stabilize the church and to lay the foundation for its government. This was difficult because there was widespread fear of church organization and authority at that time, particularly in southern Appalachia where the great majority of the ministers and members were concentrated. In order to make his point, Bishop Tomlinson compared the church to the origin and development of the government of the United States, saying,

“In our beloved country of America that has been justly spoken of as “the land of the free and hope of the brave” needed statesmen, such as Daniel Webster, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson and others in its early career and infantile state, how much more does the Church of God need brawny men who have nerves of steel and hearts full of love for the Church . . . We need men who are willing to sacrifice sleep and pleasure . . . And burn the midnight oil to search and put in motion a system that will materialize to the extent that this glorious gospel of the Kingdom can fly over this old world at lightning speed and usher in the return of our Lord and King.”

I can understand the late bishop’s reasoning along these lines. Any kind of lasting government---civil or religious---must be under-girded with men and women of character and stability, or else the government and its subsidiary institutions will be weak and unable to stand, and the whole institution will eventually crumble and fall. The only modification that I would make in Bishop Tomlinson’s parallel between civil government and the church’s government is to emphasize the need for biblical “pillars” rather than statesmen---that is, the need for God-ordained bishops, deacons, and faithful ministers and workers of the church rather than politicians and civil statesmen. In any case, we are at that point now in our development in Zion Assembly. We need pillars! If we expect to build a strong and lasting institution---God’s divine church---we must have men and women on whom we can build, men and women who are dependable, reliable, faithful, steady, consistent, solid, and who are “patterns of good works.”

Look, you can’t build anything on someone who is ready to quit every five minutes; someone who is thinking of throwing in the towel every time the bell rings. Double-minded and unsteady men and women cannot be pillars, because you can’t depend on them. A pillar is solid and strong, something that will hold up a structure. Remember “the mighty oak tree was once a little nut that held its ground.” We will finally conquer, brethren, not by our brilliant strategies and great intellects but by being

faithful and steadfast!

Now it should go without saying here, but I will say it anyway, that pillars themselves must be laid on a rock-solid foundation---a mountain of granite! For only then will the whole structure hold, especially when the rains descend, the floods rise, and the winds blow. But if our pillars are set on the Rock, not even the most powerful tsunami, earthquake, volcano, hurricane, or typhoon will be able to move Zion Assembly! David uttered a powerful prophecy about the church under the inspiration of the Spirit. He said, “. . . though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the seas; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof . . . there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved . . .” (Psalm 46:2-5).

Now we have the ROCK to build on, to be sure; and that ROCK is Christ! We are all agreed on that, right? But between the ROCK and the house, there must be pillars! Pillars give equilibrium to the house, and level up the whole structure, so the house can be built up straight and square---and go up as high as you want it to go! New Jerusalem is 1500 miles high!---and you may be sure it will stand forever because it is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

The kind of pillars needed upon which to build this last days City of God is men and women of character and strong moral fiber---faithful men and women, dependable, strong, with no quit in them; men and women of prophetic vision, willing to spend themselves for the cause that burns in their hearts and illuminates their minds; men and women who are building something to leave to their children and their children’s children---something that will save and keep them in the faith, and enable them to meet together on the other side in the final and glorious restoration! Listen, we are “called out” to build God’s house, not our houses, God’s church, not a denomination. We are building the eternal City of God, not the cities of men! Brethren, I mean to leave something behind that is of God---“a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” I am not going to make a fool of myself! I am not laboring in vain. I am laboring to build something divine and eternal, not temporal---something that will go on and on and on, forever! It’s not my church nor your church, it’s God’s church! All of us need to understand that Zion is bigger than ourselves. I’m glad I have a part in building the eternal City of God, but the City is bigger than my part in it! Some of us may pass off the scene here for awhile---but Zion Assembly will go on and fulfill her destiny. Our children

and our children's children may have to finish the work. If so, we will be "caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). Then all of us will ascend with Him into heaven together, and there we will admire the finished product---the magnificent City of God, the Zion of the Holy One!

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels . . . Saying, Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious . . ."

### **Section III**

#### **Assisting our Regional Overseers**

Speaking of pillars, I don't know that we have fully grasped yet the importance of the position of overseer in the church, particularly at this early stage of our growth and development in Zion Assembly. In our former fellowship, we had gotten use to having in some states more than 100 churches, which were centered in a state office with a self-supporting financial system and an elaborate system of pastors, state secretaries, and various ministries. This system tended to give the office of overseer more prominence and prestige. Well, we have not built the church up again to that point in this present restoration, but we will surely get there; in fact we will far surpass anything in our past, not only in numbers and finances but in respect to the office of overseer and the government of the church. The ministers and members of these last days' Zion will learn to love their leaders "for their work's sake" and to "esteem them very highly in love" (1 Thessalonians 5:13). We must, in fact, if we expect to be that mighty "army with banners" in Solomon vision, be disciplined and learn to obey commands and follow our leaders into battle (2 Timothy 2:3, 4; Hebrews 13:7, 17).

Now brethren we should consider and bear the following in mind. It is much more difficult in some ways for our overseers at this present time to do their work than it will be later when the church has grown into a larger and grander institution. Like our pioneers in the early twentieth century, our overseers are having to make greater sacrifices now, both in regard to themselves and their families, than overseers who will come

on later. Almost all of our overseers at this present time have to pastor a church in order to be full time in the ministry and to be able to do their overseer work, and some on occasion have to do secular work to support their families. But I'm happy to report, to their praise, that I have never heard any of them complain.

In light of the Scriptural admonitions that we have cited, let me encourage you to be supportive of your overseers, and to assist them willingly in every way--especially those who "work good" (Matthew 10:10; Romans 2:10; 1 Corinthians 9:7-14)---both with financial support and cooperation in their administrative duties and responsibilities. In regard to finances, the Assembly has ruled that we should receive once a month (on the 4th Sunday) an expense offering for our overseers. Every month, then, this should be heartily boosted, and the offering sent promptly to the state treasurer with the local treasurer's monthly report. In addition, consideration might be given to the overseers on special occasions, like birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, and a special offering should be received by all means during the regional convention for the overseer and his family.

## **Section IV**

### **Christ and "Caesar"**

#### **Our Relationship with Civil Governments**

A question arose this year in regard to performing marriages for illegal immigrants, which has caused us to ponder the broader question of the church's relationship with the governments of this world. I addressed this more or less last year in the annual address, the principles of which were endorsed by the Assembly (See 7th Annual Assembly Minutes, pp. 83-86). The Assembly Committee's report reads:

"We fully endorse our Presiding Bishop's annual address on the issue of immigration. Our position in regard to this issue is to minister to everyone indiscriminately in each and every nation, whether or not they are citizens or considered illegal immigrants in the various nations in which they live. We further agree that the illegal aspects of immigration should be left to the various civil governments" (p. 40).

It seems to me, therefore, that the principles already adopted have answered the question in regard to performing marriages for illegal immigrants, namely, that our ministers should use their discretion to

perform marriages between illegal immigrants, or between a citizen of a particular country and an illegal immigrant, taking into consideration their faith commitment and other considerations that would insure the church and the minister they are free to enter into a biblically valid marriage (according to our understanding and teaching in Zion Assembly), and that they are mature and resolute enough to live up to the terms of their sacred vows. We admonish our ministers, therefore, to proceed in performing and sanctioning marriages with much gravity and soberness, always giving due counsel and consideration to the consenting parties.

In the cases of marrying illegal immigrants, we should be careful to make a record of the marriage, particularly in cases in which the parties may not be able to obtain a license by the state: for then no record would exist that will hold the couple accountable for their sacred vows. I recommend therefore that an application for marriage be drawn up by the church (to obtain and record necessary information), that a license be designed, and that copies of the application and marriage license be sent to the International Offices for a permanent record. It should be understood, further, that the church's role in officiating and binding marriages is strictly spiritual and moral in nature, not legal. The church believes that only death can end a marriage, and therefore the church has no authority to grant divorces, nor to settle disputes arising from divorces in regard to finances, property, children, etc.

Now we said that the issue of illegal immigrants has raised the broader question of our overall relationship with the particular governments in which the church dwells. Where do we draw the line between cooperation with and obedience to the secular state and its laws and obedience to the law of God revealed in the Holy Scriptures? I believe we have more or less answered this question through the years, but never has it been more necessary to clarify our position than now: for there is on the horizon the emergence of the "beast" and his antichrist system that the apostle John saw in a vision more than 1900 years ago. Even as we speak the spirit of antichrist is flooding the world (including the United States) with moral and spiritual lawlessness and blatant contradictions of God's expressed will revealed in the Holy Scriptures. The aim of antichrist is nothing less than the overthrow of the headship and sovereignty of Jesus Christ in the world and the church; and behind the spirit of antichrist is Satan--the "great red dragon!" (Revelation 12:3-9).

While I was preparing this message, God revealed to me that the falling away now underway throughout the world is due in large part because many ministers and believers are anticipating (if only subconsciously or intuitively) the forthcoming system of the beast and his

mighty power, and, being spiritually weak and full of fear and dread of his power and influence, they have chosen to compromise their faith and yield themselves to the spirit of the forthcoming system. This is also one of the basic reasons for the falling away in our former fellowship. We may be sure that the great falling away in the world today will continue because the multitudes of professing Christians are not strong enough in God to resist the spirit of antichrist and the developing system of the beast. We should not be amazed, then, if they continue to give themselves over to the spirit of error, and, under the judgment of a “strong delusion” from God, plunge themselves ever more deeply into compromise and moral corruption, taking with them millions of borderline “Christians” into the current of their apostasy (Matthew 24:4, 24; 2 Corinthians 11:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; 2 Timothy 3:13; Revelation 13:2-14). The multitudes simply do not have the courage and spiritual fortitude to honor God above all else and stand firmly on His Word.

What do you think all the bickering is about in Washington these days--the disagreements between democrats and republicans and conservatives and liberals over the economy, environment, religion, public education (the battle over creationism versus evolution philosophy, and biblical principles over against the brain-washing tactics of liberals), social and moral issues (aborting the unborn, sodomite marriages, etc.), the health care debate, the Constitution, military strategies, and socialistic ideals over against America’s traditional form of government? Do you think it is just politics as usual? I tell you it is not! Why, even mentioning in public the name of God and Christ has become an issue. Did you know that it is now against the law in the United States to speak God’s name in a military funeral without special approval by the government! And we are only a step or two away from legislating laws to make it a crime to preach against the perversion and unspeakable filth of homosexual fornication.

Now I don’t pretend to have the answers to all of the particular issues just mentioned, nor to be an expert on any of the civil or secular issues. That is not my calling. But I will tell you what I do know as a God-called minister and your Presiding Bishop---having been given insight through the Spirit into the mysteries of God. What I know is this: the transcending spirit behind all of the current issues and debates is the spirit of antichrist. Political and religious leaders here in the United States and around the world are being motivated and guided by the spirit of the end-times beast, which is antichrist. The prevailing lawlessness and terror plaguing our contemporary world is paving the way for global government, global religion, global economy, global ecology, and a global leader---the Lawless One---who will overturn the laws of God and pervert truth and

righteousness! The stage is being set for the emergence of a world leader who will usurp the position and sovereignty of Christ!

So how do we stand in Zion Assembly in regard to our relationship to secular authority and government? The answer is in the spirit of the martyrs! We teach and encourage our ministers and members to be law-abiding and model citizens, so far as the laws of the land are consistent with God's laws, and the state does not force us to choose between Christ and "Caesar." Now we have never been seriously confronted with this choice in the United States up to this point in time: for America was uniquely founded upon Judeo-Christian principles, and the American people overwhelmingly have always had a reverence for Christ and the Bible, and, therefore, have been able to keep the government more or less compatible with our Christian faith. But that is not the case today. In fact, we have been witnessing now for more than 50 years the gradual overthrow of our Christian heritage in America. Already we can see the silhouette of the beast upon the horizon. Indeed, at this very moment his spirit is in our midst working his wily scheme to erode and eventually completely remove the Christian pillars upon which this nation was founded.

It seems necessary therefore to clarify our position in relation to the state, that is, in regard to the social and political systems in which the church dwells in the world. Let us be clear and firm: the state does not determine for us our moral and spiritual values in Zion Assembly. These are determined by the church in our General Assemblies, with Christ and the Holy Ghost in our midst. State governments are ordained by the Lord to provide civil order and peace, which includes the power to punish criminals and evil doers---murderers, thieves, rapists, frauds, extortionists, crooks and con artists of all sorts. Civil governments are ordained by the Lord therefore to bear the sword---to punish evil doers and provide temporal peace and safety for their citizens. The church on the other hand bears the olive branch. It is ordained to proclaim and preserve the Word of God's kingdom: to convert sinners, to baptize and disciple believers, to administrate the divine ordinances, and provide spiritual order for God's people. The church---not America nor any civil state---is the "pillar and ground of the truth."

The distinctions between the powers of state and the powers of the church are spelled out clearly by Jesus and the apostles (see Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-18), and have always been more or less understood in the United States and have been carefully maintained in this nation. In a word, the main distinction is this: to "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." But in recent years the spirit of antichrist has succeeded to blur the distinctions

between Christ and “Caesar,” which in turn has opened the way for the rising tide of secularism, and the infiltration of old pagan practices into this nation [much of this in the name of “New Age religion”]. Simply put, the spirit of lawlessness---the antagonism to divine law and biblical truth---is opening the gates of hell and unleashing hordes of demons seeking to destroy our Christian faith and practices (see Revelation 12:3-9; 16:13-14; Ephesians 6:11-18). And not only this nation but throughout England and Europe and the world the powers of darkness are at work. Whether or not we will be able to turn the tide and restrain for any length of time the spirit of antichrist that is now prevailing remains to be seen. But in any case we will be wise to prepare ourselves “against that day” and not allow ourselves to be caught off guard (2 Thessalonians 1:10, 12; 1 Timothy 6:19; 2 Timothy 1:12, 18). Indeed, we must prepare ourselves to be willing not only to speak out against moral and spiritual filth and uncleanness but also to be persecuted for our witness, being willing even to die for the truth’s sake. “You are my witnesses, says the Lord!” (Isaiah 40:10, 12; 44:8). You are “a city set on a hill!” Therefore do not “put your light under a bushel, but on a lamp stand, so all can see it!” (Matthew 5:14-16). We must “cry out” in the spirit of the prophets against the prevailing ungodliness and sinfulness in the world today. Some years ago we published a message by Brother McDonald in the *Voice of Zion* which he called the “Silent Church.” His main point in that message---which he had written many years previously in our former fellowship---was to warn that when the church fails to hold up the standard of God’s Word, evil will triumph everywhere. And this agrees with the apostle Paul’s prophecy in 2 Thessalonians 2:7,8, namely that the Holy Ghost and the church are here to restrain the spirit and force of antichrist. This is why, brethren, we must remain consecrated and filled with God’s glory, and continue to stand boldly and courageously on the principles of His Word: for otherwise we will have no authority nor spiritual power to restrain evil!

It is interesting that the word “witness” in our Bibles is derived from the Greek word, *martyr*. This is because in the early centuries so many had to give their lives for their Christian testimony (Acts 22:20; Revelation 1:5; 11:3; 17:6). In fact, the church in the early centuries was more than once “baptized in blood.” It was so common to die for the Gospel that the great church father, Tertullian, wrote “The blood of Christians is seed,” by which he meant seed to reproduce more Christians and to build God’s church. The Lord expects and requires no less of us in these last days, that is, the willingness to give our lives if necessary for the testimony of Jesus Christ! Hear the Lord: “Fear none of those things which you will suffer . . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life”

(Revelation 2:10; 3:11). Look, brethren: we are not in a popularity contest. While we appreciate the favor and praise of good men, and the temporal benefits we receive from the world around us, yet any praise and favor we receive will have to be on the basis of our faithfulness to Christ and the pure proclamation of His Gospel. You can see why it is so important for our people to pray much for civil governments. We want to intercede always for kings and rulers to enact laws and exercise their powers consistent with the will of God and the teachings of the Holy Scriptures so that we might live peaceable lives and remain free to worship our God and proclaim the Gospel without fear of reprisals and terror. For we are bound in covenant with God to obey His Word supremely, being mindful of the apostle's words: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), and recalling the example of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who, being threatened by the mighty Nebuchadnezzar with being thrown into a fiery furnace, answered him respectfully, saying, "we are not careful to answer you in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto you, O king, that we will not serve other gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up" (Daniel 3:16-18).

Are you prepared? Is your heart fixed? Is your mind settled? Are we ready to stand together in Zion Assembly against the antichrist on the testimony of Jesus Christ?

## **Section V**

### **Media/Communications Ministries**

I believe we all agree that we need to use every available means at our disposal to fulfill the great commission Christ has given to the church. Our challenging mission to all nations includes proclaiming the fullness of God's Word, baptizing and making disciples of believers, assimilating and regulating them in the government and ministry of the church, administering the ordinances [baptism, Lord's Supper, foot washing], performing and regulating marriages, and "perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 4:11-16). What a breath-taking challenge!

In order to help us accomplish our mission, we inaugurated in June 2004 the *Voice of Zion* magazine (two months after the historic restoration and reorganization of the church in April 2004), and in May 2005 we inaugurated the School of Ministry. This "official teaching arm of the church" has since that time conducted schools and classes in seven

countries, including two regular sessions each year here in the United States. And the Voice of Zion is now being sent to representatives in 14 nations and 17 states in the United States. Two years ago we inaugurated the Voice of Zion radio program, which is now being broadcast to a potential 5 million people weekly. We have also taken advantage of the internet system, building a website in 2007. This ministry has been a tremendous outreach. Much of our work in other countries came about initially through contacts with ministers who had scanned our website and communicated back to us. We simply followed up on their communications, cultivated friendships with them, and our friendship in some cases led to full covenant fellowship. In a sense, we can say the internet is fulfilling prophecy. Certainly it is being instrumental in building up the church and bringing God's people together into one.

Notwithstanding all that has been accomplished through these ministries and programs, it seems as nothing in comparison with what is yet before us. I sometimes feel like the old farmer who said, "The hurried I go, the behinder I get!" When we stop to consider that there are now seven billion people in the world---grouped together in 196 nations, speaking over 250 major languages and 6800 dialects---all of whom are our responsibility to evangelize and disciple with the "all things" message---our task seems impossible. Nevertheless, we believe God and trust His Word, and are committed to fulfilling our mission through the power of His infinite Spirit! We are going forth in confidence on Jesus' promise---"and lo I am with you" (Matthew 28:20), and the assurance of His Word when He said, "with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27), and "all things are possible to him that believes" (9:23).

We recognize, however, that traditional means of evangelism and discipleship are insufficient of themselves to enable us to fulfill our mission to all nations. By traditional means, I refer to sending out ministers and missionaries from our International Offices to preach and teach in the flesh and do all the work that must be done in the nations. This is indeed quite impossible. No doubt this is the reason the Lord has allowed the invention and development of modern technologies. Like so many other things in the world, while some may use modern technology for evil, God can enable us to use it for good---to help us fulfill our divine mission in the earth. Accordingly, we have purchased some new cameras and equipment recently in order to produce video presentations of our School of Ministry classes. These will be used by our ministers and workers throughout the world. We are also going to stream live some of the classes and sessions of the school. Live streaming via the internet can be used not only for

sessions of the School of Ministry but for the mission work in general around the world.

Further, I want to encourage us to envision and lay the groundwork for an international television ministry. The vision and implementation of this work will fall on the director of media/communications ministries. The director will need to coordinate this work with the other ministries and responsibilities connected with media ministries, particularly our internet and website ministries and radio program. It will be up to the director, in counsel with the Presiding Bishop, to suggest plans and strategies that will make these ministries most effective---to help us fulfill our worldwide mission. We are not expecting, of course, to finance and develop our own satellite system and television network overnight, but we want to inaugurate and begin to pioneer this ministry as soon as possible. Remember the Lord's prophetic admonition that cautions us against despising "the day of small things" (Zechariah 4:10): for just as Rome was not built in a day, neither was the "latter house" made more glorious than the "former" overnight (Haggai 2:3-9). But that latter house was indeed made more glorious than the former, and just as assuredly this last day's Zion will be made more glorious than at any time in the church's history, and the message we are now proclaiming in Zion Assembly---including the gathering together of all God's blood-bought children under one government, in one visible body of Christ---shall fill the earth!

I want to express my appreciation to all who have responded so faithfully to give to the radio ministry, and to those who have followed-through with your pledges. The offerings and pledges this year will be extended (and hopefully increased!) to help us inaugurate our television ministry. Oh I'm excited about this. Can you imagine it---can you see it! Our own Zion Assembly minister being heard and seen throughout the world via satellite proclaiming "the whole counsel of God"---the "all things" of Christ---and pleading with all men everywhere to become "followers of the churches of God which . . . are in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 2:14).

In closing this section, it may be good to remind us that, though we should use every available means to help us fulfill our mission in the world, nothing can take the place finally of the simplicity of practical evangelism and churchmanship---praying and preaching down revivals, and establishing real flesh and blood congregations in every town and community that opens to us in this world. In the final analysis, only real flesh and blood ministers and members are the "city set on a hill," and can do the practical work of the ministry---baptize believers, administer the Lord's Supper and foot washing, "greet the brethren with a holy

kiss,” “assemble together,” attend and regulate business meetings, resolve disputes and issues, “bring all the tithes into the storehouse,” and to express to one another in meaningful and intimate ways the graces and charisms of the Spirit. These “hands on” practices of the ministry, government, and fellowship of the church are necessary and indispensable “for the church to actually be the church!”

## **Section VI**

### ***Voice of Zion Magazine***

Last year we inaugurated **SYNC** (“Subscribe Your Neighbor Club”) to help boost subscriptions for our *Voice of Zion* paper. This program has realized some success and added probably about 125 new subscriptions for the paper, but we are still falling far short of what is needed to make the paper self-supporting. What is needed is about \$10,000, which translates to about 400 more new subscriptions. Now I don’t know what more to say or do to boost subscriptions. The answer certainly is not to come up with still another program. Rather, in pondering over this situation, it seems to me that we simply need more dedication and zeal to boost subscriptions. Way back in the 1920s and 1930s when the *White Wing Messenger* was getting off the ground, some workers got as many as 50 subscriptions in a year. Now that was zeal---and also a lot of hard work! But that was the spirit that made it possible in the early 1980s to reach the plateau of over 20,000 subscriptions for our church paper. I know of course that today we are competing against modern technology---the internet and audio-visual products---that has made reading less popular. But we must not yield to this trend in contemporary society: for reading is more beneficial to soundness of faith than audio-visuals aids. Besides, the Scripture commands us to “read” (Isaiah 34:16; Habakkuk 2:2; Matthew 12:3; 21:42; Mark 13:14; Colossians 4:16), and encourages us to “give attendance to reading” (1 Timothy 4:13). Jesus said, “Blessed is he that reads“ (Revelation 1:3).

In order to increase subscriptions we also need to grow our church membership here in the United States, for new ministers and members will be inclined to subscribe to our church paper. But, see, subscribing non-church members to the *Voice of Zion* is one way to evangelize the lost and win the other sheep and receive more members into the church. So “one hand washes the other.”

The *Voice of Zion* is one of our greatest evangelists. There are scores of ministers and perhaps a few hundred members who have been won to the church through the influence of the *Voice of Zion*. Accordingly,

let me encourage you---as many as possible---to become **SYNC** members this year; and pastors let me encourage you to strive to make your church 100% in *Voice of Zion* subscriptions. “Every Member A Subscriber” should be our motto! Right now only about one in three members here in the United States are subscribers. Every minister especially should be a subscriber and a zealous booster for our church paper.

This brings up another issue in regard to our church paper. A substantial number of our members here in the United States are Spanish-speaking, and of the 21 other countries in which the church is now established 9 of them are Spanish-speaking. Approximately one in fifteen of our ministers and members are Spanish-speaking. Now, also, since the Hand of providence has opened the doors of Haiti to the church, approximately one fifth of our ministers and more than one-half of our members are French-speaking. So the time is fast approaching for us to publish our paper in French and Spanish. This would greatly accelerate our growth and influence in many nations throughout the world: for no doubt we will soon reach other French-speaking nations---about 30 of them---in Europe, Africa, Canada, and Indonesia, in which French is either the first or second language, and also there are 15 more Spanish-speaking nations that we have not yet reached. You can see then that having our church paper already being published in French and Spanish will serve to great advantage; in fact, the *Voice of Zion* in French and Spanish may be the means to reach these nations.

Enlarging our subscriptions here in the United States is therefore of paramount importance: for not only do subscriptions help us evangelize the United States, but also to finance the publication of the paper in other languages to reach more nations. So let’s all catch the spirit of the paper and seek to excel in increasing subscriptions. Who will be the first **SYNC** member this year to get ten (10) new subscriptions? Who will be the second? Who will be the third? Who will be the first pastor to get your church 100% in subscriptions? I wonder with a bit of excited anticipation how many of our churches will strive to be 100% this year? I feel like saying “Praise the Lord for the *Voice of Zion*!”

I’m thinking just now of that verse in the Psalms that says, “The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it” (Psalm 68:11). Now I know the word “published” used here and elsewhere may be translated “preached” or “proclaimed,” but I like the word published because not everyone is called to preach in the usual sense of the word, yet all can participate in publishing the word in printed form. If you support the *Voice of Zion*, and the *Voice of Zion* goes into all the world, then I don’t see why you are not literally fulfilling the prophecy in this psalm by

being a part of that “great company” that is publishing the word! And of course the more you give, the more you are participating in fulfilling the prophecy.

## **Section VII**

### **Young People---Indispensable**

Before we move onto our final section, a word here about our ministry to young people seems urgent and of paramount importance. It is urgent because young people are indispensable to the life of the church and the fulfillment of the church’s mission in the world and because we are making far too little progress in the development of youth groups and having regular services for our young people. I don’t say that we have not put forth some effort in this regard, nor that we have not had some little success in a few places (especially among our Hispanic brethren in California), but overall we must admit up to this point that we have more or less failed. We have had some success also in our youth camps, but our follow-up with the kids that get saved in our camps has been more or less fruitless.

Very few, if any, stay saved and especially go on to become a regular part of the church. Our once-a-year youth conventions also are alive and edifying, but they have not helped either to create local youth groups nor regular services for our young people.

Now I am pointing out our shortcomings in our ministry to youth not to make us feel bad nor to scold us, but simply to say we must find a way to be more effective in reaching out to young people and in building youth groups in our churches. I am aware of what we are up against in the world today in trying to reach out to young people. The prevailing antichrist spirit in the world and the compromising of truth among the common churches pose a real challenge, to be sure; but I don’t believe for a minute that God has not some plan to enable us to effectively and successfully minister to this generation of young people---a plan that will help us to reach them and settle them in the truth and the power of His love. We simply must seek the face of God and beg Him to show us the way.

My days as a state youth director and camp director are over, but I can tell you some things I would do if I were this year appointed as a pastor or youth director. I would plan some youth activities---cook-outs, recreational activities, etc.---then I would reach out, canvass the community, and find some young people to participate in the activities. I would befriend them and pray for them and seek the Lord to show me how to reach them

with the power of Jesus' love. I would also have youth-oriented revivals--perhaps two or three a year---and I would spend as much time as I could with the young people to let them know that I care. And wherever the Lord opened the door, I would have Bible studies with them, and prayer, and continue to reach out to them until a youth group was formed. I would get a van or bus and haul as many as I could to camps, youth activities, conventions, and special activities. And I would always be on the look-out for youth leaders who could follow-up on the progress we had made. O, you say, "Brother Phillips it,s harder than you think." Too late, brethren, I've already done it several times in several places. "Been there, done that!" And if it were not for my physical limitations now compared to when I was, say, about fifty, I am confident I could accomplish as much today as I did in those "good old days." Even so, if I were a pastor or youth director today, I would still make every effort to reach out and minister to young people and build a youth ministry! You know why? Let me say it again, "young people are indispensable to the life of the church and the fulfillment of the church's mission in the world." There is no alternative, brethren, if we will please the Lord---for Jesus loves young people and desires His church to be filled with them.

*"Then the master . . . said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord it is done . . . yet there is room. And the lord said . . . Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:21-23).*

Finally, let me suggest that our churches have a special service once a week for young people. It could be called YPE---"Young People's Evening." The pastor or another qualified person could be appointed to be in charge of the evening. The evening might consist of one or more activities, depending on the peculiar needs of the youth on hand: for example, Bible study, counseling, recreational activities, food and fellowship, etc. Remember, "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again!"

## **Section VIII**

### **Envisioning a Bible College**

The School of Ministry has done a wonderful job since it was inaugurated in May 2005 in preparing our ministers and workers with some

basic knowledge and skills for the ministry. More than 600 ministers and workers have graduated or have attended one or more years of the school. We thank God for that. However, the School of Ministry falls far short of the kind of thorough teaching and training that is needed to “thoroughly furnish” and equip leaders with the knowledge and skills to enable them to take the church forward into the glory envisioned by the apostles and prophets---a world in which the church’s admirers will one day look on and say, “Who is she?” (Song of Solomon 6:10), and her ministers, like the angel in John’s vision, will say, “Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Revelation 21:9).

Nothing short of developing a Bible college and seminary will enable us to offer the kind of thorough-going education needed to set our ministers apart and equip them for the great end-times task of the church--that is, to ground and settle them in the spiritual and biblical mysteries of the Gospel and the church, and to fully equip them for national and international leadership in the sophisticated and complex world of the twenty-first century. We can see perhaps an illustration of this kind of educational experience in Jesus’ training of the Twelve Apostles. The Twelve were with him for the most part of three full years, learning from the Master Himself by precept and example. It is not likely that anything less than this kind of thorough-going teaching and training will suffice for our leaders in the church in these last days. Our international leaders and Bible instructors simply need more time with the students and better facilities to adequately instruct and equip them for the end-times ministry of the church.

When Bishop Murray agreed to close Tomlinson College in 1992, he called me by phone in Canada (I was then serving as the national overseer in that country) and gave me the news. He said, “I’m sure you don’t approve.” I said, “No sir, I’m very disappointed. I feel like a tragic death just happened.” I went on to say, “I believe closing the college sends the wrong signal to our ministers and people in the church and also to those without.” He reasoned that it was necessary to close the college because the church was in a financial crisis, and the operation of the college was a large part of the problem. I told him that if it were necessary to close the college it should have been a decision made by the whole church, not just the Administration in Cleveland. He answered, “But the decision could not be put off until the Assembly.” I said, “Then the decision could have been made by a referendum through correspondence.”

Now I said those things to Bishop Murray because I believe if the decision had been made by the church, our people would have elected to come up with the necessary funds to save the college, because a great

many understood how important the college was, both in regard to the church's public image and in equipping and preparing our ministers and young people for leadership and ministry. The same is true now. We must have a college and seminary---or some comparable system of education (like the school the prophets had in the days of Elijah and Elisha)---it seems, in order to have enough time to thoroughly teach and train our ministers and equip them for the monumental task that lies ahead of us. Some of our inspired leaders still have a great deal of knowledge of the mysteries of the Gospel and of the church that they need to pass on to this generation of the church. I am reminded here of the elderly man on a train sitting behind a young minister who was engaged in reading the Bible. The elder leaned forward and asked the young man what he was doing. He answered, "I'm preparing a sermon for Sunday." The elder then said, "Well, I'm a minister, too---been preaching now for over fifty years. Now, son, let me to give you a piece of advice. Don't study so hard for your sermons, for Satan will then know what you are going to say and mess you up. Be like me. Now when I get ready to preach, not even the Lord knows what I'm going to say!"

Notwithstanding the need for an institution of higher learning in the church, it is not our intention for the college to replace the School of Ministry, but that both serve together to meet the overall needs of education in the church. The School of Ministry will continue to serve for basic preparatory work for the ministry and especially for our outreach work in the nation while the college will serve to more fully prepare our ministers for national and international leadership and for a more excellent and thorough-going education.

We understand of course that there will be a lot of planning and work to do to make this noble vision a reality. One of the first things we will need to tackle is the construction of adequate facilities---for more classroom space, a kitchen, a dining room, a fellowship hall, a larger library, etc. The expansion of our International Ministries Center can serve a dual purpose in this regard---that is, it can serve to facilitate our college and at the same time provide more space for our ever-expanding international staff and outreach ministry. But before initiating construction, one of the first hurdles to leap over will be to insure a financial basis for the project, remembering Jesus' words in Luke 14:28 to "sit down first, and count the cost." The whole project will cost approximately \$350,000. The good news is that some have indicated a willingness to make a substantial contribution toward this end, and we are trusting the Lord that He will move upon some others to help supply this need. Now we do not have to have the full amount to begin the project, but it seems wise to have in hand

the largest part of it before we break ground.

While praying and thinking through on this project, the Lord impressed me with a plan that had been used by the Old Testament prophets. The account of this plan is found in 2 Kings 6:1-5. The situation was this: the “sons of the prophets” had multiplied under the inspirational leadership of Elisha, who had succeeded Elijah as the chief of the prophets (the mantle of leadership having fallen upon him, 2:5-19). As a consequence of the increase in their numbers, the place where the prophets met at that time (probably Jericho) had become too small. They requested therefore of Elisha, respectfully, that he give them permission to go to the Jordan river (a short distance from Jericho) to build a larger facility for their school. Now the plan was this: that each prophet cut a tree down, hew it, and take it to the site to construct the new building. Elisha consented and went with the “school of the prophets” to the banks of the Jordan. There, each man cut down and hewed a tree to fit in the new structure.

Two things are apparent in this account of the “sons of the prophets:” 1) they were not lazy preachers, but rather hard workers and industrious. They cut down trees with axes, and hewed the trees into “beams” that fit into the new structure; 2) they all joined in the work, in love and unity, and with a sense of duty and obligation to realize their corporate vision---the construction of a new building for their school. It is hard not to see in this story an illustration of David’s words in Psalm 133:1-3: *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like . . . the dew that descended upon . . . Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing.”*

Perhaps you can now see our plan. Since the prophets’ plan under Elisha has already been tried and proven successful, we could just follow it with some modifications to expand our International Ministries Complex. We could call it *“The Prophets’ Plan.”* The modification that we suggest is this: instead of our ministers and members going to the Jordan river in Israel and cutting down a tree (we might get into a little trouble over that), we will---that is, all of us who are willing and can envision a “school of the prophets”---donate the price of a tree and the cost of cutting it down and preparing it for construction. Now how much will that be at present prices? According to the Jewish historian, Josephus, and other ancient writers, this area of the Jordan was a thick jungle of plants and shrubs, densely filled with Palm and Poplar trees, the latter of which we may assume were used by the prophets. Now estimating the size and quality of a tree at that time and the labor that it would have cost to cut it down, hew it, carry it to the site, and fit it in the new structure, would cost in modern currency roughly about \$800.00.

This then is *The Prophets' Plan* that we are introducing here to help us finance the addition to our International Ministries Complex. The main thing brethren is to get in the spirit of it, like the sons of the prophets did in Elisha'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 in Solomon's day. It 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 jewels, brass, iron, marble, and precious woods---to build a house worthy of the true and living God! The account is given in 1 Chronicles 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 "I have set my affection to the house of my God" (v. 3). And the people "offered willingly, and gave . . . to the treasure of the house of the Lord" (vv. 6, 7). And when all was given, "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with a perfect heart they offered willingly 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.

Now, then, how many "Davids" and "sons of the prophets" have we here today? In King David's words, "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" Who will write a check for the cost of a tree (\$800), or perhaps for two or three trees (\$1600 or \$2400) to enlarge God's house and provide facilities for a Bible college to teach and train our ministers? We realize of course that some of you may not be able to write a check today, but that you will want to commit yourselves to raise the price of a tree for this great project. Let me encourage you to pledge toward this end. If only we can catch the spirit of David and Jesus, and say, "The zeal of Your house has eaten me up" (Psalm 69:9; John 2:17). Remember Jesus' words, "*Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down . . . and running over*" (Luke 6:38).

# International & Regional Assembly Appointments

## International Staff

2011-2012

Presiding Bishop.....	Wade H. Phillips
General Treasurer.....	E.A. McDonald
Field Secretary.....	Joshua Amara
Field Secretary.....	Miguel Garcia
Field Secretary.....	Amos Agbonifo
World Mission Secretary.....	E.A. McDonald
Communications/Media Ministries.....	Todd McDonald
United States' Missions and New Fields Director.....	Lanny Carter
Voice of Zion Office Assistant/Lay-out & Design.....	Marie Crook
Shepherding Ministries Director.....	Rocky Dalton
School of Ministry Director.....	Wade H. Phillips
Ladies Ministry Director.....	Rosie Ramirez
Sunday School Director.....	Rick Ferrell
Youth Ministries Director.....	Cheryl McDonald
Children's Ministries Director.....	Cheryl McDonald
Camping Coordinator/Advisor.....	Cheryl McDonald
<i>Voice of Zion</i> /SYNC Booster.....	Glenda Major

## Regional Overseers

United States:

### South-Atlantic

(North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida).....Scott Neill

### Mid-Atlantic

(Virginia, Maryland).....William Jones

### Mid-East

(Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania).....Rocky Dalton

### Mid-Central

(Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois).....Ricky Graves

### South-Central

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

### North-West

(Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, .....A.B. White

### Mid-West

(Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, .....Joseph Steele

**South-West**

(Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma).....Joseph Steele

**Pacific Coast-North**

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

**Pacific Coast-South**

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

**Caribbean**.....Sandraud Pierre

**South America** .....Javier Diaz Perez

**East Africa/England**.....Joshua Amara

**West Africa**.....Yomi Adekunle

*(Note: An adjustment was made in this appointment following the Assembly.*

*Yomi Adekunle was installed in this position. Bishop Agbonifo continues in the position of Field Secretary).*

**Central America**.....Miguel Garcia

**National Overseers**

**Argentina**.....Ricardo Astorga

**Chile**.....Javier Perez Diaz

**Dominican Republic**.....Sandraud Pierre

**England**.....Joshua Amara

**Ghana**.....David Dordah

**Guatemala**.....Ricardo Valenzuela

**Haiti**.....Santaniel Hostelus

**India**.....Talari Padma Rao

**Kenya**.....Joshua Amara

**Malawi**.....Mariel Dzuwa

**Mexico**.....Wade H. Phillips

**Nicaragua**.....Freddy Garcia

**Nigeria**.....Yomi Adekunle

**Pakistan**.....George Assi

**Paraguay**.....Vidal Morinigo

**Peru**.....Samuel Medina

**Philippines**.....Domingo Resurreccion

**Sudan**.....Elijah Wafula

**Tanzania**.....Joshua Amara

**Uganda**.....Joshua Amara

**United States**.....Wade H. Phillips

**Uruguay**.....George Estroz

## **Assembly Business Committee**

**Chairman:** Charles Fields

Lanny Carter, Joshua Amara, C.R. Gregory, Miguel Garcia,  
Zachary Snyder, Joseph Steele

**Alternates:** Scott Neill, Ray Dickson

## **Adjunct Committee to Assembly Business**

**Chairman:** Rocky Dalton

Wade H. Phillips, E.A. McDonald, Zachary Snyder,  
Bruce Sullivan, Tom Brown, Trevor Graves

**Alternates:** Chris Newberry, Rick Ferrell

## **Construction Committee**

**Chairman:** Wade H. Phillips, Lynn Jones, E. A. McDonald,  
Clifton Kelton, Cecil Pounders, C.R. Gregory, Ricky Graves

## **International Properties**

**Chairman:** Wade H. Phillips, E. A. McDonald, Lynn Jones,  
Gene Tingler, Joshua Amara, Joe Steele, Charles Fields

## **General Trustees**

Wade H. Phillips, E.A. McDonald, William Crook,  
Ricky Graves, Todd McDonald

**Churches/ Pastors/ Missions**  
*United States*

Adolphus, KY.....	C.R. Gregory
Anaheim, CA.....	Juan Avila
Arroya Grande, CA.....	Matthew Carrasco
Bakersfield, CA.....	Juan Lopez
Baldwin Park, CA.....	A.B. White
Browder, KY.....	Ricky Graves
Butte, MT .....	A.B. White
Chestnut Hills, TN .....	Zachary Snyder
Cleveland, TN.....	Todd McDonald
Colton, CA.....	Daniel Urcadiz
Columbus, MS.....	Byron Harris
Dallas, OR.....	G.W. Solomon
Fairmont, WV.....	Rocky Dalton
Fort Morgan, CO.....	Nazario Ornelas, Jr.
Ft. Oglethorpe, GA.....	Carl Jackson
Fresno, CA.....	James M. Parker
Fries, VA.....	Rocky E. Dalton
Goshen, IN.....	Davis (“Jim”) Webster
Greenville, SC.....	Scott E. Neill
Hartsville, TN.....	William Crook
Hermiston, OR.....	Brian Norquist
Hesperia, CA.....	Jose M. Lozano
Jacksboro, TN.....	Ray Dickson
Kosciusko, MS.....	Bill Summerlin
Las Vegas, NV.....	Jorge Pino
Little Bingamon, WV.....	Tom Brown
Lompoc, CA.....	German Bor
Lompoc, CA (FCI).....	Vicente Garcia
Lompoc, CA (USP).....	Vicente Garcia
Madera, CA.....	Reina Romo
Okolona, MS.....	Joel Brooks
Pelzer, SC.....	Bruce Sullivan
Pulaski, TN.....	Ron Prosch
Rialto, CA.....	Pete Sarry

Roanoke, VA.....	William Jones
Salisbury, MD.....	Buddy Quillen
Santa Ana, CA.....	Miguel Garcia
San Jose, CA.....	Barbara Rivera
Sheridan, WY.....	A.B. White
Soledad, CA.....	Juan Lopez
South Central LA, CA.....	Raul Carrasco, Sr
Taylor, SC.....	Andrea Faye Davis
Vallejo, CA.....	A.B. White
Van Nuys, CA.....	Miguel Garcia
Ware Shoals, SC.....	Raymond Stonell
West Mobile, AL.....	Charles Fields
Wilmington, (Leland) NC.....	Robert Llana

**Missions**

*United States*

Bayou La Batre, AL.....	Tod Deakle
Cabin Creek, WV.....	Ron Massey
Flintville, TN.....	Roger Barbour
Ft. Wayne, IN.....	Nancy Wilson
Gainesville, MO.....	Jerry Tingle
Little Rock, CA.....	Samuel Pereira
Saticoy, CA.....	Jose Lozano
Smithfield, WV.....	Lee Brown

**New Fields**

*United States*

Bellingham, WA.....	Treva Joselyn
El Sobrante, CA.....	A.B. White
Fairfield, CA.....	Florence Sadler
Petaluma, CA.....	A.B. White
Roseburg, OR.....	A.B. White
Sacramento, CA.....	Arturo Gonzales
Sonoma, CA.....	A.B. White

## International Churches/Missions

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Churches</b>	<b>Missions</b>
United States	43	16
Argentina	6	0
Chile	12	1
Dominican Republic	5	3
England	1	0
Ghana	1	0
Guatemala	5	6
Haiti	87	0
India	8	11
Kenya	64	18
Malawi	19	0
Mexico	2	1
Nicaragua	4	1
Nigeria	13	2
Pakistan	3	0
Paraguay	2	0
Peru	1	1
Philippines	6	8
Sudan	4	0
Tanzania	42	0
Uganda	7	1
Uruguay	1	0
<hr/>		
	336	69

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*“Go, labor on; spend and be spent---thy joy is to do the Father’s will; It is the way the Master went; should not the servant tread it still?”*

---Horatius Bonar

# ABSTRACT OF FAITH

## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

## Church Membership

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

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

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

### Prominent Teachings in the Scripture

**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 fundamental teachings and principles set forth in the Holy Scriptures, which form an essential part of the church’s Rule of Faith.*

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

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

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

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

the Scriptures (Acts 15; 16:4, 5). The purpose of the General Assembly is to promote unity and fellowship among the saints, to search the Scriptures for additional light and understanding, and to resolve differences in interpretations which tend to be divisive among the ministers and churches. All matters of faith, government, and discipline are discussed before the entire body of the church assembled and resolved in one accord with the manifest approval of the Spirit (vv. 12, 22, 28). This form and order is based on the precedent: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us" (Acts 15:28). All male members in good standing have an active voice in the Assembly. Women are a vital part of the church's life and ministry. In matters dealing with church authority, however, they voice their opinions through their husbands and church elders (1 Corinthians 11:3, 7-9; 14:34-36; 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1-17).

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

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

Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11, 39).

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

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

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

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

Unlike the angels, mankind is a race; thus when the first man Adam sinned, sin was transmitted to all men through him (Romans 5:12).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Salvific Work of Grace

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Subsequent Grace**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Practical Graces

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Spirit Baptism and Spiritual Gifts**

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

see also: 10:44-47; 19:1-6). The baptism with the Spirit is a baptism of spiritual empowerment for service in the kingdom of God (Luke 24:49; John 15:26; Acts 1:8); it also enables one to minister effectively within the church for the self-edification of the body (1 Corinthians 12:12-28; Ephesians 4:11-16).

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

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

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

## Ordinances

**Water Baptism** is the act of being immersed in water by the minister of the Gospel in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It is

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

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

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

## Divine Sanctities

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

**Sanctity of Marriage**—Jesus said, "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and

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

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

## Eschatology

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

14:4, 5; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Jude 14, 15; Revelation 5:10; 19:11-21).

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

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

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

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

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

We may conclude then that the spirit of antichrist signifies the deceptive and seductive spirit in the world that seeks to confuse the true identity of Christ and to corrupt His Gospel. Antichrist may take many religious, social, and political forms, but all have the same goal---namely, to

compromise and corrupt the true doctrine of salvation in Jesus Christ with false doctrines and the pretense of false Christs (Matthew 24:4,5, 11, 23, 24).

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

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

## **Principles for Practical Christian Living and Discipline**

The following guidelines are explicitly revealed in the Scriptures or else shown to be consistent with biblical teachings. They are brought to

our attention to enhance our relationship with Christ and one another, and to encourage us to live in a way that will bring glory and honor to the name of Christ and to support the witness of the church. We are admonished in the Scriptures: "...be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12b). Jesus instructs us: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

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

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

**Church Attendance and Worship**—Worship and fellowship with believers of "like precious faith" is a vital part of the Christian life. Worship should be heartfelt in the Spirit, and in harmony with the Word of God (John 4:23b; Ephesians 5:19). Each member of the church is a part of the body of Christ, and thus the body will be hindered to the degree that one

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

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

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

**Notes:**