

**Zion Assembly Church of God**  
*Minutes*  
**9th Annual General Assembly**  
**September 4-9, 2012**

*Theme:*  
**“Showing Forth His Splendor”**



# A Biblical Explanation of the . . . General Assembly

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

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

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

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

Corporate counsel is thus an underlying principle upon which the government of the church is established. The General Assembly is made up of ministers and members from around the world whom Providence has blessed to attend and participate in the proceedings. The wise man wrote, *Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety* (Proverbs 11:14), and again, *Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established* (15:22).

When Rehoboam was made king in the Old Testament theocracy, it is said that *all Israel* came to Shechem to make him king (1 Kings 12:1). Moreover, it is emphasized that Rehoboam failed because he did not heed the counsel of the *elders and the people* in making decisions (vv. 6-15); but heeded rather a select counsel of the *young men that were grown up with him* (vv. 8-10), thus signifying that Rehoboam was partial in his decision-making and succumbed to the opinion of the young men who were actually opposed the will of God. Indeed, those young men typically were full of themselves: arrogant,

boastful, and harsh in their opinions (vv. 10-14).

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

The church under the spirit and terms of the New Covenant operates as *the habitation of God through the Spirit* (Ephesians 2:22). The ministers and members form the temple of God and are unified through the indwelling power and wisdom of the Spirit. This is the key to theocratic government---the indwelling graces and gifts of the Spirit being allowed to prevail in the church; for the Spirit creates a spiritual dynamic within the church that unites the ministers and members together intrinsically in one body of Christ. Even before the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, the 120 were in *one accord* because they had been sanctified and were *continually in the temple praising and blessing God* (Luke 24:53). Thus the essential key to the unity and power of the church is in sanctification, and in maintaining a consecrated devotion to Christ. When everyone's ego is crucified, then Christ rules supreme---the kingdom of God prevails! Thus Christ says in His prayer to the Father, *Sanctify them through thy truth . . . that they all may be one . . . And the glory which you gave me I have given them . . . that they may be made perfect in one* (John 17:17-23).

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

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

Should we expect God's blessings to fall on this last day's Zion on the basis of anything less than the basis upon which He blessed that early Zion? Surely not. It is an old principle that cannot be transgressed if we expect the blessings of God to be upon this last day's house: *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! . . . for there the Lord commanded the blessing* (Psalm 133:1-3).

We fully expect the prophets' and apostles' vision of the last day's church to be fulfilled in Zion Assembly: *The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, says the Lord . . . and in this place I will give peace* (Haggai 2:9) . . . *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot. . .* (Ephesians 5:27).

---WHP

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# Zion Assembly Church of God



## International Ministries Complex

*Site of 9th Annual General Assembly*

*Note: Several Sessions of the Assembly were held  
in the Living Word Church located  
at 930 25th Street NW Cleveland, Tennessee*



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

## *Welcome!*

This Assembly has been planned and organized with much prayer and forethought, and with a sense of the Holy Spirit's guidance in putting the program together. From reports that we have received from around the world, we know that a spirit of excitement has been filling the air for several weeks in anticipation of this great meeting. Consequently, this 9th Annual General Assembly is commencing with high hopes and great expectations. We are looking for a mighty move of God with heavenly interventions---glorious breakthroughs in which the blind will be made to see, the lamb to walk, the deaf to hear, the mute to speak, lukewarm Christians convicted, the sick and bruised healed, seasoned saints baptized afresh with old-time Pentecostal power, and, most of all, God revealing and mapping out for us the future of His church. May the zeal of the Lord grant it to be so!

## *About the Theme*

The Assembly theme this year---“*Showing Forth His Splendor*”---is God's call to the church throughout the Bible, proclaimed equally in the writings of the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles. The prophets of old looked forward to the infilling and indwelling of the Spirit in the church under the power of the Gospel. Isaiah wrote, *Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified [or in whom I will display my splendor]. . . I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that [you may] be my salvation to the ends of the earth* (Isaiah 49:3,6). In the New Testament, the apostle Peter shows plainly that this prophecy is fulfilled in the church under the new covenant, that is, the church is now called and empowered to *show forth his praises* (1 Peter 2:9). The apostle Paul conveys this same idea by calling the church the “body of Christ.” And Jesus says plainly that the church is *a city set on a hill* and that the members are together *the light of the world*.

The Hebrew word *pa'ar* translated in the King James Version, “glorify,” may also be translated “beautify,” “gleam,” “adorn,” “magnify,” “splendor,” etc. We have chosen the word “splendor” for the Assembly theme, for it seems to best capture and convey the underlying message of the Assembly this year; for God has called His church to embody and display His splendor throughout the world; that is, the Lord now indwells His church in this dispensation of grace and radiates out from her His glorious perfections [“his praises”] into all the earth.

# Ninth Annual General Assembly September 4-9-2012

## Administration

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

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

**Chief Clerk**.....Marie Crook  
(Julia Massey, Sandra Moore, Brenda Reitler, Rita Goodrum,  
Shirley Kimble, Sandy Morris, Diane Jackson)

**Chief Usher**.....Tod Deakle  
Eddie Davis, Milford Kimble, Cecil Pounders, Bill Reid,  
Robert Ramirez, Lynn Jones, Daren Childers, Jerry Nichols,  
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  
**Secretary**..... Zachary Snyder  
Members: L. W. Carter, Joseph Steele, Miguel Garcia  
Joshua Amara, C.R. Gregory.  
(Alternates: Ray Dickson, Scott Neill

**Video**.....Scott Neill  
**Sound Equipment**.....Zachary Snyder  
**Photography**.....Marie Crook  
**Projection Director**.....Kari Snyder  
**Stage Manager**.....C.R. Gregory  
**Props & Maintenance** .....Jim Orange

## Other Committees

**International Properties:** Wade H. Phillips, Sidney Whitlock, A.B. White,  
Gene Tingler, E.A. McDonald, Todd McDonald, Ray Dickson  
**Construction:** Wade H. Phillips, E.A. McDonald, Sam Monday, Jack Little,  
Clifton Kelton, Ricky Graves, C.R. Gregory  
**Properties Committee:** Wade H. Phillips

# Greetings!

Let your hearts rejoice and your minds be illuminated by the Spirit and teaching of God's Word during this 9th Annual General Assembly. It is our sincere desire that you will feel welcome, and that you may say as Peter said when he saw the glory of the Lord at Jesus' transfiguration, "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Matthew 17:4).

The General Assembly will convene this year on Tuesday, Wednesday and Sunday at the International Offices on Highway 64 East in Cleveland, and on Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Living Word Church on 25th Street across from Wendy's restaurant. Please help us show our appreciation to Pastor Larry Cochran and his staff by caring for the property and equipment they have provided. Directions to the Living Word Church: take exit 25 off I-75. Go approximately one mile east past Peerless Road. Living Word is on the left in the plaza next to Ace's hardware.

The following instructions are given to help make your attendance to the General Assembly a memorable and enjoyable experience in the Word and Spirit. Personnel have been appointed to address any problem that may arise during this Assembly. We request that everyone use the **main auditorium entrance** and **that no one enter into the Living Word Church office area**. If you should need assistance while you are here, please consult with the authorized persons (listed below) to make any adjustment or change in the facilities or equipment. Ushers will be stationed at each aisle entrance for your convenience. If you encounter a problem of any kind please report it to one of the ushers.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

# **Pre-Assembly Programs**

## **Assembly Business Committee Monday, September 3, 2012**

The Assembly Business Committee will meet beginning at 6:00 p.m. to finalize its report to present to the 9th 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 4, 2012**

Beginning at 9:00 a.m. the annual ministers' conference 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) 12:15 p.m.**

All ministers and their companions are honored guests at the ministers' luncheon. This is sponsored by the International Offices. The luncheon will be held at the Mountain View Inn (take 25th Street, go under I-75, go to first light, turn right up the hill). Special singing: Zachary & Kari Snyder, TN. Special Guests: Jeff & Gertrud. Guest Speaker: Yomi Adekunle, Nigeria. Comments and special presentations by First Lady, Dale Phillips. Dress code: most of the men prefer to wear suit and tie for this occasion.

# Assembly Program

## Tuesday

6:15 p.m. Jesus! Worthy of all Praise---Zach & Kari Snyder, TN

**Burning Exhortations** (5, 7, & 10 minutes respectively):

*“Praise Him!”* (Psalm 145:1-3)

---Tina Stephenson, SC

*“Extol Him!”* (Psalm 68:4)

---Elijah Wafula, Sudan

*“Fear Him!”* (Psalm 128:1-5)

---Joel Brooks, MS

**Message**---*“Hear Him!”* (Mark 9:7; John 5:25)

---Jonathan Gregory, KY

## Official Opening of the Assembly

Welcome!---Carl & Diane Jackson, GA

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

Special Songs---The Four Pops, TN

Camp Reports—Cheryl McDonald, International Coordinator

---Jeff & Gertrud---

Assembly Expense Offering

**Message**—*“The Splendor of His Love”* (Ephesians 3:19)

---Scott Neill, SC

Prayer and Consecration Time

## Wednesday

9:00 a.m.

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

Special Songs---Charles Shelton, MS; Lee Brown, WV

Message---“*The Splendor of His Government*”

(Isaiah 2:3; 9:6, 7)

---Bruce Sullivan, SC

### General Treasurer’s Report

International Leaders’ Reports:

-----Presiding Bishop

-----Assistant Presiding Bishop/World Mission Director

-----Field Secretary

-----Field Secretary

-----US Missions & New Fields Director

-----Ladies Ministries Director

-----School of Ministry Director

-----Shepherding Ministries Director

-----Communications/Media Ministries Director

-----Youth Director

-----Children’s Ministries Director/Camp Coordinator

-----Sunday School Director

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

---Lunch Break---

[**Note: Kidz’ Konvention** schedule is: Thursday 2:30-3:30, 6:30-8:00; Friday: 10:15—11:45 a.m. 6:30-8:00 p.m. Saturday: 9:00--10:00 a.m. 2:30--4:00, 7:00-8:30 p.m. A special Children’s Program is scheduled for Sunday morning in the main auditorium of the International Ministries Center].

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 nine regions in the United States will report at designated intervals during the Assembly week.*

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

Joshua Amara, regional overseer

Kenya---Joshua Amara, national overseer  
Sudan---Elijah Wafula, national overseer  
Ethiopia---Geremew Eschete Esuendele, national overseer  
Tanzania---Edward Agar, national overseer  
Uganda---Joshua Amara, national overseer

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

Yomi Adekunle, regional overseer

Nigeria---Yomi Adekunle, national overseer  
Ghana---David Dordah, national overseer  
Cameroon---Eyong Eric Eyong, national overseer  
Togo---Amos Agbonifo, national overseer  
Benin---Amos Agbonifo, national overseer

### **2:45 Central Africa**

David Gomba, mission representative

Malawi---Maliele Dzuwa, national overseer  
Zambia---David Gomba, mission representative

### **2:55 United Kingdom**

England---Joshua Amara, national overseer

**3:00 Central America**

Miguel Garcia Sr., field secretary

Nicaragua---Freddy Garcia, national overseer

Guatemala---Ricardo Valenzuela, national overseer

**3:15 Caribbean**

Sandraud Pierre, regional overseer

Dominican Republic---Sandraud Pierre, national overseer

Haiti---Saintaniel Hostelus, national overseer

**3:30 Mexico**

Danny Ramirez, national overseer

**3:40 South America**

Javier Diaz Perez, regional overseer

Peru---Samuel Medina, national overseer

Chile---Javier Diaz Perez, national overseer

Argentina---Javier Diaz Perez, national overseer

Uruguay---Jorge Estroz, national overseer

Paraguay---Vidal Moriningo, national overseer

**3:55 Middle East**

Pakistan---George Assi, national overseer

India South---Joseph Binoy, provincial overseer

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

**4:10 Southeast Asia**

Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar (Burma)---  
(under direction of Presiding Bishop)

**4:20 Far East**

**Philippines/Guam**

Domingo Resurreccion, national overseer

----Supper Break----

## **Wednesday Evening**

7:00 p.m. Splendor in Praise!---Miguel Sr. & Sandy Garcia, CA

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

(Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana)

---Ricky Graves, overseer

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

(Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Utah, Missouri)

---Joseph Steele, overseer

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

(Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Arizona)

---Joseph A. Steele, overseer

Special Singing---The Four Pops, TN

Assembly Expense Offering

### **Message—“*Splendor of God’s Zion---the City of Truth*”**

(Isaiah 1:21-27; 60:14; Zechariah 8:3, 7, 8;

Matthew 5:14; 1 Timothy 3:15)

---Zachary Snyder, TN

Special Songs: Nicole Pounders & Alicia Harris, MS

### **Message---“*The Splendor of His Power*”** (Exodus 15:1-13;

Acts 2:2; 4:31; 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5)

---Joshua Amara, Kenya

*“There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.”*

---Psalm 46:4

## Thursday

9:00 a.m. **Mid-East Region March & Report**  
(West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania)  
---Rocky Dalton, overseer

Special Songs---Andy Davis, SC; Juan Lopez, CA

**Message**—“*Splendor in Divine Order*” (1 Kings 10:4-8;  
1 Corinthians 14:40; Colossians 2:5)  
---Joseph A. Steele, TN

## School of Ministry Program

—Wade H. Phillips

Special Singing: Jim Melton, WV; Dewey Gibson, VA

**Message**—“*The Splendor of His Word*”  
(Psalm 119:103, 105, 140; 107:20; Hebrews 4:12)  
---Miguel Garcia, Jr.

—Lunch Break---

2:30 p.m. Special Songs— Molly Hayward, MD;  
The Monday Family, TN

**Voice of Zion Boost**—Marie Crook

*In Memory . . .*  
Ordination Service

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

## **Thursday Evening**

6:15 p.m. **South-Central Region March & Report**  
(Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana)  
---Joel Brooks, Overseer

Praise Reports—Mary Jackson, WV; Jimmy Johnson, SC  
Majorie Gifford, PA

Special Songs—Becky Land, SC; Billy Summerlin, MS

### **Senior Ambassadors' Program**

—William F. Jones, VA  
*“Splendor in Perseverance”*

Assembly Expense Offering

Special Songs—Todd & Kim Erwin, AL

### **Healing Service**

---L. W. Carter

*“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”*

---Acts 4:31

## **Friday**

9:00 a.m. **South Atlantic Region March & Report**  
(North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida)  
---Scott Neill, Overseer

## **Sunday School Program**

—Rick Ferrell, director

Special Songs---Brenda Whitlock, MS

Assembly Greetings---Ricardo Valenzuela, Guatemala;  
Sandraud Pierre, Haiti; Ernesto Espinosa, Mexico;

## **Radio & Media Ministries Program**

---Todd McDonald, minister

—Afternoon Break—

*Note: The annual SYNC luncheon will be held at the Living Word Church at 1:00 p.m. Byron Harris, Kari Snyder, & Alice Jones in charge. All SYNC members are encouraged to attend.*

## Friday Evening

6:15 p.m. **Pacific Coast North Region March & Report**  
(California North, Oregon, Nevada North, Washington)  
---A. B. White, Overseer

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

Special Songs---Michael George, SC; Juan Lopez, CA

Message---“*Splendor in Righteousness*”  
(Psalm 85:11, 13; Isaiah 45:8; 61:3)  
---Raymond Stonell, SC

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

Special Songs---Shelby Erwin, AL; Trevor Graves, KY

### **Youth Program**

—Cheryl McDonald, director

*“Age cannot be judged by years. Youthfulness is a state of mind. You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your courage, as old as your feats; as young as your courage, as old as your fears; as young as your dreams, as old as your hopelessness and despair”---WHP*

## **Saturday**

8:15 a.m. Morning Prayer Service---Allen & Mandy Thompson, MS  
in charge

[**Note:** *Kidz' Konvention held today 9:00-10:00 a.m.  
and 7:00-8:00 p.m.*]

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

Special Songs---Lee Brown, WV; Sharon Compton, VA

**Message---***“Splendor in Hard Work”* (1 Thessalonians 2:9)  
---Tom Brown, WV

---Assembly Choir---

Recognition of Special Guests

Special Singing---Miguel Garcia, Sr.; Brenda Whitlock

## **Presiding Bishop's Annual Address**

---Lunch Break---

2:30 p.m. Worship Him!

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

## **Shepherding Ministries Program**

---Rocky Dalton, director

## **Assembly Business Committee Report**

---Supper Break---

## **Saturday Evening**

6:30 p.m. Pacific Coast South Region March & Report  
(California South, Nevada South)  
---Miguel Garcia, Sr., overseer

Special Songs---Cleveland Ladies Choir

Message---“*Splendor in Tithing & Giving*”  
(Proverbs 3: 9, 10; Malachi 3:10)  
---Jimmy Johnson, SC

Assembly Expense Offering

Special Singing---Yomi Adekunle, Nigeria; Kim Erwin, AL

### **World Mission Program**

---E. A. McDonald, director

“*The Church---A Light to the Gentiles [Nations]*”  
(Isaiah 49:6)

---Parade of Nations---

“We must *reach out* or else we will *pass out*! A church that is not mission-minded will soon cease to exist---indeed, it has already ceased to be! It is like a body without a soul; for the very life principle of the church is in the harvest. Here is a great mystery: millions who will make up the glorious church in the last days---in the prophets’ and apostles’ vision---are yet to be saved, received into the church, and perfected!---WHP

## **Sunday**

8:30 a.m. Sunday School Lesson---Lee Brown, WV

Mid-Atlantic Region March & Report  
(Maryland, Virginia)  
---William F. Jones, overseer

9:00 Special Singing---Sharon Compton, VA;  
Shelby Erwin, AL

### **Children's Ministries Program**

---Cheryl McDonald, director

Special Performance---George Family, SC

### **Ladies Ministries Program**

---Rosie Ramirez, director

---Assembly Choir---

**Message---“*Splendor in the Mission*”**

(Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 20)

---A. B. White, CA

Announcements

Appointments

Consecration Service

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

# **Assembly Program Adjustments**

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

## **Tuesday**

Carl Jackson, GA, not present to welcome Assembly delegates. His wife, Diane, stood for him.

## **Wednesday**

Midwest and Southeast regional marches and reports were moved to Friday.

## **Thursday**

Dewey Gibson, VA, not present to sing.  
Majorie Gifford, PA, not present to give praise report.

## **Friday**

Juan Lopez led the march and gave report for Pacific Coast North region in absence of Overseer A. B. White.

## **Sunday**

The Presiding Bishop interrupted the regular program to boost the plan for the Headquarters' Expansion and Bible College. More than \$30,000 was given at that time in cash and pledges. Then just before the Presiding Bishop made his appointments, he nominated E. A. McDonald for the position of assistant presiding bishop. Bishop McDonald's nomination was accepted without a dissenting voice. According to the new Assembly ruling, the term for the assistant presiding bishop will end at the Assembly in 2014. At that time, a new assistant will then be selected, and the term for this office will again be four years. This decision was made to offset by two years the appointments of the Presiding Bishop and the Assistant Presiding Bishop.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>International Staff Reports</b> <b>9th Annual General Assembly</b></p>
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## **Presiding Bishop's Report to the Ninth Annual General Assembly for September 1, 2011--August 31, 2012**

I would like to preface this report with the apostle Paul's opening benediction in his letter to the Philippians: *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* But the apostle's further words here also express what I feel in my heart today for you. *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel . . . Being confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

What a great consolation to know that we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ, and that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose: so that no matter if we are in the midst of trials, tribulations, distresses, persecutions, famines, nakedness, and perils, we can say, "If God be for us who can be against us?"

I feel that victory today in my soul. The Lord has enabled us and sustained us to work for Him another year and to accomplish what we have. The practical work connected with my office has included: answering all correspondence and calls that have come into the office (roughly 700 letters and e-mails this year). I have kept up a monthly correspondence with the overseers and ministers, and have served as the editor-in-chief of our church magazine, the Voice of Zion. I want to thank our secretary, Marie Crook, for her capable and untiring assistance. I want to express my thanks also here publicly to Dale, my good and faithful wife---and, yes, she is lovely, too---for her assistance in helping to package and mail the paper and for many other errands that she has run and the chores that she has done to help make this office efficient and a blessing.

I have counseled with hundreds of ministers and perhaps twice as many members both in the office and on the field. I have worked with the General Staff, the Assembly Business Committee, the Doctrine Committee, the overseers, pastors, and ministers to promote the work in all of its administrations and operations. I want to commend Bishop McDonald

for his cooperation and faithful assistance, and the General Staff and the regional overseers, whom have been cheerfully cooperative with the Presiding Bishop in the promotion of the work. Some of our leaders have sacrificed much to move the work forward in their regions and throughout the world. I want to take this opportunity here also to commend the companions of our overseers and international workers: for they minister and attend to them so that they in turn may minister to others.

I have again this year served as the president of the School of Ministry, worked with Brother McDonald in overseeing and directing the mission work, and planned and moderated the General Assembly. I want to commend here especially the overseers and ministers who cooperated with the Presiding Bishop and World Mission Director in some of our special world mission outreach efforts. These included Bishops Joshua Amara, Miguel Garcia, Yomi Adekunle, Javier Diaz, David Gomba, Amos Agbonifo, Danny Ramirez, Todd McDonald, and L. W. Carter.

My work as president of the School of Ministry included organizing and planning materials for the schools in California for the Pacific Coast North and Pacific Coast South Regions, and the regular term of the school in Cleveland. Sister Norie Garavito was especially instrumental in assisting to plan and execute the Pacific Coast South school, and Sisters Reina Romo and Glenda Major were instrumental in assisting with the Pacific Coast North school. I also want to thank the overseers of these two regions for their cooperation and assistance---Bishops Miguel Garcia and A. B. White. The Cleveland school included writing several of the courses offered and planning and organizing the 6th graduation service. Again Sister Marie Crook was an invaluable assistant in these endeavors.

I was able to attend with my wife two of the regional conventions in the United States this year---the Southeast and South Atlantic regions--serving as the headquarters' representative in the South Atlantic region. We were also scheduled to be in the Mid-Atlantic regional convention with Brother Jones, but a severe storm that knocked out the power systems in that region caused that convention to have to be canceled this year.

We should include in this report that the burden of work on this office increases every year. I say this not to complain but simply to report accurately and to inform you. More and more time has had to be spent in writing and developing materials for the various ministries and publications of the church. And it seems that this will increase still more in this coming year: for these materials are necessary to identify the church and articulate her message for the millions who are even now asking their way to Zion. Many if you have asked about the manuscript that I am currently working on called Who Is She. Well, as reported, I was hoping to have it

published before this Assembly, but the priority given necessarily to the administrative duties and responsibilities of the office of Presiding Bishop did not allow me sufficient time to finish this task. So we are hoping to complete the work this winter and have it ready for publication in January. I appreciate your prayers in our efforts to accomplish this task.

Finally, I praise the Lord for the progress made in the church this year, and for His anointing, strength, and sustaining grace. I believe I can say with the apostle Paul in all sincerity that I feel the least of all in the church, yet by the grace of God I am what I am.

The following are some personal statistics in regard to the work. I'm publishing these as a means to make myself accountable to this honorable body.

Sermons Preached.....	186
Revivals conducted.....	1
Converted.....	1
Sanctified.....	2
Holy Ghost Baptisms.....	0
Added to the church.....	16
Baptized in Water.....	0
Tithes paid.....	\$3420.00
Offerings given.....	2650.00
Miles traveled.....	32,600
(approximately 6,000 by air, 26,600 on the ground).	
Missions organized.....	1
Churches visited.....	22
Regional Conventions Attended....	2
General Assembly (Moderated).....	1

Thank you again for your prayerful support and gracious cooperation, and for the many kindnesses you have shown to me and my family. May the Lord bless and keep you all in the love of Christ.

Humbly submitted,

*Wade H. Phillips*

# Assistant Presiding Bishop's Report

## Greetings in Jesus name:

Once again I give Glory, honor and praise to God for the great things He has done. It has been a privilege to work another year as Assistant Presiding Bishop, and serve the church in this capacity. To the best of my knowledge and ability I have with sincerity and integrity assisted the Presiding Bishop, Wade H. Phillips whenever and wherever I have been needed.

Much of my time since the General Assembly in 2011, has been related to my work as World Mission Secretary, which will be reported in the World Mission Report. In addition to my daily office duties I have prepared lessons and taught in the Schools of Ministry in Maderia and Rialto California, and taught in the two weeks of School in Cleveland. I ministered in the church at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and served as the International Office Representative to the Mid East Regional Convention. I have also made two trips to conduct church business in behalf of the Presiding Bishop.

## My Personal Report:

Sermons Preached & Lessons Taught Approximately 100. Where possible I encouraged ministers who have labored in ministering to prospective members to minister the covenant to them, rather than receiving them into the church myself.

My work as General Treasurer and World Mission Secretary will be given as a separate report.

Respectfully Submitted,  
*E. A. McDonald*

## General Treasurer's Report

God is to be praised for His continued blessing upon Zion Assembly. Again this year the financial report for this Assembly shows increases despite the Economic Recession. The local churches and pastors are to be commended for their continued support of International ministries. God has provided a way and the means to fulfill all our mission efforts this year.

I want to give special recognition to Sister Cheryl McDonald, for her able assistance in the Treasurer's office. In addition to her appointed duties as Children's and Youth Ministry Director, she serves as assistant to the treasurer, 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 years 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 dispersed 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 Office are made and reported to the General Assembly.

Sister Cheryl has also spent many hours making Hotel Reservations and coordinating with Mt. View Motel to provide rooms for Assembly delegates at minimal cost. More than sixty rooms were set apart for Zion Assembly at these special rates, saving more than \$ 200 per room for the delegates, (Hand clap for Sister Cheryl).

I want to also express appreciation to the Office Secretary, Sister Crook. In addition to her full time duties as office secretary and secretary to our presiding bishop, she is always ready to give assistance to my office. (Hand Clap for Sister Crook)

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, 2012												PAGE 8	
FIRST QUARTER	TITHES	VOZ-SUB	50%		EXPENSE	MISSIONS	BLD-FUND	SC OF MIN	E-FUND	YOUTH	OCT-MAR		
			Orphan	Mission							MISSION	OTHER	
TOTALS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TOTALS	TOTALS	
BALANCE FORWARD	327.62	0	242.95	0	187.93	60	401.82	531.54	608.4	8000	9637.41	20087.67	
RECEIPTS	39339.02	1774	3736.57	9572.58	4810.84	14700	1252.75	327	1367.47	20059.25	20218.59	117197.77	
EXPENDITURES	-28446.2	-4006.06	-70.35	-11926.42	-4414.74	-10635	-29.05	0	-879.95	-30951.83	-15737.2	-107476.8	
BANK BALANCE	10220.44	-2314.08	3909.17	-2263.84	683.73	4125	1626.62	858.54	1186.92	-2863.58	14718.6	29606.62	
<b>SECOND QUARTER</b>													
BALANCE FORWARD	10220.44	-2314.08	3909.17	-2263.84	583.73	4125	1626.62	858.54	1186.92	-2863.58	14718.6	29606.62	
RECEIPTS	37667.15	1485.85	4805.14	261	3970.93	10	1235.09	240	2054.03	49326.92	3489.01	103447.02	
EXPENDITURES	-28646.2	-6128.84	-1175	-4542.79	-7600	-21680.51	-99.4	0	-1704.16	-26035.96	-17180	-117073	
BANK BALANCE	18041.39	-6957.17	7540.31	-6336.63	-3226.44	-17545.51	2762.21	1098.54	1636.79	17436.36	1027.81	16180.68	
<b>THIRD QUARTER</b>													
BALANCE FORWARD	18041.39	-6957.17	7540.31	-6336.63	-3226.44	-17545.51	2762.21	1098.54	1636.79	17436.36	1027.81	16180.68	
RECEIPTS	39706.11	6917.36	4017.6	689.26	7364.54	0	1046.34	870	1241.86	925	14141	76919.17	
EXPENDITURES	-28447.2	-4037.52	-655	-5475.86	-6722.81	-9846.09	-970.73	0	-23320.28	-2615	-83094.49	-107476.8	
BANK BALANCE	28300.3	-3977.33	10902.91	-11322.23	-2683.71	-27391.6	2637.82	1968.54	2777.75	-4956.9	12552.81	9106.36	
<b>FORTH QUARTER</b>													
BALANCE FORWARD	28300.3	-3977.33	10902.91	-11322.23	-2683.71	-27391.6	2637.82	1968.54	2777.75	-4956.9	12552.81	9106.36	
RECEIPTS	43624.21	947	4351.69	2327.74	8909.69	2763	7335.65	443	1124.75	51075.15	11091.75	133993.53	
EXPENDITURES	-28446.2	-6169.03	-1275	-2442.12	-6005.9	-10038.09	-5893.24	0	0	-30066.49	-23357.5	-113686.6	
BANK BALANCE	42476.31	-8189.38	13979.6	-11436.61	219.08	-34666.69	4280.13	2411.84	3902.6	16061.76	287.06	29316.32	
<b>YEARLY SUMMARY OF ALL FUNDS RECEIVED, EXPENDITURES, AND BALANCE IN TREASURY JUNE 30, 2012</b>													
BALANCE FORWARD	327.62	0	242.95	0	187.93	60	401.82	531.54	608.4	8000	9637.41	20087.67	
RECEIPTS	160336.49	11024.21	16912	12860.58	24855.6	17473	10870.73	1880	5788.21	120426.32	48940.35	431357.48	
EXPENDITURES	-118187.6	-19213.47	-3175.35	-24287.19	-24824.46	-82199.69	-6992.42	0	-2464.11	-112374.56	-58290.7	-432128.8	
BANK BALANCE	42476.31	-8189.38	13979.6	-11436.61	219.08	-34666.69	4280.13	2411.84	3902.6	16061.76	287.06	29316.32	

## Media Ministries Account Report

Balance Brought Forward September 1, 2011:	\$ 2,613.48
Amount Received from Pledges:	\$ 7,090.00
Deposit on Loan to General Fund from 2010-2011:	\$ 12,500.00
Total Received and Brought Forward for year 2011-2012.....	\$22,203.48

Expenditures for Radio/Internet Equipment:	\$ (2,733.83)
Expenditures for Video Streaming Equipment:	\$ (4,506.25)
Expenditures for Radio Program:	\$ (8,700.00)
Total Expenditures from September 2011- August 2012:	\$ (15,940.08)
Loan to General Fund-January 2012:	\$ (10,000.00)
Deposit on Loan from General Fund-May 2012	\$ 10,000.00

Balance on September 1, 2012:	\$ 6,263.40
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Respectfully submitted  
*E.A. McDonald*

***“ Our pocketbooks have as much to do with  
heaven---and with hell!---as our hymnbooks.”***

***---Helmut Thiehike***

# World Mission Secretary Report

During the 2011 General Assembly I was appointed as World Mission Secretary. This has indeed been a busy year as God continues to open up new doors in other countries for Zion Assembly. I have received approximately 800 emails related to missions and corresponded by email to approximately 600.

In November 2011 I went to Malawi in Central Africa and met with David Gomba, Mission Representative to Central Africa. There I met with Overseer, Maliele Dzuwa and conducted a School of Ministry for about twenty ministers.

I also went to Haiti in January 2012 where I met with Miguel Garcia, Sandraud Pierre, regional overseer of the Caribbean, and Santaniel Hostelus, overseer of Haiti. We conducted a School of Ministry with more than seventy ministers and church leaders in attendance. Total Miles traveled approximately 20,000.

I preached twice and taught more than fifty hours in the two schools to establish the church in these countries in the Word of God and the disciplines of Zion Assembly. We are glad to report that each of the countries have had phenomenal growth following the School of Ministry in those countries.

We were contacted in the April 2012 by a Brother John Babu Rao Ganta in South East India who had visited our Web Site and read our *Abstract of Faith*. He has a ministry in SE India and wanted permission to translate the *Abstract of Faith* into *Telugu*, which is one of 50 languages in India. Brother Ganta and his wife did an outstanding job in translating, and now are requesting to have 10,000 copies printed to hand out in India. In June another minister from India, Philip Thomas visited the International Offices and united with Zion Assembly. We have had three new ministry areas in India which have been opened up to the church message. By the grace of God we will conduct two Schools of Ministry in India during the 2013 Assembly year.

Doors have also been opened this year for the church to be established in Benin, Togo, Ethiopia, and Burundi. We want to express appreciation to Field Secretaries Joshua Amara, from East Africa, and Amos Agbonifo, from West Africa, and Edward Agar overseer of Tanzania for their work in establishing the church in these countries. A more thorough report will be included in the Mission Program Saturday Evening.

Please join us in prayer that God will send forth laborers into the harvest, for the fields are indeed white.

Respectfully Submitted.

*E. A. McDonald*

## International Shepherding Ministries Director

I greet this Assembly with love and thanksgiving, and give honor to our Lord Jesus Christ for all his benevolent blessings. Once again I have been fortunate and blessed to have served you as Shepherding Ministries director, and count it a privilege to report to you again this year. I count it joy to serve with such godly men and women who are on the International Staff and with all my fellow ministers and saints.

### IN THIS PAST ASSEMBLY YEAR I HAVE ATTENDED:

Annual Ministers Conference and the 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly  
Studied, prayed and prepared a Shepherding report and program for this 9<sup>th</sup> assembly.

Sent letters of communication to Regional Overseers & Shepherding directors.

Attended one week of the School of Ministry

Participated in the Mid-East Region youth camp (teaching & music)

Gave counsel and instructions to several shepherding directors in the United States.

Served as Mid-East Region Overseer while pastoring a local church.

Served as Chairman of the Adjunct Committee

This year I have organized help and hospitality for our visiting overseers from outside the U.S. attending this Assembly.

I have been faithful in tithing and giving and in reporting to the International Offices.

As Shepherding director I want to thank each and every one that has participated in the Shepherding ministries in your local church and in the regions worldwide.

Respectively submitted,

*Rocky E. Dalton*

## International Sunday School Director

As the international director of Sunday School Services, my primary work this year has been writing, being the contact person especially for additional writers. I also electronically published the Faith-N-Focus adult, teen, and children's curriculum. This year in our adult lessons, we have studied two series: Righteousness in Relationships and The Doctrine of The Church. We currently have over 180 subscriptions to the English lessons and over 45 to the Spanish lessons. Many of the subscribers to the Spanish also subscribe to the English.

We currently have two Spanish translators who work tirelessly in making sure that our curriculum is translated with excellence for those in the United States and around the world. In many of the different language areas of the world where the church is in operation, someone within that region is translating into their own language from either English or Spanish. Therefore our Sunday School Curriculum is literally touching different cultures, different people groups and different languages all around the world with the unifying message of the church of God. Praise the Lord!

In addition to writing and publishing the curriculum, as Sunday School director I was given the opportunity to travel to the Pacific Coast North Regional Convention representing International Headquarters. While there I preached two messages during the convention and was able to visit with others after the convention in their home.

Finally, I was able to graduate from the School of Ministry in May of this year. I thank Brother Phillips and Brother McDonald and all the staff of the School of Ministry for their diligence and dedication in teaching the men and women of Zion Assembly Church of God.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve and represent the church as Sunday School International Director. I praise the Lord for all that has been accomplished through the Sunday School ministry this past year.

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Rick Ferrell*

# **United States Missions and New Fields Director**

## **Greetings in Jesus' name!**

This year has been a wonderful year for Zion Assembly. The revival spirit is definitely among our people. The desire to reach out to the unchurched in the United States is present in many of our local churches. It has been a busy year for me. I have traveled from Hartsville, SC on the east coast to Van Nuys, CA on the west coast, and from Mexicalla, Mexico to Oil City, Pennsylvania.

I have preached revivals in the following churches: Mobile, AL, Columbus, MS, Okolona, MS, Bayou La Batre, AL, Fairmont, WV, Smithfield, WV, Browder, KY, Cleveland, TN, Greenville, SC, and assisted Sister Carter in a revival in Taylors, SC. Also preached in Oil City, PA, and Pell City, AL, the latter being an independent church. There were several experiences and 15 united with the church through these efforts.

I have attended 3 meetings with the Assembly Business Committee and wrote an instructional guide for establishing missions. I assisted the Presiding Bishop in delivering copies of the *Voice of Zion* to the publisher in Indiana and visited two churches in Kentucky and Indiana while on this trip. I taught the pastoral class in the School of Ministry in Cleveland. I was guest speaker at the West Virginia Regional Convention, and set in order the missions in Oil City, PA and Hartsville, SC.

Also toured Southern California in August: visited six churches and preached eight times. and attended one prayer meeting and one evangelistic seminar. Also traveled 1400 miles on this trip including going to visit with Brother Danny Ramirez the new church in Mexicalla, Mexico.

Attended three funerals and assisted in two; stayed in contact with regional overseers in the US in regard to mission work; reported every month and paid tithes to general headquarters. Been faithful in attendance to my local church when I was in town.

**Respectfully submitted**

*L.W. Carter*

# Field Secretary Report

## Greetings in Jesus name

Preached 100 messages in 20 revivals, 5 crusades, 2 conferences and 6 seminars. Visited countries traveling 60,000 miles both at home and abroad (Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda). Conducted 10 funerals and officiated 2 weddings. Visited 2 hospitals and 3 prisons to pray with inmates in Kenya. Made hundreds of phone calls and sent emails to the members of Zion Assembly Church of God, and also to others outside the church. Preached in three churches of minister friends, one of which was about to lose its entire congregation. Have continued with the radio ministry twice a week which reaches about 2 million people in the Lake Victoria region; in fact, many of my contacts and those who have come into our churches have come as a result of radio program. Finally, gave seven lectures in a private local Bible College on Evangelism in Migori. I am also writing a book entitled “Royal & Loyal.”

Respectfully submitted,

*Joshua Amara*

# Field Secretary Report

## Greetings in Jesus name

Visited the city of Contonou, Benin in July. Gave out copies of the *Abstract of Faith* to five ministers to teach and share with their members. Spent four nights with the brethren in Cotonou.

Then travelled by road four hours to Lome, Togo. Received by the brethren there. Stayed in a hotel at my own expense, because the brethren there did not have enough resources to pay my bills. Spent three nights visiting their churches and holding meetings to establish the church in their country. The Togolese ministers received me heartily and we registered their churches in the name of Zion Assembly Church of God.

I have recommended to the Presiding Bishop that the pastor at Lome be appointed overseer for Togo. Permanent buildings for the church are so difficult to get; the costs are quite on the high side. Three pastors have completed thrie minister's applications awaiting the approval of the Presiding Bishop and ministerial review council.

After that I held an indoor revival and received more members into the church. I plan to move on to Ghana, Congo, Ivory Coast, and Liberia this coming year. We will be by the grace of God cover these countries in West Africa.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Amos Agbonifo*

## **International Youth Ministries Director**

The Lord is blessing Zion Assembly with youth who are grounded in the Word of God. A growing group of these youth have accepted the call to preach the Gospel and are doing so with great anointing. Many others are taking a bold stand for Christ against a “live and let live” culture. I am always blessed in meeting young people who are eager to seek the Lord and His will for their lives. In November, I had the opportunity to organize the General Youth Convention for the Eastern Region which was conducted in Cleveland, TN with 118 in attendance. I also traveled to Rialto, California to coordinate the Pacific Coast Youth Convention with an attendance of 180. This year’s convention theme was “Know the Truth” from John 8:32. In both of these gatherings, every session was filled with sincere worship and powerful preaching. Each service concluded with altars filled with young people who wanted to know the Lord and His truth for themselves.

I am pleased to report of a Youth Convention which was also held in Nigeria, December 9-11, 2011. Overseer, Yomi Adekunle, reported of an “interesting and blessing packed” convention using the theme: “You and Your Glory.”

There were also four additional youth events held within the United States. On March 16th and 17th, the Adolphus, KY church hosted a Mid-Central regional youth convention which I was able to attend and participate in. A youth revival was organized in Idamay, WV on May 4th and 5th for the Mid-East region. The South-Central region conducted two separate youth revivals with one at Columbus, MS on March 16-18 and the other at the West Mobile, AL church on July 13-15. I am excited about the focus which has been placed on our youth this past year.

In June 2012, I traveled to Greenville, SC for the South-Atlantic regional youth camp where I taught the morning Bible class for teens. This particular group of youth challenged me to always “be ready always to give an answer... of the hope that is within me.” I truly thank the Lord for that experience which kept me on my toes and in the Word.

Finally, I have organized the Friday night youth program of this General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Cheryl H. McDonald*

## International Camping Coordinator/Advisor

This year's youth camp directors have reported safe, fun, and spiritual gatherings. Ricardo Astorga, overseer of Argentina, reported on a beautiful camp which was held for the youth in Argentina with an attendance of thirty-five. Four regional camps were conducted in the United States. I attended two of the four United States camps. In June, my family and I were blessed to attend the South-Atlantic camp in Greenville, SC. This was the second year for this camp which had great gains in attendance and spiritual experiences. I taught the morning Bible class for the teens, assisted in the music class, and helped out in the worship services. My family and I also attended the camp held in Nauvoo, AL. This was a combined camp of the Mid-Central and South-Central regions. It proved to enrich both regions by joining the efforts of the directors and staff in ministering to a larger group of youth and children. While there, I taught the children's Bible class which proved to be one of the best classes I have ever had the privilege of teaching.

Our faithful directors and dedicated staff members are to be commended. These individuals raise funds and use their personal vacation days to be involved in this vital ministry of the church. Many hours of preparation and prayer are invested to make each camp a success. All of their efforts are rewarded as each youth boldly stands to testify of a spiritual experience he/she has received as a direct result of the camp.

The combined statistics for the 2011-2012 camping ministry are as follows:

United States Regional Camps Conducted: 04  
Campers: 246  
Staff: 94  
Converted: 59  
Sanctified: 19  
Baptized with Holy Ghost: 06  
Baptized in Water: 35  
Reconciled to Jesus: 01

I am thankful for the opportunity to minister to the youth and children of Zion Assembly Church of God in this structured and evangelistic atmosphere. To God be the glory for all that is being accomplished through the camping ministry.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Cheryl H. McDonald*

## **International Children’s Ministries Director**

### *Greetings to the 9th Annual General Assembly*

Zion Assembly is blessed with many talented individuals in our local churches across the United States and around the world who have accepted the responsibility of teaching children about Jesus and His love. I feel very privileged to labor alongside these gifted ministers. In order to keep us equipped and connected, I have written a quarterly newsletter, entitled “The Chalkboard.” In November 2011, I organized children’s classes for the Eastern Regional Youth Convention in Cleveland, TN. I have worked together with my husband, Todd, to write Sunday School literature for children. In March 2012, I was invited to teach the children’s classes for the Mid-Central youth convention. In order to promote Children’s Day, I prepared thematic lessons and sent them out electronically to our children’s ministers. During the month of June, I traveled with my family to two 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 am so thankful that the Lord has called me to teach and train children in the Word of God.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Cheryl H. McDonald*

*There is nothing more important for the spiritual growth and edification of “young people” than good “old people”*

*---WHP*

# ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE REPORT

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

## **Section 1: Selection of the Presiding Bishop**

### *Note*

After opening comments by the chairman of the Assembly Business Committee (ABC), Charles Fields, the first item on the report had to do with the selection of the Presiding Bishop, which according to previous Assembly rulings the man holding the office was due to be reaffirmed in the 2012 General Assembly. Bishop Phillips, however, had spoken with the ABC in earlier committee meetings in regard to the current procedure, and had expressed his desire to see the office vacated during the procedure in order for the Assembly and the Holy Spirit to be free to reaffirm the man who had been holding the office or to look to another. The chairman asked Bishop Phillips to explain this to the Assembly, which he did; then, accordingly, he stepped down and took his seat with the Assembly delegates.

The chairman of the ABC then called the Assembly to prayer. Prayer was made for approximately 20 minutes, with many of the delegates on their hands and knees calling out to God for guidance. Then in the midst of physical demonstrations of the Spirit, Bishop William Crook felt led of the Spirit to come to Brother Phillips (who was then on his hands and knees in prayer) to lift him up before the Assembly in a gesture for acceptance. The Spirit continued to move and the ministers and people gathered around Brother Phillips to show their approval and solidarity with him. He was then led to the platform by the brethren, and the ABC laid hands on him and prayed. The secretary of the committee then handed the gavel to Bishop Phillips, and as the chairman was about to make appropriate comments, a message in tongues and the interpretation came forth from Bishop L. W. Carter, saying,

*“Yea, My people, Don’t you know I have the power to put up and to pull down. Yea, I say to you today, This is My choice. Yea I say, you have done well: allow My Spirit to continue to lead. My promise is I will go before you, and will prosper you. Yea I say, follow as I lead.”*

It was then felt by all present that the selection had been made as “seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us.” There was then more rejoicing, and a sense of peace seem to fall over the Assembly. This was followed by the chairman of the ABC giving the moderation of the Assembly to the newly selected Presiding Bishop. Bishop Phillips then proceeded to state that he felt very small and desired only to please the Lord. He went on to express that he felt this selection procedure was the best policy for the church in the future and desired for it to be the permanent procedure---that is, that every four years the one holding the office of Presiding Bishop should vacate the position in order for the Spirit and the Assembly to be free to reinstate the one who had been holding the office or to move on to select another bishop for the position.

### **Prepared Statement**

The ABC then read a prepared statement to the Assembly:

According to the 2004 Assembly Minutes, Section 2, Subsection A, #2, page 15, it was agreed that the Presiding Bishop should be “affirmed by the Spirit of God and by the General Assembly every four years.” We, your committee, have considered the life and spiritual work of our Presiding Bishop, Wade H. Phillips, and after much prayer have agreed that it *seems good to the Holy Ghost, and to us* that he continue to lead the church until the 2016 Assembly. In coming to our conclusion we have taken into consideration the growth of the church since 2004 in the area of finances, the development of the international properties, and the depth, spirituality, unity, and harmony of the church. Under his watch, we have seen no divisions or schisms among our people.

In consideration of the advancements and successes of the church, along with the gifts and abilities of leadership demonstrated by Bishop Phillips, we feel deeply that he should be re-selected to serve in the office of Presiding Bishop.

## **Section 2: Offices of Presiding Bishop and Assistant Presiding Bishop**

### *Subsection A: Qualifications*

Section II, Subsection A, #1, titled *Qualifications*, paragraph two, page 15 of the 2004 Assembly Minutes reads as follows: “Those who fill these offices must meet all the biblical requirements of a bishop. They should be ministers who have demonstrated leadership qualities and who have the trust and respect of their peers. It should be evident to the ministry and laity that they have the approval of God and the anointing of the Holy Ghost to fill these positions.”

We recommend that the wording be changed as follows: “Those who fill these offices must meet all the biblical requirements of a bishop. They should be ministers who have demonstrated leadership qualities and who have the trust and respect of their peers. They must be men of the Word of God, sound in Theology, and able to articulate and defend the doctrines of the church. It should be evident to the ministry and membership that they meet biblical qualifications and have the anointing of the Holy Ghost to fill these positions.”

### *Subsection B: Tenure*

Section II, Subsection A, #2, titled *Tenure*, paragraph two, page 15 of the 2004 Assembly Minutes reads as follows: “If the Presiding Bishop should become mentally or physically incapacitated, or if the office is vacated through moral failure, the Assistant Presiding Bishop will fill the office until the next General Assembly, at which time the process for selecting the Presiding Bishop will be implemented.”

We recommend that the wording of this paragraph be changed as follows: “If the Presiding Bishop should become mentally or physically incapacitated, or if the office is vacated through moral failure or death, the Assistant Presiding Bishop will fill the office until the next General Assembly, at which time the process for selecting the Presiding Bishop will be implemented. We further recommend that if the Assistant Presiding Bishop should become mentally or physically incapacitated, or if the office is vacated through moral failure or death, the Presiding Bishop be authorized to choose a successor to serve in this capacity until the following General Assembly.

The term of office of the Assistant Presiding Bishop should offset the tenure of the Presiding Bishop so as to stabilize the government of the church in the event of mental or physical incapacitation, or if the office is vacated through moral failure or death. Therefore, we recommend that the Assistant Presiding Bishop be nominated and selected in this Assembly to serve until 2014. Then at the 2014 General Assembly the term of the Assistant Presiding Bishop will again be for four years.”

### ***Subsection C: Selection Process***

Section II, Subsection A, #3, titled *Selection Process*, page 15 of the 2004 Assembly Minutes reads as follows: “Bishops who, in the fear of God, feel impressed of God to submit a name to the Assembly Committee for the Presiding Bishop’s position should do so well before the presentation of the Committee to the General Assembly. Having consulted with the General Leadership and General Presbytery (all bishops), the Assembly Committee should present their selection to the General Assembly for consideration and approval. If, after prayer and counsel, unanimity is not attained on the Assembly floor, the selection process should be discontinued and those dissenting should appear before the Assembly Committee to voice the reason for their opposition. If there is sufficient cause why the person nominated should not serve as Presiding Bishop, another name should be presented to the Assembly for consideration. If there is not sufficient cause, the Committee may take the original recommendation back to the Assembly floor for approval. The final decision should be made only as “... it [seems] good to the Holy Ghost and to us...” (Acts 15:28).

We recommend the following changes: “Bishops who, in the fear of God, feel impressed of God to submit a name to the Assembly Business Committee for the office of Presiding Bishop should do so at least two months before the committee’s report to the General Assembly. Having consulted with the General Leadership and General Presbytery (all bishops), the Assembly Business Committee should present its recommendation to the General Assembly for consideration. If, after prayer and counsel and what seems to have been the witness of the Holy Ghost, “one accord” has not been attained on the Assembly floor, the selection process should be discontinued and anyone still expressing dissatisfaction should appear before the Assembly Business Committee to voice the reason for his opposition. If sufficient cause is found that the person nominated should not serve as Presiding Bishop, another name should be presented to the

Assembly for consideration. If there is not sufficient cause, the Committee may take the original recommendation back to the Assembly floor for consideration. The final decision should be made only as *[seems] good to the Holy Ghost, and to us* (Acts 15:28).

### **Section 3: Regional Overseer**

Section V, subsection C, # 1, page 21 of the 2004 General Assembly minutes reads as follows: “Regional Overseers will be appointed by the Presiding Bishop in consultation with the General Leadership. State/ National Overseers will be appointed by the Regional Overseer in consultation with the Presiding Bishop. Those chosen to serve in the capacity of overseer should meet the standard and qualifications of a bishop before being appointed to this office. Those appointed should fill the office as long as they continue to meet the biblical requirements of a bishop, and are affirmed by the Spirit, and the ministry.”

We recommend the following changes: “Regional/National/ State Overseers will be appointed annually by the Presiding Bishop in consultation with the General Leadership.”

### **Section 4: Importance of Reporting (Ministers & Local Churches)**

It has come to our attention that a few of our ministers and churches are not reporting faithfully to headquarters. We urge and encourage our pastors and local church clerks to cooperate with the Assembly rulings and the counsel of our overseers to report regularly to the International Offices.

### **Section 5: Presiding Bishop’s Commendation Award**

We recommend that this Assembly go on record endorsing Section III of the Presiding Bishop’s Annual Address, titled “Presiding Bishop’s Commendation Award.”

## **Section 6: The Church and Bible Versions**

We recommend that this Assembly go on record endorsing Section IV of the Presiding Bishop's Annual Address titled "The Church and Bible Versions." Although we acknowledge that most of us prefer a particular Bible version over others, we must concede that since the church is universal, international, and multi-lingual in nature, we cannot adopt or espouse ourselves to any one particular version of the Bible. Our rule of faith, practice, government, and discipline comes through our reasoning together in the General Assembly until we see eye to eye on the Word of God.

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

We recommend that we continue to operate the same financial system for this upcoming Assembly year. We also recommend 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 the important resolution adopted 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 unforeseen emergencies. Non-members may also contribute. Requests for emergency help should be directed to the General Treasurer who will then consult with the Presiding Bishop and the General Finance Committee to disperse the funds. All Emergency Funds should be received and sent to the General Treasurer with the local treasurer's monthly report within the period of January 1--December 31." Please be sure to implement this resolution as far as possible in this upcoming year in your local churches.

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

We feel the need to once again bring to the attention of the Assembly the importance of being a subscriber to the *Voice of Zion*, and the blessing of becoming a member of the “Subscribe Your Neighbor Club” (*SYNC*). The reason this is important is because the *Voice of Zion* is still one of our most effective outreach ministries in the church, and it also nourishes and feeds our ministers and members within the church.

There remains also the need to translate and publish the *VOZ* in Spanish and French, a goal which an increase in subscriptions will help the church to achieve. All of these goals can be reached if every minister and member will see the need and feel the burden to boost subscriptions. We recommend therefore that each local church appoint a *Voice of Zion/SYNC* booster if you have not done so already, and that each booster set a goal for his or her local church to become 100% in subscriptions this year.

## **Section 10: Assembly Business Committee Report**

We recommend that each pastor read the Assembly resolutions to the local church in order to keep those who were not able to attend the Assembly informed of the business acts of the church. This will only be for informational purposes as the General Assembly rulings are conclusive.

### **Humbly Submitted,**

*Charles Fields, Chairman, Zachary Snyder, Secretary, C.R. Gregory,  
L. W. Carter, Joseph Steele, Miguel Garcia, Ray Dickson ,  
Alternate, Scott Neill, Alternate*

# **Presiding Bishop's Annual Address**

**September 7th, 2012**

## **Introduction**

### **Our Bible Pledge**

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

### **Our Church Pledge**

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

## **Introduction**

This is the ninth time we have met together like this in a General Assembly, and it is the ninth time I have addressed you as your Presiding Bishop. Many of you here today have a biblical vision of the church and, therefore, know how important and sacred this meeting is; for the General Assembly is the government of God in action in the earth. It is here in this awe-filled meeting that our minds are merged together into one with the mind of Christ. Here, in this august body, our voices give way to the voice of Christ and we become one in judgment and mission, which in turn enables us to go forth as one man with one voice to proclaim the "all

things” message of Christ to all nations.

I know these are bold statements, but listen to Jesus plainly declare the sum of these truths: *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you* (John 15:15), and the apostle Paul says likewise, *For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ* (1 Corinthians 2:16), and again, *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom . . . for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God* (vv. 7-10). Now listen to the words of the inspired prophet written hundreds of years before Christ: *Your watchmen shall lift up **the voice**; with **the voice** together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion* (Isaiah 52:8).

Through the miraculous transformation of the Holy Ghost, the church is enabled to speak plainly and clearly for Christ. Thus the prophet’s words are fulfilled: *for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem* (Isaiah 2:3).

No wonder that the patriarch Jacob, upon receiving a vision of the church at a place called Luz, exclaimed in godly fear, *Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not . . . How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven* (Genesis 32:16, 17). Thereupon Jacob changed the name of Luz to *Beth-el*, which in Hebrew means “house of God.”

Think about the awesome responsibility that Christ has laid upon us in this *dreadful* setting today. We have gathered here to fulfill the church’s most essential reason-for-being, namely, *to bind and loose in the earth what God has bound and loosed in heaven* (Matthew 16:19; 18:15-20; John 20:23). We are “called out,” brethren, to discern and interpret what the will of the Lord is, and to commit ourselves to proclaim His Word to the ends of the earth.

We can imagine the power of God’s presence in that first General Assembly in Acts 15 when the apostles and elders gathered together *with the whole church* (vv. 12, 22) to seek the mind of Christ, and then to publish *the decrees for to keep* throughout the world (Acts 16:4, 5). The holy confidence of the ministers and members in that first Assembly was based on three things: 1) that they were called and authorized to conduct such a meeting; 2) that the mighty presence of the Holy Ghost was there to enable them to interpret the Scriptures and to discern the mind of God (Acts 15:15-17); 3) that the Holy Ghost witnessed to and approved of their decisions. Thus, following that Assembly the apostles and elders sent letters to the churches, saying, *For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and*

to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things (v. 28). Likewise, in this last day's Zion the Lord is making us to *sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, and enabling us to *see eye to eye* and to *lift up the voice together*.

During these nine years (actually 8 years and 5 months) since we stepped out by faith and reorganized the church under a new administration, we have been instructed by the Holy Scriptures and have been guided by the Holy Ghost to be where we are today. The Lord has abundantly blessed our faith and labors. We have grown significantly in the Spirit and in numbers. Having begun in April 2004 with only 17 ministers, 83 members, and no local churches, we now have 818 ministers, 531 churches, and 46,244 members in 30 nations. To this extent, then, we have fulfilled the prophecy, *Enlarge the place of your tent . . . stretch forth the curtain of your habitations: spare not, lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes; for you shall break forth on the right hand and on the left; and your seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited* (Isaiah 54:2, 3).

## Section I Love and Truth

Without question our progress in Zion has been largely because God's love has been expressed so freely among us in the form of brotherly love, along with the fruit and affections of kindness, goodness, gentleness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness. Divine love shared with others in word and deed will always be our most potent force in evangelizing the lost and drawing the "other sheep" into the fold. Doctrine is essential and of paramount importance, a point upon which we will elaborate in a moment, but if we want to continue to succeed, we must *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another* (Romans 12:10), and we must *let brotherly love continue* (Hebrews 13:1). Remember Jesus' commandment, *As I have loved you [so] also love one another* (John 13:34). For Jesus' love shared freely with others is the secret of Christian fellowship--*By this shall all men know you are my disciples, if you have love one to another* (v. 35).

This *hidden wisdom*---the power of God's love flowing out from us to others---so inflamed the passions and illuminated the minds of our pioneer fathers and mothers in the late nineteenth century that they began to build again the house of God primarily on this divine attribute. To magnify the point, they called their fellowship the "church of love." R. G.

Spurling called *love* “the lost link,” by which he meant that the reformers in the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries had failed to actually restore the New Testament church because they had built their organizations on creeds and articles of faith, whereas Jesus had originally set the church in order on the basis of love.

Nevertheless, we can now see that our illustrious fathers in their early years had overreacted against the reformers’ faith systems and emphasized love at the expense of holiness standards and church discipline. The idea of love in fact can be very deceptive. That’s why the church must be grounded in truth and guided by truth; and we know that God’s Word is truth, for Jesus said in His prayer to the Father, *Thy word is truth*.

The story is told of a woman who had a pet squirrel that she had learned to love dearly. She loved it so much that she began to crack and shell nuts for her little squirrel so it would not have to work so hard to eat. She didn’t know that the teeth of squirrels continue to grow throughout their lives, and the way they keep their teeth ground down is by cracking with their teeth the hard shells of nuts. So, accordingly, the teeth of this woman’s little squirrel continued to grow until finally the little squirrel became sick and could not eat. Unwittingly, this woman had loved her little squirrel to death. Her love was not guided and governed by truth.

We see then that if the idea of love is not governed by truth, it will lead to compromise and error. Why is this? Listen to the prophet Jeremiah: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?* (17:9). In fact, it is only in the light of truth---in the light of God’s eternal principles of right and wrong---that we are able to judge a person’s profession or testimony. Jesus said, *If you love me, keep my commandments*. John said, *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous* (1 John 5:3). And the apostle Paul said, *love rejoices in the truth* (1 Corinthians 13:6).

Some of the leaders in our former fellowship a few years ago began to accuse us of being narrow-minded and judgmental because we had committed ourselves to continue to stand on certain traditional teachings which they had begun to disparage and discount. I recall one of the preeminent leaders accusing me of being judgmental for holding to our traditional stand on marriage, particularly the principle that God holds a couple accountable to their marriage vows “until death,” and therefore divorce and remarriage while one’s first companion is still living is sinful. He said, “How can you judge that? How can you say this marriage or that marriage is wrong?” I said, “If I don’t have the power to judge divorce and remarriage as being wrong, How do you have the power to judge it as being right?” The fact is, we are empowered and ordained by Christ to judge right

and wrong. *And that you may put difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean; and that you may teach the children ALL the statutes which the Lord has spoken* (Leviticus 10:10). It was love that compelled Jesus to tell the young rich man, *One thing you lack: go . . . sell what you have . . . and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*

## The Whole Truth

Now how is it possible for a person who is bound by a tobacco habit or a drug addiction to rejoice and throw away his cigarettes and drugs when he hears the truth? It is because he is transformed by the power of God into a new creature, and being born again he is now anxious to please the Lord in all things. David said, *You have commanded us to keep your precepts diligently . . . I shall not be ashamed when I have respect unto ALL your commandments. I will praise you with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned your righteous judgments* (Psalm 119:4-8). And again, *O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day* (v. 97).

The apostle John tells us that *His commandments are not grievous*. Have you ever heard someone say, “Your church is too strict for me.” Or “I don’t want to give up this,” or “I just can’t give up that.” Or “I don’t feel like [this or that] doctrine is essential to the faith.” The truth is, they just aren’t loving God enough; for when you love God, you are willing and anxious to please Him in all things. You love and respect *every word that proceeds from the mouth of God* (Matthew 4:4). Like David, you say, *I have respect unto ALL your commandments*. And though it may be somewhat discomfoting at first to give up this or that for the Lord, yet the apostle tells us it is not grievous.

## Pillar and Ground of the Truth

Ministers and members in Zion Assembly preach the truth, magnify the truth, teach the truth, walk the truth, and love the truth---because the church is *the pillar and ground of the truth*. We speak the truth in love. The truth---the Word of God---is a powerful weapon in our hands. This is why the Word must be handled with fear and trembling. The prophet Jeremiah said the Word of God is like *wheat* (Jeremiah 23:28), for as wheat feeds and nourishes the body, so the Word of God feeds and nourishes the soul. Again the prophet says, the Word is like *fire* (v. 29); for fire purifies and consumes: it burns up everything unlike God. Again in the same verse, the prophet says the Word is like a *hammer* that breaks the rock in pieces. He

means that the Word of God can penetrate a hardened heart; transform a sinner in to a saint; and just as easily break to pieces the wisdom of this world and blow apart the corrupt teachings of false teachers who resist the truth.

The inspired writer of Hebrews says, *For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart* (Hebrews 4:12). Now observe, the preacher is not quick and powerful, the Word is! The preacher is not the truth---the Word is! And the Holy Ghost is the inspiration behind the Word of God; we get our understanding of the Word through the Holy Ghost. That's why He is called "the Spirit of truth." Jesus said, *But when Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father; he shall testify of me* (John 15:26), and again, *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth* (16:13).

Now observe; the church is the ground upon which this divine action takes place, that is, the Word is fully understood through the illuminating power of the Holy Ghost, particularly when the church is assembled together to interpret the Holy Scriptures (Colossians 3:10; see also Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; Matthew 16:19, 20; Acts 15; 2 Peter 1:19, 20). That's what I want us to see in Jesus' famous declaration to Peter, *Blessed are you, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven. And . . . upon this rock I will build my church* (Matthew 16:18). The church is the organ or body through which divine revelation is received and then published in the earth (I Corinthians 2:6-13; Ephesians 1:17-23; 3:10, 17-21; John 15:15; Matthew 28:19).

Let me try to illustrate how the power of God's Word works out through the Holy Ghost to illuminate the church, enabling us to *speak the truth in love* and to be *the pillar and ground of the truth*. The idea of God, like the idea of love, can be very deceptive. Many religious leaders refer to God, but when they say "God" they do not mean the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They may say, "I love God," or "God is good," or "God is great," or "God is merciful," or "I believe in God," but, see, these statements mean absolutely nothing unless that God has a face, and the face of that God is Jesus Christ! When we *rightly divide the word of truth*, we discover that God is a Trinity (John 1:1, 18; 10:30; Colossians 1:15-19; 1 John 5:7; Revelation 1:1, 6, 8, 11; 19:13), and that Jesus is the *express image of God*, that is, He is in His person the exact representation of God's essence (Hebrews 1:3). That's why Jesus told Philip, *When you have seen Me, you have seen the Father* (John 14:6). And that's why He said in another place, *No man knows the Father except the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son*

*shall reveal Him. And again, I and my Father are One. And again, I am the Alpha and Omega . . . the Almighty!* And this is why the apostle wrote, *In [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.* And again, *By Him all things consist [or are held together].* That's why John wrote, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* And that's why the inspired Psalmist in speaking of Christ said, *Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever* (Psalm 45:6, 7; Hebrews 1:8).

So you see how the Word brings the truth to light in the church, and at the same time burns up lies and deceit, and breaks in pieces like a hammer all philosophies and heresies that contradict the truth. It is amazing to me that the Republicans are now clamoring because the Democrats have omitted "God" from their political platform, yet they themselves just nominated a Mormon for president of the United States---a man who denies that Jesus Christ is almighty God! Well, you say, "What shall we do? To whom shall we turn?" I answer in the words that the angel spoke to John, *Thou knowest!* Now I don't mean to politicize this point, but rather to use it to emphasize that our hope is not in politicians, or philosophers, or economists, or intellectuals, but in the Lord Jesus Christ, the *Author and Finisher of our faith and our blessed Savior!* Our hope is not in a new America nor in a New World Order, but in *a new heavens and new earth wherein dwells righteousness.* This is why in Zion Assembly we direct every soul in every nation to *Fix your eyes upon Jesus.*

The invincible power of God's Word is why Paul exclaimed, *Preach the Word!* For the Word of God exposes and burns up devilish lies and deceit. It shatters to pieces the building blocks of antichrist philosophies and religious systems. This is why we test everything in Zion Assembly against the Word of God, for Satan is a subtle deceiver and crafty wordsmith. His ministers use familiar religious words and phrases, but attach to them a foreign meaning. Many preachers and teachers today use the word *salvation*, but see, unless by this word one means the transforming power of God that crucifies the "old man" and frees a believer from the power of sin, it means nothing. The idea of *marriage* means nothing unless by this word one means the divine institution that God originated and ordained between a man and woman *for life.* That's why marriage is called holy *wedlock*; for the sacred vow is impossible to break except by death.

So also the word *church* can be very deceptive unless by this term one means the visible, corporate body of Christ, the government of God in the earth, the divine institution that Jesus set in order to *bind and loose in earth what God has been bound and loosed in heaven.* The word *church* is meaningless unless it refers to the divine *ekklesia* that Jesus authorized,

empowered, and commissioned to go into all the world with the “all things” message that He himself taught and preached. In fact, the word *church* is misleading and confusing if it does not point to the holy institution in which Jesus deposited His doctrine and empowered to be the *Light of the World*.

## Vision of the Church

Understanding that the church is visible and corporate and formed by a covenant is essentially what we have traditionally called “the vision of the church.” There is in fact no such thing as an invisible or spiritual church. The church in the Bible is clearly a concrete visible government in operation, not a mystical aggregate of believers scattered in a variety of denominations and independent sects. It is a corporation of parts---*members in particular*---entrusted and commissioned to extend Christ’s *doctrine* and *ministry of reconciliation* into every nation on earth (Matthew 28:19, 20; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Moreover, the church is universal, not merely local. We need to look no further than Acts 15 to see this. All of the churches everywhere were governed and disciplined by one administration and one governing body. The apostles and elders were leaders of one visible body as far as it extended in the world. And they believed and taught the same thing, walked by the same rule of faith, and worked together to fulfill the church’s single mission in the world.

When Paul wrote to the *church of God at Corinth*, he was not writing to some invisible or spiritual church. That’s an absurd fiction. Neither did he write to “a” church of God but to “the” church of God. In fact, neither the article “a” nor the adjective “this” are ever used in Scripture in connection with the church, for there is only one church---“the church of God,” “the body of Christ,” “the church of Christ,” “the temple of God,” “the bride of Christ,” “the house of God,” etc.

The fact that the church is visible, corporate, and universal defines the “oneness” of the church. *My dove, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother* (Song of Solomon 6:8-10). *There is one body . . .* (Ephesians 4:4). All of the members and local churches in all nations serve together in one visible body of Christ under one visible government. The church’s ministers and members are called therefore, to *speak the same thing* (1 Corinthians 1:10) and to *walk by the same rule* of faith (Philippians 3:16).

We can see then that those who spiritualize the church corrupt God’s Word and distort His plan, a plan that can be fulfilled only through the actual church that Jesus established while He was here on earth and

commissioned to go into all nations to teach the *whole counsel of God*. By twisting and misinterpreting the Scriptures, these *blind guides* rob believers of the true vision and understanding of the church of the Bible, and hinder them from fulfilling the work that God has called them to do, particularly the work of *perfecting the saints* and bringing together all of God's people in one visible body (John 10:16; 11:49-52; Ephesians 1:10; 2:11-22; 4:11-16; see also Isaiah 60:1-5; et al). Further, they purposely or ignorantly deface the image of God whose unity in one Godhead--Father, Son, and Holy Ghost--is to be reflected in the visible unity of His people on earth (John 17:11, 20-23; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:1-6).

Moreover, the preachers and teachers who deny the visible and universal oneness of the church of the Bible are not satisfied to simply deny this truth; they find it necessary to develop contrary ideas and doctrines about the church---contrary to the plain revelation of the church in the Bible---in order to justify their denominational or independent status. They thus chart for themselves a hopeless and fatal course, like the legend of the Pied Piper in Germany who led the children to their destruction. These blind guides are like the drunken priests and prophets in Israel who *err in vision [and] stumble in judgment [or stumble in rendering decisions]* (Isaiah 28:7).

It is obvious then why the devil fights the church and its message so desperately and violently; for Jesus set the church in order and empowered it with the Holy Ghost to be the Light of the World---to save sinners, to destroy the works of the devil, to unite together and perfect God's people to rule and reign with Him in the earth (Isaiah 49:1-6; 60:1-5; Matthew 5:14; John 10:16; 11:49-52; 17:20-23; Philippians 2:15; 2 Corinthians 3:2, 3; 4:6; Ephesians 4:11-16; 5:27; 6:11-18; Revelation 12:1-6, 10-17; 20:6).

## ***The Church and The Faith***

You see then that the vision of the church is an essential part of *the faith once for all delivered [entrusted, handed-down] to the saints*. The true church and the faith cannot be separated. The church is the *pillar and ground of the truth*, that is, it is the pillar and ground of *the faith*. And since *the faith* is inseparable from the written Word of God, and the church is God's special agent in the world to handle the Word of God, you can see then how important the church is in God's plan. Christ gave to the church the *keys to the kingdom of God* and authorized and commissioned it to *bind and loose in the earth* what has been *bound and loosed in heaven* (Matthew 16:19; 18:25-20; John 20:23). So Jesus taught us to pray after this manner: *Our Father who art in heaven . . . Thy kingdom come. Thy*

*will be done in earth, as it is in heaven* (Matthew 6:10, 11).

Let me put what we have said here in still another way. Since the church of Christ is God's special agent in the earth to say what truth is, then we may identify the true church through the proclamation and embodiment of that truth. By the same judgment we may identify the churches that have been instituted and built on the whim of man. Nothing is more important and sacred to the ministers and members of God's Zion than the Word of God. *For the Word of God is pure and shall stand forever* (Proverbs 3:5; Isaiah 40:8). Jesus thus rebuked the professors of His day for *Making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition, which you have delivered* (Mark 7:13). Certainly the Lord's Zion does not *handle the word of God deceitfully*. Listen to the apostle Paul on this point: *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not [or do not lose heart]; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness [or trickery], nor handling the word of God deceitfully [or falsely or in any way to adulterate it]; but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God* (2 Corinthians 4:1, 2).

I am reminded here of a little song that some of our early pioneers use to sing. I believe the lyrics may have originated with the late Bishop G. E. Patterson.

I know the Bible's right  
So somebody gotta be wrong . . .

I told you once  
I told twice  
You can't go to heaven  
With a sweetheart and a wife

I told you time  
And time again  
You can't make it to heaven  
While you're sipping Gin

Read the Bible  
thru and thru  
It keeps on saying  
There's work to do

Now the Gospel is made so plain by the church, says the apostle, so that *if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them who are lost* (v. 3). In other words,

the church *manifests the truth* so plainly in its preaching and through the lifestyle of its members (vv. 4-6) that only those blinded by Satan cannot see it (see also 2 Corinthians 3:2-18). We can see then why the devil hates the church so bitterly and desires to destroy it. For the church was established to wage war against Satan and his kingdom---to *wrestle against principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places*. It is ordained by God to be triumphant over Satan and his armies. Praise the Lord! We have read the last chapter of the book---*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death* (Revelation 12:11).

This devilish hatred for the church has infected millions of Christians in the world today. They despise the church and her message.

Desiring to lower her standard  
They watch every move that she makes  
They long to find fault with her teachings  
But really they find no mistake.

But this should not surprise us, for the apostles said that many who profess to be in Christ will *despise government* (2 Peter 10), and even some within the church will so misbehave and fall away from the truth until they will come to *despise the church of God?* (1 Corinthians 11:22). According to the apostles' predictions, we see a disdain for the church---the government of God---manifested in the words and expressions of so many today who profess to be in Christ. Make no mistake: they despise not the man-made denomination they may be in, or the independent church they may have designed and built for themselves, or the theological fiction of an invisible "church." It's not the mythical church that they despise, nor the religious fellowship that they have formed, but the true church of Christ that they despise! They in fact love the imaginary "church" that they have concocted in their minds---a "church" that is nothing more than a fiction. They use the words "church" and "body of Christ" as if they have deep affections for what they signify, but actually these words are no more to them than theological concepts. "Church," "bride," "body of Christ" are words without any real substance to them. They represent a philosophy, not a real organization, not an actual government that requires sacrifice and commitment. Their doctrine of the church is merely rhetorical and academic, not something that governs their lives and determines their eternal destiny.

## The Church and Accountability

This is why so many professing believers harden their hearts against the real church of the Bible and resist her message. Like children, they desire only to “play church,” not to actually practice *being* the church. While preaching on the church through the years, I have seen the eyes of some “believers” glaze over as if their minds had become numb, as if they had fallen into a stupor. Others stiffen their necks and, like the Jews who killed the saintly Stephen, *resist* the revelation of truth through the Holy Ghost (Acts 7:51). So blinded by Satan, they do not realize that this is a sinful state of mind, for they are opposing the apostle’s command to *despise not prophesying* (1 Thessalonians 5:20). They don’t want to think about the actual church of the Bible because it requires action on their part, demands commitment, and calls for accountability. In a word, joining God’s church---the church of the Bible---requires a lifestyle change, calls you to embrace passionately a body of principles and to live by a certain code. Like the institution and government of marriage, it demands whole-hearted commitment. I’m reminded here of the chicken, cow, and pig talking about supplying food for the up-coming church picnic. The chicken said, “I’ll supply the eggs;” the cow said, “I’ll supply the milk;” and together they said to the pig, “You supply the ham.” The pig immediately squealed, “Hold on! That’s not fair. You two can supply the eggs and milk with no skin off your back. But what you’re asking of me requires total commitment.”

Exactly! Becoming part of the real church of the Bible moves you out of your comfort zone and may create inconvenient circumstances. You may lose a few “friends;” and some of your family members may become cool toward you. You may have to leave a beautiful and comfortable sanctuary and begin to worship in a house or a storefront. Certainly *to be* a member of God’s church requires sacrifice and commitment. But all of these sacrifices and deprivations are as nothing to those who have a glorious revelation of the church. We who have this revelation are able to say with the faithful apostle, *But our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

## The Church and Babylon

Now in light of all that we have noticed here of the church in the Bible---the plain revelation of its visible and unified government and operations---where does it leave the doctrine of a so-called “invisible

church” or “spiritual church?” Where does it leave the thousands of denominations, associations, and independent groups in the world today that teach a thousand contradictory doctrines, and who espouse within their various ranks and orders a hundred different “Gospels?” Where does it leave those who say they see the need for a “covering,” but will not subject themselves to actual church government? Where is there room in the church of the Bible for all of this confusion and blatant contradiction of the *apostles’ doctrine*? I will tell you. All of the walls and divisions between God’s people along with the confusion of all the contradictory doctrines are called in the Bible, “Babylon,” not Zion. This religious confusion today represents the City of Man, not the City of God. The heresies and divisions are the legacy of an apostasy, not the legacy of biblical redemption and restoration. In fact, it is an insult to Christ and the Apostles to identify God’s church with this confusion and contradiction of truth. A denomination is not a part or branch of the church; that’s an absurd and ridiculous notion. The idea suggests that the Baptists are a hand; the Methodists, a foot; the Presbyterians, a nose; and the Roman Catholics, an ear, etc. And that putting them altogether you have the body of Christ. Meanwhile, until they all come together, the Presbyterians can only smell, the Roman Catholics can only hear, Baptists can only shake your hand, and the Methodists hop around. What a ridiculous theology! It is insulting to God who so carefully designed and ordered His government.

But it is still more insulting to teach that God’s church is somehow mystically and invisibly present in all of this confusion, not to mention that the notion is deceptive and defies the plain revelation of the church in the Bible; for the narrative of the church in the New Testament reveals clearly a unified and corporate body of believers [mixed with some *backsliders* and *false brethren crept in unawares*] worshipping and working together to fulfill the church’s mission, not a system of denominations, nor especially a scattered group of independent churches going in all directions theologically and experientially.

You might be asking right now what a brother from a denominational church asked me not long ago. As I was speaking to him along these same lines, he said, “Bishop, will you de-Christianize all of us who are not in Zion Assembly?” I said, “By no means: only you can do that---only you can de-Christianize you. But I feel it necessary to say to you in the name of Christ, and on the authority of God’s Word, that you are not in God’s church.” He said, “Well, then, you have not de-Christianized me but you have de-churched me.” I said, “No sir, I have not even de-churched you, for you would have to be in the church to be de-churched. What I am saying is that you have no idea what the church is and, therefore, have made no

conscious effort to unite yourself with it---for the church is visible and you unite with it by covenant, that is, you have to promise in the sight of witnesses that you will take the Bible as the Word of God, which is the church's final rule for faith and discipline, and you must willingly give yourself up to come under the government of the church. For just as the members must come together in order to exclude a member, so they must come together to receive you into the *fellowship*."

I went on to say to this precious brother, "But since you believe you were added to what you call an invisible or spiritual church by being born again, then you could really care less about being added to a visible fellowship and government through a covenant administered by a minister. Isn't that right?" After trying to qualify and defend his position, he finally said, "Yes, that's right, that's exactly what I believe" [meaning that he didn't believe a man could have anything to do with adding him to the church]. So I concluded my comments to him, saying, "I feel compelled to tell you that you may be in Christ, but there is no such thing as an invisible or spiritual church or body of Christ, and consequently you are not in God's church." He said, "So you are judging me." I said, "I'm judging the fact that you are not in God's church, not how you may stand personally with Christ. We judge right and wrong, not the eternal end of a man: for, as the apostle has taught us, we *judge them that are within . . . But them that are without God judges* (1 Corinthians 5:12, 13). In this sense, we do indeed judge and discriminate, in fact, we are commissioned by Christ and held accountable by Him to both judge and discriminate between right and wrong, and we judge one another on this basis." Then I gave him several illustrations from the Scriptures to prove this point, namely, Matthew 16:18-20; 18:15-20; John 20:23; 1 Corinthians 5:4-13; 2 Corinthians 11:2; 3 John 9, 10; Leviticus 10:10; et al.

## **Section II**

### **Holding Fast to the Faith**

*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip* (Hebrews 2:1, KJV).

Another translation reads: *Therefore we must pay closer attention to the things we have heard, so that we do not drift away* (NASB).

As I reflected on this verse and the concern of the inspired writer for the church at this time (which was probably about A. D. 64-68), the Spirit brought to mind several other biblical writers who expressed this same concern, namely, the apparent vulnerability and even the tendency of the church to “fall away” from the faith and disqualify itself from being the bride of Christ. For this reason Jesus and the apostles were constantly warning the church against *drifting away* into apostasy. Jude, the Lord’s brother, who wrote his epistle about the same time that Peter and the writer of Hebrews wrote their letters, sounded the alarm of an impending apostasy and thus urged the church to *earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints* [or *which was once for all entrusted to the saints*] (Jude 3). About A.D. 95-96, Jesus appeared to the apostle John in a vision commanding him to warn the churches in Asia that an apostasy was imminent; in fact, some of the churches had already fallen, or were at that very moment in the motion of falling, and therefore were urged to repent and restore their first works (Revelation 2:5).

Listen to Jesus’ admonitions to the churches in Asia: . . . *that which you have already hold fast till I come* (v. 25) . . . *he that . . . keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power* (v. 26) . . . *Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain* (3:2) . . . *Remember therefore what you have received and heard, and hold fast . . .* (v. 3) . . . *Hold that fast what you have, that no man take thy crown* (v. 11) . . . *Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God* (v. 12) . . . [and] *grant to sit with me in my throne* (v. 21). All of these show plainly how delicate and sensitive our identity as God’s church is in this present age, that is, we must remain sober and vigilant in our union if we expect to retain our identity as God’s church; in fact we retain our identity as God’s church moment by moment by faith. Paul says, *you [the church] stand by faith* (Romans 11:20), and again, we remain the church, the Israel of God, only *if [we] continue in his goodness . . . otherwise [we] will be cut off* (v. 22). The writer of Hebrews speaks even plainer and more emphatic on this point, saying, *But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we; if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end* (Hebrews 3:6). Our claim to be God’s church, therefore, is justified only if we *hold fast to the faith once for all handed down and entrusted to us* (Jude 3; Revelation 2:25).

The apostle Paul follows this same line of thought in his letter to Timothy, saying, *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard of me among many witnesses, commit the same to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also* (2 Timothy 2:2), and again, *This charge I commit [entrust] to you, son Timothy . . . that you might war a good warfare; holding faith . . .* (1 Timothy 1:18), and again,

*Hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard of me, in faith and love . . . That good thing which was committed to you keep by the Holy Ghost which dwells in us* (2 Timothy 1:13, 14). He writes the same to Titus saying that a bishop must, [*Hold*] *fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers* (Titus 1:9).

We see in all of these exhortations and admonitions a two-fold message, namely, we must maintain spiritual affections for Christ, that is, we must maintain brotherly love and a genuine spirituality, and we must hold fast to right doctrine---to the truth! For almost all of the exhortations are followed by warnings of *false prophets* and *corrupt teachers* who will inevitably bring in *damnable heresies* in an effort to confuse and corrupt the church and to plunge it into darkness (see 2 Peter 2:1-22; 3:3, 4; Jude 4-16; Revelation 2:2, 6, 9, 14, 15, 20, 24).

Jesus' counsel in Revelation 2:25, 26, *I will put upon you none other burden . . . but that which you have already*, brings to mind again the fact that the church's doctrine was laid down *once for all* in the time of the apostles, that is, the complete body of doctrine for the church for all ages was laid down by Christ and the apostles in the New Testament (Ephesians 2:20). Thus the church in every age is to *continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine* (Acts 2:42), neither adding to it, nor subtracting from it.

## **Continuing in the Apostles' Doctrine**

Now it seems plain enough in the passages just cited that the office of an apostle holds a special place in the history of the church, namely, that of laying a doctrinal as well as historical foundation for the church. Thus it is said that the church in the New Testament *continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine* (Acts 2:42). The word apostle [from the Greek *apostello*] means literally "one sent." But as we will see in a moment, this word had a special significance in regard to the Twelve whom Jesus had specially "called out" to form the foundation of His church, and to James, Jesus' brother, and to Paul and perhaps one or two others.

Several peculiarities set the Christ-appointed apostles apart as a select group both in regard to their office and place in history: 1) they were eyewitnesses of Christ's life and resurrection (Luke 24:48; John 15:27; Acts 1:21-25); 2) they were especially chosen by the eternal Father (John 17:6, 11, 12); 3) they were named and appointed to be *apostles* by Christ (Luke 6:13); 4) they received first hand from Christ the immutable and everlasting doctrine of the church (John 7:16, 17; 8:28; 12:49; 17: 8, 14; Acts 1:21-25). Clearly, these apostles---whom Paul called *the chief* [or

*most eminent*] *apostles* (2 Corinthians 11:5; 12:11) were peculiar in this regard, for no others were called and appointed to sit at Jesus' feet for three years and hear the doctrine taught and explained to them in the special way that these men had. The exceptions to this were the apostle Paul who was chosen and set apart by God *as one born out of due time* (1 Corinthians 15:7-10; 2 Corinthians 11:5, 6) to help lay the foundation of the church (Acts 9:15; Romans 1:5; 15:20; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 10; Galatians 2:8, 9), and James, the Lord's brother, who, though he was not one of the Twelve Apostles and had become a believer only after the resurrection of Christ, had grown up with Jesus and had lived with Him in the same household. He was also an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (1 Corinthians 15:7). His eminent position in the church can be seen further in Galatians 1:19; 2:9, 12 and in the New Testament book that bears his name. The fact that Jude refers to himself in his epistle as the brother of James rather than the brother of Jesus shows further James' high standing with God and the church. In addition, he was apparently considered *chief* among the apostles and elders (Matthew 20:27; Galatians 2:9) for he moderated the first General Assembly recorded in Acts 15, and by his "sentence" summed up the Assembly discussion and settled forever the dispute about circumcision.

## Modern-Day Apostles?

It seems plain enough that neither the office of the Twelve Apostles nor the chosen status and peculiar ministries of the apostle James and the apostle Paul can ever be repeated. The foundation of the church was laid once for all in the apostolic era. The apostles' first-hand eyewitness accounts of Christ which are recorded in the inspired Gospel accounts and letters of the New Testament alone are authoritative and form the church's foundation for faith. All others who claim this special apostolic authority are therefore *liars* [either wittingly or unwittingly] and should be rejected by the church as such---*you have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them to be liars* (Revelation 2:2). *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ* (2 Corinthians 11:13).

It is true that there were a wider circle of "apostles" in the New Testament besides the Twelve and James and Paul, which included Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Andronicus and Junia(s) (Romans 16:7), and possibly Silas, Apollos, Epaphroditus, and a few others (1 Corinthians 6-9; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:1). Most of these were probably among the 500 who had seen the resurrected Christ (1 Corinthians 15:6). Some may also have been part of the Seventy sent out by Christ before

Pentecost (Luke 10:1, 17), and some perhaps were among the 3000 baptized with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47). In any case, the “apostles” who had formed this broader circle were more or less messengers or missionaries of the church rather than apostles in the special way that the term is applied to the Twelve and James and Paul. This is why most of the reputable Bible versions translate *apostolon* in Philippians 2:25 and *apostoloi* 2 Corinthians 8:23 in reference to Epaphroditus and Titus and others as “messengers” rather than apostles, so as not to confuse and blur the distinction of the apostles in whom Christ had vested special authority to oversee the church and to lay its doctrinal foundation.

We may conclude then that the term *apostle* (“sent ones”), in regard to this broader circle, was meant more in the sense of evangelists or deacons and servants of the church rather than apostles in the sense of the Twelve and the other eminent apostles, for though some of these *messengers* preached, most were “sent” to handle the church’s finances and to attend to the needs of the poor and do other chores at the direction of the eminent apostles. In many cases, they simply “waited on tables,” if you will, clearly in contradistinction to the *apostles of the Lamb* (Acts 6:2-6; Revelation 21:14) who were appointed to give themselves wholly to prayer and the study and proclamation of the Word of God (Acts 6:1-6). In other words, the word *apostle* in reference to the Twelve and James and Paul and perhaps a few others signified the highest office in the church (1 Corinthians 12:28), whereas in reference to others it signified merely messengers “sent out” by the apostles and/or the church (in distinction from those ordained and sent out by Christ) to preach, to handle finances, and/or to perform a range of other duties. In these cases, the word *apostle* (“sent ones”) more or less implies a function rather than an office. Thus, though the office of apostle, properly-speaking, ceased to be needed after the foundation of the church was laid *once for all* in the New Testament, yet in the broader sense of the word, the whole church is now apostolic, for all of the members are [potentially] Spirit-baptized and all are called and anointed and “sent out” to participate in the great commission---to *go [and] teach all nations*. Moreover, the miraculous signs that attended the eminent apostles in the New Testament (Acts 5:12-16) now follow all Spirit-baptized believers (Mark 16:16-18). So, you see, we are all now “sent ones”---ministers and messengers---but none of us, properly speaking, hold the office of apostle, nor have a right to the title.

The impossible task for those promoting the restoration of apostles in the common churches today is to construct a convincing set of marks by which to identify these “apostles.” It is a predicament particularly because it is impossible for the marks of the original apostles to be repeated,

namely, 1) that of having had a personal and intimate relationship with the historical Christ, 2) that of having been appointed directly by the historical Christ, 3) that of having been tutored and taught directly by the earthly Christ, 4) that of having been an eyewitness of Jesus' earthly life and resurrection (Acts 1:20-26).

Advocates for modern-day apostles have suggested a number of signs that might mark modern-day apostles, including superior leadership abilities and special endowments of spiritual gifts like the power to heal and to work miracles. The problem with these identifying marks is two-fold: first, they do not square with the biblical marks of an apostle, and, second, they are not peculiar to apostles, for most Spirit-baptized and gifted pastors and evangelists manifest these gifts and abilities. In fact, in regard to spiritual and charismatic gifts, the whole Spirit-baptized church--all of the ministers and members---since the day of Pentecost have been identified by these marks (Mark 16:16-20; Acts 2:1-5). The simple fact is that the exalted office of apostle ceased to be needed in the church after the foundation of the church was laid, for every succeeding generation of the church was commanded to build upon that one foundation (1 Corinthians 3:10-14; 2 Corinthians 11:4; Ephesians 2:20).

It seems wisdom, therefore, that we should maintain in this last day's Zion the distinction of the eminent apostles in the New Testament, and, in order to do this, we should refrain from applying the title of apostle to anyone in the church including highly esteemed bishops, pastors, deacons, evangelists, missionaries, messengers, and servants. This seems especially important at this present time because so many today are claiming to be "apostles," and thus are diminishing the identity and importance of biblical apostles. In fact, there is a movement spreading throughout the world today seeking to restore the eminent office of apostle, and millions of believers are buying into this delusion and subjecting themselves to these so-called "apostles."

Now why should we be alarmed about this? Because those promoting this "apostolic restoration" believe that these "apostles" have special gifts and authority, and that therefore, believers should follow them and build their faith on their teachings; for, they argue, the Scriptures teach plainly that the apostles form the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 21:14). In other words, those promoting these modern-day apostles claim that these men [and women] are especially chosen and sent by God into the world to form the foundation of the church for each generation. Accordingly, the apostle Paul's words in Ephesians 2:20 point not to a historical foundation in the New Testament, but rather to a different foundation formed by each successive generation of these new

apostles. It follows logically, therefore, that many of the promoters of this new restoration also teach that the Bible, as we know it (66 books), is not a closed canon but is still being written by these new apostles in order to instruct and guide believers in these last days.

It should be obvious to truly Spirit-baptized and discerning saints that this movement is under the influence of Eastern religious thought and the New Age movement, both of which teach various forms of reincarnation and an irrational mysticism that stand in stark contradiction to biblical Christianity; for our Christian faith is rooted concretely in linear history, not in a never-ending cycle of incarnations. After all, the very Rock of the church---Jesus Christ---was born once 2000 years ago, died once 2000 years ago, was raised from the dead once 2000 years ago, and then took His seat forever on the throne of God! The Manger, Cross, and Empty Tomb were objects and scenes in that concrete historical narrative. And so was Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, and so was that special moment when He set the church in order on Mount Hattin in Galilee (Mark 3:13-16; Luke 6:12-17). Observe, just as we build upon the historical Christ, so also we build only upon the historical apostles. The point is that the very *rock* of the church was laid in history once for all time 2000 years ago on Christ and the New Testament apostles. Once the church was founded, there was no need for more founders! We are now building on that historical foundation (1 Corinthians 3:10; Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 21:14).

Now we don't have time nor space here to expand much further on this subject, but the apostle Peter's words in his second letter to the church offer invaluable insight on this subject and are worthy of our careful attention:

*That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior (2 Peter 3:2).*

What is obvious in this verse is that Peter sees himself with the other Christ-appointed apostles, and perhaps those who formed the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, as a select group called and ordained to establish *once for all* the authoritative doctrine of the church. We are thus made to see in Peter's words the following: 1) the doctrine of the church is historical: it was built on the words of Old Testament prophets and on *the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior* [or *on the command given by our Lord through your apostles*]; 2) the inspired words of the holy prophets and apostles with the commands of Christ form one body of authoritative doctrine; 3) the authoritative apostleship of the church was limited to the

New Testament apostles. The writings of Mark, Luke, Hebrews, and Jude [who were not apostles] are authoritative because they were inspired, and their words agree with the *apostles' doctrine*. And, in any case, even the apostles' doctrine came through the command of Christ, not in and of the apostles themselves. The apostles did not create or invent their doctrine, but simply, as Jude says, *delivered it or handed it down* from Christ (Jude 3). It is on this basis that we prefer the translation of the American Standard Version on 2 Peter 3:2, namely, *that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles*.

Peter's words in exalting the authority of the apostles who had *spoken before* and their place in the foundation of the church is further supported and corroborated by Jude: *But, ye, beloved, remember you the words which were spoken before [by] the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ* (v. 17). The phrase *which were spoken before* prove that the doctrinal foundation of the church had already been established by the time Jude wrote his epistle, which was probably about A. D. 65-69.

The apostles themselves believed that the church's rule of faith was embodied in their writings which included their interpretation of the Old Testament. Further, they denied any kind of apostolic succession, affirming rather that the apostolic office properly speaking ended with them. Then we may conclude that in and through the New Testament apostles, the foundation of the church was laid once for all, and the church today is entrusted with this same body of holy doctrine handed down from these New Testament apostles. It follows then that the church in any age receives its identity by continuing to live out and proclaim faithfully from generation to generation the same body of holy doctrine the apostles' handed down to us.

This body of apostolic doctrine is therefore a *sacred deposit*. Accordingly, the church is the custodian of God's Word as well as the anointed interpreter of God's Word. With this in mind, Paul calls the church *the pillar and ground of the truth* (2 Timothy 3:15), and Jesus commissioned and empowered the church to *Go . . . teach all nations . . . to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you* (Matthew 28:19, 20).

## **The Prophets' Vision**

The words of Paul which we have seen above correspond with the prophet Isaiah's words about the church; in fact, Paul's revelation of the church was in large part drawn out from the prophetic revelation of the church hidden in the Old Testament (Acts 15:15-17; Romans 16:25-

27; Colossians 1:25, 29; et al; see also Isaiah 48:3-7). So it still pays to investigate the inspired writings of the Old Testament, for they deepen our understanding of the church's significance and the importance of its ministry. Listen to the prophet Isaiah as he depicts the glory of church under the grace and power of the New Covenant:

*Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far [or you distant nations]; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother has he made mention of my name. And he has made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand has he hid me, and made me a polished shaft [a sharpened arrow]; in his quiver has he hid me. And said unto me, You are my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified [or in whom I will display my splendor]. Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for [nothing], and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, says the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorified in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that you may be my salvation unto the end of the earth (Isaiah 49:1-6)*

Isaiah's words help to form our "vision of the church." We see, first of all, that the prophet is speaking here of the Israel of God, the church, under the New Covenant, in contrast with the Old Covenant. His vision of the church thus includes both Jew and Gentile believers together in one body (cp. Ephesians 2:11-19; 3:5). The rest of fleshly Israel is "cut off" (cp. Romans 11:19-22; Galatians 4:28-31). The apostle Paul shows plainly that Isaiah's prophecies in this section of his book are speaking of elect Israel, the church, that is, those who accept Christ and covenant together with Him to come under His government; for in Galatians 4:27 he quotes Isaiah 54:1 and says the church in the New Testament including himself is the beginning of the fulfillment of this prophecy---*now we, brethren, are the children of promise* (v. 28). Clearly, the prophet Isaiah was enabled through the Spirit to see the church restored and renewed under the liberty and power of the Gospel (Isaiah 9:6, 7; Galatians 4:24-31). What is clear is that God does not have two brides, two churches, two Israels, two chosen peoples. The church under the Gospel is the true *Israel of God* (Galatians 6:16) in contrast with natural or fleshly Israel,

that is, the church is what God had called fleshly Israel to be in Christ. Consequently, natural or fleshly Israel, having rejected Christ, is not the true Israel of God; she is in fact under severe judgment for her rejection of the Son of God! The only hope for natural Israel is to *repent and believe the Gospel!* This fact is what pressed the apostle Paul to encourage the church to hurry to reach natural Jews with the Gospel, for they were dying every day without Christ. So also, they are now, as they were then, lost and will suffer the eternal consequences---everlasting damnation---unless they repent (Romans 10:1-15; John 3:3-7, 15, 18-21, 36). The Good News is that those who believe and repent in these last days will be grafted in again to the Vine (Romans 11:23, 24): some of these will be added to the church before the Rapture, being the elect (Isaiah 45:4; 65:9, 22; Romans 8:33; 10:1-21; 11:1-23; Peter 1:2), while others may be saved after the Rapture under persecution and martyrdom. These faithful ones will be numbered with all the saints in the eternal kingdom (Romans 11:25-32; Revelation 7:9-17; 19:14-16).

Second, we see the exaltation of the church in Isaiah's prophecy. The "me" in this passage is the church---the Israel of God---for the church under the power of the Gospel embodies Christ and gives voice to His Word (1 Corinthians 2:4-7, 12-16; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 18:23; 22:17). What is anticipated in this prophecy is the transformation of the church into the *body of Christ*---a miraculous transformation made possible through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This dynamic transformation more or less hypostatizes the church with Christ, that is, it so unites the church with Christ so that, like husband and wife, the two become one (John 17:20-23; Ephesians 5:29-32). Thus, the "me" in this prophecy is actually Christ and the church---that is, the body of Christ gives audibility to the voice of Christ through her vocal chords.

The apostle Paul's metaphor of the church as the *body of Christ* (Romans 12:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-28; Ephesians 4:16; Colossians 1:24) thus captures vividly for our imagination the oneness between Christ and the church. Indeed, through Christ the church becomes the dwelling place of the whole Godhead (Colossians 2:9; John 17:20-23). But the *body of Christ* metaphor also depicts the church as the bride and wife of Christ (Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7). In this sense, the church is not a body for Christ from the head down, but she stands beside Him as a helpmeet and wife (2 Corinthians 11:2, 3; Revelation 19:7). We may interpret then the "me" in Isaiah's prophecy in view of the church as the *bride of Christ*, who, under the glory of the Gospel, is authorized to speak and act for Christ; for she has been honored to sit with Him in His throne and to rule and reign with Him in the earth (Psalm 45:9; Matthew 16:19;

18:18; John 20:23; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 3:21; 5:10; 20:6; 22:17).

In either case, I am amazed that so many renown theologians and Bible commentators deny that Isaiah's prophecy is speaking of the church, insisting that it can only pertain to Christ. Their opinion reveals that they have not a "vision of the church." These scholars seem to think that the exaltation of the church somehow takes away something from glory of Christ. But, see, the church is the glory of Christ---*O Israel, in whom I will be glorified* [or *O Israel in whom I will display my splendor*]. It is only through the church that Christ is truly and fully glorified! In fact, Paul says that Christ is perfected or completed by the perfection of the church (Ephesians 4:13), that is, Christ is returning to consummate His marriage with a *glorious church*, a holy virgin bride (2 Corinthians 11:2, 3; Ephesians 5:27). He himself will thus be perfected, not morally, but by fulfilling the eternal purpose of the Father in Him, namely, in redeeming the *purchased possession*, the church (Ephesians 1:14; Acts 20:28), and in perfecting her under the glory of the Gospel (John 17:1-5, 19-26; Ephesians 4:11-16).

We see then that Christ is more highly exalted through the exaltation of the church. For just as a husband is exalted by the grace and beauty and obedience of his wife (Ephesians 5:22-32), so the Lord is exalted by the beauty, grace, and obedience of the church, for He is the One who beautifies and empowers her (Isaiah 61:10). Isaiah had prophesied earlier in reference to the church, *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house . . . shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it* (Isaiah 2:2). Now since the prophet is so plain and explicit in foreseeing the exaltation of the church in Christ, we also should be bold to exalt this last day's Zion. There is in fact many prophecies by several of the prophets that exalt the church, the prophetic Zion, including the Psalmist David (cf. Psalm 46:4, 5; 48:1-3, 12-14; 50:2; 78:68, 69; 125:1; see also Isaiah 2:2, 3; 14:32; 33:5, 14, 20, 21; 60:1-5; Micah 4:1, 2, 7; Joel 2:23-27; 3:16-21; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Zechariah 1:15-17; 2:10-13; 8:2-12; 9:9).

## **God's Government in the Earth**

Third, the prophetic vision of the church includes understanding the church as the government of God in the earth. Jesus established the church for this very reason: to provide government, instruction, order, and discipline for His people: to bind and loose in the earth what God has bound and loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19; 18:15-20; Acts 15; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 12:28). In establishing the church, Jesus thus fulfilled

the prophecy: *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it* (Isaiah 2:2), and again, *the government shall be upon his shoulder . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end* (9:6, 7).

A statement in one of our old Bible Training Institute books caught my attention about 42 years ago and has remained with me down through the years. Speaking of the church's government, the lesson said, "Theocracy is government through Spirit-filled men." I believe that captures in a nutshell the way God governs His people in the earth---that is, He has chosen to govern *through Spirit-filled men*. The church is thus God's instrumental government in the world. When Jesus established His church, He *gave authority to His servants* (Mark 13:34; Matthew 24:45; Luke 10:17)---authority (*exousia*) to oversee and guide the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 1 Peter 5:2; 1 Corinthians 12:28)---and commanded them to "occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13). Further, in order to enable His servants to accomplish this task, He gave them spiritual gifts---gifts of administration [various offices and ministries], and spiritual and charismatic gifts [wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, etc.] (Matthew 25:14-17; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28-31; Ephesians 4:7-12).

## Section III

### Presiding Bishop's Commendation Award

The principle of recognizing and honoring those in the church who excel in Christian service was taught and practiced by Jesus and the apostles. In fact, we see this principle expressed by God Himself in the Old Testament when He boasted of Job to Satan, saying, *Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that fears God, and [shuns] evil?* (Job 1:8). It is not surprising then that Jesus boasted of John the Baptist to the multitudes, saying, *Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist* (Matthew 11:11). Paul commended Phoebe as a *servant of the church*, saying *she has been a [helper] of many, and of myself also* (Romans 16:1, 2); further, he honored *Priscilla and Aquila . . . who have for my life [risked] their own necks* (v. 3, 4), and recognized many others who had *labored much in the Lord* (vv. 6, 12). Everywhere in the New Testament, we see those who worked well were commended, and those who did not were reprov'd or encouraged to do better.

Now we have always been more or less in the habit in this last day's Zion of giving commendations in an informal way to those who excel in the work of the church, but I believe it would be pleasing to the Lord and edifying to the church to make certain commendations more formal. So, beginning in this Assembly we will bestow special honor upon certain members of the church each year who have a proven record of excellence. This award will be called the *Presiding Bishop's Commendation*.

The purpose of the commendation is two-fold: first, to put into practice in a more formal way the Scriptural teaching of giving *honor to whom honor is due* [Romans 13:7], and second, to encourage all of our ministers and workers to *seek to excel* in the Lord's work (1 Corinthians 14:12)--to aim at the highest degree of performance for the Lord. Jesus said that we should seek to bring forth *much fruit* (John 15:8), and, while He acknowledged average believers who brought forth less fruit---whom we might call *thirty and sixty-fold* Christians---yet He put a premium on those who brought forth a *hundredfold* for the Lord (Matthew 13:23), that is, Jesus especially recognized those who produced *much fruit* and *excelled* in Christian service. Our desire and aim therefore should be to produce a *hundredfold* for Christ---for *herein is [the] Father glorified*. The apostle Paul thus admonished the ministers and members of the church to be *always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord* (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Now in regard to instituting and implementing the *Presiding Bishop's Commendation*, we suggest two possibilities: 1) the plan and process may remain within the prerogative and discretion of the office of the Presiding Bishop, or 2) the Assembly may adopt the plan. For what its worth, it seems to me that Paul's counsel in 1 Corinthians 12:26---*when one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it*---would flow more naturally if the whole Assembly was involved and approved of the practice. If the Assembly Business Committee (ABC) agrees, then it may present the plan to the Assembly for consideration. In either case, we hope that this official commendation will serve as one way for us to *consider one another to provoke unto love and good works* (Hebrews 10:24).

To make this program universal and equitable, we will encourage the ministers and members from every nation to send in names to the office of the Presiding Bishop each year for consideration, stating the reasons the person recommended is deserving of the honor. It should be borne in mind that the persons nominated should be above average Christians and faithful members of the church---faithful in attendance, tithing, giving, and regular service---being recommended therefore only in view of extraordinary

service. A panel of judges at headquarters with the Presiding Bishop will prior to the Assembly each year consider the nominations, evaluate their work, and select the persons to be honored. Then the Presiding Bishop will make the presentations in the General Assembly.

## **Section IV**

### **The Church and Bible Versions**

Since we reorganized the church in 2004 and set in motion this present restoration, questions have been raised about the church's position on the various translations of the Bible. Some of our English speaking members in particular have expressed their bias or preference for the King James Version (KJV), and have suggested that the church should adopt this version as its official translation. However, as your Presiding Bishop, I have maintained that since the church is universal, international, and multi-lingual in nature, we could not adopt or espouse ourselves to any particular version of the Bible. This fact alone seems to me to be sufficient reason for reasonable and fair-minded men and women to see the wisdom in this position, for how could we expect our brothers and sisters throughout the world---reading and speaking more than 250 different languages and 6000 dialects---accept exclusively any one particular version of the Bible written in only one particular language.

Apparently, however, this reason alone has not satisfied a few of our English-speaking people who continue to express their wish to make the KJV the church's official translation. This position is commonly called "King James Version Onlyism." Advocates of this view believe that God's Word has been supernaturally preserved in this particular version of the Bible and that it is consequently superior to all other versions. Some also believe that the KJV is inerrant and infallible.

Now, we might expect that as new people continue to pour into the church from all over the world that a few here and there will claim that a version in their peculiar national or tribal language is superior to all others including the KJV. And the same arguments made by those who advocate for the KJV will be made by those who advocate for other versions. This will in turn inevitably result in *partyism* and contentions, and consequently the peace and harmony of the church will continually be agitated and disturbed. So we feel it is time for this subject to be addressed in the Assembly.

Thankfully, most all of our people in Zion Assembly are moderate and reasonable men and women and have not allowed this issue to become

explosive and divisive. May the Lord help us to continue to avoid any spirit of bigotry and narrow-mindedness that would disrupt our unity and injure our beautiful fellowship. Our goal in the church is always to have *one mind* and *one judgment* and to *walk by the same rule* in regard to all matters of faith, practice, government, and discipline (1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 3:16). More so, we desire to be *of one heart and of one soul* (Acts 4:31) and *to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. So let us here reason together.

We have covered this subject fairly well in the School of Ministry since it was inaugurated in 2005, particularly in the two courses called *The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures* and *Biblical Interpretation*. The advantage of addressing this subject in the School of Ministry is that we have two whole weeks to cover all of the relevant points, and to answer sufficiently all of the questions raised. We don't have that advantage in this Assembly; but nevertheless we will try to explain our position here the best we can, and with the help of the Holy Ghost and the counsel of the elders, we trust the Lord will help us to come together in *one mind* and *one judgment* on this subject and enable us to continue to *walk by the same rule*.

We have stated that one of the primary reasons for our position of not adopting a particular translation of the Bible for our rule of faith is that the church is universal, international, and multi-lingual in nature, that is, our status as an "all nations church" precludes us from endorsing any particular version of the Bible considered to be in its every word and verse superior to all others. This would be quite unreasonable and in fact an untenable position for God's church, for then our ministers and members from all over the world would be forced to accept our word in English as authoritative and final though most of them may not understand a word of English or know how to read and write in English. It would follow also that we would expect these various nations, tribes, and language groups to translate the Bible into their various languages from the KJV since it is believed that the KJV has captured perfectly in its every word and verse in English the precise meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew words and verses. Again, I trust that our people can see that this is an unreasonable and untenable position for God's church.

There are still other reasons just as important that would make adopting a particular translation of the Bible unwise and self-defeating, not the least of which is that it fails to take into account the church's very reason-for-being, which is to translate and interpret the Bible for itself. God's church cannot shuffle its responsibility for biblical translation to some other group of believers, particularly to a group outside of the church like those ministers and scholars in England whom King James I appointed

in 1604 to make a new translation of the Bible in English. While the KJV has much to commend it in several respects, it is not inerrant and infallible. There is in fact no such thing as an infallible version of the Bible. The original autographs of the Holy Scriptures were indeed inspired and thus inerrant and infallible, but this cannot be said of any particular translation. Thus, what is said of the biblical writers---that *prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost* (2 Peter 1:21)---cannot be said of any particular scholar or group of translators.

Now observe; many of our ministers in English-speaking countries (the United States and England, e.g.) use the KJV to proclaim the Gospel, disciple believers, and build up the church; others in Spanish-speaking countries use the famous *Casiodoro de Reina Version* published first in 1569 (Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, e.g.); and our French-speaking brethren in Haiti and other countries use the celebrated *Louis Segond Version* first published in 1880. Now we have all these various translations being used in the church today, and we might expect that before the church is perfected and caught up in the rapture, our ministers and members may wind up using a hundred more versions. How is it then that we will be able to *see eye to eye* (Isaiah 52:8) and *speak the same thing* (1 Corinthians 1:10), especially as this last day's Zion continues to grow and flourish throughout the world? I answer, through the same government and theocratic system that unites us in the church today, namely, the counsel of God-called and anointed elders, and finally the counsel of the whole church being assembled together and praying and seeking God together in the General Assembly and invoking the gifts and witness of the Holy Ghost. This theocratic order and system worked for the New Testament church, and until now has united us in this last day's Zion; and we believe it will continue to serve us well if we maintain a good and right spirit. When issues arise, we discuss them and reason together and invoke the help of the Holy Ghost until we are finally able to say as the church did in that first council in Jerusalem, *For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us* (Acts 15:28).

Now in the process of our reasoning and deliberations in the church, various translations of the Bible may be consulted to determine which translation best captures in a particular place the original meaning of a word or verse in regard to a particular theme or subject that is in dispute or that simply needs some additional light thrown upon it. Let me illustrate how this process works. Let's say a question arises in regard to the term *luchnion* (from *luchnos*) in Revelation 2:1 which is rendered "candlestick" in the KJV. The issue for one brother is that the word should

be rendered rather “lampstand,” for he argues that it alludes back to the Jewish *menorah*---the seven pronged lampstand in the temple of the Lord (cf. Exodus 25:31-37; 27:20; Hebrews 9:2) which the Lord Himself designed and commissioned to be made (Numbers 8:4). The pleading brother reasons that in the image of the *menorah* deep mysteries of truth are opened to us that are lost in the image of a candlestick; for in regard to the *menorah*, the light was produced by pure olive oil (symbolic of the Holy Spirit), not wax or oil filled each cup shaft and the other produce the light (Leviticus 24:2), the divinity and the church---of divinity and *six* in the symbol of sense of divinity is of the churches church together, candlestick seems imagery. In fact, know them today existence until the Europe, more than after the New Testament was written. The brother thus argues further, that the “lights” were not candles at all, but olive-oil lamps.



tallow! Further, the at the top of the six branches to (Exodus 27:20; a fitting image of humanity of Christ *seven* being a term of humanity. Thus, the *menorah* a thrown over each and the whole whereas the word to lose this whole candles as we did not come into Middle Ages in five hundred years

Now after hearing the points raised by this brother, all of the brethren then discuss and reason together and take into account all that has been said, and conclude that the brother’s points are valid and that “lampstand” rather than “candlestick” is the better rendering of the term *luchnion*. Thus in this instance, the American Standard Version, the New International Version, the Revised Standard Version, the English Standard Version, and the New King James Version are superior to the King James Version.

There are instances, moreover, in which it would be impossible to understand God’s Word if one had access only to the KJV; for what sense could we make of the words of the town clerk of Ephesus in Acts 19:37---*For you have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess*---if we did not have access to the Greek text. For it is there that we learn the word *hierosulou* [from *hieron*, “temple,” and *sulao*, “to rob”] should be rendered “robbers

of temples” or “temple-robbers” rather than “robbers of churches.” With this light, we may readily see the significance of the town clerk’s words. He was speaking in behalf of Paul and his companions in arguing that they had not robbed the pagan temples in Ephesus, a thing that was considered debase and sacrilegious even among the pagans, for the expensive idols and precious things in the temples were much endeared by people throughout Asia and the Roman Empire, as well as coveted by thieves and robbers. We see then that the word “church” in this case is completely misleading; for a church, an *ekklesia*, is the people and government of God; whereas a temple is a material building and place of worship. Thus, if the town clerk had used the term *ekklesia* [“church”], the people would have been left bewildered as to his meaning, but they perfectly understood the term *hierosulous*. Interestingly, here again the American Standard Version, the New International Version, the Revised Standard Version, and the New King James Version render the term *hierosulous* accurately---i. e., “robbers of temples”---whereas the KJV does not.

On the other hand, let’s say a dispute arises over the term *porneia* in Matthew 5:32 rendered “fornication” in the KJV, but rendered “unchastity” in the American Standard Version, “immorality” in the New International Version, and “sexual immorality” in the English Standard Version and the New King James Version. Some of the brethren argue that the KJV is superior in this case because *porneia* includes the idea of being married to someone who has a living husband or wife, that is, to someone who had been married previously and the first companion is still living; and further, it includes an incestuous marriage which God and the church could not possibly honor (see Leviticus 18:8; Deuteronomy 22:22, 30). Both of these ideas---an incestuous marriage and a single person being married to someone who has been married previously and whose companion is still living---are included in the *fornication* denounced by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:1-7 where a young man apparently married his father’s wife (probably his stepmother). Further, it is almost certain that the *fornication* denounced by the Assembly in Acts 15:20, 29 has reference to illegal marriages, for it was universally understood in the church that illicit sexual relations were forbidden---for Jew and Gentile alike---so it would have been rather pointless to have made a decree in regard to common sexual immorality and promiscuity.

In a case of fornication in regard to marriage, therefore, one is free, indeed obligated, to divorce or “put away” his present marriage partner so that he may enter into a valid marriage that is honored by God and recognized by the church, or otherwise he is obligated to divorce the person and remain single and celibate. This seems consistent with Paul’s

further counsel to the church at Corinth: *Nevertheless to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband* (1 Corinthians 7:2), and again, *Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife* (vv. 10, 11). Accordingly, a husband or wife must not divorce his/her companion for any cause except “fornication,” that is, unless it is discovered that one’s first marriage was solemnized contrary to the law of God and consequently is an invalid marriage in the sight of God and the church, in which case the person in “fornication” is free to divorce and marry his own wife, or if per chance it is the woman in “fornication,” she is free to divorce and marry her own husband. Interpreting Matthew 5:31-32 and 19:3-12 in this light is the only way to be consistent with other Scriptural passages that teach that marriage has been instituted and ordained by God and is binding “until death” (Mark 10:2-9; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 7: 2, 10, 11).

Again, as in the case mentioned above in regard to the word “candlestick,” after hearing the points in dispute, the elders come together to counsel, giving consideration to all of the Scriptural evidence, and finally determine that “fornication” rather than “unchastity” or “immorality” is indeed the best rendering of Jesus’ use of the term *porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. The whole Assembly, then, after hearing the reasoning of the elders, agree that the KJV in this particular case is superior and accepts this interpretation as the church’s *rule of faith*.

We may be thankful therefore for the KJV in this instance. Interestingly, however, the church’s understanding and interpretation of *fornication* as including being married to someone who has been married before and whose companion is still living, would have been further strengthened if the KJV had rendered the verb, *echein*, in 1 Corinthians 5:1 more accurately as “has” rather than “should have:” for the word *has* denotes a permanent relationship as in marriage. As it is, the KJV’s “should have” unfortunately strengthens the argument of those who say the fornicator in the church at Corinth was not actually married to his mother, or to his stepmother as the case may have been, but was merely having carnal relations with her. Once again, the American Standard Version, the New International Version, the Revised Standard Version, and the New King James Version translate the verb, *echein*, in this verse as “has” and thus are superior to the KJV in this instance.

Time will not permit us here to cite hundreds of other instances in which the church must counsel together to determine what is the best translation of a particular word or passage. Suffice it to say that in any

case, it is the church that is the *pillar and ground of the truth*, and the General Assembly is “the highest tribunal of authority in the church for the interpretation of Scripture” (see Acts 15-16:5).

Now I don’t intend to belabor our explanation here, for hopefully what has been said has been enough to solidify our present position; but perhaps a further word on one particular point will add a little more clarity to the subject. It is thought by some that the church must adopt a particular version of the Bible in order to have unity; they reason that by not adopting a particular version, the church will end in confusion and chaos. But our experience militates against this argument. Let me illustrate. About twelve years ago I decided to teach a few months in a secular college just to experience and see first hand what the spirit and intellectual climate was like on the inside of a secular university. I chose Bluefield State College in West Virginia and taught a particular course called the Philosophy of Religion. About half way through the course (in about the sixth week), during a discussion on Christianity and the modern Ecumenical Movement, I learned that several of the students had an affinity with the KJV. Most of them coincidentally had backgrounds in fundamentalist churches in the mountain region round about the college there. One young man in class expressed the sentiments of several others in saying, “If it ain’t King James, it ain’t Bible!,” and he had this saying displayed also on a bumper sticker on his automobile next to another sticker that said, “Honk if you love Jesus!”

Now what was interesting is that each of these students who so passionately defended the KJV defended with equal passion a number of doctrines that caused him or her to be in conflict with the others. In fact, they were miles apart on some of their beliefs. One of the young men was a staunch Calvinist (a primitive Baptist) and touted the doctrines of “predestination” and “once in grace always in grace.” Another was a Methodist who believed in free will and the possibility of losing one’s salvation. Another young lady was Oneness, a “Jesus Only” believer, and still another belonged to an independent Pentecostal church that believed in the Trinity. Two believed in instantaneous second-work sanctification, the others did not; two believed in speaking in tongues, the others did not; one believed the church and the kingdom are the same thing, the others did not. And so it was with scores of other conflicting doctrines, though each student claimed the doctrines he espoused were based on the authority of the KJV. What is evident is that each person (and the group to which they belonged) either read into or pulled out of the KJV their peculiar prejudices and preferences. Indeed, several denominations that have adopted the KJV have divided over doctrinal issues. So, you see, espousing a particular

version of the Bible cannot of itself bring understanding and unity.

It is not our intention here to belittle the KJV or any other reputable version of the Bible; in fact, I thank God for them all. Personally I prefer the American Standard Version as a study Bible because overall it seems to me to be the most accurate; but I preach and teach most often from the KJV simply because when I was saved and was later called into the ministry, the church at that time (1960s) embraced more or less a “King James Version Onlyism.” So I grew up in the Lord and the ministry with the words and phrases peculiar to the KJV. But through the years, the more I studied the Word of God, desiring always to go deeper and deeper into the Mind of God, into the Divine Reasoning revealed in the Holy Scriptures, the more I was led to the original languages---basically Greek and Hebrew---endeavoring to “draw out” a truer and purer and deeper meaning from the original texts. This led me further to study Greek and Hebrew lexicons, dictionaries, commentaries, and word-study books, which in turn led me to discover that certain reputable translations of the Bible are superior on some points to the KJV, and conversely the KJV is superior in some instances to other translations. What became ever more obvious to me was the need for God’s church to do its own translation work and interpretation.

Now observe brethren; even if there was such a thing as a perfect and infallible translation of the Bible (which there is not), the translation in itself could not illuminate, sanctify, and unify the church; rather, the church and believers everywhere will be illuminated, sanctified, and united only in the Holy Spirit and through the government and discipline of the church (Ephesians 4:11-16). After all, the church itself is *the pillar and ground of the truth* (1Timothy 2:15), not a particular version of the Bible; for all translations have been produced by scholars and religious groups that are fallible in their nature and, to one degree or another, biased. That’s why in Zion Assembly we must do our own translation work and interpret the Holy Scriptures for ourselves. Understanding this and living it out as a matter of discipline and practice is in large part what we call the “vision of the church.” In other words, the church is the ground upon which biblical translation and interpretation takes place. This is in large part what makes the church a *dreadful place* (Genesis 28:17), and why we all must continue to study, reason, and pray together and invoke the help of the Holy Spirit; for I’m sure we all desire to be *sanctified and meet to the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work*.

There is still another point that is extremely important to grasp in regard to this subject. When we limit ourselves to only one translation of the Bible, we subject our thinking to the weaknesses of the particular

language in which that translation was written. Consequently, we tend to read God's Word only through the narrow prism of the words and phrases chosen by the uninspired writers of that particular version of the Bible. In other words, we subject the original words of Scripture which were written almost entirely in Hebrew and Greek to the words chosen by the translators out of a relatively limited vocabulary. What is lost in many instances is the dynamic that was present in the original inspired words. Further, the precise nuances of meaning that colored those original words and phrases are often lost or clouded. This is why it is advantageous to consult various reputable translations, for thereby our understanding is broadened, and we are enabled more readily to see the various nuances of meaning possible in the original words. Further, as Spirit-baptized believers we should appreciate the fact that the Spirit Himself can more readily quicken and illuminate our minds to deeper significances in the words of Holy Scripture if we do not bind ourselves to the human factor in a particular translation. The apostle Paul wrestled with this problem, expressing eloquently his insight into the matter in his first letter to the church at Corinth:

*And, I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency [superiority] of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in [rest on] the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:4-5).*

He went on to say in regard to the deeper things of God,

*But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained [predestined] before the world [ages] unto our glory . . . [For] God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches;*

*but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual* (vv. 7-13).

What seems clear by implication in this Pauline passage is the inherent weakness of human words and grammar. Only the Holy Spirit is able to quicken and anoint our insight and illuminate our understanding to discern and comprehend the true Word of God in the human words of Scripture (vv. 14-16). Indeed, *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* (Romans 10:17), that is, our inner ear is opened only by the spiritual Word of God, the inner voice of the Spirit who quickens our hearts through faith, illuminates our minds, and translates us into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:17).

Perhaps now we can see more clearly why it is so important for us to cultivate a true and genuine spirituality in the church, as well as to endeavor always to maintain a studious and sanctified spirit (2 Timothy 1:13, 14; 2:14-16, 21). We bear a heavy and profound responsibility in being God's church---*the light of the world* and the *pillar and ground of the truth*. Paul had a true vision of the church, and this vision prompted him to plead with the ministers and members to *Study to show yourselves approved unto God* (2 Timothy 2:15), and to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* (Ephesians 4:1-3).

Finally, brethren, since we have no official position in Zion Assembly on this subject, it seems wise and necessary for the Assembly to take a position at this time so that we may continue to *speak the same thing* and *walk by the same rule*. I'm requesting therefore that the Assembly Business Committee address this subject and make a recommendation to the Assembly for consideration.

## **Section IV**

### **Our Bible College and Headquarters Expansion**

In the Assembly last year we cast a vision for a Bible College and the expansion of our International Ministries Center to facilitate the college, and also to provide additional office and storage space at Headquarters. We received some preliminary estimates for the cost of the new facilities that ranged from \$300,000 to \$400,000. So we took the average and thought

we could perhaps build the addition for \$350,000. Then we decided that it would be wise to raise at least half of the costs before we broke ground and began construction, agreeing finally that we would break ground once we had raised \$200,000. We were encouraged also by a few of our members who said they would give consideration to making a substantial contribution to the project.

Besides hoping for these “substantial contributions,” we inaugurated what we called The Prophets’ Plan to enable us to finance the project. We had received the inspiration for this plan from the account of Elisha and the prophets in 2 Kings 6:1-5 where the prophets cut down and hewed trees to build a new and larger facility to house their school of the prophets. We estimated that the cost of a tree, and the labor of having it hewn, then transported to the building site and set in the construction would in today’s terms cost about \$800. We then called upon our people in that Assembly to consider donating the price of a tree or perhaps two or more trees to the project. Many of you responded wonderfully and we received over \$48,000 in cash and pledges.

After the Assembly, three of our good people who were giving consideration to making a substantial contribution came through with a total of \$70,000. Those who had contributed or pledged the cost of a tree (\$800) or two trees (\$1600) in the Assembly amounted together to \$47,600, all of whom except for four persons followed through on their pledges. You can see then where we stand. We now have a total of \$105,470.81 leaving us needing about \$95,000 to break ground and begin construction.

Now I have been asking the Lord to help us to know where we go from here, that is to get the rest of the financing to build the facilities for a college and to expand our International Ministries Complex. The answer seems to be to simply continue to implement The Prophets’ Plan since we believe this plan was inspired by the Lord: and also to pray more fervently for the Lord to move upon some of our good people who have the means to make some substantial contributions.

Now last year many of our people bought a tree (42 in all), but still many more did not. So I’m asking those who did not give last year to consider buying a tree this year. And I know that some who gave last year will want to give again this year. Dale and I have talked it over and we want to contribute again this year in memory of our son, Vince, who went to be with the Lord nineteen years ago last month. Perhaps there are others here today who will want to give in memory of a loved one. But let everyone give according as his heart leads him. In fact, I want to pause here to commend all of you who have given so liberally and sacrificially, regardless of what you do or do not this year. May the Lord continue to

bless and pour out upon you the abundant blessings He has promised in His Word. I pray that many of you will respond to the challenge of the Lord in which He says in regard to giving of offerings: prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open [to] you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there will not be room enough to receive it (Malachi 3:10).

Let me remind our wonderful people here of the law of sowing and reaping. But this I say [says the apostle Paul], he which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully (2 Corinthians 9:6, 7), and the wise man wrote, There is one who scatters [gives liberally], and yet increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is meet [keeps for himself what he should share with others], and yet it results only in want [in his poverty]. The liberal soul [the generous man] shall be made fat [prosperous]: and he that waters shall be watered also himself (Proverbs 11:24, 25).

Now I know \$800 may sound like a lot to some of our people, but I ask compared to what?---to a new couch or sofa? to a new lawnmower? to a new refrigerator? to a new stove or dishwasher? to a new paint job on your car? to a new set of tires? I know of a few of our people who have recently paid more than \$1500 for a three-hour course of study in a local college or university. My point is that \$800 is not what it used to be, and certainly we could give this much if we put forth a little effort and exercised a little faith. But more so, if we could envision all the good that a college and the expansion of our International Ministries Complex will do I believe we would make a special effort to give. Certainly spending our money for such a noble purpose would do more good than spending all of our money on ourselves, or feverishly and foolishly hoarding it up in bank accounts in a vain attempt to provide for ourselves some security. While it is good and wise to earn and save money, and to spend it prudently---for a fool and his money are soon parted---yet we can be truly secure only in the Lord. If we are faithful to the Lord and give liberally to His work, we may be sure of His favor in our lives both spiritually and materially. That's why the best investment you could make, brethren, is to invest in the house of God. I can promise you on the authority of God's Word that you will get many times your return on this wise and sacred investment, and you will secure for yourselves treasures in heaven---in the Father's house.

On the other hand, let me call to your remembrance the rebuke of the Lord against His people in the days of the prophet Haggai---a rebuke aimed against His people's self-centeredness and their neglect of building and beautifying His house. Listen,

Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? Saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house (Haggai 1:3-9).

Let us then, brethren, be zealous to advance the work of the church--to build again the house of God. Go up into the mountain, and bring down [timber], and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, says the Lord. Certainly we don't want the Lord to blow upon [consume] our substance, and cause our increase to be put it in a bag with holes. Rather, we want the Lord to bless our substance, don't we? Let us then imitate the faith and zeal of our Lord. Jesus cried out through the spirit of prophecy a thousand years before He was born, saying, The zeal of Your house has eaten me up [ravished my heart] (Psalm 69:9; John 2:17). Like Jesus, let us love the church; giving priority to enlarging and adorning God's house, rather than every man running unto his own house. Remember Jesus' words, Seek first the kingdom of God and then God will abundantly provide for you what you shall eat, what you shall drink, and what you shall wear (Matthew 6:31-34).

## **Section V**

### **Radio and Media Ministries**

There is no question that our phenomenal growth in the last few years is mainly because of initial contacts made through our web site and internet ministries. We receive inquiries from ministers and church leaders almost daily from all over the world asking their way to Zion. And many of these, after being counseled and more thoroughly introduced to the

church, express their desire to unite with us. And after being examined and showing proof of their sincerity and soundness of faith, we receive them into the church; and immediately thereupon they become true yokefellows with us in proclaiming and spreading the “all things” message to every nation under heaven, laboring also with us to disciple and unite all of God’s people into the “one fold.”

The modern-day explosion in communications through satellite and cyber space technologies has given almost every person on earth accessibility to universal knowledge, including access to the message and vision of Zion Assembly. Now we don’t mean to indicate that the church’s mission can be fulfilled altogether through the internet or cyber space technologies, for the government and discipline of the church must be planted in real flesh and blood people in every nation on earth, that is, only through local churches can covenant believers break bread together, wash one another’s feet, bring their tithes into the storehouse, greet one another with a holy kiss, and observe the “all things” message of Christ (Matthew 28:19). Nevertheless, cyber technologies can be especially instrumental in opening the way for us to evangelize the world and establish churches.

It is very likely, it seems to me, that Daniel’s prophecy for the end times, particularly the prophetic words that many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased (Daniel 12:4), will be fulfilled primarily through cyber technologies. Unimaginably more than one-third of the population of the world---more than two billion souls in every nation under heaven---presently have access to the internet, and this figure is expected by experts to double in the next few years; and more than five billion have cell phones. Countless millions own laptop commuters, i-pads and i-pods, and those who don’t own a computer have access to one. It seems to me that we are now beholding in this explosion of cyber technology the means for the Scriptures to be fulfilled both in regard to the universal government of man in the last days---the antichrist system---and the universal government of God---the church; for both systems are seen through the eyes of prophecy of having gained universal attention and devotion in the end-times (cp. Revelation 13:3 and Isaiah 60:1-5; Matthew 28:19). Thus in the light of cyber technology, we can now see more clearly how every soul will be able to see and hear and make an intelligent choice between the universal good in God’s kingdom and the universal evil in the kingdom of the beast. We can see how the prophet’s words about the church will be fulfilled, Your watchmen shall lift up the voice together; and with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion (Isaiah 52:8), and again, And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up

your eyes, and see: all gather themselves together, they come to you . . . the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto you (60:3-5); and likewise how Jesus' words will be fulfilled, And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd (John 10:16).

Now we have learned in the past two years also that internet ministries are a much more fluid and effective way to spread the Gospel and establish churches than traditional radio and television programs. Having been awakened more fully to this fact during the course of this year, I spoke a few months ago to our Radio and Media Ministries director, Todd McDonald, and our former director, E. A. McDonald, about this, and they both agreed that we could prosecute our mission much more quickly and effectively if we poured our financial resources for radio and media ministries into our internet ministries, that is, we could fulfill our outreach to the world more effectively and financially smarter through the use of the internet. Thus, instead of paying an outside source for radio air time like we have been doing, we could produce our own radio programs and broadcast them through the internet. In fact, instead of making two additional payments in August and September to an outside radio station, we decided to go ahead with this plan in July and report our actions to this Assembly, that is, we have already made the transition to an internet radio ministry. Further, we could possibly inaugurate a television ministry through the internet by this year's end. Now that's exciting, isn't it?---good news that makes the bones fat!

With this vision in mind, I want to encourage our people who have made annual pledges toward our radio and television outreach to continue to be faithful. We need this support now more than ever, for millions of souls are within our immediate reach through these internet ministries. Surely the Lord will bless and reward you in special ways and in heavenly places in Christ Jesus for your faithful and cheerful giving. With your support, I expect we will be able to report periodically in the Voice of Zion in the coming months great things being accomplished through radio and television streaming on the internet. Think of it! Zion Assembly radio and television ministries being shown on the internet 24 hours a day throughout the world; our peculiar message with all of its particulars reaching out to every soul on earth---to every creature under heaven! The excitement of it almost takes my breath away. I can relate to the prophet when he said, It rejoices my heart!

# Section VI

## Radio and Media Ministries

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# International & Regional Assembly Appointments 2012-2013

## International Staff

Presiding Bishop.....	Wade H. Phillips
General Treasurer.....	E.A. McDonald
Field Secretary.....	Joshua Amara
Field Secretary.....	Amos Agbonifo
Field Secretary.....	Javier Perez Diaz
Field Secretary.....	Miguel Garcia, Sr
Field Secretary.....	Danny Ramirez
General Treasurer.....	E.A. McDonald
World Mission Secretary.....	E.A. McDonald
United States' Missions & New Fields Director.....	L.W. Carter
Communications/Media Ministries.....	Scott Neill
<i>Voice of Zion</i> Lay-out & Design/Office Assistant.....	Marie Crook
Shepherding Ministries Director.....	Rocky Dalton
School of Ministry Director.....	Wade H. Phillips
Ladies Ministries Director.....	Rosie Ramirez
Sunday School Director.....	Rick Ferrell
Sunday School Literature Editor (Adult).....	Todd McDonald
Youth Ministries Director.....	Byron Harris
Children's Ministries Director.....	Cheryl McDonald
Camping Coordinator/Advisor.....	Byron Harris
<i>Voice of Zion</i> /SYNC Booster.....	Glenda Major

# Regional Overseers

## *United States:*

### **Mid-East**

(Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia,  
Pennsylvania, Maryland).....L.W. Carter

### **South Atlantic**

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

### **Mid-Central**

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

**Tennessee**.....Rocky Dalton

### **South-Central**

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

### **North-West**

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

### **Pacific Coast North**

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

**Pacific Coast South** (Southern California).....Miguel Garcia, Sr.

### **Mid-West**

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

### **South-West**

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

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

**Southeast Asia**.....Boonyong Bureenok

**Philippines/Guam**.....Domingo Resurreccion

## National Overseers:

<b>Argentina</b> .....	Jorge Estroz
<b>Benin</b> .....	Amos Agbonifo
<b>Burundi</b> .....	Edward Agar
<b>Cambodia</b> .....	Boonyong Bureenok
<b>Cameroon</b> .....	Eyong Eric Eyong
<b>Chile</b> .....	Javier Perez Diaz
<b>Dominican Republic</b> .....	Sandraud Pierre
<b>England</b> .....	Joshua Amara
<b>Ethiopia</b> .....	Geremew Eschete
<b>Ghana</b> .....	David Dordah
<b>Guatemala</b> .....	Ricardo Valenzuela Chavez
<b>Haiti</b> .....	Saintaniel Hostelus
<b>India (South)</b> .....	V. Binoy Joseph
<b>India (Southeast)</b> .....	Talari Padma Rao
<b>Kenya</b> .....	Joshua Amara
<b>Malawi</b> .....	Mariel Dzuwa
<b>Mexico</b> .....	Danny Ramirez
<b>Myanmar (Burma)</b> .....	Boonyong Bureenok
<b>Nicaragua</b> .....	Freddy Garcia
<b>Nigeria</b> .....	Yomi Adegunle
<b>Pakistan</b> .....	George Assi
<b>Paraguay</b> .....	Jorge Estroz
<b>Peru</b> .....	Javier Perez Diaz
<b>Philippines</b> .....	Domingo Resurreccion
<b>Sudan</b> .....	Elijah Wafula
<b>Tanzania</b> .....	Edward Agar
<b>Thailand</b> .....	Boonyong Bureenok
<b>Togo</b> .....	Amos Agbonifo
<b>Uganda</b> .....	Joshua Amara
<b>Uruguay</b> .....	Jorge Estroz
<b>United States</b> .....	Wade H. Phillips
<b>Zambia</b> .....(Mission).....	David Gomba
<b>Zimbabwe</b> .....(Mission).....	David Gomba

## **Assembly Business Committee**

**Chairman:** Charles Fields

L.W. Carter, Zachary Snyder, C.R. Gregory, Ray Dickson,  
Joseph Steele, E.A. McDonald

**Alternate:** Scott Neill

## **Doctrinal Committee**

**Chairman:** Bruce Sullivan

Tom Brown, Trevor Graves, Ricky Graves, Rocky Dalton,  
Rick Ferrell

**Alternate:** Chris Newberry

## **Construction Committee**

**Chairman:** Wade H. Phillips

E.A. McDonald, Lynn Jones, Clifford Kelton, Cecil Pounders  
C.R. Gregory, Rick Graves

## **International Properties**

**Chairman:** Wade H. Phillips

E.A. McDonald, Todd McDonald, Lynn Jones, Joseph Steele

## **General Trustees**

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

## Churches/Pastors/Missions *United States*

Adolpus, KY.....	C.R. Gregory
Anaheim, CA.....	Juan Avila
Arroya Grande, CA.....	Matthew Carrasco
Bakersfield, CA.....	Tony Sanchez
Bayou La Batre, AL.....	Tod Deakle
Browder, KY.....	Ricky Graves
Chestnut Hill, TN.....	Zachary Snyder
Cleveland, TN.....	Todd McDonald
Colton, CA.....	Daniel Urcadiz
Columbus, MS.....	Byron Harris
Dallas, OR.....	G.W. Solomon
Fort Morgan, CO.....	Nazario Ornelas, Jr
Ft. Oglethorpe, GA.....	William Crook
Fries, VA.....	Michael Correll
Fresno, CA.....	Alex Garcia
Goshen, IN.....	Davis (“Jim”) Webster
Greenville, SC.....	Scott Neill
Hartsville, TN.....	
Hermiston, OR.....	Brian Norquist
Hesperia, CA.....	Jose Lozano
Idamay, WV.....	Tom Brown
Jacksboro, TN.....	Ray Dickson
Kosciusko, MS.....	Bill Solomon
Lompoc, CA (FCI/USP).....	Vincente Garcia
Lompoc Valley, CA.....	Samuel L. Carrasco
Madera, CA.....	Reina Romo
Okolona, MS.....	Joel Brooks
Pelzer, SC.....	Bruce Sullivan
Pitcher’s Chapel, WV.....	Mary Jackson
Pulaski, TN.....	Rocky Dalton
Rialto, CA.....	Pete Sarry
Roanoke, VA.....	William Jones
Salisbury, MD.....	Buddy Quillen

San Jacinto, CA.....	Guillermo Amnador
San Jose, CA.....	Jorge Carrasco
Smithfield, WV.....	Lee Brown
South Central LA, CA.....	Raul Carrasco
Taylors, SC.....	Andrea Faye Davis
Twin Falls, ID.....	
Van Nuys, CA.....	Miguel Garcia, Sr
Ware Shoals, SC.....	Raymond Stonell
West Mobile, AL.....	Kim Irwin
Wilmington, NC.....	Robert Llana

### **Missions**

Cabin Creek, WV.....	Ron Massey
Fairfield, CA.....	A. B. White
Flintville, TN.....	Roger Barbour
Hartsville, SC.....	Jimmy Johnson
Saticoy/Sun Valley/Filmore, CA.....	Noemi Argueta
San Jacinto, CA.....	Guillermo Amnador
Soledad, CA.....	Juan Lopez
Sheridan, WY.....	A.B. White

## International Churches/ Missions

Nation	Churches	Missions
Argentina	2	0
Benin	1	1
Burundi	2	1
Cambodia	2	8
Cameroon	2	0
Chile	12	1
Dominican Republic	8	1
England	1	0
Ethiopia	1	1
Ghana	1	0
Guatemala	11	4
Haiti	213	0
India	33	10
Kenya	54	18
Malawi	22	5
Mexico	2	1
Myanmar	1	13
Nicaragua	7	2
Nigeria	23	2
Pakistan	2	0
Paraguay	1	0
Peru	1	1
Philippines	11	5
Sudan	4	0
Tanzania	42	0
Thailand	16	3
Togo	2	1
Uganda	7	1
United States	46	13
Uruguay	1	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>92</b>
		818
		46,244

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# ABSTRACT OF FAITH

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

## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

# Church Membership

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Salvific Work of Grace

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Subsequent Grace**

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

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

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

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

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

grace (Judges 16); whereas Joseph wisely fled from a similar situation (Genesis 39). Paul perhaps had Joseph in mind when he exhorted, “Flee fornication” (1Corinthians 6:18). The words of James, the Lord’s brother, also come to mind: “Lust when it is conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death” (James 1:13-15). In view of these solemn admonitions, great care should be taken to avoid associations and situations, which could reflect upon one’s character and bring reproach upon Christ and the church.

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

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

# Notes

