

II. GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE

Government is the authoritative direction of the affairs of men in a community. Government serves the function of devising, interpreting, and implementing the laws that are the rules of conduct which the community considers binding upon its members.

The government of any community, whether it is civil or ecclesiastical, may be subdivided into three branches of operation: the legislative, the Judicial, and the executive. The function of the legislative branch is to formulate laws and provide means for implementing those laws and penalties for violating them. The judicial branch has the responsibility of defining and interpreting the laws written by the legislative branch and exacting the penalties of those laws upon those who violate them. The executive branch serves for the administration of the system of laws formulated by the legislative branch and interpreted by the judicial branch.

The operation of government in those affairs of men that pertain to spiritual things is called ecclesiastical government. When ecclesiastical government is properly established and operates according to the divine principles of the Holy Scriptures, it is called theocratic government.

Theocratic government is established on the Biblical premise that God has always used human instrumentality to provide direction, discipline, and protection for His people. This form of government is constituted by the leadership of God over the spiritual affairs of His people through an anointed leader and a system of delegated authority comprised of a pattern of bishops appointed under his supervision.

The proper exercise of theocratic government is not to be confused with either autocracy or democracy, both of which have proven disastrous when they have been employed in the governing of God's people. Neither dictatorship nor the people ruling themselves are God's plan for church government. Theocratic government throughout Bible history has shown great flexibility of manifestation, from the sheikdom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the prophetic leadership of Moses and Samuel, to the judicial system of Samson and Gideon, to the monarchy of Saul, David, and Solomon, to the Messiahship of Jesus, and finally to the chief bishop's office of James; however, the one thing that has remained consistent is the principle of God's ruling the affairs of His people through a divinely-appointed anointed leader.

The New Testament order for theocratic government provides for the input of a "multitude of counselors" in the decision-making processes of church government. This new order provides for an anointed leader who is neither the total authority in the church nor a mere figurehead whose function is to carry out the will of the people.

In harmony with the rest of the governmental pattern of the church, the anointed leader functions as the final and highest authority in the church while not arrogating to himself total authority.

The Church of God accepts and practices this scriptural order and system of theocracy-God's ruling the spiritual affairs of His people through a divinely-appointed anointed leader and a scriptural pattern of bishops appointed under him.

A. LEGISLATIVE GOVERNMENT

The Church of God recognizes but one Legislator or Lawgiver. With Isaiah the prophet, we say "*The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king*" (Isaiah 33:22), and with James we declare, "*There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and*

to destroy" (James 4:12). Yahweh God, Himself, gave the laws to govern the conduct of His people at Sinai and in other manifestations recorded in the Scriptures. In the person of Jesus Christ, He strengthened those laws, gave them new meaning for the New Testament era, and provided a new motive for and new methods of observing them.

The Church of God believes that *"all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"* (II Timothy 3:16, 17). It believes that the canon of scripture is closed and that continuing revelation and/or church tradition are in no way to be equated with the written Word of God.

The Church of God agrees to accept only the Bible as the Word of God, to believe and practice its teachings rightly divided, with the New Testament as its only rule of faith, practice, government, and discipline. The church, therefore, has no legislative branch of government.

B. JUDICIAL GOVERNMENT

The judicial branch of government in The Church of God is the Council of Apostles and Elders. This council is comprised of men holding the following positions: Chief Bishop, Twelve Apostles, Seven Overseers, Seventy-two Prophets, and all other bishops, ordained ministers, and licensed ministers. Traditionally, all lay ministers may be in attendance at these sessions.

The Council of Apostles and Elders is responsible for searching out and setting in order the doctrine and polity of the church. It is a judicial body because it is appointed of God to interpret His laws outlined in the Holy Scriptures, making them applicable to the church in the societies in which it operates. It is not a legislative body and has no power to make laws of its own.

The Council of Apostles and Elders is charged of God and is held accountable for keeping the church in strict compliance with the Word of God, both in doctrine and in practice. It must maintain all diligence to see that no doctrine of the Holy Scriptures is deleted or omitted from the teachings of the church and that no superfluous traditional teaching is added to the doctrines of the Scriptures. It is this order of government which determines the course of the church in its effort to reach the mark of perfection, for it must formulate and approve all doctrinal matters as well as the priorities of programs and the distribution of finances in the church.

The approval of the Council of Apostles and Elders is required for all teachings and practices of the church which are to be termed "Apostles' Doctrine" and which are to be published to the entire church "for to keep" (Acts 16:4). Any ordained minister in the church may bring any new revelation or doctrinal concept before the Council of Apostles and Elders for consideration or may bring into question any established doctrine or practice of the church. While any minister may preach or speculate about new or old doctrines, the only way in which a teaching may become "Apostles' Doctrine" is to be presented to, discussed by, and approved by the Council of Apostles and Elders.

The deliberations of the Council of Apostles and Elders are open forum with every licensed and ordained minister having the right to express his opinion and participate in the orderly discussion. It is by this process of debate and evaluation that the doctrine of the church is progressively developed so that the entire church may see eye to eye and speak the same things (Isaiah 52:89; I Corinthians 1:10).

1. Chief Bishop

The Chief Bishop is the highest authority in the judicial branch of church government. He is termed Chief Bishop because he is the head over the bishops of the church (just as the Chief Justice is the head over the justices of the Supreme Court). The titles of General Overseer and General Moderator may also be applied to this office.

In the Old Testament the Chief Bishop's office was revealed and foretold in the lives of many anointed leaders over God's people: including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Joshua. It has always been a part of God's divine plan that is not subject to repeal (Ecclesiastes 3:15) to have one anointed man as leader of His people to administer His Word to them.

This divine order for government and direction was not discarded with the introduction of the Grace Dispensation. In the governmental order of the New Testament church, we find this same model being used. When the doctrinal question of imposing circumcision on the Gentiles came before the Council of Apostles and Elders, James asserted his authority as the Chief Bishop of the church to make the final decision. When he said, *"Wherefore my sentence is..."*, James exercised the authority of the anointed leader of the church to have the final judicial interpretation of the Scriptures on the question at hand.

It is the Chief Bishop who is first and foremost responsible for seeking the will of God for His people and for initiating, promoting, and supervising those programs that will bring the church to the time of the complete restoration of all prophetic works of the Holy Scriptures that will effect the return of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:20,21).

While there are numerous other officers in the church with whom God communicates His will and Word, either through revelations, prophecies, or words of knowledge, it is uniquely the role of the Chief Bishop to give direction and prophetic leadership to the church. This is the way in which Yahweh God dealt with Moses by speaking face to face with him (Numbers 12: 1-8) while still speaking to other prophets.

In the New Testament this function and ministry that is unique to the Chief Bishop was revealed by the Lord Jesus, Himself. *"Who then is a faithful, and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing"* (Matthew 24:45, 46).

The unique function of the Chief Bishop in the words of Jesus is to give the church spiritual food in season. The type of food, the quality of the food, and the seasoning of the food are all matters that are left in the hands of the servant of God. The primary function of the office of the Church Bishop in judicial government, then, is to provide seasonal direction and sustenance to the church. It is his responsibility to lead the church in the prophetic work that is to be done at a particular time, and it is he to whom God communicates the sense of direction that the whole church should take.

The Chief Bishop is the moderator of the meetings of the Council of Apostles and Elders. He is charged with the responsibility of rendering final decisions on scriptural interpretations on which no definite conclusions can be reached by the council with unanimous agreement. He must also see that he exercises the final authority and gives consent to all other decisions of the council, as he stands foremost responsible to God for the course of the church.

2. The Twelve Apostles

The Twelve Apostles, along with the Chief Bishop, are the judicial officers who are directly responsible for maintaining the course of Bible perfection for The Church

of God. Since God has set them foremost as foundational pillars for the church, they are accountable for any error that creeps into the doctrines or practices of the church. They must, therefore, exercise all diligence to see that the church maintains purity in doctrine.

The offices of the Twelve Apostles are revealed in the governmental pattern which Moses employed in Israel. There were twelve heads of the twelve tribes. The perpetuation of these judicial offices was a necessary part of the church, for Jesus selected twelve and named them apostles as His first act in building the church (Luke 6:12,13). The Twelve Apostles were the foundational pillars of the church that God set first in the church according to I Corinthians 12:28. Ephesians 2:20 declares that the church is built on the foundational doctrine set forth by the apostles. The fact that these Judicial offices were to be perpetuated in the church was confirmed when one of the first acts of the apostles was to replace Judas with Matthias that he might be numbered with the eleven (Acts 1:26). The fact that the Twelve Apostles are a part of the judicial government of the church is seen in the declaration of Jesus that His apostles would be "*judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" (Matthew 19:28).

The Church of God maintains this same scriptural pattern of apostleship in its governmental order by having twelve gifted apostles ordained and set in the offices of the Twelve Apostles. These apostles are a part of the stewardship (1 Corinthians 4:1,2) to whom God makes known by revelation (Ephesians 3:3,5) the mysteries of His will, to establish the church in the present truth (II Peter 1:12). This is a continuing part of their function in the judicial government that interprets and defines the doctrine and practice of the church.

a. The Four Principal Pillars

The four principal pillars in the government of the church are the Chief Bishop, the Two Witnesses of the Chief Bishop, and the Spokesman for the Twelve Apostles. The Old Testament shadow of these offices was revealed in Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Hur. In the New Testament church, they were Jesus, John, James, and Peter. These four are primarily responsible for the judicial order of church government. They were called pillars in Galatians 2:9.

b. The Two Witnesses of the Chief Bishop

Two of the Twelve Apostles are designated as the Two Witnesses of the Chief Bishop. These two men are senior bishops responsible for upholding and representing the office of the Chief Bishop. They are men of great responsibility and are foremost in the counseling of doctrinal issues in the Council of Apostles and Elders. The offices of the Two Witnesses are revealed throughout the Scriptures. They were foreshadowed in Moses' governmental system in Joshua and Hur. Jesus also made these offices a part of the governmental pattern of the early church with James and John. The Church of God continues this order by having Two Witnesses to the office of the Chief Bishop from among the Twelve Apostles.

c. The Spokesman for the Twelve Apostles

The Spokesman for the Twelve Apostles is a continuation of the office which Peter occupied in the Twelve Apostles of the early church. A parallel in the Old Testament was Aaron, who was a spokesman for the leaders of the tribes of Israel and for Moses himself. It is the spokesman who speaks on behalf of the collective apostleship and to whom questions of doctrine and polity are submitted to be brought to the attention of the apostleship and the Council of Apostles and Elders.

3. The Seven Overseers

The Seven overseers are important to the judicial government of the church as well as to administration. Along with the Twelve Apostles, they are foundational pillars in the church (Proverbs 9:1), men on whose understanding and anointing of the Spirit the doctrine of the church is built. They are men "full of the Holy Spirit," having knowledge of the Scriptures and the prophetic work of the church.

The Seven overseers are responsible for promoting to the church the doctrine and practice formulated by the Council of Apostles and Elders, a work which they accomplish through the Seven Spirits of God. They do so in much the same way in which the Menorah candlestick gave light in the Tabernacle of Witness through the seven lamps of fire.

The Seven are revealed in the seven rams horn blowers who marched before the camp of God (Joshua 6:4). In the New Testament church, they were not manifest until after the ascension of Jesus, for He bodily contained all the Seven Spirits of God. Jesus was the stone with seven eyes in Zechariah 3:9 and the Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes in Revelation 5:6. After His ascension it was incumbent upon the early apostles to ordain seven men of wisdom (Acts 6:3) as additional pillars in the church, whose function it was to administer the operation of the Seven Spirits of God in the church (Matthew 5:14,15).

The offices of the Seven Overseers are maintained in The Church of God today as a part of its judicial government because they are charged with organizing programs through which the light of God set forth by the Council of Apostles and Elders can be manifested to the church, the kingdom of God, and the world.

4. The Seventy-two Prophets (Elders)

The Seventy-two Prophets are elders of the people who are counselors together with the Twelve Apostles and the Seven Men of Wisdom of the doctrine and practice of the church. Their primary function in the church is to be direct representatives of the office of the Chief Bishop to the people and to represent the people in the Council of Apostles and Elders in the formulation of teaching and polity for the church. In this work the Seventy Prophets are foundational officers in the church (Ephesians 2:20).

The Seventy-two Prophets are revealed in the pattern which Moses established for governing Israel (Numbers 11:16). The offices were foreshadowed in the pattern of the Menorah candlestick in the seventy-two bowls, knops, and flowers that decorated the candlestick (Exodus 25:31-37). As is evidenced by the fact that God placed some of the spirit of Moses upon the seventy, the Seventy-two Prophets of the church are prophets by virtue of ordination by the Chief Bishop. They may or may not have the spiritual gift of prophecy or the ministerial gift of prophet.

The Seventy-two Prophets were a part of the pattern of the New Testament church, for Jesus ordained seventy-two and sent them forth to prepare for His coming (Luke 10:1). This is also indicative of the fact that the Seventy-two Prophets are representatives of the office of the Chief Bishop.

There are two officers in the Seventy-two Prophets who complete a total of seventy-two. This principle is revealed in the seventy-two garnishments on the candlestick and in the two who prophesied in the camp at the time of the ordination of the seventy in Moses' day (Numbers 11:26). The original Greek text of Luke 10:1 also reveals the fact Jesus sent forth seventy-two. The two principal men in the Seventy-two Prophets are representatives of the Seventy-two to the Chief Bishop and the Council of Apostles and Elders. These principal prophetic officers are revealed in Eldad and Medad who were gifted prophets in the Old Testament (Numbers 11:26, 27) and in the chief men Barsabas and Silas in the

New Testament (Acts 15:22).

The Seventy-two Prophets are leaders of the people who represent them in formulation of doctrine and practice in the church and who represent the office of the Chief Bishop to the people.

5. Procedures for Presentation, Debate, and Resolution

The Council of Apostles and Elders is an open-forum meeting that provides the opportunity for each ordained minister in the church to present any matter for consideration as church doctrine or practice and to seek to bring about a change in any current church doctrine or practice.

The council meets periodically throughout the year and particularly at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Chief Bishop is responsible for devising the agenda for discussion at each council and may prioritize subjects for discussion according to his discretion. Members, lay ministers, and licensed ministers who have questions that they feel should be answered by the Council of Apostles and Elders may submit them to ordained ministers or bishops in the church. They in turn may submit those subjects which they would like to represent on the council floor to the Spokesman for the Twelve Apostles or to the Chief Bishop.

Only ordained ministers have the right to present subjects for debate. Both licensed and ordained ministers have the right to participate in council discussion. Others may participate only by special permission of the Chief Bishop.

After a subject has been announced for discussion, an orderly debate ensues, with those who wish to participate being recognized from the floor by the Chief Bishop, who serves as moderator. The discussion continues until all voices have been heard or until the moderator feels that the matter under consideration is ready for resolution.

For any matter to be approved by the Council of Apostles and Elders, a motion must be made from the floor stating the proposed change, deletion, or addition to the doctrine or practice of the church. (Only ordained ministers may introduce such motions.) After a second from the floor and the opportunity for discussion of the motion, the matter is brought to a vote. (Only ordained ministers may vote.) Any issue can be decided only by unanimous agreement of the ordained ministry. Unanimous agreement can be achieved in several ways. First, it may be by acclamation, an issue on which all agree. Second, it may be that those in the minority vote on the issue agree to acquiesce to the majority for the sake of a unified approach to the issue at hand. Third, unanimity may be achieved when the Chief Bishop makes a final decision on an issue on which no agreement is forthcoming. In this case, the Council of Apostles and Elders unanimously agrees upon its continuing principle that the Chief Bishop has the final authority, and all agree to abide by his decision on the subject at hand. Generally, the subjects on which no agreement can be reached are carried over to another session for additional discussion.

As a general rule the ideal resolution of any question before the Council of Apostles and Elders is that which was achieved in Acts 15: *"Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company... And they wrote letters by them after this manner...It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord...it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things"* (Acts 15:22,23,25,28).

After each session of the Council of Apostles and Elders, minutes of that session are sent to each minister in the church and to each church with the instructions that the churches of God be established in the present truth of the apostles' doctrine and practice.

6. Committees

The Council of Apostles and Elders may appoint committees for the purpose of undertaking projects in its behalf. These committees serve the Council of Apostles and Elders, and their actions are subject to review, approval, correction, or rejection as the council sees fit. There are two kinds of committees, standing committees and special committees.

a. Standing Committees

The standing committees of the Council of Apostles and Elders include the General Presbytery of the church and the General Finance Council, the formulation of which the Council has commissioned to oversee the ministerial operation of the church and the business operations of General Headquarters respectively. Members of these committees are appointed by the Chief Bishop.

b. Special Committees

Special committees may be appointed by the Council of Apostles and Elders to assist in any project not specifically assigned to one of the standing committees. These may include project development for new publications sponsored by the Council, research projects for information that the Council needs in its decision-making process, and special business project undertakings.

C. EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT

The executive branch of the government of The Church of God is responsible for carrying out the decisions of the Council of Apostles and Elders and for management of all business and financial affairs of the church. Since The Church of God is essentially hierarchical in governmental structure, the administrative government flows from General Headquarters to territorial headquarters to district headquarters to local assemblies. Only in matters of property ownership and business not specifically governed by decisions of the Council of Apostles and Elders do local churches and territorial headquarters function autonomously.

Those leaders who serve The Church of God in executive government are responsible for directing the mechanical workings of the church, for organizing and operating various business operations required, and for administering organizational functions in an orderly fashion, with all the doctrines and practices approved by the Council of Apostles and Elders fully implemented.

Executive government is vital to the operation and continuation of the church. It is this branch of government which gives every member of The Church of God at every level of operation the protection of headship. The officers who are appointed in different capacities in executive government are delegated the responsibility and the accompanying authority to be shepherds of the people in their care and to watch for their souls as well as for the welfare of the entire Church of God. All the members of the church, accordingly, are responsible to "obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief" (Hebrews 13:17).

1. Chief Bishop

The Chief Bishop as the anointed of God is appointed as the final authority in all matters of administration in the church. Although advisors and counselors are given to assist him in ministerial and financial administration, he is charged of God with the

responsibility of being the final authority in the executive government of the church. He, above all the delegated authorities that serve with him, is charged with the proper and efficient administration of the doctrines of the Word of God, the decisions of the Council of Apostles and Elders, and the business of General Headquarters. He is also responsible for seeing that the affairs of territorial headquarters and of local churches are carried out within the guidelines established by the Council of Apostles and Elders.

The Chief Bishop may organize the General Headquarters operation of the church according to his discretion to fulfill his responsibilities by appointing officers of such abilities as are needed for the orderly operation of the ministry and of the business of the church. These include members of the General Presbytery, the General Finance Council, the General Treasurer, the General Secretary, Field Representatives, Territorial Bishops, and so forth.

The Chief Bishop is the chairman and final authority in the General Presbytery which licenses ministers, ordains ministers (deacons) and bishops, and assists in executive decisions governing ministers' activities and discipline. He also is the chairman and final authority in the General Finance Council which considers all matters of finance on the General Headquarters level.

The Chief Bishop is responsible for the successful operation of the business of the church and for the proper administration of the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures as outlined and set forth by the Council of Apostles and Elders.

2. The Two Witnesses of the Chief Bishop

The two witnesses serve as right- and left-hand men to the Chief Bishop and are executive representatives of his office throughout the church for whatever business, spiritual or monetary, that may need to be conducted. They have authority to act in whatever capacity they may be directed to act in behalf of the Chief Bishop and General Headquarters.

3. Spokesman for the Twelve Apostles

The Spokesman for the Twelve Apostles is a representative of the office of the Chief Bishop as well as of the Twelve Apostles. He may assist the Chief Bishop in working with the apostleship in doctrinal or ministerial matters and may assume whatever executive responsibilities that the Chief Bishop may delegate to him. In the event of the death or resignation of the Chief Bishop, the Spokesman for the Twelve Apostles assumes the role of acting Chief Bishop until such a time as the Council of Apostles and Elders unanimously names a new Chief Bishop.

4. General Presbytery

The General Presbytery is made up of appointments from the General Headquarters staff of those men who are gifted in working with ministerial ordinations, appointments, and discipline. These may include any of the bishops of the church. The General Presbytery may be expanded at any time to consider a particular issue of ordination, appointment, or discipline to include all of the Twelve Apostles, all of the members of the governmental pattern of the church, or even all of the bishops of the church. This action may be taken according to the discretion of the Chief Bishop with the advice of the standing members of the General Presbytery.

All ministerial ordinations and appointments must be approved by the General Presbytery, and all acts of discipline of disloyal ministers must be judged or approved by

the General Presbytery.

5. General Finance Council

The General Finance Council is made up of business leaders of the church, including the Chief Bishop, the General Treasurer, the Seven Business Overseers, and other men who are charged with the proper exercise of the business of General Headquarters. All matters of spending that surpass the maximum routine operating expenditure must be brought before the General Finance Council for its approval by any department or interdepartment that is functioning as a part of General Headquarters.

6. Seven Business Overseers

The Seven Business Overseers are the direct representatives of the Chief Bishop over the operation of the Seven Spirits of God in the church. This includes the business operation of these auxiliaries. They must be men of business ability, capable of organizing and managing the financial operation of the church. They are appointed individually over the functions of the Seven Spirits of God to carry out the operation of the seven auxiliaries of the church, which are the Bible Teaching Auxiliary, the Church Evangelistic Auxiliary, the Church Preservation Endeavor, the World Missionary Auxiliary, the Church Publishing Company, the Church Markers Association, and the Church Perfection Auxiliary.

The Seven Business Overseers are responsible for organizing their auxiliaries on the general level and for seeing that they function on the territorial and local levels by working with bishops and pastors. They must design and implement programs which will inspire the laymen of the church to operate the Seven Spirits of God in their activities. For the support of their auxiliaries they may devise fund-raising programs to be approved by the General Finance Council and the Council of Apostles and Elders.

The Seven Business Overseers must be men of considerable talent, able to inspire the ministers and laymen of the church with the importance of the orderly operation of the spirits which they oversee. Above all they must be examples in their individual operations so much so that they will appear as lamps on the candlestick in the house of God, making the Seven Spirits of God burn brightly in the church.

7. Women of Ruth International

The Women of Ruth International is the women's auxiliary of The Church of God. It is designed to provide women with opportunities for fellowship, instruction, and involvement in the various activities of the church sponsored by General Headquarters and the Seven Auxiliaries.

The Women of Ruth International takes its name from the Gentile woman who forsook her heathen gods to embrace Yahweh, the God of Israel, and His chosen people, the Jews. The parallel between Ruth and the Gentile Church of God is apparent, for the church has worked diligently to shake off the traditions of Gentile Christianity and to restore the Judaic truths and practices of the New Testament. This truth has major impact on the designs and promotions of the Women of Ruth International.

This auxiliary is headed by one of the chief women of the church and is organized on international, national, territorial, and local levels. Monthly themes promote spiritual life among the women of the church, and special fund-raising programs are organized and promoted to support various activities in the church.

The Women of Ruth International is also active in its verbal and material support of

the survival of the nation of Israel and of Jews throughout the world. This is another part of its theme taken from the story of Ruth in the Old Testament.

8. International Youth Department

The International Youth Department of the church is organized as an auxiliary to provide young people with opportunities for fellowship, activity, instruction, and involvement in the various programs of the church sponsored by General Headquarters and the Seven Auxiliaries.

This auxiliary takes the name of Light Company after the concept that church youth are to be lights pointing others to the joy of salvation and the truth of the Word of God.

The International Youth Department is organized on international, national, territorial, and local levels. Special thematic promotions and fundraising programs are developed to support various activities of the church among the young people.

9. Representatives

There are many representatives that are appointed by the Chief Bishop with the advice of the Council of Apostles and Elders or the General Presbytery that can represent General Headquarters in the world, in a prophetic program, in the kingdom of God, or in the church in general. They may include the following:

a. Apostolates

(1) Apostle to the Gentiles

The Chief Bishop may designate one apostle in the church as Apostle to the Gentiles. This may or may not be one of the Twelve Apostles. This apostolate is for the purpose of representing The Church of God to the Gentile world in prophetic outreach. The Council of Apostles and Elders may give additional clarification of the nature of this apostolate as the need arises.

(2) Apostle to the Jews

The Chief Bishop may designate one apostle in the church as the apostle to the Jews. This may or may not be one of the Twelve Apostles. This apostolate is for the purpose of representing The Church of God to the Jewish people throughout the world in the prophetic outreach program of the church. The Council of Apostles and Elders may give further clarification of the nature of this apostolate as the need arises.

(3) Others

The Chief Bishop with the advice of the Council of Apostles and Elders or the General Presbytery may appoint apostles for specific functions in representing the General Headquarters of the church for whatever need may arise throughout the world, the kingdom of God, or the church.

b. General Field Representatives

Aside from the Two Witnesses or the Spokesman for the Twelve Apostles, the Chief Bishop may appoint other special General Field Representatives for the purpose of carrying out the administration of the affairs of the church as they relate to the interaction of General Headquarters with territorial headquarters and local churches.

General Field Representatives may also be sent to represent the church in various activities throughout the world and in the kingdom of God. A General Field Representative must be thoroughly versed on the doctrines, business, and financial procedures of the church. He must also possess spiritual insight and revelation of the program of the church

with capability of leading laymen and ministry into the truth and winning new members to the church.

The Chief Bishop may appoint female ministers to positions of responsibility in the church. Just as there were chief prophetesses in Bible days, women who served as leaders of women and ministered to the Lord and the church at large in capacities of delegated authority, so such appointments may be made in the church today. These leaders must be women of proven ability and dedication, preaching the Word of God and assisting in any business that they may be called upon to perform for the church.

10. Territorial Bishops

Territorial Bishops may be appointed by the Chief Bishop to be direct representatives of General Headquarters in particular geographical areas. A Territorial Bishop has responsibility for the operation of a regional office for The Church of God and for oversight of all the churches committed to his jurisdiction.

In the area of ministerial and spiritual oversight, the Territorial Bishop must be a man who can exercise the authority delegated by the office of the Chief Bishop with all wisdom and forbearance. He must strive to maintain the purity of doctrine in the churches in his field by careful administration of the decisions of the Council of Apostles and Elders. He must see that every local church in his area is supplied with a competent pastor. He must promote evangelism efforts in his territory, both in local churches and in new fiends. He must consider the welfare of the ministers and laymen entrusted to his care so that he will carefully watch and protect them to the best of his ability.

The Territorial Bishop must be ready to hear all complaints from those in his area and to act upon them within the advice of the Chief Bishop and the Council of Apostles and Elders. He must organize and work closely with a Territorial Presbytery made up of ministers who are leaders and elders of the people to carry out the procedures required for ministerial licensing, ordination, and discipline.

In the areas of business and finance, the Territorial Bishop must have organizational ability to provide for the orderly operation of the business and financial procedures outlined by the Council of Apostles and Elders. He must supervise the operation of the seven auxiliaries within the advice of the Seven General Overseers. He must maintain accurate and current financial records. He must organize and operate a Territorial Finance council for the consideration of all financial matters. He must also receive and maintain reports from all ministers under his jurisdiction.

In short the Territorial Bishop must represent the office of the Chief Bishop and is responsible to promote all programs endorsed by General Headquarters.

11. Territorial Presbyteries

Each territory, state, or nation in which a regional office has been established for The Church of God must have a Territorial Presbytery, composed of at least three ordained ministers, preferably bishops, who are known to be leaders of the people. For best balance some members of this presbytery should also be pastors. The Territorial Bishop is the chairman of this presbytery. The Territorial Presbytery serves the purposes of examining applicants for ministerial licensing and ordination and of disciplining disloyal ministers within the guidelines of the Council of Apostles and Elders and the general Presbytery.

12. Territorial Auxiliary Leaders

Territorial Auxiliary Leaders are appointed over the seven auxiliaries by the Territorial Bishop. The function of these leaders is to work with the seven General Overseers of the Seven Spirits of God to see that the spirits that they represent are functioning in the territory and in every local church.

13. Regional Bishops

Territories may be subdivided into regions with Regional Bishops appointed by Territorial Bishops with the advice of the Chief Bishop. The Regional Bishop has essentially the same duties as the Territorial Bishop except for the fact that he is answerable to the Territorial Bishop under whom he serves as a delegated representative. A Regional Bishop is appointed specifically to the oversight of the local churches in his care and is responsible for their success.

14. Pastors

Pastors are appointed by Territorial Bishops with the advice of the Chief Bishop and the local churches to which they are appointed. The local pastor is the shepherd and leader of the local church and is the final authority in matters of business for that local church in much the same way in which the Chief Bishop is the final authority over the doctrine, practice, and business of the church in general.

The pastor has the responsibility for the care of the entire membership of the local church. As a good shepherd and not an hireling, he is charged with their spiritual welfare. He is especially responsible for feeding the flock with the revelation of the Word of God, and he should also visit his members in their homes as the need arises for fellowship and instruction. He must also maintain the confidence of the community in which his church is located by living an exemplary Christian life. He should make every effort to increase attendance and membership of the church by carrying out his extra-pulpit ministry.

The pastor is the shepherd over his flock, not a dictator or lord over God's heritage. Any programs which the pastor wishes to initiate in the local church pertaining to church buildings, parsonages, and improvements should be discussed thoroughly with the membership in a business conference, and a unanimous agreement should be reached. A pastor should by no means attempt to legislate such matters over his flock. He should work with them and lead them gently as a good shepherd (1 Peter 5:2.4), Only when a decision of unanimous agreement cannot be reached by the local church should the pastor exercise his theocratic responsibility to make the final decision by which the church agrees to abide.

It is the duty of the pastor of the local church to see that all the auxiliaries of the church are organized and operated efficiently and properly. The pastor should also see that all other programs introduced by General Headquarters function properly on the local level. He must also be diligent to maintain the purity of the doctrine of The Church of God and to instill those truths in each of his members within the advice of the Council of Apostles and Elders.

15. Local Presbyteries

The Local Presbytery is organized in each local church to assist the pastor in the spiritual development of the church and to advise the General Business Conference of the local church only on matters of discipline. Actions of reprimand and probation against disloyal members may be carried out by this presbytery; however, actions of disfellowshipment can only be recommended by this presbytery to the General Business

Conference where appropriate action may be taken by the entire church according to its discretion. Any and all actions of this sort must be carried out within the guidelines for discipline adopted by the Council of Apostles and Elders.

The Local Presbytery should be composed of elders of the people, men of proven ability and stable service in the church. The members of the local presbytery are appointed by the pastor, who serves as chairman of this presbytery.

16. Lay Ministers

The pastor of a local church may at his discretion appoint and set forth formally before the people lay ministers as leaders of various works of ministry and service in the local church. These are representatives of the pastor and should be careful to work only within the areas of responsibility delegated to them by the pastor. Lay ministers may include members of the Local Presbytery, the Local Finance Council, music and worship directors, auxiliary leaders, and the like.

These leaders are given to be assistants to the pastor. They must also be careful to maintain the proper posture toward the members of the church who are in their care for a particular purpose. They are elders of the people, but they are not dictators and should not attempt to legislate matters over the desires of the local church. They must also be careful to maintain the posture of assistant to the pastor, for they have no authority over the pastor and are appointed by him to function only with his delegated authority.

Lay ministers, whether individually or on finance councils or on local presbyteries, have no power to transact business for the local church except within those areas specifically assigned to them by the Council of Apostles and Elders or the General Business Conference of the local church.

All lay ministers must keep up to date on church activities by reading church publications and attending festivals and council meetings whenever possible. Lay ministers are appointed and ordained by the pastor to serve a term of one year, at which time they may be replaced or reappointed according to his discretion.

17. Local Auxiliary Leaders

Auxiliary leaders are to be appointed by the pastor for the promotion of the Seven Spirits of God and the Seven Business Auxiliaries of the church in each local church. They are the representatives of the pastor in making these spirits burn brightly in the local churches and are responsible for carrying out the business that each auxiliary requires.

